EVOLUTION OF SARASVATĪ IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

ABSTRACT SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SANSKRIT

BY
MOHD. ISRAIL KHAN

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF Dr. R. S. TRIPATHI PROF. & HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY ALIGARH

FACULTY OF ARTS ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY ALIGARH 1969
ABSTRACT

The Hindu mythology is predominantly polytheistic. Gods are numerous and each god or goddess shows very often mutually irreconcilable traits within him or her. This is equally true of Sarasvati, too. She is one of female deities of the Rāṣṭriya times. She has got many peculiarities of her own resulting in complexity of her various conceptions through the ages. In the Rāṣṭriya pantheon, among female deities, Usas, the daughter of the heaven is (divo duhitā) given an exalted place and has been highly extolled as a symbol of poetic beauty. Sarasvatī comes next to her in comparison to other Rāṣṭriya goddesses. But in the later period, Usas has lost her superiority and Sarasvatī has excelled her. The superiority of Sarasvatī is also obvious from another instance. In the Vedic pantheon, many deities arose and later on merged into others. If any one of them survived, was mostly in an stereotyped form. But with Sarasvatī, there has been a gradual process of change and development. In her earliest stage, she was a spacious stream having rhythmic flow and congenial waters. It was, therefore, but natural that it arrested the attention of seers dwelling along with its banks. They showed their heart-felt reverence to her. As a result, it was thought to be a living and active entity capable of listening to their prayers and in the fine, was identified with river-goddess, speech, goddess of speech. Since then, she has undergone many changes through many transitory periods of the
different epochs of the Sanskrit literature; as: completely identified with speech (vāg vai sarasvatī); fully anthropomorphised and in the classical period, has unanimously been accepted as the goddess of speech, learning and eloquence, etc. Her place has not been confined to Indian deities only. She has travelled virtually as far as Greek and Roman mythical horizon and, thus, has established her place among many deities there parallel in conception as well as in function.

Taking all these into account, the present study, 'Evolution of Sarasvatī In Sanskrit Literature' has been divided into seven chapters with an Appendix added towards the end.

The first chapter deals with the physical aspect of Sarasvatī, i.e., 'The Earliest Notion of Sarasvatī As a River'. The earliest scripture, the Rgveda mentions several rivers in ancient India. Among them, the Sarasvatī is highly extolled. Besides several stray accounts, it has been mentioned in the complete three Sūktas and in comparison to other rivers, the personification of the Sarasvatī has reached its climax. It originally stood for a primitive; but for a mighty stream. It was of a river of divine nature and hence is reckoned to be a celestial river. This river along with the Drṣadvatī once had formed the boundary of Brahmāvarta. But this river could not maintain its flow down to the present time. It disappeared long ago owing to a certain geographical change which has naturally arrested the attention of scholars, many among them have investigated into the matter and have thrown light on its whereabouts. Roth, Zimmer, etc., try to identify this river with the Indus. But their views are untenable. K.C. Coṭṭopādhyāya maintains that in the earliest portion of the Rgveda, particularly in
Mandalas VI and VII, Sarasvatī means Indus, and in the other passages, the little stream now known by that name. According to him, the Indus itself was called by the name of Sarasvatī and occasionally by Sindhu; but when the little stream in the Madhyadeśa also came to be known as the Sarasvatī, the distinction between these two became necessary, and the latter was, therefore, called the eastern Sarasvatī. But this assumption is quite untenable. If the Sarasvatī and the Sindhu were the same, the terms used for them ought to have been exchanged at least once, if not often. To Max Müller, the Rgvedic Sarasvatī is the same as the later Sarasvatī. Here the later Sarasvatī stands for the modern Sarsūti, which, in popular belief and folk-lore, stands for old Rgvedic Sarasvatī. Divaprasad Das Gupta, who also touches upon the problem on the basis of the two theories, propounded by two eminent geologists Pilgrim and Pascoe, who give the Sarasvatī the name of the Siwalik River and the Indo-Brahm River. He takes the matter elaborately. According to him, the route of the Sarasvatī was from Assam down to the south-eastern part of Punjab and Rajasthan. But due to river capture, the Sarasvatī turned into pieces. The lower course of the Sarasvatī merged into the Yamunā. But in Bengal, there is Daksīna Prayāga, which is called the redivision of the Bhāgīrathī, Sarasvatī and Yamunā. But during the 16th century, a river capture took place in the Gāṅgā with the result that the Sarasvatī and the Yamunā dried up. The lower course of Sarasvatī was occupied by the Bhāgīrathī, which at present is identified with the Hoogly river standing for Rgvedic Sarasvatī. This identification is untenable.

The geographical and historical data also help us in locating the route of the Sarasvatī. In the geographical data, the place of mountain and oceans is of great significance. It is unquestioned that the Sarasvatī got
down from the Siwalik range. So far as the seas are concerned, it was the Rajasthan sea where the Sarasvatī at first fell and, therefore, was called easterly. But owing to the upheaval of the earth, this sea disappeared. The decomposition of the Aravalli range is also said to have played its own role in raising the level of the sea higher. As a result, the Sarasvatī changed its route to westwards and fell into the Arabian sea, and hence was called westerly. Among the historical data, the place of the tribes especially of the Bharatas, the Kurus and the Pūrus is of paramount importance. The Bharatas lived along the banks of the Sarasvatī, and worshipped a female goddess, called Bhāratī, who had close affinity with the Sarasvatī river. This tribe was among the Ṛgvedic Aryans, who during the Brāhmaṇical period divided into two groups, the Easterners and the Westerners. The association of the Bharatas with the Sarasvatī shows that the river assuredly flowed through western part of the country. So does the Kurus whose land was Kurukṣetra. The Pūrus, too, are said dwelling along the banks of the Sarasvatī, who merged into the Kurus by the process of intertribe marriage.

It is generally believed that the Sarasvatī disappeared long ago and is now flowing underground and manifests itself at Prayāga at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. This mystic confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvatī is supposed to be a kind of superstition; it is left far behind near Hanumangarh and Suratgarh. It is no more in existence. It is completely lost, and the locality where it ceased its flow, is called Vinasana or disappearance situated in the territory in Patiala district. There is divergence of opinion about the real situation of the Vinasana
The Tāndya-Mahābrāhmaṇa measures out the distance between the Vinasāna and the Plakṣa Prāsravāna, a place situated somewhere on the Himalayas at forty four āśvinas, one āśvina being the distance traversed by a horse constantly moving one complete day and night. But this step, too, does not serve our purpose, because āśvina has not been accepted unanimously to be a specific measurement of length.

Modern investigations brush the doubt aside and let us believe that the modern Sarasvati was once virtually occupied by the old Vedic Sarasvatī, which flows near Pehoa or modern Prthūdaka fourteen miles away from the west of Thanesar. At Hanumangarh, this river joins Ghaggar, an old remnant of the river, which also originates from the same origin of the Sarasvatī. When the Sarasvati joins the Ghaggar, it loses its previous name and is known as either Sarasvati-Ghaggar or Ghaggar alone. But the name Ghaggar alone purports both the Sarasvati and the Ghaggar. This stream goes ahead through Patiala State, Hissar district, Bikaner, Bahawalpur and, at the end, it enters the area of Pakistan bearing the name of Hakra.

Chapter II 'Sarasvatī In the Ṛgveda' deals with the various aspects of the personality of Sarasvatī. The river form itself is a physical account of Sarasvatī; but how Sarasvatī came to assume subtler form or notion is viewed here from the psychological as well as naturalistic viewpoints. In the poetic mode, the waves are its hands and its (her) breasts are conceived either the store of waters or the store of knowledge. Besides, there are certain epithets like 'suyamā', 'śubhrā' and 'supesas' used in the sense of beautiful body, fair complexioned and beautiful respectively. These epithets used for Sarasvatī seem to be a step towards
her anthropomorphism.

The mental aspect of Sarasvatī has been brought out in clear terms with special reference to dhiyāvasuh, codayītrī sūṃtānām, cetanti sumatīnām and the like.

In the Rgveda, we come across various allusions to the social aspect of Sarasvatī. She is delineated as a mother, sister, wife, daughter and friend.

By the epithet ambītamā, we deduce that she is the best of mothers. The other epithet 'sindhumātā' apparently a compound word with 'sindhu' and 'mātā' means that Sarasvatī is either the mother of sindhus (rivers) or sindhu (waters). Saptasvasa, saptadhātuḥ, saptathī, trišadhasthā, svaṛr anyā rtāvari delineate the social aspect of Sarasvatī as a sister. The epithet saptasvasa assigns her to be one of the seven sister rivers namely Gāṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Sutudrī, Paruṣṇī, Marudvrdhā and Ārjīkiyā. The seven sisters also symbolise the stream of bliss, the stream of existence, the stream of consciousness, the stream of truth, the stream of Manu, the stream of breath and the stream of gross body. Saptadhātuḥ, saptathī and svaṛr anyā rtāvari delineate the same aspect of Sarasvatī as saptasvasa.

By 'vīrapatnī' we come to know that Sarasvatī is a wife. She is a wife either of hero (in general) or Pṛajāpati or Brahmā or she is the protectress of heroes. By vṛṣṇaḥ patnīḥ, it is reckoned to be one of the wives of Vṛṣabh meaning Indra. Sarasvatī is also called marutvatī, which has a varied meanings. Marutvat means attended by the Maruts (said of Indra, Vāyu, Viṣṇu, Sarasvatī, Agni and Somal). These varied meanings lead us to believe that Sarasvatī is either the wife of the Maruts or is one of
the wives of the gods mentioned above. The epithet pāvīravi suggests Sarasvatī to be the daughter of pāvīru, thunderbolt or lightning. Owing to the possession of 'pavi', Indra is called pāvīravaṇ. The epithet 'pāvīravi' for Sarasvatī probably denotes her to be either the wife of Indra or generated by his weapon 'pavi' as mādhyaṃkā vāk. There are few attributes such as marutsakha, sakhyā and uttarā sakhibhyaḥ, which present Sarasvatī as a friend.

The Rgveda assigns to Sarasvatī many activities. Sarasvatī as river has been worshipped variously by devout and has been asked for various cherished boons. Wealth is one of the most desired objects. Sarasvatī is possessed of the precious wealth as her breasts are expressly called as saśayāḥ, possessed of wealth; ratnadāḥ, container of wealth, and vasuvīd, possessed of precious wealth. Ṛayaś cetantī, āpo revatīḥ, etc., refer to this very nature of Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī gives not only wealth; but along with it, she brings pleasure also. This idea has been clearly hinted at in the term mayobhuvah commonly applicable to Ilā, Sarasvatī and Mahī (Bhāratī).

The Vedic people desired brave progeny and like other deities Sarasvatī was also prayed for that. In the Rgveda, Sinīvālī has predo
dominantly been taken to be the presiding deity of fertility and growth. In one of the Rgvedic mantras, Sarasvatī is invoked along with Sinīvālī and the Maruts to sustain the embryo. A devotee of Sarasvatī is encouraged by the case of Vadhryaśva recorded in the Rgveda, who was blessed by Sarasvatī with a mighty and worthy son.
Among many things granted by Sarasvatī, food is a very important and prominent gift. The terms āyuṃsi explained as annāni, yasās (food or water), vājinīvatī (annavatī), etc., describe Sarasvatī as a giver of food.

Besides, there are many other striking epithets which throw light on some of the special features of the personality of Sarasvatī. The terms vājinīvatī, pāvakā, ghṛtācī, pārāvataghnī, citrāyuh, hiranyavartmī, asuryā, dharunamāyasī pūh, akavārī, etc., are worth noticing.

The term vājinīvatī is explained as abounding in food, food conferring, possessed of food and the like. This is derived obviously from Vedic āvāj, which has various meanings as strength, food, sacrificial food, etc. Thus, being excessively eager for accepting the sacrificial oblations, she is called 'possessed of the sacrificial food'. The other sense declaring Sarasvatī as 'possessed of food and water' appears to allude to Sarasvatī as a river. While descending from the mountain to the plain, the Sarasvatī might have rendered grain-field abundantly fertile resulting in profuse yield of harvest. It was called vājinīvatī as its waters grew rich crops.

Pāvakā has been explained as 'śodhayitrī', 'pāpānām apanetrī', 'wealthy in spoil' and 'shining'. In masculine we have 'pāvaka' from āpū + āvul, meaning purifying. Pāvakā is the feminine form of pāvaka, and, therefore, it will have the same meaning. Pāvaka also means agni. Pāvakī, which is synonymous with pāvakā means the wife of Agni, and is also the Vedic name of Agni. It is probably for establishing the relationship of husband and wife between Agni and Sarasvatī that the terms pāvaka
and pāvakā have been used for them.

The term ghṛtacī has been explained variously such as: "ghṛtam udakam aṅcati", balmy, showerer of water and one who goes into the melted butter. This alludes various characteristics of Sarasvatī such as one of the three kinds of speech, goddess or the goddess of sacrifice.

The epithet pāravataghnī is a compound word from pāravata + ghnī. This attribute alludes Sarasvatī to be a river. It is called as such because it bursts either the both of its banks or bursts the ridges of the hills or effects the tribe called Parāvatas.

Citrayuh has been explained as: "citragamana citrāṇṇā vā", brisk with rare life, graceful, the girl with wonderful life-energy, etc. By this epithet Sarasvatī seems to have been depicted either as speech or the goddess of speech or the goddess of poetry standing for everything striking (citra or ramaṇīya) in poetry.

The epithet hiranyavartnih portrays Sarasvatī as a river. Through its waters, the Sarasvatī brings prosperity to the mankind, hence is called hiranyavartnih akin to hiranyavatī meaning abounding in gold.

The term asuryā portrays Sarasvatī both as a river and as a goddess. Among rivers, the Sarasvatī is the most lively river, hence is called 'asuryā' or she is called asuryā; because she is a balavatī (full of might, life and vitality) goddess.

Dharunamāyasī pūh assigns Sarasvatī to be a river of mighty and spacious streams, hence unconquerable like a fort of iron or it was called so because it supported its tributaries like the houses are supported by
a city.

The attribute akavārī to Sarasvatī presents her as a munificent goddess, who is either rich in spoil, or faultless moving or giving liberally.

Besides, the relationship of Sarasvatī with the galaxy of gods and goddesses has been brought out in clear terms. Her name occurs with many gods; but it does not speak of a particular relationship with them. There are, however, some attributes like marutsu bhāratī, marutsakhā, marutvati and vrṣnaḥ patnī, which speak of her to be the wife of the Maruts or Indra. Among the female divinities, irrespective of any relationship with them, she forms a trio of goddesses with Ijlā and Bhāratī. It is astonishing to note that in the Rigveda, these goddesses have their independent personality while in the classical period, their position undergoes an important change. They are identified with each other and form only one goddess, their names being synonymous with each other. Commentator Śāyana mentions Ijlā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī as the three kinds of speech. Among them, Bhāratī is dyusthānā vāk, Sarasvatī as mādhyamīkā vāk and Ijlā is the speech on the earth (pārthivī praiṣādirūpā). Thus, these goddesses are taken to be the three goddesses of Bhūh, Bhuvaḥ and Svāh. Another, interpretation assigns Bhāratī, Sarasvatī and Ijlā the names of paśyanti, madhyamā and vaikhārī with the same connotations as above. According to Sri Aurobindo, Ijlā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī represent drṣṭi, śruti and the largeness of the truth-consciousness.

At the end of this chapter, the relationship between Sarasvatī and Sarasvān has been established with full connotations. Sarasvān stands for a
male river, ocean, cloud, sun, river-god and god and whenever connotation we choose for Sarasvatī, he, thus, comes in all the cases as the husband of Sarasvatī. Roth takes him as the protector of divine waters, while Hellebrandt identifies him with Apām Nāpāt, the Soma or the moon.

Chapter III is on 'Sarasvatī In The Yajurveda'. It deals first of all with the physical aspect of Sarasvatī that being a river. In this connection, a striking reference is made to pañcadhā for the Sarasvatī meaning thereby having five distinct sheets or pools of waters.

In comparison to the Rgveda, the Yajurveda uses only a few significant epithets for Sarasvatī namely yaśobhagī, haviṣmati, sudughā, jāgrvi, etc. Yaśobhagī means either the sister of the fame of living being or enriched with glory. What it all purports is that Sarasvatī in the form of speech is the source of fame. By means of haviṣmati, scholars like Uvaṭācārya, Mahīdhara, Griffith, etc., accept Sarasvati as full of oblation or with oblation. This term refers to Sarasvatī as to be a sacrificial goddess, who without fail listens to all. This also implies the simple nature of Sarasvatī, who accepts every one’s offerings. By sudughā one comes to know the benevolent nature of Sarasvatī. She is easily drainable: because she is rich in cherished wealth and milk. This purports that she is a will-fulfilling deity and if approached properly, one is blessed by the same. Jāgrvi interprets Sarasvatī as vigilant, e.g., always alert in bringing out her work to a success as a physician.

The Yajurveda predominantly presents Sarasvatī as a physician in the light of the Sāutrāṃśi and Bheṣej sacrifices. Here two versions run concurrently. According to one of them, Indra (Sutraśman) is suffering
from being over-indulgent upon the Soma; hence the application of the Sautrāmaṇi. According to another, Indra is deprived of his favourite beverage being stolen away by his own friend called Namuci, who proved to be a traitor towards him. When Indra lost his strength, he resorted to the Aśvins and Sarasvatī and narrated to them the misery that had befallen him. The Aśvins and Sarasvatī gave him a thunderbolt of foam with which he smote the head of Asura and regained his strength. The period, which kept him deprived of his strength was a span of hardship for him, because during that period, he suffered many ways. As physicians Sarasvatī and the Aśvins kept him survived.

In this chapter it has also been shown that the term Sarāsvata has been used in a different sense. Sarāsvata as adjective of graha stands for a set of oblation or a cup of the Soma made of waters of the Sarāsvatī river. Waters of the Sarāsvatī are, thus, to be conceived as a unique source of strength like the Soma. Another interpretation presents 'sārasvatau' as the two fountains of Sarāsvatī meaning mind and speech. Still according to another view, two Sarāsvatas mean the Rgveda and the Sāmaveda as the two sons of the parents Sarāsvatī and Sarāsvān. Here Sarāsvatī stands for the goddess of speech and Sarāsvān as the god of speech.

Lastly, this chapter deals with Sarāsvatī as a milch-cow. Sarāsvatī actually is not a cow (dhenu); but figuratively has been called a milch-cow, for she is easily yielding and accessible.

Chapter IV ascertains the place of Sarāsvatī in the Atharvaveda. First of all, it deals Sarāsvatī with medical science. This Veda mentions
many herbs useful to cure body and restore the lost bodily vigour. Various properties have also been ascribed to many of these herbs. In the contexts of the herbs, Sarasvati has been entreated along with Agni, Savitri and Brahmaṇaspatī to bring back the exhausted power of man and make his slackened limbs tightened as the bow. Sarasvati along with her sister deities Iļā and Bhāratī is said to have provided remedy for poisoning. In the human body, there are many detrimental elements and germs causing great harm incessantly. Sarasvati along with deities has been invoked to crush such elements of our body.

Wealth brings various miseries and evils to human beings. It loosens moral values and the bond of righteousness. A wealthy man grows ambitious and his desires are unlimited. He becomes miser and harsh towards others. So as to be free from the evils of niggardliness and turning harsh to others owing to the vanity caused by wealth, one has to resort to Sarasvati, the truthful speech. It is by this speech that one can make his heart sublime filled it with reverence.

The Atharvaveda also assigns Sarasvati the work of protection. She protects man against ignorance and barbarism. The sins caused by speech, are wiped out by sweet and pleasing speech. The pious waters of the Sarasvati also free one from his sins. She is also associated with the work of protection of embryo.

Deities of the various regions reside in our body in their subtler form, while outside the body, they live in their gross form. But man does not realise this divine power in his own body, unless the veil of ignorance is cast away. In a mantra, Sarasvati has, therefore, been asked to provide
a man with mind, intellect, thought, purpose, intelligence, hearing, sight, etc.

The *Atharveda* also relates Sarasvatī with marriage. Here she has not been directly seen playing an important role in marriage, however, a newly wed-bride receives instruction as to how she should offer prayer to Sarasvatī daily in the morning at her husband's home.

The *Atharvaveda* preaches unity and harmony. For unity the feeling of love is an utmost necessity. The feeling of love joins man's head with his heart in friendly bonds, thus, makes them function in unity. In a mantra of the *Atharvaveda*, Sarasvatī along with Mitra, Varuṇa, the centre of the earth as well as both of its ends is asked to bring unity to us.

Sarasvatī is also associated with agriculture who is taken to be the presiding deity of trees, fruits, rice-fields, etc. As a river, the banks of the Sarasvatī are very much fertile abound in the yield of rich harvest. The fields on its banks were ploughed by Indra, the lord of the plough (śIrnapāthāḥ) and the Maruts as the farmers (kīnāsāḥ). Agriculture is more dependent on rains. As we know that Sarasvatī represent cloud, hence is appropriately asked for the rains for krṣi so that it may not burnt in the scorching heat of the sun.

Lastly, in this chapter, the notion of the three goddesses Iśā, Sarasvatī and Bhūratī has been brought out by a single expression 'tisraḥ sarasvatīḥ' meaning three Sarasvatīs. This seems to be a step towards the identification of the three goddesses in the *Veda* itself. The Petersburg Lexicon takes it to suggest "three rivers named Sarasvatī or perhaps three rivers in general. To Griffith, it means the three heavens and the three
earths, while to Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara this expression is for mātrabhūmi (Bhāratī), mātrbhāṣā (Īḍā) and mātrṣabhyatā (Sarasvatī).

Chapter V is on the Brāhmanas. In the Brāhmaṇic period, Sarasvatī undergoes an important change, she being identified with speech 'vāg vai sarasvatī'. Here, it naturally tempts one to take the picturesque account of Vāk and then see her identification with Sarasvatī.

In the post-Vedic period, the conception of Vāk has been put on a sound philosophical basis. Syllable, word, sentence, literature and even sound came under the scope of Vāk. Linguists offer various theories about the origin of language, which is an evolved form of speech and according to one of such theories, language is a divine workmanship. According to the Rgvedic account, the origin of Vāk is Bṛhaspati or it were rāgis, who at first procured Vāk and later on transferred to wise-men for her wide use. The Brāhmanas, too, speak of the divinity of Vāk. According to them also, Vāk is said to have been created by Bṛhaspati and is sexually related to Prajāpati in the creation of the universe.

In the Brāhmanas, we have an interesting legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas. The character of the Gandharvas is very much vague. They are described as having a great liking for fragrance and are said to guard the Soma and sometimes to have monopoly over it. The Brāhmanas speak of their affiliation with the human embryo as well as their ardent love for unmarried girls. The legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas opens with the mention of the Soma recorded in the Brāhmanas. According to the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, Vāk, in accordance to the consent of gods turned as a woman and approached the Gandharvas in order to purchase the Soma. She faces many difficulties
in accomplishing her deeds; but in fine, overcomes them and succeeds in bringing the Soma to gods.

In comparison to the Rgveda and the Yajurveda, in the Brāhmanas, there are only a few epithets like vaiśmabhalyā, satyavāk, sumṛdīkā, ascribed to Sarasvatī. Vaiśmabhalyā points to Sarasvatī as a river. The Sarasvatī is so called, because it brings up through its nourishing waters the persons living upon agriculture or living in its neighbourhood. Sarasvatī in the capacity of Vāk is also the giver of nourishment and strength (puṣṭī), which includes cattles, etc. Satyavāk presents Sarasvatī as 'possessed of true speech'. It delineates her to be the personified form of speech (Vāk). By means of the term 'sumṛdīkā' Sarasvatī has been pointed out to be a liberal one, because of bringing comfort and happiness to the people. Sumṛdīkā may also mean 'having good soil (sumṛd), i.e., the land having good (fertile) soil.

In this chapter on the Brāhmanas, the relationship between Sarasvatī and Sarasvān has been brought out by the two terms Sarasvatīvān and Bhāratīvān ascribed to the latter. As having Sarasvatī, i.e., Vāk or speech, Sarasvān is called Sarasvatīvān and as having Bhāratī, i.e., prāṇa or breath, which sustains the body, he is called Bhāratīvān.

In the Brāhmanas, the problems concerning Vāk is very much thought-provoking. Sarasvatī originally was merely a terrestrial river. But owing to the sanctity of its waters, which infused life into the views of the people, let them to identify it with speech or the goddess of speech. The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa tells us that waters of the Sarasvatī were used for consecration. Owing to the sanctity of waters, the consecration done thereby
was thought as being done with speech. Besides, owing to the predominance of
the chanting of the mantras in and about the sacrifice and gods, they them-
selves have got identified with speech.

The Brāhmaṇas speak of the seven metres, Gāyatrī, Trstun, Jagatī
with special reference in connection with cosmology. The eight syllabled
Gāyatrī is taken to represent the eight kṣaraṇa-vyāpāras of Prajāpati,
when he was desirous of creation. Vāk as a whole is said to have produced
this universe. Prajāpati is the first unborn and Vāk, the second after
him. He is the lord of speech as the terms Iśaspati, Vācaspati, Brahmana-
spati, etc., prove it.

Lastly, it is only in the Brāhmaṇa literature that the identification
of Vāk and Sarasvati is carried out in clear and indubious terms. Among
the Brāhmaṇas, the Satapatha, Gopatha, Tōndya, Aitareya, Śānkhāvana,
Taittirīya Brāhmaṇas and the Aitareya-Āranyaka, etc., affirm clearly that
Vāk is undoubtedly Sarasvati 'vāg vai sarasvatī'.

Chapter VI determines the place occupied by Sarasvati in the Purānic
literature. In the Purānic era, Sarasvati has undergone remarkable change
as in fully anthropomorphised form. This has naturally shaped our culture
and religious life.

This chapter deals at first with the Purānic accounts of the origin
of Sarasvati offered to us by the Brahmayāvarta, Matsya, Padma, Vāyu, and
Brahmāṇḍa Purānas. According to one of the accounts of the Brahmayāvarta-
Purāṇa, Sarasvati is born from the mouth of Paramātman. The other account
presents her to have born from the mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the form of his
Śakti. According to the third view of this Purāṇa, the Ātman at the primeval stage remained stationed, but when he was desirous of creation, he took two forms - male and female. The female form later on became of fivefold and Sarasvatī is one of them. According to the Matsya-Purāṇa, Sarasvatī is born out of the half portion of his body as a female form. Elsewhere, both the Matsya and the Padma Purāṇas tell us that Sarasvatī along with the four other maids - Lakṣmī, Marutvati, Śādhyā and Viśvesā was produced by Brahmā. The Vāyu-Purāṇa maintains that when Brahmā was not satisfied with his creation, he began to muse over. In the length, from his anger a Puruṣa having male and female forms took his birth. At the command of Brahmā, he separated these forms. The female form was of peculiar type. Her right part was white and left black. Later on these parts also got separated. Thus, Sarasvatī is maintained to be one of the manifestations of this white part. According to another account of this Purāṇa, Sarasvatī is born out of the meditation of Brahmā. The Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa holds that there is a conjugal procreation in male and female forms, its origin being Mahālakṣmī. Mahālakṣmī at first produced three eggs. Brahmā was produced one of them along with Śrī, Sarasvatī from the second along with Śiva and Viṣṇu from the third along with Ambikā.

In the Purāṇas, the complexion of Sarasvatī is worth noticing. There she is asserted to be out and out of white complexion. This colour is obvious from the various epithets used for her. White colour represents the sattva-guṇa of Sarasvatī in her capacity of one of the fine Prakṛtis. Her sattva-guṇa also stands for knowledge, which she possesses. The term 'śyāmā' most probably represents her youth. But 'śyāmā' may be taken for
her tamas-guna, which presents Sarasvatī of black colour (syāmā) as being one of the forms of Prakṛtis. The Tantras provide Sarasvatī with blue colour, which is undoubtedly a quite new conception of the colour of Brahmānic Sarasvatī there.

The vehicle of the goddess is also a very interesting point. In the Purāṇas, the only thing alluded to her vehicle is the swan. She has inherited her vehicle swan from her father Brahmā (hamsādhīrūḍhā). Like Brahmā, Sarasvatī is described as riding a swan. Besides the Purāṇas, elsewhere, Sarasvatī is said to ride a peacock. The vehicle hamsa alludes a philosophical purport. The hamsa connotes the identification of the Jīvātman and Paramātman - 'I' and 'He' (aham sah). The other implication of the swan may be interpreted differently. As has been said above hamsa stands for the identification of 'I' and 'He'. This mode of thinking that 'I' and 'He' are one can sustain all types of knowledge and hence hamsa is aptly taken to be the vehicle of Sarasvatī, who is knowledge conferring. The implication of peacock holds the identification of Sarasvatī with Agni and Sarasvatī (speech) with sacrifice.

In the Purāṇas, Sarasvatī has been described with her iconographical features. The prescription for making her image are well laid down. In this respect, the Agni, Matsya and Visnudharmottara Purāṇas furnish a lot of informations as to how the image of Sarasvatī should be made in recognition to the iconic prescription. They also observe that her image should be made either at right or left to that of Brahmā's image. The Purāṇas also affix the number of her faces. Usually like Brahmā, she is mentioned to have one to four or five faces. But the number of her heads differs in
the Tantras and in Buddhism. Her faces, like Brahmā represent Gāyatī, the four Vedas or the five Vedas including the Nātyaśāstra. In the Purāṇas, the number of her hands differs from place to place. Mostly, she is alluded to as having four hands. But she also holds two hands, which is evident by some of the Purānic epithets used for her. Other references allude to her as having up to six, eight and even ten arms. She is presented to have in her hands mostly the water-vessel (kamandalu), book (pustaka), rosary (ākṣamālā) and lute (vīṇā). These objects held in her hands represent the nectar of all the śāstras, śāstra, time and proficiency or achievement respectively.

The physical or material form deals with the river aspect of Sarasvatī. At first it shows its origin. Its origin is himavatpāda, i.e., the Himalayas, particularly a place on it called Plakṣa Prāsravana and according to the Skanda-Purāṇa, it belongs to the Sarasvatī-Drśadvatī Group. The Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa puts forth a very interesting mythological interpretation in regard to its coming over the earth as a river. It maintains that Sarasvatī was living in the heaven along with her husband Hari among his co-wives Lakṣmī and Gāṅgā. Once there arose a quarrel between Sarasvatī and Gāṅgā and the latter cursed the former to become a river and go to the earth. As a result, Sarasvatī descended on the earth in the form of a holy river. This mythological interpretation brings the Sarasvatī to be a celestial river like the Gāṅgā. In the Vedic times, it was the mightiest river; but since it has lost its earthly existence, its popularity has considerably suffered. In this way, it is divine and has the same origin as the Gāṅgā in the Purāṇas as well as in the popular
belief. According to another source, the ocean was possessed of a latent fire. God Viṣṇu, therefore, implored her to descend on the earth and subdue the latent fire which she did accordingly.

The Purāṇas assign much sanctity to the Sarasvati. Its waters...the sins of sinners. The Sarasvati...in its sacred waters, many tīrthas, like Pitṛtīrtha, Nīlakunda, Rudrasarovara, Mānasarorvara, etc., are situated by its banks and seers like Kardama, etc., reside along with them to practise their austerities.

The Purāṇas use numerous adjectives like śivā, puṇyā, śivajalā, etc., for rivers in general, which are connotative of their munificence and benevolent nature. We have following with regard to the Sarasvati in particular. The Purāṇas attribute to numerous adjectives such as pravāha-samyuktā, vegayuktā, srotasye 'va, mahānadi, sāgaragāmini, puṇyadā, puṇyajananī, puṇyātīrthasvarūpiṇī, puṇyavadbhir niṣevyā, sthitīḥ puṇyavatām, śubhā, pāpanīrmokā, etc., which are very much striking and suggestive. The epithets prācī and paścimāmukhī attribute it from being easterly to westerly. The term drṣyādrṣyagatiḥ states it as having visible and invisible course.

In the Purāṇas, the consortship of Sarasvati has been referred to at several places. She is associated particularly with Brahmā, Dharmarāja, Svāyambhuva Manu, Viṣṇu and Āditya. The Matsya-Purāṇa has far more to say on this point than the other Purāṇas. According to it, Sarasvati was born from half of Brahmā's body as his daughter; but when he was enamoured by her peerless beauty, he married her and enjoyed her company for hundred
years inside the lotus. The Bhāgavata-Purāṇa also refers to this episode. Elsewhere, the Matsya-Purāṇa says that Brahmā created five maids – Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Marutvatī, Sādhyā and Viśueśā, all of whom were married to Dharma-raja. According to another account, for the enlargement of the creation, Brahmā divided his body into twain, male and female. These forms were Svāyambhuva Manu and Satarūpa that stood in relation of husband and wife. According to the Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa, Sarasvatī at first was created by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but when the former showed her love for the latter, she was instructed by him to choose Nārāyaṇa as her husband. And she did accordingly. According to another view, Sarasvatī was already one of the co-wives of Viṣṇu, who later on had to transfer Sarasvatī to Brahmā as his wife. Besides, Sarasvatī has also been mentioned as the wife of Āditya and Gaṇapati.

At the end, the Chapter deals with the offsprings of Sarasvatī. Among her offsprings, prominently dealt with are Sārasvata and Manu. Besides, some cosmic elements are also taken to be her offsprings. The Purāṇas describe Sārasvata to have born from Sarasvatī by Dadhīca. Besides, Sārasvata stands in different connotations. They also furnish that there lived an ancient sect of Hindus called Sārasvatas. They lived by the side of the Sarasvatī river and were Brāhmaṇas by caste. Their inhabitancy was called after their name as Sārasvata nation. Since they persistently resorted to the Sarasvatī, the latter benefited them variously, hence she came to be styled as their mother. The Mahābhārata, too, refers to Sārasvata to be a ṛṣī and Sarasvatī as a personified river. During the period of drought lasting for twelve years, it was the Sarasvatī, which could save Sārasvata feeding him upon fish. This Sārasvata could alone
the Vedic knowledge during the drought, while other Brāhmaṇas lost it for want of food. After the drought, Sārasvata imparted the extinguished Vedic knowledge which went on expanding. This episode appears to point to a climatic change and to the extinction of waters of the Sarasvati river, too. Professor Wilson terms it as revivalism and thinks it the introduction of Hindu rituals.

The Matsya-Purāṇa says that when Brahmā saw the matchless beauty of his daughter, he married her and in course of time, Manu was born to them. Thus, owing to his engagement with Sarasvatī, he lost the virtue of his tapasyā, which he had after long practising the penance. He, therefore, started practising austerities once more and created his wife, out of half of his body and created some Prajāpatis like Viśveśa also called Dharma, Dakṣa, Marīci, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasiṣṭha, Gautam, Bṛgū, Anīgiras and Manu. Manu as the son of Sarasvatī implies the principle of manas or buddhi including five tanmātrās. Manas, buddhi and five tanmātrās are sometimes taken as seven sons of Sarasvatī. Āditya has also been taken to be the husband of Sarasvatī. This couple is taken to be the parents of Danu and Diti. Besides, the whole universe and the Vedas are said to have produced from Sarasvatī.

Chapter VII deals with the various allusions made to Sarasvatī by some important classical writers only.

Kālidāsa refers the name of Sarasvatī in different connotations. He takes her as synonymous with speech, as a poetess and river. He also points judiciously to Sarasvatī associated with music.

In both of his works the Buddhacarita and the Saundarananda,
Asvaghoṣa points to the drought-episode alluded to Sārasvatī already mentioned above.

Bhāravi takes both Sarasvatī and Bhāratī as synonymous with speech.

Māgha alludes to Sarasvatī at different places in the sense of interior court, speech and river.

Śrī-Varṣa, in his Naiṣadha-carita, refers to Sarasvatī in different contexts. He uses the word Sarasvatī for river in general and for the river of the name, too. He also assigns to her an important role in the marriage and entrusts the duty of a go-between and match-maker to her in the Svayamvara of Nala and Damayantī at the command of Viṣṇu.

Bhavabhūti takes Vāk as the goddess of speech and Vāk as Sarasvatī, thus, the terms being synonymous with each other.

Dāndin points to Sarasvatī that she lives in the lotus-forest of the mouths of Brahmā and is white in colour. Her residing in the mouth of Brahmā implies her birth from the mouth of Brahmā in the form of speech. He describes Vāk as the light called sabda (sabdāhvyam jyotiḥ) and states that unless this light illuminates the three worlds, it is nothing but all darkness.

Subandhu, in his Vāsamadattā, refers poignantly to a fact that for the poets the blessing of Sarasvatī is indispensable. Without it, the poet cannot penetrate into and present the object of description as actually existing before one's eyes. He takes Sarasvatī as a goddess as well as speech.
In the Kādambarī and Harsacarita, Bāna traces his lineage to Sarasvatī. Vatsa, the progenitor of Bāna's family, was the cousin of Sārasvata, the son of Sarasvatī and Dadhīca. From his Vatsa, there proceeded a great family wherein sage Vātsyāyana took his birth. In the family of Vātsyāyana, Kubera took his birth, who had four sons. Of them, Pāṇḍupata had Arthapati, who had eleven sons. Citraabhānu was one of them, who was Bāna's father. The family of Bāna was highly favoured by Sarasvatī and was devoted to learning since very beginning. Actually Sarasvatī represents the Vedas, all type of learning, arts and sciences. As learning was flourishing at the hands of the forefathers of Bāna, he rightly observes that they were especially favoured by Sarasvatī. In propounding such an interesting legend, Bāna seems much indebted to the Purāṇas especially to the Vēyu and the Padma and also to the Mahābhārata, which points to the drought-episode alluded to Sārasvata.

In the Kavyamīmāṃsā, Rājaśekhara gives a judicious account of the origin of Kāvyā. He at first presents Kāvyā as a Puruṣa and Sāhitya as his vadhū (bride). This legend presented by his fertile imagination and unique method of interpretation is very much interesting. To him, Sārasvata, the son of Sarasvatī is Puruṣa, who is none else than poetry, with literature (Sāhityavidyā) as his bride (vadhū). He also mentions Sarasvatī as a river, which belongs to the Uttarāpatha and stands undubiously for the Rgvedic Sarasvatī.

In the classical period, Sarasvatī is taken to represent science (vidyā) in general. Vidyā is a real ornament, which truly embellishes a man and does him every good. In his Nītisātaka, Bhartṛhari points to this
truth poignantly in good detail.

In the Vikramāṅkadeva-carita, Bihāna alludes to Sarasvatī as speech, the goddess of poetry and eloquence. He mentions Saradā residing at Pravarapura situated by the bank of the Madhumatī river on the Mt. of Kailāsa. This Pravarapura is very much favoured by her learning. Besides, Kalhang also mentions Sarasvatī as speech and as residing in Kashmir.

The Appendix deals with a study of Sarasvatī in regard to her corresponding deities in the Roman and the Greek mythologies. This gives us an understanding that there was long before a very laudable policy of give and take between India on the one hand, and Greece and Roma, on the other. The Indian goddess Sarasvatī correlates to the Roman goddess Minerva (both armed and unarmed) and the Greek goddess Athene (Athena). Minerva is the patroness of all arts and is the goddess of memory and warfare. And so is Sarasvatī, too. In a wider perspective, especially to poets, Sarasvatī is understood to be the goddess of poetry, eloquence, wisdom, music, etc. They regard her as the mother of poets, whose blessing is indispensable for real poetic composition. It is for this reason that they invoke her of and on as a Muse. The conception of the Muse goes back as early as to the Rgvedic times, where we come across with countless glimes of real poetry. There Sūryā is regarded to be the goddess of poetry, but later on she goes an important change and she ceases to be the personified form of poetry itself. Sarasvatī arose to level up the vacuum caused by her as a goddess of poetry. Many similarities and dissimilarities run concurrently in regard to the personality between Sarasvatī and the Greek Muses nine in number – Clio, Euterpe, Thalia,
Melphomena, Tersichore, Erato, Polymania, Urania and Calliope. These have been referred to in the Appendix.

This study may be distinguished from other studies on the following basis:

i) The origin and development of the conception of Sarasvatī has been traced from the Vedic period down to the classical age.

ii) The data collected for the present study have been put in an interpretative perspective.

iii) In comparison to previous studies, the present investigation is much more comprehensive in the sense that light has been thrown on every aspect of the personality of Sarasvatī.
EVOLUTION OF SARASVATI IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

THESIS SUBMITTED
FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN SANSKRIT

BY
MOHD. ISRAIL KHAN

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
Dr. R. S. TRIPATHI
PROF. & HEAD OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH

FACULTY OF ARTS
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH
1969
P R E F A C E

The conception of Sarasvati is a very complex problem in the Indian mythology. She is one of rivers or deities of the Rgvedic origin. In the Vedic pantheon, many deities arose and later on merged with others. If any one of them survived, it was mostly in an stereotyped form. But in regard to Sarasvati, the case has been of a different nature. With her, there has been a gradual process of change and development. In her earliest stage in the Rgvedic times, she was merely a terrestrial river; but owing to the excessive affection and reverence shown towards her by seers, she got identified with speech or the goddess of speech. The Brāhmaṇas repeatedly speak of her as Vāk on the one hand, while the Purāṇas, fully anthropomorphise her on the other. In the Tantras, she stands for a specific nerve, while in the classical period, she is unanimously accepted to be the goddess of speech, learning, eloquence, etc. Thus, for instance, these phenomena to which Sarasvati has been referred in these epochs of the Sanskrit literature are very much different from each other. This difference in the objects to which Sarasvati is related naturally provokes one to think and investigate into the problem seriously.

There are many scholars like A.A. Macdonell, A.B. Keith, Hillebrandt, Louis Renou, Charles Coleman, Roth, N.N. Godbole, etc., who have shed a flood of light on her personality. There are, besides, others like K.C. Cāttopādhyāya, Sir Aurel Stein, H.C. Raychoudhuri, Anand Swarup Gupta, Divaprasad Das Gupta, B.R. Sharma, etc., who have written stray articles on her. But their attempt has been partial. Each one of them has either dealt with only some one aspect of her personality or has confined himself to a specific period.

In this work, an humble attempt has been made broadly to deal with her various aspects as: a river (Chapter I); river-goddess,
goddess or goddess of speech (Chapters II - V), and as fully anthropomorphised in the Purānas. The various allusions made to her by some important classical writers have been brought out briefly in Chapter VII. The Appendix includes a study of Sarasvatī with regard to her corresponding deities in the Roman and the Greek mythologies. Thus, I have traced the origin and development of Sarasvatī through the Sanskrit literature in historical sequence from the Vedic down to the classical period. I have put the data collected as far as possible from the whole literature available in an interpretative perspective.

This work was suggested to me by Dr. Suryakanta, formerly Professor and Head of the Sanskrit Department, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and was done to some extent under the guidance of Dr. Mantrini Prasad of the Department. But it was executed mainly under the able supervision of Dr. R.S. Tripathi, Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. It is only due to his guidance and affectionate care that the work is successfully completed. I record my deep sense of gratitude to them.

I am thankful to all scholars, whose books and articles, I have consulted for the present study.

A valuable service has been rendered to me by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Jayakar Granthalaya, the library of the Centre of Advanced Studies in Sanskrit, Deccan College, Poona, the Sarasvatī Bhawan Library, Banaras Hindu University Library, The Purānas Department of All-India Kashiraj Trust, Parshvanath Jain Research Institute, Vārānasī and Maulana Azad Library and Malviya Library, Aligarh. I owe my indebtedness to the office-bearers of these libraries.

My thanks are also due to Dr. A.D.Pushalkar, Director of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, Dr. N.N. Godbole, Ex-Director of Industries and Commerce of the Government of Rajasthan,
Mahamahopadhyaya Chitravā Shastri and Ganesh Shastri Khare of Poona, Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj, Dr. Gauri Nath Shastri, Vice-Chancellor of Vāraṇāsīa Sanskrit University, Vāraṇāsī and Dr. Rāmasankara Bhattacarya of Vāraṇāsī for their valuable suggestions and discussions.

I am also thankful to Mr. Nashhood Alam Raz who typed my thesis with patience and took a lot of trouble.

Lastly, I am grateful to the authorities of the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, for awarding me the Faculty Fellowship and the Research Scholarship respectively. I am also grateful to the University Grants Commission for the financial assistance through the award of the Junior Research Fellowship.

Mīr. Israil Khān
MOHD. ISRAIL KHAN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AĀ</td>
<td>Aitareya-Arsyaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Aitareya-Brahma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABORI</td>
<td>Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Abhidhānasūtaṃani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIOC</td>
<td>All-India Oriental Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Agni-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ApaPrc</td>
<td>Aparājita-prachā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArS'</td>
<td>Arthasastra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS'</td>
<td>Abhījñānasūkuntala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>Aitareya-Upanisad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Atharvaveda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Buddhacarita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BD</td>
<td>Brhad-devatā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BdP</td>
<td>Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BhāP</td>
<td>Bhāgavata-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrP</td>
<td>Brahma-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BvP</td>
<td>Brahmavālīvarta-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>com.</td>
<td>commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBhāP</td>
<td>Devībhāgavata-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DevPra</td>
<td>DevatāmūrtipraKarana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ed.</td>
<td>edited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.n.</td>
<td>foot-note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GarP</td>
<td>Garuḍa-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>Gītagovinda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GopB</td>
<td>Gopatha-Brahma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Harṣacarita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHQ</td>
<td>Indian Historical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JQI</td>
<td>Journal of the Oriental Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KĀ</td>
<td>Kavyādarsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KA</td>
<td>Kirātārjuniya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kūd</td>
<td>Kādambarī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KM</td>
<td>Kāvyamāmākṣā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Kumārasambhava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KūrP</td>
<td>Kūrma-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MāASc</td>
<td>Mānasāra on Architecture and Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MārP</td>
<td>Mārkandeya-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Mahābhārata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Meghadūta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Mālevikāgnimitra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Matsya-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Manusmṛti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NāṭŚ</td>
<td>Nāṭyaśāstra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngh</td>
<td>Nighaṇṭu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM</td>
<td>Naiṣadhamahākāvya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMP</td>
<td>Naiṣadhamahākāvya Kaviprasasti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NŚ</td>
<td>Nītiśatakā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OST</td>
<td>Original Sanskrit Texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PdP</td>
<td>Padma-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>The Poona Orientalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrŚā</td>
<td>Prapancasātra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pū</td>
<td>pūrvārdha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RaV</td>
<td>Raghuvanśa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Rgarthadīpikā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>Rājatarāgini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV</td>
<td>Bhagvada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŚŚB</td>
<td>Śāṅkhāyana-Brāhmaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sādh Mā</td>
<td>Sādhanaṃśālā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SālyP</td>
<td>Sālyam Parvan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŚānP</td>
<td>Śānti Parvan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŚārT</td>
<td>Śāradā-Tantra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SauK</td>
<td>Saundarananda Kāvyā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Saṭapatha-Brāhmaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Science and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŚīlR</td>
<td>Silparatna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>Sāṅkhya-kārikā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKP</td>
<td>Skanda-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śrīvīḍṭ</td>
<td>Śrīvīḍyārṇava-Tantra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>Sīṣupāla-vadha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB</td>
<td>Taittirīya-Bṛahmaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ū</td>
<td>translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UR</td>
<td>Uttarārāmacarita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāmp</td>
<td>Vāmana-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VD</td>
<td>Vāsavadatta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDG</td>
<td>Vikramākadevacarita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>Viṣṇu-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRB</td>
<td>Viṣṇukīrti-Rāmāyaṇa-Bālakāṇḍa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VaiKr</td>
<td>Viṣṇukṛtī-Rahasya (Śrīdurgāsaptasatī)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VignP</td>
<td>Viśṇu-Purāṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VU</td>
<td>Vikramorvasīya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YV</td>
<td>Yajurveda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Chapter - I  THE EARLIEST NOTION OF SARASVATI AS A RIVER

1. General introduction ........................................... 1
2. The identification and location of the Sarasvati river .......... 4
   i) Roth ......................................................... 4
   ii) K.C. Cottopadhyaya ....................................... 6
   iii) Max Muller ............................................... 8
   iv) Divaprasad Das Gupta .................................... 10
3. The geographical and historical data .......................... 16
   i) The geographical facts ................................... 16
      (a) Mountain ............................................. 16
      (b) Seas ............................................... 18
   ii) The historical facts ..................................... 22
      (a) The Bharatas ....................................... 22
      (b) The Kurus ......................................... 23
      (c) The Purus .......................................... 25
4. Vinaśana or the disappearance of the Sarasvati ............... 26

Chapter - II  SARASVATI IN THE RGVEDA

1. Physical aspect of Sarasvati .................................. 35
   i) The description of the limbs of Sarasvati ................ 37
   ii) The description of the beauty of Sarasvati ............... 38
      (a) Suyamā ............................................ 39
      (b) Subhrā ............................................. 40
      (c) Supeśas ............................................ 41
2. The mental aspect of Sarasvati ................................ 42
   i) Diyāvasuh ............................................... 42
   ii) Codayitri sūrtanām ..................................... 44
   iii) Other references ....................................... 45
3. Social aspect of Sarasvati ..................................... 46
   i) Sarasvati as a mother .................................... 46
      (a) Ambitamā .......................................... 47
      (b) Sīndhumātā ......................................... 47
      (c) Mātā ................................................ 48
ii) Sarasvati as a sister
(a) Saptasvasā
(b) Saptadhātuh
(c) Saptathi
(d) Trisadhasthā
(e) Svasṛṛ anyā rīvārī

iii) Sarasvati as wife
(a) Viśupatnī
d) Vrañah patnī
c) Marutvatī

iv) Sarasvati as a daughter
(a) Pāvīvāvī

v) Sarasvati as a friend
(a) Marutsakhā
d) Sakhyā
c) Uttarā sakhibhyah

4. Main activities of Sarasvati

i) Sarasvati as the giver of wealth
(a) Sarasvati's breasts as 'sasayah', 'ratnadā' and 'vasuvid'
(b) Bāyas cetanti
(c) Āpo revatih

ii) Sarasvati as giver of pleasure
(a) Mayobhuh (in plural 'mayobhuvah')

iii) Sarasvati as the bestower of offsprings

iv) Sarasvati as the giver of food
(a) Ayuosi
(b) Tasas

5. Special characteristics of Sarasvati

i) Vājinīvatī
ii) Pāvekā
iii) Ghrtācī
d) Pārāvatañhi
v) Citrayuh
vi) Hiranyavartaniḥ
vii) Asuryā
viii) Dharumamūyasī pūḥ
ix) Akavārī

6. The relation of Sarasvati with other gods and goddesses

i) Sarasvati with male divinities
ii) Sarasvati with female divinities
(a) The triad of the Vedic goddesses
### Chapter - III  Sarasvatī in the Yajurveda

1. Physical account of Sarasvatī  
2. Some important epithets of Sarasvatī  
   i) Yasobhagini  
   ii) Navismati  
   iii) Sudughā  
   iv) Jāgṛti  
3. Sarasvatī as a physician  
   i) Sarasvatī and the Sautramani sacrifice  
   ii) Sarasvatī and the Bhesaj sacrifice  
   iii) Sarasvatī as a physician  
4. Sarasvatī and Sarasvata  
5. Sarasvatī as a milch-cow

### Chapter - IV  Sarasvatī in the Atharvaveda

1. Sarasvatī and medical science  
2. Sarasvatī and the ills caused by wealth  
3. Sarasvatī and the work of protection  
4. Sarasvatī and the divine strength of man  
5. Sarasvatī and marriage  
6. Sarasvatī and unity  
7. Sarasvatī and agriculture  
8. The trinity of goddesses

### Chapter - V  Sarasvatī in the Brāhmaṇas

1. Vāk and her introduction  
   i) The Rgvedic account  
   ii) The Brāhmaṇical account  
2. The legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas  
   i) The legend in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa  
   ii) The legend in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa
3. Some important epithets of Sarasvati
   i) Vaisambhalya
   ii) Satyayak
   iii) Sumridka

4. Sarasvati and Sarasvān

5. Vāk and the problems concerning her in the Brāhmaṇas
   i) The way through which Sarasvati went to be identified with speech
   ii) The cosmogonical Vāk legend in the Brāhmaṇas
   iii) The identification of Vāk with Sarasvati
       (a) The Sātapatha-Brāhmaṇa
       (b) The Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa
       (c) The Tāndya-Mahābrāhmaṇa
       (d) The Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa
       (e) The Āitareya-Āranyaka
       (f) The Sānkhyāyaṇa-Brāhmaṇa
       (g) The Tāättiriya-Brāhmaṇa

Chapter VI
PLACE OCCUPIED BY SARASVATI IN THE PURĀNIC LITERATURE

1. The Purānic accounts for the origin of Sarasvati
   i) The Brāhmaṇa-vāivarta-Purāṇa
   ii) The Matsya and Padma Purāṇas
   iii) The Vayu-Purāṇa
   iv) The Brāhmaṇda-Purāṇa

2. The colour of Sarasvati
   i) White
   ii) Syāma
   iii) Blue

3. The vehicle
   i) The swan
   ii) The peacock
   iii) The implication of the swan and the peacock

4. The image of Sarasvati
   i) The prescription for the image of Sarasvati
   ii) Face
   iii) The number of hands and the object held by them
   iv) The implication of the objects held in the hands
5. The physical aspect of Sarasvatī (i.e., Sarasvatī as a river)........ 176
   i) The origin of Sarasvatī as a river.................. 176
   ii) The sacred aspect of the Sarasvatī..................... 181
   iii) Some epithets of the Sarasvatī....................... 184

6. The marriage and spousehsip.......................... 188
   i) Sarasvatī and Brahmā...................... 188
   ii) Sarasvatī and Dharmaṇāja................. 190
   iii) Manu and Sarasvatī......................... 190
   iv) Sarasvatī and Vīṣṇu......................... 190

7. The offsprings of Sarasvatī....................... 193
   i) Sarasvata.................................. 193
   ii) Svāyambhuva Manu.......................... 195
   iii) Others.................................... 196

Chapter - VII REFERENCES TO SARASVATĪ BY SOME CLASSICAL WRITERS

1. Kālidāsa.................. 198
   i) Sarasvatī as synonymous with speech (vāṇī)........ 198
   ii) Relation of Sarasvatī with Music.................. 199
   iii) Sarasvatī as poetess.......................... 200
   iv) Sarasvatī as a river.......................... 200

2. Aśvaghoṣa................ 201

3. Bhāravi..................... 202

4. Māgha.......................... 203

5. Śrī-Harṣa................. 204
   i) Sarasvatī as a river.......................... 204
   ii) Sarasvatī as playing an important role in marriage 205
   iii) Sarasvatī as the patron-deity of Kashmir........ 206

6. Bhavabhūti................ 206

7. Dandin.................... 206

8. Subandhu............... 207

9. Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa............... 208
   i) The relation of Bāṇa’s family with Sarasvatī......... 208
   ii) Bāṇa’s version of the legend of Sarasvatī......... 210
   iii) Probable source of the legend................ 213
      (a) Sarasvatī legend in the Mahābhārata........... 213
      (b) Sarasvatī legend in the Purāṇas............. 213
10. Rājaśekhara
   i) Kāvyapurusa and Sāhityavidyāvadhū  ...  215
   ii) The source of the theme  ...  216
   iii) Sarasvatī as a river  ...  218

11. Bhartriharī  ...  219

12. Mahākavi Bilhana
   i) Sarasvatī as speech  ...  221
   ii) Sarasvatī as the goddess of poetry and eloquence  222
   iii) Abode of Saradā  ...  222
   iv) Some other allusion to Sarasvatī  ...  223

13. Kalhana  ...  224

Appendix: SARASVATĪ AND HER CORRESPONDING NAMES IN THE
          GREEK AND THE ROMAN MYTHOLOGIES

1. Introduction  ...  225

2. Sarasvatī and Minerva (the Roman goddess)  ...  226

3. Sarasvatī and the Greek Muses  ...  228
   i) The Rgveda and the conception of Muse  ...  228
   ii) Similarity between Sarasvatī and the Greek Muses  230

Bibliography  ...  233
CHAPTER I

THE EARLIEST NOTION OF SARASVATĪ AS A RIVER
Chapter - I

THE EARLIEST NOTION OF SARASVATĪ AS A RIVER

1. General introduction:

The earliest notion of Sarasvatī was undoubtedly as a river. It stood originally for a primitive; but for a mighty stream which has been mentioned at several places in the Rgveda, the oldest scripture. It has been taken there as a divine river, apparently for the sacredness of its waters. Since the Sarasvatī, at the remote age, was a river winning for itself a high reverence, it was naturally thought to be the best of all the rivers mentioned there. Waters were divinised under their proper name of 'āpah', which represent in general the rivers, and the Sarasvatī is the chief of these rivers. Waters also constitute a cosmic principle.

