

CHAPTER – V

VEDIC MYTHOLOGY AND THE CLASSICAL SANSKRIT LITERATURE

5.1. Concept of Vedic Mythology :

Religion is said to be the oldest and most enduring, profound and engrossing form of human activity. Since it implies a communication between the human self and the god, mythology forms an essential part of the study of religion. The Vedic mythology occupies an extraordinary significance in the study of religious history. S.V. Saraswati¹ says that god is unchanging, non-temporal, pure actuality. The *Rgveda* as the oldest work of Indian literature is the most significant source of Vedic mythology. We have far more religious beliefs based on the humanization and worship of nature than on any other literary monument in the world. In the earliest stage of Vedic mythology we can clearly see that the process of transforming natural phenomena transformed into gods. It is not found in any other literature of the world. Damieller Feller writes in his book that myth is a story that is sacred.²

The Vedic mythology has its origin from ancient times to Vedic age. It regarded all human beings as equal objects and natural phenomena as conscious and divine. Their deities related to their own culture and any major concept of daily life. Nāgendra Singh has elaborately observed :

“The Vedic Aryans must have borrowed this Atharvanic religion especially from the non-Aryans inhabiting in India.”³

Worship of heaven, earth, mountain etc. can be called divine power. Horses, cows and other animals can be invoked. Even man-made objects like weapons, war-cars, drums, ploughs, as well as ritual implements, such as pressing stones and sacrificial pillars, can be worshipped.

¹ Saraswati, S. V. VCG., P.33

² SPRVM., p.19

³ Singh, Nagendra. VM., p.5

But the worship is only a small place in Vedic religion. The gods in the Vedas affect the glory of human beings inspired by human motives and feelings. That's why those who are born like humans but never die. D. S. Das says :

“Myth is a traditional tale common to members of a tribe, race or nation usually involving super natural and serving to explain some natural phenomenon. The explanatory purpose of many myths is now obscure for a myth often continues to live as a tale in its own right after its explanation has been supplemented.”

There are features which separate the Vedic deities from one another. Many qualities and powers are equal in all gods. The divisions of nature they represent often have much in common, while still these gods have not fully developed in the form of humans. Thus the activity of a hundred-god, the fair god and the storm gods maybe easily described in similar language. At the same time, it must be remembered that the source of all Vedic gods is one. But all these deities are distinguished from each other for their own character or their own particular attribute. All these deities gradually create their own uniqueness through their own qualities. A myth is something which occurred in the inception of human civilization. It is believed that in the primeval period human life was at a stake on earth in different ways and the gods came forward for their rescue through a number of sacrifices. W. J. Wilkins remarks about the gods that “a god is regarded by the worshipper, he also worships as a superior god. Wilkins also cites the speech of Maxmuller.”⁴ Our main interest in the *Rgveda* centres round the various gods who play a vital role for the growth and spread of this Rgvedic religion.

5.2 Source of Vedic Mythology :

Myth actually arises when fiction interprets a natural phenomenon as the action of a person akin to a human agent. The natural phenomenon fades from the drawings of creatures as its place is taken by elaborate representations of human passion. When the basis natural story is forgotten, new touches completely unrelated to its original significance may be added. Vedic scholars,

⁴ Wilkins, W. J. HM., pp.10-11

such as MacDonnell⁵ and others consider the myths of the *Ṛgveda* most prominently in their works on Vedic mythology and casually refer to the *Atharvaveda*.

Vedic mythology has a very important point in the study of the history of religions. Its oldest source presents us with an earlier stage in the development of beliefs based on the personification and worship of natural phenomena than on any other literary mountain in the world. MacDonnell observes:

“The foundations on which the Vedic mythology rests, is still the belief surviving from remote antiquity, that all the objects and phenomena of nature with which man is surrounded, are animate and divine.”⁶

So the most important source of Vedic mythology is the *Ṛgveda*, the oldest text in Indian literature. Its mythology is related to the gods of various important integrated natures. The *Sāmaveda* has not such significance in the study of Vedic mythology because there are only 75 *mantras* which are not taken from the *Ṛgveda*. Much of the *Atharvaveda*’s content deals primarily with household and magical rites.

In the latter portion of it and the *Kauṣītaki Gṛhyasūtra*, there is a lot of knowledge about the spirit and demon. The *Atharvaveda* on the religion deals with notions of greater antiquity than the *Ṛgveda*. But at the higher level of religion it represents a more advanced stage. Along with the adoration of the gods, demon-father-worship and the placement of divine power in unconscious matter are all found in the religion of the *Ṛgveda*. The most aspect of Vedic mythology in the *Yajurveda* is that *Prajāpati* appeared as the chief deity, the rise of Viṣṇu’s greatness and the first appearance of an old god of *Ṛgveda* under the new name of Śiva. But the place of gods is secondary to the *Yajña* in the Veda. That is way mythological material is much less seen here. There is no essential difference between the *Yajurveda* and Brahmanical texts (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*). The main difference between the mythology of the *Ṛgveda* and the Brāhmaṇas that *Prajāpati* is considered

⁵ Macdonell, VM., p.4

⁶ *Ibid*, p.2

as the mail deity in Brāhmanical text. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁷, *Prajāpati* has been praised as omnipotent to the all and everything.

5.3. The Term Deva :

The supernatural powers have been divided into two groups. The *Deva* or god is one hand and other hand is *Asura* or demons. The word *Deva* is a symbol of being associated with the heaven. A. B. Keith says about the *Deva* that the word *Deva* is associated with the development of religion and the spread of the doctrine of migration.⁸

5.4. The Interrelation Between Gods :

The number of gods of the *Rgveda* considered being thirty-three, this figure is given also in the Iranian tradition. The deities are divided into three groups of eleven, connected with heaven, the earth and the air. According to the *Rgveda* and *Atharvaveda*, the number of deities is thirty-three.⁹ These numbers have been expressed as three times eleven.¹⁰ The *Rgveda*¹¹ states that eleven gods have addressed in heaven, eleven on earth and eleven in air. Similarly the *Atharvaveda* divides the gods into dwellers in heaven, air and earth, no number is indicated here. Not all deities are counted among these thirty-three, in addition, references to other deities are found in the *Rgveda*¹². Again in a *mantra* of the *Rgveda*¹³ the number of deities is mentioned as

⁷ सर्व वै प्रजापतिः।Ś B., I,3.5.10.IV5.7.2.

⁸ Keith, A. B. RPVU., p. 76

⁹ (i) पत्नीवत्स्त्रिशतं त्रींश्च दवाननुष्वधमा वह मादयस्व । RgV., III.6.9. (cd)

(ii) यस्य त्रयस्त्रिंशदेव अङ्गे सर्वे समाहिताः । AV, X.7.13

¹⁰ विश्वेदेवेस्त्रिभिरेकादशैरिहा । RgV., VIII.35.3 (ab)

¹¹ ये देवासो दिव्येकादश स्थ पृथिव्यामध्येकादश स्थ । अप्सुक्षितो महिनैकादश स्थ ते देवासो यज्ञमिमं जुषध्वम् । *Ibid*, I.139.11

¹² (i) त्रीणि शता त्री सहस्राण्यग्निं त्रिंशच्च देवा नव चासपर्यन् ।

औक्षन् घृतैरस्तुणन् बर्हिस्मा आदिद्धोतारं न्यसादयन्त ॥ *Ibid*, III.9.9.

(ii) वेद यस्त्रीणि विदथान्येषां देवानां जन्म सनुतरा च विप्रः । *Ibid*, VI.51.2 (ab)

¹³ (i) आ नासत्या त्रिभिरेकादशैरिहा देवोभिर्यातं मधुपेयमश्विना । *Ibid*, I.34.11(ab)

(ii) श्रुष्टीवानो हि दाशुषे देवा अग्ने विचेतसः । तान् रोहिदश्च गिर्वणस्त्रयस्त्रिंशतमा वह ॥ *Ibid*, I.45.2

(iii) विश्वेदेवेस्त्रिभिरेकादशैरिहाऽद्धिर्मरुद्धिर्भृगुभिः सचाभुवा । सजोषसा उपसा सूर्येण च सोमं पिबतमश्विना ॥ *Ibid*, VIII.35.3

(iv) अग्निस्त्रीणि त्रिधातून्या क्षेति विदथा कविः ।

स त्रीरैकदशौ इह यक्षञ्च पिप्रयञ्च नो विप्रो दूतः परिष्कृतो नभन्तामन्यक समे ॥ *Ibid*, VIII.39.9

(v) त्रीणि शता त्री सहस्राण्यग्निं त्रिंशच्च देवा नव चासपर्यन् । *Ibid*, III.9.9 (ab); X.52.6

3339. Yet it is generally said there are three classes of gods.¹⁴ Brāhmaṇas have shown the absence of established tradition. They recognize the thirty-three deities and agrees them to include the eight *Vasus*, eleven *Rudras* and twelve *Ādityas*. The *Ṛgveda* clearly states about the gods as great, some small, some young, some old and there is no reason to doubt that this was a view widely held view. The other poet assures the gods that they are not small or young, but all great. Vedic deities are given more importance than other. Indra appears as the great ruler. Varuṇa is shown as the lord of physical and moral order. For example, Sūrya may be revered as Sūrya in one place, as Savitā in another.

5.5. Classification of the Deities :

Yāska¹⁵ is an oldest commentator of the Veda. He gives the classification of the Vedic gods. He divided the various deities or forms of the same deity as described in the fifth chapter of the *Nighaṇṭuka* into three orders of *Prthivīsthānadevatā*¹⁶, *Antarikṣathānadevatā*¹⁷ and *Dyusthānadevatā*¹⁸. One and the same deity is called by several names owing to wondrous or miraculous powers which possesses or because of the different functions it has perform, corresponding to which it receives the difference names. It may be held that there are as many different deities as there are names, because there are as many different prayers. Yāska further discussed the question regarding the form of their gods in the course of which he states three different views, viz. that the gods have human forms, that they have not human forms and lastly that they have partly human forms and partly. He remarks that there are three gods, the place of Agni is on earth, air is the place of Vāyu or Indra whose place is in air and the place of Sūrya is in heaven.¹⁹ The sun god protects us from the obstacles of the *Dyusthāna*, the air god protects us from the obstacles of *Antarikṣathāna* and fire protects us from the obstacles of the terrestrial sphere. From the *Ṛgveda*, we find that not all the deities of the three

¹⁴ वेद यन्त्रीणि विदथान्येषां देवानां जन्म सन्ततरा च विप्रः । *Ibid*, VI.51.2 (ab)

¹⁵ Ni., 7.5

¹⁶ *Ibid*, VII.14 to IX.43

¹⁷ *Ibid*., X.1 to XI.50

¹⁸ *Ibid*., XII.1-46

¹⁹ सूर्यो नो दिवस्पातु वातो अन्तरिक्षात् । अग्निर्न पार्थिवेभ्यः । :*RgV.*, X.158.1

regions are so prominent, but only *Sūrya*, *Indra*, *Vāyu* and *Agni* are the principal deities of the three regions as they are the representatives of the deities of their respective regions. Each of these has different appellations according to the difference of the work, just like as the same person can work in the capacity of *Hotā*, *Adhvaryu*, *Udgātā* and *Brahmā*.

Deities are mostly mythological apotheosis of natural elements. All other mythologies present this phenomenon through myth which present the solar, lunar and consteller aspects of the sky more or less transparently. Other elements of nature are also recognizable in their mythological presentation or historical personages and functional divinities that either merge with existing major gods or retain their individuality. All pantheons include a cluster of demigods of different orders. Yāska himself does not accept that all the gods are merely forms or manifestations of the three representative gods, although he does allow that the three orders are associated in the sphere and functions that make up each. The fifth chapter of the *Naighaṇṭuka*, to which Yāska comments, it contains many minor deities and defined objects, so that each division has a total of over eleven.

