

CHAPTER - VI

MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES

In the following chapter I have discussed the prominent mythological traits of the deities mentioned and glorified in the 18 minor *Upaniṣads* of *AV* undertaken for study. In it we find two categories : (a) Vedic deities and (b) Purāṇic deities. Vedic deities referred to in these minor *Upaniṣads* are Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Bṛhaspati, Brahmā, Śiva, Rudra, Īśāna, Maheśvara, Rudraśiva, Viṣṇu, Mahāviṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Soma, Candramas, Yama, Mṛtyu, Kāla, Ṛbhu, Rākā, Sinīvālī, Parameṣṭhī Prajāpati and Lakṣmī or Śrī. Purāṇic divinities like Nārada, Tumburu and Sanatkumara are also referred to in these minor *Upaniṣads*.

AGNI

According to Yāska, Agni means : अग्रणीर्भवति - अग्रं यज्ञेषु प्रणीयते । अग्रं नयति इति अग्निः । निरुक्त-७.१४ ॥ We find the reference to Agni in the *Upaniṣads* like *Atharvaśikhā*, *Atharvaśiras* (1), *Śāṅḍilya* (III.17) and *Parabrahma* (1). There are three types of Agni mentioned in the later three *Upaniṣads* viz. *Gārhapatya*, *Dakṣiṇāgni*, and *Āhavanīya*; while *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad* also mentions the fourth agni viz. *Samvartakāgni*. This *Upaniṣad* relates these four Agnis with the four *Vedas* and four *Mātrās* of *Om̐kāra* : ओमित्येतदक्षरमादौ प्रयुक्तं ध्यानं संवर्तकोऽग्निर्मरुत एकऋषी रुचिरा भास्वती स्वभा । *Āhavanīya* means : आहूयते आज्यादिभिरस्मिन् । The fire in which oblations are given is called *Āhavanīya*. It is enkindled by bringing fire from *Gārhapatya* fire. *Dakṣiṇāgni* is known so because the altar is situated to the south of *Gārhapatya* and *Āhavanīya* fires. The food of *Darśapūrṇamāsa* sacrifice is cooked on this fire. Similarly all the rituals related to Manes are performed on this fire. It is called the mother as stated by *Manusmṛti*-II.231.¹ *Gārhapatya*, the chief fire among the three fires, is called the father according to *Manusmṛti* as this fire is used for enkindling the other Agnis viz. *Āhavanīya* and *Dakṣiṇāgni*, hence it should be protected. This fire is enkindled as per rituals at the time of accepting *Agnihotra*, with the help of *Araṇi* sticks. Putting this Agni in the *Gārhapatya* altar means invoking Agni, hence the sacrificer is called *Gṛhapati*, from which this Agni came to be known as *Gārhapatya*. In the *AV*, Agni is also known as *Triṇāma* owing to its triple character viz. *Pārthiva*, *Vaidyuta* and *Gārhapatya* : एवा त्रिणामन्नहणीयमान इमान् ननात्संस्कृधीह ।

¹ पिता वै गार्हपत्योऽग्निर्माताग्निर्दक्षिणः स्मृतः ॥ मनुस्मृति-२।२३१ ॥

अथर्ववेद-६.७४.३ ॥ The fourth Agni referred to in the *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad* is the *Samvartakāgni*. We find the reference to this Agni in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* :

ततः संवर्तको वह्निः सङ्कर्षणसुखोत्थितः ।

दहत्यनिलवेमोत्थः शून्यान् भुविंवरानथ ॥भा.पु.-१२.४.९॥

In *Nītiśataka* (76), Samvartaka is referred to as the fire of destruction : इतोऽपि वडवानलः सह समस्तसंवर्तकैः । It is also referred to by Bhāsa in his *Abhiṣekanātakam* (I.13). Agni is identified with Rudra in *Atharvaśiropaniṣad* (5) : यो वै रुद्रः स भगवान्यश्चाग्निस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः । अथर्वशिर-५ ॥ Similar idea is stated by Yāska : अग्निरपि रुद्र उच्यते । निरुक्त-१०.८.३ ॥

INDRA

Yāska gives several etymologies for Indra : इन्द्र इरां दणातीति वा, इरां ददातीति वा, इरां दधातीति वा, इरां दारयत इति वा, इरां धारयत इति वा । निरुक्त-१०.८.४ ॥ Raja Radhakantdev Bahadur derives it as : इन्द्रतीति । इदि परमैश्वर्ये तस्मात् रन् प्रत्ययः । देवराजः । स तु अदितिपुत्रः । शब्दकल्पद्रुम-खण्ड-१, पृष्ठ-२०६ ॥

Indra is identified with Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and is considered as *Prāṇa*, *Kāla*, Supreme, Immutible, Self-luminous, Fire and Moon in the *Kaivalyopaniṣad* (8) :

स ब्रह्मा स शिवः सेन्द्रः सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराद् ।

स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः स कालोऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः ॥८॥

Indra, an atmospheric God, is the favourite national god of the Vedic Indians. His importance is indicated by the fact that he is invoked about 250 hymns of *RV*. He is primarily the thunder-god, the dominant deity of the middle region and the conquest of the demons of drought or darkness. Secondarily, Indra, is the god of battle, who aids the victorious Aryans in the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants of India. He is several times called a universal monarch (*RV-IV.19.2 & c*). Various epithets like Śakra (mighty), Śacīvat (possessed of might); Śacī-pati (lord of might); Śatakratu (having a hundred powers), are used for Indra. In *AV*, he is the most prominent deity after Āp and Agni. He is known as 'Śakra' in *AV* (III.31.2-Sāyaṇa's commentary) as he is capable of performing any action: शक्रः सर्वकार्येषु शक्त इन्द्रः ।

VĀYU

Yāskācārya gives the etymology of Vāyu as : वातीति सतः । वाति गच्छति इति वातः वायुः । वा गतिगन्धनयोः । निरुक्त-१०.३५.२२ ॥

He is referred to in several texts.¹ Vāyu is mentioned along with other deities like Agni, Soma, Āditya, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, etc. in the *Dattātreya Upaniṣad* (3); while Vāyu is identified with Rudra in the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad* (6). His origin is said to be from the breath of the cosmic *Puruṣa* (RV-X.90). Vāyu (Vāta) is the friend of Agni and helps him.² In *AV*, he is mentioned to be the protector of animals who brings them back to their shades : इह यन्तु पशवो ये परेयुर्वायुर्येषां गोष्ठे सविता नियच्छतु । अथर्ववेद-२.२६.१ ॥

BRHASPATI

Yāska states : बद्धर्तऽस्मिन् ऐश्वर्यादि अथवा बद्धर्तेऽनेन समाश्रितः इति बृहत् महान् । पिबन्ति पानं करोति इति पाति रक्षति इति वा पतिः । बृहतां पतिः इति बृहस्पतिः । निरुक्त-१०.११.६ ॥ i.e. one who is the drinker of Soma and the protector of this universe.

