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PRAJĀPATI AND THE YEAR

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I. The year

1. Much has been written on the Vedic creator god Prajāpati, on the ritual “philosophy” of which he is the central figure, on his “identity” with the sacrifice, the great fireplace and the year, and on the ambition of the “sacrificer” (the patron of the sacrifice) ritually to identify himself with this god¹. In the following chapters special attention will be invited to one of these “identifications”, viz. the frequent homologation “Prajāpati is the year”. Although this has not of course escaped observation, it would seem that most authors have neglected to explain what the Vedic authorities understood by the word “year”² and that a study of its ritual and religious significance as well as the implications of the various relevant passages and statements would be a desideratum. It is my intention to discuss these questions in the chapters I–XV of this publication and to deal with the “identification” “Prajāpati is the year” in chapter XVI.

2. The year as known and understood in modern times is a concept of comparatively late development³. Yet, although the definition “the period of time taken by the earth to revolve once round the sun” is not applicable to the year of the ancients and the so-called primitives, those who in olden times tried to establish a sort of chronological system must have felt that the requirement of a long calendar period meant choosing some cycle of important natural phenomena which regularly recur in the same order. The ancients were, indeed, very well aware of the cyclic character of what they called a year⁴. Just like Homer, who speaks of “revolving years” (Iliad, 23,

1. For bibliographical notes see J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens*, I², Stuttgart 1978, p. 180 ff.; 375 ff.
2. In the texts quoted below always *saṃvatsara*. For *varṣa*, originally and often “rain” in the sense of “year” see ŚB. 11, 1, 2, 10 f.
3. I refrain from quoting the literature on this subject in which the facts are often presented for discussion in the light of onesided and now more or less antiquated theories.
4. In myths, primitive literature etc. “time is widely regarded as a recurring cycle, in which events repeat themselves in a definite, regular sequence as the seasons of the year” (C.M. Bowra, *Primitive song*, New York 1962, p. 218).

833 περιπλομένους έναυτούς) and of “the year that goes on its revolving course” (Odyssey, 11, 248), Vedic authors state that the “year revolves without end” (ŚB. 4, 3, 1, 7 *anantaḥ saṃvatsaraḥ pariḥlavate*), describe it as “revolving” (3, 4, 4, 15 *pariḥlavamānam*), argue that the year is produced when the months revolve after one another (1, 7, 2, 24), or that it passes coming into being by half months (1, 3, 5, 8), and regard it as “a (or the) revolving one” (8, 4, 1, 25 *vivartaḥ*)⁵. And already in the famous ṛgvedic hymn 1, 164 the revolving year is compared to a wheel, the wheel of the fundamental order (*ṛtam*) with twelve spokes that again and again revolves round the heavens (st. 11), the wheel on which all beings (2) as well as the 720 “sons” (days and nights (11)) are standing (cf. also 13), and which continues revolving together with its felly, undecaying (14; cf. also 48; 10, 8, 4)⁶. The idea of a wheel was also present to the mind of the poet of AVŚ. 4, 35, 4 speaking of months with 30 spokes, the year with 12 spokes and the circling days and nights, while the author of KB. 20, 1, 1 is quite explicit: “The year is this revolving (*pariḥlavam*) wheel of the gods (*devacakraṃ*)”, a definition which perhaps may be taken to attest to the belief that the gods, the powers presiding over the natural phenomena, are, while exerting their influence, themselves outside the time cycle which they control and regulate. But at AiB. 5, 30, 1 day and night are the wheels of the year by means of which one goes through that period of time. Dealing with the Supreme, the Self (*ātman*), the Lord of what has been and what is to be, the author of BĀU. 4, 4, 16 says that the gods worship that, turned towards which the year revolves with its days, as the light of lights, as “life immortal” (more exactly “a full term of life secured from death”)⁷. In JUB. 1, 12, 1, 7 it is intimated that the two ends of the year, viz. spring and winter, are connected, so that the year is endless (i.e. circular). (Cf. also TB. 1, 8, 4, 3 where the ends of the year are connected in order to reach the world of heaven).

In the well-known hymn of the frogs ṚV. 7, 103 these animals are st. 7 addressed as follows: “You celebrate that day of the year which, O frogs,

5. ŚB. 3, 4, 4, 15 deals with the construction of the *vajra* which is “identified” with the year (on this passage see J. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, Utrecht 1954, ²Delhi 1969, p. 35 f.; T.K. Das Gupta, *Der Vajra*, Wiesbaden 1975, p. 49 etc.). In the same paragraph the author alludes to the revolving character of the year by mentioning day, night and what is between them.
6. See e.g. A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique*, II, Paris 1881 (1963), p. 129; P. Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, 1, Leipzig ⁴1920, p. 111; H. Lüders, *Varuṇa*, Göttingen 1951–1959, p. 571 (whose translation of *ṛta*, viz. “Wahrheit” does not convince me); K.L. Janert, in *IJJ.* 2, p. 97 f.
7. As to the revolving month making up the year see ŚB. 11, 2, 5, 4. – After quoting the words “the revolving one, the forty-eighth” which refer to one of the bricks (of the great fireplace which is in course of construction) that represents a 48fold hymn form, the author of ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 25 proceeds to “identify” that revolving one (*vivarta*) with the year, adding that it owes this name to the fact that all creatures are evolved (*vivartante*) from the year.

has begun the rains'. The genitive "of the year" may seem superfluous but it is not; it is no doubt added to suggest the idea of periodicity, to state clearly that that day on which the rains begin recurs every year⁸.

3. The Vedic Indians were⁹, moreover, very well aware of the fact that the cyclical character of the year is not only apparent from the chronological sequence of the same events (the returns of the seasons etc.; see, e.g., RV. 7, 103, 9 "at the end of a year, when the rainy season has come", and ŚB. 2, 2, 3, 7 "with reference to years (*samvatsarān*) people say 'in such and such a rain (i.e. year, *varṣa* "the rainy season" used as a term for "year") we did it'"), but also from the more or less regular yearly recurrence of, for instance, animal life¹⁰ and the appropriate growth of plants associated with recurrent natural phenomena: TS. 5, 6, 4, 1 "cattle are born "along with" (i.e. immediately after, *anu*) the year"; PB. 6, 33 "in the course of a year the domestic animals bring forth¹¹; KB. 19, 9 (19, 6, 13) "after a year the semen (*retas*) that has been emitted is born (as a child or young one)"; KB. 19, 3 "the corn has not come, the days are short ...; the corn has come, the days are long".

8. Homer, Od. 1, 16 is, only to a certain extent, a parallel: "But when, as the annual cycles (*ἐνιαυτῶν*) revolved, the year (*ἔτος*) came in which ... he should return home"; here the reference to the years' periodicity is to bring the fact into strong relief that the year in which Odysseus' return was ordained is unique, not subject to periodicity and will almost exclusively be in focus.
9. Of course, like other peoples; see, e.g., H. Gese, *Die Religionen Altsyriens*, Stuttgart 1970, p. 9 f. The Egyptians have always watched the yearly rise of the Nile (June–September) with the utmost anxiety. – For the conception of time see also H. Reuter, *Die Zeit. Eine religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchung*, Thesis Bonn 1941; A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity*, Ascona 1947.
10. For the etymology of the words *samvatsara* and the related Greek *ἔτος* "year" as well as their relation with *vatsa* "calf" see M. Mayrhofer, *Etymol. Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, III, Heidelberg 1964–1976; Hj. Frisk, *Griechisches etymol. Wörterbuch*, I, Heidelberg 1954–1960, p. 583 f. – The co-ordination of the migratory (and hence "periodical") bird *lopā* (the quail) with the year at TS. 5, 5, 18, where the field-rat and the nocturnal flying fox (fox bat) are co-ordinated with the Fathers, the inauspicious pigeon with Nirṛti, the cock with Savitar, is probably no matter of the merest chance.
11. Cf. also PB. 10, 12, 5; 18, 4, 11; 19, 5, 5; 19, 18, 5. – Just like speakers of modern languages the Vedic Indians said "it ripens three times in a year" (AiB. 5, 24, 4). – As is well known in most parts of the world seasonal changes in light and temperature are correlated with rhythmic biological phenomena mainly related to reproduction, growth and activity. – The various agricultural activities – the preparation of the implements for ploughing, the circumambulation of the field, the sowing, reaping and threshing that follow each other in natural succession are accompanied by seasonal or periodical rites performed on dates that so to say are fixed by the calendar of nature and weather conditions; the gods who are worshipped on these occasions are however also given oblations at the annual *parvans* (days of the changes of the moon, MG. 2, 10, 7). Cf. J. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, Leiden 1980, p. 427 ff. For an example of a calendar on agricultural activities and festivals see G. Prunner, *Die Religionen der Altvölker Taiwans*, in A. Höfer et alii, *Die Religionen Südasiens*, Stuttgart 1975, p. 259 ff.

During the year food ripens (PB. 4, 10, 1; cf. 4, 7; 16, 6, 10)¹². The year – which “is” (stands for) procreation (or production, *prajananam*, ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 1)¹³ – produces fruit and brings the crops, all food to maturity (JB. 2, 303; 307; 410). The months, seasons and years make the plants ripe (not, with Keith, “cook the plants”), but the first fruits are not offered to them; they are satisfied with special libations (TS. 5, 7, 2, 5). Just like (vegetable) food the year is multiform (PB. 12, 4, 18). In TS. 5, 1, 7, 3; ŚB. 6, 5, 4, 9 the corn is said to ripen twice in the year. Always in a year (year after year) the semen emitted is born (AiB. 4, 14, 1). Offspring and cattle are born in the course of the year (TS. 1, 5, 1, 3; cf. also 7, 3, 7, 2; TB. 1, 6, 2, 2; MaiU. 6, 15; AiB. 4, 22, 4 f.); the she-goat is the most excellent of animals because she brings forth young ones three times in the year (ŚB. 3, 3, 3, 8)¹⁴. The virtue and the very being of the year is, not only in the opinion of the Vedic Indians¹⁵, in the fruits and food it brings. The year meaning constantly existing food is the source from which one secures it (12, 7, 2, 19)¹⁶. All possibility of eating food is, indeed, in the year (AiB. 8, 4, 6), and when the gods kept the year from the *asuras* they actually withheld their manly energy (ability to support many sons, comm.) and possibility of eating food (PB. 21, 13, 4; cf. 5). By ritual means one can obtain food out of the year (16, 7, 5; 23, 17, 2; 23, 21, 3) or whatever food there is in the year (ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 36)¹⁷. By scattering seeds of diverse kinds of food in twelve furrows – the year has twelve months – the officiant makes ripe (*pacati*) food for his patron with (in the course of) the year¹⁸ (TS. 5, 2, 5, 5); cf. ŚB. 7, 2, 2, 14: by ploughing one puts the food that is in the year into the great fireplace. For food in the year see also ŚB. 10, 2, 6, 16. Compare also TS. 2, 2, 6, 2; 2, 5, 6, 6. When, in the mythical story told TB. 1, 5, 6, 3 f. the gods and the *asuras* were contending about the year, the former were successful because they kept the “subsistence (grown) in the year” from their antagonists. See also KB. 12, 6 (12, 8, 12).

4. Since just as in other religions the “year” is generally thought of in terms of the annual festivals the Vedic Indians were very well conscious of the cyclical character of their solemn rites: “In the year are contained all the sacrificial rites” (TB. 2, 3, 6, 4). And this (religious) year can be periodically recovered by and during the festivals which, being

12. Cf. also RV. 1, 140, 2; PB. 21, 15, 3, and TĀ. 1, 3, 4 *saṃvatsarīnaṃ karmaphalam*.

13. According to ŚB. 10, 6, 5, 4 (BĀU. 1, 2, 4) the semen (*retas*) produced when Death copulated mentally with Speech became the year.

14. See also ŚB. 4, 5, 5, 6; 9; 10; 5, 2, 1, 24 and compare TB. 1, 3, 7, 7 as well as 1, 6, 2, 2.

15. Cf. J.E. Harrison, *Themis*, Cambridge 1912, p. 185.

16. For the milk of the year see AVŚ. 1, 35, 4; at ŚB. 1, 5, 3, 5 the clarified sacrificial butter is called the year’s own *payas* (fluid, esp. milk). For the *rasa* (“essence”) of the year see ŚB. 2, 6, 3, 2; 4.

17. See also ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 37; 7, 1, 2, 5 and 2, 6, 3, 17 “by sacrificing three times in the (a) year one ... becomes a consumer of food” (this passage deals with the three seasonal sacrifices).

18. For the instrumental see p. 34 f. See also TS. 5, 4, 8, 2; 5, 6, 2, 2.

reactualizations of primordial events, make up the “sacred calendar”. A place such as TS. 7, 5, 1, 2 attests to the conviction that the year, the perfect time cycle, which forms a complete whole in itself, exerts a favourable influence on the events, undertakings and phenomena that take place or manifest themselves within it: “whatever is done in the house of one who performs (a long soma sacrifice) for a year, that is done completely (*āptam*), successfully (*avaruddham*, obtained), and adequately (*abhijitam*, victoriously)”.

Cyclical movement and revolution of the seasons etc. being characteristic of the year, the thought of a year that does not move was no doubt very much disliked: for the man who as a result of his ritual merit has attained communion with the sun the year and (his) good fortune (*śrī*) do not stand still (*tiṣṭhati*, TS. 5, 1, 8, 6). It belongs to the conscientious sacrificer – it is true, to his own interest – to perform definite rites – in ŚB. 1, 3, 5, 16 a recitation – in a continuous, uninterrupted way, because “he thereby makes the days and nights of the year continuous, and those days and nights of the year revolve in a continuous, uninterrupted way”. If he were to recite discontinuously, he would give free scope to his rival; from this we learn that an irregularity in the succession of days and nights caused by a ritual irregularity gives the evil powers full scope for the exertion of their detrimental influence.

On the other hand, yearly – and also monthly – celebrations of important events (the marriage day, the birthday of a child, the king’s birthday, a royal consecration) were not unknown to the Indians of the Vedic period¹⁹.

5. Perfect awareness of the unique cyclical character of the year is also evidenced by the custom to perform a definite rite at the end of a year, e.g. TS. 1, 5, 7, 3 “at the end of the year he pays reverence to the fire with (stanzas) containing the name Agni and words containing the root *pū-* (“purification”; cf. 1, 5, 5); he renews it, makes it unageing, and also purifies it”. And he prays to the god of fire for making good whatever is deficient in his body, offspring and cattle, as well as for continuance of life “after having reached the fire’s end in safety”²⁰. See also 2, 1, 4, 2; 2, 5, 4, 5. At the end of its circular course the year is worn out (just as in this passage the fire is said to be worn out and extinct²¹), has worn man, his

19. I refer to P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, Poona 1941, p. 258 ff.; Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 407 f.

20. For the mantras etc. see J. Gonda, *The mantras of the Agnyupasthāna and the Sautrāmaṇī*, Amsterdam Acad. 1980, p. 23 ff.

21. For the old and the new fire see e.g. TS. 1, 5, 4, 1 ff.; ĀpŚ. 11, 15, 1; A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* ²II, Breslau 1929, p. 306. On the annual renewal of the fire *ibidem*, p. 92; see also H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, ³Stuttgart und Berlin 1923, p. 351 f.; J.C. Heesterman, *The ancient Indian royal consecration*, Thesis Utrecht, ’s-Gravenhage 1957, p. 148; 210 f., who also draws attention to year-long ripening (p. 61; 67; 105) etc. and to rites connected with the turning of the year (*passim*).

environment and interests, and needs renewal and purification. By ritually participating in this process man too hoped to begin a new life, purer and delivered from his shortcomings and from all the evils that had afflicted him during the past period of time.

But in a discussion of the right moments to establish the ritual fire the author of TB. 1, 1, 2, 8 advises against discharging this obligation at the end of the year, because in that case one will become worse off; if however one establishes one's fires in the beginning of the year²² one will be better off (more wealthy etc.). This advice is perfectly intelligible: the ritual work that is undertaken should so to say be made to fit in with the course of the year so as to develop and to produce the results expected; the approaching end of the year is regarded as an impediment. Those who have themselves consecrated in the two last seasons of the year are consecrated in that part of the year that is afflicted (*ārtam*), because it is the end of the year (PB. 5, 9, 5). Compare KB. 4, 4, 2 f.; 5, 1, 2 f. and also a passage such as AiB. 5, 29 as well as TS. 7, 4, 8, 1 f. where it is argued that one should not consecrate oneself "on the torn part of the year, in the seasons called the end", but that there is no objection at all to undertaking the consecration when one "grasps the year at its beginning".

6. A "broken" year causes the ruin of those concerned: "He who pours (liquid) into a full (vessel) wastes the liquid ..."; if in performing the so-called *utsarginām ayanam* (a soma rite of a year's duration in which certain pressing days should be passed over: ŚŚ. 13, 20; KŚ. 24, 7, 23 f.) "one would not leave out a day, then the year would fall asunder, and they would fall into misfortune" (TS. 7, 5, 6, 1 f.). If the two halves of a year, compared to the two side-posts of the door of a house or hall, come to fall asunder those concerned fall into misfortune (TB. 1, 2, 3, 1 f.). For being consecrated in that part of the year that has been "torn asunder" (the transition from the old to the new year) see PB. 5, 9, 4.

From some brāhmaṇa places it appears that an incomplete year, the omission of one or two months, was supposed to cause disaster. "If one fragment (of earthenware on which the offering is placed) would be lost, one month of the year would be omitted, and the sacrificer would die prematurely. If two were lost, two months of the year would be omitted with the same result" (TS. 2, 6, 3, 5). This is no doubt one of those many cases in which something incomplete or deficient, being regarded as abnormal, caused suspicion and was supposed to bring about an undesirable effect, so that the author felt it his duty to warn his audience of the evil consequences of such a deviation from the norm²³. Arguing in support of the normal initiation period of just a year the author of ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 28 says that were the

22. As to the beginning of the year see Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, V, Poona 1958, p. 659 f.; Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 408 ff.

23. See J. Gonda, The redundant and the deficient in Vedic ritual, to be published in the Vishv. Ind. Journal.

patron of the sacrifice to be initiated during less than a year, he would not have sufficient time to prepare the necessary number of spaces required for the bricks of the great fireplace which is being constructed; the result would be that he would not acquire for himself an adequate place in the hereafter²⁴. The author of JB. 1, 129 teaches how to deprive one's enemy of his breath and life: one should place him into the mouth of the two *sāmans bṛhat* and *rathantara*; then his breath will fail him before the end of a year. However, this ritualistic theory could be paralleled and corroborated by facts and processes observed in the external physical world: "Whatever semen is born before the year, of five or six months, that ends in miscarriage; from what is born in ten months or a year one derives profit" (AiB. 4, 22, 4 f.).

7. That a full year was a sort of popular unit of time used, for instance, in fixing a measurable space of time, in referring to a reasonable period within which events may be expected or after which they tend to assume a less grave character or in differentiating the nature or outcome of those phenomena which occur within a given period from that of those which occur at a later moment, may be inferred from places such as TS. 1, 5, 1, 2 "in the house of him who gives on the layer of sacrificial grass (*barhis*) they weep before the year is out"; 2, 5, 1, 3 "therefore before the year is out the dug-out portion of earth grows up again, for that was what she chose as a boon"; 3, 2, 9, 5 "in that the *hotar* addresses the *adhvaryu*, he puts suffering in him; if he were not to ward it off, they would suffer pain in his house before the year was over".

8. Yet, an ancient or "primitive" year did not necessarily coincide with the true year of the moderns²⁵. There might be gaps between the successive periods which could be passed over or filled up. That sometimes ten months could pass for a year²⁶ or could suffice to perform a rite that required that period to be valid may be inferred from a story such as that of the cows that, being hornless, were desirous of obtaining horns. One group performed a definite long soma sacrifice and ceased that rite, when the horns appeared after ten months, saying that they had attained their desire. Others, however, performed the rite for two more months and ceased, when they had completed the year; their horns appeared in the twelfth month. Both groups were prosperous, however (TS. 7, 5, 2, 1 f.)²⁷.

24. See also J. Eggeling, *The Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa translated*, III, Oxford 1894, p. 181, n. 2.

25. For "manipulations" with the calendar see W. Lentz, *Zeitrechnung in Nuristan und Pamir*, Abh. Preuss. Akad. d. Wiss. Berlin 1938, Ph. hist. Kl. 7, esp. p. 91; K. Jettmar, *Die Religionen des Hindukusch*, Stuttgart 1975, p. 55. – It should not be forgotten that also in modern literature (novels etc.) time and space are not those of real life (for literature on this subject see R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of literature*, ³London 1966, p. 274).

26. See also ŚB. 12, 1, 3, 20 where a sacrificial period of ten days is equated to the year.

27. One may compare the variant stories in KS. 33, 1; PB. 4, 1, 1 f.; JB. 2, 374; AiB. 4, 17, 1 ff. and W. Caland's notes in *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, Calcutta 1931, p. 43 ff.

Irrespective of what has been said on gaps or inexactness, not all references to a *saṃvatsara* denote a period of 360 days. The author of AiB. 4, 22, 4 f. deals with the distinction between a pregnancy of five or six months, which ends in miscarriage, and one of ten months or a year, “from which one derives profit”. In ŚB. 9, 1, 5, 65 a period of a full year (360 days) is even brought into connexion with the normal duration of pregnancy (in German Schwangerschaftsjahr²⁸), which according to the usual calculation is a period of roughly 280 days or ten lunar months (cf. PB. 6, 1, 3 “women bring forth in the eleventh month”): Agni, that is the great fireplace, should be built as one that has been carried (as a child in the womb) by him who has previously carried Agni, i.e. the sacred fire, for a year in the fire-pan (*ukhā*) (see TS. 5, 5, 2, 5; 5, 6, 5, 1 f.; ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 19; 7, 5, 1, 34; 11, 5, 4, 6 etc.). At TS. 5, 5, 1, 6 both years are implicitly equated: with the man who piles the great fireplace without keeping the fire in the pan for a year it is as when an embryo is dropped prematurely, and in the next sentence an embryo is said to be born, when it attains a year’s growth. Cf. TB. 1, 1, 9, 7; 10; ŚB. 11, 5, 4, 6 ff. In connexion with the birth of cattle (after an average gestation period of 284 days): TS. 5, 6, 4, 1; of children and cattle PB. 10, 1, 9. When mythical, abnormal or miraculous births are said to take place at the end of a year or in or after a year’s time (ŚB. 1, 8, 1, 7 Manu’s daughter; 3, 2, 1, 27 Indra; 6, 1, 3, 8 the son of Dawn; 11, 1, 6, 2 Prajāpati), we have of course to do with the usual “year” of the popular narrative.

In other contexts most modern authors would join the Vedic poet of RV. 7, 103, 1 in expressing themselves inexactly: “The frogs having lain for a year practising ... a vow (of silence) have raised their voice roused by Parjanya (the god of rain)”: inexactly because here “year” stands for 360 (365) days minus the rains (also AVŚ. 4, 15, 13; AVP. 5, 7, 12)²⁹. The statement that children begin to speak after a year in a Vedic work (ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 38) is of course as inexact as the time mentioned in modern encyclopaedias (fourteen months).

9. That the year, that is phenomenal time, was sometimes regarded as an impediment, as an obstacle to man’s reaching the world of heaven appears from TS. 6, 5, 3, 1: when by sacrificing the gods had gained access to the world of heaven, they obstructed the passage into it by means of the year for fear that men would equal and follow them. Does this imply that the celestial regions were considered to be beyond earthly time? Or is the year treated here as if it actually were a material object, a form of extension in space? And how are we to reconcile this mythical story with the statement that the year is the world of heaven and that those who perform a definite sacrifice find a firm foundation in the year, the world of heaven (7, 4, 1, 3)?

28. See O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, ²II, Berlin and Leipzig 1929, p. 70.

29. Notice Sāyana’s note: “beginning with autumn to the rainy season”.

However, all events and processes that result in decay and ruin take place in time, more precisely, in the course of a definite year. The year is indissolubly linked with processes such as decline, deterioration, destruction. “The year causes some things to perish and calls others into existence” (AiĀ. 3, 2, 3). “Out of the year these creatures are born, in the year they grow, in the year they perish” (MaiU. 6, 15). It is time, a definite year, in which things come to an end, it is always a definite space of time that makes a being end his days. “The year, verily, is death, for it is he (the year as a person) who, by means of day and night, makes an end of the duration of the life of mortal beings, and then they die; therefore the year is death” (ŚB. 10, 4, 3, 1). This is, in a brāhmaṇa, no mere theory, no statement of a fact but a premise to a conclusion, an introduction to a prospect of help, escape or salvation, a foundation of the belief that by knowing this fact – i.e. by identifying oneself existentially with it – “the year will not destroy, by day and night, one’s life before old age, and one will attain one’s full extent of life”. See also § 2, where Mṛtyu, Death, is called Antaka, the Ender. Hence also the statement in 11, 1, 2, 12 “in the beginning the gods were subject to death, and only when they had gained the year were they (no longer) subject to death (*amṛtāḥ* “secure against a premature death ...”³⁰); JB. 1, 252 “knowing thus and placing oneself in (occupying) day and night, fortnights ..., years ..., one overcomes that death which is in the heavenly world; one who knows thus does not die again”; 1, 246 “all that which here in this world has an *ātman*, Death (*mṛtyu*) keeps opening his mouth for swallowing it. Death is the year. The seasons (*ṛtavaḥ*) are his mouths”³¹. For an “identification” “Mṛtyu is the year” see also 2, 350. MS. 4, 3, 6: 45, 2, dealing with sacrificing for one who is ill, makes mention of a connexion between the year and being diseased: “the year has gone astray for him and (likewise to his detriment) then it falls ill”. In the similar passage KS. 12, 8: 170, 20 the year is said to have become greedy before the illness broke out. It is therefore perfectly intelligible that the poet of the prayer for relief from distress addressed to various deities AVŚ. 11, 6, 22 (AVP. 15, 14, 10) should express the wish that the twelve divine seasons and the fangs of the year may be propitious³². See also AVP. 1, 63, 2 “the missile has closed upon him with the two tusks (fangs) of the year” (in the parallel stanza AVŚ. 10, 5, 43 “... of Vaiśvānara”). On definite days one should not sleep for fear of the fangs of the year (PB. 10, 4, 3). When a consecrated person dies prematurely he is afflicted by the distress of the year (5, 10, 3).

When his sons expressed the wish to perform a (year-long) *sattra*, Ahīnas answered: “It is difficult to venture to undertake the year (a year-long

30. See J. Gonda, *Four studies in the language of the Veda*, ’s-Gravenhage 1959, p. 97.

31. Cf. Sukumari Bhattacharjī. *The Indian theogony*, Cambridge 1970, p. 55; 101, somewhat inaccurately saying that here “Yama is Time as expressing itself in the year”.

32. See also TĀ. 1, 14, 3: “this year goes away with the vital breaths (powers) of all beings”.

sattra); in the year all deadly perils are firmly fixed (*pratiṣṭhitāḥ*) just as the spokes in the nave of a chariot-wheel³³ (JB. 2, 419). Those who live in phenomenal time cannot escape death and a ritual ceremony of a year's duration is a hazardous undertaking unless one observes the ritual rules which are explained in the following chapters.

10. Among the many rules to be observed by those who wish to perform a *sattra* is the following direction regarding the use of two *sāmans* (JB. 2, 422). It is instructive in that it shows, on the one hand the importance attached to continuity and uninterrupted transitions and on the other the parallelism between and the belief in the existence of influence exerted by the yearlong ritual upon what will come to pass in the course of the year and the destiny of the performer. "One should swim (cross) over that which is spread through (*vyāptam*³⁴) the year by applying either the *abhivarta* or the *plava sāman* (as to the former, "the approaching, attacking or victorious one", see PB. 4, 3, 1 ff.; 15, 10, 12; 18, 6, 14; as to the latter, "the floating one, the boat" PB. 5, 8, 4 f.: "A sea they cross, who undertake the (sacrifice of a) year, who crosses it without a *plava* does not come out of it; that there is the *plava sāman* is for reaching the world of heaven"). The seasons, months, the transitions from the seasons to the next ones are the *vyāptam* of the year, ... or also the days and the nights. There the *plava* is to be applied ..., (because) the *plava* does not sink away, (considering,) 'not sinking away by means of this *plava* we hope to cross over the *vyāptam* of the year' ".

11. In JB. 1, 179 it is told that once the *asuras* – the gods of darkness (cf. RV. 10, 170, 2; ŚB. 2, 4, 2, 5; 11, 1, 6, 8 f.) and of the undifferentiated unity of the primordial world – entered the pitch-dark, everything outside the *agniṣṭoma* and everything outside the year being the pitch-dark (*andham tamas*). This belief that everything outside the year, outside the recurring circle of time, is darkness may probably to a certain extent find its explanation in the fact that the ancients and "primitives" live mainly in the present. Beyond the immediate memories of what has happened the past has no meaning for them and the distant future is beyond their horizon. "What we would consider a remote past, whether historical or mythical, is treated differently and set almost outside the temporal scheme"³⁵. This view of the past and the future does not of course exclude a correct realization of the coincidence of what was to be and what has been during the period of a year: "in the year are (contained) what is to be and what has been" (*bhūtam ca bhavyam ca*, PB. 18, 9, 7, i.e. "the whole aggregate of things that are connected with the past and the future", comm.); some events and undertakings that have begun in the past are continued, other work or occurrences started in a year will not end before its termination.

