\textit{Ananda}\textsuperscript{1} is one of the most common terms in the religious vocabulary of
the Brāhmaṇical/Hindu traditions both in Sanskrit and in the vernaculars,
both in the monistically inclined traditions, such as Advaita Vedānta,
and in the bhakti traditions. The term points to the intense feeling of
joy that devotees experience in their loving devotion and service of
god, and mystics, in their meditative trance or \textit{samādhi}. Within Advaita
and related traditions, it represents a central and essential “attribute” of
Brahman. The term has found its way into the names or titles of religious
figures, often in compounds, such as Brahmānanda and Anandaṭīrtha.\textsuperscript{2}
In many of the Indian religious traditions, \textit{mokṣa}, the final goal of
human existence, has been defined as \textit{ānanda}.

One of the most ancient, and perhaps the most significant, examples
of the centrality of \textit{ānanda} in theological discourse is the \textit{Brahmāsūtras}
ascribed to Bādarāyaṇa. After an introductory statement that \textit{brahman} is
the source of the universe (1.1.5–11), Bādarāyaṇa devotes eight \textit{sūtras}
to demonstrating that \textit{brahman/ātman} is defined in the \textit{Upaniṣads}
as \textit{ānanda}.\textsuperscript{3} Although the expression does not occur in the writings
of Śaṅkara, the compound \textit{saccidānanda} (being-consciousness-bliss)
became in time both within and outside the Advaita tradition a shorthand
definition of \textit{brahman}.\textsuperscript{4}

Given the prominence of \textit{ānanda} in the theological, as well as the
non-technical, religious vocabulary of India at least from about the
fifth century C.E., it is somewhat surprising that, with the exception of
van Buitenen's (1979) study, not much work has been done into the
semantic history of this term.

For heuristic purposes, I will divide the \textit{pre-Brahmāsūtra} period
into 1. Early Vedic (consisting of the RV, AV, and the mantra portions
of the YV); 2. Middle Vedic (consisting of the Brāhmaṇas); 3. Late
Vedic (consisting of the Aranyakas and \textit{Upaniṣads}); and 4. Post-Vedic
(principally Buddhist and epic literature). In this paper my focus will

be principally on the first three periods, introducing evidence from the fourth only to point to the possible later semantic history of the term.

I.2

To begin with, however, I want to discuss briefly the conclusions drawn by van Buitenen (1979) in his pioneering study. He acknowledges the explicit sexual connotations of the term in a wide spectrum of vedic texts, including the Upanisads, but rejects what he calls the “reductionist” fallacy of equating ananda with orgasmic thrill (1979, 326).⁵ He concludes his survey by pointing out the semantic multivocity of the term:

In following the course of the uses of the word ananda we have seen it pause at the landmarks in the development of religion and thought. It was the high joy of drinking the soma and of offering it, the climax of the ritual building of the universe, the unhindered happiness of gods, the orgasm that begets a son in one’s image as a metaphor of one’s self-renewal as one of the gods, the joyous knowledge of oneself and the eldest brahman, and the bliss that is the brahman and the ātman (van Buitenen 1979, 330).

Van Buitenen is right to point out that ananda has a range of meanings, consonant with the range of conditions under which a person experiences joy or pleasure. However, he makes no effort to examine which of these meanings may have provided the foundation for its technical use within the theological vocabulary of the Upanisads, a use that formed the basis of its later use in Vedāntic discourse. His reluctance to assign a central role to the sexual dimension, which (and which alone) he qualifies as “a metaphor”, coupled with his fear of “reductionism”, prevented him from seeing the explicit and unambiguous connection between ananda as orgasmic rapture and ananda as the experience of brahman ātman.

II.1

Ānanda is a somewhat rare word in the early vedic literature. In the RV it occurs in only two verses, both in a single hymn to Soma (9.113.6,11). The first reads:

yatra brahmā pavamāna chandasyām vācām vadām /
grāvām some maityāc somenānandam janayann –
indrāyendo pari srava 1/⁵

Van Buitenen translates: “O thou now purified, Soma in whom the brahman priest, while speaking the words of the hymns, rejoices with
the pressing stone, generating bliss through Soma – swirl around for Indra, O drop!” From this translation it appears that the verse is a complete sentence, which it is not, and that the relative pronoun yatra refers to Soma (perhaps seeing it as in apposition to the locative some). In fact, the co-relative yatra is left dangling until we reach the word tasmin in the next verse (RV 9.113.7):

\[\text{yatra jyotir ajasram yasmimi loke svar hitam / tasmin mani dhedi pavamunamtrie loke aksila – }\]
\[\text{indrayendo pari srava iti.}\]

Verse 6 begins a group of six verses, all containing the opening word yatra. In verses 7–11 the pronoun clearly refers to the heavenly world of light and immortality. It appears that a parallel is drawn between the sacrificial spot, the place where the soma is crushed with the stone, of verse 6, and the immortal world in heaven of verse 7, a connection that is quite common in the vedic literature. As in verse 6 the priest is said to “generate ananda” at the place where soma is crushed, so in the final verse of this group (RV 9.133.11) the heavenly world is said to contain anandas (in the plural):

\[\text{yatrunandasi ca modas ca mudah pramuda asate /} \]
\[\text{kamasya yatra prama kama tatra man anrta kevdi –} \]
\[\text{indrayendo pari srava iti.}\]

The supplicant asks that he be made immortal in the place (yatra) where every wish is fulfilled and where there are anandah, modah, mudah, and pramudah. The exact meanings here of these semantically related terms are unclear; they are clearly intended to intensify the impact, in a way similar to kamasya kamahe, and we will encounter these terms used together in later literature.

Van Buiten (1979, 324) thinks that ananda in these verses refers to “the joyous state of (drug-induced) ecstasy in which the ecstatic may hope for immortality”. Such a meaning is certainly possible; later we will see ananda associated with sura (liquor). Elsewhere, however, ananda is most frequently associated with sexual pleasure, and it is not farfetched to see a similar intent here. The soma sacrifice has clear connections to sexuality and fertility, and the soma juice itself is compared to semen. The process of crushing and squeezing out the juice from the stalks by means of the pressing stones is full of sexual imagery. It is this process that “generates ananda”, which, as we will see, is closely associated in later literature with the ejaculation of the semen and the generation of offspring. We can assume that at least part of the meaning and imagery of ananda in these Rgvedic verses is sexual.
In the AV(S) ānanda and its derivatives are used six times. Twice we have the same phrase: ānandā modāḥ pramudo 'bhimodamudāś ca ye. At AV(S) 11.7.26 these experiences are among the various elements of the universe that are said to originate from the ucchiṣṭa, the sacrificial remains, while at AV(S) 11.8.24 they are among the various powers that entered the human body. The contexts of these verses do not provide clues as to the precise meaning of ānanda. Sāyaṇa here, as in other places where the three terms moda, pramud (or pramoda), and ānanda are listed together, explains the first as pleasure derived from seeing an object, the second as pleasure derived from obtaining an excellent object, and the third as the pleasure derived from enjoying the object. Although Sāyaṇa’s interpretation does not tell us much about what the terms may have meant in their original contexts, I think his instinct in taking the three as a progressive intensifying of pleasure is correct. And his connection of ānanda with the actual enjoyment of the desired object is borne out by evidence from its usage elsewhere, especially within the context of sexual activity.

In AV(S) 10.2.9 [=AV(P)60.1], a hymn that asks repeated questions about who created the various bodily parts and powers of Puruṣa, we have the terms ānandān and nandān. Here too the context provides few clues as to their specific meanings. A clue, however, may be found in the VS(M) 20, which also has a long list of bodily organs and powers; verse 9 reads in part; ānandanandāv āndau me bhagāḥ saubhāgyam pasah. The connection between ānanda and the sexual organs made explicitly in this passage will become a recurrent theme in the middle and late Vedic literature. The connection is also made in the AV(S) itself, in a hymn (9.7) celebrating the bull. The various organs and activities of the bull are identified with different deities and cosmic entities. Verse 23 reads: mitra ikṣamāṇa āvṛta ānandáh. The meaning of “looking” and “turning this way [or around]” is not altogether clear. Sāyaṇa, however, may have had this passage in mind when he provided the gloss on AV(S) 11.6.3 (see note 17) saying that a bull in a herd looks at the cows and, desiring to mount them, bellows. Such a scene provides a plausible explanation for this looking and turning around and for why the turning around is called ānanda. If we interpret the above terms as a prelude to mating, then the passage that immediately follows [AV(S) 9.7.24=AV(P) 16.139.25] may also have sexual implications: yujyamāno vaiśvadevo yuktāḥ prajāpatir vimuktāḥ sarvam, which Whitney translates: “Belonging to all the gods when being yoked, Prajāpati when yoked, everything when released.” But the verb /yuj can also mean to unite sexually, and if that is the case,
the meaning would be: “He is All-gods when about to couple, Prajāpati when coupled, and the Whole when uncoupled.” In this context the connection of “union” with Prajāpati, the creator/procreator god, also makes sense.

