

Prajāpati is hungry. How can the concept of eating be used in philosophy?

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The aim of the present paper is to show that we can reconstruct abstract thinking in the Vedic texts even though they seem to be immersed in everyday experience. Moreover, I hope to show that the thought presented therein is so coherent and consistent that it can be called philosophical. Moreover, some concepts created by the Vedic philosophers are as sophisticated as philosophical concepts created in the Western tradition.

In order to reconstruct philosophical thought in the Vedic texts, along with philological methodology, I make use of the methodology of cognitive linguistics. This is a branch of linguistics which investigates the relationship between verbal and non-verbal signs, on the one hand, and thinking and experience on the other. The main question which cognitive linguists want to answer is how the world, as we perceive it, becomes meaningful.¹ They postulate that thinking is not independent from experience, but just the opposite, it is embodied, i.e. motivated by experience, in both universal and cultural dimensions.² The second main assumption of cognitive linguistics is that thinking reveals itself in verbal and non-verbal signs. This is the basis for the next assumption that it is possible to investigate thinking on the basis of the analysis of signs.

Cognitive linguistics investigates the mental operations through which we understand signs. It proposes three main models of these operations: conceptual metonymy, conceptual metaphor, and conceptual blending.³

Conceptual metonymy is a model of thinking which operates within one concept. It activates thinking about an aspect of a concept (or the whole concept) *via* its salient conceptual element. The concept which activates thinking is called the vehicle, the concept which is activated, the target domain. For

1. Johnson 1992.

2. Lakoff 1987.

3. For conceptual metonymy and metaphor cf. Lakoff 1987, Lakoff–Johnson 1980, Lakoff–Turner 1989. For conceptual blending cf. Fauconnier–Turner 2003.

example, the sign of the cross is a vehicle which activates the concept of Christ's death which, again metonymically, activates the concept of the Christian religion. In the Indian tradition, the sign OM can be seen as the metonymic vehicle which leads the recipient's thought towards the whole of reality, on the one hand, and towards the Hindu religion, on the other. Thus, metonymic thinking gives access to very complex concepts *via* simple signs.

Conceptual metaphor is a model of thinking which operates between two concepts. It enables thinking about one concept in terms of another. The concept which provides categories is called the source domain. The concept which is conceived in terms of these categories is called the target domain. For example, in the 23rd Psalm in the *Old Testament*, God is presented as a good shepherd who allows the Psalm's composer to lie down on green pastures. The concept of a shepherd is also metonymically evoked by its salient conceptual elements which are the rod and the staff. Thus the composer of the Psalm elaborates the GOD IS A SHEPHERD metaphor in order to present the abstract concept of a God who takes care of human beings, conceived in terms of sheep.⁴ In the *Rgveda*, God is also conceived in terms of someone who takes care of cattle; in this case as a cowherd, *gopā*.

Conceptual blending is a model of a more complex conceptual operation. Its simplest form consists of four concepts which are called mental spaces. Two mental spaces, called input spaces, transfer part of their meaning to the third space called the blend. The meaning of the blend is new in comparison to the meaning of the input spaces. An example of a conceptual blend is the concept of an angel which consists of two input spaces: the concepts of a human being and of a bird. The input space of a human being transfers the concepts of the human body and human cognitive and emotional abilities to the blend. The input space of a bird transfers the concepts of wings and the ability to fly. The input spaces have something in common, usually on a very general level. These common features are called the generic space, which, in the case of the angel, is a living being. The same blend exists in the Indian tradition, namely, the fire altar built during the Agnicayana ritual which is both a bird and a human being.

I shall analyse some passages of the cosmogonies of the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (ŚB) which explain why rituals should be performed.⁵ The general reasons given by its composers is that man repeats the creative activity of reality during rituals. This is expressed with the help of various source domains, but the prevailing source domain draws from the experience connected with being hungry because of hard work, looking for food and its preparation, eating and digesting, and finally becoming reinvigorated. It is important to note that the ŚB composers metonymically evoke the holistic concept of eating and digesting

4. Sweetser–DesCamp 2005.

5. If not otherwise stated, all the quotations from the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* are from Titus Text Database.

via its first phase which is cooking.⁶ The second important source domain is sexual activity, pregnancy, and birth-giving.