Agni, Āpah, Pṛthivī and Soma belong to the *Pṛthvī-sthāniya*. The deities belonging to atmospheric realm are Indra, Vāyu, Rudra, Marut, Parjanya. The deities of heaven are Sūrya, Mitra, Varuṇa, Dyuh, Pūṣan, Savitā, Āditya, Aśvins, Uṣas and Rātri.

5.5.A. Celestial Gods:

(i) Dyaus :

There is not even a single *Sūkta* for the deity Dyaus in the *Ṛgveda*. Its name comes in the form of duality with the earth. In the *mantra*, he is mentioned here and there in the form of father of gods like Uṣas, Aśvin, Agni, Sūrya, Āditya, Parjanya etc. He is the husband of the earth and the father of the gods. He has been called father in *Ṛgveda*. He is also said to be the father of Agni and Indra.²⁰ He is more powerful because of giving birth to everyone,

²⁰ ṚgV., I.164.33

hence he is called *Bṛṣabha*. In a *mantra*, Dayus has been called the horse of the black complexion decorated with the pearls.²¹

Being addressed with the earth, they have also been mentioned in feminine at many places. Dayus and Pṛthvī have been called as two mothers. Dayus is equated with the Greek god Zeus.

(ii) Varuṇa :

Varuṇa is one of the significant deities in the *Ṛgveda* pantheon. Twelve hymns have been addressed for him in the *Ṛgveda*. Apart from this, some *Sūktas* or hymns are addressed to Varuṇa in conjunction with Mitra, Indra, Agni etc. In the Veda, there is more description of Varuṇa's actions than his personality and accessories. Varuṇa's hands, feet, eyes, mouth have been mentioned in the form of anthropomorphism. Fire is his face.²² The Sun is his eyes, he is also a visionary and a thousand eyed.²³ The rays of the Sun are his arms. He wears golden armor and bright clothes. His golden abode is in heaven. He moves in the sky sitting on a chariot as bright as the Sun.

Varuṇa is also considered the king of humans and gods.²⁴ He is the independent ruler of the whole world. In the *Ṛgveda*, the word *Asura* is mainly used for Varuṇa. Varuṇa is a powerful deity whose command is paramount. That is why he is called *Dhṛtavrata*. Special emphasis has been laid on the moral qualities of Varuṇa in the Vedas. Morality and purity are the two great qualities of Varuṇa. So his relationship was more than *Ṛta*. By giving pardon to those who commit crimes out of ignorance, Varuṇa also absolves them of their sins. He moves in the water. In the *Nighantu*, the ocean is also a name for space. Therefore, Varuṇa is also considered as a space-local deity.

Varuṇa is the deity of the central region. He sees the earth and fills the soil with water, in the central region he creates winds and he creates light in the heaven. Thus Varuṇa makes these three worlds full of light, air and water,

²¹ *Ibid*, II.4.6

²² *Ibid*, VII,88.2

²³ *Ibid*, I.1.5.1; I.25.5

²⁴ *Ibid*, X.132.4

due to which the world becomes good in the abode of man. He is visible to mental eye of his worshippers. He takes away man from the world of darkness to the world of light. He is the symbol of loveliness. The earth which is dry becomes fresh as well bathed person. The mountain served with waters appears to be the symbol of meditative life. It is observed by the scholar Nagendra:

“Varuṇa knows all secret movements of man. If a man stands, walks, deceives, moves about secretly, if two persons counsel together sitting, Varuṇa is always there as the third person.”²⁵

Thus Varuṇa symbolizes life, light and meditation. He is very frequently associated with Mitra and there are several hymns in the *Rgveda* where Mitra and Varuṇa are addressed together.

(iii) Sūrya :

In the *Rgveda*, five *Sūktas* have been addressed to the Sun god.²⁶ Apart from this, some *Sūktas* are jointly addressed to the Sun, along with Agni, Vāyu, Parjanya etc. The personality of this deity is associated with the rising sun. His arms, face, eyes etc. have been described in the form of anthropomorphism. He himself is the eye of Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni. So he is known as the eye of all gods.²⁷ He is the seer of everyone’s sinful and virtuous deeds.

Sūrya is the son of Aditi, hence he is called *Āditya*. His father is Dayus. He was immersed in the sea, from there he was taken out by the gods and placed in the sky in the form of fire.²⁸ The god who created the sun is Indra, Viṣṇu and Soma. In the *Puruṣasūkta* of *Rgveda*, the origin of the Sun has been told from the eye of the Puruṣa. Sūrya’s relation is also considered with Uṣas. But in the end Uṣas is described as the wife of Sūrya. The main function of the Sun is illuminated for the world.²⁹ He dispels darkness with his light and gives light to all human beings. Being symbol of fire, he was placed in heaven by the

²⁵ Singh, Nagendra. VM., p.125

²⁶ RgV., I.50, 115; X.37,158,170

²⁷ *Ibid*, VII.77.13

²⁸ अत्रा समुद्र आ गूळहमा सूर्यमजभर्तन । RgV., X.72.7 (cd) *Ibid*, X,72.7

²⁹ प्रत्यङ् देवानां विशः प्रत्यङ् दुदेषि मानुषान् । प्रत्यङ् विश्व स्वर्दृशे ॥ *Ibid*, I.50.5

gods.³⁰ He measures the day and extends the days of life. He is the soul of the moving world.³¹ He supports the sky and is also called the pillar of the sky.³²

(iv) Pūṣan :

In the *Rgveda*, Pūṣan is praised completely in eight hymns and partially in four hymns. In one *Sūkta*, he is praised along with Indra and in another *Sūkta*, Pūṣan is praised as a duet with Soma. His hands, feet, weapons etc. have been mentioned in the form of anthropomorphism. Pūṣan is omniscient. His abode is in heaven only. The word *Āghṛni* is used for him. Pūṣan is mainly the presiding deity of the roads. So he knows all paths. He performs the task of taking dead persons to the ancestors. Being the knower of all the paths, Pūṣan also knows the hidden wealth. That is why he is also praised for telling the hidden wealth.

Pūṣan is the protector of animals. He is called *Paśupā* because of the protection of animals.³³ He is a deity of love. Because of his deep love, Sūryā got married to him. From the study of hymns related to Pūṣan, it appears that Pūṣan is a symbol of the Sun. *Pūṣan* means nutrients. Hence Yāska has considered everyone's nutritious *Puṁṣa* as the Sun.³⁴ Macdonell observed that the notion that appears to underlie the character of Pūṣan is the beneficent power of the sun, manifested primarily in the form of a pastoral duty.³⁵

Pūṣan is the custodian of the roads removing dangers from the way. His god also cannot be anything but a sun-god since he is also described as lord of all things that stand and move. He is called *Agranī*. So also his ability as a path-finder and restorer of lost things points to an over seeing heavenly body.

³⁰ यदेदेनमदधुर्यज्ञियासो दिवि देवाः सूर्यमादितेयम् । *Ibid*, X.88.11 (ab)

³¹ सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च । *Ibid*, I.115.1 (cd)

³² दिवः स्कम्भः समृतः पाति नाकम् । *Ibid*, IV.13.5 (cd)

³³ *Ibid*, VI.58.12

³⁴ Ni., VII.9

³⁵ Macdonell, A. A. VM, p.37

(v) Aśvins :

Aśvin is an important deity in the *Rgveda*. More than fifty hymns are addressed to him. This is pair god.³⁶ In another *Sūkta* of the *Rgveda*, they are compared to pair substances eye, hand, feet, wings, pair animal and bird. Ashwin is both young and ancient at the same time. He is of a beautiful figure and wears a garland of lotus. Aśvin is the lord of beauty and a powerful deity. Many stories of his heroic deeds are available in the *Rgveda*. He is the main one - made the old sage Cyavan in young, gave longevity to the old Kali, pulled out Raibha who had fallen in the well, saved Atri from the fire pit. His chariot is as bright as the sun. It is faster than the speed of the mind. It is sometimes pulled by horses, sometimes by birds and sometimes by bulls.

Aśvin's relation is more than honey. His chariot is full of honey. They drink honey. Aśvin is related to many gods. Dyaus is his father and Sindhu is his mother. He is also called the son of Vivasvān and Saranyū. Uṣas is his sister and Sūryā is his wife.³⁷ The adjective *Nāsatyā*, *Nicerātā*, *Rudrā*, *Mayobhuvā*, *Āpasā*, *Hiraṇyavartanī* etc have been used for them.

According to Yāska, the word Aśvin is derived from *Amśu* which means to pervade. He is also called Aśvin because of having a horse near him. The time for the appearance of Aśvin is the end of darkness and the beginning of light. They are described as a healer of gods and men, a miracle-worker, and a savior of the afflicted. The word Aśvinau is made by suffixing *vni* with the word *Aśūn*.³⁸ The Aśvins are young and they are known as the youngest of the gods. Yāska also quotes that one is called the son of night, the other the son of dawn.³⁹

(vi) Viṣṇu :

Five *Sūktas* is addressed to Viṣṇu in the *Rgveda*.⁴⁰ His three steps have been specially mentioned in the anthropomorphic form. He is a tall young

³⁶ RgV., III.39.3; X.17.2

³⁷ *Ibid*, I.181.2; 5.76.5

³⁸ Ni., p.451

³⁹ वासात्यो अन्य उच्यत उषः पुत्रस्तवान्य इति । *Ibid*, XII.2

⁴⁰ RgV., I.154, 155, 156; VII.99,100

man.⁴¹ The three steps of Viṣṇu are mentioned by the words *Vikrama*, *Urugāya*, *Urukrama* etc. Viṣṇu has measured the whole world with his three steps. His two steps are visible, but the third step can only be seen by a pious soul. This supreme abode of Viṣṇu is full of thousands of rays. Devotees want to attain this place full of light. This supreme abode of Viṣṇu is full of thousands of rays. All living beings reside in these three steps of Viṣṇu.⁴²

Viṣṇu's relation is mainly with Indra. He is a friend of Indra. Viṣṇu helps Indra in killing Vṛtrāsura. Indra also helps in Viṣṇu's power expansion. Another characteristic of Viṣṇu's character is that he is the protector of the womb.⁴³ He is philanthropic, abundant in wealth, generous, protector and nurturer of all. *Viṣṇu* is certainly the representative deity of the active form of Sūrya.

(vii) Uṣas :

Uṣas, goddess of dawn, is celebrated in about twenty hymns of the *Rgveda* and mention more than 300 times. In the hymns addressed to Uṣas, the wise sages did not ignore her natural form. That is why, from the point of view of poetry, there is more interest in the hymns of Uṣas than other deities. Uṣas is ancient even though she is dressed in bright clothes like a dancer.⁴⁴ Her arrival brings life to all the living beings. Humans, animals and birds engage everyone in their own work by Uṣas. She is the life force of all. Uṣas illuminates everyone's path.

Uṣas follows her set rules. She wakes up the worshipers early in the morning and inspires them in the *Agnihotra* ritual. She invites the deities for drink the *Somarasa*. Uṣas is the wife of Sūrya. She has also been called the mother of the Sun. the words *Maghanī*, *Viśvavārā*, *Subhagā*, *Revati* etc. have been used for Uṣas. Uṣas gives light to us. Light of Uṣas is knowledge that people get from the mother of the dawn. She gives us sacrifice, knowledge and

⁴¹ *Ibid*, I.155.6

⁴² *Ibid*, I.154.2

⁴³ *Ibid*, VII.36.9

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 192.10

auspicious wealth. Uṣas paves the way for the Sun to move on in his axis. So she is the most useful goddess for this world.

(viii) Āditya :

In the *Ṛgveda*, a group of deities are addressed in six hymns by the name Āditya.⁴⁵ There is a difference in the number of deities of this group. Their number has been mentioned as six in one *mantra*. They are Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Dakṣa, and Amśa. In a *mantra* of the *Ṛgveda*'s tenth *Maṇḍal*, their number has been mentioned as eight.⁴⁶ They are Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Dakṣa, Amśa, Sūrya and Martanda. He is called Āditya because of being the son of Aditi. Āditya is the master of the fixed-movable world. He protects the world. He punishes the sinner and protects the worshippers. *Śuci*, *Hiraṇya*, *Bhūryakṣa*, *Amimiṣa*, *Asvagu*, *Dīghadī* etc. has been used for Āditya. Āditya used for *Devsamuha* is specially used for Sūrya.