33. As to the simile see ŚB. 14, 5, 5, 15 (BĀU. 2, 5, 15); PrU. 2, 6; 6, 6; MuU. 2, 2, 6.

34. "Ausfüllung" (W. Caland's translation, in *Das Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, Amsterdam Acad. p. 224).

35. Bowra, *Primitive song*, p. 218.

It is relevant here to call attention to JB. 3, 361³⁶, where in connexion with the cosmogony of the golden egg it reads: “Having lain for a hundred divine years it was ready to break. Or was it for a thousand divine years? For there were no appearances of light (*dyumnā nāha nāma tarhy apy āsuḥ*, Bodewitz’ conjectures for *dyumnā ha nāma ...*), (i.e. no sunrises) at all in that time (that means, that then chronology did not yet exist). As old as this (phenomenal, well-known) year, so old are the *pratimās* “images, reflections”³⁷), of (this) year (e.g., days and nights etc. ...” Without sunrises there are no days, and without days, *pratimās* of the year, there is no year: “One distinguishes the year by the appearances of light. Before that time (i.e. in the timeless period before the breaking of the egg) night and day were confused (coalescent) and undifferentiated ...”³⁸. Although the year was then not in existence, ŚB. 11, 1, 6, 1 observes, the golden egg floated about as long as a year. And in § 2 the same author goes on without hesitation to say that at the end of a year a person (*puruṣaḥ*) Prajāpati, was produced from that egg and in § 3 to inform us that at the end of a year he tried to speak producing words and that at the end of (another) year Prajāpati rose to (stand on these worlds). Obviously the year is believed to have come into existence together with Prajāpati’s creative activity.

With the belief that outside the year there is nothing but the realm of the pitch-dark other convictions are in perfect harmony. “In the beginning (*agre*) there was nothing here. This (universe) was covered by Death (*Mṛtyu*) who successively created mind (*manas*)”, the waters etc., and the year; “before that there was no year” (ŚB. 10, 6, 5, 4). As long as the universe did not exist as a more or less well-ordered whole there was no year. Only then, in a cosmos and outside the realm of darkness, is there a possibility of (a complete duration of) life (*āyus*): “the year means *āyus*” (11, 7, 1, 3)³⁹.

The fact that the year does not exist in association with the pitch-dark is, moreover, in harmony with the belief that what is before the sun is non-time and that what begins with the sun (*ādityādyah*) is time (MaitrU. 6, 15) and with the conviction that “the year is yonder sun” (ŚB. 10, 2, 4, 3; see also MNārU. 79 (532)). This “identification” serves to motivate some instructions to be followed in connexion with the *pravargya* ritual – originally a milk cult intended periodically to increase the strength and power of the sun⁴⁰ – : “one may teach it to one who dwells with him (as a pupil) for a

36. For a discussion of this place see K. Hoffmann, MSS 27, p. 65 and H.W. Bodewitz, Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa 1, 1–65, Thesis Utrecht, Leiden 1973, p. 33.

37. See p. 22 below.

38. Cf. BĀU. 3, 8, 9 ascribing the existence of the differentiated periods of time to the command of the unqualified eternal brahman; MNārU. 16 f. (1, 9).

39. According to MNārU. 143 ff. the Universal Order and Reality (*ṛtaṃ ca satyaṃ*) as well as night owed their existence to the inflamed *tapas* (heat); the (primeval) ocean to night, the year to the night.

40. Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens, I, p. 153; J.A.B. van Buitenen, The pravargya, Poona 1968.

year, because the year is the sun, and the *pravargya* is the sun” (14, 1, 1, 27; see also 28; 14, 1, 2, 14; 14, 1, 3, 28). The light of the sun, annihilating the powers of darkness, guarantees the continuance and renovation of earthly life. As soon as man had come to co-ordinate time according to the standard of events of the celestial sphere the immutably ordered regularity and succession of the relevant phenomena became ascertainable, measurable and discussible by means of the chronological units of time, especially of the year⁴¹. Then the sun or the chariot of the sun(-god) was likely to become a visible symbol of time, of the revolving year (see RV. 1, 164, 2; 11; 13; 14; 48). According to JB. 1, 45 the light (*jyotis*) of the sun is the day; the parallel passages BĀU. 6, 2, 9 and ChU. 4, 15, 4 and 5, 10, 2, dealing with the journey to the world of brahman to be made by the deceased states that “he goes to the ray of light (*arcis*), from this into the day, from the day into the half-month of the waxing moon ..., from the months into the year, from the year into the sun ...”

12. As is often the case the Vedic authors do not confine themselves to one single “identification” or explanation. In JB. 1, 46 the periods of time, viz. day and night, fortnights, months, seasons and year are said to be the guards of the god who shines here (the sun). – The author of PB. 18, 2, 4 and 14 homologizes the world of heaven (*svargo lokah*⁴²) to the year; by performing the *ṛtapeya* which is characterized by twelve consecration (*dikṣā*) and *upasad* days⁴³ – just as the year consists of twelve months – one reaches that world. The commentator informs us that this homologation is based on the fact that the year is of the nature of the sun (*ādityātmakatvāt*) and that the sun is in the firmament⁴⁴.

13. In AVŚ. 3, 5 (AVP. 3, 13), which is to accompany the binding on of an amulet of *parṇa* (*palāśa*) wood for general prosperity (consisting in the possession of fiery energy (*tejas*), physical force, a full term of life etc., comm.; Kauś. 19, 20), this object is not only described as the creative and inaugurative power (*ojas*) of the gods and milk of the plants (st. 1; 1), but also as being bound on with the *tejas* of the year (st. 8; not in AVP.); *tejas*

41. It may be noticed that in other languages also, e.g., in Greek, the word for sun is sometimes used to denote the “day” or “year” (see the Greek author Herodas, Mim., 10, 1); the Latin poets reckon time in many ways by the movement etc. of the sun (e.g. Ovidius, Tr. 4, 7, 1 *bis me sol adiit gelidae post frigora brumae*, i.e. “two years”).

42. See J. Gonda, *Loka. World and heaven in the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1966, Index, p. 167, s.v.

43. These comprise certain rites that take place between the conclusion of the consecration and the pressing of the soma.

44. In KB. 19, 9, (19, 6, 7 ff.): “RV. 1, 165, 1 b ‘the Maruts are joined together (*saṃ mimikṣuh*)’, containing the word together (*saṃvat*), refers to the year (*saṃvatsara*); this is the form (*rūpam*, manifestation, symbol) of the day” the conclusion is based upon the occurrence of *saṃ*, not on the fact that the Maruts are occasionally compared to the days (RV. 5, 58, 5) or to the sun (5, 55, 4 etc.).

should not with Whitney-Lanman⁴⁵ be translated by “brilliancy”. The wood of the *parṇa* is very auspicious, is “identified” with brahman and used in various rites⁴⁶. The implication no doubt is that the year, furthering the growth of this sacred tree, has transferred part of its *tejas* to the wood. The one who pronounces AVŚ. 19, 37, 4 notifies his intention to make the addressed cheek by jowl with the *tejas* of the year⁴⁷. The author of KauṣU. 1, 6 speaks of the “glow, splendour, fiery energy” (*tejas*) of the year⁴⁸.

From the above facts and observations it may be inferred that in the religion and philosophy of the Vedic Aryans the year – notwithstanding the arithmetical correctness of the statements on, and calculations with, its parts – was not primarily conceived of as the homogeneous and continuous unit of time like that on our calendars. Its characteristics are largely undefinable by means of the categories of profane time as we know it. It primarily was the time in which the creation of the world and the inauguratory deeds of the gods are periodically repeated and in which a primordial mythical time is made present, because through it the universal process of maturing, birth and decay in the vegetable, animal and human spheres takes place⁴⁹.

45. W.D. Whitney, Atharvaveda Samhitā translated; revised and edited by Ch.R. Lanman, Cambridge Mass. 1905, p. 92.

46. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 109.

47. See the note in Whitney-Lanman, op. cit., p. 957.

48. For the year as the power that gives brahminical splendour or illustriousness (TS. 2, 1, 2, 6) see p. 37 below.

49. Compare M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions, Paris 1949 (1975) (= Patterns in comparative religion, New York 1958), ch. XI; the same, The sacred and the profane, New York 1961, ch. II.

II. The year and the other periods of time

14. At this point the relations between the year and its component parts call for closer attention¹. That in definite passages the word “the seasons” (in the plural) should be followed by the apposition “the year” is not surprising². See, e.g., TB. 3, 9, 9, 1 “after establishing himself in the seasons, in the year”; TS. 7, 4, 5, 2; ŚB. 1, 5, 3, 3 f. “(by ritual means) the gods gained the seasons, the year”; ŚB. 4, 4, 1, 3; 13, 3, 2, 1. The seasons are, indeed, also explicitly identified with the year: TB. 3, 9, 9, 1; ŚB. 13, 3, 2, 1, or the year with the seasons: TB. 2, 2, 3, 2. Although in the year each single season has some specific value and individual – not only ritual, but also social and economic – significance (cf. also ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 3 “being created they were different”), “in each of them there is the form (*rūpam*) of all of them” (4). A whole and its component parts are not essentially different; they have important qualities in common, are supposed to fulfil similar functions, to serve the same purpose (TS. 7, 3, 8, 1 by a definite rite one becomes firmly established in the seasons and the year). It is the seasons which, being continuous (ŚB. 12, 8, 2, 35), make the year continuous and united (8, 7, 1, 6); it is the seasons and their regular succession (cf. AVŚ. 15, 17, 8?) which, constituting the year, protect it from instability (TS. 5, 4, 2, 2). In cases such as the following this equalization forms part of a series of homologations: ŚB. 6, 2, 1, 36 “... the seasons are the fires, and they are the year, and the year is Vaiśvānara”. However, at TS. 5, 6, 10, 3 the layers of the great fireplace are the year, the loose earth etc. used to fill up the interstices the seasons.

In TB. 3, 11, 1, 15 a definite brick is addressed as the seasons which depend (*śritāḥ*) on the year and at the same time as the *pratiṣṭhā* of the

1. The shorter and longer periods are sometimes (e.g. TB. 3, 7, 5, 8; ŚB. 10, 2, 6, 8; 10, 4, 4, 4; 12, 8, 3, 14) enumerated in regular order: natural days, fortnights, months, seasons, year. As to “hours” etc. see ŚB. 12, 3, 2, 5. – For the extent of the year etc. see also Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, V, p. 488 ff.
2. TB. 2, 2, 3, 4 “the seasons and the year” constitute a pair of the same type as the frequent “offspring and cattle” and are like these a share of the fortune to be won.

months. In AiB. 4, 16, 1 one “obtains” the year by means of the seasons and by them continues finding support in the year. In AVP. 15, 7, 7 the year is the supervisor (*adhyakṣaḥ*) of the seasons. According to AVP. 9, 23, 12 the year is, intelligibly enough, fashioned or constructed out of the seasons and the sections of the year (*ārtava*). “By means of the seasons the year is able to exist” (ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 18).

The intimate connexion between the seasons and the year³ is, for instance, also evident in ŚB. 4, 3, 1, 3: the libations of the seasons (*rtugrahāḥ*) are to produce – by means of a productive union personified by the *achāvāka* – the seasons, the year (see also 6); in 5, 4, 1, 8: by ascending the quarters, a form (manifestation, *rūpam*) of the seasons, one ascends the seasons, the year and comes to be high above all this (this universe), that means that by venturing an important ritual “climbing” (*rājasūya* ritual) one masters the whole of the universe in respect to space (represented by the quarters) as well as to time. As observed by Sylvain Lévi⁴, the fact that the deceased ancestors are described as corresponding to the seasons (TB. 1, 3, 10, 5; ŚB. 2, 6, 1, 32) may be explained by their occupying an intermediate position between the ephemeral mortal men and the gods, just as the seasons so to say occur between the day and the year.

The sixfold Marutvatīya *śāstra* (invocation, eulogium) enables the one who uses it to obtain the year which has six seasons (KB. 15, 2, 1 ff.); similarly, six oblations (19, 7 (19, 4, 29 ff.))⁵. In this connexion it is worth noticing that the word “together” occurring in RV. 1, 165, 1, the first stanza of this “Marut hymn”, as well as a number of other stanzas (10, 120, 2; 1, 160, 5 etc.) used in the rite under discussion is at KB. 19, 9 (19, 6) explained as referring to the year (*saṃvat tat saṃvatsaram abhivadati*) which, as stated above and elsewhere, is “joined together”⁶ and made continuous.

In ŚB. 6, 1, 3, 8 the beings are homologized to the seasons and the year is the lord of the seasons, a comparison which characterizes the relation between year and seasons very well⁷. – However, references to other relations between the year and the seasons are not absent: in VS. 23, 40 (cf. TS. 5, 2, 12 b) the latter, described as the slaughterers of the sacrificial horse, “appease” (i.e. kill, prepare) this victim with the fiery energy (*tejas*)

3. For the combination “the year together with the seasons” see AVŚ. 11, 5, 20; AVP. 19, 22, 15; cf. also 15, 17, 5 ff. and TS. 4, 4, 7 f and 5, 6, 4, 1. In the formulae VS. 18, 23 the seasons combine with “observance” (*vratam*), the year with “productive heat, asceticism” (*tapas*).

4. S. Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brāhmaṇas, Paris 1898, p. 98.

5. See also KB. 20, 3, 25 ff.; 23, 1 (23, 4, 23 ff.); 26, 16; ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 12; 2, 2, 2, 3; 3, 4, 4, 18; 3, 6, 4, 19; 4, 2, 2, 7; 4, 4, 5, 18; 11, 5, 4, 7 ff.; cf. also PB. 14, 1, 10.

6. See e.g. ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 3.

7. The next continues: “both these beings as well as their lord impregnated the same woman, Uṣas”. Is this a faint reminiscence of a *ius primae noctis* or a similar custom? (cf. J.J. Meyer, Sexual life in ancient India, London 1930, p. 314; 558).

of the year, i.e. (needles of) *śamī* wood (which suggests “appeasing”, *śam-*) and is, so to say, the source of the fire-sticks⁸).

The word for seasons is often accompanied by a numeral⁹. Thus ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 25: “The fireplace has five layers; five seasons are a year, and the year is Agni”; see, e.g., also 1, 5, 2, 16; 1, 7, 2, 8; 2, 1, 1, 12; 3, 1, 3, 17; 3, 1, 4, 5; 20; 13, 6, 1, 7; 14, 1, 2, 14; TS. 7, 4, 5, 2; TB. 2, 7, 10, 2¹⁰; 6, 3, 2, 10: “Six seasons are a year, and the year is Agni”¹¹; 7, 3, 1, 35: “Six seasons are a year, and the year is Vaiśvānara”; 13, 1, 5, 6: “..., he thus establishes (the sacrificer) firmly in the (six) seasons, the year”; 13, 5, 4, 28; 13, 8, 2, 6; PB. 19, 18, 5; JB. 2, 420; ŚB. 6, 6, 1, 14 similarly with seven seasons¹²; 3, 4, 4, 17 advises to undertake three *upāsads* in order to be in harmony with the year that has three seasons. In numerical argumentation the twelve months and five seasons are often added to each other in order to produce the number seventeen¹³; in PB. 18, 4, 11; 18, 9, 5 they are said to be (equal to) the year. – Many passages stating the number of the divisions¹⁴ of the year will be dealt with in another section¹⁵.

15. The three seasonal or four-month sacrifices – by means of which Prajāpati formed, and the sacrificer, putting himself in a cosmic context and imitating him, forms for himself, a body (ŚB. 11, 5, 2, 8) – are intimately connected with the seasons of the year¹⁶, which are homologised to the five parts of Prajāpati’s body (6, 1, 2, 18). Sanctifying the seasons for purposes of worship and exertion of influence, they form in a way a unity that is complete in itself, an interrupted cycle, being connected with one another by the rules and customs (abstinence from meat etc.) that are to be observed in the intervals (ŚŚ. 3, 13, 30). Cf. MS. 4, 3, 3: 42, 2; JB. 2, 234 “the one who performs the *cāturmāsya*s performs a session of a year”. See also ŚB. 2, 6, 4, 9 saying that the seasons pass the sacrificer on to each other till he reaches the highest place, the supreme goal. According to TB. 1, 4, 10, 3 the

8. Cf., e.g., ŚB. 9, 2, 3, 37; Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 164.

9. For three seasons: ŚB. 14, 1, 1, 28.

10. See also RV. 1, 164, 12; 13; TS. 7, 1, 10, 3; 7, 3, 8, 1; ŚB. 6, 5, 1, 12; 6, 8, 1, 15; 7, 1, 1, 32; 7, 2, 3, 4; 9; 7, 4, 1, 34; 8, 6, 3, 12; 8, 7, 4, 9; 9, 2, 1, 10; 9, 2, 3, 41; 12, 2, 2, 19.

11. See also TS. 7, 4, 2, 2; 7, 5, 1, 4; ŚB. 6, 4, 2, 10; 6, 5, 4, 9; 6, 7, 1, 24; 27; 12, 2, 2, 18.

12. See also ŚB. 6, 6, 2, 7; 6, 8, 2, 7; 7, 3, 2, 9; 9, 1, 2, 31; 9, 2, 3, 45. – ŚB. 10, 2, 6, 2 the year is sevenfold: the six seasons and the year itself as the seventh part.

13. See p. 52; 88 below.

14. It a text mentions five seasons, it mostly distinguishes spring, summer, the rains, autumn and winter; if there are six, the winter is a shorter period and is followed by the cool season; in cases such as ŚB. 9, 1, 2, 31 seven seasons no doubt owe their existence to the principle of numerical congruence; in RV. 10, 90, 6 the three seasons are spring, summer and autumn. Cf. also ŚB. 12, 3, 2, 1.

15. See ch. X.

16. The formulae used in these sacrifices amount to 362 (see ŚB. 11, 5, 2, 10, with Eggeling’s notes). – For these sacrifices see, e.g., H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, ³Stuttgart and Berlin 1923, p. 439 ff. and G.U. Thite, Sacrifice in the brāhmaṇa-texts, Poona 1975, p. 69 ff.

man who performs these *cāturmāsya*s (and thus assigns periodicity to longer units of time and assists the powerfulness of definite moments and instants by celebrations) actually gains (reaches) the year, if at least “he knows thus”¹⁷. And by means of the three seasonal sacrifices the sacrificer becomes successively established in the terrestrial world, the intermediate space and in yonder world, “he becomes all this” (1, 4, 9, 5). In the same work 3, 9, 2, 2 it is not inconsistently argued that one does not take possession of the year, when one puts the *cāturmāsya*s, (i.e.) the year, in motion at any time other than the regular moment and in any way other than the regular way. But this argument is refuted: the year is as large as the seasonal sacrifices; therefore the sacrificer takes possession of the year by immolating the victims related with the *cāturmāsya*s. And MS. 1, 10, 7: 147, 11; 4, 3, 3: 42, 1 and ŚB. 13, 2, 5, 2 identify the *cāturmāsya*s with the year. ŚB. 2, 6, 3, 1 gives a good deal of information about the significance of these sacrifices: “the merit (*sukṛtam*, not, with Eggeling, righteousness) of him that performs them is imperishable (*akṣayyam*), for he gains the year, and hence there is *akṣayyam* (merit). He gains and conquers (the year) in three divisions¹⁸. The year means the all (totality, *sarvam*) and the all is *akṣayyam*; hence his merit is indeed *akṣayyam*. Moreover, he becomes a season and as such goes to the gods”. “It is by sacrificing three times in a year that one becomes a consumer of food” (2, 6, 3, 17).

16. As to the (twelve, cf. ṚV. 1, 164, 11; 48) months of the year – which is arranged by months (AiB. 3, 41, 1 f.) – they play an important part in the arguments of these authors and their number often determines the use or occurrence of twelve objects, lauds, stanzas, the repetition of a rite etc.¹⁹. For instance, there are twelve or thirteen *dakṣiṇās*, because there are twelve or thirteen months in the year (ŚB. 5, 5, 5, 19) or there is a cake on twelve pieces of pottery, because the offering is of the same measure as (corresponds to, *saṃmita*) the year (8; cf., e.g., 6, 2, 2, 5; 12); see also 4, 3, 1, 5 (twelve cups of soma); 5, 3, 5, 5; PB. 4, 2, 12; 18, 9, 7; JB. 1, 135 (twelve stanzas); 2, 83; TB. 1, 2, 2, 1 (twelve hymns of praise)²⁰; 3, 8, 1, 1 (one obtains the year by tying the sacrificial horse with a rope that is twelve cubits long; also ŚB. 13, 1, 2, 1); TS. 5, 4, 8, 2 one secures food by means of

17. “With each periodical festival, the participants find the same sacred time, ... the time that was created and sanctified by the gods at the period of their *gesta*, of which the festival is precisely a reactualization ... Religious man lives in two kinds of time, of which the more important, sacred time (which from one point of view can be homologized to eternity), appears under the paradoxical aspect of a circular time ..., a sort of eternal mythical present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rites” and “(Sacred time) is a “succession of eternities”, periodically recoverable during the festivals that made up the sacred calendar” (M. Eliade, *The sacred and the profane*, New York 1961, p. 69 f. and 104).

18. Cf. Heesterman, *Royal consecration*, p. 29, n. 13.

19. As to their identification with the Ādityas see ŚB. 11, 6, 3, 8; BĀU. 3, 9, 5.

20. See also TB. 1, 3, 7, 3 f.; 1, 6, 1, 10; 1, 7, 3, 6; 1, 7, 7, 5.

the year by offering twelve sets of twelve; 5, 6, 2, 2; cf. 5, 2, 5, 5; JB. 1, 27 “he offers during three days (four times a day); this amounts to twelve oblations; twelve months are a year”; TB. 1, 1, 4, 1 “one should lay down the fire at a distance of twelve steps; ... one obtains it from the year”; 3, 8, 21, 2; ŚB. 12, 7, 2, 19. Or a reference to the twelve months shows indirectly that a ritual act is performed in such a way as to be in conformity with the year. If one undertakes twelve *upasads* – unbloody rites taking place between the consecration and the pressing of the soma – the rite is made of the form (as a manifestation) of the year, which has twelve months, and one composes or arranges the year so as to serve the ritual purpose (*samskaroti*²¹), that means, one transforms profane time into a religiously significant year (ŚB. 3, 4, 4, 19; see also 17; 18; 20).

Or one pleases or propitiates (*prīṇāti*) the year by offering to a god who is the year on twelve pieces of pottery (TS. 2, 2, 5, 4; cf. 6; 6, 2, 3, 4). Twelve cups of soma are in a definite rite taken in order to know (the way to) the year (6, 5, 3, 1). A place such as TS. 7, 4, 11, 4 would seem to attest to the belief that under definite circumstances the year could be substituted for or be equivalent to the months: “the comment (*brāhmaṇam* “comment upon (a passage of) the Veda”) upon the year is according to that upon the month; verily they continue finding support in each month”. Or the number of the months is made to occur on the sacrificial place in order to enable the sacrificer to “obtain the year” (ŚB. 13, 3, 3, 8; cf. also TB. 3, 8, 1, 1 quoted above; for this reason one should give twelve cows: KB. 1, 1 (1, 2, 29 ff.)²². Or to establish the sacrificer in or on the year (ŚB. 13, 8, 3, 7; cf. PB. 3, 12, 3; 4, 4, 11; 12, 4, 17; 18, 9, 21; TS. 5, 4, 8, 6; TB. 3, 9, 18, 2; by preparing twelve porridges and presenting them to the officiants. In order to secure food by obtaining it from the year one should stay for four periods of three days each in different places (the wilderness, among strangers etc., JB. 2, 182). In connexion with a meritorious act of austerity (wandering, lying on the ground, accepting only uncultivated fruits etc.) to be performed for a year Kauṣītaki used to say that a performance of twelve days’ duration could suffice, because this is an imago or symbol (*pratimā*) of the year which has twelve months (KB. 25, 15 (25, 14, 11 ff.). For other cases of correspondence between a twelve in the ritual sphere and the twelve months see, e.g., TS. 5, 6, 7, 3; JB. 1, 67; ŚB. 3, 6, 4, 23 f. the sacrificial stake should be twelve or thirteen cubits long, because, like the year, it is a “thunderbolt” (*vajra*); 14, 1, 3, 28; 14, 2, 2, 12.

In a variety of contexts the reference to the year’s twelve months²³ occurs

21. For the meaning of this verb see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 364.

22. See also KB. 7, 10 (7, 12, 40 f.); 8, 1, 8 f.; 9, 2, 18 f.; 9, 4, 8 f.; 13, 9 (13, 7, 27 ff.); 14, 1 (14, 2, 13 f.); 14, 2 (14, 3, 19 f.); 16, 11 (16, 10, 11 ff.).

23. See also Heesterman, Royal consecration, p. 186 and for the *āgrayana* requiring a cake on twelve pieces of pottery, p. 24. For the significance of twelve offerings performed with a month’s interval to fill out a year, *ibidem*, p. 209 ff.

in a complicated argument or explanation. Some examples are: BP. 6, 3, 3 “the *agniṣṭoma* comprises twelve hymns of praise, the year has twelve months; the domestic animals bring forth (young ones) in the course of a year; for that reason this (sacrifice) leads to the possession of cattle (*paśavyah*) and is successful”; 18, 2, 4 by a sacrifice with twelve *dikṣās* etc. one reaches the heavenly world which is the year; 3, 12, 3; 16, 6, 10; ŚB. 13, 5, 1, 4; 15; 14, 2, 2, 12. In other cases the occurrence of the figure of Prajāpati is one of the complicative factors: ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 13 the drawing of the lines of an enclosure is accompanied by twelve formulae; the year, as Prajāpati, is the sacrifice; therefore the enclosure is as large and wide as the sacrifice; 2, 2, 2, 4; (cf. also 4, 6, 1, 11); 5, 4, 5, 20; 23; 14, 3, 2, 16; JB. 1, 13; TS. 7, 2, 10, 3. Elsewhere Agni (as the great fireplace, *agnicayana* ceremony) is in a similar way “identified” with the year: ŚB. 6, 6, 3, 16; 6, 7, 1, 28; 7, 2, 2, 16; 7, 2, 4, 4 etc.; 7, 3, 1, 47; 9, 3, 2, 8; 10, 1, 4, 8. Or the All (*sarvam*): ŚB. 5, 4, 5, 14.

It is not surprising that the year should be characterized as twelvefold (*dvādaśa*, JB. 1, 18) and that this character was obviously regarded as normal: “Thus I am produced, being added to itself by the twelvefold (year) as the additional, thirteenth month” (*ibidem*)²⁴. Elsewhere (TB. 3, 8, 3, 3) the thirteenth (intercalary) month is the hump of the bull among the seasons that is the year, an equation introduced in order to argue that the *aśvamedha*, the bull among the sacrifices, has also a hump which makes it complete. At KB. 5, 8 (5, 10, 2); 19, 2 (19, 1, 26); 25, 11 (25, 10, 2) the additional thirteenth month is said to be as great as the year; by “obtaining” it by a ritual method one “obtains” the whole year. An additional entity or extra element was often regarded as representing the total and synthesizing its components²⁵: “the thirteenth month is manifestly the year itself” (ŚB. 12, 8, 2, 31)²⁶. In TS. 4, 3, 10, 1 ff. which consists of a series of 17 parallel formulae to be used when the so-called *ṣṣṭi* (creation) bricks are put down (5, 3, 4, 7), the year occurs in the mantra “they praised with 13; the months were created, the year was the overlord (*adhipati*, VS. 14, 29)”; the relation between the year, the number 13 and the months is obviously regarded as similar to that between Prajāpati, the number one and the creatures, or that between the Lord of beings (likewise a divine person), the number five and the fivefold living beings etc.²⁷.

24. Cf. H.W. Bodewitz, *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa* I, 1–65, Thesis Utrecht, Leiden 1973, p. 59 f.

25. Cf., e.g., J. Gonda, *Triads in the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1976, p. 8 f.

26. As to the thirteenth month see, e.g., also TS. 5, 6, 7, 1; ŚB. 12, 2, 1, 8. For ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 19 “the year as an embryo, in the shape of the thirteenth month, enters the seasons” see Heesterman, *Royal consecration*, p. 33.

27. For the thirteenth month and the *śunāsīrīya* which marks the close of the seasonal sacrifices see Heesterman, *op. cit.*, p. 33 f.

