

In the beginning 3:

One or many...

N. Kazanas, October 2016

0. Contrary to modern mainstream belief that religiophilosophical beliefs developed from primitive crude ritualistic nature-worship and/or animism to polytheism, henotheism, monotheism (a Sky-father-god or Mother-goddess) then monism, this paper argues that in the *RV* (Ṛgveda) the opposite is true. Some ṛgvedic sages knew that all forms of divine power and all manifestations are expressions of One Supreme Being, neither male nor female and from this descended or developed other forms of philosophy, religion, ritual, myth and superstition.

1. In my paper “In the beginning” (No 1 in this series), I indicated with ample evidence that academics mistranslate generally the Rigvedic hymns. While their translations may be linguistically impeccable, although even this aspect is not always right, their understanding of the spirit of the hymns is vitiated by the prevalent prejudices in Indology and their own lack of connexion with the esoteric side of the texts.

Franklin Edgerton is no exception. As I wrote in the second paper (§6) he was a distinguished academic and an excellent sanskritist and his translations are better than most. But he ignores the esoteric or philosophical-psychological aspect of most hymns. Like many other academics he ignores totally the fact that some hymns state the soma rite to be, apart from the usual sacrifice, also an inner psychological process, as I mention in the same paper (§5: e.g. hymns 9.73.8, 9.113.2). Academics cannot unfortunately shake off their pedantry: they get dizzy themselves in the joys of piling up references, dotting down footnotes and often foisting specialized terms (which they think “scientific”) and ignore the subtler and more substantial meaning (as in Edgerton 1965: 25). All of us find it very difficult not only to shake off our pet notions, when shown to be wrong, but even to recognise that we entertain these and other prejudices. As I wrote in the earlier papers “In the beginning 1” and “2”, such prejudices are the Aryan Invasion/Immigration Theory and the evolution of religion from a crude form (e.g. animism) to more refined ones (e.g. monotheism).

In the hymns of *RV* and *AV*, writes FE (=F. Edgerton, p 25) “Often the One is a sort of demiurge, a Creator, Father, First Cause” – and here he cites *AV* 2.1.3. and 11.8.8-9. He is right of course linguistically, and the verses say: ‘He our father, our generator, and the (cosmic) Connection, knows the stations and the worlds all’ (as Edgerton translates on p 79 the hymn of Vena). The second reference he cites (Hymn of Vena) can be disregarded here as the two stanzas are lists of names of gods (Indra, Soma etc) and have nothing to do with the One being, a Creator etc. Even if we accept the rendering of *bandhu* as ‘(cosmic) Connection’ (and the reference FE gives to 1.129.4 where *bandhu* occurs too) and not ‘kinsman’, which makes just as good sense, surely there is nothing here other than poetic tropes: the poet is using different terms to suggest the One Lord’s relation to the manifest worlds and beings.

But our academic continues: “Such theistic expressions may be used of impersonal monistic names for the One as well as of more personal quasi-monotheistic ones” (p 25). It is obvious that he splits hairs here in typical quasi-scientific pedantry. The poet uses different terms not confusing, as FE suggests, or being unclear about, monotheism and monism, but in order to help people of different dispositions (devotional, intellectual, emotional, gnostic, given to activities or quietism etc) understand the presence of a Supreme Power, both transcendent and immanent.

That there is a derogatory tone and a tendency to downgrade most of the statements of the rishis is revealed here by the “quasi-monotheistic” and elsewhere by the “speculations” and his ascription to them of a naïve and/or superstitious belief that

knowledge of names gave them magic powers (pp 21-24). There again FE is right in relation to later texts but the Rigvedic sages exhibit real powers in many hymns and perform what to us seem utterly incredible and mythical miracles: e.g. the miraculous deeds of the Ṛbhus (e.g. 1.20.2; 4.33.2; etc); the parting of the river waters by the seer Viśvāmitra (3.33); Vāmadeva's identification with Indra, Manu and Sūrya (4.26.1); Atri's rehabilitation of the sun (5.40) or his salvation by the Aśvins (5.78); different rescues by Aśvins; etc. Just because we do not understand what is involved and certainly cannot use the power of Language in a "magical" way, it does not mean that those sages could not. A little open-mindedness and humility on our part would not hurt!

