

Idealistic Modification of the Materialistic *Veda*

Tilak Bahadur Khatri, PhD¹

Abstract

This article explores the origin and the later developments of the *Veda*. The objective is to examine the materialist philosophical content of the early *Vedas* and contrast it with the idealistic readings of the text from later eras. This article discusses the research issues surrounding the historical roots of the *Vedic* literature and the idealistic changes made to it in later times. The study has used historical materialism as a methodological tool and examined several *Vedic* verses, relating them to the socioeconomic conditions of the period in which they were composed. The article has analyzed the roots of some terminologies frequently used in the text and their connections to the philosophy of the *Veda*. The terms *bhagavan*, *rita*, *Dānam*, *Havana*, *Brahman*, *yajña* and name of some gods are frequently used in the *Veda* and their meanings are analyzed in a particular historical contexts. The article reveals that the *Vedic* verses are the simple creations of *Vedic* Aryans and they are associated with the everyday desires of the *Vedic* people, such as those for food, cattle, rain, safety, prosperity, health, and progeny. The early creation of the *Vedic* verses are this-worldly and materialistic in content and they are in no way otherworldly and spiritualistic. The meaning of most of the terminologies found in the text has materialistic origin and in course of time, their meanings are converted into opposite. The philosophy of the *Veda* has its root in the collective mode of production and with the introduction of private property and classes, the text is made an ideological tool of the minority of governing classes. The *Veda*'s original materialistic meaning is altered, and the book is transformed into a spiritual guidebook—an ideological weapon used by the ruling classes to deceive and repress the vast majority of laboring people.

Key Words: Aryan, *Brahman*, *Brahmaṇism*, commune, *Vedic*, *yajña*

Introduction

The article examines the materialistic content of the *Vedas* and contrasts it with their spiritualistic adaptations of later times. The *Vedas* are recognized as the founder and oldest texts of eastern philosophy, especially Hindu scriptural philosophy. Most of the eastern philosophers have based their philosophy on the *Vedas* and all the Hindu scriptural literature have borrowed and imitated a lot from the *Vedas*. The *Vedas*' exceptional standing within the Hindu scriptures emphasizes their transcendental and mystical themes. But, the *Vedas* do not initially assume the existence of spirit or the other world. The *Vedas*, when they are examined through the lens of historical materialism, do have a philosophy founded in materialism. The early songs of the *Vedic* literature praise the material objects, natural forces and the social forces that have direct impact on their daily life. The names of the different gods mentioned in the *Vedas* are not the supernatural beings but they are the embodiments of material objects and the representative of the natural and social forces. The philosophy of the *Veda* is revolved round the two terms: *yajña* and *Brahman*. The terms are now interpreted as supernatural

1. Asst. Professor of English,

Patan Multiple Campus, TU, Lalitpur, Nepal, Email: tilakkckhatri@gmail.com/tilak.khatri@pmc.tu.edu.np

Received on Sept. 5, 2023

Accepted on Dec. 7, 2023

Published on Jan. 31, 2024

entities but they did have materialistic connotations at the beginning. The development of private property and social classes caused the *Vedic* terminology to lose their original meanings and take on new ones. These terms start to take on otherworldly and spiritualistic connotations instead of their materialistic ones. The materialistic philosophy of the *Vedas* is modified and it is done intentionally to benefit the minority of the ruling classes. The ruling class people can dominate and suppress the majority of the toiling masses with the help of the spiritual philosophy and the *Veda* is used for the purpose. The article analyzes the connotations of some *Vedic* verses, the original meanings of some *Vedic* terminologies and its later modifications, and the later *Brahmannical* treatment of the concept of *yajña* and *Brahman*.

Methodology

The article adopts the qualitative approach with exploratory and analytical methods. This is accomplished by analyzing and interpreting some *Rgvedic* songs or hymns (*sūktas*) and important *Vedic* terminologies using the *Vedas* as the primary texts and some secondary literature that are based on the *Vedas*. The researcher employs the Marxist concept of historical materialism as theoretical tools. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels created the idea of historical materialism, which examines literary writings while maintaining their relationship to the socioeconomic base and superstructure of the period in which they were written.

Results and discussion

The word "Veda" connotes different meanings over time. It literally means "knowledge," and according to the Orthodox, it refers to revealed or sacred information (Chattopadhyaya "Veda" 32). However, Shripad Amrit Dange contends that, when understanding the Veda through the lens of historical materialism, the text refers to the knowledge of gaining, producing, and obtaining 'Prajā Pashvadih' – progeny and animals ("Yajña, Brahman" 55). The *Vedas* are collections of hymns, poetry, and eulogies that pre-literate pastoral Aryans produced and verbally passed down to succeeding generations. As such, they contain wisdom about how to increase human labour power (*Prajā*) and riches (*Dhanam*) in ancient Aryan communities. They are hence known as "hearsay" or "śruti," which means "that which is heard." (Chattopadhyaya "Veda" 32; "Varuna" 545; Dange "Yajña, Brahman" 56). These songs and poems, traditionally known as *mantras*, are later gathered into four *Saṁhitās* or compilations: the *Rgveda-Saṁhitā*, *Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā*, *Atharvaveda-Saṁhitā*, and *Yajurveda-Saṁhitā*. These are commonly referred to as *Rgveda*, *Sāmaveda*, *Atharvaveda*, and *Yajurveda* (Chattopadhyaya "Veda" 32). The *Rgveda* is the first, then the *Yajurveda* (in two branches, the White and the Black), the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda*, in chronological sequence. (Kosambi "Aryans" 73). Of these, the *Sāmaveda* is a collection of hymns largely drawn from the *Rgveda* for singing at sacrificial ceremonies, the *Yajurveda* is a collection of sacrificial formulas used in ritual sacrifices, and the *Atharvaveda* is a collection of spells, charms, and incantations (Damodaran "Beginnings" 40). This indicates that the word *Vedas* is a plural term and it connotes the aforementioned four compilations.