Cosmogony I (ŚB 2.2.4)

The first cosmogony analysed here is the beginning of the main cosmogony explaining the Agnihotra ritual (ŚB 2.2.4.1):

*prajāpatir ha vā idām āgra ēka evāsa / sā aikṣata kathām nū prajāyeyēti sò śrāmyat
sā tāpo tapyata sò ḡnīm eva mūkhāj janayām cakre tād yād enām mūkhād
ājanayata tāsmād annādò ḡnīḥ /*

Prajāpati alone, indeed, existed here in the beginning. He considered, ‘How may I be reproduced?’. He toiled and performed acts of penance. He generated Agni from his mouth; and because he generated him from his mouth, therefore Agni is a consumer of food.⁷

The composer of this cosmogony presents the Creator, called Prajāpati, as a man who releases fire from his mouth. In Vedic times, fire was created by means of a fire-drill and blowing was necessary to keep the fire going. The concept of blowing can be evoked thanks to metonymy and it is accessed via the concept of the mouth (LOCUS OF ACTIVITY FOR ACTIVITY metonymy). In this way the recipient can build the image of a man who kindles fire. This image is the source domain for the Creator. Such a conceptualization implies thinking of the cosmos in terms of fire.

The verbal form *janayām cakre*, ‘generated’, evokes the second source domain for creation which is birth-giving. The ŚB conceives Prajāpati as an androgynous being: he is conceived in terms of a man and a father and of a woman and a mother.⁸ The activation of this metaphor allows the composer to conceive creation in terms of birth. Within the frames of this conceptualization, the cosmos is conceived in terms of a new-born baby.

The composer explains the nature of fire by calling it the eater of food. This explanation is coherent thanks to the afore-mentioned LOCUS OF ACTIVITY FOR ACTIVITY metonymy: the concept of the mouth activates the concept of eating. In order to fully understand this explanation we also need to remember that, in the Veda, burning is conceived in terms of eating (BURNING IS EATING metaphor). Fire needs fuel to burn and it is in this function that it is conceived in terms of the eater of food.

6. THE FIRST PHASE FOR ACTION FOR THE WHOLE ACTION metonymy, see Radden-Koevecses 1999.

7. All the translation of the ŚB are Eggeling’s translations (Eggeling 1994).

8. See ŚB 2.5.1.3 (analysed below).

We can see that several metaphors operate in this description: CREATION IS THE KINDLING OF FIRE, CREATION IS GIVING BIRTH, BURNING IS EATING. The recipient is expected to simultaneously evoke all of these. In other words, the recipient is expected to create a blend consisting of several input spaces. The first input space is the creation of the world. The second input space is the kindling of fire. The third is giving birth, and the fourth, eating. The generic space of this conceptual network is the concept of transformation. In the blend, Prajāpati is a man who kindles the fire which has to be kept alight with fuel, but he is also a woman who gives birth to a child which has to be fed, and the Creator of the world. The world is fire and a new-born baby.

Then Prajāpati thinks (ŚB 2.2.4.3-4):

*sá aikṣata prajāpatiḥ / annādām vā imām ātmāno jījane yād agnīm ná vā ihā mād
anyād ānnam asti yām vā ayaṃ nādyād íti kālvālikṛtā haivā tárhi pṛthivyāsa
naúśadhaya āsur ná vānaspatayas (...) áthainam agnúr vyāttēnopaparyāvavarta /*

Prajāpati then considered, 'In that Agni I have generated a food-eater for myself; but, indeed, there is no other food here but myself, whom, surely, he would not eat'. At that time this earth had, indeed, been rendered quite bald; there were neither plants nor trees. (...) Thereupon Agni turned towards him with open mouth; and he [Prajāpati] being terrified, his own greatness departed from him.