The Sarasvatī is said 'kāmagā'. The Purāṇas describe the Sarasvatī as going of its own accord and as creating waters in the clouds. All waters are identified with the Sarasvatī. On this ground, all Vedic waters (āpah) may also be identified with the Sarasvatī. Thus, the identification of waters with rivers and of waters with the Sarasvatī, is also supported by Hemacandrācārya who accepts 'Sarasvatī' as one of the twenty-seven synonyms for a river.

1 RV., I.3.12; II. 41.16; III.23.4; V.42.12,43.11; VI.52.6; VII.36.6, 96.1-2; VIII.21.17-18,54.4; X.17.7, 64.9, 75.5 etc.
3 Vām P., XL.14.
4 Cf. AC., 4.145-146.
Twenty-seven synonyms for river are: nādi, hiraśvavarna, rodhovakrā, taranginī, sindhu, saivalivi, vahā, hradinī, srotasvinī, nimnagā, srota, nirjharini, sarit, tatīnī, kūlankasā, vāhini, karsu, dvipavati, samudradayitā, dhuni, sreevanti, sarasvatī, parvatajā, āpagā, jaladhigā, kūlyā, jambālinī.
Waters mentioned in the Vedas, no longer remain to be regarded merely as divine waters (divyāpah) or rivers. They are thought to be the very source of the creation of the world; and are closely associated with Prajāpati. Prajāpati is identified with Brahma in the Purānic Literature and Sarasvatī with Vāk in the Brāhmaṇas. It is Brahma, who is supposed to be the creator of Sarasvatī. The Sarasvatī was a mighty river and had its source in the mountains and in the length, fell into the sea after traversing a long distance. It never knew stagnation, because of its being always in flux. The ever-continuity of one's work is the very symbol of inspiration. The ever-affluence of the Sarasvatī, psychologically, is also a source of inspiration.

---


"The Veda speaks constantly of the waters or the rivers, especially of the divine waters, āpo deviḥ or āpo divyāh, and occasionally of the waters which carry in them the light of the luminous solar world or the light of the Sun, svarvatir āpah. The passage of the waters effected by the Gods or by man with the aid of the Gods is a constant symbol. The three great conquests to which the human being aspires, which the Gods are in constant battle with the Vritras and Panis to give to man are the herds, the waters and the Sun or the solar world, gāh, āpah, svah."


3 SR., II.5.4.6; III.1.4.9, 14, 9.1.7, 9; IV.2.5.14, 6.3.3; V.2.2.13, 14, 3.4.3, 5.4.16; VII.5.1.31; IX.3.4.17; XIII.1.8.5; XIV.2.1.12.

TB., I.3.4.5, 8.5.6; III.8.11.2.

AB., II.24; III.1-2, 37; VI.7.

Ta B., XVI.5.16.

Gop B., II.1.20.

Sā B., V.2; XIII.6; XIV.4.

4 See *infra.*, pp. 153–155.

5 Cf. RV., VI.61.2, 8; VII.95.2, 96.2.


"She of the stream, the flowing movement", and is therefore a natural name both for a river and for the goddess of inspiration."
An analysis of the word 'sarasvatī' makes the sense quite clear. Its part 'saras' is formed from /sr, by adding the suffix 'asun'. Then the suffixes 'vatup' and 'nis' are added to 'saras' so as to form 'sarasvatī'.

'Sr' implies the movement while 'saras' stands for flowing water, water, a lake, a large sheet of water, etc., and accordingly the Sarasvatī is that which is watery or elegant.

The derivation of the word as 'saras + vatup + nis' presents Sarasvatī as a river with flowing water (saras) and, thus, ever-affluent. The root 'sr' at the root of the word gives us to understand that as a river, Sarasvatī was never stagnant, but always flowing. The Brāhmaṇas take Sarasvatī as speech (Vāk), thus, implying that speech flows in the form of letters (vānas), words (padas), sentences (vākyas) and the group of sentences (vākyasamūhas). Thus, the name is equally applicable to a river as well as to speech.

There are various rivers mentioned in the Rgveda. They are the oldest ones. A long list of theirs has been prepared by Macdonell and Keith. Of these, the Sarasvatī is said to have a close affinity with the Drādadvatī and to have formed with the latter the boundary of Brahmāvarta. As such the Drādadvatī is defined as "rocky" and Sarasvatī as having a bottom full of large

5 MS., II.17.
stones, precipitous banks and impetuous stream.¹

2. The identification and location of the Sarasvatī river:

The Sarasvatī river could not maintain its flow down to the present time. It disappeared long ago. Its disappearance is generally supposed to have been caused by the upheaval of the earth. The disappearance has arrested the attention of scholars and several of them have investigated the whereabouts of the river.

(I) Roth: Roth identifies the Rgvedic Sarasvatī with the modern Sarsūti, the corrupt name of the former. But on the ground that Sarasvatī has been described as the foremost of rivers (nadītamā), as going to the ocean and as a large river, he again thinks that it is the modern Indus river which is meant the Sarasvatī river. Zimmer and others harp on the same string.²

His acceptance of the modern Indus river as the Rgvedic Sarasvatī is hardly tenable. The Sarasvatī and Sindhu (Indus) rivers are mentioned in the Rgveda as independent rivers,³ and of them, Sarasvatī is highly eulogised.

---

¹ Sir A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. XIV (India, 1887) p. 68. "Drishadhvati means the "rocky" or "stoney" and the Sarsuti is described by Utri in the time of Mahmud Ghaznis invasion as having a bottom full of large stones, with precipitous banks and impetuous stream."

² Cf. Macdonell and Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 435. "In many other passages of the Rigveda, and even later, Roth held that another river, the Sindhu (Indus), was really meant: only thus could it be explained why the Sarasvatī is called 'the foremost of rivers' (nadītamā), is said to go to the ocean, and is referred to as a large river, on the banks of which many kings, and, indeed, the five tribes, were located. This view is accepted by Zimmer and others".

One of the mantras, compares it to a great ocean (maho arnah), flowing with its mighty currents.\(^1\) The Sarasvatī, the foremost of rivers,\(^2\) has been described as so large, so mighty, so strong and swift in its currents that it invokes fear in one's heart. It has been, therefore, invoked by the seers not to frighten them by its waters.\(^3\)

The Sarasvatī has also been popular with the Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, Śūtras, Epics, Purāṇas, etc., in its different forms and its different conceptions. But this is not the case with the Sindhu which hardly finds any elaborate description after the Samhitās.\(^4\)

The Rgveda and the Atharvaveda use the word 'sindhu' more often for 'stream' merely; but the word appears to have been used for the Sindhu (Indus) river also.\(^5\) The Sarasvatī river has been a different river. It has been called "sindhumātā" (the mother of streams), an epithet which apparently presents it as the greatest river, greater even than the Sindhu. The epithet 'sindhumātā' has been used only for the Sarasvatī river and never for the Sindhu. If the word 'sindhu' denotes the Sindhu river, we should have no hesitation in accepting the Sarasvatī as a greater river than the Sindhu on

---

1 Rv., I. 3.12.
2 Ibid., II. 41.16.
3 Ibid., VI. 61.14.
4 Macdonell & Keith, op. cit., p. 450.
5 Cf. Rv., I.122.6, 126.1; IV.54.6, 55.3; V. 53.9; VIII. 12.3, 25.14; X. 64.9.
account of its being treated as its mother. ¹

Roth's view has, therefore, no firm leg to stand upon. The Sarasvatī and the Sindhu should be accepted as the independent rivers. ²

(II) K.C. Cāttopādhyaẏa: He maintains that in the earlier portions of the Rgveda, particularly in Mandalas VI and VII, the Sarasvatī means the Indus and in other passages, the little stream now known by that name. According to him, the Indus itself was called by the name Sarasvatī and occasionally by Sindhu; but when the little stream in the Madhyadesa also came to be known as Sarasvatī, the distinction between these two became necessary, and the latter was, therefore, called eastern Sarasvatī. ³

This view is untenable. The Sarasvatī river is described in Mandala VII of the Rgveda as flowing rapidly with all sustaining waters, sweeping away in its might all other waters; ⁴ flowing through the mountains up to the ocean distributing riches to the vast world. ⁵ As the description in the former verse does not agree with the little stream of the Sarasvatī river, scholars ⁶ are inclined to apply it to the Indus. But this identification cannot

¹ Cf. ibid., VII. 36.6.
"Sapta Sindhavah, 'the seven rivers', occur only once in the Rigveda as the designation of a definite country, while elsewhere the seven rivers themselves are meant. Max Muller thinks that the five streams of the Punjab, with the Indus and the Sarasvatī, are intended."
⁴ RV., VII. 95.1.
⁵ Ibid., VII. 95.2.
be accepted; for though the description in the former verse happens to agree with the Indus, that in the latter, where the Sarasvati is said to distribute riches to the vast world, does not do at all. Thus, the Sarasvati described in these verses cannot be taken to be the Indus.\(^1\)

The assumption that in the earlier portion of the Rigveda, Sarasvati means the Indus, is hardly acceptable. In the hymns wherein the Sarasvati is celebrated, there is nothing which can admit of such an interpretation. Only one verse\(^2\) among all the hymns, uses the term 'Sindhu' and that, too, not as a proper name; but as a synonym for 'a river' in general. Cattopādhyāya thinks that the words Sarasvati and Sindhu were synonymous. If it were so, these terms ought to have been exchanged, at least once, if not often in the hymns which describe the Sarasvati. But the case is quite different. We do not have even a single instance where these terms have been exchanged. In the verse referred to above, any synonym of river will suit in place of Sindhu, and the use of the word 'Sindhu' is here merely accidental and not with any special significance. Moreover, it is also unreasonable to assume that the adventurous Vedic Aryans did not know the Sarasvati river which is not far away from the Indus and, therefore, believed the Indus to be identical with the Sarasvati.\(^3\) Cattopādhyāya supports his identification of the

---

1 As the modern Sarasvati does not reach the sea and the second verse of the same hymn expressly mentions that it does reach the sea, some scholars doubt that Sarasvati in this hymn denotes a river at all. See OST., Vol.II (London, 1871), p. 346.

According to Langlois quoted by Muir, Vol.II, p.246, f.n.127, Sarasvati in this hymn stands, not for a river but for the goddess of sacrifice with her libations: "Langlois, Vol.iii., p. 247, note 13, thinks that Sarasvati in this hymn stands, not for a river, but for "the goddess of sacrifice", with her libations. "These libations form a river, which flows from the mountains, where the sacrifice is performed, and where the soma plant is collected. This river flows into the samudra(sea), which is the vessel destined to receive the oblations."

2 RV., VII. 95.1.

Sarasvatī river with the Indus by a curious argument that the description of the Indus in X.75; and that of the Sarasvatī in other hymns and passages bear a close resemblance. But one cannot accept the identification on mere resemblance. In the Ṛgveda itself the descriptions of several deities are closely resembling to one another; but one cannot regard them as identical. The Sarasvatī was, therefore, a separate river; and not the same as Indus. Catopādhyāya considers that the Sarasvatī in the Ṛgveda is only terrestrial and not celestial; but the Ṛgvedic evidence shows it beyond any shadow of doubt that it is both celestial and terrestrial like the Gaṅgā.¹

(III) Max Müller: To Max Müller, the Ṛgvedic Sarasvatī is the same as the later Sarasvatī. According to him, the Vedic Sarasvatī was really a great river and made its way to the sea. In its largeness, it has been compared by him with the Sutlej. So far as the disappearance of the Sarasvatī is concerned, he says that a great change has taken place in the existence of rivers, particularly in the existence of the Punjab rivers. The Sarasvatī was the last to have any change and, therefore, is called 'iron citadel' in the west against the rest of India. He is of the view that the Sarasvatī did not disappear in the Ṛgvedic age, its disappearance is later.² What Max Müller takes as the Vedic Sarasvatī, is the later Sarasvatī, i.e., the modern Sarsūti.³

¹ Vide B.R. Sharma, op.cit., pp. 55ff.
² Max Müller, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXXII (Delhi, 1964), p. 60.
³ Macdonell and Keith, op.cit., p. 435, f.n.16.

"In the enumeration of rivers (evidently, from east to west) in RV. X.75.5, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Sutudrī, the Sarasvatī comes between the Jumna and the Sutlej, the position of the modern Sarsūti (Sarasvatī), which, flowing to the west of Thanesar, is joined in Patiala territory by a more westerly stream, the Ghaggar, and, passing sirsa, is lost in the desert at Bhatnai; but a dry river bed (Hakra or Ghaggar) can be traced from that point to the Indus."
Here Max Müller compares the Sarasvatī with the Sutlej. To him the latter was as great as the former. It is not acceptable; because in the Ṛgveda, the Sarasvatī has been described as a river par excellence and it is owing to this that it is variously spoken as 'the best of river' (madītanā)\(^1\); 'iron citadel' (dharuṇaṃśayaśā pūḥ);\(^2\) 'superior to other sister-rivers' (uttarā sakhibhyāḥ).\(^3\) The Sutlej is not so big a river as to claim such epithets and, therefore, its comparison to the Sarasvatī is also not proper. In the Ṛgveda, containing the praise of the rivers (Nadī-Statth), it is the Sarasvatī river alone which is highly eulogised and praised.

Max Müller leaves us untold whether the Sarasvatī flowed to the sea after its union with the Sindhu.\(^4\) We may expressly say that both the rivers were independent\(^5\) and that the Sarasvatī flowed directly to the sea (samudra).\(^6\) The other acceptable rather more convincing point which his word later itself suggests, is the identification of the later with

\(^1\) RV., II.41.16.  
\(^2\) Ibid., VII. 95.1.  
\(^3\) Ibid., VII. 95.4.  
\(^6\) A.C. Das, Ṛgvedic India (Calcutta, 1927), p.7, f.n.1.  

"The Sarasvatī, however, never flowed into the Indus, but directly into the sea, like the Indus. It was an independent river, and the marks of the old bed, still discernible in the sands, do not point to its conjunction with the Indus."
the earlier Sarasvatī which has changed its course and diminished in size.¹ It is owing to the changing position that it is simultaneously called easterly (prāci)² and westerly (pasāimāmukhi).³

(IV) Divaprasad Das Gupta: Divaprasad Das Gupta also touches upon the problem. He quotes two geologists, Pilgrim and Pascoe who give the Sarasvatī river the names of the Siwalik River and Indo-Brahm River respectively. This Indo-Brahm River was stretched at a time from Assam to the west of Punjab and fell into a gulf of the Arabian Sea which had its shore dashing the boundary of Punjab. Some geological evidences such as boulder deposits, a kind of particular deposits of fossils, etc., along side the foots of the Himalayas, prove that there existed a very large river. It had big tributaries; and the Ganga, Yamuna, Gandaka, etc., of today are the outgrowth of these tributaries.⁴


"There is no conclusive evidence of there having been any great change in the size or course of the Sarasvati, though it would be impossible to deny that the river may easily have diminished in size. But there are strong reasons to accept the identification of the later and earlier Sarasvatī throughout."

² Pdp., V. 18.217, 28.123; Bhāp., X.78.19.

³ Skp., VII. 35.26.

Das Gupta identifies the Indo-Brahm river with the ancient Sarasvatī and maintains that the ancient centre of civilisation and places of historic importance, Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, were situated by the Sarasvatī. Mr. Das Gupta deems Mohenjo Daro probably situated by the mouth of the Sarasvatī as the principal port of India. Owing to the catastrophic changes, the river got dwindled and sufficiently shrank back. At the primeval stage, there stood a high-land between Chotanagpur Plateau of Bihar and Khasi Hills of Assam. The Sarasvatī was flowing from Assam up to the border of Punjab; and was apparently to the north of this high-land, while on the opposite side, were the Meghnā, Brahmaputra, Bhāgirathī, etc.1 Owing to the river capture,2 a drastic change took place in almost all the rivers - the Meghnā, Brahmaputra, Bhāgirathī, etc., and they turned backwards, captured the Sarasvatī and the modern Brahmaputra diverted waters of the Sarasvatī (upper part) into its own course. Similarly, the Bhāgirathī captured the Gaṅgā, and the latter captured Yamunā, Gaṅgākā, Gomati, Rāptī, etc., and diverted their waters into its own course. This catastrophic change was enhanced due to the upheaval in the Himalayas which turned the flow of the Gaṅgā previously

1 Ibid., p. 536.
2 Ibid., p. 536.

"There is a phenomena in nature what is called in geological Sciences as 'river capture'. A river generally lengthens its course by cutting backwards at the very source of the river. By this process of back cutting it may ultimately reach the course of another river and divert the water of the latter river into itself."
flowing from south-east to north-west. Today, we do not find any mark of the upper part of the Indo-Brahm River, as it has been filled up and highly raised up by the rising of the Himalayas, making high the ancient deep and wide ditch occupied by the river.1

The lower part of the Sarasvatī, flowed along the upper courses of the Satadru, Yamuna and Ghaggar and had long tributaries. A river capture was done by the Yamuna, which ultimately diverted waters of the Vedic Sarasvatī into its own course and flows even today with the same. Thus, the Vedic Sarasvatī is supposed to have formed the confluence of the three rivers - Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvatī at Prayag. 2 The confluence of the three rivers at Prayag is called 'Yuktavenī'; but the Ganga forms at its deltaic point in Bengal a 'Muktavenī', which is the re-division of the Bhagirathi, Sarasvatī and Yamuna, and is called the 'Dakṣaṇa Prayūga' of Bengal. The Ganga which was flowing along with the Bhagirathi during the middle of the 16th century, took a vital turn and diverted itself through the Padma. It was due to these great earth movements that the Sarasvatī and Yamuna dried up. Many other changes also took place in rivers of Bengal. The Bhagirathi, at present, is supposed as flowing through the lower course of the Sarasvatī. This lower course of the Sarasvatī is identified with the present Hooghly

1 Ibid., p. 536.
2 Ibid., p. 537.
Das Gupta has, indeed, brought into light a good deal of striking references to the whereabouts of the Sarasvatī. His quest for the Sarasvatī, on the basis of geological findings, is really very important and establishes its close association with the Himalayas. He traces a very long route of it and shows that it was later on divided into two parts, the upper and the lower. Its lower part might have been the same as the modern Sarsūti, running from the Southern Punjab to the Northern Rajasthan. He holds that Harappa and Mohenjo Daro were situated at the mouth of the Sarasvatī. But at present, these places fall in the valley of the Indus river, where a great civilisation is said to have flourished. The Sarasvatī had many tributaries from North and South and it is possible that some of them might have gone to the Indus and, thus, have rendered a water-link between the Indus and the Gangetic basin. He, therefore, seems to be right when he puts: "Distribution of fauna in the present-day Indus and the Gangetic systems, specially of fresh water Dolphins also put to the fact that there must have been water connection between the Indus and Gangetic basins."

As it is obvious, the Sarasvatī and the Sindhu were, according

1 Ibid., pp. 537-538.
2 Ibid., p. 536.
3 Ibid., p. 536.
4 Ibid., p. 535.
to Das Gupta, two independent rivers and they cannot be identical. So far as the diversion of the flow of the Sarasvati into that of Yamuna is concerned, he appears to be of the same opinion as Dr. D.N. Wadia, according to whom, "In course of time, the Sarasvati took a more and more easterly course and ultimately merged into the Ganges at Prayag. It then received the name of Yamuna."  

But a contradiction still prevails. According to Dr. Wadia, it was the ancient Sarasvati, which was formerly westerly and later on became easterly, which is quite contrary to the fact leading to its disappearance in the West. 2 Das Gupta who holds the similar view, is wrong; because the lower part of the Sarasvati cannot be held to have merged into the Yamuna. If it is thought to have merged into the Yamuna, we cannot take it to be the Vedic Sarasvati. He is wrong in holding that in the Vedic times, the Sarasvati changed its route to the Yamuna and was seen by the then people. 3 For, the disappearance of the Rgvedic Sarasvati is post-Vedic rather than Vedic. There is no mention of the disappearance (Vinasana) of the river in the Vedas proper which could support what Das Gupta states. It is possible that the upper part of the Indo-Brahma River may be identified with another Sarasvati different from the Rgvedic Sarasvati and may be advocated to have been interlinked with the Siwalik River mentioned by Pilgrim. 4 The Siwalik river was the

2 See infra., pp. 26-34.  
3 Divaprasad Das Gupta, op.cit., p. 537.  
4 Ibid., p. 535.
original Vedic Sarasvati, which flowed from the Siwalik ranges.\(^1\) Its
course would have reached the vicinity of the region of western rivers.
As its description clearly shows, the Vedic Sarasvati flowed in the
western part of India rather than in the eastern, the region of the
rivers namely, Brahmaputra, Meghnā, Bhagirathi, etc.

The ports and cities accepted by Das Gupta as situated along the
banks of the Sarasvati,\(^2\) are quite unknown to the Vedas. He contends
that one portion of the upper part of the Sarasvati, was existing as
late as the middle of the 16th century.\(^3\) It cannot be reconciled with
the description, contradictory to the disappearance of the Vedic Saras-
vatī as the period of its disappearance was earlier than the 16th or
the middle of the 16th century.\(^4\) One would hardly accept that the Vedic
Sarasvati overflowed through Assam and Bengal. The Vedas show its asso-
ciation with the tradition, culture, religious customs, etc., of the
western part of India rather than with those of the eastern part. He
states that the Sarasvati is still flowing through the Hooghly river;\(^5\)
but none can take it for the Vedic Sarasvatī for the above reasons.

\(^{1}\) Sir A. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
\(^{2}\) Divaprasad Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 538.
\(^{3}\) *ibid.*, p. 537.
\(^{5}\) Divaprasad Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 538.
3. The geographical and historical data:

So far as the historical facts leading to the location of the Sarasvatī are concerned, we will see them later. Let us first see the geographical facts.

(i) The geographical facts:

(a) Mountain:

The Ṛgveda, which contains various references to Sarasvatī as a river, describes it as flowing from the mountains and reaching the sea:

"ekā cetat sarasvati nadinām sūcīr yatī giribhya ā samudrāt"²

If those mountains and seas are once located, there will be no difficulty in ascertaining the course of the Sarasvatī. Since the Sarasvatī is not existent at present, we are to resort to pre-historic times, when it was existing. It would not be out of place in this content to have in mind the geological geography of the Indian Peninsula.

The Indian Peninsula may be broadly divided into three parts, namely - (i) the triangular plateau of the Peninsula, (ii) the mountainous region of the Himalayas; and (iii) the great Indo-Gangetic Plain of Punjab and Bengal.³ The Ṛgvedic mantra referred to above, tells us that the Sarasvatī got originated in the mountains; but we are to ascertain which mountain it was wherefrom it got its origin. There is

1 Supra, p. 1, f.n.1.
2 RV., VII. 95.2.
3 D.N. Wadia, op.cit., p. 1.
no indication for it in the Rigveda proper; but in the Purāṇas, the Sarasvatī has been reckoned as one of rivers issued from the foot of the Himalayas 'himvat-pādanāḥ vartāh'. This shows that the Sarasvatī originated from the foot of the Himalayas. The Himalaya has a long range extending from the bordering line of our country and that of Baluchistan to the south-east of the Brahmaputra in Assam and falls under the following geographical divisions:2

i) The Great Himalayas.
ii) The Lesser Himalayas.
iii) The Outer Himalayas.

Similarly, it has been geologically divided into different zones3 as:

i) The Northern Zone.
ii) The Central Zone.
iii) The Outer Zone.

The Outer Himalayas fall under the Outer Zone and is the same as the Siwalik ranges.4 Rivers mostly flow from this division. The Sarasvatī, too, has been reckoned to have outfringed from the foot of the Siwalik ranges.5

---

2 D.N. Wadia, op.cit., pp. 9-10.
3 Ibid., p. 10.
4 Ibid., p. 10.
5 Cf. N.N. Godbole, op.cit., p. 17.
(b) **Seas:**

As we have noticed above, the Sarasvati after having taken its birth from the mountains, made its way to the sea. We are to ascertain which sea it was. The modern geologists, after scientific quest and observation, have unanimously reached the conclusion that the region now occupied by the Indo-Gangetic Plain of Punjab and Bengal was previously covered with waters. It divided the Indian Peninsula into two divisions - north and south.  

In the *Rgveda*, there is the mention of two seas - eastern and western. In the verse, the word 'pūrva' refers to the sea situated in the east and 'parah' to the one existing in the west. We are yet to discover which of these seas it was wherein waters of the Sarasvati fell. Geological evidences show that whole of Rajputana was previously the bed of a sea. It was a very large sea and covered a large area of Rajasthan.

---


"Mr. Wells second map (of the period 35,000-25,000 years ago) shows the interrupted continuity of the sea that separated the Punjab and the Himalayas from the Southern Indian Plateau, broken only by the formation of land in the Eastern Rajputana and points to the existence of a sea over a large portion of the Gangetic valley (which could be no other than the Eastern Sea of the Rig Vedic map and of another sea or gulf over Western Rajputana and the whole of lower Sindha)."

2 *RV.*, X. 136.5.

"vātasyā śvo vāyoh sakhā 'tho: deve 'sito munih! ubhau samudrāv ā kṣeti yaś ca pūrva utā'parahī"  

MP., CXXI.65, also refers to two seas - one in the east and the other in the west."
It had extended even up to the south-east of the Aravalli.¹ When the Sarasvatī is said to flow from the mountains into the sea,² it points to the fact that it flowed from the Siwalik ranges into this sea of Rajputana. The Yamunā and the Gāṅgā flowed into the Eastern Sea,³ which is obviously different from the Rajputana Sea. Śrī V.P. Ketkar on astronomical as well as Purānic grounds called the Eastern Sea 'the Gaṅgetic sea.'⁴

Thus, the Sarasvatī once flowed into the Rajasthan Sea or the Western Sea. The Rgveda mentions four seas also.⁵ Among these four seas, the three are - the Eastern Sea; the Rajputana Sea; and the Arabian Sea. In the enumeration of the two seas, the Eastern Sea denotes the Gaṅgetic

---

2 R.V., VII. 95.2.
4 Ibid., p. 8.
5 R.V., IX, 33.6.

"rayāḥ samudrāṇā caturo 'samabhyam soma visvataḥ | ā pavasva sabhasrinahu "

Ibid., X. 47.2.

"sva 'yudham sv avasam sunītham catuh samudram dharunam rayīnām".
Sea and the Western Sea, the Rajputana Sea; but in the enumeration of the four seas, the case is different. The four seas must be: (i) the Eastern sea (the Gangesic Sea); (ii) the Southern Sea (the Rajputana Sea); (iii) the Western Sea (the Arabian Sea); and (iv) the Northern Chinese Sea (now the Chinese desert).  

It is obvious that the fourth sea was towards the north of the Himalayas and it has left so many remnants.

In the Purāṇas, the Sarasvatī is said to be 'prāci' and 'pācimā-mukhi'. These attributes evidently show a change in its course from east to west. Geological facts prove that owing to the geological changes, there was a change in the Rajputana Sea and owing to this change in the

1 Cf. N.N. Godbole, op. cit., p. 6.

"The four seas referred to were (a) the Eastern Sea (now the Ganges Valley), the Southern Sea (the old Rajasthan Sea - now Rajasthan desert), the Western Sea (towards Afghanistan and Baluchistan and the North Chinese Sea - now known as the Chinese desert.)"

2 A.C. Das, op. cit., p. 12.

"It now only remains for us to identify the fourth sea. It must have been situated somewhere on the north, beyond the Himalayas, on the confines of the land inhabited by the Aryans. And Geology proves that such a sea did actually exist in ancient times, stretching from below the highlands of modern Turkestan towards Siberia on one side, and from the confines of Mongolia to the Black Sea, on the other covering an immense area. This sea disappeared in comparatively recent geological times, leaving the Black Sea, the Sea of Aral, Lake Balkash, and an extensive depression now dry and covered into steppes, as its remnants."

3 Pāp., V.18.217, 28. 123; Bhāp., X. 78.19.

4 Skp., VII. 35.26.

5 A.C. Das, op. cit., p. 7.

"This river, however, at present time, never reaches the sea, but loses itself in the sands of the desert of Rājputānā, the sea having receded a long distance, some hundreds of miles from its mouth. The evident reference is that since the composition of the verse, a different distribution of land and water has taken place, probably caused by a cataclysm or a series of cataclysms, resulting in a sudden or gradual upheaval of the bed of a sea that has once existed there."
sea, the Sarasvati, which was once flowing into the Rajputana Sea along with the Drşadvati in the east, turned to the west.\textsuperscript{1} It is corroborated even by another evidence. This Sea of Rajputana was extended up to the south and east of the Aravalli mountains,\textsuperscript{2} which was once the highest mountain of the Indian Peninsula.\textsuperscript{3} It seems true that its decompositions, during the catastrophic times, must have gone through erosion to all directions irrespective of the Rajputana Sea and the Eastern Sea. And as a result, rivers falling into the Rajputana Sea would have diverted their way to south and west and the rivers, falling into the Eastern Sea, would have become more easterly.\textsuperscript{4}

Thus, from the above observations, it is quite clear that the Sarasvati river was previously in the east; and later on, it changed its course towards the west and flowing through the Eastern Nara entered the

---

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. N.N.Godbole, \textit{op.cit.}, p.2, Map No.1.

\textsuperscript{2} A.C. Das, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{3} N.N. Godbole, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 8.

"A brief description of the Aravallis would be very helpful in understanding the history of Sarasvati and its course to the south and west and its possible relations to the Aravallis. The Aravallis are true tectonic mountains formed in the pre-cambrian period and are subjected to upliftments during post Vindhyan times. At one time, they had assumed great height about four miles and were even taller than the Himalayas, our youngest of mountains today."

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Ibid.}, p.2.

"It is also suggested that the decomposition products of the Aravalli rocks once four miles high must have spread in all directions, west, north and north-west and east, the western products going to fill up the old Rajasthan Sea and the northern and north-western products going to form the famous ridge between Delhi and Ambala and Dehra Dun which is responsible for driving the Yamuna and Ganga streams east-wards and the other streams of the Punjab, Indus and Sarasvati towards the west - along the latitude of 30\textdegree N which is probably the line of the upheaval of Manu."
Rann of Cutch. 1

(ii) The historical facts:

The location of the Sarasvati can also be ascertained on the basis of the historical evidences furnished by the Rgveda. It refers to many kings, residing along the banks of the Sarasvati, which has been described to be excessively generous unto them. 2 It also mentions five tribes as brought up by the Sarasvati. 3 It is to us to identify and locate these five tribes. There is the mention of the Bharatas, the Kurus, the Pūrus, the Mātysyas, the Pāṇcālas, etc. The point is open to dispute. Raychaudhuri reckons the five tribes as the Bharatas, the Kurus, the Pusamas, the Mātysyas, and the Videghas or Videhas. 4 Rāhula Sāṅkṛtāyana accepts the five tribes to be the Pūrus, the Yadus, the Turvasas, the Druhyus and the Anus. 5 If we locate the Bharatas, the Kurus, and the Pūrus, we may be able to locate the Sarasvati.

(a) The Bharatas:

The Bharatas are mentioned with the Sudōsa, the Trāṭsus and the Divodāsa. Their relation with the Trāṭsus is still uncertain. They are

1 Ibid., pp. 2, 32, 33.
2 Cf. RV., VIII.21.18.
3 RV., VI.61.12., "paṇca jātā vardhayantī".
4 Raychaudhuri, H.C., "The Sarasvati", SC 8(12), July 1942-June 1943, Nos. 1-2, p.470. He himself seems to be uncertain about it as his use of the word 'may' shows.
mentioaned some times as being the Tṛṣṇus themselves, while some times, 
they are maintained as being different; because we find the Tṛṣṇus 
described as the Vasiṣṭhas, family singers of the Bharatas. Whatever 
the case may be, it is beyond doubt true, that the Bharatas lived along 
the banks of the Sarasvatī, and worshipped a female goddess, called 
Bhāratī, who had her close affinity with the Sarasvatī river. It seems 
that the Bharatas were called as such because of their association with 
Bhāratī. In the Ṛgveda, these people are also mentioned as living along 
the banks of the Sarasvatī, Āpayā and Drṣadvatī rivers. If the Bharatas 
are located, we will be able to ascertain the course of the Sarasvatī 
river also. It is almost true that these were among the Ṛgvedic Aryans; 
but during the Brāhmaṇical period; the Aryans divided into two groups, 
the Easterners and the Westerners, living in the east and the west of 
the middle country. This middle country was occupied by the Kuru-
Pañcālas with whom the Bharatas later on merged. If they had any 
association with the Kurus, they certainly would have belonged to the 
western part of the Indian Peninsula. From this, it is also proved that 
the Sarasvatī, too, would have flowed in this part.

(b) The Kurus:

The reference to the Kurus occurs sometimes independently and some-
times with the Pañcālas. With the Pañcālas, it occurs as Kuru-Pañcālas, 
indicating a people living in the country of Kuru-Pañcāla. The animity

1 Cf. Macdonell and Keith, op.cit., pp. 94-95.
2 Donald A. Mackenzie, Indian Myth and Legend (London, 1913), p.XL.
3 RV., III. 23.2-4.
4 Donald A. Mackenzie, op.cit., p. XXXIX.
and unanimity between these two groups is a matter of controversy.\footnote{1} The word Kuru indicates beyond any doubt the Kuru tribe, the land of Kurus, i.e., the people of Kuru land or the modern Kurukṣetra.\footnote{2} Dr. B.C. Law describes the Kurukṣetra or the land of Kurus as follows:

"It was a well-known city of the Kurus in ancient times. It was one of the 16 great countries (Mahājānapadas) or Jambudvīpa or the continent of India. It was situated 25 miles south of Ambala on the river Sarasvatī."\footnote{3}

This well-known city of ancient India, was famous for its antiquity and sacredness. It was, here that the Ṛgvedic mighty and pious Sarasvatī flowed with other rivers of the region.\footnote{4} The Sarasvatī, now called modern Sarsuti, and Drsadvatī, now identified with the modern Rākṣi,\footnote{5} formed the circuit of Cakra which covered the area of 20 Yojanas.\footnote{6}

The reference to early Kurus assigns them to the western provinces of India. As they were closely associated with the Sarasvatī, the latter

\footnotetext[1]{1}{Macdonell and Keith, \textit{/Vol.1}, pp. 165-167.}
\footnotetext[2]{2}{Cf. \textit{ibid.}, p. 165-167; for detailed information also cf. Agrawal, R.C. \textit{"Early History and Archaeology of Kurukṣetra and Ambala Division"}, \textit{IHQ}, Vol. XXXI, No.4 (Calcutta, 1955), pp. 293 ff.}
\footnotetext[3]{3}{Dr. B.C. Law, \textit{"Kurukṣetra in Ancient India"}, \textit{Dr. S.K. Belvalkar Felicitation Volume}, BORI (Poona, 1957), p. 249.}
\footnotetext[4]{4}{Sir A. Cunningham, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 88.}
\footnotetext[5]{5}{\textit{ibid.}, p. 88.}
\footnotetext[6]{6}{\textit{ibid.}, p. 90.}
must have flowed in the western part of India, especially in Punjab.

(c) The Pūrus:

Raychaudhuri excludes them from the five tribes.¹ Rāhula Sāṅkṛtāyana includes them among the five tribes and has expressed the probability of their existence even before the Ṛgvedic age. He accepts that they fell in various divisions in that very age such as the Bharatas, the Trāṇas and the Kusākas.² At one place, in the Ṛgveda, the Pūrus tribe occur with Yadus the Turvāsas, the Druhyus, and Anus.³

All the five are mentioned as the sons of Yayāti: "Nahuṣa was the son of Āyu, the grandson of Purūravas and the great grandson of Ilū. Yayāti had five sons, viz., Yadu, Turvasa, Anu, Druhyu and Pūru, of whom the first four migrated to other areas while Pūru and his descendants ruled over the ancestral domain.⁴

Pūrus living by the banks of the Sarasvatī merged with the Kuruś by the process of intertribe-marriage.⁵ The dwelling of the Pūrus by the banks of the Sarasvatī, is also referred to in the Ṛgveda itself.⁶

1 Raychaudhuri, H.C., op.cit., p. 470.
2 Rāhula Sāṅkṛtāyana, op.cit., p. 18.
3 ṚV., I. 106.8.
   "yad indrā'gni yaduṣu tu arṣ[aṣeṣu yad druhyuṣu'nuṣu pūruṣu sthah".
6 ṚV., VII. 96.2.
   "abhe yat te māhinā subhre andhasā ahikṣiyaṁ puruvaḥ! sa no bodhyavitri marutsakhā coda rādhī maghonam"
All the above allusions to the kings and tribes tell us of the antiquity of the Sarasvatī and their close relation with it. The Sarasvatī of the Rigvedic times flowed through their regions and made them flourish in the western part of India in Punjab and the south of Rajasthan.

4. Vinasana or the disappearance of the Sarasvatī:

It is clear from what has been said above that the Sarasvatī flowed down from the mountains and ran to the ocean; but it dried up owing to geological changes. The place, where it lost its existence, is aptly called 'Vinasana' or 'the disappearance' of the Sarasvatī. The disappearance of the Sarasvatī is held in Punjab territory in Patiala district. Its disappearance has also been connected with the Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa. The Tāṇḍya-Mahābrāhmaṇa specifies the distance between Vinasana and the Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa. According to it, the Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa is at the distance of forty four 'āśvīnas' from Vinasana (catus catvarimsad āśvinī)." The 'āśvīna' being the distance traversed by a horse constantly moving one complete day and night. It is held that Plakṣa Prāsravaṇa was actually the place of the source of the Sarasvatī rather than the place for its re-appearance. In the great Epic Vinasana is placed on the borders of

2 TāB., XXV, 10.16.
the Sūdras and the Ābhiras. The land of the Ābhiras is located above the Indus delta while the land of the Sūdras was the place below the confluence of the Conāba and the Indus. Vinasāna is beyond the borders of these two places.1 According to other sources, Vinasāna occupies a large area capable to form the western frontier of Madhyadesa whereas the latter has its other frontiers - the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā in the east; Himālayas in the north and Vindhya mountains in the south.2 In the Bhaudhāyana-Dharmasūtras the region of Vinasāna is mentioned to exist to the west of Āryāvarta, which is to the west of the Black-forest, to the north of the Pāripātra and to the south of the Himālayas.3

In the later literature, Vinasāna is held to exist near modern Sīrsā in Kurukṣetra in the eastern Punjab4 (now in the Karnal District


"This Vinasāna forms, according to the laws of the Wānavas, the western frontier of Madhyadesa, the eastern frontier being formed by the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Madhyadesa is a section of Āryāvarta, the abode of the Āryas in the widest sense. Āryāvarta shows with Madhyadesa the same frontiers in the north and the south, viz. the Himālayas and Vindhya mountains, but it extends beyond Madhyadesa to the west and east as far as the western and eastern seas."

3 Cf. ibid., p. 59.

"In the Sūtras which supplied the material to the authors of the matricial law books, the Vinasāna is mentioned for the first time in the Baudhāyana Sūtras, I,2,9, 'Āryāvarta lies to the east of the region where (the Sarasvati) disappears, to the west of the Black-forest, to the north of the Pāripātra (mountains), to the south of the Himālayas'. The name of the Sarasvati is not mentioned, but no other river can be understood."


"In the early Vedic period, the Sarasvati probably flowed into the Arabian Sea. Later literature speaks of its disappearance at Vinasāna (near modern Sīrsā)in Kurukṣetra or Brahmāvarta (in the eastern Punjab) which is described as the land between Sarasvati and Drāadvati."
of Haryana). Vinasana has also been located beyond the modern Sīrṣā, to the west of which the Sarasvatī lost itself in the desert of Bhatner.¹

When it is observed that the locality called Plakṣa Pṛāsravana is the source of the Sarasvatī,² our acceptance of the river as outfringed from the foot of the Siwalik range,³ will take Plakṣa Pṛāsravana as situated somewhere near the Siwalik ranges. The map prepared by Macdonell and Keith may approve of it.⁴ Vinasana is also accepted to be a locality where the Sarasvatī ceases to flow and is said to have situated in the Patiala district.⁵ It is towards the south-west of the Plakṣa Pṛāsravana.⁶

---


² The Indologists are of the opinion that the Sarasvatī is the same as Sarāuti which flows to the west of Thānesar and is joined in the Patiala territory by a more westerly stream Ghaggar and passing Sīrṣa is lost in the desert at Bhatner.

³ Macdonell and Keith, op.cit., p. 55.

⁴ Cf. N.N.Godbole, op.cit., p. 17.

⁵ See Macdonell and Keith, op.cit., Vol. I, map of Vedic India (Names of Peoples, countries and Localities in Black).


⁷ See also SKP., VII. 33, 40-41.

⁸ Cf. ibid., Vol. II, p. 300.

⁹ Vinasana, 'disappearance', is the name of the place where the Sarasvatī is lost in the sands of the desert. It is mentioned in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa and the Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa. The locality is the Patiala district of the Panjab.
Let us note the distance between Plakṣa Prāsravāṇa and Vinasāna in the light of the Tāṇḍya-Brāhmaṇa.

This Brāhmaṇa mentions the distance as forty four 'āsvīnas'(datus catvārimśad āsvīnāni), which denotes the distance of journey covered by a horseman in one day. But 'āsvīna' has not been accepted unanimously to be a specific measurement of length. It has been defined variously.

In the Atharvaveda, the 'āsvīna' distance is held to exceed 5 yojanas. According to Patañjali, an average horse goes four yojanas, while the superior one to eight yojanas in a day. On the other hand, Kautilya mentions three varieties of horses. Of which the horse of the first variety travels the distance of six yojanas in a day; that the second variety, nine; and that of the third kind, twelve.

There is divergence of opinion as to the actual distance of yojana. Generally one yojana is believed to be of 8 krosas and 1 krośa of 2 miles. Hwen Thsang states it as equal to 8 krosas; while in the

1 TāB., XXV. 10.16.
2 Macdonell and Keith, op.cit., p. 70.
   "Āśvīna, or Āsvīna, designates, in the Atharvaveda, and two Brāhmaṇas, the length of journey made in a day by a horseman (asvīn). The exact distance is not defined."
3 AV., VI. 131.3.
   "yad dhāvasi triyojanām pañcayojanām āsvīnam."
4 MB., V. 3.55.
   "स्वो 'यम यस स्वत्वरी योजाणी गच्छति, अस्वतारो 'यम यो 'स्तान योजाणी गच्छति."
5 AVŚ., II. 30.
Hindu Books, it is rated at 4 krosas.¹ According to Fa-Hian, yojana also stood for about $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles or $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles or 8 miles.² It also stands for 4 or 5 English miles or $2\frac{1}{2}$ English miles.³ If we take all these into account, and try to measure the distance between Plakṣa Prāsravana and Vinasana, we cannot decide the correct distance.

The appearance and disappearance of the Sarasvatī may give us a clue to the route of the river. According to the Imperial Gazeteer of India, it rises in the Sirmur State and downs to the plains at Adh Badri. After flowing ahead to a short distance, it loses itself in the sand; but appears once more at a distance of 3 miles to the south of Bhavanipur. It again vanishes at Balchhappar and manifests while flowing through Karnal district until it loses itself completely in Patiala territory, where Vinasana is claimed to have situated.⁴

2 Ibid., p. 484.
3 Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 623.
5 Cf. Macdonell and Keith, op.cit., p. 300.
This gives us the clear picture of the route of the Sarasvatī. Modern investigations brush the doubt aside and let us believe that the above mentioned route was once virtually occupied by the old Vedic Sarasvatī. In this regard, an on-the-spot survey done by Sir Aurel Stein, is of immense importance. The river now called Ghaggar or Hakra has been identified with the Sarasvatī, standing for an old Vedic Sarasvatī in the popular belief.\(^1\) The Vedic Sarasvatī has retained old name by the modern Sarsūti, which flows near Pehoa or modern Prthūdaka 14 miles away from the west of Thanesar.\(^2\) Though at present, it has shrunk back and dwindled sufficiently, yet it has been taken to be a very big river at a time. At present, the river is not always perennial, and in the most part of the year, its bed remains dried up. Especially in the rainy season, it over-flows and inundates a large area on its sides; because its bed is raised up considerably. It is held that at Hanumangarh, it joins Ghaggar – now as Ghaggar Canal, an old remnant of a river, which also originates from the same Siwalik range. When Sarsūti joined the Ghaggar, it loses its previous name and is known as Sarsūti-Ghaggar or Ghaggar alone. But when only the name ghaggar is applied, it purports both the Sarsūti and the Ghaggar. The single stream goes ahead under the name of Ghaggar through Patiala State, Hissar district, Bikaner, Bhawalpur and traversing a quite good journey, it enters the area of


\(^2\) Allexander Cunningham, *op.cit.*, p. 283.

"The old down of Pehoa is situated on the south bank of Sarasuti, 14 miles to the west of Thanesar."
Pakistan bearing the name of Hakra. This Hakra is the tail-end of the Ghaggar, which remains empty for the most part of the year - from November to June. This tail-end should not be taken to mean an intermediary to engulf the Sarasvati (Ghaggar) to Indus. It is, in fact, the Eastern Nara through which the Sarasvati reached the Rann of Cutch. At present, the Eastern Nara, which is the tail-end of the Sarasvati or the Ghaggar, has taken the shape of the Sukkar barrage project.

So far as the confluence of the three rivers - Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati at Prayag is concerned, it appears to be simply a craving on the part of the religious minded people to revive the popular notion about the Vedic Sarasvati that she is still flowing and meets the other two rivers at Prayag. On the basis of the foregoing discussion, it is obvious enough that the Vedic Sarasvati is left behind at Hanumangarh and flows

---

1 Baychaudhuri, B.C., op.cit., p. 468.
N.N. Godbole, op.cit., p. 19, "The Ghaggar is known as Hakra when it enters the Pakistan area."

2 Ibid., p. 2.
"The main object of the theme, the Old Vedic Sarasvati has been traced from its source to its disappearance in the sands of Rajasthan and through the Eastern Nara to its one time entry into the Rann of Cutch."