17. The year consists of 24 half-months (TS. 2, 5, 8, 3²⁸; ŚB. 10, 4, 2, 18; see also JB. 2, 377; 2, 410; PB. 6, 3, 4; 14, 1, 11; 15, 1, 10; 16, 7, 5; 23, 21, 3; TB. 1, 2, 6, 2) and is therefore 24-fold (PB. 4, 2, 6; 4, 10, 5; cf. also 16, 7, 5). This fact is made an argument on the strength of which it is JB. 2, 124 taught that a definite soma ceremony requiring the use of 24 *stotra* stanzas enables the man who knows to turn his rival out of the year (i.e. out of phenomenal time into the realm of chaos and darkness). Other passages may be brought to light to attest to the belief that the number 24 of the fortnights could help the sacrificer or the officiants to achieve similar purposes²⁹; with Prajāpati as an “intermediary” ŚB. 2, 2, 2, 5; 4, 1, 1, 15; 4, 6, 1, 12; 5, 4, 5, 21. This 24-fold character of the year explains a passage such as TB. 1, 2, 6, 2: the food that has grown over and above (what is normal) is called the 25th.

18. The half-years, seasons and years³⁰ are besought to increase Agni, who here clearly is the sun, because he is requested to shine with the bright heavenly sphere (AVŚ. 2, 6, 1; AVP. 3, 33, 1); the conclusion is warranted that the seasons etc. were, like the year itself, considered to be able, as more or less divine powers, to exert a beneficial influence.

From PB. 4, 1, 3 ff., dealing with the *gavām ayana*, a soma ceremony lasting one year, it might be inferred that the author believed in the successive creation of the components of the year out of, or by means of, pre-existing shorter periods. By applying the three days’ period twice Prajāpati, having produced day and night by means of the overnight (*atirātra*) rite, created the seasons; by means of a twice performed six-day rite he fashioned the twelve months; by means of four six-day periods the 24 half-months. After having produced a month by means of five six-day periods he created the other months, the year. It should, however, be born in mind that the sacrificer and the officiants, taking Prajāpati’s creation as a model of their ritual activity whilst living in phenomenal time characterized by a sequence of events, had, in generating by means of a continued sacrificial ceremony the whole year in order to find a firm foundation in it, to proceed gradually, so to say bit by bit (4, 1, 17).

19. It is important here to dwell also on the relations assumed to exist between the year on the one hand and its short components, the (360, RV. 1, 164, 48) days and nights, on the other³¹. “The whole year is just that day after day” (ŚB. 12, 2, 2, 23; cf. JB. 2, 431). The poet of RV. 1, 164, 11 speaks of 720 sons who (representing the days and nights) are standing in

28. See also TS. 5, 1, 8, 5; 5, 6, 7, 2; 7, 3, 7, 2; 7, 4, 1, 3; 7, 4, 2, 5.

29. Cf. TS. 7, 4, 11, 4; TB. 3, 3, 7, 1; 3, 9, 11, 2.

30. For an enumeration of all the periods of time from the natural day up to and including the year (with numerals) see TS. 5, 7, 18, 1; cf. also 7, 1, 15, 1.

31. It may be parenthetically observed that a year in the human sphere is a day for the gods (TB. 3, 9, 22, 1; PB. 16, 6, 11).

pairs on the wheel of the universal order. “Day and night are the wheels of the year; verily thus with them he (the sacrificer) goes through the year” (AiB. 5, 30,1). Those who perform an overnight rite (*atirātra*) “procreate day and night (so as to have control over them, comm.), they obtain a firm foundation on day and night; the year is only so much as day and night; by day and night they thereby reach the year” (PB. 4, 1, 5). There is a parallel passage in KB. 17, 5 (17, 4, 17), where the performance of an *atirātra* is said to serve “to obtain the year”. ŚB. 6, 6, 4, 3 “day and night going on towards (the end) reach (i.e. equal) a year ...”. According to ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 19 the year – which is able to exist by means of the seasons – is founded (*pratiṣṭhitah*) on day and night and linked to the moon by means of the seasons so that this heavenly body is the connecting link (*āsañjanam*, viz. connecting the year on the one hand and the day and nights on the other). According to JB. 2, 431 the day is the *pratiṣṭhā* of the year; the one who knows that is firmly established³².

The author of AiB. 2, 17, 2 prescribes the use of 360 stanzas for one desiring the sacrifice, because “the year is 360 days, Prajāpati is the year, the sacrifice is Prajāpati”. For 360 as the number of the days and nights of a year see TS. 2, 5, 8, 3; ŚB. 1, 3, 5, 9; 9, 1, 1, 43 etc.

Yet, within the seasons and the months many days have individual significance. Some days are favourable, some unfavourable. The relation between the days of full and new moons on the one hand and the year on the other is illustrated by the “identification” of the former with the limbs and joints as well as the eyes of the year; the man who knowing thus performs the rites of full and new moon unites the limbs and joints of the year and sees along the world of heaven (TS. 2, 5, 6, 1). The imagery is clear: by duly performing these sacrifices man contributes to the realization of the organism, complete in itself, that is the year.

Reverting for a moment to ŚB. 12, 2, 2, 23 (see above) I draw attention to the fact that in contrast to the above passage and ŚB. 12, 2, 2, 13–21 the relation between the year on the one hand and the days or special days on the other is not explained by references to sacrificial rites or sacrificial concepts but as a subject for (existential) realization (comprehension or “knowledge”): the man who knows the equivalence or homology (*upaniṣad*) “the whole year is just that day after day” “becomes more and more better off (*śreyān*); he becomes of the same essence (self, individuality, *ātman*³³, viz. as the year); he becomes the year and having become the year he goes to the gods” (... *sātmā bhavati saṃvatsaro bhavati saṃvatsaro bhūtvā devān apyeti*). The same passage occurs in ŚB. 12, 1, 2, 3 in connexion with knowledge of the birth of the year. And in 12, 1, 3, 9 those who undertake the ritual of the *caturviṃśa* day – which is said to have been fashioned out of the year (2) –

32. On the 360 days of the year see AiB. 2, 17, 2; 4, 12, 7; KB. 3, 2, 24.

33. Otherwise Eggeling, Śat. Br. V, p. 155 “possessed of a (new) body”; Minard, Cent chemins, II, p. 171 “pourvu d’un ātman”; cf. ŚB. 11, 5, 6, 9 discussed by Minard, l.c.

are described as becoming the year and attaining to fellowship and co-existence with the year. These references to the possibility of an identification of the sacrificer and the year are of interest because they show that this identification could be pursued irrespective of the Prajāpati doctrine³⁴.

34. See ch. XVI and p. 64. – For “knowledge” of Prajāpati see, e.g., ŚB. 12, 3, 3, 4; GB. 1, 5, 21: 133, 11.

III. Manifestations and symbols of the year

20. A reference to the many different forms (*rūpāṇi*, manifestations, images, features¹) of the year may at first sight seem surprising: ŚB. 10, 4, 3, 20 f. the so-called space-filling bricks required in the *agnicayana* ritual are said to be as many in number as the *rūpāṇi* of the year, which by placing these bricks on different fireplaces are secured for Prajāpati, the Year, who is identical with the structure that is in course of construction. The author adds in explanation that even as the days and nights, the fortnights, months, and the seasons are the *rūpāṇi* of the year, the different fireplaces are *rūpāṇi* of Agni, the sacred fire, who is only one. All time passes in periods and a shorter period can easily be regarded as a partial manifestation of a longer one – “there is in each single season (*rtu*) the form (*rūpam*) of all seasons” (ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 4; cf. 2, 2, 3, 7) – ; a succession of shorter periods that make up a longer one, each of them characterized by different events, may create the impression of being facets or different manifestations of the latter. In ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 6 Vāyu (Wind or, rather, Moving Air) is said to have taken that part of Prajāpati which is between his waist and his head and to have kept going up (or away) having become the deities and the forms of the year. It may be recalled, on the one hand, that Vāyu, the superintendent of the atmosphere (TB. 3, 2, 1, 3), an all-maker (ŚB. 8, 6, 1, 17), who, omnipresent (MS. 2, 2, 7: 20, 19), is everywhere between heaven and earth (ŚB. 8, 2, 3, 2), is said to be one half of Prajāpati (6, 2, 2, 11) and the self of all the gods (9, 1, 2, 38), must in prehistoric times have been one of the great deities² and, on the other hand, that the year is a manifestation of Totality, with which high gods tend to be identified. – According to PB. 12, 4, 18 and 14, 9, 8 the year (which consists of twelve months) is said to be multiform (variegated, *virūpa*) and in this respect to resemble food³.

In the view of the authority to whom we owe the passage MaiU. 6, 15

1. As to *rūpa* see, e.g., J. Gonda, *The praūgaśāstra*, Amsterdam Acad. 1981, p. 60 ff. and *passim*.
2. J. Gonda, *The dual deities in the religion of the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1974, ch. VI.
3. As to KB. 19, 9 see p. 16, n. 44 above.

“there are two manifestations (*rūṣam*) of brahman, viz. time (*kāla*) and what is not time (non-time, *akāla*). That which is prior to the sun is non-time, without parts. That which begins with the sun is time with parts. Of the partite (brahman) the manifestation is the year (*sakalasya vā etad rūṣam yat saṃvatsaram*). Out of the year these creatures are born ...”. As long as there is no year, no phenomenal time, natural processes, processes of reproduction or development etc. which take place in time, changes occurring in animate or inanimate substance are non-existent and even unimaginable.

21. After having enjoined that the one who performs a definite rite should wander etc. for twelve days and then may devote himself to another “desire (of living)” Kauṣītaki (KB. 25, 15 (25, 14, 11 ff.) explains that this is an image (*pratimā*, likeness, reflection, symbol) of the year which has twelve months. In a similar way the ten sets of eighteen victims required for the horse sacrifice are said to be a *pratimā* of the year, because this consists of twelve months, five seasons and the year itself as the eighteenth (TB. 3, 9, 1, 1 f.)⁴. Periods of twelve days (*dvādaśarātrayaḥ*) are indeed for this reason *pratimāḥ* of the year (KS. 7, 15: 79, 6; TB. 1, 1, 6, 7)⁵. According to JB. 3, 361 there are so many *pratimāḥ* of the year as the year itself is great. The phrase *saṃsatsarasya pratimā* occurs already in AVŚ. 3, 10, 3 (AVP. 1, 104, 3) where it applies to the day of the moon’s last quarter (the *ekāṣṭaka*⁶) which in st. 2 is called the spouse (*patnī*) of the year. See also ŚB. 3, 12, 4⁷. PB. 10, 6, 7 and 12, 4, 18 consider the year to be multiform (*virūpa*, because of the different character of the seasons etc., comm.).

22. In the *brahmodya* (ritual enigma⁸) which the *hotar* has to recite on the last day of a ten days’ soma ceremony and which is called “the bodies (*tanūḥ*) of Prajāpati” (AiB. 5, 25, 14; see also KB. 27, 4 f. (27, 8, 14 ff.)) the unresting one and the fearless one are said to be Vāyu and Mṛtyu ..., and that which has no prius and that which has no rival (*abhrātrvyā*) mind (or spirit, *manas*) and the year. Since the other identifications are sufficiently clear, the meaning must be that the year, being the only one of its kind – there is never and nowhere more than one year at the same time – is without something or somebody which (who) wishes to equal it.

At JB. 2, 393 the year is in connexion with a reference to a full bag said to be “full” (*pūrṇa*), that means “complete in itself, so that nothing can be added to it”. Cf. PB. 5, 10, 2.

4. For this computation (see also p. 20 above) see Gonda, Triads in the Veda, p. 8 and Prajāpati’s numbers, in Vol. G. Tucci, to be published Rome 1984.
5. TB. 2, 5, 8, 12 the words “Indra extends the plough like the share(?), this is a *pratimā* of the year” are explained: “Indra extends Āditya (the sun) like Vāyu (the wind); this expanded form of the sun is a *pratimānam*, i.e. *pratīnidhi* (“representative, substitute, likeness”) of the year (comm.).
6. For the *ekāṣṭakā* see § 34 below.
7. Cf. W.B. Bollée, *Ṣaḍviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, Thesis Utrecht 1956, p. 90.
8. See J. Gonda, *Vedic literature*, Wiesbaden 1975, p. 134 etc.

IV. Rites performed for a year or at the end of a year

23. The references in Vedic legends and narratives to events, tasks, enterprises that strictly speaking do not belong to the ritual sphere but are said to take place or are undertaken for the period of a year are no doubt a characteristic of an ancient and widespread narrative style¹. This vague term for a long period moved the feelings and emotions of the audience more than precise chronological indications by means of higher compound numerals which were not, or rarely, used in the normal circumstances of Vedic life². The very fact that even in the modern West we continue letting and hiring houses, concluding contracts, appointing employees or officials (cf. ŚB. 11, 4, 2, 20 where a person has been “our *adhvaryu* for a year”), moving school-children up to a higher class for one year (or for a longer term of years) proves the self-evidence, naturalness and utility of reckoning by this period of time in daily practice. In the legend of Śunaḥśepa Hariścandra’s son wanders several times in the wild, always for a year (AiB. 7, 14 f.)³. See also ChU. 5, 1, 8–11; BĀU. 6, 1, 8 ff. The same “motif” is a characteristic of popular belief or popular wisdom: “when (a man) for a year goes about among the community he deserves a reward” (property, wealth, *dhanārghaḥ*, TS. 2, 2, 6, 4). In a mythical tale told TS. 2, 5, 1, 2 Indra is said to have borne the guilt of slaying Tvaṣṭar’s son for a year. A certain Mitraavid went to heaven after having performed the two *go-* and *āyus-* (*stoma* days) for a year (JB. 2, 278)⁴. In ChāgU. 5 some men desirous of instruction stay with ascetics for the same period. There is no doubt that this literary usage reflects a widespread popular use of the word for “year”: in connexion with a ritual custom (to unite the ends of the year) described TB. 1, 8, 4, 3 the question is put: “Who will live for a year?”

1. Notice that, in harmony with the style of oral literature (cf. M. Jacobs, *The content and style of an oral literature*, Chicago 1959, p. 231) the plural and dual of *saṃvatsara* are comparatively rare.
2. See, e.g., RV. 1, 110, 4; 1, 161, 13.
3. Notice that he redeems himself on payment of a hundred (likewise often a large, more or less indeterminate number).
4. See, e.g., also JB. 2, 394; 409; 3, 104; AiB. 2, 33, 5.

So, it is not surprising that even in important myths definite events are said to come to pass in a space of time of a year's duration, and that even after the statement that in the beginning the year did not yet exist: ŚB. 11, 1, 6, 1 f. "the golden egg floated about for as long as the period (*velā*) of a year; at the end of the year a man was produced from it"⁵. In ChU. 3, 19, 1 the world, becoming existent and growing, turned into an egg and lay for a year⁶.

24. Varous rites, duties and observances are said to be performed or undertaken for a year; see, e.g., ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 19 "Agni is carried for a year... and attended to for a year" (TS. 5, 6, 5, 1); 10, 2, 5, 3 "for a year they perform the *upasads* and the *pravargya*"⁷; at 5, 5, 3, 2 this space of time is even declared to be the normal one: "the practice of an observance (*vratacaryā*) lasts just as long as a year; hence he does not shave himself for a year". Other instances are ŚB. 12, 3, 3, 11; 12; 14; 12, 2, 1, 9; JB. 25, 13, 1; ĀśvŚ. 3, 14, 22 (or lifelong); TB. 1, 1, 9, 7 "one should guard him for a year"; 3, 2, 3, 11 "he who having performed the soma sacrifice does not drink the soma for a year"; 3, 9, 13, 1 "the *adhvaryu* offers the unbloody offerings for a year" (*aśvamedha* ritual); ŚB. 13, 4, 4, 1 "when the year (from the day of the setting free of the horse; cf., e.g., ŚŚ. 16, 1, 15) has expired (*paryavete*)"; 11, 2, 5, 4; ŚŚ. 3, 11, 16 "both (rites) are performed for (the period of) a year"; 13, 19, 18 soma "sessions" (ceremonies) of a year's duration (*saṃvatsarasattrāṇi*)⁸; KB. 25, 15 (25, 14, 9) "he should wander for a year"; ĀpŚ. 9, 3, 15 (an observance); PB. 16, 6, 11; AiĀ. 3, 1, 6 "Tarukṣya guards (his teacher's) cows for a year"; BĀU. 1, 5, 2; ChU. 2, 19, 2; PrU. 1, 2. Thus mention is also made of libations offered in the course of the year; ŚB. 2, 3, 3, 19 f. these are 720 in number, because they are made twice a day; or of other ritual activities taking place in the course of a year (7, 2, 1, 5 f.)⁹. The maximum period of the consecration of the one who intends to perform a soma sacrifice is a year (BhŚ. 10, 2, 10; cf. ĀpŚ. 10, 14, 8), the minimum twelve days (ĀpŚ.), which is the year's image. Certain *darbha* blades which are to be used in the *agnyādhāna* must have dried up for a year (BhŚ. 5, 19, 8; ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 11; HŚ. 3, 6, 11). The effects of certain dreams are expected to follow within a year (AVPar. 68, 1, 58). "Acts of austerity (*śramah*; var.: sacrificial worship, *yajñah*) are limited to

5. See, e.g., also TB. 1, 1, 3, 9; 1, 2, 1, 5; 3, 8, 12, 2.

6. For a possibly popular simile see TS. 2, 6, 10, 2. Notice that in the epic episode of Sāvitrī her husband will die after a year; but the fatal event approaches "on a much later day" (popular narrative style).

7. See, e.g., also TS. 2, 5, 4, 4; 5, 5, 1, 6; 5, 5, 4, 2 f.; 7, 4, 8, 1; AiB. 4, 22, 3; ŚB. 10, 2, 6, 9; 13, 1, 5, 1; 13, 1, 6, 2; 13, 4, 2, 16; 14, 1, 1, 27; cf. also ŚŚ. 3, 11, 16 etc.

8. I refer to A.B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Cambridge Mass. 1925, p. 349 ff.

9. Cf. also ŚB. 2, 1, 4, 5; 10, 1, 1, 4; 10, 4, 1, 1 f.; 12; see also 6, 1, 3, 20; 7, 1, 2, 11; 13, 5, 4, 28.

(determined by) the year, and that is why one extracts any desired object from the year, which one wishes to obtain by exerting oneself (in performing ritual acts) during a year” (JB. 3, 117).

In this connexion the ritual described ŚB. 13, 4, 1, 9 is of some significance: after performing the evening offering the sacrificer who is engaged in the horse sacrifice passes the night together with his favourite wife, but without embracing her, behind the *gārhapatya* hearth, thinking, “I hope to reach, by this self-restraint, successfully the end of the year (during which the horse is to roam about)”.

25. The locative often denotes the end of a period of time: ŚB. 1, 8, 1, 7 “at the end of a year (*saṃvatsare*) a woman was born”¹⁰. Dealing with the principle called *virāj* (the hypostatization of the conception of the universe as a whole, and as such an intermediate between the primaeval Puruṣa and the evolved Puruṣa of RV. 10, 90) AVŚ. 8, 10, 18 describes it as having come into being in (at the end of) a year; “that is why what is cut out of the forest trees grows whole again in a year (*saṃvatsare*)”. Similarly, 8, 10, 19; see also 9, 10, 26. Here a natural process, seen or assumed to reach completion in a year is – in the usual way, with a reversal of the order of things, in casu of the relation between cause and effect – stated to originate in a similar process that, assumed to have taken place in the mythical past, is believed to be exemplary¹¹. According to ŚB. 11, 5, 4, 6 “they taught the *sāvitrī* stanza (RV. 3, 62, 10) at the end of a year, thinking, ‘being just as old as a year embryos are born’”. One of the long-haired ones mentioned RV. 1, 164, 44 shaves himself at the end of the year. Also ŚB. 11, 2, 7, 1 “the sacrifice is offered at the end of the year of him who knows that the sacrifice is (co-ordinated with) the year”; PB. 21, 14, 9 (cf. 8) “after the lapse of a year the soma sacrifices take place”. See also TS. 1, 6, 10, 3 “when the year has revolved (*ṣaryāgate*)”.

Various ritual, mythological and legendary events are indeed said to have taken place after a year, or at the end of a year. In RVkh. 5, 5, 6 “the skilful Bhṛḡus came to the sacrificial place at the end of a (the) year”. When the gods with Agni as a regular basis (*āyatanam*)¹² exerted themselves in order to create offspring they produced one cow after a year (TS. 7, 1, 5, 2). At the end of a year Death, the ultimate cause, immolated the sacrificial horse (ŚB. 10, 6, 5, 8; see also BĀU. 1, 2, 7). In the love-story of Purūravas and Urvaśī the latter invites the former to come to her in the last night of the year (from now): another instance of the importance attached to this fixed period of time in popular tales. Compare also JUB. 4, 8, 4, 7; 4, 8, 5, 2; 4, 5 “how may we go to the heavenly world after having reached the end of the year?”.

10. Cf. p. 12 above.

11. See, e.g., also ŚB. 4, 6, 4, 3; 11, 1, 6, 3; 12, 3, 1, 7.

12. J. Gonda, *Āyatana*, in *Adyar Library Bulletin* 33 (1969), p. 1 ff. (= *Selected Studies*, Leiden 1975, II, p. 178 ff.).

From PB. 21, 3, 6 it appears that if the *śabalīhoma* (cf. LŚ. 9, 8, 1; ĀpŚ. 22, 17, 10), which is performed in spring to increase the herds¹³ cannot be brought to a successful conclusion, because an animal expected to respond to the performer's call does not give a cry, one should repeat the whole rite and the calling after a year. The unbloody sacrifices connected with the establishment of the sacred fires must take place on the day of the establishment, after (loc.) twelve days (which is an "image" of the year), after a month, after a season or after a year (ŚŚ. 2, 2, 2; ĀpŚ. 5, 21, 2; cf. KS. 8, 8: 92, 13; TB. 1, 1, 6, 7).

26. In other cases it is enjoined that one should perform a certain ritual duty for a year and that after that year (immediately after that lapse of time) the results of one's efforts will manifest themselves (JB. 2, 409) or one should undertake a definite task (2, 410). Cf. also TB. 1, 1, 9, 7.

27. The above is not to say that a year is the maximum period of time or that there are no cycles of longer duration. Injunctions to spend a succession of years in performing different ritual tasks are not absent. PB. 25, 5, 1 f. "during a year they live according to the rules of the consecrated (cf. JB. 2, 55); during another year they perform the *upasads*; during a year they perform soma sacrifices"¹⁴. The sacrificial session on the river Dṛṣadvatī as described PB. 25, 13, 1 requires guarding cows during the first year, kindling fire during the second, consecrating and maintaining the fires in the third. The author of ŚŚ. 3, 8, 4, prescribing to the uninitiated how to act, if they wish to execute long unbloody sacrifices, orders them, by way of alternative, to perform each of these rites for a year. A longer sacrificial session consists of year-long cycles: PB. 25, 16, 1 "the first year is the *gavām ayana*, the second the *ādityānām ayana*, the third the *aṅgirasām ayana*" (which have been described in preceding chapters); in accordance with PB. 25, 16, 3 ŚŚ. 13, 28 gives the advice to perform this rite for the benefit of one desiring offspring. However, the ritualists make also mention of longer cycles. The twelve years' rite of Prajāpati passes off in triennial cycles (ŚŚ. 13, 28, 5)¹⁵. For periods of three years see also PB. 25, 6, 3 (dealing with a *sattra* of twelve years' duration); for periods of nine years 25, 7, 1 (dealing

13. Cf. Keith, Religion and philosophy, p. 348 f.

14. The translation of the stereotyped phrase *saṃvatsarāyādīkṣanta* (etc.) in ŚB. 6, 1, 3, 7; 12, 1, 1, 1; 12, 2, 1, 9; 12, 3, 5, 3-10 proposed by Eggeling, viz. "they consecrated themselves for a year" is ambiguous and should be rectified: in fact, "they consecrated themselves for (a sacrificial session of) a year" (thus rightly Eggeling 12, 2, 1, 1; 12, 2, 2, 8): the dative expressing "the object in view" could also be rendered by "with a view to (a session of) a year". It is the long soma ceremony (*sattra*) that is the subject of ŚB. 12, 1-5 (cf. also 4, 5, 1, 12; 4, 6, 2, 1; 4, 6, 4, 3-5).

15. In a quotation from a brāhmaṇa (ĀpŚ. 8, 22, 15; cf. 14) mention is made of periods of three years in which the seasonal sacrifices are not performed during one month; BhŚ. 8, 25, 9 and ĀpŚ. 8, 22, 10 f. deal with the triennial performance of these rites. AVPar. 71, 8, 1 speaks of diseases prevailing for three years.

with a *satttra* lasting 36 years); of 25 years 25, 8, 1 etc. ŚŚ. 13, 26 and 27 makes mention of the ordinary and the great *tapāścītam* (two of the longer *satttras*). The difference is this: in the former case those concerned are consecrated, perform the *upasads* and press the soma for a year (see above), in the latter for three years; then one should repeat the *gavām ayana*.

The so-called separate (*nirūḍha*) animal sacrifice is an instance of a ceremony that should take place either every six months, or every year (ĀśvŚ. 3, 8, 5).

V. For (through) a year or with (by) the year

28. In numerous cases the word for year occurs in the instrumental, whether in active sentences with other words figuring as subject (and object) and or in passive sentences with another word in the nominative. Some instances, quoted at random, are: ŚB. 4, 3, 1, 8 “they (two officiants offering the twelve seasonal libations) embrace this All (universe) by means of the year, this All (universe) is embraced by means of (“within”, Eggeling) the year”; TS. 5, 2, 5, 2 “in that (he ploughs) with (a team of twelve oxen, (he ploughs) with the year”¹; 5, 1, 10, 5; 6, 5, 3, 1; PB. 4, 2, 19. – AiB. 4, 22, 6 “he smites away the evil by the year”; ŚB. 8, 4, 3, 20; AiB. 5, 28, 10 f. “there are 720 evening and 720 morning libations in the year. So many are the bricks accompanied by *yajus* formulae of the fire. By (Keith) the year, by the fire has he sacrificed ...”; 5, 29, 5 “if he offers for two years before sunrise he has really sacrificed to (“for”, Keith) one (year) only; he who sacrifices after sunrise through (in the sense of “during the whole of”; “with”, Keith) obtains the year”. In the prayer for assistance found in AVP. 15, 2, 2; TS. 4, 4, 12, 4 and KS. 22, 14: 70, 15 Savitar is requested to help those speaking “with the year of the days”: does it mean “every day during the yearly revolution of the sun”²

Here the difficulty resides in the fact that in translating the Sanskrit instrumental we have to take our choice of a number of prepositions expressing different relations between the following noun and the other words in the sentence. The sociative function of this Sanskrit case is more essential and fundamental than the purely instrumental use which has derived from it. This case essentially indicates the person who or object which in some way or other accompanies the process. The instrumentalis of instrument, time and space must have originated in sentences denoting an instrument, time, or space, “sociatively” i.e. as attendants³. In translating

1. A.B. Keith, *The Veda of the Black Yajus School*, Cambridge Mass. 1914, p. 408.
2. MS. 3, 16: 189, 6 reads: “with the year, with the day (*ahnā*)”.
3. I refer to J. Gonda, *Old Indian*, Leiden-Köln 1971, p. 117; The character of the Sanskrit accusative, Vol. A. Martinet, Canarias 1957, p. 54 (= *Selected Studies*, Leiden 1975, I, p. 51).

we are confronted with the problem as to whether the attendant nominal concept is to be regarded as an instrument or as the medium (space, distance) traversed, time passed through or by the lapse of which anything is brought to a state of fulfilment, completion, etc. And in taking our choice we are liable to make mistakes, because in some cases it is not easy to decide what would have been Vedic man's choice, if he had to use the prepositions of an analytical language. Thus, when it TS. 2, 2, 5, 6 reads: "(this offering) is on twelve pieces of pottery; the year has twelve months, verily *saṃvatsareṇa* he drives away his (patron's) (rival) kinsmen", the question arises, whether the "attendance" or accompaniment of the year is a matter of instrumentality or of time gone through successfully. Is the year an instrument because of the twelve pieces of pottery to which its twelve months are homologized? (This is suggested by Keith's⁴ translation "by the year"). Or would the author have agreed with us in supposing the removal of the kinsmen to have come about after the completion of a year?⁵ What thoughts did the author call up before the minds of his audience when he paid homage to the bow and three arrows of Rudra *saṃvatsareṇa* (5, 5, 7, 2 f.; cf. ĀpŚ. 17, 12, 3); is the year a mere instrument ("with the year", Keith), or first and foremost a divine power whose assistance is indispensable (compare the following formulae), or should the audience be aware of the fact that in many contexts *saṃvatsareṇa* means "during a (the) whole period of a year" (notice that the sacrificer, whilst pronouncing the set of five formulae, circumambulates the fireplace turning to the points of the compass). Anyhow, a ritual act that is performed *saṃvatsareṇa* "by (means of) the year" can, in a case such as ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 38 bring about an intended result at the end of a year: by separating a brick which represents speech from another one that represents progeny by two seasonal bricks one separates speech from progeny by the year; hence children do not speak before the end of a year. See also TS. 5, 6, 4, 1.