The two final examples from the AV(S) contain the feminine adjective ānandini, “one possessing ānanda”, i.e., joyful. In a charm to produce rain, there is the wish “may plants become joyful” – ānandiniḥ osadhiḥ bhavantu [AV(S) 4.15.16 = AV(P) 5.7.14]. The reference is to the joy that plants, parched after a long period of drought, feel (metaphorically) when the rains come. The sexual connotation, I think, is still there, because rain is often equated with semen, and at AV(S) 11.4.3 the process of plants absorbing rain-water is explicitly compared to mating:

yat praṇa stanaśiṣṭāmbhiḥ krandatō osadhiḥ
pra viyante garbhān dadhate 'tuo bhūvīr vi jaśante ||

Sāyaṇā’ makes the sexual imagery explicit: thunder looks upon the plants and cries out, like a bull that bellows at seeing the cows; then the plants, by merely hearing that sound, become impregnated, carry the fetus, and bring forth progeny.

AV(S) 4.38 is a good-luck charm for victory in gambling. The first part of the charm is addressed to Apsara, who is said to “rejoice in the dice” (akṣēṣu pramodante). She is characterized in verse 4 as ānandinim pramodinim. The context appears to indicate that these terms are used with reference to the pleasure of gambling, but the Apsaras are closely associated with sexuality.

Apart from passages parallel to the AV(S), there are only two independent uses of the term in the AV(P). At AV(P) 12.6.8, in an eulogy of rain similar to AV(S) 4.15.16, the sun is said to produce ānanda – sūya ānandaṁ janayan. At AV(P) 16.152.11 also the sun is said to bring ānanda.

Turning now to the mantra sections of the Yajurveda Samhitās, the TS uses ānanda only once (TS 5.7.19), and it is unclear whether this passage is a mantra or a brāhmaṇa. This section of the TS deals with how various parts and powers of the sacrificial horse are connected to gods and cosmic entities. The passage in question reads: ānandaṁ nandaihunā kāmam pratyāsābhyām bhayam śītāmbhyām prāśaṁ prāśāsābhyām – “ānanda with the penis; love with the two Pratyāsas; fear with the two Śītāmans; command with the two Praśaṇas.” Here we come across for the first time the clear connection of ānanda with a corresponding physical organ, the nandathu, literally “the delighter” but clearly referring to the penis that provides ānanda.
The VS(M) uses the term four times. In the *mantras* to be recited at the Sautrāmaṇi sacrifice, the liquor (*surā*) is addressed: *esa te yonir modāya tvānandāya tvā mahase tvā* – “This is your place of birth. You for delight! You for ānanda! You for joy!” [VS(M) 19.8; = KS 37.18; TB 2.6.1.5]. Here, as in RV 9.113, the context is a drink but here we see more clearly another aspect of ānanda, the hilarity and mirth of drinking. The term is used again in the *mantras* of the Sautrāmaṇi (VS(M) 20.9), a passage we have already examined and where the sexual connotation of ānanda is explicit. Similarly explicit are the two other occurrences, both in 30th Adhyāya containing *mantras* for the Puruṣamedha sacrifice. In listing the various types of men to be sacrificed for various aims, the text reads: *ānandāya strisakham pramude kumāriputraṃ* – “for ānanda a women’s friend, for pleasure the son of an unmarried woman” [VS(M) 30.6; TB 3.4.2.1]. It is unclear what *strisakha* precisely means; given the context of dance, song, and sex, it is at least a possibility that it refers to a libertine, a man all women run after. Further down the list we have *vīṇāvūḍam pāṇighnam ṭunavādhnam tān nṛttāyānandāya talavam* – “Lute player, hand clapper, flutist – these for dance; for ānanda a musician” [VS(M) 30.20]. In the VS, then, ānanda, besides its sexual meanings, is used with reference to the pleasure associated with drinking, dancing, and music. Taken together with the AV(S) usage with regard to the Apsaras engaged in the game of dice, we see a pattern emerging in the early Vedic literature of ānanda being associated with sex, gambling, drinking and dancing.

II.2

I turn now to the middle Vedic texts represented by the Brāhmaṇas. With the exception of a single passage in the Kauśitaki (=Śāṅkhāyana 2.7), the term is used extensively only in two Brāhmaṇas, both belonging to the Yajurveda: the Śatapatha and the Taittiriya. Although both are somewhat late texts, the Śatapatha is probably the older of the two.

Leaving aside for the moment the BU, which constitutes its final chapters, the SB(M) uses the term six times. The meaning of ānanda is most clear and explicit at SB(M) 10.5.2.11. This section deals with the connections between the sun, on the one hand, and the sacrifice and the body, on the other. With regard to the body (10.5.2.7–9), the golden person in the sun’s orb (*mandale puruṣah*) and Indra are in turn identified with the person in the right eye (*dakṣine ‘ksan puruṣah*), and the mate of the person in the sun’s orb and Indrāṇi, the wife of Indra, are in turn identified with the person in the left eye. The male and
the female persons in the right and left eyes remain out of each other’s sight by the partition created by the nose (10.5.2.9; cf. TS 2.3.8.2).

During sleep, however, the two descend into the cavity or space within the heart and unite with each other; at the climax of this union the two become in some way unconscious (petit mort of orgasm) and in this rapture experiences the highest ananda:

\[
tau hṛdayasyākāsaṁ praty averya mithunabhavatās tau yodā mithunasyāntam gacchato 'tha haitai purūsah svapūtī tad yathā haivedam mānuṣasya mithunasyāntam gurvāsamyād iva bhavayi evam haitai asamvidā iva bhavayai daivaṁ āh y etan mithunam paramo hṛṣyā anandaḥ / SB(M) 10.5.2.11.
\]

"The two descend into the space within the heart and engage in sexual intercourse. And when the two reach the climax of the sexual intercourse, the man here is then asleep. It is like this. As here when one reaches the climax of a human sexual intercourse one becomes in some way unconscious, so there he becomes in some way unconscious, for that is the divine sexual intercourse, for that is the highest ananda."

Here ananda refers clearly and explicitly to the orgasmic thrill that makes one lose one’s consciousness. In the very next paragraph (10.5.2.12), in fact, the text goes into further detail, stating that a) one should not awaken a sleeping man suddenly or violently, lest one disturb the sexual union of these two, and b) the mouth of people who have slept are slimy (ślesmanā) because these two have spilled their seed, thus comparing the slimy spit to the slimy semen.

The connection between ananda and orgasm is further established in SB(M) 6.2.2.6. In explaining why a white and hornless male goat is offered to Vāyu Niyutvat, the text narrates the story of Prajāpati. After creating the creatures (prajāḥ, feminine), he looked (anuvyāksata) at them and because of the excessive joy (atyānandena) he spilled his seed, which became the while goat. His orgasmic joy comes here not at the time of creation but afterwards when he looks at his creatures.

The use of the feminine prajā gives us a clue; he lusted after his own daughter(s). Prajāpati’s incest is frequently mentioned in the Vedas, and the story of Prajāpati lusting after his daughter is told repeatedly in the vedic literature. The “looking” by Prajāpati could also have sexual implications; looking at the melted butter by the wife of the sacrificial patron, for example, is viewed as sexual intercourse between the wife (woman) and butter (semen).

These usages permit us to interpret the other four occurrences of ananda in the SB(M), all in the single passage 10.3.5.12–14.

\[

tasya vā etasya yajusah / rasa evapaniśat tasnām yāvanmātrena yajugādhyāvayur graham grhṇātā su ubhe stutāsāstre anuvṛabhavyat ubhe stutāsāstre anuvṛayānute tasnām yāvanmātira ivānāsya rasaḥ sarvam annam avam avatī sarvam annam anuvetyet ||12||
\]
vṛttr evāṣya gaitaḥ tasmād yaśāṃ sa evaśva viṣñānum ātmānaḥ dātmānaḥ haśva sarve devāḥ sa haśaiva devānām uddhāvidyā sa ha sa na manoyo ya evaṃvid devānām haśva sa ekāh ||13||

etad dhā uṣna mahāsṛva rauhīnaṃ ṛṣaḥ i vāyaṃ vāntam ānąndam ta ātmato vā vāhaṇo vēti sa ha sa taḥsaiva vātā tasmād yām deveṣy āśiṣāṃ icched etenaivopariśteṣayaṃ vā ātmāsaṃ mē kāmāh sa me saṃsārtādāṇāṁ iti saṃ haśvāmāi sa kāma rādyate yatākām bhavaya evāṃ sa vēi trṣmīṃ āśiṣāṃ gaiti etam ānąndam etam ātmānaṃ abhūsambhavati ya evaṃ vēda ||14||

"12. Now, of this yajus-formula, the hidden connection (upaniṣad) is flavor [or essence]. Therefore, when with ever so small a yajus-formula the Adhvaryu draws a cup of Soma, it (rasa) becomes equal to both the Stotra and the Śastra, it measures up to both the Stotra and the Śastra. The flavor of food, therefore, be it ever so small, enhances the entire food.