Ibid., p. 20, "In the Indo-Gangetic alluvium map of India given by Oldham, there is a very interesting reference to a small tail-end of a river known as Lower Eastern Nara River. This stream, a very narrow one, is shown to be flowing south along long. 69°E and flowing into the Rann of Cutch... The leading Geologists agree that at one time the Sarasvati (Ghaggar) was flowing down into the gulf of Cutch."

3 Ibid., p. 21.
"Any way this tail-end of the old Ghaggar is utilised today as a perennial canal of the Sukkar barrage project. Thus ends the old Sarasvati contributing to the prosperity of the new Pakistan regime joining the Gulf of Cutch at about 24°N-West".
under one name or the other (the Ghaggar, or the Sarasvati) through Patiala, Hissar, Bikaner, Bahawalpur to the Rann of Cutch.\(^1\) It is also held that a river of frivolous importance called Sarasvati joined the Ganges and the Yamuna at Prayag, and it is possible that it might have been misunderstood to be the Vedic Sarasvati by the people.

Some important latitudes, longitudes and heights above sea-level concerning the flow of Sarasvati will bring the clear picture of the Sarasvati. Dr. N.N. Godbole\(^3\) has given them as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height above sea-level:</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahawalpur</td>
<td>559 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>400 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dera Ghazi Khan</td>
<td>400 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludhiana (Punjab)</td>
<td>635 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahore</td>
<td>709 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harappa (near Montgomery)</td>
<td>550 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course of Sarasvati from Bahawalpur</th>
<th>559 feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rawanwala</td>
<td>449 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudwala</td>
<td>385 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badalwala</td>
<td>375 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagla</td>
<td>347 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkar</td>
<td>190 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohinjo Daro</td>
<td>180 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sarasvati flowed down along 69° and 70° long. E and into the Rann of Kutch at 24.2° NL and 69.1° long. E.

\(^1\) Raychaudhuri, H.C., *op.cit.*, p. 468.

\(^2\) N.N. Godbole, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

"The so-called Sarasvati near Allahabad was perhaps a small stream and the real Sarasvati is left behind near Hanumangarh."

\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 33-34.
Lower Nara, perhaps, the tail-end of Sarasvati enters Rann of Kutch at 24.2° N and 69.1° E long.

Some important latitudes and longitudes concerning Sarasvati are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Lat. N</th>
<th>Long. E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amritsar</td>
<td>31.7°</td>
<td>74.8°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harappa</td>
<td>30.6°</td>
<td>72.8°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Ganganagar</td>
<td>29.9°</td>
<td>73.9°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shatuna</td>
<td>29.9°</td>
<td>76.1°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisar</td>
<td>29.2°</td>
<td>75.7°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirsa (Sarasvati)</td>
<td>29.55°</td>
<td>75.05°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurukshetra</td>
<td>29.95°</td>
<td>76.75°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanumangarh</td>
<td>29.6°</td>
<td>74.30°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anupgarh</td>
<td>20.2°</td>
<td>73.2°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suratgarh</td>
<td>29.3°</td>
<td>73.8°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunar</td>
<td>30.95°</td>
<td>76.5°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>28.6°</td>
<td>77.2°</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER II

SARASVATĪ IN THE RGVEDA
Chapter - II

SARASVATI IN THE RGYEDA

1. Physical aspect of Sarasvati:

Much has been said about Sarasvati as a river, which in the post-Vedic period, is regarded as the personified form of the goddess of speech, learning and eloquence; but it is to be seen how seers and Vedic bards, in remote age, conceived it in different forms and colours. Possibly, Vedic seers took Sarasvati as a goddess at first and later on projected their concepts into a solid and physical form, i.e., a terrestrial river. For this, they created a basic idea in their mind, which was equally applicable to other things. There are, for instance, the rays of the sun, which stand for light and light symbolises knowledge.¹ Similarly, light and darkness have been understood for life and death, freedom and bondage, good and evil, virtue and sin.² The night (rātrī) or darkness generally is supposed for 'tamas', which is denotative of illusion (ajñāna).³ This was not always so on the part of the seers; for, gradually, they were rising above the ethical and psychological view of Nature. Thus, they translated their ideas into physical form.⁴ We

---

¹ Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p. 106.
³ Cf. the perspective meaning of SK., i; see also Dr. Ādyāprāsāda Miśra, Sāṅkhvāttvākṣayamudī-Prabhā (Prayāga, 1956), pp. 1-2.
⁴ Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., pp. 104-105.
have many cases of the sort. 'Asva' symbolises the dynamic force of life and 'Ušas' the most beautiful poetical figure.  

The case of perception may be otherwise. It is possible that they (Vedic seers) proceeded from Sarasvatī's physical account to subtler notion. The following will suffice this aptly.

According to J. Muir, Sarasvatī was taken at first merely as an earthly river. Owing to excessive reverence of seers, it was deified. The saintly beings, who were residing by its banks and performed their daily sacrifices, took Sarasvatī as the patroness of their sacrifices. Later on, they began to associate Sarasvatī with the mantras, chanted at the time of the sacrificial performance. They had firm belief that it was the pleasure of Sarasvatī alone, which could give them an incentive for the free flow of mantras at the occurrence of the sacrifices. Her grace was, thus, basically necessary. Such was the process through which Sarasvatī was later on identified with Vāk or was conceived as the goddess of speech.

There were many rivers in the country; but the Sarasvatī was best among them. It was, therefore, natural that it might have arrested the attention of the Vedic Aryans. The seers, dwelling along its banks, might have been immensely impressed by its mighty streams, rhythmic flow,

1 Ibid., p. 106.
4 RV., II. 41.16.
congenial waters and the like. This might have evoked much praise for it. It was, probably, for such reasons that the Sarasvatī occupied a very pious place even in the sacrifice. When somehow or other, its name was associated with the sacrifice, the previous notion of it as a river would have gained a wider perspective. It would have been regarded as the mother and subsequently as a goddess. This godhead would have been ascribed to it in the same way as we find in the case of the Gaṅgas, which is regarded as a mother-goddess in later literature as well as in popular belief.

Whatsoever the case might have been, it is beyond doubt true that Sarasvatī, in the Rgveda, has been described both as a river and as a river-goddess. So far as her anthropomorphic feature in this Veda is concerned, it is only possible in its capacity of a river rather than in that of a goddess or the like. Her anthropomorphism has been virtually carried out in the epics and the Purāṇas.

(i) The description of the limbs of Sarasvatī:

In the Rgveda, we do not find such a clear picture of the various limbs as hands, mouth, legs, breasts, etc., of Sarasvatī as in the post-Vedic literature in the case of many of gods and goddesses; but the ascription of limbs had begun even in the times of this Veda.¹ The waves

---

¹ Sarasvatī is a river at first and is later on conceived as a goddess. The latter stage is higher than the previous one. It seems that Vedic seers were not satisfied with the river-form of Sarasvatī, and in order to make the river living and active entity that alone could hear them, they regarded it as a river-goddess. This concept of Sarasvatī as a river-goddess is also endorsed by Yāska who says:

"tatra sarasvaty ēkasya nadiśad devatāvac ca niṣṇā bhavanti".

(Nirukta, II.23).
(ūrmayah) of the Sarasvatī river are poetically conceived as its hands. It digs up its banks with its hands of waves as a man digs up lotus-roots (bisakha iva). With its hands of waves, it is described as tearing down the peaks of mountains.

In one of the Rgvedic mantras, we come across the description of Sarasvatī’s breasts. They are described as invoking pleasure; as giving superior wealth; and as possessing wealth. The ascription of breasts to Sarasvatī is significant and implies various aspects of her personality. If we take Sarasvatī as a river, the breasts will imply its healthsome waters endowed with fructification. Waters may also stand for Sarasvatī residing in the clouds, or for cloud itself. The cloud, then, would be the physical form of Sarasvatī and the breasts would, thus, symbolise the storehouse of waters, she possesses. While shedding it to the earth, she brings happiness and wealth to the world. The similar notion seems to underlie the conceiving of the breasts of Sarasvatī.

(ii) The description of the beauty of Sarasvatī:

This aspect, too, does not find an elaborate description. Some attributes assigned to her, however, give us some vague idea. Such

1 RV., VI. 61.2.
2 Ibid., I. 164.49.
3 ’See infra., p. 63.
4 AV., VII. 12.1; see also Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, Ataravaveda Subodha Bhāṣya, Part III (Sūrata, 1958), p. 45 on AV., VII. 12.1.
5 RV., VII. 96.6, "pīpvāmsam sarasvataḥ stanaṁ yo visvadarsataḥ."
attributes are 'suyamā', 'subhrā', 'supresas', etc.

(a) Suyamā:

This word has been used only once for Sarasvatī. It is interpreted variously. Griffith takes it as 'tractable' and explains it as: "Tractable: Suyamā: easily led (by prayer)." Wilson makes out of it the meaning of 'beautiful', while Sayana explains it as: "yamyate niyamyata iti yamo vigrahah. suvigrahā..."

'Vigrahā' implies different meanings, e.g., shape, form, figure, the body, etc., and 'su' means good, well, excellent, excellently, beautiful, etc. This evidently shows that Sayana, explaining the word 'suyamā' as 'suvigrahā', means Sarasvatī as having a beautiful body. Wilson seems to follow him in rendering the word as 'beautiful'. In supporting such a view, we will accept Sarasvatī as endowed with a beautiful form. This beautiful form has been bestowed on her in her capacity as a goddess mentioned in the mantra with other gods. But we are not sure of the above meaning, as none of gods mentioned with her are anthropomorphised. The word 'suyamā' admits of various other interpretations.

It is derived from the word 'yama', meaning one of a pair or couple, a fellow, by adding the prefix 'su' and the suffix 'ṭāp'. Sarasvatī is

1 Ibid., IX. 81.4.
2 Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 912.
3 Ibid., p. 1118.
called 'suyamā' probably because she is the consort of one of the gods, mentioned in the mantra.

'Yama' also means restraining, controlling, restraint and the like. According to this derivation, 'suyamā' is the one, who is either self-restraint or is easily accessible.

(b) Subhrā:

This word occurs several times in the Rgveda. In one of the mantras, it is used in plural as an adjective of Sarasvatī, Brhaddivā and Rākā. Elsewhere, it comes exclusively as an adjective of Sarasvatī in the vocative case. In the first mantra, Sāyana takes Sarasvatī as a river or the goddess of speech; in the second as a goddess only; and in the third, as both speech (Vāk) and a river. For these various notions, he translates 'subhrāh' as 'dīptāh' in the first mantra; 'subhre' as 'subhravarne' both in the second and third mantras as referred to above.

'Subhrā' is a very suggestive epithet of Sarasvatī. In the Rgveda (V.42.12), the occurrence of 'Rākā' representing the full moon night, with Sarasvatī is very significant. Generally, beauty is compared with the bright moon. This brightness consists of pure whiteness and because of brightness and purity, also lying in the waters of the Sarasvatī, it is comparable to Rākā. Waters of the Sarasvatī are so

1 Ibid., p. 889.
2 RV., V. 42.12.
3 Ibid., VII. 95.6, 96.2.
clean and so pious that they are called 'subhra'. The cleanliness and purity of its waters stand for its pure beauty. If Sarasvatī is taken to be the goddess of Vāk or Vāk herself, the varṇa, pada, vākya may be taken as her limbs and meaning as her soul. Through them one gains knowledge. Knowledge is symbolised by light (prakāśa), the colour of which is white. Darkness is nothing positive; but implies the absence of light. Sarasvatī lies bodily in varṇa, pada and vākya. All these stand for her body white in colour and she is, thus, aptly called 'subhā'. It is probably for this reason that in later classical literature, she is conceived as of white complexion and as bearing white cloth 'subhravāstrāvṛttā'.

The Rgveda (VII.95.6) not expressly referring to any specific form of Sarasvatī, seems to point to her as a river-goddess. Vasiṣṭha is described as performing a sacrifice on the bank of the Sarasvatī river. He invokes Sarasvatī to come over and grant him food. The mantra suggests that she is conceived here as a river-goddess, presiding over the sacrifice held in her honour, and is invoked to receive oblations. She seems to be of the same character referred to in another mantra (VII.96.2) of the Rgveda.

(c) Sapesas:
'Sapesas' is used in plural as 'sapesasah' collectively as an adjective of Bhāratī, Sarasvatī and Iśā. Sāyana understands it as 'surūpāh', Wilson as 'beautiful', and Griffith as 'beauteous'. In singular, it would convey the same sense for Sarasvatī alone.

1 RV., IX. 5.8.
As shown later on, these three goddesses are ultimately one and this oneness lies in a deity who is the goddess of speech. The formation of this word would certainly run as prefix 'su' meaning well and 'pis', meaning to decorate. Accordingly 'supesas' is the one who is well decorated. Sarasvati's occurrence with the other two goddesses Bhāratī and Ilā shows that she is a goddess, more evidently the goddess of speech, or speech itself as Ilā and Bhāratī are also described as representing the two varieties of speech of terrestrial and heavenly character.

2. The mental aspect of Sarasvatī:

There are some attributes, which throw some light on the mental aspect of Sarasvatī. Of them, 'dhiyāvasuh', 'codayitrī sūrtānām' and 'cetantī sumatīnām' deserve special attention.

(i) Dhiyāvasuh:

This word has been used for Sarasvatī only once in one of the Rgvedic mantras. Sayana explains it as: "dhiyāvasuh karma prāpya dhananimitthabhūtā. vāgdevatāyās tathāvidham dhananimittatvam āranyakakānde srutāy vyākhyātām-yajāham vastu dhiyāvasur iti vāg vai dhiyāvasuh" (ĀĀ., I.1.4). Here he takes Sarasvatī as Vāgdevatā and according to the Āranyakā, Vāgdevatā is the means of wealth. With this idea, he interprets 'dhiyāvasuh' as: "karma prāpya dhananimitthabhūtā". By 'karma' probably he

---

1 Vide infra., p. 89-94.
2 Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p.1126.
3 Ibid., p. 703.
4 See infra., pp. 89-94.
5 Rv., I.3.10.
means sacrifice. By performing the sacrifice in which mantras are
chanted, Vāgadevataī is pleased and gives wealth to devouts in return.
This may be endorsed by Wilson when he renders the word as: 'the recom-
pensers of worship with wealth'. Śrī Nādhava, the son of Śrī Venkatārya,
in the Ṛgthadhāpīka, maintains the word as: "prajñayā sarvesām vāsa-
yitrī", which means one, who enlightens all by her very wisdom.

Besides, the word has been differently understood by Skandavāmin's
Bhāṣya on the Ṛgveda and Yāska's Nirukta as: "prajñādhana, athavā vaser
ēcchādenā 'rthasya vasusābdah, prajñayā chādayitrī sarvārthānām"¹ and as
'karmavasuh'.²

The word 'dhiyāvasuh' is evidently from 'dhīh' and 'vasuh' formed
from feminine 'dhīh' meaning, intellect, understanding, knowledge, etc.³
Similarly, 'vasuh' means wealthy, rich, good, etc.⁴ As the formation
of the word shows, it seems proper to take Sarasvati as rich in intellect
or knowledge. In the opening mantra on Sarasvati, she is invoked as
the goddess of speech (vāgdevatā), in the sacrifice, probably with the
intention of the incitement for the chanting of the mantras and for
getting mind brightened by her. If the goddess brightens one's mind,
knowledge will automatically come.

---

² Nirukta. II. 26.
³ Vaman Shivram Apte, op. cit., p. 597.
⁴ Ibid., p. 953.
⁵ RV., I. 3.10.
(ii) **Codayitri sūrtaṇām**:

It is used in the same Sūkta\(^1\) as contains the word 'dhiyāvasuḥ' discussed above. Though of the Ṛgvedic origin, it is not alien to later literature.

The word 'codayitri' is undoubtedly formed from cud, meaning to impel, incite or inanimate.\(^2\) 'Codayitri' (feminine) will, thus, mean one, who incites or impels. Sāyana, Mādhava, Wilson and Griffith agree with this sense and explain it as 'prerayitri', 'codayitri', 'inspirer', and 'inciter' respectively.

Sāyana explains 'codayitri sūrtaṇām' as: "sūrtaṇām priyāṇāṁ satyavākyāṇāṁ codayitri prerayitri", and so is Griffith while he translates it as inciter of all pleasant songs. All ideas either expressed or unexpressed are the product of mind or intellect. To take Sarasvatī as the inciter of such ideas is to take her as the inciter of intellect.

The word 'sūrtaṇām' may also be interpreted differently. It is possible that 'sūrta' is/su/nr + rta. 'Rta' means a man, a person or mankind.\(^3\) 'Rta' also means bright and luminous in and addition to proper, right, honest and true.\(^4\) Thus, Sarasvatī is also to be accepted as stirring up bright-mind or intellect. The expression "codayitri sūrtaṇām" is, thus, synonymous with "cetanti sūmatiṇām",\(^5\) explained by Sāyana as:

\(^1\) Ibid., 1.3.11.
\(^2\) Monier Williams, op.cit., 327.
\(^3\) Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 647.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 348.
\(^5\) RV., I.3.11.
"sumatînîm sôbhânabuddhiyuktânîm anusthâtrâm cetântî tâdîyam anustheyam jnâpayantî," translated by Wilson as 'instructress of the right-minded', and rendered by Griffith as 'inspirer of all gracious thought'. The word 'matîn' is formed from /man, 'to think', by adding the suffix 'ktin' in abstract sense (bhâve) and is feminine in gender. It means intellect, understanding, sense and knowledge.2 'Sumatînîm' will, thus, denote the persons endowed with intellect. Sarasvatî illumines their intellect and widens its horizons. She, thus, appears before us as the goddess of speech (Vâk).

(iii) There are still other references to show that Sarasvatî blesses knowledge (prajñâ) or intelligence to others. One of the mantras says: "sarasvatî südhayantî dhiyam", 3 which purports that Sarasvatî gives intelligence (dhih). Another allusion to this aspect of Sarasvatî reads: "maho arnah sarasvatî pra cetayati ketunâ dhiyo viśvâ vi râjitâ". Here 'maho arnah' stands for the stock of knowledge or learning accumulated in Sarasvatî. In other words, she may be taken as the embodiment of knowledge. She does not confine knowledge to herself alone; but also gives away to others. It is why there is the use of 'ketunâ' which is the means to direct others by intelligence (pra cetayati ketunâ). Yaśka explains 'ketunâ' as 'by action' or 'by intellect': "mahad arnah Sarasvatî pra cetayati prajñâ-payati ketunâ karmanâ prajñâyâ." 4

1 Pânîini, Astadhîyâ, II.3.94, "stîryam ktin".
2 Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 834.
3 RV., II.3.8.
5 Cf. for 'ketu', Nirukta, II.27.
the verse (dhiyo visvā vi rājati), explicitly says, according to Sāyana’s Bhāṣya that Sarasvatī manifests her prowess of intelligence by making all enlightened: "svākiyena devārūpena visvāḥ dhiyāḥ sarvāny anuṣṭhā- 
trprajñānāṁ vi rājati visēṣena dīpayaṭi. anuṣṭhānaviśaya buddhīḥ 
sarvadā 'tṛdāyaṭi ty arthaḥ”. She, thus, illumines all and makes 
them know what they ought to do. She is implored for intelligence: 
"sarasvatī vīraptatī dhiyam dhāt"; and is described as the protectress 
of intellect and intellectuals: “dhīnām avitrī”.

3. Social aspect of Sarasvatī:

In the Rgveda, we come across various allusions to social aspects 
of Sarasvatī. She is delineated as a mother, sister, wife, daughter and 
friend.

(1) Sarasvatī as a mother:

Like other goddesses, Sarasvatī is also portrayed as an affectionate 
mother, though only in a few mantras. Motherhood has been attached to 
her (it) conceiving her as a source of fertility, as a milch-cow, and 
even as a goddess. The fundamental function of a mother is to nourish 
and look after her child. As a river, the Sarasvatī does good to the 
worshippers, as if its own progeny, living along the banks. As a goddess, 
she is more capable of granting her devotees precious presents and is, 
therefore, figuratively conceived as a milch-cow bringing rich and

1 RV., VI. 49.7.
2 Ibid., VI. 61.4.
3 Cf. ibid., VII. 36.6.
4 See infra., p. 110-112.
healthsome food. Sarasvati is regarded as 'ambita', 'sindhumata', and 'mat'. The connotation of each of them is as under:

(a) Ambita:

One of the Rgvedic mantras describes Sarasvati as 'ambita', 'the best of mothers', addressing her in the vocative case as 'ambita'. It also suggests that several mother goddesses had emerged in the Rgvedic period.

(b) Sindhumata:

This epithet of Sarasvati is apparently a compound word with 'sindhu' and 'mat' as its members. Sindhu admits of various explanations. The word 'sindhumata' is, therefore, variously interpreted. Sayana understands it as: 'apam matrabhuta'. Madhava as: 'sindhunam mat', Griffith, as 'Mother of Floods', and Geldner, as the one whose mother is Sindhu, and Wilson translates the word as: 'The Mother of the Sindhu - Sindhu matri may mean, according to the Scholiast, apam matri-bhuta, being the mother of the waters'.

The word 'sindhumata' may more properly be explained as: 'sindhunam jalana mat', the mother of rivers of waters. A mighty stream that the Sarasvati river was, it would have been a perennial source for various rivers. If 'sindhu' stands for 'waters' only, one may also think that the Sarasvati supplied the Vedic Aryans enough of waters for irrigating their fields.

---

1 Vide infra., pp., 69-71.
2 RV., II.41.16.
3 Ibid., VII. 36.6.
In a mantra, Sarasvatī is said descending from the mountain (parvata) to ocean. It means that the Sarasvatī river had its source in the mountain and ran to ocean. It is the physical description of the river. But 'parvata' also means 'cloud' and 'samudra' denotes 'welkin'. Sarasvatī, according to the naturalistic interpretation, is also understood to reside in the sky and is called 'mādhyamikā'. The cloud is, thus, Sarasvatī's original abode or source. When it comes down to the ocean (samudra) - the ocean on the earth, not the welkin - provides profuse waters to the rivers to flow and to the people for different purposes. Sarasvatī is, thus, according to the naturalistic interpretation, the mother of rivers and waters.

Besides, the ever-flowing of the Sarasvatī river is taken to imply inspiration. It is, thus, inspiring. This sense also emerges from 'sindhu' in the epithet 'sindhumātā'. 'Sindhu' is derived from śyand, 'to flow'. It, thus, denotes 'the progressing life'. Sarasvatī is, therefore, the mother of the ever-progressing or ever-flowing life.

(c) Mātā:

One of the Ṛgvedic mantras, portrays the dual character of

---

1 Ibid., VII.95.2.
2 Max Müller, Sacred Books of the East., Vol. XXXII, p.57.
3 Ibid., p.58.
4 Vide infra., pp. 89-90.
5 Cf. Pt. Śripāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., p.45.
7 Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 1115.
8 RV., X.64.9.
Sarasvatī very nicely, both as a river as well as a goddess along with the Sarayū and the Sindhu. It suggests that at first rivers were understood simply as rivers and afterwards, they were invoked to come to the sacrifices for protection. Their arrival to the sacrifice adds singularity to their character. This singularity is on account of their waters, which are essential for our life. Since waters protect and nourish one as one’s mother, they are called "āpah mātāraḥ". The divinity of the Sarasvatī river may, therefore, lie in the extraordinary character of its waters, which are the storehouse of fertility and purification. It is due to these characteristics that they are addressed as 'mātāraḥ'.

(ii) Sarasvatī as a sister:

The following epithets present Sarasvatī as a sister:

(a) Septasvasā:

This word occurs for Sarasvatī only once and has been interpreted variously. Sāyana explains it as: "gāyatrīdīnī sapta chandāmsi svasūro yasyās tādṛśī. nadīrūpāyās tu gāṅgādyāḥ sapta nadyah svasāraḥ". Wilson takes it to mean the same as Sāyana. Madhava takes it in the sense of rivers only: "gāṅgādyāḥ yasyāḥ svasāraḥ."

Although there were a number of rivers in ancient India; but great importance was assigned only to the seven rivers of the north,

1 Cf. John Dowson, op.cit., p. 284.
2 RV., VI. 61.10.
which are as follows:

1. Gāṅgā (Ganges);
2. Yamuna (Jumna);
3. Saraswatī (Sarsuti);
4. Sutudri (Satlej);
5. Parushni;
6. Marud-vridhā;
7. Ārjikīyā (the Vipāsā, Hyphasis Byās)."¹

It is also probable that these seven rivers were the five rivers of Punjab and the Sarasvatī and the Sindhu.²

According to one view,³ the seven sisters symbolise:

1. Stream of bliss;
2. Stream of existence;
3. Stream of consciousness;
4. Stream of truth;
5. Stream of Manu;
6. Stream of breath; and
7. Stream of gross body.

Sri Aurobindo⁴ takes the seven rivers as the sevenfold waters of life; and defines them as follows:

"The sevenfold waters thus rise upward and become the pure mental activity, the Mighty ones of Heaven. They there reveal themselves as the first eternal and ever-young energies, separate streams but of one

---

¹ Cf. John Dowson, op.cit., p. 281.
⁴ Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p. 138.
origin — for they have all flowed from the one womb of the super-
conscious Truth — the seven Words or fundamental creative expressions
of the divine Mind. Sapta vānīh ...

Another interpretation takes 'saptasvasā' to refer to the seven
metres. It is obvious that there are seven metres used in the Ṛgveda.
The Veda is the stock of knowledge and these metres contain in them all
knowledge. Sarasvatī, the goddess of speech and learning¹ may be taken
as implying the Veda and all knowledge derived from it. Seven metres,
expressive as they are of this stock of knowledge, may be regarded as
her sisters. We have shown discussing the kinds of vānī, that Sarasvatī
is closely associated with the sun (sūrya); and, therefore, she is called
Bhūratī in the form of rays (rasmirūpā). The rays of the sun have seven
colours and so does Bhūratī. The seven-coloured rays have, thus, been
conceived as the seven sisters of Bhūratī or Sarasvatī. These rays
shine not only in the heavens; but also in the mid-region and the
earth. It points to Sarasvatī as 'madhyamā' as well as 'vaikharī'.²

(b) Saptadhātuh:

One of the Ṛgvedic mantras describes Sarasvatī as 'Saptadhātuh'.³
The word has been explained by Śāyāna as: 'saptadhātuh sapta dhātavo
'vayavā gayatryādyā gaṅgādyā vā yasyāh sā tatho ātā'. Wilson understands
it as: 'comprising seven elements'. 'Saptadhātuh' is a compound with

¹ John Dowson, op.cit., p. 284.
² See infra., p. 57, f.n. 5.
³ Vide infra, pp. 89-90.
⁴ RV., VI. 61.12.
'sapta' and 'dhātu' as its members. The word 'dhātu' is formed from √dhā (ādhāre), by adding the suffix tun, and denotes the fundamental principles (tanmātrās) constitutive elements of the creation of the universe. But the fundamental principles are five¹ not seven in number, a fact which does not permit one to accept 'saptadhātuh' as denoting with 'seven elements'. But if we include the 'mahat' and 'ahāṅkāra' in the 'tanmātrās' the sense becomes meaningful. The more convincing interpretation has been offered by Madhava² who takes 'satadhātuh' to imply one with seven metres or sisters. Griffith admits similar sense in translating the word as 'seven sisters'.

(c) Saptathī:

At one place in the Rgveda, Sarasvatī is called 'saptathī',³ which evidently means 'one out of the seven'. Sayana, Geldner, Griffith, and Wilson all agree on its meaning. Madhava explains it as: "sannāma nadināṃ saptathī." It, undoubtedly, refers to the seven rivers treated as sisterly with each other.

(d) Trividhasthā:

This epithet,⁴ according to Sayana, means: "trisū lokeśu sahā vatīśthamānā trilokavyāpīṇī". Griffith explains the term as: "Sprung from threefold source: 'abiding in the three worlds', that is, pervading heaven, earth, and hell, according to Sayana, like Gangā in later times."

---

¹ Cf. Vaman Shivarman Apte, op.cit., p. 595; SK., 22.
² "saptadhātuh saptabhis chandobhih sahitā, saptabhīr vā svasrbbhīh".
³ RV., VII. 36.6.
⁴ Ibid., VI. 61.12.
The very mantra in which the epithet occurs seems to refer to Sarasvatī simultaneously in two capacities, as a river as well as the goddess of speech. If we correlate her with the trinity of the Ṛgvedic goddesses, viz., Sarasvatī (herself), Iśā and Bhūratī, we may take Sarasvatī as three sistered goddess. It is possible, because the three goddesses are said to represent separately the threefold divisions of the Veda (Brāhmaṇa), Āranyaka and Upaniṣad. The sequence of the goddesses representing Veda, Āranyaka and Upaniṣad accepts Iḍā as first, Sarasvatī as second, and Bhūratī as last.

(e) Svasārī anyā rtavari:

The word 'rtavari' has been used twice in connection with Sarasvatī as well as with other rivers. At one place, it occurs independently for Sarasvatī in the vocative case as 'rtavari'. At another place, it comes with 'svasārī anyā'. Both the words have more or less the same meaning.

Sayana explains 'svasārī anyā rtavari' as: 'svasārī svayam sārinīḥ saho 'tpannā vā rtavariḥ. rtam ity udakānām. tadyuktāḥ anyāḥ ca nadīr asmān atinayatu. yadvā ... udakavatyah svasāro bhaginyo 'nyā gangūdyā nadyas.'

Wilson takes the words as: 'her other water-laden sisters' and Mādhava as: 'svayam sārinīḥ. anyāḥ ca praṇāḥ'. Mādhava probably holds

2 RV., II.41.18.
3 Ibid., VI. 61.9.
by 'prajāh' other rivers as offsprings of the Sarasvatī. This sense is possible in both the ways. First, they may be taken as having been originated from it or the tributaries of it. Second, all rivers may be understood as its offsprings; for Sarasvatī residing in the cloud makes all the rivers flow. 1 'Svaś' means sister. 'Svaśy anyā ṛta varī' points to rivers associated with the Sarasvatī.

(i) Sarasvatī as wife:

This aspect of Sarasvatī is brought out by the following epithets:

(a) Virapatnī:

'Virapatnī'2 has been variously explained by scholars. Wilson translates it as: 'the bride of the hero' and accepting Sāyana's interpretation, explains it as: "the wife of the hero, Prajapati or Brahma; or it might mean the protectress of heroes or of men.' Sāyana expresses his view on the word, as: "vīrapatnī. vīrah prajāpatih patir yasyās tādṛṣi. yadvā. vīrānām pālayitī." Griffith also takes it to mean the 'hero's consort' and states that "the River-god Sarasvān or Sarasvata is more usually considered to be the consort of Sarasvatī ..."

It is difficult to derive any specific meaning from 'vīra'; for the word has a very wide meaning. So far as the consortship of Sarasvatī is concerned, it is accepted not only in the Vedas, but also in the later literature. In the Vedas, the idea is vague and incomplete, yet the seed lies there. In the Purāṇas, she is clearly mentioned as the wife

1 See supra., p. 48.
2 RV., VI. 49.7.
of such gods as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Sarasvāti, etc. ¹ Sāyana takes 'vīra' to mean Prajāpati. In the later literature, Prajāpati has been replaced by Brahmā. Prajāpati is assuredly from 'prajāman' meaning to beget, to generate and the like. ² Prajāpati is the one, who is the lord of the creatures (prajas). But this word is equally applicable to Indra and Agni. ³ Sarasvāti in the Rgveda, helps Indra, who endeavours to kill Vṛtra. ⁴ It is possible that the epithet 'vīrapatnī' refers to her as the wife of Indra. Besides, Prajāpati is Agni; and in the Rgveda, we find Agni as identical with Sarasvāti. ⁵ It seems that Sarasvāti here is a sacrifice and Agni as fire presiding over it. Their union may be taken as that of wife and husband. The word 'vīra' itself implies the sense of fire, sacrificial fire, ⁶ which endorses the above view. 'Vīra' is also one of the names of Viṣṇu ⁷ and accordingly, she may be taken as his wife, too.

(b) Vṛṣṇah patnī:

The use of 'vṛṣṇah patnī' occurs, in one ⁸ of the Rgvedic mantras, in plural (vṛṣṇah patnīḥ) in the context of rivers in general, where no mention has been made of the names of specific rivers. Sarasvāti has

---

1 Vide infra., pp. 188-192.  
2 Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 607.  
3 Ibid., p. 606.  
4 See infra., pp., 79-80; 85; f.n.3.  
5 RV., II. 1.11.  
6 Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 1004.  
7 Ibid., p. 1004.  
8 RV., V.42.12.
been mentioned in this mantra in the last line along with Brhaddevi and
Dākā. It seems that in this mantra, Sarasvatī is at first reckoned as
one of the rivers and then as a goddess. Sāyana’s explanation runs as:
“sarasvatī stannāmikā nadi vāgdevi vā”. An elaborate description need
not be given here except to take her as one of the rivers collectively
referred to as 'nadyah' in the mantra, to which Sāyana interprets as:
“nadyah nadanāśilā gāgādyāh”. By ‘gāgādyāh’, he obviously includes
the Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī also comes before us as one of the wives of
‘vṛṣṇah’ as is clear from the expression ‘vṛṣṇah patnīḥ’ explained by
Sāyana as: “vṛṣṇah varṣakasye 'adrasya patnīḥ. patnyah pālayitryah,
nadyah. nadanāśilā gāgādyāh”. Geldner translates ‘vṛṣṇah patnīḥ’ as
the wives of vṛṣṇaha (means Indra)’; Griffith as ‘Steer’s wives’ and
Wilson as ‘the wives of the Showerer (Indra)’.

Indra is the god of rain. With his weapon, he kills Vṛtra and
releases waters to rain on the earth. He fills rivers with waters and
makes them flow. It is he, who makes their barren life fructuous with
waters by infusing fertility into them as a husband into his wife.

Rivers are, thus, aptly called Vṛnas wives. As the Sarasvatī
is also one of them, ‘vṛṣṇah patnī’ is an appropriate epithet for it.

(c) Marutvatī:

In one of the Rgvedic mantras, Sarasvatī is called ‘marutvatī’. 1
It associates Sarasvatī with the Maruts or presents her as accompanied

1 Ibid., II. 30.8.
by them. Geldner, Griffith and Wilson all take her in the same sense. Sāyaṇa explains it as: "marutvati marudbhir yuktā, madhyamasthānā hi vak sarasvatī marutas ca madhyamasthānas'thāh. atas tadvatī satī."

The Maruts are mid-regional. 'Marutvati' is the feminine form of masculine 'marutvati', meaning a cloud, Indra, and Hanumamat. Since the Maruts belong to the mid-region, they possess lusture, a quality indicated by the root of the word, 'mṛ' or 'mar', meaning to shine. Monier Williams gives an appropriate explanation of 'marutvati', when he writes: 'Marut-vat, ān, atī, at, (Ved.) attended by the Maruts (said of Indra, Vāyu, Viśnu, Sarasvatī, Agni, Soma'. Then he takes 'marutvati' as the name of Indra and as a cloud.

Sarasvatī is called 'marutvati' for the obvious reason that she is the wife of Indra or Vāyu, or Viśnu, or Agni, or Soma, or cloud. Owing to her association with the cloud, she may be taken as its consort in the form of lightning or the flash of lightning. Lightning or the flash of lightning is a symbol of 'tejas' and cloud may be thought to have derived it from the sun, Ādityas with which Sarasvatī as Bhūrati is intimately connected. Sarasvatī as Bhūrati is perhaps taken as the wife of the Maruts and is spoken of as 'marutsu bhūrati'.

2 Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 748.
3 Ibid., p. 749.
4 Ibid., p. 749.
5 Cf. Sāyaṇa's com. on RV., II. 1.11, for Bhūrati when he says: "bhūrati bharatasya ādityasya ādityasambandhinī raśmirūpā satī."
6 Ibid., I. 142.9.
(iv) Sarasvati as a daughter:

This aspect of Sarasvati is also not worked out in detail. This personality of hers is implied by the following epithet:

(a) पविरवि:

In two of the Vedic mantras, Sarasvati is called 'पविरवि'. The term is very vague, and hence, difficult to explain. The ambiguity of the word is further enhanced by 'कन्या' and 'तनयातुः', which follow it. Scholars explain the words variously. Sometimes, they construe it with 'कन्या' and 'तनयातुः' and sometimes, take it independently.

Sāyana takes 'पविरवि' in the first mantra as 'सोधयित्रि' and 'कन्या' as 'कमानिया'. In the second mantra, he takes 'पविरवि' as 'युधितवि' and 'तनयातुः' as 'सयायित्रि'. Similarly Wilson renders 'पविरवि' in the first mantra as 'purifying' and in the second as 'armed'. He renders 'कन्या' as 'amiable' and writes: "Amiable-Kanya, literally a maiden, is here explained Kamaniya, to be desired or loved..." According to him 'तनयातुः' means 'thundering'. But Griffith makes out a different sense. He takes the words 'पविरवि' and 'कन्या' together to mean 'lightning's child'. In the second mantra, he seems to derive the above sense from 'पविरवि' only and leaves out 'तनयातुः' as a verb. Geldner, too, takes the words 'पविरवि' and 'कन्या' together to mean 'the daughter of pavīru(?). Sure that he is not above the real meaning of the word 'pavīru', he quotes Grassman and Ludwig, who render 'parīru' as 'lightning'.

1 Ibid., VI. 49.7; X.65.13.
So far as the word 'kanyā' is concerned, it is generally taken in the sense of daughter, who has not reached the age of puberty. 'Kanyā' is, therefore, popularly defined as kumārī, dasāvārṣīya.¹

The term 'pavīrāvī' for Sarasvatī is undoubtedly unique. There are many possibilities with regard to the formation of the word. It seems the feminine form of the masculine word 'pavīrava'. The explanation of this word in Monier Williams—Dictionary runs as: "pavīrava, as, 1, sm, (fr. pavīru). Ved. proceeding from or belonging to the thunderbolt."² 'Pavīrava', thus, seems to be from 'pavīru', meaning both a flash of lightning, a thunderbolt.³ The word 'pavīrāvī' may also have some relation with 'pāvana', from /pū, meaning 'sanctifying' and, thus, capable of destroying sin and making one free from it.⁴ Sāyana and Nādava understand 'pavīrāvī' as 'sodhayitri' and Wilson translates it as 'purifying'.

Again, 'pavīrāvī' seems to have been formed either from 'pavīra', probably same as 'pavīru' as referred to by Geldner, or from 'pavih'. 'Pavīra' means a spear or a lance⁵ and 'pavih' means the thunderbolt of Indra; the tire of a wheel; the point of a spear or arrow; an arrow; speech; fire.⁶ Thus, there is much similarity between 'pavīra' and 'pavih' and both the words seem to be identical. 'Rava' denotes sound. 'Pavih' and 'rava' will, thus, jointly stand to denote 'the sound created

---

² Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 571.
³ Ibid., p. 558.
⁴ Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 699.
⁵ Ibid., p. 688.
⁶ Ibid., p. 688.
or belonging to 'pavīh', i.e., Indra's thunderbolt with which he destroys his enemies. When the thunderbolt moves, it creates sound. This sound belongs to the mid-region and represents Sarasvati, associated with the firmament as 'mādhyaṃkā vāk'.  

The above discussion leaves us to the conclusion that 'pāvīravī' probably stands for 'mādhyaṃkā vāk', the abode of which is firmament where it is closely associated with Indra.  

(v) Sarasvati as a friend:

There are few attributes such as 'marutsakhā', 'sakhyā' and 'uttarā sakhibhyah', which present Sarasvati as a friend.

(a) Marutsakhā:

In some of the Rgvedic mantras, Sarasvati comes with the Maruts. In such instances, she is not directly associated with them. There, her name occurs independently. But 'marutsakhā', an uncommon address for her, shows that she is closely associated with the Maruts and is their friend. The Maruts are the gods of the mid-region. Their association with the aerial region is, therefore, natural. Sarasvati, too, as

---

1 See Infra., pp. 89-90.
2 Infra., p. 89.
4 Cf. ibid., p. 59, f.n. 8; also cf. AB., III.37, which reads for Sarasvati as: vāj vāj sarasvati pāvīravī vācyāte tad vācam dādāti tade "hur yām āṃ pāvīravī samse."
5 Rv., VII, 96.2.
'mādhyamikō vāk' has the same region for her habitation. Residing there, she very often comes across the Maruts. It is for this reason that she is called 'marutsakhā', 'the friend of the Maruts'. It is corroborated by Sāyana who explains 'marutsakhā' as: "maruto mādhyamikā devaganāh. te sakhāyō yasyā mādhyamikāyā vacas tādrśi."

(b) Sakhyā

It has been used for Sarasvatī in one of the Rigvedic mantras.¹ The context, here, is of a prayer for shelter. It is dubious whether 'sakhyā' is an adjective for Sarasvatī or is simply an equivalent for 'sakhyāni'. As 'visvā' in the Vedic literature, stands for 'visvāni', similarly, 'sakhyā' may stand for 'sakhyāni'. Sāyana accepts the latter case and explains it as: 'sakhyā sakhyāni sakhibhāmbi', thus, taking 'sakhyā' to mean friendship. Mādhava, Wilson and Griffith also take it in the same sense.

'Sakhyā' may also be the instrumental form of 'sakhi' (a male friend), or of 'sakkī' (a female friend). Probably, the word indicates the friendly notion, which Sarasvatī possesses. The verse in which 'sakhyā' occurs, purports that the worshippers who live along the banks of the Sarasvatī think of themselves as its friends: 'O Sarasvatī! we are living by you; we are friendly bound with you or we are in your shelter. Take us as your friends and do not make us frightened with your impetuous shore-cutting waters'. Thus 'sakhyā' implies the sense of friendship.

¹ Ibid., VI. 61.14.
(c) *Uttarā sakhībhyah*:

In the expression 'uttarā sakhībhyah', 1 'sakhībhyah' may be the plural of the dative and ablative cases. 'Uttarā sakhībhyah' paints Sarasvati as a river and as Mādhava rightly understands it, presents it as superior to other rivers: "anyābhya nadībhyaḥ sakhībhyaḥ utkṛṣṭo stotṛbhyaḥ vā suprasaste 'ti". The term 'sakhībhyah' used for rivers presents them as the friends of Sarasvati. Keeping this in mind, Wilson translates 'uttarā sakhībhyah' as: 'most liberal to her friends'.

4. *Main activities of Sarasvati*:

Various functions of Sarasvati have been described in the Ṛgveda.

(i) *Sarasvati as the giver of wealth*:

The Sarasvati occupies a very important place among rivers. It is, perhaps, the seven rivers which underlie the conception of 'the seven precious objects' 2 and it is, perhaps, they which are indirectly associated with Agni, Soma and Rudra. It is, perhaps, they which are reckoned as the seven jewels or the seven glories (sriyas). 3 As the rivers were the sources of fertility for the people residing on their banks, they deified and worshipped them variously. Particularly, in the case of the Sarasvati, this process has met considerable development. It has been variously worshipped by devotees and has been asked for various cherished

2 *Ibid.*, V. 1.5; VI. 74.1.
booms. Wealth is one of the foremost desires.

(a) **Sarasvati’s breasts as ’gasayaḥ’, ’ratnadhā’ and ’vasuvid’:**

In one mantra of the **Rgveda,** [1] Sarasvati’s breasts are called ’gasayaḥ’, possessed of wealth; ’ratnadhā’, container of wealth, and ’vasuvid’, possessed of previous wealth. The worshipper implores her to make such breasts sucked by him. He obviously requests her for what her breasts contain within them. These breasts of Sarasvatī are either the waters, full of fertility, or her wordy wealth, the reservoir of knowledge. We have the popular saying:

”vidyā dadāti vinayām vinayād yāti pātratām/ pātratvād dhanām āpnoti dhanād dharmaḥ tataḥ sukham”

Accordingly, a man ardently desirous of knowledge, gets wealth also. As a river, the Sarasvatī may be thought to possess great potentiality in its waters nourishing the crops of the cultivators.

(b) **Rāyas’ cetanti:**

The Sarasvatī brings wealth to the world. On its way to the sea, it does a lot of work. In the mantra, while flowing down through its course to sea: ”rāyas’ cetanti bhuvanasya bhūreḥ”. [2] Sāyana’s explanation runs as: ”bhuvanasya bhūtajātasya bhūreḥ bahulasya rāyaḥ. dhanāni| cetanti prajñāparyantī pracchanti”.

(c) **Āpo revathiḥ:**

In the **Veda,** waters are often regarded as rivers. They are

---

described as possessed of opulence (revatīh); controlling over the wealth (kṣayathā hi vasvah); and the protectresses of wealth (rāyas ca patnāh). Sarasvatī is the patron deity of rivers: "sarasvatī tad abhimānini devatā", and is, therefore, asked to give wealth (vayo dhāt). There are many instances which speak of her munificence with regard to wealth. It gave sufficient wealth to Nāhuṣa. Similarly, it gave wealth to the priest of King Citra described in the two Rgvedic mantras. Owing to her close relation to wealth, Sarasvatī is called 'rāyā yujā' containing wealth, and 'subhaqā' of auspicious wealth. One who is favoured by her, gets boundless wealth: "na tasya rāyah pryetā 'sti." Since it gives immense wealth, it is also called 'saptadhātuh', is repeatedly implored for wealth: "coda rādho maṭhonām", "dhātā rayā", "varivasyantu subhrāh", "abhi no neṣī vasyo", and "rāyah ... yajamāṇeṣu dhehi". She offers cherished wealth like Pūṣan, the god of

1 Ibid., X.30.12.
2 Sayana’s com. on Ibid., X.30.12.
3 Ibid., X.30.12.
4 Ibid., VII. 95.2.
6 Ibid., VII. 95.4.
7 Ibid., I.89.3; VII. 95.4,6; VIII.21.17.
8 Ibid., VII. 40.3.
9 Ibid., VI. 61.12.
10 Ibid., VII. 96.2.
11 Ibid., III. 54.13.
12 Ibid., V. 42.12 (collectively Sarasvatī, Brhaddīvā and Rākā have been implored for wealth).
13 Ibid., VI. 61.14.
14 Ibid., X. 17.9.
prosperity: "rada puṣe'va nah sanim".\(^1\) In a prayer, Agni is asked to bring Sarasvatī along with the Maruts, the Asvins and waters to bestow treasures upon worshippers:

"agni yāhi dūtyam ma riṣanyo devān acchē brahmaṇāt ganaṇa;
sarasvatīn maruto asvinā "po yakṣī devān ratnadheyāya viśvān \(\text{\"}2\text{\"}"

(ii) Sarasvatī as the giver of pleasure:

The following speak of her as the giver of pleasure:

(a) Mayobhūḥ (in plural 'mayobhuvah'):

One of the multifarious functions of Sarasvatī is to bestow pleasure. This idea has been clearly hinted at in the term 'mayobhuvah',\(^3\) commonly applied to Ijā, Sarasvatī and Mahī (Bhāratī). Sāyana explains the words as 'sukhotpādikāḥ' and "sukhasya bhāvayitrāḥ". Mādhava takes it the same as Sāyana. Griffith translates it as 'they who bring delight or wealth, and Wilson as 'givers of delight', 'sources of happiness'.

The three goddesses seem to be conceived as the goddesses of speech, duly representing the three regions, earth, firmament and heaven. It is supported by Sāyana who writes: "atha vai tāh kaityantarikṣadyustānā vāgdevyāḥ."\(^4\) They are invoked at a sacrifice, which may have many a purpose. It may be performed to kill or ward off evils or bad omens; or to drive away calamities. They are appeased with oblations offered at the sacrifice in order to bestow fortunes and prosperity, and, thus, pleasure, upon their devotees.

---

1 Ibid., VI. 61.6.
2 Ibid., VII. 9.5.
3 Ibid., I. 13.9 (V.5.8).
4 His com. on ibid., V.5.6.
As the goddesses of speech, they may also be thought to have been invoked for knowledge, which once might have been the highest goal of seer, resulting in the ultimate happiness of mind.

Elsewhere, too, Sarasvati is asked for pleasure (sarasvati nah subhaqā mayas karat), and felicity (sarma). Sarasvati along with Rudra, Viṣṇu and Vāyu, is entreated to grant happiness: "te no rudrah sarasvatī sajoṣā mīlauṣmanto viṣṇur mrīantu vāyuḥ." The breasts of Sarasvati called 'mayobhūḥ' are explained by Sayana as: "yah ca stanah mayobhūḥ rasāsvādinām sukhasya bhāvyatā."

(iii) Sarasvati as the bestower of offsprings:

The Vedic people desired brave progeny and like other deities Sarasvati was also prayed therefor.

Śiśvālī is the presiding deity of fertility and growth. She is, thus, the goddess bestowing progeny. She is mentioned only in a few mantras, and two of them invoke her for the grant of offsprings.

1 Ibid., I. 89.3.
2 Ibid., VI. 49.7.
3 Ibid., VI. 50.12.
4 Ibid., I. 164.49.
5 Macdonell and Keil, op.cit., p. 449.
6 RV., II. 32. 6-8; X. 184.2.
7 Ibid., II.32.6; X.184.2.
Like Sinvāli, Sarasvatī is also requested to grant progeny. In one mantra,¹ she is invoked, along with Sinvāli and the divine Asvins, to sustain the embryo:

"garbham dhehi sīnvāli
garbham dhehi sarasvati |
garbham te asvinau devāv ā dhāttēm puskarasrajā ||"

The devout had a firm belief that by offering worship to Sarasvatī with utmost devotion, he would be blessed with offsprings. He is encouraged by the case of a celebrated rṣī Vadhryāsva, recorded in the Ṛgveda, who was blessed by Sarasvatī with a mighty and worthy son, who relieved his father from debt. The Sunhotras had firm hopes that goddess Sarasvatī would graciously grant their desire for progeny.³

(iv) Sarasvatī as the giver of food:

Among many things granted by Sarasvatī, food is a very important and prominent gift. The epithets 'vājini''⁴ and 'vājinī''⁵ speak of her as granting food. We will discuss these forms under her special characteristic features.⁶ Besides, there are many other allusions, which portray her as the giver of food. Only a couple of them would suffice.

---

1 Ibid., X. 184.2.
2 Ibid., VI.61.1.
3 Ibid., II.41.17.
4 Ibid., I.3.10; VI.61.4; VII.96-3.
5 Ibid., V.61.61.
6 See infra., pp. 69-71.
(a) **Ayūṃsi**:

The word 'āyūṃsi' admits of several interpretations. Sayana and Madhava explain it as 'annāni'. The Nighantu's interpretation runs as: "āyuh. sūnrtā. brahma. ity annasya...nāmāni". Griffith and Wilson render it as 'generations' and 'existences' respectively. The word 'āyūṃsi' appears to have been derived from 'āyuh', which means life, vital power, etc. Its rendering by 'generations' and 'existences' also purports almost the same.

Vitality is life and vitality is gained through food. Sarasvatī is, thus, described as giving such vital powers.

(b) **Yasāsa**:

In one of the Rgvedic mantras, rivers including the Sarasvatī have been invoked to come together and in such an invocation, they are eulogised variously with such addresses as 'susvayanta', 'sudughāḥ', 'sudhārā', 'abhi svena payasā pīpyānāh' and 'yasasso vāvasānāh'.