(ix) Savitṛ :

In the ten hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, Savitṛ is mentioned independently and in certain hymns. Savitṛ is primarily a golden deity. His eyes, arms, tongue and hands are all golden. His hair is of yellow colour. He moves on a deer-like chariot of various forms. Savitṛ is the illuminator of all. He is a powerful deity. He is the ruler of the immovable world. It is by his command that the night comes. In *Ṛgveda*, the identification of some deities with Savitṛ is also described. Savitṛ is described as Prajāpati, Puṣan, Mitra, but in other places Savitṛ is described as different from Puṣan and Mitra.

Savitā is the destroyer of the sins of the living beings. Savitṛ is invoked for the prevention of nightmares and for the removal of crimes committed by humans due to ignorance and carelessness. Savitṛ is everyone's inspiring deity. These are the images of the inspiring power of the rising sun. Yāska has considered Savitṛ as the deity who inspires everyone. Savitṛ has the highest place in the daily life of India. He is the beloved deity for the worshipers who

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II.27; VII.51, 52; VIII.18, 47, 56, 67

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, X.72.8

offer to him. He is worshipped for knowledge by the Vedic Aryans. He produces consciousness in human being. He leads them to the path of trucks.

5.5.B. Atmospheric Gods :

(i) Indra:

Indra is the chief national deity of the Vedic pantheon. The largest number of hymns of the *R̥gveda* is devoted exclusively to the glory of Indra. His praise and his heroic deeds have been described in 250 hymns in the *R̥gveda*. Apart from this, he has been invoked along with other deities in 50 other hymns as well. His abdomen, hands, head etc. have been mentioned in the form of anthropomorphism of Indra. His body is powerful. Indra's main weapon is *Vajra*, that is why he has been designated by words like *Vajrabāhu*. His thunder has been compared to the sun in the sky.⁴⁷ He also wears bow and arrow. Indra moves on a golden chariot faster than the mind.

Indra is a lover of *Somraspana*, hence he is called *Sompā*. Indra becomes very happy after drinking Somras. Indra is said to be the son of Mṛṣṭi and Niṣṭigra. He is considered to be the son of Dyaus of Tvaṣṭā. Indrani is the wife of Indra.⁴⁸ He is the friend of Marut. Hence he is called *Marutsakhā*. In the *R̥gveda*, Varuṇa is the god of moral power and Indra is the god of physical power. He is the ruler of all. He is addressed with epithets indicating power, *Asura*, *Śakra*, *Śacīpati*, *Śatkratu* etc.

The most important work of Indra in the *R̥gveda* is the killing of *Vṛtra*. Vritravadha. *Vṛtra* was the *Asura* element that obstructed the flow of water, by killing which Indra made the rivers flow. Because of his generosity, he has been called *Maghavan*. Indra is so powerful that he is called upon by both friends and foes for help in battle.

Indra is among the deities who sit alone in the *Naighaṇṭuka*.⁴⁹ Indra is more realistic in approach. Indra basically represents the dissemination and protection of the subjects. He is depicted as here, all his heroic deeds are described by the ecstasy of the Vedic poets. Indra is associated with various

⁴⁷ R̥gV., VIII.59.2

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, X.86

⁴⁹ *Naighaṇṭuka*, V.4

other gods. His chief friends and allies are the Maruts who in innumerable passages are described as assisting him in his warlike exploits.

(ii) Rudra:

The etymology of the word Rudra is somewhat uncertain as regards the meaning. It is generally derived from the root *Rud* to cry.⁵⁰ Three hymns have been addressed for Rudra in the Vedas. He is also mentioned along with other deities. Rudra's physical form is also described. His hands and arms have been mentioned. His body parts are strong, resplendent. He has a coiffure on his head. They wear bow and arrows. Rudra form of Rudra is described in the *Ṛgveda*. No one can encroach his might. The word *Asura* is also used for them. Being a universal ruler, he knows the activities of humans and demigods. Rudra is described as a destroyer god. Prayers have been made in relation to him to pacify his anger. He is the destroyer as well as the protector of the living beings. He does well to humans and animals. He is the best knower of medicines. There are differences regarding the form of Rudra. According to Weber, Rudra is basically the form of fierce thunder. Śrōdara considers Rudra to be a dead soul. Sāyana and other commentators have derived Rudra from Rud. Maitdanal also considers Rudra to be related to electricity. In the later literature, in place of the destructive form of Rudra, his benevolent form is visible in the form of Śiva.

Rudra, an atmospheric god occupies a subordinate position in the *Ṛgveda*, being celebrated in only three hymns, in part of another and in one conjointly with Soma, while his name occurs about 75 times. He is furious and destructive. But his blessings are sought for the welfare of human beings as well as the animal world. He is the strongest and invincible, the one who is unsurpassed in might. In the passage of the *Ṛgveda*, Rudra is one of the many deities identified with Agni. The name Rudra is used for *Paramātmā*, *Jivatmā* and *Śūravīra*. Infinite forms of Rudra have been described in the *Śatarudrīya-adhyāya* of *Yajurveda*. Yāska has introduced the god Rudra as follows: “रुद्रो

⁵⁰ Mecdonell, A. A. VM, p.77

रौतीति सतः, रोरूयमाणो द्रवतीति वा, रोदयतेर्वा, यदरुदंतद्रुद्रस्य रुद्रत्वम्”⁵¹ The father of the whole world is Rudra, in this regard the *Rgveda*.⁵²

(iii) Vāyu :

Vāyu or air is the real deities of air. But it is different from each other in terms of importance. In the *Rgveda* there is one independent hymn for Vayu and six hymns are addressed with Indra. In the tenth maṇḍala, there are mentioned only two *Sūkta* for Vāyu. Vāyu touches the sky with Indra. He is as fast as the mind and has a thousand eyes. He is constantly in motion. These are the souls of the gods. White colored air is indicative of electricity and sunrise.

(iv) Marut :

Marut has a prominent place among the space local deities. The Maruts are addressed in thirty-three hymns in the *Rgveda*. Apart from this, along with Indra, he has been praised in seven hymns along with Agni and Puṣan in one hymn. The Maruts are always addressed as a group. They are always mentioned in the plural. He is the son of Rudra, so *Rudrāṇ* and *Rudrāsaṇ* have been used for him. Due to being the son of Rudra, the adjective *Rudriyāsaṇ* has been used for the Maruts. Pr̥ṣni is the mother of Rudra, hence she is also called *Pr̥ṣnimātara*. In many mantras, their origin has been told from cow. According to Sayana, Go means land.

Maruts are radiant by nature and light itself. They have a close relationship with electricity. When the Maruts rain, the lightning spreads its light on the earth. He holds a bow and arrow along with lightning in his hands. They dispel the darkness and pave the way for the sun. The Maruts are several times called singers. The song of the Maruts is indicative of the sound of the wind. They shed rain. Because of his close relation with electricity, wind and rain, Marut is accepted as the god of storms. Maruts are tributaries of cows and

⁵¹ Ni., p.453

⁵² भुवनस्य पितरं गीर्भिराभी रुद्रं दिवा वर्धया रुद्रमत्तौ । बृहन्तमृष्वमजरं सुषुम्नमृधग्धुनेम कविनेषितासः ॥
RgV., VI.49.10

rivers for crop production. They are described as young warriors. They are decorated with gold ornaments. They drive golden chariots.

(v) Parjanya :

In the *Ṛgveda*, three hymns are addressed for *Parjanya*. In *Ṛgveda*, three hymns are addressed for Parjanya. Rainfall is the main function of Parjanya. Parjanya has been prayed for sufficient rain. Parjanya is also related to electricity. It is also related to electricity. When he protects the earth from water, winds blow and lightning strikes. He produces the plants. Parjanya is the husband of the earth because of producing plants and medicines by holding the seed in the earth. Soma is his son. Parjanya is the god of rain. There is a difference of opinion regarding their form. According to Yāsak, Prajnya has four meanings like the one who wins others, the one who generates, the one who inspires the juices. In the word Parjanya, the meaning of rain cloud and rain god is mixed.

5.5.C. Terrestrial Gods :

(i) Agni :

The deity, who stands most prominently among the entire Vedic deities, is second only to Indra in terms of the number of hymns addressed. There are 200 hymns for him in the *Ṛgveda*. Agni has the first place among the Vedic deities in terms of sacrificial importance. The anthropomorphic form of fire is also mentioned. He is called *Gr̥tapr̥ṣṭa*, *Gr̥tamukha*, *Gr̥tamukha*, *Gr̥takeśa*, *Haritakeśa*. His food is ghee and wood. Butter is his drink. Dipak Bhattacharya⁵³ stated about the origin of Agni that “The aqueous origin of Agni concerns the water in plant which, as wood, kindles Agni.”

The light of fire is like the rays of Sun, Uṣa and Vidyut. He light up in the night and dispel the darkness. His black path indicates the smoke rising while burning the forests. So, he is called *Dhūmaketu*. Due to the origin of fire, Dyus is his father. Indra created fire between two stones. The origin of fire is also believed to be from the struggle of two forests. Fire is also produced from wood. Fire has been called the navel of the earth. Agni is more

⁵³ Bhattacharya, Dipak. MRS., p.65

closely associated with human life than any other deity. He belongs to the family of humans and his easy friends and worshippers. So, he is known as *Gr̥hapati*. He carries the offerings to the deities and brings the deities to the rituals. The mythological parents of Agni are *Dyaus* and *Pr̥thivī*.

Agni is related to the *Aṅgīrasa*, who are often described as the seven priests who brought fire down from heaven or were the first to ignite it for man. *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*⁵⁴ treats it as a path leading to the gods. He is called the *Hotā*, the *Advaryu*, the *Brahmā* and *Purohita* of the gods. In this way he incorporates in Himself all the activities of the human priest. Agni is directly present in the *Yajña*. In the *Yajña*, Agni himself accepts the oblation and calls other deities also for the oblation. He takes away the sacrificial offerings to the deities. A. B. Keith says

“Agni is also great because he is declared above all the gods:
Varuna, Mitra, Marut and all the gods worship him.”⁵⁵

In the *Ṛgveda*, the worship of fire has been sung by the names of *Vaiśvānara*, *Tanūpāta* and *Narāśmā* etc. Agni is the lord of immortality.

(ii) Soma :

Soma has an important place in the main deities of the *Ṛgveda*. All the 114 *Sūktas* of the ninth *Maṇḍala* and four *Sūktas* of other *Maṇḍalas* have been addressed to Soma god. Apart from this, in four to five hymns, he has been praised in the form of *Yugaldeva* along with Indra, Agni, Puṣan, Rudra etc.

The spiritual qualities related to the natural and spiritual aspects of the god Soma lead to the highest bliss and happiness. Soma is a drink of longevity. This god is known as *Pavamāna* Soma. He leads to immortality. He comes third in order of importance among the Vedic gods. The drink inspired Indra to his deeds was the juice of the soma-plant. The vines are crushed to obtain the juice so that the soma may have a useful role in the ritual.

⁵⁴ TaiB., II.4.1.6

⁵⁵ Keith, A.B. RPVU, p. 161

(iii) Pṛthivi :

Pṛthivi is considered as a *Pṛthivisthāniya devatā* which emerges from its name. There is only one verse found in the *Ṛgveda* where Pṛthivī is worshipped. The goddess earth is not only our visual earth. She has also an integral expansion of the whole world.