"13. Its [of the yajus] completion is satiation. Therefore, when with food a man reaches satiation, then he considers himself in some way wiped out."

"Its body is ānąndam – this is its true knowledge. For, indeed, all the gods have ānąndam as their body. This, indeed, is the true knowledge of gods. And anyone who knows this is not a man; he is truly one of the gods.

"14. Knowing this, indeed, Priyavrata Rauhīnayaṃ said to the wind as it was blowing: ‘Your body is ānąndam. Blow this way or that way!’ And thus, indeed, does it blow. Therefore, a man who wishes to obtain a blessing from the gods should worship them within this: ‘Your body is ānąndam. Here is my wish. May it be fulfilled for me!’ And whatever wish he may have, it will surely be fulfilled.

“A man who knows this will obtain this contentment, this fulfilment, this ānąndam, and this body."

Here the yajus formula is compared to food. Of this yajus-food, the upaniṣad is the flavor (rasa), the completion (gati) is the satiation (trṣṭti), and the body (ātmā) is ānąndam. The text goes on to state that all the gods have ānąndam as their ātmā, providing the earliest evidence of ānąndam being used as an essential attribute of gods. This knowledge of the essence of gods appears to be a secret, the knowledge of which gives a man power over the gods. Thus, if anyone tells the gods, “Your ātmā is ānąndam,” one’s wishes will be fulfilled. The passage ends by saying that anyone who has this knowledge attains trṣṭti, gati, ānąndam, and ātmā; in this ascending hierarchy, that the man will obtain is clearly the ātmā that consists of ānąndam; that is, he becomes a god.

This is a difficult passage. Eggeling’s translation compounds the difficulties, and I do not pretend to have solved all of them. Upaniṣad here means connection/equivalence, showing how the yajus is equal to the other ritual utterances, just as the flavor (rasa) permeates the food. The implication is that if it is the rasa, then even a small amount can surpass things that are much larger. The yajus is brief in comparison to the Stotra (SāmaVEDic chant) and the Śastra (Ṛgvedic recitation) that follow each other at a Soma sacrifice. The phrase ānąndam evāṣya viṣñānum ātmā Eggeling translates as: “And joy, the knowledge thereof
(viz. of the essence, the mystic import), is its soul (self)”. Clearly this is inaccurate. The subject is atman, and vijianam is probably a parenthetical statement. Then the atman (which in this context probably means body) of the gods, just as the atman of the yajus, is said to consist of ananda, and this knowledge gives magical power to the knower. At the surface level ananda in this passage probably refers to the relishing of the flavor of food. But in this literature there are clear connections between food/eating and sex, and here the terms rasa and gati can have a double entendre, the former meaning semen (see TU 2.7 discussed in II.3) and the latter meaning “going”, i.e., sexual congress. And trpti, as we will see in TB 2.4.6.5, also has sexual connotations. The author appears to be playing on this double meaning which permits him to say that gods have ananda as their atman, reminiscent of SB(M) 10.5.2.11 that speaks of “divine sexual intercourse” which is the highest ananda.

If we exclude the three passages (TB 2.6.1.5; 2.6.5.6; 3.4.2.1) occurring also in the VS, the TB uses ananda four times. The sexual connotation is most explicit at TB 2.4.6.4–5, where the term is used twice:

prajapatiś śrivām yaśas maśkayor adhātāt sapam
kāmasya trptim anandam tasyāge bhājayetā mā ||
modō pranodo anandō maśkayor nihitaḥ sapah
sriveva kāmasya trptim daśyānāṃ pratigrāhe ||

“Prajapati put the penis in the vagina, the glory in the woman – the satisfaction of desire, the ananda, O Fire, make me here partake of that!”

“The penis is put in the vagina – the joy, the thrill, the ananda, flowing somehow (with semen) toward the satisfactions of desire in accepting the sacrificial gifts.”

In this eulogy of the pride of masculinity, ananda, as well as the two associated terms moda and pramoda, are identified with the penis placed within the vagina, the penis that brings the satisfaction (trpti) of desire. Moda, pramoda, and ananda appear as names of three of the fifteen mūhūtras of a night at TB 3.10.1.1.

The final example is from TB 2.4.5.7:

indraḥ ca nāh śunātrau imaṁ yajyām mimikṣataṁ /
garbham dhātaro svastaye //
yayoḥ idam viśvaṁ bhuvanam śiviveśa yayoḥ anando nihito mahāś ca /
śunāstrāv trubhīḥ sanvīdānaṁ indravantaḥ havir idam jusehām //

“Indra and you, O Suna-Sira, mix [prepare] this sacrifice for us and place the fetus for prosperity. Together with Indra and in agreement with the Seasons, O Suna-Siras, be pleased with this offering, you into whom this whole world has entered and in whom ananda and exultation have been placed.”

In this hymn to the obscure dual deity Suna-Sira, ananda and mahas, a term often associated with ananda, are said to be placed or deposited in these two deities. Suna and Sira are identified by Yāska with Vāyu and
Āditya, but originally they were probably agricultural deities, possibly personifications of the plow and the share. Although the passage is obscure, we can detect here the same type of agricultural metaphor that was found in AV(S) 4.15.16, where plants are said to be joyful (ānandinah) when it rains. There could also be a sexual imagery in the “union” of the plow and the share (or plow and the plowman), the union that produces ānanda leading to agricultural abundance.

In a somewhat unclear passage of the Kauṣṭakī Brāhmaṇa (7.2), ānanda is associated with three things, food, drink, and sexual intercourse: yaivaikē cānandā annaṁ pāne mithune rātrīṁ eva te samātā avyayacchinnāṁ kriyante śa taṁ rātrīṁ kārotrahī ya u vaike cānandā annād eva te sarve jayante “Whatever joys that are in food, drink, and sexual intercourse, all those are joined together without interruption through the night; for them the night is the sieve. Whatever joys there are, they are born from food.” Although here ānanda is said to be derived from food, the same passage goes on to state that the essence (rasa) of food gives rise to semen (retas) and the essence of semen gives rise to man. Here too, then, food and semen are closely associated with each other and with ānanda.

II.3

The literature of the late Vedic period contains the most significant semantic developments of ānanda, developments that had a profound influence on later Indian theological vocabularies. The evidence for these developments come principally from the early Upanisads, the term occurring only once in the Āranyakas.

Among a series of mantras for the Pitrmedha, we read at TA 6.11.2: ānandaiya pramodaiya punar āgāṁ svāṁ grhān – “For bliss, for delight I have returned to my home.” The context offers no clues, but we have seen the two terms ānanda and pramoda frequently used together.

Of the early Upanisada, ānanda is most prominent in the two Yajurvedic documents, the Brhadāraṇyaka and the Taittiriya, and to a somewhat lesser extent in the Kauṣṭakī, which belongs to the Rgveda. I will deal with the three together because all three reflect parallel semantic developments of the term. Continuing, and extending, the trend already noticed in the earlier literature, these Upanisads present ānanda as the faculty or power of the sexual organ parallel to the sensory and motor faculties associated with other organs, e.g., seeing with the eyes, hearing with the ears, and motion with the feet. Although the term upastha can refer to both male and female sexual organs, it is
clear that these texts deal with the male rather than the female orgasm; upasita in these contexts undoubtedly refers to the penis. The BU 2.4.11 (=BU 4.5.12) presents the sexual organ as the point of convergence of all ānanda (evaṃ sarvesām ānandānām upastha ekaśyanam), in the same way as the ocean is of all waters, skin of all sensations of touch, and sight of all visible appearances. A similar association is made in the TU 3.10.3: praṇāīt amṛtam ānanda ity upasthe. The meaning of the elliptical phrases in this passage is far from clear, but probably the sense is that one should “venerate”, that is, perceive the equivalence of, brahman in the sexual organ as “procreation, immortality, and ānanda”. Here we have an interesting coupling of immortality and ānanda, a connection that becomes important when brahman comes to be defined as ānanda. In the present context, it is procreation that links ānanda to immortality: ānanda, the ejaculatory bliss, precedes procreation, and sons are identified with immortality in the early Vedic literature.

In explaining the pre-eminence of intelligence (praṇāīa), the KsU shows how all human powers and the objects in the world corresponding to those powers are derived from intelligence. In this context KsU 3.5 states:

upasita evaśyā ekam aṅgaṃ udūlam hṛdayāṁ ānando ratiḥ praṇāīt parastat pratīvhitā bhūtamātṛā

“The sexual organ is one part drawn from it [i.e., from intelligence], and ānanda, delight, and procreation constitute the particle of being that corresponds externally to it.”