29. As is well known, there exists also an accusative of space and time. Indicating that the process expressed by the verb is brought into an unspecified or unqualified relation with another idea expressed in the sentence this case, unlike the instrumental, does not imply any reference to such questions as to whether the process is completed within a definite space of time⁶. See, e.g., AVŚ. 15, 3, 1 "he stood a year (*saṃvatsaram*) upright"; ŚB. 4, 2, 4, 6 "were he (the officiant) to pour it (the soma) during the chanting, the sacrificer would not survive for a year": here the period of time is made to correspond to a ritual act, the chanting, which takes place in time; if one affects the chanting, repercussions are likely to occur in the course of the year. – ŚB. 2, 3, 2, 14 dealing with the worship of the sacred

4. Keith, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 152.

5. Compare, e.g., also Keith's translation of TS. 4, 4, 8, 1 in which the instrumental is sometimes rendered by "through", sometimes by "with"; see also TB. 1, 5, 3, 4.

6. I refer to Gonda, Vol. Martinet, p. 50 ff. (= Selected Studies, I, p. 47 ff.).

fire (*agnyuṣasthāna*) “let him endeavour to strengthen some one of these (gods or fires) for a year, whether he (the householder) himself will offer (the *agnihotra*) or some one else will offer for him”. ŚB. 13, 4, 3, 1 ff. relates full details of the so-called revolving story (*pāriṣlavam ākhyānam*) which in the framework of the horse sacrifice is a cyclic narrative dealing with mythical kings told by the *hotar* and lasts by identical series of ten days for the whole year.

VI. The year as a divine person

30. In a long discussion of the special animal sacrifices the author of TS. 2, 1 calls attention to the fact that a man who desires brahminical illustriousness (*brahmavarcasam*) may offer, in different seasons, animals of different colour to Agni, Indra, or Bṛhaspati. These animals, which represent fiery or brilliant energy (*tejas*), are immolated in the course of a year (2, 1, 2, 6), which is the giver of *brahmavarcasam* and therefore gives it to that sacrificer. Likewise 2, 1, 4, 2. Here the year is represented as a more or less personal, and in any case active, power which is able and qualified to dispose of something that is wanted by (a) human being(s). In JUB. 3, 5, 5 ff. the year is described as bidding welcome to a person who is conducted to it. Places such as TS. 7, 5, 6, 2 (“they place breath in the year” and PB. 5, 9, 11 “identifying” the *citrā* full moon¹ with the year’s eye point in the same direction (but notice that “head” (*mukham*) in PB. 5, 9, 8 means also “beginning”).

It is indeed not surprising that the year should occasionally be described as acting or behaving like a divine person²: ŚB. 6, 6, 1, 20 Saṃvatsara is, it is true after being “identified” with Agni Vaiśvānara, said to have performed the rite under discussion in the beginning. In connexion with the *sṛṣṭi* bricks (fourth layer of the great fireplace) ŚB. 8, 4, 3, 3 ff. quoting VS. 14, 28 ff. confirms the statement made in the latter that a number of deities, among them the year (§ 9), were successively the overlord (*adhipati*) when various creatures were created. In 8, 4, 3, 9 the year is practically put on a par with Indra, Bṛhaspati, Varuṇa and other gods. On the tenth day of the *daśarātra* ceremonies one sacrifices “to that deity, Saṃvatsara” (12, 1, 3, 20). A statement such as “it is the year which (Saṃvatsara who) repels from a firm foundation him who having piled up the great fireplace does not find

1. Cf. A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index of names and subjects*, London 1958, p. 417.
2. Cf. C.W.J. van der Linden, *The concept of deva in the Vedic age*, Thesis Utrecht 1954; H. von Glasenapp, *Entwicklungsstufen des indischen Denkens*, Halle S. 1949, p. 15 f.; cf. also ṚV. 2, 13, 1; AVŚ. 5, 28, 2.

a firm foundation'' (TS. 5, 4, 2, 2) is in a way a counterpart of proverbs and other traditional sayings in other languages embodying the experience of the irresistible power of time. In AVŚ. 3, 10, 9 mention is made of sacrificing to the seasons, the years, the months, more or less figuring as divine beings. The author of TS. 5, 3, 11, 3, speaking of the year's favourite presence or location (*priyaṃ dhāma*)³ no doubt considered it to be a deity. In AVŚ. 10, 6, 18 (AVP. 16, 44, 2) the year is said to have bound on an amulet and to defend (govern, AVP.) all existence (*bhūtam*).

The authors of TS. 5, 6, 23 and ĀpŚS. 20, 23, 12, dealing with the horse sacrifice, inform us that at the end of the year three he-goats with hanging dewlaps (?) are offered to the year (there are three others for each of the six seasons). In TB. 1, 6, 9, 5 *saṃvatsara* is the object of the verb *yajati* "to worship (by means of a sacrificial rite)". From these places as well as AVŚ. 3, 10, 9 and 10 "I sacrifice to the seasons, ... the years, the months" etc. it may be inferred that the year could in certain circles of ritualists receive offerings. Compare also AVŚ. 6, 55, 3; 11, 6, 17, where the years, months, etc. are besought to free those speaking from distress. In AiB. 2, 41, 9 the ṛgvedic words 3, 13, 7 ab addressed to Agni, viz. "Do thou accord us thousandfold property, with offspring and a well-nourished condition" are interpreted so as to refer to the year in its entirety or as a complex (*samastah*); the one who uses this stanza sets the year as a complex in order and "goes to it". In the section which deals with the sacrificial post AiB. 2, 2, 21 prescribes the use of the words "make us erect for moving, for life" (RV. 1, 36, 14 c), adding the comment "even if the sacrificer is seized (by Mr̥tyu, Death, comm.) he (the officiant) gives him to the year", that is "having avoided death he gives him to the year, the giver of a full lifetime, whose essence (nature) is time".

31. Sometimes the year is "identified" with another power concept regarded as acting like a divine personality. When the gods and the *asuras* were in conflict the *gāyatrī* – a metre of 24 syllables – remained away grasping and taking their authority, physical strength, and physical power, offspring and cattle, whereupon the gods addressed her as "All-maker" (*viśvakarman*) and the *asuras* as "Deceiver" (*dabhi*); since the *gāyatrī* "is the year", so the year remained away (TS. 2, 4, 3, 1 f.). In KS. 40, 12: 147, 5; MS. 2, 13, 22: 167, 20 the year, described as revolving in the middle of the inhabited world there to transform the creatures and to generate them in various forms, receives the epithets *dhṛtavrata* "faithful to its functional conduct" (elsewhere applied to Varuṇa, Indra, Agni etc.) and *parameṣṭhin* "being in the highest" (also an independent deity with which the year may be regarded as "identical"⁴) and is besought to protect "our sacrifice" from "the highest point of the heavens".

3. Cf. J. Gonda, The meaning of the Sanskrit term *dhāman*, Amsterdam Acad. 1967, Index, s.v.

4. See J. Gonda, *Parameṣṭhin*, to be published elsewhere.

Just as one can attain to communion or intimate union and residence in the same “world” (*sāyujyaṃ salokatā*)⁵ with Aditi, Viṣṇu, Āditya etc. (ŚB. 12, 1, 3, 1 ff.) one can by ritual means experience this form of intimacy with the year (9; 20), It is even possible to become the year: “the man who knows the equivalence (a profound or intimate knowledge, *uṇiṣad*)⁶ of the year becomes more prosperous and fortunate (*śreyān*); he comes to have the same *ātman*, he becomes the year, and as the year he joins the gods” (ŚB. 12, 2, 2, 23).

32. By means of an offering to Agni Vaiśvānara, who is the year, one delights or satisfies (*prīṇāti*) the year (which may result in access to the world of heaven, TS. 2, 2, 5, 4; 2, 5, 11, 6; 6, 3, 7, 3; cf. also 6, 2, 3, 4; 5, 7, 2, 5; TB. 1, 3, 7, 4; 1, 6, 8, 3; KB. 5, 1, 9; 19, 8 (19, 5, 4)). From TS. 2, 2, 5, 1 f. it may be inferred that if a man who desires offspring omits to make an oblation on twelve pieces of pottery to Agni Vaiśvānara who is the year, the year being unpropitiated (*aśāntah*) burns up the womb of (his) offspring. He should also offer an oblation to Varuṇa, who is expected to free him from his noose and to Dadhikrāvan⁷, who will purify him; since Vaiśvānara represents the year, this is here also virtually a divine power of the same rank entrusted with the duty of punishing men for omissions, recovering debts etc. Experiencing the individual character of events strongly pre-modern man wants to find specific and individual causes. *Post hoc* being interpreted as *propter hoc* a continued barrenness is ascribed to a ritual omission and the year – manifestating its power at the later moment when the lasting barrenness appears to be irremediable – is regarded as the deity competent to deal with ritual omissions. This is in any case in harmony with ṚV. 10, 190, 2 describing the year as having power or authority over “anything opening the eyes”, i.e. any living being, and with TS. 2, 2, 6, 2: “Those two who ally themselves with one another do so for the (or, a) year; Varuṇa seizes him of them who first acts treacherously”. The implication seems to be that a treaty or engagement is binding no longer than a year. Caland⁸ was inclined to interpret the somewhat mysterious PB. 10, 12, 5 “Speech (*vāc*) does not speak beyond the year” in the same way. Clear cases of limitation to a year occur TS. 2, 5, 4, 4 “the vow (*vrata*) does not extend beyond a year” (cf. 5 “for a year Agni, lord of vows, causes him to take a vow ...”) and 5, 7, 6, 1 “for a year should he observe the vow, for a vow does not extend beyond a year”. These statements were probably based on the conviction that years are cyclical periods of time characterized by the regular recurrence of definite events or phenomena, with which a continued

5. J. Gonda, *Loka. World and heaven in the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1966, p. 114.

6. Cf. E. Senart, in *Florilegium Vogüé*, Paris 1909, p. 575; L. Renou, *Mélanges Kunhan Raja*, Madras 1946, p. 55; A. Minard, *Trois énigmes sur les Cent Chemins*, Paris, I. 1949, p. 11; II, 1956, p. 317; 342.

7. Cf. A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic mythology*, Strassburg 1897, p. 148 f.

8. W. Caland, *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, Calcutta 1931, p. 247.

vow would be incompatible. Like natural phenomena etc. it should, if need be, be renewed. Remember that also the longer *sattras* consist of a number of individual years, not of one single continued ritual (PB. 25, 6; ĀpŚ. 11, 8 ff. etc.).

There is more to be said on the propitiation or appeasement of the year. Since the *vāravantīya sāman* “is” cattle and cattle represents “appeasement of evil” (*śānti*), the use of that *sāman* allows the participants in a long soma ceremony to rise from the year (i.e. to conclude the year-long ceremony) after it has been “appeased” (*śānta*, i.e. made free from inauspicious influences; PB. 5, 3, 12).

33. The year is, on the other hand, “general appeasement of evil” (*sarvasya śāntiḥ*, PB. 9, 8, 13), and that is why one should perform a sacrifice for the bones of a deceased sacrificer at the end of the year’s *sattra*; were those concerned to perform the sacrifice at an earlier moment, speech (i.e. the sacrifice) would become wounded and mangled (cf. also ŚB. 13, 3, 6, 6)⁹. As to these evil consequences, see e.g. PB. 21, 15, 4 “those who undertake the *mahāvratā* before (the end of) the year, perform a deed that cannot (should not) be done (*akṛtam*)”.

It is therefore not surprising to find the wish at the end of a prayer (TS. 7, 5, 20, 1) “may the year be appeased, i.e. auspicious (*śāntaḥ*)”. Compare also VS. 18, 23 and 26, 14 “the year must establish (perform, *dadhātu*) our sacrifice for thee and keep our children safe”, where Mahīdhara explains “year” by “the deity presiding over it”.

34. A few words may be inserted here on (the) *ekāṣṭakā*, the Year’s wife. *Ekāṣṭakā*, the *aṣṭakā* (the day of one of the four changes of the moon (*parvan*, a joint of the year, ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 24), the eighth day of the dark fortnight, especially in the winter and the cool season, also the rites performed or the oblations offered on these days¹⁰) par excellence – i.e. the eighth day of the month Māgha, if this is the only *aṣṭakā* ceremony performed – is already in the stanza AVŚ. 3, 10, 2 (AVP. 1, 104, 2), which is found also in PG. 3, 2, 2; HG. 2, 17, 2; MG. 2, 8, 4, called the consort (*patnī*) of the year, whereas in AVŚ. 3, 10, 3 (AVP. 3) it its “likeness, image, or symbol” (*pratimā*; see also PG., l.c.; MG., l.c.; TS. 5, 7, 2, 1). The *aṣṭakā* rituals have many features in common with the *śrāddha* ceremonies, rites for the deceased ancestors. They – or in any case the *ekāṣṭakā* – are obligatory but may be performed in a simple form. The wish is expressed that the *aṣṭakā* night may be auspicious (MG. 2, 8, 4), that there may be peace, safety, bliss, a long life, offspring etc. (PG. 3, 3, 6) etc.; there are in the formulae prescribed references to an oblation to the complete year (AVŚ. 3, 10, 5; MG., l.c.; cf. HG. 2, 14, 4) or expressions of the wish to enjoy for a long time the favour of

9. See also Caland, *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, p. 222.

10. I refer to Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 157 f.; Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 451 ff.

the years which are worthy of worship (JG. 2, 3). According to TS. 7, 4, 8, 1 and PB. 5, 9, 2 during the *ekaṣṭakā* (day and) night the year stays with his consort, the *Ekaṣṭakā* (just as, the commentator explains, in earthly life a husband stays at night with his wife, the year being a manifestation of Prajāpati). AVŚ. 3, 10, 8 (AVP. 1, 106, 1; 1, 104, 2) is a prayer for long-lived progeny united with abundance of wealth after the statement that the year, her husband, has come to *Ekāṣṭakā*. Those who consecrate themselves for the year (rite) should, according to TS., l.c., and PB., l.c. consecrate themselves on this day; “then they grasp (*ārabhya*, TS.) the year”. The explanation of the intimate relation between the year and the *Ekāṣṭakā* may be found in the fact that the latter was a New Year’s day¹¹; hence also its suitability for that consecration.

35. The year is on the other hand also described as having come into existence, just as other power substances¹², “from the ocean” (RV. 10, 190, 2), which no doubt means that it arose “from the primeval waters” from which the universe has been produced (ŚB. 6, 8, 2, 3).

The relation between the frame of creation (*skambha*), in any case a “spatial” concept, and the year in AVŚ. 10, 7, 5 is not clear: “whereto do the months ... go, in concord with the year, tell me that *skambha* to which the seasons ... go”.

11. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 410.

12. “Daseinsmächte, eigenständige Realitäten” (von Glasenapp, Entwicklungsstufen, p. 15).

VII. Steadiness

36. Among those words that in passages dealing with the year are not infrequently used are the noun *pratiṣṭhā* “a firm foundation” and the verb *pratiṣṭhati* “to be firmly established”¹. These terms express the idea of steadiness for which Vedic man was eager. When a power is *pratiṣṭhita* it is settled and placed where it belongs; it does not exert its influence in places and under circumstances where it would be unwished-for and dangerous, where it would infringe the cosmic and ritual norms and rules. Only when one is firmly placed (*pratiṣṭhitaḥ*) can one undertake a risky task (ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 18, cf. 2, 1, 4, 26; PB. 18, 10, 10). Just as these worlds are firmly established on the primeval waters the year is established on day and night (ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 17; 19)² or on the day (JB. 2, 431). The knowledge of this relation between a (natural) day and the year could no doubt relieve the audience of anxiety: the year, long and unsurveyable, cannot become detached from the day, a much more familiar and reliable concept, so to say, its smallest component part and as such of the same nature. A brick used in piling the Nāciketa fireplace is TB. 3, 11, 1, 13 addressed as the *nakṣatras* that depend on the moon, and as the *pratiṣṭhā* of the year³.

Passages such as ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 19 are at first sight incomprehensible: “Day and night are his (Agni’s) firm foundation, for on day and night this year is founded. The moon is the attachment (hook, connecting link, *āsañjanam*), for to the moon this year is attached by means of the seasons ...”. If, however, we read the preceding § 17 “The waters are his (Agni’s) firm foundation, for on the waters these worlds are founded. The sun is the *āsañjanam*, for to the sun these worlds are attached by means of the quarters”, § 19 becomes clearer and appears to be a variant of § 17 (see also § 21) which is no doubt more original: the primeval waters are in Vedic India as well as other countries supposed to have been the origin and

1. J. Gonda, *Pratiṣṭhā*, in *Selected Studies*, II, p. 338 ff.

2. On this passage see p. 73 below.

3. Compare ch. XV below.

foundation of the world⁴; Agni's luminous energy (*varcas*) in the sky is the sun (7, 1, 1, 23), and the fire on the fireplace is identical with that heavenly body (6, 1, 2, 20; 6, 4, 1, 8), which, on the other hand, is said to support the regions of the universe (8, 2, 1, 10; cf. VS. 17, 72 quoted ŚB. 9, 2, 3, 34, where Agni upholds the regions – which 14, 3, 1, 17 are his corners – by means of his fiery energy (*tejas*)), but elsewhere Agni and the regions are “identified” (6, 2, 2, 34). As to § 19, the relation between the year and the natural day is clear, the moon corresponds to the sun, the year and the seasons (temporal concepts) to these worlds and the quarters (spatial concepts; see 5, 4, 1, 8 stating that the quarters are a manifestation of the seasons).

37. On the other hand the year is, intelligibly enough, regarded as the *pratiṣṭhā* of all beings (ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 22, where it is “identified” with the 33-fold hymn form which because of its composition is also a *pratiṣṭhā*). But one “obtains” the year only by means of the seasons and it is only by these that one continues finding a firm foundation in the year (AiB. 4, 16, 1; cf. TS. 5, 7, 6, 5). By paying reverence with six stanzas one comes to rest firmly on the seasons (which are six in number), by using also another six stanzas, on the year (which has twelve months; TS. 1, 5, 7, 3)⁵. Since the year “is” the world of heaven one is firmly established in the latter by having a *pratiṣṭhā* in the former (7, 4, 1, 3; 7, 4, 2, 5; 7, 4, 3, 4). By a definite arrangement one becomes firmly founded in (or on) the year (7, 3, 10, 2). The close relation between the year and the sacrificial ritual is also intimated by the statement that by means of a definite ritual technique the sacrificer is firmly established in the year (ŚB. 13, 1, 5, 6; cf. 13, 3, 2, 1; 13, 8, 2, 6; 13, 8, 3, 7 *ṛtuṣv evainam etat samvatsare pratiṣṭhāyām pratiṣṭhāpayati*); this implies that he is not likely to fall into the chaos and darkness which we have seen⁶ is outside the year⁷. After establishing himself in the seasons, in the year the sacrificer ascends to the deities (TB. 3, 9, 9, 1), and by preparing twelve porridges and presenting them to the priests he establishes himself in the year (3, 9, 18, 2). By means of the *bṛhatī* metre on which the heavenly world is firmly founded one establishes oneself in the heavenly world (13, 5, 4, 28). Likewise by performing the *pañcahotar* rite, which, like the heavenly world, “is” the year (TB. 2, 2, 3, 6). This much desired condition can likewise by ritual means combine with the realization of another ambition (TB. 2, 7, 10, 2: in the seasons (and) in the year; PB. 3, 12, 3: in the year (and) in cattle). But those who perform an animal sacrifice in which eleven victims are

4. Cf. J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens*, 2I, Stuttgart 1978, p. 405 s.v. Urwasser; M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris 1949, p. 170 f. See e.g. RV. 10, 121, 7; VS. 11, 29; ŚB. 6, 4, 1, 8.

5. See also TS. 5, 4, 8, 6; 7, 1, 10, 4; 7, 2, 1, 2; 7, 2, 6, 2; 3; 7, 3, 8, 1; 7, 4, 3, 2; 7, 4, 5, 2; 7, 4, 7, 2; 7, 5, 1, 4.

6. See p. 14 above.

7. See also TS. 7, 3, 8, 1; PB. 4, 1, 17; 4, 4, 11; 15, 1, 10; 18, 9, 21; 18, 11, 6.

immolated before the year has been “obtained” reach a condition of instability (*apraṭiṣṭhā*, TB. 1, 2, 5, 1⁸). According to the authorities cited TS. 7, 4, 11, 4 the year is *apraṭiṣṭhitah*; it is greater (longer) than a *praṭiṣṭhā* which seems to mean “the year is not to be firmly founded; it is too great to be a *praṭiṣṭhā*”⁹.

38. The year is, however, also considered to be able to withhold a *praṭiṣṭhā* from a sacrificer. In connexion with the *agnicayana* ritual it reads in TS. 5, 4, 2, 2: “It is the year which repels from a *praṭiṣṭhā* him who having piled up the fireplace does not find a *praṭiṣṭhā*”. If, however, one constructs the sixth layer one will find a *praṭiṣṭhā* in the six seasons, the year¹⁰. – It is not surprising to read in ŚB. 12, 2, 1, 1 ff.; GB. 1, 5, 2 that the one who is to be consecrated for a sacrificial session of a year – which is compared to the crossing of the sea – should know the firmly founded places that offer standing ground (*gādhapraṭiṣṭhāḥ*); as such, it is stated, serve the *caturviṃśa* day, the *abhijit* day etc.

In AVP. 17, 29, 11 *praṭiṣṭhā* combines with *āyatanam* “the place which belongs to a person (etc.) and to which he (etc.) regularly resorts to achieve a definite purpose”¹¹. In TS. 2, 2, 6, 1 “the year is the *āyatanam* of the gods; from the *āyatanam* they drove the *asuras* in defeat. In that one offers to (Agni) Vaiśvānara (who is the year) on twelve pieces of pottery, one places oneself (*yataṭe*) on the *āyatanam* of the gods”. The implication is that the gods could not defeat the *asuras* before they has resorted to the year as their proper province.

8. For *apraṭiṣṭhā* see also TB. 2, 2, 9, 4; JUB. 3, 4, 1, 4; ŚB. 1, 6, 1, 18; 7, 4, 1, 12 etc.
9. For another interpretation see Keith, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 610.
10. In TB. 3, 11, 1, 13 f. two bricks used in constructing the Nāciketa fireplace are successively described as the *nakṣatras* that are fixed on (connected with, depend on, *śrītāni*) the moon and as the *praṭiṣṭhā* of the year; and as the year that is fixed (etc.) on the *nakṣatras* and is the *praṭiṣṭhā* of the seasons.
11. Cf. J. Gonda, in ALB 33 (1969), p. 1 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 178 ff.).

VIII. Entering the year

39. Proceeding now to discuss the expression *samvatsaram praviś-* which is usually translated by “to enter the year” it may, to begin with, be noticed that even the months, fortnights and seasons, which are parts of the year, are explicitly said to be able to enter it (TS. 7, 4, 2, 2), and whilst doing so to reach the assembly of the gods. This must mean that they become wholly identical with the year and able to achieve the same objects as the year which in the preceding section (7, 4, 1, 3) is stated to be the heavenly world. The one who knowing thus performs the rite of 24 days likewise enters the year and reaches a better status.

By using six different case forms in the formulae addressed to Agni one produces this god out of the six seasons, the year which he had entered (ŚB. 2, 2, 3, 26 f.). ŚB. 12, 3, 5, 2 ff. proposes a solution of the following problem: how do the several sacrifices of those who perform a year-long soma ceremony (*sattra*) and become consecrated for that period come to be uninterrupted?; after stating the ritual means (offerings etc.) by which this object is achieved, the author observes (§ 11): “It is thus that these sacrificial rites (*yajñakratavaḥ*¹) enter into the year”, that means, “they become blended, fuse or amalgamate with the year, i.e. with the period during which the year-long *sattra* is performed”. At 12, 3, 1, 9 the Supreme Self or Supreme Spirit (*adhyātmam*) is said to have entered the year endowed with all *stomas* and all *sāmans*. According to 13, 2, 5, 1 the life sap of the horse poured out by Prajāpati entered the year.

40. It is also possible to expel a spiteful rival from the year: the year comprises 24 fortnights, a definite soma ceremony requires 24 laudatory stanzas; by cutting off the last parts of these stanzas one cuts off the “Lebensraum” (*loka*²) of the rival and works his ruin, expelling him from the year (JB. 2, 122 ff.). This no doubt means that the rival is deprived of

1. For this word (“a particular mode of ritual performance”) see J. Gonda, *The Vedic morning litany*, Leiden 1981, p. 109 ff.
2. See Gonda, *Loka*, passim.

the good the year stands for and brings. When one adds fuel to the ritual fire at a distance of twelve steps “one expels him from the year, which has twelve months” (TB. 1, 1, 4, 1). The same effect is produced by the procedure described 1, 1, 9, 10, viz. if one does not add fuel *samvatsare*, but in the year before (that year), on the twelfth day before, because periods of twelve days are images (counterparts) of the year.

IX. Winning or obtaining the year

41. The year is also one of the objects for the possession of which the gods and their antagonists, the *asuras*, contended and which was gained by the former (TB. 1, 5, 6, 3 f.). It is therefore time to deal with the frequent phrases “to win or obtain the year”¹. Says the author of ŚB. 2, 6, 3, 1 “imperishable is the merit of the one who offers the seasonal sacrifices², for such a one wins (*jayati*) the year, and hence there is undecaying (*akṣayyam*, viz. merit, prosperity etc.) (for him)”. Whereas this place holds out a prospect of gaining the year in three divisions (the seasonal sacrifices), ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 17 speaks of obtaining possession of the year in five (divisions) by being anointed five times, because there are five seasons in the year. And at 6, 2, 2, 31 the problem is discussed as to how an animal sacrifice will gain (*āpnoti*) the year, and how it is numerically congruent with the year, with Agni. By using 15 *gāyatrī* stanzas (of 24 syllables each) one obtains (*āpnoti*) the days of the year and the year (1, 3, 5, 9; see also 11, 5, 2, 10; 12, 2, 1, 7; PB. 4, 2, 7–9; TS. 2, 5, 8, 3). Various other rites and ritual techniques serve to achieve the same purpose (*saṃvatsarasayāptiyāi*), e.g. in KB. 7, 10 (7, 12, 41) a particular mode of recitation; 8, 1, 9 the recitations of twelve stanzas; in ŚB. 7, 2, 2, 6 yoking a team of six, twelve, or 24 oxen (notice the numbers of the seasons etc.)³. According to AiB. 4, 13, 7 one obtains the year by performing the rite of a definity day⁴. But the author of TB. 1, 8, 10, 1 is of the opinion that one does not reach or gain (*āpnoti*) the year before one has a *pratiṣṭhā*.

Although there can be no doubt that “obtaining the year” stood for something like “deriving benefit from it”, authors dwelling upon the implications of the relevant phrases and on the advantages resulting from

1. As to “to win, gain, or obtain” Prajāpati see, e.g., TS. 5, 4, 2, 4; 5, 4, 7, 2; 5; 6, 1, 2, 7; 6, 2, 10, 6; 6, 3, 3, 6; 6, 3, 7, 1; 7, 2, 2, 2; 7, 2, 3, 2; 7, 3, 8, 2.
2. See p. 20 above.
3. See also KB. 9, 2, 19; 9, 4, 9; 9, 6, 22; 13, 7, 29; 14, 1, 7; 14, 3, 20; 15, 2, 3; 16, 9, 17; 16, 11 (16, 10, 13); 7, 5 (17, 4, 19); 19, 3 (19, 2, 17); 19, 7 (19, 4, 31); 19, 8 (19, 5, 9); 23, 1 (23, 4, 25); 26, 16 (26, 13, 50).
4. See also AiB. 5, 29, 5; 4, 13, 7 as well as TB. 3, 9, 1, 2.

the obtaining of the year are sometimes helpful in allowing us to form an idea of what these expressions meant to them and their audience. Says Kauṣītaki (KB. 11, 7, 18 ff.): “After having obtained the season (he obtains) the year and the desires that are in the year (i.e. all objects of desire that can be gained, all ambitions that can be realized in the course of a year)”⁵. Similarly, KB. 19, 10 (19, 7, 3 f.); 30, 10 (30, 7, 20 f.). According to the authorities quoted at ŚB. 10, 2, 4, 1 “the year is (includes) all objects of desire” (*saṃvatsaraḥ sarve kāmāḥ*), “for indeed”, the author adds, “outside the year there is no object of desire whatever”. In harmony with these statements 6, 2, 2, 35 and KB. 26, 1, 19 make mention of wishes that are (contained) in the year⁶. In this connexion one might quote passages such as MS. 4, 3, 3: 42, 8 and KS. 10, 3: 127, 15 “the year is the one who affords an opportunity of eating food”; JB. 2, 303 “the year ripens all food and enables us to eat it (*krtsnam annādyam pacati*); they obtain (*upayanti*) that possibility of eating food when it has been completely acquired by the year” and TS. 7, 5, 1, 1 attesting to the conviction that by performing a rite of a year’s duration one obtains one’s desire; KS. 10, 3: 127, 8 “after having obtained the year one gains the acquisition of the objects acquired”. In 14, 1, 6 ff. Kauṣītaki adds to “all the objects of desire”: “all continuance of life (*sarvam amṛtatvam*): “The gods obtained the sixfold year (there are six seasons) with its six seasons, and by the year all objects of desire, all *amṛtatvam*”. Attention may in this connexion be drawn to the identification of the year with a full span of human life (*āyus*) in MS. 4, 6, 8: 91, 12; KS. 10, 4: 128, 13; 11, 8: 154, 10 as well as to the statement “a full lifetime is the highest object of desire” in KS. 37, 16: 66, 4.

