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Source: *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 1960, Vol. 41, No. 1/4 (1960), pp. 85-128

Published by: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute

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RUDRA FROM THE VEDAS TO THE
MAHĀBHĀRATA

BY

SUKUMARI BHATTACHARJI

Rudra is a comparatively unimportant god in the R.V., with only two and a half complete hymns to him and about 75 casual references in all. In the R.V. he is mainly described as a physically attractive god, with well-formed jaws, strong limbs, massive build, bold and powerful, of a whitish or tawny complexion, having a gold chain around his neck and brave like a bull.¹ He has matted and braided hair,² full of elan,³ is a thunder-bearer and is seated in a chariot.⁴

He is a benign giver of gifts,⁵ has healing power,⁶ is a father of the world, and destroyer of enemies.⁷ Prayer is offered to him so that healing may come to the family, as also for the welfare of cattle,⁸ whose protector he is.

His associates are the Maruts, whom he begot in Pr̥ṣni.⁹ The Maruts are quite frequently mentioned as his sons.¹⁰ In 8 : 101 : 15 R.V. Go instead of Pr̥ṣni is mentioned as the mother of the Maruts. The word Rudra has also been derived from a root meaning 'to howl' (Cf. Nirukta 10 : 3 : 2 yadarudat tadrudrasya Rudratvam).

R.V.

¹ स्थिरोभिरङ्गैः, पुरुरूप 2 : 33 : 9.

² कपर्दी 1 : 114 : 1, 5.

³ उग्र 2 : 33 : 9.

⁴ गर्तसद् 2 : 33 : 11.

⁵ भूरेर्दातारम् 2 : 33 : 12.

⁶ हस्ते विभ्रद् मेधजा 1 : 114 : 5.

⁷ 2 : 33 : 11.

⁸ 1 : 114 : 1 द्विपदे चतुष्पदे ...

⁹ पित्रे मरुताम् 1 : 114 : 6, 9 ; 2 : 33 : 1, रुद्र ... पृश्नि ... मरुतः 5 : 152 : 16.

¹⁰ रुद्रस्य मर्याः, 1 : 64 : 2, रुद्रस्य सनुम् 1 : 64 : 12 ; 5 : 42 : 15 ; रुद्रस्य सूनवः 1 : 85 : 1 ; SYV. 6 : 50 : 4, रुद्रस्य पुत्राः 6 : 66 : 3, 11 ; 7 : 56 : 1.

From all this emerges a powerful and benevolent god, like most of the gods in the earliest pantheon in the RV. He has a minor position, but in essence is not different from the major gods. He is attractive, not repulsive; fierce and powerful, yet with no dark or evil associations about him. He is prayed for protection and healing and, because he is so powerful, is supplicated to protect the devotee and charge his arrows away from him and his. One is reminded of David's Jehovah in the Psalms: "Fight against them that fight against me..... Let destruction come upon him unawares". (Ps 35 : 1, 8).

The SV gives us no new feature of the god. With the YV we have a much more clearly delineated and at the same time a somewhat different picture of Rudra. New traits appear together with new names and epithets. He is the son of Svadhiti,¹ and has a sister Ambikā.² He is Tryambaka.³ He is also Kṛttivāsas, Śiva, blue throated, tawny, thousand-eyed, golden-armed, red, and wears a head-gear.⁴ He is called by names which later become more familiar: Bhava, Śiva, Paśupati, Nilagrīva, Śitikanṭha, Kapardin. His physical appearance, which was powerful and attractive before, undergoes such radical changes that it hardly resembles the other figures in the Rgvedic pantheon. The tawny fair-limbed archer, seated in a chariot, with a gold necklace around his neck, now becomes a dwarf with dishevelled hair, aged, massive and old.⁵ He is still copper-complexioned and red.⁶ In YV he is called Śambhu and Śamkara and suddenly becomes poor (daridra) and is styled 'the blue-and-red

¹ स्वधितिस्ते पिता SYV 3 : 63.

² एष ते माग रुद्र सह स्वस्राम्बिकया SYV 3 : 63.

³ त्र्यम्बकं SYV 3 : 57 ; त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् SYV 3 : 61 : 16 : 51.

⁴ कृत्तिवासाः SYV 3 : 61 ; 16 : 51 नीलग्रीवः, शितिकण्ठ, विलोहित, सहस्राक्ष SYV 16 : 7 : 13 हिरण्यवाहु SYV 16 : 17, रोहित 16 : 19 ; उष्णीधी 16 : 22.

⁵ ह्रस्व, वामन, व्युत्केश, वर्षीयान्, वृद्ध 16 : 31-36.

⁶ ताम्र, अरुण 16 : 39.

one, the supreme one (the Īśāna), and has a new name Krivi.¹ As Krivi means a leather-bag, the name is directly associated with storm, cloud, lightning and rain, as is amply clear from 16 : 38 : 39.² As healer, he becomes the first divine physician.³ Prayers are offered so that he averts his weapons from his worshipper.⁴ He is a bestower of gifts useful to an agrarian community—besides long life, wealth, food, prolificity, also healthy cattle, bodily strength and good progeny.⁵ Prayer is also offered that he will ward off his wrath from the worshipper's parents, relatives, children and cattle.⁶ For the first time also Rudra is also addressed as a creator god ;⁷ he becomes the overlord of the vegetation and animal world,⁸ together with all spheres of human life. The list in KYV 16 adds a new series of associations, which includes not only foreign but also contradictory features to those of the Rgvedic portrait of a formidable yet benign patron god. He now becomes the lord of thieves, robbers, cheats, the bald-headed, the night-rovers, and the deformed.⁹ Grace is sought from the benevolent aspect of the god.¹⁰ He remains the warrior armed with bow and arrows.¹¹ While in the RV., Rudra was generally associ-

¹ रुद्र, शंभु, शंकर, ईशान, दरिद्र ; रुद्र यत्ते क्रिवि परं नाम 10 : 20.

² येषां वात इषवः 16 : 65 ; रौद्रा नभोरूपाः पार्जन्याः 24 : 3.

³ अथ्यवोचदधिवक्ता प्रथमो देव्यो भिषक् 16 : 5.

⁴ रुद्रस्य हेतिः परि नो वृणक्तु 16 : 50.

⁵ आयुषे, अन्नाद्याय, प्रजननाय, रायरपोषाय, सुप्रजास्त्वाय, सुवीर्याय 3 : 63.

⁶ मानस्तोके तनये ... गोषु अश्वेषु मा रीरिधः 16 : 15-16.

⁷ रुद्राय पशुपतये 24 : 3 ; पशानां पतये नमः 16 : 17 ; रुद्रः पशुभ्यः 9 : 39 ; क्षेत्राणां, वृक्षाणां, ओषधीनाम्, अरण्यानाम् 16 : 18-20.

⁸ 16 : 17-28.

⁹ स्तायूनाम्, तस्कराणाम्, मुष्णताम्, विरुन्तानाम्, कुलुञ्चानाम् 16 : 18-22.

¹⁰ या ते रुद्र शिवा तनुरघोरा पापकाशिनी 16 : 2, 48, 49 मीढुष्टम शिवतम शिव नो सुमना भव 16 : 51.

¹¹ धन्व 16 : 10, 12 हेतिः 2 : 33 : 4 (RV.) SYV 16 : 11 : 12 ; स्थिरधन्वन्, क्षिप्रेषु, तिग्मायुध 7 : 46 : 1, स्विषु, सुधन्वन् 5 : 42 : 11 ; अवततधन्वन् पिनाकावसः 3 : 70 : 16 : 51 ; यामिषुं गिरिशन्त हस्ते विभर्ष्यस्तवे 16 : 1 ; 35-36 परमे वृक्षे आयुधं निधाय 16 : 51.

atad with rivers, earth, water, trees and mountains. (RV. 10 : 64 : 8); he now has a particular habitat in the Mūjavat Hill (SYV 3 : 61). For his special attendant Rudra has now a mouse.¹ He now becomes the god of architects, councillors and merchants.² He shouts out loudly (16 : 19). Immediately after he is called the gracious and benevolent god of peace, the fierce and formidable aspects are particularly emphasized and he is characterised as a frightful and merciless killer of even far away enemies, the Wounder, the Destroyer; then suddenly the Benign, the Good, etc.³ The Śatarudriya of the YV. introduces certain dark, inauspicious, mysterious and malevolent associations. Here Rudra is worshipped in his macabre aspect. The obnoxious details of the entrails, the liver and other such parts of the body are mentioned in this hymn. This again is a new Rudra, who, besides being terrible and awe-inspiring, is almost horrible and loathsome.

In the AV, this Rudra is already a fixed assumption. Certain new details are added. As the Rgvedic Rudra remains the same in the SV, the AV Rudra is also virtually the same as in the YV. The terrible and horrible features are now his regular characteristics; what is added is nothing entirely new, but only an extension or intensification of the already known traits. Blue tufts and a thousand tufts are attributed to him.⁴ He is Śarva, Paśupati, Rudra, Bhava and Mahādeva (AV 15). He still is Jalāsa-bheṣaja (2 : 27 : 6), but as a healer his task is now specified as extraction of arrows.⁵ He remains the divine physician; people pray to him to be healed. In 6 : 20 : 2 he is supplicated for the cure of consumption, and in 6 : 59 : 3 for the cure of cattle with medicinal herbs.⁶ In 6 : 90 there is probably a reference to

¹ एष ते रुद्र माग आखुस्ने पशुः 3 : 65.

² स्थपतिः मन्त्रिन्, वाणिज 16 : 18.

³ उग्र, भीम, उग्रैवध, दूरैवध, हन्तु, हनीयस, आततायिन्, शंभु, मयोभव, शंकर, मयस्कर, शिव, शिवतर 16 : 18 ; 32.

⁴ नीलशिखण्ड A. V. 2 : 27 : 6 ; 6 : 93 : 1 ; 11 : 2 : 7.

⁵ यां ते रुद्र इणुमास्यद्द्वेभ्यो हृदयाय च 6 : 90.

⁶ रुद्रो भूम्ने चिकित्सतु 6 : 141 : 1 ; शं नो रुो रुद्रेभिर्जलापः 19 : 10 : 6 ; रुद्रस्य मूत्रममृतस्य नामिः 6 : 44 : 3 ; इदमिद्धा 3 भेषजमिदं रुद्रस्य भेषजम् । येनेषुमे-कतेजनां शतशल्याममघ्नतत् 19 : 59 3.

rheumatism caused by his missiles. This dread god is now frequently implored for protection, favour and grace.¹ Together with Soma, Rudra is invoked for remission of sins, (7:42:1, 2). Bhava and Śarva are together invoked for the expiation of sins (8:2:7). Together with Yama, Mṛtyu, Rudra is invoked for the same purpose (6:93:1 & 2). He has a golden bow and a number of arrows.² "But Rudra is never associated, as Indra is, with the war-like exploits of the Maruts, for he does not engage in conflict with the demons" (Vedic Mythology by Macdonell, p. 74). Rudra like Agnī is praised as an immanent and omni-present deity.³ His animal associates have become more numerous and varied—cows, horses, goats, sheep, crows, dogs, deer, ducks, snakes, vultures, birds, siṃsumāras, pythons, eagles, and aquatic animals.⁴ His dogs with gaping mouths are mentioned in a hymn (11:2:30). Two whole hymns (2:34 and 15:5) are addressed to him as the lord of animals (Paśupati). Rudra has always been a destroyer of animals, even in the RV. In the AV he remains so (1:19:3), and has become moreover a killer of demons (6:32:2).⁵ As Bhava and Pṛśnivāhu he is implored for the destruction of an enemy army.⁶

Pursuing the drift of the Vedas, we notice, not the gradual development of a Vedic deity along lines already laid down in the RV but the metamorphosis of a minor yet recognisably Aryan god into a god who has both Aryan features and features which have to be called pre-Aryan. The process starts in the RV, with the

1 घनुर्विमर्षिं हरितं द्विष्मयं सहस्रघ्नं शतवघं शिखण्डिनम् । रुद्रस्येपुश्चरति देवहेति-
स्तस्यै नमो यतमस्यां दिशीऽतः ॥ 11 : 2 : 12 ; अहं रुद्राय धनुरातनोमि ब्रह्मद्विष शरवे
हन्तवा उ 4 : 30 : 5.

2 यो अमौ रुद्रो यो अप्स्वन्तर्ध ओषधीर्वीरिष आविवेश । य इमा विश्वा भुवनानि चावल्क्ये
तस्मै रुद्राय नमो अस्त्वघ्नये ॥ 7 : 87.

3 11 : 2 : 9-24.

