

TAPAS IN THE RG VEDA

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By

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## ABSTRACT

It is my contention in this thesis that the term tapas means heat, and heat only, in the Rig Veda. Many reputable scholars have suggested that tapas refers to asceticism in several instances in the RV. I propose that these suggestions are in fact unnecessary. To determine the exact meaning of tapas in its many occurrences in the RV, I have given primary attention to those contexts (i.e. hymns) in which the meaning of tapas is absolutely unambiguous. I then proceed with this meaning in mind to more ambiguous instances. In those instances where the meaning of tapas is unambiguous it always refers to some kind of heat, and never to asceticism. Since there are unambiguous cases where tapas means heat in the RV, and there are no unambiguous instances in the RV where tapas means asceticism, it only seems natural to assume that tapas means heat in all instances. The various occurrences of tapas as heat are organized in a new system of contextual classifications to demonstrate that tapas as heat still has a variety of functions and usages in the RV.

In conclusion, I suggest that heat works very well as a translation for tapas in the RV. While it is of course possible that other meanings of tapas were acceptable to Vedic man, it seems to me that we must await support from the RV itself before accepting any meaning beyond that of heat, the only meaning which is in fact documented in the RV. This approach to understanding tapas in the RV (i.e. contextual analysis) may help to solve some of the problems modern scholars have faced when attempting to translate a term such as tapas in the RV.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this thesis to explore the meaning of the term tapas in the Rg Veda.<sup>1</sup> The thesis suggests that an analysis of the term as it appears in its context (i.e., the hymn) will lead toward the most comprehensive understanding of the term. It then proceeds to organize the various occurrences of tapas in the RV in a new system of classifications based on different contexts in an attempt to bring a clearer understanding to the meaning and function of the term in the RV.

The RV saṁhitā is the earliest Sanskrit text of the Aryans. It is a collection (saṁhitā) of knowledge (veda) divided into ten books (mandala-s - circles) consisting of 1028 hymns (sūkta-).

The hymns of the RV were composed and transmitted orally in different families during a period probably dating back before 1800B.C.<sup>2</sup> The various hymns were gradually brought together to form a collection, but their exact date of compilation has not been determined.<sup>3</sup> The most ancient hymns are contained in mandala-s II to VII. They constitute the family books, that is, the hymns contained in each of these books are attributed to various members of a single family. Thus mandala II is attributed to members of the Gr̥tsamada family, mandala III is attributed to the Viśvāmitra family, mandala IV to the Vāmadeva family, mandala V to the Atri family, mandala VI to the Bharadvāja family and mandala VII to the Vasiṣṭha family. It is probable that these mandala-s formed the nucleus of the RV.

The remaining books were added to this nucleus. Mandala VIII resembles the older books in that the majority of the hymns (1-66) were attributed to the Kaṇva family. The balance (67-103), however, were composed by other families. Mandala I is a collection of hymns composed by a number of poets, and is probably a later addition, although some of the hymns may be old. Mandala X is no doubt of later origin and, judging from the subject matter and grammatical structure, was added latest to the existing body of texts. Mandala IX consists of hymns to soma (an intoxicating juice), and it is possible that the hymns of this book were taken from the other mandala-s, and then kept together for ritual purposes.<sup>4</sup>

The RV is the foundation of a wider Vedic tradition. Within the corpus of Vedic texts are included three additional sāṃhitā-s: the Atharvaveda (magical and medical formulae), the Sāmaveda and the Yajurveda (these latter two select mantra-s from the RV for specific ritual purposes). The Brāhmaṇas (ritual treatises), the Āraṇyakas (forest texts) and the Upanisads (philosophic speculations) complete the Vedic corpus.

Renou points out that the Veda is revered as an indivisible whole in popular belief, in spite of the vague and often incomprehensible manner in which the authors organized reality.<sup>5</sup> It is understandable why the texts are difficult to comprehend. Their varied elements have been composed and recomposed in different times and in different places to respond to different needs, by men of the most diverse vocations.<sup>6</sup> The Veda was a problem for Indian thought

because of

the difficulty of the style and language, (at least as regards the mantra-s), joined to a certain esoterism of Vedic thought ... the disposal of time and space of the series of Vedic texts, groups and schools; the cutting up of old hymns into formulae or even into fragments, becoming inert bodies in the liturgical web which receives them; the emphasis placed on pronunciation, on recitation to the detriment of the interpretation of the texts; the rarity of commentaries, their insufficiency (at least as regards the mantra-s), their etymological prejudice; the fact, above all, that Vedic representations had, early on, ceased to be a ferment of Indian religiosity, that it no longer recognized itself even where it remained faithful to them. Briefly, the Vedic world, whose essential had passed, while transforming itself, into the very flesh of Hindu practices and speculations, was no more than a distant object, exposed to the hazards of an adoration stripped of its textual substance. 7

In other words, the religion out of which the Vedas emerged is obscured in antiquity, and is not very well understood in the Indian tradition. This obscurity, among other reasons, led heterodox Jains and Buddhists, sectarian movements, philosophic schools and smṛti writers to reject the Veda, or at least not to give it much specific attention and to set it apart from the Indian tradition as a whole. The implication of this, then, is that interpreters of the Veda should be careful about translating terms out of context with the text in which the term appears; they should be especially careful about reading back in the Veda the ideas of the later tradition.

If the Indian tradition had difficulty in understanding the Vedic tradition, just how successful will modern scholarship be, especially when it comes to defining and understanding a term (i.e. tapas) in the

most difficult text of them all, the RV? It is important to realize that approximately 3800 years separate the composition of the RV and current attempts to understand the meaning and function of tapas in the RV. Just how close can a modern conceptual understanding of tapas come to the ancient Vedic understanding of the term? Is such an understanding possible? If the relation between a modern understanding and the understanding of the authors of these ancient texts is only partial, then what aspects of the modern attempts to understand tapas correspond to the Vedic understanding; what aspects do not correspond? To what extent do current modes of thought influence a given understanding of Vedic religion? Specifically, is it possible to arrive at a precise definition of tapas that would even approximate the intended meaning of the term in the RV?

It is not the purpose of this thesis to answer all of these questions. These questions are raised merely to point out some of the problems modern scholars face when they attempt to translate a text such as the RV. However, this thesis will suggest a methodology which may help resolve some of these problems.

Many modern scholars have failed in their attempts to provide adequate translations of tapas in the RV, because they were too ready to provide meanings appropriate for the later tradition, ignoring the degree to which the RV is set apart from the later tradition. For example, in the middle and late nineteenth century translations of the RV appeared by such noted scholars as: H.H. Wilson, Max Muller, R.T.H. Griffith, Geldner and Grassmann. Their translations of tapas reflected

the efforts of three scholars who had attempted to define tapas in the Sanskrit dictionaries. Grassmann had compiled a dictionary specifically for RV usage: Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda. He found four distinct ways to define tapas in the RV.

- (1) Wärme (warmth), Hitze (heat), Glut (heat, glow)
- (2) Qual (torment), Bedrängniss (affliction)
- (3) in den spätern Liedern Selbstpeinigung, Askeke zur Ertödung der Sinnlichkeit und Versenkung ins Uebersinnliche (in the later poems - self-torture, asceticism, with the mortification of sensuality and disappearing in the transcendental.)
- (4) Flammenglut personificirt (flame or glow personified).<sup>8</sup>

Grassmann indicates which of these meanings he considers most appropriate for each occurrence of tapas (26X) in the RV.

Apte provides a total of eleven meanings to render the Sanskrit term tapas as it appears throughout the whole Sanskrit literary tradition. Although only one meaning is illustrated from the RV (7.82.7 - pain, suffering), four of the eleven actually correspond to Grassmann's meanings. These are

- (1) Warmth, heat, fire, light; Mb 12.351.10.
- (2) Pain, suffering; RV 7.82.7
- (3) Penance, religious austerity, mortification; Ku 5.64.
- (4) Meditation, connected with the practice of personal self-denial or bodily mortification; Mb 1.3.57; BG 12.11.24. 9

Monier-Williams provides a similar range of meanings and specifically mentions RV usage three times. These are

warmth, heat, RV; pain, suffering, vii.82.7;

religious austerity, bodily mortification,  
penance, severe meditation, special  
observance (feeding upon herbs and roots  
with Rishis, ix.113.2); personified, x.83.2,3.<sup>10</sup>

These dictionaries have provided a broad spectrum of meanings for RV usage. However, just how adequate are these dictionaries as guides for translating tapas in the RV? For example, each of these scholars mentions asceticism or mortification as a possible meaning for tapas. Grassmann goes so far as to indicate which meaning is most appropriate for each occurrence of tapas in the RV. Of the twenty-one occurrences of tapas in the RV, Grassmann translates tapas as Askese (asceticism)/sensual mortification ten times. Similarly, Geldner, in his translation of the RV, translates tapas as Kasteiung (mortification) nine times, Bemühen (effort, endeavor) three times, and Dranges (effort urge) once. It is important to note that Apte and Monier-Williams focused on the later tradition. Although Grassmann focused on the RV, he was incorrect in his assumption that the term tapas in the RV can be equated with asceticism. Many scholars have made this error of reading back into the RV ideas belonging to the later tradition, ignoring the context in which the term appears.

For example, Chakraborti (1973)<sup>11</sup> and Bhagat (1976)<sup>12</sup> have recently completed detailed studies of asceticism in the Indian tradition, each including an exploration of the evidence for ascetic activity in the RV. They follow the lead of scholarship before them, and translate tapas as asceticism in many instances. However, after a close examination of the hymns in which tapas occurs in the RV, it is improbable that any translation of tapas in the RV would mean "asceticism, urge,

effort or mortification". Tapas did come to refer to ascetic practice in the later tradition as Chakraborti and Bhagat clearly document,<sup>13</sup> but seeing that meaning associated with tapas in the RV is probably anachronistic on their part.

There is no doubt that ascetic practices were known in the RV. For example, in an unusual hymn in the tenth mandala (10.136), a muni (ascetic) is girdled with wind, has long hair, and wears soiled garments. He flies along the path of the apsararas and the gandharvas, although men see only his mortal frame. He is aware of secret desires and is a wonderful friend. He is a friend of Vayu, supports Agni, drinks with Rudra and is inspired by gods. He is one with heaven and light, and dwells in the east and western ocean. The muni may have practiced asceticism and austerities to acquire magical powers similar to those promised to the performers of sacrifices, but his austere practices were not within the mainstream of Vedic thought. Muni-s had great powers, but their erratic behavior did not belong within the tightly structured sacrificial ritual system. This tenth mandala hymn was added late to the core of the RV, and probably reflects late Vedic thought and the assimilation of non-Vedic ideas to the orthodox tradition. Although non-Vedic ascetic practices, such as the muni's, were initially unacceptable to the Brāhmaṇic conception of sacrifice, they were eventually assimilated and incorporated into the orthodox tradition.<sup>14</sup> This assimilation eventually made asceticism a part of the Vedic sacrificial system, and the term tapas came to refer to ascetic practice,<sup>15</sup> but it is important to note that the term tapas does not occur in 10.136 in relation to this ascetic

life-style. In fact, the term tapas does not even occur in this hymn. Nor is there any clear evidence in any of the tenth mandala occurrences of tapas that tapas refers to anything but heat (i.e. 10.190.1; 10.87.14).

Other attempts (twentieth century) to explain tapas in the RV have helped clear up this ambiguity a bit. The discussions of tapas that Gonda<sup>16</sup> and Renou<sup>17</sup> provide also start with the standard dictionary definitions: Gonda - heat, asceticism, meditation; Renou - asceticism, heat; but they go beyond this.

Gonda        Tapas is: originally the heat generated by and in the person who exerts himself to the utmost in asceticism, concentration, etc., and the particular kind, and supernatural degree, of energy and power of will produced by the exertion. Tapas, being attended with a nervous over-sensitiveness, a failing consciousness of external reality and a fading away of the sense of what is possible and what is not capable of being done by man, is considered a very effective power, which being accumulated by fervent ascetic practice, can enable its 'possessor' to perform supernormal activities such as seeing, knowing, creating what is beyond human powers, and which being discharged, is automatically and irrevocably effective.

Renou

Tapas is the ascetic "heat" which confers supernormal powers on men as on the gods ... Various practices are capable of generating tapas, from sitting near the fire or in the sun, to internal heating, ecstasy, and the consumption of intoxicative and narcotic substances.

Some important observations can be made about these two comments. The term tapas is still connected to ascetic practices, but an important distinction has been introduced. Tapas is the 'heat' resulting from or generated by ascetic practice. It is not the ascetic practice itself. It is this 'heat' that confers supernormal powers. Gonda lists

various of these supernormal powers: "seeing, knowing, creating what is beyond human powers, and which, being discharged, is automatically and irrevocably effective." These supernormal powers, acquired from tapas, are an important dimension to our understanding of tapas in the RV.

W. O'Flaherty also goes beyond the standard dictionary definitions. She has recently translated large portions of the RV,<sup>18</sup> and in most instances she translated tapas as heat. Although she translates tapas as asceticism in one instance (10.109.4),<sup>19</sup> and implies ascetic effort in other instances,<sup>20</sup> she seems to overlook these translations to make an important observation. She specifically refers to tapas as "the heat generated by ritual activity."<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that where tapas appears in relation to 'activity' in the RV, it is always as the 'heat' of ritual activities (of Vedic worshippers), and not of ascetic activities (of muni-s, yati-s).

Another recent scholar has pointed out that in the tenth mandala of the RV tapas refers to a cosmic creating and cosmogonic heat. Knipe<sup>22</sup> makes the following observation about this dimension of the meaning:

(Tapas) ... is a mystical heat, a creative warmth glowing like a kind of 'incubation' or hatching' heat in the preformal cosmic waters.

In the RV the power of tapas is creative on the cosmic as well as on the human level: on the macro-cosmic level, tapas functions as a 'catalyst' and 'lubricant' in the creative process of evolution. On the micro-cosmic level, tapas helps the Vedic worshiper to transcend the normal human condition to create inner supernormal experience, to manifest supernormal power and to produce progeny. These related creative aspects of tapas will be discussed below.

Chauncy Blair has made a complete study of the term. He has collected and analyzed the various occurrences of the root tap- and its derivatives in the RV, the total of which is approximately 110. His work, Heat in the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda, is divided into six parts: (1) on the uses of the root tap- and its derivatives (the longest); (2) on heat and enemies; (3) on heat of the body; (4) on heat and the cosmos; (5) on heat and the gods; and (6) on other aspects of heat. His study identified twenty-one passages in the RV in which the word tapas appears<sup>24</sup> (the same passages as Grassmann above), and he classifies them into four categories. These four categories are:

- (a) tapas as injurious heat directed against demons and enemies - 8X
- (b) tapas for general ritual purposes - 3X
- (c) tapas as a legendary and supernatural attribute of rsi-s and pitr-s - 5X
- (d) tapas as a creative or cosmogonic power working in the cosmos - 5X.<sup>25</sup>

Gonda has raised serious objections to Blair's methodology. In a review<sup>26</sup> of Blair's monograph, Gonda comments that the author "... has provided a welcome contribution to the understanding of a complex of ideas which was to assume great importance in Indian culture;"<sup>27</sup> however, in the same review, Gonda refers to Blair's discussion of the semantic development of tap- in the RV as "... one of these easy conjectures and fallacious constructions which the student of semantics will so often find on his path."<sup>28</sup> What is wanting in Blair's study, according to Gonda, is

- (1) a delineation of the general cultural background;

- (2) an attempt to show the connections between the 'heat' complex with related or complementary complexes of ideas;
- (3) the function and 'position' of heat, fire, and glow in the Veda as a whole; and
- (4) the importance of all that is connected with concepts and the phenomena in early Vedic times in general.<sup>29</sup>

Knipe also calls into question Blair's hermeneutical procedure.