Brhaspati is referred to as one who shares the secret knowledge of 'Avimukta' and 'Kurukṣetra' with Yājñavalkya, in the *Jābālopaniṣad* (1) : ॐ बृहस्पतिरुवाच याज्ञवल्क्यं यदनु कुरुक्षेत्रं देवानां देवयजनं सर्वेषां भूतानां ब्रह्मसदनम् । He is eulogised as the deity of knowledge who gives pain to those who envy knowledge : ब्रह्मद्विपस्तपनो मन्युमीरसि बृहस्पते । ऋग्वेद-२.२३.४ ॥ and is identified with Brahma in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (II.1.3) : बृहस्पतिर्वै सर्वं ब्रह्म ।

BRAHMĀ

The etymology of Brahmā can be explained as : बृंहति वर्धते यः । (वृहि वृद्धौ + वृहेर्नोऽच्च उणा ४.१४५ । मतिन् नकारस्याकारश्च ।) He is identified with the Supreme Reality in the *Sāṅḍilya Upaniṣad* (3), while he is identified with Rudra in the *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad* (2). Brahma is mentioned as the deity of the first state viz. *Jāgratāvasthā* in the *Parabrahmopaniṣad*. *Sītopaniṣad* refers to Brahmā and other Gods as giving honour and respect to Sītā. Brahmā asks Nārāyaṇa about the *Tāraka mantra* which would protect and transgress an individual from this mundane world in the *Dattātreya Upaniṣad*. He is stated as the best among the deities : तस्मादाहुर्ब्रह्मैव देवानां श्रेष्ठमिति । शत.ब्रा.-८.४.१.३ ॥ In *Ch. Upaniṣad* (III.11.3-4), he is said to be the bestower of

¹ RV-VIII.26; I.23,134; VII.90; Bhāg.Pu.-V.25.15; Matsya-261.19; Viṣṇu-I.8.11

² RV-I.223.78; I.227.14; I.228.40

knowledge to Prajāpati. He is the first creator in this universe (*Muṇḍaka-I.1.2*). Brahmā is referred to as the creator and first of all the beings (*Bhā.-II.5.1*). Brahmā is also called the self-born and the embodiment of the *Vedas* : तस्मिन् स्वयं वेदमयो विधाता स्वयंभुवं यं स्म वदन्ति सोऽभूत् । भाग.-३.८.१५क,ड॥

ŚIVA / RUDRA

The etymology of the word 'Śiva' as given by Yāska is — व इति सुखनाम शिष्यतेर्वकारो नामकरणः शिवमित्यप्यस्य भवति । निरुक्त-१०.१७॥ 'Happiness' is traced to √शिष्, lit "that which remains or abides". We find the etymology of the epithets or names like 'Rudra, Īśāna and Maheśvara in the *Atharvaśiropaniṣad* (3 and 4) :

अथ कस्मादुच्यते रुद्रः यस्मादृषिभिर्नान्यैर्भक्तैर्दुतमस्य रूपमुपलभ्यते तस्मादुच्यते रुद्रः ।
अथ कस्मादुच्यते ईशानः यः सर्वान्देवानीशते ईशानीभिर्जननीभिश्च शक्तिभिः । . . .
ईशानमस्य जगतः स्वर्दशमीशानमिन्द्र तस्थुष इति तस्मादुच्यते ईशानः । अथ कस्मादुच्यते
भगवान्महेश्वरः यस्मान्द्रक्ताञ्जानेन भजत्यनुगृह्णाति च वाचं संसृजति विसृजति च
सर्वान्भावान्परित्यज्यात्मज्ञानेन योगैश्वर्येण महति महीयते तस्मादुच्यते भगवान्महेश्वरः ।
अथर्वशिर-४॥

Yāska gives the etymology of Rudra as derived from the root √रुद् = to Cry : रुद्रो रौतीति सतः । रोरूयमाणो द्रवतीति वा । रोदयतेर्वा । यदरुदत्तद्रुद्रस्य रुद्रत्वम् इति काठकम् यदरोदीत्तद्रुद्रस्य रुद्रत्वम् इति हारिद्रविकम् । निरुक्त-१०.५.३॥

He is called Rudra as he grants or tells the *Tāraka-mantra* to living beings at the time of dissolution, according to *Jābālopaniṣad*. *Vāyavīya Saṁhitā* mentions him to be the deity which makes people cry due to his powers of dissolution – रुद् दुःखं दुःख हेतुर्वा तद् द्रावयति नः प्रभुः – रुद्र इत्युच्यते तस्मात् । वायवीय संहिता॥

Ananta Paṇḍita (17th Cen. A.D.) in his *Svānubhūti-nāṭaka* states similar etymology of Rudra :

रुं दुःखं दुःखहेतुं वा द्रावयत्येष नः प्रभुः ।
रुद्र इत्युच्यते सद्भिः शिवः परमकारणम् ॥५.२९॥

We find references to God Śiva alias Sadāśiva, Rudra, Rudra-śiva, Maheśvara and Īśāna in the *Upaniṣads* like *Kaivalya* (6,7,8,20,24), *Ātmā* (18,20), *Mahāvākya*, *Dattātreya* (2,3), *Atharvaśikhā* (1,2), *Atharvaśiras* (1-32), *Śāṇḍilya* (I.2, II.4, III.1,2), *Parabrahma* (1,2), *Jābāla* (1), *Kṛṣṇa* (2,8,11,20) and *Annapūrṇā* (III.21,32,33).

Similarly we also find seven names of Rudra in *AV* viz. Īśāna, Bhava, Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Rudra and Mahādeva. Similarly we find eight names of Lord Śiva in the *Śivamahimna Stotra* of Puṣpadanta :

भवः शर्वो रुद्र पशपतिरथोग्रः सहमहां-

स्तथा भीमेशानाविति यदभिधानाष्टकमिदम् ।

अमुष्मिन् प्रत्येकं प्रविरचति देव श्रुतिरपि

प्रियायास्मै धाम्ने प्रविहितनतस्योऽस्मि भवते ॥शिवमहिम्न-२८॥

In the Nāndī Śloka of Abhijñānaśākuntalam, Kālidāsa also refers to the eight forms of God Śiva. Śiva is eulogized as the Sovereign Ruler in the minor *Upaniṣads*. e.g. Atharvaśikhopaniṣad states : योग ध्यानाना शिव एको ध्येयः शिवंकरः ।२॥

Bhāgavata (III.12.8-10) refers to Rudra as the first among the deities to be born and as he cries like a frightened boy in front of Brahmā for his names and places of residence, he came to be known as Rudra.

Rudra is glorified as the Supreme Lord of the universe in the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad*. Referring to the dissolution aspect of Śiva, the *Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad* states : व्यापको हि भगवान् रुद्रो भोगायमानो यदा शेते रुद्रस्तदा संहार्यते प्रजाः ।

Moreover He is glorified as the deity, which is unthinkable, unmanifest, Immortal, without beginning, middle and end, the only one, all-pervading, consciousness and Bliss, and his consort is Umā. He is identified with Brahmā, Indra and Viṣṇu and is Immutable, Supreme, Self-luminous, *Prāṇa* (vital air), Time, fire and the moon in the *Kaivalyopaniṣad* (6-8).

Rudra occupies a subordinate position in the *RV*,¹ being celebrated in only three entire hymns, in part of another, and in one conjointly with Soma, while his name occurs about 75 times.² He is described in the *RV* as fierce destructive like a terrible beast, self-glorious (I.129.3; X.92.9), is a lord (Īśāna) of this vast world (II.33.9) and father of the world (VI.49.10). He is an ordainer (VI.46.1), and by his rule and universal dominion he is aware of the doings of, men and gods (VII.46.2). Rudra is one of the several deities identified with Agni in *RV* (II.1.6), *AV* (VII.87.1) in *TS* (V.4.3.1; V.5.7.4) and the *ŚB* (VI.1.3.10; CP IX.1.1.1). He is generally regarded as a storm-god. Vedic Aryans associated Rudra with the natural calamities that humans have to face in their day to day life viz. floods, famines, diseases. And the deity considered to pacify such natural calamities is Śiva. In this manner, Rudra and Śiva are the *Rudra* (terrible)

¹ Macdonell A. A. : Vedic Mythology, page 74

² Prominent references are *RV*-I.114-4; II.33.1,3,10,11; V.60.5; VI.4.10; VII.46.1; X.92.5 etc.

and *Śānta* (peaceful) forms of one deity.

