

SPARKS FROM THE VEDIC FIRE

[*A New Approach to Vedic Symbolism*]

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PREFACE

THE SEERS SPEAK ESOTERICALLY

आचक्षते परोक्षेण

The thought of the R̥igveda is cast in the mould of symbols. The symbol is a concrete object employed to convey an esoteric meaning. Each material object is regarded as a symbol of the Divine Principle behind it. It is the concrete form of an abstract entity and is eloquent with the significance of its purposeful functioning. The language of the cosmos is embodied in the material objects and its alphabet and meaning have to be discovered in them. Each visible object stands as the envelope of a mystical meaning, which the eye of wisdom discerns.¹

The symbols represent an abiding language. They have been with us since the beginning of time and are to remain till eternity. Human speech is subject to change and conditioned in time and place like other institutions. But the symbols represent the language of infinite nature. They do not change or evolve.

The Sun and the Moon, the Ocean and the Waters, the Fire and the Sky, the Heavens and the Earth, the Dawn and the Night—they are as they are.² They are eternal Pegs fixed in the cosmic vault. On these 'fenders' mystical meanings are hung and read by the Seers.

Symbols were deliberately selected in preference to words as the only adequate means of expressing live and fresh meaning. The language of symbols shines beyond racial and regional limits. Its depth depends on the power of the discerning mind.

The Tree, the Forest, the Hill, the River, the Lake, the Well, the Cow, the Horse, the Man, the Birds, the Eagle, the Dragon,³ these are all powerful symbols in the ageless *repertoire* of universal speech understood by men at all places and times.

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1. *Bhūteshu bhūteshu vichitya dhīrāḥ* (Kena Up. 2.5).
 2. *Sūrya, Chandra, Samudra, Āpaḥ, Agni, Ākāśa, Dyauḥ, Prithivī, Ushā, Rātri.*
 3. *Vanaspatī, Vana, Sānu (Adri), Sindhu, Saras, Utsa, Gauḥ, Āśva, Puruṣa, Suparna, Śyena, Ahi,*

Similary family relationships are familiar to us as intimate entities. Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Son, Daughter, these are household truths of life. They are manifestations of that essential Power or Substance called Life. They remain with us from birth. Their meaning becomes deep-seated in the heart of each sentient being.

As expressive of Man's deepest bonds with Nature the value of symbols is that of Axioms of which the truth is established beyond proof.

Man-made objects also serve as symbols, e. g. the gyrating Wheel, the moving Car, the Full Vase, the Bowl, the House, the Doors, the Wooden Vat, the Fire-pan, the Bricks, the Pillar, the Bow, the Arrow,¹ etc.

Numbers also possess great value as symbols or pointers of mystical meanings; for example, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 24, 27, 33, 34, 36, 40, 44, 48, 60, 90, 100, 1000—these numbers punctuate a rich and colourful spectrum of cosmic meanings and universal metaphysics formulated by the Rishis.

The *language* of the R̥gveda is not to be traced in the lexical mould of apparent words and meanings. It is essentially the language of symbol-phonemes, designed to explain the mystical working of the cosmos on the parallel planes of Life (*Prāṇa*), Mind (*Manas*), and Matter (*Vāk*). These are known as the Three Brothers of Agni, or equivalent to the Seven Sons of Aditi, who is the Great Mother Goddess or Infinite Nature. The Seers speak mystically, for the Gods love the mystic.²

For instance, the Cow is *par excellence* the symbol of living organism producing milk. She eats simple grass and fodder produced by rain-water. The mysterious chemistry of the cow's body converts water into milk. But the cow does not yield milk unless she gives birth to the calf. She is fecundated by the Bull, her sire, and then she calves. Milk is thus the symbol of motherhood. Wherever there is milk there is motherhood. Cow's love for the suckling calf becomes concrete as milk. What is the difference between water and milk? Milk is water permeated by tiny globules of butter. Affection in the mother's heart is made visible in the miracle of milk. Milk is therefore the appropriate symbol of generation and motherhood. How does milk get its butter contents? The mystery of butter gives the answer. The seer points out: 'Butter is Fire'³. Fire is put out by water, but

1. *Chakra, Ratha, Pūrṇa-Kumbha, Chamasa, Gṛiha or Dama, Devīḥ Dvārah, Droṇa Kalaśa, Ukhā, Ishtakā, Skambha, Pināka, Ishu.*

2. *Āchakshate parokshena, paroksha-priyā vai devāḥ :*

आचक्षते परोक्षेण, परोक्षप्रिया वै देवाः ।

3. *Āgneyam vai ghṛitam* (Śatapatha, 7.4.1.41 ; 9.2.2.3). *Etad vai pratyakshād yajña-rūpam yad ghṛitam* (Śat, 12.8.2.15).

blazes by butter. Fire and butter are thus of identical brand, both being forms of energy. The seed in the sire is the fertilising male principle deposited in the female to procreate. The male is symbolised as Agni, the Fiery Energy and the Female as Soma, its Watery counterpart. It is the contact with the bull that confers on the cow the potency to change water into milk. The cow as the symbol of motherhood commands extensive description in the Ṛigveda. She is identical with Infinite Nature whose progenitive power is boundless and who is the divine mother of men, animals, birds, living creatures and plants. The process of generation is of the same pattern for all organic beings. The Ṛishis have therefore employed a common or parallel language applicable to all these in such terms as Aditi, Devas, Yajña, Gauḥ, Payas, Gbṛita, Retas, Chakra, Kāla, Aśva, Saṁvatsara, Ushā, Hiraṇya, Prāṇa, Sūrya, Indra, Agni, and a host of others.

The symbolical approach is thus the 'Open Sesame' to Vedic exegesis. It opens a new door and puts us in possession of an unprecedented richness of meanings. It was in fact the ancient traditional approach embodied in the Brāhmaṇas. This evidence is ambrosial for a fresh attuning of the mind with the thoughts of the Ṛishis in the mantras. It should therefore be welcome to Vedic scholars everywhere. The exploding meaning of the symbol in a mantra is as gladdening as divine encounter. The problem of Vedic interpretation is essentially the problem of decoding the meaning of symbols employed by the Ṛishis with deliberate choice. Symbolical meanings serve as vibrations emanating from the Bhūtas and leading to the Devas (देवं वहन्ति केतवः). The Bhūtas or material objects may be simple and ordinary objects, but they are idealised and become transformed into radiant entities of the highest value; e. g. the Tree becomes the Tree of Existence, the Forest as the highest Brahman unlimited in time and space. Even the household Jar is treated as the symbol of the cosmos and the human Body full with all the possibilities of existence, and the familiar Pestle and Mortar signify the two Clashing Rocks or the opposite principles of Prāṇa and Apāna. The Barking Hound is the symbol of Indra as Ākāśa which is the source of speech, or Vāk. The croaking Frog (*Maṇḍūkā*) is the sign of the individuated Prāṇa stirred to life by the drops of heavenly clouds or the Universal Life-principles moistening the earth (भूमिं पर्जन्या जिवन्ति, I. 164. 51).