'Yasāsah' is from 'yasas', which means water, food, etc. Since they cause and bestow plenty of food, they are spoken of as: "yasasso vāvasānāh". Sayana explains 'yasasso' as 'annavatyah'. Owing to this particular characteristic that Sarasvatī is earnestly entreated to confer

---

1 RV., II. 41.17.
2 Nih., II. 7.
3 Monier Williams, op.cit., p.127.
4 RV., VII. 36.6.
5 Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 812.
abundance of food: "verdha subhre stuvate rūsi vājān", 1 "ōṣadyā 'śmin barhiśi mādayasva 'nāmīvā īṣa ā dhēhy asme", 2 and "sahasrārgaḥ iḍo atra bhāgam rāyas poṣam yajamāneṣu dhēhi". 3

5. Special characteristics of Sarasvatī:

The following terms bring to light some of the special features of the personality of Sarasvatī.

(1) Vājinīvatī:

The word 'vājinīvatī', 'vājinīvatī' and 'vājini' occur as adjectives of Sarasvatī. Sayana explains 'vājinīvatī' used three times in nominative case as: "vājinīvatī annavat kriyavatī", "vājo 'nmaṃ yasyaṃ kriyoyaṃ sa vājini. tadyuktā", and 'annavatī'. This word has also been used two times in the vocative case as 'vājinīvatī' 5 and has been explained by Sayana as 'annavatī'. The last word 'vājini' 6 is interpreted by him as: "vājo balam annam vā. tadyukte". Wilson translates 'vājinīvatī' occurring three times in the nominative case as 'the bestower of food', 'the acceptress of (sacrificial) food', and 'the food conferring' respectively; and 'vājinīvatī' used two times in the vocative case, as

1 RV., VII. 95.6.
2 Ibid., X. 17.8.
3 Ibid., X. 17.9.
4 Ibid., 1.3.10; VI. 61.4; VII. 96.3.
5 Ibid., II. 41.18; VI. 61.3.
6 Ibid., VI. 61.6.
'abounding in food', and 'giver of sustenance', and 'väjini' as 'abounding in food'. Griffith renders 'väjiniwati' as 'enriched', 'rich in her wealth', and 'never niggardly in thought' respectively and 'väjini' as 'strong'. Geldner has rendered 'väjiniwati' at the first two places as 'rich in prize or remuneration', and at the third place as 'rich in mare'. In the Skandavāmin's Rgveda-bhāṣya, 'väjiniwati' (1.3.10), is explained as: "vājo balam vego vā tadvati vājiniwati ... svabhūtā senā tadvati ... athavā vājo havir lakṣanam annam tad yasya asti sā ... yāgasantatih". ¹

Originally, in 'väjiniwati', we come across 'väja' from Vedic √vaj, which has various meanings as strength, vigour, energy, food, sacrificial food, wealth, speech, battle, conflict, context, etc. Owing to this variety of meanings, one is tempted for various implications of this word.

'Vājini' in 'väjiniwati' is obviously from √vaj, and if we take into account all the meanings of this word referred to above, 'väjiniwati' will stand for the one who is possessed of the above qualities. Monier Williams - Dictionary runs on this word as: "Vājinī-vat, ān, antī, at, Ved. possessed of Vājini, i.e., of food, &c. (the adj. being used for the substantive), yielding nutriment; possessed of sacrifices; abounding in worship or prayers (which are offered at dawn, highly honoured), etc.

¹ Quoted in B.D., op.cit., p. 17, f.n.19.
² Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 901.
³ Ibid., p. 901.
Sarasvati is called so for various reasons. Being excessively eager for accepting the sacrificial oblations, she is called 'possessed of the sacrificial food', and being the presiding deity of the sacrifice, she is spoken of as 'possessed of the sacrifices'. Sarasvati abounds in prayers and is called 'suyamā', rendered by Griffith 'tractable meaning easily led by prayer'. Sarasvati is often invoked by seers to come to sacrifice and to provide them with an effective speech. The word 'vājah' itself being derived as /vaj + ghaun/² it denotes clarified butter, food in general, water, prayer or mantra, with which a sacrifice is concluded, sacrifice, strength, power, wealth, speech, etc. Taking 'vājah' for a prayer or mantra, 'vājinīvatī' will denote the one who is possessed of a prayer or mantra.

Sarasvati as 'vājinīvatī' is either the one who eagerly accepts the prayers of her devotees or the one who is the inciter of prayers in them.

But the other sense declaring Sarasvati as 'possessed of food and water' appears to allude to Sarasvati as a river. While descending from the mountain to the plain, the Sarasvati river might have rendered grain-fields abundantly fertile resulting in profuse yield of harvest. It was called 'vājinīvatī, as its waters grew rich crops. Afterwards, it became a general appellation for Sarasvati.

1 RV., IX. 81.4.
2 Vaman Shivram Apte, op. cit., p. 957.
3 Ibid., p. 957.
(ii) **Pāvaka**:

This epithet\(^1\) occurs in the very beginning mantra on Sarasvatī and has been interpreted differently. Sāyana explains it as 'sodhayitrī', and Skandasvāmin as: "aṁhasāṁ pāpāṁ apanetṛī athavā pavatiḥ kṣāraṇārthah ... kṣārayitrī udakānāṁ".\(^2\) Griffith translates it as 'wealthy in spoil', and Geldner as 'shining'.

In masculine, we have 'pāvaka' from /pā + nvuk, which means 'purifying'.\(^3\) It also denotes fire, the god of fire, the fire of lightning,\(^4\) etc. In the feminine gender, it becomes 'pāvaki' which means the wife of Agni, and is also the Vedic name of Sarasvatī.\(^5\) Both 'pāvaki' and 'pāvaka' are in the feminine gender and mean the same.

'Pāvaka' denotes Agni, who symbolises heat, which purifies everything burning impurity. In one of the Rgvedic mantras,\(^6\) Agni is identified with Sarasvatī, which speaks of a close relationship between Agni and Sarasvatī. In the sacrifices where fire is kindled and oblations are poured in the sacrificial fire, Agni becomes the presiding deity. But Sarasvatī is also very often invoked to come to the sacrifice and accept whatever is offered.\(^7\) On such occasions, the sacrificer, obviously, takes

---

1 *RV*, I. 3.10.
2 Quoted in *RD*, *op.cit.*, p. 17, f.n. 16.
6 *RV*, II. 1.11.
7 Cf. *ibid.*, I. 3.10-11, 13.9 (V.5.8), 142.8; III. 4.8 (VII. 2.8); V.43.11; VII. 95.4; I.17.6, 110.8.
Sarasvati as the presiding deity of the sacrifice. When both Agni and Sarasvati are invited together to the sacrifice and taken to be the presiding deities of that sacrifice, it appears that they are accepted as husband and wife. It is probably for being the wife of Agni that Sarasvati is called 'pavakī'.

Even the Sarasvati river would be supposed to be 'pavakī' or 'pavakā', 'purifying', for its waters would have been so pure and sacred as to make everything pure with them.

'Pāvaka' also means 'the fire of lightning', a meaning which 'pavakī' or 'pavakā' would also embrace. In this regard, 'pavakī' or 'pavakā' will have the same implications as 'pāvīravī', used for Sarasvati.

(iii) Ghṛtācī:

The use of the word 'ghṛtācī' has been made several times in the Rgveda; but Sarasvati as 'ghṛtācī has been mentioned only once and it has been interpreted variously. Sāyana explains it as: "ghṛtam udakam añcatī." To Griffith it means: "Balmy: literally, filled with, or sprinkling ghṛta, oil, fatness, or fertilizing fluid", and to Wilson and Geldner 'showerer of water', and 'one who goes into melted butter' respectively.

1 See Upanis., pp. 58-60.
2 RV., I.2.7, 167.3; III.6.1, 19.2, 30.7; IV.6.3; V.28.1. VI.63.4; VII.1.6, 5.5, 43.2, 60.3, 84.1; VIII. 44.5; IX. 70.1, etc.
3 Ibid., V. 43.11.
Apte takes 'ghṛtācī' to mean greasy, abounding in ghee, containing water, shining, night, and Sarasvatī. 'Ghṛtācī' also occurs several times in the Rgveda, without having any association with Sarasvatī. At one place,² it comes as an adjective of the 'golden coloured lightning', described as 'showering waters'. Sāyana understands this word appearing in another mantra³ as "ghṛtenā "ktā sruk" and explains it more explicitly when it occurs in another mantra⁴ as an adjective of Indra: "he puruḥūtt bahubhir āhute 'adra ghṛtācī. ghṛtasābdo havir mātram upalakṣayati. tathā ca soma-jayapurodāśādilakṣānam havir aṃcāti. pṛṇotī 'ti ghṛtācī".

For this explanation, we may deduce that 'ghṛtācī' is the one:

(a) who showers waters;
(b) who takes oblations mixed up chiefly with ghṛta, soma, purodāśa, etc.

But so far we have not understood 'ghṛtācī' as throwing any light on any specific characteristic of Sarasvatī. The mantra⁵ using 'ghṛtācī' for Sarasvatī alludes to her various characteristics. By 'ā no divo', she apparently appears to be described as Bhāratī (pasyantī), whose abode is heaven and as such, she is one of the varieties of speech (vānī). It is doubtful to which aspect of hers 'hratāh parvatād ā' refers. 'Parvata' literally means 'mountain', but as a Vedic word, it also implies

---

1 Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 478.
2 RV., I.167.3., see also Sāyana's com. thereon.
3 Ibid., III. 6.1.
4 Ibid., III.30.7.
5 Ibid., V. 43.11.
welkin or cloud; and this shows Sarasvatī to be mid-regional in the capacity of one of the kinds of speech, viz., 'madhyamā vāk'. But one cannot be sure that Sarasvatī is described here as Vāgdevī, pasyantī and madhyamā respectively. Sāyana doubts it and that is why he says: "santi hi dyulokasya triṇi parvāni 'tisro divāh pṛthivīḥ' ityādi śruteḥ".

If we take this for granted, it would mean that Sarasvatī is purely heavenly and on account of being 'pasyantī', she has been invoked to descend from the heaven down to the sacrifice in order to receive oblations (havan devī jujusānā). and to listen to the speech of her worshippers (no vācam usatī śrutu). Here 'ghṛtācī' obviously points to Sarasvatī as receiving oblations offered to her at the sacrifice; and in such circumstances, she is the goddess of speech or speech itself.

Though originally used with above connotation, 'ghṛtācī' afterwards became a general term for Sarasvatī and was, therefore, used for the Sarasvatī river, too. It alluded to the latter as the one that showered (i.e., provided) waters. This word has been understood in this sense by Wilson (Ṛgveda, V.43.11).

The use of the word 'ghṛtācī' presents Sarasvatī as the goddess of sacrifice and as entreated to come down to the sacrifice from the heaven. Since, she receives oblations, she is called 'ghṛtācī'. Oblations,

---

1 Cf. Sāyana's com. on ibid., V. 43.11 (parvatāt ... vā 'ntariksāt meghādā).
2 Sāyana's com. on ibid., V.43.11 (anena mādhyamikī vāg meyate).
3 His com. on ibid., V. 43.11.
4 Ibid., V. 43.11.
5 Ibid., V. 43.11.
offered at the sacrifice, may be of ghṛta, waters or other things; but ghṛta is the main oblation in a sacrifice. When it is offered to her, she gladly accepts it. Hence the word 'ghṛtācī' should demote Sarasvatī as the one who receives ghṛta. The Ṣaippūrṇayudhakāsa explains 'ghṛtācī' as: "ghṛtena amṛtena aṁcata trītam gacchati 'ti ghṛtācī."¹ This points to Sarasvatī as the one who is fed with ghṛta, or ambrosia.

(iv) Pāravataghnī:

This word² is obviously a compound from pāravataghnī. There is much speculation about the definite meaning of 'pāravata', while 'ghūnī' is equivalent to 'ghūtini' in feminine from √han meaning striking, killing.³ This very word is wrongly taken as 'pāravadaghnī' the corrupt form of 'pāravata-ghnī'.⁴

Again, 'pāravata' is taken from 'par-va' which means remote, coming or brought from a distance, of foreign extraction, and is also the name of a tribe on the Yamuna.⁵ It also means 'with both banks'. Keeping it in mind, Madhava explains 'pāravataghnī' as: "pāravāragnātī pāravataghnī'ī...kūlayor ubhayor bāhaṅkrīm ity arthāh". Sāyana takes 'pāravata' to mean 'present at a distant place' as well as 'both the banks': "sarasvatīm pāravatagnīm pāravati dūrasē vidyamānasyā 'pi vrksrer hantrīm .... yadvā. pāravatagnīm pāravāre parāvācī tīre.tasyor

¹ Halāyudhakāsa, p. 291.
² RV., VI. 61.2.
³ Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit. p. 477.
⁴ Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 567.
⁵ Ibid., p. 567.
ghātinīm". Wilson translates 'pāravataghnī' as 'the underminer of both banks'.

'Pārāvata' may, thus, be thought to be formed from 'para' and 'avara', meaning 'remote' and 'nearer'. Therefore, present the Sarasvatī river as causing destroying its banks. It is also possible that it affected the tribe called Parāvatas, living alongside the river Yamunā, which, at that time, was not far from it and destroyed their settlements. In this way, the sense of 'para' and 'avara' befits according to the context.

Thus, 'pāravataghnī' speaks of Sarasvatī as a river. Griffith translates 'pāravataghnī' as 'who bursts the ridges of the hills' and, thus, gives us to understand that the Sarasvatī river while descending from the mountain destroyed the ridges of hills on its way. He appears to have confused 'pārāvata' in 'pāravataghnī' for 'parvata' in making out such a meaning. Monier Williams thinks 'hitting the remote (demon), slaying from afar', the right meaning of 'pāravataghnī', which would describe Sarasvatī as a goddess slaying the remote demon Vṛtra.

(V) Citrāvuh:

This epithet is apparently from citra + ēyuh. 'Citra' has been explained by Apte as: "1 Bright, clear. 2 Variegated, spotted, diver-

---

1 Ibid., p. 533.
2 Ibid., p. 92.
3 Ibid., p. 567.
4 RV., VI. 49.7.
- 78 -

sified. -3 musing, interesting, agreeable; ... 5 surprising, wonderful, strange; ... 7 Conspicuous, excellent, distinguished; ... tram
... 5 Heaven, sky; ... 6 (In Rhet.). The last of the three main divisions of Kāvyā (Poetry).¹

Similarly, 'āyuḥ' is used in a multiple sense. It embraces the sense of life, virtues and other characteristics of mortals and immortals. That is why it has been explained variously. Śāyana explains 'citrāyuḥ' as "citragamanā citrānnā vā", Griffith renders the word as 'brisk with rare life', and Wilson as 'graceful'. Geldner thinks it to mean 'the girl with wonderful life-energy'.

Among these explanations, the explanation offered by Griffith and Geldner is striking and presents Sarasvatī as having a singularity in her life. This singularity in life is obvious from the fact that in the same mantra she is described as 'pāvīravī kanyā', 'vīrapatnī' as has been noted earlier,² and has been closely associated with the consorts of gods. As the daughter of 'pāvīru', and the wife of Prajāpati or Viṣṇu and with her association of the wives of gods, she comes before us with an unique vitality. It is, probably, because of such a uniqueness that she is called 'citrāyuḥ'.

But 'citrāyuḥ' may also be interpreted differently. It is probable

¹ Vanan Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 493.
² Vide supra, pp. 54-55, 58-60.
that Sarasvatī has been depicted by means of this epithet as speech or
goddess of speech. ¹

Sarasvatī is the goddess of poetry ² and the use of 'citṛayuh' in
this context will portray her as standing for everything striking
(citra or ramanīya) in poetry.

(VI) Hiranyavartanī:

By means of this epithet, ³ Sarasvatī is described as a river.
The attributes 'vājinivatī', ⁴ 'ghorā, vṛtaghnī', ⁵ 'svasāranya vṛtavārī', ⁶ etc., delineate various characteristics of this river with divinity
attached to it. These epithets are not ascribed to any other river.

Because of its furious streams, the Sarasvatī is known as 'ghorā', ⁷
possessed of the terrific nature. Sarasvatī's terrific nature is also -
evident from the fact that it (she) helped Indra in constant battle with
Vṛtra, and is, therefore, called 'vṛtraghnī'. ⁸ Vṛtra had encircled waters

¹ From 'pāvīravi', we have already deduced this sense; and the same
sense may also be derived from 'gnāh' to which Sāyana renders: "gnābhīh
devapatalīhī sajasāh sahāpriyamānā. yadvā. gnāh gāsātrādānī chandā-
mātī. "chandāmī vai gnāh" (Til.Sam. V.1.7.2) iti śruteḥ." It presents Sarasvatī as the friend of the wives of gods and as Vāk manifested in
the form of metres like Gāyatrī.

³ RV., VI. 61.7.
⁴ Ibid., VI. 61.3-4,6, etc.
⁵ Ibid., VI. 61.7.
⁶ Ibid., VI. 61.9.
⁷ Ibid., VI. 61.7.
⁸ Cf. ibid., VI. 61.3,5,7.
in the heaven. Sarasvatī, by her divine powers, loosened his enclosure, and as the result of it, waters rushed towards the earth with all their fructuousness. Thus, she released wealth and prosperity for mankind; and it is, perhaps, also in this capacity that she is called 'hiranya-vertnīh', akin to 'hiranyavatī' meaning, 'abounding in gold'. This is equally applicable to her in the capacity of a river.

Sarasvatī is so rich in wealth and so munificent in distributing it to mankind that she is symbolically supposed as traversing the golden path or possessing a chariot made of gold.

(VII) Asuryā:

Monier Williams takes this word to mean incorporeal, spiritual, divine, demoniacal, belonging to the Asuras, and water of the clouds.

'Asuryā' is a compound of 'asū + yā'. 'Asu' means 'breath, life, spiritual life, and water'; and 'yā' evidently means 'going' (from yā, to go). 'Asuryā' will, thus, mean 'breathing', 'having life', 'having spiritual life', as well as 'going with water'.

---

1 Ibid., VI. 61.3.
2 Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 1173.
3 Cf. the views of Sayana, Wilson, Griffith, Geldner, etc., on RV., VI. 61.7.
4 Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 106.
5 RV., VII. 96.1.
6 Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 106.
Now, we are to see how the epithet 'asuryā' can be applied to Sarasvatī. In the first line (pāda) of the mantra in which this word occurs, Sarasvatī is, undoubtedly, referred to as a river; but in the second line, she is mentioned as dwelling in the heaven as goddess (devatārūpā) and on the earth as Vāgrūpā. The Sarasvatī is described as 'asuryā'; for it is the most 'lively' river as well as because, as Goldner rightly understands it, its place among rivers is as important and striking as that of Asuras among gods.

The adjective 'asuryā' can be applied to Sarasvatī even as a goddess; for she is full of might, life and vitality, as is obvious from her deeds. Sāyana is, thus, right in his explanation 'asuryāyai balavatyai', and so are Griffith and Wilson in their renderings 'mightiest' and 'most mighty' respectively.

(VIII) Dharuṇamāyaśi pūḥ:

Sāyana explains 'dharuṇamāyaśi pūḥ' as: "eṣā đṛṣṭamānā madīrūpā sarasvatī āyasy āyatā nirmitā pūḥ purī 'va dharuṇam ... dharuṇā dharayi-trī." Wilson understands it as 'firm as a city made of iron' (though he is doubtful about the implication of the comparison); and Griffith as 'fort of iron'. It describes the Sarasvatī river as mighty and unconquerable as the city or fort of iron. It was unconquerable; for people found it difficult to cross it on account of its wide course and

1 Cf. Sāyana's com. "rodasī dyāvaprthivyah sthitām divi devatārūpeṇa bhūmyām vāgrupena" (RV., VII. 96.1.).
2 Cf. his translation of ibid., VII. 96.1.
3 Ibid., VII. 95.1.
unfathomable depth.

'Dharunam' means 'dharayirī', supporter also. The Sarasvatī supported its tributaries. It supported them as the houses are supported by a city (pūh); and hence the propriety of the expression 'dharunamā-yasī pūh' applied to it.

IX. Akavārī:

Śayana understands 'akavārī' as 'akutsitaganā', Griffith as 'rich in spoil', Wilson as 'faultless-moving', and Geldner as 'giving liberally'. Apte interprets 'akavā-va' as a negative adjective from /kav-ā/, meaning: indescribable (avarāṇaṇīyā); not contemptible, not bad; and then 'akavavārīh' as "kutsitā aryο yasya sa kavāriḥ; na kavāriḥ ao; or yasya śatravo 'py akutsitā vrtrādyah," or akutsita iyati aisvaram prāpnoti". This interpretation runs in masculine, which will have the same meaning in feminine, too.

The mantra describes the auspicious and bounteous nature of Sarasvatī and mentions her as granting fortune and giving food, i.e., prosperity of every kind: "bhadram id bhadrā kṛnavat sarasvaty akavārī cetati vājini-vatī". Thus, she is the giver of wealth. Apte derives this sense, when he puts: "akutsita iyati aisvaram prāpnoti".

In the light of the present discussion, 'akavārī' as an adjective of Sarasvatī, presents her as 'liberal' even to her enemies.

1 Ibid., VII.96.3.
2 Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p.3.
In addition to the above, there are many attributes of Sarasvatī, but they are not so important as to deserve elaborate analysis. Sarasvatī as a river is compared to the person: "bisakhā iva". The Sarasvatī digs up its banks as a person delving for the fibrous stalk of a lotus (bisa) digs up the soil. It is, again, described as 'naditamā', 'the best of rivers', 'Bṛhatī,' 'great' (parivṛdhā guṇāsyādhiḥ - Śāyāna), 'ratha iva' 'going swiftly as a chariot irrespective of obstacles' and 'śuciḥ' 'sacred and purifying'. As goddess, Sarasvatī is described as 'devitamā' 'the best of goddesses', 'āpaprasi' (svatejośā pūritavatī - Śāyāna) and the like.

6. The relation of Sarasvatī with other gods and goddesses:

(i) Sarasvatī with male divinities:

Several times Sarasvatī has been mentioned in the Rgveda with the gods: Mitra, Daksā, Varuṇa, Soma, the Asvins, the Maruts.
Agni, 1 Indra, 2 Visnu, 3 Rudra, 4 Pusan, 5 Parjanya, 6 Brahaspati, 7
Aryaman, 8 Vayu, 9 Vaca, 10 Vata, 11 Pavaman, 12 Aja-Ekapada, 13 Visvedevah, 14 Vibhu, 15 Aditya, 16 Apah, 17 etc. The occurrence of her name
with these gods does not generally speaks of a particular relationship.

There are, however, some expressions used for Sarasvati which appear to
point to some relationship with some of them. For instance, 'marutsakhā', 16
'marutvati', 19 and 'marutsu bhāratī', 20 declare her as the friend of,

1 Ibid., II.1.11; III.23.4; V.46.2; VI.52.6; VII.9.5, 39.5, 40.3; VIII.39.10; X.65.1.
2 Ibid., II.30.8; V.46.2; VI.52.6, 61.5; VII.39.5; VIII.21.17, 38.10; X.65.1, 131.5, 141.5.
3 Ibid., V.46.2; VI.50.12; VII.39.5; VIII.54.4; X.65.1, 141.5.
4 Ibid., V.46.2; VI.50.12; X.65.1.
5 Ibid., V.46.2; VI.61.6; VIII.54.4; IX.81.4; X.65.1.
6 Ibid., VI.50.12; 62.6.
7 Ibid., IX.81.4; (Brahmanaspati - Ibid., X.65.1); X.141.5.
8 Ibid., VII.39.5; X.65.1, 141.5.
9 Ibid., VI.50.12; IX.81.4; X.65.1.
10 Ibid., VI.50.12.
11 Ibid., VI.50.12; VIII.54.4; X.141.5.
12 Ibid., IX.67.32, 81.4.
13 Ibid., X.65.13.
14 Ibid., X.65.13.
15 Ibid., V.42.12.
16 Ibid., X.65.1.
17 Ibid., VIII.54.4.
18 Ibid., VII.96.2.
19 Ibid., II.30.8.
20 Ibid., I.142.9.
and associated with the Maruts. 1 'Vrṣṇah patniḥ' 2 portrays her (it) as one of the wives of Indra. She helps Indra in killing Vṛtra. 3

Many times, she has been mentioned with the Aśvins; 4 and according to the Vaiṣṇavēya-Samhitā, she is their wife: "sarasvatī yonyām garbham antar aśvibhyām patnī ..." 5

The relationship between Sarasvatī and Agni has been indirectly hinted at in the Rgveda. The use of the term 'pāvaka' (masculine) for Agni and 'pāvaka' 6 (feminine) for Sarasvatī, both meaning 'purifying'; and Agni's identification with Sarasvatī 7 tempt us to believe that the latter has been conceived as the wife of the former.

(ii) Sarasvatī with female divinities:

Sarasvatī is also mentioned with goddesses; but has close relationship only with some of them. She is mentioned with Aditi, 8 Gungū, 9

1 See supra, pp. 56-57.
2 Cf. Śāyana on RV., V.42.12, "vṛṣṇah vṛṣaṣasye 'ntrasya patnīḥ."
3 Cf. Śāyana on Ibid., VI.61.3, "visvasya vyāptasya māyīnaḥ māyā-vināḥ brsasya. brsaya iti tvastur nāmadheyam. tvastuh prajām putram vṛtrāsram ca nyavadhīh. tvat sāhāyyad eve 'ndro hatavān".
4 Ibid., I.89.3; VII.9.5; IX.81.4; X.131.5, 184.2.
5 RV., XIX.94.
6 See supra, pp. 72-73.
7 RV., II.1.11.
8 Ibid., I.89.3; VII.39.5; X.65.1.
9 Ibid., II.32.8.
Among these divinities, the triad of Vedic goddesses, consisting of Ila, Sarasvati and Bhārati occupies most important place. Before dwelling upon this trinity, let us see other goddesses with whom Sarasvati has close relationship.

The name of Sarasvati with Aditi, Guñgū, Siñivati, Rākā, Indrāni, Varuṇāni, Prthivī, etc., occurs quite in an independent and dis-connected way. She has alliance with Purandhi, Dhiḥ and Gnāḥ. She has been entreated to bring good fortune and listen to the speeches of the worshippers with Dhiḥ: "sam sarasvati saha dhibhīhīr astu", and Purandhi: "srnavan vacāmsi me sarasvati saha dhibhīhīh purandhyā". Thus, Dhiḥ 'comes twice with Sarasvati in instrumental form in plural and appears to have close relationship with her. Sayana renders the word 'dhibhih' as: "stutibhih karmabhir vā", Griffith as 'Holy Thoughts' or 'Devotions personified' and Wilson as 'holy rites'. 'Dhiḥ' seems to be a deity of devotion and thought personified and has been associated with Sarasvati

1 Ibid., II.32.8; X.184.2.
2 Ibid., II.32.8; V.42.12.
3 Ibid., II.32.8.
4 Ibid., II.32.8.
5 Ibid., V.46.2; VI.49.7.
6 Ibid., VII.54.4.
7 Ibid., X.65.13.
8 Ibid., XI.35.11.
9 Ibid., X.65.13.
like the other female deity Purandhī, entreated similarly to listen to
the speeches. With Gān, Sarvāvatī has more affinity as she herself
is one of them. In the Rgveda (V.46.2), Gān occurs along with Agni,
Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, the Naruts, Viṣṇu, Nāsētāṣ, Rudra, Pūṣan and
Bhaga as well as with gods (devāḥ) in general. Probably, Gān is used
in plural in the sense of wives - the wives of gods in general and the
wives of the enumerated gods in particular. But another mantra (VI.49.7)
associates Sarvāvatī closely with Gān and implores her to provide the
worshipper with shelter and felicity: “gānāhīr acchidram sarāṇam sajotā
durādhārām gṛṇate saṃra yamsat”.

(a) The triad of the Rgvedic goddesses:

As in the post-Vedic literature, we come across the trinity of
gods - Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa - as well as the trinity of goddesses -
Sarvāvatī, Lakṣmī and Pārvatī, similarly, there is the Vedic trinity
of goddesses - Sarvāvatī, Ilā and Bhāratī - sprung up from the Rgveda.

In the Rgveda, Ilā is the personified oblation of milk and ghee,
obtained from the cow. So Ilā represents that wealth, which one gets
from the cow. She may also be considered the goddess of fertility.
There are only a few mantras in the Rgveda, where she is mentioned alone,
otherwise, she comes with Sarvāvatī and Bhāratī. Like Sarvāvatī, Ilā is
also a milk-cow. Ilā bears fruits permanently, irrespective of

---
1 Ibid., I.65.13.
2 Donald A. MacKenzie, op.cit., p. 151.
3 Ibid., p. 150.
4 RV., III. 55.13.
seasons.¹ As a milch-cow, she is the supreme among the cattle and is, therefore, rightly called the mother of the herds of cattle.²
She is said to have oily hands and the house, where she lives, Agni protects against the enemy and brings there eternal welfare.³ Like her hands, she has oily legs, too.⁴ She has been entreated to flow on the sacrificial grass.⁵ She is, probably, the personification of libation.

Like Iśā, Bhāratī is also a sacrificial goddess.⁶ In the Vedas, she generally stands independently and is, at some places, invoked with Sarasvatī. In the classical period, their position undergoes an important change. They are identified with each other and form only one goddess, their names being synonymous. Even before it, the Atharvaveda itself appears to suggest the identification of these three goddesses - Sarasvatī, Iśā and Bhāratī.⁷

According to Sri Aurobindo, Iśā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī represent 'drṣṭī', 'sruti', and 'the largeness of the truth-consciousness'.⁸

¹ Ibid., IV.50.8.
² Ibid., V.41.19.
³ Ibid., VII.16.8.
⁴ Ibid., X.70.8.
⁵ Ibid., X.36.5.
⁷ Cf. AV., VI.100.1, "tisrah sarasvatīh".
⁸ Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p. 110.
These three goddesses appear to represent the three kinds of speech (Vāk). In the Rgveda, the mention of these three goddesses does not specify which goddess represents which kind of speech. To ascertain it, we are to resort to the commentary like Śāyāṇa.

Śāyāṇa mentions Iḷā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī (Mahi) as the three varieties of speech. He takes Bhāratī as ‘dyusthānā vāk’¹ and accepts her as ‘rasāmrūpā’.² He holds Sarasvatī to be ‘mādhyamikā vāk’.³ He accepts Sarasvatī as ‘stanitādirūpā’ (i.e., dhvanirūpā), whose abode is the firmament. He further explains Sarasvatī as: “sarasvatī. sarah vāg udakām vā. tadvaty antarikṣadevatā tādṛśi”.⁴ As the sound (stanita, or dhvani) is communicated by the air, Sarasvatī becomes ‘vēyu-rūpā’ or the controller of Vēyu.⁵ She is repeatedly spoken of as the ‘mādhyamikā vāk’ elsewhere, too.⁶ Iḷā is the speech on the earth (pārthivī praśādirūpā).⁷ Thus, the three goddesses Bhāratī, Sarasvatī and Iḷā are the presiding deities of speech of the three regions — heaven (dīyuh), mid-region (i.e., firmament) and earth (pārthivī) respectively: “... etās tisrah tristhānāvāgabhimanidevatāḥ”.⁸

---

¹ Cf. his com. on RV., I.142.9, “bhāratī bharatasya dityasya sambandhī dyusthānā vāk”.
² Cf. his com. on ibid., II.1.11; the same idea occurs in ibid., I.188.8.
³ Cf. his com. on ibid., I.142.9.
⁴ “sarasvatī. sara ity udakānām. tadvaty stanitādirūpā mādhyamikā ca vāk”.
⁵ His com. on ibid., I.188.8.
⁶ Com. on ibid., II.1.11, “sarasvatī saranāvēn vēyuḥ tatsambandhī etanyāmikā mādhyamikā”.
⁷ Com. on ibid., II.30.8; V.43.11; VII.96.2; X.17.7, 65.13.
⁸ Com. on ibid., I.142.9.
⁹ Ibid., I.148.9.
Iḷā, Sarasvatī and Bhārati are identical with Agni (agnimūrtayāh), the symbol of tejas (brilliance = intelligence). Agni, on the earth, represents the sun, which is called Āditya in the heaven. Bhārati has close association with Āditya as well as with the Maruts (marutam bhārati). She is, thus, a mid-regional deity, while Sarasvatī as the 'madhyānā vāk' is also a mid-regional deity. It suggests that Bhārati and Sarasvatī are identical. These facts lead us to believe that the above mentioned three goddesses are identical and Agni is their male form.

Iḷā, Sarasvatī and Bhārati are the representative deities of Bhūh, Bhuvah and Svah, thus, terrestrial, atmospheric and celestial speeches. These goddesses also come under a different set of names. There are three varieties of speeches called 'pasyanti', 'madhyāmā' and 'vaikharī' among which 'pasyanti' stands for Bhārati; 'madhyāmā' for Sarasvatī; and 'vaikharī' for Iḷā.

---

2 Ibid., I.142.9.
3 Ibid., I.142.9.
4 Ibid., p. 89.
5 Sūryakānta, op.cit., 127-128.
6 Cf. Sāyāna’s com. on RV., I.164.45.

"parā pasyanti madhyāmā vaikharī 'ti catvārī 'ti. ekai "va nādātmikā vāk mūlādhārād uditā satī pure 'ty ucyate. nādasya ca sūkhṣmatvāna durmirūpatvāt sai "va hṛdayagāminī pasyanti 'ty ucyate yogībhīr draśttānā sākyatvāt. sai "va buddhiṃ gata viśvākṣām prāptā madhyāmē 'ty ucyate. madhyē hṛdayākhyē udiśyamānvāt madhyāmāyāh. atha yādā sai "va vaktre sthitā tālvoṣṭhādīvāpāreṇā bahir nirgacchāti tadā vaikharī 'ty ucyate". See also Wilson’s com. on "catvārī vakparimitā padāmi in ibid., I.164.45"
The same 'nādātmikā' (dhvanirūpā) vāk is known as 'parā', 'paśyantī', 'madhyamā' and 'vaikhari'. When having basic origin that very Vāk is 'parā'; when subtle (sūkṣma) and residing in the heart, it is 'paśyantī' perceived only by Yogins; when it is intelligible and manifest, it is 'madhyamā', being arisen in the heart (madhyā); and when it comes to the mouth, i.e., when it comes out through the vocal organs like plate, lips, etc., it is known as 'vaikhari'. These four kinds of Vāk represent the four stages in the manifestation of Vāk in a man.

One view explains the association of Iḷā, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī with the three different regions. According to it, Iḷā is expressly Iḷā, which means, in the Vedas, any drinkable fluid, a draught (especially of milk), refreshment, comfort, enjoyment, etc. Iḷā as speech (Vāk) would, thus, be the terrestrial knowledge, which provides us with food, drink and comfort, the necessities of human life, which assists us in the earning of livelihood. Sarasvatī, the mid-regional speech, represents the knowledge of the rituals, which wins the heaven and its bliss for human beings. Bhāratī is the knowledge of heavenly speech which brings us nirvāṇa.

7. Sarasvatī and Sarasvān:

Sarasvān is the singular form of the nominative case of the stem Sarasvat. In the Rgveda, Sarasvān has for it an equivalent in

---

1 Cf. Sāyana's com. on ibid., I.164.45.
2 Cf. Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 141.
3 Vide Sūryakṁta, op. cit., p. 128.
4 The word occurs in RV., I.164.52; III.4.8; VII.2.8, 96.4.6; X.66.5.
Sarasvāh\(^1\) (sarasa + va). The word 'Sarasvat' is formed from 'sarasa' (from \(\sqrt{sr} + \text{va}\)) by adding the suffix 'vatup' (vat). Śāyana explains its accusative form as: "sarasyaṃ udakavyaṃ. sara ity udakānāma. devam sūryam vā."\(^2\)

Apte gives various meanings of the word Sarasvat: having water, watery, juicy, succulent, elegant, sentimental, tasty, sapid, the ocean, a lake, a male river (nada), a buffalo and the name of Vāyu.\(^3\)

The meaning of Sarasvat as 'having water' or 'watery' is prominent. In one mantra, he has been mysteriously described as a celestial bird, the root cause of waters and plants, providing well through rain:

"divyam suparnam vēyasaṃ bhontam apām garbhāṃ darsatamo 'sadhīnām! vr̥ṣṭībhīṣa tarpayantam sarasyaṃ avase johavīmi \(1\)\\n
According to Griffith, Sarasvān (or Sarasvat)"is the name of a River-God usually assigned as a consort to Sarasvat. In this place the sun is meant, and Sarasvantam may be taken as a mere epithet, 'rich in water' which he absorbs." Wilson accepts Sarasvān as 'having water' as he explains "abhipato vr̥ṣṭībhīṣa tarpayantam" meaning "satisfying with rain the reservoirs, saliladharan". The word 'abhipata' appears to him "unusual": and according to him, it may be differently explained

---

1 [Ibid., VII. 96.5.](#)
2 His com. on [ibid., I.164.52](#); commenting on [ibid., VII.96.4](#), he explains 'sarasyaṃ udakavyaṃ' as: "sarasyaṃ udakānāma. devam sūryam vā."\(^2\)
3 [Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 1108.](#)
4 [RV., I.164.52.](#)
as "favourably, willingly, anukulyene". Sarasvān as 'having water' or 'watery' is also suggested by the following mantra, which describes his breast (stana):

"pāpivāmsūm sarasvataḥ stanaṁ ye visvedeśaṁtah bhaksimahi
prajāṁ iṣam ii".¹

Sāyana explains "sarasvataḥ stanaṁ" as: "sarasvataḥ devasya stanaṁ sābdāyamānām stanaavedrasādhāram va megham", thus, also suggesting 'a cloud' as 'the breast of Sarasvān'. Only in one mantra, Sarasvān is described with the three goddesses, Iī, Sarasvatī and Bhāratī.² Sarasvān is closely related to Sarasvatī as her husband.³ Like him, Sarasvatī, too, appears as a cloud.⁴ While translating the Rgveda, I.164.52, Griffith takes Sarasvān to be the sun. Even in such a case, the above relationship of Sarasvatī with Sarasvān, the sun, is clearly brought out; for she as Bhāratī is closely associated with one of the Ādītyas.⁵ While commenting on the Rgveda, III.4.8 (VII.2.6), Sāyana associates Sarasvatī as Bhāratī with the sun as his wife. As Bhāratī, Sarasvatī is not different from 'pasāyanti vāk', residing in the heaven and perceptible by yogins only; and Sarasvān is also, even as the sun, a celestial being. Both takes him as the protector of divine waters; while Hillebrandt identifies him with Āpūṃ Nāpāt, Soma, or the moon.⁶

¹ Ibid., VII.96.6
² Ibid., III.4.8 (VII.2.6).
³ Sāvraha p.92 and see also above lines.
⁴ Cf. Pt.Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., p.45.
⁵ Cf. Sāvraha, p.89-90.
⁶ Cf. Griffith’s fn. on RV., I.164.52.
The spouseship of Sarasvān and Sarasvatī is established even in case we take Sarasvān as the ocean and Sarasvatī as a river of this name. In Kāvyā, the ocean is conceived as the husband of rivers. Through their course, they approach it and surrender themselves to it, as a wife, approaching her husband, yields herself to him. The Sarasvatī was the mightiest river of Vedic times and after flowing from the mountain, it approached the ocean, its husband, as it were.

Whichever connotation we chose for Sarasvān, he, thus, comes in all the cases as the husband of Sarasvatī.

---

1 Ibid., VII.95.2.
CHAPTER III

SARASVATĪ IN THE YAJURVEDA
Chapter - III

SARASVATI IN THE YAJURVEDA

1. Physical account of Sarasvati:

Sarasvati in the Yajurveda, as in the Rgveda, is seldom provided with a physical form. Only a few verses refer to her as a river.¹

In one verse of the Yajurveda,² already existing in the Rgveda,³ she is mentioned both as a river and as a goddess of speech. Explaining the first part of this verse, Mahidhara presents her as showering waters, 

"... maho mahat arnah udakam pracetayati prajnapayati prerayati sarvasyam bhūman vrśtim kārayati." He speaks of her as showering waters over the entire world. It would be impossible for a river. She may, therefore, be supposed as the cloud.

The second part of the verse "dhiyo viśvā virājati", mentions her as the goddess of speech. Even as the goddess of speech, she is spoken of as possessing light and, thus, capable of illuminating the whole universe. Mahidhara explains the above expression as: "viśvāh sarvāh dhiyāh sarvaprāṇisthā buddhiḥ virajāti virājasyati dipayati sarvajantubuddhiḥ prakāsayingati." The same idea is put forward in Griffith's translation: 'she with her light illuminates, she brightens every pious thought'.

1 RV., XX.86; XXXIV.11.
2 Ibid., XX.86.
3 RV., I.3.12.
One verse describes Sarasvatī as follows:

"pañca nadyah sarasvatīm apiyanti sasrotasah |
sarasvatī tu pañcadvah so desō 'bhavat sarit "\n
In the Rgveda, Sarasvatī is described as 'tṛisadhasṭhā', 'ṣaptadāhātuh' and 'ṣaptasvāsā'. Similarly, in the above verse, she is mentioned as 'pañcadvah'. Five rivers are described to join the Sarasvatī.

It appears that of the seven rivers, five had close affinity with the Sarasvatī. These five rivers merged into it and it, thus, supported all of them. According to Raychoudhuri, the Sarasvatī was known as pañcadvah, for it, for the most part of the year, ceased to be a perennial stream and its waters were interrupted at several places, so as to make it 'pañcadvah' - having five distinct sheets or pools of waters. His view may be accepted on the ground that at the time of the Vājasaneyīśamhitā, there had started a gradual decay of the river. On the other hand, it is also possible that owing to its support to Drsadvatī, etc., which merged into it, it was called 'pañcadvah'. The land of rivers mentioned in the above verse (so desō 'bhavat sarit), is probably the same as described by Manu as Brahmāvarta.

---

1 RV., XXXIV.11.
2 RV., VI.61.12.
3 Ibid., VI.61.12.
4 Ibid., VI.61.10.
5 Vide John Dowson, op.cit., p. 291.
6 Raychoudhuri, H.C., op.cit., p. 472.
7 Cf. Mahīdhara com. on RV., XXXIV.11.
8 MS., II.17.
2. Some important epithets of Sarasvatī:

We have only a few significant epithets for Sarasvatī in the 
Yajurveda, namely, pāvakā, brhatī, yasobhaṇī, havīsmatī, sudughā and 
jēgrvi. Of these, pāvakā and brhatī occur in the Rgveda also and 
have already been explained. Other epithets are explained in the 
following lines:

(i) Yasobhaṇī:

This word has been used in the dative case as ‘yasobhaṇīyai’ 
with ‘svāhā’.⁴

Mahīdhara explains it as: "jīvataḥ puruṣasya prasāṃsa yaṣaḥ 
tasya yaśasv bhaginī vāgrūpā sarasvatī tasyai" and Uvācārya as: 
jīvataḥ prasāṃsa yaṣaḥ bhaginī ‘ti sanbandhisābdaḥ svase ‘ty ucyate". 
Mahīdhara takes ‘yasobhaṇī’ as ‘the sister of the fame of living 
beings’; but the latter makes the sense more clear while taking it 
as ‘the words embodying the fame of living beings’. Griffith interprets 
the word as ‘Sarasvatī enriched with glory’. What it all purports 
is that Sarasvatī in the form of speech is the source of fame. Jayadeva 
Śarmā understands Sarasvatī as ‘veda-vāni’ providing prosperity; while 
Rāma Śarmā Ācārya takes her as the goddess of speech and giver of 
renown, as the devotion of Sarasvatī bestows renown on the devotee. Dayā-
manda Sarasvatī defines the word more elaborately: "(sarasvatyai) saranti

---

1 YV., XXII.20.
2 Ibid., XXII.20.
3 Supra., pp. 72-73, 63.
4 YV., II.20.
According to him, Sarasvatī is the speech, full of knowledge (jñāna); and as 'yasobhagini', she is the speech endowed with true words.

'Yasobhagini', thus, presents Sarasvatī in the form of speech or of the goddess of speech and eloquence. If invoked properly with devotion, Sarasvatī bestows on devotee all sorts of knowledge, intellect and happiness, resulting in prosperity or if she is invoked with oblation, she as the presiding deity of the production of the children, makes them famous.

(ii) Havismatī:

It occurs only once for Sarasvatī in the Sukla-Yajurveda. Uvacācyā interprets it as: "sarasvatī ca havismatī havisa samāta", meaning Sarasvatī full of oblation or with oblation. Mahīdhara, Griffith and Rāma Sārmā Ācārya accept the same sense. Dayānanda Sarasvatī explains it as: "(havismatī) prasastāni havisy ādātum arhāni vidyante yasyām sa", thus, taking the word to mean 'full of excellent oblations.' Jayadeva Sārmā attempts a new interpretation of the word, while Mahīdhara and others take the verse to refer to both the Nāsatyas and Sarasvatī clearly in the context of the ceremonies leading to Saurūmaṇī, etc., (karmasu = saurūmanavyādiyāgesu - Mahīdhara). Sārmā, on the other hand, holds that Sarasvatī means 'the congregation of the

1 Griffith's note on ibid., II.20.
2 Ibid., XX.74.
intellectuals' (vidvat-sabhā). Qualified with 'haviṣmatī', 'vidvat-
sabhā' is, according to him, possessed of bestowing knowledge and
audible plans. This social standpoint of his leads him to take 'nara'
as 'netā', i.e., leader; and 'supešasā' and 'hiranyavartanī' as the
qualities of the leader who chooses righteousness; who is of the modest
nature and who goes by a benevolent path. According to him, the rājā
(king, here Indra) is requested to make a leader of the society like a
'vidvat-sabhā', who may come to its rescue.

Though such a meaning as held by Sarma can be squeezed out,
one cannot ignore the more usual and simple meaning, derived by the
scholars mentioned above. The Yajurveda, predominantly deals with the
sacrifices, performed in honour of various deities. The sacrifices are
usually performed for various purposes and oblations are offered to
the deities concerned with the hope of getting reward. Here, in the last
line of the verse, Sarasvatī apparently seems to be eulogized by her
devotee with rich oblations. While offering the oblation to Sarasvatī,
he takes it for granted that whatever is offered to her, would be accepted.
The word 'haviṣmatī' may also imply the simple nature of Sarasvatī who,
without fail, accepts everyone's offerings and has been consequently
named after it.

(iii) Sudughā:

This epithet has been defined by scholars variously. Dayānanda
Sarasvatī takes the word to mean Sarasvatī as fulfilling desires well and

1 Ibid., XX.75.
as possessing the entire science (vidyā): "(sū)(sudughā) kāmān yā sustha
doṃhī pra pūrayati sā (sarasvatī) pūrṇavidyāyuktā". Mahīdhara, as easily
drainable: "kīḍrī sarasvatī sudughā susthe dugdhē sā sudughā sādhudohanā";
Rāma Sārmā Ācārya, as: 'conferring the cherished wealth'; and Griffith as
'rich in milk'.

The epithet 'sudughā' is, to some extent, akin to 'ghṛtācī' and,
therefore, for its clear notion, we may refer to the explanation of
'ghṛtācī', as well as to the section of the present volume dealing with
'Sarasvatī as milch-cow'.

(iv) Jāgrvī:

'Jāgrvī', is a very remarkable epithet. Mahīdhara explains it
as 'one who keeps awake day and night and is careful in bringing her work
to a success' "kīḍrī sarasvatī diva naktam ahorātram jāgrvī jāgaranaśīlā
svakāryasiddhāv apramattā." Dayānanda Sarasvatī interprets 'jāgrvī' as
'vigilant', i.e., alert in bringing her work to a success'. "jāgrūkā
kāryasādhāne 'pramattā', and takes Sarasvatī as a woman, well-versed
in the Vaidyakāsāstra and possessed of wide knowledge: "vaidyakāsāstravit-
prāsastajñānavatī strī".

In the verse containing the word 'jāgrvī', Sarasvatī has been
considered a physician attending on Indra, accompanied by the Āśvins.
The Yajurveda presents her mainly as a physician. The word 'jāgrvī'
purports that Sarasvatī in the capacity of a physician keeps herself

1 Supra., pp. 73-76.
2 Infra., pp. 110-112.
3 **TV., XXI,36.
awake day and night, i.e., remains always alert, in treating her patient.

3. **Sarasvati as a physician:**

The Yajurveda presents Sarasvati as a physician in the description of the Sautramani and Bhesaj sacrifices, where Asvins also stand as physicians along with her.

(i) **Sarasvati and the Sautramani sacrifice:**

This sacrifice was performed in honour of Indra (sutrāman). The Soma, the favourite drink of gods, bestows strength on one who drinks it; but it is injurious if overdrunk. The Soma sacrifice was performed by gods in order to appease Indra, whose favourite beverage is the Soma; but being over-indulgent upon it, he fell ill; and gods had to cure him through the Sautramani sacrifice, a sacrifice performed for driving away the evil effect of the Soma. In this sacrifice, all gods act as physicians; but the part played by the Asvins and Sarasvatī is of great significance.

(ii) **Sarasvati and the Bhesaj sacrifice:**

Mahidhara's commentary on the Vājasaneyi-Sambhita, X.33, tells us that the demon Namuci, a friend of Indra, took advantage of his friend's

---

2 Cf. Griffith's note on Hyl., XIX.1.
3 Max Müller, *op.cit.*, p.326.
4 Besides the Yajurveda, the demon Namuci has also been mentioned several times in the Rgveda (I.53.7; II.41.5; V.3.7-8; VI.20.6; VII.19.5; VIII.14.13 etc. In the Rgveda, I.53.1, he is described as the deceiver of Indra and in the Purāṇas, as a Dānava, i.e., a descendant of Danu. Cf. Wilson's note on Rgveda, V.307. The Yajurveda, on the contrary, mentions him as a friend of Indra, who, exploiting the latter's confidence, drank up his strength.
confidence and drank up Indra's strength along with the draught of wine and the Soma. When Indra lost his strength, he resorted to the Ásvins and Sarasvatí and narrated to them the misery that had befallen him. The Ásvins and Sarasvatí provided him with a thunderbolt of foam, with which he struck the head of the Asura and regained his strength. The period which kept him deprived of his strength was a span of hardship for him; because during that period he suffered in many ways. As physicians Sarasvatí and the Ásvins kept him survived.

