

The Science of Naming in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*

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Abstract:

A name is a word or group of words for referring to an individual. Although Atman is untouched by the happenings of the phenomenal world we live in, the named entity attains individuality by its name and form (*nāma* and *rūpa*).

This paper will shed light on some aspects of personal names occurring in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* belonging to the *Sāmaveda*. It will discuss on the inclination, tendencies and motives active behind the naming pattern of the personal names in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*. The study will focus on the custom of naming and naming pattern in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* in general by analyzing the meaning of the personal names used therein or use of synonyms/epithets for names, use of patronymics/metronymics, etc. and also on the religious, local, ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds of those names in particular. Good and meaningful choice of names forms an image of one's aesthetic sense also.

Keywords: Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa, Brāhmaṇa, onomastics, naming, naming pattern, patronymics, metronymics, epithets

Introduction:

Of the Vedic age, *Brāhmaṇas* represent a period of transition from the early Vedic to post Vedic era. M. B. Emeneau observed in his article Towards Onomastics of South Asia: "The personal names of the people of South Asia are still incompletely explored." Considering this importance of the science of naming of South Asia, the personal names belonging to the Vedic age deserve a separate treatment since they are closer to Indo-European tradition and differ to some extent from those of the later ages. A preliminary observation relating to the classification of some of the human names occurring in *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* belonging to the *Sāmaveda* and some of the problems which I have faced while studying and classifying these names are presented in this paper.

Problem/ Objective of study.

My study will try to explore the inclination, tendencies and motives active behind the naming pattern of the transitional period between the early Vedic and post Vedic era through the analysis of the personal names occurred in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*. This paper will focus on the custom of naming and naming pattern in general by analysing the meaning of the names or use of synonyms/epithets for names, use of patronymics/metronymics, etc. and also on the religious, local, ethnic and socio-cultural backgrounds of those names in particular. Good and meaningful choice of names forms an image of one's aesthetic sense also.

Review of Literature:

W. Caland has some pioneering works on the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*. Some remarkable observations on the linguistic peculiarities of the said *Brāhmaṇa* have already been made by H.Oertel, Theophil Gubler, Alfons Hilka, A.A.Macdonell, A.B.Keith, Betty Heimann and J.A.van Velze have contributed to some extent in the field of Sanskrit names. But the onomastic study of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* still needs proper attention of scholars. Understanding the need of further research in this field, I have selected this theme for exploration.

Concepts and Hypothesis:

This study of analysing the personal names present in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, will include:

- A. Usage of the personal names
- B. Morphological analysis of the personal names
- C. Semantic analysis of the personal names

A. Usage of the personal names

The total names occurring in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* approximately come around 360. Among them some of the names may fall into the category of epithets also but as far as the context is concerned, they are used like personal names.

The naming patterns existed in the society of *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* may be classified into six groups as follows:

1st group: **Personal names only:** There are cases where a person is referred to only by his / her personal name.

Example: Agastya, Aṅgiras, Atri, Bhṛgu, Indra, Nṛmedha, Suvrata, Nakira, Śakapūta, Bṛhadgiri, Jamadagni, Kaśyapa, Kutsa, Vasiṣṭha, Suparṇa, Śyāvaśva, Somaśuśma. Śakti, Manu, Ātreya etc.

2nd group: **Personal names with patronymics / metronymics:** In some cases the personal names with patronymics or metronymics are used for referring individuals. Example: Nagarin Jānaśruteya, Janaka Vaideha, Priya Jānaśruteya, Bhrgu Vāruṇi, Kusurvinda Auddālaki, Kapivana Bhauvāyana, Aṣāḍha Bhāllabeya, Atidhanva Śaunaka, Aṣṭādaṃṣṭra Vairūpa etc.

3rd group: **Personal names with more than one patronymic / metronymic:** In some cases the personal names with more than one patronymics or metronymics are used for referring individuals. Example: Buḍila Aśvatarāśvi Vaiyāghrapadya, Gaḷunas Ārkṣākāyana Śālāpatya etc.

4th group: **Patronymics / metronymics used in singular as personal names:** In some cases, the original given name is missing; a person is referred to only by his patronymic or metronymic. Example: Āruṇi, Bhārgava, Jānaśruteya, Bhāradvāja, Bhāllabeya / Bhāllaveya, Śāṅḍilya etc.

5th Group: **Personal names used in plural indicating a group of people:** Personal names which are used in plural generally indicate a group of people with a common ancestor. Example: Kali, Kuru, Pañcāla, Aṅgiras, Ikṣvāku, Bharata, Mitratvat, Aṅgirasya, Marut etc.

6th Group: **Patronymics used in plural indicating a group of people:** Patronymics which are used in plural generally indicate a group of people having the same patriarchal origin. Example: Bhāradvājāyana, Vaitahavya, Kāṇvāyana, Saudāsa, Caikitāneya

As the *Brāhmaṇas* represent a period of transition from the early Vedic to later Vedic era, we have noticed some changes in the naming pattern also. In the early Samhita texts the number of single personal names are higher than any other naming pattern but in the time of *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* personal names with patronymics or metronymics were much in use than single personal names only. Personal names with metronymics and female names are less in comparison to other naming patterns.

For the very famous persons or semi-mythical personalities, the patronymics were not given or the patronymics are only given without personal names. A very common practice of using same personal names with different patronymics or metronymics is also evidenced in the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa*. Some names occurring in this are also common with the names occurred in the literature of the four Vedas.