Knipe points out three deficiencies in this regard:

- (1) no regard to the Indo-Iranian background or to any other text in the Vedic tradition;
- (2) lack of references to the human condition, to the experiences of man outside of the Vedic hymns;
- (3) no reference to Vedic India's total expression in myths, symbols, speculations and particularly rites.<sup>30</sup>

These objections point up some strong problems in Blair's study. Although it cannot be denied that Blair's monograph has provided a valuable service in collecting the texts, analyzing the morphology of tap- derivatives and demonstrating that tapas can be translated as heat throughout the RV and AV (in same case he leaves tapas untranslated), it is apparent that his system of classification has failed to convince Gonda and Knipe. It is not the purpose of this thesis to answer all these objections. All interpretations should, of course, take account of the literature's general cultural background, but it must be remembered that there are limits to a modern scholar's ability to reconstruct the general cultural background of RV times. Renou for instance, has argued that Gonda's 'cultural context' is the later tradition, and contends that it was almost as far from the Vedic world

as a modern perspective.<sup>31</sup>

One approach which may help determine the exact meaning of tapas in its many occurrences in the RV and which has not yet been thoroughly utilized, is to give primary attention to those contexts in which the meaning of tapas is absolutely unambiguous, and proceed with those in mind to more ambiguous instances. What I propose is to examine all hymns in which tapas appears in an effort to understand how the term is used in each context. In those instances where the meaning of tapas is unambiguous it always refers to some kind of heat and never to asceticism (i.e. 9.113.2; 10.16.4). In those instances where the meaning of tapas is not clear from the context of the hymn itself, many reputable scholars have suggested alternate meanings such as asceticism, effort, urge (i.e. 10.129.3; 10.109.4). Since nothing in the context of these particular hymns preclude such an interpretation, then these scholars rested satisfied that tapas in these cases does indeed mean asceticism. However, since the hymns are ambiguous, the meaning of tapas could just as easily be heat. It is my contention in this thesis that the suggestions that tapas refers to asceticism in these ambiguous cases are in fact unnecessary. Rather, logic dictates that we first try to apply the meaning 'heat' for which we have adequate support in other Rig Vedic hymns. In fact, having done this, I am now convinced that in each and every case the hymns make excellent sense if tapas means only heat and not asceticism. Since there are unambiguous cases where tapas means heat in the RV, and there are no unambiguous instances in the RV where tapas means asceticism - in fact, in 10.136, where ascetic practices are clearly

discussed, the term tapas does not even occur - it only seems natural to assume that tapas means heat in all instances. While it is of course possible that other meanings of tapas were acceptable to Vedic man, it seems to me that we must await support before accepting anything beyond the meaning of heat, the only meaning which is in fact documented in the RV.

It is my contention that the RV itself contains the necessary clues to bring a clearer understanding to the intended meaning and function of the term tapas as it is used in the RV. For this reason, I propose to confine my study of tapas in the RV to the RV itself, and not go outside the text for support. The approach outlined above may help to solve some of the problems modern scholars have faced when attempting to translate a text such as the RV.

The next step, then, is to organize the various occurrences of tapas as heat in a new system of contextual classifications. In these categories where ambiguous meanings are found, I will work from unambiguous to ambiguous usages of the term. From this, it will become apparent that tapas as 'heat' still has a variety of functions and usages in the RV.

This thesis will discuss the twenty-one passages in which tapas appears in three categories based on the three different kinds of contexts. Although these categories are similar to Blair's in some respects, they go beyond Blair's by discussing the occurrences of tapas contextually. Chapter one will discuss tapas in contexts where it is the transforming heat of soma that brings on supernatural experience:

- RV 9.113.2. tapasā  
 8. 59.6. tapasā  
 10.154.2. tapasā, tapasā, tapas  
 4. tapasvatas  
 5. tapasvatas, tapo-jān  
 10.109.1. tapas  
 4. tapase

Chapter two will discuss tapas in contexts where it is a destructive heat-force:

- RV 10. 16. 4. tapasā  
 8. 49.16. tapasā  
 6. 5. 4. tapasā, tapasvin  
 7. 1. 7. tapobhis  
 7. 82. 7. tapas  
 10. 87.14. tapasā  
 10. 83. 2. tapasā  
 3 tapasā

Chapter three will discuss tapas in contexts where it is a creative and/or cosmogonic heat-power:

- RV 10.167. 1. tapas  
 10. 68. 6. agni-tapobhis  
 10.129. 3. tapasas  
 10.190. 1. tapasas  
 10.169. 2. tapasā  
 10.183. 1. tapasas, tapasas

Chapter four will summarize and conclude the findings of this thesis.

ENDNOTES: INTRODUCTION

- <sup>1</sup>Rg Veda will be abbreviated to RV hereafter.
- <sup>2</sup>J.A. Santucci, An Outline of Vedic Literature (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), p. 1.
- <sup>3</sup>L. Renou, Vedic India. Classical India, Vol. III, Translated by Philip Spratt (Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1957), p. 3.
- <sup>4</sup>Santucci, op cit., pp. 1-2.
- <sup>5</sup>L. Renou, Destiny of the Veda in India (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), pp. 52-53.  
P. Younger, "Renou, Louis, The Destiny of The Veda in India; Gonda, D., Change and Continuity in Indian Religion; Brown, W. Norman, Man in the Universe: Some Cultural Continuities," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 34 (1968), pp. 75-79, correctly points out that Renou never clearly states why the RV is so revered.
- <sup>6</sup>Renou, Destiny of the Veda in India, p. 16.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 53.
- <sup>8</sup>H. Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rigveda (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964), pp. 522-523.
- <sup>9</sup>V.S. Apte, The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Vol. III (Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957), p. 760.
- <sup>10</sup>M. Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 437.
- <sup>11</sup>H. Chakraborti, Asceticism in Ancient India (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1973).
- <sup>12</sup>M.G. Bhagat, Ancient Indian Asceticism (New Delhi: Munshiram M Manoharlal, 1976).
- <sup>13</sup>cf. W. O'Flaherty, Śiva: The Erotic Ascetic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); for a discussion of tapas as 'knowledge' in the later tradition, see V. Bhattacharya, "Tapas," Indian Historical Quarterly, IX (1958), pp. 104-105; for a discussion of tapas as 'merit'

in the later tradition see M. Hara, "Transfer of Merit," Adyar Library Journal, 31-32 (1967-68), pp. 382-411.

<sup>14</sup>cf. W. Kaebler, "The Brahmācārin: Homology and Continuity in Brāhmanic Religion," History of Religions 21 (1981), pp. 77-89.

<sup>15</sup>The word tapas was eventually used for all bodily asceticism in the later tradition, and it is reasonable to suppose that tapas as it appears in the RV already contained a 'tendency' in this direction, i.e. tapas as pain (see discussion of 7.82.7 in chapter two).

<sup>16</sup>J. Gonda, Ancient-Indian Ojas, Latin Augos and the Indo-European Nouns in -es/-os. (Utrecht: A.A. Oosthoek's Uitgevers Mij., 1952), p. 25.

<sup>17</sup>Renou, Vedic India, op cit., p. 125.

<sup>18</sup>W. O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda (Middlesex: Penquin Books, Ltd., 1981). Whenever possible I have used W. O'Flaherty's translations. Where she has not translated a particular hymn, I have resorted to Griffith's translations, R.T.H. Griffith, The Hymns of the Rgveda, ed. by J.L. Shastri (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973). I will also occasionally refer to K.Geldner, trans., Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche urberetzt (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), Vols. 33, 34, 35, 36 of the Harvard Oriental Series. And H.G. Grassmann, (ed. and trans.) Der Rig-Veda (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1876-77). The hymns under discussion in each chapter will appear at the end of the thesis.

<sup>19</sup>W. O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda, op cit., p. 276.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 34 (10.108), 26 (10.128), 55 (10.154).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>22</sup>D.M. Knipe, In the Image of Fire: The Vedic Experiences of Heat (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), p. 107.

<sup>23</sup>C.J. Blair, Heat in the Rig-Veda and Atharva Veda (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1961).

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>25</sup>cf. U.M. Vesci, "Der Begriff Tapas im R̥g Veda," Kairos X (1968), pp. 186-192, for a favorable discussion of Blair's categories.

<sup>26</sup>J. Gonda, "Review of Heat in the Rig-Veda and Atharva Veda by C.J. Blair," Indo-Iranian Journal, VIII (1964), pp. 60-64.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Knipe, op cit., pp. 109-111.

<sup>31</sup>cf. P. Younger, op cit., pp. 75-78.

## CHAPTER I

### TAPAS: AS THE TRANSFORMING HEAT OF SOMA

There are several hymns in the RV in which tapas appears in association with soma. When soma is ingested during the Vedic sacrifice to obtain supernormal experience, it is the tapas(internal heat) generated within the Vedic worshipper, from the ingested soma, that transforms the worshipper and enables the vision to occur.

Sacrifice is the foundation of the Vedic cult. It was perceived by Vedic man as a sort of 'connecting link' between spirit and matter, between heaven and earth, between god and man, between creator and created. Its function was to establish and maintain communication with the divine world. Through the sacrifice man can control the universe and change its laws. Through the sacrifice general well-being was secured, rta (truth, law, order) was obtained, and the rising of the sun, the falling of the rain and fertility were guaranteed. In short, the sacrifice was the means by which the universe and the gods stood in relationship with man. Renou reconstructs the essential features of the cult:

... sacrifice is a consecration, a movement from the profane to sacred, which modifies not only the 'victim' but the moral personality who pays for the ceremony, and even possibly external objects. The victim effects the communication between the profane and the sacred, while the priest is both the agent of the sacrificer and the delegate of the gods. 1

A variety of ideas prompted Vedic man to perform sacrifice. These ideas can be found in various hymns throughout the RV: a desire to obtain a favor from the gods (2.28.1; 1.114.3; 3.32.13); protection against the enemy (1.103.8); protection from sin (1.136.5; 10.63.6); attainment of fame (3.19.1); material progress (6.6.1; 7.61.4); and the experience of supernormal visions (9.113; 8.59). Various gods (Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, etc.) are invoked with prayers during the sacrifice to provide these worldly comforts and blessings. Vedic man had a simple and utilitarian ideas of happiness, centered on prayers asking for property, progeny and safety from misfortunes.<sup>2</sup>

The sacrifice was a solemn homage paid to the gods. The sacrifice consists of several rites of various lengths which culminate in offerings made to the sacred fire (Agni). There is the short and frequently performed agnihotra (the oblation to the fire), which is carried out in the morning and in the evening. During this rite a simple offering of milk is made to Agni. There are also vegetable sacrifices at the full and new moon, special rites for the changing of the seasons, and ceremonies for harvests. Animal sacrifices (i.e., a he-goat - cf. 10.16.4) also occur during a ceremony modeled on the full and new moon rites.<sup>3</sup>

There may be as many as sixteen or seventeen officiants at a sacrifice, in addition to the layman and his wife who pay for the ceremony. These include the brahmin, who supervises and makes corrections when needed, the hotar, who makes oblations and recites from the SV, and the adhvaryu, who recites and follows prescribed procedures from

the YV. It is crucial for the outcome of the sacrifice that these officiants perform their roles correctly.<sup>4</sup>

In the Vedic tradition, the sacrifice is preceded by a consecration called dīksā. Involving bathing, remaining in a hut clothed in black antelope skin, sitting near the fire in silence, being abstinent, fasting and sleeping on the ground, the diksa frees the body from normal domestic life. Dīksā brings on an inner heat called tapas; in other words, dīksā engenders or leads to tapas, it is the womb of tapas. This internal heat was the sign that one has "passed beyond the human condition, has emerged from the profane,"<sup>5</sup> as Eliade puts it. Tapas was a fundamental aid for the sacrificer to experience happiness and the supernormal vision of heaven and immortality. Royalty (rāstra), strength (bala) and creative power (ojas) were also among the products of dīksā practice and tapas generation (AV 19.43.1; 19.41.1).<sup>6</sup> Tapas and dīksā are intimately related in the sacrificial ritual, but it is important to note, as Gonda points out, that dīksā is not identical with tapas, nor can it be considered a form of tapas.<sup>7</sup> As Renou puts it, dīksā is an "intention to burn."<sup>8</sup> In the later tradition the practice which generates internal heat is called tapas,<sup>9</sup> but in the RV the term tapas merely refers to the heat that is generated as a result of this practice. In the RV, tapas (internal heat) was also generated 'during' the sacrificial ritual through soma ingestion.

The soma sacrifice was one of the most important of the Vedic sacrifices. All 114 hymns in the ninth mandala, plus six in other books, are dedicated to soma. Soma is, according to Renou, "the Vedic

sacrifice par excellence." The preparation itself became a holy ritual. The RV describes in detail the preparation of soma (i.e., 9.47; 10.94), but barely mentions the other preparations which form the rubric of Vedic sacrifice. Basically, the soma plant is pressed by stones in a bowl and the liquid, also called soma, is filtered through a wooden sieve. The juice is intoxicating when ingested and is dangerous if drunk to excess (8.79.7-8; 8.48.10). But the hallucinatory effect is sought after, or at least admired, for soma has the ability to produce in the ritual priest an ecstatic state of mind, intimations of immortality (8.48; 9.113) and immense personal, godlike power, such as was valuable to Indra in his fight with Vrtra (9.113.1; 10.119). The Vedic people found in this soma something divine. It became to them a god, Soma, the King of plants (10.109).<sup>10</sup>

In this chapter, tapas will be discussed as it appears with soma in four hymns. In 9.113, tapas is embodied in soma. It is unambiguously clear in this hymn that tapas refers to heat. In the next three hymns, however, the meaning of tapas is little more ambiguous. In 8.69, it is the tapas generated within the Vedic poet after soma ingestion that enables the poet to envision the ṛṣi-s. In 10.154, the ṛṣi-s are offered soma, and they are 'full of tapas.' In 10.109, a personified Tapas witnesses the sin of the personified Soma, and in the same hymn, it is with tapas that the ṛṣi-s envision the knowledge and consequences of this sin. It is probable that tapas refers to heat in each of these instances.

Hymn 9.113 praises the sanctity of soma and describes the immense power which is aroused when soma is ingested during the sacrifice.

The poet begins this hymn by asking Indra, who ingested soma before killing Vṛtra, to drink soma with him. Then the poet takes soma himself. Soma has as its qualities satya, śraddhā, tapas (v.2) and rta (v.4). It is full of juice, for all juices flow through it. It has been grown by Parjanya (Indra), god of rain. As the poet becomes inspired under the influence of the juices, he asks soma to place him in that place where light (jyoti) shines, where the world of the sun and of immortality (amṛta) lies. This is where Yama, the god of death dwells (cf. 10.154), where the cosmic waters are, where there is freedom of movement, where the dead are nourished by offerings, where there is joy and pleasure, gladness and delight, where desires are fulfilled.

This intoxicating soma is laden with tapas (v.2). Since soma has the ability to grant immortality (vv.7-11), it follows that tapas, which is embodied in soma, plays a role in the process of transforming the priest from the human domain to the supernormal realm of immortality. According to Grassmann, tapas in this hymn refers to the 'act' of sensual mortification. But it is clear in this context that tapas is 'not' the 'act' of sensual mortification. Tapas here is not an 'activity.' Tapas is embodied in soma, and it is more probable to assume that, rather than 'mortify' the senses, tapas-laden soma 'expands' or 'heightens' the senses for the supernormal experience. One's expanded senses then have the sensitivity to experience joy (v.6) and inextinguishable light in an unfading world (v.7). It might also be suggested that since soma has been prepared over the fire (Agni), it would 'possess' or 'embody' the heat (tapas) of the fire (cf. 3.53.14 - the tap- of fire heats milk;

10.16.4 - the tapas of Agni heats the sacrificial goat). Thus, it is the tapas of soma that supplies the internal heat-power for the supernormal vision. It 'prepares' the body of the Vedic worshipper for this vision in much the same way as the heat of the fire 'prepares' milk for drinking.

As alluded to in the 'invocation' of the hymn (v.1), Indra also took soma to acquire the tapas (heat-power) to kill Vṛtra with his thunderbolt (1.55; cf. 10.167). Indra does not practice sensual mortification (asceticism), but he does acquire tapas (heat-power) for the destruction of Vṛtra by ingesting soma, just as the soma-ingesting poet acquires tapas for his vision. In the funeral ceremony (discussed next chapter), soma is given to the corpse for his journey to the realm of the immortals (10.16.5; 10.154.1). These immortals (ṛṣi-s) possess tapas (10.154.2,4,5), and it is probable that they also acquired their tapas through soma ingestion (10.154.1) and the heat of the fire. Tapas, as an aspect of soma, probably as its 'heat', aids in the transformation of the poet to the supernormal realm of immortality.

Hymn 8.59.6 clearly demonstrates that the tapas of soma enables the poet to obtain a supernormal vision. In this hymn, soma is offered to the dual deity Indra-Varuṇa in return for cheerfulness, wealth, food, progeny and long life (v.7). Indra-Varuṇa, who is filled with truthfulness, great strength and majesty (v.5), hastens to the sacrifice to assist the worshipper with his libations (v.1,3). It can be assumed from 9.113, that the worshipper would also ingest soma. As a result, with his 'spirit's fervid glow' (with his tapas - tapasā - v.6), the

worshipper is transformed beyond the normal human condition to perceive a supernormal vision of the ṛṣi-s. Indra-Varuṇa gave to these ṛṣi-s in olden times revelation, thought, and power of song. The poet also beheld that the ṛṣi-s had acquired their heavenly abode as a result of their own sacrificial offerings. These offerings include soma, for the seven holy voices who pour meath (soma) in v.3 are the same ṛṣi-s who have the power of song in v.6 (and sing aloud in 9.103.3). The ṛṣi-s also are offered soma (10.154.1), and as a result possess tapas (10.154.4), which enables them to acquire visions (10.109.4). It is possible that the worshipper ingests soma to be just like the ṛṣi-s, at least for the duration of the ritual.