It should be remembered that the symbolical meanings descend like an avalanche. The Vedas cannot be treated as individual strands. One should be willing to reckon with a whole skein entangled in the extreme. The stout heart of the enquirer should expect not a few stray threads but the whole cloth woven by the subtlest minds. It seems that everything is related to everything else. The Divine scheme of creation is like this, an unending inter-linking without

fixed priorities, where one cannot insist on logical sequences. It is a case of extremely elastic formulations. One should be prepared to love this approach to meanings as the milkman loves the milk of his cow. The Veda is कामदुधा वाक्, the Milk-at-Will Cow and the Mind is her Calf.

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8. NĀSADIYA SŪKTA (नासदीयसूक्त)

1. *Sadasad-vāda*—The Nāsadiya Sūkta gives this doctrine the first position. In the beginning there existed the Asat and from it proceeded the Sat. This was the view of the Taittirīyas. In the Ṛigveda itself both Asat and Sat are said to have existed in the Parama Vyoma i. e. the Empyrean or the highest heaven which was the abode of the Gods and from which both Aditi and Daksha were born—

असच्च सच्च परमे व्योमन् दक्षस्य जन्मन्नदितेरुपस्थे । अग्निर्हि नः प्रथमजा ऋतस्य पूर्वं आयुनि वृषभश्च वेनुः ॥
(Rig. X. 5.7)

We may also compare here the statement made in Ṛik X. 72. 2-3, (देवानां पूर्व्ये युगेऽसतः सदजायत). In the Śatapatha Asat is explained as the Rishi-creation or Prāṇa-sṛishti (VI. 1. 1. 1)*. The terms Sat and Asat were differently understood in the various schools of philosophy. Here the gross material creation is said to be Sat and the preceding stage of Energy is termed Asat. Others said that Brahman is Sat and Pradhāna or Prakṛiti is Asat. Subtle discussion over their relative priority as shown by Pandit Ojha in his *Daśavātārarahasya* resulted in the elaboration of seven diverse points of view which subsequently were expanded to twenty-one.

2. *Rajovāda*—Rajas is the primeval material cause of the cosmos (आरम्भणं तत्त्वमिहोच्यते रजः). It is said in the Ṛigveda that in the beginning there existed the One Unborn (एकं, अजः) referring to the absolute Brahman and from him were produced the six Rajāṁsi which were all supported by that One (वि यस्तस्तम्भ षडिमा रजांस्यजस्य रूपे किमपि स्वदेकम्, I. 164.6).

These are also known as *Shadurvāḥ*, the 'Six Expanded Ones' (षडुर्वीरेकमिदं बृहत्, X. 14.16; also X. 128. 5. Others believe that Rajas is the same as Loka and there are seven Lokas, viz., भुभुवः स्वः महः जनः तपः सत्यम्. These are also termed as the Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space, Activity and Consciousness. Others speak of Rajas as being twofold, viz., Śukla-Rajas and Kṛishṇa Rajas which represent the basal dichotomy of the cosmos and revolve in a circle as the dynamic pulsating forces of creation—

अहश्च कृष्णमहरजुर्न च वि वर्तेते रजसी वेद्याभिः । वैश्वानरो जायमानो न राजा ऽवातिरज्ज्योतिषाग्निस्तमांसि ॥
(Rig. VI. 9. 1.)

* असद्वाऽदमग्रऽसीत् । तदाहुः किं तदसदासीदित्यृषयो याव तेऽग्नेऽसदासीत्तदाहुः के तऽऽश्रय इति प्राणा वाऽऽश्रयः ।

It is said elsewhere in the R̥igveda that the black and the white represent the variant Pair of Twin Beauties: One of the two is dark, and bright shines the other. These two originate from a common parental source and are Sisters. Mighty is God supreme and sole power which is capable of such miraculous manifestation—

नाना चक्रते यम्या ३ वपुंषि तयोरन्यद् रोचते कृष्णमन्यत् । श्यावी च यदरुषी च स्वसारौ महद् देवानामसुरत्वमेकम् ॥
(R̥ig. III. 55. 11)

Rajas represents the principle of Motion (गति) as against the principle of Rest or Stasis (स्थिति). Whereas Aja is the same as the Avyaya Purusha, Rajas corresponds to the Akshara Purusha. The doctrine of Akshara was quite well known to the seers of the R̥igveda where it is stated that the primeval ocean of infinite energy transforms itself into this material creation through the agency of Akshara—

तस्याः समुद्राः अधि वि क्षरन्ति तेन जीवन्ति प्रदिशश्चतस्रः । ततः क्षरत्यक्षरं तद् विश्वमुप जीवति ॥
(R̥ig. I. 164. 42)

Cosmic pulsation is expressing itself in the universal rhythmic movement of expansion and contraction and the same is designated as Prāṇa in Vedic terminology, as stated in the Śatapatha—

प्राणो वै समंचनप्रसारणम् (Śat. VIII. 1.4.10).

Controlled rhythmic beat or throb is the nature of Prāṇa and the same is equivalent to the life-principle manifest in different forms. Prāṇa is a dual principle like Rajas, expressing itself as the pair of Prāṇa and Apāṇa. As it is said, the supreme light of the universe manifests itself in an expiring and inspiring movement known as Prāṇana-Apāṇana—

अन्तश्चरति रोचनास्य प्राणादपानती । व्यख्यन्महिषो दिवम् (R̥ig. X. 189. 2).

When the two opposite poles of Energy or Rajas become established and an uninterrupted oscillating movement starts between the two then only light begins to shine in its sphere and the principle of Darkness or riotous energy symbolized as *Mahisha* keeps out of that orbit. Rajovāda was an important metaphysical doctrine of the R̥igveda which later became identified with and merged into the theory of Kāla or Time.

