

Introduction

1. How I have reached here

This monograph is based on research began in 1990 and its first results were presented in the printed version of my PhD thesis (Jurewicz 1994). It was a study of the philosophical paradigms presented in the early Smṛti texts: the *Manusmṛti* (henceforth MS),¹ the *Bhagavadgītā*, (henceforth BhG) and the *Mokṣadharmā* (henceforth MDhP, 168–278).² The basic thesis is that those who composed these texts shared a common conceptual framework as to the main assumptions about reality. These frames were not explicit but rather taken for granted in the same way as European philosophers take theirs for granted. Such common ground, accepted by a group of people, is seen as the condition for the appearance of language and for the sophisticated mental constructs which are expressed in language (Tomasello 2008). We will return to this issue below (see section 6).

As argued in that PhD thesis, this early Hindu conceptual framework was based on certain fundamental assumptions. The first is that reality is one, the second is that cognition precedes being, the third is that creation of the world is the creation of subject-object cognition within the manifest aspect of reality and the fourth is that man is expected to continue this cognition

¹ The MS is also called the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra*. The abbreviation MS, not MDh, was chosen to make it easier for the reader to distinguish this text from the *Mokṣadharmā* which has been abbreviated to MDhP.

² This part of MDhP was chosen for analysis because the later chapters are characterised by a greater degree of abstraction. One has the impression that the first part of MDhP is a conceptual preparation for the second part as the Composers could then apply abstract concepts with the conviction that the recipient will understand them thanks to their knowledge of the earlier part of the MDhP. It should also be noted that the border between the first and the second parts of the MDhP is fluid. It will be shown that abstract concepts are used in the first part while the last part of the MBh, the *Nārāyaṇīya*, reverts to a more descriptive argument. This confirms the impression that the concepts were specifically created for the Purāṇic description. It must be emphasised however that the division proposed here does not prove that the first part is historically earlier. It is hoped to investigate this issue in future research.

in the microscale. If he does, he becomes free, if not he remains within the manifest aspect for consecutive rebirths. My further research has confirmed the validity of these assumptions.

One was sure that early Smṛti thought would remain the main focus of study. Moreover, being always interested in philosophy, it was planned to enlarge the research to selected strands of classical Indian philosophy (Darśana). There were, however, some minor issues that were rather bothersome. When reading BhG or MDhP there were some words or phrases which seemed very strange and their larger meaning was rather obscure. For example, why does Kṛṣṇa, who in BhG 10.22a is presented as manifesting himself in the best manifestation of various phenomena, then describes himself as the *Sāmaveda* among the Vedas. Why the *Sāmaveda* and not the *Ṛgveda*?³ And in BhG 15.14 he calls himself *vaiśvānara* who is present in the bodies of living being and, being connected with exhalation and inhalation, cook's food.⁴ What does it mean? And what is the meaning of the strange cosmogony presented in the early chapter of the MDhP 176 (see chapter 1.2.1)?

It was clear that these terms and concepts probably referred back to earlier Vedic thought. One knew the so called 'philosophical' hymns of the *Ṛgveda* (henceforth RV) and *Atharvaveda* in the Śaunakīya recension (AVŚ)⁵ but little about the Brāhmaṇas except for them being examples of so called 'ritualistic speculations'⁶ or having no meaning at all (Staal 1979). One had also read the main Upaniṣads such as the *Brhadāraṇyaka* (henceforth BU), the *Chāndogya* (henceforth CU), the *Aitareya* (henceforth AU), the *Kaṭha* (henceforth KaU), the *Maitrāyaṇīya* (henceforth MaU) and others. They seemed stranger than the early Smṛti texts and contained even more annoying issues. Anyway, I decided to go to the roots thinking that it would not take too much time (just a few hymns!) and then return to study the Upaniṣads more thoroughly. Two or three years at most and one could return back to the Smṛti Composers!

However, it turned out that the journey to the roots took twenty years. In 2005, I published my habilitation on the metaphors and philosophy of the RV which was then republished in 2010 in much revised and enlarged English version. One was completely overwhelmed by the coherence and beauty of the Ṛgvedic hymns realising that the RV can be seen as cosmogony, as the creation of the world, of human beings in their everyday life and of the ultimate mental capacities that men can gain thanks to soma. Critically

³ BhG 10.22ab: *vedānām sāmavedo 'smi devānām asmi vāsavaḥ*.

⁴ BhG 15.14: *ahaṃ vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinām deham āśritaḥ | prāṇāpānasamāyuktaḥ pacāmy annaṃ caturvidham ||*

⁵ See e.g., Edgerton (1965).