Will you (Indra) make me into a shephard  
of the people, into a king ... into a ṛṣi  
after I have drunk the (pressed) soma?<sup>...</sup>  
3.43.5 (Blair).

In 8.59.6, the meaning of tapas is ambiguous. Tapas has been translated as sensual mortification by Grassmann, and as Bemühen - effort by Geldner. But it is not clear from the context that ascetic effort is implied in the meaning. Tapas is not an activity here. It is more probable to assume, by reference to the previous hymn (9.113.2), that the poet in this hymn envisions the ṛṣi-s with his tapas, with his internal heat, and this he acquired through soma ingestion. It is clear from 9.113.2 that tapas is embodied in soma. And in 8.59.6 it is reasonable to assume that it was tapas, not as an activity, but as the heat of soma, that enabled the poet to be transformed from the human state to perceive a supernormal vision of the ṛṣi-s.

In hymn 10.154, the poet offers soma to the ṛṣi-s, who are filled with tapas, and asks Yama, the god of death, to lead the deceased to them. It has been shown that the Vedic worshipper desires to be like the immortal ṛṣi-s during the sacrifice (3.43.5). For this reason he ingests soma and acquires tapas. It is not unlikely that during these soma and tapas filled sacrifices, he is preparing to be with the immortal ṛṣi-s after he dies.

The hymn (10.154) opens by making a distinction between levels of heavenly abodes. A distinction is made between the food (soma) of the ṛṣi-s and the food (butter) of those who are not ṛṣi-s in (v.1; cf. 10.14.3; 10.135.1). Soma is noted as the ambrosia for the gods, while butter is human food for the semi-divine fathers.<sup>10</sup> Since madhu (honey or soma, cf. 10.167.1) is better than butter, the hymn asks that the deceased go to the realm of the ṛṣi-s.

It is desirable to go to the realm of the ṛṣi-s because they are 'full of tapas' (tapasvatas - vv.4.5). Forms of tapas appear six times in this hymn. The ṛṣi-s are full of tapas (tapasvatas - vv.4,5) and are reborn through their tapas (tapojān - v.5). Tapas (v.2) is their glory, for with it (tapasā - 2X in v.2) they become invincible and go to the sun. It is possible that pitṛ-s (fathers) in v.4 refers to ṛṣi-s (cf. AV 18.2.15 - the verse is identical except for the occurrence of ṛṣi-s in place of pitṛ-s). By replacing pitṛ-s with ṛṣi-s, all verses would then refer to the tapas of the ṛṣi-s. It is probable that it was the ṛṣi-s, the great seers, who were the first to nurse Order, who had Order, and made Order grow great (v.4).

Hymn 10.154 provides little clue for an unambiguous translation of its several occurrences of tapas. However, it is my contention that Grassmann and Geldner are mistaken once again in their translations of tapas in this hymn. Geldner suggests that tapas be translated as Kasteiung (mortification) in each case, while Grassmann offers asceticism/sensual mortification in verse two and Qual (torture, suffering) in verses four and five. The ideas of suffering or torture may be implied in the practice of asceticism or mortification, but it is not clear that tapas indicates ascetic practice in these instances, not to mention suffering or torture. For example, in verses four and five, it makes more sense to say that the ṛṣi-s are full of 'heat', rather than full of asceticism or suffering. The idea of the ṛṣi-s possessing a heat-power as a positive virtue is more natural here. O'Flaherty has perhaps offered the most appropriate translation for tapas in these verses. She translates tapas in each case as 'sacred heat' - "the heat generated by ritual activity."<sup>11</sup> It is this sacred heat-power, possessed by the ṛṣi-s as a 'result' of doing ritual activity (which may include soma ingestion) that makes them invincible, heroic, 'full', etc.

Moreover, the fact that the ṛṣi-s have been offered soma (v.1) lends support for the translations of the tapas occurrences in this hymn as 'heat'. It has been shown that the poet ingests tapas (heat)-laden soma (9.113) in order to be like the ṛṣi-s (3.43.5), and that inner-heat generated within him as a result of ingesting soma enables him to envision the ṛṣi-s (8.59.6). It is reasonable to assume that the tapas possessed by the ṛṣi-s (10.154.2,3,5) is the 'heat' embodied

in the soma offerings.

In 10.109, the ṛṣi-s 'settle down to tapas (tapase - v.4)' to envision knowledge just as the poet in 8.59.6 envisions the ṛṣi-s with his tapas (soma-heat). Soma appears in this hymn as King Soma (vv.2,4), an epithet that is applied to the deified soma plant and soma juice (cf. 9.113.4). Although neither the ṛṣi-s nor the poet ingests soma in the hymn, it can be assumed from the other hymns discussed that the ṛṣi-s were intoxicated with soma - hence their tapas. This assumption is based on findings from 'within' the RV, and is unlike the false logic that has led many scholars to mistranslate tapas as ascetic effort in the RV, merely because they find tapas meaning asceticism in contexts 'outside' the RV. Tapas also appears in v.1. This occurrence also does not qualify Soma.

This hymn implores King Soma to return the abducted wife of a Brahmin (Brhaspati - god of sacred speech, the Brahmin of the gods<sup>12</sup>). The sin against the Brahmin is proclaimed by an ancient and impressive list of things, Gods and Beings - the ocean, wind, divine waters and heat (tapa). The ṛṣi-s settled down to tapas (tapase), and as a result, were able to speak with wisdom concerning the Brahmin's wife - if she were not returned, disorder would occur in heaven. Since Soma was the abductor, and since he was King, whose responsibility it is to see justice done, he is asked to return the Brahmin's wife. Brhaspati also asks for her return. Eventually, Soma and the gods lead her back and the sin is erased.

Tapa in v.1 presents a grammatical problem, making the meaning ambiguous.

te 'vadan prathemā brahmakilbise  
 'kūpārah salilo mātariśvān  
 vīduharās tapa urgo mayobhūr  
 āpō devīh prathamja rtena

O'Flaherty offers a free flowing translation combining vīduharās and tapa:

These were the first to speak about the sin against the Brahmin: the boundless ocean, Mātariśvān, the fierce-flowing heat, strong fire that brings the force of life, and the divine waters who are first-born in the sacred order.

The ambiguity of this passage makes it difficult to translate. Blair<sup>13</sup> follows Geldner<sup>14</sup> in saying:

The boundless ocean (akūpārah salilo) and mātariśvān (wind) are clear." But tapa is neuter singular, and cannot be modified by the adjectives 'of firm flame' (vīduharās), which is plural, nor by 'strong' (ūgro) and 'productive' (mayobhūr) both of which are masculine. Pāda (d) names the 'heavenly waters,' first-born by the rta.

Although there is a grammatical problem with this verse, Gonda makes the point that ugra is often an adjective of tapas, and is found frequently in the later tradition, especially in the Mahābhārata.<sup>15</sup> However, Gonda also affirms that there exists a problem in understanding the use of ugra and tapas together in the Vedic texts.

... it is very difficult exactly to state what these authors mean by ojas- and ugra-. The very vagueness of the contexts, the absence of qualifying terms, the unreliability of the commentary, the want of explanations in the texts themselves are serious disadvantages when investigating into the sense of these words. 16

However, one thing is clear. Tapa is given a cosmic identity. Grassmann and Geldner are in agreement when they define tapa in this

hymn as 'a personal flaming glow' and personifizerte Tapas - tapas personified - respectively. Tapa is personified with such cosmic entities as the boundless ocean, Mātariśvān (wind) and the divine waters. Tapas is well-known for its role in RV cosmogony as the heat that perpetuates creation (discussion in chapter three). Perhaps it is no mistake that both tapa and soma appear in the same hymn as personified entities. It is tapas as a personified entity that is one of the first to recognize the sin against the Brahmin committed by King Soma, soma personified. It has been argued in this chapter that tapas is generated from soma ingestion. The Vedic worshipper is raised to realms of cosmic grandeur through soma ingestion, and with the subsequent generation of 'tapas', it only seems appropriate that it is the personified cosmic 'heat-power' of soma that recognizes the sin.

Verse four (10.109.4) contains the one occurrence of tapas in the RV that appears in the dative case (tapase). The ṛṣi-s settled down 'to' or 'for' tapas to obtain knowledge concerning the consequences of the abduction (v.4). This verse presented a problem to me. For the longest while I went along with the majority of scholars who translated tapas as asceticism. Grassmann translates tapas in this verse as asceticism/sensual mortification. Similarly, Geldner translates tapas as Kasteuing (mortification) and O'Flaherty translates the term as asceticism. It seemed to me that this was the one occurrence of tapas that did not fit into my schema. Since the tenth mandala was added late to the corpus of the RV, it seemed possible that non-Vedic ascetic ideas had indeed been assimilated to Vedic norms.<sup>17</sup> However, after a

close examination of the text, I found that the meaning was vague. Tapas could refer to asceticism, but it was only conjecture. There is no doubt that the ṛṣi-s had to 'do' something to acquire the knowledge concerning the Brahmin's wife, but there is no evidence in this verse, or even in the hymn as a whole, that it is the term tapas that refers to this activity. The weight of the evidence of the RV makes it more probable that tapas simply refers to the internal heat that enables the supernormal vision (in this case supernormal knowledge) to occur. I included this verse in this chapter because of the association that tapas has with Soma in verse one, and the implication (based on other hymns in the RV) that the ṛṣi-s ingested soma before visualizing the supernormal knowledge. Soma and tapas have been used together in other hymns, and I am assuming that the same association can be implied here. It can naturally be assumed that the ṛṣi-s had ingested soma, or sat near the fire or in the sun,<sup>18</sup> but these activities were not called tapas. Tapas in this hymn and in the RV as a whole is essentially the sacred heat or 'heat-power' that is the result of this activity. It is tapas (soma-heat) that provides the ṛṣi-s with the envisioned knowledge concerning the Brahmin's wife (v.4; cf. 8.59.6 - the ṛṣi-s have the power of revelation).

Tapas occurs several times in the RV as the heat of soma (9.113.2; 8.59.6; 10.154.2,4,5; 10.109.4). From the one instance where tapas undoubtedly means heat (9.113.2), I have shown that the other occurrences of tapas discussed in this chapter, which are a little more ambiguous in meaning, make perfect sense when understood as heat. This heat is embodied

in soma (9.113.2), and when soma is ingested, its heat (tapas) enables the Vedic worshipper to envision the ṛṣi-s (8.59.6). Similarly, when soma is offered to the ṛṣi-s, they became 'full of tapas' (10.154), and with their tapas, are able to envision knowledge (10.109.4). In other words, tapas is the transforming heat of soma.

In the next chapter, tapas will be discussed in those hymns where it refers to a destructive heat. It is the heat of the gods (Agni, Indra-Varuṇa, Manu) which is destructive to enemies. In the final chapter, tapas will be discussed in those hymns where it refers to a heat that creates.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Louis Renou, Vedic India. Classical India, Vol. III  
Translated by Philip Spratt (Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1957), p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>M.G. Bhagat, Ancient Indian Asceticism (New Delhi:  
Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976), p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>Renou, Vedic India., p. 94.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99.

<sup>5</sup>M. Eliade, Yoga. Immortality and Freedom, translated by  
Willard R. Trask. 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press,  
1973), pp. 107-109.

<sup>6</sup>J. Gonda, Change and Continuity in Indian Religion (The  
Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965), pp. 342-343.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 343, n. 131.

<sup>8</sup>Renou, Vedic India, p. 100.

<sup>9</sup>cf. O'Flaherty, Śiva. The Erotic Ascetic (Oxford: Oxford  
University Press, 1981).

<sup>10</sup>For more on soma, see. A.A. Macdonell, Vedic Mythology,  
(Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), pp. 104-115 and R.G. Wasson,  
Soma, the Divine Mushroom (London: Harcourt Brace Janonovich, 1968).

<sup>11</sup>O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda (Middlesex: Penquin Books, Ltd.,  
1981), p. 55.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>13</sup>C.J. Blair, Heat in the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda (New  
Heaven: American Oriental Society, 1961), p. 60.

<sup>14</sup>K.F. Geldner, Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche  
übersetzt, Vol. 33 of the Harvard Oriental Series, p. 330.

<sup>15</sup>J. Gonda, Ancient-Indian Ojas, Latin Augos and the Indo-European Nouns in -es/-os, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>17</sup>cf. W. Kaebler, "The Brahmācārin: Homology and Continuity in Brāhmanic Religion," History of Religions, 21 (1981), p. 77.

<sup>18</sup>cf. Kaebler, op cit., p. 89: Tapas or the heat of the fire was imparted to the brahmācārin (Vedic student) when he spent prolonged periods in front of the fire - San G.S. 2.10; Asv G.S. 1.21.4; Par G.S. 2.4.3; 2.48; tapas was also imparted to the brahmācārin as he sat in the heat of the sun - AV 11.5.26; and from the RV - tapas of the sun heats the earth (7.34.19), tapas of fire heats milk (3.53.14).

## CHAPTER II

### TAPAS: AS A DESTRUCTIVE HEAT-POWER

This chapter will discuss those hymns in which tapas appears as a destructive heat-power. Tapas is a revered attribute of the gods, and when the gods are invoked by the Vedic worshippers to direct their tapas against someone or something, usually an enemy, the effect on the recipient is definitely unpleasant and destructive. Tapas is the heat that consumes the sacrificial goat during the cremation ceremony (10.16.4), and it is this same destructive heat that destroys dangerous enemies, both human and spirit. Such injurious heat can also be wielded by one's enemies. Thus there are verses asking the gods for protection from the injurious heat of enemies. Tapas appears as a destructive heat-power in eight passages. In each of these passages it is absolutely unambiguous that tapas means heat.

Although this chapter focuses on the destructive heat-power that the gods direct against enemies, I will begin this discussion with a funeral hymn which clearly describes the destructive activity of this tapas. In 10.16.4, tapas is the heat of Agni, the flesh-eating fire (kravyadam), who consumes the sacrificial goat during the cremation ceremony. It is this same flesh-eating fire of Agni that destroys enemies in 10.87.14. It is interesting to note that in 10.16.4 the corpse is not burned by tapas, which destroys the goat, but is 'cooked' (v.1) by Agni's 'gentle forms' (v.4). A brief examination of the

cremation ceremony, and the appearance of tapas in 10.16, will clarify Agni's role, and in particular, the exact function of tapas which destroys enemies.

The details of the cremation ceremony can be reconstructed with certainty.<sup>1</sup> Burning the dead is usually preferred in the RV, but burial is not unheard of. Hymn 10.18.10 alludes to a burial, where mention is made of the dead going to the lap of Mother Earth. In the cremation ceremony, the dead body is laid on the ground near the cremation fire, smeared with cowdung and covered with grass. It is then washed and anointed. The women of the house circle the body, wailing and beating their breasts and thighs. A branch of a tree is then tied to the corpse, and is trailed along the ground effacing the footprints of the mourners as the body is taken to the funeral pyre. The footprints are wiped out to prevent the return of the spirit of the dead.<sup>2</sup> Keith suggests that as the procession moved along, the mourners urged "... the dead to go on his long way, to unite with the Father and with Yama, to leave sin behind, to go home, and to escape the dogs of Yama."<sup>3</sup> The corpse is then laid on the funeral pyre, in the midst of three fires. The wife is laid beside him, then is led away to be cared for, possibly by the brother-in-law. If the deceased was a kshatriya (warrior), his bow was taken from him, or was broken and placed beside him. If he was a brahmin (priest), his staff<sup>4</sup> and instruments of the sacrifice<sup>5</sup> were laid beside him on the pyre. The corpse is covered with the limbs of a cow and is smeared with cow's fat as an armor against the destructive heat (tapas) of Agni (10.16.7). A goat is tied over the corpse to

draw Agni's flames (this is Agni's share) and to keep the corpse from being totally destroyed. The pyre was then lit and Agni was asked to consume the goat and take the dead uninjured to the fathers.