In *Taittirīya* as well as *Vājasaneyī Samhitās* of *Yajurveda*, in a chapter (*Adhyāya*) called *Śatarudrīya*, the character of Rudra appears in a much more developed form. "His benignant form (Śiva tanuḥ) is distinguished from its opposite, the malignant", states Bhandarkar R. G.¹

Bhāgavata (IV.6.42) refers to Rudra as that Brahman, the Lord of all – Supreme over Śakti and Śiva, the womb and the seed of the worlds :

जाने त्वामीशं विश्वस्य जगतो योनिबीजयोः ।

शक्ते शिवस्य च परं यत्तद्ब्रह्म निरन्तरम् ॥भाग.-४.६.४२॥

The study of the *Śatarudrīya* (the 16th chapter of VS dedicated to Rudra-Śiva) is enjoined on the devotee of Śiva in the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* (II.24). Rudra has thousand eyes. This description of Rudra reminds one of the nature of Rudra-Śiva deity in the RV and AV. Rudra has been invoked in a long hymn (AV-XI.2) in AV not to confer boons but only not to injure. On one hand He is mentioned to be the deity of destruction; while we also find references to the creative aspects of Rudra. He is said to create the universe in AV: य इमा विश्वा भुवनानि चाक्लृपै तस्मै रुद्राय नमो अस्त्वग्रये ।अथर्ववेद-७.१२.२॥

According to this *Śvet Upaniṣad*, the controller and dissolver deity of this creation is only Rudra (Śvet.Upa.-III.2) who is *Guḍha*, *Sarvavyāpī* (all-pervading) and *Sarva-Śāsaka* (all-ruling) *Śv.upa.-V.3* and through his knowledge *Mokṣa* can be attained (*Śv.upa.-III.4.16*). In this text, *Viśvamāyā* is known as *Prakṛti* and the ruler over that *Māyā* is said to be *Rudra* (*Śv.Upa.-IV.10*) : एको हि रुद्रो न द्वितीयाय तस्थुः ।श्वेता-३.२॥ विश्वाधिपो रुद्रो महर्षि ।श्वेता-३.४, ४.१२, महानारायण-१०.३॥ General references about Rudra are also found in *Bhagavadgītā* : रुद्राणां शंकरश्चास्मि रुद्रानश्विनौ मरुतस्तथा ।११.६॥ रुद्रादित्या वसवो ये च साध्याः ।११.२२॥

Further He is referred to as *Sadāśiva* (18) and as the Ancient One, the *Puruṣa*, the Ruler and All-good in the *Kaivalya Upa.* (20) which states that He i.e. the *Jīva* or human soul, being deluded by the *Māyā* performs all acts by means of various enjoyments such as women, eating and drinking etc.

According to N. J. Shende² "Rudra – Śiva has attained the nature of a benignant God and the whole majesty of the god-head by the time of the

¹ ibid - page 148.

² Shende N. J. — The Religion and Philosophy of *Atharvaveda*, page 242

Yajurveda and *Atharvaveda*. Even before the Vāsudeva – Kṛṣṇa cult was current, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, standing as it did at the door of the *Bhakti* School, pours its loving adoration on Rudra-śiva, but when later on Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa came into the field, the germs of *Bhakti* speedily developed. As in the *AV*, so in the *Atharvāṇic Upaniṣads*, the Rudra-śiva worship is also given a prominent place next to that of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa.”

VIṢṆU

The etymology of Viṣṇu as stated by Yāska is : अथ यद् विषितो भवति तद् विष्णुर्भवति । निरुक्त-१२.१८ ॥ The *Matsya purāṇa* derives the word from $vi + \sqrt{sta}$ (*m*)*bh.*, to check, to support or from \sqrt{vis} – to enter.

विस्तब्धं यत् त्वया सर्वं जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमम् । विष्टभ्य तिष्ठसे नित्यं त्रैलोक्यं सचराचरम् ।
यक्षगन्धर्वनगरं सुमहद्भूतपन्नगम् । व्याप्तं त्वयैव विशता त्रैलोक्यं सचरासरम् ।
तस्माद्विष्णुरिति प्रोक्तः स्वयमेव स्वयंभुवा ॥ मत्स्यपुराण-२४८.३९(क,ड)-४२(अ,ब) ॥

We also find the etymology of Viṣṇu in *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad* (2) : संघर्ता सर्वेभ्यो दुःखभयेभ्यः संतारयति तारणात्तानि सर्वाणीति विष्णुः । Viṣṇu is derived from the root \sqrt{vis} , which means ‘That which pervades or indwells all’; or from the root \sqrt{vis} – to be active, thus meaning ‘The active one’.

Viṣṇu is referred in the following minor *Upaniṣads* undertaken for study viz. *Tejabindu* (5), *Kaivalya* (8), *Dattātreya* (1,3), *Parabrahma* (1), *Āruṇeyī* (5), *Kṛṣṇa* (16), *Atharvaśira* (2), *Atharvaśikhā* (1,2), *Śāṇḍilya* (I.2,54,55,56), and *Sītā* (1). *Tejabindu* and *Āruṇeyī Upaniṣads* highlight the abode of Viṣṇu as Supreme : तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः । This Rk occurs originally in *Rgveda*-I.23.20 in *Vājasaneyī Samhitā* (VI.6); *AV* (VII.27.7); *Bhāg. Purāṇa* (IV.12.26) and some minor *Upaniṣads* like *Tejabindu*, *Āruṇeyī* and *Śāṇḍilya*. It portrays Viṣṇu as supreme Abode. *Sāyaṇācārya* states : सूरयः विद्वांस ऋत्विगादयः विष्णोः सम्बन्धि परमम् उत्कृष्टं तत् शास्त्रप्ररिद्धं पदं स्वर्गस्थानं शास्त्रदृष्ट्या सर्वदा पश्यन्ति ।

Viṣṇu occupies subordinate position in *RV* as there are only seven *Sūktas* in *RV* which deal with Viṣṇu : I.154; I.155,156; V.3.3; VI.69.1-8; VII.99.1-7; VII.100.1-7 who is referred to as a *Puruṣa* - *RV*-X.90.116. Viṣṇu is said to obtain any form any time, in *RV*-VII.100.6.