4 रुद्र शरब्धैतान् ममामित्रान् 1 : 19 : 3. आराद्रक्षांसि प्रति दह स्वमग्ने न वो
गृहाणामुप तीतपांसि । रुद्र नो ग्रीवा अशरैन् विश चाः पृष्टीर्वोऽपि शृणानु यानुधानाः ॥ 6 :
32 : 2.

5 भवश्च ष्त्रिवाहुश्च शर्वं सेनाममुं हतम् 8 : 8 : 17.

6 RV. 2 : 1 : 6 ; 3 : 2 : 5 ; 4 : 3 : 1 ; 8 : 72 : 3.

12 [Annals, B. O. R. I.]

introduction of the dark and malevolent traits. If in the RV., Rudra is invoked with fear and trembling, it is not so much because he is ill-tempered and irate, but because he is powerful and embodies those cosmic forces which, misdirected, may bring immense harm to the community. His associations with the Maruts and Pr̥sni are clearly traceable to his essence as the rain-bearing cloud. Thus he is powerful and, to an agrarian community a formidable god worth propitiating for wealth and prosperity of men and cattle. He has a human form, that of an archer in a chariot with bow and arrows and a necklace round his neck; an altogether attractive figure. With the KYV, this god imbibes traits which emphasise his might in such a way that, from an awe-inspiring god he gradually becomes a sinister deity. Where have these traits come from? A non-Aryan mountain-deity, who obviously had associations with storm, cloud, and rain has lent some of his characteristics to Rudra. Both Rudra and his new counterpart are mighty storm-gods, but there the similarity ends. As a result, new and dark associations step into the concepts of Rudra. He is called by other names; Śarva, Bhava, Ugra, Krivi, Nīlāśikhanda, Śitikanṭha and Kapardin. This association with blue (later blue-red) is entirely new. He still is a healer, but also become lord of the plants, herbs, trees and even of the world. The utterly foreign and anti-Rgvedic attributes are introduced here: he is a dwarf with dishevelled hair, he is old and poor. At the same time he is invoked as an auspicious god bringing blessings. In other words, we are no longer concerned with the homogeneous aspect of Rudra but that of two concepts telescoped. Here the most important aspect of the later Rudra appears in his dual nature. For, in the process of assimilation of the new traits the old Rudra is not yet lost sight of. The resulting Rudra is a mysterious being with two contradictory sets of attributes. He is Rudra and Śiva, Ugra and Śambhu, Bhīma, and Śamkara, Hanṭṛ and Mayas-kara, Hanīyas and Śivatara. In the YV and not in the RV. we have all the germs which later create the complex Rudra-Śiva of the epics and Purāṇas.

The gruesome associations multiply, for in some prayers the entrails and loathsome parts of the body of the sacrificial victims are offered to him presumably because he delights in them. On the

other hand, from a minor god he is increasing in stature for he becomes the god of various professions: the architects, the merchants all find a god in him. On the one hand he clearly becomes a mountain-dwelling god and on the other he is the central deity who, while retaining overlordship of the vegetation and animal world has through realising his potentialities become a major and significant god of an expanding city-dwelling people of merchants and craftsmen. This constructive side is a direct product of his beneficial aspect (Cf. *Yā te Rudra Sīvā tanuh*, YV 16 : 1). He is invoked for long life, growth and healing, over food, fields, forests, trees, herbs, animals and paths. He is given a new animal-follower—the (mouse *ākhuṣte paśuh* YV 3 : 65). Svadhiti is his father, Pṛṣni or Go, the earth, his wife, the Maruts his sons and Ambikā his sister. These relations have gradually accumulated. In both YV and AV (but not in the RV.) he is called the creator god (YV 11:54, AV 7:87). This is evidently due to the increase of his dimensions: he is being transformed from a minor RV. god to a major later-Vedic god. This mutation continues, and the duality of his nature becomes sharper. The creator god is also the god of thieves and cheats; the overlord of the inanimate and animate world is a poor, old bulky figure associated with demons and monsters, with matted locks and clad in a leather loin-cloth. The sinister side is emphasized and the mystic associations multiply.

Rudra has been called Agni.¹ The Nirukta says, *Agnirapi Rudra ucyate* (10 : 2 : 7). In the Taittirīya Saṃhitā he has been clearly identified with Agni.² The Āsvins, because of their power and prowess have been called Rudra in SYV. 8 : 12 : 3.

In one passage of the AV, we have an interesting passage of how the RV. Rudra became the later Mahādeva and Īśana.³ "It is probably owing to his formidable characteristics that in the

¹ रुद्रो वा एव यदाग्निः T. S. 5 : 4 : 3 : 1.

² स महानभवत् स महादेवोऽभवत् स देवानामीशं पर्येत स ईशानोऽभवत् AV. 7 : 92 : 1.

³ एवं चतुर्मुखः स्थाणुर्देवदेवोऽभवत् पुरा 1. : 211 : 28.

Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras Rudra is regarded as isolated from the other gods. When the gods attained heaven, Rudra remained behind (SB. 17.3)". (Macdonell: Vedic Mythology, p. 76).

This Vedic Rudra undergoes a change more thorough and complete in the epics. Of course the process continues through the Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras, but when we reach the epics we find an almost new god, though traces of the old guise still persist.

When Arjuna praises Śiva in 3:39 for Pāsupatiāstra, he praises a supreme god with the attributes of creator, preserver and destroyer, shining with resplendent glory, with a third eye in the forehead, invincible, the destroyer of Dakṣa's sacrifice, of Bhaga's eye, etc. Or again in the Tilottamā episode, when staring at her, Śiva became four-headed.¹ The most typical description of the epic Śiva is found in 7:20. 118-138, where his forms are both brilliant and formidable.² He is so very powerful that Nārāyaṇa could see him only after he had practiced penance for thousands of years (7:200:57-58) and when he finally saw him, Śiva was Rudra, Īśāna, Rṣabha, Hara, Śambhu, the awakener, the Supreme Being of fierce wrath, the destroyer of everything, armed with divine bow, arrows and golden armour, with the Pināka, thunder, a blazing pike, club, trident and a sword. He was white with the moon in his head, dressed in tiger-skin with a stick in his hand, with armlets, and snake-thread around his trunk, surrounded by supernatural hosts, seated with his pretty consort Pārvatī. Then Nārāyaṇa sings a typical hymn to him addressing him as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, the Alpha and the Omega, the Subtle, Abstract Principle beyond Being, prototype of all creation—past, present and future, the Omnipresent and Omniscient Being (7:200:63-67). This then is the Rudra with slight minor modifications, i. e., additions and alterations, that we meet in the epics—the sum total of all fundamental creative principles together with certain apparently irreconcilable concrete details. In the next chapter, (7:20) when Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa who the shining figure armed with the spike was, who went before him killing enemies even before

¹ एवं चतुर्मुखः स्थाणुर्देवदेवो, भवत् पुग। 1 : 211 : 28.

² दीप्तानि रूपाणि घोरानि बहूनि च 7 : 201 : 118.

Arjuna's weapons touched them, who was very black, and whose feet did not touch the earth, from whose Śāla flew a thousand others and hit the foe (7 : 201 7-11), Kṛṣṇa told him it was none other than Śamkara Iśāna, and Mahādeva—the three-eyed one with tuft in his hair, clad in rags--the underlying principle of all that be, has been and shall be. He has a blue neck, a head-gear, is of a fine face, with a thousand eyes, the mountain is his habit, his arms are golden, he is dressed in grass and herbs, yet is the best of beings, like the bull (7 : 201 : 28-34). He not only possesses a bow and arrows but is excessively fond of them.¹ Śiva has two forms ;² he is Tryambaka for being the lord of three goddesses³ He is Śiva because he offers sacrifices desiring good to mankind in all spheres ;⁴ Vyomakeśa because his hair is nothing but the brilliant splendour of the sun and the moon ;⁵ Vṛṣākapi because Dharma is called the Vṛṣa⁶ ; Hara because he robs Brahman, Indra, Varuṇa and Kuvera ; Rudra because he is composed of all that consumes, all that is sharp, fierce and powerful in flesh, blood and marrow.⁷ The epithets Śūin, Jaṭila, thousand-eyed, Bark-clad, Powerful, Three-eyed, Blue-throated, Pinākin, Tawny, Smoke-coloured, Invincible, Blue-tufted, Destroyer, Preserver, Distributor of Wealth, Husband of Ambikā, Golden-armoured, -- these are all mentioned in 7:78:53-62. He is called Golden (Hiraṇmaya) in 1:48:22, with an eye on the forehead (Lalāṭākṣa) Śarva, Gaṇeśa, in (3 : 39 : 74-80). He has eleven forms, and again eight forms⁸

¹ सुधन्विन्, धनुर्धर, धन्वन्तर, धनुत, धन्वाचार्य, उग्रधुध, बहुधन्विन् 72 : 201 : 44-46.

² घोरा चान्या शिवा चान्या ते तनू 7 : 201 : 107.

³ तिस्रो देवीर्धिया चैव भजते भुवनेश्वरः । द्यामपः पृथिवीश्चैव त्र्यम्बकश्च ततः स्मृतः 7 : 201 : 130.

⁴ स मेधयति यन्नित्यं सर्वार्थान् सर्वकर्मसु । शिवमिच्छन्मनुष्याणां तस्मादेवः शिवः स्मृतः ॥ 131.

⁵ सूर्योचन्द्रमसौलोक्ये प्रकाशन्ते रुचश्च याः । ताः केशसंज्ञितास्त्र्यक्षे व्योमकेशस्ततः स्मृतः ॥ 134.

⁶ कपिश्रेष्ठ इति प्रोक्तो धर्मश्च वृष उच्यते । स देवदेवो भगवान् कीर्त्यतेऽतो वृषाकपिः ॥ 136.

⁷ ब्रह्माणमिन्द्रं वरुणं यमं धनदमेव च । निगृह्य हरते यस्मात्तस्माद्गर इति स्मृतः ॥ 137; यन्निर्दहति च्छीक्ष्णो यदुग्रो यत् प्रतापवान् । मांसशीणितमज्जादो यत्ततो रुद्रे उच्यत 7 : 201 : 144.

⁸ एकादशतनुः स्थाणुर्धनुषा परितोषितः, महेश्वरेण असमूहैना 3 : 49 : 4, 8.

Then in 12: 284-12 he has three locks of matted hair, three heads, with a three pointed pike. In the same chapter he is characterised as fond of dance-offerings (Nātyopahāralubdha) and the patron of music and singing (Gitavādītrapālīn) with ten hands (Daśavāhu), with hands in his head (kapālahasta); fond of ashes of the burning pyre (Citibhasmapriya), sword-tongued (Khaḍga-jihva) with a deformed face (vikṛtavaktra), with an antelope skin, for his upper garment (kṛṣṇājinottariya), with a stout but decayed body and with matted hair (Sthūlajīrnajātila), with locks shining like a blazing sun and fire (diptasūryāgnijātila). Then suddenly in v. 56 we are reminded that this Śiva was once a storm-god, for he is still called masses of clouds, lightning and the rumbling of clouds.¹ In 12-323-20 he is said to be wearing a garland of karnikāra blossoms. In 13: 17: 32 ff. Upamanyu describes his vision of Śiva to Kṛṣṇa and says that he saw him skin-clad, with matted and tufted hair, deer-eyed and destroyer of all creatures.² Then again concealed in the guise of a lunatic (unmattaveṣapracchanna), the preserver of all creatures (Śarvalokaprajāpati), bull-shaped (vṛṣarūpa), large-jawed (mahāhanu). It is also hinted that his actual form dwarfs and defies description.³ Side by side with his description as an attractive and impressive god runs another strain which characterises him as fox-shaped and fox-and-lion-shaped, and even banyan tree-shaped.⁴ In v. 58 in the same chapter are arrayed the usual epithets—sikhin, mundin, jātila—and then are added: burning and born of a mūrti, one who walks on his head, insincere, bird and wing-shaped, a lunatic, (jvālin, mūrtija, mūrdhvaga, khalin, pakṣin, pakṣarūpa, unmāda). He has abnormal size and a deformed shape described in a vivid and macabre fashion in 13: 17: 86-89, where most of his limbs are mentioned as disproportionately

¹ स्वमेव मेघसङ्घश्च विद्यत् स्तनितपर्जितः 7 : 201 : 56.

² जटी चर्मी शिखराडी च सर्वाङ्गः सर्वभावनः । हरश्च हरिणाक्षश्च सर्वमूतहरः प्रभुः ॥

³ न रूपं शक्यते तस्य संस्थानं वा कदाचन । निर्दिष्टं प्राणिभिः कैश्चित् प्राकृतैर्मांस-
लोचनैः । 14 : 8 : 8, 9.