Out of all the four *Vedas*, the *Rgveda* is the most significant and largest, with 1,028 songs or hymns (*sūktas*). Every hymn has an average of 10 stanzas (rk), for a total of 10,552 stanzas. The hymn's overall mass is determined to be equal to the collection of Homer's surviving poems ("Veda" 32). A great body of literature exists in *Veda*, and the composition of the entire *Rgveda* by the pastoral *Vedic* poets took many centuries. The entire *Rgveda* is a literary account of a protracted period of transition from a pre-class to a class-divided society ("Gauri" 244; "Varuna" 556). Because of this, the *Rgveda* is the only text that contains the ideas of the many *Vedic* people, each of whom

represents a different stage of development. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya states: “There is no basis to think that during these hundreds of years the life and thought of Vedic people remained unchanged. Therefore, it is only natural that the Rigveda should contain different strata of the thought of the Vedic people passing through different stages of development” (“Varuna” 539). Scholars differ in their dates of composition for the Ṛgvedic hymns. Max Muller dates the *Ṛgveda* between 1200 B.C. to 800 B.C. (qtd. in Damodaran “Beginnings” 40), D.D. Kosambi between 1500 B.C. to 1200 B.C. (“Aryans” 73), and Meghnad Desai between 1500 B.C. to 900 B.C. (“Introduction” 1). The dates of the Rigvedic hymns' creation indicate their ancient origins, despite differing opinions among scholars regarding these periods.

The writings of the Vedic era convey the ideals of that age and reflect the social and economic foundation of that period. Their primary focus is the provision of fundamental essentials for the Vedic community, or their means of subsistence. The two questions, *Dhanam* (instruments of production, economic productive activities) and *Prajā* (human labour power), are crucial for Vedic literature (Dange “*Yajña: The Collective*” 39). The Vedic hymns, therefore, are the plain statements of the everyday desires of the Vedic people, which include the desires for food, livestock, rain, safety, success, health, and offspring (Chattopadhyaya “Veda” 33). The prehistoric Vedic people were backward (112), and the fear of starvation, death, and extinction was the overriding fear of those ravenous savages (107). As a result, the songs from the earlier strata of the *Ṛgveda* are materialistic (Chattopadhyaya “Chanting” 111) and they are in no way otherworldly which represent the yearning for mokṣa, or freedom (545). Chattopadhyaya argues: “The Vedic poets did not know of any song that was not a showerer of desire and they did not know of any desire that was not positively material. And if their desires were so thoroughly this-worldly, it would be wrong to attribute to them any other-worldly or spiritualistic world-outlook. . .” (550). The *Ṛgveda*'s hymns can be analysed to expose its materialistic content, which contradicts the views of orthodox interpreters who view the text's philosophy as spiritualistic or otherworldly. The meanings of the words change rapidly than the words, and, in course of time, connotations of the Ṛgvedic words were transformed into their opposite, ingraining spiritualistic meanings. For instance, the term “bhagavan,” which is today widely used to refer to God, is derived from the word “bhāga,” which in the *Ṛgveda* merely meant material wealth or a share thereof. This means that the word refers to “one with material wealth” or “one entitled to a share.” (Chattopadhyaya “Varuna” 553-54). This provides us with a clear example of how the *Ṛgveda*, which was originally a materialistic work, has been transformed into a theological and spiritualist sacred text.

The mere reference to multiple gods and goddesses in the text—which are neither characterised as supernatural entities nor divine—leads to the conclusion that the *Ṛgveda* is an otherworldly or spiritualist text (“Varuna” 551). The gods of the *Ṛgveda* are nothing more than the embodiments of inanimate objects, such as the herb (osadhi), the tree (vanaspati), the hill (parvata), the forests (aranyāni), and the weapons (ayudha) such as the bow and arrows. They're also called the embodiments of wishes that are exclusively earthly, such as “the protection against the nightmare,” “the protection against consumptive diseases,” and “the protection against abortion.” (Chattopadhyaya “Veda” 34). The *Ṛgveda*'s Pitu Sūkta is a glorification of one of these key gods, “Pitu,” which means food or Annam:

Now will I glorify Food (pitu) that upholds great strength,

By whose invigorating power Trita rent Vritra limb from limb.