How important it is to have gained the year may appear also from places such as the following. In ŚB. 11, 1, 2, 12 it is stated that “only when the gods had gained the year were they free from (premature) death”; the author adds that to those who perform the rite under discussion “accrues imperishable merit, the imperishable world” (*akṣayyam sukṛtam bhavaty akṣayyo lokah*); in 12, 1, 3, 22 that “when they enter upon the concluding *atirātra*, then, having gained the year, they become firmly established in the heavenly world”. See also JB. 1, 252; TB. 3, 1, 6, 1. According to TS. 7, 4, 3, 2 f. those who have gained the year by means of the seasons find a *pratiṣṭhā*⁷ in the year. In TS. 5, 5, 1, 7 the piling of the great fireplace when the due season has come after obtaining the year is compared to the birth of a child in due course after a year’s growth as an embryo.

The celebration of a day on which all lauds consists of 24 stanzas – the number of the fortnights – enables the performers to lay hold (*ārabhante*) of

5. This point is emphasized by G.U. Thite, *Sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa-texts*, Poona 1975, p. 71; 224, quoting JB. 2, 303; 307; PB. 18, 4, 11.

6. Cf. also KB. 14, 1, 8; 19, 10 (19, 7, 16); 30, 10 (30, 7, 21).

7. See ch. VII above.

the year (PB. 4, 2, 6; cf. also 17; 5, 9, 2; AiB. 4, 12, 4 and compare 6, 8, 4)⁸. When one consecrates oneself in the beginning of the year one grasps (*ārabhya*) it at its beginning (TS. 7, 4, 8, 2). “The man who tries to take possession of the year in any other way than by means of the seasonal sacrifices, which are manifestly the year, is deprived of offspring and cattle and fails to reach heaven” (ŚB. 13, 2, 5, 2). It may also be remembered that the year is *sarvam* (ŚB. 5, 4, 5, 14 etc.) and that in the year are contained the past and the future (*bhūtaṃ ca bhavyaṃ ca*, PB. 18, 9, 7); the following words reveal the significance of this fact in ritual practice: “He (the officiant) makes him (the patron of the sacrifice) prosper in regard to the past and the future”. That means that by obtaining the year one masters the whole of time.

After the example of the gods who in prehistoric times “saw” the offerings and worshipped with them a sacrificer can by means of this rite win (*prajayati*) the seasons, the year and deprive his rivals of them (ŚB. 1, 5, 3, 3; 4; see also 1, 6, 1, 19 (with *jayati*)). Likewise dealing with a rival who is to be ousted from his unimpaired condition: PB. 19, 18, 3 (*avarundhe* “secures”).

42. Another phrase, translated by “to mount (*ārohati*) the year”, should rather be understood to express the idea of “trying to take possession of or to attain, venturing on, the year”: TS. 7, 2, 1, 2 “by the *prsthās* (a particular arrangement of *sāmans*) they venture on the seasons, by the seasons on the year; in the year they establish themselves firmly”; 7, 2, 6, 2; 7, 4, 7, 2. It may be recalled that at KB. 20, 1, where the year is said to be the revolving wheel of the gods, this wheel, being continuance of life and the possibility (of supplying men) with the sixfold food, is the place on which the gods have mounted and move round all the worlds including that of Death and that of brahman. In that they perform the *abhiplava* soma ceremony sacrificers mount on the year and obtain that food. See also KB. 26, 1 (26, 2, 2).

In contrast to modern translations such as “the grandeur (majesty) that has accrued to thee in the day, in a year ...”⁹ – words with which the *mahiman* libation presented in a golden vessel is addressed (VS. 23, 2; ŚB. 13, 5, 2, 23; KŚ. 20, 7, 16) – the commentators Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara explain *ahan samvatsare* etc. as locatives of motive¹⁰: the wish to “possess” the year etc. has induced the action described. Cf. also VS. 23, 4; ŚB. 13, 5, 3, 7.

8. For the use of the verb *īpsati* “to desire to obtain” see TB. 1, 4, 10, 3; of *upepsati* see KB. 11, 7, 11; of *samaśnute* “to gain, reach” 19, 2 (19, 1, 10); of *avarundhe* “to obtain” TB. 3, 8, 1, 1; 3, 9, 2, 2.
9. Cf. R. T. H. Griffith, *The texts of the White Yajurveda*, Benares 1927, p. 249; Eggeling, *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, V, Oxford 1900, p. 391.
10. See J. S. Speyer, *Vedische und Sanskrit-Syntax*, Strassburg 1896, § 77, 4, p. 22.

X. Numbers and numerical congruence

43. At this point attention must be invited to an important and characteristic expedient of Vedic ritualist and “philosophical” thought and argumentation, viz. the numerical congruence of different concepts or entities or a numerical system of classification. By means of their “arithmétique mythologique” (and, one should add, “rituelle”)¹ the ritualists endeavoured to understand the interrelations between conceptually different entities and notions. A common number can sum up and mould into one and the same complex an unlimited quantity of entities that belong to different categories. Combining quantities or aggregates of persons, objects, and what we would call concepts or abstractions that are, or for the sake of argument were regarded as, countable and amount, or were considered to amount, to the same number and arranging them so as to form numerical systems of classification, the ritualists were convinced of the possibility of equating or “identifying” them and of the feasibility of “gaining”, comprehending, “mastering” the other constituents of the complex, if only one of its elements was known, “reached”, or understood². The term used to indicate this mental operation is *sam̐pad* “accomplishment, equalization” and in this connexion “numerical congruence”³. A good instance of a *sam̐pad* – the term occurs in the text – occurs ŚB. 1, 5, 2, 16: “there are five ritual utterances (e.g. “bid the god hear!”); fivefold is the sacrifice, is the victim, are the seasons of the year, “this is the one measure (*mātrā*) of the year, this the *sam̐pad*”⁴. The rites connected with the purchase

1. The term is Bergaigne’s (La religion védique, II, p. 114 ff.).
2. It may be remembered that where we moderns would see no more than a mere association of thought or a more or less fortuitous correspondence in number etc., the ancients and so-called primitives were inclined to find a causal connexion or a possibility of manipulation by the man “who knows”.
3. Oldenberg, Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft, p. 113, n. 2; Minard, Cent chemins, I, p. 201 f; L. Silburn, Instant et cause, Paris 1955, p. 61 f.; 67; Heesterman, Royal consecration, p. 34 f.
4. Not “consummation” (Eggeling’s translation, ŚB. I, p. 142).

of the soma for the *agnicayana* ceremony provide the number twelve (four clod-bricks are put on, sand is scattered with a hymn of six stanzas; the seed is made to grow with two stanzas); so this number is the *sāmpad*⁵ connecting Agni with the year (ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 47). See also ŚB. 9, 1, 1, 43; 9, 3, 3, 18. – The author of ŚB. 9, 3, 3, 18 discusses the question as to how the offering called “shower of good (of wealth)” (*vasor dhārā*) “reaches” the year (*āpnoti*, Eggeling’s translation is “obtains (conformity with) the year”) and Agni (the place of the sacred fire), and how it amounts to⁶, i.e. attains to numerical correspondence (*sāmpadyate*) with these two. In the answer the 360 libations of this rite are said to correspond to the 360 days of the year, and to the same number of the bricks of the fireplace, etc. For a similar argument see 6, 2, 2, 31: “how does that (sacrificial) ... (see above)? Well, for those five victims there are 24 kindling stanzas, twelve *āpri* stanzas ...”

Some instances of argumentation by means of numerical congruence have already been mentioned or will be discussed in other sections of this publication. The following may find a place here. The offering of twelve so-called season cups of soma serves to get acquainted with the year, because the year consists of twelve months (TS. 6, 5, 3, 1). The one who uses a rope twelve cubits long to tie the sacrificial horse obtains the year (TB. 3, 8, 1, 1)⁷. According to PB. 18, 2, 3; ĀpŚ. 22, 9, 11 ff. and other works the *ṛtapeya* soma sacrifice should be performed by a man who wishes to reach heaven: this ceremony requires twelve consecrations and *upasad* days and the year is equivalent to twelve months (PB. 4; 14). The twelve full moon days, the twelve eighth days (following the full moon days) and the twelve new moon days are the “psychical and physical faculties” (*indriyaṃ vīryam*) of the year which one “gains” by a rite of twelve days’ duration (which is preceded by the same number of consecrations and *upasads*; PB. 10, 3, 11; see also 18, 9, 5).

By means of a rite of six days’ duration (a *śadhaha*) one mounts the wheel of the gods for safety and finds a firm foundation in the seasons which are six in number (TS. 7, 4, 11, 2 f.). The one who makes the twenty-fourfold offering will be firmly established in the year which has 24 half-months (TS. 7, 5, 1, 3 f.). For the same reason are those who perform four *śadahas*, making up 24 days, said to follow the year (7, 4, 11, 4)⁸. For the year and a team of six, twelve or 24 oxen see ŚB. 7, 2, 2, 6. For the year with 360 nights⁹ and 360 enclosing stones ŚB. 10, 4, 3, 13; 10, 5, 4, 10.

5. Here Eggeling translated “(mystic) correspondence”.

6. For this translation see JB. 1, 27 “he offers during three days; this amounts to twelve oblations” (*dvādaśāhutayāḥ sāmpadyate*); 2, 238.

7. For twelve or thirteen months see also ŚB. 2, 2, 3, 27; 10, 5, 4, 15; PB. 12, 4, 17; JB. 1, 27; 2, 182; KB. 1, 1 (1, 2, 30); 16, 11 (16, 10, 12).

8. Cf. also ŚŚ. 14, 2, 13; 15, 5, 11.

9. Cf. also ŚB. 11, 1, 2, 10 f.; PB. 9, 3, 6; 18, 11, 6; TB. 1, 8, 10, 1. As to 720 or 721 see AiB. 5, 28, 10; AiĀ. 3, 2, 1; JB. 2, 238.

44. Not infrequently, the year is described as being homologous to the Vedic stanza called *br̥hatī*, which consists of 36 syllables forming four verses divided into two hemistichs (8, 8, 12, 8). Says ŚB. 6, 4, 2, 10: “What comes to be like (*abhisampadyate*) the year, comes to be like (*abhisampadyate*) the *br̥hatī*, for the year is the *br̥hatī*, (viz.) twelve full moons, twelve eighth days (of the fortnight of waning moon), twelve new moons; that makes 36, and the *br̥hatī* consists of 36 syllables”. In 11, 5, 2, 10 the formulae of the seasonal offerings are said to amount to (*sampadyate*) to 362 *br̥hatī* stanzas; thereby the sacrificer gains both the year and the *mahāvratā*. In 12, 2, 3, 1 the year is again said to amount to (*abhisampannaḥ*) the *br̥hatī*, because there are 36 soma days known by special names. In a similar way the ritual year is JB. 2, 29 f. said to be composed of the *br̥hatī*. In ŚB. 13, 5, 4, 28 the one who offers six animals to each of six gods establishes himself in the heavenly world by means of the *br̥hatī*¹⁰. The result of a definite rite requiring mantras that amount to six *br̥hatīs* is that cattle will be born after the lapse of a year, because the year is equal to six seasons and the *br̥hatī* is cattle (PB. 19, 18, 4 f.). It may be recalled that the *br̥hatī* occurs also in other speculations: cattle are related to it (ŚB. 12, 7, 2, 15); the gods reached heaven by it (12, 2, 3, 1; 12, 3, 3, 13); 21 of them are the measure of the universe (10, 5, 4, 6 ff.); it is the mind (*manas*) of Prajāpati (10, 3, 1, 1; 5).

“The great fireplace (*agni*) has five layers; the year has five seasons; the year is Agni” (ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 25). “The sacrifice and the victim are fivefold, the year has five seasons; that is why the omentum¹¹ consists of five portions” (11, 7, 4, 4).

In order to obtain Prajāpati’s number seventeen the twelve months and five seasons are, e.g. PB. 18, 9, 5, added op¹². See also PB. 18, 4, 11; and compare cases such as ŚB. 12, 2, 2, 6. Hence also PB. 6, 2, 2 “the 17fold one is the year” (Prajāpati is the year); 10, 1, 7. – By means of five formulae consisting of 17 syllables (in the aggregate) one can find the *sampad* of the sacrifice, which is identical with Prajāpati (ŚB. 1, 5, 2, 17).

45. Some more (explicitly or implicitly) complicated instances are: TB. 1, 7, 7, 5 six oblations before and six after the anointing enable the sacrificer to enter the stronghold of the gods which is (identical) with the year that has twelve months; ŚB. 1, 3, 5, 9 one obtains the year by means of fifteen *gāyatrī* stanzas which contain 360 syllables, the number of the days of the year; 3, 1, 3, 17 the sacrificer is anointed five times, because the sacrifice¹³ is

10. See p. 43 above.

11. This is the traditional translation of *vaṣā*; recently, however, T. Burrow (BSOAS 95 (1982), p. 188) argued in favour of “internal deposit of fat within the animal” (the “leaf” or “flare”).

12. See also p. 23 above.

13. Cf., e.g., also PB. 24, 14, 1.

commensurate with the year which has five seasons¹⁴. See also the long exposition of the conformity of the Śatarudriya litany with the year and Agni in ŚB. 9, 1, 1, 43. Computations such as the following are not rare: “there are 21 offerings – there are twelve months and five seasons in a year and three worlds and the sun, the goal, the *pratiṣṭhā* is the twenty-first¹⁵: he thus reaches that goal, that *pratiṣṭhā*” (11, 2, 6, 11).

The fact that the year could so often and so deliberately be co-ordinated with ritual and social events shows most clearly that to Vedic man it did not mean a neutral and abstract frame of reference but rather one of a succession of recurring phases, charged with a peculiar value, power and significance¹⁶, the conception of time being, like that of space, neither continuous nor homogeneous, but concrete and qualitative, not abstract and quantitative.

14. For other instances see AiB. 3, 39, 6; ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 31 ff.; 9, 1, 1, 43; 10, 4, 3, 19; 10, 5, 4, 10; 15. In TB. 1, 1, 6, 7 twelve days are said to be a *pratimā* “image, symbol, reflection” of the year (see p. 15 above): if one scatters oblations for twelve days one appeases Rudra “with the year”.

15. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 40 f. and, e.g., ŚB. 1, 3, 5, 11; 6, 7, 1, 2; 9, 1, 1, 26; 13, 1, 7, 3.

16. Cf. H. and H.A. Frankfort, Before Philosophy, Harmondsworth 1949, p. 35.

XI. Identifications

46. Let us now pay special attention to the many identifications or homologations, that is to those passages in which something else is, in a simple predication – as is well known, a form of the verb “to be” connecting subject and predicate is not used – stated to be the year, or vica versa. In translating or in attempting to render the sense of the original texts more or less paraphrastically into a modern language one might also use verbs such as “represents”, “is co-ordinated with”, “is equivalent to”, etc. or, in case of need, “belongs to”, “is closely connected with”, “shares certain essential qualities with” or, briefly, “symbolizes”. From a survey of the relevant texts the conclusion seems to emerge that in the opinion of the authors another concept or entity has, in a definite context or when viewed in a definite light or from a definite angle, so much in common with the year or resembles it to such an extent that a belief in “the coincidence of their identities” suggests itself, that at least a part or aspect of the other entity or concept coincides with, or manifests itself in, the year without, however, being regarded as completely, absolutely or constantly identical with it.

47. Some gods are explicitly “identified” with the year. In a section dealing with the *śunāsīra* offering at the end of the seasonal sacrifices etc. (see, e. g., ŚB. 5, 2, 4, 4 ff.; TS. 1, 8, 7) TB. 1, 7, 1, 1, after enjoining those concerned to offer a cake on twelve pieces of pottery (notice the number) to Indra Śunāsīra, states that this god is (represents, is equivalent to) the year and that by means of this offering one secures food for the patron of the sacrifice “with (in the course of)¹ the year (*saṃvatsarena*)”. Vāyu, the giver of rain, receives milk. Indra Śunāsīra is no doubt an agricultural deity (cf. AVŚ. 3, 17, 5) and is here probably regarded as fulfilling his function or as being influential during the whole year. Cf. TB. 2, 5, 8, 12 *indraḥ śunāvad vitanoti śīram, saṃvatsarasya pratimānam etat*, which probably means “Indra “extends” the plough which is furnished with a share; that is a counterpart (likeness) of the year”. A similar explanation may be proposed for TB. 1, 7,

1. See p. 34 ff. above.

2, 1, where Dhātār receives the same offering and, “being the year”, presides over the production of offspring *saṃvatsareṇa*. Dhātār, the god who “places” the embryo and is worshipped by those who are desirous of a son etc.², was no doubt likewise regarded as active throughout the year. See also MS. 4, 3, 6: 45, 2; KS. 12, 8: 170, 19, and TS. 1, 5, 1, 3 “Dhātār is the year; that is why offspring and cattle are born in the course of a year”.

A twelfefold offering is also given to Agni Vaiśvānara, that manifestation of fire which, “belonging to all men”, is especially present in lightning, sun and the *āhavanīya* hearth (TB. 1, 7, 2, 5); being homologized with the year he is said to be propitiated *saṃvatsareṇa*. The same deity, being the year, is with the same oblation and the same effect worshipped by a man who is calumniated (TS. 2, 2, 5, 1); or who by making over the year wished to win the heavenly world (4), to win a conflict (2, 2, 6, 1), to prevent enemies from wiping off their sin upon him (2), or himself from becoming like a sheep (3), etc. (4)³. The epithet *vaiśvānara* is at ŚS. 12, 17, 1 given to another manifestation of the same god, Parikṣit: AiB. 6, 32, 11: “Parikṣit is Agni, for Agni surrounds (dwells around, *pari kṣeti*) these creatures” and 14 Parikṣit is the year, for the year surrounds these creatures”.

Varuṇa is occasionally said to be the year: ŚB. 4, 1, 4, 10 (“and longevity (*āyus*) is the year, hence longevity is Varuṇa”); 4, 4, 5, 18 (“that is why there are six oblations for Varuṇa, because the year has six seasons”). The former place seems to lead us up to the explanation of this rare identification. Quoting VS. 7, 10 (cf. RV. 4, 42, 10) the author of ŚB. explains the word *ṛtāyūbhyām* “for the two who observe the *ṛta* (i.e. Varuṇa and Mitra)” incorrectly as “for *ṛta* and *āyus* (a full life-time)”. Since Mitra is homologized to *ṛta*, Varuṇa must represent *āyus*, which is “identified” with the year. As observed elsewhere⁴, this place is instructive in that it shows how a new “identification” could arise even from a misunderstood text.

48. There are several other cases of more or less occasional “identifications” of the year attesting to the tendency to make the phenomenal world more understandable by reducing seemingly distinct and disparate entities and phenomena to a more orderly arrangement and a more or less systematic whole of mutually related or essentially “identical” elements or principles⁵. TB. 1, 6, 8, 2 soma as semen (*somaḥ pitṛmān*) is equated with the year⁶: on the occasion of the sacrifice to the Fathers which is part of the ceremonies of the third seasonal sacrifice one propitiates the

2. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 120; 219 etc.

3. See also ŚB. 4, 2, 4, 4; 6, 6, 1, 5; 6, 2, 1, 36; 7, 3, 1, 35; 8, 2, 2, 8; 9, 3, 1, 1; AiB. 3, 41, 1.

4. J. Gonda, The Vedic god Mitra, Leiden 1972, p. 31.

5. Cases such as “the year is *sumeka* “well established”(?) (ŚB. 1, 7, 2, 26; cf. Eggeling, Śat. Br. I. p. 199; Mayrhofer, Etymol. Wörterbuch, II, p. 637) can be left undiscussed.

6. Cf. Bodewitz, Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa I, 1–65, p. 122.

year by offering a cake to this manifestation of King Soma. See also 1, 6, 9, 5 where the person concerned worships the year by worshipping Soma Pitṛmān. As to the Fathers and the continuation of the family and the procreation of offspring see, e.g., RV. 10, 56, 6; ĀpŚ. 1, 9, 12; ĀśvŚ. 2, 7, 12; Manu 6, 35 ff.; 3, 262; GG. 4, 3, 27⁷; as to Soma and semen (*retas*), e.g., RV. 9, 86, 28. On the above occasion the Fathers who are seated on the *barhis* obtain fried barley or rice grains. – Arguing that those who perform a soma ceremony of a year’s duration are swimming on the ocean and that “the ocean is the year” the author of TS. 7, 5, 1, 2 f. expresses the opinion that only by performing the two *atirātras*, which are the further banks of that ocean, can one safely get out from it. – According to the doctrine set forth in JB. 1, 18 time, the year or the sun as a father generates man by means of the heavenly fluid (rain = seed)⁸. In ŚB. 3, 4, 4, 15 f. the *vajra*, the well-known weapon of Indra, is “identified” with the year and by the year as a *vajra* the gods are related to have cleft the strongholds (of their antagonists) and conquered these worlds (*lokān*, spheres to live in safety)⁹. The probability of this function and possibilities of the year was felt to be in need of comment: “the day is Agni, the night Soma, and what is between (the two) is Viṣṇu”. Now Agni is more than once said to be fiery energy and to be identical with the sun (e.g., ŚB. 5, 2, 3, 8; 6, 1, 2, 20; 7, 4, 1, 34), Soma is regarded as identical with the moon (e.g., ŚB. 10, 4, 2, 1; 11, 1, 3, 3; 11, 1, 4, 4) and as to Viṣṇu, this god maintains intimate relations with the *axis mundi* and its representative, the sacrificial post (*yūpa*), which being set up is said to be a *vajra* that is hurled. In this connexion ŚB. 3, 6, 4, 19; 23; 24 are of special interest: “the year is a *vajra* and the *yūpa* is a *vajra*”. We should not suspect these authors of indulging in extravagant fantasy or reproach them for apparent superfluities or inconsistencies; the multitude, variation and many-sidedness of these equations represent attempts at doing justice to the complexity of the phenomena and their mutual relations.

49. The one who constructs the fourth layer of the great fireplace lays down 18 bricks which represent the hymns of praise (VS. 14, 23; ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 9 ff.; KŚ. 17, 10, 6 ff.). In 13 of the 18 explanations that in ŚB. follow the formulae the year plays a part. Thus rapid motion, the 18fold one (§ 13); heat, the 19fold one (14); victorious attack (15), brilliant energy and prestige (*varcas*, 16), arrangement (17), the womb (18), embryos (19), creative power and authority (*ojas*, 20), inventiveness (21), firm foundation (22), the surface of (on which is) the ruddy one (i.e. of the sun, 23), the firmament (24), the revolving (sphere, 25) are successively homologized to the year.

7. See also J.J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation*, Zürich and Leipzig 1937, II, p. 45 ff.; *Sexual life in ancient India*, London 1930, p. 223.

8. Cf. Bodewitz, op. cit., p. 218.

9. For this passage see J. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, Utrecht 1954, ²Delhi 1969, p. 35 f.; 81. T.K. Das Gupta, *Der Vajra*, Wiesbaden 1975, p. 49; 52 f. See also AiB. 1, 25, 2.

The homologations are in each case based on numerical congruence between the numbers that are characteristic of the accompanying texts and of the various combinations of the elements of the year. In view of other places where some of the above concepts are “identified” with this space of time on the one hand and of the nature and functions of the year on the other, the inference seems warranted that the other homologations were formed on the analogy of those already existing. Interestingly enough, the author has in 12 cases added an explanation, e.g. in 14 “the year indeed burns all beings”.

50. ŚB. 8, 3, 3, 11 deals with a complicated “identification” which, on closer examination, is not so strange as it would appear at first sight. After having observed that in constructing the third layer of the great fireplace one first lays down ten bricks which are homologized to the moon – because the *virāj* which, like the moon, “is” food consists of ten syllables – the author says that thereupon one places 36 other bricks which represent the 24 half-months and the 12 months (of the year), and ends by homologizing the moon to the year and all living beings. As is well known the moon was in various countries believed to be a sort of island or abode of the blessed¹⁰. As to the year, this is regarded as increasing or furthering all beings (see above, ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 13), as being arranged over them (17), being their womb (18), their authority and creative power (*ojas*, 20) and firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*, 22), and from it all beings are said to be evolved or developed (25).

Another case of complication occurs at ŚB. 12, 8, 2, 36 where the *sautrāmaṇī* rite is stated to be “identical” with the year as well as the moon; the former “identification” is in § 31 based on numerical congruence: the sacrificer takes the 13th draught and the 13th month is the year itself. However, the occurrence of the year is rather caused by the fact that by this rite one wins all (*sarvam*, § 36), the year being identical with *sarvam*¹¹.

The part played by the moon as a regulator of time¹² is well known; this luminary suggested the idea of a “calendar” expressing the rhythm of the annual phenomena of nature and assured their regularity. When in AVŚ. 8, 8, 23 (cf. AVP. 16, 31, 3) the year is called a chariot and the moon the charioteer (*sārathiḥ*) this function of that heavenly body was no doubt present to the author’s mind. The “identification” is developed: the day and night are the wheels (AVP.), the seasons the reins (AVŚ. 22); notice also that Indra, the representative of ruling power or nobility (*kṣatram*, ŚB. 5, 1, 1, 11 etc.), is called the *savyasthā*, i.e. the warrior standing on the left side of the chariot, and remember that the consecrated sacrificer is homologized to the *kṣatram* (ŚB. 5, 3, 1, 3), whereas Indra, “the greatest of those who fight in a

10. M. Eliade, *Traité d’histoire des religions*, Paris 1949 (= *Patterns in comparative religion*, New York 1958), § 54; F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 56 f.

11. See ch. XII below.

12. Cf. e.g. ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 18.

war-chariot" (RV. 1, 11, 1; VS. 12, 56; ŚB. 8, 7, 3, 7), is regarded as the supervisor of actions (ritual and other, AVP. 15, 7, 9) and as "identical" with the sacrificer (ŚB. 5, 1, 3, 4). Does the author suggest that it is the noble sacrificer who shares the responsibility for the realization of man's hopes of good fortune during the year?¹³

A fine instance of an elaborated homologation occurs in ŚB. 12, 1, 4, 1 ff. After stating that the year is man (*puruṣa*), i.e. not only, and not even in the first place, the empirical human being, but first and foremost the primeval prototype, the author goes on to "identify" various sacrificial rites and festivals with limbs and other parts of that figure: "the opening overnight rite (*prāyaṇīyo 'tirātraḥ*) is his feet because (men) go forward (*prayanti*) by means of their feet" etc. to end with the conclusion "thus that year is firmly established in respect of the individual personality (*adhyaṭman*)" and, pursuing in the usual way a practical goal, with the statement that the one who knows this establishes himself by means of offspring and cattle in this, and by continuance of life in the other, world. Compare 12, 3, 2, 1 as well as 8, 2, 1, 17 where the year "is" these worlds and 11, 1, 2, 12 stating that by means of the year, which is *sarvam*, one reaches the imperishable world¹⁴.

51. The following is an interesting case of different identifications of the same entity which in point of fact express the same idea. In the section that deals with the *viṣuvat*, the central day which divides the *gavām ayana* soma ceremony of a year's duration equally in two parts, AiB. 4, 18, 1 rightly states that one celebrates this day in the middle of the year; 4, 22, 1 compares this day to a man, its two halves being the halves of the man (see also ŚB. 12, 2, 3, 6); in 2 it quotes authorities advising to perform (the recitations of) the day only on the *viṣuvat* day and expresses the opinion that it should be recited only in (the *sattra* of) the year (cf. the comm.), which contains this day so that "they obtain this day as the year" and one "drives evil away by the year, by the *viṣuvat*" (4 ff.). According to PB. 4, 7, 1 the *viṣuvat* is the body (trunk) of the year. From KB. 19, 3, (19, 1, 28 ff.) it appears that the schema of the year-long sacrifice has to follow the yearly course of the sun: "on the day of new moon in the month of Māgha the sun, being about to turn northwards, rests; those engaged in sacrificing rest also, being about to sacrifice with the introductory *atirātra* ... He goes north for six months; they follow him with six-days periods ... Then being about to turn southwards, he rests; they also rest, being about to celebrate the *viṣuvat* day, etc." This author also expresses the opinion that this rite takes place in order to obtain the year. In ŚB. 6, 7, 4, 11 the middle of the year is equated

13. For moon, *nakṣatras* and the year see TB. 3, 11, 1, 12 ff. For the moon desirous of obtaining residence in his own "world" after having taken possession of the several periods of time and, in order to realize that ambition, offering to himself see TB. 3, 1, 6, 1.