5.6. Vedic Mythology as Depicted in the Kālidāsa's Mahākāvyas :

The godhead represents a perfect synthesis of the Vedic religion and the Vedāntic philosophy, the Purāṇic personal theism with its emphasis on devotion, and the philosophic impersonalism of the *Sāṃkhya* system in conception of Kālidāsa. Kālidāsa has realized in an imaginative way that god is the link of unity the various streams of the primitive knowledge in India. Mythology has gone hand in hand in the entire course of Indian literature. The myth making capacity of authors of the Vedic hymns resulted in the elaborate personification of Agni, Sūrya, Indra, and Varuṇa contributing at the same time to the enrichment of the Imagery of the hymns. The mythological symbolism of Vedic literature is of special signification for the evolution of lyrical imagery based on conception of nature in its feminine aspect as portrayed in the myths of Sūrya, Sāvitrā and Uṣas.⁵⁶ So does Kālidāsa who alludes many of the classical myths and sagas, handed down image making, especially in the epic poems, which have a strong legendary or mythical setting. So does Kālidāsa who alludes many of the classical myths and sagas, handed down from Vedic times and avails himself of these profusely for image-making, especially in the epic poems, which have a strong legendary or mythical setting.

(i) Indra:

Kālidāsa has presented the best and powerful god Indra of the *Ṛgveda* in many places of his poetry. He has selected the heroes in his works which are

⁵⁶ J. Tilakasiri, *Imagery in Vedic Mythology*, p.22

almost always stronger than the powerful the god Indra of the Vedic age. He has used many adjectives for Indra. They are as follows :

सहस्रलोचन, पाकशासन, वज्रिन्, वज्रपाणि, वृत्रहन्ता or वृत्रहन्, शक्र, शतक्रतु, मरुत्वत्, मघवत्, वृषन् अखण्डलः, देवेन्द्र, पुरुहूत, महेन्द्र etc. These names are coming from Veda. In this way, Kālidāsa has presented these names in his epic poem which integrated from the glory of Vedic Indra.

(a) Indra as Sahasranetra:

In the Vedic era, the first sacrifice was made to Indra. The physical structure of Indra presented by Kālidāsa is often similar to that of Vedic Indra. This tradition has been existing till the time of Kālidāsa. Kālidāsa has called *Devendra* as *Sahasranetra* at many places in his poetry.⁵⁷ Having a thousand eyes shows his worth. Indra was stealing the horse of Dilīp's *Āsamedha yajña*, when Raghu who was appointed to protect the horse has followed Indra. He saw that there are hundreds of eyes on the body of the person who defeated the horse, the eyelids of his eyes do not fall and the horses of his chariot are green. From this Raghu understands that it is none other than Indra himself. It is confirmed to be the *Sahasranetra* of Indra. Again in the KS, when Śiva projected his glory on the fire, the fire lit from his glory went to *Devendra*, then he is seen looking through his thousands of eyes.⁵⁸ When Indra goes to Śiva to called Kumāra Kartikeya, Kālidāsa has also called Indra as *Sahasranetra*.⁵⁹ The concept of *Sahasranetra* has been around since the Vedic period, because in many hymns of the *R̥gveda* it has been called *Sahasranetra*. The meaning of Indra's *Sahasranetra* is that at the same time Indra can see everywhere with his thousand eyes. Indra becomes the form of thousand eyes. *Padmapurāṇa*⁶⁰ states the reason for the conversation to this form that Gautama *Ṛṣi* cursed to Indra that thousand of vaginas will arise on his body. Then he becomes thousand of vaginas. It that time he asked for

⁵⁷ व्यादिदेश गणेशोऽथ पार्श्वगान्कामुकाभिहरणाय मैथिलः । तैजसस्य धनुषः प्रवृत्तये तोयदानिक सहस्रलोचनः

॥ RV., XI.43

⁵⁸ सहस्रेण दृशामीशोः कुत्सिताङ्गं न सादरम् । दुर्दर्शनददर्शग्निं धूम्र धूमितमण्डलम् ॥ KS., X.2

⁵⁹ दृष्ट्वा सहस्रेण दृशां महेशमभूकृतार्थोऽतितरां महेन्द्रः । सर्वाङ्गजातं तदथो विरूपमिव प्रियाकोपकरं विवेद

॥ KS., XII.24

⁶⁰ PP., I.50

forgiveness from the sage with folded hands. When the sages' anger subsided then he modified Indra's curse and changed those vaginas in the form of eyes. For this reason thousand eyes appear on the face of Indra. Hence then Indra is called *Sahasranetra* or *Sahasralocana*. Again he is also known as *Sahasrākṣa*.⁶¹

(b) Indra as Pākaśāsana :

Kālidāsa has talked about the rule of Daśaratha like that of Indra in the RV.⁶² Here he also has used the name *Pākaśāsana* for Indra. Indra is ruling in heaven. Wherever there is a need related to governance then this adjective has been used. Kālidāsa is also influenced by this method. Again he has also mentioned the word *Pākaśāsana* in the KS.⁶³ The commentator Mallinātha has explained that “पाको नाम कश्चिदसुरस्तस्य शासन इन्द्र”. The rule of the *Pāka* by Indra is mentioned several times in the *R̥gveda*. The rule of *Paka* by Indra is mentioned in the Veda. One *mantra* of the *R̥gveda* states that o god! you punish all those sinners and make them disciplined who do not do good deeds.⁶⁴ Other *mantra* is elaborated that you are a great scholar, and teach and discipline the children of raw intelligence and the teachers of mature intelligence.⁶⁵ After the Vedic period, the other name of Indra comes in the *Purāṇa* and Sanskrit literature as *Pākaśāsana*. So we can say that Vedic thought is reflected in the classical poems.

(c) Indra as Marutvāt :

Kālidāsa has applied the word मरुत्वात् in the second canto of RV.⁶⁶ Indra's other name is Marutvat. Kālidāsa says that the son of Dilīpa has consumed the earth as like Indra as heaven. Mallinātha explains “मरुत्वानिन्द्रः”. *Amarkoṣa* says that “इन्द्रो मरुत्वान्मघवा” Kālidāsa takes this name from the Veda.⁶⁷

⁶¹ BP., 87; MB., XIII.41, 153

⁶² पृथिवीं शासतस्तस्य पाकशासनतेजसः । RV., X.1 (ab)

⁶³ तत्र निश्चित्य कंदर्पमगमत्पाकशासनः । KS., II.63 (ab)

⁶⁴ शासस् तम् इन्द्र मर्त्यम् अयज्युं शवसस् पते । R̥gV., I.131.4 (cd)

⁶⁵ प्र पाकं शास्सि प्र दिशो विदुष्टरः । *Ibid*, I.31.14 (cd)

⁶⁶ दिवं मरुत्वानिव भोक्ष्यते भुवं दिगन्तविश्रान्तरथो हि तत्सुतः । RV., III.4 (ab)

⁶⁷ R̥gV., V.42.6; IX.65.10

(d) Indra as Vajrin :

Kalidāsa has used the word वज्रिन् many times in the RV.⁶⁸ Here *Vajrin* is meant as Indra. The meaning of the *Vajrin* is one who beholds the thunder. This word is used for Indra.⁶⁹ In the *R̥gveda*, this adjective is used only for wearing a thunderbolt; there it also means the mighty Indra with the best weapon.⁷⁰ *R̥gveda* states that Indra wears a thunderbolt in the form of justice or punishment system to run this world and punishes the wicked.⁷¹ In this way, Indra holds up the thunder and punishes the wicked person which is mentioned in the various *mantras* of the *R̥gveda*.⁷²

(e) Indra as Vajrapāṇi :

The poet has used the word वज्रपाणि for Indra in the second canto of RV⁷³. Here the poet has given this adjective only after installing the thunderbolt in the hands of an angry Indra. Mallinātha has explained that “वज्रपाणौ यस्य स वज्रपाणिरिन्द्रः”. That means one who holds the thunderbolt in his hand is called *Vajrapāṇi*. Here the adjective of Indra is *Vajrapāṇi*. In all the Vedic texts, only Indra is the one who holds the thunderbolt in his hand. That's why he got this name as adjective.

(f) Indra as Vṛttahantā, Vṛttahā, Vṛtrahaṇam :

Kālidāsa has used the word वृत्तहन्ता, वृत्तहा, वृत्रहणम् at many places in the RV and KS.⁷⁴ These words are mentioned almost 60 times in the *R̥gveda*. The word *Vṛtta* is made from the root *vṛt* with the suffix *ra-*. According to the *R̥gveda*, this epithet of Indra is used to kill a demon named Vṛtrāsura. Indra

⁶⁸ यमकुबेरजलेश्वरवज्रिणां समधुरं मधुरञ्चितविक्रमम् । RV., IX.24 (cd); X.40

⁶⁹ Suryakanta, VK., p.454

⁷⁰ इन्द्रो विश्वस्य कर्मणो धर्ता वज्री पुरष्टुतः । R̥gV., I.11.4 (cd)

इन्द्रस्य तु वीर्याणि प्र वोचं यानि चकार प्रथमानि वज्री । *Ibid*, I.32.1 (ab)

⁷¹ इन्द्र इद् धर्योः सचा सम्मिष्व आ वचोयुजा । इन्द्र वज्री हिरण्ययः । *Ibid*, I.7.2

⁷² *Ibid*, I.57.6, I.80.1, I.82.6, X.4.12

⁷³ जडीकृतस्त्र्यम्बकवीक्षणेन वज्रं मुमुक्षन्निव वज्रपाणिः । *Ibid*, II.42

⁷⁴ वृत्रस्य हन्तुः कुलिशं कुण्ठिताश्रीव लक्ष्यते ॥ KS., II.20 (cd); वृत्रहणं स्मितेन । *Ibid*, VII.46 (ab)
वृत्रहा पदं हि सवत्रगुणैर्निधीयते ॥ RV., II.62 (cd)

got the title of most powerful because of killing Vṛtrāsura.⁷⁵ Yāska also says Indra is Vṛtrahan.⁷⁶ These names use more than 50 times in the *R̥gveda*.

(g) Indra as Śakra :

The word शक्र has been used for Indra by the great poet Kālidāsa five times in the RV epic.⁷⁷ The word Śakra is used about 40 times in the *R̥gveda*.⁷⁸

(h) Indra as Śatakratu :

Kālidāsa has presented the word शतक्रतु as adjective as the subject of a hundred actions. He has used this name several times in his poems.⁷⁹ Indra is the only one who has completed hundred actions without any problems. In the mythological period, when Dilīpa tries to perform the hundred *Āśvamedha* sacrifice, at that time Indra obstacles him and he protects his Śatakratu position. This name is used for Indra in the *R̥gveda*.⁸⁰ Again other Veda and Brāhmaṇa says that “इन्द्र आसीत्सीरपतिः शतक्रतुः”⁸¹. Kālidāsa is also influenced by Vedic epithet.

(i) Indra as Maghavan or Maghavā :

Kālidāsa has also used the word मघवन् or मघवा for Indra almost 13 times.⁸² This word is used several times in the *R̥gveda*. This name or adjective is used because of the highest praise of Indra in the Vedas.⁸³ The poet has used this name only because of the greatness of Vedic Indra.

