

Mṛtyu, 'death,' is repeatedly mentioned in the Rigveda¹ and later² as a thing of terror. There are a hundred and one forms of death, the natural one by old age³ (*jarā*), and a hundred others, all to be avoided.⁴ To die before old age (*purā jarasah*)⁵ is to die before the allotted span (*purā āyusah*),⁶ the normal length of life being throughout Vedic literature spoken of as a hundred years.⁷ On the other hand, the evils of old age in the loss of physical strength were clearly realized:⁸ one of the feats of the Aśvins was to restore old Cyavāna to his former youth and powers, and another was the rejuvenation of Kali.⁹ The Atharvaveda¹⁰ is full of charms of all sorts to avert death and secure length of years (*āyusya*).

The modes of disposing of the dead were burial and cremation (see *Agnidagdha*). Both existed in the early Vedic period,¹¹ as in Greece;¹² but the former method was on the whole less favoured, and tended to be regarded with disapproval. The bones of the dead, whether burned or not, were marked by the erection of a tumulus (*Śmaśāna*): the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa¹³ preserves traces of strong differences of opinion as to the mode in which these tumuli should be constructed. There is little or no trace¹⁴ of the custom common in northern lands of sending the dead man to sea in a burning ship: the reference

¹ vii. 59, 12; x. 13, 4; 18, 1, 2; x. 48, 5; 60, 5. So *mṛtyu-bandhu*, 'akin to death,' Rv. viii. 18, 22; x. 95, 18.

² Taittiriya Saṃhitā, i. 5, 9, 4, where the world is said to be 'yoked with death' (*mṛtyu-saṃyuta*); Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, i. 5, 9, 6; Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, iii. 8, 2; 14, 1, 2, 3; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, x. 6, 5, 1, etc. So often the 'bonds of death' (*mṛtyu-pāśa*), Av. viii. 2, 2; 8, 10, 16; xvii. 1, 30; Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, iii. 10, 8, 2; Kāthaka Upaniṣad, i. 18, etc.

³ Av. ii. 13, 2; 28, 2.

⁴ Av. i. 30, 3; ii. 28, 1; iii. 11, 5; viii. 2, 27; xi. 6, 16, etc.

⁵ Rv. viii. 67, 20; Av. v. 30, 17; x. 2, 30; xiii. 3, 56.

⁶ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, ii. 1, 4, 1.

⁷ Rv. i. 64, 14; 89, 9; ii. 33, 2, etc. Cf. Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader*, 384; Weber, *Indische Studien*, 17, 193; *Festgruss an Roth*, 137.

⁸ Rv. i. 71, 10; 179, 1.

⁹ x. 39, 8. Cf. Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, 5, 243.

¹⁰ See Bloomfield, *Atharvaveda*, 62 *et seq.*

¹¹ See Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 16, clii; Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Literatur*, i, 84, 85.

¹² See Lang, *Homer and his Age*, 82 *et seq.*; cf. Burrows, *Discoveries in Crete*, 209-213.

¹³ xiii. 8, 2, 1.

¹⁴ Cf. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 410; Weinhold, *Altnordisches Leben*, 483 *et seq.*