

## CHAPTER – VIII

### MYTHOLOGICAL DATA

In this chapter, characteristic traits of the prominent deities mentioned by the Sanskrit poetesses are briefly explained from mythological point of view. There are several deities like Indra, Varuṇa, Brahmā, Lakṣmī, Kubera, Agastya, Vasiṣṭha etc. mentioned in these compositions studied by me.

Vedic mythology occupies a very important position in the study of the history of religions. The lower form of worship, however, occupies but a small space in Vedic religion. The deities of the *Rgveda* are glorified as human beings, inspired with human motives and passions, born like men, but immortal. The character of each Vedic god is made up of only a few essential traits combined with a number of other features common to all the gods, such as brilliance, power, beneficence and wisdom. These hymns are valuable because we see before us in them a mythology in the making. In these hymns there is a transformation of the natural phenomena into mythological figures in gods and goddesses such as Sūrya (Sun), Soma (Moon), Agni (Fire), Āpas (Water). We find that the hymns are not addressed to a Sun god or Moon god, but to the Sun itself, the Moon itself. Among such mythological figures whose original nature is already partly forgotten in the hymns and who are honoured more as mighty, lofty beings, distinguished through all kinds of miraculous deeds are Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aditi, Viṣṇu, Pūṣan, the two Aśvins, Rudra and Parjanya.

According to Macdonell A. A. “In the older parts of the *Rgveda* individual gods are often invoked as the highest but this notion is not carried out to its logical conclusion. The fact that the Vedic poets frequently seem to be engrossed in the praise of the particular deity then happen to be invoking, that they exaggerate his attributes to the point of inconsistency, has given

rise to the much discussed theory which Max Müller originated and to which he has given the name of Henotheism or Kathenotheism. According to this theory, 'the belief in individual gods alternately regarded as the highest', the Vedic poets attribute to the god they happen to be addressing all the highest traits of divinity, treating him for the moment as if he were an absolutely independent and Supreme deity alone present to the mind."

Agni, a personification of the sacrificial fire, presents in its conception the household life of the Vedic Aryans and is second in importance only to Indra, whose conception presents their external life of struggle and conquest. His connection with domestic life is a special feature. He is the only *Gṛhapati* (master of the house), the *Atithi* (guest) and a Kinsman of men. He is the *Dūta* (messenger), par excellence, appointed by gods and men to be an oblation bearer.

As the central figure of the sacrifice, he is called variously *Ṛtvija*, *Vipra*, *Purohita*, *Adhvaryu* and *Brāhmaṇa* and is thus the divine counter part of the earthly priesthood.

Viśvavārā is the Vedic seer of *Ṛgveda* (V.28). She praises here Agni for marital happiness and prosperity. Viśvavārā, a lady of the family of Atri invokes Agni and proceeds to the sacred fire facing the east. She offers prayer to Agni, which spreads lustre and which shines in the presence of the Dawn :

समिद्धो अग्निर्दिवि शोचिरश्रेत् प्रत्यङ्ङुषसमुर्विया वि भाति ।

एति प्राची विश्ववारा नमोभि देवाँ ईळाना हविषा धृताची ॥ऋग्वेद-५.२८.१॥

In the second *Rk*, generous nature of Agni, which makes a person wealthy is observed by Viśvavārā :

विश्वं स धत्ते द्रविणं यमिन्व स्यातिथ्यमग्ने नि च धत्त इत् पुरः ।ऋग्वेद-५.२८.२॥

Viśvavārā in the third *Rk*, entreats Agni for marital happiness and invokes god Indra to curb and subdue the enemies :

अग्रे शर्धं महते सौभगाय तव द्युमन्युत्तमानि सन्तु ।  
सं जास्पत्यं सुयममा कृणुष्व शत्रूयतामभि तिष्ठा महांसि ॥ऋग्वेद-५.२८.३॥

In the last *Rk*, when the sacrifice is performed she offers prayer to Agni and urges other priests to select Agni with a purpose to offer oblation to Gods :

आ जुहोता दुवस्यताऽग्निं प्रयत्यध्वरे । वृणीध्वं हव्यवाहनम् ।ऋग्वेद-५.२८.६॥

Indra is the favourite national god of the *Rgveda* and has the largest number of hymns, nearly 250 i.e. about one-fourth of the total number of hymns of the *Rgveda*. His physical proportions and powers are almost cosmic. His arms bear the *Vajra*, his exclusive weapon. As a destroyer of demons he is naturally the favourite god of the battle invoked more often than any other god. An exclusive epithet of Indra is *Maghavan* (bountiful), because he is so generous to his worshippers.

