

नासदीयसूक्तम्

(With kr'SHNA yajurvEda *swarams*)

नासदीयसूक्तम् (नासदासीयसूक्तम्)

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीम्॥ नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत्।
किमावरीवः कुहकस्य शर्मन्। अंभः किमासीद्गहनं गभीरम्।
नमृत्युरमृतं तरहिना। रात्रिया अह्ना आसीत्प्रकेतः।
आनीदवातग्ग् स्वधया तदेकम्॥ तस्माद्भान्यं न परः किं च नासा।
तम आसीत्तमसा गूढमग्रे प्रकेतम्। सलिलगं सर्वमा इदम्।
तुच्छेनाभवपिहितं यदासीत्। तमसस्तन्महिना जायतैकम्॥
कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि। मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत्॥
सतो बंधुमसति निरविदन्। हृदि प्रतीष्या कवयो मनीषा।
तिरश्चीनो विततो रश्मिरेषाम्। अधस्विदासी ३ दुपरिस्विदासी ३ त्।
रेतोधा आसन्महिमान आसन्। स्वधा अवस्तात्प्रयतिः परस्तात्॥
को अब्धा वेद क इह प्रवोचत्। कुत आजाता कुत इयं विसृष्टिः।
अर्वाग्देवा अस्य विसर्जनाय। अथा को वेद यत आबभूव।
इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आबभूव। यदि वा दधे यदि वा न।
यो अस्याध्यर्खः परमे व्योमन्। सो अंग वेद यदि वा न वेद॥

nAsadeeya sUktam translation

R'g vEda 10.129 (also a part of the yajurvEda and the udakashAnti)

At first was neither Being nor Nonbeing.
There was not air nor yet sky beyond.
What was its wrapping? Where? In whose protection?
Was Water there, unfathomable and deep?

There was no death then, nor yet deathlessness;
of night or day there was not any sign.
The One breathed without breath, by its own impulse.
Other than that was nothing else at all.

Darkness was there, all wrapped around by darkness,
and all was Water indiscriminate.
Then that which was hidden by the Void,
that One, emerging, stirring,
through power of Ardor (Tapas), came to be.

In the beginning Love arose, which was
the primal germ cell of the mind.
The Seers, searching in their hearts with wisdom,
discovered the connection of Being in Nonbeing.

A crosswise line cut Being from Nonbeing.
What was described above it, what below?
Bearers of seed there were and mighty forces,
thrust from below and forward move above.

Who really knows? Who can presume to tell it?
Whence was it born? Whence issued this creation?
Even the Gods came after its emergence.
Then who can tell from whence it came to be?

That out of which creation has arisen,
whether it held it firm or it did not,
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
He surely knows or maybe He does not!

ನಾಸದಾಸೀನೋ ಸದಾಸೀತ್ತದಾನೀಮ್ |
ನಾಸೀದ್ರಜೋ ನೋ ವ್ಯೋಮಾ ಪರೋ ಯತ್ |
ಕಿಮಾವರೀವಃ ಕುಹಕಸ್ಯ ಶರ್ಮನ್ |
ಅಂಭಃ ಕಿಮಾಸೀದ್ಗಹನಂ ಗಭೀರಮ್ |

ನಮೃತ್ಯುರಮೃತಂ ತರ್ಹಿನ |
ರಾತ್ರಿಯಾ ಅಹ್ನ ಆಸೀತ್ಪ್ರಕೇತಃ |
ಆನೀದವಾತಗ್ನ್ ಸ್ವಧಯಾ ತದೇಕಮ್ |
ತಸ್ಮಾದ್ಧಾನ್ಯಂ ನ ಪರಃ ಕಿಂ ಚ ನಾಸ |

ತಮ ಆಸೀತ್ತಮಸಾ ಗೂಢಮಗ್ರೇ ಪ್ರಕೇತಮ್ |
ಸಲಿಲಗ್ಂ ಸರ್ವಮಾ ಇದಮ್ |
ತುಚ್ಛೇನಾಭವಪಿಹಿತಂ ಯದಾಸೀತ್ |
ತಮಸಸ್ತನ್ಮಹಿನಾ ಜಾಯತೈಕಮ್ |