The composer elaborates the source domains activated in the previous sentences: fire needs fuel in order to burn, a new born child is hungry and needs food. In both cases, the agent of the activity is in danger. If fire cannot find any fuel, it will destroy the person who kindled it. If a child cannot be fed, its parent suffers mental distress. The composer highlights the first source domain: Prajāpati is in danger of being destroyed by his own creation which is conceived in terms of being eaten.

It is important to remember that the ŚB presents a monistic vision of reality which manifests its aspect during creation. The name *prajāpati* is the term given to the creative power within its manifest aspect which is identical with what it creates. Monism is expressed in the cosmogonies of the ŚB in the following ways: firstly, Prajāpati is also conceived in terms of fire: he toils and heats himself;⁹ secondly, he is androgynous, so he is mother and father at the same time. As is well known, it was believed that a father is reborn in his son and, in many places in the ŚB, Prajāpati is simply called Agni. Thus, the recipient understands that in terms of Prajāpati who creates the fire that needs fuel, a reality is conceived which transforms itself into such a form that is dangerous for itself.

If the recipient elaborates the blend created in the previous part of the

9. The activity of fire is also conceived in terms of toiling, e.g. *Rgveda* 3.29.16.

cosmogony (ŚB 2.2.4.1), he will identify fire with a hungry child, more specifically, with its belly. In terms of this blended concept, the place for the future world is conceived.¹⁰ And in the same way as the empty belly is filled with food and fire is filled with fuel, the emptiness created by reality will be filled with the world.

The conceptualization of the place for the future world in terms of a hungry belly which threatens the Creator with death opens the way to profound philosophical questions. Did reality in its manifestation as Prajāpati know what it was doing? Did it commit a mistake? Is it omniscient or not? Omnipotent or not? Or, maybe does reality manifest its freedom in this way? If reality is perfectly free, it is not limited by any attribute, even by the attribute of necessary existence. If this is the case, a great difference between Judeo-Christian and Vedic thought emerges. In the former, the attribute of God's existence has never been questioned. Yahweh's response to Moses, who questions him about his identity, is 'I am who I am'.¹¹ In Vedic thought, reality is so free that it can even commit suicide if it so wishes. And this very freedom of reality is manifested in Prajāpati's creative activity.

Cosmogony 2 (ŚB 2.5.1)

The composer begins the cosmogony with the description of Prajāpati who creates the groups of beings: birds, snakes, and intermediate beings. All of them die. Since the father manifests in his son, the recipient can understand the concepts of the groups of beings as the source domains, in terms of which the manifestations of reality are conceived. The form in which reality manifests its ontic identity with its creation is conceived in terms of birds.¹² The form in which reality manifests as its own opposite is conceived in terms of snakes, which are the opposite form to birds. The form which allows reality to unite its opposing manifestations and to realize their ontic identity is conceived in terms of intermediate beings. In all these forms, reality dies within its creative manifest power called Prajāpati.

And then we read (ŚB 2.5.1.3):

*só 'rcañ chrāmyan prajāpatir iksāṃ cakre / kathāṃ nū me prajāḥ sṛṣṭāḥ
pārābhavanṭīti sā haitād evā dadarsānaśanātayā vai me prajāḥ pārābhavanṭīti
sā ātmāna evāgre stānayoḥ pāya āpyāyayāṃ cakre sā prajā asṛjata tā asya
prajāḥ sṛṣṭāḥ stānāv evābhīpādya tās tātaḥ sāmabbhūvus tā imā aparābhūtaḥ /*

10. The same idea of creation is expressed by the concept of *cimcum* by Isaac Luria (Scholem 1997, 321 ff.).

11. *Book of Exodus* 3.14. See Kolakowski 1988.

12. The composer of ŚB 2.1.1.1 explains the affinity of birds and Prajāpati in the following way: 'Now man is the nearest to Prajāpati; and man is two-footed: hence birds are two-footed'.