⁴ शृगालरूपः, सिंहशार्दूलरूपः, न्यग्रोधरूपः 13 : 17 : 46.

large. He lies in ashes, preserves the world with ashes, is a Gandharva, Aditi, and Garuḍa. He is extremely irate and a charmer in v. 100; also Ahirvudhnya, Skanda and Kuvera. He is very fond of song and dance and is worshipped by Apsarases.¹ The names Hara, Mr̥ḍa, Śiva and Śaṅkara are frequently used in the later Sūtra literature, presumably because "the great and red god must be treated as auspicious in order to make him so in point of fact" (Keith: The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads). He is called ithyphallic.² He is fair, dark and black,³ bull-shaped with a black tail, with sweet brown eyes.⁴ His pināka bow is described in great detail in 13 : 14 : 256-7, śūla in 265-270, and paraśu in 271-4. In answer to Pārvatī's question he explains the functions of his four faces :- with the eastern one he performs Indra's task, with the northern he enjoys Uma's company, the western face is auspicious to all creatures and with the southern, malignant face he destroys all creation.⁵ Indra had hurled his thunderbolt which scalded his neck and thenceforth he was called Śrikanṭha.

This description of Śiva does not correspond to that of the Vedic Rudra. What was drawn merely as a sketch has now become fuller with new dimensions and details of attire, weapons, hair, face, head, eyes, ornaments. The old picture has disappeared. He is no longer one figure but many figures pressed together; and, what is stranger still, he is at the same time the negation of these new epithets and attributes.

Śiva was a hunter and a hero in the RV., YV., and AV. He still is that; but his hunting fame is now established, referred to as a thing of the past. In the Kirāta-Arjuna episode Arjuna said that none other can bear the shower of his shafts except the

¹ नृत्याप्रियो नित्यनर्त । नर्तकः सर्वलालसः । महानीतो महानृत्यो ह्यम्बरी गणसेवितः ॥ 13 : 14 : 117.

² महशिफः 13 : 14 : 161. ³ गौरः श्यामस्तथा रुष्णः 13 : 14 : 162.

⁴ वृषरूपधरः, रुष्णपुच्छः मधुपिङ्गललोचनः 13 : 14 : 240

⁵ पूर्वेण वदनेनाहमिन्द्रः वमनुशास्मि ह । उत्तरेण त्वया सार्धं रमाम्यहमनिन्दिते । पश्चिमं मे मुञ्चं सौम्यं सर्वप्राणिसुखावहम् । दक्षिणं भीमसंकाशं रौद्रं प्रहरति प्रजाः ॥ 13 : 141 : 5, 6.

bearer of the Pināka-bow.¹ Again he is referred to as the equal of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna.² Sātyaki's fierce fighting and slaughter are compared to the slaughter of the animals by Śiva.³ "The divinity to whom this class of prayers (Mrgārasūktāni) is addressed most frequently is Rudra-Śiva (Agni) under the large variety of names of embodiments (mūrti) customary with that divinity". (Bloomfield: *The Atharvaveda and the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*) When did Śiva slay animals so ruthlessly? We have no account. From the preserver and lord of cattle to this merciless slaughterer of cattle is a far cry. Of course prayers have been offered to him as early as the RV. for the protection of cattle and he was ever an angry god, but no such slaughter was ever mentioned. And here too, this is mentioned in similes as if it was already part of established tradition. Brahman paid compliment to Śiva's marksmanship and archery in 8:33:42, where with reference to the three cities he says that none but Śhānu can pierce them with one shot.⁴ The gods are ordered to placate this matchless archer.⁵ Aśvatthāman says that he will behave towards the Pāñcālas as the Pinākapaṇi did towards the animals.⁶ Śiva is referred to as a general, as hunter and archer, the killer of elephants and demons⁷

As in the ŚV. and AV., he still is the lord of the animal and vegetable world. Frequent mentions in descriptive phrases bear testimony to this. He is the lord of clouds, creatures, trees, cows,

¹ 13 : 14 : 256-7.

² विश्वसृग् यत्र गोविन्द पृतनानीस्तथ जुनः । तत्र कस्य बलं कामेदन्यत्र त्र्यम्बकात् प्रभोः 7 : 32 : 11.

³ जघानेशः पशूनिव 7 : 111 : 9. ⁴ न च स्थाणुमृते भेत्तुमिच्छेष्णुणापरः 8:33:42.

⁵ स्थाणुमशानं जिष्णुमक्लिष्टकारिणाम् । योद्धारम् । 8:33; 42, रुद्रस्येव हि क्रुद्धस्य निधनस्तान् पशूनिव 7 : 19 : 7.

⁶ पाञ्चालेषु चरिष्यामि सूदयन्निव संयुगे । पिनाकपाणिः संक्रुद्धः स्वयं रुद्रः पशुष्विव ॥ 10 : 3 : 29.

⁷ मृगव्याध, धन्विन् सेनानी, पिनाकी, गजहा, दैत्यहा 13 : 17 : 48.

forests and waters.¹ As Paśupati he protects animals and is happy with them as their overlord.² He is identified with certain trees and is also a cowherd clad in cowhide.³ He can assume various forms especially those of foresters, Śavaras, Yakṣas, rakṣas, snakes, daityas and dānavas and hole-dwellers. Then follows a list of the creatures whose shape Śiva can assume 13 : 14 : 14-21. In 13 : 14 : 321-22 he is the lion of the animals and of the village animals he is the bull.

Śiva's habitation is more localised and more distinctly mentioned, for unlike other gods, he is a dweller of the north, and has his home down on this earth instead of in heaven. Many and varied are the references to his habitat, but sifting them we come to certain notions, e. g., "While the other gods abide in the east, the place of the rising sun," his place is in the Himālaya, in the north, in Muñjavat, Muñjabata, or Muñjapṛstha.⁴ When Umā asks him why he has chosen the cremation ground as one of his habitats he replies that no place is more sanctified.⁵ As a natural corollary follow his associations with death and decay. We have a vivid description of this sinister place.⁶ Various spots in the northern region and a few elsewhere have been specially mentioned as pilgrimages to the Śaiva devotee, and naturally these are spots where he dwells (3 : 82-127). His association with and

¹ पर्जन्यपति, भूतपति, वृक्षपति, गवां पति 7 : 201 : 34, वनस्पतीनां पति, 35 अपां पति 34.

² सर्वथा यत् पशून् पति तैश्च यद्रमते पुनः । तेषामधिपतिर्यच्च तस्मात् पशुपतिः स्मृतः ॥ 7 : 201 : 123, पशूनां पति 7 : 78 : 53.

³ गोपालिर्गोपतिग्रामो गोचर्मवसनो हरिः 13 : 17 : 115, गोवृषेश्वरः 13 : 17 : 140.

⁴ मुञ्जपृष्ठ इति प्रोक्तः स देशो रुद्रसेवितः 3 : 82 : 103, 105, 12:122:4, श्मशानगृहक्षेपकः 12 : 341 : 20.

⁵ न च मेधतरः किञ्चित् श्मशानादिह लक्ष्यते 13 : 141.

⁶ केशस्थिकलिले भूमि कपालवटसंकुले । गृध्रगोमायुवहुले चिताग्निशतसंकुले । अशुचौ मांसकलिले वसाशोणितकर्दमे । विक्रीर्णान्त्रास्थिनिचये शिवानादविनादिते ॥ 13 : 141 : 14. श्मशानवासी भगवान् 13 : 17 : 33, एष चैव श्मनानेषु देवो वसति निव्यशः 7:201: 117.

overlordship of nature are indicated by phrases which make him dwell beneath trees, on uneven places, mountain peaks, in caves and in water and also among grass and herbs.¹ In KYV (T. S.) 4 : 5 : 1 : 3 we are told that he haunts lonely forests and is seen by cowherds and maidens drawing water. He is also supposed to practise penance in water, 7 : 78 58, 10 : 17 : 11.

One of Śiva's functions in the epic is to give weapons and gifts to supplicants. After Arjuna had taken the vow to kill Jayadratha on the morrow, he, at Kṛṣṇa's advice praised Śiva for favour so that he might fulfil the vow. Śiva gave him the Pāśupata weapon 7 : 78 : 47-79 : 24. The Brahmaśiras weapon is given to Arjuna and Śiva teaches him the mystery and use of it (3 : 40), reference to it is again found in 3 : 91 : 11. The story of Pāśupatāstra is repeated in 3 : 168 : 18 : 56. There is a strange tale of Duryodhana. When he was dejected over his discomfiture before the Gandharvas and the consequent loss of prestige before the Pāṇḍavas, the demons offer a sacrifice, summon Duryodhana and tell him that he is a gift to them from Śiva after the latter had been propitiated by their penance.² Again when the Kāśī princess was practising penance, Śiva appeared and granted her her desire: she would be born as king Drupada's son and kill Bhīṣma to avenge herself (4 : 189). Drupada's queen was childless and had prayed to Śiva who had blessed her with a child who would be born as a daughter but would later become a son.³ Kṛṣṇa had reassured Arjuna that the gods would be gracious to him since he had challenged no less a god than the terrible Śiva who is normally invisible to the mortal eye.⁴ The Śakti weapon which Yudhiṣṭhira hurled at Śalya was supposed to have been fashioned by

¹ वनस्पतीनां मूलेषु, शृङ्गेषु विषमेषु च । गुहासु ... । जलेशयः 13 : 17 : 99ff
दर्भचारी 13 : 17 : 108.

² पुरा त्वं तपसास्माभिलिख्यो राजन् महेश्वरात् 3 : 251 : 16.

³ इत्युक्तो देवदेवेन स्त्रीपुमांस्ते भविष्यति । ... कन्या भूत्वा पुमान् सावी इति चोक्तास्मि
शंभुना 5 : 190 : 5, 7.

⁴ भीममुग्रं महादेवं त्र्यक्षं शर्वं कपर्दिनम् । न शक्ता द्रष्टुमशानं किं पुनर्योधितुं प्रभुम् ॥
त्वया साक्षान्महादेवः सर्वभूतशिवः शिवः । युद्धेनाराधितः स्थाणुर्देवाश्च वरदास्तव ॥ 8 : 86 :
12, 13.

Tvaṣṭṛ on Śiva's behalf.¹ In order to encourage Yudhiṣṭhira Kṛṣṇa tells him that when propitiated Śiva will grant even immortality and such weapons as would slay even Indra.² Paraśurāma had gained his famous weapon by pleasing Śiva at Mountain Gandhamādana.³ Again when there was chaos and anarchy in the world Brahman approached Śiva and asked for Daṇḍa (punishment), who created it through meditation.⁴ When the sword was created out of sacrificial fire Brahman gave it to Śiva who first danced with joy, was transfigured and became terrible and aweinspiring. His host sang and danced and put up a macabre show. Later Śiva handed it over to Viṣṇu.⁵

In the vulture-and-jackal episode, Śiva, at Pārvatī's request took pity on the dead child and revived it 12:153:110-115. Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana desiring a worthy son pleased Śiva with penance and received Suka. Śiva himself performed the initiation ceremony for the new born 12:323:11-29; 324:18-19. Again when Śiva finds the father grieved at his son's early liberation and consequent detachment, he consoles the father saying that such was the son the latter had desired, and promised undying fame to him.⁶ Whether hyperbolically or realistically, Śiśupāla, the king of Chedi has been called Śiva's incarnation.⁷ Śiva it was who had blessed the Nivāta-kavacas.⁸ In 13:14:73ff there is a list

¹ ईशानहेतोः प्रतिनिर्मितां तां त्वष्टा रिपूणामसुदेहमक्ष्याम् 9 : 17 : 44.

² प्रसन्नो हि महादेवो दद्यादमरतामपि वीर्यं च गिरिशो दद्याद् येनेन्द्रमपि शातयेत् 10 : 17 : 7.

³ तौषयित्वा महादेवं पर्वते गन्धमादने । अस्त्राणि वरयामास परशुं चातितेजसम् ॥ 12 : 49 : 33.

⁴ आत्मानमात्मना दण्डं ससृजे देवसत्तमः 12 : 122 : 21-35.

⁵ ततः स भगवान् रुद्रो दानवक्षतजोक्षितम् । अस्ति धर्मस्य गोप्तारं ददौ सत्कृत्य त्रिष्णवे 12 : 166 : 65.

⁶ यावत् स्थास्यन्ति गिरयो यावत् स्थास्यन्ति सागराः । तावत् तवाक्षया कीर्तिः सपुत्रस्य भविष्यति ॥ 12 : 324 : 37.

⁷ चेदिराजकुले जातस्त्र्यक्ष एव चतुर्भुजः 2 : 43 : 1.