Here, instead of the amṛta of the TU, we have the more usual rati associated with ānanda and procreation. The subsequent paragraphs (KsU 3.6–8) make the same associations:

praṇāīyopasthaṃ samārūhyopasthaṇānandaṃ ratiḥ praṇāītī āpnoti

“When someone mounts the sexual organ by means of intelligence, he grasps ānanda, delight, and procreation through his sexual organ.”

na hi praṇāīeṇa upasita ānandaṃ ratiḥ praṇāītī kāmcaṇa praṇāīopayed anyatra me mano ‘bhūd ity āha nāham etam ānandaṃ na ratiḥ na praṇāītī praṇāīśīṣaṃ iti

“For without intelligence, the sexual organ would not make someone perceive any ānanda, delight, or procreation. So, one says: ‘My mind was elsewhere, I did not perceive that ānanda, delight, or procreation.’

nānandaṃ na ratiḥ na praṇāītī vijñāṣitānandaśya rateḥ praṇāīe vijñātīraṃ vidyāt

“It is not the ānanda, delight, or procreation that a man should seek to apprehend; rather, he should get to know the one who apprehends ānanda, delight, or procreation.”

In KsU 1.7 Brahmaṇ asks the man who has managed to arrive in the world of Brahmaṇ a variety of questions centering on how the man will
grasp various objects. Thus, odors are grasped by the sense of smell, visible objects by sight, tastes by the tongue, actions by the hands, and so on. Brahman asks: *kenānandam ratīm prajātim iti* – “(By what means do you grasp my) ānanda, delight, and procreation.” The man replies: *upastheneti* – “By my sexual organ.”

Even though the sexual organ is not explicitly mentioned, the list of the father’s powers that he assigns to his son during the poignant ceremony of transmission when the father is about to die contains the same three powers: ānanda, rati, and prajāti (KsU 2.15). During this ceremony the son lies on top of the father, every limb and organ of his touching the corresponding organ of the father. Clearly, the transfer is from the organs of the father to those of the son, and though unstated the transfer of ānanda, rati, and prajāti must be from the father’s penis to that of the son.

These Upanisads thus make a clear and explicit connection between ānanda and the penis on the one hand, and between ānanda and procreation, on the other.

As opposed to the sexual organ, the BU 4.1.6 connects ānanda with the mind. The context is a long conversation between King Janaka and Yājñavalkya during which Janaka recounts what different teachers had told him about brahman. One of them had said that brahman is the mind. Yājñavalkya asks: “But did he tell you what its abode and foundation are?” He had not, and Janaka asks Yājñavalkya himself to tell him that. Yājñavalkya responds: *mana evayatanam akāsah praisthānandā ity enad upāśita* – “The mind itself is its abode, and space is its foundation. One should venerate it as (i.e., take brahman to be) ānanda.” Janaka asks: *kānandatā* – “What is ānanda-ness (i.e., what constitutes ānanda)?” Yājñavalkya replies that it is the mind itself (*mana eva*) and gives the reason:

\[
\text{manasā vai samṛta śrivam abhihāryate tasyām praitvāpaḥ putro āśyate sa ānandāḥ / mano vai samṛta paramān brahmā}
\]

“For surely, Your Majesty, it is with the mind that a man takes a woman to himself and through her fathers a son who resembles him. And this is bliss. So clearly, Your Majesty, the highest brahman is the mind.”

Here we have a connection established between mind, space, and ānanda in a set of equations: between mind and ānanda, between mind and brahman, and, hence, between ānanda and brahman. Ānanda, moreover, is defined as the mind because it is through the mind that one takes a woman (or wife) and begets a son through (literally, in) her. Here it appears that the entire process of begetting a son is defined as ānanda. The connection between ānanda and brahman is established...
here through the son, in a way similar to TU 3.10.3 where procreation appears to be the link between ānanda and immortality. Further, the foundation of this brahman is space. The reference is probably to the space within the heart which, as we saw (SB(M) 10.5.2.11), is associated with sexual activity in the context of sleep. And at BU 1.4.3 it is said that "the space here is completely filled by the woman" (ayam ākāśāḥ striyā pūryata eva).

This connection between ānanda and the mind throws light on the passage that follows the ceremony of transmission from a dying father to his son at BU 1.5.19. Among the divine faculties that enter the father after this ceremony is the daiva manas, the divine mind. And this divine mind is defined as: tad vai daiva mano yenānandy eva bhavaty atho na śocati – "The divine mind is that by which he is just (always) joyful (ānandin) and thereafter is never sorrowful." We have seen in SB(M) 10.3.5.12–15 that the ātman of divine beings (deva) is said to be ānanda.

The connection between ānanda and space in BU 4.1.6 permits us to interpret a rather difficult passage in TU 2.7 which immediately precedes the exegesis of ānanda discussed below. The author cites a verse:

\[
\text{asad va īdam agra āśī tato vā sad ajāyata } \\
\text{tad ātmanam svayam akurata ātman tasmi tait sukṛtram ucayate }
\]

In the beginning this world was the non-existent, and from it arose the existent. By itself it made a body for itself; therefore it is called "well-made".

Now, "well-made" (sukṛta) is an epithet that is used with reference to the human body; for example, in AU 1.2 the human body is distinguished from those of animals precisely because it is "well-made." In SB (8.6.2.18) the body of Agni created in the Agnicayana ritual is called "well-made", and the body of the sacrificer is likewise "well-made". But the TU appears to be playing on the two words svayam√kr and su√kr, the body is "well-made" (sukṛta) because it is "self-made" (svayamkrta). How does a man make his own body? In a similar context, the AU (2), speaking of the births of a man, declares that the semen (retas) is one's very self in the form of an embryo (garbha); and a man carries this seminal self of his within himself and later deposits it in a woman. This depositing of semen is his first birth.38 When the semen has developed into a fetus and the woman gives birth, that is his second birth. It appears likely that the "self-made" nature of the body is connected to the fact that a man carries himself within himself in the form of his semen. This helps us understand the remainder of the TU (2.7) passage:
yad vai tat sukṣyam i raso vai sah i rasaṁ hy evaṁ labdhvānaṁ bhavatī i ko hy evaṁyāt kah prāyaṁ t i yad esa ākāśa ānanda na syāt i esa hy evaṁyādāyati i yadā hy evaiṁa etasmīṁ adṛśye ‘nāmye ‘nirukte ‘nilayane ‘bhaye39 prayāśāṁ vindate i aha so ‘bhayaṁ gato bhavati i yadā hy evaiṁa etasmīṁ u daram40 antaram kurute ‘tha tasya bhayaṁ bhavatī i

The first problem is the meaning of rasa. It has been generally translated as “essence,” but the meaning does not make much sense within the context. Rasa has numerous meanings, including essence, seminal fluid, taste, and pleasure/desire. The author is probably playing on the ambiguity of the term. At TU 2.1, for example, a man is said to be made of the essence of food (sa vā esa puruṣo ‘ñnarasamayah). The “well-made/self-made” condition of the human body consists in its being (or that it comes from) rasa, when one obtains this rasa one attains ānanda. The sexual implications of rasa here are unmistakable, and I think that here it means the “essence” of the human body, that is, the seminal fluid.41

The second problem concerns the somewhat mysterious statement about ananda existing in space. The connection between mind, space, and ānanda in the above BU (4.1.6) passage, and the ānanda produced by the sleeping person when sexual intercourse takes place within the space in the heart (SB 10.5.2.11–12), I think, permits us to see here a similar connection: ānanda is present, i.e., is able to be grasped, in the space of the heart. Indeed, the TU (1.6.1) itself locates the mind (manas) in the heart: sa ya eso ‘ñtarahṛdaya ākāśaḥ tasmīṁ ayaṁ puruṣo manomayaḥ amṛto hiranyayah – “In this space here within the heart lies the immortal and golden person consisting of the mind”. Brahmaṇ, moreover, is said to reside within the cavity of the heart (CU 8.1). In this ānanda one loses the consciousness of being separate (see below BU 2.1.19; 4.3.21), one does not perceive even a smallest difference (daram antaram); this state of consciousness brings a man to the state of abhaya.

We can then translate the TU 2.7 as follows:

That which is well-made (=self-made) is nothing but semen, for when a man here obtains the semen, he comes to possess ānanda. Now, who would breathe in, who would breathe out, if this ānanda were not here in space; for that alone can grant ānanda. For when a man finds his support within that which is invisible, incorporeal, indistinct, supportless, and free from fear, then he becomes free from fear. For only when he creates even a small difference does fear come upon him.

We have seen how sleep was identified in the SB (10.5.2.11–12) with the persons in the right and left eyes having sexual intercourse within the space of the heart. The unconsciousness of sleep was there also compared to the loss of consciousness in orgasm. This theme is
taken up again in the BU 2.1.19, where deep dreamless sleep is opposed to the state of dream when the person is in some way still conscious, except that the dream consciousness is creative, creating rather than perceiving its objects. In deep sleep, however, one is not aware of anything; during this time the self slips out of the space of the heart and rests in the pericardium:

sa yathā kämaro vā mahārājō vā mahābrāhmaṇo vāitighnām ānandasya gatī śayta evam evaiṣa etac cete /

“He rests there, just as a young man, a great king, or an eminent Brahmin rests after attaining the height of ānanda.”