While praising and practising austerities, Prajāpati thought within himself, 'How comes it that the living beings created by me pass away?'. He then became aware that his creatures passed away from want of food. He made the breasts in the fore-part of [his] body teem with milk.¹³ He then created living beings; and by resorting to the breasts, the beings created by him thenceforward continued to exist: they are these [creatures] which have not passed away.

The composer of this cosmogony activates the same source domain as the composer of the previous one (ŚB 2.2.4), i.e. the birth of a child who is hungry and needs food. Here it is not the parent who is in danger of death but the offspring. Such a conceptualization of this situation is closer to everyday life experience. The recipient understands therefore that in the frames of the target domain, reality is not threatened by its creation, but it somehow annihilates itself in its manifest part. Only the fourth manifestation is safe, and it is conceived in terms of feeding with milk.

Once again this brings us to ask fascinating philosophical questions. On the one hand, we are led to understand that reality fails in its creative activity, that it commits a mistake three times. Therefore is it omnipotent and omniscient or not? On the other hand, we can understand that reality is so free that it can commit mistakes whenever it wants and as much as it wants. Finally, we can understand that it is not a mistake, but that reality wants to create a place for the future world; this place is conceived in terms of hungry bellies and the emptiness which is left when the beings die.

Thus the concept of an empty belly and of a living being which dies of hunger is the source domain for a very subtle philosophical concept of the emptiness which is the place for the future world and, in fact, the first manifestation of reality. In this metaphysical system, death is given the highest possible rank because it is the form in which reality manifests itself. In other words, death is the first manifestation of reality. It is implied that if reality wishes to manifest itself, it has to die. Generally speaking, death is the only way through which the Absolute can express its total otherness from life which is the feature of its manifest aspect.

Cosmogony 3 (ŚB 7.1.2)

The composer of this cosmogony explicitly describes the death of Prajāpati in his creative activity. At the same time, it presents the further phases of creation, conceived in terms of cooking, which allow reality to resurrect itself in its manifest aspect (ŚB 7.1.2.1):

13. Eggeling: 'He made the breasts in the fore-part of [their] body teem with milk'.

*prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjata / sā prajāḥ sṛṣtvā sárvaṃ ājím itvā vyásraṃsata tásmād
vísrastāt prāṇó madhyatá údakrāmad áthāsmād víryám údakrāmat tásmínn
útkrānte ṛpadyata tásmāt pannād ánnam asravat yác cákṣur adhyáseta tásmād
asyánnam asravan no hehá tárhi kā caná pratiṣṭhāsa /*

Prajāpati produced creatures. Having produced creatures, and run the whole race, he became relaxed. From him, when relaxed, the vital air went out from within: then his vigour went out of him. That having gone out, he fell down. From him, thus fallen, food flowed forth: it was from that eye on which he lay that his food flowed. And, verily, there was then no firm foundation whatever here.

The source domain elaborated by the author of the cosmogony is the concept of a runner. The recipient understands that the runner dies because the middle breath goes out of him, and it is the middle breath that keeps life. The logic of the source domain allows the recipient to assume that the main reason for the runner's death is that he is exhausted. However, the concept of hunger is also evoked here because it is said that food flows from the runner. Thus, hunger is also the reason for his death. Therefore, in the target domain, reality dies in its manifest aspect. But in its unmanifest aspect, it is still alive and still omnipotent. This is implied by the concept of the gods, who are the manifestation of its subjective powers, which are able to continue creation after the death of the main power called Prajāpati (ŚB 7.1.2.6-7):

*tām devā agnáu prāvṛñjan / tād yá enam prāvṛktam agnír ārohad yá evāsmāt
sá prāṇó madhyatá udákrāmat sá evainam sa āpadyata tām asmínn adadhur átha
yád asmād víryám udákrāmat tād asmínn adadhur átha yád asmād ánnam ásravat
tād asmínn adadhur tām sárvaṃ kṛtsnám saṃskṛtyordhvam údaśrayams tād yám
tām udáśrayann imé sá lokāḥ / (6)*