The ceremony was followed by purification rites. The pyre was cooled and the remains were placed in a urn and buried. The place of burning was cooled by the use of cooling substances and water plants. A marsh was thus created where water plants and frogs may thrive (10.16.13, 14). The female frog was the symbol of rain and fertility (cf. 7.103).<sup>6</sup> Thus new life sprouts at the end of the funeral. Those who performed the service bathe to purify themselves, and eat a mortuary meal. The relatives also bathe. For 3-10 days after the death, abstinence and continence are observed. Keith observes that this eliminates any possibility of injury occurring to a child that might be conceived at this time.<sup>7</sup>

There are several ideas concerning the importance of burning the dead. The development of the use of cremation as the normal form of disposing the dead was aided by the worship of fire, the belief that fire removed evil influences and acted as a messenger between men and gods. However, cremation ensured that the dead man was taken, by means of the fire, to the sky. It was also possible that cremation represented a sort of human sacrifice to the gods (10.16.31). The goat, which is burned as a substitute victim, is used to keep evil spirits away, and to exhaust the intense heat of the fire, and thereby protect the corpse.<sup>8</sup> The gentler flames of Agni would 'cook' the corpse, and carry the 'refined' body of the dead man, as well as his soul, to the regions of heaven.<sup>9</sup>

In 10.16, Agni is invoked to burn (tapas) the sacrificial goat, and to prepare and carry the dead man to heaven with his less destructive fire. The hymn can be divided into three parts.<sup>10</sup> In vv.1-8, Agni is asked to burn the corpse, but not too much, and send it to the fathers (ancestors). He is asked to direct his most destructive heat (tapas) to the sacrificial goat. In vv.9-12, a new fire is lit (or invoked) to carry the oblation to the gods and lead the dead man to Yama (cf. 10.14). In vv.13.14, the funeral fire is extinguished and cooled. The dead man himself begins as an impure corpse but becomes, by the end of the hymn, one of the fathers to whom the oblation is sent. He wears a new body in heaven, leaving behind sin and evil (cf. 10.14.8). O'Flaherty suggests that 'cooking' the corpse (v.1), rather than 'consuming' it (v.4), raises the corpse to a state fit for heaven and for the gods.<sup>11</sup>

It is Agni as Jātavedas, the knower of creatures, the auspicious, oblation-bearing form of Agni, that is asked to 'cook' the corpse, while Agni as kravyadam, the flesh-eating fire, is called upon to consume the goat. As Jātavedas, Agni is asked to cook (kr̥navah - v.1; karasi - v.2) the corpse with his gentle forms (v.4), to prepare it for entrance to heaven (v.6), and to carry him to the fathers in heaven (v.1). Jātavedas is asked not to burn (dah-) or consume (chikṣipah) the corpse (v.1), for this is the function of kravyadam, the flesh-eating fire. Agni, as kravyadam, burns (tapasya, tapatu) the goat with his heat (tapasā)(v.4). This heat is an impetuous heat (dhṛṣṇu) that burns or destroys (dakk-) (v.7), and that carries impurities to Yama. Agni in

this form also burns (dah-) and purifies the place of cremation (v.13).

It is clear that tapas is destructive heat and must be guarded against. It was used to destroy the goat, but the corpse had to be protected from it. It is this same flesh-eating tapas that the Vedic worshippers invoked the gods to use against their enemies.

Of the passages concerned with this injurious aspect of tapas that is directed against enemies, Agni is invoked four times to consume enemies or demons with his tapas, Indra-Varuṇa is invoked once to protect worshippers from the enemy's injurious tapas, and Manyu is invoked once to both protect worshippers from the enemy's injurious tapas and consume the enemies with his own tapas.

Agni is invoked to direct tapas against enemies in the following four hymns: 10.87.14; 6.5.4; 7.1.7; 8.49.16. Hymn 10.87 is discussed first because it actually refers to Agni as kravyat, the flesh-eater (v.5). This is the same fire and the same heat that destroyed the sacrificial goat in the cremation ceremony (10.16). There is one point of difference, however. Whereas in 10.16 there seems to be a distinction made between Agni as Jātavedas and Agni as the flesh-eater, in this verse (v.5) it is Jātavedas who is the flesh-eater. Although the term tapas does not appear in this verse as the heat of Agni, the flesh-eater, tapas does appear as the heat of Agni in v.14. In v.14 Agni is called upon to destroy (śrñīhi) the Yātudhānās (probably the same Yātudhānās that Agni as flesh-eater destroys - also śrñīhi - in v.5) with his heat (tapasā), to destroy the rakṣasas with his fire (harasā), and to destroy false worshippers with his radiance (parcisā). In almost every verse

Agni is asked to destroy (or slay, V.7) the raksasas, and to drive them from the worshipper's presence (v.11), although not always with tapas. A derivative of tap- (tapuh) also appears in v.23, where Agni is asked to consume (dah- - Kravyat also burns, dah- in 10.16.1) the raksasas with this all-pervading sharp flame (tapuh).

The second hymn to be discussed is 6.5. In this hymn Agni is invoked and many of his illustrious qualities are exulted; he is the son of strength, wise and merciful; he is bright-blazing and is invoker of the gods, bestower of wealth, wisdom, splendid opulence and food, and is protector. In verse six, Agni is asked to "Accomplish quickly that for which thou art solicited" and to be pleased with the reciter's praise. He is also asked to provide descendents (cf. 10.183.1) and fame.

Agni is also invoked as Jātavedas in this hymn (v.3), and his heat is tapas (v.4). Tapas (tapasā, tapasvān) and two other tap- derivatives (tapā, tapīṣṭha) appear in v.4 in association with Agni's role as protector. He is tapasvān (burning, hot; <sup>12</sup> tejasvi tvam - you bright brilliant one<sup>13</sup>). He is also tapīṣṭha, most hot. In other words, Agni has a great deal of heat, and with his heat (tapasā) he is asked to consume (tapā) those who would do injury.

The third hymn to Agni is 7.1. In this hymn Agni is again invoked and praised. It is man who generates Agni and places him in his home. Agni brings light, food and sustenance, bestows offspring and grants riches. He is asked to be present at the sacrifice, to help overcome all impious devices, to bring triumph in battle, to defend from enemies, to provide the best fire, to give protection and to carry

oblations to the gods. Agni is also asked to consume enemies. In verse seven, he is asked to consume (daḥ-) the enemies with his heat (tapobhir), with the same flames with which he consumed Jarutha, a demon. Agni consumes (daḥ-) with the same destructive heat (tap-) as in the previous verses.

The fourth hymn to Agni is 8.49. Agni, who is worthy of worship, is asked to come to the sacrifice. Agni is truthful, brings happiness and provides food and wealth. Offerings go to Agni, who brings the gods and takes offerings to the gods. Agni shields in battle, gives guidance in battle, is fierce in battle and is the guardian of men. He drives away poverty, hunger and strong demons. Agni burns (daḥ-) enemies, protects from enemies, subdues enemies, and protects from rakṣasas. In verse 16, he cleaves Adri with his heat (tapasā) and overcomes enemies.

The enemy in 8.49.16 is Adri. What Adri refers to in this verse is unclear; however, an examination of what this uncertainty is may provide a better understanding of the meaning and function of tapas in this context. Adri can mean: (1) a rock; (2) a cloud; and (3) a mountain. If Adri refers to (1) a rock, the poet in this verse may be invoking Agni to split with his tapas (heat) and śócis (radiance) the pressing stones (Adri) of the enemy to interfere with the enemy's soma preparations. With the soma preparations of the enemy interrupted, the ritual priest of the enemy would not have the vision and power to invoke their own gods, thus giving the advantage to the Vedic priest. Śócis may be used in the above instance to demonstrate a show of force and to strike added

fear into the heart of the enemy. Or, since Adri can also refer to a (2) cloud,<sup>14</sup> the enemy could be a drought. Agni would then be invoked to cleave the cloud with heat (tapas) and lightning (śocis) and thereby produce rain. Agni, as Vaiṣṇanara, can exist as latent lightning in a cloud.<sup>15</sup> Or, if Adri refers to a (3) mountain in this verse, the passage is probably a reference to Agni's association with Indra, where it is the tapas and śocis of Agni that splits the mountain fortress of Vṛtra.<sup>16</sup> This is the most probable understanding. Vṛtra is a rakṣas, and rakṣasas are often referred to in the hymn. Although Indra is not mentioned in this hymn, Indra and Agni are often depicted as dual-divinities and are conjoined called Vṛtra-slayers or fort-destroyers (1.109.7-8).<sup>17</sup> Indra slays while Agni burns in another hymn (6.28.4). And Indra does use tapas to destroy Vṛtra in 10.167.1. Agni is called chief of the Aṅgirasas in v.2. The Aṅgirasas were also associated with Indra in the destruction of the fort. Thus, Adri is probably a reference to the mountain fort of Vṛtra. If this is the case, the destructive force of tapas is indeed powerful for it to 'burn' a mountain fortress.

At this point in our discussion on the destructive aspect of tapas, it is important to ask - What injury does the recipient of tapas receive? It has been demonstrated that tapas, as the heat of the flesh-eating fire, devours the sacrificial goat (10.16.4) and enemies (10.86.5,14). This destructive heat is a heat that 'burns' enemies, outsiders, those who covet possessions, sorcerers, rakṣas (demons), false worshippers, and 'splits' Adri. It is a heat that Agni used to burn down Jarutha (a demon). In other words, the Vedic worshippers invoke Agni to 'burn'

with his tapas those considered undesirable. But does the recipient always die?

A clue may be found in 7.104. Here several tap- derivatives are found. Indra-Soma is invoked to burn (tapatam) the demon (v.1), heat (tapus) the man who carries out the ritual for evil purposes (v.2) and to use fire-heated (agni-taptebhir) weapons against enemies (v.5). In verse 15 a reference is made to a man's span of life or duration of life (āyus) having been burnt (tatapa) up. Blair suggests that a man wears āyus as he would clothes.

āyus ... is a personal attribute, perhaps even thought of by the Vedic writers as having a technical, psychological, or physiological meaning, and a corresponding ritualistic meaning. Several passages mention the desirability of living out all of one's life, implying that the normal duration of life can be cut short ... The word āyus ... may well be implied whenever tap-heat is used against an enemy. 18

Although it is not clearly stated anywhere in the hymn that a man dies by this heat action, destruction and death are often presumed. The flesh-eating heat of Agni would suggest this, as would the references in 7.104 that the enemy would go to hell (v.1,3,4,5).<sup>19</sup> Verse 15 hints at another interesting perspective for this discussion. The reciter of the hymn asks to die if he has burned (tatapa) a man's life (āyus). This indicates that it is considered 'evil' for one to heat an enemy through one's own action. Perhaps this is why the 'gods' are invoked to heat the enemies with their tapas.

The gods of the enemies can also use tapas against the Vedic worshippers. In 7.82, the Vedic worshipper prays to Indra-Varuna for

protection against the enemy's tapas. In this hymn Indra and Varuṇa are respectfully worshipped. The sacrificer and his wife confer as much strength (ojas) as they can to Indra and Varuṇa. All of the gods also bless Indra and Varuṇa with ojas and balam. In turn, Indra and Varuṇa are asked to provide protection against those who may cause injury and to destroy or discomfort all negative influences (i.e. the unworshipful) and enemies. These gods are invoked during wars and battles for this reason. Being the lords of both celestial and terrestrial treasures, they grant prosperity, wealth, large habitations, happiness, and sons and grandsons. Indra and Varuṇa are the creators of all beings in the world. They are instrumental in creation. With their strength (ojas) the barriers of the waters (āpah) are forced upon (see next chapter on creation). Sūrya (the sun) is placed in the heaven as Lord. With soma, they have replenished the dry beds of the rivers. Tapas does not belong to Indra and Varuṇa (in this hymn) as it does to Agni. In this hymn tapas is a hostile heat that originates from enemies and afflicts the Vedic worshipper. In verse seven Indra and Varuṇa are asked to keep this injurious heat away. Tapas, appearing with aṅhaḥ (sin, evil) and duritāni (difficulties, misfortunes) in verse seven, will not affect the sacrificer under the protection of the ritual and under the protection of the gods. Scholars tend to agree on the translation of tapas in this verse: Grassmann - Qual, Bedrängniss (torture, affliction); Geldner - Pein (pain); Wilson - distress; Griffith - trouble; Apte - pain, torture; and Blair - hostile heat. This tapas is indeed hostile, as Blair suggests, and as hostile heat, it would in

fact cause pain and torture, as the other scholars suggest. This understanding of tapas as pain is in keeping with the thesis of this chapter, namely, that tapas can be destructive, and, no doubt, cause pain. Indra and Varuṇa both have the strength (ojas) to protect the Vedic worshipper from this destructive, and painful tapas.

In the following final hymn (10.83), Manyu is invoked not only to destroy enemies with his tapas, but to protect the Vedic worshippers from the tapas of the enemies. This hymn was repeated at the sacrifice for the destruction of enemies.<sup>20</sup> Manyu is anger personified, and is thus the wrathful warrior. About Manyu, Gonda has the following to say,

Manyu is on the one hand a divinity in its own right, a companion of the Maruts, who joins those who go to war; he is implored to gain the victory, being brilliant like fire, and to be the commander-in-chief, to destroy the enemies, to measure out ojas and to protect those praying. It is, on the other hand, expressly stated that Manyu has taken possession of these gods, that they embody him. He is also addressed as Indra's vajra or thunderbolt, being a missile (sāyaka-), born together with abhūti-, a concept which, though difficult to interpret, may have been something like 'success'. United with tapas ... he slays the enemies of his adorers. Those who have worshipped him, the missile thunderbolt, gain overwhelming force and creative power ... Being himself of overwhelming ojas, self-existent and to a considerable degree possessed of sahas, Manyu is invoked to put, in combats, ojas in his worshippers. 21

Elsewhere Gonda defines Manyu as "wrath deified," "... a divinity possessed of irresistible might, who glows like fire,"<sup>22</sup> "the victorious spirit of battle" and the ally of tapas (tapasā yuga).<sup>23</sup>

In this hymn (10.83), Manyu is identified as Indra, Agni and Varuṇa. Like Agni and Indra-Varuṇa in the preceding hymns, Manyu also

possesses tapas. But the characteristics of Indra are most prominent. Manyu, as Indra, is the slayer of Vṛtra, and he is invoked to destroy all enemies with his tapas just as he destroyed Vṛtra (v.3; cf. 1.55; 1.52). With his tapas he also protects his worshippers from enemies (v.2). Like Indra, Manyu is the thunderbolt (vajra). He consumes soma and provides his worshippers with strength (ojas - vv.1,4; bala - v.5) and might (saha - v.1). Manyu, who resists foes and sustains all, is praised by all and brings riches to all.

Tapas performs two functions in this hymn. Manyu is invoked in verse two to protect with tapas those who are praying for protection, and in verse three to attack the enemy with tapas. Grassmann defines both of these usages as Flammenglut personificirt, that is, the hot flame personified or embodied in Manyu himself. In verse three, tapas is used in the same manner as the destructive tapas of Agni in the previous hymns in this chapter. It also recalls Indra's use of tapas to slay Vṛtra. In the Indra-Vṛtra myth Indra slays the demon with his vajra and with his tapas (1.55; 1.52; 10.167 - see next chapter for detailed discussion).

In verse two, Manyu protects his worshippers with tapas. This use is less common in the Vedic hymns than the former usage. This occurrence of tapas demonstrates that the power of tapas can be used not only for offensive purposes, but it can also be used for defensive purposes. This implies that the defensive power of the tapas from the Vedic gods is superior to the offensive power of the tapas from the enemy's gods; that is, only if the Vedic worshipper approaches Manyu worshipfully (v.5).

The meaning of tapas in these hymns is clear and unambiguous. Tapas is a physical heat-power that has a definite unpleasant and undesirable effect upon the recipient. Tapas is sometimes invoked as the flesh-eating heat of the funeral fire to not only consume the sacrificial goat, but also to consume enemies. It is always destructive, and probably painful, and often leads to death. Its destructive nature appears in offensive and defensive contexts where enemies are involved. The gods Agni, Manu and Indra-Varuṇa are the wielders of this injurious heat.

Although the contexts in which tapas refers to an injurious, destructive heat are less frequent in the AV than in the RV,<sup>24</sup> and are almost entirely gone from the later Vedic tradition (Brāhmanas, Āraṇyakas, Upaniṣads), it must not be concluded that tapas for 'power and passion' has lost its appeal and effect in the Indian tradition. In the later epic and puranic tradition, tapas is repeatedly found in association with the acquisition of supernormal powers for personal gain and for the destruction of one's enemies.<sup>25</sup> The Mahābhārata, for example, is filled with stories concerning the destructive power of tapas. In one story, the Tripura myth, the Asuras controlled the three cities (worlds) with their tapas. Śiva eventually destroyed the demons with the power of his tapas (Mbh 8:24; 13:160).

Tapas is a heat-power that is not only destructive; it also performs a creative function in the RV. The next chapter will discuss several hymns in which tapas is creative on both the cosmic and the human levels.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>L. Renou, Vedic India (Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1957), pp. 228-230; A.B. Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), pp. 417-424.

<sup>2</sup>Keith, op cit., p. 418.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 418. (cf. 10.14.7-12).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 419.

<sup>5</sup>Renou, Vedic India, p. 118.

<sup>6</sup>O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda, p. 51.

<sup>7</sup>Keith, op cit., p. 420.

<sup>8</sup>Renou, Vedic India, p. 119.

<sup>9</sup>Keith, p. 420.

<sup>10</sup>O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda, pp. 46-49.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>12</sup>V.S. Apte, The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary, II, p. 761.

<sup>13</sup>Rig-Veda-Saṁhitā with the Commentary of Sāyanāchārya, ed. by F. Max Müller (Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1966), II, p. 361.

<sup>14</sup>W.F. Wilson, Rig-Veda Saṁhitā (London: Trubner & Co., 1888), V, p. 99.