O pleasant Food, O Food of meath, thee have we chosen for our own,

So be our kind protector thou.

Come hitherward to us, O Food, auspicious with auspicious help,

Health-bringing, not unkind, a dear and guileless friend. (I/187. 1-3, Griffith's translation 119)

This Sūkta personifies food as a god and exalts it as the source of life. This description of the food calls it a source of power and health. The Sūkta celebrates the Food, which is a representation of human desire and material objects. The portrayal of Food god does not contain any hint of spirituality or divinity.

The lack of advanced production tools made life difficult for the early Ṛgvedic people. They had to fight hard to survive against wild beasts and the unfathomable powers of nature. They were unable to understand natural events or take use of them for personal gain. This led them to see the divinity in the forces of nature. So, Sun, Moon, Stars, the seasons, trees, stones, rivers, earth — all are personified into gods and goddesses. The deceased coexist among them and receive their food even if they are buried (Damodaran “Beginnings” 30; Dange “*Yajña: The collective*” 37). The *Vedic* gods and the religion associated with them are therefore merely mental projections of the outside forces that rule people's lives. Frederick Engels observes:

Now all religion is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which dominate their daily life, a reflection in which terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural ones. In the beginnings of history it was the forces of nature which were first so reflected . . . Comparative mythology has traced back this first process, at least in the case of the Indo-European peoples, to its origin in the Indian *Vedas* . . .” (“State” 410)

The early *Vedic* Aryans created superstitious, unscientific, and mythological conceptions of reality as a result of their ignorance, and they transformed the external, terrestrial forces that ruled their lives into supernatural ones.

Early *Vedic* poets personify the forces of nature as gods and goddesses; nonetheless, they do not portray the gods as autonomous entities apart from nature, capable of both creating and directing the path of nature, as the later idealists understand the God. The *Vedic* poets do not base their beliefs on any fictitious will of the *Vedic* gods, but rather on the idea of rita, or the order of nature. It is the rita, not the gods, that the *Vedic* poets and their kinsmen believe to be the most powerful force ensuring their survival. In their view, the rita principle, rather than the will of the gods, establishes the universe's order (Chattopadhyaya “Varuna” 631, 628, 629). Mitra and Varuna, especially the latter, are identified as the gods of rita among the *Vedic* gods. They are only referred to as rita observers, guardians, or upholders, though: “Varuna, along with Mitra, was the guardian of the rita – ritasya gopa – and only in this capacity were they the rulers of the rivers and the bestowers of food and rain. They were the revealers of the rita and the increasers (or upholders) of the rita, but all these significantly enough, were accomplished by the aid of the rita” (Rig. vii.64.2/ i. 23.5, qtd. in Chattopadhyaya “Varuna” 629). This shows that the rita, or the natural order, is independent of the gods; rather, the gods are dependent upon the rita since Varuna is able to maintain the rita only with its assistance. The god Varuna merely exists as a metaphor of the rita, so the idea of the *Ṛgveda*'s rita contains a rudimentary materialistic philosophy.

In the early stages of human development, human relations and social processes were understandable and not very complex. The only things that people could not understand or explain were the powers of nature. However, in course of time, the social forces also became inexplicable and mysterious like the forces of nature. Engels contends:

But side by side with the forces of nature, it is not long before social forces begin to be active, forces which confront man as equally alien and at first equally inexplicable, dominating him with the same apparent natural necessity as the very forces of nature. The fantastic figures [personifications], which at first only reflected the mysterious forces of nature, at this point acquire social attributes, become representatives of the forces of history. ("State" 410)

The personifications of the social forces to gods and goddesses begin after the social forces attribute the characteristics of the natural forces. Some persons, with the increase of population, gain more power and prestige in society and the common people attribute them divinity and make them god and goddesses.

The *Vedic* poets personify some of the powerful figures of Aryan tribes to gods and goddesses. Indra is one of the many human gods mentioned in the *R̥gveda*; he is portrayed as the main war god and is praised in numerous verses for his bravery in battle and his ability to give the conquered food and supplies to the other Aryans so they may survive. This is how Indra is commended in Rig.VI. 80.3:

Indra, give us immortality and joy,
Give us tempered strength to destroy enemies!
Make us prosperous and protect us!
Protect the learned! Bestow good progeny
And plentiful food on us! (qtd. in Damodaran "Beginnings" 31)

In the ancient Aryan Community, the rubber wars became more intense as the pastoral economy developed. This establishes the foundation for a war-god's supremacy. Indra, the deity of battle and plunder, finally usurped the ancient glory of Varuna, the moral administrator (Chattopadhyaya "Varuna" 635). Indra is worshipped for robbing the wealth of Anaryas, Dās̄yus and Āsuras, destroying their hundreds of villages and killing lakhs of them (Ambedkar "Reformers" 23). The references to war found in the *R̥gveda* are somewhat related to prehistoric battles fought by the *Vedic* Aryans against a variety of opponents such as Āsuras, Dāsa, and Dās̄yus (K.Mishra "Races" 232). This suggests that prior to being elevated to the status of a war god, Indra was merely "the culture-hero of some *Vedic* tribe" (Chattopadhyaya "Varuna" 535). Indra is not a god but he is a brave person of the *Vedic* period.