Thus we observe that God Indra is a bounteous Deity towards his worshippers. Through his generosity God Indra has increased Himself amongst His devotees. At the time of crisis he helps both men and women and therefore he is invoked and addressed with confidence and affection by Apālā. We find a friendly bond of affinity between the God and the devotee in these *Rgvedic* hymns.

Apālā is the seer of *Rgveda* (VIII.91). She is the daughter of the famous sage Atri. In her hymns she addresses Indra, the most powerful deity to shower his love on her. For this she began to propitiate Indra who was very fond of Soma. Even though she was learned, she was ignored by her husband because of her skin disease.

The *Rks* addressed by her to Indra reflects her mental state and misery experienced by her in her life, which inspired her to compose such hymns:

कुविच्छकत् कुवित् करत् कुविन्नो वस्यसस्करत् ।  
कुवित् पतिद्विषो यती रिन्द्रेण संगमामहै ॥ऋग्वेद-८.९१.४॥

According to Sāyana she here asks for physical strength (कुविच्छ कत्), growth of the family (कुवित् करत्) and worldly gain (कुविन्नो वस्यसस्करत्). In the next two hymns she invokes Indra for the growth of her father's baldhead, his infertile land and her female organ :

इमानि त्रीणि विष्टपा तानीन्द्र वि रोहय ।  
 शिरस्ततस्योर्वरा मादिदं म उपोदरे ॥ऋग्वेद-८.९१.५॥  
 असौ च या न उर्वरा दिमां तन्वं मम ।  
 अथो ततस्य यच्छिरः सर्वा ता रोमशा कृधि ॥ऋग्वेद-८.९१.६॥

Impressed by her prayers and intelligence, Indra through his generosity blessed her with sun like lustrous skin complexion and made her strong :

खे रथस्य खेऽनसः खे युगस्य शतक्रतो ।  
 अपालामिन्द्र त्रिष्णू त्व्यकृणोः सूर्यत्वचम् ॥ऋग्वेद-८.९१.७॥

Aśvins, the twin deities, are morning deities, their connection with light being well established. They are divine physicians with several legends of miraculous cures to their credit.

Ghoṣā is the seer of *R̥gveda* (X.39-40). Her hymns are addressed to Aśvins.

She was the daughter of Kakṣivān and was a *Brahmavādinī*. As she was suffering from a disease she could not be given in marriage, so she stayed at her father's place where she became old and was cured of her disease by the favour of the Aśvins.

According to V. G. Rahurkar "The same fact is corroborated in the hymn (X.39.3) and by Sāyana. The *Bṛhaddevatā* (VIII.42-49) adds further details and says that Ghoṣā became 60 years old, when she still lived in her father's house and that she became the seer of the hymn (X.39.40).

Ghoṣā invokes Aśvins to give her wealth and requests them to help her and grant favour on her :

इयं वामह्ये शृणुतं मे अश्विना पुत्रायेव पितरा मह्यं शिक्षतम् ।  
 अनापिरज्ञा असजात्यामतिः पुरा तस्या अभिशस्तेरव स्पृतम् ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.३९.६॥  
 युवां ह घोषा पर्यश्विना यती राज ऊचे दुहिता पृच्छे वां नरा ।  
 भूतं मे अह उत भूतमक्तवेऽश्वावते रथिने शक्तमर्वते ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.४०.५॥

In the ninth and tenth *Rk*, she asks God Aśvins for a husband and a son, so that she would obtain marital happiness :

जनिष्ट योषा पतयत् कनीनको वि चारुहन् वीरुधो दंसना अनु ।  
 आस्मै रीयन्ते निवनेव सिन्धवोऽस्मा अहे भवति तत् पतित्वनम् ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.४०.९॥  
 जीवं रुदन्ति वि मयन्ते अध्वरे दीर्घामनु प्रसितिं दीधियुर्नरः ।  
 वामं पितृभ्यो य इदं समेरिरे मयः पतिभ्यो जनयः परिष्वजे ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.४०.१०॥

Ghoṣā solicits Aśvins to lead her to the house of a man who loves her and who is physically strong like a bull :

प्रियोस्त्रियस्य वृषभस्य रेतिनो गृहं गमेमाश्विना तदुश्मसि ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.४०.११॥

The two divine Aśvins being praised were pleased and made her ageless and free from disease. They gave her a husband and the sage Suhastya as a son.