⁸ यक्षेन्द्रवलरक्षःसु निवातकवचेषु च । वरदानावघाताय ब्रूहि कोऽन्यो महेश्वरात् ॥ 13 : 14 : 215.

of gifts and boons bestowed by Śiva to different people at different times. Thus we hear of Hiranyakaśipu and his son Mandara, of Viṣṇu and his Sudarāśanacakra, the dæmon Śatamukha the Svāyambhuva Kratu and the gift of a thousand sons, of Veṅavyāsa who won fame, the Bālakhilyas, Atri's wife who won sons in the absence of her husband, of Śākalya and Sāvārpi who became authors, of Indra's recovery of the heavenly kingdom, and Nārada gaining eternal fame and power. Upamanyu tells his own tale: he was Vyāghrapāda, a sage's son in the Kṛtayuga. He had asked his mother for pāyasa and had received only rice-paste-gruel as they were too poor to afford the real thing. When he was grieved, his mother told him to beg Śiva for it and she herself introduced the god to him by singing a hymn to him. Upon this he practised penance for 3000 years. Śiva appeared in Indra's guise but the supplicant refused to receive anything from anybody except Śiva and surrendered himself utterly to the god who then had to shake off the disguise and offer him any boon he chose: he chose unflinching devotion to Śiva. Kṛṣṇa also bears testimony to Śiva's gift: he himself got sons through Rukmīṇī by pleasing Śiva (13 : 15 : 4). Then Jāmbavati had also asked for sons. Kṛṣṇa went to Śiva again where Upamanyu the devotee told him to practise penance. Later Umā granted a son to him 13 : 15 : 4. We have a second list of gifts distributed to different sages by Śiva. It records the episodes of Vyāsa, Vālmiki, Jāmadagnya, Viśvāmitra, Asita-Devala, Gṛtsamada, Vāsudeva, Jaigīṣavya, Garga, (who received the 64 arts), Parāśara, Anīmaṇḍavya and Gālava. Pleased, Śiva may give away the kingship of heaven itself.¹

Of Śiva's exploits the ones most frequently referred to are his burning of the three cities, and his destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice. Of Tripuradahana there are actually three full accounts and many stray references strewn in the whole of the epic. The first account is found in 7:201:64-82. It says that three demon-brothers Kamalākṣa, Tārakākṣa, and Vidyuumālin built three cities of gold, silver and iron respectively, and had become virtually invincible and

¹ त्रैलोक्यस्याधिपत्यं वा तुष्टो रुद्रो प्रयच्छति । मनसापि शिवं तात ये प्रपयन्ति मानवाः 13 : 18 : 65.

invulnerable, through Brahman's blessing. Naturally they started tormenting gods and men, so that the gods in dire distress approached Śiva for their destruction. Śiva agreed but said that he required physical and metaphysical equipment for the task. These secured, he waited for 1000 years till the cities revolving in mid-air fell in one line, and then with one single arrow he pierced them. When the cities burned, Pārvatī came to see with a child in her arms. Indra grew jealous of the feat, and immediately his arms were paralysed. The gods approached Brahman who revealed that the child was none other than the mighty god Śiva. They bowed to him and he restored strength to the paralysed limb. In 3:41:39 we hear of the weapon with which he burnt the cities.¹ In 3:173 is the account of Arjuna destroying Hiranyapura through Śiva's blessing. Another verse in 13:14:262 says that Śiva destroyed the cities with a single arrow and with complete ease. The second version of Tripuradahana is found in 8:33:34. Here the demon kings of the cities are three sons of Tāraka blessed with invincibility. Here, prior to Śiva's taking charge of the affair, the gods made a futile attempt. They, then approached Śiva who said that they should make a joint effort. At this the gods replied that the demons were twice as powerful as all of them taken together. Then Śiva borrows half of their total strength. A unique chariot is fashioned and equipped with material and abstract accessories. This being complete, he asks them for a charioteer who was superior to him, they appointed Brahman. While the chariot starts to move, Śiva's bull roars, and the chariot sinks from the commotion. Then Viṣṇu, in the shape of another bull rescues it. Now stringing his bow Śiva concentrates, awaiting the moment when the cities will fall in a line. When this happens, he shoots the arrow. Terrific tumult and destruction follow. Yet another episode tells us of one Bhīma, ruler of the demons who ignored Dharma and thus created havoc. The demons under him had become bold and iniquitous, so in order to punish them, Śiva, at the gods' request destroyed them with one arrow.²

¹ महात्मना शंकरेण त्रिपुरं निहतं यदा । तदैतदस्त्रं निर्मुक्तं येन दग्धा महासुराः 3 : 41 : 39.

² तेषां स्वधिपतिस्त्वस्तीद्धीमो भीमपराक्रमः । देवतानां भयकरं स हनः शूलपाणिना 12 : 294 : 8-18.

The next important feat of Śiva is his destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice. Of this too, we have three distinct accounts, the first is in 7 : 201 : 52-62, where it is briefly narrated as to how Dakṣa had not at first set apart a share for Śiva in his sacrifice, and so the god destroyed it in his wrath. Dakṣa was then convinced of his divinity. A fuller account is found in 10 : 18, where it says that when Śiva was angry with Brahman for transferring the commission to create from him to another, he retired to Muñjavat. Then the gods (not Dakṣa) offered a sacrifice leaving Śiva out of their account because they were ignorant of his true stature. So Śiva made a bow out of Lokayajña and Nryajña and Vasaṭkāra became the bow-string. Armed with this, Śiva came to the venue of the sacrifice and in a consuming indignation shot the sacrifice in the heart. It fled in the shape of a deer, Śiva followed it, the earth shook, the gods fainted and in the chaos that resulted, Śiva cast out Bhaga's eyes, lopped off Savitr's arms knocked out Pūsan's teeth and besieged the gods. Then words uttered by the immortals caused the string to fall off the bow. The gods propitiated him and he cast his anger in a pool where it remains as fire and dries up the water. At last Śiva restored the lost limbs to Bhaga, Pūsan and Savitr, as well as the sacrifice to Dakṣa and what is more, the gods recognised his right to the sacrificial offering.¹ The longest account of this episode is found in 12 : 282-3. Here Pārvatī saw the procession of the gods moving towards Dakṣa's sacrifice. Śive explained the situation to her: "Gods have fore-ordained that I should have no share in the sacrifice".² Then, observing her mortification, he said, "Wait", and mustering his host rushed towards the sacrifice and utterly destroyed it. The sacrifice assumed the shape of a deer and fled. Then, as Śiva pursued it his sweat fell on the ground and out of it sprang a dwarf whose march shook the earth. It was Jvara. Brahman requested Śiva to divide it up as the earth could not bear it whole. He did so, and we have various maladies of men, demons and animals. Shaking from fever Vṛtra yawned and Indra hurled his thunderbolt.

¹ सर्वाणि च हवींष्यस्य देवभागमकल्पयत् ॥ 10 : 18 : 23.

² सुरैरेव महाभागे पूर्वमेतदनुष्ठितम् । यज्ञेषु सर्वेषु मम भाग न उपकल्पितः ॥ न मे सुरा प्रयच्छन्ति भागं यज्ञस्य धर्मतः ॥ 10 : 18 : 26-27.

In chap. 83 we have a slight variation of the same theme. This episode adds that Dadhica uttered words of caution and admonition when Dakṣa proposed leaving Śiva out of the account, saying that then it would neither be righteous nor a sacrifice worth the name.¹ He then asked them to watch out for Śiva's approach, and cursed and prophesied destruction.² Then Śiva created a demon Virabhadra and a demoness Bhadrakālī who did their master's bidding and completely smashed the sacrifice. The gods asked in terror and consternation: "Who are you"? The demon replied that he was Virabhadra and she was Bhadrakālī, born of Śiva's and Umā's wrath. Then Dakṣa, together with the gods worshipped Śiva, who suddenly rose from the fire and redressed Dakṣa's loss. Still another variant says that Śiva destroyed Dakṣa's sacrifice at Dadhici's request and sent his burning trident which consumed everything 12 : 342 : 108ff. Reference to this is found again in 12 : 342 : 25 where the story is given in a nutshell and the only addition is that Śiva came by his third eye as a consequence of Dakṣa's wrath.³ Another reference is made in 13 : 1 : 32 which says that Indra became supreme by slaying Vṛtra and Śiva by slaying the sacrifice.⁴

Śiva is further credited with another murder—that of Andhaka. Brief, almost passing references to this feat are made in 2 : 284 : 1 : 11 and 7 : 200 : 71. Mention should also be made of what was perhaps already an extinct custom, referred to only once in the epic, viz., human sacrifices to Śiva. When Jarāsandha wishes to offer human sacrifices to Śiva in order to gain his favour, Kṛṣṇa and his party question him: How can you, a king yourself, offer innocent kings to Śamkara?⁵

1 नायं यज्ञो न वा धर्मो यत्र रुद्रो न इज्यते ।

2 यथाहं शंकरादूर्ध्वं नायं पश्यामि दैवतम् । तथा दक्षस्य विपलो यज्ञोऽयं न भविष्यति ॥

3 क्रतुवधप्राप्तमन्युना च दक्षेण भूयस्तपसा चात्मानं संयोज्य नेत्राकृतिरन्या ललाटे रुद्रस्योत्पादिता ।

4 वृत्रं हत्वा देवराट् श्रेष्ठभावे, यज्ञं हत्वा भागमवाप चैव शूली देवः ॥

5 राजा राज्ञः कथं साधून् हिंस्यान्नृपतिसत्तमः । तद्राज्ञः सन्निगूह्य त्वं रुद्रायोपजिहीर्षसि ॥ स कथं मानुषैर्देवं यमुमिच्छसि शंकरम् (2 : 22 : 7-9).

Among his more peaceful enterprises may be mentioned his holding of the river Gangas as it fell from the sky. When Bhag-ratha decides to usher it to the earth, the river asks him to beg Śiva to hold her as none other was capable of the task 3:108:23-24. Śiva agrees and does so 3:109:7,9. He is mentioned as Jāhnavīdhṛk in 13:17:137.

Mañkanaka the sage of old was wounded with the blade of a kuśa grass and vegetable-juice came out of the wound; he danced with joy. This provoked the gods who appealed to Śiva to do something to stop his exultation. Śiva, in compliance with their request went before Mañkanaka and pricked his own finger from which dropped ashes. This put Mañkanaka out, who in due humility submitted to and praised him 3:83. This same episode is repeated in 9:38:39. Mañkanaka danced at the sight of the Śākarasa and all the earth shook at the dance. Then the gods and sages approached Śiva who asked him the reason of this jubilation. Mañkanaka told him; Śiva showed him ashes from his own wound and the sage worshipped him 9:38:38:53.

In the epic Śiva is quite frequently styled as the Supreme Being. Passages like 7:200:62:64, 66-68, 73-78 where Nārāyaṇa's vision of him as the highest being is vividly described strike a somewhat new note. Even in the YV Rudra had been occasionally called the highest, but here Nārāyaṇa, the god of a parallel stature in the epic pantheon sees him as the creator, preserver and destroyer, as the final principle; beyond whom there is nothing and in whom everything consists and all contradictory principles converge. As the apocalyptic vision continues in the next chapter we have a further revelation of Śiva as the highest god 7:201:9, 10, 13-18, 121-22. Earlier in 7:78:44-47 when Arjuna sees a vision of Śiva he sees the god as the unborn creator of the elements as well as the destroyer. In the Kirāta episode these attributes are emphasised. Kṛṣṇa describes Śiva to Yudhiṣṭhira as the Beginning, Middle and End, in and through whose movement the world moves.¹ He is the Cause, Effect, Action and Instrument; the

¹ आदिरेष हि भूतानां मध्यमन्तश्च भारत । विचिष्टने जगच्चेदं सर्वमस्यैव चिष्टया 10 : 17 : 9 ; प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षोभयित्वा स्वतेजसा । ब्रह्माणमसृजत्समाद्देवदेवः प्रजापतिः ॥ 13 : 14 : 6.

existent and the non-existent are but his Being and Non-being.¹ He is the eater of the food and the food himself, its giver and consumer, its creator, cook and consumer 12 : 284 : 50. In the same vein it runs in passages like 12 : 284 : 51-52, 66-67, 92-95. In verse 127 it says that Śiva is the foremost of the gods.² After the creation is destroyed with fire, Śiva pervades it 12 : 312 : 13-14. Upamanyu tells Kṛṣṇa that Śiva is the supreme god 13 : 17 : 25-29. Śiva bore the vedas with the subsidiary arts and sciences of the past, present and future.³ Śiva's supremacy in all spheres, his over-lordship of the material and spiritual world, of the temporal and the eternal, of the mortal and the immortal — these have been emphasised in 13 : 14 : 315-327 ; 407-423 ; 13 : 17 : 140 147 ; & 13 : 18 : 71-77.