2. A major difficulty with academics and most writers in this field is their failure to appreciate that the RV and AV hymns are poems, selected collections from a vast, shifting current of such creations. Most obviously, they are not treatises, handbooks, essays or dissertations on Vedic religious dogma or philosophical teachings or world-views. Consequently, the hymns do not contain systematic formulations of the thinking and the events of that distant period, which may well have covered several centuries if not a millennium. Moreover, they are composed (or "seen" or "heard") by different rishis, not only at different periods but also at different locations. Saptasindhu, the Land-of-the-Seven-Rivers around Indus and Sarasvati, was a vast area! We have some clear statements and some good hints but too much is enigmatic because we no longer have the necessary information. To claim that apart from some obvious riddles and playful tropes, many stanzas are deliberate enigmas in poetic contests is absurd: even at the time of the Brāhmaṇas much of the import had been lost and for this reason the compilers of those texts thought it necessary to provide narratives that explained the laconic references in the hymns and so to fill the gaps of information. The same was done by later works like the *Nirukta-Nighaṇṭu* and the *Brhaddevatā*.

Let me illustrate my meaning with an example from recent times. I take the well-known sonnet *England in 1819* by P.B. Shelley. I select just four lines (1-2,5,7):

An old mad, blind despised and dying king,
Princes, the dregs of their dull race...
But leech-like to their fainting country cling...
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field...

To one uninitiated these statements may well sound highly enigmatic and he/she may well come up with a theory that the poet is competing with others and spinning off riddles. But all who know the history of England of that period find these lines very meaningful. The King is George 3rd, mad and dying. The Princes are the aristocracy, comprising mostly a self-indulgent and stupid caste, remaining in power and having wealth thanks to a long tradition of exploiting the land and the people often with suppression. And the last line refers to Peterloo, the massacre of over 600 innocent men, women and children, by the local Yeomanry, who had gone to arrest the speakers at a peaceful meeting of the people seeking parliamentary reform. We know these details because we have ample documentation. Anyone can read the history of the period and learn the facts.

Unfortunately we have no documentation for the Vedic Age other than the hymns themselves. It is therefore bad scholarship to select statements from the hymns that fall within one's favorite frame of beliefs or the prevalent theories and prejudices of our times and ignore other apparently dissimilar statements or interpret the latter according to our own specific beliefs and prejudices and speculations.

3. Back to our academic. FE continues his theorizing that the poets and priests grope and "speculate" from the early polytheism or "animism" or whatever towards some

satisfactory concept of the One. But “here again their suggestions are many and varied” (p 25 top). In §1 I gave an example of this. FE goes on, however: “The One is compared to a carpenter [RV 10.81.4], or a smith [10.72.2; 10.81.3] ... or his act is like one of generation: he begets all beings [10.129.5 which **seems** to compare the acts of generation to a sexual act]”. (All these square brackets are by me but are given by FE in footnotes; the emphasis on ‘seems’ is mine.) He adds also that the Creator’s “activity” is compared to a sacrifice, a ritual performance [RV 10.81.1].”

All this is quite true, of course, and is illustrated by hymn 10.81. In his presentation of this hymn (p 61) FE describes the Creator Viśvakarman ‘All maker’ as a “new quasi-monotheistic demiurge”, as he has done elsewhere. Except that the “quasi-” is unwarranted. And I find it strange that this scholar does not seem to appreciate the art of the Vedic poets which, after all, is not very different from good modern poetry.