We find the reference to Viṣṇu in *AV* almost 65 times wherein He is referred to as the nourisher, refuge and protector who is worshipped by number of people : विष्णोः पत्नि तुभ्यं राता हवींषि पतिं देव राधसे चोदयस्व । अथर्ववेद-७.४८.३ ॥

Viṣṇu is referred to as the Supreme, self luminous Highest Reality, who bestows liberation and He is identified with Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, Akṣara, Prāṇa, Kāla, Agni and Candramā (Moon), in the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* (8) : स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः स कालोऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः । Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Indra are portrayed as the procreators of this universe in the *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad* (2) : ब्रह्माविष्णुरुद्रन्द्राः संप्रसूयन्ते सर्वाणि चेन्द्रियाणि सहभूतानि करणं । while identity between Śiva and Viṣṇu is portrayed in the *Atharvaśiropaniṣad* : यो वै रुद्रः स भगवान्यश्च विष्णुस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः । *Śāṇḍilyopaniṣad* (I.2) advises one to worship Viṣṇu, Rudra etc. : ईश्वरपूजनं नाम प्रसन्नस्वभावेन यथाशक्ति विष्णुरुद्रादिपूजनम् । and further it is stated that one should continuously worship Viṣṇu : सततं पूजयेद्विष्णुम् ११.५५ ॥ Viṣṇu is referred to in the context of the four states and he is mentioned as the deity of dream state in the *Parabrahmopaniṣad* (1) : जागरिते ब्रह्मा स्वप्ने विष्णुः सुषुप्तौ रुद्रस्तुरीयमक्षरं चिन्मयम् । God Viṣṇu is identified with the conch-shell (Śaṅkha) of Śrikrṣṇa in the *Kṛṣṇopaniṣad* (16) : यः शङ्खः स स्वयं विष्णुर्लक्ष्मीरूपो व्यवस्थितः । In *Dattātreyā Upaniṣad* it is said that one who constantly mutters the 16 syllabled mantra of Dattātreyā, viz. ओं ऐं क्रां क्लीं क्लूं हां ह्रीं हूं सौः दत्तात्रेयाय स्वाहा – merges with Viṣṇu i.e. one attains the form of Viṣṇu – तज्जापी विष्णुरूपी भवति । Here Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and Dattātreyā are identified with each other : ‘ब्रह्मा विश्वरूपधरं विष्णुं नारायणं दत्तात्रेयं ध्यात्वा सद्बदति ।’ Here Viṣṇu is glorified as beholder of the universe. Viṣṇu is the germ of this empirical world, states *Sītopaniṣad* (1) : विष्णुः प्रपञ्चबीजम् ।

SOMA AND CANDRA

The etymology of Soma is : सौति अमृतमिति । सु प्रसवे + अर्त्तिस्तुमुहुस्त्रिति । उणा-१.१३९। इति मन् । चन्द्रः इत्यमरः । १.३.१४ ॥ Yāska states : सोमः ओषधिः . . . सुनीतेः यदेनमभिषुन्वन्ति । निरुक्त-११.२ ॥ It is a name of the herb and is traced to √सु = to press. The etymology of Candra is as follows : चन्दयात आह्लादयति चन्दयति दीप्यते इति वा । चन्द + स्फायितश्चीति । उणा-२.१३। इति रक् । देवताविशेषः ।¹ Yāska states : चन्द्रश्चन्दतेः कान्तिकर्मणः । निरुक्त-११.५ ॥ Candramā is a deity of midregions. In the *Puruṣasūkta* of *Rgveda*, Candramā is said to be originated from the mind of the Supreme / Cosmic Puruṣa (*RV-X.90*).

In the *AV*, Sun and Moon are compared to two children, who move around one another while playing. During this game, the Sun looks towards all the worlds and the Moon creates seasons : पूर्वापरं चरतो माययैत्तौ

¹ Raja Radhakantdev Bahahur — *Śabdakalpadruma*, vol.-II, page 247

शिशू क्रीडन्तौ परि यातोऽर्णवम् । विश्वान्यो भुवना विचष्टुऋतूरन्यो विधज्जायसे नवः । अथर्ववेद-
७.८६.१ ॥ Candramā bestows peace and long life : भागं देवेभ्यो वि दधास्यायन्त्र
चन्द्रमस्तिरसे दीर्घमायुः । अथर्ववेद-७.८६.२ ॥¹

In the *Brāhmaṇas*, especially *Kauṣītaki* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas* Candramā is identified with Soma : सोमो वै चन्द्रमाः । कोषी.ब्रा.-१६.५ ॥ एतद्वै
देवसोमं यच्चन्द्रमाः । ऐ.ब्रा.-७.११ ॥ He is foremost among all constellations
(Tait.Br.-III.11.1.12). In *Bhagavadgītā*, God Kṛṣṇa also states Soma to be
the nourisher of herbs: पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥ भ.गी.-१५.१३ ॥

In *Atharvaśirā Upaniṣad* (8) while glorifying Rudra, Soma is mentioned:
यो वै रुद्राः स भगवान्यश्च सोमस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः । While describing the *Khecari
mudrā*, Soma is mentioned (here it is used in the context of *nāḍī* (i.e.
Idānāḍī) in *Śāṅḍilya Upaniṣad* (1.59).

सोमसूर्यद्वयोर्मध्ये निरालम्बतले पुनः ।
संस्थिता व्योमचक्रे सा मुद्रा नाम्ना च खेचरी ॥१.५९॥

He is mentioned to be purified by Vāyu, Agni and Soma, one who mutters
the eight syllabled mantra of Dattātreyā, states Dattātreyopaniṣad : . . . ।
यो नित्यमधीते वाय्वग्निः सोमादित्यब्रह्मविष्णुरुद्रैः पूतो भवति ।

Sītā is said to be illumined by the service of Āditya and Soma in the
Sītopaniṣad : . . . आदित्यसोमाभ्यां दीपाभ्यां प्रकाशयमानां । Here Soma is used with
reference to Candra or Moon, who is believed to be the son of Sage Atri
and Anasūyā in *Svāyambhuva Manvantara*² (*Bhāg.*-IV.13; *MBh.*-Śān.-
CC.24).

Soma is mentioned while describing Sītā in *Sītopaniṣad* : सोमात्मिका ओषधीनां
प्रभवति कल्पवृक्षपुष्पफललतागुल्मात्मिका औषधभेषजात्मिका सूर्यादिसकलभुवनप्रकाशीनि दिवा
च रात्रिः . . . । Soma is mentioned to be the king of herbs in *AV* : सोमं नमस्य
राजानं यो यज्ञे वीरुथां पतिः । ३.२७.४ ॥

The Moon (Candra) and the Sun do not illumine in the abode of Supreme
Reality, states *Annapūrṇopaniṣad* (IV.30) :

न तत्र चन्द्रार्कवपुः प्रकाशते न वान्ति वाताः सकलाश्च देवताः ।
स एव देवः कृतभावभूतः स्वयं विशुद्धो विरजः प्रकाशते ॥४.३०॥

¹ In the *Bhāg.* (V.22.8-10), Candramā is mentioned as providing food and energy to all and as
one who helps the growth of cereals. He satisfies the hunger, the life-principle in all beings :
एवं चन्द्रमा . . . सर्वजीवनिवहप्राणो जीवश्चैकमेकं . . . प्राणाप्यायनशीलत्वात्सर्वमय इति वर्णयन्ति ।

² *ibid*

Similar reference is found in the *Kathopanīṣad* (V.15), *Muṇḍakopanīṣad* (II.2.11), *Śvetāśvataropanīṣad* (VI.14) and *Bhagavadgītā* (XV.6).¹

YAMA

Yāska derives the word Yama as : यमो यच्छतीति सतस्तस्यैषा भवति । यमः निर्वक्तव्यः । स पुनरेष यच्छति उपरमयति जीवितात्सर्वं भूतग्राममिति यमः । निरुक्त-१०.१९ ॥ i.e. one who gives peace, rest (*Viśrānti*) to living beings is Yama. An etymology of the word Yama is suggested in the *RV* (X.14.14), where this god is prayed to grant (*ā yamat*) a long life.