<sup>15</sup>A.A. Macdonell, Vedic Mythology (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), p. 94.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 127-128.

<sup>18</sup>C.J. Blair, Heat in the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda,  
p. 19.

<sup>19</sup>cf. W.M. Brown, "The Rigvedic Equivalent for Hell," JOAS,  
61 (1951), pp. 76-80.

<sup>20</sup>W.F. Wilson, Rig-Veda Saṁhitā, VI, p. 220.

<sup>21</sup>J. Gonda, Some Observations on the Relations between "Gods" and "Powers" in the Veda, a Propos of the Phrase Sūnah Sahasah (The Hague: Mouton, 1957), p. 94.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>24</sup>Blair, op cit., p. 7.

<sup>25</sup>cf. W. O'Flaherty, Śiva: The Erotic Ascetic.

### CHAPTER III

#### TAPAS: AS CREATIVE AND COSMOGONIC HEAT

One of the recurring themes in the RV is that of cosmogony, "speculations on the creation of the universe."<sup>1</sup> In this chapter it will become clear that Vedic man understood tapas to play an important role in cosmogony and in other creative functions.

The Vedic poets offered several different cosmogonic speculations to solve the mystery of the universe, to find out the common origin of the diverse phenomena of nature, and to understand the existence of living beings, especially of mankind. There is no 'set system' in the RV concerning the origin of the world. There are many versions of cosmogony. Creation is sometimes regarded as a product of a cosmic battle between (1) the god Indra and the demon Vr̥tra (1.32; 1.52; 1.55; 10.167), (2) the god Br̥haspati and the demon Vala, guardian of the 'cows' (10.68); sometimes as an unmotivated act attributed to several gods whereby heaven and earth, originally one, were separated; sometimes as a long series of puzzles or riddles with a naturalistic basis (1.164).<sup>2</sup> Hymns in the tenth mandala envision: an anthropomorphic origin of the parts of a primeval man originally sacrificed by the gods (10.90);<sup>3</sup> that a primordial divinity created the world in sacrifice (10.81-82); on the unknown creator himself (10.121); and, in the most profound poetic language, on the origin of existence itself (10.129; 10.190).<sup>4</sup>

There are six hymns in which the term tapas clearly functions in a creative and/or cosmogonic role. In all of these occurrences of tapas, it is probable that tapas refers to a creative 'heat'. One appearance of tapas in the tenth mandala (10.167.1), although not a cosmogonic hymn, refers to the heat used in the cosmogonic battle between Indra and Vṛtra. In 10.167.1, it is the tapas of Indra that wins (or creates) the sky after Vṛtra's death. In addition, tapas is understood here to play a role in procreation as well as in cosmogony; it is both a destructive heat and a heat that creates; it also refers to a heat that is contained in soma (cf. 9.113.2). In 10.68, the god Brhaspati uses tapas to destroy the demon Vala, who is keeping creation from unfolding in much the same manner as Vṛtra in 1.32 and 1.55. In these first two hymns, tapas is both destructive and creative. Tapas must first be used as a destructive force, as discussed in chapter two, before it can function as a creative force. These two hymns are discussed in this chapter, because it is the destructive role of tapas, that precedes and initiates creation.

The appearance of tapas in 10.129 and 10.190 clearly illustrates the cosmogonic dimension of the term tapas. Tapas is shown to be a catalytic and lubricating heat in cosmogony; it is the incubating heat that is behind creation itself. These latter two hymns suggest that tapas is the key to creation.

In the final two hymns to be discussed, tapas is used in a creative, but not cosmogonic, sense. In 10.183, tapas is understood to play a role in procreation; it gives virility. In 10.169, tapas is a

creative agent that is used by the Āṅgirasas to create 'cows'.

The first hymn to be discussed that demonstrates the cosmogonic dimension of tapas is 10.167. Although 10.167 is not a cosmogonic hymn, it explicitly connects cosmogonies from the first mandala (1.32; 1.55) with tenth mandala cosmogonic themes, and it uses tapas to do it.

This hymn invokes Indra to provide many sons. Indra is exulted as Śakra (powerful or able), as Maghavan (liberal), as Dhātṛ (creator) and as Vidhātṛ (disposer); he is the companion of Soma, Varuṇa, Bṛhaspati and Anumati, gods of royal decree. Indra is the god who has tapas and who has won (or created) the sky. The sky is usually the prize of the conflict between Indra and Vṛtra (1.32.4; 6.30.5; 8.3.20). In other words, Indra is Dhātṛ, the creator, who has the creative power of tapas, which he uses to create the sky. As a god with these associations, Indra surely has the ability to provide (create) sons. It is perhaps no mistake that the poet asks Indra for sons in the same verse as his reference to the creative power of tapas possessed by Indra. If Indra can create the sky, surely he can provide sons - this is what the Vedic worshipper prays for. Also, Indra is offered madhu, a sweet juice which is possibly soma.<sup>5</sup> Although soma the juice is not mentioned in this hymn (only the god Soma is), in other hymns soma is often found in connection with Indra (see chapter one). In 1.32, for example, Indra ingests soma to acquire the strength for battle against Vṛtra.

Tapas appears in this hymn as a reference to the cosmic battle between Indra and Vṛtra. In a first mandala hymn, 1.55.1, Indra uses heat (ātapa) against enemies for the benefit of mankind. Indra's vajra, or thunderbolt, is used against the enemy Vṛtra (cf. 1.32; 1.52.6);

it is the heat (tap-) of the vajra that actually destroys Vṛtra. After the destruction of Vṛtra, creation unfolds. In 1.55, tapas is essential for the destruction of the god of inertia, Vṛtra, and for the generation of creations.

In 10.167.1, this heat-power of Indra is exulted: Indra surrounds Vṛtra with tapas and with his tapas he wins the sky. Although the word Vṛtra does not appear in this hymn, the connection with Vṛtra is clear. Vṛtra is the tremendous obstacle that had to be overcome before the waters of creation could flow into the cosmos. Vṛtra obstructed creativeness. From the destroyed Vṛtra the 'sky', sun and dawn were brought forth (1.32.4). Although a form of the root tap- does not appear in 1.32, it is stated elsewhere that heat (ātapa - 1.55.1) comes from Indra's thunderbolt (vajra) and it is the vajra that surrounds Vṛtra with the heat that destroys him. It is possible, then, that paritapya (10.167.1) is a reference to the injurious heat that destroyed Vṛtra. However, it is important not to equate this use of tapas as the same destructive power of tapas discussed in the previous chapter. Albeit tapas is used for destructive purposes in 10.167.1 (destruction of Vṛtra), it is clear that the tapas of Indra in this hymn also initiates creation (i.e., making the sky, making sons).

The use of madhu (soma) in this hymn implies an indirect extension to this understanding of tapas. It has been shown elsewhere that soma contains tapas, heat-power (9.113.2). It is also known that Indra ingests soma to acquire the strength for battle against Vṛtra and that the sky is created as a result of this battle (1.32.4) and the use of

tapas (10.167.1; 1.55). Following this, it is not unlikely that it is the heat-power of tapas contained within the soma that provides Indra with the ability to win or create the sky. The poet knows that Indra is Dhātṛ, the Creator (10.167.3). By offering Indra soma (which is tapas-laden), and by referring to Indra's creative use of tapas (10.167.1; cf. 1.55), the poet hopes that the soma offered to Indra will provide him with the necessary tapas to create many sons.

When viewed in context, it is apparent that several different aspects of the concept of tapas come forward from this hymn to broaden our understanding of tapas. First of all, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of tapas in this hymn - it means heat. Tapas is the destructive heat that surrounds (paritapya) and destroys Vṛtra. In this sense, paritapya is related to the destructive heat (ātapa) of Indra's vajra. Tapas is also embodied in madhu, which is possibly soma (cf. 9.113.2). It is this soma juice that provides Indra with the tapas to destroy and create. Finally, and most importantly, tapas is creative. It is Indra's tapas that wins or creates the sky, and that possibly will provide the poet with the creative power to have sons (cf. 10.183, below).

The tapas of Indra destroys Vṛtra, and creation is released. A new dimension of tapas is suggested here. Tapas destroys, but this same destructive function of tapas allows creation to unfold. This destructive and creative aspect of tapas is more clearly presented in 10.68.6.

Br̥haspati has a firm footing in the Indra myth of the release

of the cows.<sup>6</sup> In 10.68 Br̥haspati rent the defenses of Vala with mantra-s (a roar - cf. 4.50.5), extricating the cows from the mountains. He also brings out the honey (soma) which was enclosed by the stone (vv.4-9). Br̥haspati drove away the darkness created by Vala, with his light (vv. 5,9), and found the dawn, the sun (cf. 10.167.1) and Agni (v.9). He set in motion the rising of the sun and moon (v.10). The reciters of the hymn ask Br̥haspati to bestow upon them food, cows, horses, sons and dependents (v.12).<sup>7</sup>

Br̥haspati demolished with rays (Geldner - arkaiḥ: with mantra-s) burning like fire (agni-tapobhis) the weapon of Vala. There can be no doubt that tapas means heat here. This is reminiscent of Agni's action against Adri (8.60.16) and his enemies (7.1.7) by means of his rays, and of Indra's piercing of Vṛtra's stronghold with his tapas (1.55; 10.167.1). It is not unlikely that arkaiḥ here refers to mantra-s, as Geldner suggests. Br̥haspati is the Lord of Speech (2.23.1), he generates all prayers (1.190.2) and communicates prayers to the human priest (10.98.27).<sup>8</sup> That these mantra-s contain the heat of fire is also not unlikely since Br̥haspati is often associated with Agni and his burning actions (2.23.14 - burning of goblins). It is appropriate that the Lord of Speech brings about the release of the song of the world. Commenting on another hymn that relates the Br̥haspati myth (4.50), Kramrisch states,

Roaring in his might, Br̥haspati propped apart the limits of this world (4.50.1). Born in the beyond, in the highest space of the great light, he drove away the darkness that was in the beginning (4.50.4) and liberated the cows, the radiant life-giving waters, the rays - the songs - from the dark cave where they had been imprisoned (4.50.5). Br̥haspati, Lord of inner transport and its expression,

the hymn, liberates, like Agni, the light-to-be between heaven and earth, on the stage of man's illumination. 9

If the release of the cows is the result of Brhaspati's burning mantra-s, Kramrisch's understanding of cows as songs is naturally accepted.

Returning to 10.68, an important event occurs after Brhaspati destroys Vala with tapas - creation unfolds. The destructive action of tapas initiates the creation of various aspects of the world - the cows are set free, the dawn, the sun and Agni are found, and the sun and moon are allowed to rise. This recalls Indra's use of tapas to destroy Vrtra, whereby the sky is won (10.167). It is clear that the destructive use of tapas as heat also contains a pervasive creative tendency. Unlike the catalytic and smooth generation of the cosmos in 10.129 and 10.190 (see below), tapas is instrumental in an act of dissolution, which lays to waste the old in order for the new order of creation to be released.

The creative power of tapas generates creation in two cosmogonic myths in the tenth mandala. The cosmic creative dimension of tapas in 10.167 and 10.68 hints at the central role that tapas plays in the cosmogonic hymns 10.129 and 10.190, already mentioned.

Perhaps the most profound vision of creation in the RV is found in hymn 10.129. This hymn is conceptually provocative. In O'Flaherty's words, "It is meant to puzzle and challenge, to raise unanswerable questions, to pile up paradoxes."<sup>10</sup> The Vedic poets realized the limitation of their visions and could only ask questions about the first movements of creation. However, the poets did see one thing,

that tad ekam, That One, hatched creation from its own inner self-generated heat (tapas, v.3).

The poet who composed this hymn envisions that in the beginning there was neither non-existence nor existence, neither space nor sky, neither death nor immortality, neither night nor day. Darkness was hidden by darkness. There was only a windless impulse. Out of this windless impulse the life-force moved. Tapas is generated in the first movements of creation. From this movement tad ekam, That One, a single monistic (neuter) principle,<sup>11</sup> emerges; then desire, the first seed of mind. Creation is perceived in the supernormal vision of the rsi-s as a spontaneous generation from the 'incubating heat' of tad ekam. Tad ekam emerged out of its own inner creative heat (tapas), not needing any warmth from outside.<sup>12</sup> In the words of O'Flaherty,<sup>13</sup> this self-generation is an "unfolding without strife, a flowing and germinating from the source into existence." Similarly, in the words of Knipe,<sup>14</sup> it is the "effortless, transcendent, cosmic side of tapas, still perpetuated," that moves creation into manifestation. With wisdom in their hearts, the poets saw these first movements of creation, but they did not see the source. 'That One' may be identical with the Supreme God, but the poets did not know. The poets found the bond of existence and non-existence (vv.1,5) in their visions, but they did not know 'why' creation originally occurred. Even the gods did not know, for they were formed after creation. The poet ponders and concludes - perhaps even the highest being does not know. The source of creation and the 'why' of creation remain a mystery.

Tapas has received a variety of translations in this hymn:

Brown - creative incubating heat; Kramrisch - creative inner heat; Renou - l'Ardeur; Muller - fervent heat; Bhattacharyya - inward fervour; O'Flaherty - power of heat; Grassmann - Glut (heat), asceticism, sensual mortification; Geldner - Dranges (urge, effort). There is apparently an ambiguity in these translations. It seems that some scholars regard tapas in a cosmogonic context as heat, while others regard it as an urge or ascetic effort. However, there is no specific evidence that effort is involved here. Since there are numerous unambiguous instances in the RV where tapas means heat, and in the absence of more specific contextual clues, there is no reason not to assume that tapas refers to a cosmogonic heat 'incubating' creation into manifestation. In fact, 10.190.1 supplies unambiguous support for this interpretation.

Tapas appears as cosmogonic heat in 10.190, and compliments our understanding of tapas in 10.129. Unlike 10.129, this hymn is very straight-forward. There are no paradoxes or questions. In 10.190.1, a cosmogonic tapas, 'as it blazed up,' created (ṛta), truth (satya), night (rātr) and ocean (samudra). There is no question that tapas means heat here. From the ocean, in turn, was born (ajāyata) the year. The year arranges days and nights and rules over all that blinks. Blinking is the sign of life (cf. 10.121.3). Then Dhātṛ, the arranger or creator, arranges the sun and moon, the sky and earth, the middle realm of space, and light.

It is clear in this hymn that tapas, as a cosmogonic force, is similar to tapas in 10.129. It both heats and moves creation along. Yet there is a difference. As in most cosmogonic hymns in the RV, except

10.129, the 'creator' in 10.190 is personified. He is Dhātr, a name applied to Indra in 10.167.3. Dhātr creates and sets in order his creation, not unlike Viśvakarman (All-Maker) in another cosmogonic drama, where he created the sun (10.82.1; cf. 10.167.1), and worlds (10.82.3). Grassmann defines tapas in this verse (v.1) as heat and asceticism, as he does for tapas in 10.129.3. Similarly, O'Flaherty equates tapas in this verse "... with the primeval erotic or ascetic heat of the Creator."<sup>15</sup> However, to define tapas as asceticism, or even ascetic heat, is merely conjecture, and does not fit the context. It is true that these tenth mandala hymns are a later addition to the RV, and reflect a sophistication of ideas that are evident in the later tradition.<sup>16</sup> But an examination of the context of 10.129 and 10.190 clearly limits any understanding of tapas to heat, inner incubating heat, etc. Only tapas as 'heat' could 'blaze up' to create satya, rta and samudra.

Within the contexts of the latter two hymns being considered (10.129 and 10.190), it appears that a clear meaning comes forward to define tapas. Tapas is a cosmogonic force. It is the 'catalyst' or 'lubricating' force behind creation itself. It is the 'incubating heat' that moves creation into manifestation.

In the final two hymns to be discussed in this chapter, tapas appears in contexts where the meaning of the term is clearly creative, but definitely is not cosmogonic. Tapas is understood to play a role in procreation in 10.183. In 10.169, the Aṅgirasas create 'cows' with their tapas. In both these instances (10.183; 10.169) the meaning of tapas is ambiguous. However, as we shall see, it makes perfect sense

to translate tapas as heat.

Hymn 10.169 is recited in praise of 'cows'. The poet of the hymn asks that Rudra, who is usually depicted in the RV as fierce and injurious (1.114.7,8; 6.28.7), have compassion upon the cows, that Parjanya (Indra, god of rain, cf. 9.113.2) grant them protection, that Indra and Prajāpati bring the cows to the cowpen. The cows are blown by the wind, they absorb water from the earth, some have similar forms, some different forms, some single forms. They were created by the tapas of the Aṅgirasas. They offer their bodies to the gods, nourish with milk (rain?<sup>17</sup>) and have calves. Soma knows their properties.