B. Morphological analysis of the proper names

In accordance with the Paninian grammar the formation of the proper names of the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* may be classified into two groups: **Single non-compounded names** and **Compounded names**

1. Single non-compounded names:

This group can further be classified into two sub-groups:

a) Root + Primary suffixes (krt / Unadi)

Example: Atri, Bhrgu

b) Stem (Root + Primary suffixes) + Secondary suffixes (patronymic)

Example: Vāruṇi, Ātreya

c) Stem + Secondary suffixes (non-patronymic),

Example: Vasiṣṭha

2. Compounded names:

This group can further be classified into three sub-groups:

a) only compound

Example: Sitibāhu, Satyayajña, Bharadvāja, Śvetaketu etc.

b) compound + Secondary suffixes (Patronymic/Metronymic)

Example: Bhāradvājāyana, Jānaśruteya, Āśvatarāśvi

c) compound +Secondary suffixes (non-Patronymic)

Example: Nagarin

As we all know that use of patronymics like Bhāradvājāyana, Ārkṣākāyana etc. is a characteristic feature of late Vedic period but in the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* we also get evidences of this type though few in number. When there will be several layers in the formation of words used as names what measure should we take; whether it will be useful to trace all the stages or the final one.

C) Semantic analysis of the personal names

A person is named within a few days of his/her birth (acc. to Hindu tradition, *ekādaśe'hani pitā nāma kuryāt*) when nothing about his tendency, inclination or activities, etc. can be ascertained. Meaning of words used as names or constituents thereof is not for knowing exactly the characteristics of the persons, bearing the names, but it casts light on the parents' or name-givers' aesthetic sense. From an aesthetical point of view names can add beauty to a given language and literature.

In such cases, the semantic analysis of the names can denote the inclination, tendency or motive of those who selected the names for the newly born child. Thus the semantic examination of the Vedic personal names sheds light on the aims, aspiration, expectation, etc of the Vedic people.

Regarding classification of names on semantic basis, we may have profitable help from the patterns suggested by Hilka and Velze.

For the semantic analysis of the personal names in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* according to the meaning of the words as names as a whole or their principal elements, the following classification may be tentatively proposed which needs to be more accurate and revised further.

When a name is accented (i.e., one recurring in the text of the Rgveda), the accent can often determine the nature of the compound but in case of unaccented texts the task is more difficult.

1. Names containing elements in connexion with gods:

a) Names of Gods (Theophoric names)

- Related to Agni - Jamadagni, Agni, Idhmavāha
- Related to Indra – Indradyumna,
- Related to Indra's Vajra- Vajra
- Related to Brahman - Brahmadata

b) Names of demons - Ugradeva

2. Names containing religious ideas - Satyayajña

3. Names containing hoministic elements

- The body and the parts of the body - Aṣṭādaṃṣṭra, Dantāla
- Character- Bhṛgu, Viśvāmitra
- Knowledge and intelligence- Vasiṣṭha, Budha
- Glory and prosperity- Prācīnayogya, Gautama, etc.
- Mankind- Manu

4. Names borrowed from natural objects

- Inanimate nature (sky, star, earth, mountains etc) - Bṛhadgiri, Pṛthuraśmi, Pṛthu
- Colours - Harivarṇa, Govarṇa
- Numbers - Aṣṭādaṃṣṭra, Ekata, Dvita, Trita

5. Names derived from animals - Aśvasūkti

6. Names containing cultural elements

- Food and beverages - Bharadvāja, Dadhyañc
- Race, social life, caste, tribe, etc.- Pañcāla, Kurupañcāla

7. Names related to power

- Powerful - Śakti, Bṛhaspati etc.

Research Design:

I have done my work on the basis of analysing the personal names occurred in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*. I have collected data of personal names used in the said text exhaustively and analysed it from three different angles. The names have been analysed and classified on the basis of their usage in the context, their morphological structure and semantic aspects.

Finding:

From the above analysis of the usage of personal names occurred in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, their morphological analysis and semantic analysis, we have been successful in drawing a picture of naming patterns prevailing in the society during the age of the *Brāhmaṇas*.

Conclusion: As the system of naming widely differs from nation to nation, from time to time, it becomes important for linguistics and for cultural history of a nation during a specific period to study the proper names. This study has helped us better in understanding the patterns and customs of naming and tendencies behind choosing names in the society at the time of the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa*. There are some problems faced during the analysis of the names in the said text. When a name is accented (i.e., one recurring in the text of the Ṛgveda), the accent can often determine the nature of the compound but in case of unaccented texts the task is more difficult.

The position of a name does not often help us ascertain the intended meaning of the compound. Another problem, which may confront us, is in compound, which part of the words is to be considered as principal one (*purvapadapradhānatva* or *uttarapadapradhānatva*). If there are parts of a name having various meanings then there can be dozens of ways of explaining them.

During the semantic analysis I find it also difficult to determine exclusive groups into which the name may be semantically classified for overlapping is unavoidable in many cases. Famous Vedic scholars, such as W. Caland and H. Oertel, were not even able to establish a satisfactory text form. Hence, paucity of a better critical edition of the text makes it difficult to conduct any further study on this text.

Suggestions: It is needless to mention that the subject matter is still far from being exhausted. I think for assertions and conclusions we must still go cautiously with the work.

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