3. *Vyoma-vāda*—The ultimate changeless and eternal source of the cosmos is known as the Parama-Vyoma. That is immortal and beyond modification. It is also called Indra or Nabhya-Prajāpati that remains unborn (अन्तरजायमानः). Its

opposite principle is *Apara Vyoma* representing the creational aspect of the cosmos. This is subject to change and all kinds of modification and therefore is regarded as mortal. *Ākāśa* (Space) is its first material manifestation and the five gross elements are gradually produced from it. The *Amṛita-vyoma* is the birth-place of the *Devas* and the *Martya-vyoma* that of the *Bhūtas*. The doctrine of *Vāk* is intimately connected with that of *Vyoma*. In the *Empyrean* (परमेव्योमन्), *Vāk* is said to be immortal (अमृता वाक्) and to be constituted of 'a thousand syllables' (सहस्राक्षरा परमे व्योमन्, R̥g. I. 164. 41). That which is *Sahasra* is infinite and universal, undifferentiated and unaffected by the conception of arithmetical numbers. That which is *Vyoma* is the same as *Ākāśa* and the attribute of *Ākāśa* is *Śabba* or Speech consisting of syllables.

4. *Apara-vāda*—*Para* and *Apara* are relative conceptions, the Absolute being conceived as *Para* and the Immanent as *Apara*. This Pair of Higher and Lower is also designated as *Ūrdhva* and *Adhaḥ*. The centre is the *Para* and the circumference the *Apara*. The Cosmic Tree is said to have its roots in the *Ūrdhva*, that is the Higher Essence and its branches ramify in all directions of the space called *Adhaḥ*. The relative conception of *Para* and *Apara* was of the widest application in the Vedic metaphysical lucubrations. *Vyoma*, *Vāk*, *Prajāpati*, *Kāla*, all these were conceived of as belonging to a higher and lower order, the higher corresponding to the stage *ab intra* (अन्तरजायमानः) and the lower to the stage of manifestation (बहुधा विजायते). The seed and the tree, the primeval germ and the manifest body are examples of *Para* and *Apara*.

5. *Āvaraṇa-vāda*—The line of *Nāsadiya Sūkta* referring to this doctrine reads—

किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन् (R̥g. X. 129. 1).

Creation is governed by the principle of Finitisation. The Infinite is cast in a finite mould for the purpose of becoming manifest. That which is made concrete and material assumes a finite shape. This is the doctrine of *Āvaraṇa*. A significant term for it is *Māyā*. The power that measures out all created things is *Māyā*. *Indra* as the presiding diety of *Parama Vyoma* assumes diverse forms through his *Māyā*.

रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव तदस्य रूपं प्रतिवक्ष्णाय ।

इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते युक्ता ह्यस्य हरयः शता दश ॥ (R̥g. VI. 47. 18).

All creation is measuring out, which is usually expressed by one or the other derivatives of the root मा, to measure, and generally expressed as *Vimāna*. This measuring out takes place through the agency of *Rajas* or motion and is

threefold or operative at three different levels of reference (त्रिधातु R̥g. III, 26. 7), i.e., Mind, Life and Matter.

The principle of Envelopment is important for creativity. It determines the depth and dimensions of the projected creation. Each created object comprises a Dyāvā-Pr̥thivī, i. e. the parental pair of Heaven and Earth. The Dyāvā-Pr̥thivī conception is the most vital and basic to the whole idea of Vedic cosmogony in which the Earth symbolizes the material basis and Heaven is the symbol of all that is its unmanifest immortal source. Many a beautiful hymn of the R̥gveda is devoted to the glorification of this Parental Pair. Anything to become manifest must descend to the level of Matter, spoken of as Earth or Mother. The word Mātā literally signifies that which measures. The womb of the Mother determines all the possibilities of existence inherent in each created object. The Father coincides with the infinite immortal source, but the Mother represents its mortal and finite counterpart. The Mother is truly the container of what she creates. That is her true nature, viz. serving as a mould or Āvaraṇa. The Nāsadiya Sūkta gives a synonym to this as Śarma, viz., Shelter. Each covering is virtually a protection. That which envelopes serves as a shelter to the object enveloped. From this point of view we may understand why in the Brāhmaṇas Śarma is equated with Charma or the Cutaneous principle which appears as the covering of each living object. It is said that the skin of the black antelope is called Charma in ordinary human speech but is virtually a Śarma so far as it represents the divine principle of protection; for the black antelope is the symbol of Yajña and the latter enshrines Agni or the overall principle of Life (शर्मं चर्मं वा एतत्कृष्णस्य (मृगस्य) तन्मानुषं, शर्मं देवत्रा, Śat. III 2. 1. 8). Śarma = Charma = Āvaraṇa represents the truly cryptic esoteric style of the Brāhmaṇas. In the Purāṇic terminology it is the same as the Gaja-kṛitti worn by Śiva at the beginning of his Tāṇḍava Dance, where the elephant is the symbol of Ahaṅkāra or individual manifestation.

6. *Ambhovorāda*—The Ambhovāda was an important Vedic doctrine in which the Waters were conceived as the primeval source of all creation. Ambhas, Āpaḥ, Salilam, Samudraḥ, R̥itam, all these were regarded more or less as synonymous concepts and described with great elaboration in the mantras of the R̥gveda. All creation proceeds from the infinite ocean of Varuṇa who is the presiding deity of Waters. The region of Varuṇa is that of darkness, i. e. of the absence of manifestation. It is also spoken of as the dark descent (कृष्णं नितानं, R̥g. I. 164. 47). The Waters represent the principle of Rest in which Matter existed in a state of equilibrium and as an amorphous mass. Out of that unmanifest state of darkness and

static inertia proceeds the principle of Motion and Light which is symbolized as Agni. This doctrine is repeated many times in the R̥gveda that the Waters as the primeval Mother gave birth to Agni. The R̥gvedic seer formulates this significant enquiry:—

परो दिवा पर एना पृथिव्या परो देवेभिरसुरैर्यदस्ति । कं स्विदगर्भं प्रथमं दध्न आपो यत्र देवाः समपश्यन्त विश्वे ॥
तमिदगर्भं प्रथमं दध्न आपो यत्र देवाः समगच्छन्त विश्वे । अजस्य नाभावध्येकमर्पितं यस्मिन् विश्वानि भुवनानि तस्थुः ॥
(R̥g. X. 82. 5-6).