The word *Mṛtyu* is derived by Yāska as : मृत्युमरियतीति सतः, मृतं च्यावयतीति शतबलाक्षो मौद्गाल्यः । निरुक्त-११.६ ॥ 'The God of Death' has been traced to $\sqrt{\text{मारय्}}$ – i.e. 'One who kills', or $\sqrt{\text{च्यावय्}}$ – i.e. 'One who throws down the dead person.'

Yāska derives *Kāla* as : कालः कालतयेर्गतिकर्मणः । निरुक्त-२.२५ ॥ It is traced to the root $\sqrt{\text{काल}}$ means to drive; i.e. कालयति सर्वाणि भूतानि क्षयं नयति इति कालः । i.e. one who destroys all beings is *Kāla*.

Yama is associated with *RV* (X.14) as its author because that hymn is regarded as a funeral hymn and Yama is looked upon as a god of death. The prayers in *RV* (X.14.14), *AV* (III.14.4) and *TB* (I.8.6), suggest that Yama was prayed for granting long life or to ward off Death. In the *RV* (X.18.1), *Mṛtyu* is asked to go away on his own path, which is distinct from that of the gods (इतरो देवयानात्) and to spare the progeny of the sacrificer (*RV*-X.18.1; *VS*-XXXV.7; *AV*-II.2.21). This suggests that the path of *Mṛtyu* is the *Pitryāna*. "Though Yama is not considered to be a god of death in the *RV*, he is regarded with a certain amount of fear due to his indirect connection with death, so much so that it is tempting to identify him with *Mṛtyu* in the *RV* (X.165.4cd) and also यमाय नमो अस्तु मृत्यवे । अथर्ववेद-६.२८.३, ६३.३ ॥

Mṛtyu is called a messenger of Yama (*AV*-XVIII.2.27). He is conceived to be death, i.e. the phenomenon of cessation of life, or death as personified. *Kāla* enjoys the position of a deity in *AV* (XIX.53.54). At many places, He is referred to in terms of 'Fate', but He is also considered to be omnipotent like the Supreme Reality. He is considered to be active

¹ न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः । तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ कठ-... , मुण्डक-२.२.११, श्वेताश्वतर-६.१४ ॥

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकाः । यद्भात्वा न विवर्तन्ते तद्भाम परमं मम ॥ भ.गी.-१५.६ ॥

like the horse (AV-XIX.53.1). He is the nourisher of the world (AV-XIX.53.4). He creates heaven and earth (AV-XIX.53.5).

There are few references in the later Vedic literature, where Yama and Mr̥tyu are identified. For e.g. In *Kāthopaniṣad*, Yama is repeatedly called Mr̥tyu establishing their complete identification (I.10,13,22,29), while at one place Mr̥tyu is addressed as Yama (I.15). Here Yama appears as the preacher of the life after death to Naciketā.

Yama is glorified in the *Atharvaśīras Upaniṣad* (22) : यो वै रुद्रः स भगवान्यश्च यमस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ॥२२॥ This reference occurs when the gods are glorifying or praising Lord Rudra. Mr̥tyu and Kāla are also glorified in the same manner in the *Atharvaśiropaniṣad*.

ṚBHU

Yāska derives it as : ऋभवः उरु भान्ति ।निरुक्त-११.१५ ॥ i.e. 'that which shines a great deal.' Or ऋ स्वर्गे देवमातुरदितेर्वा भवति यः । (ऋ + भू + डु ।) देवता ।¹

Ṛbhu is referred to in *Jābālopaniṣad* (6) as one of the *Paramahāṁsas* :

तत्र परमहंसा नाम संवर्तकारुणिश्चेतकेतुदुर्वासऋभुनिदावजडभरतदत्तात्रेयैवतकप्रभृतयो ...
परित्यज्यात्मानमन्विच्छेत् । जाबाल-६ ॥

Ṛbhu is stated as the best among the knowers of Brahman in the *Annapūrṇopaniṣad* (1). A *Yogī* named Nidāgha comes to Ṛbhu to know about Ātman. Ṛbhu tells Nidāgha about the eternal knowledge (*Annapūrṇopaniṣad*-3) :

निदाघ प्रणतो भूत्वा ऋभुं पप्रच्छ सादरम् ।
ब्रूहि मे श्रद्धानाय ब्रह्मविद्यामनुत्तमाम् ॥१.१७॥
तथेत्याह ऋभुः प्रीतस्तत्त्वज्ञानं वदामि ते ।
महाकर्ता महाभोक्ता महात्यागी भवानघ ।
स्वस्वरूपानुसंधानमेवं कृत्वा सुखी भव ॥१.१८॥

In the *Annapūrṇopaniṣad*, he teaches sage Nidāgha, the *Annapūrṇā-mantra* of twenty-seven syllables. Ṛbhu practised penance and Annāpūrṇā presented herself before him and imparted him the knowledge of the Ātman (V.11).

In the *Tejabindu Upaniṣad* (5,6), Ṛbhu instructs the sage Nidāgha into the nature of the Absolute. The *Varāha Upaniṣad* tells us that Ṛbhu practices

¹ Raja Radhakantdev Bahadur — Śabdakalpadruma vol. I, page 287.

penance for twelve years, as a result when the lord assuming the form of Varāha appears before him. He asks for knowledge of *Brahma-vidyā*. Varāha instructed him into the nature of the Absolute (I.3). Then Ṛbhu tells the sage Nīdāgha the nature of *Jīvanmukti* (4), and the practice of yoga (5). Ṛbhu teaches philosophy (*Tattvajñāna*) to his disciple Nīdāgha (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*-II.16; *Nārada Purāṇa*-I.49).

Besides the higher gods of the *Veda* there are number of mythical beings not regarded as having the divine nature fully and originally. The most important of these are the Ṛbhhus. They are celebrated in the eleven hymns of the *RV* and are mentioned by name over a hundred times. Their individual names, which often occur, are Rbhhu or less commonly Ṛbhukṣan ('Chief of the Ṛbhhus').¹ By their skilful deeds they became gods (*RV*-III.60.1) and immortal beings alighting like eagles in heaven (*IV*.35.8). This extraordinary exaltation of the Ṛbhhus treats them as a group of beings who, for no apparent reason, have become the highest exponents of spiritual life, states Hopkins.²

RĀKĀ AND SINĪVĀLĪ

Rākā is derived by Yāska as : राका रातेर्दानकर्मणः । निरुक्त-११.३० ॥ i.e. the goddess of the full moon ($\sqrt{\text{रा}} = \text{to give}$). Yāska derives the word Sinīvālī as : सिनीवाली सिनमत्रं भवति, सिनाति भूतानि, वालं पर्व वृणोते: तस्मिन्नवती, वालिनी वा, वालेनेवास्यामणुत्वाच्चन्द्रमा: सेवितव्यो भवतीति वा । निरुक्त-११.३१ ॥ i.e. The Goddess of *Amāvasyā*. It can be traced in two ways : सिन् + वाल् - सिन् = Food and वाल् = a day of astronomical conjunction, from $\sqrt{\text{वृ}} = \text{to cover}$, the whole word meaning 'full of day on a day of astronomical conjunction'; सिन् + वाल् - 'during which the moon on account of its smallness is sewed as if it were a child.'