It is difficult to discern exactly what the cows are. The most frequent application of the 'cow' is the myth of the kine released from the rock by Indra. According to Macdonell, the cows released by Indra may in many cases refer to the waters, the flood of creation set forth after the slaying of Vṛtra (5.29.3; 1.52.8); or, the cows may refer to the rays of the dawn (10.67.5; 10.68.9). When Indra extracted the cows from darkness with his light, the waters were meant (1.33.10). Macdonell also suggests that mythologically the rain-clouds figure to a considerable extent under the name of the cow.

... the cloud, rocks or mountains would seem to represent the stationary rainless clouds seen during drought, while the cloud cows would rather be the moving roaring rain-cloud.

The bountiful clouds are doubtless the prototypes of the many-coloured cows which yield all desires (kāmadughā) in the heaven of the Blest (AV 4.34.8) and which are forerunners of the Cow of Plenty (kāmaduh) so often mentioned in post-Vedic poetry.<sup>18</sup>

Kramrisch has suggested that cows actually represent the song or hymn.

At the beginning of things, by forces antagonistic to creation, the cows were withheld ... The song or hymn is a cow. From the dark waters of the cave, Bṛhaspati releases the three, the dawn, the sun, and the song-cow. He opened the three doors of the cave fortress and let out, by the two doors below and one above, the cows who had been fettered and hidden in the chaos of lawlessness (10.67.3-5). The two doors below let the sun shine and the dawn arose for this world; the door above, the third, lets the song roar to its destination. Indra then, by this roar, cuts up Vala, the "incloser," the Paṇi, the guardian of the cows, and drives away his cows. 19

Although it is not clear what the cows actually are in Vedic mythology, it is clear according to 10.169.2 that the cows were created by the Aṅgirasas. Again, tapas is the power that creates, and in this instance it was used by the Aṅgirasas. The Aṅgirasas may be an actual family of priests, since members of it composed portions of the ninth mandala, or they may be a higher race of beings, intermediate between gods and man, as attendants of Agni (1.75.2), who is often described as a messenger between heaven and earth.<sup>20</sup> The Aṅgirasas perform creative functions in several hymns, and tapas plays an indirect role in these functions. Indra and the Aṅgirasas are closely connected, and it is known that Indra used tapas to defeat Vṛtra and release the cows (10.167; 1.55). In many hymns it is Indra who released the cows for the Aṅgirasas (8.52.3), and for them he opened the cow-pen (1.51.3; 1.134.4). Accompanied by them Indra pierced Vala (2.11.20) and drove out the cows (6.77.6). In other hymns, Indra assumes a less prominent position than the Aṅgirasas in the myth of the cows. The Aṅgirasas

emptied the stall containing the cows, with Indra as their companion (10.62.7). In this hymn it is the Aṅgirasas that drove out the cows and pierced Vala (v.2), caused the sun to rise and spread out mother earth (v.3). It follows from this that the Aṅgirasas also had a hand in setting creation in order. Brhaspati and the Aṅgirasas are also connected. Brhaspati receives the epithet 'son of Aṅgiras' when piercing the rock and capturing the cows (10.68.2), and is directly called Aṅgiras when he drives out the cows and releases the waters with Indra (2.23.18). In nearly all occurrences of the word in the singular, Aṅgiras is an epithet of Agni, who is several times called the chief of the Aṅgirasas (1.75.2)<sup>21</sup> Since tapas is used by Indra (10.167), Brhaspati (10.68) and Agni (7.1) and the Aṅgirasas are so often found connected with these gods, it is no surprise that the Aṅgirasas use tapas in 10.169.

It is not clear from the context of the verse alone how to best translate tapas. Grassmann translates tapas in this hymn as asceticism, while Geldner uses pain, suffering. These translations by themselves are misleading, unless the sense of "the asceticism of the Aṅgirasas that creates the cows requires a painful effort" can be implied. However, there is nothing in the text to imply this. It is more probable to assume, from a comparison with 10.190.1 where the meaning of tapas is absolutely ambiguous, that here too there is nothing to prevent an interpretation of heat - specifically creative heat. Thus, the Aṅgirasas create 'cows' with a creative heat in much the same way as Dhātṛ creates the universe with his cosmogonic heat.

It has been shown that tapas plays a central role in cosmogonic speculations (10.129 and 10.190) and in 'macro-cosmic' creative functions (10.169). In the final hymn, there is evidence to demonstrate that tapas also plays a 'micro-cosmic' creative role in practical human activities and desires. In 10.183, tapas is an essential means for the engendering of offspring.

There are three verses in this hymn. According to Sāyana,<sup>22</sup> the speaker of the first stanza is the yajamāna's<sup>23</sup> (sacrificer's) wife, the speaker of the second stanza is the yajamāna and the speaker of the third stanza is the hotar (priest). Each stanza also has its own deity. In the second stanza the yajamāna is speaking to his wife. In the third stanza the hotar is speaking to himself. In the first stanza the wife beholds in her mind her husband, filled with the power of tapas. In her mind's eye she sees him enjoying progeny and riches. In other words, it appears that she visualizes first the manifestation of the desired offspring, and then prays that the husband, who is desirous of offspring, will beget offspring. The husband then beholds (visualizes) in his mind's eye his wife, radiant with beauty, approaching him for the initial act of impregnation. He prays that she too, who is desirous of offspring, will bear offspring. In the final stanza, the priest prays that he (himself), who can implant the seed in vegetables and in all living beings through the efficacy of the sacrifices which he performs, can also engender progeny upon women.

Tapas appears twice in the first stanza of this hymn. The wife beholds in her mind's eye that her husband, the sacrificer, is born from

tapas (tapaso jātam) and is developed or effective from tapas (vibhūtam jātam). It is possible that the sacrificer is being equated with the ṛṣi-s. In this verse the sacrificer is envisioned by his wife as born from tapas (tapaso jātam). In 10.154 the poet envisions the ṛṣi-s as tapojān (born from tapas). The sacrificer does aspire to ṛṣi-hood through soma ingestion (3.43.5).

Grassmann translates these two occurrences of tapas as asceticism. Similarly, Geldner translates tapas using Kasteiung (mortification), and Wilson uses penance. Again, it is probable that these meanings are superimposed from the later tradition. In the later tradition, Rudra, as the tapasvin, is always urdhvaretas, having his seed drawn up in chastity, and is the symbol of sexual, creative power. That tapas refers to an activity that generates a virile, creative power is seen in the following myth:

Rudra was calm, controlled, and without desire. From him Viṣṇu was born and was instructed to perform creation. Then (Rudra) thought, "After doing tapas I will perform creation," and when he was exhausted from performing tapas he slept in the ocean of milk for a long time. Meanwhile, as Rudra could not be found, Viṣṇu and Brahmā performed creation. When Rudra arose, he wandered about, desirous of creating, and he saw that the universe was filled with pairs of various creatures and that there was no space left. Then he, who is the cause of creation, became angry, and he cut off his marvellous liṅga, thinking, "What use is it?" It was made of great flames, terrible, without base or middle or end. Brahmā and Viṣṇu saw the liṅga, sought in vain the top and bottom of it, and worshipped it. Rudra's anger was assuaged and he vanished. 24

However, there is nothing in 10.183 that hints at a meaning for tapas beyond that of heat, an incubating heat used for creative purposes. There is no activity involved. It is obvious from the context of the hymn that tapas implies the 'power of procreation'. It is with the creative potency of tapas that the sacrificer will be able to produce offspring. Tapas in this micro-cosmic role of generating new life in 10.183 is similar to its cosmogonic role of generating the universe (10.129 and 10.190). Tapas as a creative heat seems to satisfy the context. The husband has tapas for procreation much like the Creator has tapas for cosmogony.

Although the dependence of cosmogonic speculations upon the creative power of tapas appears infrequently in the RV, it clear from these few references that tapas is viewed by Vedic man as an important cosmogonic and creative power. In the contexts of the hymns discussed in this chapter, several meanings of tapas come forward to define as heat. Tapas is the catalytic heat that is the initiating force behind creation itself. In the visions of the ancient ṛṣi-s, all of creation is heated to manifestation through the incubation heat of tapas. It has also been determined that tapas plays a role in procreation as well as in cosmogony; it is both a destructive heat and a heat that creates; it is a heat that is contained in soma, which when ingested produces visions and strength. Tapas is both a cosmogonic heat and a heat that could be utilized by Vedic man in procreation.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>N.N. Bhattacharyya, "Cosmogonical Speculations in Ancient India: A Comparative Study," Journal of Oriental Institute Baroda, XVII (1967), pp.316-327, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>cf. W.N. Brown, "Agni, Sun, Sacrifice and Vāc: A Sacerdotal Ode by Dīrghatamas (Rig Veda 1.164)," JAOS 88(1968), pp. 199-218.

<sup>3</sup>cf. W.N. Brown, "The Sources and Nature of Pūruṣa in the Puruṣasūkta (Rig Veda 10.90)," JAOS 51 (1931), pp. 108-118.

<sup>4</sup>Categorization suggestions taken from: Renou, Vedic India, p.6, and, O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup>W.F. Wilson, Rig-Veda Saṁhitā, VI, p. 396.

<sup>6</sup>See discussion of 10.169 below for possible interpretations of 'cow'.

<sup>7</sup>cf. 10.67 for Brhaspati story.

<sup>8</sup>A.A. Macdonell, Vedic Mythology (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), pp. 101-102.

<sup>9</sup>S. Kramrisch, "The Triple Structure of Creation in the Rg Veda," HR II (1962), pp. 140-175, (1963), pp. 256-285, and p. 144.

<sup>10</sup>O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>W.N. Brown, "Theories of Creation in the Rig Veda," JAOS 85 (1965), pp. 23-34, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>13</sup>O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda, p. 142.

<sup>14</sup>D.M. Knipe, In the Image of Fire. Vedic Experiences of Heat (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), p. 115.

<sup>15</sup>O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup>cf. Knipe, *op cit.*, pp. 115-116, 120-121. That the Creator performs an action to create the world is not unknown in Brāhmaṇic speculations. Prajāpati creates the world with his magical sweat by ascetically heating himself (AB 5.32.1). Prajāpati also conquers Paṇman (sin), his ancient enemy, by a thousand years of tapas effort (not unlike the battle in the Indra-Vṛtra myth) to produce the stars from the pores of his heated body (SB 10.4.4.1). The Āraṇyakas also illustrate this cosmogonic effort. For example, JUB 1.8.1-13 illustrates that the human practice of tapas as heat-production is derived from the divine prototype, Prajāpati.

<sup>17</sup>Macdonell, *op cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 60, 150-151.

<sup>19</sup>Kramrisch, *op cit.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>20</sup>Macdonell, *op cit.*, p. 143.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>R.T.H. Griffith, The Hymns of the Rgveda (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), p. 650.

<sup>23</sup>The Yajamāna is "he who sacrifices for himself." He usually pays for the sacrifice. Theoretically, he can be anyone from the three higher caste-s.

<sup>24</sup>O'Flaherty, Śiva. The Erotic Ascetic (Siva, Dharma-samhita, 10.1-23), pp. 131-132.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate that in all instances where the term tapas occurs in the RV the meaning of heat works very well as a translation. There are numerous unambiguous instances in the RV where tapas means 'heat'. In other instances where the meaning is ambiguous some modern scholars have tried to translate tapas as 'asceticism' (some have even translated tapas as asceticism where the meaning is clearly heat - i.e. 10.190.1). Since, however, there are no unambiguous instances in the RV where tapas means asceticism, and even where ascetic practices are discussed (10.136) there is no evidence that these practices are called tapas, it is reasonable to assume that in the ambiguous instances also tapas should be translated as 'heat'. Since the meaning of heat works perfectly well in all occurrences of tapas, even in those instances where the meaning is ambiguous, it is reasonable to assume that Vedic man understood and used tapas as heat, and heat only.

It is difficult, however, for us to comprehend exactly how Vedic man organized reality. The religion upon which the RV is based is obscured in antiquity and is not even very well understood by the later Indian tradition. The intent of this thesis is to demonstrate that it is dangerous to introduce a meaning for a term such as tapas for which there is no concrete evidence in the RV itself. While it is of course possible that other meanings of tapas were known to Vedic man, it seems

that we must look for unambiguous support for such meanings within the text (RV). In this instance, anything beyond the meanings of 'heat', the only meaning which is in fact documented in the RV, seems unwarranted.

In this thesis I have discussed tapas as heat in three categories to demonstrate the various dimensions of meanings and functions that the term holds in the RV. The first chapter attempts to show that where tapas and soma are found together, tapas is always the 'heat' of soma. In 9.113, tapas is embodied in soma. When soma is ingested by the Vedic worshipper, tapas helps to generate the supernormal experience. In 8.59, the poet envisions the ṛṣi-s with tapas, presumably with the same tapas that is generated within the poet in 9.113 after the ingestion of soma. In 10.154, we discover that the ṛṣi-s are also lovers of soma. The Vedic worshippers offer soma to the ṛṣi-s. The ṛṣi-s are 'full of tapas' and become invincible with tapas, presumably as a result of the soma offerings. In 10.109, the ṛṣi-s also acquire supernormal knowledge with their tapas (v.4). In this same hymn (v.1), Tapas is personified with such cosmic entities as the ocean, wind, etc., and with them witness the sin committed by Soma, personified.

The second chapter discusses occurrences of tapas where the meaning is indisputably 'heat'. Just as the ṛṣi-s are invincible with their tapas, the gods (Agni, Indra-Varuṇa, Manyu) are invincible in battle with their tapas. This tapas is both injurious and destructive. A funeral hymn (10.16) is discussed first to demonstrate the destructive activity of tapas. Tapas is the flesh-eating heat of Agni that totally consumes the sacrificial goat. It is this same heat that the gods employ

to consume enemies. In 10.87.14 the Vedic worshippers invoke Agni as the flesh-eating fire to consume the mutilated bodies of the enemies. Agni is invoked in three other hymns (6.4.5; 7.1.7; 8.49.16) to do the same. Indra-Varuṇa is invoked in another hymn (7.82.7) to protect the Vedic worshippers from the tapas of their enemies. Manyu is invoked in 10.83.2,3 to both protect with his tapas the Vedic worshippers from the enemies, and to direct his destructive tapas upon the enemies.

The third chapter reveals that tapas is not only a destructive power - it has cosmogonic and creative power as well. In two interesting hymns (10.167; 10.68), the destructive action of tapas initiates creation. These two hymns are included in this chapter because of their instrumental role in cosmogony, for without the destructive action of tapas in these hymns, creation could not unfold. In 10.167, Indra, who ingests soma (madhu), destroys Vṛtra with his tapas, and with this tapas, he also wins (creates) the sun. In 10.68, the same myth is referred to as in 10.167. This time it is Bṛhaspati who destroys the demon Vala with his tapas, thus generating creation. In 10.129 and 10.190, tapas is the catalyst and lubricant that moves creation into manifestation. The poet perceives this in his innermost vision. Tapas is not destructive, but totally creative and cosmogonic; this heat is the key to creation. In 10.169, tapas plays a macro-cosmic creative function in the creation of the 'cows'. In 10.183, tapas plays a role in micro-cosmic creative functions in practical human activities and desires - it is the essential means for the engendering of offspring. Tapas in this micro-cosmic role of generating new life is similar to

its cosmogonic role of generating the universe. The sacrificer has tapas for procreation much like the creator has tapas for cosmogony.

The functions of tapas in each of these three categories are not mutually exclusive. Tapas is the heat that is embodied in soma, it is the inner heat that generates supernormal vision, it is the heat of the gods that is destructive and injurious to enemies, it is heat of the cremation fire, and it is a creative and cosmogonic heat. The tapas that is embodied in soma is the same tapas that generates or 'creates' in the Vedic worshipper the supernormal vision. The tapas in soma conquers or destroys (albeit temporarily) the normal human perception (when soma is ingested) just as Indra conquers and destroys Vṛtra and Bṛhaspati destroys Vala. With this destruction comes the creation of the supernormal vision, just as the destructive tapas of Indra and Bṛhaspati 'paves the way' for cosmogony. In their supernormal visions, the ṛṣi-s 'see' the creative power of tapas producing ekam, salila, kāma, rta, satya, rātr and samudra. This creative power belongs just as much to the ṛṣi-s or sacrificer as it does to absolute reality. Also, in each instance, tapas 'transforms' - tapas transforms the Vedic worshipper from the normal level of human perception to the level of supernormal perception; tapas transforms the enemy into 'burned' destruction; and, tapas transforms the universe into manifestation.

These observations concerning tapas in the RV concur with observations that Knipe makes concerning the universal element fire: "... it (fire) is both a transcendental celestial form and a tangible human acquisition, it is both eternal and temporal, it is both the benevolent

author of warmth and light and malevolent uncontrollable beast of destruction;"<sup>1</sup> and, "Fire is the very embodiment of change and transformation."<sup>2</sup> Knipe's observations concerning fire fit our understanding of the function of tapas as heat in the RV very well.