(iii) Sarasvatí as a physician:

Sarasvatí has been several times described as a physician in the Yajurveda. The Ásvins stretched out the healing sacrifice for Indra (devā yajñam atanvata bhesajam bhīṣajā 'śvīnā), while Sarasvatí infused strength into his body (indrīye 'ndriyāṇi dadhatah). They drain out the milk-like medicine or medicinal balm for Indra so that he could gain his vigour. One verse describes the Ásvins as the store of the Soma (havirdhānam) and Sarasvatí as the sacred hearth (agnidhram). The supposition of the Ásvins as the store of the Soma seems to suggest that

---

1 "namucir nāmā 'sura indraśya sakāh "sīt sa visvastasye 'ndraśya vīryam suryasā somena saha papaū". See also J. Muir: QST., Vol. V. p. 94.
2 Mahādhara's note on RV., X. 33, "apām phenamāpam vajram indraśya dadhah". See also J. Muir, op. cit., p. 94.
3 Śāṇā on RV., VI. 14. 5, "apām phenena namuṣeh śīrash indra udavartayat." See, for instance RV., XXI. 31. 33, 36, 38, 39, etc.
4 Ibid., XIX. 12.
5 Ibid., XIX. 15. 
6 Ibid., XIX. 15. "ásatibhyaṃ dugdham bhesajam indraśya 'ndram sarasvatāyā."
they are the restorers of the Soma from the enemy of Indra. Sarasvati
as ‘agnidhram’, the receptacle for keeping the sacred fire, refers
to her in the capacity of Vāk, identified with sacrifice.¹ It also
presents the Āsvins as the cloud and Sarasvati as the riādhyamikā Vāk.
Elsewhere, Sarasvati and the Āsvins are accompanied by Savitṛ and
Varuna at the time of the curing of the form of Indra.² Some of the
verses of this Veda describe very beautifully and vividly how the body
of Indra was built:

a) Sarasvati took the charge of making the interior part of
Indra.³

b) She along with Agni was assisted by the Nāsathyas in creating
a beautiful body for Indra.⁴

c) The Āsvins and Sarasvati became the mouth of Indra.⁵

d) Sarasvati created Indra’s breath (vyāna) with ‘upavāka’;
and nose-hairs (bahih) with ‘badara’.⁶

e) The Āsvins joined the limbs of Indra, while Sarasvati
brought them together so as to complete the structure of
the body deathless and lustrous.⁷

f) Sarasvati and the Āsvins then poured into Indra’s body the
brilliance of the animals, as well as the oblations, honey
and foaming liquor.

1 Cf. SB., III.1.4.9.14; etc.
2 IV., XIX.80. “āsvinā yajñam savītā sarasvatī indrasya rūpaṃ varunō bhīṣajyan.”
3 Ibid., XIX.82. “sarasvatī vayatī pesō antaram.”
4 Ibid., XIX.83. “sarasvatī manasā peseṇaṃ vasu nāsatyābhīyaṃ vayati
darsatam vapuh.”
5 Ibid., XIX.86. “... āsvīnā ’sa sarasvati †
6 Ibid., XIX.90.
7 Ibid., XIX.93. “āngūny ātman bhīṣajā tad āsvinā’tmānasā nāgaih sam
adhāt sarasvatī. indrasya rūpaṃ satamānom āyus candrena jyotir amrtaṃ
dadhānāh.”
8 Ibid., XIX.95. “tejāh pasūṃam havir indriyāvata pariṣrutā payasā saraghm
madhu, āsvībhīyaṃ dugdham bhīṣajā sarasvatyaḥ sutāsūtābhīyaṃ amrtaḥ soma
induh.”
The Asvins are called the Lords of splendour (śubhaspatī), while Sarasvatī is said to employ speech (Vāk) in curing and infusing strength into Indra.

Like Namuci, who drank up the strength of Indra, there are several other demons, as Vṛtra, Ahī, Suṣṇa, Pipru, Sambara and Uṛuṣa. They stand for some phenomena of Nature. They represent the power, which restrains fertile waters within them and does not let them pour down on the earth. As the power restraining and concealing waters within the clouds, they reside in the clouds, which are, as it were, the cities for their dwelling. Indra is represented as their enemy and the overthrower of cities. Indra as the releaser of waters, destroys these enemies of waters concealed in the clouds and makes the rivers overflow. Rivers which are, thus, saved from being dried up by Indra by providing waters are conceived as his wives (brānah patnīḥ).

Waters are the very life of Indra. When his strength, i.e., waters were stolen away or drank up by Asuras who represented drought and inclement weather, he became lifeless. Without the life-strength, his body (i.e., cloud, according to the naturalistic interpretation) was disfigured, and was later on reconstructed by the Asvins and Sarasvatī.

---

1 Ibid., X.33.
2 Ibid., XIX.12, "vācā sarasvatī bhīṣag indrāye 'ndriyāni dadhatah".
4 Ibid., pp. 95-96.
5 RV., V.42.12; see also supra., pp. 55-56.
As the Asuras steal the light of the life-strength of Indra, they also represent darkness. When he is deprived of the light of his life-strength by them, he is overtaken by the darkness of agony, sorrow and dejection; and the Asvins who by curing him provide him with the light of life-strength, are aptly described as the lords of splendour.

Sarasvatī is closely related to Indra, the god of clouds or rain. She resides in the clouds and is possessed of thundering and showering clouds. The clouds are also described as her breasts. The Yajurveda describes her as a mother, too, who bears in her womb an infant as a result of her union with the Asvins: "sarasvatī yonyām garbham antar asvibhyām patnī sukṛtam vibharti". Mahīdhara understands 'garbham' as: 'garbham indralaksanām', i.e., an embryo indicating Indra. Griffith takes it as the infant, she has helped to recreate. It makes Sarasvatī the mother of Indra and wife of the Asvins. Sarasvatī and the Asvins, who represent thunder (pāvīravi) and being the lords of splendour (śubhaspati) respectively, jointly create Indra, i.e., rain. The Asvins are also described as the store of the Soma. The Soma may, here, be supposed to stand for waters which the Asvins create and restore in the clouds.

1 Ibid., p. 277.
2 IY., X.33.
3 Cf. Śripāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, et al., op.cit., p. 45.
4 Cf. R.V., I.164.49; see also supra., p.38.
5 IY., XIX.94.
6 Cf. his note on ibid., XIX.94.
7 Vide supra., pp. 58–60.
8 IY., X.33.
9 Ibid., XIX.10.
Sarasvati herself is both cloud and Vāk. The legends recorded in the Altaréya and Satapatha Brāhmaṇas, tell us that she as Vāk turned herself into a woman, who went to the Gandharvas to restore the Soma, stolen by them. It is still to be investigated whether the Gandharvas were the same as Asuras or had any association with them, when the above legend was woven especially in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa.

Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman are also said to be strength of Indra. When Indra aimed at killing Vṛtra with his thunderbolt, the latter, who had concealed all the verses of Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman, returned them to Indra. The only distinction between the Gandharvas and the demon Vṛtra is that the former are described as guarding the Soma and the latter as stealing Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman.

The personality of Sarasvati as a physician of Indra may also be interpreted otherwise. It may be taken to point to the time before the universe came into existence, when it was all darkness. Darkness symbolises the absence of creation, while light represents existence or life. Desirous of creating, Prajapati connected himself with Vāk, i.e., Sarasvati, and produced waters by her. The procreation of waters by Vāk suggests Sarasvati as the mother of Indra, the lord of rain or waters. As a physician, Sarasvati reconstructs the body of Indra and infuses

1 See infra., pp. 132-137.
2 J. Muir, op. cit., p. 95.
3 Cf. Griffith's note on IV., XIX.12.
vigour into him. Even as a mother, she forms Indra's body within her womb and communicates strength and life to him. Thus, the personalities of Sarasvatī as a physician and as a mother can be well reconciled.

The Atharvaveda puts it in a slightly different manner and takes her as a wish-cow or even a melodeous cow yielding substance and nourishment to Indra. According to the other source, it may be put forward that speech (Vāk) is here merely her instrument (controller), according to Nahidhara meaning Prajāpatī, not her nature, and her healing power may rather be deemed to be due to her nature as purifying water. According to the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, this speech (Vāk) is as the 'healing word', while Weber finds here a reference to the Sarasvatī river with cold water, containing Amṛta or healing medicine. Besides, the three goddesses, Bhāratī, Iśā and Sarasvatī accompanied by the Āsvins are said to have infused power in the innermost navel of Indra.

We have seen earlier how Sarasvatī and the Āsvins raised the bodily edifice of Indra, and Sarasvatī built its inner form.

4. Sarasvatī and Sarasvata:

The relation of Sarasvatī, Sarasvat (Sarasvān) and Sarasvata

1 Ibid., p. 260.
2 See infra., p. 112.
3 Cf. Griffith's note on YV., XVIII, 37; see also infra., pp. 108-109.
4 Cf. Griffith's note on YV., XVIII, 37; XX. 55.
5 Ibid., XXI, 54, "devis tisras tisro devīr āsvine 'dā sarasvatī. śūsan na madhye nābhyaṁ indrāya dadhur indriyam".
has already been dealt with in detail in the previous chapter.¹ In the Yajurveda, Sārasvata has been mentioned only in a few verses. In one verse,² he is alluded to as ‘sārasvata’, which according to Mahīdhara, means ‘sārasvatagraha’ a set of oblation, to which, he while establishing sārasvata’s relation with Sarasvati, writes: “abhīṣecānye sārasvatīnām śapām grahaṇam eva sārasvata grahaḥ sārasvata grahaḥ grahaḥ grernāti ‘ti tatra ‘mnānāt”, thus, understanding ‘sārasvata’ as waters of the Sarasvati river. ‘Graha’ means the ‘set of oblation’ or the ‘cup of the Soma’.³ Then, ‘sārasvatagraha’ would naturally mean a set of oblation or a cup of the Soma, made of waters of the Sarasvati. Waters of the Sarasvati river are, thus, to be conceived as a unique source of strength like the Soma.

Another verse⁴ uses this word in the objective case as sārasvatam: “upayām agrhito ‘yā ‘svinām tejah sārasvatam vīryam aindram balam”, to which Mahīdhara explains as: “sārasvatam sarasvatī sambandhi vīryam sāmarthyaḥ. aindram indrasambandhi balam.” Here ‘sārasvata’ denotes the vigour of Sarasvati through which Indra also gains his strength.

Previously we have noted that Sarasvati as a divine physician cured and provided Indra with strength by Vāk, her own controlling power. Vāk has been identified with waters;⁵ and, thus, Sarasvati’s Vāk would imply waters of the Sarasvati river, here denoted by the term ‘sārasvata’.

¹ Vide supra., pp. 91-94; see also infra., pp. 193-195.
² XV., XVIII,20.
³ Cf. Griffith’s note on ibid., XVIII,19.
⁴ Ibid., XIX,8.
Thus, in the capacity of a goddess, Vāk is her controlling power; and in the capacity of river it is its healthsome waters.

At another place, 'sārasvata' occurs in the dual of the nominative case as 'sārasvatau' as an adjective for 'utsau'. Griffith takes 'sārasvatau utsau' to mean 'both fountains of Sarasvati' and further explains the phrase in his note as: 'both fountains: Mind and Speech'. Mahādhara discusses the text elaborately, "... sārasvatau sārasvati-sambandhinau utsau utsyandanau kūpau pravāham vā tvā tvān prāvatam prokarṣṇena pālayām. tau co'itsau manovācau. sāstrajñānaye kūpā lvo 'tsyandati 'tī manah kūpah tat pratipādanam kurvati vāg api kūpah. mano vai sarasvān vāk sāravatay etau sāravatāv utsāv iti (7,5,1,31) śruteh. yad-vā sāravatav utṣau ṛgvedasāmavedau ... śrutih rksāma vai sāravatāv utsāv iti".

As the conception of Vāk as applied to Sarasvati has been developed from her watery form, the same would hold good with regard to Sarasvān; for he stands parallel to Sarasvati in many respects. If Sarasvati is accepted as the goddess of speech (Vāgdevatā) or speech (Vāk), one has to take Sarasvān as the god of speech. The Ṛgveda and the Sāmaveda are taken to be the expansion of Vāk, Sarasvati and Sarasvān, as a child is the expansion (santati or santāna) of its parents. These two Vedas are, therefore, regarded as two Sāravatas, i.e., two sons of the parents Sarasvān and Sarasvati. The Ṛgveda has been recognised

1 XIV., XIII.35.
as Sārasvata; for it is the most ancient and original source of knowledge; and the Sāmaveda, probably because it contains the mantras of the Rgveda, and is not, therefore, essentially different from it. Thus, both are treated as two sons of the same parents. The term 'sārasvata', therefore, denotes the Rgveda as well as the Sāmaveda. Mahādhara's Bhūṣya quoted above tells us Sārasvān is mind (manas) and Sārasvatī, speech (Vāk). In the Yajurveda, mind is identified with Prajāpati, who, in the Rgveda, has been described as Vēcaspati or Brahmānāspati, the lord of speech (Vāk) or hymn (brahman). Thus, Sārasvān is the same as Prajāpati.

5. Sārasvatī as milk-cow:

In the Yajurveda, Sārasvatī has been mentioned many times as a milk-cow (dhenu). The milk-cow, as the word itself suggests, is the cow that yields sufficient milk. Sārasvatī is called a dhenu on account of her bounteous and affectionate nature. As a cow provides people with milk, the only healthsome and complete food, as a mother to her children and is regarded by them as their mother (go-mātā). Similarly, Sārasvatī is benevolent to people, her children, and fulfils their wishes. She is, thus, figuratively called a milk-cow; for she is easily yielding and accessible.3

At one place, Sārasvatī, the milk-cow, has been described as pouring the Soma for Indra: "duhe dhenul sarasvatī somam sukram iche ...

1 See Griffith's note on ibid., VII.3, 'The Mind: meaning Prajāpati'.
2 Cf. 'sudughā' supra., pp.99-100.
3 Cf. 'suyamū', supra., pp.39-40.
4 IV., XX.55.
The reference is obviously to the sacrifice when the fire has been kindled and the Soma has been pressed. The Soma has been pressed by Sarasvatī, conceived as a dhenu on account of her pleasing nature, as Mahīdhara understands it: "kiṅca dhinoti prīmāti dhenuḥ ... sarasvatī iha yajña somam duhe dagdhé". On account of her pleasing nature, Sarasvatī invokes gods to the sacrifice. In another verse, Sarasvatī is described to get the desires accomplished by the heaven and the earth (rodāśī): "rodāśī ubhe duhe kāmān sarasvatī". Mahīdhara explains it as: "ubhe rodāśī dyāvāparthivyaśu kāmān duhe dagdhé ... dyāvāparthivibhyām sakāsāt kāmān dogdhī ..."

Sarasvatī is equally munificent towards both mankind and gods. She helps mankind as well as gods in need. While rendering help to gods, she is accompanied by other gods also. She provides Indra with his rich food. In this act, she is assisted by god Vanaspati and the Āsvins. When Vanaspati accords him with the liquor, she as a milch-cow, accompanied by the Āsvins, provides him with madhu: "ṛuthe 'ndro vanaspātih śāsāmānāh parisrūtā. kīlām āsvībhyaṁ madhu duhe dhenu sarasvatī". Thus, Sarasvatī yields sweet beverage (madhu). Since Sarasvatī is easily yielding, she is affectionately called 'sudghā' (śādhudahānā - Mahīdhara).

---
1 Ibid., XX.60.
2 Ibid., XX.65; cf. also Mahīdhara's com. thereon.
3 See Griffith's notes on Ibid., II.34; XX.65.
4 Ibid., XX.75.
The same notion is also attached to her as a physician, as she at that time became a cow and drained out the pure splendour and power for Indra.¹

Thus, Sarasvati has been presented in the Yajurveda as a milch-cow figuratively as well as actually, at least, at the time of draining out splendour and power for Indra, as has been noticed above.

¹ Ibid., XXI.34; also cf. Mahādhara's com. "... sarasvati ca dhanur bhūtvā indraya śukraṁ śuklam śuddham jyotir indriyaṁ viryyaṁ ca duhe dugdhe".
CHAPTER IV

SARASVATĪ IN THE ATHARVAVEDA
Chapter - IV

SARASVATI IN THE ATHARVAVEDA

Only a few mantras of the Atharvaveda refer to Sarasvati; and some of them are taken up from the Rgveda. They delineate the following traits of her personality.

1. Sarasvati and medical science:

The Atharvaveda, Book 4, Sūkta 4, deals with such medicines and devices as could cure various ailments. The Sūkta contains eight mantras, the first of which mentions a herb called 'Sepaharsanś'. It was dug out by the gandharvas for Varuna, who had lost his strength and who restored his vigour through it. Various properties have been ascribed to this herb. By its use, Prajāpati grows high, and man becomes more sturdy. Similarly, there are other herbs called 'Rśabhāṇa', 'Soma', which are equally useful. In this context, Sarasvati has been entreated along with Agni, Sāvitr and Brahmanaspati to bring back the exhausted power of a man and make his slackened limbs tightened as the bow:

1 AY., IV.4.1.
2 Griffith takes this 'osadhī' as 'the plant which strengthens and exalts the nerves', Whitney as 'a penis-erecting herb', cf. Sāyana "sepoharsanśāṁ śejasah punāsrajanasya vardhāntam vīryapradānena unnāmyitrīṁ osadhīṁ".
3 AY., IV.4.2.
4 Ibid., IV.4.3.
5 Ibid., IV.4.4.
6 Ibid., IV.4.5.
"adya 'gne adya savitar adya devi sarasvati
adyā 'syā brahmanaspate dhanur ivā tānasyā pasah ||"¹

Medicines and herbs are associated with divinities. The trio of the goddesses - Sarasvati, Iśā and Bhūrati - has been mentioned in the Atharvaveda by such expressions as: "tisro devih ... sarasvatiḥ"², and 'tisrah sarasvatiḥ'.³ and it is suggested that all of them are only different aspects of a single goddess. In the Atharvaveda, VI.100.1, they are described to have provided the remedy for poisoning: "tisrah sarasvatir aduh sacittā viṣadūṣasam". This association of herbs with deities has been brought out in clear terms in the following:

"asūrāṇām duhitā 'sī sā devānām asī svasā ||
divasprthivyāḥ sambhūtā sūs ca karthārasam viṣam ||"⁴

The herb is taken to be the daughter of/Asuras; sister of gods; and, at the same time, it is supposed to have been born of the heaven and the earth.

The Atharvaveda, thus, maintains a close relationship of the osadhi (herb; medicine) with the divine beings. It cures human beings of ailments by dint of its effectiveness born/its divine association; and does them good.

The human body contains many harmful germs, which, living within

1 Ibid., IV.4.6.
2 Ibid., V.12.8.
3 Ibid., VI.100.1.
4 Ibid., VI.100.3.
it bring great loss to it. Gods have made bodily cells so strong that they do not easily succumb to them. They, therefore, have constantly a severe combat with them. The cells constantly struggle with the germs and when the latter triumph, the body suffers. Sarasvatī, along with the heaven, the earth, Indra and Agni, has been rightly invoked to kill these harmful elements:

"ote me dyāvāpatthivī otā devī sarasvatī |
otau ma indraś cā 'gnaś ca krimi jambhayatāṃ iti ||" ¹

For crushing the germs in the body of a child, the use of 'the Vacā herb'² is prescribed. The Sūkta 23, Book 5 in the Atharvaveda, is of much interest in this connection. From it, we come to know that these germs reside in our bodies and have their names, colours and shapes.³ As Agni, the sun (Sūrya) and others⁴ destroy such germs, Sarasvatī also prayed for the destruction of these germs.⁵

2. Sarasvatī and the ills caused by wealth:

Wealth has been described to bring various miseries and evils to human beings. It loosens moral values and the bonds of righteousness.

¹ Ibid., V.23.1.
² Ibid., V.23.2. Vacā is taken to be potent spell. This hymn is akin to the hymn II.32 which deals with a charm for the destruction of parasitic worms.
³ Ibid., V.23.4-5.
⁴ Ibid., V.23.1, 6.
⁵ Ibid., V.23.1. "... devī sarasvatī!
... krimi jambhayatāṃ iti!"
Both lack and gain of wealth bring miseries. A person without wealth is utterly helpless. Only if he is courageous and does not lose his heart in distress, he masters the unfavourable situations in life. Even the possession of wealth brings evils to man. A wealthy man grows ambitious and his desires are unlimited. He does not remain contented with what he has. He bankers after wealth and malignity gets rooted in the heart of his hearts. The Sūkta 7, Book 5, in the Atharva-veda, portrays the evils caused by wealth. The two opening mantras of the Sūkta, proclaim that malignity should go away and munificence should manifest itself. Malignity is, thus, severely condemned.

Niggardliness is described to make a man morally weak and causes agony to him: “veda tvā 'ham nimīvantim nitudantīm arāte”. Wealth makes a man lazy and his heart and sentiments, impure: “cittam vīrtsantyā ’kūtīm puruṣasya ca”.

In the last two mantras of the Sūkta, we get the description of the wealth accumulated through niggardliness. The first mantra (V.7.9) describes wealth to be extended to all directions because of its being unlimited: “yā mahāti mahomānā visvā āśa vyānase”. It is called 'the calamity with golden hair (hiranyaśekṣi nīruṭti); for it entices a man and

---

1 Cf. Śripāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., Part II (Sūrata, 1950), p. 85 on Ibid., V.7.
2 Ibid., p. 85.
3 Ibid., V. 7.1-2.
4 Ibid., V.7.7.
5 Ibid., V.7.8.
6 Ibid., V.7.9-10.
dooms him to distress and various evils. The last mantra (V.7.10),
where the wealth of a miser is spoken of as: 'hiranyavarnā subhaṁ' and
'hiranyakasāpūḥ', identifies wealth with 'arūti' itself.

So as to be free from the evils of niggardliness and turning
harsh to others owing to the vanity caused by wealth, one has to resort
to Sarasvatī, the truthful speech, who gives rise to noble thoughts.¹

If a person wants to get rid of all miseries and fill his heart
with the sense of reverence, he should make his heart sublime and resort
to this speech:

"yam yacemy ahon vacē sarasvatī mano'yāja
śraddhā tam adya vidatū dattā somena babhrunā ||"²

Sarasvatī has also been understood in a wider sense. She is
the personification of speech and reverence or faith.³

3. Sarasvatī and the work of protection:

The Ahāravyaṛeda gives the names of the gods Indra, Pūṣan, Aditi,
the Maruts, Āpām Nāpāt, Saptā Sindhus, Viśnu, Dyāvāprthivi, Grāvā, Soma,
Sarasvatī, Agni, the Asvins, Uṣas, Day, Night, etc.,⁴ who are invoked
for protection. Though these deities belong to the three different
regions, their existence in a gross body is represented by atoms.⁵ In

¹ Cf. ibid., V.7.4, "sarasvatīṁ amastim bhagaṁ yanto hāvamkhe".
² Ibid., V.7.5.
³ Cf. Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., p. 88 on ibid., V.7.
⁴ Ibid., VI.3.1-3.
⁵ Cf. Au., I.2.4.
the body, they appear to represent good forces that guard man against evil forces.1

Sarasvatī, occurring in the Atharvaveda (VI.3.2), is explained by Sātavalekara as: "vidyādevī, jñānadevatā, śāstra-vidyā and sabhyatā."2 Sarasvatī represents science and culture. She protects human beings against ignorance and barbarism.

Sarasvatī has also been asked to free man from sins, which he commits under the influence of his sinful nature. The traits of his nature inciting him to commit sin, are described as enemies and are termed, mroka, manohā, khaṅka, mārdabha, ātmadūṣi and tanādūṣi.3 These sinful traits make man’s mind, body and soul impure, and hence the use of such terms as mroka, tanādūṣī, and ātmadūṣī for them. The Book XVI of the Atharvaveda deals with the devices which a man can adopt in order to get rid of his sins and expiate his sinful deeds; water has been described as a means to remove sins from the body.4 The sins caused by speech, are wiped out by sweet and pleasing speech (ūrjā madhūmati vāk).5 The presiding deity of Vāni is Sarasvatī, who, in her terrestrial form, is Iī or Iū, also called vaikhari spoken by men on the earth.6 As the sun is asked to protect against day (ṣūrya māhah pātu), Aqui

1 Cf. AV., VI.4.1-3; also cf. Pt. Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., p. 25 on ibid., VI.4.
2 Cf. Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., p. 23 on ibid., VI.3.
3 Cf. ibid., XVI.1.3; also cf. Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., Part. IV (Śrīrata, 1958), p. 3 on ibid., XVI.1.
4 Ibid., XVI. 1.10, "ṣrīprā āpo apa ripram asmat".
5 Cf. ibid., XVI. 2.1.
6 See supra., pp.89-90
against the earth (agniḥ prthivyā), Vāyu against the mid-region (vēyur antariksāt), Yama against the men (yamo manuṣyebhyāh), so Sarasvatī is invoked to guard against earthly materials (sarasvati pārthivebhyāh). Sarasvatī, here may also be taken to be an earthly river of the name, removing the sins of man with its pious waters. Or, Sarasvatī here may be understood as the power of discrimination between good and evil, which keeps a man away from committing sins. This power of discrimination leads man to overcome all sins. When a person is spiritually uplifted, his soul becomes strong and gods also come to his rescue and reside in his body. Thus, the sun resides in his eyes; vāyu in his breath; agni in his speech; Yama in his phallus, and Sarasvatī in his intellect.

Sarasvatī is also associated with the protection of an embryo. In the Rgveda, both Sarasvatī and Śiṅivāli have been invoked to grant progeny. From this point of view, the Atharvaveda, too, is of great importance, the Book V, Śūkta 25 of which furnishes valuable information as to the sustenance of the embryo. It contains thirteen mantras. The first mantra describes how the embryo comes into existence. It takes birth from the virility of a being, mixed with the fundamental principles of creation, the earth, water, fire, sky and air. Man's virility deposited in woman's womb, grows into a child within the prescribed period: "śepo

1 AV., XVI. 4.4.
2 Cf. Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., p. 17.
3 See supra., pp. 66-67.
4 AV., V. 25.1.
The following few mantras invoke various gods and goddesses to protect the embryo against different quarters they represent. Prthivi is said to be great and to bear the embryos of all beings:

"yathe'yam prthivi mahl bhūtanām garbham ādadhe
evam ādadāmī te garbham tasmāi tvām avase huvē||"\(^2\)

Similarly, there are many other gods and goddesses like Sinivēśī, Sarasvatī, the Asvins, Mitrā, Varuṇa, Bhṛhaspati, Indra, Agni and Vidhātrī who are prayed for progeny. Divinities have close association with the embryo as the following mantra shows:

"yad veda rūjā varuṇo yad-vā devī sarasvatī /
yad indro vṛtrahā veda tad garbhakaranam pibā||"\(^5\)

4. Sarasvatī and the divine strength of man:

The human body is made of the principles, i.e., air, water, fire, sky and the earth, which represent various gods and goddesses of different regions residing in the human body. We can find it in the Aitareya-Upanisad in the following:

"agnir vāg bhūtvā mukham prāvisad vāyuh prāno bhūtvā nāśike prāvisad ādityes caksur bhūtvā kṣīṇā prāvisad dīśāḥ śrotam bhūtvā karpau prāvisām esadhivaspatayo lomāni bhūtvā tvacām prāvisām candramā mano bhūtvā hṛdayam prāvisān mṛtyur apāno bhūtvā nābbīṃ prāvisād āpaveto bhūtvā śīśam prāvisān."\(^6\)

---

1 Ibid., V. 25.1.
2 Ibid., V. 25.2.
3 Ibid., V. 25.3.
4 Ibid., V. 25.4.
5 Ibid., V. 25.6.
6 AU., I. 2.4.
Thus, these deities, in their subtle form, exist in different parts of our body. Our body is nothing beyond them. This concept, which finds so clear an expression in the Upanishads, can be traced back to the Atharvaveda, where we have:

"sūryo me cākṣur vātaḥ prāno 3 ntarikṣam ātmē prthivi
śārīram
aśtāto nāmā'ham ayaṁ asmi sa ātmānam ni dadhe dyāvāprthivi-
bhyām gopīthāya ||"¹

In the human body, these deities reside in their subtle forms; while outside it, they exist in their gross forms.² When a man comes to know this fact, he finds no distinction between these deities and himself:

"tasmād vai vidvān puruṣam idam brähme 'tī manyate|
sarvāḥ hy asmin devatā gāvo gosṭha ivē "sate ||³

As these deities reside in the human body, it is full of divine strength. Man does not realise this strength hidden within himself until the veil of ignorance is cast away. In a mantra prayer has been made for obtaining mind, intellect, thought, purpose, intelligence, sense, hearing and sight:

"manase cetase dhiya ākūtaya uṣa cīttaye |
matyai śrutāya cākṣase vidhema haviśa vayam ||⁴

In this context, Sarasvatī has been entreated to provide a man with vital airs and breath:

¹ Ibid., V. 9.7.
² Cf. AV., I. 1.4.
³ AV., XI. 8.32.
⁴ Ibid., VI. 41.1.
We often hear of the seven rṣis. They are interpreted variously. The Atharvaveda mentions them as residing in our body and representing various parts of the body, namely, the eyes, ears, nose and mouth. On the other hand, they also stand for the skin, eyes, ears, tongue, nose, mind and intellect. Thus, these seven rṣis are none else; but the seven organs of the human body. As long as they reside in the body of a man, he is alive and when they depart, he dies. They are, therefore, described as the protectors of the body. It is for this reason that they are taken to be the divine and are entreated to give us long life:

"mā no hāsīṣur rṣayo daivyā ye tanūpā nas tanvaś tanūjāh |
smārtīya mārtīṃ abhi naḥ sacadhvaṃ āyur dhatta prātaraṃ jīvase naḥ ||"¹

These seven rṣis are also treated as the seven energies, which are either the seven breaths, or intellect, mind and five sense organs. Sarasvatī appears to symbolise all these energies as she is described, to have removed with ghṛta the deficiency caused in the soul and body:

"yadā 'sāṣā vadato me vicuksbhe yad yācāmānasya carato jānan anu |
tad ātmanī tanvo me vīristam sarasvātī tadā prnaṃ ghṛtene ||"²

---

1 Ibid., VI.41.2.
2 Cf. Sṛpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, _op.cit._, Part. II, pp. 76-77 on _AV._, VI.41.
3 Ibid., V.41.3.
4 Cf. Whitney and Sṛpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, _ibid._, VII.59.2.
5 _AV._, VII.59.1.
Ghrita does not stand here merely for clarified butter, but it denotes life-energy. Sarasvatī infuses life and energy into the deficient body and soul.

5. **Sarasvatī and marriage:**

The Book XIV of the Atharvaveda contains two Sūktas, the first dealing with the marriage ceremony and the second devoting itself to the teachings for the bride. The first Sūkta treats of the marriage ceremony by way of describing the wedding of Śūryā. The ceremony of this immortal being sets a model for the wedding of the daughters of the mortals. Śūryā has been described as going to the house of her husband with her full bridal preparation:

```
cittir ā upabarhanam caksura abhy aśjanam |
dyaur bhūmih kosa āsīd yad ayat śūryā patim
```

The Sūkta then describes the chariot used in the marriage, the gifts, etc.

The second Sūkta undertakes to impart teachings for the bride. She is instructed to follow and serve her husband taking him as if he were Viṣṇu himself. We are also told that Sarasvatī and Sīniśālī grant offspring and favour with good fortune:

---

1 Cf. Griffith's note on ibid., XIV.1, p. 159, where he writes "The greater portion of Hymn I. is taken, with many transpositions and variations, from Rigveda X.85, which is itself a composite hymn and evidently one of the latest of that collection. Its main object is the ceremony of marriage in general, and more especially the wedding of Śūryā, the daughter of the Sun, who is regarded as the typical bride whose nuptial ceremonies are to be the pattern of marriages on earth".

2 Ibid., XIV, 1.6.

3 Ibid., XIV.1.10-12, 14, 16.

4 Ibid., XIV. 1.13.
"prati tiṣṭha virāḍ asī viṣṇur īve 'ha sarasvatī |
    sinīvāli praṇyatāṁ bhagasya sumatāv asat ||

The bride is directed to worship Agni at first, then Sarasvatī and lastly the fathers of the family:

"yadā gūrhapatyam asaparyait pūrvam agnīm vadhūr īyaṃ |
    adhā sarasvatyai nāri pīthbhaya ca namaskuru ||

She should worship gods sitting on the skin of the deer laid down on the grass. In this connection, it is worth noticing that a mantra reads "... prati bhūṣe'ha deviṁ", an expression variously interpreted by scholars. Some find in it a clear proof for the worship of the idols of gods. Thus, Bābū Avināśa, in his 'Vedic Culture', tries to establish the prescription of idol worship in the Vedas, and for the corroboration of his view, he also quotes the Rgveda, II. 24.10, and VIII. 1.5. If we were to accept such a view, the above expression would instruct the bride to decorate the idols of gods as it is done in the modern age. This would also lead us to suppose that the decoration of the idol of Sarasvatī was also prevalent in the Vedic age. But such a view is hardly tenable. The expression merely instructs Sūryā to worship gods. The idol worship was not in vogue in Vedic times. It is only in the Purāṇas that gods are idolised for the first time.

1 Ibid., XIV. 2.15; Griffith takes Sarasvatī as an adjective for the bride and writes: 'Sarasvatī: bride is complimentarily addressed as an incarnation of the Goddess of Fertility'.
2 Ibid., XIV. 2.20.
3 Ibid., XIV. 2.22-24.
4 Ibid., XIV. 2.25.
5 Cf. his views quoted by Srīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., Part IV, p. 53 on ibid., XIV. 2.
(6) **Sarasvatī and unity:**

One of the Sūktas of the *Atharvaveda* mentions unity, obviously as the result of love. If there is no mutual love and affection, there can be no unity. The feeling of love joins man's head with his heart in friendly bonds. The mind should control the emotions of the heart and the heart should soften the mind so as to pulsate with the noble feelings of love and compassion. Thus, they should work in unity.

Mind should also be under one's control. In one mantra, the deities like Mitra, Varuṇa, Sarasvatī, the centre of the earth as well as both of its ends are asked to bring unity to us:

```
Mahyam tvā mitrāvarūnau mahyam devī sarasvatī
Mahyam tvā madhyam bhūmya ubhāv antau samasyatam
```

Thus, the *Atharvaveda* preaches us unity and harmony.

7. **Sarasvatī and agriculture:**

The *Atharvaveda* associates Sarasvatī with agriculture (krṣi).

We should bear in mind that Sarasvatī is taken to be the presiding deity of trees, fruits, rice-fields and plants, which may be included in agriculture. Though the conception has been elaborately put forth in later mythology, its origin can be traced to the *Atharvaveda*. In accepting the deity of agriculture, Sarasvatī is taken as an earthly river. The neighbouring areas of the Sarasvatī river are described to be very fertile, abounding in the yield of grains, particularly for making

---

3 Charles Coleman, *op.cit.*, 9-10.
oblations to gods because of their piousness. The fields on its banks were ploughed by gods for the crop of barley. Indra is portrayed as the lord of the plough (śīrstrapatiḥ) and the Maruts as the farmers (kīnāśaḥ):

"devā imān madhunā sāmyuktāṃ yavaṃ sarasvatyām adhī maṅūv acarkṛṣuḥ
dhra āṣit śīrstrapatiḥ sātakratuḥ kīnāśa āṣan marutah sudānavaḥ ||"¹

Thus, the Sarasvatī river, which was pious not only to men; but also to gods, was the best river promoting agriculture. Though a terrestrial river, gods had close association with it and, thus, divinity was attached to it, too. The instance of Indra and the Maruts as agriculturists shows the greatness and divine message for the occupation of cultivation.² Agriculture depends on water – water particularly obtained in the form of rain, without which no harvest is possible. Sarasvatī, as the name itself suggests,³ abounds in water. She is also associated with the clouds. In a mantra, she is requested to provide water from her clouds so as to save kṛṣī from burning in the scorching heat of the sun as well as not to shatter it with the thunder of the clouds.⁴

8. The trinity of goddesses:

The conception of the trinity of the goddesses Sarasvatī, Iḍā and Bhāratī is also found in the Atharvaveda. At one place, Sarasvatī

---

1 AV., VI.30.1.
3 Śripāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, op.cit., Part III, p. 45 on ibid., VII.12.
4 Ibid., VII.12.1.
has been mentioned with Bhārati and Idā, all described as 'the three goddesses' (tīsraḥ devīḥ). In another mantra, we find the ambiguous expression 'tīsraḥ sarasvatīḥ', (the three Sarasvatīs'), variously interpreted by scholars. Sāyana explains it as: "tīsraḥ trisankhyākāḥ sarasvatīḥ sarasvatīyas trayīrupāḥ. yadvā idā sarasvatī bhārati 'tī tīsraḥ devyah sāhacyāt sarasvatīya ucyante". Thus, according to him, 'tīsraḥ sarasvatīḥ' denotes the three forms of Sarasvatī; or, the goddesses Sarasvatī, Bhārati and Idā are collectively called by the name of Sarasvatī because of their close association. The Petersburg Lexicon takes it to suggest "three rivers named Sarasvatī or perhaps simply three rivers in general." Griffith takes it to mean "Three Sarasvatīs: the multiplication is analogous to that of the three heavens and three earths." Sripāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara understands the above expression as "three Sarasvatīs as goddesses of learning" and gives them the name of mātrabhūmi, mātrbhāṣā and mātrṣabhyaṭā. According to him, Bhārati is mātrabhūmi who feeds up all; Idā is mātrbhāṣā who inspires man to perform sacrifice; and Sarasvatī is mātrṣabhyaṭā, who incites man to perform good deeds.

1 Ibid., V.12.8.
2 Ibid., VI.100.1.
4 Cf. Max Müller, op.cit., p. 512.
5 Griffith's f.n. on AV, VI. 100.1.
6 Sripāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara on Ibid., VI.100.1.
CHAPTER V

SARASVATĪ IN THE BRĀHMAṆĀS
Chapter - V

SARASVATI IN THE BRAHMANAS

1. Vāk and her introduction:

The conception of speech has been put forward in the post-Vedic period on scientific basis. Syllable (aṣṭara), word (sūbda), sentence (vākyā) and literature (sāhitya) and even nāda (dhvanī), these all come under the scope of speech. Speech is known as Vāk, vānī and girā. In the Ṛgveda, Vāk denotes speech, while in later period, Vāk, vānī and girā are the words for it. There is divergence of opinion regarding its origin. According to one view, its origin is human and right from its origin, has been coming down from generation to generation. Contrary to it, one view regards it as a divine workmanship.¹

Speech evolves in the form of language. Linguists offer various theories about the origin of language, and according to one² of these, language has been classified mainly into two groups: (i) Language as created ready-made by God; and (ii) Language as the result of evolution. The first view regards language as descended to human mind from the heaven as God's grace to human beings as distinguished from animals; but the second view refutes it and accepts the existence of language by

---

way of evolution. The viewpoint of our religious scriptures favours
the first view. We will see it in the Rgveda and the Brähmanas.

(i) The Rgvedic account:

Various aspects of Sarasvatī, as portrayed in the Rgveda, the
Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda, have been discussed in the previous
chapters. In the Rgveda (X.71), Vāk herself comes forward to disclose
her identity. In the first four of the eleven mantras of this Sūkta,
there is the description of the creation of Vāk. In one of the mantras,
it is said that Brhaspati is the first speech, and from him, there took
origin other words for other objects, and these words, which are speech,
are impelled by Sarasvatī herself:

"brhaspate prathamam vāco agram yat praivrata nāmadheyam dadhānah  
yad eṣām āśreṣṭham yad aripram āṣīt preṇā tad eṣām nihitaṁ guhāvih \n1"

The obvious meaning here is that Brhaspati was the first to create
Vāk; and Sarasvatī who is also Vāk is, thus, the creation of Brhaspati.
In the second mantra, Vāk is said to have been created by wisemen:
"yatra dhīrā manasā vācam akrat". 2 Another mantra reveals to us how
speech was acquired for worldly use. There, it is mentioned that wisemen
secured speech by dint of sacrifice. But the credit for her procurement
does not go only to wisemen. It were the rṣis, who first procured
speech and later on, transferred it to wisemen for its wide use:

1 RV., X.71.1; see also Sāyana's com. thereon.
2 Ibid., X.71.2.
"yajñena vàcaḥ padavīyaṁ āyan tāṁ anv avindan āṇisu praviṣṭām |
tāṁ ābhṛtyā vy adadhuh purutrā tāṁ sapta rebha abhi sam navante ||"¹

By this Ṛgvedic account, it is evident that Vāk is divine, i.e.,
she has a divine origin. The āṇis brought her to wisemen and the
latter, then, studied her in the form of knowledge, or Veda, and she,
was, thus, made for common man. ² In the following mantra, there is the
revealing of Vāk:

"uta tvah pasyam na dadarsa vàcēm uta tvah śravam na śrṇoty enām t
uto tv asmai tanvam ? vi saśre śye 'va patya usati suvāṣāh ||"³

(ii) The Brāhmaṇical account:

The Brāhmaṇas often speak of the divinity of Vāk. Her divinity
is obvious enough as she is associated with gods. She gave birth to
the Vedas and contains the entire universe within herself:

"vācā vai vedāh sandhīyante vàcā chandāmsi ... vàcā sarvāṇi"⁴

Vāk is also described as mother and breath as her son:

"... våg vai mātā prāṇah putrah"⁵

From this, we can deduce that Vāk is so powerful that she has
all things within her and she is capable of producing the universe. But
this universe cannot be taken as directly evolved from Vāk. In this
respect, she is closely related to Prajāpati, who creates the universe.

¹ Ibid., X. 71.3.
² Cf., Wilson's note on ibid., X. 71.3.
³ Ibid., X. 71.4.
⁴ AA., III.1.6.
⁵ Ibid., III.1.6.
Brhaspati is the first to create Vāk and is also the lord of Vāk. From the following evidences, it is clear that Brhaspati and Prajāpati are identical in the capacity of her lords in connection with creation.

Brhaspati is supposed to be the lord of verses; and in the Upanisads, he is generally called Brahman as presiding over the verses. Vācaspati, and is the lord of Vāk, or speech is widely used in the Brāhmaṇas. This term is also a synonony with Brhaspati, Brahmanaspati and Brahman.

Vāk is sometimes identified with waters, the primeval principle for the creation of the universe. While desirous of creation, Prajāpati first of all created waters wherefrom other things were created. Vāk, thus, represents waters and is also the will of the Creator, as his will is considered as expressed in speech (Vāk).

Sometimes Vāk is identified with Prajāpati, Visvakarman, the whole world, and Indra. According to a legend about creation recorded in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Prajāpati, desirous of creation, created Vāk (speech) out of his mind and from her, he created waters. In this connection, a sexual association between them is maintained. In the Kāthaka-Upanisad, this point has been expressed as follows:

"Prajāpati was this universe. Vāch was a second to him. He associated sexually with her; she became pregnant; she departed from

---

him; she produced these creatures; she again entered into Prajāpati.  

Prajāpati is the source of creation and Vāk, as one of the five elements for creation, stands for the greatness of Prajāpati.

2. The legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas:

In the Brāhmaṇas, we have an interesting legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas. Before entering into the details of the legend, let us see what the Gandharvas stand for.

It is difficult to ascertain the nature and the character of the Gandharvas. They appear not only in the Brāhmaṇas as early as the Rgveda, where they are mentioned both in singular and plural. They were deprived of the draught of the Soma as a punishment; for since they had allowed Visvāvasu to steal it. They seem to stand parallel to the Apsarases. The Apsarases are associated with waters of divine character (divyāḥ āpah). They are identified with the spirit of waters. Water is held to be their original abode. The "dominant trait in the character of the Apsarases, the original water-spirits, is their significant relation with āpah, the aerial waters, and consequently their sway over human mind, a later development to link mind with the deities connected with waters." Similarly, the Gandharvas are also associated with waters, who reside in the sky and know all the secret of the firmament.

1 Cf. ibid., p. 330.
3 RV., I.163.2; IX.83.4; 8512; X.10.4;85.40-41;123.4.7;139.5-6; 177.2.
4 Ibid., IX.113.3.
6 Ibid., p. 66.
and heaven. Because of their association with the sky, they are thought capable of generating waters from there.\(^1\) The association of the Gandharvas with divine waters brings them nearer to Vāk, wherefrom Prajāpati, being desirous of creation, generated waters.\(^2\) Thus, both Vāk and the Gandharvas generate waters and, therefore, are at this point similar in nature. Vāk, the Gandharvas and the Apsarases are related to each other. Vāk is held to be the mother of emotions, symbolised by the Gandharvas. She is also the creator of the Apsarases. "She is", as Danielou rightly observes, "the mother of the emotions, pictured as the Fragrances or the celestial musicians (gandharva). She gives birth to the uncreated potentialities, represented as celestial dancers, the water-nymphs (apsaras)."\(^3\)

Gandharvas are described as having a great liking for fragrance. They are also said to guard the Soma and, sometimes, to have a monopoly over it. The Brāhmanas point to their affiliation with the human embryo as well as to their ardent love for unmarried girls.\(^4\) In the post-Brāhmanic mythology, they have a differed position. They are represented as the excellent celestial musicians, playing on lute (vīnā). To them, the secrets of music are opened.\(^5\) Likewise, Sarasvatī is also represented, particularly in the mythology to hold vīnā in one of her hands and to produce song thereby.\(^6\) Through his musical instrument, a musician

---

1 Alain Danielou, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 305.
3 Alain Danielou, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 260.
4 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 306.
5 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 306.
6 See \textit{infra.}, p. 176.
expresses his emotions and arouses the emotions of his audience. Sarasvati, too, while playing on Vīnā, manifests emotions and, therefore, she is aptly held to be the mother of emotions. Music and emotions, thus, have close association. Emotions are represented by the Gandharvas, as they are devoted to music and are pictured as playing on Vīnā. Thus, Vāk (Sarasvati) and the Gandharvas are closely related to each other.

The legend of Vāk and the Gandharvas, opens with the mention of the Soma. The same legend occurs, with a slight difference, in the Yajurveda, with particular reference to the Soma, Indra, Nanucī, Sarasvati and the Asvins. ¹ The Brāhmanas appear to have borrowed the theme therefrom, as is obvious from the statement that Indra's Soma was stolen and concealed in waters by the Gandharvas: "gandharvā ha vā indrasya somam apsu pratyāyitā gopāyanti ta uha strikāṁs te hāｒṣa manāṁi kurvate".² But they are otherwise portrayed as guarding the Soma.³ There is much confusion about the theft of the Soma. Somehow it fell into the sole possession of the Gandharvas; and gods could get it back only through purchase. It is termed 'Somakraya', 'the purchase of the Soma'.⁴ The elaborate description of this legend occurs in the Aitareya and the Satapatha Brāhmaṇas.

¹ Cf. RV., X.33-34; RV., X.131.4-5; see also Max Müller, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XLII, p. 328; J. Muir, op.cit., p. 94.
² Sā. B., XII.3.
³ B.R. Sharma, op.cit., p. 60.
The legend in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa:

In the Brāhmaṇas, Vāk turns into a woman of her own accord. It is evident by the following observation. The Gandharvas are described as having a great longing for women. Vāk is the wife of gods. The Soma was with the Gandharvas, which added immensely to the anxiety of gods. Consequently, they along with seers thought out a plan to get the Soma back from the Gandharvas. Meanwhile, Vāk intervened and revealed that the Gandharvas were the lovers of women. She offered herself for assuming the form of a woman, and approached them for purchasing the Soma. The gods declined to accept it; for without her, they could not sustain themselves. Vāk promised them to come to them again after the end was accomplished. Gods accepted it. The Soma was, thus, purchased from the Gandharvas by Vāk:

"soma vai rājā gandharvesv āsīt tam devās ca rṣayas ca
'bhyadhāyān katham ayam asmān somo rājā nacched iti sā
vāg abravit strikāmā vai gandharvā mayaś va striyā
bhūtāyā paṇadhvas iti ne 'tī devā abruvan katham vayam
tvad xe syāme 'tī sā bravit kriṇitaś 'va yarhi vāva vo
mayā 'rtho bhavitā tarhy eva vo 'ham punar āgantā 'sūf 'tī tathe
'tī tayā mahānāgnyā bhūtāyā somām rājānam akrīṇam")

The Soma was stolen by the Gandharva Visvāvasu and guarded by the Gandharvas Svān and Bhrāji. 2

---

1 AB., I.27.
2 Cf. ibid., I.27; and also com. of Śāyana thereon.
(II) The legend in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa:

In this Brāhmaṇa, the above legend has been put forth elaborately. The legend runs thus: The Soma was in the heaven. The gods are desirous of performing the Soma sacrifice on the earth. But it was not possible in the absence of the Soma. They, therefore, created two illusions, Suparnā and Kadrū for bringing the Soma. Suparnā and Kadrū quarrelled with each other, and the latter defeated the former. Consequently, Suparnā had to fetch the Soma. For this purpose, she turned herself into metres; and of them, Gāyatrī, the goddess of metres, brought the Soma.¹

Gāyatrī, assuming the form of bird, flew to the heaven in order to bring the Soma.² While on her way back, the Gandharva Vīśvēvasu interrupted her and the Gandharvas robbed her of the Soma. The unexpected delay in Gāyatrī's bringing the Soma caused anxiety to the gods. They themselves thought that the sole reason of it should lie in the snatching away of the Soma by the Gandharvas.³ With no hopes for getting it, they thought it better to send someone again for fetching it. As the Gandharvas were fond of women, they decided to send Vāk to them in order to take the Soma back.⁴

There is a difference in the above two versions of the legend.

1 SB., III.2.4.1; and Śāyana's com. thereon.
2 Śāyana's com. on ibid., III.2.4.2; "suparṣayā mirmi 'gāyatrī' - chandadevaṁ paksirūpena".
3 Ibid., III. 2.4.2.
4 Ibid., III. 2.4.3.
According to the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, it is Vāk who took initiative. She revealed to gods the fact that the Gandharvas were fond of women and, therefore, offered herself for bringing the Soma from them. She assured gods to come back to them with the Soma. According to the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, gods already knew the nature of the Gandharvas that they were fond of women and they, therefore, sent her to them. She succeeds in getting the Soma from the Gandharvas; but, according to the version of the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, while she was returning with it, they pursued her and asked gods to offer her to them in exchange of the Soma. The gods agreed on it with the condition that if Vāk wanted to come back to them, the Gandharvas should not force her to rejoin themselves against her will. Consequently, both gods and the Gandharvas began to woo her. The Gandharvas recited the Veda and gods played on a lute in order to win over her. Gods were victorious, and consequently, the Gandharvas had to lose the Soma as well as Vāk. In the classical literature, Vāk (as Sarasvatī) is held to be the patroness of arts and sciences, and is invoked as a Muse. Her association with arts and sciences goes back to the Brāhmaṇas, where she is described to have been pleased by gods by playing on a lute, which shows that she had a great liking for music.

1 AB., I.27.
2 SB., III. 2.4.4.
3 Ibid., III. 2.4.5.
4 Ibid., III. 2.4.6-7.
5 John Dowson, op.cit., p. 204.
6 James Hastings, op.cit., p. 605.
3. Some important epithets of Sarasvatī:

In the Brāhmaṇas, there are only a few epithets ascribed to Sarasvatī. Of them, the following are worth noticing:

1) **Vaisāmbhalyā**:

Of the Brāhmaṇas and the Āranyakas, only the Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa uses this epithet only once. 1 Sayana in his Bhāṣya, explains it as:

> "visvāṃ prajānāṁ bharanāṁ poṣanāṁ visāmbhalaṁ tatkartum kṣamā vaisām-
> bhalyā tādrī ..." 2

Accordingly, 'vaisāmbhalyā' is one, who brings up the whole prajā. This is obviously a compound word from vaisām + bhalyā. 'Vaisām' seems to be from √vis, which has various meanings: "a man, who settles down on or occupies the soil, an agriculturist, a merchant, a man of the third or agricultural caste (= vaisya, q.v.); a man in general; people." 3

Similarly, 'bhalyā' seems to be the cognate of 'bharā' from/bhṛ 'to bear' or 'to support'. 4 Vaisāmbhalyā, in this context, seems to be a popular epithet of Sarasvatī ascribed in accordance to her nature. It points to Sarasvatī as a river. The Sarasvatī is so called; because it brings up through its nourishing waters the persons living upon agriculture or living in its neighbourhood. It is also called giver of food (vaijīnīvatī). 5

Before using these epithets, the passage speaks very highly of

1 **TB.**, II. 5.8.6.
2 Cf. his com. on ibid., II. 5.8.6.
3 Cf. Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 941.
4 Cf. Vaman Shivram Apte, op.cit., p. 809.
5 **TB.**, II.5.8.6 (used in the vocative as 'vaijīnīvatī'); see also : supra., pp. 60-71.
waters for their being medicine, as they were, for the world (viśva-bheṣjīṁ).¹ Then, the epithets 'vājiniṁati' and 'vaisāmbhalyā', occur which present the Sarasvatī as possessed of (and, thus, providing) food and nourishment to the world.² The honey-like sweet waters of the Sarasvatī river cause abundant milk in cows³ and vigour in horses.⁴ Sarasvatī in the capacity of Vāk is also the giver of nourishment or strength (puṣṭī), which includes cattle, etc.⁵ Sarasvatī, the river or the goddess, may be called 'vaisāmbhalyā' on account of bringing up or nourishing people through the nourishment or strength provided to the cattle.