The introduction of fire and the domestication of animals revolutionised the way of life for the prehistoric Aryans. Hunting and fishing were insufficient to sustain the prehistoric population, and because food supplies were unpredictable, humans were forced to turn to cannibalism (Dange "*Yajña*" The collective 41). The discovery of fire facilitated the simpler digestion of meat, and the domestication of animals produced consistent food supplies, increasing the amount of meat and giving rise to new food types, such as milk and its byproducts (Engels "Part Played" 9). It is undeniable that fire was seen in the woodlands as a dreadful, destructive force of nature that ravaged

everything in its path. Nonetheless, the point was to produce it at the will of mankind and to make a non-living force of nature into men's service. Engels admits:

The practical discovery of the conversion of mechanical motion into heat is so very ancient that it can be taken as marking the beginning of human history. Whatever discoveries, in the way of tools and domestication of animals, may have preceded it, the making of fire by friction was the first instance of men pressing a non-living force of nature into their service. ("Heat" 111)

The fire, or Agni, became the source of creation, existence, growth, riches, happiness, and everything for the prehistoric Aryans once they learned to produce fire by friction and used it in their duties (41). Fire and livestock brought the productive powers to a new height. This new productive forces brought men "... from savagery to barbarism, from the Krita age to the Treta age, from wanderings to settlements, from starvation and occasional cannibalism to assured supply of food, shelter and defence, from nakedness to covering, from helplessness before Nature to strength and growth" (Dange "Yajña: the collective" 42). The *Rgveda* has more hymns dedicated to Agni, or fire, than to any other gods, as a result of *Vedic* writers viewing him as the principal god (Kosambi "Aryans" 78). The *Rgveda's* hymns glorify the god Agni, referring to him as Vishpati, the head and guardian of human settlements, since fire was the only thing that allowed the prehistoric Aryans to build houses (Dange "Yajña: The collective" 41). This demonstrates that the *Vedic* gods are nothing more than the embodiments of the natural or social forces that have an impact on people's lives.

The discovery of fire and the domestication of animals brought forth the concept of *Yajña* which "... led to wealth, prosperity and growth of the Aryan commune and saved it from extinction" ("Yajña, Brahman" 53). The basic ideas of the Aryan culture were *Brahman* and *yajña*, which are considered the source, the culmination, and the entirety of existence ("Where" 28). Dange defines *Brahman* as the ancient Aryan Commune, *yajña*, its collective mode of production and *Vedas*, the knowledge of this mode of production ("Yajña: The collective" 43). *Yajña* is not a word; rather, it is a sentence that comes from *ya*, *ja*, and *na*. The root *ya* means 'to go, to gather'; *ja* means to beget; *na* means third-person-plural form of the verb and the sentence means 'they gather together and beget'. What did they beget? In primitive commune, Aryans assembled together and produced things, means of subsistence and children, the human labor power ("Yajña, Brahman" 50). The extreme backwardness of the productive forces in primitive Aryan communities prevents private production, private consumption, and private families. If anything is to be produced, it is possible only by collective labor ("Yajña: The collective" 43). This shows that Dange's description of *yajña* as the collective mode of production and the term *Brahman* as a prehistoric Aryan commune are accurate.

The *Vedic* literature supports Dange's notion of *yajña*. Dange has studied the features of the original *yajnas*—*Satras* and *Kratu*, as described in the *Vedas*. *Satras* and *Kratu* are described in the *Vedas* as the *yajñas* carried out by the gods, the ancestors of the Aryans. Dange discusses a number of *Satras'* characteristics, which are similar to the collective production method of the prehistoric Aryans. The first characteristic of the *Satras* is that every participant is considered a *Yajamana*, whereas in later *yajñas*, the priests are not considered to be *Yajamanas*. The second feature of the *Satras* is that the *Yajñaphal*, the collective products are distributed and consumed collectively. Thirdly, unlike later *yajñas*, all participants in the *Satras* are of the same *Gotra*, that is, blood related. Fourthly, all the participants are elected to temporary functional roles and it dissolves after the work is over. The fifth characteristic of the *Satras* is that, in contrast to the subsequent *yajñas*, both men and women participated in the *Satra yajña* or labor. Likewise, Dange explains the characteristics of *Kratu yajña*

which also exhibits the collective labor in relation to cattle production, rearing and consumption of the primitive Aryans (“*Yajña*: The collective” 44-7). This reveals that in its original form, the *yajña* was the sum total of all the daily tasks carried out by the primordial Aryan Commune in order to maintain and advance Aryan existence. Originally, the *yajña*, as Dange claims, was the Aryan people's archaic form of collective production, vital to the upkeep and development of the commune known as the *Brahman*.

