

Nassadiya Suktam

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Third part — Continuation from previous issue

तमः आसीत् तमसा गूळहम् अग्रेऽप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वम् आः इदम् तुच्छयेन ।
आभु अपिहितं यत् आसीत् तपसः तत् महिना अजायत एकम् ॥ ३ ॥

अग्रे – before Creation (in the state of dissolution) (the entire *jagat*); **तमसा** – by the darkness of self-ignorance (*maya*); **गूळहम्** – (was) totally covered; **तमः आसीत्** – (the manifest *jagat*) was in the form of darkness of self-ignorance; **अप्रकेतं** – (though the covering principle self-ignorance was distinct from the covered *jagat*, their distinction) was unknown (in that state); **इदम्** – this (perceptible); **सर्वम्** – entire *jagat*; **सलिलं आः** (i.e. **आसीत्**) – was inseparable from its cause (like the *jagat* totally merged in water in the case of intermediary dissolution). Or was not known, like water mixed with milk; **यत्** whatever (*jagat*); **आभु** (**आसमन्तात् भवति इति**) – completely; **तुच्छयेन** (i.e. **तुच्छेन**, **य्** is **छांदसः प्रयोगः**) by insignificant (**अज्ञान** – self-ignorance); **अपिहितं आसीत्** – was covered; **तत्** – that (*jagat*); **एकम्** – (even though) identified with its cause, self-ignorance; **तपसः** – of *Ishwara's* contemplation on the *jagat* to be created; **महिना** – by the glory; **अजायत** – was born (3)

3. In the state of dissolution before Creation, the entire *jagat* was completely covered by the darkness of self-ignorance/*maya*. The manifest *jagat* was in the form of the darkness of self-ignorance. Though the covering principle, self-ignorance, was distinct from the covered *jagat*, their distinction was unknown in that state. This entire perceptible *jagat* was inseparable from its cause (like the *jagat* completely merged in water in the case of intermediary dissolution). Or the entire *jagat* was not known, like water mixed with milk. That very *jagat* that was completely covered by insignificant self-ignorance, even though identified with its cause (self-ignorance), was born of the glory of *Ishwara's* contemplation on the *jagat* to be created.

How then is this *jagat* described so far born if it was non-existent prior to its birth? Any Creation is necessarily preceded by its *kaaraka* (producer) and instruments of action. Without that, birth is not possible. This is now answered. *Agre* (before Creation), this *jagat* was *gulham* (totally covered) by *tamas* – the darkness of ignorance. It is just like pitch darkness that covers the world during night-time. *Ajnana* or *avidya*, synonymous to *maya*, is called *tamas* (darkness) here because it covers the true nature of *atma*. So the *jagat* was totally covered

by this cause, the veiling power called *tamas*. Manifestation in terms of name and form out of this covering of *tamas* is itself called the birth of *jagat*. This refutes the philosophy of *asatkaryavada* according to which an effect (*karya*) that was totally non-existent in the cause takes birth as an effect.

If the effect *jagat* exists in the cause called *tama*, how was the presence of *raja* (fields of experience) etc. negated earlier? This is addressed by *tamah aasit* (there was the darkness of ignorance earlier). In the state of dissolution, the entire *jagat* remained in the form of its cause, *tamas*, and not as the manifest *raja* etc. with distinct names and forms. That is the reason why the presence of *raja* etc. comprising of the *jagat* was negated earlier.

A doubt may arise at this point. The *tama* which covers is the doer (*karta*) whereas the *jagat* that is covered is its object (*karma*). How can the doer and its object be identical? They should be distinct. True. Yet, unlike in the state of the manifest *jagat*, the distinction between ignorance (the one that covers) and *jagat* (the one that is covered) is not clearly perceived in the state of dissolution. So the answer is given, *apraketam* (not known at all). *Manusmruti* (1-5) also corroborates this.