They are referred to as goddesses worshipping Goddess Sītā in the *Sītā Upaniṣad* : राकासिनीवालीभ्यां छात्रेणभ्यर्च्यमाना देवी ।

Rākā as a Vedic deity, is considered to be the goddess of prosperity and compassion (*RV*-II.32; V.42). She is several times referred in various texts³ : राकामहं सुहवा सुष्टुतीहुवे शृणोतु नः सुभगा बोधतुत्मना । ऋग्वेद-२.३२.४, अथर्ववेद-७.५०.४२ ॥ She is also referred to in *APŚ*-IV.13.3 as : राकाया अहं देवयज्यया

¹ Macdonell A. A. — Vedic Mythology, page 131

² Hopkins E. W. — Epic Mythology, page 35-36

³ In *RV* and *AV*(VII.48.1); *TS*(III.3.11.5); *MS*(IV.12.6;194.16;4.13.10); *KS*(XIII.6); *SMB* (I.5.3); *APMB*(II.11.10); *APG*(VI.14.3); *N*(XI.3); *AŚ*(I.10.7;V.20.6); *ŚŚ*(I.15.4;VIII.6.10); *Vait*(I.16); *AG*(I.14.3); *SG*(I.22.12); *GG*(II.7.7); *HG*(II.1.3); *Rvidh*(I.30.3)

प्रजावन् भूयासम् । She is considered to be the daughter of sage Aṅgīrasa and Śraddhā according to *Bhāgavata purāṇa* (IV.1.34).

Sinīvālī is a goddess, who is referred to in the two *sūktas* of *R̥gveda* (RV-II.32; X.184).¹ In the second stanza of the *sūkta* (RV-X.184), Sīnīvālī is invoked, as she generally allots the birth of children² as stated by V. G. Rahurkar.³ Sinīvālī is worshipped or called with goddesses like Sarasvati, Rākā, Guṅgu and is called the wife of Viṣṇu in *AV* (VIII.46). Later on in Vedic texts, Rākā and Sinīvālī are related to the digits of the moon where Sinīvālī is known as the chief goddess (अधिष्ठात्री देवी) of the first day digit of the moon and Rākā of the full moon. But this idea is nowhere found in *R̥gveda*. In *AV* (II.26.2), also she is referred to as a leader and as a bestower of progeny in *AV* (XIV.2,15,21) : सिनीवालि नयत्वाग्रम् एषाम् । In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (IV.12.49), she is referred to as : पौर्णमास्यां सिनीवाल्यां द्वादश्यां श्रवणेऽथ वा । According to Hopkins⁴, Sinīvālī is the third daughter of Brahman's third son, Aṅgīras (father of Bṛhaspati) and owing to her excessive thinness she is both visible and invisible. People call her Kapardin's daughter.

PARAMEṢṬHĪ PRĀJAPATI

Prajāpati is addressed as Parameṣṭhī in *Āruṇeyī* and *Kaivalya* (1) *Upaniṣads* : परमे व्याम्नि चिदाकाशे ब्रह्मपदे वा तिष्ठतीति । He is considered to be equivalent to Brahmā and is glorified as the Supreme Reality. *Āruṇeyī Upaniṣad* is a dialogue between sage Āruṇi (Aruṇa's son) and Prajāpati. Āruṇi goes to the abode of Prajāpati and asks : "By doing what one can become free from the bondage of *Karman* and How can one relinquish work altogether?" The *Upaniṣad* is an answer to this question of sage Āruṇi, where Prajāpati advises him to renounce everything in this world : ॐ आरुणिः प्रजापतेर्लोकं जगाम । तं गत्वोवाच । केन भगवन्कर्माण्यशेषतो विसृजानीति ।

Similarly, Prajāpati is asked to teach the knowledge of Brahman by sage Āśvalāyana in the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* (1). He is identified with Śiva, Indra, Akṣara, Viṣṇu, Prāṇa, Kāla, Agni and Candramā (moon) : ॐ अथाश्वलायनो भगवन्तं परमेष्ठिनमुपसमेत्योवाच । : ययाऽचिरात्सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य परात्परं

¹ *Prācīna Caritra Kośa*, page 1041

² Sinīvālī is referred to as : 'सिनीवालि पृथुष्टुके' - in RV(II.32.6); AV(VII.46.1); VS(34.10); TS (III.1.11.3); MS(IV.12.6,195.4); KS(XIII.16); Vait (I.14); SMB(II.6.2); N(XI.32). The term 'Sinīvālī' occurs in : TS(III.3.11.5); MS(IV.13.10;213.12); AŚ(I.10.7), ŚŚ(I.15.4); Kauś. (XXXII.3;LIX.19).

³ Rahurkar V. G. — *The Seers of the R̥gveda*, page 296.

⁴ Hopkins E. W. — *Epic Mythology*, page 12

पुरुषं याति विद्वान् ॥१॥ Prajāpati explains the nature and the form of Sītā in the *Sītopaniṣad* : सीता किं रूपमिति ।

The authorship of X.129, which is popularly known as the *Nāṣadiya-sūkta* is ascribed to Parameṣṭhī. According to the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad, Brāhmaṇa* (III.40.2), Parameṣṭhī was a disciple of Prajāpati, while the BĀU (II.6.3; IV.6.3) tells us that Sanaga was a disciple of Parameṣṭhī. According to Siddheshwar Shastri¹, “He was a Vedic seer and a disciple of Brahmā. His student was Sanaga (*Br. Upa.*-II.6.3; IV.6.3). Eight names of Prajāpati are mentioned in *Rgveda* (I.18)².

In *Bṛhaddevatā* (I.62), Prajāpati is glorified as the original source of all the mobile and immobile beings on this earth, who is known as eternal, immutable and *Vācya* :

असतश्च सतसश्चैव योनिरेषा प्रजापतिः ।

यदक्षरं च वाच्यं च यथैतद्ब्रह्म शाश्वतम् ॥१.६२॥

He is the seer of a number of *Sūktas* of *Rgveda* (*RV*-IX.101.13-16).³ According to Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrao⁴, “Prajāpati is a Vedic deity who is considered as the creator of all the creatures. In the Xth *Maṇḍala* of *Rgveda*, Prajāpati is referred to as a deity four times. He is called (*Aśvāhana*) to give lot of progeny (*RV*-X.85.43). He is also prayed along with Viṣṇu, Tvaṣṭṛ and Dhātṛ for bestowing progeny (*RV*-X.184) etc. In this adoration, there is one independent *Sūkta* of *Rgveda* where he is referred to as the Supreme Deity (*RV*-X.121.10) : प्रजापते न त्वदेतान्यन्यो विश्वाजातानि परि ता बभूव । ऋग्वेद-१०.१२१.१० ॥ and also – हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीत् । स दाधार पृथिवी द्याम् . . . । ऋग्वेद-१०.१२१.१ ॥

According to *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, he is the father of Gods (*Śat.Br.*-II.2.4; XI.1.6; *Tai.Br.*-VIII.1.3). He is known as ‘*Parabrahma*’ or ‘*Vīśvātmā*’ in the *Upaniṣads*, clarifies the doubts of all (*AB*-V.3, *Ch. Upa.*-VIII.7.1; *Śvetā.Upa.*-III.4.2).