*tásyāyám evá lokāḥ pratiṣṭhā átha yò 'smím lokè 'gníḥ sò 'syāvān prāṇó
'thāsyañtárikṣam ātmātha yò 'ntárikṣe vāyúr yá evāyám ātmán prāṇāḥ sò 'sya sá
dyaúr evāsya śírah sūryācandramásau cákṣuṣī yác cákṣur adhyáseta sá candramās
tásmāt sá mīlītataró 'nnaṃ hí tásmād ásravat / (7)*

The gods heated him in the fire; and when the fire rose over him thus heated, that same vital air which had gone out from within him came back to him, and they put it into him; and the vigour which had gone out of him they put into him; and the food which had flowed from him they put into him. Having made him up entire and complete, they raised him [so as to stand] upright; and inasmuch as they thus raised him upright, he is these worlds. (6)

This [terrestrial] world truly is his foundation; and what fire there is in this world that is his [Prajāpati's] downward vital air. And the air is his body, and what wind there is in the air, that is that vital air of his in the body. And the

sky is his head; the sun and the moon are his eyes. The eye on which he lay is the moon: whence that one is much closed up, for the food flowed therefrom. (7)

Within the frames of the source domain, the composer builds the image of a dead body burnt in fire. This image evokes several concepts and thus the recipient is prompted to create a conceptual blend. In the context of Indian civilization, the image of a dead body burnt in fire metonymically evokes the concept of cremation (SALIENT ELEMENT OF AN ACTIVITY FOR THE WHOLE ACTIVITY metonymy). It was believed that the deceased is regenerated in a perfect form under the influence of cremation fire.¹⁴ This belief is probably based on the everyday experience: when someone is cold, they should be warmed up and the deceased is especially cold, so he/she needs a special warming. This is the first input space of the blend built into this description.

The second input space is cooking which is also the heating of a dead body under the influence of fire. Cooking transforms the dead body in such a way that it can be eaten. It is worth noting that in the descriptions of cremation, the power of the cremation fire which transforms the dead person is also conceived in terms of cooking.¹⁵ Finally, in the Veda, not only eating food but also its digesting are conceived in terms of its being put under the influence of fire. On the basis of this metaphor (EATING AND DIGESTING IS PUTTING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF FIRE), the recipient can create the third input space, namely, the eating and digesting of food. The next input space is the creation of the cosmos. The generic space is transformation. In the blend, Prajāpati cooks himself, eats and digests himself and thanks to this, he is resurrected and becomes the cosmos: Prajāpati's head becomes the sky, his feet become the earth, his belly the space between them. In this way, cooking becomes the source domain to conceive the spatial dimension of the manifest aspect of reality.

It is worth noting that cooking is also the source domain in terms of which the temporal dimension of the manifest aspect of reality is conceived. Let us consider the following short description of the sun's activity, whose movement is the visible sign of the temporal character of the cosmos (ŚB 10.4.2.19):

eṣā vā idāṃ sárvam pacati ahorātrāṭ ardhmāsāṭ māsāṭ ṛtúbhiḥ saṃvatsarēṇa

That one [the sun] bakes everything here, by means of the days and nights, the half-moons, the months, the seasons, and the year.

The sun's activity is conceived in terms of cooking: the instruments of this activity are temporal divisions which are understood as fuel.¹⁶ When the sun

14. Jurewicz 2010, Parry 1988.

15. *Rgveda* 10.16.1-2.

16. Divisions of time are conceived in the same way in *Rgveda* 10.90.6.

moves, it makes plants mature, and hence edible. At the same time, the sun's movement ages living beings, and this is the reason for their death. Both these processes are conceived in terms of cooking.¹⁷

From what has just been said, it follows that the concept of cooking, eating, and digesting is crucial for understanding creation within the manifest aspect of reality. Prajāpati's resurrection is conceived in terms of cooking, but also in those of eating and digesting, which are metonymically implied by the cooking scenario. Cooking is an intentional activity: one typically prepares food in order to eat it and not to throw it away without eating. The spatiotemporal functioning of the world is conceived in the same terms: it is an intentional activity on the part of reality which wants to manifest itself as the world.