⁷⁵ वृत्रहणं पार्यं ततश्च वज्रम् । R̥gV., I.121.12 (cd)

⁷⁶ अहं च त्वं च वृत्रहन् । Ni., p.17

⁷⁷ पुरा शक्रमुपस्थाय तवोर्वी प्रति यास्यतः । RV., I.75 (ab);
Ibid, XIV.83, III.39, III.56, VI.74

⁷⁸ R̥gV., VIII.8.5; AV., VIII.8.6-8

⁷⁹ अपूर्णमेकेन शतक्रतूपमः शतं क्रतूनामपविघ्नमाप सः । RV., III.38 (cd),
तथा विदुर्मां मुनयः शतक्रतुं द्वितीयगामी नही शब्द एष नः । RV., III.49 (cd)

⁸⁰ R̥gV., I.17.9

⁸¹ AV., VI.30.1, TaiB., II.8

⁸² तदङ्गमग्रं मघवन्महाक्रतोरमुं तुरङ्गं प्रतिमोक्तुमर्हसि । RV., III.46, *Ibid*, I.26; III. 52; IX.20; XVIII.31;

जानामि त्वं प्रकृतिपुरुषं कामरूपं मघोनः । MD., I.6 (ab);
तस्मिन्मघोनस्त्रिदशान्विहाय सहस्रमक्ष्णं युगपत्पतात KS., III.1

⁸³ R̥gV., III.53.8, VII.104.19; X.44.9; X.28.3

(j) Indra as Vṛṣan :

Kālidāsa has been inspired by the power of Indra. Therefore, the Vedic power of Indra has descended in some parts even in this period. So he has applied the adjective of Indra as ‘वृषन्’ in his poem.⁸⁴ Actually the meaning of the *Vṛṣa* is the one having strength like a bull. There are many descriptions of Indra in the Vedas by the name *Vṛṣabha*.⁸⁵ “वृषासिदिवो वृषभः पृथिव्या वृषा सिन्धूनाम्”. *Amarakoṣa* also says “वासवो वृत्रहा वृषा”.

(k) Indra as Ākhaṇḍala :

Kālidāsa has again used the word आखण्डलः for Indra in the MD and KS.⁸⁶ The form of Indra has been described by Kālidāsa in favor of the cooperation of the gods which seems to be influenced by the Vedic period. In the Vedas also Indra is described as the king of all the gods as well as assistant. In the eyes of Kālidāsa, Indra is the best helper of the gods and the ultimate warrior. It is his supreme duty to protect all the deities of his class. Similarly the poet has described about Indra at different places. So we can say that the specialty of Indra has been described by him in the Sanskrit literature taken from the Vedic period.

(ii) Śiva:

The deity named Rudra of the Vedas is conceived as Śiva of the Purāṇic age. The lord of the eleventh group of *Rudras* is Śiva. The lord Śrīkrṣṇa has indicated this in the *Bhagavatgītā* by saying that he is Śiva or Śaṅkara of the Rudras.⁸⁷ The great poet Kālidāsa belongs to *Śaiva* family. The development of Śiva whose importance has been rendered by Kālidāsa is Vedic Rudra. Rudra is not of much importance among Vedic deities but belief of this deity was very climax in the Purāṇic. So its effect on Kālidāsa was natural. And that

⁸⁴ वृषेव पयसां सारमाविष्कृतमुदन्वता ॥ RV., X.52 (cd);

वृषेव सीतां तदवग्रहृक्षाताम् । KS., V.61 (cd), *Ibid*, V.80

⁸⁵ RgV., VI.44.21, IV.22.2, X.103.2, VIII.33.11; ŚB., II.5.3.18

⁸⁶ द्वल्मीकाग्रात्प्रभवति धनुषखण्डमाखण्डलस्य । MD., I.15 (ab),

सङ्कल्पिताऽर्थे विघृतात्मशक्तिमाखण्डलः काममिदं बभाषे । KS., III.11 (cd)

⁸⁷ रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि । BhaG., X.23

is why Śiva is mentioned at many places by him in his poems. The other Vedic names of the lord Śiva used by Kālidāsa are as follows:

(a) Śiva as Tryambaka :

Kālidāsa has used the word त्र्यम्बक for Śiva in the RV and MD.⁸⁸ Mallinātha has explained this word “त्रीण्यम्बकानि यस्य स त्र्यम्बको हरः । त्र्यम्बकः शिव एक एव महेश्वरः स्मृतः”. Śiva is the only imagination in the whole universe who has three eyes. Even then only the fire comes out from that third eye. He had consumed Kāmadeva in a moment through this eye.⁸⁹ Kālidāsa has called as *Trinetra* at many places.⁹⁰ The term *Tryambaka* for Śiva is mentioned in the *Rgveda*. There are mentioned by the sages that we worship the three-eyed lord Śiva, who sustains this world with his power, we pray to him that he may free us from the bondage of birth and death and give us salvation and grant salvation from this worldly life by giving freedom from all the bonds of birth and death.⁹¹ Ācārya Sāyaṇa has also given the meaning of *Tryambaka* to *Tridevas Brahmā*, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. Kālidāsa is greatly influenced by this Vedic description. He calls this *Tryambaka* Śiva as Brahmā. This Brahmā is the producer, maintainer and destroyer of the world. Apart from the *Rgveda*, in various *Samhitās* like *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*,⁹² *Taittirīya Samhitā*,⁹³ *Maitrāyaṇīya Samhitā*,⁹⁴ etc. the word *Tryambaka* is implied as Śiva with three eyes.

(b) Śiva as Rudra :

Kālidāsa has often mentioned the deity of Rudra at many places. It is told in the fifty-fourth verse of Second canto of RV that the line who is the

⁸⁸ जडीकृतस्त्र्यम्बकवीक्षणेन वज्रं मुमुक्षन्निव वज्रपाणिः । RV., II.42 (cd)

महेश्वरस्त्र्यम्बक एव नापरः । RV., III.49 (ab) ; *Ibid.*, XIII.51

राशीभूतः प्रतिदिनमिव त्र्यम्बकस्यादृहासः । MD., I.62 (cd)

⁸⁹ क्रोधं प्रभो संहर संहरेति यावद्भिरः खे मरुतां चरन्ति । तावत् स वह्निर्भवनेत्रजन्मा भस्माऽवशेषं मदनं चकार ॥ KS., III.72

⁹⁰ प्रतिग्रहीतुं प्रणयिप्रियत्वात् त्रिलोचनस्तामुपचक्रमे च । KS., III.66

⁹¹ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् । उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥ RgV., VII.59.12

⁹² त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पतिवेदनम् । उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनादितो मुक्षीय मामुतः ॥ VāS., III.60

⁹³ TaiS., I.8.6.2

⁹⁴ MaiS., X.10.4.7

servant of Śiva attacked *Nandini* with the power of Śiva.⁹⁵ Here the poet has presented the name of Śiva as Rudra. Again he has substituted in the other verse of RV that Rāma showed his might by breaking *Śiva-Dhanuṣa*.⁹⁶ Here he has used the word ‘रुद्रकार्मुक’ in place of ‘शङ्करधनुषि’. The lord Śiva is also presented as Rudra by the great poet in the KS.⁹⁷ Mallinātha has given the description that “रुद्राणामपि एकादशानामिति”. The Rudra form of Śiva is more prevalent in the Vedas. Rudra is praised in three hymns of the *R̥gveda*. But this name is often pronounced more than seventy times.⁹⁸ Rudra is called Agni in many places of Veda.⁹⁹ In the *Mahābhārata*, the *Ekādaśa Rudra* is referred to as *Mṛgavyādha*, *Sarpa*, *Pinākī*, *Kapālī*, *Sthānu* etc.¹⁰⁰ *Ekādaśa Rudra* is described as an incarnation of Śiva in the *Śatarudrīya Samhitā* of the *Śivapurāṇa*. It is said that pleased with Kāśyapa’s penance, the lord Śiva took birth in the form of eleven Rudras from the womb of Surabhī, wife of Kāśyapa.¹⁰¹ The names of eleven Rudras are mentioned as follows: *Śambhu*, *Pinākī*, *Giriśa*, *Sthānu*, *Bhargava*, *Sadāśiva*, *Śiva*, *Hara*, *Śarva*, *Kapālī* and *Bhava*.¹⁰² Rudra has been called as Śiva because of welfare.¹⁰³ In the sense in which Rudra is used in the Vedas, Kālidāsa also influenced by the same meaning and introduced it in his poetry.

(c) Śiva as Kṛttivāsā :

Kṛttivāsā, another name of Śiva is mentioned by poet in KS¹⁰⁴. This name is mentioned in the *Vajasaneyi-samhitā*.¹⁰⁵ This epithet of Śiva is famous only because of living in the mountains or caves. The poet again used the other name of Rudra as *Giriśa* in the RV and KS epics.¹⁰⁶ He says that the king Dilīpa with weapons, stopped by the influence of Śankar, relaxed his sense of

⁹⁵ इमामनूनां सुरभेरेवेहि रुद्रौजसा तु प्रहृतं त्वयाऽस्याम् । RV., II.54 (cd)

⁹⁶ दृष्टसारमध रुद्रकार्मुके वीर्यशुल्कमभिनन्द्य मैथिलः । *Ibid*, XI.47 (ab)

⁹⁷ रुद्राणामपि मूर्धनिः । KS., II.26; रुद्रसंरम्भभीत्या । *Ibid*, III.76

⁹⁸ R̥gV., I.27.10; I.43.1

⁹⁹ अग्निर्वै रुद्रः । ŚB, V.3.1.10, यदरोदीत्तस्माद्भुद्रः । *Ibid*, VI.1.3.10

¹⁰⁰ MB., Ādiparva 66.2-3; 122.68-69

¹⁰¹ “These eleven forms of Rudra are *Kapālī*, *Paṅgala*, *Bhīma*, *Virupākṣa*, *Vilohita*, *Śāstā*, *Ajapāda*, *Ahīrbudhnya*, *Śambhu*, *Caṇḍa* and *Bhava*.” ŚiP., Śatarudrīya Samhitā, 18.26

¹⁰² *Ekādaśarudra*, p.2

¹⁰³ R̥gV, X.92.9

¹⁰⁴ KS., I.54

¹⁰⁵ VāS., III.61; XVI.1-66

¹⁰⁶ गिरिशप्रभावादात्मन्यवज्ञां शिथिलीचकार ॥ RV., II.41 (cd)

humiliation. Here Kālidāsa has presented the lord Śiva as *Giriśa*. The etymology of *Giriśa* is “गिरि शेते इति गिरिशः”. This name for Rudra or Śiva is also first used in the *Vajasaneyi Samhitā*.¹⁰⁷ Kālidāsa has also assumed the same meaning of this word as it has been given in the Vedas. He uses this name in his poems where Śiva is made to reside on the mountains. From this it is found that the influence of Vedas is found in Kālidāsa’s poems.

(d) Śiva as Nīlakaṇṭha :

The great poet Kālidāsa has used the word नीलकण्ठ and शितिकण्ठ in the KS.¹⁰⁸ The word *Nīlakaṇṭha* and *Śitikaṇṭha* are first used in the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*.¹⁰⁹ The throat of Śiva is blue, hence it is called *Nīlakaṇṭha*. This name of Śiva is utilised in the *Purāṇas* also. Again it is get used in the *Taittirīya Samhitā* and *Maitrāyaṇīya Samhitā*.¹¹⁰ Here *Śitikaṇṭha* has been defined by the commentator Uvata as *Nilagrīva*, *Śitikaṇṭha*, *Kṛṣṇagrīva*, *Śvetakaṇṭha* as a synonym of Rudra. The commentator Mahīdhara explained the *Śitikaṇṭha* and said that “विषभक्षणेन यस्य शितिकण्ठस्तस्मै नमः ।” that means here *Śitikaṇṭha* is synonymous with *Nīlakaṇṭha*. Although *Śitikaṇṭha* is used to convey the meaning of white-neck in the Vedic literature; but Kālidāsa has described it as *Nīlakaṇṭha*. He has glorified his poetry by using these.