14. One might, for instance, compare, M. Eliade, *The sacred and the profane*, New York 1961, p. 68 ff.; 91 ff.

with the world of heaven. In 9, 3, 4, 18 the sacrificer is anointed in the middle of the *pārtha* oblations (by which one appropriates all food, 5, 3, 5, 4) which represent the year; thus he is placed in the middle of the year. In PB. 21, 15, 3 the autumn is the middle part of the year, after (in 2) it has been considered the middle or trunk of the *mahāvratā* rite which is equated with the year. JB. 2, 409 prescribes the celebration of the *mahāvratā* on the *viṣuvat* day in the middle of the year¹⁵.

52. Not infrequently a homologation is indeed the outcome of a set of concurrent circumstances, or rather it is stated to result from two other “identifications”. Thus, ŚB. 8, 6, 1, 4 it is argued that in fact one places the seasonal bricks in the heavenly world, because these bricks as well as the heavenly world correspond in character with the year (cf. 9, 5, 1, 59). – The “identity” of the great fireplace and the year is demonstrated by means of a double homologation: “This Agni (the fireplace) is the year and the year is these worlds” (*lokāḥ*, ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 30)¹⁶. In TS. 7, 4, 1, 3; 7, 4, 2, 5; 7, 4, 3, 4 the year is homologized to the world of heaven: if one performs a definite rite of 24 days’ duration, one finds a firm foundation in the year, the world of heaven, because 24 fortnights make up a year, etc.

That in these homologations the year occupied a very important place does not only appear from the frequency of its occurrences, but also from the entities with which it is “identified” and, occasionally, with its final position in a series of identifications. In a set of mantras to be said over the sacrificial horse, viz. “Thy back is the sky ..., thy breath the atmosphere, thine eye the sun ..., thy limbs the seasons”, the animal’s greatness (*mahiman*) is equated with the year. According to TB. 3, 9, 4, 8 these formulae are recited in order to conquer the tripartite universe for the sacrificer¹⁷.

There can be no doubt that some homologations were invented for the sake of argument, for instance when there was necessity to explain or motivate a ritual detail. At TS. 7, 3, 10, 2 the *para sāmāns* are said to be the year; being on both sides of the *divākīrtya sāmān* which represent the sacrificers of the *sattra* discussed they support them on both sides in the world of heaven, where the sun is with the *divākīrtya* surrounded by the *para sāmāns* (1); besides, those concerned find on both sides support in the year. – Or an uncommon or far-fetched homologation may owe its existence to the necessity to fill a gap in a series of identifications, especially when that series forms part of a more or less systematic set of complex identifications. Thus BĀU. 6, 2, 10, where the process of raining is treated as a sort of soma sacrifice, the god who causes the rain to fall is said to be the fire and the year (probably regarded as that which is spent in the process) the fuel, the clouds

15. The *viṣuvat* is also the central day of contracted forms of a year-long ceremony called “riddle (*pravalha*) of the year” (ĀśvŚ. 10, 5, 7; ŚŚ. 16, 26, 4).

16. Also ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 7; 8, 3, 2, 7; 8, 4, 2, 15.

17. In TS. 7, 5, 25, 1 the trunk of the horse is the year; see also BĀU. 1, 2, 7; in AVŚ. 15, 18, 3 the year is the head of the *vrātya*.

the smoke etc. In the parallel passage ChU. 5, 5, 1 the moving air (*vāyu*) is, for more obvious reasons, the fuel (cf. 5, 6, 1). – It may be parenthetically remarked that the performance of protective rites was regarded as necessary to a successful accomplishment of a sacrificer's aims. With definite formulae which represent *brahman* one should “set down” the *agnihotra*, which is the beginning of the sacrifice under discussion, as well as the oblations of the final rite: “so with *brahman* one surrounds the year on both sides” (TS. 1, 6, 10, 3). – This procedure is not infrequently employed with considerable consistency. Enumerating some homologations of elements of the *agnihotra* ritual with provinces of the cosmos (the *sadas* (shed) is the earth etc.) etc. (the fuel is the forest-trees, the final bath is the sea etc.) an author equates the exclamation *svagā*, which expresses the desire for prosperity, with the year, which therefore probably is supposed to bring prosperity (TB. 2, 1, 5, 2).

53. The man who knows that “the sacrifice is the year” will at the end of a year win and secure all that is (by means of rites) performed in that year (ŚB. 11, 2, 7, 1). – The fact that the *saṃvatsara* “is” the fire, the *parivatsara* the sun etc. enables a sacrificer to, “reach” (obtain) the fire and *saṃvatsara* by means of the *vaiśvadeva* etc. (PB. 17, 13, 17): here the several seasonal sacrifices are equated with the different years, called *saṃvatsara*, *parivatsara* etc.¹⁸.

In reading these equations and identifications one should indeed remember that these authors, in spite of what seems to be an inclination to far-fetched and untenable theoretical expatiations, pursue a practical goal. Knowing something means identifying oneself existentially with it. Knowledge is power; to understand means to seize. Capacity is intimately linked with it. “Whosoever thus knows that birth of the year, ... becomes possessed of a (new) person (body), he becomes the year, and, as the year, he goes to the gods” (ŚB. 12, 1, 2, 3; 12, 1, 3, 9; 20; 12, 2, 2, 23).

One should not follow those scholars¹⁹ who are of the opinion that a section such as TS. 5, 6, 7 depends on a play of words. Dealing with variants of the length of the consecration of the sacrificer who wishes to construct the great fireplace the author, after stating that the gods obtained the brilliance (*virāj*) of Agni by means of the consecration, sets forth his opinion that that person may be consecrated for three days, because then he obtains (the meter) *virāj* which has three feet; or for six days, because “the year consists of six seasons, the *virāj* is the year and (consequently) he obtains the *virāj*”. And so on. Since the name and the thing named are in so-called primitive and archaic thought much more intimately associated than modern men are accustomed to accept, identity of names was widely considered to point to identity of essence. That means that by gaining the

18. As to these names see Macdonell and Keith, Vedic Index, II, p. 412 f. (see also AVŚ. 6, 55, 3; AVP. 19, 9, 1; 19, 51, 1; TS. 5, 7, 2, 4; ŚB. 8, 1, 4, 8; VS. 27, 45; TB. 3, 4, 11, 1; 3, 8, 20, 5; 3, 10, 4, 1; 3, 10, 10, 4).

19. See Keith, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 460.

metre *virāj*²⁰ a sacrificer was believed to be automatically able to acquire Agni's *virāj* (brilliance).

Cases are not absent which on modern men would create the impression of being a comparison rather than an identification. In ŚB. 12, 2, 3, 7 the year is described as a large bird, the *viṣuvat* day being its body and the twice six months its wings. In JB. 2, 397 some identifications are in fact accompanied by a comparison: a definite ritual act is compared to the inflation of a pouch, which is homologized to the year²¹. Among the various "identifications" of the sacrificer proposed in the *brāhmaṇas* that in ŚB. 11, 2, 7, 32 is, in a way, a vivid description of the relation that is assumed to exist between the patron of the sacrifice and the officiants: "he is the year (cf. 12, 1, 2, 3), the seasons officiate for him"; the author ingeniously correlates the functions of the five officiants with some of the main characteristics of the seasons. However, in KB. 29, 8 (29, 7, 18 f.) "the *hotar* is the year, the *hotrakas* (his assistants) the seasons", their relation being similar.

20. For the *virāj* see, e.g., also TS. 5, 6, 10, 3.

21. See also PB. 5, 10, 3 (with Caland's note).

XII. The year is sarvam

54. One of the most important theorems advanced in the Veda to explain the relations that exist between the phenomena, between the universe and its provinces, between time and its divisions and the mutual connexions between these is the homologation of the universe conceived from the temporal point of view to the universe as such, the totality of all existence¹. Hence the references to the year's identity with "these worlds" (*ime lokāḥ*, ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 17) and the numerous places stating the "identity" of the year and *sarvam* "all"²: "and, indeed, all this, (this universe,) whatever there is, is the year" (ŚB. 12, 8, 2, 36)³. In cases such as ŚB. 1, 7, 2, 24, where *saṃvatsaraḥ* is subject and *sarvam* predicate, the latter word denotes an undivided and unspecified totality not restricted to things phenomenal: when the year was produced, the gods became able to appropriate the *sarvam* of (or, all that belonged to) the *asuras*. See also 4, 2, 2, 6 f. By offering the libations of the seasons, which, just as the year, are *sarvam*, one produces *sarvam* (4, 3, 1, 4). One consecrates oneself by putting on a wreath of twelve lotus-flowers; the year (having twelve months) is *sarvam*; so he is consecrated by means of all (the All; 5, 4, 5, 13 f.). – Elsewhere however the year is stated to be "this all, this universe" (*idaṃ sarvam*, 6, 6, 4, 3; 10, 2, 5, 16; JB. 1, 27).

Sometimes the homologation "the year is *sarvam*" is immediately followed by a definition or characterization of the latter concept. Thus ŚB. 1, 6, 1, 19 "the year is (something) *sarvam* and *sarvam* – here probably corresponding to the All (the totality of existence) – is imperishable (*akṣayyam*), i.e. characterized by continued existence", an explanation that

1. As to the Totality etc. see J. Gonda, Reflections on sarva in Vedic texts, Indian Linguistics 1955, p. 53 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 495 ff.).
2. On an attempt etymologically to explain the word *saṃvatsara* as *sarvatsara* see ŚB. 11, 1, 6, 12.
3. See also ŚB. 6, 6, 4, 3; 10, 2, 5, 16; 13, 4, 1, 5; 13, 5, 1, 4; 13, 5, 3, 11; 13, 6, 1, 11; 14, 3, 2, 22.

is also found elsewhere (2, 6, 3, 1; 11, 1, 2, 12)⁴. What is *sarvam* is also *aniruktam* “beyond verbal expression, communication or definition” (1, 3, 5, 10), just as the year in MS. 1, 10, 5: 145, 15 and KS. 35, 20: 67, 11. – Those who perform a long sacrificial session, for a year or more, “obtain and win *sarvam*”, if only they immolate “all these cows, which, being three in number, are said to be *sarvam*” (4, 5, 1, 11 f.). By means of the *sautrāmaṇī*, which is the same as the year (12, 8, 2, 36), one wins *sarvam* (31). See also 7, 5, 1, 34. – “Syllogisms” of the type 8, 7, 1, 1 are not wanting: “the seasonal bricks are all this, for the seasonal (bricks) are the year (cf. 12), and the year is all this”; see also 11, 1, 2, 12. – Noteworthy is also the “identification” “the day which contains all the *stomas* is the year” in JB. 2, 279.

4. I refer to J. Gonda, All, Universe and Totality in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, to be published in J. Or. Inst. Baroda, and Some notes on Prajāpatir aniruktaḥ, to be published elsewhere.

XIII. The year as an element of Vedic philosophy

55. After quoting and discussing the above passages a difficult and for the time being for the greater part almost insoluble problem forces itself on us: were those equations and “identifications” of the year, if not in a majority, then in a considerable minority of cases, invented?; were the functions ascribed to it and the significance attached to it mainly recognized independently of the theories of the origin and structure of the universe and the role and destiny of the sacrificer, which culminated in the ritual, cosmological and transcendentalizing doctrine concerning the relations between the year, the construction of the great fireplace and Prajāpati?¹ Or did the very interest in the year and its ritual significance as well as the very frequency and variety of the places that deal with it at least in part come into existence under the influence of or in connexion with this important doctrine? And if, what at first sight seems probable, they did, to what extent were the year equations an element of the *agnicayana*-Prajāpati doctrine in its initial stage? This much seems certain, first that the year must already at an early date have been an important element of the ritualist “philosophy” of the Vedic Indians and secondly, that those who elaborated and propagated the Prajāpati theory and those who conceived the idea to reconstruct Prajāpati and to achieve the sacrificer’s transcendence by constructing the great fireplace no doubt linked up with the advocates of the “year theory” in using, incorporating and assimilating their “identifications”. This assumption is corroborated by the fact that the year was also associated with most important entities and concepts that are not or not directly related with the Agni-Prajāpati complex or do not form one of its most essential parts and that it plays a part in the relevant theories.

56. In AVŚ. 11, 7 extolling the remnant of the offering², which is considered to be the primordial unique principle, the foundation of the

1. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens*, ²I, p. 187 ff. and see also the last section of this publication.
2. See J. Gonda, *Atharvaveda 11, 7* in Vol. L. Renou, Paris 1968, p. 333 f. (= S.S. III, p. 471 f.).

world, including heaven and earth, as well as various important concepts or rather power-substances (“Daseinsmächte”³) such as universal order (*ṛtam*), (being in accordance with) reality (*satyam*), consecration (*dīkṣā*), are said to be in this remainder; among these are also the divisions of time, including the year (st. 18; AVP. 16, 83, 8). This must mean that also the universe and its divisions conceived from the temporal point of view are only aspects of the unique principle⁴.

In the sāmavedic compilation known as Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa which mainly deals with the significance of *sāmans*, metres, and other entities of great importance and effectiveness, the section 1, 12, 1 states the “identity” of the *sāman* with the year (see also 3, 7, 1, 9) and its five parts with the five seasons. That is why, for instance, cattle make the sound *hiṃ* in spring (this sound precedes the chanting as *huṃ*); the summer corresponds to the *prastāva* because both are *anirukta* “undefined”⁵. – JB. 2, 305 the *pr̥ṣṭhya śaḍaha*, a period of six soma days consisting of an *agniṣṭoma* day, two *ukthyas*, a *śoḍaśin* and two *ukthyas*, is “identified” with the year.

57. Interpreting the horse sacrifice as of cosmic significance and a reproduction of the universal order, ŚBM. 10, 6, 4, 1 and BĀU. 1, 1, 1 describe the universe as a sacrificial horse. This description – incorrectly regarded as “grotesque”⁶ – is remarkable, though not unique, in that in representing the parts of the animal’s body as equivalent to parts of, or phenomena in, the universe it combines its spatial and temporal aspects. The year is the body (*ātman*, the body, as a rule except its separate members) of the animal, the seasons are his limbs and the months and half-months his joints, days and nights his feet, but the sun is his eye and the sky his back, the intermediate space his belly (and stomach), the earth the undermost region of his body (cf. BĀU. 1, 2, 3, where the earth is his chest). Since also his liver and lungs are the mountains of the earth and so on, one would at first sight expect the universe (as far as it was known to the Vedic Indians) to occupy the place allotted to the year. That this is not the case shows that in the author’s line of thought the year and universe, i.e. the temporal and spatial aspect of the totality, are virtually equivalent and so to say interchangeable. See also BĀU. 1, 2, 7; ŚBM. 10, 6, 5, 8.

58. In the comparatively late speculative passage ascribed to Bādhva AiĀ. 3, 2, 3 the essence of the “great person” (*mahāpuruṣa*) that is the year is stated to be the sun which is the same as the incorporeal conscious self (*prajñātmā*). The text continues: “Him (the sun) they call *brahman*. The self

3. For this term see H. von Glasenapp, *Entwicklungsstufen des indischen Denkens*, Halle S. 1940, p. 9 ff.
4. I abstain from drawing conclusions from AVŚ. 19, 58, 1 (cf. AVP. 1, 110, 1) “the swiftness of ghee ... always increasing the year”.
5. A formula is *anirukta* when no deity is explicitly indicated. The statement “the summer is *anirukta*” seems to be without parallel.
6. P. Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishad’s des Veda*, ³Leipzig 1921, p. 382.

(*ātman*) which consists of sight, hearing, mind (*manas*) and speech is equal to (-*saṃmāna*) to the year”. See also 3, 2, 1.

In an exposition of the doctrine of *brahman-ātman* the author of the still more recent MuU. 2, 1, 6, after informing us that the Supreme Person (*puruṣa*) is the source of the world and of the individual as well as of all religious rites, adds to “the sacrifices etc.” also “the year, the sacrificer and the “worlds” (*lokāḥ*) where moon and sun shine”⁷.

7. Those places in which the year, with or without the seasons etc., occurs in enumerations of powers, periods, entities, phenomena etc. that also in parallel sentences are the subject or the object of the same process or of similar processes, are in this survey omitted, because they do not add to our understanding of the Vedic year. See e.g. AVP. 5, 5, 9 where the half-year is stated to have conceived the year as an embryo (just as the intermediate space the moving air etc.); 15, 14, 2; 17, 21, 8; 9; 17, 29, 15.

XIV. The year and sacrificial rites

59. According to ŚB. 2, 6, 3, 1 the religious (ritual) merit (*sukṛtam*) earned by him who performs the seasonal sacrifices is imperishable, for he gains the year ...; he gains and conquers it in three ways (or, triply, *tredhā*); “by performing these rites three times in the year, he obtains the (whole) year” (2, 6, 3, 10); “the seasonal sacrifices ... are manifestly the year, and when he immolates the seasonal victims, he then manifestly takes possession of the year” (13, 2, 5, 2). From PB. 21, 15, 2 it appears that the *mahāvṛata* rite was considered to represent the year, its head, wings, middle (trunk) and tail being the spring, summer and rainy season, autumn and winter respectively. Dealing with the *caturviṃśā* as the opening days of the *gavām ayana sattra* AiB. 4, 12, 8 informs us that the year is the *agniṣṭoma*, because no other sacrificial rite, constituting a limb or member of the *sattra* of a year’s duration, can support or discriminate that day, the *agniṣṭoma* being of the form of a year-long *sattra* (cf. the comm.). The *sāmans rathantara* and *bṛhat* are the two ships that carry over the sacrifice and by which one crosses over the year (AiB. 4, 13, 1; soma sacrifice)¹. “When the great fireplace (*agni*) is twelvefold ... one obtains the year, the sacrifice” (ŚB. 13, 3, 3, 8). The sacrifice is of the same measure (or value, *saṃmita*, i.e. also “corresponding with, resembling etc.”) as the year: 3, 1, 3, 17 (and that is why the eyes of the one who is consecrated are anointed five times; there are five seasons); 3, 1, 4, 5 (why there are five libations); 3, 3, 3, 5 (one bargains five times for the soma stalks); 3, 4, 1, 14 (sacrificial material is taken five times); 3, 9, 4, 11. From ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 31 and 37 it may be inferred that this “identity” was rather regarded as correspondence or congruence: “How does the performance of (the animal sacrifice) correspond with (how is it congruent, in conformity, with, *saṃpadyate*²) the year, with Agni?”³. See also 9, 1, 1, 43:

1. Hence the expression “to attain in safety the other side of the year” (AiB. 4, 13, 8; 4, 14, 3; 4, 15, 8; 4, 29, 17).
2. See p. 50 ff. above.
3. KB. 12, 6 (12, 8, 12): “The year is exclusively for those who perform a sacrificial session (*sattra*) of a year”.

the same question with regard to the *śatarudriya* libation; 9, 3, 3, 18; JB. 2, 305 *saṃvatsaro vai pṛṣṭhyah ṣadahaḥ* (a definite form of six soma days).

The equalization of the year and the sacrifice occurs also in passages stating the “identity” of the year with another concept or phenomenon. Thus ŚB. 4, 3, 3, 12 “he takes up (the portions of soma) with the two vessels of the seasons, for the year, the sacrifice, (means) the seasons” (cf. 4, 4, 1, 2 “the year, the sacrifice, (means) the seasons”⁴); cf. cases such as 13, 3, 6, 7. A sacrifice without a mantra is unsuccessful; therefore at ŚB. 13, 1, 2, 1 the use of VS. 22, 2 (mentioning a rope) and of the girth or halter of a horse that is twelve cubits long is prescribed: thus one secures the year, the sacrifice. – The cyclic character of the annual ritual (*karman*) and devices consisting in sacrificial worship (*yajñakratu*) is of course as much emphasized as the fact that all sacrificial rites are contained in the year (TB. 2, 3, 6, 4).

Eggeling’s translations of places in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa where mention is made of an equation are not always reliable. According to a syntactic rule⁵ – which however is not without exceptions – the predicate of a nominal sentence precedes the subject. One should therefore in both cases translate the sentence *saṃvatsaro ’gniḥ* occurring in ŚB. 6, 2, 1, 21 and 28 “Agni is the year”; in both places there follows “as great as Agni is ..., by so much he thus kindles (21, in 28 “propitiates”) him” and the fact that in 21 “as great as” refers to 24 kindling stanzas and the year is said to contain 24 half-months and in 28 to twelve *āpri* stanzas and the year is said to consist of twelve months is irrelevant⁶. The passages deal with the animal sacrifices belonging to the *agnicayana*.

As appears also from some of the above quotations, part of these “identifications” occur in passages dealing with a long soma ceremony of a year’s duration or with one of its elements. Thus in the description of the *gavām ayana*, the most interesting of the longer *sattras*⁷, of which it is the model, its component rites are said to have been fashioned from out of various deities and powers but the passage ends by stating: “Such was the birth of the year” (ŚB. 12, 1, 2, 1 ff.)⁸. In the same section (12, 2, 2, 18 f.; see also JB. 2, 431) the sacrifice is homologized to the year. – Hence also the statement that, for instance, the *sattra* of the serpents requires a year that consists throughout of tens and tens (sc. of days characterized by ten stanzas; the word *daśa* means also “bite”; PB. 25, 15, 1; ŚŚ. 13, 23, 6 ff.; ĀpŚ. 23, 14, 9 etc.).

In connexion with the full and new moon sacrifices TS. 1, 6, 5 enjoins the

4. Eggeling, Śat. Br. II, p. 357: “And the sacrifice ... is the seasons, the year”.

5. B. Delbrück, Die altindische Wortfolge aus dem Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa dargestellt (= Syntaktische Forschungen, III), Halle 1878, p. 26; Altindische Syntax, Halle a. S. 1888, p. 17 (§ 8); Minard, Cent chemins, I, p. 51; 157; II, p. 69; 72.

6. See also ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 18; 8, 7, 1, 7; 8, 7, 4, 9; 9, 2, 3, 6; TB. 1, 4, 10, 1.

7. Cf. A. Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, Strassburg 1897, p. 157 f.

8. In ŚB. 12, 1, 3, 10 f. two constituent periods correspond to the half-months and months, and to the seasons.

use of the following set of parallel formulae which accompany the scattering to the quarters: “In the eastern (southern, western, northern quarter, the zenith) the gods (and) the officiants; the months (and) the Fathers (for whom the monthly *śrāddha* ceremonies are intended); the houses, the cattle; the waters, plants (and) trees; the sacrifice, the year, the lord (patron) of the sacrifice (*yajñapati*, i.e. the “sacrificer”, ŚB. 1, 1, 2, 12) respectively must cleanse (purify) me” to accompany the scattering to the quarters⁹. The relation between year and sacrifice is obviously thought to be of the same nature or to be as close as that between gods and officiants etc. Notice also that the above order of the quarters is the common one, the point of the sky overhead being the last “quarter” which to a certain extent points to its predominant position.

60. The above places help to explain the use of the term *saṃvatsara* in the sense of a “soma ceremony of a year’s duration”: AiB. 4, 13, 8 and JB. 2, 371; 2, 426 *saṃvatsaram upayanti* “they undertake the (sacrifice of a) year’s duration”; ŚB. 12, 3, 3, 9; TS. 7, 4, 8, 1 and ĀpŚ. 21, 15, 4 “to consecrate oneself for the year”; 24, 4, 5¹⁰. A *saṃvatsarasad* is one who performs a year’s sacrificial session (e.g. ŚB. 12, 3, 5, 3 ff.). But in ŚB. 11, 2, 7, 1 the “identification” of the sacrifice with the year occurs at the end of a section on the rites of full and new moon: for the man who knows this identity a sacrifice is performed at the end of the year and he will gain, secure and win all that is done (by means of rites) in the year. See also BĀU. 1, 5, 2. And in JB. 1. 179 the sacrificial ritual (*yajña*) is said to be “as large as the *agniṣtoma* and so large is also the year”. It may be noticed that TS. 6, 1, 8, 1 “in the course of the year” (*saṃvatsarasayāyane*) refers to the *gavām ayanam*, one of those long periodical sacrificial rites called *ayanam* “course (of sacrificial days)” (cf. e.g. AVŚ. 18, 4, 8; ŚB. 4, 4, 5, 19; PB. 13, 4, 10; 25, 10, 9; 25, 11, 1). When PB. 4, 7, 4 those who successfully traverse the year have prospects of attaining, alive, the light, “year” stands for a *sattra* of a year’s duration (comm.). See also 5, 8, 5.¹¹ In the prayer for protection of the sacrifice TB. 3, 1, 2, 6 this is called “year-long imperishable prosperity that continues through a year”¹² (*saṃvatsarīṇam amṛtaṃ svasti*); cf. AiB. 1, 28, 39.

61. Dealing with the disturbance of sacrificial work the author of GB. 2, 2, 5 quotes a stanza stating that where (whenever) a sacrifice is put into confusion, there the year is put into confusion (*saṃvatsaraviriṣtam*), which leads to the destruction of the officiants, the king and the people.

The existence of intimate relations between sacrificial ritual and the year

9. See A. Hillebrandt, *Das altindische Neu- und Vollmondsopfer*, Jena 1880, p. 164 ff.
10. See also TS. 7, 5, 1, 2; 3; 7, 5, 3, 1; 2; 7, 5, 9, 4.
11. And compare AiB. 4, 22, 3; PB. 5, 10, 1; 24, 14, 2; ŚB. 12, 1, 3, 23; 12, 2, 1, 6; 12, 2, 3, 9; 12, 3, 5, 12; 13, 2, 5, 2; VS. 17, 13 quoted ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 14 (and the comm. on VS.); JB. 1, 3, 2, 431.
12. Rather than “yearly” (P.E. Dumont, in *Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc.* 98. p. 212); cf. also RV. 10, 87, 17; TS. 1, 4, 10, 1.

enables the ritualists to rely on arguments and propose explanations and modes of action of a rather and at first sight far-fetched complicate character. In performing the *upasads* one remains standing, because one wishes to conquer these worlds; one offers to Agni, Soma and Viṣṇu, because one wishes to construct a *vajra* of which these gods are to be the component parts; this *vajra* is the revolving year with which the gods conquered these worlds (ŚB. 3, 4, 4, 14 ff.).

62. The sacrifice (*yajña*) is more than once said to be of equal measure with, or commensurate with (*saṃmita*) the year. Because this is regarded as a fact and there are five seasons in the year one anoints the sacrificer who is being consecrated five times (ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 17); one offers five libations (3, 1, 4, 5); the one who buys the soma bargains five times (3, 3, 3, 5) etc. (see 3, 4, 1, 14; 3, 9, 4, 11). In part of the cases the result consists in gaining the year. Notice that the term “sacrifice” is used here in a general sense; the above places deal with the standard soma ceremony. PB. 4, 2, 12 is quite explicit: “The *agniṣtoma* contains twelve lauds and the year twelve months; thus (for that reason, *tena*) it (the *agniṣtoma*) is commensurate with the year”. Cf. also JB. 1, 179. (But PB. 24, 14, 1 deals with the schema of a soma ceremony of 49 days’ duration which, in a way, agrees with that of the year’s *sattra* (*gavām ayana*)). In ŚB. 5, 5, 5, 8 and 19 the same compound (*saṃvatsarasammiti*; which 11, 5, 4, 6 ff. is used in connexion with the normal duration of pregnancy) characterizes a non-bloody oblation (*iṣṭi*); in 5, 5, 3, 2 the practice of a religious observance (the king who has performed the *rājasūya* does not shave his hair for a year). Cf. also PB. 9, 3, 6, and for the use of *-pramita* see TB. 1, 1, 6, 7; 1, 1, 9, 10 in connexion with the rites of twelve days’ duration. The year-long duration of ritual work or exertion is together with the expiration of the period of validity intimated in JB. 3, 117: “One secures that desire the fulfilment of which one pursues by exerting oneself during a year, for the ritual work is limited to the (a) year”.

In AVŚ. 10, 2 dealing with the wonderful structure of man, his biological character, abilities etc. st. 20 raises the questions as to what enables him to obtain acquaintance with the Vedic revelation and (the ritual) fire, and with what he has measured (fashioned, made, *mame*) the year, no doubt as the period of the annual sacrificial cycle. The answer (st. 21; cf. AVP. 16, 61, 2; 5) is: brahman that is inseparably associated with him¹³. It may be remembered that the verb *mā-* normally means “to mark out, to indicate the seize, limits etc. of something that is to be made”. So the implication is that the year, its length, character, composition etc., is not an independent, eternal, natural phenomenon, but that it is brahman which through man has, with a view to the performance of rites, given it its measurable properties.