Agni was the first child of the Waters as its Mother. The Waters were the same as R̥itam or Parameshthī, the universal principle and source of creation. Agni is spoken of as Apāmgarbhaḥ (R̥g., III. 5. 3). According to the R̥gveda VII, 49, 4 Vaiśvānara Agni had its abode in the Waters (वैश्वानरो यास्वग्निः प्रविष्टस्तापो देवीरिह-
मामवन्तु). Agni as the enkindling principle in the cosmos is spoken of as the Primeval Heat (अग्रज तपस्, बृहद्देवता, II. 53). The Āraṇyaka-parvan refers to it as the temperature (ऊष्मा) and the Maitrāyaṇī Upanishad referring to the doctrine of the Divine Heat (देवौष्ण्यं) mentions that this heat is generated by the clashing forces of expansion and contraction known as उपांशु and अन्तर्यामि and that the Puruṣa is the same as Agni (यदौष्ण्यं स पुरुषः । अथ यः पुरुषः सोऽग्निर्वैश्वानरः, मैत्रायणी उपनिषद् II. 6). It is stated that the Gods discovered beautiful Agni hidden in the Waters—

अविन्दन्नु दर्शतमप्स्वन्तर्देवासो अग्निमपसि स्वसृणाम् (R̥g. III. 1. 3.)

In the R̥gveda Agni is explicitly stated to be the first-born of R̥ita which signifies the cosmic order as expressed in the form of the channels through which Water or Energy is flowing (अग्निर्हि नः प्रथमजा ऋतस्य, R̥g. X. 5. 7).

It may be stated that the sub-stratum of R̥ita or Āpaḥ or Ambhaḥ represents the principle of Soma, and Agni is its opposite principle. All creation is spoken of as the manifestation of the interaction between Agni and Soma (अग्नीषोमात्मकं जगत्). Animal life with blood, vitality and spirit is produced and sustained by the interaction of Agni and Soma (अग्नीषोमीय पशु) which is tied to each sacrificial stake. The sub-stratum of Waters is conceived as a lake (सरस्) from which Sarasvatī or Vāk symbolizing the principle of Matter flows forth in a thousand forms.

Agni, the enkindled divinity, is the same as Indra, which the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa derives esoterically from the root 'indh', 'to burn', that which is 'Indha' becomes Indra in the cryptic speech (स योऽयं मध्ये प्राणः । एष एवेन्द्रस्तानेष प्राणान्मध्यत इन्द्रियेणैन्द्र यदैन्द्र तस्मादिन्द्र इधो ह वै तमिन्द्र इत्याचक्षते परोक्षम्, VI. 1. 1. 2). In Vedic terminology the following bunch of coincident meanings should be borne in mind :

अग्नि—इन्द्र—सूर्य—मनु—अहं—यज्ञ—अमृत—देव—अक्षर—काल—हिरण्यगर्भ—प्रजापति—सत्य—
प्राण—ज्योतिः—पिता—अहः—संवत्सर.

They point to the same phenomenon, viz. the principle of Agni born from the pre-existent and infinite ocean of Waters. The principle of Soma has also its coincident series, viz. ऋत—आपः—अम्भः—सलिल—समुद्र—वरुण—असुर—अहि—वृत्र—मृत्यु—अपान—पृथिवी—माता—रात्रि—तमः, etc. A correct appreciation of their symbolism throws light on many stanzas of the R̥igveda.

7. *Amṛita-Mṛitu-vāda*—Amṛita and Mṛitu are inherent in the creative process of the cosmos. Immortality is the principle of rest or stasis, and mortality is motion or change :

अमृतं मृत्युरिति द्वयमेतद्विश्वस्य मूलमिति विद्यात् ।

अविनाशी स्थितिलक्षणममृतं गतिमान् विनश्वरो मृत्युः ॥

(पं मधुसूदन ओझा, दशवादरहस्य, p. 15)

The Devas represent Amṛita and the Bhūtas Mṛityu, and Agni is connected with both as the देवाग्नि and भूताग्नि, the former in the sun and the latter in the earth (भूतानि मृत्योरमृताच्च देवास्तेषूभयेष्वग्निरयं निविष्टः, ibid. p. 16). In other words अमृत is called रस and मृत्यु is called बल—

रसो बलं चेत्यमृतं च मृत्यु रसप्रधानान्यमृतानि सृष्ट्याम् ।

बलप्रधानास्त्वह मृत्यवः स्युर्न मृत्यवः सन्त्यमृतातिरेकात् ॥

(पं मधुसूदन ओझा, दशवादरहस्य)

अन्तरं मृत्योरमृतं मृत्यावमृतमाहितम् ।

मृत्युर्विवस्वन्तं वस्ते मृत्योरात्मा विवस्वति ॥

(शतपथ १०।५।२।४)

Birth is immortality and death is Mṛityu. Both of these are found in the Sun as Mārtāṇḍa, whom Aditi, the mother of Gods, brought forth 'to spring to life and die again' :

प्रजायै मृत्यवे त्वत्पुनर्मताण्डमाभरत् ।

(R̥ig. X. 72.9).

प्रजा (= जन्म), मृत्यु (= मरण) are the component halves of the same circle, they constitute the cyclic wheel of time.

8. *Ahorātra-vāda*—This was the same doctrine as the Kāla-vāda to which reference is found in the Svetāśvatara Up. (I. 2, कालः स्वभावो नियतिर्यदृच्छा etc). Also,

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्दद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः । रात्रि युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥

(Gītā 8. 17)

A thousand yugas constitute a day of Brahmā and a similar duration his night. Day means creation and night stands for dissolution. Ahorātra is the unit of time and pregnant with all its power. It is Samvatsara itself pushing with dynamic force the earth to revolve round the Sun on a fixed orbit. The Sun in the centre is Prajāpati; he is the Horse that imparts movement to everything.

Ahorātra is very often spoken of as the Ahaḥ or Day of which the black and the white are two halves : अहश्च कृष्णमहरजुनं च (Rig. VI. 9. 1). The one presses the other to move on and on and revolve in a cycle. As a result of this equal distribution of light and darkness the Vaiśvānara Agni as the life in the Purusha and the Sun in the solar system is sustained and kindled for ever. Light and darkness, black and white, Agni and Soma, creation and dissolution, birth and death, heaven and earth—these are the varied manifestations of Ahorātra. The tremendous force behind creation is Kāla, and this doctrine is found in its fully elaborated metaphysical form in the Atharvaveda (Kāṇḍa XIX, Sūktas 53-54):

इमं च लोकं परमं च लोकं पुण्यांश्च लोकान् विधृतीश्च पुण्याः ।

सर्वल्लोकानभिजित्य ब्रह्मणा कालः स ईयते परमो नु देवः ॥

(Atharva. XIX, 54. 5).