¹ Chittrav Siddheshwar Shastri — *Prācīna Caritra Kośa*, page 388

² ऋग्वेद - १-३-ब्रह्मणस्पति, ४-इन्द्रो-ब्रह्मणस्पतिः सोमश्च, ५-ब्रह्मणस्पतिः सोम इन्द्रो दक्षिणा च, ६-८-सदसस्पति, ९-सदसस्पतिर्नराशंसो वा ।

³ सोमानं स्वरणं कृणुहि ब्रह्मणस्पते । कक्षीवन्तं य औशिज ॥१॥ यो रेवान् यो अमीवहा वसुवित् पुष्टिवर्धनः । स नः सिपलुं यस्तुरः ॥२॥

⁴ Chitrao Siddheshwar Shastri — *Prācīna Caritra Kośa*, page 461

LAKṢMĪ

The word Lakṣmī has been traced to many verbs optionally by Yāska.

लक्ष्मीर्लाभाद्वा कक्षणाद्वा लप्स्यनाद्वा लाञ्छनाद्वा लषतेर्वा स्यात् प्रेप्साकर्मणो लभ्यतेर्वा
स्याद् आश्लेषकर्मणो लभ्यतेर्वा स्यादश्लाघाकर्मणः । निरुक्त-४.१० ॥

“The word seems to be the product of contamination of the following verbs among others : $\sqrt{\text{लाञ्छ}}$ = to mark or $\sqrt{\text{लष्}}$ = to desire and $\sqrt{\text{लग्}}$ = to cling”, states Siddheshwar Varma.¹ It can also be stated : लक्ष्यति पश्यति उद्योगिनमिति । महती लक्ष्मीः महालक्ष्मीः । नारायणशक्तिः ।

Sītā is identified with Mahālakṣmī, Śrī or Lakṣmī in the *Sītopeniṣad* (2). Similarly in *Annapūrṇopeniṣad* (I.5), Goddess Annapūrṇā is identified with Mahālakṣmī :

नित्यानन्दा निराधारा विख्याता विलसत्कचा ।
विष्टपेशी महालक्ष्मीः कामस्तारो नतिस्तथा ॥१.५ ॥

Sītā as a goddess, assumes three forms for the protection of the people. In *Sītopeniṣad* (8), she is glorified as Vīralakṣmī with pleasant eyes worshipped by all gods, who is in the form of Vīraśakti. As the Mahālakṣmī, She is the omniscient goddess and the cause of this universe. She assumes three forms for the protection of people. Being the Vīraśakti, she has four hands, crown encircled by the Gods etc.

सा सर्ववेदमयी सर्वदेवमयी सर्वलोकमयी सर्वकीर्तिमयी सर्वदेवतैः पूज्यमाना
वीरलक्ष्मीरिति विज्ञायत ।

We find her glorification in the Śrī *Sūkta* of *Rgveda*, where she is worshipped for prosperity, wealth, long, life, good health, for off springs and profuse food :

तां म आवह जातवेदो लक्ष्मीमनपगामिनीम् ।
यस्यां हिरण्यं विन्देयं गामश्वं पुरुषानहम् ॥२ ॥
गन्धद्वारां दुराधर्षां नित्यपुष्टां करीषिणीम् ।
ईश्वरीं सर्वभूतानां तामिहोपह्वये श्रियम् ॥९ ॥

Lakṣmī is said to have sprung from the milky ocean after Candra (Moon) during the *Samudra-Manthana* (Churning of the milky ocean) (*MBh-Ā-XVI.34; Viṣṇu-I.8.5; Bhāg.-VIII.8.8; Padma-Sr.-4*).

As evinced above from the references found from the Viṣṇu and

¹ Varma Siddheshwar — Yāska as an Etymologist, page 7.

Bhāgavata purāṇas, Sītā is an incarnation of Goddess Lakṣmī in Viṣṇu's incarnation as Rāma and in Sundara-kāṇḍa of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa (III.6.14), we find reference to Goddess Lakṣmī. According to *Brahmavaivarta* (II.35), there are eight incarnations of Lakṣmī.

Conclusion :

As discussed above the characteristics of the Vedic deities referred to in the *ṚV*, *AV* and in the Minor *Upaniṣads* differ in some way or other. For e.g. Agni is mentioned as possessing various forms and functions having three-fold nature or triple character, i.e. in heaven (Sun), mid-regions (lightening), earth (fire). He is also mentioned as *Gṛhapati* in the *ṚV* as well as *AV*; while in the Minor *Upaniṣads* of *AV* undertaken for study we find the three or four fold divisions of Agni. This shows that this division of Agni is related to the sacrificial ritual, which is of a later date i.e. *Sūtra* period (800 BC to 300 BC). Similarly Indra is glorified as an atmospheric god in about 250 hymns of *ṚV*. he is a prominent deity in *AV* also. But in the Minor *Upaniṣads* of *AV* he is referred to only once and unlike the Vedas He is identified with several other deities / entities like Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Rudra, Prāṇa, Kāla, Agni, Candramā etc. Vāyu being a Vedic deity is also of mythical character. We find some similarity in the reference to Brhaspati in the *ṚV* as well as in the Minor *Upaniṣads*. In *ṚV* he is eulogised as a deity of knowledge, similarly in Minor *Upaniṣads*, he shares secret knowledge with Yājñavalkya. Brahmā is glorified as the Supreme Reality in the Minor *Upaniṣads* and not as a creator as pointed out in the *Bhāg.* II.5.1. We find numerous references to various epithets of God Śiva in the Minor *Upaniṣads* of *AV*. He is known as Sadāśiva, Rudra, Rudraśiva, Maheśvara and Īśāna. We can trace back the references to *AV* wherein seven names of Rudra are found. While about the reference to Rudra-śiva or Śatarudrīya we find one whole chapter (16th) glorifying the deity in *Vājasneyī Saṁhitā* (ŚYV). Minor *Upaniṣads* eulogise Viṣṇu's abode as the Supreme. He is the deity who creates and beholds this universe. Similar description is found scattered in the Vedic literature. We find reference to Soma as a herb as well as a deity identified with Śiva. Similar reference is found in *AV* where Soma is the king of herbs. Moreover Yama, Mṛtyu and Kāla are identified with Rudra in the Minor *Upaniṣads* of *AV*. We find slight difference in the ideology of Yama and Mṛtyu in *ṚV*. Yama was prayed for granting long life (*ṚV* X.14.4; *AV* III.14.4) or to ward of death and Mṛtyu is a deity who kills everybody (*ṚV* X.12.1-*Sāyaṇa bhāṣya*). However Yama and Mṛtyu are identified in *Kāthopaniṣad* (I.10,13,15,22,29). Irrespective of their Vedic origin or

mention as their becoming gods by their skilful deeds (*RV* III.60.1), the Minor *Upaniṣads* refer to Ṛbhu as a preceptor who teaches *Vedānta* philosophy to sage Nidāgha. The goddesses Rākā and Sinivālī are referred to as worshipping Goddess Sītā in the *Sītopeniṣad*. We find no reference in the Minor *Upaniṣads* to Rākā and Sinivālī as we find in *RV* (II.32: V.42; X.184), i.e. as the deities of the full moon i.e. *Pūrṇimā* or no moon day i.e. *Amāvāsyā*. Parameṣṭhi Prajāpati, as found in earlier texts is glorified as Supreme Reality (*RV* X.121.10). He is moreover portrayed as the preceptor in Minor *Upaniṣads* as is identified with other deities like Śiva, Rudra, Viṣṇu etc. Lakṣmī is glorified as Śrī in the *Śrī-Sūkta* of *RV*. In the Minor *Upaniṣads*, Sītā is identified with Lakṣmī.