The distribution of community goods among the members of the commune provides additional evidence that the *yajña* was the early Aryan Commune's collective form of production. Every item that was brought to the Mahavedi was intended for immediate consumption and use. The remainder of the feast, known as the *Hutashesha*, was enjoyed by everyone after the gods and *pitaras* (ancestors) were given their parts first. It was the daily *Havana* which Dange defines as the mode of distribution of food, collectively produced, to the whole commune and it was regarded as an integral part of the *yajña* (“*Yajña*: The collective” 49). There was no discrimination made among commune members in the old system of *Havana*; everyone received an equal portion of food. A private householder could not have cooked "his own food" for himself separately because at that time neither he nor his "own" existed (Dange "Organisation" 95). Based on this ideal state of the prehistoric Aryan Commune, the *Bhagavad Gītā* formulates the moral code in verse III.13 for those living in class society, where food is cooked just for one's own sake:

yajñāśiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarvakilbiṣaiḥ

bhuñjate te tvaghaṁ pāpā ye pacantyātmakāraṇāt

(The good people who eat what is left from the sacrifice are released from all sins but those wicked people who prepare food for their own sake – verily they eat sin.). (Radhakrishnan's translation 155)

In the aforementioned verse, the author of the *Gītā* anticipates that people would uphold the morals of the ancient time in which people cooked for the benefit of the entire Commune as well as themselves, and they relished using leftover food after giving gods and *pitaras* their portion. This verse of the *Gītā* condemned the members of class society as "eaters of sin" who prepared food just for themselves without considering the needs of others. It can be seen from this that the verse maintains the morality of the *Satra yajña* of the ancient Aryan Commune, rather than the *yajña* of the later periods. The *Gītā* refers to *saha-yajñāḥ* in III.10, which is the combined *yajña* of three castes people (*Prajāḥ*), carried out for the proliferation of riches and people (144), and which preserves the features of the *Satra yajña* of the prehistoric Aryan Commune. The *Gītā* mentions *Kratuḥ yajña* in IX.16 (Gambhirananda translation 382), although it does not go into detail about its characteristics.

The *yajñas*, the collective mode of production of the prehistoric Aryan Commune, gradually transform into ritual with the passage of time. The *Satra* and *Kratu yajñas* transform into *Ashwa Medha*, *Puruṣa Medha* and *Brahma Medha yajñas* at the later stage of Aryan history. The Aryan Commune's limited economy was unable to keep up with the growing population, leading to the Aryan *Gaṇa*-*Gotra* splitting up and dispersing throughout Asia in search of other areas to inhabit. In the search for wealth and space, disease and death or foes sometimes annihilated the Aryan *Gaṇa*. In this process, the migrating Aryans had to engage in wars with opposing tribes. There are numerous accounts of these battles in the *Rgveda*. The *Deva-Gaṇas'* conflicts with the *Āsuras*, *Daituas*, *Rakshasas*, and other similar forces serve as instances of this. Following their victory in battle, the Aryan *Gaṇa* took possession of the enemy's cattle, other valuables, as well as its men,

women, and children, bringing them back to their Gaṇa home. The Gaṇa-Commune owns the war booty, which is not regarded as private property. They are distributed among the Gaṇa members, but not until they carry out the *yajña* rituals of Ashwa Medha, Puruṣa Medha, and Brahma Medha (Dange “Organization” 83–90). Ashwa Medha, Puruṣa Medha and Brahma Medha *yajñas* do not carry the every communistic feature of the previous the Satra and Kratu *yajñas*, but they are still based on the ancient commune system.

The three-*yajña* ceremonies are performed with the participation of all the commune members under the direction of the Gaṇapati. It is a celebration of the war's victory as well. The Ashwa Medha *yajña* involves the slaughter of the horse that initially ventured into enemy territory in order to produce the sacred meal for the deity Agni fire and the commune. Prior to slaughtering the horse, all of the Gaṇa members partake in meat, wine, and sex dance, i.e., the group mating, an Aryan tradition that was common at the time. In this kind of group mating, the captured women are also included, and the Gaṇa accept them as members of their own. A small number of male inmates are also taken in by the commune due to their physical attractiveness, strength, and aptitude for medicine; the remainder are sacrificed to the powerful fire deity Agni. It is called the Puruṣa Medha *yajña*. The lack of any reference to even a symbolic eating of the victims means that this Medha is not seen as a cannibalistic remnant. They were killed only because the commune's impoverished economy could not support additional mouths. Later, as the productive forces developed and the victors were able to provide jobs for them, the deaths of the male prisoners ceased, turning them into slaves. The Gaṇa members enjoy with the meat of different kinds of animals beside the horse slaughtered in the *yajña*. Their final task is to dispose of their kinsmen who have been killed in battle, following the release of the male prisoners in the Puruṣa Medha. The collective dumping of kins killed in battle is known as Brahma Medha *yajña*. The dead from the war are an essential component of the *Brahman*, the Gaṇa Commune, and as the name implies, their disposal is considered a partial demise of the commune itself (Dange “Organization” 90-2). The three *yajñas*; Ashwa Medha, Puruṣa Medha and Brahma Medha are the product of the time and they fulfil their duties given to them by the time. The growth of the productive forces compelled the ancient Aryans to participate in such *yajñas* as a social duty.