Vāk Ambhṛnī is the seer of *Rgveda* (X.125) consisting of eight *Rks*. According to Sāyana, she is the daughter of sage Ambhṛna. Vāk herself is the divine being (*Devatā*), who is glorified in this *Sūkta*. Vāk here experiences oneness with *Brahma*. In the third *Rk* she introduces herself to be the sovereign queen and as the chief of the objects of worship :

अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूनां चिकितुषी प्रथमा यज्ञियानाम् ।  
 तां मा देवा व्यदधुः पुरुत्रा भूरिस्थान्नां भूर्यावेशयन्तीम् ॥ऋग्वेद-१०.१२५.३॥

In the eighth *Rk*, too she refers to her great personality, as giving form to all the created worlds beyond the heaven, beyond this earth.

It is thus a philosophical *Sūkta*, which mentions the experience of realisation of *Brahmaviduṣi*.

The examples of Apālā, Viśvavārā and Ghoṣā prove that the learned and prominent ladies like them were more concerned with family life, conjugal happiness and domestic well being than anything else. These learned ladies were not only aware of the greatness and capabilities of the personages invoked by them but also they were knowing different people saved and helped by these divinities.

These hymns show that the fearless, spirited bold ladies like Viśvavārā, Apālā and Ghoṣā were never depressed in the most critical calamities in their life. In the most miserable condition they came out of the difficult crisis with victory and achievement of the desired objects.

Indra, the mighty National God in the Vedic age is invoked in the 250 numbers of hymns in the *R̥gveda*. In the text studied by me, Indra is glorified in several verses in the compositions *Madhurāvijayam*, *Raghunātha-Abhyudaya* and *Khaṇḍa kāvya Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti* :

यद्विभूतिस्तुतौ स्वल्पा लक्ष्मीर्यक्षामरेशयोः ।

दूरे दुर्योधनादीनां सम्पत्सादृश्यकल्पना ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.४२॥

तस्यासीद्विजया नाम विजयार्जितसंपदः ।

राजधानी बुधैश्श्लाघ्या शक्रस्येवामरावती ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.४३॥

स तस्याममरावत्यां पुरुहूत इव स्थितः ।

अशिषदृयामिव क्षोणी मनवद्यपराक्रमः ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.६७॥

अथ वरतनुभिस्समं कदाचि द्विरचयितुं कुसुमापचायलीलाम् ।

प्रमदवनममर्त्यकामिनीभिर्हरिरिव नन्दनमासदन्नरेन्द्रः ॥मधुराविजयम्-६.१॥

Gangādevi has depicted the prosperity and celebrated capital city of Vijaynagar of King Bukka in the first two cantos. There she has referred to the riches of Indra and his prosperous city called Amarāvati.

As described by poetess Gaṅgādevī in the above verses the prosperity of Kubera and Indra, looked insignificant by the side of the prosperity of king Bukka. Also the city Vijaynagar is compared with the city Amarāvati. Moreover, king Bukka ruled over the city like Indra, ruling

over Amarāvati. King Kampana too is compared with Indra. Just as Indra was attended by the celestial nymphs, king Kampana was also surrounded by the ladies of his palace.

Likewise, in the composition *Raghunātha-Abhyudaya* Poetess Rāmabhadraṁbā has beautifully described the city of Tanjore in cantos I & II. She observes that all the Gods including Indra were fond of residing in this city and were performing sacrificial rituals therein :

बद्धास्सभाङ्गणे यस्य भान्ति स्स जयसिन्धुराः ।  
 बन्दीकृता इवाम्भोदा जैत्रयात्रानिरोधिनः ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.४० ॥  
 यस्यां प्रसादाश्रृङ्गेषु लग्नं मार्ताण्डमण्डलम् ।  
 संधत्ते वीक्षमाणानां सौवर्णकलशभ्रमम् ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.५५ ॥  
 प्रतिबिम्बमिषात्प्रविश्य यस्या मणिसौधानि महेन्द्रराजधानी ।  
 बहुरूपधरेव भाति तेषां परिचर्यापरिशीलनाय नित्यम् ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-२.२८ ॥