PURĀNIC FIGURES

NĀRADA AND TUMBARU

Nārada, is referred to in *Sītopeniṣad* as singing praise of 'Sītā', along with Tumburu : तुम्बरुनारदादिभिर्गीयमानाः ।

The etymology of Nārada is : नारं पारमात्मविषयकं ज्ञानं ददातीति । (दा + कः).¹ नरस्य धर्मो नारं, तत् ददाति दा - क । He is the mind born son of Brahmā and third incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu (*Bhā.Pu.*-I.3.8; *Matsya Pu.*-III.6.8). He is born of Brahmā (*Bhā.Pu.*-III.12.28). He is represented as a messenger from the God to men and vice-versa and as being very fond of promoting discards among gods and men, hence his epithet of Kaliprāya. In *MBh.* (*Ādi.*-I.111), Nārada is also referred to as the best orator and musician. He was well versed in music (*MBh.* *Ādi parva*- 111.40). We find his work on music titled '*Nārada Saṁhitā*'. He is said to have been the inventor of the lute or *Vīṇā*. He is also the author of a code of laws, which goes by his name. *Bhāgavata* (I.5.1) describes Nārada as a Devarṣi who constantly moves about the world singing the Lord's name on his *Vīṇā*, holding Lute in his hand (*Bhāg.*-I.13.37). Nārada is referred to as reciting three verses accompanied by his *Vīṇā*, about the greatness of Dhruva, at the sacrificial festival conducted by the *pracetās* as :

महिमानं विलोक्यास्य नारदो भगवानृषिः ।

आतोद्यं वितुदञ् श्लोकान् सत्रेऽगायत्प्रचेतसाम् ॥ भाग.पु.-४.१२.४० ॥

Nārada describes *Śikṣā* (one of the limbs of *Veda*) in detail in the *Nārada Purāṇa*. He also explains the art of music and singing and other cognate

¹ Raja Radhakantdev Bahadur — *Śabdakalpadruma* vol. II, page 865

sciences.¹ In *Nārada Purāṇa* (I.50.71-73), it is said that the *Svaras* Sā, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha and Ni are first sung by Agni, Brahmā, Soma, Viṣṇu, Nārada and Tumbaru respectively. Nārada gives information about the musical instruments *Vīṇā* and *Veṇu* (*Nārada Purāṇa* I.50.58-79 & onwards).

He is a Vedic seer and knower of sacrifices (*AV-V.19.9*; *XII.4.16*; *XII.4.24,41*). The seventh *prapāṭhaka* of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (*VII.1.1*) contains a conversation between Nārada and Sanatkumāra, where Nārada is the disciple and Sanatkumāra is the spiritual teacher.

Tumbaru is a *Gandharva*, one among the sons of Kaṣyapa and Prādhā. According to *Śabdakalpadruma*² : गन्धर्वविशेषः । स्वर्गागायकः इति जटाधरः । गन्धर्वैः सहितः श्रीमान् प्रागायत् च तुम्बुरुः । महा.-१.१२३.१५ ॥

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, he is described as singing praise of the God in the court of Brahmā, with Nārada : य एष एवमनुश्रुतो ध्यायमानो मुमुक्षूणामनादिकालकर्म-वासनाग्रथितमविद्यामयं हृदयग्रन्थिं सत्त्वरजस्तमोमयमन्तर्हृदयं गत आशु निर्भिनत्ति तस्यानुभावा-न्भगवान्स्वायंभुवो नारदः सह तुम्बुरुणा सभायां ब्रह्मणः संश्लोकयामास ॥ भाग. पु.-५.२५.८ ॥

Hopkins³ opines : “Tumbaru leads the *Gandharvas* in music and singing, which is performed by *Gandharvas* and *Kinnaras*, “skilled in song and in instrumental music, and in keeping time” (साम्यतालविशारदाः, प्रमाणेऽथ लये स्थाने ।). Tumbaru goes to Meru with Nārada and other *Gandharvas* but only to worship.”

SANATKUMĀRA

The etymology can be explained as : सनतो ब्रह्मणः कुमारः । ब्रह्मणः पुत्रः । तत्पर्यायः । वैधात्रः । इत्यमरः । So it can be stated : सनत् ब्रह्मा तस्य कुमारः सनत्कुमारः ।

यथेत्पन्नस्तथैवाहं कुमार इति विद्धि माम् ।

तस्मात् सनत्कुमारेति नामैतन्मे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ इति महाभारते हरिवंशः ॥

He was a great philosopher in the times of *Upaniṣads* as evinced from his dialogues with Nārada in *Ch. upa.*-VII.17-22. Sanatkumāra preaches the knowledge of *Ātman* to Nārada in the *Ch.upa.* (VII.1.1.26). He is known as one of the seven mind-born sons of Brahmā and an incarnation of

¹ Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS in the Govt. collection, the Asiatic Society of Bengal Vol. V, Calcutta page lxxxiii and *Nārada Purāṇa*-I.50.

² Hopkins E. W. — *Epic Mythology*, page 154

³ *ibid*, page 154

Viṣṇu in *MBh.*¹ as well as several *Purāṇas.*² According to *Bhāgavata*, he is a detached and learned person (II.7.5). He is an unbiased, detached and desireless person as stated in *Vāyu Purāṇa* (VI.71). He teaches sage Vibhāṇḍaka on the Himalayas (*MBh-Śāntiparva-I.20*).

He highlights on *Bhāgavata* while preaching Nārada (*Padma-U-193-198*) and Sāṅkhyāyana (*Bhāg-III.8.7*). He talked about the form of Supreme Being with many sages (*MBh-Śā.-Pari-I.20*). His preachings to Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the '*Prajāgara Upaparva*' of *MBh* are famous by the name '*Sanatsujātīya*' (*MBh-U-42-45*), which is also commented by Śrī Śāṅkarācārya. Sanatkumāra along with Pippalāda and Aṅgirā, is referred to in the *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad* as a disciple of sage Atharvan inquisitive of knowing the Supreme Being : ॐ पिप्पलादोऽङ्गिराः सनत्कुमारश्चाथर्वाणं भगवन्तं पप्रच्छ को वा ध्याता कश्चिद्ध्येय इति ।

There are many works attributed to him like : (1) *Sanatkumāra Upapurāṇa* (*Kūrma-Pūrva-I.17*); (2) *Sanatsujātīya Ākhyāna* (*MBh-U-42-45*); (3) *Sanatkumāra Saṁhitā* (*Śiva, Skanda, Sūta Saṁhitā-I.22.24*); (4) *Sanatkumāra Vāstuśāstra*; (5) *Sanatkumāra Tantra* and (6) *Sanatkumāra Kalpa*.

Conclusion :

Purāṇic sages like Nārada, Tumburu and Sanatkumāra are referred to in our minor Upaniṣads. We do not find any specific information about Nārada and Tumburu except for the fact that they sing praise of Sītā. We find reference to Nārada as a musician in the *Mbh. Ādi parva* (I.111), *Nārada Purāṇa* (I.50.58 ff) and in *Bhāg. Purāṇa* (I.5.1). We find reference to both Nārada and Tumburu; while Sanatkumāra is mentioned as a disciple of sage Atharvan in the *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad*.

¹ *MBh* — *Śā.*-327.64-66; *Udyog*-41.2-5; *Sabhā*-11-13

² *Harivaṁśa*-I.1.34-37; *Bhāgavata*-II.7.5; III.12.4; IV.8.1