In 10.81 the Supreme, which here is named Viśvakarman, is presented in different guises and given different epithets. Thus in stanza 1 he is father (*pitā*), ṛṣi, sacrificer and officiating priest (*hótr*) in a sacrifice; in st 2 he is all-maker (*viśvákarmā*), brings forth the earth, reveals heaven and is all-seeing (*viśvacakṣāḥ*); in st 3 he faces and observes all sides, has arms and legs extended on all sides and [like a smith] this One God (*devá ékaḥ*) blows and smelts (*dhamati*) with fan-bellows sky and earth; in st 4 he fashions (*nis-takṣ*) like a carpenter (or wood-carver) out of timber (*vána* and *vṛkṣá*) sky and earth and the worlds; in stanzas 5 and 6 he performs a rite and sacrifices himself yet growing great (*vāvr̥dhānāḥ*); in st 7 he is the Lord of Speech (*vācás páti*, suggesting perhaps creation through the Word) and mind-inspirer (*manojū-*).

To my mind there is not the slightest doubt that the poet extolls all the time the One Supreme trying out different images and suggesting the different qualities and powers of this All-maker. I don’t see the slightest effort or movement from the Many to the One. It is the One all along presented in different forms and figures (smith, carpenter, sage, father etc)! Again, let us consider an example from 20th century poetry. I take some lines from T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, from “Burnt Norton” section II, the beginning:

The trilling wire in the blood...
The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
All figured in the drift of stars...

The first three lines give us in three disparate images (trilling wire, dance, circulation) the motion of the blood and its sensation, then the fourth line says this is reflected in the motion of the stars. The poet is not groping towards some theory or speculating about the motion of the stars: he presents different images of the same motion that are drawn from current knowledge and experience.

The Vedic poets do the same. They give poetic images, metaphors, similes, personifications, hyperboles (plenty of those) and all other figures and tropes from the store of knowledge and experience current at that period. And as the distinguished indoeuropeanist Calvert Watkins put it – “The language of India from its earliest documentation in the *R̥gveda* has raised the art of the poetic figure to what many would consider its highest form” (2001:109). The Russian vedicist, Mrs T Elizarenkova, had a few years earlier shown with much descriptive analysis that the Vedic poets had indeed raised poetry to the very highest form (1995). I myself, utilizing such previous studies wrote a paper on the all-comprehensiveness of the poetry of the RV (Kazanas 2015: ch 3).

4. Hymn 10.81 contains other interesting aspects.

Stanza 2 sets questions: “What was the base, one may ask, indeed?” *kím svīd āsīd adhiṣṭhānam*. “And how was done all this enterprise (*ārāmbhanam*) – the manifestation of this earth and the unfolding of the sky?” The poet may perhaps express genuine not-

knowing of that very first act of creation/generation/manifestation; he may be filled also with genuine wonderment at the mystery and wishes to infuse this wonderment to his listeners: what indeed was the starting point, the material basis and the method or process?

Having given the figure of the smith in st 3, he gives the figure of a wood-carver in st 4, but again with questions. What was the forest, what the tree or wood (*vrkṣá* and *vána*) with which he fashioned out sky and earth? If he worked like a carpenter what did he stand on, or what was it he ascended/superceded (*adhyátisthat*) supporting the worlds and beings? O you intellectuals, do ask yourselves about this!... BUT note, all you good readers, that in st 2 the poet had already hinted at how the All-maker had done all this: *mahinā viśvácaṣāḥ* ‘with [his own] power casting-his-eye-on-all’; and the poet expands this in concrete images saying in st 3 ‘on all sides (*viśvátas*) he had eyes, visage, arms and legs, so he fanned-out sky and earth fully (*sám*) with arms like bellows/wings (*pátatraiḥ*) this One God!’ In st 3, we have the personification of a supernatural smith (an image common in other cultures), but the poet has already said that the Creator had manifested the world by his might through mere looking – here *caṣ*, later in the Upanishads *ḍṛś*.

Hymn 10.82 also has as its subject the All-maker *Viśvakarman*. Here too the one god by/from whom all worlds are produced is said to be beyond the (constellation of the) Seven Sages (st 2), beyond heaven and earth and the Gods Asuras (st 5), set upon the navel of the Unborn (st 6). Stanza 5 also posits a question: “What was that first Embryo [i.e. the seed] *gárbha* which the waters bore...? – and from whom was produced all this creation? ... He indeed [i.e. *Viśvakarman*] was that embryo. Here, however, as in several other hymns there is a distinction between the one god/*garbha* who as the All-maker fashions the worlds and beings and the real Supreme One which is Unborn *ajá!* In 10.129.1-3 also we find the One which simply breathes by innate power without air and that which becomes/evolves *ābhú* producing desire and other forces and the creation.

