

interruption. If we can rightly understand these significant statements made by two ancient Purāṇas, we have to infer that the Purāṇa or old tales existed, but not Purāṇa literature as such.

There is also another account as to the origin of the Purāṇas as told by the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. In fact we have to look for their origins in the Vedic literature itself. The myths and legends to which allusion is made therein as well as the particular forms of prayer and worship inculcated, afforded ample material for the later compiler of the Purāṇa especially the *sarga* and *pratisarga* portions. These portions are intimately connected with the origin of the world. It is not difficult to believe that cosmogonic hymns of the Ṛg Veda Samhitā afforded a convenient material to build up a literary superstructure. There is therefore much justification for the remark of Prof. Macdonell that "those 'cosmogonic' hymns of the Ṛg Veda were not only the precursors of Indian Philosophy but also of the Purāṇas" (*History of Indian Literature*, p. 138).

Not only the *sarga* and *pratisarga* portions of the Purāṇas are indebted to the Vedic literature but also the numerous ancient legends which are scattered in the Brāhmaṇas (also included as a branch in the Vedic literature). The Brāhmaṇas mainly deal with the sacrifices and different rites and ceremonies and also contain special spells and prayers. In these particular forms of worship and prayer which are associated with the legends of yore, we are led to think that the foundations of the later Purāṇa literature were laid. According to Weber (*History of Indian Literature*, 1914. p. 24) the miscellaneous topics and subjects in the Purāṇas had their sources in these Vedic legends which were elaborated in content and character. Thus arose a distinct class of literature which goes by the name of Purāṇas by the commencement of the epoch of the Upanishads.