The distribution of war booty among commune members marks the conclusion of the *yajña* procedure. The various forms of captured riches, including as jewellery, clothing, livestock, and pots are distributed among the Gaṇa members through the act of Dānam, which was a crucial component of the *yajña* during that era. Later *Vedic* scholars mistranslated the word Dānam as a gift or charity, although the word actually means "division" in the *Ṛgveda* since it is derived from the root "da," which means "divide." Havana is the name given to the daily distribution of the collective products among the Gaṇa members in the peacetime economy. Dānam encompasses the sporadic dispersal of battle booty or durable commodities like armour, clothing, ceramics, etc. The riches gained during the war belongs to the entire commune, hence Dānam, like Havana, is a social duty rather than the personal responsibility of the tribe head or Gaṇapati, according to his wishes. In the prehistoric Aryan Commune system, Dānam served as a legal safeguard against starvation for the sick, old, crippled, and weak, who typically had the first claim to communal property. There was a guarantee of fair distribution and safety from famine for every individual in the prehistoric Aryan Commune, founded on collectivism (Dange “Organization” 92-6). Dānam and Havana are indispensable parts of the *yajña* procedure of the ancient communistic Aryans but they lose their original significance with time.

The fundamental characteristics of *yajña* were transformed into their opposites with the advent of private property and classes in society. The *yajña*, the Aryan Commune's collective mode of

production, became "purely a ritual, a form of worship, a social memory" ("*Yajña, Brahman*" 50). In class society, the two top castes, the Brāhma-Kṣatriyas, turned the *yajña* rite into an ideological weapon to suppress the primary producers, the Vaiśhyas and Sūdras, and to battle against other tribes (Kosambi, "Aryans," 87; "State," 143). The *yajñas* were employed by the Brāhma-Kṣatriya monarchs to seize the animals and wealth of the common people as well as the large territories that the Vaiśhya-Sūdra labourers had cultivated (Dange "Sanguinary" 149). The holy texts state that the primary goal of the sacrifice was to multiply animals, food, and prosperity—all of which might be attained through aggression. It was believed that making a sacrifice was essential to winning a war and, moreover, to becoming a successful war commander. Man, bull, and stallion were the highest ranking sacrificial "beasts" (Aryans, 87). However, human sacrifice grew sporadic, and it was only seen to be essential to fortify strong points like city gates and bastions and to keep dams from being washed away by floodwaters. In such cases, the killed victim had to be buried in the foundations of the new construction ("From Tribe" 102). Human sacrifice was merely a ceremony, unlike the Puruṣa Medha of the ancient time, when the Gaṇa commune was forced to kill the male war prisoners due to a low economy. There was more to the horse sacrifice than just killing and devouring it. The chief queen had to couple with the killed horse as a revolting reproductive ritual and it might have been considered as substitute for some earlier sacrifice of the king or his surrogate. The horse was given a year to roam freely before being killed, and any other tribe that attempted to stop it was met with a challenge to fight. This resulted in ongoing conflict and warfare with the opposing tribes, which, when combined with a cycle of sacrifices, benefited only the Kṣatriya kings and the Brāhmaṇas (Kosambi "Aryans" 87). The Kṣatriya monarchs amassed their wealth and power and extended their territory with the use of sacrifices and the higher sacrificial fees benefited the Brāhmaṇas. The *yajñas'* ritualistic practices introduced superstition, and the ruling class's ritual *yajñas* were founded on violence, plunder, and looting. The ancient *yajñas*, conducted by the *Brahman*, the Aryan commune, which protected the labouring masses, lost their allure and beauty, and instead became adversaries of the masses.

The terms "Dānam" and "Havana" also underwent meaning modifications due to private property and social classes. The monarch and his Kṣatriya aristocracy began to use the war as a means of accumulating money for their own homes. This turned the war booty into the king's and the ruling class's property. Subsequently, Dānam—previously the mandated allocation of the acquired riches among the Gaṇa members—became an exclusive responsibility of the monarch and the governing elite. It depends on their own wishes whether to share the wealth or not. The monarch was seen as a good king if he dispersed the wealth; if not, he was a bad king. Dānam evolved as an optional virtue and a gift or charitable donation from the kings or Kṣatriyas. Dānam was transformed from a social insurance tool to a means of enriching the Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas, the ruling class. The social obligation of the war chief or Gaṇa chief to distribute Dānam attached to the monarch and Kṣatriya class and the right of the *Brahman*, the Commune in receiving the war-booty transformed itself to another branch of the governing class, Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas, as conductors of the *yajña* process, the *Vedas* and possessors of intellectual legacy, alone were regarded the true heirs of the *Brahman*, the Commune and they alone became the receivers of all Dānam and Havana (Dange "Organization" 93-6). A majority of the producing population was denied access to Dānam and Havana, and the new classes appropriated and used the traditional ideology and moral principles associated with Dānam and Havana for their own class objectives. The king and the Kṣatriya class, who possessed the social riches, did not divide it among the populace; the Brāhmaṇas were the only ones to benefit from their distribution. In the new class structure, the wealth and property amassed in the name of *yajñas* became exclusively the property and fortune of the governing Kṣatriyas and

Brāhmaṇas. The ruling class used the *yajñas* as weapons for plundering the wealth and property from both foreigners and most of their own producing population, the Vaiśyas and Sūdras.