(ii) Satyavāk:

In the Rgveda, Sarasvatī is described as 'codayiṁtī sūnrtānām',⁶ 'impelling excellent (i.e., sweet and pleasing) and true speeches.

Similarly, in the Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa, she is called 'satyavāk', 'possessed of true speech'.⁷

¹ TO., II. 5.8.6.  
² Cf. Sāyaṇa's com. on ibid., II. 5.8.6, "he sarasvatī. madfrūpe. te tvadīyāsv aspe yan madhu madhuryam vidyate tathō gosv asveṣu madhuran kārōn samicam vakanasāmarthyam ca yad vidyate he vājiniṁati. annasamṛddhyutke. sarasvatī. ten sarveṣa me mukheṃ anugdhi vaktreṇ alankṛtaṃ kuru".  
³ See supra., pp. 110-112.  
⁴ Cf. the sense of 'vājiniṁati' as derived by Geldner from RV., VII. 96.3.  
⁵ Sm., III. 1.4.14, "... vāg vai sarasvatī vāgyajñah sā 'syai sama tmaṇdevatā 'dhitā bhavati vvākpasavo vai puṣṭī puṣṭīr vai puṣṭī puṣṭiḥ paśavah paśavo hi yajñas te ..."  
⁶ RV., I.3.11.  
⁷ TO., II. 5.4.6, "... pra te mahe sarasvatī subhage vājiniṁati satyavāce bhare matim. idam te havyam ghṛtavat sarasvatī. satya-vāce prabhareṇā havyāsi ..."
Sri Mādhava explains its dative form 'satyavāc' as 'anṛtavākyaśahitāyai'. This indicates that Sarasvatī in the capacity of Vāk is all truth. Being free from falsehood, she is described in the Ārgveda itself as illuminating holy thoughts: "cetanti sumatiṇām".

(iii) Sumrāḍkā:

The epithet 'sumrāḍkā' occurring in the Taṅtirīya-Brāhmaṇa and the Taṅtirīya-Āranyaka, has the same implication as 'mayobhūh' used for Sarasvatī in the Ārgveda and interpreted by Śāyāna as 'sukhotpādikā' and 'sukhasya bhāvayitri'.

This word occurs in dative form in the Taṅtirīya-Brāhmaṇa as an adjective of Adīti: "adityai svāhā 'dityai mahyai svāhā 'dityai sumrāḍkāyai svāhe 'ty āha." Here, 'sumrāḍkā' means 'liberal'. Adīti the mother of gods, is naturally liberal towards her progeny. The term occurs several times in the Taṅtirīya-Āranyaka. Śāyāna explains it as: 'suṣṭhu sukhahetuh' and 'suṣṭhu sukhakari'. Sarasvatī as Iḍā provides peace and prosperity and gives rich gifts to the people. Thus, she brings

1 Taṅtirīya-Brāhmaṇa. with the commentary of Bhāṭṭa Bhāskara Miśra, supplemented with Śāyāna's Astaka II (Mysore, 1921), p. 246.
2 RV., I.3.11.
3 Ibid., I.13.9; V.5.8.
4 His com. on Ibid., I.13.9.
5 His com. on Ibid., V.5.8.
6 Tr., III.8.11.2.
7 TĀ., I.1.3, 21.3, 31.6; IV.42.1.
8 His com. on Ibid., I.1.3.
9 His com. on Ibid., IV.42.1.
comfort and happiness to the people. It is this nature of Sarasvatī, which has been pointed out by Śāyāna in his interpretation of the word 'sumṛdikā' in the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka. 'Sumṛdikā' may also mean 'having good soil (sumrd)', i.e., the land having good (fertile) soil. It should be borne in mind that the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka describes Sarasvatī as the land with water: "sarasyati saroyuktabhūmirīpa īṣṭake". Sarasvatī as 'sumṛdikā' would, thus, be the land with good (fertile) soil. As the fertile land yields rich harvest and, thus, prosperity, Sarasvatī also provides prosperity. She has been requested to be 'śivā', providing meal and 'śantamā', 'providing peace or subduing troubles and calamities'.

In addition to the above epithets, there are still others, 'subhaga', 'vājinīvatī', 'pāvakā', etc., which we have already discussed.

4. Sarasvatī and Sarasvān:

Much has been said about Sarasvān earlier and his relationship with Sarasvatī has been pointed out. His relationship with Sarasvatī is brought out by the terms Sarasvātvān and Bhāratīvān used for him.

1 Cf. ibid., I.1.3, and Śāyāna's com. thereon.
2 Cf. ibid., IV.42.1, and Śāyāna's com. thereon, "... he sarasyati tvam no 'smān prati śivā 'nukūla śantamā 'tisayena sarvopadra- vaśamanī sumṛdikā suṣṭhu sukhakarī ca bhava".
3 Tīrtham, II. 5.4.6.
4 Ibid., II. 5.4.6; 8.6.
5 Ibid., II. 4.3.1.
6 Vide supra., pp. 61, 69-73.
7 Vide supra., pp. 91-94, 107-110.
According to the *Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, Sarasvān represents manas (mano vai sarasvān) and Sarasvatī, Vāk (vāk sarasvatī). It also speaks of two Sārasvatas as two fountains (sārasvatau tva 'tsau'). The identification of Sarvasvān and Sarasvatī with manas and Vāk respectively has been asserted in another Kānda in clear terms: "... manas' cai 'vā 'syā vāk ca "ghārau sarasvāns ca sarasvatī ca savvidyān manas' cai "va me vāk ca "ghārau sarasvāns ca sarasvatī ce 'ti".2

Thus, manas and Vāk are brought into close relation with each other. To quote Śāyāna: "manas' cai 've 'tyādi. 'asya' yajusārārārasya imau 'āghārau' manovēgrāpau jañātevyau. tau kramena 'sarasvāms ca sarasvatī ca' etad dravātmakau bhavatah. adhyātmakaṁ tayor upāsanam āha. savidyād iti. mama manas' ca vāk ca sarasvatsarasvatārūpāv āghārāv iti jñānyād ity arthāh."3

The identification and relation of manas and Vāk may be understood differently. Mind (manas) is supposed to be equally filled with 'rasa' and 'bala' (rasabalasamamātrāvacchāna). During this state of equilibrium, everything is in tranquil state and hence no effect; but when there is any stress such as the desire for expression an idea, it turns into breath and when the stress is acute, it turns into Vāk. Thus, even on this psychological ground, there is a close relationship between manas and Vāk, i.e., mind and speech,4 symbolically represented by Sarvasvān and Sarasvatī.

1 SB., VII. 5.1.31.
2 Ibid., XI. 2.6.3.
3 His com. on Ibid., XI. 2.6.3.
In the Altareya-Brähmana, Sarasvān is described as Sarasvatīvān and Bhūrati vān and has been asked to accept the parivāpa, being poured in the sacrifice. Sarasvātī has been invited repeatedly to the sacrifice and as Vāk has also been identified with it: As having Sarasvatī, i.e., Vāk or speech, Sarasvān is called Sarasvatīvān; and as having Bhūrati, i.e., prāna or breath, which sustains the body, he is described as Bhūrati vān.

5. Vāk and the problems concerning her in the Brāhmaṇas:

(i) The way through which Sarasvātī went to be identified with speech:

Originally a terrestrial river, the Sarasvātī was later on ascribed with divine character on account of the sanctity of its waters and was conceived as Vāk (speech) and then as the goddess of speech (Vāgdevī).

The pious waters of the Sarasvātī river infused life into the views of the people residing along its banks and this fresh life was the cause of the holy speech in the form of sacred hymns, which led them to identify the river with speech or conceive it as the goddess of speech. The identification of the Sarasvātī river with Vāk is endorsed by the fact that Vāk is described to reside in the midst of Kuru-Pāṅcālas:

"tasmād atro ātaraḥ hi vāg vag vātati kurupaṅcālataḥ vāgasya dhy esa ..."
The Vāk, thus, described could only be the Sarasvatī river flowing in
the Kuru-Paṇcāla region. Sarasvatī, or Vāk is also connected with the
Soma;¹ and for this reason Sarasvatī is called 'aṃśumatī', full of the
Soma. "... Soma, frightened by Vṛtra, fled to the Aṃśumatī, flowing
in the Kurukṣetra region. He settled there and gods too settled
there along with him. They used Soma, and thereby evolved Soma-
sacrifices."²

The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa informs us that waters of the Sarasvatī
were used for consecration. It is also said that the consecration was
done with speech,³ i.e., the Sarasvatī river. Sacrifices were performed
on the banks of the Sarasvatī river and its blessings were prayed for
their success. Then, the river was implored for the holy speech and
was conceived as Vāk and furthermore as the goddess of speech.

From the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa, we come to know that the mantras
chanted in the sacrifice are taken to be Vāk and owing to the predominance
of the chanting of the mantras, the sacrifice itself has been identified
with Vāk.⁴ On account of the constant recitation of the mantras in
honour of gods associated with the sacrifice, the sacrifice itself was

¹ Stūra., PP.132-133.
² Sūryakānta, op.cit., p. 115.
³ Śā., V.3.4.3, 5.8.
⁴ Ibid., III. 1.4.9, 14, etc.
identified with gods. There is no distinction and, thus, the full identification is maintained, when consequently, the sacrifice (yajña) has been identified with Wāk.

(ii) The cosmogonical Vāk legend in the Brāhmaṇas:

While discussing the various implications of 'saptasvāsa' as an epithet of Sarasvatī, we have pointed out that this word also denotes, according to Śāyāna and others, the seven-metres - Gāyatrī, etc. Of the seven metres, Gāyatrī, Trṣṭup and Jagatī have special importance in connection with cosmology. There is a beautiful story about Gāyatrī. Gāyatrī is said to have eight syllables (akṣaras), which are the result of the kṣaraṇa vyāpāra done in eight times by Prajāpati, while he was desirous of creation. In the beginning, Prajāpati was alone. So he had a desire to reproduce himself. For this purpose, he practised penance; and by dint of it, waters were produced. Waters asked him about their use. He said, "you should be heated"; and as a result, they were heated and foam was produced out of them. Similarly, the foam was heated and the clay was produced. When clay was heated, sand was

1 Cf. Gop.B., II.1.12, "sarvā devatā visāur yajño devatās caiva yajām ..."; TB., I. 3.4.5, "... ato prajāpatāv eva yajñam pratisthāpayati, prajāpatir hi vāk".
2 SB., III. 1.4.9, 14, etc.
3 Vide supra., pp. 49-51.
4 SB., VI. 1.3.1.
5 Ibid., VI. 1.3.2.
6 Ibid., VI. 1.3.3.
produced. Similarly from sand, there resulted pebble; from pebble, the stone; from stone, metal ore; and in the last, gold was produced.

This is the kṣaraṇa-vyāpāra of Prajāpati and each of his vyāpāras or kṣaraṇas implies one aksāra or syllable, obtained by Gāyatrī. Thus, his eight kṣaraṇa-vyāpāras imply eight aksāras or syllables of Gāyatrī. In this way the eight syllabled Gāyatrī came into existence.

Vāk has been held to have produced this universe. Gāyatrī, too, does the same work. She has played a vital role in the creation of the universe in association with Prajāpati. Sarasvati in her capacity of being 'trisadhastha', represents the three worlds, earth, firmament and heaven. Gāyatrī is also called 'tripadā' and the legend of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa speaks of her as having been produced by Prajāpati. Prajāpati created the three worlds, the earth, space and the heaven, represented by the three padas of Gāyatrī. The metre Gāyatrī represents Sarasvati, who in her different capacities, represents different regions. Iḍā represents the earth; Sarasvatī the mid-region; and Bhārati, the heaven.

In the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, Vāk is accepted as the progeny of Prajāpati. It is Prajāpati, who, in the later literature, has been

1 Ibid., VI. 1.3.4.
2 Ibid., VI. 1.3.5.
3 Ibid., VI. 1.3.6.
4 Cf. RV., VI. 61.12; see also supra., p. 52.
5 AB., XX.
6 See supra., pp. 88-90.
7 AB., XX.
identified with Brahmā, the Creator. The seed of this identification is available in the Aitareya-Brahmana,¹ where Gayatri is his kṣaraṇa and vyāhṛtis are bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ and svāḥ, and these vyāhṛtis are identified with the three letters constituting OM, the very symbol of Brahma. The identification of Prajāpati with metres² is carried out in this way. The cosmogonical aspect of Vāk is more obvious, when metre has been identified with mind, and mind with Prajāpati. Metre is taken to represent various elements.³

Thus, there is a close affinity among Prajāpati, Vāk and metre. Prajāpati is the first unborn; and Vāk, the second after him. He has every control over Vāk for creation and it is probably for this reason that he is called Vācaspati, the Lord of speech.⁴ The epithets Ilāspati, Vācaspati and Brahmaṇaspati⁵ speak of his lordship over Vāk. Vāk is a vital force in creation, a fact apparent enough from the acceptance of metres as indriyas.⁶

(iii) The identification of Vāk with Sarasvatī:

It is only in the Brāhmaṇa literature that the identification of Vāk and Sarasvatī is asserted in clear and indubious terms. The following lines will show this identification in the various Brāhmaṇas.

¹ Cf. SB., VI. 2.1.30.
² Cf., Satapatha-Brahmana, with the Hindi commentary Ratnadīpikā by Pt. Gāndā Prasāda Upādhyāya, Vol.I (New Delhi, 1967), pp.113-114 (in reference to SB., VIII.5.2.6, and XX., XV.4.5).
³ Cf. SB., III. 1.3.22; V.1.1.16.
⁴ BD., III. 71.
⁵ Th., II. 6.18.1, 3, "... gayatri chanda indriyam ... uṣmik chanda indriyam"; AB., II.6.18.3, "... triṣṭup chanda indriyam ... jagati chanda ihe 'ndriyam".
(a) The Satapatha-Brahmana:

This Brahmana has a greater number of references than others in this regard. In the consecration ceremony, the sprinkling of waters of the Sarasvati is thought as if it were done with speech (Vāk).\(^1\) This Brahmana further stresses that Sarasvati is speech and speech itself is sacrifice.\(^2\) Since Sarasvati is speech, Prajapati is described to have strengthened himself and also to make her his progeny.\(^3\) In the Rgveda,\(^4\) we find Vāk as proclaiming herself to be the daughter of a rṣi, and, thus, she comes into the picture as a lady. We have no mention of the name of Sarasvati there; but Vāk can be none other than Sarasvati as Vāk and Vāk as the daughter of the rṣi is in all probability the speech sprung from his mouth. The Satapatha-Brahmana,\(^5\) too, presents Sarasvati as a lady and she is the same as Vāk.

In the Yajurveda,\(^6\) Vāk is taken to be the controlling power of Sarasvati. In the Satapatha-Brahmana,\(^7\) Sarasvati is first taken to be Vāk and then Vāk to be her controlling power, probably discretion born of knowledge. Sarasvati or Vāk is also identified with mind (manas), the abode of all ideas before they are expressed through speech and heard by ears.\(^8\) Thus, in her latent form, speech is mind. Elsewhere:

---

1 Cf. ŚB., V.3.4.3; 5.8.
2 Ibid., III. 1.4.9, 14.
3 Ibid., III. 9.1.7.
4 RV., X.71.
5 ŚB., IV.2.5.14, 6.3.3.
6 YY., IX. 30.
7 ŚB., V. 2.2.13, 14.
8 Cf. Ibid., XII. 9.1.13.
Sarasvān is identified with mind and Sarasvatī with Vāk: "sārāsvatān tvo 'tsau prāvatām iti mano vai sārāsvān vāk sarasvaty etau." Thus, Sarasvatī and Sarasvān combinedly form the complete Vāk.

(b) The Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa:

The identification of Sarasvatī with Vāk is clearly asserted in the Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa in the statement that one who worships Sarasvatī, pleases Vāk; for Vāk is Sarasvatī: "atha yat sārāsvatīṁ yajati, vāg vai sarasvatī, vācām eva tena prīṇāti".

(c) The Tāndya-Mahābrāhmaṇa:

At the outset of this chapter, we have noted that post-Vedic conception of Vāk includes in Sarasvatī, the conception of varṇa, akṣara, pada, vākya and dhvani. Her identification with Vāk and also with dhvani exists in the Brāhmaṇas. Identifying Sarasvatī with Vāk, the Tāndya-Brāhmaṇa states: "vāg vai sarasvatī vāg vairūpam vairūpam eva 'smai tayā yunakti". Here Sarasvatī is taken to be śabdātmikā Vāk, i.e., the speech in the form of sound (śabda or dhvani). The word 'vairūpam' suggests the various forms of speech; and 'vairūpam' the object denoted by speech.

(d) The Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa:

In the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, Sarasvatī is said to be Vāk and then

---
1 Ibid., VII.5.1.31; XI.2.4.9, 6.3.
2 Cop B., II.20.
3 See supra., p. 128.
4 Tā B., XVI. 5.16.
5 Cf. Sāyana on the above, "... vāk śabdātmikā hi sarasvatī. vairūpaḥ ca viksaṁśītumāṃ".
6 AB., III. 37.
'pāvīravī', a term already used for Sarasvatī in the Rgveda. One who worships 'pāvīravī' invokes Sarasvatī, too, at the same time, because of her sanctifying nature, Sarasvatī, the goddess of speech, is called pāvīravī.

(e) The Aitareya-Āranyaka:

In the Rgveda, Sarasvatī is called 'dhiyāvasuh', and 'pāvākā'. The Aitareya-Brahmana, too, uses these terms; but it boldly presents them as the synonyms for Vāk, thus, confirming the identification of Sarasvatī with Vāk: "pāvākā nah sarasvatī yajñām vaṣṭu dhiyāvasur iti vāg vai dhiyāvasuh".

(f) The Sāmkhyāyaṇa-Brahmana:

This Brahmana identifies Sarasvatī with speech and says that on the occasion of 'dārsapaurṇamāsika', one who worships Sarasvatī, pleases Vāk (speech); because Sarasvatī is Vāk: "yat sarasvatīṁ yajati vāg vai sarasvatī vācam eva tat ānāty atha".

(g) The Taittelīuya-Brahmana:

This Brahmana also refers to Sarasvatī. In this Brahmana, we also find the identification of Prajāpati who is, according to the Satapatha-Brahmana, possessed of prānas (breaths) and Vāk with the

1 See supra., pp. 58-60.
2 Cf. Sāyana on AB., III.37, "ye 'yam vāgahāmānīnī 'sarasvatī' devatā sai 'va 'pāvasya' sodhanasya hetuvat 'pāvīravī' tatpāthena 'vāci eva' devatāyām mantrarūpam 'vācam' sthāpayati".
3 RV., I.3.10; see supra., pp. 42-43, 72-73.
4 AA., I.14.
5 ŚāB., V. 2.
6 TB., I.3.4.5; III.8.11.2.
7 Cf. Satapatha-Brahmana with the Hindi-Vijñānabhaṣya, Part II, p. 1353.
sacrifice and Vāk. As Vāk is the manifestation of prāṇas, Vāk, i.e.,
Sarasvati is considered superior to the prāṇas: "vāg vai sarasvatī.
tasmāt prāṇāmāṃ vāg uttamā".

In the classical literature, 'girā' (from 'gir', capable to
assume a human voice) is taken to be one of the names of, or synonyms
for Sarasvatī, she being understood as the spoken form of Vāk (speech).
The identification of Sarasvatī with the human voice can be traced back
to the Brāhmaṇas, where she has been expressly called 'jihvā', i.e.,
tongue, a physical organ of speech, and the word Vēc or Vāk is used for
the human speech.

1 TB., I.3.4.5.
2 Ibid., I.3.4.5.
3 Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 289.
4 SB., XII.9.1.14, "jihvā sarasvatī".
5 Cf. TB., I.3.4.5.
CHAPTER VI

PLACE OCCUPIED BY SARASVATI IN THE PURANIC LITERATURE
Chapter - VI

PLACE OCCUPIED BY SARASVATI IN THE PURANIC LITERATURE

1. The Puranic accounts for the origin of Sarasvatī:

There are numerous accounts in the different Purāṇas for the origin of Sarasvatī. Some of them tally with others, while some are of distinctive nature from others. The important and striking views, according to some Purāṇas, are as follows:

(i) The BrahmaVaivarta-Purāṇa:

This Purāṇa contains different accounts at different places. The Brahma-Khaṇḍo Adhyāya 3 of this Purāṇa maintains a detailed account for the origin of the Puranic triad of goddesses - Sarasvatī, Māhālakṣmi and Durgā. In this context, it holds that Sarasvatī was born from the mouth of Paramātman.¹

At another place, the same Purāṇa maintains Sarasvatī to have been produced from the mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the form of his Sakti.²

Still at another place, the BrahmaVaivarta-Purāṇa virtually following the Sāṅkhya theory of creation puts forth another account for the origin of Sarasvatī. It maintains that there is Ātman whose energy (sakti) is called 'Mūlaprakṛti'. But how things evolved from this

2 Ibid., II.4.12, "āvīrdbhūtā yadā devī vakrataḥ kṛṣṇayosītah".

- 152 -
'Mālaprakṛti', is to be seen. In this Purāṇa, it has been maintained that at the primeval the Ātman remained stationed; but when he had a desire of creation, he took two forms—male and female. This female form is called Prakṛti. This Prakṛti also, according to the wishes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, became of fivefold form under the names of Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī. In this way, Sarasvatī here has been reckoned as one of the five Prakṛtis that are the ultimate cause of the universe:¹

Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa, though severally taken as independently, has also been identified with Paramātman or Brahman,² and if it is so, it is as equally proper to hold her the daughter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu as it is to accept her as the daughter of Brahmā.

(ii) The Matsya and Padma Purāṇas:

According to the Matsya-Purāṇa, Sarasvatī has several times been referred to as produced by Brahmā, the great Creator, who is thought to have created all the Vedas and sāstras from his mouth.³ After that, he produced his ten mind-born sons—Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracetas, Vasishtha, Bhṛgu and Nārada.⁴ By this creation of his own, Brahmā was not satisfied; and he began to plan which could carry on the burden of creation. He, therefore, began to envoke Sāvitrī; and after sometime, Sāvitrī was produced from the half portion of his

¹ Ibid., II.1.1 ff.
² Cf. Ibid., II.1.20,48; see also Ananda Swarupa Gupta, op.cit., p. 64.
³ MP., III. 2-4.
⁴ Ibid., III. 5-8.
body as a female form. This form is also known under various names as Satarupā, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī and Brahmāṇī.¹

At another place, Brahmā is again said to have produced a beautiful woman from half of his body as his wife. By virtue of her austerities, she equalled Brahmā and was gifted with the faculty of creation of the world.²

Elsewhere, Sarasvatī along with four other maids - Lakṣmī, Marutvatī, Śādhyā and Visvesā is said to have been produced by Brahmā.³ The similar notion occurs in the Padma-Purāṇa also.⁴

(iii) The Vaiyu-Purāṇa:

According to this Purāṇa, it is maintained that Brahmā at first created his mind born-sons (mānasa-putras), who equalled themselves to their father Brahmā. They all were possessed of knowledge and hence indifferent to the world: “āgatajñānā vītarāgā vimatsarāḥ”. They could not enjoy any pleasure in the worldly lures. Therefore, Brahmā (hiranya-garbho bhagavān-paramēsthī) began to muse over. During this process of his thinking, perhaps, not finding out his solution, Brahmā became angry. Consequently, from his anger a Puruṣa, having sun-like splendour took his birth. Half of his body was male and half female. Brahmā asked this Puruṣa to separate his male and female parts into twin; and he did accordingly. Brahmā again asked the male form of Puruṣa to divide

---

¹ Ibid., III. 30-32.
² Ibid., CLXXI. 21-22.
³ Ibid., CLXXI. 32-36.
⁴ Pdp., V.37.79-80.
him. He did so while dividing him into eleven Rudras. Unlike the male form, the female form was of peculiar type. Her right part was white and left black. Brahma again asked this female form to divide her black and white parts, which she did. The white part is taken to be the various manifestations of hers, say Svāhā, Svadā, Mahāvidyā, Medhā, Kāśmīri, Sarasvatī and Gaurī. Thus, being one of these, Sarasvatī represents Gaurī (the white coloured goddess) produced from the white part of the female form.1

According to another account available in this Purāṇa, Sarasvatī is said to have been produced from Brahmā as Viśvarūpā. This Purāṇa maintains that Brahmā had no offspring. He, therefore, meditated and in course of his meditation, Sarasvatī was born loudly roaring to Him as Viśvarūpā.2

Here, she is supposed to be the mind-born daughter of Brahmā, and at the same time, is also taken to be Prakṛti.

(iv) The Brahmūnda-Purāṇa:

According to this Purāṇa, there is a conjugal procreation in male and female forms. The origin of this procreation is Mahālakṣmi. For this purpose, Mahālakṣmi at first produced three eggs. Brahmā was produced from one of them along with Śrī, Sarasvatī from the second along with Śiva and Viṣṇu from the third along with Ambikā.3 In nutshell,
it seems that, according to this theory, the three eggs originally symbolise the stage of Hiranyagarbha Prajāpati. This Hiranyagarbha Prajāpati also seems to have been born from the Supreme power, Paramātmā, along with the combined notion of the latter's female power called Mahālakṣmī. This Mahālakṣmī as the Supreme Goddess stand parallel to Paramātmā, the Supreme power as giver of birth to the triad of gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa. Similarly, the triad of the Purānic goddesses Laksālī, Sarasvatī and Ambikā (Durgā) may be taken to have been born from the Supreme female power called Mahālakṣmī.

In this regard, a very striking reference is made to the origin of Sarasvatī under various names, all synonyms for her. It is held that there is a Devī, who assumes different forms at the time of creation. The same goddess is said to have divided herself into two parts - male and female - at the command of Mahālakṣmī. As the male portion bears various names, the female portion is known as Vidyā, Bhūṣā, Svara, Aḵṣara and Kāmadhenu, which are all demotative of Sarasvatī. Similarly, the sattva form produced from the goddess Mahālakṣmī is also called variously as Mahāvidyā, Mahāvīṇā, Bhūratī, Vāk, Sarasvatī, Āryā, Brāhma, Kāmadhenu, etc. Like the previous ones, these names are also synonyms for the various forms of Sarasvatī.

These are some of the main points regarding the origin of Sarasvatī, which the Brahma Vaivarta, Matsya, Padma, Vīyu and Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas

1 Cf. Ācārya Bādralātha Śukla, Markandaeva Purāṇa : Eka Adhyayana (Vārānasī, 1961), pp. 94-95.
offer to us.

2. **The colour of Sarasvatī:**

The colour of Sarasvatī is also a very interesting point, particularly so far as her anthropomorphosis is concerned. In the Vedas, particularly in the Rgveda, she is called 'śubhā',¹ which seems to be a step towards her anthropomorphosis; but in the Purāṇas, she has been fully anthropomorphised. Her vigraha form is not only due to her colour, she has been provided with almost all of her physical aspects also. So far as her colour is concerned, the Purāṇas refer to her as of white, blue and śyāma colours. These are briefly discussed as follows:

(1) **White:**

Unlike the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas, the Purāṇas repeatedly describe Sarasvatī to have a purely white complexion. Such a colour of her complexion is obvious enough from the various epithets used for her, for instance, she is called 'paramā jyotirūpā',² (like a heap of bright light), 'jyotisvarūpā',³ 'himaśravasānukundendukumudāmbhojasannibhā',⁴ (white in colour like snow, scandal, kunda, indu, kumuda, lotus all having white colours), 'śaklavāra',⁵ (having white complexion), 'koṭiścandrasprabhājustapustasārīvulyuktavigraha',⁶ (having the body besmeared with the lusture of crores of moons), and 'śvetābhā',⁷ (one of white lusture).

---

¹ Cf. RV., V.42.12; VII.95.6, 96.2; see also supra., pp. 40-41.
² BrP., II.5.10.
³ Ibid., II.5.34.
⁴ Ibid., II.1.36, 5.13.
⁵ Ibid., I.3.54; II.2.54, 4.46.
⁶ Ibid., II.4.46.
⁷ AP., I.16.
She possesses the beauty of crores of full moons 'koṭipūṛṇenduśohābhādhyā'.

It is not only her complexion that is white; but at one and the same time, she is also described to have white eyes like lotuses - 'saratpankajalocanā'. Besides, she is also called 'sudatī' having beautiful or shining white teeth.'

Thus, she is all and all white. Her white colour is one of the three colours representing her three 'guṇas' in her capacity of one of the five Prakṛtis. But so far as her 'sattva-guṇātmikā' form of Prakṛti is concerned, it does not represent her 'suddhasattvasvarūpa' form only; but it also stands for a psychological connotation. Since knowledge is generally understood to evolve from sattvaguna, it is quite reasonable to hold Sarasvatī as the goddess possessed of white colour. Knowledge is also thought identical with sattva (sattvaṃ jñānam).

Like Brāhmanic Sarasvatī, some goddesses of learning in Buddhism, e.g., Mahāsarasvatī, Vajrāṃś Sarasvatī and Āryā Sarasvatī are also white-complexioned. In the Aparajita-prācchā, by her other epithets like 'śvetabhajā', 'śvetāṅgī' and 'candrasēkharā', Sarasvatī seems to be out and out of white colour. These epithets seem equally applicable to the four forms of Sarasvatī—Mahāvidyā, Mahāvēṇī, Bhāratī and Sarasvatī.

2. Ibid., I.3.55.
3. Ibid., I.3.56.
4. Ibid., II.1.1 ff.
5. Ibid., II.1.36.
The most familiar colour is white. The significance of this colour has already been explained. Keeping her nature in view, her devotee is asked to please her by worshipping her just by giving away, according to his capacity, the white garment (śuklavastraṇī) and by offering to her the white garland (śuklamālya) and ointment (anulepa).

(ii) Syāmā:

In addition to her description as having the white colour, Sarasvatī is also called 'syāmā'. It is necessary, in such a circumstance, to decide what the term 'syāmā' implies.

The word 'syāmā' appears to have been used for Sarasvatī in two different senses. Generally, everywhere in literature, gods and goddesses have been depicted as ever young; and the old age has totally been discarded. In the case of Sarasvatī, 'syāmā' probably denotes her youth. But at the same time, Sarasvatī may also be supposed to be of black (syāma).

Usually 'syāma' stands for black colour and the epithet 'syāmā' befits Sarasvatī in the sense of 'syāma' (black colour), which is clear from the following. According to the Sāmkhya system, there is 'Prakṛti', which is the fundamental source of the universe. In the Purāṇas, too, at one place or the other, the same philosophy has been ushered in a well-mannered way. For instance, Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī

---

1 Supra., p. 156.
2 MP., LXVI.6.
3 Bṛ. 1.3.56, "sasmitā sudāti śyāmā sundarīnā ca sundarī || sreṣṭhā śrutānām sāstrānām viduṣaṁ jānanī paraṁ||
4 From the verse (Bṛ. 1.3.56), it is beyond doubt true that Sarasvatī is called most beautiful (sundarīnām ca sundarī), which is possible in one's youth. Kālidāsa in his Meghadūta (II,22), also uses 'syāma' for Yakṣini to denote her youth: "tanvi śyāmā śikharidasanā pakvabimbā 'dharoṣṭhī"."
are said to be denoted by the single name of 'Prakṛti'. All of them are capable of creation. They are, therefore, called the five forms of 'Prakṛti'. This 'Prakṛti' as the source of the universe, is said to have been possessed of the three guṇas - sattva, rajas and tamas. These guṇas are classified categorically according to their nature. Sattva stands for white colour, rajas for red and tamas for black.

When these guṇas are low and high in grades, there is an upheaval and creation starts therefrom; but when they are proportionally equal, it is vice versa. Scientifically, when red, white and black colours are mixed together, the ultimate colour is black. Similarly, the ultimate colour of 'Prakṛti' must be black; for, at the stage of Pralaya all the guṇas are in equilibrium and remain standstill and, therefore, their comixture should give rise to black colour. Being one of the forms of 'Prakṛti' Sarasvatī is judiciously described to be of black colour (śyāmā). Śyāmā also stands for colour like gold.

In Jainism, there are sixteen forms of Sarasvatī. Mahākāli is one of them, whose colour is black. Being one of the forms of Sarasvatī, Mahākāli aptly accounts for her black (śyāmā) colour. This also justifies the description of Sarasvatī as having black colour (śyāmā).

(iii) Blue:

This colour has not apparently been mentioned in the Purāṇas. This

1 BVP., II.1.1, 4.4.
2 BP., XXIII.54-57; SK., 1.
3 SāT., Introduction, p. 25.
occurs in the other literature, particularly in the Tantras. In the Srividyāraja-Tantra, there is the description of 'Nīlasarasvatī'. It appears that Sarasvatī of Brāhmanism is there called 'Nīlasarasvatī', probably because of her new tantric conception, which accepts her colour as blue. According to the above Tantra, which provides her with this colour, the hands of the goddess are beautified with blue lotuses.¹

Elsewhere, Sarasvatī has been depicted as partially of blue colour. In Buddhism, Vaijrasarasvatī is said to have a face the right phase of which is blue and the left white: 'uḷasitadakṣīṇavāṃsakaḥ'.² Like Buddhism, in Jainism, too, one of the Vidyādevīs, Māṇavī, according to one of the sects, is said to be of blue colour. Her seat is also blue. This goddess seems to have her close association with 'Nīlasarasvatī' of Brāhmanism.³

In the Aparājitasūtra, a quite different colour has been associated with Sarasvatī. According to it, it is her neck alone, which is of blue colour; neither her body nor her face. The Aparājitasūtra brings to light the four forms of Sarasvatī. They are Mahāvidyā, Mahāvīni, Bhāratī and Sarasvatī.⁴ In the Devatāmūrtipraṇam of Sūtradhāra Naḍḍana, there are twelve forms of Sarasvatī - Mahāvidyā, Mahāvīni, Bhāratī, Sarasvatī, Āryā, Brāhma, Mahādhenu, Vedagarbha, Īśvara, Mahālakṣmi, ¹ Srivid T. 11.1; see also ibid., Part II, p. 273 for "Nīlasarasvatī-vidyābhedāvidhīḥ".
² Śāhī Nā., 163.
³ D.C. Bhattacharya, op.cit., pp. 174-175.
⁴ Apa Pr., CCXXX.15.
Mahākāli and Mahāsarasvatī. The four forms of Sarasvatī given in the Aparājitaśloka tally with the first four forms among the twelve given by Sūtradhāra Māṇḍana. In all probability, the epithet 'nīlakaṇṭha' is equally applicable to Mahāvidyā, Mahāvānī, Bhāratī and Sarasvatī and consequently, they all may be held to have their neck of blue colour.

3. The vehicle:

Like colour, the vehicle of the goddess is also a very interesting point. In the Purāṇas, the only thing alluded to as her vehicle is the swan.

(i) The swan:

By the study of the Purāṇas, we arrive at conclusion that she has inherited her vehicle from her father or husband Brahmā, who has the swan as his vehicle. The Matsya-Purāṇa, which devotes most of its chapters on iconographical aspects, says that the image of Brahmā should be made as seated on a swan or it should be 'kamalāsana'. Similarly, Sarasvatī is also described as riding a swan. The Matsya-Purāṇa, while prescribing the identical formula for the making the images of Brahmā and Sarasvatī, says that the image of Brahmāṇī should correspond to that of Brahmā. As Brahmā has the swan as his vehicle, the similar must be the case with Sarasvatī, too, e.g., she should be seated on a swan (kamśādhirūḍhā).

In Jainism, some of its Vidyādevis, like Vajraśrākhala, Kālī, Gandhāri, etc., are said to have the swan as their vehicle.

---

1 Dev Prā., VIII.80-85.
2 MP., CCLX.40.
3 PrŚā., VIII.41.
4 MP., CCLXI.24-25.
5 Ibid., CCLXI.25
6 B.C. Bhattacharya, op.cit., p.124.
7 Ibid., p.124.
8 Ibid., pp. 141, 173.
(ii) **The Peacock:**

Besides the swan, the peacock has also been alluded to as the vehicle of Sarasvati. This vehicle hardly finds mention in the Purānas; but elsewhere it is associated with Sarasvati.\(^1\)

The peacock gets the prominent place in Jainism as the vehicle of some of the Vidyādevis, such as Rohini,\(^2\) Prajñāpti,\(^3\) Apratikākāra,\(^4\) etc.

The different sects of Jainism (i.e., Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras) accept a variety of vehicles for the Vidyādevis. For instance, the cow is the vehicle of Rohini (Śvetāmbara sect),\(^5\) the elephant of Vajrāṅkūṣa (Śvetāmbara sect),\(^6\) the Garuda of Apratikākāra,\(^7\) the Cuckoo of Puruṣadattā,\(^8\) the deer of Kāli (Digambara sect),\(^9\) the tortoise of Mahākāli (Digambara sect),\(^10\) the man of Mahākāli (Śvetāmbara sect),\(^11\) the alligator of Gaurī (Śvetāmbara sect),\(^12\) and the like.

(iii) **The implication of the swan and the peacock:**

The swan (haṭṭa) is taken to be a very superior bird and is said to possess a sense of spirituality and divinity. It is, probably, due to

---

2 B.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, 166.
its divinity that it is taken to be one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu. Moreover, in the Prapancaśūra, Patala 4, this whole world is called 'ḥamsātmaka'. The word 'ḥamsātmaka' has with it a philosophical purport according to which the whole world is conceived to be 'ḥamsā'. In this context it is necessary to bring to light the full connotation of the word 'ḥamsā' so as to understand the philosophical associations with it.

The following observation offers a very fine explanation of the form ḥamsā:  

'‘I am that' - one who has this feeling of identification and ends the fear of the world, is ḥamsā. Here, 'aham' stands for Jīvātman and 'saḥ' for Brahma or Supreme reality. Sarasvatī also in her personal capacity, represents the three worlds, three Vedas, three Agnis, three guṇas, three stages and all the tattvātāras. She is, thus, the embodiment of all the fundamental atoms capable of creating the universe. It has already been noted in the Purāṇic accounts of the origin of Sarasvatī that when the mind-born sons of Brahmā took no interest in the activities of the world, he created Sarasvatī to bear the burden of the universe. So in the form of 'sakti' or 'energy of the Supreme Being', Sarasvatī created the whole world, which has its base in her and shows her association

---

2 Monier Williams, op. cit., p.1163.
3 WbP., XXXII. .10-12; SkP., VI.46.29-30.
4 Cf. The Modern Cyclopedia, Vol. VII (London), p.344, 'the name of Sarasvatī itself implies the female energy.'
with the Supreme Being. The swan (haṁsa) represents the position when
this 'association' turns into 'identification'. This identification
between her and the Supreme Being is symbolized by her vehicle, the swan,
whose name 'haṁsa' by itself is remarkably suggestive.

The other implication of the swan may be interpreted differently.
As has been said above, 'hamsa' stands for the identification of 'I' and
'He'. This mode of thinking that 'I' and 'He' are one, can sustain all
types of knowledge and hence 'hamsa' is aptly taken to be the vehicle of
Sarasvatī. Haṁsa is also the name of a mantra, which is called 'ajapā
mantra', spoken without an effort. Its sound represents the supreme sound
of the Supreme reality. It is by this Supreme sound that knowledge is commu-
nicated. Haṁsa related to Sarasvatī may be thought representing all this and
it is for this reason that in the popular belief, 'haṁsa' is said to be
'jñānavān'. Her travelling by 'haṁsa', psychologically implies her moving
with knowledge. It may also mean that she is the embodiment of 'jñāna' and
wherever she goes by this vehicle, she brings knowledge with her. Haṁsa
also typifies purity - purity of mind which (mind) is cut off from the
worldly temptations. The association of 'haṁsa' with Sarasvatī, in a way,
implies her becoming pure; for, she is the embodiment of knowledge or is
possessed of knowledge, and it is knowledge through which purity is gained.

Now the implication of the peacock remains to be seen. For the
peacock, there is a Sanskrit word 'śikhin'. This word denotes the sense
of a peacock as well as of Agni. Agni has been identified with Sarasvatī.

2 Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 1005.
3 Vîpa., XXXII.10; RV., II.1.11; also cf. 'pāvakā' in ibid., I.3.10.
and Sarasvatī (speech) with sacrifice. In the same continuation, it may be held that the three flames of Agni represent the three forms of Sarasvatī (speech). It is, perhaps, to symbolise her psychological and philosophical relation with Agni that she holds the peacock, the symbol of Agni, as her vehicle.

4. The image of Sarasvatī:

(1) The prescription for the image of Sarasvatī:

A landmark in development has been paved towards the iconographical character of the goddess in her entering the Purānic era. It is the Purāṇas, which at first have anthropomorphised her to the fullest extent and offer to us several iconographical references to her. Among the Purāṇas, it is the Agni, the Matsya and Viṣṇudharmottara, which deal with this prominently. The Agni-Purāṇa spares its chapters XLIX to LV on laying down the prescriptions for the images of various gods and goddesses. In its chapter XLIX, on the said subject, while describing the image of Brahmā, it lays down that the images of Sarasvatī and Savitṛī should be respectively at left and right sides of Brahmā's image: "ūjyaśthālī sarasvatī́ sāvitrī vāmadakṣine".²

Like the Agni-Purāṇa, the Matsya-Purāṇa also maintains the same formula; and for it, it devotes chapters CCLVIII to CCLXII. Like the Agni-Purāṇa, it prescribes how the image of Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī should

---

1 ŚB., III.1.4.9, 14.  "vvāg vai sarasvatī vvvāg yajñah".
2 AP., XLIX.15.
be made with Brahmā. It goes on saying that Brahmāni (Sarasvatī as either wife or daughter) should be made like Brahmā (brahmaśadārī) in all respects to his recognition of iconic features. As to the image of Brahmā, it says that it should be made of four heads and there should be a water-vessel (kamandalu) in one of his hands. He should be made riding a swan or seated on a lotus. The image should have a site for oblations of ghee and four Vedas. To its left, there should be the image of Sāvitrī and to right that of Sarasvatī.

Like the Agni and Matsya Purāṇas, the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa spares its third Khanda exclusively for iconic description. In Adhyāya XLIV of this Purāṇa, Brahmā has been pictured as sitting in the lotus-posture (padmāsana) and has Sāvitrī placed in his left lap. The striking feature of this description is the absence of Sarasvatī, who has been represented with Sāvitrī by the Agni as well as the Matsya Purāṇas. It remains not only as a mere Purānic theory; but it has also taken iconographical form, which is evident from the following evidences:

The dual image of Brahmā and Sarasvatī found in the Mathura Sculpture shows partial acceptance of the formulas laid down by the Purāṇas. Partial because sometimes the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa has been followed in depicting only Sāvitrī with Brahmā. But such distinction does not always

---

1 MP., CCLXI.24.
2 Ibid., CCLX.40.
3 Ibid., CCLX.44.
5 Cf. Brindavan C.Bhattacharya, op.cit., p.19; see also op.cit., p. 43.
prevail. An obvious attempt has been made at wiping out such a distinction and the two goddesses are given their proper places by depicting both of them with Brahman. This feature is available in some of the famous sculptures like Mirpur Khas in Sindh\(^1\) and the early Chola and late Hoysala Schools.\(^2\)

Besides, the Puranas themselves let us believe that in the Puranic age, the theory of image-making had already been put to practice. This is evident from the following instances. Once the King Ambuvići, after having known the great powers of Sarasvatī, had a great regard in his heart for her and consequently, taking the clay out of the Sarasvatī river, made an earthen image (pratimā) of her.\(^3\) Similarly, in the Vāmana-Purāṇa, Sarasvatī has been said to have been installed in the form of linga at the Sthānu-tīrtha by Siva himself.\(^4\) These instances will suffice to lead us to assume that in the Puranic age, we find not only allusions to iconic features of various divinities; but we also witness that these were, by and by translated into real iconography.

(ii) **Face:**

In iconography, face attains very great importance. It is this alone through which the whole image is measured out. According to the Mānasāra, the image of Sarasvatī and Savitṛi should be made in accordance

---

2 Ibid., p. 518.
3 SkP., VI.46.16-17.
4 VāmP., XL.4.
with the dasātalā system: "sarasatīṁ ca śāvitrīṁ ca dasātalāṁ kārayeta".¹

The dasātalā system is taken to be the supreme one among tālamānas—navatāla, aṣṭatāla, saptatāla, etc., and according to all these measurement systems the whole image (pratīmā) should be ten times the face. This dasātalā system is again divided into the three categories according to its height giving the measurement various names such as uttama, madhyama and adhama dasātalas. As per rule, the largest dasātalā system divides the whole length of the image into 124 proportionally equal parts, the madhyama into 120 and the adhama into 116.² The method of making the face is detailed in the same Silpaśāstra.³ The three varieties of dasātalā system have fully been defined by Srī Kumāra in the Silparatna.⁴ As regards the measurement of aṅgulas, a detailed description is given in the Silpaśāstra by Prasanna Kumar Acharya.⁵

---

¹ MāAsc., LIV.19.
³ Ibid., p. 64.
⁴ "The face is taken as the standard of the tāla measurement and is generally twelvees aṅgulas or about nine inches in length. The face is stated to be of vocal shape (kukkuṭānda-samākāra, lit., 'shaped like the egg of a hen')."
⁵ Prasanna Kumar Acharya, Silpaśāstra. A Summary of the Mānasāra, developed out of a Dissertation accepted for the Ph.D. Degree, p. 35.

8 paramānus = 1 rathadhūli (lit. car-dust).
8 rathadhūlis = 1 bālāgra (lit. hair's end).
8 bālāgras = 1 likṣhā (lit. a nit).
8 likṣhās = 1 yūkā (lit. a louse).
8 yūkās = 1 yava (lit. a barley corn).
8 yavas = 1 aṅgulas (lit. finger's breadth).

Three kinds of aṅgulas are distinguished by the largest of which is made of 8 yavas, the intermediate of 7 yavas, and the smallest one of 6 yavas."
This is the detailed description of the face, which has an impressive recognition in iconography. But so far as the Purāṇas are concerned, they actually do not go to such a farther extent in connection with the face of a deity. While describing the face of the goddess Sarasvatī, they vary to a great extent. Like her father Brahmā, she is often mentioned as having one to four faces; but elsewhere she is also mentioned as having up to five faces. According to the Matsya-Purāṇa, \(^1\) like Brahmā, Brahmāṇī should have four faces. Similarly, in the Vaiṣṇu-Purāṇa, she (as Prakṛti) is described as having four heads. \(^2\) According to the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa, Sarasvatī has only one face. \(^3\)

Sri Sūtradhāra Māṇḍana in his Rūpamandana, has described two forms of Sarasvatī, namely Mahāvidyā and Sarasvatī. There, Mahāvidyā is said to have one face (ekavaktra). \(^4\) Moreover, like Brahmā, Sarasvatī has also been depicted to have five faces. In this form, she has been named 'Śāradā'. \(^5\)

Sarasvatī in Buddhism has some features similar and some dissimilar to those of Brahmānic Sarasvatī. While describing the former's iconic character, it is emphasised that she may have either one or three faces. \(^6\) Like her, Vajrasarasvatī has also three faces 'vajrasarasvatīṃ trimukhām'. \(^7\)

---

1 MP., CCLXI.24.
2 VP., XXIII.55.
3 Cf. Dr. Priyabala Shah, op.cit., p. 154.
6 Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, op.cit., p. 349.
7 Saḍbhā., 163.
Now the implication of one and four faces is to be seen. It is held that her face represents Sā vitrī or Gāyatrī.¹ It has already² been pointed out that Sarasvatī is called ‘saptasvasā’ having the seven metres as her sisters and Gāyatrī is foremost of all. All these metres separately or jointly symbolise not only the metre of the Vedas; but they may be taken as symbolising the Veda as a whole. This sense of one face of Sarasvatī tally with the fact that when Vāk is said to have been issued from Brahmā’s mouth,³ This Vāk may be said as symbolising the Veda; and Sarasvatī, who is prominently described in the Purāṇas as Vāk or Vāgdevī⁴ or the presiding deity of speech,⁵ may be said as having embodied Veda itself as produced from the mouth of Brahmā.⁶ The four faces of hers may also be taken as symbolising the four Vedas in the same way as the four faces of Brahmā stand for four Vedas.⁷

In the Purāṇas, it is widely held that Brahmā has created the whole universe. For this creation, he had a pre-planning through his mind or intellect. This mind or intellect is nothing, but the Veda, which bears the cosmic feature endowed with fourfold nature.⁸ This sense goes

¹ Dr. Priyabala Shah, op.cit., p. 154.
² Supra., pp. 49-51.
⁵ Dr. Rāmasaṅkara Bhāṭṭācārya, Pūrāṇāgata Vedaśīlayaka Sāmagrī kā Samīkṣātmaṅkar Ādhavaṇa (Prayāga, 1965), pp. 122, 378-379.
⁶ Dr. Priyabala Shah, op.cit., p. 140.
⁷ The four faces of Brahma represent the four Vedas; the eastern Rigveda, the southern Yajurveda, the western Sāmaveda and the northern Atharvaveda.
⁸ Vasudeva S. Agrawala, Matsya Purāṇa - A study (Bamnagar, Varanasi, 1963), pp. 15,28.
to the four Vedas and mind can be replaced by the fourfold nature or creation. So four faces of Brahmā imply the four Vedas. Similarly, four faces of Sarasvatī, undoubtedly, stand for the same fact; for, she also is said as creating the universe. 1

So far as the three faces are concerned, they may be taken as implying the three principal Vedas - the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, and the Sāmaveda excluding the Athāryaveda, which is supposed to be a later compendium. That is why she is called 'trayā vidyā' representing those three Vedas. She, in fact, represents all the vidyās, namely yajñavidyā, māhāvidyā, guhyavidyā, ātmavidyā, ānvīkṣikī, trayāvārtē and danandī. 2

The conception of the five faces of Sarasvatī may be extended to the five Vedas in which the Nātyasūtra is included according to the new conception of the fifth Veda. It is said that Brahmā created this fifth Veda in the way, he created the four Vedas. May, it is more superior to the other Vedas; for it has their essence in it and embraces almost all the arts and sciences. 3 Thus, this Veda be identified with the one face of Sarasvatī in the form of the Veda; because Sarasvatī herself is said closely related to the various arts and sciences. 4

(iii) The number of hands and the object held by them:

The number of Sarasvatī's hands differs from place to place in the

1 Cf. ṚṣAbha Purāṇa, II.1.1, 4.4. It is said that Durgā, Bhāgavatī, Laksmitī, Sarasvatī and Savitritī are the five Prakṛtis in creation of the world: "śrṣtividyau prakṛtih prabandhā maṛtāh".