The term *ātighnī* is significant; in this context it must mean more than just the “summit of bliss” but refer to the apparent loss of awareness resulting from orgasmic bliss. Otherwise the comparison makes little sense, since the point the author wants to make is that in deep sleep a person enjoys bliss but is not conscious of anything. This meaning also corresponds to the way sleep is described in SB 10.5.2.11–12.

The same metaphor is used to describe deep sleep also at BU 4.3.21 with a clearer statement about the loss of consciousness:

_tad yathā priyāṁ striyā sampariṣvako na bāhyam kiṃcana veda nāntaram evam evaiṣam purusāḥ prājñenātman āh samāraṣvako na bāhyam kiṃcana veda nāntaram /

“It is like this. As a man embraced by a woman he loves is oblivious to everything within or without, so this person embraced by the self consisting of knowledge is oblivious to everything within or without.”

The term *ānanda* is not used here and there is no direct reference to orgasm, but the reference is clearly to the oblivion created by the height of sexual bliss.

The related term *abhinanda* is used for orgasm in the well-known passage on the doctrine of five fires where the sexual organ of a woman and the sexual act performed in it are compared to a sacrifice (BU 6.2.13 = CU 5.8.1):

_yoṣā vā aghān gautama / tasyā upastha eva samīl lomāni dhūma yonir arcir yad antaḥ karoti te ‘ngārā abhinindā viṣphuliṅgāḥ / tasmim etasmim aghau deva reto jihvāti /

“The fire is a woman, Gautama. Her firewood is the vulva; her smoke is the pubic hair; her flame is the vagina; when one penetrates her, that is her embers; and her sparks are the climax. In that very fire gods offer semen.”

The dreaming state is connected with *ānanda* at BU 4.3.9: the dreaming person sees _pāpmanā ānandāṁ ca*, “both bad things and ānandas.” What these ānandas are the following passage explains (BU 4.3.10), describing how the dreamer creates his own dreamland:
na tatrāṇandā mudāḥ pramulo bhaṇvantā || aitāṇandān mudāḥ pramudāḥ srjate ||

“In that place there are no ānandas, pleasures, or delights; but he creates for himself ānandas, pleasures, and delights.”

Later the text explains what these pleasures are (BU 4.3.13):

svapnānta ucchāvacat iyamāno rūpāni devah kurute bahūni ||
uteva siribhiḥ saha modamāno jākṣe titeṣpī bhūyāni parīna //

Travelling in sleep to places high and low
The god creates many a visible form —
now dallying with women,
now laughing,
now seeing frightful things.

The pāpmanāḥ and ānandāḥ of the first passage probably parallel the dallying with women (moda, we have seen, is used frequently with ānanda) and bhayāṇī of this passage.

A long and interesting passage occurring in BU 4.3.32–33 identifies the world of brahmaṇ as one’s highest ānanda (esō 'syā parama ānandāḥ) and goes on to explain how vast this ānanda is in comparison to other types of ānanda, beginning with what we are most familiar with:

sa yo manuṣyāṇām rāddho samrādho bhavaty anyeṣāṁ adhipatīḥ sarvair mānuṣyākār bhogāḥ sampiṇṇatamah sa manuṣyāṇām parama ānandāḥ //

“Among human beings, when someone is successful and rich, ruling over others and enjoying to the utmost all human pleasures — that is the highest ānanda of human beings.”

The texts goes up the ladder of greater ānandas, each higher ānanda being hundred times greater than the one below it. Here ānanda is not directly connected to sex but to the broader category of bhoga or pleasures. A similar gradation of ānanda is described in TU 2.8 in a passage entitle ānandasya māṁsasā, analysis or exegesis of ānanda.

Perhaps the most famous of the ānanda passages of the TU is the one on the five bodies (TU 2.2–5), which later literature identifies as sheaths (kośā). A man has five bodies or selves (ātman) consisting of food (anna), breath (prāna), mind (manas), perception (vijñāna), and finally ānanda, each surrounding the previous like layers of an onion. Of each such body, the text identifies the head, the two sides, trunk, and the bottom. In the case of the ānandamayātman, the head is priya, right side is modā, the left is pramodā, the trunk is ānanda, and the bottom is brahmaṇ.44 Here again we come across the three terms moda, pramoda, and ānanda. The portion of the body I have translated as trunk (or torso) is called ātman; so here we find that ātman is ānanda, and the passage from ātman as the central part of the body to ātman
as one's essential self is easy. So, we find the two major concepts of
the Upaniṣads, ātman and brahman identified as ānanda. At the end
of the TU (3.10.5) these five ātmans are presented as the path that a
person travels after death: he first reaches the ātman of food, then that
of breath, then that of the mind, then that of perception, and finally
the ātman of ānanda. The simple statement that brahman is ānanda is
found in both the BU (3.9.28) and in the TU (3.6).

When we turn to the other two early prose Upaniṣads, the Chāndogya
and the Aitareya, it comes as a surprise to find the term ānanda almost
absent from their vocabularies. It is completely absent not only in the
AU but in the entire AA, within which the AU is embedded, and in
the AB. Besides the term abhinandāḥ found in the passage on the five
fires common to the CU and the BU that we have already examined,
the term occurs only twice in the CU. When it rains the vital functions
(prāṇāḥ) are said to be full of ānanda (ānandināḥ) at the thought that
there will be plenty of food (CU 7.10.1). We have already seen this
usage of the term with reference to plants. In a theologically significant
statement, the CU, speaking of a man who sees ātman everywhere,
says: sa vā eṣa evam paśyantī evam manvāna evam vijñānān ātmānarthitā
ātmakriyā ātmānimithuna ātmānandaḥ sa svarād bhavati – “A man who
sees it this way, thinks about it this way, and perceives it this way;
who finds pleasure in the self, who dallies with the self, who mates
with the self, and finds ānanda in the self – he becomes completely his
own master.” Here we have the two familiar terms rāti and ānanda,
together with two other terms (krīḍā and mithuna) also with sexual
connotations, in describing the activities of a man who has reached the
ultimate state of oneness with his own ātman.

Turning to the later verse Upaniṣads, it is even more surprising to
find that ānanda is quite a rare word in their theological vocabularies.
It is completely absent in the older group comprising Kena, Katha,45
Īṣa, and Śvetāsvatara. It occurs once in the Muṇḍaka (2.2.7b)46 where
the ātman that the wise see in their heart is described as ānandariṣṭā,
“having the form or appearance of bliss”.

Only the Praśna, an admittedly late work, returns to the theme of
ānanda. In an eulogy of lifebreath (prāṇa), the PU (2.10) says that
when it rains creatures becomes joyful (ānandariṣṭa). In enumerating
the activities that a sleeping person does not engage in, the PU (4.2)
says nānandayate, which echoes the similar enumerations in the earlier
literature and clearly means “he does not experience sexual pleasure”.
Likewise, the PU (4.10) in enumerating the organs and their respective
objects, lists *upasthas cānandayitavyaṁ ca* — “the sexual organ and objects that can be sexually enjoyed”.

The Māṇḍūkya (5), whose date is difficult to determine but is likely quite late, calls a person in deep dreamless sleep *ānandamayah* and *ānandabhuk*, consisting of *ānanda* and enjoying *ānanda*. This is in line with the repeated use of *ānanda* by the older literature in the context of sleep.

The transmission of the Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad has been extraordinarily bad, and the editor van Buitenen (1962) has shown that it is a composite text. The term *ānanda* occurs at MtU 6.7, 13, 23, 27; 7.3; and all these passages are placed within brackets by van Buitenen, indicating that they are editorial interpolations. The first passage has the term *ānandayitā* (“one who experiences *ānanda*”) in a list of agent nouns. The second (MtU 6.13) deals with the essence (*rasa*) of an ascending hierarchy of entities, from food to *ānanda*, which is said to be the essence of perception (*vijñāna*). A person who knows these essences is said, among other things, to be *ānandavān*, “possessing *ānanda*”. At MtU 6.23 the top of OM is said to be Viṣṇu, who is characterized, among other things, as *ānanda* (occurring also at MtU 7.3). At MtU 6.27 the cup (*kośa*) consisting of the space within the heart is said to be *ānanda*.

III

Finally, I want to turn briefly to the literature of the period that followed the early Upaniṣads. This is a gray area because it is impossible to determine with any precision either this period or the texts belonging to it. Some of the late Upaniṣads may well be contemporary with some of the texts generally assigned to this period. In spite of these uncertainties, however, it is instructive to examine at least some of the literature from this period.  