As Pt. Ojha has explained रात्रि is the substratum and real substance (प्रकृति) and अहः is its modification :

रात्रिः पुरस्ताद् तदहस्तु पश्चादहः परस्तात् स्वयमेव रात्रिः ।

विकारतोऽहः प्रकृतिस्तु रात्रिः सैषा गतिः सा प्रभवः प्रतिष्ठा ॥

रात्रि symbolises the principle of Rest and अहः that of Motion ; रात्रि is sleep (निद्रा) and अहः is the awakening of the world-force (जागरण) which is styled as क्षोभ in the Purāṇas. Viṣṇu, the deity of the cosmos sleeps or rests on the substratum of the infinite force called Ananta or Śeṣha, the Remainder.

Viṣṇu represents the finite universe and the cosmic serpent is the symbol of Infinity. In the terminology of the Pañcharātra Bhāgavatas, Mārkaṇḍeya represents the principle of Time. He is coeval in time with creation, and the latter is a sacrificial session of a thousand years and so is Ṛishi Mārkaṇḍeya destined to live for a thousand years (सहस्रायुः) When Viṣṇu or the Divine Creator awakes from his abode in the Infinite Ocean (एकार्णव), it is the sage Mārkaṇḍeya, who first comes out of the restful body of Nārāyaṇa, and creation starts. What is intended to be said is that the dynamic element of Time is the root cause of cosmic pulsation. Nārāyaṇa is identical with Sūrya or Savitā, and the comprehensive coincidence of its connotation is explained in the Maitrāyaṇī Upanishad (VI. 8) as आत्मा, ईशान, शंभु, भव, रुद्र, प्रजापति, विश्वसृज्, हिरण्यगर्भ, सत्य, प्राण, हंस, शास्ता, विष्णु, नारायण, अर्क, सविता, धाता, विधाता, सम्राट्, इन्द्र, इन्दु ।

All these enter the orbit of meaning associated with अहः as a metaphysical doctrine of the Rīgveda.

9. *Daiva-vāda*—The doctrine of the Devas as cosmic creators is fundamental to R̥gvedic thought. The emergence of the Gods is the point where Yajña starts. The cosmos is one continuous sacrifice in which Agni is always present. He is invoked as यज्ञस्य देवम् (R̥g. I. 1. 1.) and is the symbolic embodiment of all the Gods (अग्निः सर्वा देवताः, एतरेय २।३; तैत्तिरीय I. 4. 4. 10, सर्वदेवत्योऽग्निः, शतपथ VI. 1. 2. 28). Where Agni is, there all other Gods must be present (स देवा एह वक्षति, R̥g. I. 1. 2.). In the Dākshāyaṇī Sūkta of the R̥gveda (X. 72) we find a profound disquisition regarding the birth of Gods and their relation to Aditi or Infinite Nature. The latter is the mother of eight sons (अष्टौ पुत्रासो अदितेः) and they include the Seven Ādityas and the eighth Mārtāṇḍa or the yonder Sun born of the Golden Egg whom Aditi nursed to undergo the cyclic process of life and death (प्रजायै मृत्यवे त्वत् पुनर्मर्तिण्डमाभरत्). For material creation Mr̥ityu is an essential factor; without it there would be no rhythm and no further movement.

As to the number and nature of Gods, there was a point of view that Agni and Soma are two essential divinities; Agni creates the Devas (Energy) and Soma creates the Bhūtas (Material Elements). Agni is one but assumes a triple form, and is therefore variously spoken of as त्र्यम्बक (son of three mothers), or त्रिमाता (R̥g. III. 56. 5) and त्रिमूर्धा (three-headed, RV. I. 146. 1). There are three high stations of Agni's birth all rooted in सत्य or the firm nucleus of Yajña :

त्रिरस्य ता परमा सन्ति सत्या स्वार्हा देवस्य जनिमान्यग्नेः (R̥g. IV. 1. 7)

The first truth of Agni's birth is Mind, the second Life and the third Matter. They are respectively known as ब्रह्माग्नि (= स्वयम्भू), देवाग्नि (= सूर्य) and भूताग्नि (= पृथिवी). In between these three levels, are the twin principles of Soma which keep the three Fires burning. Agni and Deva are identical principles, viz. energy in its active manifest form. Where there is Deva, there is light, immortality, order and truth. The opposite of Deva is Asura, the symbol of darkness, death, disorder and devilry. The Asura as darkness precedes the Deva and was therefore sometimes called पूर्वदेव. From one mighty Asura's dominion were produced the Devas of definite names and forms :

महद् देवानामसुरत्वमेकम् ।

In each यज्ञ-मंडल, the Single Deva (एको देवः) occupies the centre, the Thirth-three Devas lend their functioning power to the diameter विष्कम्भ बल, and the Ninety-nine Asuras cluster all round the circumference परिधि बल. The diameter is देव and the circumference is असुर and that is why the latter are thrice as numerous as the former. The Asuras are not permitted to enter into the holy Yajña-maṇḍala protected by the

mantra-power. Thus the देववाद school was of far-reaching connotation and importance in the Vedic times.

10. *Samśaya-vāda*—This was the school of sceptics who asked about the universe such questions as : Whence ? When ? Where ? How ? What size ? What form ? Diverse were the answers formulated, but doubt found expression in such utterances :

न तं विदाथ य इमा जजानान्यद्ब्रूमाकमन्तरं बभूव ।

नोहारेण प्रावृता जल्प्या चासुतुष उक्थशासश्चरन्ति ॥ (Rig. X. 82. 7)

‘You will not find him who produced these creatures : something different has entered your hearts.

‘People now have beclouded minds and stammering lips, and given to wordly enjoyments, they merely have become chanters of hymns.’

In the Nāsadiya Sūkta itself we find sceptic utterances in their boldest form :

‘Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation ? The Gods are later than this world’s production. Who knows then whence it first came into being ?’ It is finally stated that even the Creator who presides over this universe in the highest heaven knows its origin or does not know it—cannot be affirmed positively. Such is the great mystery. Everything here is a big sign of interrogation—a Great Question (संप्रश्न), the answer to which no one knows.

Besides these ten points of view there were other cosmogonic doctrines also and they were being put forward not in the spirit of contradiction but as probable explanations of the universe. Sometimes even single words were followed to their logical conclusion, for example, the symbology of the Cow, or the Horse, or the One-Footed Goat (अज एकपाद्), or the Dragon of the Deep (अहिर्बुध्न्य) or the Dawn, or the two Aśvins, or the Great Mother (महीमाता) by whom was always intended Aditi, the Mother of the Gods. Such symbols are too numerous to mention but they are regarded as offering some cogent explanation of the cosmic process. Indeed the comprehension of Rīgvedic mythology depends on a correct appreciation of the meaning of the symbols which the Vedic seers employed as the vehicle of their thought and which language by common consent became the norm for the formulation of the Mantras. One who understands the significance of the symbols employed in the Rīgveda can do justice to the thought embodied in it. There is a complete and consistent metaphysical system in the utterances of the Rishis and that key holds the secret of Vedic exegesis.