In fact, the phenomenon of heat, specifically the phenomenon of the production of inner heat for destructive and creative purposes, is part of an ancient and widely held belief. The concept of tapas demonstrates a striking similarity to motifs of the magical production of inner heat found in the mythology and historical records of Indo-European culture. Because the Indo-Aryans (the peoples of the RV) were part of the pre-historic migration of Indo-European tribes that swept Europe, Western Asia and India, it is reasonable to assume that the Indo-Aryan concept of tapas has pre-historic roots in the archaic forms of inner heat production that influenced the mythology of Indo-European culture. R.L. Turner<sup>3</sup> has compared tapas to Indo-European derivatives. A detailed etymological study of the root tap- and its origins in the Indo-European tradition may lead to a more concise understanding of the term tapas in the RV. Moreover, Elaide<sup>4</sup> has carefully documented and presented records concerning the production and use of inner heat among Indo-European peoples. A close examination of the parallels between Indo-European usage and the evidence found in the RV may reveal interesting notions concerning the nature of tapas in the RV. For example, an understanding of the ancient Iranian concept of vital heat, found in the well-known expressive form of fire, xvaranah, which is the splendor and glory of Ahura Mazda's divine lordship and kingship, may

find an interesting parallel in our concept of tapas.<sup>5</sup>

A detailed examination of the following topics may also reveal more about the nature of tapas in the RV: (1) a study of the root dah- (to burn) and its derivatives in the RV; (2) a study of the exact relation of the terms tapas and dīkṣā, and yajna in the Vedic tradition; and, (3) the exact relation between tapas and ascetic practices, if any, in the RV and the Vedic tradition as a whole.

It will no doubt be revealing to examine the changing conception of the term tapas within the framework of the whole of the early Indian tradition (specifically - Rgveda, Atharva-veda, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and selected Upaniṣads). Several hypotheses concerning this historical development have been put forward by various scholars (i.e. Knipe,<sup>6</sup> Bhagat,<sup>7</sup> Chakraborti<sup>8</sup>) and these need to be compared and tested against the primary material with the same contextual methodology as contained herein. For example, the paradigm of this change suggested by Hopkins<sup>9</sup> could be explored and tested. Hopkins suggests that the link of tapas with asceticism is clearly documented in the AV. Although the AV reveals that ascetic effort (śrama) is required for the production of inner creative heat (tapas), signifying the link suggested by Hopkins, it is interesting to note that where śrama and tapas appear together,<sup>10</sup> tapas is still considered heat and has not yet assimilated the notion of effort. A separate term signifying effort (śrama) is still required. The assimilation of ascetic effort into the concept of tapas may have occurred in subsequent texts. According to Hopkin's paradigm, an adept in the Brāhmaṇas often undergoes austerities for a year in preparation

for ritual activity, but always returns to normal domestic life. Full-scale asceticism is first evident in the Āraṇyakas. The ascetic life is no longer a preparation for ritual activity - the internal 'heating up' of the forest dweller is itself considered the 'inner' sacrifice. In the Upaniṣads, the austere life of the forest dweller becomes recognized as a viable path in the search for the meaning of life and for the release from worldly life. Originally connected with ritual and meaning heat, by the time of the Upaniṣads the term tapas is revealed to be fully expanded to refer to ascetic practices. This meaning was not originally a part of the earlier Vedic tradition. Hopkins does not state in his paradigm exactly where in the texts the transition from heat to ascetic practice occurs in the concept of tapas; however, a close contextual study similar to the one offered in this thesis would reveal the exact nature of this changing conception. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that tapas refers to both ascetic practices and the inner heat which is generated from this practice, in the later tradition.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>D.M. Knipe, In the Image of Fire, op cit., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>R.L. Turner, A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-European Languages (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 322-323.

<sup>4</sup>cf. M. Eliade, Shamanism. Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. Translated by Willard R. Trask (New York:- London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964); and also

M. Eliade, Yoga. Immortality and Freedom, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

<sup>5</sup>Knipe, op cit., p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-121.

<sup>7</sup>M.G. Bhagat, Ancient Indian Asceticism (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976), pp. 92-137.

<sup>8</sup>H. Chakraborti, Asceticism in Ancient India (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1973), pp. 3-44.

<sup>9</sup>T.J. Hopkins, The Hindu Religious Tradition (Encino: Dickenson Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 49-50.

<sup>10</sup>AV 4.35.1-2; 12.5.1; 10.7.36 - Knipe, op cit., p. 117.

HYMNS

HYMNSRV 6.5 (446) tapasā, tapasvin

1. I invoke your Son of Strength, the Youthful, with hymns, the Youngest God, whose speech is guileless;  
Sage who sends wealth comprising every treasure, bringer of many boons, devoid of malice.
2. At eve and morn the pious servants bring thee their precious gifts, O Priest of many aspects,  
On whom, the Purifier, all things living, as on firm ground their happiness have established.
3. Thou from of old hast dwelt among these people, by mental power the charioteer of blessings.  
Hence sendest thou, O sapient Jātavedas, to him who serves thee treasures in succession.
4. Agni, whoever secretly attacks us, the neighbour, thou with Mitra's might! who harms us,  
Burn him with thine own Steers for ever youthful, burning with burning heat, thou fiercest burner (tapā tapīṣṭha tapasā tapasvān).
5. He who serves thee with sacrifice and fuel, with hymn, O Son of Strength, and chanted praises,  
Shines out, Immortal! in the midst of mortals, a sage, with wealth, with splendour and with glory.
6. Do this, O Agni, when we urge thee, quickly, triumphant in thy might subdue our foemen.  
When thou art praised with words and decked with brightness, accept this chanted hymn, the singer's worship.
7. Help us, that we may gain this wish, O Agni, gain riches, Wealthy One! with store of heroes.  
Desiring strength from thee may we be strengthened, and win, Eternal! thine eternal glory.

Griffith

RV 7.1 (517) tapobhis

1. The men from fire-sticks, with their hands' swift movement have,  
in deep thought, engendered glorious Agni,  
Far-seen, with pointed flame, Lord of the homestead.
2. The Vasus set that Agni in the dwelling, fair to behold, for help from every quarter:  
Who, in the home for ever, must be honoured.

3. Shine thou before us, Agni, well-enkindled, with flame, Most Youthful God, that never fadeth.  
To thee come all our sacrificial viands.
4. Among all fires these fires have shone most brightly, splendid with light, begirt by noble heroes,  
Where men of lofty birth sit down together.
5. Victorious Agni, grant us wealth with wisdom, wealth with brave sons, famous and independent,  
Which not a foe who deals in magic conquers.
6. To whom, the Strong, at morn and eve comes, maid-like, the ladle dropping oil, with its oblation:  
Wealth-seeking comes to him his own devotion.
7. Burn up all malice with those flames (tapobhis), O Agni, wherewith of old thou burntest up Jarūtha,  
And drive away in silence pain and sickness.
8. With him who lighteth up thy splendour, Agni, excellent, pure, refulgent, Purifier,  
Be present, and with us through these our praises.
9. Agni, the patriarchal men, the mortals who have in many places spread thy lustre, -  
Be gracious to us here for their sake also.
10. Let these men, heroes in the fight with foemen, prevail against all godless arts of magic, -  
These who approve the noble song I sing thee.
11. Let us not sit in want of men, O Agni, without descendants, heroless, about thee:  
But, O House-Friend, in houses full of children.
12. By sacrifice which the Steeds' Lord ever visits, there make our dwelling rich in seed and offspring,  
Increasing still with lineal successors.
13. Guard us, O Agni, from the hated demon, guard us from malice of the churlish sinner:  
Allied with thee may I subdue assailants.
14. May this same fire of mine surpass all others, this fire where offspring, vigorous and firm-handed,  
Wins, on a thousand paths, what ne'er shall perish.
15. This is that Agni, saviour from the foeman, who guards the kindler of the flame from sorrow:  
Heroes of noble lineage serve and tend him.

16. This is that Agni, served in many places, whom the right lord  
who brings oblation kindles,  
And round him goes the priest at sacrifices.
17. Agni, may we with riches in possession bring thee continual  
offsprings in abundance,  
Using both means to draw thee to our worship.
18. Agni, bear thou, Eternal, these most welcome oblations to the  
Deities' assembly:  
Let them enjoy our very fragrant presents.
19. Give us not up, Agni, to want of heroes, to wretched clothes,  
to need, to destitution.  
Yield us not, Holy One, to fiend or hunger; injure us not at  
home or in the forest.
20. Give strength and power to these my prayers, O Agni; O God,  
pour blessings on our chiefs and nobles.  
Grant that both we and they may share thy bounty. Ye Gods,  
protect us evermore with blessings.
21. Thou Agni, swift to hear, art fair of aspect: beam forth, O Son  
of Strength, in full effulgence.  
Let me not want, with thee, a son for ever: let not a manly  
hero ever fail us.
22. Godeemn us not to indigence, O Agni, beside these flaming fires  
which Gods have kindled;  
Nor, even after fault, let thy displeasure, thine as a God, O  
Son of Strength, o'ertake us.
23. O Agni, fair of face, the wealthy mortal who to the Immortal  
offers his oblation.  
Hath him who wins him treasure by his Godhead, to whom the prince,  
in need, goes supplicating.
24. Knowing our chief felicity, O Agni, bring hither ample riches  
to our nobles,  
Wherewith we may enjoy ourselves, O Victor, with undiminished  
life and hero children.
25. Give strength and power to these my prayers, O Agni; O God,  
pour blessings on our chiefs and nobles.  
Grant that both we and they may share thy bounty. Ye Gods,  
protect us evermore with blessings.

RV 7.82 (598) tapas

1. Grant us your strong protection, Indra-Varuṇa, our people, and our family, for sacrifice.  
May we subdue in fight our evil-hearted foes, him who attacks the man steadfast in lengthened rites.
2. O Indra-Varuṇa, mighty and very rich! One of you is called Monarch and One Autocrat.  
All Gods in the most lofty region of the air have, O ye Steers, combined all power and might in you.
3. Ye with your strength have pierced the fountains of the floods: the Sun have ye brought forward as the Lord in heaven.  
Cheered by this magic draught ye, Indra-Varuṇa, made the dry places stream, made songs of praise flow forth.
4. In battles and in frays we ministering priests, kneeling upon our knees for furtherance of our weal,  
Invoke you, only you, the Lords of twofold wealth, you prompt to hear, we bards, O Indra-Varuṇa.
5. O Indra-Varuṇa, as ye created all these creatures of the world by your surpassing might,  
In peace and quiet Mitra waits on Varuṇa, the Other, awful, with the Maruts seeks renown.
6. That Varuṇa's high worth may shine preëminent, these Twain have measured each his proper power and might.  
The One subdueth the destructive enemy; the Other with a few furthereth many a man.
7. No trouble, no misfortune, Indra-Varuṇa, no woe (tapas) from any side assails the mortal man  
Whose sacrifice, O Gods, ye visit and enjoy: ne'er doth the crafty guile of mortal injure him.
8. With your divine protection, Heroes, come to us: mine invocation hear, if ye be pleased therewith.  
Bestow ye upon us, O Indra-Varuṇa, your friendship and your kinship and your favouring grace.
9. In battle after battle, Indra-Varuṇa, be ye our Champions, ye who are the peoples' strength,  
When both opposing bands invoke you for the fight, and men that they may gain offspring and progeny.
10. May Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman vouchsafe us glory and great shelter spreading far.  
We think of the beneficent light of Aditi, and Savitar's song of praise, the God who strengthens Law.

RV 8.49 (669) tapasā

1. Agni, come hither with thy fires; we choose thee as Invoking Priest.  
Let the extended ladle full of oil balm thee, best Priest, to sit on sacred grass.
2. For unto thee, O Angiras,, O Son of Strength, move ladles in the sacrifice.  
To Agni, Child of Force, whose locks drop oil, we seek, foremost in sacrificial rites.
3. Agni, thou art Disposer, Sage, Herald, bright God! and worshipful, Best offerer, cheerful, to be praised in holy rites, pure Lord!  
by singers with their hymns.
4. Most Youthful and Eternal, bring the longing Gods to me, the guileless, for the feast.  
Come, Vasu, to the banquet that is well prepared: rejoice thee, gracious, with our songs.
5. Famed art thou, Agni, far and wide, Preserver, righteous, and a Sage.  
The holy singers, O refulgent kindled God! arrangers, call on thee to come.
6. Shine, Most Resplendent! blaze, send bliss unto the folk, and to thy worshipper: Great art thou.  
So may my princes, with good fires, subduing foes, rest in the keeping of the Gods.
7. O Agni, as thou burnest down to earth even high-grown underwood,  
So, bright as Mitra is, burn him who injures us, him who plots ill against thy friend.
8. Give us not as a prey to mortal enemy, nor to the wicked friend of fiends.  
With conquering guards, auspicious, unassailable, protect us,  
O Most Youthful God.
9. Protect us, Agni, through the first, protect us through the second hymn,  
Protect us through three hymns, O Lord of Power and Might, through four hymns, Vasu, guard thou us.
10. Preserve us from each fiend who brings the Gods no gift, preserve thou us in deeds of strength:  
For we possess in thee the nearest Friend of all, for service of the Gods and weal.

11. O Holy Agni, give us wealth renowned with men and strengthening life.  
Bestow on us, O Helper, that which many crave, more glorious still by righteousness;
12. Wherewith we may o'ercome our rivals in the war, o'erpowering the foe's designs.  
So wax thou by our food, O Excellent in strength. Quicken our thoughts that find out wealth.
13. Agni is even as a bull who whets and brandishes his horns.  
Well-sharpened are his jaws which may not be withstood: the Child of Strength hath powerful teeth.
14. Not to be stayed, O Bull, O Agni, are thy teeth when thou art spreading far and wide.  
Make our oblations duly offered up, O Priest, and give us store of precious things.
15. Thou liest in the wood: from both thy Mothers mortals kindle thee.  
Unweariedly thou bearest up the offerer's gifts, then shinest bright among the Gods.
16. And so the seven priests, O Agni, worship thee, Free-giver, Everlasting One.  
Thou cleavest through the rock with heat (tapasā) and fervent glow. Agni, rise up above the men.
17. For you let us whose grass is trimmed call Agni, Agni, restless God.  
Let us whose food is offered call to all the tribes Agni the Invoking Priest of men.
18. Agni, with noble psalm that tells his wish he dwells, thinking on thee who guardest him.  
Speedily bring us strength of many varied sorts to be most near to succour us.
19. Agni, Praise-singer! Lord of men, God! burner-up of Rākṣasas, Mighty art thou, the ever-present Household-Lord, Home-friend and Guardian from the sky.
20. Let no fiend come among us, O thou rich in light, no spell of those who deal in spells.  
To distant pastures drive faint hunger: far away, O Agni, chase the demons' friends.

RV 8.59 (1028) tapasā

1. In offerings poured to you, O Indra-Varuṇa, these shares of yours stream forth to glorify your state.  
Ye haste to the libations at each sacrifice when ye assist the worshipper who sheds the juice.
2. The waters and the plants, O Indra-Varuṇa, had efficacious vigour, and attained to might:  
Ye who have gone beyond the path of middle air, - no godless man is worthy to be called your foe.
3. True is your Kṛṣṇa's word, Indra and Varuṇa: The seven holy voices pour a wave of meath.  
For their sake, Lords of splendor! aid the pious man who, unbewildered, keeps you ever in his thoughts.
4. Dropping oil, sweet with Soma, pouring forth their stream, are the Seven Sisters in the seat of sacrifice.  
These, dropping oil, are yours, O Indra-Varuṇa: with these enrich with gifts and help the worshipper.
5. To our great happiness have we ascribed to these Two Bright Ones truthfulness, great strength, and majesty.  
O Lords of splendor, aid us through the Three-times-Seven, as we pour holy oil, O Indra-Varuṇa.
6. What ye in time of old, Indra and Varuṇa, gave Ṛṣis - revelation, thought, and power of song,  
And places which the wise made, weaving sacrifice, - these through my spirit's fervid glow (tapasā), have I beheld.
7. O Indra-Varuṇa, grant to the worshippers cheerfulness void of pride, and wealth to nourish them.  
Vouchsafe us food, prosperity, and progeny, and lengthen out our days that we may see long life.

RV 9.113 (825) tapasā

1. Let Indra the killer of Vṛtra drink Soma in Śaryañāvat, gathering his strength within himself, to do a great heroic deed. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
2. Purify yourself, generous Soma from Ārjīka, master of the quarters of the sky. Pressed with sacred words, with truth and faith and ardour [tapasā], O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
3. The daughter of the sun has brought the buffalo raised by Parjanya. The divine youths have received him and placed the juice in Soma. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
4. You speak of the sacred, as your brightness is sacred; you speak the truth, as your deeds are true. You speak of faith, King Soma, as you are carefully prepared by the sacrificial priest. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
5. The floods of the high one, the truly awesome one, flow together. The juices of him so full of juice mingle together as you, the tawny one, purify yourself with prayer. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
6. Where the high priest speaks rhythmic words, O Purifier, holding the pressing-stone, feeling that he has become great with the Soma, giving birth to joy through the Soma, O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
7. Where the inextinguishable light shines, the world where the sun was placed, in that immortal, unfading world, O Purifier, place me. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
8. Where Vivasvan's son is king, where heaven is enclosed, where those young waters are - there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
9. Where they move as they will, in the triple dome, in the third heaven of heaven, where the worlds are made of light, there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
10. Where there are desires and longings, at the sun's zenith, where the dead are fed and satisfied, there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.
11. Where there are joys and pleasures, gladness and delight, where the desires of desire are fulfilled, there make me immortal. O drop of Soma, flow for Indra.