The historic prestige of *yajña* was gone, but the Brāhmaṇic ideology known as Pūrva Mīmāṃsā idealised the new forms of *yajña* that were degraded by class society. The *Vedic* orthodoxy forms the foundation of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. The *Vedas* were referred to as the holy books of Brahmanism in later Aryan history, and the ruling elite clearly needed the adoration of the *Vedas* to maintain control and the law-abiding behaviour of the vast majority of the labouring people (“Hangover”13”). The orthodox, even at the present time, believe that the *Vedas* are the source of all knowledge, and some Indian legal rules forbid women and members of lower castes from studying the *Vedas* (Chattopadhyaya "Veda" 33). However, for the early Aryans, who lived in the *yajña* mode of production, there was no such thing as a sacred Veda. There was nothing mysterious about these verses because they were their own creations and they used their own creative deeds and words based on their life experiences to produce the Richas or *Mantras* of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* were the plain works of the preliterate Aryans, but later on, they were made so orthodox that it was thought to be the greatest heresy to add to or alter the words already present (Dange “*Yajña, Brahman*” 54-5). In the end, the *Vedas* became the text of orthodoxy, and it is from this orthodoxy that Pūrva Mīmāṃsā's philosophy originates.

The Mīmāṃsā-sūtra, a collection of 2500 aphorisms credited to a particular Jaimini, is the foundational text of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā philosophy. Its exact date of compilation is impossible to determine, however it may have occurred between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. (Chattopadhyaya “Mimamsa” 51). The word Mīmāṃsā implies systematic investigation and the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā philosophy seeks to conduct a systematic research into the rituals and sacrifices of the Brāhmaṇas, also referred to as the Karmakānda. The Mīmāṃsā-sūtra by Jaimini is a text on rites that impose prohibitions and injunctions. Jaimini's Dharma is founded on *Vedic* Karma, which refers to carrying out ritual observances, or *yajñas*, with the hope of receiving compensation in a subsequent life. The Mīmāṃsakas view *yajñas*, or Karma, as the foundation of human existence and everything that goes towards achieving human goals. They place greater value on the *Vedas* than the *Vedic* gods because, in their view, the purpose of the *yajñas* is not to appease the gods or purify the soul, but rather to carry out the instructions given by the *Vedas* and the Brāhmaṇas. They endow the *Vedas* with an enigmatic holiness. Jaimini considers the *Vedas* as self-revealing and timeless texts that were not created by humans or even the gods (Damodaran "Mimamsa" 172-3). The original materialistic *Vedas* of the ancient communistic Aryans get polluted by the Brāhmaṇic philosophy of the later times and the *Vedas* begin to be interpreted as mysterious scriptures.

The Mīmāṃsakas deny the existence of God (“Mimamsa” 55-6). They base their denial of God on the concept of magic, which maintains that “...by creating the illusion that we control reality, we can actually control it” (Chattopadhyaya "Tantra" 272). Similar to the magical concept, as noted by Chattopadhyaya, the Mīmāṃsakas likewise hold that the *yajña* rites generate their effects on their own, either automatically or via the aid of their own intrinsic rules or inherent power. They do not think that the success of the *yajñas* is due to God's grace. Furthermore, they consider the *Vedic* deities to be little more than names or sounds required for the ritual spells (Chattopadhyaya “Mimamsa” 56). The Mīmāṃsakas seem to be materialists since they reject the existence of God, a supernatural being. However, they overvalue *yajñas*, or ceremonial blood sacrifices, and turn them into esoteric, mysterious practices. They bestow divinity on the *yajñas* themselves. The Mīmāṃsakas ideology, therefore, strengthens the *yajñas*, the intellectual tool of the ruling class, and with their assistance, the Brāhma-Kṣatriya class increases their wealth and power, subjugating the Vaiśyas and Sūdras, the majority of toiling masses.

Conclusion

The *Vedas* are found to be materialistic at the beginning, and with the introduction of private property and classes, they are modified and made other-worldly and spiritualistic. The *Vedic* verses are found to be the songs of pre-historic *Vedic* Aryans and those songs were made on those material objects and forces that have direct impact on their daily life. They made songs on 'Pitu' (the food), Sun, Moon, Stars, the seasons, trees, earth, rivers, stones, Agni (the fire) and all the other natural forces with which they have to encounter while sustaining their life. They are mysterious and inexplicable for the *Vedic* Aryans and are personified as gods and goddesses. Human relationships, human development, and social processes are initially simple and understandable. Like the forces of nature, they too became enigmatic and mysterious over time. This made the *Vedic* poets personify some of the strong Aryan tribesmen to gods and goddesses. One of the numerous human gods mentioned in the *Vedas*, Indra is represented as the primary god of war. Later times idealize two fundamental notions of the *Vedas*; *yajña* and *Brahman*, however it is discovered that these conceptions have a materialistic base, unlike the later concepts. Historical materialist interpretation of the terms reveal that *yajña* signifies the collective mode of production, and *Brahman*, ancient Aryan commune. These are the terms coined and used by the *Vedic* Aryans when they lived in commune, participated in the collective labor and consumed the products collectively. In the later modifications, the *Brahman*, the commune is converted into an abstract entity and *yajña* is made a ritual performance organized to benefit the ruling class people. The Brāhmaṇic philosophy, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, sanctifies the *Vedas* and idealizes the new forms of *yajña* of the class society. It is found that the *yajña* now have been made the ideological tool of the ruling Brāhma-Kṣatriya class, in order to suppress and exploit the majority of toiling masses.