In the cantos V and VIII the poetess has portrayed the personality of the king Raghunātha comparing him with mighty God Indra :

इत्यलंकृतिमुपेत्य मञ्जुलां वृत्रशासनसमानवैभवः ।  
 आसदन्मणिसभान्तरं विभुः सिंहशाब इव शैलगह्वरम् ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-५.२० ॥

In cantos VII & VIII king Raghunātha is rightly likened with God Indra due to his impressive personality and great valour :

अखण्डभोगैरवनौ समेतमाखण्डलं यं नृपमारचय्य ।  
 चक्षुः सहस्रस्य समं व्यतानीदम्भोजभूरक्षियुगं विशालम् ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-७.६ ॥  
 तदनन्तरं धरणिपाकशासनो विजयानुकूलशुभवेषभासुरः ।  
 समयार्हैनैकविधदानसंततिप्रतिपादितावनिसुरप्रमोदनः ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-८.५१ ॥

In the *Khaṇḍakāvya Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-prasāsti* Devakumārikā has compared kings like Śaṅgrāmsimha and Amarsimha who were as powerful and wealthy as the divine God Indra :

अशोभतासौ भ्रमुकामुकेन मतङ्गजेनेव मदोत्कटेन ।  
 क्रामन् पुरीं देव पुरीमिवेन्द्रो लोकाभिरामां नरदेवनद्धाम् ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. २.५ ॥

वैकुण्ठलोकं श्रयति प्रजेशे भूपाधिनाथेऽमरसिंहराशि ।  
तदात्मजः शक्र इवाथ पृथ्वीं दिवं दिनेशप्रतिमः प्रशास्ति ॥वै.प्रा.प्र. ४.१९॥

In the *Rgveda* the sages have frequently praised the extra ordinary wealth belonging to God Indra. Moreover, in the *Rgveda* the gigantic (majestic) personality of Indra is nicely described by these sages :

राजेव हि जनिभिः क्षेप्येवाऽव द्युभिरभि विदुष्कविः सन् ।  
पिशा गिरो मधवन् गोभिरश्वै स्त्वायतः शिशीहि राये अस्मान् ॥ऋग्वेद ७.१८.२॥  
शतं ते शिप्रिन्नृतयः सुदासे सहस्रं शंसा उत रातिरस्तु ।  
जहि वधर्वनुषो मर्त्यस्याऽस्मे धुम्रमधि रत्नं च धेहि ॥ऋग्वेद ७.२५.३॥  
त्वं विश्वस्य धनदा असि श्रुतो य ई भवन्त्याजयः ।  
तवायं विश्वः पुरुहूत पार्थिवो ऽवस्युर्नाम भिक्षते ॥ऋग्वेद ७.३२.१७॥<sup>1</sup>

He fights against and conquers the enemies with his thunderbolt (*vajra*) and is in general a symbol of generous heroism. He is a god of warriors. He is energetic and violent in action. He is invoked by people to protect them to give them victory on the battlefield to help them in their fight against their enemies<sup>2</sup>.

Bahadur Radha Kant Dev quotes in *Śabdakalpadruma* (vol. I), description of city *Amarāvatī* :

रमयन्ती मनोऽतीव केयं कस्येयमीशितुः ।  
नयगानन्दसन्दोहदायिनी पूरनुत्तमा ॥स्कन्दपुराण-१०॥  
गणका नात्र विद्यन्ते चिन्ताविधाविशारदाः ।  
यतो जानाति सर्वेषां चिन्तां चिन्तामणिर्द्रुतं ॥स्कन्दपुराण-१०॥  
सूपकारा न सन्त्यत्र रसकर्मविचक्षणाः ।  
दुग्धे सर्वरसानेका कामधेनुरतोऽनिशं ॥स्कन्दपुराण-१०॥  
तरुत्वं पारिजातः स्त्रीरत्नं मोर्व्वशी त्विह ।  
नन्दनं वनरत्नञ्च रत्नं मन्दाकिनी ह्यपां ॥स्कन्दपुराण-१०॥

<sup>1</sup> Other verses found in the *Rgveda* are : 7.(27.3; 19.5; 21.6; 31.7)