Given the theological prominence of *ānanda* within the Brahmanical/Hindu religious vocabulary, it is surprising that the term is never used by the Buddhists or the Jains with reference to *nirvāna* or the ultimate state of liberation. Both traditions, nevertheless, claim that the liberated state is one of bliss or happiness, but the term they use is *sukha*. The Pāli Tipiṭakaṃ Concordance lists 26 occurrences of *ānanda*, including both verbal (*ānandati*) and nominal forms. None has any religious or even an explicitly sexual significance; all refer to a normal sense of joy or happiness. The only usage even remotely connected to religion is the use of *ānandajāte* with reference to the gods
(Suttanipāta 679), but the same expression is used a few verses later (687) when Asita became full of joy at seeing the young Bodhisattva.

The same pattern holds true in the two epics, the Rāmāyāna and the Mahābhārata. There also, for the most part, ānanda means ordinary joy. The term occurs 45 times in the Rām, and 43 times in the MBh. None of the occurrences in the Rām and only a handful in the MBh have any religious/theological connotation. I give below a representative sample of the contexts in which the term is used in the epics.

A son is often characterized as bringing or increasing the ānanda of his mother: Rāma is kāusalyānandavardhana; Lakṣmana is sumitrānandavardhanah; and Bharata is kaikeyyānandavardhanah. The frequency of this usage especially in the Rām suggests that it had become a cliché. A large group of privative compounds is used to describe the state of grief and desolation of women who have lost their husbands, of men and women in exile, and even of towns at the death or exile of their king or favorite son. Only once is such a privative used with regard to a positive virtue, although there are frequent references to "tears of joy".

It is only in the Śāntiparvan, the book most subjected to later additions, that ānanda is used with religious or technical meanings. Thus, within a Śaṅkhyya context, ānanda is listed among sāttvika guṇas and as a product of prakṛti (MBh 12.187.33; 212.26; 239.23; 267.26; 301.17; 14.45.8). Once ānanda is listed as a virtue (MBh 14.38.2), while elsewhere its absence is considered a virtue (MBh 12.191.8; 268.11).

It is clear, however, that in the epics ānanda is the antonym of śoka. In a list of opposites that a person should abandon, we find the compounds satyāntre, śokānandau, priyāpriyau and bhayābhaye (MBh 12.268.11). And in lists of synonyms or words with similar meanings, we find ānanda listed with praharṣa, prīti, and sukhā (MBh 12.187.33; 212.26; 239.23). The closest we come to a "religious" use of ānanda is in the list of the thousand names of Viṣṇu where we find surānanda, ānanda, nandana, nanda, and śatānanda (MBh 13.135.33, 69, 79).

Only once have I found the term used with regard to the ultimate state to which people aspire, a state that is called paramam ānandam (MBh 13.16.55).

In a passage reminiscent of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, the MBh (12.301.1) lists the bodily organs (adhyātmam) and objects (adhibhūtām) and divinities (adhiḍaivaṭām) that correspond to them. Thus we have: pāda, gāntavyam, viṣṇuh; and hastau, kartavyam, indraḥ. In this list we have the group upasthah, ānandaḥ, prajāpatiḥ,
connecting the sexual organ, ānanda, and Prajāpati, the procreative/creator god.

It is significant that ānanda is completely absent in the Bhagavad Gītā, a book that is inclusive both in doctrine and in vocabulary. In the sixth chapter that describes a true yogin, the Gītā uses the term suṣṭha repeatedly (BhG 6.21, 27, 28) to indicate the final bliss such a man attains. At 6.15 the Gītā describes the bliss of a yogin as sānti (peace) and nirvāṇa (possibly, “calm”).

An examination of the non-Vedāntic literature shows that suṣṭha was, in fact, the most common term for both ordinary and ultimate happiness. Besides the Gītā and the Buddhist and Jain literature, suṣṭha is the preferred term for the bliss of the liberated state in Sāmkhya-Yoga theology. In Sāmkhya ānanda is said to be an attribute of prakṛti rather than of puruṣa. In Yoga, vitarka, vicāra, ānanda, and asmitā are four states of samādhi, but still short of the liberated consciousness. In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika the state of liberation lacks all pain or suffering but there is no positive feeling of bliss or ānanda.

IV

From the above survey of the use of ānanda in the early Indian literature we can draw the following conclusions:

1. In the early Vedic literature ānanda is used in a variety of contexts, including the thrill of gambling, the convivial joy of drinking, and especially sexual pleasure.

2. The middle Vedic literature of the Yajurveda emphasizes the sexual aspect of ānanda, using it almost as a technical term for orgasmic rapture. The absence of the term in non-Yajurvedic Brāhmaṇas, with the exception of a single passage in the KṣB, indicates that this usage was by and large confined to the Yajurvedic schools.

3. In the late Vedic literature also the term is most frequent in the two Yajurvedic Upaniṣads, the Brhadāraṇyaka and the Taittirīya, although the presence of the term with a sexual connotation in the Rgvedic Kauṣṭāki Upaniṣad makes the picture somewhat less clear. The association of brahmaṇ/tāman with ānanda, however, takes place principally in the Yajurvedic Upaniṣads. This semantic development, I believe, took place specifically as an extension of the meaning of ānanda as orgasmic rapture, a meaning already found in the early Yajurvedic texts. The connection between these two meanings of ānanda, we saw, is made explicitly in BU 4.1.6. Two elements of orgasmic rapture are central in this extended meaning: 1) the connection of ānanda to
procreation and, therefore, to Prajāpati, and 2) the loss of consciousness of individual identity associated with orgasm. TU (2.7) is the locus classicus for ananda as the primary attribute of brahmanātman.

4. The evidence of the Buddhist, Jain, and epic literature indicates that ananda did not immediately enter the common religious vocabulary either as the joy of heaven or final release (mokṣa) or as an attribute of the Ultimate Being or State. I think that after the composition of the BU and the TU ānanda as an attribute of brahman and as signifying the final state of bliss remained a technical usage confined to a somewhat narrow circle. There must have been a parallel semantic development of ānanda leading to its meaning as simple (not necessarily sexual) joy and happiness. This development took the term away from any specifically religious connotation. Unfortunately, we do not have the literary evidence to trace this development from the early vedic usage to the Buddhist and epic texts. We have, however, seen ānanda used with such a generic meanings in BU 4.3.32–33; CU 7.10.1; and TU 2.8. It is however, clear that the religious usage of the term in the Brahmasūtras and later literature is derived not from this generic epic usage but from its specifically religious meaning that developed in the Upaniṣads.

5. The native tradition itself recognizes the connection between the Māṁsaśūtras of Jaimini and the Brahmasūtras. This association provides the basis for calling the former Pūrva-Māṁsaśūtra and the latter Uttara-Māṁsaśūtra; as the former is the exegesis of the "earlier" part of the Veda, so the latter is the exegesis of the "later" part, namely the Vedānta or Upaniṣads. If we are to believe this association, then we should expect that the teachers of the two Māṁsaśās belonged to the same religious/intellectual milieu. That may well be true, but at least in the case of the term ānanda, which is central to the Uttara-Māṁsaśā (both the Sūtra itself and especially its commentators), the two appear not to have shared this religious vocabulary. Although the sūtras of Jaimini themselves offer no clues, Śābara's commentary, written probably around the middle of the first millennium C.E., refers frequently to the "happiness" or "joy" of heaven (svarga) in his discussion of Māṁsaśūtras 6.1.1–2. The most common word Śābara uses for "joy" is prītī, although occasionally he uses sukhā.

6. Let us, finally, return to the Brahmasūtra passage (1.1.12) that defines ātman/brahman as ānanda: ānandamayo 'bhyaśāt — "The (self) consisting of ānanda is (the supreme self) because of repetition." The reasons why the supreme self is defined as ānanda, according to Bādarāyaṇa, is because the Upaniṣads repeatedly say so. Śaṅkara in
his commentary expands on this terse statement, citing these repeated
Upanisadic statements. Interestingly, however, all his citations except
one are taken from the TU, and the one non-TU text is BU 3.9.28. So
the repeated mention of brahman/ātman as ānanda is found only in the
Yajurvedic Upanisads, and it is on the basis of these documents that the
Brahmasūtras assert the primacy of ānanda as the defining characteristic
of brahman/ātman. We can thus see here the direct connection between
the Yajurvedic Upanisads and the Brahmāsūtra definition of brahman
as ānanda, at least if Śāṅkara is right in identifying the sources that
prompted Bādarāyaṇa’s statement about repetition. It is, furthermore,
the extraordinary influence of the Brahmāsūtras on later theological
discourse that made ānanda a central term and concept in the later
Brahmanical/Hindu vocabulary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Joel Brereton, Stephanie Jamison, and Mark Southern
for sharing their deep knowledge of the Vedic language with me and
for helping me decipher several difficult passages.