In this way the composers of the ŚB create a model which allows them to express the functioning of the world motivated by the subsequent acts of Prajāpati's death and resurrection in a precise way. This model is a blend which consists of the following input spaces. The first input space is a human being who cooks, eats, and digests food. The second is the cosmos in its spatiotemporal dimensions. The third is the manifest aspect of reality. The generic space is transformation. In the blend, Prajāpati is both human being and cosmos, his head with his mouth is the sky; his feet are the earth with the mortal beings; his hungry belly is the space between the sky and the earth. Prajāpati kills himself, cooks, eats, and comes back to life.

The next input space is a philosophical assumption concerning reality and its creation. In this case, reality, when it creates the world, falls apart and annihilates itself in its manifest aspect. This is the stage when the creative movement is stopped. Then reality begins to act again and unites its dispersed elements. This act of unification is especially important because it allows reality to preserve its ontic identity within its manifest aspect. The blend expresses the monism of reality within its manifest aspect: the identity of the eater (the head) and the food (the earth) is realized when the food is put into his/her mouth. According to the composers of the ŚB, it seems that death and resurrection are the only way the immortality of reality can be manifested.

Cosmogony 4 (ŚB 10.4.2)

In this part I shall show how the composers of the ŚB conceived the role of human beings and other living beings (ŚB 10.4.2-3):

17. This way of thinking about the activity of time in terms of cooking is continued in later thought, e.g. *Mahābhārata* 12.217.39, 220.84, 231.25, 309.90. Cooking seems to be a suitable source domain for the conceptualization of maturing and growing old, because it takes time to cook meat properly in order to get tasty food, just as it takes time to become mature and old.

sò 'yám saṃvatsaráḥ prajāpatiḥ sárváṇi bhūtāni sṛṣṭe yác ca prāṇi yác cāprāṇám ubháyaṃ devamanuṣyānt sá sárváṇi bhūtāni sṛṣṭvā riricāná 'va mene sá mṛtyór bibhayām cakāra / (2)

sá hekṣām cakre / katham̐ nv hám imāni sárváṇi bhūtāni púnar ātmān āvapeya púnar ātmān dadhīya katham̐ nv ahám evaiṣām sárveṣām bhūtānām púnar ātmā syām iti / (3)

This Prajāpati, the year, has created all existing things, both what breathes and the breathless, both gods and men. Having created all existing things, he felt like one emptied out, and was afraid of death. (2)

He bethought himself, 'How can I get these beings back into my body? How can I put them back into my body? How can I be again the body of all these beings?'. (3)

In this description, the source domain is constituted by the process of excretion. If the recipient wants to elaborate the logic of this domain, he will think about excretion from the various openings of his/her body. As the result of this process, the agent feels hunger which is the cause of his fear of death and his desire to eat. This is how Prajāpati is conceived and such a conceptualization agrees with the conceptualizations analysed above. Within the frame of the monistic vision, food can only be constituted by what is excreted from reality, i.e. the creatures. When Prajāpati eats them, he will become their body, in the same way as a human being becomes the body of what he/she has eaten. Therefore, creatures are the part of the manifest aspect of reality which is conceived in terms of the food that builds the body of the agent who eats it. Thus their death is life-giving.

Moreover, the composers of the ŚB create the concept of death which is not real death. This is clearly explained in ŚB 6.2.1. Its composer presents the fire created by Prajāpati, which wants to hide itself because it is afraid that Prajāpati will kill and eat it.¹⁸ It therefore assumes the forms of five living beings: a man, a horse, a bull, a ram, and a he-goat. But Prajāpati recognizes it in these forms. Then, the cosmogony in its source domain elaborates the scenario of preparing food, its cooking, eating, and digesting. Prajāpati kills the animals, cuts off their heads and eats them uncooked. He throws their torsos into water. Then he thinks (ŚB 6.2.1.9, quoted after Weber 1855):

sá aikṣata / yádi vā idám itthám evá sádātmānam abhisam̐karisye mārtyaḥ kuṇapó 'napahatapāpmā bhaviṣyāmi hāntaitád agnínā pácānīti tād agnínāpacat tād enad am̐tam akarod etád vai havír am̐tam bhavati yád agnínā pácanti (...)