The god of a parallel stature to Śiva's in the epic is Nārāyaṇa, and Śiva's relationship with him is rather ambiguous. "Historically the most important facts are his identity with Viṣṇu, but at the same time the absence of trinitarian interpretation except in one late passage, 3 : 272 : 47". (E. W. Hopkins : Epic mythology, pp. 223-224). Śiva's relationship with Viṣṇu becomes intelligible only if we bear in mind that the Śaiva and the Vaiṣṇava sects were vying with each other in proclaiming that the god of each sect was supreme. There are passages stating that the two gods are fundamentally one.⁴ This essential unity is stated in 12 : 341 : 22-27, where it says that when Nārāyaṇa is worshipped, Rudra is worshipped in him, for the twain are but one.⁵ When Nara and Nārāyaṇa challenge Śiva, he hurls his trident which hits Nārāyaṇa's chest and burning the hair there returns to Śiva. Śiva then rushes towards the two sages, Nārāyaṇa takes him by the throat

¹ सर्वा वै देवता ह्यस्मिन् गावो गोष्ठ इवास्ते । ... भगवान् कारणं कार्यं क्रिया कारणमेव च । असतश्च सतश्चैव तथैव प्रभवाम्ययौ 12 : 284 : 79, 81.

² यथा सर्वेषु देवेषु वरिष्ठो भगवाञ्छिवः

³ वेदांश्च सोपनिषदो विद्याः सावित्र्यथापि च । भूतं भव्यं भविष्यं च दधार भगवाञ्छिवः । 13 : 85 : 92.

⁴ शिवाय विष्णुरूपाय विष्णवे शिवरूपिणे 3 : 39 : 76 ; 13 : 14 : 18.

⁵ नारायणत्मको ज्ञेयः पाण्डवेय युगे युगे । तस्मिन् हि पूज्यमाने वै देवदेवे महेश्वरे । संपूजितो भवेत् पार्थ देवो नारायणः प्रभुः ॥

14 [Annals, B. O. R. I.]

which becomes dark at the touch.¹ There was a fight between Rudra and Nārāyaṇa; all nature suffered and Brahman, together with the gods, came and requested Rudra to make peace. They did so. Rudra praised Nārāyaṇa, who said: He who knows thee knows me, he who follows thee follows me.² At the second stage of creation Brahman got Dharma with Nārāyaṇa as its essence and gave it to Śiva, who in his turn, handed it over to the Bāla-khilyas and disappeared.³

Śiva's associates, as they were introduced in the SYV and AV, are still essentially the same. They have only gained in details and have become increasingly repugnant and even obnoxious. They are dwarfish, with matted locks, bald-pated, short-necked, pot-bellied, gigantic in size, fiercely energetic, big-eared with deformed faces and feet, outlandishly dressed—by such is Śiva worshipped.⁴ This description goes on in the same vein through verses 19-21 and 48. In 7 : 78 : 40 they are described as bright, thousand-eyed and with deformed limbs. Two of his followers are described as grey-eyed and red-and-blue, when they pick up the snake-weapon from the lake. In 3 : 173 : 46-55 Arjuna sees hideous figures and he hurls a missile at the three-eyed one. These associates are animals, snakes, demons, nymphs and men also. In 3 : 230 : 28, 34-43, after Skanda's coronation, Śiva left in kingly splendour followed by his terrible retinue, as did Pārvatī followed by hers. In 3 : 271 when Jayadratha propitiates Śiva he says, that

¹ वेगेन महता पार्थे पतन्नारायणो गसि ॥ ततस्तत्तेजसाविष्टः केशा नारायणस्य ह ।
बभूवुर्मुञ्जवर्णास्तु ततोऽहं मुञ्जकेशवान् ॥ ततः शूलं विनिर्धूतं हुंकारेण महात्मना ॥ जगाम
शंकरकरं नारायणसमाहृतम् । अथ रुद्र उपाधावत्तावृषी तपसाग्वितौ ॥ तत एनं समुद्रं
कण्ठे जग्राह पाणिना । नारायणः स विश्वात्मा तेनास्य शितिकण्ठता ॥

² यस्त्वा वेत्ति स मां वेत्ति यस्त्वामनु स मामनु 12 : 348 : 16-18.

³ यदासीच्चक्षुषं जन्म द्वितीयं ब्रह्मणो नृप । यदा पितामहेनैव सोमाद्धर्मः परिश्रुतः ।
नारायणत्मको राजन् रुद्राय प्रददौ च तम् । ततो योगस्थितो रुद्रः पुरा कृतयुगे नृप ॥ बाल-
खिल्यानुषीन् सर्वान् धर्ममेतदपाठयत् । अन्तर्दधे ततो भूयस्तस्य देवस्य मायया ॥

⁴ वामना जटिला मण्डा ह्रस्वश्रीवा महोदराः । महाकाया महोत्साहा महाकर्णास्तथापरे ।
आननौर्विकृतैः पादैः पार्थ वैशैश्च विकृतैः । ईदृशैः स महादेवः पूज्यमानो महेश्वरः ॥ 7 : 201 :
14-15.

Jayadratha cannot defeat the Pāṇḍavas, because they have Kṛṣṇa for an ally. So, except Arjuna the rest will be defeated. With this he retires with his associates who are dwarfish, fierce, hunchbacked, frightful to see and hear, awful with many weapons.¹ Once the goddess of learning saw Śiva surrounded by his followers—some with faces like tigers, lions, bears, cats, makaras, vṛṣadamśas, elephants, camels, owls, vultures, jackals, ravens, pigeons, deer, dogs, sheep, śalyakas, ichneumon, goats, and various other creatures 9 : 44 : 22-27. The description is continued in 9 : 45 : 76-111. These are typical descriptions of the retinue of deformed creatures and creatures from all species, with disproportionate limbs, who are shockingly dressed and who dwell in crematoria, who follow, guard and worship Śiva. In 9 : 46 : 1-58 this host reappears, but this time they have both pleasant and fierce features. In 10 : 7 : 16-49 this host is in action. They have human and animal faces, are either singing or dancing or perpetrating repugnant and gruesome rites—gulping blood and lumps of fat and feasting on flesh and entrails.² Some have come to resemble Śiva through worshipping him.³ In 14 : 8 : 1-32 the deformed followers are vividly described. Nandi, the only associate mentioned by name is described in 13 : 14 : 289 as one who holds the trident and looks like a second Śiva.⁴

Apart from these followers Śiva is also associated with some gods and sages to each of whom he stands in a distinct relationship. Of his two forms the malign monsterlike one is Viṣṇu, Agni, and the sun, while the benign one is water, the luminaries and the moon.⁵ He once sent the irate Durvāsas to deputise for him in Śvetaki's sacrifice (1 : 223). During Tripuradahana, Viṣṇu became Śiva's arrow together with Agni and Soma (8 : 34 : 48).

¹ वामनैर्विकटैः कृञ्जैरुग्रैः श्रवणदर्शनैः । रुतः पारिषदैर्घोरैर्नानाप्रहरणोद्यतैः ॥

² पातारोऽसृग्त्रसैघ्रानां मांसान्त्रकृतभोजनाः । ... पियन्तोऽसृग् वसाश्रान्ये कुट्टा
ब्रह्मद्विषां सदा 10 : 7 : 40, 44.

³ ये समाराध्य शूलङ्कं भवसादृश्यमागताः 10 : 7 : 145.

⁴ शूलं विष्टभ्य तिस्रन्तं द्वितीयमिव शंकरम् ।

⁵ घारा तु यातुधानस्य सोऽग्निर्विष्णुः स भस्करः । सौम्या तु पुनरेवास्य आपो-
ज्योतीषि चन्द्रमाः 7 : 201 : 108.

When Prajāpati was emitting the fire of his anger, Śiva tried to assuage his wrath. Out of the controlled fury was born the woman Death. Śiva's identity with the sun has been emphasised in 12 : 284 : 15. Again in 14 : 8 : 16 where Śiva is Bhāskara and Vaiśvānaramukha, his associations with fire and the sun are made clear. When Śiva practised penance, Agni encircled on all sides for 1000 years, standing on one foot, and plaguing the other gods.¹ Again when Śiva came to ask Brahman why he meditated in Vaijayanta, he is described as Brahman's son, born of the latter's forehead.² More important are Śiva's association with Yama and Kāla. When Arjuna asked Vyāsa who it was who went before him slaying the even enemy before Arjuna fought them, Vyāsa replied : He is the first Prajāpati...and went on describing Śiva in a way which virtually identified Śiva with Death 7:201.25. He is called Rudra, Śiva, Agni, Indra, Vāyu, and the Aśvins; the lightning, the cloud, the moon, Bhava, Īsāna, Varuṇa the sun, days, and nights, Kāla, Antaka and Mṛtyu,³ 7 : 201 : 102-104. He is specifically identified with Kāla, whose bow is the year and whose bowstring the night of death.⁴ Again Śiva is death, the sharp knife, karman, the destroyer of friends and foes alike as the apocalyptic cloud.⁵

¹ तपोऽतप्यत दुर्घर्षं तात नित्यं वृषध्वजः । पावकेन परिक्षिप्तं दीप्यता यस्य चाश्रमम् ॥ ... भगवन् पावकस्तत्र स्वयं तिष्ठति वीर्यवान् । सर्वान् विघ्नान् प्रशमयन् महादेवस्य धीमतः । दिग्धं वर्षसहस्रं हि पादेनैकेन तिष्ठतः । देवान् संतापयंस्तत्र महादेवो महाघ्नतः ॥ 12 : 327 : 21-25.

² ललाटप्रभवः पुत्रः शिव आगाद्वयदृच्छया 12 : 350 : 8, again अहं ब्रह्म आद्य ईशः प्रजानां तस्माज्जानसर्वं च मत्तः प्रसूतः 12 : 351 : 20.

³ स वै रुद्रः स च शिवः सोऽग्निः सर्वः स सर्ववित् । स चेन्द्रश्चैव वायुश्च सोऽश्विनो स विद्युतः ॥ स भवः स च पर्जन्यो महादेवः सनातन । स चन्द्रमाः स चेशानः स सूर्यो वरुणश्च सः ॥ 7 : 201 : 101 - 2.

⁴ कालो हि मगवान् रुद्रस्तस्य संवत्सरो धनुः । तस्माद्रौद्री कालरात्रिर्ज्या कृता धनुषोऽजरा 8 : 34 : 37.

⁵ मृत्युः क्षुरश्च कृत्यश्च पक्षोऽपक्षयकरः । मेघकालो महादंष्ट्रः संवर्तकबलाहकः ॥ 12 : 284 : 73 or कालः स एव कथितः क्रोधजेति मया तव 13 : 17 : 75, 76.

An account of Śiva's origin says that grandfather Brahman had created Śiva together with the seven sages.¹ In another episode Brahman praises Śiva and confesses that he is supreme (7 : 202 : 90). And strangely enough, another episode reverses the orders of creation, making Śiva the creator of Brahman from his right side, while from his left he created Viṣṇu.² This account goes on to state that during the final dissolution, Śiva will devour creation. Although he it is who created the universe, at the end he will draw in everything including memory.³

Many new epithets appear for the first time in the epic describing his appearance, functions and exploits. Thus he is the destroyer of Bhaga's eyes, Savitr's arms and Pūṣān's teeth. He is referred to as extremely violent in temper, fully armed, indomitable, a destroyer of those hostile to Brāhmaṇas, Umā's husband (18 : 33 : 52-58), the creator (12 : 283 : 59), the lord of the Yakṣas, all-hearing, all-pervading, with pointed ears, the lord of elephants (12-283), greedy of cooked meat and rice, fond of lutes and lyres, having fine raiments and garlands, quarrel-maker, a Pāñcāla 12-284 : 26ff, greedy of foetus-flesh like a jackal, with a thousand-pointed pike, preserver of children and their keeper, a toy to the youngsters, pleased with the six rites, engaged in the three activities, the subject and discourser of talks centring round Dharma, Kāma, Artha and Mokṣa, having a definite weakness for chess, lord of the Gaṇas, Kāma, fond of karṇikāra garlands, drinker of poison and fire, of nectar and death and of caramel. Pot-bellied, he has clouds in his hair, rivers in all joints, the four seas under his arms. He enters Rāhu's mouth and drinks soma at night; as Svarbhānu he swallows the Sun (12 : 284 : 26ff).

¹ (पितामहः) जनयामास भगवान् पुत्रानुत्तमतेजसः । मरीचिमृषिमत्रिं च पुलस्त्यं पुलहं क्रतुम् । वसिष्ठञ्जिरसौ चोभौ रुद्रं च प्रभुवीश्वरम् । 12 : 166 : 15-16.