(e) Śiva as Nīllohita :

Kālidāsa has applied the other name of Śiva ‘नीललोहित’ which is the mention in the Veda.¹¹¹ The word *Nīllohita* is used for the first time in the *Rgveda* but there it refers to blood mixed with blue colour in the sense of menstruation.¹¹² *Nīllohita* means blue colour in the *Śuklayajurveda*.¹¹³ Thus, using this word, Kālidāsa describes the colour of Śiva's body. The

¹⁰⁷ VāS., XVI. 1-66

¹⁰⁸ क्व नीलकण्ठ व्रजसि । KS., V.57 (cd) तस्योपकण्ठे घननीलकण्ठः । *Ibid*, VII.51 (ab)

तस्यात्मा शितिकण्ठस्य सैनापत्यमुपेत्य वः । *Ibid*, II.61 (ab) प्रणम्य शितिकण्ठाय । *Ibid*, VI.81 (ab)

¹⁰⁹ नमो नीलग्रीवाय च शितिकण्ठाय च । VāS., XVI.1.66 (XVI.28)

¹¹⁰ TaiS, IV.5.5.1

MaiS, II.9.5; XII.4.10

¹¹¹ नीललोहितरेतसः । KS., II.57 (cd)

¹¹² नीललोहितं भवति कृत्यासक्तिर्व्यज्यते । RgV., X.85.28

¹¹³ द्रापे अन्धसस्पते दरिद्र नीललोहित । आसां प्रजानामेषां पशूनां मा भेर्मा रोङ् मो च नः किञ्चनाममन् ॥ ŚuV, XVI.,47

commentator Mallinātha has also used the meaning of *Nīlālohita* as having blue complexion.

(f) Śiva as Śambhu :

Kālidāsa replaced Śiva's glory by the using the word Śiva in his KS epic.¹¹⁴ Again in the MD epic, Kālidāsa says that Gaṅgā caught Śambhu's hair and the other verse says that as lord Śambhu dismounts the snake dressed in the form of *Kaṅkaṇa* with his hand and holding that hand Pārvatī walks on foot, in the same way the clouds stop the flow of water inside her and move forward and make the stairs of the body. It gives you the work of a ladder to climb the pearly peaks.¹¹⁵ Here Śambhu is known as Śiva. श्यति पापम् इति शिवः । This word is described in the same way in the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*.¹¹⁶ It is said in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹¹⁷ that “शिवः शिव इति शमयत्येवैनमेतदहिंसायै तथो ह्येष इमांल्लोकाञ्छान्तो न हिनस्ति ।” The glory of Śiva is very widespread in the *Purāṇa*. Śiva and Śambhu are used in the sense of welfare. So the poet not only used the word *Śiva* as the lord Śiva, he also applied this word as the welfare in the various verses in his epics.¹¹⁸ The word Śiva is used in the Veda as welfare.¹¹⁹ Śiva is the Proctor of the victims. That is why, Kālidāsa also remembers Śiva as the protector of himself and his characters.

(g) Śiva as Pinākapāṇi :

The lord Śiva is called पिनाकपाणि by the poet in the tenth verse of third canto of KS.¹²⁰ In the Vedas, Rudra has a bow and arrow in his hand. Due to these weapons, later Rudra is called *Pinākapāṇi*. Mallinātha has explained this word that “पनाकः पाणौ यस्य स पिनाकपाणिः।” The one *mantra* of the *Rgveda* is

¹¹⁴ कारणे शंभोर्वलयीकृताहिना सहिष्यते । KS., V.66 (cd), समदिवसनिशीथं सङ्गिनस्तत्र शंभोः । *Ibid*, VII.91 (ab)

¹¹⁵ शम्भोः केशग्रहणमकरोदिन्दुलग्नोर्मिहस्ता । MD., I.54

हित्वा तस्मिन् भुजगवलयं शंभुना दत्तहस्ता क्रीडाशैले यदि च विचरेत् पादचारेण गौरी ।

भङ्गीभक्त्या विरचितवपुः स्तम्भितान्तर्जलौघः सोपानत्वं कुरु मणितटारोहणायाग्रयायी ॥ *Ibid*., I.64

¹¹⁶ VāS, XII.17

¹¹⁷ ŚB, VI.7.3.15

¹¹⁸ शिवानि वस्तीर्थजलानि कञ्चित् । RV., V.8 (cd); *Ibid*, XI.33

¹¹⁹ VāS, XVI.1.66

¹²⁰ पिनाकपाणेर्धैर्यच्युतिं के मम धन्वनोऽन्ये । KS., III.10

the sight in which Rudra has bow and arrow in his hands.¹²¹ This form of Rudra has flourished more and more in the *Purāṇas*. The bow which is in the hand of Rudra has been given the name *Pināka* in the Puranic period. Therefore the basis of this designation of the lord Śiva is Vedic.

(h) Śiva as Jagatpitā :

Śiva is called the father of the world by Kālidāsa in the beginning of RV.¹²² This thought come from the Veda because one *mantra* of the *R̥gveda* says Rudra is the father of the whole world.¹²³

(i) Śiva as Śava :

Kālidāsa has compared the king Daśaratha with the lord Śiva in the ninety-third verse of eleventh canto of RV. Here he has used the name of the lord Śiva as *Śava*.¹²⁴ The word *Śarva* is used in the Vedas in the sense of vehicle, master of animals, Rudra and Agni.¹²⁵ The poet also mentioned the mane of Śiva as the master of the animals in KS.¹²⁶ The name *Śava* is also one of the eight names of Śiva¹²⁷ The *Paśupati* name is the shown in the *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa*.¹²⁸ In the Vedic Period, *Śava* is more used in the sense of spinach of all. In this way, the form of *Śava* and *Paśupati* is known as Śiva in the Classical period. Kālidāsa has also used this name inspired by these meanings. Thus the great poet presents various names of Rudra as Śiva in his poems.

¹²¹ अर्हन्विभर्षि सायकानि धन्वाहन् निष्कं यजतं विश्वरूपम् । अर्हन्निदं दयते विश्वमभ्वं न वा ओजीयो रुद्र त्वदस्ति ॥ R̥gV., II.33.10

Ibid, V.42.11; VII.46.1; X.64.8;
AV., IV.30.5

¹²² वागर्थविष्व संपृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये । जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ । RV. I.1

¹²³ भुवनस्य पितरं गीर्भिराभी रुद्रं दिवा वर्धया रुद्रमक्तौ । बृहन्तमृष्वमजरं सुषुम्नमृधुवेम कविनेषितास ॥ : R̥gV., VI.49.10

¹²⁴ अथ पथि गमयित्वा क्लृप्तरम्योपकार्ये कतिचिदवनिपालः शर्वरीः शर्वकल्पः । RV., XI.93 (ab)

¹²⁵ अग्निर्वै स देवस्तस्यैतानि नामानि शर्व इति यथा प्राच्या आचक्षते भव इति यथा बाहीकाः पशूनां पती रुद्र अग्निरिति । ŚB, I.7.3.8

¹²⁶ पतिः पशूनामपरिग्रहभूत् । KS., I.53 (cd); पशुपतिरपि तान्यहानि । *Ibid*, VI.95

¹²⁷ एतान्यष्टौ अग्निरूपाणि कुमारो (पशुपतिः उग्रः अश्विनिः भवः महान्देवः ईशानः रुद्रः शर्वः)नवमः । ŚB., VI.1.3.18

¹²⁸ ŚāB., VI.1-9

(iii) Viṣṇu :

Kālidāsa has determined the order of the lord Viṣṇu after the lord Śiva in the mythological *Devatrayā*. Talking about the form of the lord Viṣṇu, he has described it as follows: when Indra came to the god Viṣṇu who was afflicted by the terror of Rāvaṇa who was victorious in *Triloka* and saw that the lord Viṣṇu was on his rest-bed. His body is resplendent with the beads of Śeṣanaga's hood. His wife, wearing a silk cloth, sat on a lotus and pressed his feet. The words mentioned by Kālidāsa for the god Viṣṇu are *Viṣṇu*, *Trivikrama* and *Vāmana* which are related to Veda. The other Vedic names of the god Viṣṇu used by Kālidāsa are as follows:

(a) Viṣṇu as Viṣṇu :

Kālidāsa has described the form of Viṣṇu as the creator of the world, the maintainer of the world, and the one who destroys them in the end¹²⁹. Viṣṇu belongs to *Dyuloka*. The word *Viṣṇu* is derived from the root *viṣṭ* which means to spread everywhere or to be widespread. His three feet are described in the Vedas, which are the protectors of all beings.¹³⁰ Viṣṇu is also said to be the form of *Yajña*. “यज्ञो वै विष्णुः”¹³¹ He is the patron of all beings. He gives joy to all beings.¹³² The description of most of the glory of this god becomes clear from a single *mantra* of the *Rgveda*¹³³ which means that who is the creator of the earth, space and heaven, who stabilizes the abode of the gods, one who walks through the three worlds with three feet, then which god should be praised except that the lord Viṣṇu? Thus inspired by this concept of the characteristics of Viṣṇu, Kālidāsa has also presented Vedic thought in his poetry.

¹²⁹ नमो विश्वसृजे पूर्वं विश्वं तदनु विभ्रते । अथ विश्वस्य संहर्त्रे तुभ्यं त्रेधा स्थितात्मने ॥ RV., X.16

¹³⁰ उरुक्रमस्य स हि बन्धुरित्या विष्णोः पदे परमे मध्व उत्सः । RgV., I.154.5 (cd)

¹³¹ ŚaB, I.1.2.13

¹³² तदस्य प्रियमभि पाथो अश्यां नरो यत्र देवयवो मदन्ति । RgV., I.154.5 (ab)

¹³³ विष्णोर्तु कं वीर्याणि प्र वोचं यः पार्थिवानि विममे रजांसि । यो अस्कभायदुत्तरं सधस्थं विचित्रमाणस्त्रेधोरुगायः ॥ *Ibid*, I.154.1

(b) Viṣṇu as Trivikrama :

Kālidāsa has mentioned in the RV¹³⁴ that just as Prahlada who was the rival of Indra had stopped the lord Viṣṇu's feet midway while accepting Lakṣmī, in the same way Aja was stopped on the way by that lofty royal group carrying Indumatī. This thought also comes from the *Purāṇa*. *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* says:

“विरोचनविरोधेऽपि प्रह्लादः प्राक्तनं स्मरन् ।

विष्णोस्तु क्रममाणस्य पादाम्भोजं रुरोध ह ।”

Here the poet used the name of Viṣṇu as *Trivikrama*. *Trivikrama* refers to the three feet of the god Viṣṇu by which he measured the entire universe. This ideology was first expressed in the Vedas.¹³⁵ That is, Viṣṇu had measured all the wide worlds with three steps to expand his path and transmit the life force. Due to which all those mighty deeds of the lord Viṣṇu, the protector, enemy, happy and the lord of all things, are praised. Similarly it is impossible to know the third step of him. As it is clear by a *mantra* that it is possible for a human being to get an introduction of two steps, the earth and the inner space form of Viṣṇu who belongs to bright, but it is impossible for anyone to know the third step in the form of *Dyuloka*.¹³⁶ In this way, having known the glory of Viṣṇu, Kālidāsa has applied this thought in his poetry. Therefore, the influence of Veda on him is clearly reflected.

(c) Viṣṇu as Vāmana :

The twenty-second verse of eleventh canto of RV¹³⁷ is elaborated that Rāma went to Vāmana's holy *Āśrama*, about which Viśvāmitra had already told him everything. There Rāma could not remember the pastime of his previous birth. *Vāmanāvatara* is also mentioned in the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. In the incarnation, Viṣṇu measured the three worlds in three steps with the tiny feet of his very small living body. It is also described in the glory of

¹³⁴ तमुद्रहन्तं पथि भोजकन्यां रुरोध राजन्यगणः स दूतः । बलिप्रदिष्टां श्रियमाददानं त्रैविक्रमं पादमिवेन्द्रशत्रुः ॥ RV., VII.35

¹³⁵ तत्तदिदस्य पौस्यं गृणीमसीनस्य त्रातुरवृकस्य मीळहुषः । यः पार्थिवानि त्रिभिरिब्दिगामभिरुरु क्रमिष्टोरुगायाय जीवसे ॥ RgV, I.155.4

¹³⁶ द्वे इदस्य क्रमणे स्वर्दृशोऽभिख्याय मर्त्यो भुरण्यति । तृतीयमस्य नकिरा दथर्षति वयश्चन पतयन्तः पतत्रिणः ॥ *Ibid*, I.155.5

¹³⁷ वामनाश्रमपदं ततः परं पावनं श्रुतमृषेरुपेयिवान् । RV., XI.22

Trivikrama. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Viṣṇu is known as Vāmana.¹³⁸ The same meaning is also indicated in the *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*. “वैष्णवो वामनः ।”¹³⁹ Kālidāsa is influenced by this Vedic ideology. So we can say that the influence of the Vedas is found in the writings of the poet.