<sup>2</sup> Velankar H. D. — page 18, 26



तुलापुरुषदानादिमहादानानि षोडश ।

ये यच्छन्त्यमलात्मानस्ते लभन्तेऽमरावतीम् ॥स्कन्दपुराण-१०॥

Kubera, the God of riches is mentioned by Poetess Gaṅgādevī and Poetess Rāmabhadraṁbā. City of Madhura is compared with Alakā, the wealthy city of Kubera. Besides, the prosperity of the city Tanjore is reflected in the verse (*Raghunātha-Abhyudaya-2.57*) :

यद्विभूतिस्तुतौ स्वल्पा लक्ष्मीर्यक्षामरेशयोः ।

दूरे दुर्योधनादीनां सम्पत्सादृश्यकल्पना ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.४२॥

उपेत्य तुण्डीरमखण्डितोद्यमः प्रमथ्य चम्पप्रमुखान् रणोन्मुखान् ।

प्रशाधि काञ्चीमनुवर्तितप्रजः पतिर्निधीनामलकापुरीमिव ॥मधुराविजयम्-३.४१॥

क्रयविक्रयतः कृतार्थचर्या मणिजालाङ्कितमन्दिरा यदर्याः ।

प्रहसन्ति महेशपार्श्वलब्धावपि दुर्वर्णगृहाश्रयं कुबेरम् ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-२.५७॥

Kubera is the god of riches and treasure and the ruler of the northern quarters. Kubera is the son of Viśravas by Iḍavidā and thus the half brother of Rāvaṇa. Besides, being the lord of riches and regent of the north, he is the king of the *Yakṣas* and *Kinnaras*. He is said to be the lord of *Yakṣas* (*Yakṣādhipati*) who founded the city Alakā.

Kubera is also glorified by the celebrated poet Kālidāsa in his *Meghadūtam*, *Kumārasaṁbhavam* :

कुबेरगुप्तं दिशमुष्णरश्मौ गन्तुं प्रवृत्ते समयं विलङ्घ्य ।

दिग् दक्षिणा गन्धवहं मुखेन व्यलीकनिःश्वासमिवोत्ससर्ज ॥कुमारसम्भवम्-३.२५॥

There is a reference to sage Agastya in the *Mahākāvya Madhurāvijayam*. As depicted by poetess Gaṅgādevī king Kampana is said to have received the lustrous sword by the great sage Agastya to kill the *Yavana* ruler :

अथ कालवशेन पाण्डयवंश्यान् गतवीर्यानिवधार्य कुम्भजन्मा ।

मनुजेश्वर मण्डलाग्रमेनं भवते प्रेषितवान् महाभुजाय ॥मधुराविजयम्-८.२५॥

अथाग्रहीत्कम्पनृपस्तमेव कौक्षेयकं कालकरालरूपम् ।

व्यापादनार्थं यवनेश्वरस्य यः प्रेषितः प्राक्कलशोद्धवेन ॥मधुराविजयम्-९.३५॥

Here it is said that just as Agastya gave the weapon to Rāma to kill Rāvaṇa, so this king Kampana was given the weapon by his father king Bukka to kill the wicked *Yavana*.

In the *Mahākāvya Raghunāthābhudaya*, sage Agastya is mentioned as *Kumbhajanmā*, being born in pitcher :

अवशिष्टमणिं यदापणाब्धिं कृतवान्मन्दिरदम्भकुम्भजन्मा ।  
परधा जलयन्त्रभागधारामुखतो मुञ्चति किं तदम्बु भूयः ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-२.२१॥

Story regarding the birth of sage Agastya is found in the text of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Matsyapurāṇa* :