² योऽसृजद्वक्षिणाद्दृग्घाद् ब्रह्म णं लोकसंभवम् । वामपार्श्वोत्तथा विष्णुं लोकरक्षार्थ-मीश्वरः 13 : 14 : 247.

³ स रुद्रः सहरन् कृत्स्नं जगत् स्थावरजङ्गमम् ॥ कालो भूत्वा महातेजाः संवर्तक इवानलः । युगान्ते सर्वभूतानि ग्रसन्निव व्यवस्थितः ॥ एष देवो महादिवो जगत् सृष्ट्वा चरा-चरम् । कल्पान्ते चैव सर्वेषां स्मृतिमाक्षिप्य तिष्ठति ॥

When Śiva was initiated for the destruction of the three cities, Uśanas cut off his locks which became snakes and tormented him so that the neck became blue. Also, in the previous creation Nārāyaṇa's grip around the neck had turned it blue.¹ He is credited with being the source of all knowledge. Through his blessings many sages became authors, he himself is closely associated with learning.

In the fourth month falls the festival of Brahman and also of Śiva.² He is said to have burnt Cupid to ashes.³

One of the new epic associations of Śiva is that with snakes. It was implied before in the Vedas but becomes more explicit now. In 7 : 78 : 10 his weapons emerge out of lake-water in the shape of snakes. In 1 ; 48 ; 22 we hear that Āstika grew up delighting the snakes like Śiva. He has snakes all over his body (vyāladhr̥k 3 : 163 : 44), is himself snake-formed (vyālarūpa 13 : 17 : 61).⁴ He is snake-hooded, huge in form, sharp of teeth, venomous, with the neck encircled with a bow-string but has however a human shape.⁵ Śiva is styled as garlanded with snakes (sarpaśaṅkhopāhāra 13 : 14 : 307) and also relieving the pain and poison of snake-bite (sarpārtināśa) (13 : 14 : 309).

The Vedic Rudra was not an ascetic himself but the epic Śiva is. He is quite frequently mentioned as engaged in deep meditation. When he is commissioned by Brahman to create, or before

¹ त्रिपुरवधार्थं दीक्षामुपगतस्य रुद्रस्य उशनसा जटाः शिरसि उत्क्रुच्य प्रयुक्तस्ततः प्रादुर्भूता भजगास्तैरस्य भुजगैः पीडयमानः कण्ठो नीलतामुपगतः । पूर्वं च मन्वन्तरे स्वायम्भुवे नारायणहस्तग्रहणत्निलकण्ठत्वमेव च । 12 : 342 : 26

² अथ मासे चतुर्थे तु ब्रह्मणः सुमहोत्सवः । ... समाजे ब्रह्मणो राजन् तथा पशुपतेरपि 4 : 13 : 14, 15.

³ काममभिवर्तमानमनङ्गत्वेन शममनयत् 12 : 190 : 10, कामाङ्गनाथ 13 : 17 : 52.

भूधरो नागमौञ्जी च नागकुण्डलकुण्डली । नागयज्ञोपवीती च नागचर्मोत्तरच्छदः ॥ इन्द्रायधसवर्णामं धनुस्तस्य महात्मनः । पिनाकमिति विख्यातमभवत् पन्नगो महान् ॥ 13 : 14 : 256-7.

⁵ सर्पशीर्षी महाकायस्तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्रा विषोरवणाः । ज्यावोऽस्तिमहाश्रीवः स्थितः पुरुषविग्रहः ॥

he destruction of the three cities, or again when Arjuna or Upamanyu sees him, he is sitting in detached philosophical isolation (8 : 33 : 46-7, 12 : 327 : 21-25). When millions of saints clamoured for a vision of Rudra, he meditates and created a million replicas of himself to gratify their desire of seeing him first (the Rudrakoti episode (3 : 82 : 119-123). Śiva is also the founder of a new cult with its philosophy known as Paśupata. He tells Dakṣa that he received it through meditation.¹

We are familiar with eleven Rudras. Even in the epics there are quite a few references to these. In all major hymns to Śiva they are mentioned. In 12 : 283 : 20 Dakṣa says: "We have seen many—actually eleven-Rudras, all holding pikes and with matted hair, but I do not know this Maheśvara."² Again, in 12 : 339 : 50 Śiva manifesting his glory to Nārada says: "Look at the eleven Rudras at my right side."³ Mention of the Rudras in the plural number is not rare (12 : 122 : 30) they are even said to be 1100 in number 13 : 14 : 390. Śiva is the lord of all the Rudras (12 : 122 : 34).

Pārvatī does not appear as Śiva's consort in the Vedas. Even in the Kenopaniṣad 25 and Muṇḍaka 1 : 2 : 4 passages she is just Umā Haimavati without any reference to Śiva as her husband. But in the epics Śiva is almost everywhere accompanied by Pārvatī.⁴ Not only does Pārvatī appear together with Śiva, she is in the epics an independent goddess in her own right. Mahādevī-sikhara is a pilgrimage sanctified by her presence (3 : 85 : 51). Yudhiṣṭhira sings a hymn to Durgā on his way to Virāṭanagara. In this hymn we have a series of epithets which do not tally with our notion of Umā as the daughter of Himālaya and the wife of

¹ मया पाशुपतं दक्ष शभमुःपादितं पुरा । तस्य चीर्णस्य तत् सम्यक् फलं भवति पुष्कलः ॥ 12 : 284 : 124.

² सन्ति नो वहवो रुद्राः शूलहस्ताः कपर्दिनः । एकादशस्थानगता नाहं वोद्मि महेश्वरम् ॥ ... रुद्रो रोषात्मको जातो दशान्यान् सोऽसृजत् स्वयम् । एकादशेति रुद्रास्तु विकार-पुरुषाः स्मृताः 12 : 34 : 37.

³ पश्यैकादश मे रुद्रान् दक्षिणं पार्श्वमास्थितान् ।

⁴ वरदं पृथुचार्द्ध्या पार्वत्या सहितं प्रभुम् 7 : 200 : 70, पार्वत्या सहितं देवम् 7 : 78 : 40.

Śiva, and in the hymns she is neither. And yet later, this Durgā becomes Umā. In the above hymn she is Yaśodā's daughter, Nārāyaṇa's beloved, born in the line of cowherd Nanda she makes the line increase. She is the destroyer of Kāṁsa. When she was hurled against a stone she flew up to heaven. She is sister to Vāsudeva, bearer of sword and shield, dark, a virgin, Brahmacārīṇī, resembling the rising sun, her face like the full moon, four-armed, four-faced, with bangles of peacock-tufts, with bracelets and armlets on, a sky-rover, dark like a dark portrait with a face like saṁkarṣaṇa's, with huge arms, high like Indra's banner, with a lotus and a bell, crowned with a marvellous head-dress, with a waistband of snakes, a flag of peacock-tufts. She protects heaven with her vow of chastity, is the killer of the buffalo-demon, has her permanent residence on a mountain top in the Vindhya ranges, is fond of wine, meat and animals, a saviour in extreme danger.¹ In the Bhīṣmaparvan when Kṛṣṇa asked Arjuna to propitiate Durgā, we have another account of her. Here all the previous epithets are repeated and some new ones are added. Among these are : dweller in Mandara, with human skulls on her body, Caṇḍī, Kātyāyanī, cruel, armed with a fierce pike, younger sister to the cowherd king, fond of buffalo's blood, with a yellow robe on, Kauśikī, (i. e. Śīva's wife) with the face of a ruddy goose (or cuckoo or wolf), fair, dark, wife of the fire god, greatest of the various vidyās, the great sleep of men (i. e. death), mother of Skanda, permanent resident of the nether world, the evening, etc. (6 : 23 : 3-16). When the hymn is over, she appears and blesses Arjuna with invincibility. One is reminded of Rāmacandra's prayer to her in a similar crisis with a similar result. She blessed Kṛṣṇa too with a son Śāmba in 13:15:39. In 13 : 146 : 33 Durgā delivers a sermon on the duties of virtuous women. She is associated with the phallic worshippers in 13 : 146 : & 14 : 43 : 15, where it says that the great goddess Pārvatī is the supreme deity of the followers of the phallic cult.² Pārvatī is dressed like Hara and has the same vow, has a gold pitcher filled with the water of all the holy places.³ She is said to have pressed

¹ 4 : 6 : 1-25.

² भगदेवानुयातानां माहेश्वरी महादेवी पार्वती हि सा ।

³ हरतुल्याम्बरधरा समानव्रतचारिणी । विभ्रति कलशं रौक्मं सर्वतीर्थजलोद्भवम् ॥
13 : 140 : 24.

Śiva's eyes in sport, when a third eye appeared. It burned the Himālaya, she was grieved for her father and so Śiva restored it. At one place she is related to Varuṇa and is called Gaurī.¹

Her union with Śiva is conceptually carried to an extreme in certain passages, where the couple is described as one figure, Śiva in the right half and Gaurī in the left.²

Skanda in the epic supplants the Maruts as Rudra's son. The longest account of his birth is given in 3 : 224 where we hear that Agni desired the wives of the seven sages. Svāhā was in love with Agni, so she assumed the forms of all the seven sages' wives except that of Arundhati and thus received the seed six times. Later she brought forth a son out of it. This was Skanda. Śiva also came to his aid...Svāhā claimed the son as her own. The seven virgins--daughters of the Tapas Fire--reared him. Rudra gave him a garland fashioned by Viśvakarman. The story says that Śiva had entered Agni's body and created Skanda.³ When Svāhā desired a son, Skanda united her with Agni. Brahman sent Skanda to Śiva and told him that Rudra as Agni and Svāhā as Umā had begotten and borne him for the benefit of the whole world.⁴ In 9 : 44 we have another variant of the same tale. It says that⁵ fire, unable to bear Rudra's seed, deposited it in the Ganges, who again laid it down on the bank. It was seen by the Kṛtikās among the bulrushes, and the child that came of the seed was brought up by them. Yet another account (13 : 85 : 55-82) says that the Ganges, unable to bear Agni's seed, fainted. Some water-spirit roared and the Ganges

1 वरुणस्य तथा गौरी 13 : 146 : 5.

2 नमः श्यामाय गौराय, अर्धपीतार्धपाण्डवे । नारीनःशरीराय स्त्रीपुंसाय नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ मणिभूषितमूर्धाय नमश्चन्द्रार्धभूषिणे । ... स्त्रीपुंसाय स्त्रीरूपधराय ... । 13 : 14 : 298, 302, 308, 313.

3 अनुप्रविश्य रुद्रेण वह्निं जातो ह्ययं शिशुः । तत्र जातो जनैः स्कन्दो रुद्रसूनुस्ततोऽभवत् ॥

4 रुद्रस्य वह्नेः स्वाहायाः षण्णां स्त्रीणां च भारत । जातः स्कन्दः सुरश्रेष्ठो रुद्रसूनुस्ततोऽभवत् ॥ 3 : 224 : 228-30.

5 तेजो महेश्वरं स्कन्नममौ प्रपतितं पुरा.

15 [Annals, B. O. R. I.]

shook with fear and refused to carry it. Agni asked her what it was like. She said it was like fire, like gold. Later the child was brought up by the Kṛttikās. The seed had fallen so the child was called Skanja. Brought up by the Kṛttikās he is Kārttikeya, they hid him in a cave and hence he is Guha. His origin however was disputed: some call him Maheśvara's son, others Agni's. Umā, Kṛttikās and Gangā all claimed to be his mothers. He is even called the son of Revatī.¹ The sun's rays bore part of the seed to the trees and the sea and some fell on land, so many kinds of Gaṇas were created. These have to be worshipped with arkapuspa (3: 231). Then follows a list of the different names of Skanda. He dwells in Rohitaka where the Mattamayūrakas (a tribe with the peacock as their totem?) worship him, and is secated on a peacock 13: 14: 278.

Śiva is not only worshipped in his proper person, he is worshipped as a phallic deity also, where the erect organ also represents him. A passage in 7: 200: 92-6 tells us of the merits of such worship: it should be taken to mean the prime principle of life. In the next chapter we hear that Śiva practises chastity and this pleases saints, gods and Gandharvas; so they worship his liṅga.² He is called Sthāṇu because his liṅga is fixed in the erect position.³ Liṅga worship has been suggested to have been an alternative for image-worship.⁴ Brahman once appointed Śiva to create the universe. Accepting the commission Śiva sank beneath the water to meditate and remained there for a long time. Impatient at this delay Brahman appointed another creator and had the work completed by him. Then at length Śiva came out of the water

¹ केचिन्महेश्वरसुतं केचित् सुतं विभावसोः । उमायाः रुक्तिकायाश्च गङ्गायाश्च वदन्त्युत ॥ 9 : 46 : 97, स्वाहेयो रेवतीसुतः 3 : 23 : 6.