In a discussion of the question as to whether there are five or six seasons

13. Cf. P. Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, 1, ⁴Leipzig 1920, p. 268.

in the year the author of ŚB. 2, 1, 1, 13 observes that when (it is insisted on that) there are six of them, then Agni is the sixth, so that there is no deficiency. This passage deals with the establishment of the sacred fire (*agnyādhāna*) and in particular with its equipments (*sambhārāḥ*, the objects required for a ritual purpose)¹⁴, which are five in number, according to 2, 1, 1, 12, because there are five seasons. These *sambhārāḥ* correspond to the fivefold sacrifice, the fivefold victim and the five seasons¹⁵. In § 1 it has been stated that the fire (Agni) is equipped (*sambhṛ-*) from various quarters with objects in which some of its (his) nature is inherent. The above relation of Agni and the five seasons may be considered a variant form of the method of computing that consists in the addition of a whole to the number of its components¹⁶.

14. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 169 ff.

15. See also ŚB. 3, 1, 4, 20; 3, 3, 3, 5; 3, 4, 1, 14; 3, 6, 4, 18; 4, 1, 1, 16.

16. See, e.g. Gonda, Triads in the Veda, p. 8 (quoted above).

XV. The year and the agnicayana

63. I now turn to those cases in which the year and the *agnicayana* ritual occur in the same context. This complicated and doubtless by no means frequent ceremony¹, the piling of the great fireplace, which may combine with any soma sacrifice, but is declared to be obligatory only in certain cases, and the significance attached to its details are of great interest because they reflect the cosmogonic and philosophic theories which form a characteristic feature of the *brāhmaṇa* literature more thoroughly than other elements of the Vedic ritual. After this immolation of victims the heads of which are to be built in the structure, the clay is solemnly collected; the sacrificer makes the fire-pan and definite bricks; when the pan is filled with fire he has to carry it about for a year, whilst performing various rites, adoring the fire, etc. The actual building is made in five layers consisting of 10800 (360 x 30, that is the number of the hours in a year) bricks which are given diverse names and are not only said to be (represent) Agni's limbs and joints (ŚB. 6, 1, 2, 31) but also "identified" with Prajāpati's limbs, viz. the days and nights (10, 1, 1, 2). The five layers represent Prajāpati's five *tanūs*, i. e. his abilities regarded as his "bodies" which constitute his corporeal self. They represent also the three provinces of the universe and the two regions between these. Those who build the fireplace reconstruct the creator god (Prajāpati), that is restore him to fresh vigour when he lost his energy after having created creatures (e. g. ŚB. 6, 1, 2, 12).

In connexion with the animal sacrifices to be performed by those who intend to construct the great fireplace TS. 5, 1, 8, 5 f. states that 24 kindling stanzas are to be repeated, because "the year has 24 half-months, Agni Vaiśvānara² is the year (cf. ŚB. 6, 1, 1, 20) and (consequently) one wins Vaiśvānara". With the first stanza mentioned there (TS. 4, 1, 7 a) – recited when the fire is being lighted or when additional fuel is applied to it – "Let the half-years, the seasons, the years ... increase thee, O Agni" the officiant

1. See Gonda, *Religionen Indiens*, I, p. 191 ff.; Eggeling, *Śat. Br. IV.* p. 13 ff.; V, p. 1 ff.

2. In this aspect Agni is especially, as the one who "belongs to all men", the descending fire of heaven, the sun and the *āhavanīya* fire that is regarded as identical with it.

“causes Agni to increase with the seasons of the year” (see also KS. 18, 16: 276, 7; MS. 2, 12, 5: 148, 11; VS. 27, 1; ŚB. 6, 2, 1, 25). As to the “identification” of Agni Vaiśvānara and the year, it is interesting to notice that according to MS. 2, 1, 2 one should offer to this deity which is explicitly said to be “(Object of) Desire” (Kāma) an offering on twelve pieces of pottery: then one’s wish will be fulfilled because a wish is (regularly) fulfilled in a year (*samvatsare*), just as misfortune (*āpad*) befalls in a (the) year. For a similar reason the same offering should be made by the man who wishes to injure his neighbour. For similar constructions see KS. 10, 3. See, e.g., also TS. 2, 2, 5, 4, and for the relation between this aspect of Agni and the year 2, 2, 5, 5 f., where the one who is about to remove the fire should give to Agni an offering on eight pieces of pottery and to Vaiśvānara one on twelve, because “the year has twelve months”, the birth place (*yoni*) of Agni being the year; “verily he makes him go to his own birth place”³.

When those who are to construct the great fireplace are searching Agni in the form of a lump of clay which they have to dig out (ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 36) they should according to ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 25 observe the rules of *sampad*⁴: they should search with five animals (*te pañca sampada bhavanti*): “Agni (i.e. the fireplace) has five layers; five seasons are a year, the year is Agni; as great as Agni is ..., so great does this become”. After he has dug out the lump of clay the *adhvaryu* touches it, takes hold of it etc. with VS. 11, 32–37: “these (stanzas) amount to (*sampadyante*) six; the year is six seasons and Agni is the year; as great as Agni is ..., so great does this (lump of clay) become” (ŚB. 6, 4, 2, 10).

64. The authors avail themselves of the opportunity to base a ritualistic explanation on the fact that the year is composed of seasons. When the ritual fire is carried in a vessel (the ceremony of the *ukhya agni*), one places that vessel in a netting – apparently a sort of round netted mat – no doubt with a practical purpose: the vessel may become too hot to be carried in the hand (cf. KŚ. 16, 3, 23 f.; ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 1 ff.; TS. 5, 1, 10, 5; ĀpŚ. 16, 10, 8 ff.). However, the author of ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 16 ff. focusses attention exclusively on the ritual significance of this device: “Agni is these worlds and the netting is the regions, for by means of the regions the worlds are able to stand” and “Agni is the year, and the netting is the seasons, for by means of the seasons the year is able to stand (remain, exist, *sthātum*)”⁵. The author adds: “He thus carries him (Agni) by the seasons. It is furnished with (fastened to a cord by means of) six strings, for there are six seasons”. – Agni should indeed be carried in the pan for a year (ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 19) or for at least six months because embryos less than six months old cannot live (9, 5, 1, 63). (It may be remembered that the fire in the pan is an embryo: TS. 5, 6, 9, 2). For the merit gained by carrying Agni for a year see ŚB. 10, 2, 6, 9.

3. For Agni Vaiśvānara “being” the year see also TS. 5, 1, 8, 5; 5, 2, 6, 1; 5, 4, 7, 6.

4. See ch. X.

5. I refer to ch. II, p. 18.

The great fireplace which is in course of construction is divided by the soil-coverings of the layers, the first four layers being the seasons (ŚB. 8, 5, 4, 7). By means of the seasonal bricks, which represent the seasons (8, 7, 1, 1) one holds together the fireplace, which is the year, and thus makes the year continuous; see also 3; 6. – The fireplace being the year (see also TB. 1, 4, 10, 1) and the year these worlds, the fifth layer as well as the cool season are stated to be the sky (ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 7; see 10, 4, 5, 2). – The same homologation is the basis of the following arguments. By bestrewing Agni, i.e. the five-layered fireplace, five times – five seasons make a year – one bestows with Agni's measure, continuance of life upon him (Agni and, probably, the sacrificer) (8, 7, 4, 9)⁶. For the same reason "he gratifies him" with five oblations by so much food as is Agni's measure (9, 4, 2, 26; cf. 24; 9, 4, 4, 14). The construction requires 360 enclosing stones which are explicitly equated with the nights of the year (10, 5, 4, 10), and the same number of *yajusmatī* bricks which are equivalent to the days in the year (ibid.; other equations mentioned here may be omitted). See also 6, 2, 2, 29⁷.

65. The "identification" of Agni (i.e. the great fireplace) and the year is sometimes continued by a homologation of the year to something else. Thus at ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 17 "... and the year is these worlds (*ime lokāḥ*)", i.e. the well-known and visible tripartite universe. "The cosmos is homologizable to cosmic time (= the year) because they are both sacred realities"⁸. Since the great fireplace is a pre-eminently holy place and the image of the universe, (ŚB. 10, 5, 4, 1 ff.) it can also comprise a temporal symbolism. These equations are amplified in order to bring out their meaning in this context: that part of Agni which is above the earth and below the atmosphere is the second layer of the construction (cf. 10, 5, 4, 2) – and this is the subject under discussion – and that same part of him is the summer season. – In the remarkable theory of metabolism set forth ŚB. 10, 1, 1, 11 that part of food which is free from death moves upwards and enters the air; that which is subject to death passes beyond the navel and enters the earth as urine and faeces. "Now, that which enters the earth enters the fireplace that has been built here, and that which enters the air enters that fire which is placed on the built (fireplace)".

Some instances are complicated and in need of a somewhat extensive explanation. Thus PB. 10, 12, 7 "Agni (the fireplace) is the year (because

6. See also ŚB. 9, 1, 1, 26.

7. For the first full moon day, the first eighth days etc. see ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 30; for days and nights 7, 3, 1, 43; 10, 2, 6, 1.

8. In some N. American Indian languages the term "world" (i.e. cosmos) is also used in the sense of "year", "the world has passed" meaning "a year has gone by". "This ... reveals the intimate religious connection between the world and cosmic time. The cosmos is conceived as a living unity that is born, develops, and dies on the last day of the year, to be reborn on New Year's Day" (Eliade, *The sacred and the profane*, p. 73).

this is to be brought about, comm.; cf., e.g., ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 12); the year is speech (*vāc*) (because after a full year children begin to speak distinctly), in that Agni is distributed (, i.e. the word *agni* is inflected, cf. 10, 7, 1 f. enumerating formulae with *agne*, *agnim*, *agninā* etc.) they thereby distribute speech”: that means that the one who in accordance with the ritual rule pronounces formulae containing the various cases of the *agni* distributes speech which is “identical” with Agni (the fireplace).

Occasionally an “identification” of the year combines with other homologations which have one element – not the year – in common. In ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 12 the so-called seasonal bricks (*ṛtavyāḥ*) – which are (the same as) the seasons (1) are successively said to be these (three) provinces of the universe, the nobility (cf. 2) and the year. By the different layers of the fireplace one builds up the three “worlds” one above the other, the nobility above (the third estate) and the year. This presupposes the possibility of a mutual correspondence between the (three) provinces of the universe, the (three) classes of the Āryan society and the year which is built up by the different layers, being joined together by means of the seasonal bricks (3; 6). – An interesting complicated argument occurs at ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 1: the seasonal bricks are the seasons; they are also this All, because they are the year and the year is this All; the one who lays down these bricks lays down this All. These bricks are also generative power (*brajananam*) and since the year means generative power⁹, one thus lays down generative power.

66. Passing mention may in this connexion be made also of the following places (likewise quoted in the order in which they occur in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa). By means of the twelve stanzas VS. 17, 33–44 (= ṚV. 10, 103, 1–12), which constitute a prayer to Indra for aid and victory in battle, one drives away the *asuras* by so much as is Agni’s greatness (ŚB. 9, 2, 3, 6 observing that the year consists of twelve months). – If one presses soma for a year, one gains *sarvam* (all, the All, totality) by means of *sarvam* because both the year and the 101fold fireplace which is under discussion (cf. 10, 2, 4, 1 f.; 10, 2, 6, 1) are *sarvam* (10, 2, 5, 16). – All the days and nights, fortnights, months and seasons (are forms) of the year, and so they are forms of him (Agni, ŚB. 10, 4, 3, 21). – Because of the number of the formulae it includes (360 etc.) the Śatarudriya litany is regarded as corresponding (*sampadyate*) to the year (and) Agni (ŚB. 9, 1, 1, 43). See also 9, 3, 3, 18. – In constructing a theory of Agni’s relations with the year one can also bestow consideration upon the fact that the sun is a manifestation or representation of the god of fire. “This (Agni) bakes (burns, ripens etc. *pacati*) what is baked (etc.) by the sun which bakes (etc.) by means of the days and nights, the fortnights, the months, the seasons and the year” (ŚB. 10, 4, 2, 19).

67. In addition to the normal form of the *agnicayana* ceremony there are

9. Cf. p. 8 above.

five special methods of building the great fireplace. Our only sources of information on these variant rites – which presuppose the knowledge of the normal form – are BŚ. 19, 1–10; ĀpŚ. 19, 11–15; TB. 3, 10–12 and TĀ. 1. According to the Indian tradition these five special methods, as dealt with in the texts of the Taittirīyas, are based on texts of the school of the Kaṭhas. They are: the Sāvitracayana; the Nāciketacayana; the Cāturhotracayana; the Vaiśvasṛjacayana; the Āruṇaketucayana¹⁰. In the present context only a few points deserve to be mentioned. The performance of the first – “the construction of the fireplace in the form of the sun” – requires, inter alia, the use of the mantra TS. 5, 6, 4 a “the year, in unison with the *ayāvans* (“the dark halves of the months”) accompanying five libations made on *darbha* grass, the recitation of 15 mantras in connexion with the placing of 15 bricks that represent the 15 nights of the bright fortnight (TB. 3, 10, 1 a; 3, 10, 9), of 15 mantras accompanying the bricks which represent the 15 *muhūrtas* (periods of 48 minutes), of 15 accompanying the bricks that represent the 15 days of the dark fortnights, etc., formulae consisting of the names of the twelve bright fortnights and the twelve black fortnights of the year etc. In ch. 3, 10 the reason of these recitations is given: all these days and nights, *muhūrtas*, months, seasons and the year are the Sāvitra fire – cf. 3, 10, 9, 9 “the year is this (*sāvitra* fire)” – and he who knows thus will go on living, free from evil, attain the full measure of life and conquer the heavenly world (3, 10, 9, 10) and he who knows the names of the great sacrifices, of the half-months, the months and the years will not fall into misfortune during these periods and sacrifices.

The second special construction (that of Naciketas) requires, inter alia, 21 formulae accompanying the placing of bricks, which are successively addressed as “space to live in safety” (*lokaḥ*), “creative heat” (*tapas*), “fiery energy” (*tejas*) ..., the year, the seasons, the months ... After having related the story of the boy Naciketas, who was given by his father to Mṛtyu (Death) and obtained from this god the secret of the Nāciketa fireplace, and having argued that one should build this structure on the occasion of a soma sacrifice etc., the author of TB. 3, 11, 10, 2 and 4 states that this fireplace is the year, its head, wings and tails being the seasons. By placing the bricks that are required for the construction the *adhvaryu*, acting for his patron, conquers the tripartite universe etc. and obtains intimate union with the deities who are there. In the *cāturhotracayana* (TB. 3, 12, 1–5), which resembles the Nāciketacayana – most of its rites are the same – the year plays no part. As to the Vaiśvasṛjacayana (TB. 3, 12, 6–9) which, resembling the preceding method, has in most cases the same rites, it requires, inter alia, two stanzas (3, 12, 8, 7 and 8), in which all the days and nights, the fortnights, seasons, months and the year are said to have been made into bricks just like the sky, the gods in the sky, the texts of the Vedas

10. For the text, a translation (of the first four) and notes see P.E. Dumont, The special kinds of Agnicayana, Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc. 95 (1951), p. 628 ff.

etc. It is worth noticing that the half-months and the year are defined by the adjective *kevala* “complete in itself, not connected with anything else, isolated”. This must mean that these periods of time figure here as completely independent entities; what is called a *saṃvatsara* is a year, irrespective of its length, the date of its beginning etc.

As to the likewise optional Āruṇaketucayana the long relevant series of mantras in TĀ. 1¹¹ is interrupted or illustrated with legends in the usual *brāhmaṇa* style; stanzas of the Ṛgveda are quoted in support of the explanation. The ceremony should be performed by those who are desirous of offspring – because both offspring and this fireplace are Prajāpati’s, the man who knows this will have offspring –, desirous of cattle, rain ..., brahminical illustriousness, heaven (1, 26, 3 ff.). Before undertaking it one should observe a penance for a year or for two months (1, 32, 1). Section 8 contains a series of cosmologic questions, inter alia, “what supports the years, the days etc.?” (1, 8, 1; cf. 1, 2, 2 “all spaces of time (*kālāḥ*) are fixed in (connected with) the year”) section 23 an interesting mythical tale about a primeval tortoise¹² that claiming to have been here before Prajāpati and assuming the form of a human being with a thousand heads etc., at Prajāpati’s request created the universe.

11. For an abstract of its contents see the Introduction to Rājendralāla Mitra’s edition (Bibl. Indica, Calcutta 1871), p. 13 ff.

12. See Gonda, *Religionen Indiens*, I², Index, s.v. Schildkröte.

XVI. Prajāpati and the year

68. Prajāpati is often briefly homologized to the year (e.g., MS. 1, 10, 8: 148, 8 *saṃvatsaraḥ prajāpatiḥ*¹), the complete time unit, the full time cycle as a cosmological entity comprising the past and the future (PB. 18, 9, 7). The year is also – e.g. ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 17 after the statement that this Agni (i.e. the great fireplace) is the year – said to be “these worlds” (*ime lokāḥ*) or (e.g. 8, 7, 1, 1) “this All, the whole universe” (*idaṃ sarvaṃ*): homologation of the totality of time to the totality of space². It may be recalled that the term “year” implies totality and completeness. It is an integral structure, the well-articulated parts and divisions of which compose it in an invariable and surveyable way. Because its revolution coincides with that of the sun it is a model of invariability and imperishability (cf., e.g., ŚB. 11, 1, 1, 12 “when the gods had gained the year they became free from death, for the year is *sarvaṃ* and the imperishable is *sarvaṃ*”³). It is so to say the foundation of all beings and of everything happening in time (cf. 8, 4, 1, 21). The year is, moreover, “a means of generating” (*prajānanam*, 8, 7, 1, 1): it should be remembered that Prajāpati “caused offspring to be born by means of the year” (TB. 1, 6, 2, 2⁴, which indeed is a full term of pregnancy⁵ and has a fixed relation to the ripening of the crops.

In stating the “identity” of Prajāpati and the year authors not infrequently mention the number of the months, of the seasons, or of the days of a year. AiB. 1, 1, 14 is an instructive passage: “Prajāpati is seventeenfold; the months are twelve (in number), the seasons five ...; so

1. See, e.g., also TB. 1, 4, 10, 10; 1, 6, 2, 2; 3, 10, 9, 8; 3, 10, 10, 4; ŚB. 5, 1, 3, 2; PB. 16, 4, 12; AiB. 2, 17, 2; 6, 19, 7; KB. 6, 15 (6, 11, 2); ŚĀ. 1, 1; AiĀ. 3, 2, 6; MNU. 268. One should not say, with S. Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brāhmaṇas*, Paris 1898, p. 16 that “Prajāpati est confondu avec l’année”. See also Mbh. 3, 200, 38 *annam prajāpatīś caktāḥ sa ca saṃvatsaro mataḥ / saṃvatsaro tu yajño ’sau sarvaṃ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*.
2. See p. 85 below.
3. See ch. XII.
4. In this passage mention is also made of some gods who co-operated in the process of generating and rearing: Soma who placed the seed, Savitar who caused to procreate offspring etc.
5. For the ten-month year see also Heesterman, *Royal consecration*, p. 176.

great is the year; Prajāpati is the year”⁶. In 2, 17, 2 f. the author enjoins that 360 stanzas should be recited for one who is desirous of the sacrifice; “360 are the days of the year; so great is the year; Prajāpati is the year; the sacrifice is Prajāpati”; then the sacrifice will condescend to the sacrificer; 2, 39, 7 “he recites the *puroruc* (an introductory mantra) in twelve divisions; the year has twelve months; Prajāpati is the year, he is the generator of this All” (*asya sarvasya prajanayitā*). Various other computations may lead to the result that “the sacrifice, Prajāpati, is the year”: there are six seasons or twelve months, or 24 fortnights in the year (ŚB. 2, 2, 2, 3 ff.)⁷. Four times three lauds make together twelve, the number of the months of a year, Prajāpati is the year; he (the patron of the sacrifice) reaches (becomes equal to) Prajāpati (PB. 16, 4, 12; similarly, 13). The cake of the animal sacrifice (*agnicayana* ritual⁸) belongs to the creator god and is placed on twelve pieces of pottery, because Prajāpati is the year and there are twelve months (ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 11 f.). Another example of an injunction or argument based on the god’s identity with the year is ŚB. 5, 1, 2, 9 “these are the five *vājapeya* cups he draws, for he who performs the *vājapeya* wins Prajāpati, and Prajāpati is the year which has five seasons”.

Mention may also be made of places such as PB. 10, 3, 6: at a *sattra* – a soma ceremony lasting at least twelve days – one of the consecrated priestly participants is called the *grhapati*⁹; “the *grhapati* of the gods is the year; that is Prajāpati and the months are those who have undertaken the consecration together with him”, and KB. 19, 1, 9 f. “by worshipping with a victim for Prajāpati one hopes “to attain this year (in safety), being instigated by Prajāpati”.

69. Not infrequently, an author resorts to a double homologation – often: “Prajāpati is the year and the sacrifice”¹⁰ – in order to show the effect of an argument or of the application of a ritual rule: “One should sing on twelve syllables. The year consists of twelve months; Prajāpati, the sacrifice, is the year¹¹. Thus one reaches the year, Prajāpati, the sacrifice” (JB. 1, 135). In ŚB. 1, 5, 1, 16 the author needs a double homologation to show the officiants how to propitiate the god: dealing with a mantra which contains the name of Father Vaiśvānara¹² he observes that this figure is the year and Prajāpati, so that by means of this formula one propitiates the year and thus

6. See also AiB. 1, 13, 33; 1, 16, 44; 1, 28, 41; 1, 29, 24.

7. See also ŚB. 4, 1, 1, 15; 4, 6, 1, 11; 12.

8. See chapter XV, p. 72.

9. Cf. Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, p. 154.

10. Gonda, *Religionen Indiens*, I², p. 190 ff.

11. For other instances of brief double homologations see. e.g., ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 12 and 13 “the year, as Prajāpati, is the sacrificer” in JB. 1, 135 *saṃvatsaraḥ prajāpatir yajñah* one homologation is implicitly suggested by means of an apposition; otherwise 14, 3, 2, 16 *saṃvatsaraḥ prajāpatiḥ, prajāpatir yajñah*.

12. See ch. XV, p. 72; Vaiśvānara is ŚB. 10, 6, 1, 11 said to be identical with the Puruṣa (the Primeval Person).

Prajāpati. Compare 5, 2, 5, 14 (see also 17) Vaiśvānara is the year and Prajāpati is the year by which the latter created abundance (plenitude, *bhūman*) and creatures. – Or a double homologation helps to draw some conclusion or other with respect to the patron of the sacrifice: ŚB. 3, 2, 2, 4 “Prajāpati is the year, (since) the sacrifice is Prajāpati, and the year is day and night which revolving produce it. He has been consecrated during the day and has gained the night; as great as the sacrifice is, ..., to that extent he has gained it”. See also 4, 1, 1, 16. “When”, the author of ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 2 states, “one offers the twelve “obtainments”¹³, one will be successful, because Prajāpati is the year and the sacrifice is Prajāpati”. Similarly, § 4 and 5, 4, 5, 20 arguing that twelve animals should be given as a *dakṣiṇā* as well as §§ 21, 23¹⁴. – Whilst discussing the results to be expected from the performance of the *śunāsīrya* sacrifice which belongs to the four-monthly rites the author of GB. 2, 1, 26 states that not only is Śunāsīra, to whom they are offered, the year – which is delighted by the offerings – but that the four-monthly sacrifices collectively are Prajāpati, the year. “Prajāpati is *sarvam*; the *cāturmāsyaṇi* are *sarvam*. Therefore the one who knows thus and knowing thus performs these sacrifices obtains *sarvam* by means of *sarvam*”¹⁵. A similar – and no doubt older – passage attesting to the practical consequences following from the “identification” of Prajāpati and the year is KB. 6, 15 (6, 10, 7 ff.; cf. also 5, 8) where the author, after informing us that Prajāpati as the creator of sacrificial worship created by means of some sacrifices gods, men etc. as well as their food and the fulfilment of their wishes, states, first that by means of the seasonal sacrifices the creatures obtained the world of heaven, the fulfilment of all desires and continuance of life, and secondly that these seasonal sacrifices are identical with Prajāpati, the 24fold year, the Vaiśvadeva being, as it were, his mouth, the *varuṇapraghāsa* his arms, etc.; moreover, the sacrifices of full and new moon are his joints. Since Prajāpati is *sarvam*, these sacrifices are *sarvam* and so on. – In TB. 1, 4, 10 the question is raised as to whether the sacrificer who performs the seasonal sacrifices will die or survive. The answer is that “he goes alive to the seasons. If he dies in spring, he becomes the spring; if in summer, the summer etc. Having become a season he goes to the year. Prajāpati is the year. He is just (indeed) Prajāpati”.

70. According to expectation the ritual implications and importance of the “identification” under discussion are often mentioned and explained. Among those rites that are based on the identity of Prajāpati and the year is that described in JB. 2, 371. On the day that precedes the first day of the *gavām ayana* (a soma ceremony of one year’s duration) one offers a he-goat to

13. “Obtainment” (*āpti*) is the name of twelve oblations accompanied by names of Prajāpati (one for each month) addressed to this god as the presiding deity of this year; see VS. 9, 20 and the commentaries.

14. For these places see also Thite, Sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa-texts, p. 271.

15. See ch. XII.

Savitar, who is the stimulator of the gods. This offering is to stimulate the sacrificial year which is now to begin. In the early morning of the next day one sacrifices, in order to satisfy all the gods, a special he-goat to Prajāpati, the most distinguished (chief, *śreṣṭhaḥ*) of the gods. This victim represents the essence of all animals, by which the year, Father Prajāpati, is satisfied.

In the prayers for purification and protection against distress AVP. 19, 30, 1 ff. the author successively invokes Agni, the possessor of all remedies, the Waters that are beneficial to all, Vaiśvānara¹⁶ implored to purify those speaking with his rays, etc. as well as Prajāpati with the five seasons, the Year with all the presence of divine power (*dhāman*¹⁷). The term *dhāman*¹⁷ seems to mean here the manifestations, i.e. the divisions, of the year in which it gives evidence of its divine power. – In AVP. 9, 20, 12 the combination *prajāpatiṃ samvatsaram* is co-ordinated with the *pañkti* metre (*pañktaṃ chandaḥ*). The stanza is the last of a series of verses, obviously intended to serve a person's particular purposes, in which various entities are enumerated and the wish is expressed to obtain and keep them by means of the first, second ... twelfth night and first, etc. piece of firewood.

According to TS. 7, 2, 10, 3 the sacrificer who is to undertake the soma ceremony of twelve days' duration "should be consecrated for twelve days (because) the year consists of twelve months. (And since) Prajāpati is the year, he is Prajāpati. He is born indeed who is born from austerity (*tapas*)": a clear case of "identification" with Prajāpati on the strength of the latter's being the year (which is characterized by the number twelve) and the performance of a rite of twelve days.

Attention may also be drawn to cases such as ŚB. 9, 5, 1, 38 (part of the section on the consecration etc. of the great fireplace): a cake offered to Dhātār ("the Establisher") is offered on twelve pieces of pottery because "the year consists of twelve months, Prajāpati is the year, and Dhātār is Prajāpati". Thus this type of argument is also found in passages dealing only indirectly with the construction of the great fireplace and the restoration of Prajāpati. See ŚB. 2, 3, 3, 18 showing a double homologation of the type "the fire is Prajāpati and Prajāpati is the year". This statement introduces the author's conclusion that the *agnihotra* of the man who has built the great fireplace is year after year completed with it, so that, if he knowing this offers the *agnihotra* he year after year obtains (gains the merit of building) the constructed fireplace. According to 10, 2, 4, 1 Prajāpati is the year and Agni (the great fireplace) is all objects of desire; the construction of the fireplace means the inclusion of Agni into Prajāpati's body; "whence people say, 'The year includes all objects of desire'; for, indeed, outside the year there is no object of desire whatever".

71. Yet, divergent views of the relation between Prajāpati and the year are not absent. When in ŚB. 11, 1, 6, 1 ff. a golden egg is related to have

16. As to Vaiśvānara see p. 72 f. above.

17. J. Gonda, The meaning of the Sanskrit term *dhāman*, Amsterdam 1967, esp. p. 57.

been produced by and from the primeval waters, and Prajāpati is said to have been produced from the egg the author states that this egg floated about for a year and the god was produced in a year's time, although then the year did not yet exist. It was only after Prajāpati had created the tripartite universe and the seasons, the gods and the *asuras* that he proceeded to create day and night and the year. – In JUB. 1, 15, 1, 3 one of the sixteen components into which Prajāpati had divided himself, viz. the auspicious, pleasant, or excellent (*bhadram*), being his heart, created (*asṛjata*) the year out of itself. – The fact that the year is so often “identified” with Prajāpati did not prevent the author of TB. 1, 5, 6, 3 f. from recounting the mythical story of the gods and the *asuras* contending about the year. – Mention may also be made of the passage TS. 7, 1, 10, 1 of which there is no parallel in other works. Just as elsewhere (e.g. ŚB. 11, 5, 8, 1) Prajāpati is described as being “alone here” and desiring to create offspring, the Year is said to be alone in this world and desiring to create the seasons. He succeeded in carrying out his plan by means of the rite of five days' duration (cf. BhŚ. 16, 29).

