

Nassadiya Suktam

Part 3 continued

तिरश्चीनः विततः रश्मिः एषां अधःस्वित् आसीत् उपरि स्वित् आसीत् ।

रेतोधाः आसन् महिमानः आसन् स्वधा अवस्तात् प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥ ५ ॥

एषां (कार्यवर्गः) – (the aggregate effect) of these (*avidya, kama, karma* – the causes of Creation); तिरश्चीनः विततः चस्वित् आसीत् फ– did they spread in the middle?; अधः स्वित् आसीत् – did they (spread) below?; उपरि स्वित् आसीत् – did they (spread) above?; (न – not so); रश्मिः (सदृशः) – (They spread everywhere instantaneously like) the rays of rising sun; महिमानः – superior; रेतोधाः – the authors of the seed (*retah*) of *karmas* viz. *jivas*; आसन् .were born; स्वधा – food in the sense of the experiential world; अवस्तात् – inferior (and); प्रयतिः – the *bhokta jiva*; परस्तात् – superior; आसन् – were born(5)

5. Did the aggregate effects of the cause of Creation spread (first) towards the middle? Or did they spread downwards (first)? Or did they spread upwards (first)? Not so. (They spread everywhere instantaneously) like the rays of rising sun. Jivas superior in nature were born (in Creation). (So too) was the experiential world inferior/subservient to jivas born. The bhokta jiva is superior.

The Creation was instantaneous once it started. It is impossible to find out where it began, how it proceeded and where the process of Creation ended. The aggregate effects of these (*avidya, kama* and *karma*) were like *rashmihi* (rays of the sun). Just as rays spread all over instantaneously at sunrise, so too did the Creation spread (*vitatah aasit*) all over. This wonder is expressed through the use of *svit*, a particle of interrogation or inquiry. It often implies doubt or surprise and is translated by 'what', 'hey', or 'can it be so'. It also supplies a sense of the indefinite. The *pluta* (prolonged vowel) used in the verb *aaseet* is in the sense of ascertainment or considering the pros and cons (*Panini Sutra 8-2-97*). The three questions expressing wonder and surprise are: Did it spread in the middle (*tiraschinah*)? Did it spread downwards (*adhah*)? Did it spread upwards (*upari*)? Thus the simultaneousness of the Creation is pointed out by questioning its locus at the outset.

But this declaration of the *suktam* appears to contradict the *Taittiriya Sruti* (*Tai. Aa. 8-1*), which speaks of an order of Creation, and states that space (*akasha*) was born from *atma*, air (*vayu*) from space, fire (*agni*) from air etc. True. There is an order of Creation. Yet, the impact of instantaneity is so great that for all practical purposes, it is sudden like a flash of lightning. Thus the order of Creation becomes imperceptible. In short, the Creation spread in all directions. This is why some cosmologists try to read the big bang theory into the *Naasadiya Suktam*. But according to the *Naasadiya Suktam*, there was no extremely dense matter before Creation that could explode out in the form of the universe. The five great elements space, air, fire, water and earth are themselves the products of Creation.

Next, the created *jagat* is classified. There are two major divisions. The first is the *bhokta*, *jivas* who are predominant, and the second is the *bhogya*, the experiential world subordinate to *jivas*. The *bhogya* is meant for the enjoyment or suffering of the *bhokta*. The nature and birth of *jivas* are described in the phrase *mahimanah* (superior) *retodhah* (authors of the seed of *karma*, the cause of Creation). Thus *Parameshwara* endowed with *maya* having created the *jagat* himself entered into it and made divisions in the form of *bhokta*, *bhogya* etc. Entry of *Parameshwara* into the Creation is providing sentiency in the form of *cidabhasa* (reflected *chaitanya*/awareness). The *Taittiriya Sruti* in its statement 'Having created the *srushti*, *Parameshwara* entered it' (*Tai. Aa. 8-6*) etc. establishes this. Between the Creation of *bhokta* and *bhogya*, the *svadha* (food), the *bhogya* world is inferior (*avastat*) while the *bhokta* (*prayatih*) is superior (*parastat*). In other words, *Parameshwara* created the *bhogya* world subservient to *bhoktas* (*jivas*).

Thus the Creation in the form of *bhokta* and *bhogya* was established in brief. The reason why it could not be elaborated in detail is now given.

कः अद्वा वेद कः इह प्रवोचत् कुतः आजाता कुतः इयं विसृष्टिः ।

अर्वाक् देवाः अस्य विसर्जनेन अथा कः वेद यतः आबभूव ॥ ६ ॥

कः – which person; अद्वा – in reality; वेद – knows this Creation; कः – who; इह – in this world; प्रवोचत् – could describe it; इयं – this perceptible; विसृष्टिः – variegated Creation; कुतः – from which material cause; आजाता – was it born? कुतः – due to what efficient cause did it emerge?; देवाः – presiding deities; अस्य – of this jagat; विसर्जनेन अर्वाक् – after it was born; (कृताः – were created); अथ – when this is so (how can they know?); कः – who (else such as humans etc.) वेद – can know? यतः – from what cause; आबभूव – was this Creation born? (No one).....(6)

6. **Who knows this Creation in reality? (No one). Who in this world could describe it? (No one). From what material cause was this Creation born? What is its efficient cause? (Perhaps the *devas* know). The presiding deities (*devas*) were (themselves) born after the Creation came into existence. When this is so, how could they know? Who else other than *devas*, such as humans etc., can know the cause from which it is born? (No one).**

That the nature of Creation is difficult to understand is revealed through some rhetorical questions. Who (*kah*) knows (*veda*) the *srushti* (Creation) in reality (*addhaa*)? That is, there is no one who knows. Who (*kah*) indeed in this universe (*iha*) could describe (*pravochat*) it? No one. From what (*kutah*) material cause was this (*iyam*) variegated Creation (*visrushti*) born? Due to what (*kutah*) efficient cause did this Creation emerge (*aajaataa*)? No one knows the answers to these questions or can provide any level of description.

Why should there be such difficulty when there are the omniscient *devas* (presiding deities/ cosmic functionaries) who should know? No, they (*devaah*) themselves were born much subsequent (*arvak*) to the birth (*visarjana*) of this (*asya*) universe of five great elements and elementals. How could they know the Creation existing even before their birth? How could they describe it without its knowledge? The fact that this *jagat* is very difficult to know is now concluded. *Atha* (when *devas* themselves are unable to know), who (*kah*) else such as humans can know the cause from which (*yatah*) this universe was born? That is, no one else can. Sri Vidyanaraya Muni draws one's attention to this fact when he states: Scholars of different schools of thoughts (including scientists) may give a plausible description of the *jagat* up to a certain point. But at one stage or the other, ignorance looms large on their face. When probed further, they have to say perforce that they know not. Because of its inexplicability, *Brahmajnanis* (persons having direct knowledge of Brahman) describe the *jagat* as a magic show (Panchadashi, ch. 6-143 and 146). Only Vedanta in the form of the Upanishads leading to fruition in the form of the direct cognition of *atma*/Brahman can solve this riddle of the multifarious *jagat*.

Just as the Creation of this *jagat* is difficult to understand, it cannot be sustained by anyone in the created universe either.

..... *to be continued*