

Nassadiya Suktam

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Second part — Continuation from previous issue

न मृत्युः आसीत् अमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्याः अहः आसीत्
प्रकेतः ।
आनीत् अवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्मात् ह अन्यत् न परः
किञ्चन आस ॥ २ ॥

तर्हि – then; मृत्युः – death; न आसीत् – was not there; अमृतं – deathlessness or continuance of living beings; न – was not; रात्र्याः – of the night; अहः – of the day; प्रकेतः – perception; न आसीत् – was not there; आनीत् – That (Brahman) breathed; अवातं – without air; तत् – that (Brahman); स्वधया – with *maya*; @km! – (was) indivisibly one; ह – certainly; तस्मात् – from that (Brahman conditioned by *maya*); न अन्यत् – nothing else; किञ्चन – whatever (from five great elements and elementals); परः – (that is present) after (the Creation); आस – emerged(2)

2. Then (at the time of dissolution) there was no death (the destroying entity). There was no deathlessness or continuance of living beings (either). Day and night were not perceived (because there was no sun and no moon). Brahman breathed without air. That (Brahman) was indivisibly one with *maya*. Certainly, none of the five great elements and elementals that are present after the Creation had emerged from Brahman conditioned by *maya*.

Any destruction depends on the destroyer, which is the principle of death (*mrutyu*). Therefore, there should have been death. No. At that time, there was no *mrutyu*. Then in the absence of death, all beings must have been deathless (*amrutam*). No. Then (*tarhi*) there was no *amrutam*. Actually, when the mature *karmaphalas* of all beings are exhausted, a desire to abandon the *jagat*, which no longer serves any purpose, is born in the mind of *Parameshwara* (the Creator principle). Then everything is withdrawn, including the destroyer principle. Even so, there must have been *kala* (time), the basis of everything. No. There was no cognition (*praketah*) of day (*ahnah*) or night (*ratryah*) because their causes, the sun and the moon, were absent. This refutes the existence of time with all its units such as month, season or year. Then how is it that the word *tadanim* (then), referring to the principle of time is used? This usage is only secondary, for want of better expression. A word indicating time is used even where there was no time.

Does this mean that *sunyavada* (nihilism) applies? No. The Brahman that is unfolded in all the Upanishads/Vedanta existed. This is revealed by the phrase “it (Brahman)

breathed (*aanit*)". But Brahman is free from *prana* (vital air) and mind. It cannot breathe because it is disembodied (*ashariram*). Then was it possibly Brahman in the form of a manifest *jiva* (individual) that breathed? No. The answer is: it breathed *avaatam* (without air). *Jivas* cannot breathe without air. So what is implied is that Brahman because of which *jivas* are able to breathe existed, and not any actual *jivas*. Brahman and Brahman alone continued to exist in spite of the total destruction of Creation. Even *maya* (the Creative power of *Ishwara*) did not exist. *Maya* or *avidya* (self-ignorance) is only a postulation in non-dual Brahman to explain the phenomenon of the seeming Creation to ignorant persons. Sage Vasishtha explains this truth beyond any trace of doubt in the *Yogavasishtha*, also called *Maharamayanam*.

If Brahman exists totally unconnected to *maya* in this manner, then the independent *prakruti* made up of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamogunas* as envisaged by the Sankhya school of thought will perforce have to be accepted. In that case, the refutation that *sat* did not exist during dissolution would be wrong. It is not so. The answer: That (*tat* – Brahman) was indivisibly one with *maya* (*svadhayaa ekam*). Even though the *asanga* (unconnected) Brahman cannot have any connection or association with anything, it is due to *avidya* (self-ignorance) that *maya* appears to be the nature of Brahman. Such a connection is erroneously attributed to (or *adhyasta* on) Brahman. It is like attributing

the superimposed (*adhyasta*) silver to a sea-shell and seeing the silver as identical with the shell. This proves that *maya* cannot be *sat*.

If *maya* is thus indivisibly identical with Brahman, then Brahman also should be inexplicable (*anirvachaniya*) and unreal like *maya*. In that case, the phrase *aanidavatam* (it breathed without air), which speaks of its existence, will not be valid. Or if *maya* is ever-existent like Brahman, the statement 'no *sat* *aasit*' will not hold true. It cannot be so. In the absence of proper inquiry, *maya* and Brahman may appear to be identical. But on gaining through discrimination the direct knowledge of Brahman, the *anirvachya* (inexplicable/unreal) aspect of *maya* and the ever-existent nature of Brahman get established.

The entire Creation is encompassed by the principles of *druk* (seer) and *drashya* (seen), corresponding to Brahman and *maya*. These two are referred to in the *suktam* by the phrases *aanit avatam* (Brahman breathed without air) and *svadhayaa* (by *maya*) respectively. Then in the absence of any other entities that need to be negated, why the denial 'there was no *raja*' (fields of experience) etc. in *mantras* one and two? The answer: In the state of dissolution, none of the other factors (*na anyat kimchana*) (the five great elements and elementals) that exist after (*parah*) Creation emerged (*aas*) from *tasmat* (from that Brahman conditioned by *maya*). This fact is highlighted by the denial of *raja* etc.