(iv) Brahmā :

Kālidāsa has praised Brahmā in the second canto of KS through Indra and other deities.¹⁴⁰ The Vedic basis of *Brahman* is *Hiraṇyagarbha* or *Prajāpati*. Prajāpati is the first god among the deities. He was the first born in the whole world. His is the lord of the world and he has kept the earth and sky.¹⁴¹ He is considered to be the most important deity even in the Brāhmanical texts, because in ancient times he was alone.¹⁴² This Prajāpati is called *Brahman* in *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*.¹⁴³ This Prajāpati is revered as the lord of the gods and also protects to all.¹⁴⁴ Kālidāsa is also influenced by this Vedic form of *Brahman*. That is way, Kālidāsa also calls this original birth *Brahman* as *Svayambhuva*.

(v) Āgni :

Kālidāsa is highly influenced by the Vedic form of Agni. He has praised Agni from the mouth of Indra who is the king of the gods. By this, the importance of Agni is even more increased. In one verse of KS, Indra says that when Agni perform *havi* by saying *Svāhā*, *Svadhā* and *Vaṣaṭ*, then he is the only one who pleases the gods, ancestors and human beings, because from your mouth, everyone receives their own fruits.¹⁴⁵ Manu says in MS, *Āhuti* is given in the fire.¹⁴⁶ Agni is the *Hotā* of gods. *Hotā* means हवन्कर्ता. *Aitareya*

¹³⁸ वामनो ह विष्णुरासः । ŚB, I.2.5.5

¹³⁹ VāS., 30.10; MaiS., III.13.2

¹⁴⁰ KS., II.1-17

¹⁴¹ हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः परिरिक्त आसीत् । स दाधार पृथिवीं द्यामुतेमां कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥ RgV., X.121.1

¹⁴² प्रजापतिर्ह वै स्वां दुहितरमभिदध्यौ । दिवं वा उषसं वा मिथुन्येनया स्यामिति तां सम्बभूव । ŚB., II.4.4.1

¹⁴³ प्रजापतिर्ब्रह्मा । ĀśvaG., III.4

¹⁴⁴ प्रजापतिर्वै भुवनस्य पतिः । TaiS., III.4.8.6

¹⁴⁵ प्रीतः स्वाहास्वधाहन्तकारैः प्रीणयसे स्वयम् । देवान्पितृन्मनुष्यांस्त्वमेकस्तेषां मुखं यतः ॥ RV., X.17

¹⁴⁶ अग्नौ प्रास्ताहुतिः । MS., III.76

*Brāhmaṇa*¹⁴⁷ says that Agni is *Hotā* means who calls to all gods in the sacrifice. Having explained, Yāska says that the first work in the *Yajñas* is started by Agni.¹⁴⁸ Kālidāsa has mentioned in the other verse of KS¹⁴⁹ carrying the *Āhuti* that is made for the Sun, Agni conveys that *havi* to the Sun. Due to which the Sun is pleased and pours water through the clouds. After that there is the origin of food, then from that food the living beings are nourished. *Manusmṛti* says that *Āhuti* is given in the fire, the fire is transferred it to Sūrya, Sūrya is converting into rain, rain nourishes the crop and people survive on it.¹⁵⁰

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says that it *Yajamāna* desires rain then the *Parjanyaesṭi* should be done.¹⁵¹ It is also mentioned in this Brāhmaṇa text that the rice is the place of origin of all and how is it originate?¹⁵² Hence it is said by *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁵³ that *Vanaspati* conceives to protect the living beings and also says again how to make the vegetable by doing the sacrifice.¹⁵⁴ In the *Bhagavadgītā*, the lord Śrīkrṣṇa holds the concept of Manu and says that all living beings originated with the help of the sacrifice.¹⁵⁵ Again the other names of Agni like *Kṛṣṇavartmā*, *Jātaveda*, *Marutsakhā*, *Havirbhuk* etc. is mentioned by the poet in the poems which are related to the Vedas.¹⁵⁶ In this way, the importance of fire in the Vedas has been presented by Kālidāsa in his poetry in its entirety, due to which his importance remains eternal.

¹⁴⁷ अग्निर्वै देवानां होता । AiB., III.14

¹⁴⁸ अग्रणीर्भवति अग्रं यज्ञेषु प्रणीयते । Ni., p.354

¹⁴⁹ निधस्से हुतमर्काय स पर्जन्योऽभिवर्षति । ततोऽन्नानि प्रजास्तेभ्यस्तेनासि जगतः पिता ॥ KS., X.20

¹⁵⁰ अग्नौ प्रास्ताहुतिः सम्यगादित्यमुपतिष्ठते । आदित्याज्जायते वृष्टिर्वृष्टेरन्नं ततः प्रजाः ॥ MS., III.76

¹⁵¹ स यदि वृष्टिकामः स्यात् । यदीष्ट्या वा यजेत् ...ŚB, I.5.2.19

¹⁵² “अन्नं वा अस्य सर्वस्य योनि । ŚB, VI.14; अन्नाद्भूतानामुत्पत्तिः । *Ibid*, VI.37 ; इतः प्रदाना वै वृष्टिरितो ह्यग्निवृष्टिं वनुते स एतैः..... वर्षन्ति । *Ibid*, III.8.2.22

¹⁵³ AiB., XI.4.3-6

¹⁵⁴ वृष्टिर्वै याज्या विद्युदेव विद्युद्धीदं वृष्टिमन्नाद्यं संप्रयच्छति । *Ibid*, II.41.

¹⁵⁵ अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः । यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ BhaG., III.14

¹⁵⁶ दाहशक्तिमिव कृष्णवर्त्मनि । RV., XI.42 (cd) ; जातवेदोविशुद्धां प्रगृह्य प्रियाम् । *Ibid*, XII.104 (ab); जातवेदोमुखान्मायी । KS., II.46(cd);

मरुत्प्रयुक्ताश्च मरुत्सखाभं तमर्च्यमारादभिवर्त्तमानम् । RV., II.10 (ab)

अन्वासितमरुन्धत्या स्वाहयेव हविर्भुजम् । *Ibid*, I.56 (cd) ;

शुचौ चतुर्णां ज्वलतां हविर्भुजां शुचिस्मिता मध्यगता सुमध्यमा । KS., V.20 (ab)

(vi) Varuṇa :

Kālidāsa has called Varuṇa the one who punishes the wicked.¹⁵⁷ Although Varuṇa is discussed here in the form of a paradigm, yet the importance of this god was in the Vedic period. Similarly, Varuṇa is also said to be extremely powerful according to classical Sanskrit literature.¹⁵⁸ He performs the sacrifice. Kālidāsa has made him perform a *Yajña* in *Pātāla*. He also says that *Kāmadhenu* has gone to collect the *Yajña* materials. And Varuṇa performs such a *Yajña* in which there should not come any kind of obstacle. That is why big and fierce snakes guard the door for its smoothness.¹⁵⁹ In this way, he is also the performer of the long session. Kālidāsa is definitely influenced on him by the Vedic form of Varuṇa, but his glory had diminished by this period also gives information about this. In this way Kālidāsa has mention the characters of others gods in his epic which those are influence by the Vedas.

5.7. Influence of Vedic Mythology in the Bṛhatrayī :

Māgha has been included by the great scholars among the *Bṛhatrayī*. He was a skilled scholar of mythology. We have found a large number of mythological and Puranic stories which have been referred by him in his epic. The poet Śrīharṣa was equally well versed in the mythological literature and hence many myths exist in his poem. Some of them are interesting as they throw light on the cultural background of medieval India in some way or the other.

(i) Indra :

Māgha has shown through the fifth canto of ŚP¹⁶⁰ that the wings of the mountains like Maināka etc., they went to the sea before the fear of Indra. And those who were winged by Indra's thunderbolt, the lord Śrīkṛṣṇa himself went

¹⁵⁷ सवरुणावरुणाग्रसरं रुचा । RV., IX.6 (cd)

¹⁵⁸ RV., XI.53

¹⁵⁹ हविषे दिव्यसत्रस्य सा चेदानीं प्रचेतसः । भुजङ्गपिहितद्वारं पातालमधितिष्ठति ॥ RV., I. 80

¹⁶⁰ ये पक्षिणः प्रथममम्बुनिधिं गतास्ते येऽपीन्द्रपाणितुलितायुधलूनपक्षाः । ते जग्मुरद्रिपतयः सरसीर्विगाढुमाक्षिप्तकेतुकुथ ॥ ŚP., V.31

to visit the rivers under the pretext of the elephants of the army, having become feathered and scorched in the mountain feathers. Māgha has shown here that the ceremonial mountain had wings which were cut off by Indra with his thunderbolt. This thought come from the *Rāmāyana* and *Purāṇa*. According to the *Maināka-Hanumān* dialogue of *Rāmāyana* composed by Maḥarṣi Vālmīki, there used to be wings of mountains in *Satyayuga*. The thousand-eyed Indra, enraged, cut off the wings of thousands of mountains with his thunderbolt.

Māgha here has used the word सहस्रभाजा which is meant by thousand eyes in the thirteenth verse of fourth canto of ŚP.¹⁶¹ Indra is known as *Sahasranetra*. It is mentioned in the *Purāṇa*. Indra was cursed by the sage Gautama, whose wife he had seduced. The curse was that his body would have a thousand marks resembling the female organ. At the request the sage relented and these marks were afterwards returned into eyes.¹⁶² Hence Indra is called *Sahasranetra* or *Sahasralocana*. Again he is also known as *Sahasrākṣa*.¹⁶³ These thousand eyes are referred to in the NC¹⁶⁴ by the poet Śrīharṣa. The poet mentioned that Indra was pleased to hear the gesture of Nala. After that his all eyes were filled with the tears of enjoy.

In the eighteenth canto of NC¹⁶⁵, the famous story of Indra-Ahalyā is told by the poet Śrīharṣa. The poet has said here that Indra who is the king of gods had shown the courage to have luxuries with other's wife i.e. Gautam's wife Ahalyā. Again the story of the seduction of Ahalyā, the wife of the sage Gautama, is mentioned in the NC.¹⁶⁶ The poet has taken this thought from *Brahmapurāṇa*.¹⁶⁷

(ii) Brahmā :

Brahman has been described as *Ātmabhūva* or self born in the ninth canto of ŚP¹⁶⁸. According to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Brahmā* is called

¹⁶¹ यत्राधिरूढे महीरुहोच्चैरुन्निद्रपुष्पाक्षिसहस्रभाजा । ŚP., IV.13 (ab)

¹⁶² PP., I.50

¹⁶³ BP., 87; MB., XIII.41, 153

¹⁶⁴ नाकपालः प्रमोदवाष्पावृतनेत्रमाला । NC., III.28 (cd)

¹⁶⁵ पुष्पकाण्डजयडिण्डिमयितं यत्र गौतमकलत्रगामिनः ॥ŚP., XVIII.20

¹⁶⁶ आह चाहमहल्यायां तस्याकर्णितदुर्ण्या ॥ NC., XX.70 (cd)

¹⁶⁷ BP., 87

¹⁶⁸ विहिताञ्जलिर्जनतया दधती विकसत्कुसुमारुणताम् । चिरमुज्जितापि तनुरौज्जदसौ न पितृप्रसूः प्रकृतिमात्मभुवः ॥ ŚP.IX.14