5. Questions of wonder and riddles occur in other hymns as well, e.g. especially 1.164 (*asyá vāmásya ...*).

Of much significance and similar to 10.81 and 82 is also hymn 10.72 (as some other hymns, but we must select, otherwise the discussion would become overextended).

FE considers this hymn “rather superficial” and “of no great interest” (p 60). His judgement here is another indication of his imperfect understanding of the import of the hymns. Wholly bent on speculation as he is and on the evolution from primitive to sophisticated, as he sees it, he finds three points worthy of note: the existent derived from the non-existent; Dakṣa being born from Aditi and Aditi from Dakṣa; and (“the most original trait”) the Mother-Goddess giving birth *uttānápád* – “with legs outstretched”.

Let us look at it. In the second stanza Brahmanaspati ‘Lord of holy power/speech’, like a smith blew/fanned/smelted (*adhamat*) the gods (or heaven and earth or the worlds) simultaneously together (*sam*). In that first age of the gods the existent (*sat*) was manifested from the non-existent (*ásat-aḥ*).

This last statement is taken by most academics as indication that the ancient seers thought creation was produced from non-existence, from nothing, *ex nihilo* (as Christian theologians assert about their own creator-god), contrary to *Chāndogya Up* 6.2. which says that the existent cannot emerge from non-existence – and many other passages in the Upanishads which say that the creator creates/emits the ray of creation (*srj-*) out of his own substance (like a spider)! Here these academics display again pedantry and defective thinking. St 2 starts with Brahmanaspati creating like a smith (*karmāra iva*)! A smith has his bellows, fire and metal and, **surely, it is out of these materials that he fashions his products, not out of non-existence.** Obviously then, here, *ásat* signifies “non-manifest”, not absolute non-existence – and the verb *√jan-* (>*ajāyata*) signifies manifestation or

bringing from non-visibility or non-apprehension, into visibility or apprehension. St 2 is as follows: – “*bráhmaṇaspáti*, the lord of prayer/sacred-speech, like a smith blew/fanned-out together [all] these (*etāḥ*) [worlds]; in the earlier/primal (*purvyé*) age of the gods existence was manifested (*ajāyata*) from non-existence”.

Rather surprisingly, some translate *etāḥ* (which is plural) as dual, heaven and earth, which would have been *eté!* (E.g. O’ Flaherty 1981: 38.) The first of st 3 repeats more or less what was said in st 2 but now adds that this manifestation was followed by the manifestation of the *ásās* ‘the regions’ or probably ‘the dimensions of space-time’.

The mutual birth-giving in Aditi-Dakṣa-Aditi (st 4-) is not really problematic if we bear in mind the wisdom and wit of these poets. Aditi is the otherwise indescribable Infinite, the unlimited Unmanifest. From that rises creative Dexterity *dakṣa* and from this now is produced the infinite space-time continuum in which all other manifestations will exist and move. This *dakṣa* corresponds to the *ābhú* ‘the evolvent’ in 10.129.3c or the “embryo” *gárbha* which supports all worlds in 10.82.6. Here it has been said that *bhū* ‘becoming, evolvent’ (often but wrongly rendered as ‘earth, world’) emerged/manifested (*ja-jna* < *jan*) from the unmanifest *ásat*, Mother Aditi, and from this *bhū* the *ásās* ‘dimensions, regions’, i.e. the continuum. Following this continuum the good gods themselves manifested, the shining creative powers that would generate the widening world-spheres and the sun. Stanzas 4-7 repeat in more detail the laconic statements in stanzas 2 and 3. (There are sexual hints, of course, with female fecundity (*aditi*) and virile creativeness (*dakṣa*) since sexuality was not unknown to the Vedic people; but to focus on this as if this is of primary importance, as many modern writers do, betrays their own predilections.)