Brahman is Reality or Essence, who without undergoing any modification becomes the sub-stratum and the effective cause of creation. He is One and at the same time Many. The main root is बृह्, to expand or to become many. As in the spring season the trees and the creepers are loaded with fresh leaves and flowers which sprout from their inherent sap or essence, so is the cosmos born out of the essence of Brahman. Like the waves of tidal flood on the surface of the ocean creation is due to the quality of manifestation inherent in Brahman.

All the created objects show a twofold attribute, viz. that they are subject to constant change and secondly that they retain their identity. The first thing is the principle of Motion and the second that of permanency and Rest. The first is बल and the second is रस. If the created objects reveal this twofold character their ultimate cause, i. e., Brahman assuredly partakes of this duality.

The trinitarian doctrine of the Three Purushas called Avyaya, Akshara, and Kshara is inculcated in the Vedas and elaborated in the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgītā. Avyaya is the highest Purusha and sub-stratum of all. It is the Supreme Essence in which all things are unified (परेऽव्यये सर्वं एकीभवन्ति). Prāṇa or the vital being is Akshara which is responsible for all kinds of activity and motion. The gross material elements or the Pañcha-bhūtas are called Kshara. As the Gītā says—

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ (Gītā XV, 16)

Matter is Kshara because it is subject to decay and disintegration. The energy within the material elements is Akshara.

The Vedic terms for these three are a little different. We have two sets of terms. In the first set *Avyaya* is *Para*, *Akshara* is *Parāvara*, and *Kshara* is *Avara*, i. e., the three Persons are conceived of as the Higher, the Middle One, and the Lower One. In the more ancient terminology the Avyaya Purusha was known as अज and एकं, and since अज is spoken of as एकपाद् or अपाद् i. e., the One-Footed or the Footless One, the idea was that अज was devoid of any motion and represented the principle of Absolute Static Rest.

The Vedic word for Akshara Purusha was *Rajas* and Creation is spoken of as the measuring out of the possibilities of existence under the power and force of *Rajas*.

The third principle, viz., the Kshara Purusha is in the Rīgveda called Vāk. Vāk is the designation of the Pañcha-bhūtas or the Five Elements of Matter. The genesis of the term is simple. In the course of manifestation the more subtle

substances are gradually transformed into the less subtle. There are three planes of manifestation, viz. Mind (मनस्), Life (प्राण) and Matter (वाक् or पंचभूत). Ākāśa is the foremost of the five elements and also the most subtle one. Its attribute is Śabda or Vāk and therefore Vāk was accepted as the symbol of all the five material elements.

This was the Vedic conception of the three Purushas and all creation was regarded as Tripursha-sṛisṭi. It is the three states of consciousness that are implied here, viz., जाग्रत्, स्वप्न and सुषुप्ति. One which is gross is encased within the other which is more subtle. We come across here a graded system of psychological depths which enter the constitution of each human being. This exposition of the Vedic Trinity corresponds essentially to the metaphysical triad of Indian philosophy, viz., सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस् of the ancient Sāṅkhya philosophers. This is the same as the three Devas in the Purāṇas, viz., Vishṇu, Brahmā and Śiva. The three ritualistic Fires, the three Guṇas, the three Vedas and the three Devas are but divergent expressions of one and the same triadic doctrine distinguished by a cosmic coherence of the highest value—

एत एव त्रयो वेदा एत एव त्रयोऽग्नयः ।

एत एव त्रयो देवा एत एव त्रयो गुणाः ॥

Many other Trika parallelisms were derived from the basic conception of the Vedic Trinity.

The Avyaya Purusha is constituted of five sheaths or पंचकोषः, viz. आनन्द, विज्ञान, मन, प्राण, वाक् which are elaborated in the Taittirīya Upanishad. The Akshara Purusha is constituted of the Pañcha-prāṇas and the Kshara Purusha of the Pañcha-bhūtas. The Kshara is the material cause (उपादान or आरम्भण), the Akshara is the efficient cause (निमित्त कारण or प्रभण) and the Avyaya Purusha is the substratum (आलम्बन).

The Nāsadiya Sūkta does not content itself by merely recounting the various points of view; it makes a solid contribution by offering its own solution to the cosmogonic problem agitating the thinkers of that age. It makes the following statements:—

1. The ultimate cause of the world is तत्, styled as एकम्, the One and the only One without a second. The epithet तत् is in contradistinction to एतत् or इदं सर्वम् for the world.

2. That एकम् was transcendent and above all, viz. परात्पर, which is the essential meaning of तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किञ्चनास (none other was, nor aught there-beyond). This परात्पर is the same as called निर्विशेष and निर्धर्मक.

3. That Transcendent Brahman for the sake of creation breathed (आनीत्), i. e. it was distinguished by its inherent power which is 'Breath' (प्राणन). It is the same which later references speak of as निःश्वसित and which is equivalent to the principle called त्रयीविद्या or वेद, or ऋषि, or in the words of the Śatapatha the असत् प्राण.

4. This प्राणन depended not on any external factor like air (अवातं), but was entirely due to the intrinsic-power (स्वधा) of Brahman. This स्वधा is a mystery, its obscure nature is beyond explanation or utterance and it exists in Him by his own right. As expressed further in the hymn the principle of स्वधा is of a lower order (अवस्तात्), being the cause of material creation and associated with the Pitṛis.

5. In that *ab intra* state (अग्रे) Dark-Inert (तमस्) was hid by Dark-Inert (तमस्). The two entities referred to as तमस् are Svayambhū (the self-existent Father-principle) and Parameshthī (his emanation, the Mother-principle). In the Gītā the स्वयम्भू is called बीजप्रद पिता and the परमेष्ठी the महद् ब्रह्म or योनि. Both represent the parental pair prior to the creation of द्यावा-पृथिवी, which is the parental pair on the plan of manifestation.

6. The cosmos was hid in the depth of सलिलम्. This is a term which as explained above was synonymous with अम्भस्, आपः, समुद्र, महोत्तरणः or the एकार्णव of the Purāṇas. इदं सर्वं refers to the created world (cf. ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वम्), which did exist in its sutable state as hidden under the depth of the sea. The principle of आपः denotes diffused matter existing in a state of equilibrium and rest. The cosmos (इदं सर्वं) existed then as an inscrutable watery mass, still unformed into any real shape (अप्रकृतं).