Svayambhu because he, who knew the Vedas, himself appeared from the abdomen of Lord Viṣṇu.¹⁶⁹ The poet had described the other verse of ŚP¹⁷⁰ that Brahmā broke the big egg of the universe with his nails which was golden, bright light the sun and from which was created the entire universe. Actually this thought comes from the Veda. Manu says in the *Manusmṛti*¹⁷¹, the egg had a golden colour, resplendent like the effulgence of a thousand suns. In that egg *Brahmā* was born himself. Manu also says in the other verse that egg of that divinity, despite being alive for a year, after that the egg was broken into halves.¹⁷²

Sitting of Brahmā on the lotus emerging from Viṣṇu's navel is referred in NC I.47 and III.34. The poet has taken this thought from the Purāṇas.¹⁷³

(iii) Śiva :

Having compared Śiva with the *Raivataka* mountain, the poet says that Śiva is also the leader of the *Rudras*, described as having bright black throats, who cover his body with large serpents and often engage in dance.¹⁷⁴ Other name of Śiva is Rudra. *Ekādaśa Rudra* is described as an incarnation of Śiva in the *Śatarudrīya Samhitā* of the *Śivapurāṇa*. It is said that pleased with Kāśyapa's penance, the lord Śiva took birth in the form of eleven Rudras from the womb of Surabhī, wife of Kāśyapa.¹⁷⁵ The names of eleven Rudras are mentioned as follows: *Śambhu*, *Pinākī*, *Girīśa*, *Sthāṇu*, *Bhargava*, *Sadāśiva*, *Śiva*, *Hara*, *Śarva*, *Kapālī* and *Bhava*.¹⁷⁶

The other verse elaborates the eight forms of Śiva.¹⁷⁷ Śiva has eight aspects which are depicted in Vedas, *Āgamas*. He created the whole universe from himself. Eight idols of Śiva also are mentioned in Purāṇas¹⁷⁸ like Earth,

¹⁶⁹ BhāP., III.8.15

¹⁷⁰ विरिञ्चनखभिन्नवृहज्जगगणजकैकतरखण्डमिव । ŚP., IX.9 (cd)

¹⁷¹ तदण्डमभवद्वैमं सहस्रांशुसमप्रभम् । तस्मिञ्ज्ञे स्वयं ब्रह्मा सर्वलोकपितामहः ॥ MS., I.9

¹⁷² स्वयमेवात्मनो ध्यानात्तदण्डमकरोद् द्विधा ॥ Ibid, I.12

¹⁷³ MP., 169.2, MB., III.273.45, BP., III.8.15

¹⁷⁴ प्रनर्तितानेकलताभुजाग्रान् रुद्राननेकानिव धारयन्तम् । ŚP.IV.7

¹⁷⁵ "These eleven forms of Rudra are *Kapālī*, *Paṅgala*, *Bhīma*, *Virupākṣa*, *Vilohita*, *Śāstā*, *Ajapāda*, *Ahīrbudhnya*, *Śambhu*, *Caṇḍa* and *Bhava*." *Śivapurāṇa*, *Śatarudrīya Samhitā*, 18.26

¹⁷⁶ *Ekādaśarudra*, p.2

¹⁷⁷ आननेन शशिनः कलां दधद्दर्शन क्षयितकामविग्रहः । आप्लुतः स विमलैर्जलैर्भूदष्टमूर्तिधरमूर्तिरष्टमी ॥ ŚP., XIV., 118.

Ibid, IX.27

¹⁷⁸ ŚiP., *Śatarudra* section, II.16

Water, Fire, Air, Sky, Yajmāna, Soma and Sun. Kālidāsa has mentioned them in the *Nāndīśloka* of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*.

Māgha refers to one of his forms in the ŚP,¹⁷⁹ in which only half of the Śiva's body is indulged with ashes; the other half, being united with Umā. This thought comes from the *Matsya Purāṇa*.¹⁸⁰

The poet has described in the third canto of ŚP that how to create the Gaṅgā from the hair of Śiva.¹⁸¹ On the request of Bhagīratha, the Gaṅgā wanted to come to earth. She was first held by Śiva in his matted hair. She descended to earth to sanctify the ashes of Bhagirath's ancestors. The poet has taken this thought from the *Mahābhārata*.¹⁸²

Śiva's neck being dark and the other part of the body white is mentioned in NC¹⁸³. This darkness was due to him drinking the terrible poison that came out during the churning of the ocean. This story of drinking of the poison by him has referred to in NC XVI.30, XIX.34, XXI.36. This myth has taken by the poet from the *Purāṇa*.¹⁸⁴

Another the interesting story about lord Śiva is referred in NC¹⁸⁵. According to this, Śiva started crying as soon as he was born from the forehead of Brahmā'. On being asked who he was crying, he said 'I want a name' after that Brahmā named him Rudra. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* cites that a boy began to cry after his birth, and then he said to destiny maker or the creator of the universe that kindly designate name and place.¹⁸⁶ Having heard his speech, Brahmā said, you will be called by the name Rudra by all people because you have so anxiously cried.¹⁸⁷

Suggesting this heroic act of lord Śiva, Śrīharṣa has mentioned *Tryambaka*, another name of Śiva in the NC¹⁸⁸. The commentator commented

¹⁷⁹ उमाङ्गविभक्तभस्मामिव । ŚP.IV.5

¹⁸⁰ MP., 260

¹⁸¹ प्रजा इवाङ्गादरविन्दनाभेः शन्भोर्जदाजूटतजादिवापः ॥ŚP., III.65

¹⁸² MB., Anu.139

¹⁸³ दधद्भुदनीलकण्ठतां वदहृत्यच्छसुधोज्ज्वलं वपुः । NC., II.82

¹⁸⁴ PP., VI.235

¹⁸⁵ आलोच्य भाविविधिकर्तृकलोकसृष्टिकष्टानि रोदिति पुरा ॥NC., XI.115

¹⁸⁶ स वै रुरोद देवानां पूर्वजो भगवान्भवः । नामानि कुरु मे धातः स्थानानि च जगद्गुरो ॥ ŚB., III.12.8; BhāP., III.12.8

¹⁸⁷ यदरोदीः सुरश्रेष्ठ सोमवेग इव बालकः । ततस्त्वामभिधास्यन्ति नाम्ना रुद्र इति प्रजाः ॥ ŚB., III.12.10; BhāP., III.12.10

¹⁸⁸ त्रम्बकस्य पदयोः कुसुमानि न्यस्य सैषNC., XXI.37

that “त्र्यम्बकं त्रिनयनं हरम् ।” The term *Tryambaka* for Śiva is mentioned in the *R̥gveda*. There are mentioned by the sages that we worship the three-eyed lord Śiva, who sustains this world with his power, we pray to him that he may free us from the bondage of birth and death and give us salvation and grant salvation from this worldly life by giving freedom from all the bonds of birth and death.¹⁸⁹ Ācārya Sāyaṇa has also given the meaning of *Tryambaka* to *Tridevas Brahmā*, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. Śrīharṣa is greatly influenced by this Vedic description. Apart from the *R̥gveda*, in various *Samhitās* like *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*,¹⁹⁰ *Taittirīya Samhitā*,¹⁹¹ *Maitrāyaṇīya Samhitā*,¹⁹² etc. the word *Tryambaka* is implied as Śiva with three eyes. Śiva is called *Puraripu* or *Purāri* or *Tripurāri* as he destroyed the three cities of the Demon.¹⁹³

(iv) Viṣṇu :

The poet has mentioned in the first canto of the NC that in the form of *Vāmana* incarnation, Viṣṇu travelled the whole sky with a single foot.¹⁹⁴ This concept comes from Mahābhārata.¹⁹⁵ Viṣṇu is referred as named *Hari* in NC¹⁹⁶. This dual form of Viṣṇu and Śiva appears to be similar to the *Śiva-Nārāyaṇa* described in the *Matsya Purāṇa*¹⁹⁷ which gives instructions for the construction of an idol representing the form in question.

(v) Sūrya :

The radiance of the sun was unbearable for Sañjanā, the daughter of Vaiśvakarmā, the carpenter of heaven. So he put the sun on a lathe and reduced his lustre until it became bearable for his own daughter.¹⁹⁸ This mythological thought is influenced in the NC XIX.54 and XXI.18.

¹⁸⁹ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् । उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥ R̥gV., VII.59.12

¹⁹⁰ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पतिवेदनम् । उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनादितो मुक्षीय मामुतः ॥ VāS., III.60

¹⁹¹ TaiS., I.8.6.2

¹⁹² MaiS., X.10.4.7

¹⁹³ AaiB., I.25; ŚB., III.4.4.4

¹⁹⁴ हरैर्यदक्रामि पदैककेन खं पदैश्चतुर्भिः क्रमेणेऽपि यस्य नः । NC., I.70

¹⁹⁵ MB., II.47

¹⁹⁶ NC., XXI.104

¹⁹⁷ वामार्धे माधवं विद्यादक्षिणे शूलपाणिनम् । MP., (ch.260)

¹⁹⁸ PP., I.8

The king is compared with the Sun by the poet Māgha.¹⁹⁹ Āditya is the god of celestial. This god is celebrated in six whole hymns and in part of two others in the *R̥gveda*. The Sun who is the creator of the day, is the chief among the twelve Ādityas.²⁰⁰ Again this thought has mentioned in the other verse in ŚP.²⁰¹

(vi) Agni :

Agni is described as Śikhin, having brilliant flames, with the aid of which is supposed to carry oblations (*havis*) to the gods. The three sacrificial fires *Gārhapatya*, *Āhavanīya* and *Dakṣiṇā* are mentioned in ŚP II.3.²⁰²

(vii) Candra :

The moon is described having been produced from the eyes of the Atri, a great sage in the ninth canto of ŚP.²⁰³ This thought is understood by the commentator. The commentator has explained that “अत्रेरत्रिमुनेर्नयनप्रभवः”. The poet has taken this thought from the Purāṇa.²⁰⁴ The moon is also described as presiding over and the feeding the plants.²⁰⁵

The poet mentioned one myth in NC²⁰⁶ that the moon did not collapse even after reaching Tārā who is the wife of Bṛhaspati. This myth has taken by the poet from Veda and Purāṇas also.²⁰⁷ The myth of the birth of Candra from the eye of the sage Atrī has mentioned in NC XXII.73,40,133. This thought comes from *Harivaṃśa*²⁰⁸ and *Vāyupurāṇa*²⁰⁹. In the other poem, it is mentioned that the moon once carried Tārā who is the wife of Bṛhaspati,

¹⁹⁹ उदेतुमल्यजन्नीहां राजसु द्वादशस्वपि । ŚP., II.81 (ab)

²⁰⁰ R̥gV., IX.114.3

धाता मित्रोर्यमा रुद्र वरुणः सूर्य एवं च । भगो विवश्वान् पुषा च सविता दशमः मृतः ॥ MB., Adiparva, 59.15

²⁰¹ ŚP II.23

²⁰² MS II.232

²⁰³ ŚP., IX.41

²⁰⁴ VāP., II.28.5

²⁰⁵ SkP., VII.1.20

²⁰⁶ नास्य द्विजेन्द्रस्य बभूव पश्य दासन् गुरोर्यातवतोऽपि पातः । NC., XXII.118

²⁰⁷ R̥gV., X.109, Bhāgavatpurāṇa IX.14, HV. *Harivaṃśa-purāṇa* I.25, PP., V.12, BP., 9, MP., 23

²⁰⁸ *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*, I.25

²⁰⁹ VāP., II.28.5

which resulted in his having a stigma on his body.²¹⁰ This thought like stigma of moon is come from the Veda.²¹¹

Thus it is shown in the above pages that the poets of classical Sanskrit period have Vedic myths in their narratives. So their poems are meaning and interesting. They have also lasting impacts.

²¹⁰ स तप्तकार्तस्वरभास्वराम्बरः कठोरताराधिपलाञ्छनच्छविः । विदिद्युते वाडवजातवेदसः शिखाभिराश्लिष्ट इवाम्मसां निधिः ॥ ŚP., I.20

²¹¹ RgV. X.109