Works Cited

- Ambedkar, B.R. "Reformers and Their Fate." *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India*, file:///E:/Revolution%20and%20Counterrevolution%20by%20Ambedkar.pdf , pp.13-71.
- Chattopadhyaya, Debiprasad. "The Chanting Dogs." *Lokāyata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, People's Publishing House, 1992, pp. 76-122.
- . "Gauri." *Lokāyata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, People's Publishing House, 1992, pp. 232-66.
- . "Hangover of Ancient Beliefs." *Indian Philosophy: A Popular Introduction*, People's Publishing House, 1993, pp. 5-14.
- . "The Mimamsa." *Indian Philosophy: A Popular Introduction*, People's Publishing House, 1993, pp. 51-67.
- . "Tantra." *Lokāyata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, People's Publishing House, 1992, pp. 269-358.
- . "Varuna and Māyā." *Lokāyata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism*, People's Publishing House, 1992, pp. 527-665.
- . "The Veda." *Indian Philosophy: A Popular Introduction*, People's Publishing House, 1993, pp. 32-6.
- Damodaran, K. "The Beginnings of Philosophy." *Indian Thought: A Critical Survey*, 1967, pp. 30-43, file:///E:/K%20Damodaran%20Indian%20Thought.pdf
- . "The Mimamsa." *Indian Thought: A Critical Survey*, 1967, pp. 172-79, file:///E:/K%20Damodaran%20Indian%20Thought.pdf

- Dange, Shripad Amrit. "Organisation of Tribal Wars and War-Wealth. Ashwa Medha, Purusha Medha and Danam." *India From Primitive Communism to Slavery: A Marxist Study of Ancient History in Outline*, People's Publishing House, 1972, pp. 83-96, file:///E:/Sripad%20Amrit%20Dange's%20India%20Primitive%20Communism%20to%20Slavery.pdf
- . "Sanguinary Wars and the Rise of the State and Danda." *India From Primitive Communism to Slavery: A Marxist Study of Ancient History in Outline*, People's Publishing House, 1972, pp. 146-53, file:///E:/Sripad%20Amrit%20Dange's%20India%20Primitive%20Communism%20to%20Slavery.pdf
- . "Where Aryan Man Begins." *India From Primitive Communism to Slavery: A Marxist Study of Ancient History in Outline*, People's Publishing House, 1972, pp. 21-9, file:///E:/Sripad%20Amrit%20Dange's%20India%20Primitive%20Communism%20to%20Slavery.pdf
- . "Yajña, Brahman and Veda." *India From Primitive Communism to Slavery: A Marxist Study of Ancient History in Outline*, People's Publishing House, 1972, pp. 50-58, file:///E:/Sripad%20Amrit%20Dange's%20India%20Primitive%20Communism%20to%20Slavery.pdf
- . "Yajña: The Collective Mode of Production of the Aryan Commune." *India From Primitive Communism to Slavery: A Marxist Study of Ancient History in Outline*, People's Publishing House, 1972, pp. 37-49, file:///E:/Sripad%20Amrit%20Dange's%20India%20Primitive%20Communism%20to%20Slavery.pdf
- Desai, Meghnad. Introduction. *Who Wrote The BhagavadGītā? : A Secular Inquiry into a Sacred Text*, Harper Element, 2014, pp. 1-15.
- Engels, Frederick. "Heat." *Dialectics of Nature*, Progress Publishers, 1986, pp. 109-13.
- . *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*. Foreign Languages Press, 1975.
- . "State, Family, Education." *Anti-Duhring*, Foreign Languages Press, 1976, pp. 407-22.
- Gambhirananda, Swami, translator. *Bhagavad Gītā: With the Commentary of Sankarācārya*. Advaita Āshrama, 2014.
- Griffith, R.T.H., translator. *Rgveda: The Oldest Divine Book*. Edited by F. Max Muller, 7th ed., VIJAY GOEL, 2017.
- Kosambi, D.D. "The Aryans." *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, Vikas Publishing House, 1994, pp. 72-95.
- . "From Tribe to Society." *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, Vikas Publishing House, 1994, pp. 96-132.
- . "State and Religion in Greater Magadha." *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, Vikas Publishing House, 1994, pp. 133-65.
- Mishra, K C. "Races of Pre-history." *Tribes in the Mahābhārata: A Socio-Cultural Study*, National Publishing House, 1987, pp. 217-249.
- Radhakrishnan, S., translator. *The BhagavadGītā*. Harpercollins Publishers, 2010.