That these authors were aware of the true character of these “identifications” or homologations¹⁸ appears also from a passage such as ŚB. 11, 1, 6, 13, where people are related to say “Prajāpati is the year”, because he created it as an image or likeness (*pratimā*, “counterpart”, Eggeling) of himself. “And”, the author observes, it truly is a likeness, because his name as well as the word *saṃvatsara* “year” consists of four syllables: another instance of numerical congruence¹⁹. An entity that as an image or counterpart resembles another entity can be said to be the latter's *pratimā*. In AVŚ. 9, 4, 2 (AVP. 16, 24, 2) the bull became in the beginning the *pratimā* of the waters (that were the foundation and origin of the universe): they have an important characteristic in common, viz. fertility. Cf., e.g., also TS. 5, 5, 3, 2. In TB. 3, 2, 8, 8 the sacrificial cake (*puroḍāś*) is a *pratimā* of the sacrificial victim because a firebrand is in the same way carried round them. But it also “is” (i.e. represents) the sacrificer (9).

72. The author of PB. 25, 17 dealing with the so-called thousand years' sacrificial session (*sahasrasaṃvatsarasattram*) of Prajāpati informs us that by means of this rite the creator god became able to set in motion all (i.e. the universe: *sarvasya prasavam agacchat*); that he undertook this when he had become dull because of old age, which he (now) repelled, and that (henceforth) he came to prosper in every respect. Those who imitate the god will fare likewise. Now, the number thousand is explicitly said to stand for abundance (ŚB. 3, 3, 3, 8) and for “all, the totality” (*sarvam*): 8, 7, 4, 9 when one scatters a thousand chips of gold on the great fireplace one confers *amṛtam*, the highest manifestation (form, *rūpam*), upon Agni, the year; see also 10, 2, 1, 11; 10, 4, 4, 4 and 13, 4, 1, 6. The meaning of PB. 25, 17 therefore is that with (by means of) a complete number of years (the totality

18. See ch. XI.

19. See ch. X. Cf. also ŚB. 5, 1, 5, 14.

of years) the universe can by the force of Prajāpati's example be set in motion, old age repelled and complete prosperity won.

The author of AiB. 4, 25 has based his account of the introduction of the soma ceremony of twelve days' duration (*dvādaśāha*), said to be a sacrifice of Prajāpati (§ 1) and the oldest and best of sacrifices (§ 6), upon the fact that the year ("identified" with Prajāpati) on the one hand and the seasons and months on the other are firmly established on one another (§ 5). According to this mythical story the seasons and months first performed, at his request, this sacrifice for Prajāpati, who thereupon performed it (as an officiant) for them. The result was that Prajāpati, the year, became firmly established in the seasons and the months, and these in him. So the patron of a *dvādaśāha* is firmly established in the officiant.

73. Here also these homologations serve to explain various phenomena. Says the author of ŚB. 10, 4, 2, 1 ff.: "Prajāpati is not only the year and Agni (the great fireplace), but also King Soma, the moon²⁰" and that is why he was justified in saying that the number of his (Agni's) bricks is identical with the number of his lights, viz. 720, the number of the days and nights of the year. After having created everything the god felt so to say emptied, exhausted (see, e.g., 3, 9, 1, 1 ff.)²¹ and was afraid of death. In order to get the beings back into his body (person) he tried in vain to divide himself into 2, 3, 4 etc. until he was successful when he made himself 24 bodies of twice 15 (bricks and hours of day and night, viz. *muhūrtas* of 48 minutes each): that is why the year consists of 24 fortnights and twice 15 hours; in a year there are 10800 *muhūrtas*, and in the fireplace the same number of *lokampṛṇa* (space-filling)²² bricks. And so on.

This corporeal Prajāpati being the year is regarded as responsible for the alternation of winter and summer: when he raises his warm foot it is summer; when his cold foot, it is winter (JB. 1, 167). The days of full moon are Prajāpati's breaths (2, 393 f.) etc. In that in performing the soma sacrifice of a year's duration one omits the days of full moon one sets the breaths of this cosmic person Prajāpati free (ibidem). In JB. 2, 396 the author homologizes the god's breaths and joints (*parvāni* which also means "the days of the four changes of the moon") to the days of full and new moon; these should be omitted for fear that Prajāpati (i.e. the year), when nothing of his body is omitted, should afflict (the sacrificer's) cattle.

When part of his body had been restored, Prajāpati, desiring to create creatures, entered into union (saying *bhūtvā*) with the seasons, the waters, the vital airs (*prāṇāḥ*, vital powers or faculties), the year (N.B.!), the Aśvins and succeeded in producing the creatures (ŚB. 8, 2, 2, 7). The reason why the assistance of the water, the indispensable breaths (vital airs) and the Aśvins should be required is clear: water is in the whole body of all living

20. Gonda, Change and continuity, ch. II, esp. p. 48.

21. And compare, e.g., AiĀ. 3, 2, 6.

22. Cf. Eggeling, ŚB. V, p. 546 f. s.v.; Minard, Cent Chemins, I. p. 86.

beings (7, 2, 4, 10): “when water flows everything whatsoever exists comes into existence here” (7, 4, 1, 6). As to the Aśvins, they are succouring gods par excellence and divine physicians, who moreover lay down the second layer of the great fireplace (8, 2, 1, 3 etc.) which is in course of construction. As to the seasons, it may be observed that by them everything fits in with its place (8, 7, 1, 6); that they must not be disturbed lest the person concerned should die (8, 7, 1, 11), that by means of them the age of embryo and man is computed, progeny being produced in accordance with them (7, 4, 2, 31). The year and its component parts, the seasons, are the period of time in which the process of creation takes place.

These are not the only places to attest to a conception of Prajāpati as a cosmic being not unlike a human person and congruent or commensurate with the year and its divisions. According to ŚB. 1, 6, 3, 35 f. the joints (*parvan*) of Prajāpati – “who is the year” – which were relaxed after he had created the living beings are the two twilights (the junctions of day and night), the full moon and the new moon, as well as the beginnings of the seasons. Then the gods cured and redressed him by means of the *agnihotra* and the seasonal sacrifices. In 11, 5, 2, 1 it is told how Prajāpati fashioned a body for himself by means of these *cāturmāsyas*. ŚB. 6, 1, 2, 17 informs us that the five bodily parts of the god that became relaxed are his hair, skin, flesh, bone and marrow; they are the five layers of the great fireplace; § 18 demonstrates that one builds up Prajāpati (the fireplace), the year, with the five seasons, the parts of his body (“and these layers are five in number”). In § 19 Prajāpati, the year, is “identified” with Vāyu²³, the god of the moving air, and his five parts, the seasons, with the five regions of the universe (viz. the four cardinal points of the compass and the upward direction): another instance of homologation of time and space. The author does not fail to add that when one builds up these five layers, one builds up the god with the regions.

Also in connexion with the *agnicayana* ritual ŚB. 7, 1, 2, 11, after recalling that Prajāpati is the year, argues that in building the great fireplace one restores Prajāpati²⁴ so as to make him whole and complete (*sarvaṃ kṛtsnam*²⁵) and raises him to stand upright, just as the gods then (in the days of yore) raised him. This Agni (i.e. the great fireplace) indeed “is Prajāpati, and Prajāpati is the year; the first layer is his foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*) and the spring season also is his foundation” (7, 4, 2, 31). Likewise 8, 3, 2, 8; 8, 4, 2, 15. That part of Prajāpati which is between his feet and his waist is the second layer and at the same time the summer season (8, 2, 1, 18). The joints of the god which became relaxed are the days and nights (10, 1, 1, 2).

23. See, e.g., AiB. 4, 26, 11; JUB. 1, 12, 2, 3 (1, 34, 3) and J. Gonda, The popular Prajāpati, in History of religions (Chicago 1982), p. 141 ff. and Some notes on Prajāpatir aniruktaḥ, to be published elsewhere.

24. I refer to Gonda, Religionen Indiens, I², l. cit.

25. See ch. XII.

74. The “identity” of Prajāpati and the year is also implicitly demonstrated by the argument that both of them are “identical” with a third concept. When, in constructing the great fireplace, one begins the fourth layer, one places eighteen bricks that represent the hymns of praise. The formula addressed to one of them is: “The aerial space, seventeenfold” (VS. 14, 23). Now, this space is said to be Prajāpati who is seventeenfold, and also the year which consists of twelve months and five seasons²⁶ (ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 11)²⁷. In this connexion attention may be called to such successive parallel passages as TS. 5, 6, 9: “(The fire) in the pan is an embryo ...; the fire is Prajāpati ...; the fire is the year ...”.

TB. 3, 10, 1 contains the formulae to be recited by the *adhvaryu* when he places the 185 bricks of the great fireplace (*sāvitracayana*²⁸). The last formulae mentioned consist of the four names of the year – which is homologized to this *sāvitra* fire, 3, 10, 9, 8) –, viz. Prajāpati. Saṃvatsara, Mahān (“the Great One”²⁹) and Kaḥ (“Who”, i.e. Prajāpati)³⁰. These names are to accompany the placing of four bricks on the navel, i.e. the centre of the ground of the fireplace (ĀpŚ. 19, 12, 15). As is well known the navel – a term (*nābhi*) in the Veda almost exclusively used in connexion with very potent conceptions and great divinities – is quite intelligibly often regarded as the source of existence³¹ and associated with the origin of life. In various religions the stone representing the centre of the earth, the tree of life, the source of paradise etc. are not infrequently believed to be in the navel or centre of the earth. The Magna Mater who presides over fertility was the goddess of that navel. Agni is in RV. 1, 143, 4 said to have been established in the very navel of the earth, of the world, which is explained as the piece of ground serving for the sacrificial place (cf. also RV. 2, 3, 7; TS. 4, 7, 13, 2 etc.). The “symbolism” is clear: the year, which by its names is qualified as Prajāpati, who is to be reconstructed and reintegrated, is placed on the source of all existence. Prajāpati’s reintegration is achieved by means of the bricks that constitute the year. The centre of the ground is so to say the womb in which the year is born. At the same time and by means of the same ritual acts the sacrificer, who is identified with Prajāpati (cf. ŚB. 7, 4, 1, 15), constructs himself a new sacral personality and secures the continuance of his existence (*amṛtam*)³². “The (man) who knows thus does not fall into

26. See p. 52 above.

27. Compare also ŚB. 10, 2, 6, 2 f. where the year is said to be sevenfold by the seasons and by the regions of the universe. For the co-ordination of time and space, or rather of temporal and spatial concepts see p. 78 above; H. Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft, Die Weltanschauung der Brāhmaṇa-Texte*, Göttingen 1919, p. 37 ff.; Heesterman, *Royal consecration*, p. 29, quoting TB. 1, 4, 9, 5; ŚB. 2, 6, 4, 9. Notice that the spatial concepts are concrete orientations.

28. See ch. XV, p. 76.

29. Cf. ŚB. 13, 1, 1, 4.

30. See ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 13 (with Eggeling’s note, Śat. Br. I, p. 8); 6, 2, 2, 5 etc.; RV. 10, 121.

31. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 84 ff.

32. Cf. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens*, I², p. 193 ff.

misfortune during (with regard to) fortnights and months. He who knows the names of the sacrificial rites, of the seasons and of the year (*agniṣtomaḥ ... prajāpatiḥ samvatsarah*) does not fall into misfortune with regard to (or during) these” (TB. 3, 10, 10, 4).

In the section that deals with the *agniyupasthāna*, an optional ceremony of homage to Agni represented by the ritual fires ŚB. 2, 3, 2 ff. the fire is explicitly said to be Prajāpati and this god to be the year (2, 3, 3, 18). “Year after year, therefore, is his *agnihotra* carried out with the piled-up fireplace and year after year does he obtain (enjoy the advantage of) the piled-up fireplace whosoever, knowing thus, offers the *agnihotra*”. That means, the commentator observes, first that the constructed fireplace is of the form of the year and secondly that it is Prajāpati who makes the *agnihotra* that is to be accomplished during the year successful. Cf. also § 20.

75. By means of the *agnicayana* ritual the sacrificer and his officiants reenact a timeless part, when the god who was to create life in the world was periodically engaged in creating³³. Everything that they do is significant and relevant to the ultimate object of their efforts. And these efforts, too, must be repeated periodically. Their sacrificial place corresponds to the cosmos, “these worlds” (ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 17)³⁴, the course of their sacrifice to the year. Prajāpati’s periodical creative activity, his relaxation and “reconstruction” bring about and guarantee the continuation of all creative processes. The several ritual acts to be performed by those who construct the great fireplace must indeed correspond exactly to those acts which in the mythical past were performed by the gods in Agni (ŚB. 7, 1, 2, 3), when, after creating creatures, Prajāpati had fallen asunder (*vyasraṃsata* “collapsed”, Eggeling’s translation being “relaxed”) in order to restore him (cf. *ibidem*, § 8 ff.). By recounting what is believed to have happened in the primeval past the mythical narratives provide sanction and indispensable precedent for the ritual acts prescribed by the authorities. The relevant ceremonies are to be performed during a year, because Prajāpati is the year (§ 11). If one fails to do so one does not make the god complete; one should not even be an onlooker at such an interrupted and imperfect performance of the ritual (§ 11).

76. The underlying “philosophy” of the *agnicayana* ritual renders the repeated reference to the “identity” of Prajāpati and the year almost

33. As to the timelessness of myths and the periodic character of mythical eternities see, e.g., H. Hubert and M. Mauss, *Mélanges d’histoire des religions*, Paris 1909, p. 190 ff.; P. Saintyves, *Les notions de temps et d’éternité dans la magie et la religion*, *Revue de l’histoire des religions*, 79, Paris 1919; Eliade, *Traité d’histoire des religions*, ch. XI (with bibliographical notes); *The sacred and the profane*, p. 68 ff.; F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 150 ff. (with bibliographical notes).

34. Cf. also A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, X, Breslau 1927, I², p. 102 ff.; Heesterman, *Royal consecration*, p. 76.

unavoidable. Since the performance of this ritual takes a year (ŚB. 7, 1, 2, 11) and requires the use of as many bricks as there are hours in a year³⁵, the sacrificer who, after Prajāpati's example, is engaged in constructing the great fireplace can be said to cause the creatures to be generated "by the year, by Prajāpati, the progenitor" (8, 4, 3, 20). See also 10, 1, 1, 2 ff.: "First, the great fireplace is constructed, the year ...; now, that Prajāpati who became collapsed is the year and he ... is this very fireplace which here is constructed"; 10, 2, 6, 1: "The 101fold Prajāpati is the year, and to that belong 60 days and nights, 24 half-months, 13 months, and three seasons, the year being the 101st"; 8, 4, 1, 28; 10, 4, 1, 16; 10, 4, 2, 2; TS. 5, 6, 10, 1 etc. Compare also places such as ŚB. 9, 1, 1, 16: "There are fourteen formulae; thirteen months are a year, and Prajāpati is the fourteenth³⁶ and Prajāpati is Agni ..." and 10, 4, 1, 12: "The gods, having put together (in order to answer its ritual purpose, *samskr̥tya*), this Agni, Prajāpati, prepared this food for him in a year". However, "the year" is also added to Prajāpati's name in 1, 9, 2, 34 "the gods and the *asuras* ... were contending about this sacrifice, (that is, their) father Prajāpati, the year"; the passage deals with the concluding ceremonies (*samiṣṭayajus*) at the end of the description of the sacrifices of full and new moon. Cf. also 1, 3, 5, 10 f. Likewise 4, 2, 4, 11 (soma sacrifice); see also 4, 6, 1, 11; 4, 1, 1, 16 and 4, 5, 5, 12 "Prajāpati is the year, and the sacrifice is Prajāpati"; 13, 3, 6, 7 if a sacrificer offers twelve messes of rice to the officiants, the year, the sacrifice, becomes ready to incline towards him, "for cooked rise is Prajāpati and Prajāpati is the year" (*aśvamedha*).

The statement "Prajāpati, sacrificial worship (*yajñah*), is the year (ŚB. 11, 1, 1, 1) implies that what in the universe is the Creator God is in the ritual sphere the sacrifice and as a complete time circle the year (cf., e.g., 11, 1, 2, 12)³⁷. By contact with, by actualizing, or by exerting influence on, one of these – e.g., by mastering the year, or by correctly performing definite sacrifices – one can exert influence on the others or identify oneself with Prajāpati. Thus one can also "obtain whatever accomplishment there is" by making twelve oblations (the twelve *āptis*, ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 2; VS. 9, 20), because of the identity of twelve (months), the year, Prajāpati and the sacrifice (ŚB. *ibidem*); likewise ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 4, and 13, 3, 6, 7 (with a threefold homologation). Compare also the somewhat complicated argument in AiB. 6, 19, 7: definite hymns, recited serially, are twelve in number; "the year has twelve months, Prajāpati is the year; the sacrifice is Prajāpati; thus they ... continue to be firmly established in the year, in Prajāpati, in the sacrifice".

It is, on the other hand, possible to propitiate (or make amends to) "the year and thus Prajāpati" by worshipping another deity – in *casu* Father Vaiśvānara – who is identified with the year and Prajāpati (ŚB. 1, 5, 1, 16).

35. See p. 83 above.

36. See p. 23 above.

37. Cf. Gonda, *All, universe and totality in the Śat. Br.* (see p. 63, n. 4).

Or one becomes an eater of food and comes to be firmly established (*pratīṣṭhanti*) in the five seasons and the year by performing a definite soma ceremony of seventeen days' duration including a period of five days (cf., e.g., ĀpŚ. 23, 2, 14), which was in the mythical past performed by Prajāpati, when he was desirous of becoming an eater of food (TS. 7, 3, 8, 1). Another rite enables a sacrificer to propagate offspring by reciting seventeen kindling stanzas and so to win Prajāpati, who is characterized by this number seventeen; "there are twelve months and five seasons; that is the year; offspring are born in the course of a year" (6, 3, 7, 1).

77. In ŚB. 10, 2, 6, 1 ff. it is argued that beyond the 101fold³⁸ Prajāpati, who is the year, lies the "world" (sphere in which to dwell safely, *lokaḥ*) that grants (all) desires (*kāmapraḥ*), the *kāmapraḥ* being free from death (continuance of life, *amṛtam*). "It is thus the *amṛtam* that lies beyond this (year, i.e. temporal existence). And that same "immortal" (principle) is that very light that shines yonder", and is therefore beyond temporal existence which here also explicitly coincides with the Creator God under discussion. This wish-granting "world" was obviously understood as a blissful abode, a paradise, one of those places of rest, refreshment and abundance that are conceived of in many religions. But it is noteworthy that this realm is not localized in heaven and that it is implicitly described as being beyond Prajāpati, beyond the presence of the High Creator God. It is on the other hand "identified" with the light of the sun which in various religions is believed to be heavenly bliss and salvation. And in § 2 the sun ("he who shines yonder") is said to be the light (*tejas*) of the year: this must mean that, although the source of the light is beyond the year, it illumines the year. It is the god Savitar who distributes that light among the distributed creatures.

The "identification" of Prajāpati with the year gives sometimes rise to complicated and at first sight contradictory mythological explanations. In ŚB. 10, 4, 3, 1 ff. the year is said to be the same as Death (Mṛtyu), because it destroys, by means of day and night, the life of mortal beings. The year, indeed, is the Ender (Antaka). Thus "the gods were afraid of this Ender, Death, the year, (viz.) Prajāpati". This fear of Prajāpati is intelligible; it arises from the realization that one of the functions of the year, to which Prajāpati is homologized, is that of the Ender. The gods tried to avoid death by various ritual means; in vain, until Prajāpati himself told them how to construct the great fireplace in the right way. Thereafter they became secure from death (*amṛtāḥ*, § 8). But then Mṛtyu – now obviously as an individual deity, distinct from Prajāpati – complains to the gods of the fact that, since now all men will become *amṛtāḥ*, nothing will be left for him. And it is, interestingly enough, the gods (not Prajāpati), who ease his mind: "Henceforth no one shall be *amṛtaḥ* with the body; only when thou shalt

38. 60 days and nights + 24 half-months + 13 months + 3 seasons + the year itself.

have taken that as thy share, he who is to become *amṛtaḥ* either through knowledge, or through rites, shall become *amṛtaḥ* after separating from the body”. The author observes in explanation that both knowledge and ritual should be understood as the fireplace. But in § 11 he goes on to say that the one who constructs the fireplace reaches³⁹ the Ender, Death, the year, Prajāpati, Agni.

Completeness or totality is often regarded as sixteenfold⁴⁰. In BĀU. 1, 5, 14 Prajāpati, being “identified” with the year, is quite consistently said to have sixteen parts (*soḍaśakalaḥ*). His nights are fifteen (of these) constituent parts, the “fixed part” (*dhruvā*) is the sixteenth. The term *dhruvā* indicates the non-manifested part of a whole, the manifested parts of which are transitory or of a temporary nature; it represents the idea of the whole or total that includes and encompasses the constituent parts. Hence the statement (ibidem) that Prajāpati, the year, increases and diminishes⁴¹ by his nights alone. “Having, on the new-moon night, entered with that sixteenth part into everything here that has breath, he is born thence on the following morning (as the new moon)”: a new beginning and a process of recreation viewed as the periodical regeneration of the creator god. In § 15 it is added that the one who knows this (i.e. who mentally identifies himself with this) is himself Prajāpati consisting of sixteen parts who is the year, the sixteenth part being his *ātman*, the fifteen parts his increasing and diminishing property.

MaiU. 6, 15 states quite clearly that “out of the year (*saṃvatsarāt*) these creatures are born⁴²; in the course of the year they grow when they have been born; in the year they perish”. “Therefore”, the author concludes, “the year is Prajāpati as time”. Here the year, that is phenomenal time (*kālah*), is not only exalted as the source of all that is, but also as the origin and substratum of all existence and all destruction. Continuing his argument the author “identifies” the year, Prajāpati, time with food (*annam*; cf. ŚB. 5, 1, 1, 2; 7, 1, 2, 4⁴³), the nest of brahman (*brahmanīḍam*, as far as I am able to see, a hapax legomenon which, though usually explained as “the abode or resting-place of brahman” may be taken to denote the place where brahman fully unfolds or expands (in the phenomenal world), just as birds attain to full growth in their nest) and the *ātman*⁴⁴.

By way of introduction to the well-known theory of the two paths, viz. that of reincarnation and that of non-reincarnation (see BĀU. 6, 2, 15 f.;

39. See ch. IX.

40. Gonda, Change and continuity, ch. IV.

41. For obvious reasons I prefer this translation to the usual “is increased and diminished” (Hume, Radhakrishnan).

42. See ch. I, p. 8; 13.

43. See also Eggeling, Śat. Br. IV, p. XXI.

44. One might compare the formulae addressed to the sacrificer’s throne-seat: “Thou art the womb (birth-place, *yonī*) of royal power, thou art the navel of royal power” (VS. 20, 1 etc.; ŚB. 12, 8, 3, 8; *saurāmaṇī* ritual; cf. also 12, 9, 1, 3).

ChU. 4, 15, 4; 5, 10; BhagG. 8, 24 ff.), the author of PrU. 1, 9 states that the year, which is identical with Prajāpati, has two paths or routes, the southern and the northern, the former being that on which those men go who perform acts with selfish desire, win the world of the moon and return (to this world), the latter that which, leading to the final goal, is followed by those who seek the *ātman* by asceticism, devotion to study of the Veda (*brahmacaryam*), faith and knowledge, win the sun and do not return. The well-known natural phenomenon of the sun's annual progress south and north of the equator is the physical basis of this theory of man's twofold destiny, but the paths followed by the two groups of men are said to belong to the year and the year is explicitly "identified" with Prajāpati, who in the preceding paragraphs is described as the creator of life, viz. the sun, and of matter, viz. the moon. Since Prajāpati (the whole brahman, ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 42; 13, 6, 2, 8) is identical with his creation (cf., e.g., ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 11; 6, 8, 1, 4; 10, 4, 2, 2 f.), the paths can be said to be his. So the reference to Prajāpati calls up the idea of a natural law, inherent in the Creator's creation and imposed by himself in order to hold out to his creatures a prospect of a twofold destiny.

78. Finally, it seems worth while to review by way of a brief summary some of the main features, attributes, qualities and characteristics which, according to the Vedic authorities, the year and Prajāpati have in common. Although the year – which could also be regarded as a divine person (ch. VI) – is, on the one hand, said to have been created by Prajāpati as a counterpart of himself (ŚB. 11, 1, 6, 13) and Time is, on the other hand, called the father of Prajāpati (AVŚ. 19, 53, 8), they are elsewhere regarded as having come into existence at the same time or as being identical (cf. ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 2; 10, 4, 2, 1 f.; 11, 1, 1, 1; 11, 1, 6, 1 ff.). Mythical eternity being periodical in character (§ 75 above), the year – which is cyclical – is the time in which the creation of the universe is periodically repeated. Just as the year, the Creator God is thought to be periodically engaged in producing the universe, the inhabitants of the world and all existing things. This implies that in the beginning Prajāpati as well as the year were "alone here" (ŚB. 11, 5, 8, 1; TS. 7, 1, 10, 1). While Prajāpati is described as the creator of everything (ŚB. 10, 4, 2, 1), the year is said to be the womb of all beings and all things, forming them and being, just as Prajāpati (AiB. 4, 22, 9; PB. 4, 8, 15), their foundation (ŚB. 8, 4, 1, 22). Prajāpati is the Totality (*sarva*) and the year is likewise considered to be *sarvam* (ŚB. 11, 1, 2, 12 (§ 54 above)), totality and completeness; both of them are homologized to concepts or entities that are regarded as *sarva*. Not infrequently these homologations result from the fact that Prajāpati and the year are "identified" with the same figure or entity (§ 74), for instance, with the moon (ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 16; 8, 3, 3, 11); with Dhātār, the Establisher (9, 5, 1, 35; TB. 1, 7, 2, 1); with the sacrifice (ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 2; 11, 1, 1, 1; 11, 2, 7, 1); with space (8, 4, 1, 11); with Brahman (7, 3, 1, 42; as to the year's "identity"

with the nest or abode of Brahman see MaiU. 6, 15). Both the year and the god stand for or represent productiveness and generative power (ŚB. 8, 7, 1, 1; cf. 6, 5, 4, 9), but they are also “enders” or “identical” with Death (10, 4, 3, 1 ff.). Both of them are characterized by the number seventeen (5, 1, 2, 11; 6, 2, 2, 8): however artificial the seventeentfold character of the year (twelve months and five seasons) may be, the authorities to whom we owe the relevant passages were no doubt convinced of its conclusive force when it came to demonstrate the “identity” of Prajāpati and the year. And, to wind up this incomplete survey by a point of practical interest, winning or gaining the year was, it would seem, considered no less an ideal than reaching or obtaining Prajāpati (ŚB. 5, 1, 1, 4; 5, 1, 2, 9; § 41 above).

79. As is well known, the problem of a beginning *in* time or *of* time and the question as to whether or not time existed before the creation of the universe and before or after the existence of space have vexed the minds of many philosophers and theologians of the West. These points of discussion are foreign to the cosmological myths of many so-called primitive and ancient peoples. In these myths the universe is usually supposed to have originated in the primeval waters or some other pre-existent state or order. Leaving the ritual context and the mythological presentation of the relevant facts out of consideration I recall that in Vedic India the belief in the primeval waters was sometimes incorporated into the Prajāpati speculations (ŚB. 11, 1, 6, 1 ff.; § 71 above). Generally speaking, the ancient Indian thinkers clearly tended to identify the Creator God with phenomenal time or also to consider the year to have come into existence together with Prajāpati or with his creative activity (§ 11; 78); to regard the tripartite universe as having emanated from him (ŚB. 11, 5, 8, 1) or as the result of his dismemberment; and to ‘identify’ space with the year and Prajāpati (ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 15; 8, 4, 1, 11). It is also stated that outside the year there is nothing but the realm of the pitch-dark; that in the beginning there was nothing or, elsewhere, that before the first creative act there was no year (§ 11); that then Prajāpati or the year were “alone here” (ŚB. 11, 5, 8, 1; TS. 7, 1, 10, 1); further that as long as there was no year, there were no natural processes, no reproduction, and so on (§ 20). Like Prajāpati, the year, implying totality and completeness, is sometimes (ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 17) ‘identified’ with the tripartite universe, with the totality of all existence (§ 54). The temporal and spatial aspect of the totality are virtually equivalent (§ 36; 54; 57; 65; 68; 73). The year is the firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*, § 78) of everything existent. It should, moreover, be borne in mind, that the phenomenal year, as understood by the Vedic Aryans, primarily was the space of time in which a primordial mythical time is made present and the creative and inauguratory acts of the beginning are periodically repeated.

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