3 Nāṭyaśāstra, I.15-16.

4 John Dowson, op. cit, p. 284.
Parānas. It is really very interesting to take them all into account. In the Parānas, Sarasvatī is mostly alluded to as having four hands. But by some of her Purānic epithets like 'vīṇāpustakadhārinī', she seems to have only two hands having a lute (vīṇā) and book (pustaka). The Matsya-Purāṇa while prescribing certain rules for making the images of various gods and goddesses states that Sarasvatī, like Brahmā, should be made as having four hands. Like the Matsya-Purāṇa, the Agni-Purāṇa also prescribes that the image of goddess Sarasvatī should be made as having a book (pustaka), a rosary (āksamālā), a lute (vīṇā) and a lotus (kumbhābja) in her respective hands.

In the Visnudharmottara—Purāṇa, as in the other Purānas, a number of references put forth her iconic character. At one place, she is described as having four hands. In her two right hands, she holds a book and a rosary while in her two left hands she bears a water-vessel and a lute (vīṇā). Elsewhere also she is pictured as having four hands; but the order of the emblem held in the right and the left hands differs. In the latter case, Sarasvatī is depicted as having a rosary and a trident in her two right hands and a book and a water-vessel in her left hands. Thus, trident has been given the place of lute (vīṇā). At another place, she is mentioned as usual to have a book and a rosary in her right hands and a lute (vaiṇavī) and a water-vessel (kamandalu) in her left hands. 'Vaiṇavī' has

1 BVP., II.1.35, 2.55.
2 MP., CCLXI.24.
3 AP., L.16.
4 Cf. Dr. Prayabala Shah, op.cit., p.225.
5 Ibid., p. 227.
6 Ibid., p. 154.
been explained by Dr. Kramrirsch as vaisnvl and by Dr. Priyabala Shah as the staff of vīṇā made of bamboo.

In the Brahmavatüarta-Purāṇa, Sarasvatī is one of the five 'Praktis'. The Vāyu-Purāṇa, while describing her as the 'Prakṛti Gau', presents her as having four mouths, four horns, four teeth, four eyes and four hands. Since she herself is 'the Prakṛti Gau', all the animals are born under her impression as four-footed and four-breasted.

In the Skanda-Purāṇa, an earthen image (pratima) is said to have been made by the King Ambuvī. That image is described to have four hands with a lotus, a rosary, a water-vessel and a book in the respective hands. This shows the fulfilment of the rules laid down by the Purāṇas, according to which the image of goddess Sarasvatī should be four-handed.

In Jainism, most of the Vidyādevīs are four-handed; while in Buddhism, the case differs. The Buddhistic Sarasvatī is said to have either two arms or six arms, and in case she is two armed, she has her four forms under different names. She is also said to have eight and even ten arms.

---

1 Cf. ibid., p. 154, f.n.1.
2 Ibid., p. 154. "The word Vaiñavi requires some clarification. I have amended the reading Vainavī into Vīnaīva because Sarasvatī is traditionally known to carry Vīṇā and not a flute of bamboo which is the usual meaning of the word Vaiñavi. On further consideration, however, I find that it is not necessary to change the reading into Vīnaīva because the word Vainavī does not mean Vīna. It indicates the staff of Vīṇā which must have been made of bamboo as in the case of the present 'Ekatārā'."
3 BvP., II.1.1,4,4.
4 VP., XXIII. 44-45.
5 Ibid., XXIII.88.
6 SkP., VI.46.16-19.
8 VaiR., 15.
9 H.Krishna Sastri, op.cit., p. 187; also cf. SārT., VI.37.
The implication of the objects held in the hands:

The four arms of Sarasvatī, like her four faces, represent the four Vedas, and kamandalu represents the nectar of all sāstras. Since she symbolises the entire knowledge, she symbolises all the sāstras, too. She holds a book in one of her hands and this also conveys the same sense.

The Skanda-Purāṇa (VI.46.19), while defining the book (pustaka) in one of the hands of Sarasvatī, says: "pustakaṁ ca tathā vāme sarvavidyāsamudbhavam". All other concepts of Sarasvatī have developed from her watery form, e.g., Sarasvatī as a river, and it is also maintained that Sarasvatī has created all the tanmātras, which are but essential for the creation of the universe and of which water is one. As 'Prakṛti', she is advocated to have created the universe. The water is fundamentally necessary for this purpose. It is, probably, for this reason that she has water in her water-vessel and, thus, she denotes her earliest association with water. This water may not be thought of an ordinary type. It is divine (divya) and it is only in this capacity that it may be thought to have been kept in the water-vessel of Sarasvatī.

---

1 Dr. Priyabala Shah, op.cit., p. 184; The Skanda-Purāṇa (VII.33.22) aptly calls her 'śrūtilakṣaṇa'.
2 Ibid., p. 186.
3 Ibid., p. 186; also cf S.C. Dimakar, Seon, "Sarasvatī in Jain Iconography" Summaries of Papers, Part I, AIOC, XXIII Session - Aligarh (1966), p. 174. In the Jain Iconography Sarasvatī is shown adorned with four hands having a book, a water-vessel, a rosary and the fourth empty. Here book has been understood for the Sāstra (Right Knowledge), rosary for Right Faith or Devotion, water-vessel for the ideal of sainthood or Right conduct and empty hand indicates the supreme path of nirvikalpa samādhi.
5 Vasudeva S. Agarwala, op.cit., p. 53.
6 BWP., II.1.1, 4.4.
7 SKP., VI.46.19.
Similarly, the lute (vīṇā) held by Sarasvatī is also not less important. It is held that the lute represents a kind of achievement or proficiency (siddhi). The close relation of the lute and the book cannot be ignored. Sarasvatī, no doubt, represents the principles of speech and for this very reason that she has been identified with speech (vāgva sarasvatī) in the Brāhmaṇas. Now, this speech can reasonably be divided into sound (dhwani) and word (pada and vākya). The book in the hand of Sarasvatī also represents, besides what is said earlier, the second element while the lute in her hand represents the first element. Only the lute, and no other musical instrument, has been described in the hand of the goddess. The lute is the most ancient musical instrument and finds mention in the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa (III.2.4.6). Melody helps mental concentration. The lute is the best instrument resorted to for this purpose; because it is highly useful for producing some song. Moreover, the goddess is said to have a rosary (akṣamālā) in one of her hands. This rosary in the hand of the goddess usually represents time.

5. The physical aspect of Sarasvatī (i.e., Sarasvatī as a river):

(i) The origin of Sarasvatī as a river:

The Purāṇas though furnishing a lot of materials to different horizons, concentrate much on the origin (source) of the rivers. All rivers mentioned in the Purāṇas, have their different sources; but

1 Dr. Priyabala Shah, op.cit., p. 186.
2 Supra., pp. 147-151.
3 Cf. DBhāp., III.30.2.
4 Dr. Priyabala Shah, op.cit., p. 185.
of equal nature; i.e., the mountains.  

It is in brief the description of the various sources of various rivers. Of the Sarasvatī, it is said that it is originated from the 'Himavatpāda' along with the Ikṣu, Gomatī, Niśālī, Saṭadru, Īravāṭī, Candrabhāgū, Bāhudā, Sarayū, Kuhū, Tṛitiyā, Yamunā, Kauśikī, Drādadvatī, Lauhitya, Sindhu, Gaṅgā, Devikā, Vītastē, Gandākī, Dhūtapāpa and Vīpāsā.  

Dr. A.B.L. Awasthi, on the basis of the study of the Skanda-Purāṇa, classifies the rivers of Bhāratavarṣa into eleven groups:  

In such a classification, Sarasvatī is mentioned to belong to 'Sarasvatī-Drīshadvatī Group'. Here, it is said to be originated from Brahmā and traversing various places and assuming different names, it ultimately found its way to the western ocean. According to this statement,  

1 Yasapāla Tandana, op.cit., pp. 51-52, cf. the terms used for different rivers. Summarisingly, they are said as: "ṛksa-nihśrtāḥ, pārīyatra-nihśrtāḥ, mālaya-nihśrtāḥ, mahendra-nihśrtāḥ, vīndhyapāda-nihśrtāḥ, sukṣmatapīda-nihśrtāḥ, sahyapāda-nihśrtāḥ, sahyapāda-nihśrtāḥ and himavatpāda-nihśrtāḥ".  

2 Ibid., p. 52; see also Vasudev S. Agrawala, Mārkandeya Purāṇa: Eka Sanskritika Adhvayana (Allahabad, 1961), p. 146.  

3 Dr. A.B.L. Awasthi, op.cit., p. 149.  

2. Indus Group.  
4. Gaṅgā-Yamunā Group (including Chambal system).  
5. Brahmputra System.  
6. Śīprā-Mahi Group.  
7. Sabhramatī Group.  
11. Kāverī-Krītamālā Group."  

4 Ibid., pp. 153-54. "Sarasvatī, issuing from the water-pot of Brahmā, started on its downward course from Plaksha, on the Himavata, and passing through Kedāra, from where it turned westward (Paścimāṅghimukhi), concealed underground. Beyond Pāpabhimā, she reached at Gandharvavāpa and thence followed a westward course. Passing through Bhūtīsvarān and (contd.)
it is supposed to be produced from Brahmā and, therefore, it may be called 'Brahmaputri' in its capacity of a river. This name of it, according to its origin, has also been recognised by Śrī Hemacandrācārya, who gives two names: (a) 'Brahmaputri', (b) 'Sarasvatī'.

She is mentioned several times as the daughter of Brahmā. A mythological interpretation regarding its coming over to the earth as a river has been given in the Brahmasūkta-Purāṇa, where at first she is conceived to be residing in the heaven along with her husband Hari among the company of his co-wives Lakṣṇī and Gaṅgā. Once Gaṅgā, in a passionate mood, looked at Hari again and again. Hari knew it easily and responded it by laughing at her. Sarasvatī could not tolerate such an act of Hari. She, overpowered by her furious wrath, told Hari of his profound love for Gaṅgā. When Hari saw Sarasvatī in such a mood, he went out of the assembly hall leaving Sarasvatī, Gaṅgā and Lakṣṇī inside. Then Lakṣṇī tried her best to appease Sarasvatī with her polite words; but she could not succeed in her endeavour. Sarasvatī levelled her with a curse to become like a tree (vṛksarūpa) and a river (saridrūpa). When Gaṅgā came to know of it, she consoled Lakṣṇī by saying that Sarasvatī herself should be a river and go to the earth, where sinners reside while committing sins. In return, Sarasvatī again cursed Gaṅgā as she did 'Lakṣṇī'.

(Contd. from p.178).

(BvP., II.6.17-40.)

1 AŚ., IV.151.
2 BvP., III.35.44; PDP., V.18.165, 37.79 ff; MP., III 31-32; BbP., III.12.28, etc.
While this was going on, Hari returned in and heard of what had happened. But alas, he could not change the sorrow for pleasure. He, therefore, said Bharati! go to Bharatavarṣa in consequence of your quarrel with Ganga and innocent Lakṣmi. Similarly, Ganga will also go to the abode of Siva. Since Padma (Lakṣmi) has remained innocent of all, she should remain here in the heaven with me. Therefore, Sarasvati came down to the earth. Being on the earth, she is called Bharati; being a priyā of Brahmā, Brahmī; being as the presiding deity of speech, vāni; and being stationed covering the world like ever-flowing stream (stotasye 'va) and becoming related to the ponds of Hari, Sarasvati.  

In the classical period, we find much importance attached to the Ganga. It is held to flow out of the head of Śiva and even greater divinity is assigned to it, when it is held celestial. Since the Ganga river is still in existence on the earth, the above mentioned Purānic notion that first it was in the heaven and later on descended to the earth finding Śiva’s head as its abode and, thus, celestial, has been developed and popularity has won in the later classical period. So far as the Sarasvati is concerned, it was of far-reached fame in Vedic age than the Ganga. But since, it has lost its earthly living, its popularity as a river has considerably suffered. In this way, it is divine and has the same origin as the Ganga in the Purānas as well as in the popular belief.

Another story of the similar kind runs in the Skanda-Purana.

1 Ibid., II.6.41-53.
2 Ibid., II.7.1-3.
According to it, Sarasvatī was previously a deity. The ocean lying on
the earth was possessed of latent fire (vādavāgni). In order to bring it
to the bottom of the Pātāla Loka; and to bring good to gods avoiding its
injurious effect, God Viṣṇu entreated Sarasvatī to descend on the earth.
She being the loyal and obedient daughter of her father Brahmā refused
to grant his request until her father ordered her. Viṣṇu, therefore,
implored Brahmā, who granting Viṣṇu's request, bade Sarasvatī to descend
on the earth.¹ Sarasvatī being turned into a river got down on the
Himālayas and passing through Plakṣa, ran to the surface of the earth.²

According to the Mātasya-Purāṇa, the original source of the Sarasvatī
is the lake of snakes (śarpāṇām tātsarāḥ) on the Hemakūta. This lake gave
birth to the Sarasvatī and the Jyotismātī. Both of these rivers being
originated from this lake, ran to fall into the eastern and western seas.³

About the Gaṅgā, the popular belief tells us that when the 60,000
sons of Sagara were reduced to ashes, King Bhagīratha practised severe
penances to bring the Gaṅgā on the earth for their salvation. Similarly,
Sarasvatī is said to have been brought by Pitāmaha to Puṣkara and by the
Sage Mārkandeya to Kurukṣetra.⁴

This is, in nutshell, the physical description of the origin of
Sarasvatī as a river. Other Purānic accounts for her origin as a divine

¹ SKP., VII.33.13-15.
² Ibid., VII.33.40-41.
³ MP., CXXI. 64-65.
⁴ Vēmp., XXXVII. 16-23.
being, have already been taken into account. All the rivers originate from the mountains. This is equally true of Sarasvati also. Much is said about its origin from the mountain as well as about its whereabouts in the beginning. The new fact given about it is that it, in the ancient times, undoubtedly excelled the Ganges and, thus, may be supposed to claim the same popular belief as we have today about the Ganges.

(ii) The sacred aspect of the Sarasvati:

Since earliest times, Aryans assigned the Sarasvati a very superb position in their traditional rites and customary religious systems. It is obvious enough from the following Puranic accounts:

The Brahma-Purana says that there were sixteen rivers, the Kaveri, the Krsna, the Narmada, the Yamuna, the Godavari, the Cañrāghū, the Iravati, the Vipāśa, the Kauśikī, the Satadru, the Sarayu, the Śīṇa, the Sarasvati, the Brādīnī and the Pāvani, which were all married to Agni. Agni, as we know, is a symbol of light and sacredness. The association (identification) of Agni with Sarasvati speaks of the attachment of the former's qualities to the latter. The implication of this statement of the Brahma-Purana with regard to the marriage of the said rivers with Agni, seems that early Aryans at first resided by and around these rivers taking them pious and also kindled the sacrificial fires in their honour. Later on, some of them proceeded southwards.

1 Vide supra, pp. 152-157.
2 Vide supra, pp. 1-34.
3 Bṛdh, II.12.13-16.
4 RV., II.1.11.
leaving them behind. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the north
Indian rivers are given more superior place, where more religious minded
Aryans lived. Thus, it appears that these rivers had acquired a very
pious position by their connection with the sacrificial fires lit on their
banks by Aryans. Similarly, a list of pious rivers has been presented
by the Agni-Purāṇa.¹

The Matsya-Purāṇa, while describing the sacred aspect of some of
rivers, says that the Gaṅgā is sacred at Kanakhalā, the Sarasvatī at
Kurukṣetra; but Narmadā is sacred everywhere. The same Purāṇa, while
speaking of the purity of waters of the Sarasvatī, Yamunā, Gaṅgā and
Narmadā, says that waters of the Sarasvatī purify one within three
days, of the Yamunā in seven days, of the Gaṅgā instantaneously and of
the Narmadā just by the mere sight.²

The Sarasvatī river annihilates all the sins with its sacredness
and, therefore, is called the killer of all the sins.³ Not only is it
or its waters sacred, its bank equally deserves this sacredness and hence
is called auspicious one (subhataṣa).⁴ It is only due to the auspicious-
ness of the bank that various tīrthas are situated thereon. It (Sarasvatī)
is full of pious waters and, therefore, is called 'puṣyatoyā',⁵ 'puṣya-
jalā',⁶ etc. Because of these qualities, it is held to be all pure and

¹ AP., CCXIX. 69-72.
² MP., CLXXXVI. 10-11.
³ Vāmp., XXXII. 3; SkP., VII. 34.31.
⁴ MP., VII. 3.
⁵ Vāmp., XXXIII.2; XXXVII. 29, 38.
⁶ Pdp., V. 27.119.
auspicious. This is evident by such attributes as ‘subha’, 1 ‘punya’, 2 ‘atipunya’, 3 etc.

Rasis who practise penance, prefer to live in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Such atmosphere facilitates them to attain the tranquility of mind. The banks of the Sarasvatī had such an atmosphere. It is why they were densely inhabited by such holy sages. 4 By the dwellings of such sages, it is proved how high esteem they would have cherished for the Sarasvatī, performed their daily religious rites by its banks and drank its holy waters. One of such sages was the worshipful Kardama, who lived along with the bank of the Sarasvatī and practised hard austerities for ten thousand years. 5 Lord Kṛṣṇa also sitting under an asvatthā tree, practised his self denial 6 on the bank of the Sarasvatī.

Earlier 7 we have seen that the Sarasvatī as a river is called ‘brahmaputri’, the daughter of Brahmā. Brahmā seems to have great affection towards it. It is evident from the fact that Brahmā once along with Marśi and other sages visited the hermitage of Kardama, which was encircled by it. 8 Many other similar references to the holy places and tīrthas by the bank of the Sarasvatī are scattered at numerous places in the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa. They all prove the sanctity of the Sarasvatī river. It is said

1 Vāmp., XXXII.2; MārP., XXIII.30.
2 Vāmp., XXXII.24; XXXIV.6; EdP., III.14-83.
3 Vāmp., XLII.9.
4 BhāP., III. 22.27.
5 Ibid., III.21.6.
6 Ibid., III.4.3-8.
7 Supra., p. 176.
8 BhāP., III.24.9.
that a heavy battle took place between Devas and Asuras, when Lord Viṣṇu destroyed the progeny of Diti. So Diti went to Syamantapaṅcaka, a holy place situated on its bank and practised hard penance for a long time worshipping her husband.¹ In the chapter XXII of the Matsya-Purāṇa, there is an enumeration of the sacred tīrthas for Śrāddhas, in which the Pitṛtīrtha, Nilakunda, Rudrasarovara, Mānasarovara, Mandakini, Acchobda, Vipāśā, Sarasavatī, all are taken to be the sacred tīrthas.² The Sarasvati is also taken to be sacred to Devamātā on its bank at Pāravāra.³ It is also said that the sacred rivers, the Gaṅgā, the Sindhu, the Śaṭadru, the Candrabhāgā, the Īrāvati, the Vitastā, the Vipāśā, the Yamunā, the Gandakī, the Sarasvati, the Devikā and the Saryū all were utilised as bamboos in the chariot of Tripūrārī.⁴

The Sarasvati has, thus, been a very sacred river in many respects; for instance, as having pure waters of spiritual sanctity, sacred banks and sacred tīrthas.

(iii) Some epithets of the Sarasvati:

In the Purāṇas, numerous adjectives are used for rivers in general. Among them, some are really remarkable and striking; such as śivā, pujyā and śivajalā. Usually such epithets imply the munificence and benevolent nature of rivers.⁵ They flow for others and water the earth for others;

¹ MP., VII. 2-3.
² Ibid., XXII. 22-23.
³ Ibid., XIII. 44.
⁴ Ibid., CXXXIII. 23-24.
⁵ Dr. Rāmaśankara Bhaṭṭācārya, Itihāsa-Purāṇa kā Amāṣilana (Vārāṇasi, 1963), p. 219.
and amid such a process of their actions, they bring many beneficial boons to human happiness and feed the world like their own children. It is, perhaps, due to this fact that they are affectionately called mothers of the world (visvasya mātaraḥ). It applies to the rivers in general; we have the following with regard to the Sarasvatī in particular.

The Purāṇas speak of two types of rivers, those which flow only in the rainy season and the others, which are always in flux. The Sarasvatī is reckoned to be of the latter type. The Vēma-Purāṇa says that it is the Sarasvatī alone, which, irrespective of seasons, never ceases to flow (varsākāla-vahāḥ sarvā varjaya-vitvā sarasvatī). It is probably to denote this very character of the Sarasvatī that the various Purānic epithets such as pravāhama-yuktā, vegayuktā, srotasye 'va, etc., have been used for it.

By nāditama,7 we know how mighty it was in the Rgvedic times. The Purāṇas do not undermine its such previous superior position. They hail the Sarasvatī as a great river and let it to retain its former status; they only replace 'nāditama' with 'mahānadi' (a great river).8 Great rivers have several characteristics of their own as distinguished from those of smaller ones. One of such characteristic features is as follows:

1 Ibid., p.219.
2 Ibid., p.223.
3 VēmP., XXXIV.8.
4 Ibid., XXXIII.1.
5 Ibid., XXXVII.22.
6 BvP., II.7.3.
7 RV., II.41.16.
8 VēmP., XXXVII.31, XL.8; BhaP., V.19.18.
It is generally observed that small rivers originate either from the mountains or from big rivers. If they originate from big rivers, they flow as their tributaries. Similarly, if they originate from the mountains, they run down and join big rivers. In both the circumstances, they have but a little life. But such an opinion cannot be advanced against big rivers. They originate from the mountains and find their ultimate way to the oceans. It is why a big river is called 'samudragā' flowing up to the ocean.¹ This is equally true of the Sarasvatī and it is for this reason that it is called 'sāgaragāmini (flowing to the ocean).²

Earlier,³ we have noticed that the Sarasvatī took its birth from the Himālayas and first fell into the Rajasthan sea and later on changed its course for the Arabian sea. This change has been shown in the Purāṇas themselves as they furnish two Purānic epithets for the Sarasvatī, namely 'prāci'⁴ and 'pascimāmukhi',⁵ i.e., when it was easterly, it was called 'prāci', but when it became westerly, it came to be styled 'pascimāmukhi'. In the duration of change, its state was varying. At this time, it was struggling for life in the desert and, therefore, it was sometimes visible and sometimes invisible. In such a state, it is called 'drṣṭāyāmṛṣṭaṅgatī' (having visible and invisible course).⁶ On account of its flowing through

---

¹ Cf. Dr. Ramaśankara Bhaṭṭācārya, op. cit., p. 223.
² Vide Sūdīnī., pp. 20-22.
³ Vide Sūdīnī., pp. 20-22.
⁴ PdP., V.18,217; Sūdīnī., X.78.19.
⁵ Sūdīnī., VII.35.26.
⁶ Vide Sūdīnī., XXXII.2; also cf. INO, Vol. XXVII. No.3, p.216, "Sarasvatī rises in the Sirpur hills of the Siwalik range in the Himālayas and emerges into the plains at Ād-Badrī in the Ambala District, Punjab. It disappears once at Chalaur but reappears at Bhavanipur; then it disappears at Balchappar but again appears at Bara-khera ..."
Kurukṣetra, it is called 'kurukṣetra-prādayinī'. Since the Sarasvatī contains auspicious waters (punyajalāvahā), various epithets expressive of its sacredness have been used for it, e.g., 'punyādā'; 'punyajananī, punyatirthasvarūpini, punyavadbhir niśeṣyā, sthitih punyavatām'; 'tapasvinām taporūpā, tapasyākāsarūpini, jvaladagnisvarūpini'; 'tīrtharūpā-tātipāvany'; 'subhā'; 'punyā'; 'punyajalā'; 'pāpanirmokā'; 'sarvapūpepranāsini'; 'atipunyā'; 'punyatoṣyā'; etc.

Both Aryans and non-Aryans have been said residing in the vicinity of the rivers—the Gaṅgā, the Sindhu and the Sarasvatī. They were provided with equal opportunity and while living there, they took their waters without any distinction. A collective epithet 'saridvarāḥ' has been used for the Sarasvatī, Devikā and Sarayū. Besides this, a most striking epithet for the Sarasvatī is 'brahmānandī'. It was the brahmānandī Sarasvatī, wherein sage Parasurāma took his 'avabhāta bath'. The Sarasvatī was, thus, closely associated with Brahmā.

2. Ibid., XXXII. 24.
4. Ibid., II.6.2.
5. Ibid., II.6.3.
6. Ibid., II.7.4.
8. Ibid., XXXII.24, XXXIV.6.
10. Ibid., V.27.119.
13. Ibid., XXXVII. 29, 38.
14. MP., CXIV.20.
15. Ibid., CXXXIII.24.
6. **The Marriage and Spouseship:**

This aspect has been fully developed in the *Purāṇas*. Though its exposition is vague; but it has its own characteristics and has been referred to several times. Sarasvatī has been spoken of as associated particularly with Brahmā, Dharmarāja, Svāyambhuva, Manu, Viṣṇu, Aditya, etc.

(1) **Sarasvatī and Brahmā:**

The marriage between Sarasvatī and Brahmā, though allegorical, has been mentioned several times in some of the *Purāṇas*, and Brahmā is closely related to Sarasvatī. His engagement with the latter is really very remarkable. The *Matsya-Purāṇa* has far more to say on this point than the other *Purāṇas*. According to it, Sarasvatī was born out of the half portion of Brahmā's body as his daughter. But when he looked at her, he was fired by her peerless beauty and praised her for it incessantly 'Oh! what an enchanting form!' 'oh! what an enchanting form!'. This all, he said in the presence of his mind-born-sons (mānas-putras), which caused shame to his daughter, who with great reverence, began to circumambulate her such bare-faced father. But when, she was circumambulating him, Brahmā took it troublesome to move again and again with her. So he became four-faced to have a full and continuous look at her; and then five-faced, when she proceeded to the heaven. Ultimately, Brahmā entrusted on his sons the work of creation and married her, who was of hundred beauties (satarūpā). Thus, he enjoyed the company of Sarasvatī for hundred years living inside the lotus.¹

¹ *MP.*, III. 30-43.
From this Purāṇa, it is not clear how Brahmā, in spite of the unwillingness of Sarasvatī, won her as his wife; but the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa clarifies this point. It says that Sarasvatī was quite impassionate, when Brahmā fell under the irresistible influence of love. He had to win over the heart of his daughter.  

When Brahmā married Sarasvatī, he lost his tapasyā and he, therefore, had to practise hard penance. It is due to this tapasyā that he begot his wife from half of his body, who was gifted with the faculty of creation. This consort of Brahmā was beauty incarnate and stood by her husband as Surabhi. Brahmā enjoyed her company and out of his union with her a smoke-coloured progeny was born. Here/is not the clear reference to his wife by name and most probably Sāvitri seems to be referred to which is evident from the following. In the Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa, Sāvitri has been mentioned as the wife of Brahmā and when Brahmā enjoyed her company, the Vedas, Sāstras, year, month, day, night, twilight, dawn, etc., came into existence. In the Purāṇas, Sarasvatī and Sāvitri have been mentioned in different capacity. As 'Prakṛti', they stand side by side with each other; while other references present them as essentially one. Sometimes, they come before us as two different wives of Brahmā.

---

1 BhāP., III.12.28.
2 MP., Clxxi. 20-23.
3 Ibid., Clxix.34-36.
5 Ibid., II.1.1, 4.4;
6 MP., III.30-32.
7 See supra, pp. 166-167.
(ii) Sarasvatī and Dharmarāja:

The Matsya-Purāṇa says elsewhere that Brahmā created five maids - Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Harīvatī, Sādhyā and Visvesā and all of whom were married to Dharmarāja in due course. ¹

(iii) Manu and Sarasvatī:

When Brahmā enjoyed himself in the company of Śāvitrī (or Sarasvatī) and Manu was born. Thus, Manu was the son of Sarasvatī (also called Śatarūpā) by Brahmā. This Manu is called Svāyambhuva Manu. ² In some descriptions Śatarūpā has been said to be the wife of Manu, who must be the different person from the above Manu. For the enlargement of the creation, Brahmā divided his body into twain, male and female. These forms were Manu Svāyambhuva that stood in relation of husband and wife. ³

(iv) Sarasvatī and Viṣṇu:

Sarasvatī has also been mentioned as the wife of Hari. The Brahmaśaiva-varta-Purāṇa says that Hari had three wives namely, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gāṅgā. ⁴ Śrī Kṛṣṇa produced Sarasvatī; but when she showed her affection towards him, he asked her to choose Nārāyana as the object of her love. He told her that he had Rādhā as his wife, and, therefore,

---

¹ MP., CLXI.32.33; also cf. PdP., V.37.79.
² MP., III.44-45.
⁴ BrP., II.6.17, "lakṣmīḥ sarasvatī gāṅgā tisaḥ bhāryā harer 'pi premām samās tiṣṭhanti satatām harisannidhau"
there was no room for her to be his wife. Thus, Sarasvatī was given to Nārāyaṇa. According to one view, Sarasvatī was one of the co-wives of Viṣṇu. But when the latter found that one wife was as much as he could manage, he had to offer Sarasvatī to Brahmā and Gaṅgā to Śiva, while he kept Lalākṣmi alone with him. Thus, Sarasvatī was at first the wife of Nārāyaṇa and later on of Brahmā.

The relation between Sarasvatī and Sarasvān has already been discussed. Sarasvān was the spouse of Sarasvatī. The similar notion has also been reiterated in the Brahmacāvarta-Purāṇa, where the identification between Sarasvatī and Bhāratī as well as between Brahmā and Hari has been maintained. Hari has been conceived to be Sarasvān, who, in the capacity of the presiding deity of waters, is all-pervading.

According to the literal meaning, Viṣṇu (Hari) is the one who is all-pervading. The sense is explicit from the root विष, to enter, or to pervade. The personality of Brahmā also implies this for he represents the whole universe as well as the soul (ātman) or Supreme Being, beyond space and time. It is probably for this reason that Brahmā has also been identified with Nārāyaṇa: "brahmā nārāyaṇātmaḥ".

1 Ibid., II.4.12-19.
2 Ibid., II.2.59.
5 BPr., II.7.1-3; also cf. Amanda Swarup Gupta, op.cit., p. 63.
6 Monier-Williams, op.cit., p. 946.
7 Ibid., p. 689.
Besides, Sarasvati has also been mentioned at different places as the wife of Āditya,\(^1\) Gaṇapati,\(^2\) etc.

As to the relation of Āditya with Sarasvati, we should first see the meaning of Āditya. The word has many meanings, for instance, the son of Aditi,\(^3\) one of the seven rṣis, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, etc. Sūrya, sometimes, represents Indra. It is why Indra has been reckoned as one of the twelve Ādityas and is also subordinated to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.\(^4\) Probably, the acceptance of Sarasvati as the wife of Āditya is just to show her most ancient affinity to Indra. Sarasvati in ancient times, was supposed to be the goddess of the Bharatas tribe, who held their descending from her.\(^5\) In the post-Vedic period, the place of Indra is highly under-rated and his Vedic superiority seems to have been encroached upon by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. If it be true, one may reasonably except Sarasvati to come to be accepted as the wife of Brahmā and Viṣṇu. So far as the marriage between Brahmā and Sarasvati is concerned, it is out and out allegorical. It is said that the primal creation is the result of the divine knowledge. Brahmā is understood to be the Creator of the Vedas and Gāyatrī (Sarasvati) the presiding deity over them. Thus, their corporial and incorporial relation is simply shown by this mythological way of interpretation.\(^6\)

\(^1\) MP., CLXXI, 57, "ādityasya sarasvatyām jajñāte dvau satau varau".
\(^2\) V.V. Dixit, "Brahmā and Sarasvati" PO, Vol.VIII, No.1 & 2 (Poona, 1943), p.67. "In course of time a fresh deity arose who usurped the function of Prajāpati and Brahman. That deity is Gaṇapati. He is the lord of all knowledge, like them ... Gaṇapati also has two wives Sāradā and Sarasvati. Sāradā represents profane learning and Sarasvati represents sacred learning. The earlier idea that the daughters became wives of the father was dropped as it was unaesthetic to the refined taste".
\(^3\) Monier Williams, op.cit., p. 119.
\(^4\) Ibid., p.140.
\(^5\) Donald A. Mackenzie, op.cit., p.XL.
Among the offsprings of Sarasvati, we are told of Sārasvata, Svāyambhuva Manu and some cosmic elements. Their brief description is as under:

1. **Sārasvata:**

Sārasvata has been referred to at several places in different contexts in the Purāṇas. For instance, it stands for the son of Sarasvati and Dādhica, the twelfth kalp, the son of Jaigīśavya, a Vedavyāsa of the ninth dvāpāra, etc.

In the Purāṇas, we also find that women had the same name as rivers. The Saravastī was an ancient one; but in the later period, persons were given this name. Similarly, the name Sārasvata, too, happened to be much popular.

In the Mahābhārata, also Sārasvata has been taken to be the son of Sarasvati. There, at one place, Sārasvata is held to be a rṣi and the Sarasvatī a personified river. It has been said that there occurred a severe drought lasting for a period of twelve years and resulting in a famine. On account of this, people lost all the sources to live upon. Brāhmaṇas could not devote themselves to the Vedic studies for want of food. Consequently, the entire Vedic knowledge was lost. Only Sārasvatī

---

1. [VP., LXV.91; Bṛ. III.1.94, "sārasvataḥ sarasvatyāṁ dādhicāc co papadyate"].
2. [MP., CCXC.5.]
3. [VP., XXIII.138, "jaigīśavye 'tī vikhyātaḥ sarvesāṁ yogināṁ varah".]
4. [VīS., III.3.13, "sārasvatyas ca navame"].
could retain it; for his mother saved his life feeding him upon fish. When the drought was over, it was he, who taught the Vedas to the Brāhmaṇas.¹

Still at another place,² Sārvastī has been told to have been born to Sarasvatī by God, who asked him to study Vedas and impart the Vedic knowledge to others. This Sārvastī is the same as Vyāsa and Apāntaratamas.

The Purāṇas tell us that there lived an ancient sect of Hindus called Sārvastis. They were in the western country by the side of the Sarasvatī river. The people of the sect are supposed to be the Brāhmaṇas. The area they lived in, was also called Sārvastī nation after their name.³ They were called Sārvastis apparently because of their continuous inhabitation along the Sarasvatī river. On account of benefits they got from the river and their reverence for it, they regarded it as their own mother. The sanctity and divinity attached to the river influenced their lives and many of them rose as seers (rṣis).

It is not impossible that these Sārvastis were the descendants of Sārvastī of the drought-episode alluded to above. Their number would have risen up to 60,000 and it was, probably, to them that Sārvastī imparted the Vedic knowledge after the drought. The episode appears to point to a climatic change and to the extinction of waters of the Sarasvatī river, too. The Sārvastis would have, even during the period of famine, persisted to live by the side of the river and when the drought

1 SārvP., LIII.2-51.
2 SāntP., CCCLIX.38 ff.
was over, they would have been imparted the extinguished Vedic knowledge by Sārasvata. Prof. Wilson terms it revivalism and thinks it introduction of Hindu rituals.¹

(ii) Svāyambhuva Manu:

When Brahmā was enamoured of the beauty of his daughter Sarasvatī or Satarūpā, he married her and enjoyed her company for hundred years in the lotus-temple. On account of their union, Svāyambhuva Manu was born.² Besides him, there are fourteen other Manus, all of whom are his descendants.³

At another place, the Matsya-Purāṇa states that when Brahmā married to Satarūpā, he lost the very virtue of his tapasyā. He, therefore, again practised tapas and created his wife of equal qualities and capable of creation out of half of his body and then he recited the Gāyatrī and created some Prajāpatīs like Viśvēsa, also named Dharma, Dākṣa, Marici, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasistha, Gautama, Brāhma, Angiras and Manu.⁴

There are two types of creation, Manasī and Maithunī. The former creation (srṣṭi) symbolises his idea and the latter the very conversion of the idea into form. The latter creation of his includes his physical sons, Dākṣa, Dharma, Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Pramoda, Mṛtyu and Bharata.⁵

---

² MP., III.43-44.
³ Ibid., III.45-47.
⁴ Ibid., CLXII.20-28.
⁵ Cf. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, op. cit., p. 35.
Manu as the son of Sarasvatī or Gāyatrī or Satarūpā or Brahmāṇī also implies the principle of manas or buddhi including five tanmātṛas, which are essential for the creation of the universe. Manas, buddhi and five tanmātṛas are, sometimes, taken as seven sons of Sarasvatī; but these may also be supposed to be her energy in the form of sraddhā, rddhi, kalā, medhā, tuṣṭi, puṣṭi, prabhā, matī, omkāra, etc. It is why puṣṭi, dhyā, kīrtti, siddhi, kānti, kṣamā, svadhā, svāhā and vānī are sometimes identified with Sarasvatī.

These sraddhā, rddhi, kalā, medhā, etc., are mental qualities of Sarasvatī and symbolise her mind itself. In the case of Brahmā, too, Svāyambhuva Manu, the offspring of Brahmā, represents Mind or Intellect of Brahmā and his progeny is the place for the very manifestation of that principle of intellect. The Purāṇas often tell us that all the Vedas were produced from Brahmā and Sarasvatī. The Vedas are the store of knowledge and knowledge is the very product of mind. And if Svāyambhuva Manu is the Mind of Brahmā, he is Veda. Similar view may also be held with Sarasvatī. In a broader sense, Svāyambhuva Manu may be said to have representing the Vedas proper.

(iii) Others:

Satarūpā has been said in the Padma-Pūrāṇa to have produced Rṣis, Prajāpatīs, Manus and others. The Matsya-Pūrāṇa speaks of

---

1 Ibid., p. 53.
2 GarP., I.7.9.
3 VamP., XL.15,16.
4 Cf. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, op.cit., p. 15.
5 PdP., V.16.10-12.
twelve Ādityas, Indra, Viṣṇu, Bhaga, Tvastr, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Ravi, Pūṣan, Mitra, Dhanada, Dhātṛ and Parjanya. Āditya has also been taken to be the husband of Sarasvatī. Danu and Diti were produced from this very couple. Besides, the whole universe and the Vedas are also said to have evolved from Sarasvatī.

1 MP., CLXXI. 56-58.
2 VāmP., XXXII. 6.
CHAPTER VII

REFERENCES TO SARASVATĪ BY SOME CLASSICAL WRITERS
REFERENCES TO SARASVATĪ BY SOME CLASSICAL WRITERS

Sarasvatī has also been popular with the classical writers. We are here studying the allusions made to her by important writers only.

1. Kalidāsa

Kalidāsa refers to Sarasvatī many times in his Rāghuvamsa, Kumārasambhava, Vikramorvasīva, Mālavikāgnimitra, Abhijñānasākuntala and Nāchadūta. He mentions her name with different connotations.

(1) Sarasvatī as synonymous with speech (vāni):

In the classical period, Sarasvatī has been conceived chiefly as a goddess of learning and has been completely identified with speech. Taking Sarasvatī as speech, Kalidāsa writes: "uccaśāra puras tasya gudharupā sarasvatī".1 "iti dehavimuktaye sthitam ratim ākāśabhavā sarasvatī".2 "yadā madāndho na gatān nyavartatā 'mbarat tadā 'bhūn marutān sarasvatī".3 "ācanyo 'dīrayāmāsa sitā satyam sarasvatim".4

1 RV., XV.46.
2 KS., IV.39.
3 Ibid., XV.32.
4 RV., XV.60.
"saravatī śrutimahatī mahīyatām", ¹ and "mayi tasya suvṛtta vartate laghusandesa padā saravatī". ²

Elsewhere, he has taken Sarasvatī as a goddess representing the entire literature, with twofold division into Sanskrit and Pārśkṛta:

"dvidha prayuktena ca vāṁsayena saravatī tathāmithunam munīva ¹
sāṃskārapūtena varaṇa varenaṃ vadhūṃ sukhagrāhyanibandhanena ॥ ³

Here Sarasvatī is presented as praising Śiva and Pārvatī through Sanskrita and Pārśkṛta. In the classical age, we do not find any distinction between Bhāratī and Saravatī. Bhāratī, too, stands for speech (vāṇī). ⁴

(ii) Relation of Saravatī with Music:

Being the patroness deity of all the arts and sciences, Saravatī has been judiciously associated with music, the most enchanting of all the arts. She has been considered the source of music or song.

In the Raghuvamsā, Saravatī is said to be at the root of the praise of Raghu sung by bards:

"parikalpitaśamnīdhyā kāle kāle ca bandīṣu ¹
stutyaṃ stutibhir arthyābhir upatasthe saravatī ॥ ⁶

She has also been described as the teacher of music. In order to

¹ AS., VII. 35.
² RV., VIII. 77.
³ KS., VII.90.
⁴ Ibid., VI. 79.
⁵ John Dowson, op.cit., p. 284.
⁶ RV., IV. 6.
learn the art from her, one is to worship her: "sūṣṭhu bhagavatī bhaṇḍādī. bho gaṇadāsa, saṅgītapadaṃ lambhī sarassale uvaṇṇamodāṇam khādamānasa kīm de muhanīgheṇa vivādeṇa".¹

(iii) Sarasvatī as a poetess:

Kālidāsa speaks of Sarasvatī as a poetess also. He mentions a drama called Lakṣmi-Svayamvara, which was composed by Sarasvatī herself: "gāḷava: na jāne āraḥhitā na vattī. tassūṃ uṇa sarassakīḍakāvavabandhe lacchīsāmāvare tesu tesu rasantaresu tammai ēsi".²

(iv) Sarasvatī as a river:

There are only a few instances in Kālidāsa's works speaking of Sarasvatī as a river. Kālidāsa describes this river as flowing underground:

"nidhōnagarbhāṁ ṯa sāgarāmbārāṁ somaṁ ivā bhyantrailnapāvakāṁ | nadīṁ ivā 'ntahsalīlam sarasvatīṁ nrpah sasatvāṁ mahīṁ amanyata||"³

In the Meghadūta, he describes the Sarasvatī river as flowing in the Brahmāvartta janapada somewhere near Kanakhala.⁴ That he attaches much importance to this river is evident enough from the fact that he

¹ MM., I, p. 275, lines 14-15, Sanskrit: "sūṣṭhu bhagavatī bhaṇḍādī. bho gaṇadāsa, saṅgītapadaṃ labdhī sarasvatyupāyamodakāṁ khādatā kīṁ te muhanīgheṇa vivādeṇa".

² VU., III, p. 192, lines 4-5, Sanskrit: "gāḷava: na jāne āraḥhitā no vā iti. tassūṃ punah sarasvatikṛta-kāvavabandhe lakṣmīsvayamāvare tesu tesu rasantaresu tammayā ēsit".

³ Rāv., III,9.

⁴ MD., I,52-54.
asks the cloud to sanctify itself by drinking its waters:

"hitvā hālām abhimatarasām revati lōccanānkām
bandhūprityā samaravimukho lāngali yāh siṣeve

kṛtvā tāsām abhi gamam apām saumya! sārasvatāṁ
antah suddhas tvam api bhavitā varamātreṇa kṛṣṇah ||¹

Here, this river has not been described as flowing underground. As the text suggests, its course is treated as manifest. He accepts the meeting together of the Gāṅgā and Yamunā at Prayag and the Sarasvati is shown absent there.²

2. Asvaghosa:

(i) It has already been pointed out how the knowledge of the Vedas was lost and how the son of Sarasvatī kept it preserved during the period of drought and later on, when the drought was over, he taught the Vedas to the Brāhmaṇas, who resorted to him in order to study them.³

---

¹ MD., I.53.
² Cf. Rāv., XIII. 54-56.
alludes to this event in the Budhacarita as follows:

"sārasvataś āpi jagāda naṣṭam vedāṃ punar ayam dadraśaṃ na pūrve
yvāsaṃ tathāḥ nam bahudhā cakāra na yam vaśiṣṭhāḥ kṛtvān asaktīḥ \[I\]

His Saundarananda also refers to this event as:

"tathā 'āgirā rāgaparītacetāḥ sarasvatī(?) brahmasutah siṣeṣe
dārasvato yatra suto 'syā jajñē naṣṭasya vedasya punah pravaktā \[II\]

3. Bhāravi:

Bhāravi, in his Kirātārjuniya, refers to her under the names of
Sarasvatī as well as Bhāratī only at a few places; but both the names
imply the sense of speech (vāṇī): The references run as under:

"viviktavarnābharaṇā sukhasrutih
prasādayantī ṭṛdayāṇy api dviśām \[I\]
pravarttate nā 'krtaṇaḥyakarmanāṁ
prasannagambhīrapadā sarasvatī. \[II\]

The poet, here, discloses the nature of Sarasvatī (vāṇī) through
such adjectives of Sarasvatī as 'viviktavarnābharaṇā', who has distinct
letters (varnas) as her adornments; 'sukhasrutih', who is pleasing to
ears; and 'prasādayantī ṭṛdayāṇy api dviśām', who is capable of
pleasing even the hearts of enemies. He again speaks of her as 'prasannagambhīrapadā' having words containing lucidity and profundity (of

1 BC., I. 42.
2 Sauk., VII.31.
3 Ka., XIV. 3.
The name Bharatī has also been employed for Sarasvatī to convey
the same sense. A couple of instances will make it clear:

"Iyam īṣṭagūṇāya rocatāṁ
rucirīrthā bhavate 'pi bhāratī'

Here, from "rocatāṁ rucirīrthā bhavate 'pi bhāratī", it is obvious
that Bhāratī denotes speech. The same sense is conveyed by the word in the
following:

"samasya sampādayatā gunair imān
tvayā samāropitabhārāi bhāratīm
pragālbham ātmā dhuri dhuryya' vāgminām
vanecareṇā 'pi satā 'dhiropitāh II" 2

4. Māgha:

Māgha has also alluded to Sarasvatī at some places. At one
place, he refers to her in the sense of an interior court (Sabhābhyanantarā):

"dyotitā 'ntahsabhaih kundakudmalāgradatah smitaḥ!
snapite 'va 'bhavat tasya 'śuddhavarnā sarasvatī II" 3

1 Mallinātha explains it as: "prasannāni vēcakēni gambhirāni artha-
gurūni ca pedāni suptīśeantarūpanā yasyāh sā. anyatra tu prasannā
vimalā gambhirāpadā alasacaranā sarasvatī vāk. gīrvāgvāni sarasvatī
'ty amaraḥ".

2 KA., II.5.
3 Ibid., XIV. 6.
4 SV., II.7.
The word Sarasvati stands for the interior court of Hari. He uses the word Bhāratī in order to denote the sense of speech:

"bhāratīṁ āhitabharāṁ athā 'nuddhatam uddhavaḥ |
| tathāyāṁ utathyānujāvaj jagāśa 'gre gada-grajaṁ //"\(^2\)

He appears to point to the Sarasvati river also when he refers to the ocean as Sarasvāṇ:

"samaṁ samantato rājāṁ āpatantir anākinaṁ |
| kārṣinaḥ pratyagrahīd ekaḥ sarasvāṇaṁ iva nimnagāṁ //\(^3\)

5. Śrī-Harṣa:

Śrī-Harṣa, in his Naśadhiya-carita, refers to Sarasvati in different contexts.

(i) Sarasvati as a river:

Śrī-Harṣa uses the word Sarasvati for the river in general in the following:

"disi disi girigravānah svāṁ vamantu sarasvāṁ |
| tulayatu mithas tāṁ āpātasphuraddhavanidambaraṁ |
| sa param aparāḥ kṣīrodāvan yadī 'yam udīryate |
| mathitur amrtaṁ khedacchedi pramodanamo'danam //\(^4\)

Here, the first line of the verse "disi disi girigravānah svāṁ vamantu sarasvāṁ", means 'let the mountain-stones flow their river (sarasvāṁ) in all directions: In the following verse, he points to the Sarasvati river:
There is pun on the expression "sarvasvatisapraspravahacresu". Here Sarasvati stands for speech (Vāk) as well as the river of the name and in general as well. Elsewhere, Sarasvati stands both as a river and as a goddess. In reference to Varuna, she stands for the Sarasvati river and in reference to Nala, for goddess Sarasvati.

(ii) Sarasvati as playing an important role in marriage:

We have observed earlier that Sarasvati was worshipped by persons who wanted progeny. She was worshipped by a bride, too, but in such a context, her relationship with marriage has not been brought out in clear terms. In the later literature, she has acquired an important place in this ceremony. The Grhya-Sūtras expressly mention her in the context of marriage. She was invoked at the marriage rites.

So even before the classical period, she had entered the domestic life. Śrī-Harsha entrusts the duty of a go-between and match-maker to her, and assigns to her the active role in the svayamvara of Damayanti or the command of Viṣṇu.

---

1 NM., IX.51.
2 Ibid., XIII.24.
3 See supra., pp. 66-67.
4 See supra., p. 124.
6 NM., X.70 ff.
(iii) **Sarasvatī as the patron-deity of Kashmir:**

The residents of Kashmir recognise Sarasvatī under the name of Saradā as their guardian-deity. Sarasvatī under the name of Saradā, is thought to live corporally in Kashmir and the Naiṣadharacīrtī of Śrī-Harṣa won the credit of being a poem endowed with profound learning and literary merits only after being recognised so by her.

6. **Bhavabhūti:**

Sarasvatī and Vāk have been taken to be synonymous with each other. Vāk, like Sarasvatī, has been used to denote the goddess of speech (Vāgdevī).

Bhavabhūti speaks of the goddess of speech as Vāk:

"idam kavibhyah pūrvebhya namovakam praśāsmahe
vindema devatōm vācam amṛtaṁ ātmānaṁ kālam ||"^3

At another place, he tells us of himself as highly favoured by Vāk (Sarasvatī):

"yam brahmānam iyan devī vāg vasye 'va 'nuvantate\nuttaram rāmacīrtīm tatpranātmatprayokṣyate ||"^4

He also refers to Vāk as Sarasvatī herself, who produces learning (vidyā):

"vidyāṁ vāg iva yāṁ asūta.||"^5

7. **Dāṇḍin:**

In the very beginning of the Kavyādārṣa, Dāṇḍin refers to

---

2 *NBh.*, XVI.130; also cf. Pt.Śrī Haragavinda Sāstrī's introduction of the Naiṣadhamahākāvya, Part I (Vārānasī, 1954), pp. 5-6.
3 *Uḍ.*, I.1.
Sarasvatī. He points to two facts concerning her. He states that she is, as it were, the she-swan residing in the lotus-forest of the mouth of Brahmā, and is all white (sarvasuklā):

"caturmukhamukhāmbhobhavahamsavadhūra mama
mānase ramatām nityām sarvasuklā sarasvatī ||"¹

The conception of Sarasvatī as residing in the mouth of Brahmā leads us to think that she as Vāk took birth from the mouth of Brahmā.² Whiteness has been taken as the colour of knowledge (jñāna) that being light pure and simple (jyotisvarūpā) and to conceive Sarasvatī as all white is to take to be all knowledge. Dandin himself describes Vāk as ‘the light’ called ‘śabda’ (śabdhavāyam jyotīḥ) and states that unless this light illuminates the three worlds, it is nothing but all darkness:

"idām andham tamah kṛtsnam jāyeta bhuvanatrayam|
yadi śabdhavāyam jyotir āsamsāram na dīpyate ||"³

8. Subandhu:

For classical Sanskrit poets, Sarasvatī has frequently been a subject of eulogy and invocation. They bestowed high reverence on her; for she was the only goddess, who invokes wisdom and eloquence in them.⁴ It is generally believed that for poets the grace of Sarasvatī is indispensable. If they are not favoured with her grace, their mind and fancy cannot penetrate into, and visualise the objects of description and

¹ KĀ., I.1.
² Cf. BhāP., III.12.26; see also supra., pp. 171-172.
³ KĀ., I.4; also cf. ibid., I.3, 5, for the usefulness of Vāk.
present them in their poetry as actually existing before one's eyes, 
may as more pleasing than they are experienced in the actual world. 
Subandhu points to this fact in the following: 

"karabadarasadrs'am akhilam bhuvanatalam yatprasadatah kavayah |
pasyanti sukshmantayah sa jayati sarasvati devī "

He speaks of himself as graced by Sarasvatī. He takes Sarasvatī 
not only as a goddess but also as speech (vāl), "kvacid vālmīkisarasvatīm |
iva darsite 'ksākuvaṃsām", "... ākāsasarasvati samudacarat". 