इदं दिव्यं महच्चापं हेमवज्रविभूषितम् ।  
वैष्णवं पुरुषव्याघ्र निर्मितं विश्वकर्मणा ॥रामायण-अरण्यकाण्ड-११.२९॥  
अर्मोघः सूर्यसंकाशो ब्रह्मदत्तः शरोत्तमः ।  
दत्तो मम महेन्द्रेण तूणी चाक्षयसायकौ ॥रामायण-अरण्यकाण्ड-११.३०॥  
संपूर्णो निशितैर्बाणैर्ज्वलद्भिरिव पावकैः ।  
महाराजतकोशोऽयमसिर्हेविभूषितः ॥रामायण-अरण्यकाण्ड-११.३१॥  
अनेन धनुषा राम हत्वा संख्ये महासुरान् ।  
आजहार श्रियं दीप्तां पुरा विष्णुर्दिवौकसाम् ॥रामायण-अरण्यकाण्ड-११.३२॥  
तद्धनुस्तौ च तूणीरौ शरं खड्गं च मानद ।  
जयाय प्रतिगृह्णीष्व वज्रं वज्रधरो यथा ॥रामायण-अरण्यकाण्ड-११.३३॥  
एवमुक्त्वा महातेजाः समस्तं तद्वरायुधम् ।  
दत्त्वा रामाय भगवानगस्त्यः पुनरब्रवीत् ॥रामायण-अरण्यकाण्ड-११.३४॥<sup>1</sup>  
इतीन्द्रशापात् पतितौ तत्क्षणातौ महीतले ।  
अवासावेकदेहेन कुम्भाज्जन्म तपोधन ।  
मित्रावरुणयोर्वीर्यद्विसिष्ठस्यानुजोऽभवत् ।  
अगस्त्य इत्युग्रतपाः सम्बभूव पुनर्मुनिः ॥मत्स्यपुराण ६१॥

In the following two verses the prosperity of city Vijaynagar is described. As depicted by the poetess, Goddess Lakṣmī never remembered Lord Viṣṇu, who was in *Yoganidrā*. In the other verse king Bukka as a father

<sup>1</sup> Vālmīki Rāmāyana — Oriental Institute, Vadodara, 1992, page 288

explains his son Kampana that he should act in such a way that the goddess of prosperity does not go away for a moment also :

लक्ष्मीश्चिराज्जगद्रक्षा जागरुकमुपेत्य यम् ।  
 योगनिद्राजडं विष्णुं कदाचिदपि नास्मरत् ॥मधुराविजयम्-१.३६॥  
 तदेवमात्मन्यवधार्य धैर्यतस्तथा विधेयं भवतापि धीमता ।  
 यथेयमेकान्तचला भवद्गुणैर्लभेत लक्ष्मी स्थिरतामनारतम् ॥मधुराविजयम्-३.३७॥

While in the *Raghunātha-Abhyudaya*, it is said that king Raghunātha struggled hard to attain Royal glory and wealth :

अथ शास्त्रचोदितमहर्मुखोचितं विरचय्य शोभनविधिं विशां पतिः ।  
 सकलप्रदां सदनमध्यवासिनीमवनन्तुमैहत रमां समाहितः ॥रघुनाथाभ्युदयम्-४.१॥

In *Rgveda* Lakṣmī is said to be *Padmasthitā*, *Padmavarṇā*, *Padmamālīnī*.

Lakṣmī or Śrī is the Goddess of fortune, prosperity and beauty regarded as the wife of Viṣṇu. She is said to have sprung from the ocean along with the other precious jewels when it was churned for nectar by the Gods and demons.

In *Śrīsūkta* also we find :

हिरण्यवर्णा हरिणीं सुवर्णरजतस्रजाम् ।  
 चन्द्रां हिरण्मयीं लक्ष्मीं जातवेदो म आ वह ॥श्रीसूक्तम्-१॥  
 पद्मानने पद्मरुरु पद्माक्षि पद्मसंभवे ।  
 तन्मे भजसि पद्माक्षि येन सौख्यं लभाम्यहम् ॥श्रीसूक्तम्-१८॥  
 विष्णुपत्नीं क्षमां देवीं माधवीं माधवप्रियाम् ।  
 लक्ष्मीं प्रियसखीं भूमि नमाम्यच्युतवल्लभाम् ॥श्रीसूक्तम्-२५॥  
 कौस्तुभश्चमणिर्दिव्य उत्पन्नोऽमृतसंभवः ।  
 मरीचिविकचः श्रीमान्नारायणउरोगतः ॥महाभारत-आदिपर्व १६.३५॥  
 श्रीः सुरा चैव सोमश्च तुरगश्च मनोजवः ।  
 यतो देवास्ततो जग्मुरादित्यपथमाश्रिताः ॥महाभारत-आदिपर्व १६.३६॥  
 ततश्चाविरभूत साक्षाच्छ्री रमा भगवत्परा ।  
 रञ्जयन्ती दिशः कान्त्या विद्युत सौदामनी यथा ॥भा.पु. ८.८.८॥