7. तुच्छयेनाश्वपिहितं यदासीत्—Both तुच्छय and आशु are technical terms. तुच्छय is void or spatial cavity i. e. the cosmos; आशु is that which pervades on all sides (आसमन्ताद् भवतीति) and denotes Brahman itself. There can be no creation unless आशु is in some part affected by the principle of तुच्छय, or limitation, which implies the creation of a मंडल, that is a shell or coating with a void within it. The तुच्छय, is the same as अश्व (भूत्वा न भवतीति), i. e. a यक्ष, phantom or ghost, which is merely an appearance and nothing in reality. So is the world, and the three Lokas are but manifestations of Name and Form, which are called अश्व and यक्ष—

ब्रह्म वाऽऽदमग्रऽआसीत् ।अथ ब्रह्मैव परार्थमगच्छत् । तत्परार्थं गत्वैक्षत कथं न्विमांल्लोकान् प्रत्यवेयामिति । तद् द्वाभ्यामेव प्रत्यवैद् रूपेण चैव नाम्ना च । ते हैते ब्रह्मणो महती अम्बे । ते हैते ब्रह्मणो महती यक्षे । (शत० ११।२।३।१-५)

The cosmos or the नाम-रूप as तुच्छय--अम्ब--यक्ष represents the महिमा of पुरुष, but पुरुष is mightier than all this seeming greatness—

एतावानस्य महिमास्तो ज्यायांश्च पुरुषः (ऋ० १०।६०।३)

8. तपसस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम्—एकम् here refers to the principle of individuation, i. e. the individual centres which came into existence as so many universes. Each universe is a यज्ञ, and the aggregate of all the universes is also a यज्ञ. The यज्ञ is spoken of as the नाभि or centre of organised activity—

पृच्छामि यत्र भुवनस्य नाभिः । ऋ० १।१६४।३४

अयं यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः ॥ ऋ० १।१६४।३५

“Where is the centre of the world, I ask thee”,

“This यज्ञ is the world’s centre”.

नाभि, हृदय, उक्थ, ऊर्ध्व, क, गर्भ, मध्य—all these point to the centre of the universe or the created organism. This is एकम्, the one which becomes many in the extension of its diameter and the *mandala* or its circumference. This एकम् is that यक्ष which is born of heat or तपस्—

महद् यक्षं भुवनस्य मध्ये तपसि क्रान्तं सलिलस्य पृष्ठे ।

On the surface of सलिल i. e. आपः, diffused primordial matter, the यक्ष i. e. नाम-रूप (Name-Form relata) makes its appearance by the power of तपस्, i. e. अग्नि or heat or temperature gives rise to movement, activity or pulsation.

The particular portion of आपु that was shadowed by तुच्छय, generates within itself the temperature of heat which brings into being the individual centres manifesting as the Sun in the midst of each system. सूर्य is the manifest form of intense तपस्, the enkindled power called इन्ध, i. e. esoterically इन्द्र. The mutual relationship of यत् and तत् is noteworthy. In contrast to the vast mightiness of Brahman, the created world is but a very minute portion of Him (cf. एकांशेन स्थितो जगत्).

9. मनस्—That one Individuating Phenomenon is known as the Mind (मनस्) ; the same as अहंकार, the Consciousness or Ego. It is variously known as संज्ञा, चित्ति, संवित्, स्मृति, etc. In the यज्ञ terminology मनस्तत्त्व is called यजमान, or दीक्षित, or ब्राह्मण, or होत्री, or मनु, i. e. the presiding spirit of each सप्तहोतृ यज्ञ—

येभ्यो होत्रां प्रथमामायेजे मनुः समिद्धाग्निर्मनसा सप्त होतृभिः ।

(Rig. X. 63. 7)

मनु is मनस्, also called अग्नि, or इन्द्र, or प्राण, or प्रजापति, or शाश्वत ब्रह्म, because of its समिन्धन or बृंहण.

10. काम--The enkindling of अग्नि or इन्द्र or the consciousness of mind is the same as काम, the principle of desire. It is the primeval seed of life and creation appearing in each individual centre or यज्ञ, or सूर्य. It is the same as विज्ञान, or संज्ञा, the wife of the Sun-god and daughter of त्वष्टा.

11. When we speak of मनस्, we should always remember its source in the हृदय. As already pointed out, हृदय, नाभि, गर्भ, उक्थ, मध्य all signify the centre which is unmanifest (अव्यक्त) and मनस् is its manifest power. मनस् is एजद् and हृदय is ध्रुव (I. 164. 30), मनस् is मर्त्य and हृदय its अमृत cause. मनस् or consciousness is the norm of life, of which हृदय is the hidden mysterious source :

कवीयमानः क इह प्रवोचत् देवं मनः कुतो अघि प्रजातम् । (I. 164. 18)

Who the poet here could tell of the source of the god-like Mind ? Mind is no ordinary thing, it is God Himself. In the शिवसंकल्प सूक्त of the यजुर्वेद, मनस् is called हृत्प्रतिष्ठ, i.e. the mind is established in the हृदय, and the same is implied here in the words हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा.

12. What did the poets discover by the power of their thought was the kinship of the material creation (सतो बन्धुम्) in the असत् or प्राण सृष्टि of the preceding order. These particular meanings of सत् and असत् have been explained above under सदसद्वाद and in the शतपथ VI.1.1.1. (ऋषयो वाव ते अग्ने असत्...के ते ऋषय इति प्राणा वा ऋषयः). The kinship of Matter with Energy is the basic knowledge and top secret of the cosmogonic science. It may seem contradictory but it is there—the Bhūtas have emanated from the Devas.

13. Next comes a strange cogitation of the Seer. With an introvert mind he thinks loudly—

अधः स्विदासी ३ दुपरि स्विदासी ३ त् ।

The source of the Sat seems at times rooted below, at times emanating from above. Here अधः is the material world, and उपरि is ऊर्ध्व or Brahman. The principle of Life, Mind and Matter, i.e. of the created universe with its triadic coherence, is attributed by some to the manifest process and by others to a mystery. The truth lies somewhere between the two, as the ray that constitutes this creative process is neither from above nor from below, but an oblique manifestation (तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषां). Its source and end are both unknown and unknowable. It is analogous to the birth of Indra from the oblique side of his mother.—

तिरश्चता पार्श्वान्निर्गमाणि, (Rig. IV. 18. 2).

