

Vedas: about 1500 b.c. Rig- largely personal devotional;  
Yajur - ritualistic  
Sama -  
Atharva - charms and exorcisms.

Each contains Mantras (the sacred codes) and Brahmanas, the prose treatises which include Nidhi or rules regulating rites for priests and arthavada or quasi-philosophical explanations, and A ranyakas, the descriptions of sacrifices and the elaborate allegories and symbolic meanings of the rites.

The Bridge is Karma marga or way of works and gnana marga or way of knowledge.

#### I. Maya in the Vedas: Karma marga.

1. Basic meaning of maya is "power" to perform magical supernatural acts. Of itself it is beyond good and evil. It is always localized and personalized. It gives its possessor control over others. It explains all for which one can not naturally account, all defying explanation of which a) a thing appearing to be something other than itself or not existing, in its own right, predominated. e.g. Indra changes "forms" through maya.

It is a mysterious awesome, wonderworking power which produces effects that transcend human understanding. It resides in men, in gods, and in the world generally.

2. This concept probably springs from a Dravidian concept of "mana". Both concern the fundamental nature of religious experience of the primitive - a sense of mystery and of the supernatural. Control of supernatural is not "by the operation of immutable laws acting mechanically," (Frazer) but a mysterious overall super-normal power which transmutes the pretense of reality. Probably best translated "supernatural" (Marrett).

The primitive places alongside of the world of sense-experience another world imaginatively conceived, invisible and intangible. And he is forever correlating the two. Levy-Bruhl's primitive mystique.

3. Primitive World View: There is present in nature a diffused and interconnected impersonal energy or vital force, some quantum of which is possessed by all or most things or persons, that the amount of this energy is more or less fixed or limited; that any unusual, striking or alarming power, ability or productivity in anything is evidence of the special presence of this force; that it is localized in different natural objects, or possessed by different persons in varying degrees; that the most important property of anything consists in the amount of this energy which inheres in it; that portions of such vital energy may be transferred from one person or thing to another, and may be controlled, regulated, insulated, by various devices, usually of a mechanical sort; that contact between a person or object highly charged with it will, without violation of either, produce, as it were an explosion of vital force highly dangerous to the weaker party and it may be to both; that the chief end of man is to get possession and control of this force; and that the chief utility of an immense variety of rites lies in the manipulation of it." (Marrett) The Threshold of Religion.

4. To the Vedic Indian the world is decidedly real. The Vedas reflect a tendency to unify the gods in henotheism where each god is elevated successively to the highest position and all others temporarily become merged into this one. But parallel with this henotheistic trend is a development of philosophical monism.

There are four lines of thought development;

- 1) henotheism - Prajapati-Vishvakarma. The ultimate power is traced to one of the many gods.
  - 2) Brahman - the "power" residing everywhere is concretely unified in the ritual. To them there was no difference between external, overt act, the "symbol" (objective) and the inner significance or meaning of the ritual (subjective). The sacrifice loses its value as a means; the "power" of the sacrifice, the knowledge of this power becomes important.
  - 3) Atman, considering the world alive it is conceived in anthropomorphic terms.
  - 4) Sat - the emergence of concept and problem of "sat" ultimate reality or essence.
11. Upanishads, Concept of Maya; The close of the Vedas therefore known as the vedanta. Gnana marga. These contain the mystic teachings which initiate the elect into knowledge of the ultimate reality and truth for "knowing" is to have control over it. These are the foundation for later Hindu philosophical and religious thought.
1. The magic power of the ritual associated with the idea Rita (the Rig Vedic notion of cosmic law or order) is abstracted from the concrete ritual as such, and conceived of as the supreme power (Brahman); this thought arises out of the bewildering maze of unrestricted speculation and emerges as the one compelling idea.
  2. The aim of the Upanishadic secret instructions was "not so much to reach philosophic truth as to bring peace and freedom to the anxious human spirit".
  3. In contrast to Vidya - intuitive knowledge not reasoned knowledge, there is avidya which is a positive ignorance that functions as a cosmic power deluding men about the true nature of their destiny. The world of relative reality, the Maya of this phenomenal universe is due to it.
  4. Vidya takes for emancipation and a vidya makes for samsara (the round of birth and deaths) and prevents release.
  5. The gist of Upanishadic theories is; Atman (I) = Brahman (ultimate reality) = Only reality (sat) The world is seen as a huge human being; identifying speech as fire, breath as wind, eye as sun, ear as the four quarters. This single principle of the universe lends itself to various interpretations, some a monism, some a henotheism and others a pantheism.
  6. The world is asat or becoming - the multi-form dynamic perishable material in contrast to the absolute static eternal perfection sat or being. Becoming is the female element and being the male and both take part in the creation of the world of things.

7. In supreme illumination we learn the oneness of subject and object, the relativity of the world, the non-ultimate nature of oppositions.
8. The world is not illusory but a relative reality in contrast to the absolute reality. The Upanishad do not yield us a complete philosophical system, rather the beginnings of ideas from which later systems were formed.