Stanza 6 presents the gods as clasping closely one another and as if dancing (*nṛt-*) in *salilá*. This is “water, ocean” in later texts but, as I argued in the first essay (in section §5, end), in the hymn 10.129.3 it signifies “fluctuating energy”. And so it must do here, since nothing material has yet been generated. It is the gods dancing as it were in this fluctuating continuum that generate the *reṇú* ‘dust, pollen, particles’ with which, like magicians (*yáti-*), they made the world-spheres swell out (st 7) and then brought forth the sun (as the orb, hidden in the ocean rises from it).

Stanzas 8 and 9 deal with the sun, which the gods drew forth as they expanded the worlds. This was Aditi’s eighth son, the *Mārtāṇḍa* ‘dead-egg’ or ‘the sun-god born of an egg’, whom she casts away. With seven sons Aditi went forth to that earlier age and brought again the being *Mārtāṇḍa* for generation *prajāyái* and death *mṛtyáve* – his own and that of other creatures. This is both the rising and the setting of the sun and man’s (and other creatures’) birth and death. And since the sun rises and sets recurrently, there may well be a suggestion here that man too reincarnates from one life to another. Poetry does suggest: implication and suggestion *lakṣaṇā* and *vyañjanā* are among its primary functions.

So the hymn is anything but superficial.

6. I shall now proceed to examine the elements of monism found in the *RV*. Many of these appear in the earlier books, before book 10. It seems to me strange that I should have to do this, but, obviously, most academics don’t want to understand this.

The principle of the Unity of Being or monism is expressed very clearly in the well-known hymn 1.164. What strikes me at first is the humility of this extraordinary sage Ucathya *Dīrghatamas* who in st 5 says unhesitatingly “I, myself being *pāka* ‘naïve, simpleton, unripe’ and not discerning with my mind, I ask...” He repeats this in st 6:

*ácikitvāñ ciketúśaś cid-atra kavín pṛchāmi vidmáne ná vidvān /
ví yás tastámbha śál imá rájāmsy ajásya rūpé kím ápi svid ékam //*

‘Not having realised and not knowing, I, for the sake of knowing, ask the wise-poets who have realised here: What is the One really, which in the form of the Unborn established each-and-all (*vi*) the six dimensions’.

Many, including Jamison & Brereton, inform us that the One is the sun (p 355) but do not bother to say what the six *rājāmsi* ‘regions/quarters’ are. How can the sun who definitely appears every morning to be born out of the darkness (or some ocean) be “unborn”? And how does it *vi-stambh-* ‘establish, fix, prop, support’ the (unknown) six regions? We could understand three such – sky, midspace and earth (or three times three); also four – the areas east, south, west and north (or eight taking the in-between adjacent areas). But six? We know of six seasons *ṛtu* and tastes *rasa*, but not regions. Having respect for the rishi’s wisdom, I translate “dimensions” – three of space and three of time. As for the One Unborn, it is the One which the sages call by many names, including the Sun, or divine bird, st 46:

*índraṃ mitráṃ váruṇam agníṃ āhur átho divyáḥ suparnó garútmān /
ékaṃ sád víprā bahudhā vadanty agníṃ yamám mātaríśvānam āhuḥ //*

‘They call [it] Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, also the heavenly fine-feathered bird (Sungod). Though it is One, the wise poets speak of it in many ways – Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan (=Vāyu ‘air, wind’)’.

In 10.114.5 the idea is repeated: the wise-poets describe in many different figures that which is One. Stanza 2 in this same hymn said explicitly that sages had traced the One Cause of everything abiding in distant and mysterious realms/rules (*vrata-*).

Hymn 8.54.2 states just as explicitly that the One became all and everything: *ékaṃ vā idám ví babhūva sárvam*.

Then, in Book 3 of the Viśvāmitra clan, hymn 54.8 says *viśvam ékaṃ patyate* ‘the One which is All governs all and everything’, *éjad dhruvám* ‘what moves and what is at rest’, *cárat patatī* ‘what walks and what flies’, *viśunam vjātám* ‘this manifested multiplicity’.