⁶ For discussion, see Smith (1989).

the assumption of the precedence of cognition is valid here and it motivates the thinking of the poets and its expression. Further, reality is conceived as an internally contradictory fire which manifests its opposite aspects (fiery and liquid, conceived as soma) in the cosmos and in men exalted with soma. But how to describe and explain what one could see in the RV without being accused of fantasy and without using the language of the poets who express that ontology in their own terms. One had therefore to identify an appropriate methodology, for example, the concept of ‘defining events’ to analytically present the philosophical content of the RV.

Sometime in the mid 90’s I was fortunate to attend a lecture given by the Polish linguist, Professor Renata Grzegorzczkova. It was part of a short symposium organised to commemorate the achievements of my grandfather, Witold Doroszewski, who had been a linguist and the editor of the greatest dictionary of Polish language (which it remains till now). Outside the window it was spring, the chestnuts were blossoming... All of the sudden Professor Grzegorzczkova’s lecture caught my attention. She was speaking about a methodology which would be of help. It was Lakoff’s approach to cognitive linguistics. This was the hammer I was looking for! So began my study of cognitive linguistics though it took some years before I could use this methodology effectively.

In the meantime, I commenced the study of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (henceforth ŚB) and again felt overwhelmed by its content, by the way that cosmogonies are coherently applied to ritual thought and activity. Cognitive linguistics turned out to be wonderful tool which not only allows one to understand holistic cosmogonic concepts, but also the metonymic nature of so called ‘ritual identifications’⁷ and ‘etymologies’⁸ which turned out to be definitions based on a prototypical theory of categorisation. And one saw that the Composers of the ŚB refer to fire as the general concept of reality in the same way as it is presented in the RV. Sometimes they explain it explicitly, sometimes implicitly. They also refer to it in cosmogonies and they aim for its perceptible expression during ritual.

One should add that the *Jaimīniya Brāhmaṇa* (henceforth JB) and the *Jaimīniyopaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* (henceforth JUB) especially their descriptions

⁷ E.g., according to Gonda (1975: 248–249) many expressions of the RV which we could interpret as metaphorical are ‘rather statements of an equalisations or assimilation’ and ‘express beliefs in identity between various elements of reality, such as object and its source or material cause.’

⁸ E.g., Gonda (1955–1956). It is proposed to see them ‘as a part of the overall attempt to build a conceptual system and terminology, aiming to organise knowledge about the world, both in theoretical and pragmatic terms, and to organise a language to express this knowledge. In this system, the etymologies should be treated as definitions that name the constitutive features of an entity’ (Jurewicz 2016a).

of the afterlife confirm the thesis, formulated on the basis of funeral hymns of the RV (Jurewicz 2010), that the concept of rebirth within one's family had already been accepted in the Veda. This conviction is explicitly expressed as *punarmṛtyu* (repeated death) in later Vedic texts.

Equipped with knowledge about the earlier Vedic thought one could see the early Upaniṣads (BU, CU, *Taittirīya*, henceforth TU, *Kauṣītaki*, henceforth KU and *Praśna*, henceforth PU) from this perspective. The texts attest to an important change in ontology in that, while the range of investigations of earlier Vedic philosophers is reality in its manifest aspect together with the borderline sphere between the two aspects, the Upaniṣadic philosophers also try to cognise and describe the unmanifest aspect. This changed ontology is the result of a change in liberating practice which has led the philosophers beyond the manifest aspect to the unmanifest reality. Much of the content of the older Upaniṣads refers to liberating practices, based on recitation with proper breathing, which needs further investigation. These practices are often presented with the use of ritual terms which are more easily understood when we know the earlier Brahmanic texts. Much remains to be done in this respect but already we can reconstruct the development of the early Hindu liberating practices. Thanks to the early Upaniṣadic descriptions one could see the efforts Hindu philosophers made to reach the state after soma which they had heard about while listening, memorising and reciting the Veda. Although conceptualisation of reality in terms of fire gradually vanishes in the early Upaniṣads, the conviction that the cosmos is a manifestation of subject-object cognition of reality becomes very important and is often explicitly expressed. The outcome of this research is presented in my second book (Jurewicz 2016/18).

Finally, one was ready to come back to early Smṛti thought. The first idea was to extend the research to include the later Upaniṣads particularly KaU and MaU. The analysis has now been completed but it has turned out that there is too much material for one book. It had already become very large when compared to my PhD thesis because the Vedic background gives one a much wider perspective for understanding the early Smṛti texts. Since the analysis of the MaU is almost finished it will be published in a separate volume in the near future. In this study therefore, one will only touch on some aspects of that magnificent text. The KaU has been extensively explored by some contemporary scholars⁹ so an investigation into that text will have to wait its turn. The texts that are going to be analysed here are generally the same as in my PhD thesis: selected chapters of the MS, of the BhG and of the first part of MDhP (168–278).

⁹ Bodewitz (1985), DeVries (1987), Oberlies (1988), Grinshpon (2003: 80–100), Cohen (2008), Smith (2016), Norelius (2017), Haas (2019).