² नित्येन ब्रह्मचर्येण लिङ्गमस्य यदा स्थितम् । महयत्येष लोकांश्च महेश्वर इति स्मृतिः ॥ ऋषयश्चैव देवाश्च गन्धर्वाप्सरसस्तथा । लिङ्गमस्यार्चयन्ति स्म तच्चाप्यूर्ध्वं समास्थितम् ॥ 7 : 20 : 124-5.

³ स्थितलिङ्गश्च यन्नित्यं तस्मात् स्थाणुरिति स्मृतः ॥ 7 : 201 : 133.

⁴ पूजयेद्विग्रहं यस्तु लिङ्गं चापि महात्मनः । लिङ्गं पूजायिता नित्यं महतीं श्रियमश्नुते ॥ 7 : 201 : 140.

and found the task already accomplished; so he planted his līṅga on the earth and was about to retire. At Brahma's enquiry he replied that his penance had been undertaken in order to provide food for the creatures before they were created. Then in great anger he retired to Mount Muñjavat (10 : 17 : 10-26). Another episode tells us how Uśanas became Śukra. Śiva displeased with Uśanas's misdeeds put him in his mouth and swallowed him. Uśanas suffered much in Śiva's stomach and was allowed to make his exit through the līṅga. He came out blazing white. Śiva, in anger tried to kill him but Pārvatī called him son and so he was spared (12 : 289 : 10-38). There are ithyphallic descriptions of Śiva, also as destroyer and lord of the līṅga; his līṅga is marked with yoni.¹ Śiva is unique in that it is only his līṅga that is worshipped by the gods. Men and women belong to him because they are either male or female — the līṅga symbolising both.²

The Vedas give a mouse to Śiva as his individual animal associate; in the epic it is the bull. During Tripuradahana we hear this bull roaring 8 : 34 : 95. Śiva put up a bull-sign in his flag. The bull is his close associate;³ it is described in all its strength and splendour in 13 : 14 : 240-43, and the description gradually tends to identify the god with his beast, till in verse 46 the equation is complete.

Analysing the purely epic features of Rudra in the Mahābhārata we find that they may not have all sprung from the same source. The RV. Rudra yields to the SYV. and even this later-vedic Rudra imbibes traits from diverse sources. His feat of burning the three cities, for example, resembles the exploits of Indra. The cities have been described as affluent and prosperous, the demon-rulers apparently invincible. Now Śiva, like Indra,—the warrior-leader

¹ मगहारी, लिङ्गाध्यक्ष, महालिङ्ग, प्रत्यक्षमिह देवेन्द्र पश्य लिङ्गं भगाङ्कितम्.

² 13 : 14 : 230-234.

³ ध्वजयष्टिं वियत् कृत्वा स्थापयामास गोवृषम् 8 : 34 : 41, कपर्दिनं वृषावतं वृषनाभं वृषध्वजम् । वृषदूर्ध्वं वृषपतिं वृषश्रद्धं वृषर्षभम् । वृषाङ्गं वृषभोदारं वृषभं वृषमेक्षणम् ॥ वृषायुधं वृषशरं वृषभूतं वृषेश्वरम् ॥ 7 : 201 : 39-40.

of the last horde of the I. E. people who entered India between 1700 and 1400 B. C. (cf. T. Burrow: *The Sanskrit Language: Chap. The Emergence of the Indo-Aryan*) must be shown to have aided the forefathers of the epic people before he gains admission into their pantheon. Thus he kills demons or gives weapons for their destruction. As Rudra his claim is not disputed, yet a Brāhmaṇa passage says that when the other gods attained heaven, Rudra was left behind (Śatapatha Br. 1:7:3:1). The destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, because he was left out, may be a record in the public memory of the struggle of the Vedic Aryans and some tribal people, some of whose gods were slowly being absorbed in the Aryan pantheon. One or more important organic component of the epic concept of Śiva must have been lent him by one or more tribal gods, so that at the first formative stage of the epic mythology, Śiva was extraneous to the pantheon.

"The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa tells us that Śarva was a name of Agni among the eastern people and that Bhava was used among the Bāhlikas which suggests that in Rudra there have combined the forms of different but kindred gods. A referenece to the cult of Rudra by the Vrātyas has been seen as the explanation of the curious Vrātya hymn of the Atharva-veda, and of the ceremonies which are used for the introduction into the Vedic religious life of the non-Brahmanical Aryans.... The question, however, does arise whether in the late Rudra we have not the syncretism of more than one deity and possibly the influence of aboriginal worship on the Aryan". (A. B. Keith: *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*). The Dakṣa Yajña episode, therefore, may be interpreted as the record of the Aryan reluctance to include Śiva among their gods, although as Rudra his vedic counterpart received his due share in the sacrifices. He is—as Barth calls him—not Brahmanic. Characterising the epic and post-epic conceptions of Śiva he says, "We can conceive nothing more lifelike than the figure that stands out from this piece of vedic realism, but nothing at the same time, less Brahmanic. (Barth: *Religions of India*). Of Śiva as the god of the Vrātya hymns, Bloomfield says, "There can be no doubt that he is in reality Brahma, but section 5 which introduces the Mūrtis of Rudra shows it to be under Śaivite influence". (Bloomfield: *The Atharva-Veda and the Gopatha*

Brāhmaṇa). The symbolic significance of the fact that the social outcastes, the vrātyas, found in Rudra a champion of their cause is obvious : as the dominion of the vedic Aryans was being consolidated, as they were bringing larger and larger tracts under their social and political influence, they were receiving fresh social and religious impact from the newcomers. They had to absorb not only other tribal people, but also new tribal gods and cultic forms of worship. This explains the entry of Rudra on the one hand and the Vrātyas on the other.

The new direction in the development of Śiva starts with the KYV but is more clearly in the AV, where the stamp of tribal gods on his personality is unmistakably impressed. It is quite in keeping with the AV that instead of gaining any new theological or philosophical feature, Rudra gains in the dark, magic and mysterious attributes here. And, Bloomfield, commenting on the trend of the Vedas in general, says, "In striking contrast with the vigorous though peculiar development of theosophic speculations in the AV is its barrenness on the side of purely mythological fancy. The RV. deals with the gods of nature as the theme of its poetry : the Atharvan cultivates the more homely genii...or substitutes demonology. The character of the leading divinities of the RV, Agni, Indra, Sūrya is scarcely developed at all, barring the undoubtedly popular advance of the fusion of Agni with Rudra in the direction which finally produced the god Śiva (op. cit. p. 90).

Besides changing his character, Rudra has grown in stature. He represents the syncretism of many gods and it is possible to analyse a few of the component divinities. The first thing that strikes us in the changed epic personality is that he is an established hero with particular exploits to his credit—like the destruction of the cities, and of Dakṣa's sacrifice, the killing of Andhaka, the holding of the Ganges, and the discomfiture of Maṅkanaka. Similarly, his habits and habitat, his divine, animal and superhuman associates are all well established. This may have been due to the fact that one of the gods of this new syncretism was a mountain deity of some northern tribes. Even now Śiva is generally worshipped in the mountain regions. "His uncanny and baleful traits

have, however, also been explained as starting from the conception of a deity of mountain and forest whence storm and disease attack man and beast. (Macdonell : article on Rudra in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*). And naturally his wife is Pārvatī daughter of the mountain. There may have been a couple of deified hunters at the back of this concept.

The epic Rudra, whose beginning was seen in the YV. for the first time, has certain habits and associations which are in direct contrast to the concept of a god in the vedic sense. Here we have a god clad in an animal hide (deer, elephant, or tiger), with matted hair, carrying a trident and seated on a bull. This also has aboriginal and tribal associations. It has nothing in common with the vedic Rudra, nor can it follow from anything recognisably Vedic-Aryan in religion. This image tallies perfectly with that of an ascetic, which Śiva is, for, " He is also par excellence the god of asceticism and austerities " (Barth : *Religions of India*). Dr. S. K. De in his article on ' Sects and Sectarian Worship in the Mahābhārata ', says that the epic philosophy was Sāṅkhya-yoga with Īśvara as the 25th principle, " This ", he says, " is a curious medley of two unrelated systems ". The Īśvara here is not the pure abstraction of the later system, but is so nebulous and ill-defined that the concept of Yogādhyakṣa Śiva fits this pattern. The Pāsupata system, says Dr. De, in the same article, emphasises " emotinal realisation more than mere knowledge ".

The emphasis on the ascetic side of his nature may have been due to various reasons : Śiva may have been the central deity of an ascetic brotherhood, or a regional god may have been endowed with this attribute in the process of being raised to a universal status. Also, as one section of Śaivism later branched off into Tantricism, asceticism may have been the natural, even indispensable counterpart of the orgiastic ritual of the other side. The orgiastic side of his nature is best symbolised by his image as Bhairava or Kālabhairava, ecstatically dancing his dithyrambic Tāṇḍava dance with his ghost companions. The lurid atmosphere of such a dance is perhaps reminiscent of some cultic rituals. In the epic, Śiva has been described as addicted to song, music and dance, and his dance has been interpreted as cosmic, but, who knows whether behind it there was not originally a tribal festival?

In the epic, Śiva is almost always mentioned with his host—and these are not the Maruts with whom he is associated in the Vedas, but the deformed and hideous legion symbolising disproportionate deformity, subhumanity and death. These share and reflect on a lower plane the new features of the epic Śiva, whose association with them has clear traces of borrowing from some chthonic god's characteristics.

In his connection with them and the cremation ground, Śiva assumes new traits and becomes closely linked with death. As a god of the north he is not Yama who is a resident of the south, yet he shares some characteristics with him, in a very complex fashion. Pārvatī is the killer of the buffalo-demon, and the buffalo is Yama's beast. Yama is Kāla, and Pārvatī later became Kālī, Śiva being quite frequently called Kāla. The Badami and Ellora cave temples represent Bhr̥ngī and Kāla as Śiva's attendants. Śiva has been more than once mentioned as the god entrusted with the task of cosmic dissolution. His Ghorā tanuḥ—leads to his association with Agni in the vedic and later vedic literature, presumably because Agni too has been conceived as the agent of the final dissolution. His followers also have some bearing on this task. They are both ghastly, deathlike in appearance and pleasant, as if they represent both good and bad spirits. At the back of these spirits there may have been a faith in metempsychosis, for "we find this worship of the dead among the Hellenes, among the Latins among the Etruscans, we also find it among the Āryans of India" (Fustel de Coulanges: *The Ancient City*).

In the epic pantheon Śiva enjoys a unique position. He is said to be Brahman's son, and Brahman is called the Grandfather-Pitāmaha. Although it is nowhere stated explicitly yet the unspoken assumption is that in the hierarchy of the gods, Śiva enjoys an intermediary position. He is conceived as the father of the world, with Pārvatī as the Mother goddess—Jaganmātā. Śiva was summoned for the task of creation, he is the refuge in times of crises, he is the father of Skanda, and later this fatherhood is extended to cover a family of four children. As the only god who is almost always accompanied by his wife, Śiva is easily thought of as the father of the world. Brahman is gradually dwindling

into comparative insignificance and theologically his place is being occupied by Śiva. At this interesting period of a settled agrarian community, when the cosmic forces represented by the RV gods are being transformed into personal gods, it is but natural that Śiva should gain in importance and stature, as his is the figure which easily lends itself to the concept of universal fatherhood. At this particular stage when the Indian pantheon is gradually giving way to the supreme triad—Brahman, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara—the inconspicuous vedic god, simple and linear in execution in the Vedas will naturally be filled out with all the necessary theological details and become a major god. As a result we have the inscrutable phenomenon of the association of opposites in him—he is both benign and malign, dark and fair, terrible and gentle, life, and death. This combination of the polarities of the conceptual world is necessary to make him awe-inspiring and mysterious.

Thus from comparative insignificance, Rudra gains in dimensions till passing through the stage of what Keith calls Kathenotheism, he is proclaimed the Supreme Being. What, precisely, is at the bottom of this? "Syncretism of deities is so common and notorious that it seems strange to find so much reluctance to accept what is notoriously a trait of post-vedic Śiva, whose cosmopolitan character enables him to absorb local god after god.. It is certainly possible that a forest and mountain deity of some kindred god such as a vegetation spirit and even a god of the dead may be united with the vedic lightning god to form the composite figure of the YV". (Keith: *the Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣads*, Vol. 1, p. 148). This aspect of the vegetation deity is closely associated with the worship of Rudra's symbol—the Phallus. Phallic worship is not an isolated phenomenon in India. Over large tracts of land and over long periods of time, people have worshipped the phallus as a symbol of fertility and virility. We know the Egyptian Chem, Munt and Amun who were worshipped ithyphallically. In Rome Priapus was later represented as the phallus. Worship of the detached phallus was popular in Babylonia. At Harappa stone phallic symbols have been found (cf. Marshall: *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Valley Civilisation* Vol. 1, p. 62-63).