In the *Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti* of Devakumārikā, Ṛbhṛs are referred in the context of donation in the following verse :

तस्यैवानुमतोऽदत्त नृपो दानानि कानि च ।

पर्जन्य इव सस्येभ्यो द्विजेभ्य ऋभुनोदितः ॥वैद्यनाथ प्रा.प्र.-२.२०॥

Besides the higher gods of the Veda there are a number of mythical beings not regarded as having the divine nature fully and originally. The most important of these are the Ṛbhus. They are celebrated in eleven hymns in the *Rgveda* and are mentioned by name even a hundred times.<sup>1</sup>

Like the higher Gods, they are invoked to give prosperity and wealth :

त आ तक्षन्त्वभवो रयिं नः स्ववसः स्वपसः सुहस्ताः ।

अपो ह्येषामजुषन्त देवा अभि क्रत्वा मनसा दीध्यानाः ॥ऋग्वेद-४.३३.८॥

ऋभुमृभुक्षणो रयिं वाजे वाजिन्तमं युजम् ।

इन्द्रस्वन्तं हवामहे सदासातममश्विनम् ॥ऋग्वेद-४.३७.५॥

In the fourth chapter of *Khaṇḍakāvya Vaidyanātha-prāsāda-praśasti*, poetess Devakumārikā, in some five verses, gives the mythological reference of the origin of *Cauhāṇa* Dynasty by the grace of Vaśiṣṭha :

संग्रामसिंहजननी चाहुवाणन्वयोद्धवा ।

पितुर्वशीद्धवस्तस्या अतः परमिहोच्यते ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-४.१॥

पुरा महान्तक्षकनागराज उत्तङ्गनाम्नः किल कर्णभूषाम् ।

हत्वाऽगमद भूतलमेव सद्यो मुनिस्ततश्चातितरां चुकोप ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-४.२॥

On seeing the Muni digging the earth with the wooden piece, Indra, by his *Vajra*, made the way :

काष्ठं गृहीत्वाथ खनन्तमुच्चैर्मुनिं विलोक्याथ सुराधिराजः ।

द्विजे कृपाबद्धमना दयालुर्वज्रं मुमोचाथ धराविदारि ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-४.३॥

Then Vaśiṣṭha Muni requested Himālaya to fill the *Garta* and Himālaya performed his duty. Thereafter, clever Muni Vaśiṣṭha performed *Yajña* to

<sup>1</sup> Macdonell A. A. — page 131

obtain *Vīra* in order to protect the earth :

हिमालयं याचितवान् मुनीन्द्रसतद्रतपूर्त्यै स तमेकमेव ।  
 दत्तेन तेनान्द्रिवरेण गर्तपूर्तिं विधायाहितकृत्य आसीत् ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-४.५॥  
 भुवोऽथ रक्षार्थमनल्पबुद्धिर्मखं दधौ वीरवरस्य लिप्सुः ।  
 हवीषि तस्मिन्नजुहोत् सुमन्त्रैरमोघसिद्धयर्थकरैर्वशिष्ठः ॥वै.प्रा.प्र.-४.६॥

And suddenly from the fire there came out horrible person who became popular as '*Cauhāṇa*':

तस्मादकस्मादथ वह्निकुण्डात् कृतान्ततुण्डादिव चण्डरूपः ।  
 दोष्णथ बिभ्रमच्चतुरोऽवतीर्णः ख्यातोऽत्र तस्माद् भुवि चाहुवाणः ॥वैद्यनाथ प्रा.प्र.-४.७॥

**Conclusion :**

We find numerous hymns addressed to the natural forces personified as the deities in the Vedic text. The sages have invoked the deities like Indra, Varuṇa, Aśvins, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Rudra etc. Likewise the female sages Viśvavārā, Apālā, Ghoṣā, etc. have offered prayers to the prominent divinities like Agni, Indra, Aśvins in the Ṛgveda.

Through these hymns, we mainly get to know about the mythological traits of these deities. In the poetry of the *Ṛśikās*, however, we also find some glimpses of the contemporary social life, family structure and difficulties generally faced by the lady in those days.

Similar features are also found in the compositions of the ladies belonging to the medieval period. Although these ladies have glorified the gods like Indra, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Kubera, Ṛbhus, etc., they have expressed their ardent devotion through ornate poetry. These texts also contain a great deal of Historical, Mythological and Philosophical data.

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