9. Bāna Bhatta:

Bāna offers us with more material regarding Sarasvatī than any 
other classical writer. In the Harsacarita while tracing his lineage to 
Sarasvatī, he describes her in detail how his family was descended from her. 
In the Kādambarī, he tells us that his family was favoured by Sarasvatī and 
was devoted to learning from the very beginning. 

(i) The relation of Bāna's family with Sarasvatī: 

Bāna describes his family in the Harsacarīta as well as in the 
Kādambarī. According to the latter, in the family of Vātsyāyana, there 
took birth Kubera, from Kubera, Arthapati, from Arthapati, Citrabhānu. 

1 Vd., introductory verse 1 
2 Ibid., introductory verse 13, "saravatidattavaraaprasādah..." 
3 Ibid., p. 218, lines 1-2. 
4 Ibid., p. 245, lines 1-2. 
5 Vide HC., I,61 ff. 
7 Ibid., 10. 
8 Ibid., 13. 
9 Ibid., 16.
and from Citrabhānu, Bāna. But the Harṣacarita furnishes a more detailed account of Bāna's family. According to it, there was a Brahmin born in the family of Bhārgava, who got Vatsa as his son by his wife called Aksamālī. From this Vatsa, there proceeded a great family wherein sage Vatsyāyana took birth. After a considerable lapse of time, Kubera took birth in this family, who had four sons namely Acyuta, Isāna, Hara and Pāśupata. Of them, Pāśupata had Arthapati as his son, who had eleven sons namely Bhṛgu, Ramsa, Suci, Kavi, Mahīdatta, Dharma, Jātavedas, Citrabhānu, Tryakṣa, Mahīdatta and Visvarūpa. It was Citrabhānu, who was Bāna's father.

This family of Bāna, was highly graced by Sarasvatī, which is obvious from a few evidences. Bāna writes that his ancestor Kubera was earnestly devoted to the Vedas, sacrifice and the other śāstras and Sarasvatī always resided in his mouth. He was a great performer of the sacrifices and Sarasvatī herself took it as pleasure to wipe out the beads of perspiration caused during their performance. Actually Sarasvatī represents the Vedas, all type of learning, art, science, etc. As learning was flourishing at the hands of the forefathers of Bāna, he rightly says that they were especially favoured by Sarasvatī.

1 Ibid., 19.
2 Ibid., p. 62, lines 1-6.
3 Ibid., p. 63, lines 1-17.
4 Ibid., p. 65, lines 1-11.
5 Ibid., introductory verse 11.
6 Ibid., introductory verse 19.
7 Supra., pp. 171-172.
8 John Dowson, op. cit., p. 284.
Vatsa, the progenitor of Bana's family, was the cousin of Sarasvata, the son of Dadhica and Sarasvati. They were born simultaneously, the former to Akṣamāla and the latter to Sarasvati. Sarasvata was blessed by his mother Sarasvati with the knowledge of all the śāstras and other branches of knowledge along with the esoteric meanings of the Vedas.

Consequently, when Sarasvata grew up, all the blessings of his mother got themselves manifest in Sarasvata automatically. He and Vatsa were not only cousins but also bosom-friends. He, therefore, infused the entire learning into Vatsa.

Thus, Bana's family was from the very beginning blessed with learning, its progenitor being in close relation with the son of Sarasvati herself. His family is duly praised for its profound learning. We have already noted the close relation of the Sarasvata Brāhmaṇas with Sarasvata.

(ii) Bana's version of the legend of Sarasvati:
Bana establishes matrimonial relation between Sarasvati and Dadhica. The latter is described as the son of Cāvana ṛṣi and Sukanyā.

---
1 HC, I, p. 61, line 1—p. 62, line 6.
2 Ibid., I, p. 61, lines 2-4, "... 'samyaksarabhayaḥ sarve vedāh sarvāni ca śāstraṇi sakalās ca kalā mat prabhavat svayam āvirbhavi-śyanti' iti varam adāt".
3 Ibid., I, p. 62, lines 7-9, "atha sārasvato mātur mahimā yauvanā-rambhā eva "virbhūtā kṣesvidyāsamhāras tasmin savayasi bhrātari preyasi prūnasane suhrđi vaśe vāṃmayam samastam eva saṅcārayāmāsa".
4 Cf. ibid., p. 63, lines 1-17; Kād., introductory verses, 10-19.
5 See supra, pp. 103-105.
the daughter of King Saryaṭa. The father of Dadhica, was a rṣi and has been described as practising penance at a distance of four miles from the Sona.\footnote{1} It is from this Dadhica that Sārāsvata, the causin of Vatsa, the progenitor of the family of Bāna, was born.\footnote{2}

The legend concerning Sārāsvati in the Harṣa-carita, as follows. Sārāsvati was the daughter of Brahmā, residing in the heaven (Brahmaloka). Once while Brahmā was sitting encircled by gods and the discussion on a certain vidyā was going on, there arose a controversy owing to the difference of opinion.\footnote{3} Meanwhile, Durvāsā quarrelled with another rṣi called Upamanyu, and overpowered by the furious rath over the latter, he struck a discordant note of the Śaṅkha. After hearing it all held their tongues; but Sārāsvatī could not restrain herself from laughing at him for the wrong.\footnote{4} Seeing Sārāsvatī laughing at him, Durvāsā punished her with the curse to descend to the earth.\footnote{5} Here Durvāsā does not specify the period of curse. Brahmā came forward with a word of consolation to his daughter and limited the curse of Sārāsvatī to live on the earth only up to the birth of a son.\footnote{6}

The following day of the curse, Sārāsvatī, accompanied by Sāvitrī,

\begin{flushleft}
1 HC., p. 41, lines 9-25, "... nijatejahprasaraaplaṣṭaplomnaś cyavanasya bahirvṛttiivitaṃ dadhico nāma tanayah, janany apy asya ... saryāṭasya suta ... sukanayā nāma ... itas ca gavyātimātram īvā pāreṣaṃ tasya bhagyavāsa cyavanasya ... cyāvanasya nāma caitrarathakalpana kānamāṃ nivāsah".

2 Ibid., p. 61, line 1- p. 62, line 6.

3 Ibid., p. 10, lines, 1-8.

4 Ibid., p.11, line 1.- p. 12, line 14.

5 Ibid., p.18, lines, 2-3, "durvinite, vyapanayāṃ te vidyājanitāṃ unmatim imām, adhastād gaccha marṣyālokaṃ".

6 Ibid.,p. 19, lines 12-15, "...'vatse sarasvati, viśāḍam mā gāḥ... ātmajamukhamalāvalokanāvadhiḥ ca te sūpo 'yam bhaviṣyati' iti".
\end{flushleft}
set out for the earth. Following the path of Māndākini, she got down to the earth and according to the advice of Śāvitrī, settled down on the western bank of the Śoṇa, also called Hiranyavāha. At the bank of the Śoṇa, they began to pass their days with their daily duties.

One day, Dadhīca, who was born at the house of his maternal grandfather and who had attained youthhood, was going to his father's hermitage. While on his way, he chanced to come to the abode of Sarasvatī and Śāvitrī. He saw Sarasvatī and Śāvitrī and later on set out for his father's hermitage. After some days, Dadhīca sent his messenger called Mālatī to Sarasvatī to communicate his love-message to her. Afterwards this acquaintance resulted in the establishment of conjugal relation. Dadhīca spent the period of more than a year like a day in the company of Sarasvatī, residing at the bank of the Śoṇa. Sarasvatī conceived and in due course of time, gave birth to Sārasvata. After the birth of Sārasvata, she returned to the 'heaven; for Brahmā had limited the curse of Durvāsā to live on the earth till the birth of a son. But when Dadhīca was separated from Sarasvatī, he found it difficult to maintain the worldly life and, therefore, resigning worldly affairs he returned to the forest to lead an ascetic life. This is the detailed account of the legend of Sarasvatī.

---

1 Ibid., p. 28, lines 4-14.  
2 Ibid., p. 29, line 1- p. 30, line 17.  
3 Ibid., p. 30, line 17 ff.  
5 Ibid., p. 51, line 1- p. 56, line 23.  
6 Ibid., p. 58, line 1- p. 60, line 12.  
7 Ibid., p. 61, lines 1-5.  
8 Ibid., p. 19, lines 14-15.  
9 Ibid., p. 61, line 5 - p. 62, line 3, "gatāyām ca tasyām dadhico 'pi hṛdaye hṛādinye 'vā 'bhiḥato ... virahāturās tapase vanam agāt".
and Dadhica as put forth by Bāna.

(iii) **Probable source of the legend:**

This legend does not find any parallel in the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas. Bāna appears to have taken the legend from the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas and to have developed and connected it with his family in his own way.

(a) **Sarasvatī-legend in the Mahābhārata:**

We have already observed that Sarasvatī had a son called Sārasvatī. This Sārasvatī preserved the knowledge of the Vedas during the period of drought and when the drought was over, he imparted it to 60,000 Brāhmaṇas, who flocked to him for gaining it. Bāna seems to have taken the theme of the legend and have moulded it according to his purpose. Bāna makes Sārasvatī transfer to Vatsa the entire knowledge, given to him by his mother Sarasvatī and this knowledge was enhanced with the advancement of the family of Vatsa.

(b) **Sarasvatī-legend in the Purāṇas:**

It is also feasible that Bāna is indebted to a certain extent to the Purāṇas. In some of the Purāṇas, there are clear references to Sārasvatī, as being the son of Sarasvatī from Dadhica. The Vāyu-Purāṇa states:

---

2 *HC.*, p. 61, line 1–p. 62, line 6.
"sārasvataḥ sarasvatyāṁ dadhīcāc ca 'padadyate".¹

Similarly, the Brahmānda-Purāṇa reads: "sārasvataḥ sarasvatyāṁ dadhī- 
casyo 'padadyat".²

The parentage of Sarasvata in Bāna's version of the legend is the 
same as the one found in the above Purāṇas. But in: spite of this, there 
is a little discrepancy. Bāna, in his Harṣacarita, takes Dadhīca to be 
the son of a rṣi called Čyavana;³ but the Purāṇas are silent over parentage. 
The descendance of Sarasvatī either as a river or as a goddess to the earth 
has been admitted differently at different places. The coming down of 
the Sarasvati river on the earth has similitude in the Gaṅgā's bringing to 
the earth by Bhagīrathā. Similarly, in the Skanda-Purāṇa, Sarasvati has 
been described to have been asked by God Viśnu to descend on the earth 
in order to subdue the marine fire of the oceans.⁴ According to another 
account, she was cursed by Gaṅgā, one of the wives of Hari, to became a 
river and to go down to the earth.⁵ Bāna makes Sarasvati descend on the 
earth owning to the curse of Durbāsa⁶ and describes her to be the wife of 
a mortal man called Dadhīca.⁷ He describes Sarasvati as residing on the 
bank of the Soṇa,⁸ a fact which is found in the Bhāgya-Purāṇa.⁹

¹ VP., LXV.91.
² BṛP., iii.1.94
³ HC., p. 41, lines 6-10.
⁴ SkP., VII. 33.13-15.
⁵ See supra., pp. 178-179.
⁶ HC., p. 10, line 1 - p.18, line 4.
⁷ Ibid., p. 60, lines 1-12.
⁸ Ibid., p. 29, line 1- p.30, line 17.
⁹ BhāP., V.19.18.
In the Kāvyamānasā, Rājesekhara describes beautifully the birth of Sarasvata from Sarasvatī. He holds Sarasvata as Kāvyapuruṣa and presents Sāhityavidyā as his bride (vadhū). The details runs as under.

(i) Kāvyapuruṣa and Sāhityavidyāvadhū:

Sarasvatī resided on the earth. When she had the desire for a son, she went to the Himalayas to practise penance. As a result, Brahmā pleased with her and granted a son. In course of time, Sarasvatī gave birth to Kāvyapuruṣa. Once when she had gone for taking a bath in the celestial Ganges leaving the child on a certain slab of stone lying under a tree, it was brought as an orphan to the hermitage of sage Usanās. When Sarasvatī returned, she could not find her son there. She came across sage Vālmiki, who took her to the hermitage of sage Usanās, where she found her son.

Once in the heaven, there arose a certain controversy between sages and gods over Śruti and Brahmā appointed Sarasvatī as the judge. So Sarasvatī left the earth and went to the heaven leaving her child on the earth. The departure of his mother disappointed Sarasvata and in utter despair, he left the home. The son of Gaurī, an affectionate friend of Sarasvata

---

1 Kā., III, p. 13, lines 6-7.
2 Ibid., III,p.13, lines 6-9.
3 Ibid., III,p.15, lines 2-3.
4 Ibid., III, p.15, lines 4-6.
5 Ibid., III,p.16, lines 1-3.
6 Ibid., III,p.16, lines 4-5.
7 Ibid., III,p.17, lines 3-6.
(Kāvyapurūsa), followed him; but he was detained with words of consolation by Gaurī, who created Sāhityavidyāvadhū and ordered her to follow her lawful husband and bring him back. Sāhityavidyā, the bride of Kāvyapurūsa, accompanied by sages, followed her husband. Sārasvata (Kāvyapurūsa), thus, accompanied by Sāhityavidyāvadhū, visited various Deśas and at last reached Vatsagulma Nagar in Vidarbha Deśa, where he married Sāhityavidyāvadhū by the Gāndharva style. The bridegroom and the bride, once again, started on their journey from there, visited various places and finally returned to their mother-in-laws Gaurī and Sarasvatī, who were sitting together on the Himālayas.

(ii) The source of the theme:

The episode of Sārasvata as detailed above appears to have been taken up from the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas as well as from Bāṇa's Harsacarita, though Bājasekhara has introduced various novel features in it. In the Harsacarita, Bāṇa has taken Sārasvata to the son of Sarasvatī by Dadhīca. Sarasvatī was at first living in the heaven; but owing to the curse of Durgāsa on her, she had to come down to the earth until a son was born to her. The next day of the curse, she left the heaven, came down to the earth along with Sāvitrī and started living at the banks of

1 Ibid., III, p. 17, lines 7-14.
2 Ibid., III, p. 18, lines 1 - p.22, line 11.
5 Vide supra., pp. 194-195.
6 EC., I, p. 18, lines 2-3.
7 Ibid., I, p. 28, lines 4-14.
the Sona river. She was married to Dadhica. After giving birth to Sarasvata, she returned to the heaven in accordance with the instruction of Brahma. Rajaśekhara has introduced various changes in the legend by his fertile imagination. According to him, Sarasvati lives on the earth. She gives birth to Kavyapura by the grace of Brahma, who, thus, comes forth as her husband; while Bana takes him to be her father. According to the Kavyamimanasā, Sarasvati is called to work as a judge on the occasion of controversy between sages and gods in the heaven. It describes her to have returned to her son, while in the Harṣacarita, she is described differently. According to it, Sarasvati, in the heaven, does not play any vital role in the discussion among Prajāpatis - Manu, Dakṣa, Cākṣuṣa, Saptarṣis and Maharsis along with Brahma in chair. She only laughs at Durvāsā at his discordant Sāmagāṇa. She leaves her husband Dadhica and her son Sarasvata for ever; and never comes back to meet them again.

Besides, the Rgveda and the Vālmikīya Rāmāyana have also influenced Rajaśekhara to some extent.

Rajaśekhara through his unique method of interpretation, here, gives a brief and judicious account of the origin of Kavya. He assigns

1 Ibid., I, p. 29, line 1 - p. 30, line 17.
2 Ibid., I, p. 19, lines 14-15; p. 61, lines 1-5.
3 III, p. 13, lines 6-7, "pura purīyantī sarasvatī tuṣāragirau tapasyāmāsa, prītena manasā tām viraṇciḥ provāca - putram te sṛjāmi".
4 III, p. 19, lines 12-13, "vatse sarasvatī".
5 III, p. 17, lines 3-4, "ekadā tu brahmaṁśi-brnḍārakayoḥ śrutivivāde dākṣināvān devaḥ svayambhūḥ tām imāṁ nirṇetrim uddīdesa".
7 III, p. 10, lines 1-8.
8 Ibid., I, p. 11, line 1 - p. 12, line 14.
9 Ibid., I, p. 61, line 1 - p. 62, line 6.
10 RV., IV. 58.3.
11 VBB., II.15.
divinity to its birth, for it took birth from Sarasvatī and Brahmā. The attachment of divinity to it, is further endorsed by the fact that Sarasvatī is also not a mortal one. She is the goddess of speech (Vēgdevi), who holds high office in the heaven.

Rājaśekhara’s version of the episode of Sārasvata is allegorical and philosophical. To him, Sārasvata, the son of Sarasvatī, is none other than poetry (kāvya), conceived by him as a man (puruṣa) with literature (sāhityavīdyā) as his bride (vadhū).

Poetry is, thus, the chosen and beloved groom of literature.

(iii) Sarasvatī as a river:

Rājaśekhara describes India as divided into five parts - 'Pūrvadesā' (vārāṇasyāḥ purtaḥ pūrvadesāḥ); 'Dakṣināpatha' (māhiṃsatiyāḥ parato dakṣināpathah); 'Paścāddesā' (devasabhāyāḥ parataḥ paścāddesāḥ); 'Uttarāpatha' (prthūdakāt parataḥ uttarāpathah); and 'Madhyadesā' (teṣām madhye madhyadesā). He describes these Desās along with their janapadas, mountains, rivers, etc.

1 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
2 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
3 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
4 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
5 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
6 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
7 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
8 [Editor's note: Reference to a page and line number is not provided.]
In this context, we find the mention of the two Sarasvatī rivers, which undoubtedly belong to the two different Desas. One of them is mentioned to flow in the Paścādeśa along with such rivers as Svabhavatī, Vārtaṅghī, Mahī, Hīḍimbā, etc. The other is mentioned to flow in the Uttarāpatha along with the rivers Gāndhā, Sīndhu, Sātadru, Candrabhāga, Yamunā, Irāvatī, Vītāsā, Vipāśā, Kuhū, Devikā, etc.

It is not very difficult to locate these two Sarasvatī rivers. The Sarasvatī of the Uttarāpatha explicitly stands for the Rgvedic Sarasvatī of the northern India and that of the Paścādeśa, for the Sarasvatī of the western India shooting from the Aravalli range.

11. Bhartrhari:

In the classical age, Sarasvatī is thought to represent science (vidyā) in general like tapas, dāna, śīla, guṇa and dharma serving as an adornment to human being. It is only vidyā, which differentiates him from the animal. Bhartrhari conveys the same idea through the following verse of his Nitisātaka:

1 Ibid., XVII, p. 227, lines 3-4.
"sarasvatīsvabhavatīvārtaṅghīmahihīḍimbādyā nadyah"

2 Ibid., XVII, p. 227, lines 8-9.
"gāndhāsindhusarasvatīsātadrcandrabhāgāyamunerāvatīvītāsvīpaśākūhū-devikādyā nadyah".

3 See for details supra., pp. 1-31.

4 The Imperial Gazetteer of India., Vol. XXII, p. 97.
"Sarasvatī(2). - A small but holy river of Western India, rising at the south-west end of the Arāvalli range near the shrine of Ambā Bhavānī, and flowing south-westwards for about 110 miles, through the lands of Pālanpur, Bādhāpur, Mahī Kantha, and Baroda, and past the ancient cities of Pātan, Anhilvāda, and Sidhpur, into the lesser Bann of Cutch, near Anvarpur. West of Pātan its course is underground for some miles, and its stream is small, except in the rains. The river is visited by Hindus, especially those who have lost their mothers. Sidhpur is considered an especially appropriate place at which to perform rites in honour of a deceased mother".
Sāhitya and Saṅgīta are two of the arts, patronised by Sarasvati. One who is deprived of them, is, in fact, an animal. In the following verse, the qualities of a human being are enlisted:

"yeṣām na vidyā tapa na dānam jūnām na śīlam na guno na dharmaḥ |
te martyaloke bhūvī bhrābhūtā manusyarūpene mṛgās caranti ||

The poets of high merit, blessed by Sarasvati, are said to have acquired sweet speech from all śāstras, to be able to impart instruction to disciples, and to win honour from the kings even:

"sāstropākṛtābhadrasundaragirāh śīya-pradeyā gamā |
vikhyātāḥ kavayo vasantī viṣaye yasya prabhō nirdhanāḥ |
taj jādyam vasudhādhipasya kavayas tv artham vinya 'pi "śvarāḥ |
kūtyāḥ syuh kuparikṣakā hi maṇayo yair arghataḥ pātītaḥ ||

The wealth of vidyā surpasses all types of wealth; because it is not stolen by thieves; bestows welfare; though spent, goes on increasing incessantly; and lasts for ever.

It is rightly observed that the ornament of speech (vāgbhūṣaṇa) is the best of all ornaments, as other ornaments are perishable, while it lasts

\[\text{Supra., pp. 172-176, 190-200.} \]
\[\text{NS., 13.} \]
\[\text{Ibid., 16.} \]
for ever. It is the speech (vāni) alone, which truly embellishes a man.¹

Vidyā is the real nature of a human being and does him every good.²

12. Mahākavi Bilhana:

Bilhana, the great Kashmirian poet refers to Sarasvati several
times in his Vikramāṇkadevacarita. She has been mentioned under her
different names such as Sarasvati, Śrīradā, Bhārati and Vāddevī in different
contexts.

(i) Sarasvati as speech:

The use of the word as synonymous with speech, occurs several
times.³ The same is the case with the word Bhārati.⁴

(ii) Sarasvati as the goddess of poetry and eloquence:

It is by Sarasvatī, the supreme goddess of poetry and eloquence
that a poet composes the poems of high order or a man attains the power

¹ Ibid., 19.
"keyūrānī na bhūṣayānti puruṣaṁ hārā na candra-jvalā
na snānaṁ na vilopaṇaṁ na kuṣumāṁ na "lānkṛta mārdha-jāhī
vānyākā samalaṅkaroti puruṣaṁ yā sāmskrītā dhāryate
kṣiyante khalu bhūṣāṇāṁ, satatāṁ vāg-bhūṣāṇāṁ bhūṣānāṁ !["

² Cf. Ibid., 20.
"vidyā nāma narasya rūpam adhikāṁ pracchannaguptam dhanam
vidyā bhogakāṁ yaśaḥsukhakāṁ vidyā guruṇāṁ gurūh
vidyā bandhujano vídesāgamane vidyā para devātā
vidyā rājasu pūjyate na tu dhanām vidyāvīhīnah pasūh !["

³ VDC., I.9.
"anabhṛavrṣṭīḥ śravānāṁṛtasya sarasvatīvibhramajinmabhūmih"

⁴ Ibid., V.30.
"vyājāhāra daśānāṁ upāllava - nyastakomala-pādam sarasvatim"

(Contd.)
of effective speech. Bilhana appears to hold the same view when he describes Sarasvatī as the goddess of poetry and eloquence. The great poets are poets by birth and not by attempt. Poets as such are thought to be the offsprings of mother Sarasvatī. The eminent poet Bilhana who boasts of himself to be the greatest poet, is highly favoured by Sarasvatī, the mother of the great poets:

"vidvattāyaḥ sa khalu śikharam prāpa yasye śtarāmo
jyeṣṭho bhṛata kṣitipatiśatāsthānālīlāvatāmsah
vaktre kavyāṁrta rasabharāsvādaktaṇaṁ yadiye
dṛṣṭā devī sukavijananī sā prapālike 'va ||”

(iii) The abode of Saradā:

The residents of Kashmir hold Saradā to be the patroness deity of their country. Bilhana says that Saradā's abode is Pravarapura situated

(contd from p.222)

Ibid., II.49.
"kadācid ākāṅṛyatī saṁ bhāratīṁ prabhātāpyūjāsamaye nabhāscarīṁ"

Ibid., V.50.
"yat kṛtāṁ kim api tena lajjasāy bhāratī katham api pravartate"

1 Ibid., I.21.
"sahodarāh kūṅkumakesarāṇāṁ bhavantī nūnaṁ kavitvāvilāsāḥ
na saradādesām apasya dṛṣṭas teśāṁ yad anyatra mayā prarohaḥ \n"

2 Cf. Ibid., III.19.
"lāvaṇyalubdhābhīṁ alabdham eva bhūpālakanyāmadhupaṁ-ganābbhiḥ
kavitvavaktirvaphalā cucumba sarasvatī tasya mukhārvindam ||”

3 Ibid., XVIII.84.

4 James Hastings, op.cit., p. 808.
on the bank of the Madhumati river on Mt. Kailasa. She is said to have
favoured this Pravarapura by her learning:

\[ \text{"dhatte yasyah spataśucibhih kāntibhih kṣālayantyāh}
\text{\ }\text{sāhityā gaurīgurur api gigir nūnām uccāh śīrāmsī\i}
\text{\ }\text{gāṅgōspardhoddhursadhumatīsaikatottamsahāmī\i}
\text{\ }\text{vidyārakṣādhiวรรณ akarot śā svayām śārādā yat}} \text{\i}\]

Pravarapura, the original abode of Śāradā (Sarasvati) has exhibited
various wonders. Women have attained command over speech both in Sanskrit
and Prākrit as if they were their mother-tongues:

\[ \text{"brūmaḥ śāraṇaśa takaṇabhuvaḥ kim nidheḥ kautukānām}
\text{\ }\text{tasya nēkādābhagunakaṇthākīrnakarnāmrtaśyā}\i
\text{\ }\text{yatra strīnām api kim aparām janaabhāṣāvad eva}
\text{\ }\text{pratyāvāsaṃ vilasati vacaḥ samkṛtam prākṛtam ca}} \text{\i}\]

(iv) Some other allusion to Sarasvati:

At one place, Bilhana describes Sarasvati as playing on vīnā:

\[ \text{"sāraṇaśa yad vadaṇesu nityam ābhāti vīṇām īva vādayanti"} \]

Elsewhere, she is referred to as the Vāgdevī, having the swan
(hamsa) as her vehicle, bearing white pearl-necklace (hāralatām īva
\[ \text{'j̥jalā}', \text{ and white garment.}\]

1 VDC., XVIII.5.
2 Ibid., XVIII.6.
3 Ibid., I.10.
4 Ibid., XVIII.68,83.
5 Ibid., XII.47,49.
6 Ibid., II.28.
7 Ibid., III.33.

\[ \text{"ākarnya karnāṭapateḥ sukhedam ittham vacaḥ pratysvadat kumāraḥ śarasiotālaladukūlakāntāṃ prakāṣayen dantamayūkhalekham}} \text{\i}\]
13. **Kalhana:**

In his *Rājatāranginī*, Kalhana mentions Sarasvatī several times under the names of Sarasvatī as well as Śāradā. While giving a historical account of Kashmir, he states that on the Mt. of Bheḍa in Kashmir, there is a pond in which Sarasvatī still resides in the form of a swan:

```
devi bheḍagireḥ śrāge gaṅgodbhedaśucau svayam
saro 'ntarḍrṣyate yatra haṃsarūpa sarasvatī
```

The Purāṇas provide a swan (haṃsa) to her as her vehicle. This conception evolved towards her identification with the swan and then she herself came to be conceived as a swan (haṃsarūpa). For Kashmir has been the seat of learning for centuries, Sarasvatī has been judiciously thought to live there. Kalhana says that at the mere sight of goddess Śāradā there, one gets instantaneously the speech used by poets:

```
ālokya śāradām devīṃ yatra samprāpyate kṣanāt
.tarāṅgini maḍhumati vāni ca kavisevīta
```

Another verse speaks of her as the goddess of speech (Vāgdevī):

```
dvijas tayor nāyakākhyo gaurīśārasadmanoḥ
caṭurvidyaḥ kṛtas tena vāgdevīkulanandiram
```

---

1 *Rāt.*, I.35.
2 *Supra.*, pp.162-166.
3 *Rāt.*, I.37.
APPENDIX

SARASVATĪ AND HER CORRESPONDING NAMES IN THE GREEK
AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGIES
Appendix

SARASVATĪ AND HER CORRESPONDING NAMES IN THE GREEK AND
ROMAN MYTHOLOGIES

1. **Introduction**

The Greek and Indian mythologies have many a similarity. In spite of apparent polytheism in their mythologies, there is astonishing similarity in respect of deities in Greece, Italy and India. Some of the deities of the Greek mythology correspond to those of the Latin


2 It is quite obvious from the list of corresponding deities quoted by Charles Coleman, *op.cit.* p. 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Deity</th>
<th>Roman Deity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siva</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indra</td>
<td>Bacchus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahma</td>
<td>Saturnus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>Minos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varuna</td>
<td>Neptunus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surya</td>
<td>Sol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandra</td>
<td>Lunus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayu</td>
<td>Aeolus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visvakarma</td>
<td>Vulcan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aswinicamara</td>
<td>Castor &amp; Pollux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganesha</td>
<td>Janus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavana</td>
<td>Pan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viraja or Vairati</td>
<td>The River Styx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuvera</td>
<td>Plutus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kriṣhna</td>
<td>Apollo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nared</td>
<td>Mercurius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skanda</td>
<td>Mars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durga</td>
<td>Juno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suraswati</td>
<td>Minerva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remb'hd</td>
<td>Venus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushaṣa</td>
<td>Aurora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaha</td>
<td>Vesta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prit'hivi</td>
<td>Cybele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri</td>
<td>Ceres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gopyah</td>
<td>Musae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidyah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atavi Devi</td>
<td>Diana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aswiculapa</td>
<td>Cennii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heracula</td>
<td>Hercules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mythology. It speaks of inter-relationship between the mythologies of these countries; and tempts us to suppose that in the olden days, India, Greece and Rome had come together to know each other.

The Indian goddess Sarasvati corresponds to the Roman goddess Minerva and the Greek goddess Athene. Athene is also called Athena whom the Romans identify with Minerva.

2. Sarasvati and Minerva (the Roman goddess):

Minerva is the patroness of all arts, trades and is the goddess of memory and warfare. Sarasvati, too, is the patroness of all arts and

1 Cf. the list given by C. Witt, Myths of Hellen or Greek Tales (New York, 1903), p. X.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Aphrodite&quot;</td>
<td>Venus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appolon.</td>
<td>Apollo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artemis.</td>
<td>Diana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athènè.</td>
<td>Minerva.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kronos.</td>
<td>Saturnus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Démòtèr.</td>
<td>Ceres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionusos or Bacchos.</td>
<td>Bacchus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hephaistos.</td>
<td>Vulcanus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hera.</td>
<td>Iuno.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermès.</td>
<td>Mercurius.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persephonè.</td>
<td>Proserpina.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plonton.</td>
<td>Pluto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poseidon.</td>
<td>Neptunus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeûs.</td>
<td>Juppiter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


sciences; but she is not portrayed to patronise trade. It is a striking difference between them. She is called 'ghorā' and 'vrtra-ghnī', which point to her function connected with warfare. She not only kills Vṛtra; but also protects warriors and, therefore, she is called 'vīrāpatni'. This leads us to believe in the existence of some sakti-worship in the olden days; and it is possible that warriors might have invoked Sarasvatī for their protection and victory. The epithet 'pāvīravi' for Sarasvatī shows that Sarasvatī had a weapon (pāvī) in her hand. In the Rgveda, Sarasvatī is not described in clear terms as the goddess of war; but the adventurous deeds, she does amply show this trait of her personality. In the post-Vedic times, Kārttikeya and Durgā are associated with warfare; while Vedic literature knows nothing about them. Sarasvatī's association with war brings her near to the armed Minerva, while the other aspects of her personality correspond to Minerva without weapon. When her patronage of letters is emphasized for poetic composition or when she is taken to be the patroness of arts or the goddess of memory, she is of modest nature, and this aspect of her personality corresponds to the modest nature of Sarasvatī, when taken to

1 John Dowson, op. cit., p. 284.
2 RV., VI.61.7.
3 Ibid., VI.61.7.
4 See supra., pp. 54-55.
5 See supra., pp. 58-60.
be the goddess of learning, music, poetry, history, arts and sciences.¹

The armed aspect of the personality of Minerva shows that she is the
goddess of warfare and it is only this capacity of hers that she is
painted to have a glittering, armour poised spear,² breastplate and
shield since her birth.³

3. Sarasvati and the Greek Muses:

We find a great deal of similarity between the personality of
Sarasvati and the Greek Muses. Sarasvati, in the post-Vedic mythology,
represents all sorts of vidyās arising from eloquence and wisdom. Nay,
she has been held to be the goddess of eloquence and wisdom; and has
been invoked for the same as a Muse.⁴ The similar conception about
vidyās is also found in the Greek mythology. There 'Gopyas' or 'Vidyas'
are termed Muses.⁵ Before reckoning similar features between Sarasvati
and the Greek Muses, it is necessary to find out Sarasvati's conception
as a Muse in ancient Indian literature, particularly in the Rgveda.

(1) The Rgveda and the conception of Muse:

As we see our earliest scripture, the Rgveda is written in poetic
style and one comes across numerous glimpses of real poetry in it. In
this Veda, we find the description of certain abstract ideas like

---

¹ See infra, pp. 230-231.
² H.A. Guerber, op.cit., p. 39.
³ A.R. Hope Moncrieff, op.cit., p. 37.
⁵ See supra, p. 225, fn. 2.
'Sraddhā', 'Anumati', etc., which show that the poet were really in quest of an object with subtle form to guide them in their pursuit of poetry. For poetry, the creative genius is of paramount importance. To acquire this genius, they deified abstract ideas and worshipped them. In such a pursuit, the goddesses 'Sūrītā', 'Śrīyā', etc., are highly extolled and held as the goddessess of genius and poetry. Geldner makes out the same idea from 'Śrīyā' or 'Śrīyāsya-duhitē' (Ṛgveda, IX.72.3) and terms her 'the genius of poetry and song'. The same sense is understood to lie in Sarasvatī's description as: "codayitrī sūrītānām cetantī sumatīnām". Here, we find a closeness in nature between Śrīyā and Sarasvatī.

Sarasvatī, in the later literature, is taken to be the goddess or the patroness of poetry; but its seed is found in the Ṛgveda proper also, where she is called 'dhinām avitri', meaning protectress of holy thoughts or prayers. Śrīyā was at first taken to be the Ṛgvedic goddess of poetry, but later on, she came to be regarded as poetry personified and Sarasvatī as the goddess of poetry. In the Vedic pantheon, Śrīyā is called Vāk; and it is also worth-noticing that the word Vāk stands as synonym for Śrīyā and Sarasvatī. In this context, we may refer to the age of Nighantu, where Śrīyā and Sarasvatī were probably identified and the personality of Śrīyā had merged into that of Sarasvatī; because it reckons both of the

1 ṚV., X.151.5.  
2 Ibid., X.59.6, 167.3.  
3 Ibid., I.40.3; X.141.2.  
4 Ibid., IX.72.3.  
5 See supra, pp. 44-45.  
6 ṚV., VI.61.4.  
7 See supra, pp. 44-45.  
words Sūryā and Sarasvatī as the synonyms for Vāk.  

(ii) **Similarity between Sarasvatī and the Greek Muses:**

The word 'Muse' is derived from Greek μνημείον, meaning to think, to remember. The Greek Muses, though originally three, are now reckoned nine in number and are all the daughters of ancient Zeus and Mnemosyne. They stand for genius or spirit, which guide a poet in his composition. Sarasvatī, too, is assigned the similar function and has been held, particularly in the classical age, as the inspirer of poets. Her acceptance as the goddess of inspiration, puts her as the inspirer of genius or the poetic spirit.

In the Greek mythology, we find nine Muses; namely, 1. Clio, 2. Euterpe, 3. Thalia, 4. Melpomene, 5. Terpsichore, 6. Erato, 7. Polyhymnia, 8. Urania, and 9. Calliope. The character of these Muses is also distinct.

---

1 Cf. *Noh*. I. 11, where various conception of Vāk is carried out in good detail.

"(1) Śloka; (2) Dhārū; (3) Iḷā; (4) Gauh; (5) Gaurī; (6) Gāndhārvī; (7) Gāmbhīrā; (8) Gāmbhīrā; (9) Mandra; (10) Mandrajanī; (11) Vāsī; (12) Vāṇī; (13) Vāṇīcī; (14) Vāsah; (15) Pavih; (16) Bārātī; (17) Dhamāni; (18) Nāili; (19) Menā; (20) Mēlih; (21) Sūryā; (22) Sarasvatī; (23) Nīvit; (24) Svarā; (25) Vaghū; (26) Upāndhih; (27) Māyūh; (28) Kākut; (29) Jihvā; (30) Ghoṣah; (31) Svārah; (32) Sābdhā; (33) Svānah; (34) Rk; (35) Homrā; (36) Gīh; (37) Gāthā; (38) Gnah; (39) Dhenā; (40) Gnah; (41) Vīpā; (42) Mānā; (43) Kasā; (44) Dhiṣanā; (45) Nauh; (46) Aksaram; (47) Mahī; (48) Adī; (49) Sāchā; (50) Vāk; (51) Anuṣṭūp; (52) Dhenū; (53) Vaghū; (54) Gaidā; (55) Sarāh; (56) Svarṇī; (57) Bokurā."

6 James Hastings, op.cit., p. 4.
Clio represents history; Euterpe, lyric poetry; Thalia, comedy; Melpomene, tragedy; Terpsichore, dance and song; Erato, love song; Polyhymnia, sublime hymn; Urania, astronomy; and Calliope, epic poetry.¹ Sūrti,² Vṛkṣkāryā,³ Sūryasya duhitā,⁴ Sarasvātī,⁵ etc., conceived as the goddesses of poetry or poetic genius may be act as the Muses. All these goddesses are later on merged into the personality of Sarasvātī, who alone, with her diverse forms, survives as the goddess or the patroness of learning, arts, sciences, poetry, etc.

Like the Greek Muses, Sarasvātī represents various fields. Under the name of Brāhma or Brāhmī, she is understood to be the goddess of sciences; and as Bhāratī, the goddess of history.⁶ The Purānic accounts provide Sarasvātī with a lute in one of her hands and establish her association with music.⁷ She is considered as the goddess of music even, and it is for this reason that she is worshipped by musicians. The Greek Muses as a whole are described to have a great liking for music and dance. They enchanted a divine gathering, and Apollo guided them as their Choirmaster with the music of his lyre. Their liking for music and dance is so acute that they performed them at Delphi on Mt. Helicon around the fountain of Aganippe.⁸ They are closely connected with a stream of an earthly character.

¹ A.R. Hope Moncrieff, op.cit., p. 34.
² RV., I.40.3; X.141.2.
³ Ibid., I.98.4.
⁴ Ibid., IX.72.3.
⁵ Ibid., III.53.15.
⁶ Charles Coleman, op.cit., p.9.
⁸ James Hastings, op.cit., p. 4.
Hippocrene, mythologically described to have sprung from the hoof of the
divine horse called Pegasus. It associates the earthly fountain with
the divine horse and, thus, its attachment with divinity is but natural.
The home of these Muses is in a country near Mt. Olympus and, thus, they
should be closely associated with gods of Mt. Olympus. This association of
the Greek Muses with a mountain and a river, brings them nearer to Saras-
vati as a river described to have sprung from a mountain (parvata); but
having a divine character. The Hippocrene river is described to have
sprung from the hoof of Pegasus, which corresponds to the Sanskrit word
'pajas', meaning force, movement and the like. The root 'sr' after
Sarasvati also implies movement. She resides in the cloud as storehouse
of waters. Thus, there is much similarity between the birth of rivers
Sarasvati and Hippocrene. The only slight distinction, we find is that
the former receives its existence on the earth through god Indra; and
the latter not through gods; but through their horse Pegasus. This
difference is not so vital as to make us ignore the philosophical importance
behind Indra and Pegasus, both of which represent force or energy.

1 Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p.105; for detailed information about Pegasus,
we may see James Hastings, op.cit., Vol.XII, pp.741-742.
2 For gods of Olympus see R.P.Warren, The Gods of Mount Olympus (New York,
3 See supra., p. 38.
4 See supra., pp. 6-8.
5 Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p.106.
6 See supra., p. 38.
7 Cf. 'v्रṣṇḥ patniḥ' vide supra., pp.55-56.
8 Monier Williams, op.cit., p.140.
9 Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p. 106.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Agni-Purāṇa**  

**Aitareya-Āranyaka**  

**Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa**  
with the commentary of Sāyāna-cārya, (ed.) S. Sāmasrāmi, Part.I (1895), Part.II (1896), Calcutta.

**Aparājitaspratī**  
(ed.) P. R. Mankad, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1950.

**Atharvaveda**  

**Bhāgavata-Purāṇa**  
Printed by B. P. Varma, Banaras City.

**Brahma-Purāṇa**  

**Brahma-viṣṇu-Purāṇa**  

**Bṛhāddeva-Purāṇa**  

**Chamber’s Encyclopaedia**  

**Devībhāgavata-Purāṇa**  
C. J. Pāthaka, Banaras City.
Encyclopaedia Britannica

Garuda-Purana
(ed.) Sri Jivananda Vidyasagara Bhattacharya, Calcutta, Samvat 1890.

Gopatha-Brähmana
(ed.) Sri Jivananda Vidyasagara Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1891.

Isādīvīṃsottarasaṁhitānapisad

Kurma-Purana

Mahābhārata
- Sāntiparvan, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

Mārkandeya-Purana
(ed.) Sri Jivānanda Vidyāsagara Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1879.

Mataya-Purana

Padma-Purana

Praptadharmasūtra

Rgveda-Samhitā
with the commentary of Sāyana Acarya, Vedic Research Institute, Poona.

Śādhanamāla
(ed.) Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, Oriental Institute, Baroda.

Śāṅkhāyana-Brāhmana
Saradātilaka-Tantra

Sātāpatha-Brāhmaṇa
with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya, Śrī Venkatesvara Steam Press edition, Bombay, 1940.
- with the Hindi Vijnānabhāṣya, Rajasthan Vedic Research Institute, Jaipur, 1956.

Śkanda-Purāṇa

Śrīdurgāsaptasatī

Śrīvidyārṇava-Tantra

Śukla Yajurveda Samhitā
with the commentaries of Uvātacārya and Mahidhara, (ed.) W.L.S. Panasikara, Bombay, 1929.
- (ed.) Śrī Jīvānanda Vidyāsāgara Bhattacārya, Calcutta, 1908.

Taittiriya-Āranyaka
with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya, Ānandāsrama Press edition, 1926.

Taittiriya-Brāhmaṇa
with the commentary of Bhātta Bhāskara Misra, Astaka I (1908), Astaka II supplemented with Sāyana's Astaka II (1921), Astaka III, Part I (1911), Mysore.
- with the commentary of Sāyana, Part I (1934), Part II (1936), Ānandāsrama Press edition.

Tāndya-Mahābrāhmaṇa
with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya, (ed.) A.C. Sāstri, Part I (1935), Part II (1936), Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras.

Vālmīkiya Rāmāyaṇa
Vāmana-Purāṇa

Vāyu-Purāṇa

Viṣṇu-Purāṇa
Sri Venkatesvara Steam Press edition, Bombay, 1832.

Ācārya, R.S.
Yajurveda

Acharya, P.K. (ed.)
Mānasāra On Architecture And Sculpture
Oxford, 1933.

Acharya, P.K.
Śilpa-Śāstra
A Summary of the Mānasāra developed out of a Dissertation accepted for the Ph.D. degree by the University of Leiden.

All Īndia Kashiraj Trust, Ramnagar, Varanasi, 1963.

Agrawala, V.S.
Matsya Purāṇa - A Study
All Īndia Kashiraj Trust, Ramnagar, Varanasi, 1963.

Mārkandeya Purāṇa - Eka Sāmskritika Adhyayana

Annandale, C. (ed.)
The Modern Cyclopedia

Apte, V.S.
The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary
Poona, 1890.

Asvaghosa
Saundarananda Kāvyā
The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1939.

Buddhacarita
Chowkhamba Vidya Bhawan, Varanasi, 1962.

Aurobindo, Sri
On The Veda
Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1956.

Awasthi, A.B.L.
Studies In Skanda Purāṇa
Banerjea, J.N.  
*The Development Of Hindu Iconography*  
Calcutta University, 1956.

Barnhart, C.L. (ed.)  
*The New Century Cyclopedia Of Names*  

Bharata  
*Nātyaśāstra*  
Institute, Baroda, 1956.

Bhāravi  
*Kiratārjunīya*  
(ed.) Śrī Jīvānanda Vidyāśāgara Bhaṭṭācārya,  
Calcutta, Samvat 1884.

Bhargava, M.L.  
*The Geography Of Vedic India*  

Bhartrhari  
*Nītīsataka*  
Haridāsa-Sanskrit Series No.97, 6th edition,  
Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi.

Bhatta, Bāna  
*Harsacarita*  
Chowkhamba Vidyā Bhawan, Varanasi, 1958.

Bhaṭṭācārya, R.S.  
*Subject Index To The Agni-Purāṇa*  

Bhāṭṭācārya, B.C.  
*Indian Images*  
Part I, Calcutta, 1921.

Bhattachāryya, B.  
*The Indian Buddhist Iconography*  
Calcutta, 1958.

Bhavabhūti  
*Uttararāmacarita*  
Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1953.

Bilhaṇa  
*Vikramādityacarita*  
(ed.) V.S. Bhāradvāja, Part.I (1958), Part.II  
(1962), Part.III (1964), Banaras Hindu University,  
Varanasi.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caturvedi, S.R.</td>
<td>Kālidāsa-granthāvalī</td>
<td>Bharata Prakāśaṇa Mandira, Aligarh, Samvat 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanda, R.P.</td>
<td>The Indo-Aryan Races</td>
<td>A Study Of The Origin Of Indo-Aryan People And Institution, The Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, 1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleman, C.</td>
<td>The Mythology Of The Hindus</td>
<td>London, 1832.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandin</td>
<td>Kāvyādārsā</td>
<td>(ed.) Srī Jīvānanda Vidyāśāgara Bhaṭṭācārya, Samvat 1890.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferm, J. (ed.)</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia Of Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garret, J.</td>
<td>Classical Dictionary Of India</td>
<td>Madras, 1871.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geldner, K.F.</td>
<td>Der Rig-Veda</td>
<td>Harvard University, 1951.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guerber, H.A.  
*The Myths Of Greece And Rome*  

Hastings, J. (ed.)  
*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*  
Vols. II, VII, VIII, IX, XI, XII,  
Third Impression, New York.

Hemacandracarya  
*Abhidhānacintāmani*  

Jayāditya, V.  
*Kāśīka*  

Josī, J. (ed.)  
*Nalavudhakosa*  
Sarasvati Bhawan Prakāsana, Vārānasī, 1879.

Kalhana  
*Rājarṣaṅgīni*  

Kautilya  
*Arthasastra*  
(ed) M.T.G. Sāstrī with the commentary  
Srimūla, Part I - 1 & 2 Adhikaranas, Trivandrum, 1924.

Keith, A.B.  
*The Religion And The Philosophy Of The Veda*  
And Upanishads  
*Vol. II*, Harvard University, 1925.

Kumāra, Śrī  
*Silparatna*  

Macdonell, A.A.  
*The Vedic Mythology*  
Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1903.

*The Brhad-devatā*  
Part. II, Harvard University, 1904.

Macdonell, A.A. & Keith, A.B.  
*Vedic Index Of Names And Subjects*  

Mackenzie, D.A.  
*Indian Myth And Legend*  
London, 1913.

Mādhava  
*Rgārthadīpīka*  

Māgha  
*Sīgupālavadha*  
(ed.) G.V. Bhāṭṭacārya, Calcutta.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa And Rūpamandana (ed.) N. Candra, Calcutta, 1936.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renou, R.</td>
<td>Vedic India Calcutta, 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sānkrtāyana, R.</td>
<td>Vṛgvedic Ārya Allahabad, 1957.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarmā, J.</td>
<td>Yajurveda Saṁhitā A Hindi Commentary, Ārya Sāhitya Mandala, Ajmer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sātavalekara, S.D.  
_Atharvaveda Subodha Bhasya_
Parts I, II, III & IV (1950) and Part V (1960), Svādhyaya Mandala, Pāraṇī, Sūrata.

Shah, P.  
_Visnudharmottara-Purāṇa_
Third Khaṇḍa, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1961.

Sinha, P.N.  
_A Study Of The Bhāgavata Purāṇa_
Madras, 1960.

Spencer, S.  
_Mysticism In World Religion_

Śrī-Harṣa  
_Naśadhamahākāvyya_
with the commentary of Mallinātha and Hindi tr. by H.G. Sāstrī, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1954.

Subandhu  
_Vaśavadattā_
Chowkhamba Vidya Bhawan, Varanasi, 1954.

Sukla, A.B.  
_Mārkandeya-Purāṇa : Eka Adhyayana_

Tandana, Y.  
_A Concordance Of Purāṇa Contents_
Hosiarapura, 1952.

Taraporewala, I.J.S.  
.Elements Of The Science Of Language_
Calcutta University, 1951.

Tilak, B.G.  
_The Arctic Home In The Vedas_
Poona, 1956.

Upādhyāya, B.  
_Purāṇa-Vimarsa_
Chowkhamba Vidya Bhawan, Varanasi, 1965.

Wadia, D.N.  
_Geology of India_

Warren, R.P.  
_The Gods Of Mount Olympus_

Whitney, W.D.  
_Atharva-Veda Sahhitā_
Vols. VII & VIII, Harvard University, 1905.

Williams, M.  
_A Sanskrit-English Dictionary_
Oxford, 1872.
Wilson, H.H. Rig-Veda-Samhita

The Vishnu Purāṇa

Wit, C. Myths Of Hellas Or Greek Tales
New York, 1903.

Yāska Nirukta
with complete Nighantu upto fourteenth lesson.
JOURNALS AND REPORTS

All-India Oriental Conference, XXIII Session, Aligarh, 1966, Summaries Of Papers.

Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

Archaeological Survey of India, 1887.

Asiatic Researches, Vol. VII.

Dr. S.K. Belvalkar Felicitation Volume, Poona.

Geographical Journal.

Half-Yearly Bulletin of the Purâna-Department, Varanasi.

Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta.

Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda.

Journal of the University of Bombay, Bombay.

Proceedings and Transactions of the All India Oriental Conference, Annamalainagar.

Science and Culture.

The Calcutta Review.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India.

The Indian Historical Quarterly.

The Poona Orientalist, Poona.

Vedavēṇī, Vāraṇasī.