RV 10.16 Tapasā (plus tapasva, tapatu)

1. Do not burn him entirely, Agni, or engulf him in your flames. Do not consume his skin or his flesh. When you have cooked him perfectly, O knower of creatures, only then send him forth to the fathers.
2. When you cook him perfectly, O knower of creatures, then give him over to the fathers. When he goes on the path that leads away the breath of life, then he will be led by the will of the gods.
3. (To the dead man:) May your eye go to the sun, your life's breath to the wind. Go to the sky or to earth, as is your nature; or go to the waters, if that is your fate. Take root in the plants with your limbs.
4. (To Agni:) The goat is your share; burn (tapasya) him with. With your heat (tapasā). Let your brilliant light and flame burn (tapatu). With your gentle forms, O knower of creatures, carry this man to the world of those who have done good deeds.
5. Set him free again to go to the fathers, Agni, when he has been offered as an oblation in you and wanders with the sacrificial drink. Let him reach his own descendants, dressing himself in a life-span. O knower of creatures, let him join with a body.
6. (To the dead man:) Whatever the black bird has pecked out of you, or the ant, the snake, or even a beast of prey, may Agni who eats all things make it whole, and Soma who has entered the Brahmins.
7. Gird yourself with the limbs of the cow as an armour against Agni, and cover yourself with fat and suet, so that he will not embrace you with his impetuous heat in his passionate desire to burn you up.
8. (To Agni:) O Agni, do not overturn this cup that is dear to the gods and to those who love Soma, fit for the gods to drink from, a cup in which the immortal gods carouse.
9. I send the flesh-eating fire far away. Let him go to those whose king is Yama, carrying away all impurities. But let that other, the knower of creatures, come here and carry the oblation to the gods, since he knows the way in advance.
10. The flesh-eating fire has entered your house, though he sees there the other, the knower of creatures; I take that god away to the sacrifice of the fathers. Let him carry the heated drink to the farthest dwelling-place.

11. Agni who carries away the corpse, who gives sacrifice to the fathers who are strengthened by truth - let him proclaim the oblation to the gods and to the fathers.
12. (To the new fire:) Joyously would we put you in place, joyously would we kindle you. Joyously carry the joyous fathers here to eat the oblation.
13. Now, Agni, quench and revive the very one you have burnt up. Let Kiyāmba, Pākadūrvā, and Vyalkaśa plants grow in this place.
14. O cool one, bringer of coolness; O fresh one, bringer of freshness; unite with the female frog. Delight and inspire this Agni.

O'Flaherty

RV 10.68 (894) agni-tapobhis

1. Like birds who keep their watch, splashing in water, like the loud voices of the thundering rain-cloud,  
Like merry streamlets bursting from the mountain, thus to Brhaspati our hymns have sounded.
2. The Son of Angiras, meeting the cattle, as Bhaga, brought in Aryaman among us.  
As Friend of men he decks the wife and husband: as for the race, Brhaspati, nerve our coursers.
3. Brhaspati, having won them from the mountains, strewed down,  
like barley out of winnowing-baskets,  
The vigorous, wandering cows who aid the pious, desired of all,  
of blameless form, well-coloured.
4. As the Sun dews with meath the seat of Order, and casts a flaming meteor down from heaven.  
So from the rock Brhaspati forced the cattle, and cleft the earth's skin as it were with water.
5. Forth from mid-air with light he drave the darkness, as the gale blows a lily from the river.  
Like the wind grasping at the cloud of Vala, Brhaspati gathered to himself the cattle.
6. Brhaspati, when he with fiery lightnings (agni-tapobhis) cleft through the weapon of reviling Vala,  
Consumed him as tongues eat what teeth have compassed: he threw the prisons of the red cows open.

7. That secret name borne by the lowing cattle within the cave  
Brhaspati discovered,  
And'drave, himself, the bright kine from the mountain, like a  
bird's young after the egg's disclosure.
8. He looked around on rock-imprisoned sweetness as one who eyes  
a fish in scanty water.  
Brhaspati, cleaving through with varied clamour, brought it  
forth like a bowl from out the timber.
9. He found the light of heaven, and fire, and Morning: with lucid  
rays he forced apart the darkness.  
As from a joint, Brhaspati took the marrow of Vala as he gloried  
in his cattle.
10. As trees for foliage robbed by winter, Vala mourned for the cows  
Brhaspati had taken.  
He did a deed ne'er done, ne'er to be equalled, whereby the Sun  
and Moon ascend alternate.
11. Like a dark steed adorned with pearl, the Fathers have decorated  
heaven with constellations.  
They set the light in day, in night the darkness. Brhaspati  
cleft the rock and found the cattle.
12. This homage have we offered to the Cloud God who thunders out  
to many in succession.  
May this Brhaspati vouchsafe us fulness of life with kine and  
horses, men, and heroes.

Griffith

RV 10.83 (909) tapasā, tapasā

1. He who hath revered thee, Manyu, destructive bolt, breeds for  
\_ himself forthwith all conquering energy.  
Ārya and Dāsa will we conquer with thine aid, with thee the  
Conqueror, with conquest conquest-sped.
2. Manyu was Indra, yea, the God was Manyu, Manyu was Hotar,  
Varuṇa, Jātavedas.  
The tribes of human lineage worship Manyu. Accordant with thy  
fervour (tapasā), Manyu, guard us.
3. Come hither, Manyu, mightier than the mighty; chase, with thy  
fervour (tapasā) for ally, our foemen.  
Slayer of foes, of Vṛtra, and of Dasyu, bring thou to us all  
kinds of wealth and treasure.

4. For thou art, Manyu, of surpassing vigour, fierce, queller of the foe, and self-existent,  
Shared by all men, victorious, subduer: vouchsafe to us superior strength in battles.
5. I have departed, still without a portion, wise God! according to thy will, the Mighty.  
I, feeble man, was wroth thee, O Manyu! I am myself; come thou to give me vigour.
6. Come hither, I am all thine own; advancing turn thou to me, Victorious, All-supporter!  
Come to me, Manyu, Wielder of the Thunder: bethink thee of thy friend, and slay the Dasyus.
7. Approach, and on my right hand hold thy station: so shall we slay a multitude of foemen.  
The best of meath I offer to support thee; may we be first to drink thereof in quiet.

Griffith

RV 10.87 (913) tapasā

1. I Balm with oil the mighty Rakṣasslayer; to the most famous Friend I come for shelter  
Enkindled, sharpened by our rites, may Agni protect us in the day and might from evil.
2. O Jātavedas with the teeth of iron, enkindled with thy flame attack the demons.  
Seize with thy tongue the foolish gods' adorers: rend, put within thy mouth the raw-flesh eaters.
3. Apply the teeth, the upper and the lower, thou who hast both, enkindled and destroying.  
Roam also in the air, O King, around us, and with thy jaws assail the wicked spirits.
4. Bending thy shafts through sacrifices, Agni, whetting their points with song as if with whetstones,  
Pierce to the heart therewith the Yātudhānas, and break their arms uplifted to attack thee.
5. Pierce through the Yātudhāna's skin, O Agni; let the destroying dart with fire consume him.  
Rend his joints, Jatavedas, let the eater of flesh, flesh-seeking, track his mangled body.

6. Where now thou seest Agni Jātavedas, one of these demons standing still or roaming,  
Or flying on those paths in air's mid-region, sharpen the shaft and as an archer pierce him.
7. Tear from the evil spirit, Jātavedas, what he hath seized and with his spears hath captured.  
Blazing before him strike him down, O Agni; let spotted carrion-eating kites devour him.
8. Here tell this forth, O Agni: whosoever is, he himself, or acteth as, a demon,  
Him grasp, O thou Most Youthful, with thy fuel: to the Man-seer's eye give him as booty.
9. With keen glance guard the sacrifice, O Agni: thou Sage, conduct it onward to the Vasus.  
Let not the fiends, O Man-beholder, harm thee burning against the Rākṣasas to slay them.
10. Look on the fiend mid men, as Man-beholder: rend thou his three extremities in pieces.  
Demolish with thy flame his ribs, O Agni, the Yātudhāna's root destroy thou triply.
11. Thrice, Agni, let thy noose surround the demon who with his falsehood injures Holy Order.  
Loud roaring with thy flame, O Jātavedas, crush him and cast him down before the singer.
12. Lend thou the worshipper that eye, O Agni, wherewith thou lookest on the hoof-armed demon.  
With light celestial in Atharvan's manner burn up the fool who ruins truth with falsehood.
13. Agni, what curse the pair this day have uttered, what heated word the worshippers have spoken,  
Each arrowy taunt sped from the angry spirit, -- pierce to the heart therewith the Yātudhānas.
14. With fervent heat (tapasā) exterminate the demons; destroy the fiends with burning flame, O Agni.  
Destroy with fire the foolish gods' adorers; blaze and destroy the insatiable monsters.
15. May Gods destroy this day the evil-doer: may each hot curse of his return and blast him.  
Let arrows pierce the liar in his vitals, and Viśva's net enclose the Yātudhāna.

16. The fiend who smears himself with flesh of cattle, with flesh  
of horses and of human bodies,  
Who steals the milch-cow's milk away, O Agni, -- tear off the  
heads of such with fiery fury.
17. The cow gives milk each year, O Man-regarder: let not the  
Yātudhāna ever taste it.  
If one would glut him with the biesting, Agni, pierce with  
thy flame his vitals as he meets thee.
18. Let the fiends drink the poison of the cattle; may Aditi cast  
off the evil-doers.  
May the God Savitar give them up to ruin, and be their share  
of plants and herbs denied them.
19. Agni, from days of old thou slayest demons: never shall Rākṣasas  
in fight o'ercome thee.  
Burn up the foolish ones, the flesh-devourers: let none of them  
escape thine heavenly arrow.
20. Guard us, O Agni, from above and under, protect us from behind  
us and before us;  
And may thy flames, most fierce and never wasting, glowing  
with fervent heat, consume the sinner.
21. From rear, from front, from under, from above us, O King,  
protect us as a Sage with wisdom.  
Guard to old age thy friend, O Friend, Eternal: O Agni, as  
Immortal, guard us mortals.
22. We set thee round us as a fort, victorious Agni, thee a Sage.  
Of hero lineage, day by day, destroyer of our treacherous foes.
23. Burn with thy poison turned against the treacherous brood of  
Rākṣasas,  
O Agni, with thy sharpened glow, with lances armed with points  
of flame.
24. Burn thou the paired Kimīdins, burn, Agni, the Yātudhāna  
pairs,  
I sharpen thee, Infallible, with hymns. O Sage, be vigilant.
25. Shoot forth, O Agni, with thy flame: demolish them on every  
side.  
Break thou the Yātudhāna's strength, the vigour of the  
Rākṣasa.

RV 10.109 (935) tapa, tapase

1. These were the first to speak about the sin against the Brahmin: the boundless ocean, Mātariśvān, the fierce-flowing heat, strong fire [tapa?] that brings the force of life, and the divine waters who are first-born in the sacred order.
2. King Soma was the first who gave the Brahmin's wife back again, without a grudge; Varuṇa and Mitra agreed to go with her, and Agni, the summoning priest, took her by the hand and led her back.
3. He must be grasped by her own hand, as a token, when they have said, 'She is the Brahmin's wife.' She did not stay for a messenger to be sent. Thus is the kingdom of a ruler protected.
4. The gods and the seven sages who settled down to asceticism [tapase] in the ancient time spoke about her: 'The wife of a Brahmin is dangerous, if she is taken away; she plants disorder in the highest heaven'.
5. He lives as a chaste student, a servant eagerly serving; he becomes a limb of the gods. In that way, Brhaspati won back his wife again, when she had been carried off by Soma, just as the gods won back the sacrificial spoon taken by Soma.
6. The gods gave back again, and men gave back. Kings, keeping their promises, should give back the Brahmin's wife.
7. When they gave back the Brahmin's wife and with the god's aid erased the sin, they enjoyed the rich essence of the earth and then went on to the wide-striding realm.

O'Flaherty

RV 10.129 (955) tapasas

1. There was neither non-existence nor existence then; there was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond. What stirred? Where? In whose protection? Was there water, bottomless deep?
2. There was neither death nor immortality then. There was no distinguishing sign of night nor of day. That one breathed, windless, by its own impulse. Other than that there was nothing beyond.

3. Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning; with no distinguishing sign, all this was water. The life-force that was covered with emptiness, that one arose through the power of heat [tapasas].
4. Desire came upon that one in the beginning; that was the first seed of mind. Poets seeking in their heart with wisdom found the bond of existence in non-existence.
5. Their cord was extended across. Was there below? Was there above? There were seed-placers; there were powers. There was impulse beneath; there was giving-forth above.
6. Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it? Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation? The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe. Who then knows whence it has arisen?
7. Whence this creation has arisen - perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not - the one who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only he knows - or perhaps he does not know.

O'Flaherty

RV 10.154 (980) tapasā (2X), tapasyatas (2X), tapas, tapojān

1. For some, the Soma is purified; others sit down for butter. Those for whom honey flows - let the dead man go away straight to them.
2. Those who became invincible through sacred heat [tapasā], who went to the sun through sacred heat [tapasā], who made sacred heat [tapas] their glory - let him go away straight to them.
3. Those who fight in battles as heroes, who sacrifice their bodies, or those who give thousands to the priests - let him go away straight to them.
4. Those who first nursed Order, who had Order and made Order grow great, the fathers full of sacred heat [tapasvatas], O Yama - let him go away straight to them.
5. Those inspired poets who know a thousand ways, who protect the sun, the seers full of sacred heat [tapasvatas], O Yama - let him go away to those who are reborn through sacred heat [tapojān].

O'Flaherty

RV 10.167 (993) tapas

1. This pleasant meath, O Indra, is effused for thee: thou art the ruling Lord of beaker and of juice.  
Bestow upon us wealth with many hero sons: thou, having glowed with Fervour [tapas], wonnest heavenly light.
2. Let us call Śakra to libations here effused, winner of light who joyeth in the potent juice.  
Mark well this sacrifice of our and come to us: we pray to Maghavan the Vanquisher of hosts.
3. By royal Soma's and by Varuṇa's decree, under Bṛhaspati's and Anumati's guard,  
This day by thine authority, O Maghavan, Maker, Disposer thou! have I enjoyed the jars.
4. I, too, urged on, have had my portion, in the bowl, and as first Prince I drew forth this my hymn of praise,  
When with the prize I came unto the flowing juice, O Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, to your home.

Griffith

RV 10.169 (995) tapasā

1. May the wind blow upon our Cows with healing: may they eat herbage full of vigorous juices.  
May they drink waters rich in life and fatness: to food that moves on feet be gracious, Rudra.
2. Like-coloured, various-hued, or single-coloured, whose names through sacrifice are known to Agni,  
Whom the Aṅgīrasas produced by Fervour [tapasā], - vouchsafe to these, Parjanya, great protection.
3. Those who have offered to the Gods their bodies, whose varied forms are all well known to Soma, -  
Those grant us in our cattle-pen, O Indra, with their full streams of milk and plenteous offspring.
4. Prajāpati, bestowing these upon me, one-minded with all Gods and with the Fathers,  
Hath to our cow-pen brought auspicious cattle: so may we own the offspring they will bear us.

Griffith

RV 10.183 (1009) tapasas, tapasas

1. I saw thee meditating in thy spirit what sprang from Fervour  
[tapasas] and hath thence developed [tapasas].  
Bestowing offspring here, bestowing riches, spread in thine  
offspring, thou who cravest children.
2. I saw thee pondering in thine heart, and praying that in due  
time thy body might be fruitful.  
Come as a youthful woman, rise to meet me: spread in thine  
offspring, thou who cravest children.
3. In plants and herbs, in all existent beings I have deposited  
the germ of increase.  
All progeny on earth have I engendered, and sons in women  
who will be hereafter.

Griffith

RV 10.190 (1016) tapasas

1. Order and truth were born from heat [tapasas] as it blazed  
up. From that was born night; from that heat was born the  
billowy ocean.
2. From the billowy ocean was born the year, that arranges days  
and nights, ruling over all that blinks its eyes.
3. The Arranger has set in their proper place the sun and moon,  
the sky and the earth, the middle realm of space, and finally  
the sunlight.

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