NOTES

1 It is clear that etymologically ānanda is derived from the root ānand; but much
less clear is exactly how the noun is derived. As van Buitenen has pointed out, the
compound verb ānandate is not found in the early literature. He is right, I think, in
regarding it “as a verbal noun nanda with prefixed ā, and thus belong to a fairly
large group that often goes unrecognized: ā indicate the place where the verbal action
occurs, for example, āśrama, where one toils; āśrama, where one enjoys oneself;
āśrama, where things are scattered; ālaya, where things lie, etc. The word ānanda
thus implies a locus: that in which one finds bliss, be it a son, the fulfillment of a
wish, etc. Ānanda then is not just a free-floating unfocused bliss, a state of beatitude;
it has an implied object” (van Buitenen 1979, 327; for an extensive discussion of
the etymology and meaning of the similar word āśrama, see Olivelle 1993, 8–24).
Although the implication of a locus is correct and is evident in some of the early
usages that locates ānanda in the sexual organ or penis, in the later language the
term assumes the general meaning of happiness and joy. Nevertheless, van Buitenen’s
insight is important for teasing out the early semantics of ānanda.

2 W. Schwarz lists 96 compounds with ānanda as the final member, most of
which appear to be names or titles: Reverse Index of Old Indian (Wiesbaden: Otto

3 It is impossible to date the Brahmāsūtra with any precision or certainty, but we
would not be too off the mark in assigning it to a period between the 2nd and 5th
centuries C.E. Although a detailed analysis of texts from this period is required
to arrive at a definitive conclusion, I think that this treatment of ānanda in the
Brahmasūtras was a watershed in the history of the term. It clearly influenced all
the “Vedantic” traditions, both the Advaita and the devotional. The Advaita use of
the term may also have influenced the Tantric definition of the liberating experience as ānanda: Abhinavagupta, Tantrāloka, 5.27–53; Muller-Ortega 1989, 197–98.

4 See Deussen 1912, 212; Nakamura 1983, 486. According to Deussen, the expression first occurs in the Mśrīnātha-pāntiya Upaniṣadā, which is not of great help, because we know nothing about the date of that Upaniṣad.

5 Van Buitenen’s fear of “reductionist” tendencies in the study of religion was perhaps influenced by his connections to the Chicago school of “history of religion”. On the reductionist debate in the study of religion (where reductionism is often used as a derogatory term) and on the reductionist imperative if we are to engage in any explanatory endeavor, see Segal 1983; Preus 1987.

6 Geldner translates: “Wo, o Pavamāna, der Hohepriester in gebundener Rede sprechend mit dem Preßstein (in der Hand) bei Soma sich erhoben fühlt, durch den Soma Wonne wirkend, da fließe usw [für Indra ringsum ab, o Saft]!” By syntactically connecting the final refrain with the rest of the sentence, Geldner also appears to make this a complete sentence. In other verses, however, he translates the refrain as a separate sentence. The word mahiyate, we will see, is often associated with ānanda, and in these contexts probably refers to an internal feeling of exultation.

7 Geldner translates: “Wo das ewige Licht ist, in welche Welt die Sonne gesetzt ist, in diese versetze mich, o Pavamāna, in die unsterbliche, unergängliche Welt! Fließe für Indra ringsum ab, o Saft!”

8 Geldner translates: “Wo Wonne, Freuden, Lösste um Belustigungen wohnen, wo die Wünsche des Wünschens erlangt werden, dor mache usw [mich unsterblich! Fließ für Indra ringsum ab, o Saft]!”

9 On this type of intensification, see Oertel 1937.

10 reta vai somah (“Soma is indeed semen”) SB 1.9.2.9. See, Jamison 1996, 127–46.

11 Whitney translates: “Delights, joys, enjoyments, and they that enjoy enjoyments.” The parallels at AV(P) 16.84.8 reads ānandaḥ ca pramodāḥ cābhīmodamūdāḥ ca ye; and AV(P) 16.87.4 reads nandaḥ for modāḥ.

12 modāḥ = viṣayadosarṣaṇajanyā harṣāḥ; pramodāḥ = prakṛtivyāsālayābhajanyā harṣāḥ; ānandaḥ = viṣayopabhogajanyāḥ sukhaśveṣāḥ. Commenting on TB 2.4.6.5, Sayana offers the following definitions: sukhaśveṣāḥ modāḥ / darṣaṇaṁ janyāḥ pramodāḥ / bhogajanyā ānandaḥ /; and at TB 2.4.6.5, he states explicitly that the three words imply a gradation: modāyāstas tārataḥmyënaśvasthitāḥ sukhaśveṣāḥ / vārūyaṁ janyāḥ sukhaśveṣāḥ modāḥ / darṣaṇaṁ janyāḥ pramodāḥ / bhogajanyā ānandaḥ /

13 For triadic intensifications of this type, see note 32.

14 Whitney translates: “Mitra when looking, delight when turned this way.” The AV(P) 139.24 reads: āvṛtti ānanda iksaṁāṇo mītrāvarṇau.

15 A similar sexual implication of looking is found at SB(M) 6.2.2.6 discussed below, p. 7, n. 24.

16 Whitney translates: “When breath with thunder roars at the herbs, they are impregnated, they receive embryos, then they are born many.”

17 Sayana glosses abhikrandati: abhindhaya śabdāyate / yathā gatyānadhaye dṛippo viṣyabhaḥ garbham adhīṣṭas tā abhindhaya śabdāṁ karoti tathātī arthah. He glosses pra viyame: prañābhihkaṇādānaṁratā eva garbhāṁ grhyantaḥ ...vatsatāṁ tarvāṁ oṣadhiṁ garbha-pranāūkālā ity arthah. In the next two verses the author uses the verb pramodati to refer to the joy of plants and animals at the coming of rain.

18 Sayana appears to take it as a mantra, while Keith (1914, 479, n. 1) thinks it is
a brāhmaṇa passage, although he is not completely sure because of the mantra-like ending of TS 5.7.20 with svāhā! repeated three times.

19 The meanings of these pairs are unclear. Śaṅkara merely states that they are pairs of organs near the sexual organ: guhyasāmpavartaṇī avayaavayuṣgalāṇī. The Āśvaṁeṇha section (13.9) of the KS reads nandatūhībhyaṁ.

20 The passage occurs also in MS 3.11.8; KS 38.4; TB 2.6.5.6.

21 These are identifications familiar also in the Upaniṣads: BU 4.2.2. 5.5.2.

22 Eggeling translates ānta as “end”, which misses the point. The ānta of sex is not just the end but the climactic orgasm. He also misses the point when in a footnote he explains that “unconscious” means something like “indifferent, apathetic”.

23 MS 4.2.12; AB 3.33; SB(M) 1.7.4. In the BU (1.4.3–4) there is the story of the first being (often identified with Prajñāpati) who split himself in two, into paśu (husband) and paśu (wife). He copulated with her, producing the humans. But the woman thinks “After begetting me from his own body, how could he copulate with me?” She hid herself by becoming various animals, with all of whom he copulated, thus giving rise to various kinds of animals. For an extensive discussion of Prajñāpati’s incest, see O’Flaherty 1973, 111–40.

24 See SB 1.3.1.18. This topic is studied exhaustively by Jamison 1996, 55–59. See also AV(S) 9.7.23 discussed above.

25 The term gati (completion) indicates probably the progress and the completion of the progress of the yajus. In the earlier part of this section (SB(M) 10.3.5.1–7) dealing with the etymology of yajus, it is repeatedly connected with motion. In the final image of a man who has eaten a lot, there appears to be a pun on gati. The man then feels as if he is gata, that is, “I’m gone” or “I’m wiped out”.

26 The nominal sentence ānanda evaśya viññānam ātmā is problematic. In other nominal sentences with three nouns (A, B, C), such as CU 6.1.4–6, the most likely syntax is: B is A, (namely) C. Thus in the CU examples vājraṃbhakṣam vākraṃ nevadātāya is translated: “The transformation is a verbal handle, a name.” In the present context, however, viññānam appears as an intrusion both because the two parallel sentences in this structured series of identifications have only two nouns and because viññānam is quickly dropped from the discussion; even in the final enumeration in §14 it is omitted. I have followed Stephanie Jamison’s (private communication) suggestion that viññānam be a parenthetical comment and not part of the equation. The term then refers to this “knowledge” or “science”, i.e. the knowledge that “ātmā is ānanda”, which the gods and Priyavrata Rauhināyana possessed.

27 Contrary to Eggeling, the subject of the nominal sentence is upaniṣad and the predicate is rasā; likewise, at the beginning of paragraph 14, gati is the subject and ṛṣṭṛ the predicate (see Gren-Eklund 1978). Furthermore, I think that the phrase ānanda evaśya viññānam ātmā is the third in the list, paralleling rasā and ṛṣṭṛ.

28 We have a similar connection between rasā, ānanda, and ātmā in the TU 2.1–7.

29 Śaṅkara takes the dual muskāyasaḥ as referring to the testicles (ānta), but the context, I think, suggests the labia majora (or minora) of the vagina. The term is used with the meaning of labia in VS(M) 23.28 (discussed by Jamison 1996, 71 and 276, n. 134); KSb 23.4; BU 6.3.3 (where the term appears to refer to the labia minora).

