

for in the 4th verse, where is said, "This one (*i. e.* I) speaks through the navel¹⁹ (*nâbhâ*), hails you, in your residence; hear, O sons of the gods, ye Rishis (to my speech)." The song is addressed to the Añgiras, who are requested to receive the poet. The gift of thousand is also mentioned.

Let us, after this discussion regarding the antiquity of the As'vamedha and Nâbhânedishtha hymns, return to the general question on the relationship between the pre-eminently sacrificial mantras, and the other production of Vedic poetry.

If we look at the history of poetry with other nations, we nowhere find profane songs precede religious poetry. The latter owes its origin entirely to the practical worship of beings of a higher order, and must, as every art does, go through many phases before it can arrive at any state of perfection and refinement. Now in the collection of the hymns of the Rigveda, we find the religious poetry already so highly developed, the language so polished, the metres already so artificially composed, as to justify the assumption, that the songs which have reached our time, are not the earliest productions of the poetical genius, and the devout mind of the ancient Indians. Generations of poets and many family

¹⁹ This expression appears to be strange. It implies a very ancient idea, which must have been current with the Iranians and Indians alike. The navel was regarded as the seat of an internal light, by means of which the seers received what they called revelation. It is up to the present day a belief of the Parsi priests, that the Desturs or High-priests have a fire in their navel, by means of which they can see things which are hidden. This reminds us of some phenomena in modern somnambulism.