18. This is expressed directly in *Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇa* 21.1.2; see also Lévi 1898, 25.

He considered, 'Surely, if I fit this [matter] such as it is unto mine own self, I shall become a mortal carcase, not freed from evil: well then, I will bake it by means of the fire'. So saying, he baked it by means of the fire, and thereby made it immortal; for the sacrificial food which is baked by fire is indeed immortal [or, ambrosia].

Thus, the torsos are cooked and eaten. The act of eating is not explicitly expressed, but it is implied by the logic of the source domain. In this way, the sacrificial living beings, although they have been killed, become immortal, because they become the substance of the body of the reality which manifests itself in the cosmos. We could say that they are not killed but only transformed into a more perfect form.

In order to understand the role of human beings in the world thus conceived, it is important to evoke the ritual context of the above cosmogony. This explains the ritual of building the fire altar on which the fire was kindled and sacrifices were performed. This process can be seen as the ritualized process of the creation of a hearth, the preparation of food, and its eating. The fire altar is the ritual realization of the reality manifest in the cosmos: the heads of the animals are buried under the altar, their torsos are the layers of the altar. At the same time, the fire altar is the ritual representation of the human sacrificer. In the creative act, reality manifests itself as Prajāpati in the cosmos and in the fire altar built *in illo tempore*. A sacrificer, when he performs Agnicayana, re-enacts the creative process of reality and builds a sacrificial body for himself, identical with the cosmos and reality itself. In this way, he himself becomes reality which constantly dies and is resurrected in its manifestations.

It can thus be concluded that the composers of the ŚB knew how to use the concepts connected with everyday experience in order to express very subtle philosophical theories in these terms. They expressed monistic worldviews according to which reality manifests its aspect during creation. Death is the first manifestation of reality, while resurrection is the next stage. The living beings, who participate in these transformations thanks to rituals, become immortal in just the same way as reality is immortal within its manifestation: they constantly die and are resurrected. At the most general level, it could be said that the philosophers of the ŚB create a sophisticated model of the Absolute, whose most important attribute is not existence (as it is in its Western definitions) but freedom. In order to realize this attribute, the Absolute partly denies its existence in order to begin to exist in a different way. Human beings are the manifestation of the active powers of the Absolute which are able to kill, while other living beings are the manifestations of its passive powers which are able to be killed. Death is the transformation of the mode of existence within the manifest aspect. As the Absolute dies so that it can exist in another way, living beings also die in order to live in another way as the opposing aspects of the Absolute which manifests itself as killing and dying. Rituals are the only activity which renders this manifestation possible.

This philosophical theory is expressed in the scenario of being hungry, the preparation of food, eating and digesting. The first manifestation of reality which is the negation of the Absolute's attribute of existence is conceived in terms of a hungry belly. The constant manifestation of the Absolute in the world is conceived in terms of cooking, eating, and digesting. Within the ritual frames, human beings are those who eat, thereby achieving immortality, while the other beings are those who are eaten and become immortal, as parts of the immortal bodies of those who eat them.

It is worth adding that the source domain of the preparation and eating of food is not only conceptual but also experiential. The phase conceived in terms of hunger is realized during *dikṣā*, when the sacrificer feels the same as Prajāpati *in illo tempore*. The phase conceived in terms of preparation and eating the food is realized during the ritual.¹⁹ It therefore follows that, in their theories, the philosophers of the ŚB did not only use concepts close to experience in order to explain more complex concepts in terms of the simpler ones. They also wanted to ensure that the act of understanding philosophical issues completely overwhelmed the human being, in terms of his theoretical insight and practical activity. Philosophy was not only a matter of thought but also of living.

19. The ritual thus understood can be seen as the multimodal metaphor (Cienki–Müller 2008, Forceville–Urios-Aparisi 2009, Jurewicz 2014).

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