30 According to Śaṅkara, the sacrificial gift here refers to the practice of giving a virgin to the officiating priest as a daksinā. The exact meaning and syntax of sṛtvā is unclear.

31 Both modā and pramodā are used with sexual connotations. Thus RV 10.30.5 says that Soma frolics with the waters (feminine) like a man with young girls: yābhiḥ somo modate harsate ca kalyāyābhir yuvatībhīr na maryaḥ! At RV 10.10.12 Yama
tells Yami, his sister, that she should not have sex with him but with some other man: anyena mat pranudaḥ kalpayasya.

32 This sequence probably falls into the triadic intensifying device known as "Behagel's Law", i.e., the law of increasing elements: Otto Behagel, "Beziehungen zwischen Umfang und Reihenfolge von Satzgliedern," *Indogerm. Forschungen* 25 (1909-1910), 110-42. This intensification consists in a progressively larger number of syllables or morae in the three words. An example from American English would be "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". In *moda*, *pramoda*, *ānanda*, we have a progressive increase in morae: 3, 4, and 5. I want to thank Mark Southern for pointing this out.

33 This is probably a Gāyatrī verse, followed by a Tristubh. The meter of *pāda* a of the Tristubh can be restored by dropping *idam*. This verse is an adaptation of the common verse-type beginning *vāyav indraś ca*. Jamison (1988, 14) formulates succinctly the grammatical rule followed by this construction: "two vocatives may not be conjoined by *ca*; in place of the second expected vocative, another case will appear. In Vedic, this is always the nominative." Our verse follows the "inverted construction" where the nominative is placed first (see Jamison 1988 for further bibliography and a detailed discussion of this construction). Theoretically, there should be a plural verb ending here, because three deities are addressed. The dual ending of the verb (*nimikṣatam*) probably follows the stereotype of such constructions where two deities are addressed, generally Indra and another deity (usually Vāyu).

34 The two are mentioned in RV 4.57.5.8. The final Cāturāśaya sacrifice in the autumn is called Santsūrya and offered to these two deities, clearly indicating their association with agriculture and the bounty of the harvest; see Śravita Kūṣa (Poona: Vaidika Sanskritdhara Mandala, 1962), I.2: pp. 759-63, 895-98. In the SB (7.2.2.5) there is an explicit connection between plowing and sex: the plow (=penis) makes the furrow (=womb) and deposits the seed (=semen) in it, for "if one casts (seed) into unplowed land, it is the same as depositing semen in a place other than the womb."

35 The transmission of the KSU, however, has been much less faithful than that of the other early Upaniṣads. It is, therefore, difficult to make firm conclusions from the presence of the term in the KSU, which may have been influenced by the Yajurvedic documents. Such an assumption is supported by the fact that neither the parallel documents of the Aitareya śākha (AB, AA, and AU), nor the Kaṭabāyi Brāhmaṇa (except in an isolated passage) contain the word ānanda.

36 See, for example, RV 5.4.10: "Through offspring, O Agni, may we attain immortality" – *prajābhīr agne amṛtatvaṃ atyām*. See Olivelle 1993, 41-46.

37 The list of these powers is the same as the one repeated four times together with the corresponding organs at KSU 3.5-8. This long list is absent in the abbreviated ceremony recorded in BU 1.5.17.

38 In this sense, then, the connection between ānanda and prajāti can have another meaning. The ejaculation of the semen in ānanda is itself the prajāti or the self-procreation of the man.

39 So with Rau (1981). The vulgate reads "bhāyaṃ."


41 The AU (2.1), for example, calls semen (reṣṭa) "the radiance gathered from all the bodily parts" (*tad etat survebhyo niṣebhyas tejāh sambhūtam*). In BU 6.4.1 semen is called the essence of man: *puruṣasya reṣṭah (rasah)*. Rau (1981) translates rasas as "der Lust gewährt".


43 This term does not appear elsewhere in the early Upaniṣads. In the Brāhmaṇas the
term occurs only once, in JB 1.45 in the parallel description of the five fires. Verbal forms of the word occurs only twice in the vedic literature, AV(S) 9.2.2; 19.8.3.

These parts of the body derive from the image of a bird, the bottom being the tail. The bird image comes from the shape of the fire-altar built with bricks. For a comparison of the TU passage to MiU 6.33, see van Buitenen 1979; 326-27. The MiU passage also concludes with the sacrificer becoming ānandā and modin.

A verse, variants of which occur both in KaU 1.3 and BU 4.4.11, contains the term ānandāḥ ("joyless"). The BU(M), however, reads auspīya for ānandāḥ. Charpentier (1928-29) on KaU 1.3 prefers to read ānandāḥ.

MiU (1.2.7) uses abhinandanti with reference to people who take delight in ritual activities.

The term ānanda is rare in the Śrauta- and Grihya-sūtras. It occurs in the mantra esa te yonir ānandeya tvā in both the Āpastamba Śrautasūtra (19.7.5) and the Satyāyānī (Hiranyakasī) Śrautasūtra (23.1.26). This mantra is taken from VS(M) 19.8, which we have already examined. In the Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra (18.29) the term ānandādaḥ is found twice with reference to comasādhyavāyaḥ (assistant priests who carry the cups). Āpastamba Śrautasūtra (5.18.2) has the expression grhānām pustim ānandam. The Kausikasūtra (40.13) has anandino modamānaḥ in a mantra to Agni. In the Grihya-sūtras, the term occurs only in the Vaiśākhasa (3.19) and the Āgniṣṭोla (1.4.1), both belonging to the early centuries C. E. The term is completely absent in the Dharma-sūtras and the Manu Śmrī. It does not occur in Pāṇini but is listed in the Gopatha, 81.36. Patañjali uses ānanda twice, both in the identical phrase eiti jīvāntam ānandāḥ, which is a citation of Rām 5.52.6.

For a discussion of the Buddhist nirvāṇa as sukha, see Collins 1996: 2.2b (pp. 165-70). In Jainism also the liberated soul has infinite knowledge (anātmanāna) and infinite bliss (anantasukha); see Jain 1979: 268.

Out of these 11 are from the Śiṅkas, generally recognized as late texts.

Rām 1.1.16.23; 10.28; 49.6; 50.1,3,10,12; 64.21; 67.13,15; 69.1,7; 72.17.
2. 5.19; 16.56; 39.13; 40.7; 46.76; 51.4; 53.13; 59.13; 66.33; 84.11; 105.24. 3. 35.9.
4. 20.9; 24.19. 5. 11.29; 18.1; 32.33; 33.77; 34.11.25; 6. 24.31; 31.67; 39.7; 68.9.12; 114.2; 36; 107.29; 115.1,40. 7. 87.4.

MBh 1. 118.30; 163.15. 2. 1.4; 59.1; 70.21; 3. 118.29; 221.22; 261.13.
5. 124.17; 136.17; 173.16. 6. 2.18; 7. 48.1; 50.9; 124.1; 159.42; 164.157. 8. 46.9.
9. 44.6; 45.11; 10.7.4; 16.24; 11. 27.5. 12. 31.36; 168.43; 187.33; 191.18; 212.2,26; 236.21; 239.23; 267.26; 268.11; 301.3; 17. 13. 16.55; 27.81; 135.33, 69. 79.
14. 38.2; 45.8. 16. 6.11.

Rām 1. 1.16; 67.15; 72.17; 2. 66.33; 84.11; 3. 35.9; 6. 31.67; 115.40. MBh 3. 261.13.

Rām 1. 1.23; 2. 16.56; 46.76; 4. 24.19; 5. 32.33; 34.11; 34.25; 6. 39.7; 107.29.

Rām 2. 40.7. In the MBh (8. 46.9) Karna is called suhṛdānandavardhīna, and in the Rām (2. 5.19) a great festival of Ayodhya is called jānasyānandavardhanā.

nirānanda: Ayodhya after Rāma's exile (Rām 2. 51.4; 105.24); the mother of her husband is killed (Rām 4.20.9); Rūma at Śrīkṛṣṇa's death (Rām 5.111.29); Sirīt in exile (Rām 6. 68.9.12; 114.36), people after a 12-year drought (MBh 1.63.16), the deprived world of the future (MBh 3.188.29), Amīta when rejected by Śalva (MBh 5.17.36), Draupāda (MBh 10.16.24), the bank of the Ganges with widows of dead heroes (MBh 11.27.5), Dyārakā after Kṛṣṇa's death (MBh 16.6.11). nīpānītānanda: Ayodhya (Rām 2.53.13); ānānanda: Hastināpura after Pāṇḍu's death (MBh 1.118.30). vijagānanda: Pāṇḍavas in exile (MBh 2.70.21; hātānanda: the Pāṇḍava camp (MBh 7.50.9). vijagānanda: a dead boy (MBh 12.31.36).

The sages Vaiśākhyya and Vaiśākhāsas are said to be karmabhis te nīrānanda dharmamīyā jītenātāya (MBh 12.236.21).
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**ABBREVIATIONS**

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<td>AA</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
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