And the 22 stanzas of hymn 55 in the same Book 3 have as refrain *mahád devānām asuratvám ekam* single is the god-power of the gods and great. In other words the gods are gods in that they partake of goodhood, the great unitary force that makes them gods.

Enough has been said to establish that the One is the cause of the many.

7. That One does not really create. It does not do anything – except breathe of its own innate power, since there was no air, as 10.129.2c says: *ānīd avātám svadháyā tát ékam*.

Since there was no air (and except for That One, there was absolutely nothing else, nothing at all), what was that “breathing”?

I take it that the outbreath, the exhalation, was the emergence of the creation with all its levels, worlds, creatures and phenomena, and the inbreath, the inhalation, was the withdrawal of all this. (Here too we have poetic suggestion, but I would be quite happy to consider any other reasonable suggestion.)

However, the creation emerges from ‘that-which-becomes’ *ābhú*, as it is termed in 10.129.3c. And this manifested *ajāyata* out of the power of transformation *tápasas* –or ‘fervour/heat’, as most academics wrongly translate. And I say ‘wrongly’ because this power-of-becoming was covered over by (and lying unmanifest within) *tuchyéna* ‘vacuity/void’; and since nothing at all existed other than That One, there could not have existed heat of any kind that we know in our world. So I take *tápas* in the sense of *aiśvarya* (as in the *Dhātupāṭha*), the supreme power that can lay down laws and change them and their effects at will: hence transformation.

From That One, in That One, arose ‘power-of-becoming’ by means of *tápas* and *svadhá* ‘self-transformation, innate-power’. But still, all was enveloped by/in vacuity! Still nothing recognisably “existent” existed!

The idea is presented again in more familiar images elsewhere, as in 10.82.5-6. '[He, Viśvakarman, the All-maker] was the embryo first arising on the Waters (*āpaḥ*) [of Infinity], where all the gods are assembled – the embryo planted on the navel of the Unborn, within which (*yasmin*) stand (*tasthūḥ* literally 'have stood') all the worlds'.

In other hymns the All-maker is presented as something of an anthropomorphic god who creates like a smith or carpenter – or through simple viewing (see earlier section §4, end).

Upon (*adhi*) that evolvent force and all-through-it (*sam*) rolls/vibrates (*vṛt-*) desire/love/will (*kāma*). Until now we have the causal sphere, manifest and apprehensible, thinkable by mind.

This now becomes the mind. 10.129.4 tells us that this *kāma* is the first seed of mind *mānaso rétaḥ prathamām*. The seed grows and expands into the vast mental sphere. Hereafter (in stanza 5) appear various powers, energetic and passive, higher propulsive (*práyati-*) and lower self-moving (*svadhā*) mechanical forces. And these create the material world, we are left to understand, since the next two stanzas say that we do not really know how it all began. Who truly knows?...

8. But all this process is discoverable within man. This is implied in the fourth stanza of this very same hymn:

sató bándhum ásati níravindan hṛdí pratīṣyā kāvayo manīṣā (c,d).

'Having examined thoroughly with discernment wise-poets discovered within their heart the bond/connexion of truth/reality/existence in the untruth/illusion/non-existence.'

The mental power that examines, observes and understands (*manīṣā*), the mind (*mānas*), the will (*kāma*) and the evolvent (*ābhū*) is, in fact, from the power/substance of the One Itself. This is clearly stated in a hymn in *AtharvaVeda* 4.1.3:

*pra yo jajñe vidvān asya bandhur viśvā devānām janimā vivakti/
brahma brahmaṇa ujjabhāra mahyan-nicair ucaiḥ svadhā abhi pra tasthau//*

'He who, knowing, became manifest, the Connexion/kinsman of this [world], he declares all the generations of gods; **he carried along/forth (uj-jabhāra) the sacred-power brahma from the midst of brahma, by innate power**, stood forth high and low.'