In the Matsya Purāṇa it is stated :

वामं विदार्य निष्क्रान्तः सुतो देव्याः पुनः शिशुः ।

The same is said of विष्णु in the देवीभागवत that विष्णु was born from the oblique side of शुद्र विराट् (बभ्रुव पाता विष्णुश्च शुद्रस्य वामपार्श्वतः, Devī Bh. IX. 3. 59). Similar was the birth of the Buddha from the oblique side of his mother.

The meaning of these is that the source of Life is not contiguous either in the manifest or the unmanifest. If it were so it could be traced. It is like the diving of a sky-soaring eagle, an intrusion from an oblique direction and hence nobody knows whence it comes or where it goes.

14. The two principles essential for birth are the parental pair comprising Father and Mother. The Father is the रेतोधा and the Mother is the महिमानः. The रेतोधा is the same as बीजप्रद पिता (Gītā, 14, 4) and महिमानः is the same as महद् ब्रह्म or योनि (मम योनिर्महद् ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधाम्यहम्, Gītā, 14. 3.) On the plane of the unmanifested creation (मानसो सृष्टि) they are styled as स्वयम्भू and परमेष्ठी, and on the plane of manifest creation, द्यावा-पृथिवी. A two-fold parental pair is essential for the creation of Agni who is therefore called 'twice-born' (द्विजन्मा, I. 194, 4.). The two births are on the plane of energy and matter, the first one is called higher (परस्तात्) and the second one lower (अवस्तात्).

15. प्रयति—The highest entity is called प्रयति (प्रयतिः परस्तात्), which is elsewhere also styled as the संयती लोक or the region of तपस् and सत्य i.e. the मनस्तत्त्व of स्वयम्भू or the Father.

16. स्वधा—It is comparatively of lower potentiality, belonging to the वाक् or material plane of परमेष्ठी, the Mother Principle. स्वधा is associated with the Pitris, and identical with विराज् conceived of as the female potentiality of परमेष्ठी and identical with महत् and योनि. According to Manu, the first-born are the Rishis and they in turn give birth to the Pitris :

ऋषिभ्यः पितरो जाताः पितृभ्यो देवमानवाः । देवेभ्यस्तु जगत् सर्वं चरं स्थाण्वनु पूर्वशः ॥ (Manu, 3.201)

ऋषि corresponds to स्वयम्भू, पितरः to परमेष्ठी, देव to सूर्य and मानव to पृथिवी. The Rishi-creation is असत् and of देव is सत्. With the Rishis are dove-tailed the Pitris representing the principle of स्वधा or the crystallisation of material particles, which further on in the देव सृष्टि become organised into a यज्ञ or ordered system.

17. When thinking of the two relative factors of प्रयति and स्वधा, viz. the higher controlling energy and the lower material order subject to it, the Rishi thinks of the several aspects of differentiated energy called the Gods. This was the doctrine of देववाद and considered insufficient in itself as the ultimate cause of

creation, अर्वाग् देवा अस्य विसर्जनेन, i. e. when स्वयम्भू and परमेष्ठी, viz. the अव्यक्त पुरुष and महान् as its opposite counterpart have already appeared as the first parents of creation, then appear the देवाः as the presiding spirit of यज्ञ, which commences in the region of सूर्य. सूर्य is यज्ञनारायण ; there is no regular यज्ञ prior to the creation of सूर्य. In fact the सप्तहोतृ यज्ञ comprised of 'Seven Threads' (सप्त तन्तुः) begins in सूर्य, the सप्त तन्तुः being Mind, Life and the Five Elements of Matter called मनः, प्राण and पंचभूतः (or वाक्) respectively. In सूर्य we witness the spectacle of the clash between the Angels and Titans (दैवासुरम्), the former led by इन्द्र and the latter by वृत्र, who is keen to enter the orb of the Sun-god (सूर्य मण्डल) and overpower its presiding deity Indra but which it cannot do.

18. Finally in enunciating the First Principle, the Seer mentions the अध्यक्ष of this creation as its source, and this is no other than Brahman—

इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।

यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन् सो अंग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥ (Rig. X. 129. 7)

In uppermost Empyrean (परमेव्योमन्) is the निर्गुण ब्रह्मन्, beyond all categories of Time and Space, and He the Supreme Godhead has created All this (इदं सर्वं) by His intrinsic power.

Brahma-vāda was thus the metaphysical doctrine of the R̥gveda :

किंस्विद् वनं क उ स वृक्ष आस यतो द्यावापृथिवी निष्टतक्षुः ।

मनीषीणो मनसा पृच्छतेदु तद् यदध्यतिष्ठद् भुवनानि धारयन् ॥ (Rig. X. 81. 4)

The 'Forest' is the परात्पर ब्रह्मन् (cf. तस्माद्ब्रह्मन् परः किंचनास), infinite and beyond all creation. The 'Tree' in it is the अव्यय, from which are fashioned the many universes. Each universe again is like a branch (वृक्षा) of that Avyaya, Aśvattha. The Forest, the Tree and the Branch all are of one and the same Essence, viz., Brahman :

ब्रह्म तद्वनं ब्रह्म स उ वृक्ष आस यतो द्यावापृथिवी निष्टतक्षुः ।

मनीषीणो मनसा विब्रवीमि वो ब्रह्माध्यतिष्ठद् भुवनानि धारयन् ॥

(तैत्तिरीय ब्राह्मण, २।८।९)

The Nāsadiya Sūkta thus presents a profound statement of the ancient cosmological formulation. Its esoteric meaning and consistency are patent in the seven *mantras* that make up the hymn.

नासदीय सूक्त

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत् ।
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्नम्भः किमासीद् गहनं गभीरम् ॥ १ ॥

न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह आसीत्प्रकेतः ।
आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्भान्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥ २ ॥

तम आसीत्तमसा गूहमग्रेऽप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम् ।
तुच्छयेनाभवपिहितं यदासीत्तपसस्तन्महिनाजायतैकम् ॥ ३ ॥

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत् ।
सतो बन्धुमसति निरविन्दन्हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा ॥ ४ ॥

तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषामधः स्विदासीद्दुपरि स्विदासीत् ।
रेतोधा आसन्महिमान आसन्स्वधा अवस्तात्प्रयतिः परस्तात् ॥ ५ ॥

को अद्धा वेद क इह प्र वोचत्कुत आजाता कुत इयं विस्पृष्टिः ।
अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनेनाथा को वेद यत आबभूव ॥ ६ ॥

इयं विस्पृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न ।

यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्त्सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥ ७ ॥ ऋग्वेद X, 129.