Why is it not known? *Idam* (this) *sarvam* (entire *jagat*) was (*aah*) water (*salilam*). That means the *jagat* was indistinguishable, like a mass of water in the deluge. This statement applies in the case of intermediary dissolution. Then where is the need to elaborate that the *jagat* was totally indistinguishable in the final state of dissolution. Or the meaning of *salilam* (water) can be taken differently. Just as water mixed with milk is overwhelmed by the milk and not seen separately as water, so too the *jagat* is merged in *tama* and not perceived. Then that *tama* (darkness of ignorance) must be very powerful like milk to prevent the *jagat* from being born again at any time separate from itself. No. Whatever (*yat*) *jagat* is there was completely (*aabhuhu*) covered (*apihitam*) by insignificant (*tuchchyena*) ignorance (*tama*). In this way, the *jagat* was indistinguishably one (*ekam*) with *tama* (ignorance). Self-ignorance (*tama*) is said to be *tuchcham* (insignificant) because it does not exist truly though it appears to. That (*tat*) *jagat* in the form of effect (*karya*) is born (*ajaayat*) by the glory (*mahinaa*) of *tapas* (*Ishwara's* contemplation on the *jagat* to be created).

If *Ishwara's* contemplation is the cause of the rebirth of *jagat*, what is the cause of this contemplation?

कामः तदग्रे समवर्तत अधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।
सतः बन्धुम् असति निरविन्दन् हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयः मनीषा ॥ ४ ॥

अग्रे – Before Creation; कामः – desire; अधि – with reference to; तत् – that (Creation); समवर्तत – was born (in the mind of *Ishwara*); मनसः – (*vasanas*) related

to the mind (of *jivas* were the cause of *Ishwara's* desire); **यत्** – *vasanas* (were born from); **रेतः** – the seed of the future Creation (viz. *karmas*); **प्रथमं** – (done in) earlier (*kalpas*); **आसीत्** – was (there); **कवयः** – the all-knowing sages; **हृदि** – in their *antahkarana* (mind); **सतः** – of the *jagat* presently experienced as existent; **बन्धुम्** – cause (as the *karmas* performed by *jivas* in earlier *kalpas*); **प्रतीच्य** – having inquired into; **मनीषा** – by a *buddhi* absorbed in *samadhi*; **असति** – (as abiding) in *avyakruta* (unmanifest cause) distinct from *sat*; **निरविन्दन्** –understood thoroughly....(4)

4. Before Creation, the desire to create the *jagat* was born (in the mind of *Ishwara*). *Vasanas* (latent impressions) abiding in the mind of *jivas* were the cause (of *Ishwara's* desire). *Vasanas* were born from the *karmas* performed (by *jivas*) in the past *kalpas* which served as the seed (*retah*) for the future Creation. The all-knowing sages have inquired into the cause of the empirical *jagat* and understood it thoroughly in their *antahkarana* by means of a *buddhi* absorbed in *samadhi* as the *karmas* performed by *jivas* in earlier *kalpas* presently abiding in *avyakruta* (unmanifest cause).

Before (*agre*) this Creation came into existence, a desire (*kaama*) to create the *jagat* was born in the mind of *Parameshwara*. What was the cause of that desire to create the *jagat*? It is the *vasanas* (latent impressions) that were inherent in the *antahkaranas* of all *jivas* in a merged condition, merged with *maya* at that time. This shows that the vivid features of *jagat* cannot be directly attributed to *atma*. But from where did these *vasanas* originate? The answer lies in the phrase – *yat retah prathamam asit* – it is from the *karma* performed by all *jivas* in the earlier (*prathamam*) *kalpas* that were ready and on the verge of manifestation at the time of Creation. These *karmas* are also described as *retah* (the seed of the future Creation). This is the reason why a desire to create the *jagat* was born in the mind of all witnessing *Parameshwara* who is *karmaadhyaksha* – the one who presides over the *karmas* of all beings. The *Taittiriya sruti* corroborates this: *Parameshwara* desired. Let me be many; let me be born. HE contemplated upon *srushti*. Having contemplated, HE created this *jagat* with all its variegatedness (*Tai. Aa. 8-6*). The *suktam* further corroborates this fact by quoting the experience of knowledgeable persons in this field. All-knowing masters (*kavayah*) ascertained the cause of the present experiential *jagat* (*satah*) to be the multitude of binding (*bandhum*) *karmas* performed by *jivas* in the earlier *kalpas* and now abiding in a dormant condition in the *avyakruta* (*asati*), the unmanifest cause. They came to know about this after having deliberated (*pratishya*) in their *antahkarana* (*hrudi*) through *manishaa* (the *buddhi* in *samadhi*).

Avidya (*ajnana* – self-ignorance), *kama* (desire) and *karma* (results of actions) were described thus far as the causes of Creation. Now the rapidity of the Creation without any let up once it starts is being highlighted.