In the the Far East phallic worship was quite prevalent in Indo-China and Przyluski in his book "Non-Aryan Loans in Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian" says, "The phallic cults of which we know the importance in the ancient religions of Indo-China are generally considered to have been derived from Indian Śaivism. It is more probable that the Aryans borrowed from the aborigines of India the cult of *linga* as well as the name of the idol (pp. 41, 45). This seems more probable when we think of the actual vedic references to the term Śiśnadeva. "The curt manner of the references to Śiśnadeva in the Vedas indicates the non-Aryan nature of the phallic cult". (*Linga Cult in Ancient India*: A. P. Karmarkar: B. C. Law Comm. Vol. 1). But how did Śiva come to be associated with this particular symbol? For all over India this is one of the forms in which Śiva is worshipped even now. And Allan has definitely described the symbol on an uninscribed coin as the "lingam on square pedestal": the 3rd and 2nd century B. C. if not earlier (*Śiva and His Early Emblems on Early Indian Coins* by J. N. Banerji IHQ: 1940). There are anecdotes in the Mahābhārata to explain Śiva's association with the phallus, but we must probe deeper in order to find the source of the symbol. Śiva, one remembers; is almost invariably connected with Pārvatī. Now, Durgā, who in the later mythology the regular consort of Śiva has, in the Mahābhārata mythology very little in common with Pārvatī. Once or twice where she is called Skandamātā, and Skanda is never directly described as Śiva's offspring, although he is inferentially presented as such. Durgā therefore, is at best, only inferentially related to Śiva as his spouse. But Durgā in the Mahābhārata in her own right, a fierce goddess sharing many primitive and horrible traits with Śiva—her partiality for blood, fat and flesh etc., her love of the repugnant, her hunting and demon-killing traits. Both she and Śiva have associations with the phallic symbol. S. Nanimadhab Chaudhuri in his article on "Linga-Worship in the Mahābhārata (IHQ. XXIV, 1948), says, "It is our opinion that the assimilation of the phallus-cult with the old Vedic cult of Rudra is owing to the previous association of the latter cult with the mother-goddess". With this we come upon another component concept of this interesting syncretism.

16 [*Aanals*, B. O. R. I.]

Through his association with Pārvatī, Śiva changes from the Vedic Rudra, loosely connected with Pṛṣṇī or Go (Aditi in the Rāmāyana and Surabhi in the Harivaṃśa) in whom he begets the Maruts. The mother-goddess concept is pre-Indo European and is a very, very old concept in the history of the world. In Egyptian history we have Isis carrying Harpocrates (or Horus) " sometimes represented as a young suckling ". (We also remember how during the Tripuradahana episode Śiva was suddenly seen as a baby in Pārvatī's arms). At Harappa has been found a goddess of earth and vegetation, sacrifices to whom " seem to be in conjunction with the nature of the goddess of earth and Mother Goddess, and her bloody cult, orgiastic dances, castration etc. , ... customs known from Asia Minor. This goddess to whom human sacrifices were brought is likely to belong — as Śiva does — to the cultural sphere of Asia Minor. The cruel goddess Durgā is her Old-Indian analogue " B. Hrozný : History of Western Asia, India and Crete p. 186). W. Porzig in Zeitschrift für Indologie 5, 278, also suspects the origin of Śiva, god of mountains and storm, as well as of his wife Pārvatī or Durgā, to have belonged to Asia Minor. It is therefore no accident that Durgā came to be associated with Śiva in the epics. When the Indo-Europeans came to India they brought or fashioned Rudra, who, as the storm god, quite naturally took over the attributes and associates of his West Asian analogue. When the name is changed from Rudra to Śiva much else changes. " With the increasing use of this epithet, (Śiva) the malevolence of Rudra becomes more prominent in the later Vedas. The white YV which adds various disgraceful attributes furnishes the transition to the terrific and repulsive Śiva of Hindu mythology ". (Macdonell : article on Rudra, Hastings Encyclopaedia of religion and Ethics).

Among the Śiva's animal associates may be mentioned his gaping-mouthed dogs. Now, as the god of death, he is entitled to dogs. In Greek mythology the dog is called Kerberos and in Egyptian mythology this dog is Anubis the conductor of the dead. Anubis has been at times represented as jackal-faced in Egyptian monuments, and we remember Śiva in the epic being called Srgālamukha ; among his animal associates are dogs and jackals too.

Of the other animal followers of Śiva the mouse later came to be associated with his Purāṇic son Gaṇeśa. In the epic this Gaṇeśa is yet unborn; Śiva has himself been called Gaṇeśa and Gaṇapati, and has the mouse to himself.

Both Śiva and Pārvatī are closely associated with snakes as has been shown before. Now the snake cult in the ancient world, is a much explored subject. "In very ancient times the serpent was the cult-sign or religious emblem of a tribe inhabiting a site in the (Egyptian) Delta, the capital of which was at Buto". (The Anvil of Civilisation, by Leonard Cottrell, p. 41). The Cretan Mother Goddess with a pair of snakes in her hand is well known. In the Mahābhārata, India perhaps preserves the memory of a snake-cult, whatever its source. The snake goddess Manasā, who has survived the Old Pantheon, is popularly supposed to be Śiva's daughter. Snakes were the Dravidian emblem of death and fertility, and five-headed snakes formed a canopy of the līṅga on some archaeological specimens of ancient India (A.P. Karmarkar: The Līṅga Cult in Ancient India, B. C. Law Comm. Vol I), Śiva has snakes all over him and Pārvatī also uses snake coils as ornaments. It is significant that as Mahākāla and Mahākālī they both have associations with snakes which directly symbolise death.

The bull also is a very old symbol of strength, vegetation and reproduction. It has always been connected with the pantheon of primitive agrarian communities. In Egypt Apis was "the sacred bull worshipped in Memphis. When the sacred animal died a successor was chosen. (Article on Apis, Oxford Classical Dictionary). There were certain signs by which he (Apis) was recognised to be the god. "Bulls are considered the property of the god Epaphos or Apis and are therefore tested in the following way ... If the priest finds a single black hair upon him, he pronounces him unclean ... If the animal passes all the tests successfully, the priest marks him". (Herodotus Bk. II, p. 117, Penguin). It reminds us of the present day custom of dedicating the spotless bull to Śiva and also of the bull released to save the dead from hell (Vṛṣotsarga) a custom the date of whose origin is unknown. The old death association persists. The Rgvedic Rudra

did not have a bull but was seated in a chariot. The bull therefore is a later addition. Among the Indus Valley coins the bull as a symbol is depicted on the reverse side of a unique gold coin of an Indo-Scythic king bearing legends in Greek and Kharosthi script—*tauros* and *usabha*, both standing for Śiva. This reminds us of the same device appearing on the coins of the White Hun ruler Mihiragula with the legend Jayatu Vṛṣaḥ, in the script of the period (Śiva and His Emblems on Early Indian Coins by J. N. Banerji, IHQ, 1940).

Of Śiva's weapons the bow and arrows are gradually superseded by the epic trident and battle axe with which he is seen on certain copper coins issued by the Kuninda Republic of the second and first century B. C. A round copper seal discovered at Sirkap shows him with a club, where he resembles Herakles and bears testimony to the Hellenistic treatment. A Kuṣāna Vāsudeva gold coin is interesting in that it shows him with a noose; here Rudra Śiva has clear connections with Yama the traditional bearer of the noose.

We thus have a composite godhead whose different and sometimes disparate parts have travelled from distant land and whose attributes have accumulated from pre-Aryan, Aryan and non-Aryan tribal peoples over a long period of time. The resulting syncretism offers contradictory traits but has gradually been assimilated in the Indian pantheon, till in the Śiva-, Śivamahā-, Skanda-, and Devībhāgavata-purāṇas, we have the picture of a god belonging to the supreme triad worshipped all over India, ruling all spheres of life in his theological and every day ritual aspects. This god does not grow or change in essence after he has received final shape in the epics. The naturalistic and animistic traits about him are shed in the epics and he is more humanised than in the Vedas. He is in the Mahābhārata an ascetic living a retired life. He is the god who relieves people in distress, if they practise penance and approach him with humility. He has weapons which he himself seldom uses but which are yet his to grant to a worthy supplicant.

He is no longer the protector of cattle although he becomes the lord of animals. Neither is he healer any longer, although as one of

the three supreme gods he is almighty and can heal also. Rudra in the epics had been denied a share in the sacrifices--something unthinkable about any of the Vedic gods, and enraged at this insult he shows his might, thus forcing an acknowledgement of his otherwise unrecognised divinity.

In all these we have a distinct transformation of the Vedic Rudra. In the first place he is neither called nor thought of as a fierce storm-god. The *Bṛhaddevatā* (2: 34) and the *Chhā. Up.* (3: 16: 3) still remember him as the howling god of storm and wind. In the epic this trait is forgotten; the purely physical counterpart of his personality has been lost sight of entirely, or exists purely in memory. The young Vedic god, of firm limbs, beautiful lips, braided hair, dazzling shape, of almost sunlike brilliance, dressed finely, with a gold necklace and seated in a chariot, has now become a skin-clad ascetic, wrapped in penance, quiet and retiring, away from human habitation, followed not by the gods called Maruts but by hideous demons. Tryambaka he still is, but instead of having three mothers (which indicates his identity with Agni originating in three places) he has now three eyes. Ambikā, who was a sister to the Vedic Rudra, is now a synonym for his wife Pārvatī.

What has actually happened to the Vedic Rudra? Not one but many things have happened before he is so altered. For clearer understanding it is better to call him Rudra-Śiva instead of calling him by either name singly. Already in the YV and in the K. U. P. he is described as a malevolent god, a destroyer if also a preserver. This is the point of departure. Here we are introduced to other non-Vedic deities--a vegetation god, a god of animals, a phallic god who is worshipped for fertility and strength, the goddess-associate Pārvatī, and also other theological and philosophical concepts like the *Yogādhyakṣa Śiva*, the *Ardhanārīśvara* and *Harihara*. This new composite god found the doors shut to him in the pantheon; the memory of the struggle between this god and the traditionally accepted pantheon lingers in the episode of *Dakṣayajñanāśa*. As *Dakṣa* was an early Progenitor of the Aryans, the episode gains in significance and becomes the story of early Aryan reluctance and later acceptance of one or many non-Vedic

tribal gods. This new Śiva brought with him all his tribal characteristics and retains most of them, or those of them which would fit in with the faint anticipatory YV passages.

One of the less important Vedic gods has been raised in the epics to a supreme position, has assumed new dimensions and attributes, has shed his old attributes, has a mother-goddess for a consort and the general of the divine army for a son. All this did not happen in a day. The Rgvedic society had moved from the days when the people sacrificed to the gods in the hope that, pleased with their sacrifices the gods would move the forces of nature for their benefit, give them crops and cattle, sons and victory in war. Now in the epic age, the Vedic gods have no longer the same function. Another force, at once supreme and ineluctable, has come into existence, namely Fate-called by various names, as Kāla, Kṛtānta, Niyati, Bhāgadheya. Within this framework of fatalism people live and worship. The gods are still there and have the power to grant boons when propitiated, but Fate rules supreme. It is immutable and explains all the anomalies of life, as is amply clear in the series of anecdotes regarding the complexities of life in the Śāntiparvan.

The Rudra of only two entire hymns of the RV has gained immeasurably in importance in the Epic Age, not only because he embodies in his person diverse divinities but also because in his capacity as Mahākāla he is a personification of Fate itself. As an inhabitant of the cremation ground and with spirits (bhūtas) as his followers, he represents Death--the most formidable shape in which Fate can appear to man. All the gods of the supreme triad of the epic have this attribute - in some form or other they represent Fate; it is this potentiality in their nature which lends itself to being identified with Fate that has secured for them this supreme position, instead of the comparative oblivion to which many Rgvedic gods were consigned.

Now we understand why Rudra has gained this new importance. He has a dual personality--fierce and deadly as Rudra, he is at the same time a detached, gentle and benevolent deity as Śiva. As Rudra he could easily be converted into the dark and malign aspect of death, and as Śiva he could be made into the benign giver

of life. Thus with his *ghora* and *Śiva tanuḥ* he embodies in his person the dual principle of life and death. He is thus the closest approximation to the abstract concept of Fate the All-powerful, the concept which in the Epic Age has, so to say, supplanted all the other gods.

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