It is also stated in AV 11.8 where, in many stanzas (18-30), it is said that many qualities, gods, elements entered the human embodiment. So stanza 32 says "Knowing Man *puruṣa* therefore, one thinks 'This is *brahman*'; for all the deities are seated in him like cows in a pen": *tasmād vai vidvān puruṣam idaṃ brahmeti manyate; sarvā hyasmin devatā gavo goṣṭha ivāsate*.

In the AV there is the Supreme Brahman (*brahma jyeṣṭham*: AV 10.7.20) and also the lower brahman, embodied in man, which is subject to time *kāla* (as in AV 19.53.9 and in 19.54.1). Such differentiations and identifications are not, admittedly, found in the RV. Both are mentioned in AV 10.7, the well-known hymn to Skambha (=Support). Here the *brahman*, sacred-power or Absolute, is identified with the Support and whoever know brahman in man know the Highest *parameṣṭhin* (as will be explicitly repeated later in the Upanishads): see stanza 17a: *ye puruṣe brahma vidus te vidus parameṣṭhinam*.

In stanza 35 of this same hymn, Skambha, identified as the Supreme, established (*dadhāra*) the six extensive dimensions (*diśas...urvīḥ*). All of course translate *diśas* (plural) as "regions/quarters directions" and FE wonders (p96) at this finding that six is an unusual number (see section §6, above)! If we take *āśā*, *diś* (both fem) and *rajas* (neuter) to be directions, quarters, regions or spaces, the number six would seem very odd; so I insist that we have "dimensions". However, this same stanza says that the Supreme entered into all this creation – *idaṃ viśvaṃ bhuvanam āviveśa*. This entry was stated in stanzas 8-9 also. So it is not surprising that It is within man too.

This idea is, of course found in the RV also, in 1.164.21:

inó vísvasya bhúvanasya gopá sá mā dhíraḥ pákam atrá viveśa.

‘The mighty guardian of the whole world, he the wise one, entered here into me, the simpleton.’

Elsewhere in the RV, Agni, who encompasses all gods (5.3.1; 5.13.6) and knows all and everything (3.1.17; 6.15.13) and so appears as an apt emblematic manifestation of the Supreme, is the light and source of all inspiration placed in man’s heart *hṛdaya áhita-* (6.9.6) and is perceived through mind *mánasā nicay-* (3.26.1; 4.1.20).

A.B. Keith pointed out that while the term *brahman* does mean prayer or spell or holly word or rite, in many passages it “must be taken rather as holy power” (1925: 446). And as both prayer and holy-power it must be taken in 6.75.9: *bráhma várma mamántaram* ‘the bráhma-power is my inmost armour’.

9. From the above brief survey (§§7-8) it appears that the system Vedānta was present at the time of the RV and the AV, even of the earliest maṇḍalas. Obviously, the system did not enjoy the popularity of the orthodox hieratic religion with its polytheism, henotheism and sacrificial rites as practised in the wealthier sections of society, nor the lower magical, superstitious practices of the poorer common folk. But it was there and some rishis certainly followed its basic tenets.

The One is the First Cause and Creative Principle of the multiplicity.

The manifest world is created by its Will from its own substance through a Creator-god who is its expression.

The One is in man also as his essential, real Self and man must come to realise this.

In brahman is both *sat* ‘existence/reality/truth’ and *asat* non-existence/unreality/untruth’ as is declared in AV 10.7.10,15. Then, in AV 10.8.43 are explicitly mentioned the 3 *guṇas*.

These very same tenets will be re-examined and re-stated in greater detail in the principal Upanishads after the long ascendancy of the ritualism found in the Brāhmaṇa texts. But this teaching also was eventually forgotten or pushed aside and distorted into various other systems like Sāṅkhya. And later Adi Shankara came along (some say in the 5th cent BCE, others after 500 CE) and restated the Advaita Vedānta as we have it today. I need not state here the mahāvākyas of the Upanishads and the Shaṅkarācārya tradition like *ayam ātmā brahma* ‘this personal self is the Absolute’, *ahaṃ brahma-asmi* ‘I am the Absolute’ etc.

But the basic tenets of this philosophical system were there at the very beginning.

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