

walked having their faces turned aside, and did not turn (their backs). He (Prajâpati) then encircled them with fire, whereupon they turned to Agni. After they had turned to Agni, Prajâpati said, "The creatures which are born (*jâta*), I obtained (*avidam*) through this one (Agni)." From these words came forth the Jâtavedâs hymn. That is the reason that Agni is called Jâtavedâs.⁴⁰

The creatures being encircled by fire were hemmed in walking. They stood in flames and blazing. Prajâpati sprinkled them with water. That is the reason that the Hotar, after having recited the Jâtavedâs hymn, repeats a hymn addressed to the waters : *âpô hi shṭha mayobhuraḥ* (10, 9). Thence it is to be recited by him as if he were extinguishing fire (*i. e.* slowly).

Prajâpati after having sprinkled the creatures with water, thought, that they (the creatures) were his own. He provided them with an invisible lustre through *Ahir budhnya*. This *Ahir budhnya* (lit. the serpent of the depth) is the Agni Gârhapatya (the household fire). By repeating therefore a verse addressed to *Ahir budhnya*,⁴¹ the Hotar puts the invisible lustre in the

"May Agni Jâtavedâs enjoy the Soma ! he who has a beautiful appearance, whose splendour is apparent to all, he, the house-father, who does not flicker (when burning, *i. e.* whose fire is great and strong), he who is visible amidst the darkness, he who receives the offerings of melted butter, who is to be praised, who performs the sacrifices without being disturbed by many hindrances, who is unconquerable and conquers his enemies in the battle. O Agni Jâtavedâs ! extend (thy) splendour and strength round us, with force and pluck (*tus'ah* and *aptus'ah* are adverbs); protect him who lights (thee), and praises (thee) from distress ! May Agni Jâtavedâs here hear (us); may he enjoy the Soma.

⁴⁰ The etymology of the word as here given is fanciful. The proper meaning of the word is, "having possession of all that is born," *i. e.* pervading it. With the idea of the fire being an all-pervading power, the Rishis are quite familiar. By *Jâtavedâs* the "animal fire" is particularly to be understood.

⁴¹ This is *uta no ahir budhnyah s'rinotu* (6, 50, 14), which forms part of the Agni-mâruta Shastra. See As'v. S'r. S. 5, 20.