

formulas in the Yas'na which commence with *nirāé-ahayémi*, *i. e.* I invite, are exactly of the same nature as the Nivids.

The Nivids along with many so-called Yajus formulas, which are preserved in the Yajurveda, the Nigadas, such as the Subrahman'yâ and the so-called Japa formulas, (such as Ait. Br. 2, 38), which are muttered with a low voice only, are doubtless the most ancient pieces of Vedic poetry. The Rishis tried their poetical talent first in the composition of Yâjyâs or verses recited at the occasion of an offering being thrown into the fire. Thence we meet so many verses requesting the deity to accept the offering, and taste it. These Yâjyâs were extended into little songs, which on account of their finished form were called *sûktam*, *i. e.* well, beautifully spoken. The principal ideas for the Yâjyâs were furnished by the sacrificial formulas in which the Yajurveda abounds, and those of the hymns were suggested by the Nigadas and Nivids. There can be hardly any doubt, that the oldest hymns which we possess, are purely sacrificial, and made only for sacrificial purposes. Those which express more general ideas, or philosophical thoughts, or confessions of sins, such as many of those addressed to Varuṇa, are comparatively late.

In order to illustrate that the development of the sacrificial and religious poetry of the ancient Brahmans took such a course as here described, I may adduce the similar one which we find with the Hebrews. The sacrificial ritual of Moses as laid