ಕಾಮಸ್ತದಗ್ರೇ ಸಮವರ್ತತಾಧಿ |
ಮನಸೋ ರೇತಃ ಪ್ರಥಮಂ ಯದಾಸೀತ್ |
ಸತೋ ಬಂಧುಮಸತಿ ನಿರವಿಂದನ್ |
ಹೃದಿ ಪ್ರತೀಷ್ಠಾ ಕವಯೋ ಮನೀಷಾ |

ತಿರಶ್ಚೀನೋ ವಿತತೋ ರಶ್ಮಿರೇಷಾಮ್ |
ಅಧಸ್ವಿದಾಸೀ ದುಪರಿಸ್ವಿದಾಸೀತ್ |
ರೇತೋಧಾ ಆಸನ್ಮಹಿಮಾನ ಆಸನ್ |
ಸ್ವಧಾ ಅವಸ್ತಾತ್ಪ್ರಯತಿಃ ಪರಸ್ತಾತ್ |

ಕೋ ಅದ್ಧಾ ವೇದ ಕ ಇಹ ಪ್ರಪೋಚತ್ |
ಕುತ ಆಜಾತಾ ಕುತ ಇಯಂ ವಿಸೃಷ್ಟಿಃ |
ಅರ್ವಾಗ್ಧೇವಾ ಅಸ್ಯ ವಿಪರ್ಜನಾಯ |
ಅಥಾ ಕೋ ವೇದ ಯತ ಆಬಭೂವ |

ಇಯಂ ವಿಸೃಷ್ಟಿಯತ ಆಬಭೂವ |
ಯದಿ ವಾ ದಧೇ ಯದಿ ವಾ ನ |
ಯೋ ಅಸ್ಯಾಧ್ಯಕ್ಷಃ ಪರಮೇ ವ್ಯೋಮನ್ |
ಸೋ ಅಂಗ ವೇದ ಯದಿ ವಾ ನ ವೇದ |

ನಾಸದಾಸೀನೋ ಸದಾಸೀತ್ತದಾನೀಮ್ |
ನಾಸೀದ್ರಜೋ ನೋ ವ್ಯೋಮಾ ಪರೋ ಯತ್ |
ಕಿಮಾವರೀವಃ ಕುಹಕಸ್ಯ ಶರ್ಮನ್ |
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ತಮಸಸ್ತನ್ಮಹಿನಾ ಜಾಯತೈಕಮ್ |

ಕಾಮಸ್ತದಗ್ರೇ ಸಮವರ್ತತಾಧಿ |
ಮನಸೋ ರೇತಃ ಪ್ರಥಮಂ ಯದಾಸೀತ್ |
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ಸೋ ಅಂಗ ವೇದ ಯದಿ ವಾ ನ ವೇದ |

The *nAsadeeya sUktam* is one of the most important pieces in all of the *vEdas*, and IMHO, ranks with other prominent components such as the *puruSHA sUktam* and the *IshAvAsyOpanishat*. It originally comes from the *R'g vEda*, but is also repeated in the *yajurvEda*, and is also a part of the *udakashAnti mantrams*. This short passage is extraordinarily profound, and has fascinated philosophers and theologians around the world. Perhaps the most thought-provoking part of it all is the statement, "He surely knows, or may be He does not!". This is a refreshing change from the dogma pushed by most religions, and immensely appealing to the modern, scientific mind, allowing spirituality to coexist with science, technology and the space-age [Prasad].

Here are some additional comments on the sUkta (downloaded from various sources):

Nasadiya Sukta in the R'g Veda also gives another account which says "In the beginning there was neither existence nor non-existence, no realm, no sky, no air, no earth. There was neither mortality nor immortality, neither any form nor name, neither day nor night.; Darkness concealed darkness. There was, however, only one thing: 'Breath which breathed breathlessly.' This breath desired to create and there was creation. How was it formed or was it not formed at all? God only knows; Maybe he knows; Maybe he may not know ?!"

But this breath is called "The Vedas"

Thus desire- Kama (desire or lust) is found to be the cause of creation. Whose desire was that? No one knows. From 'ASAT' - (Non-being) arose 'SAT'- (being). The opposites that are yet complementary entities whose interaction produced and maintained everything.

Does this not sound like the saying "The Lord said 'let there be light' and there was light"?

“Then there was neither death nor deathlessness,
Nor any indication of day and night.
The one breathed without breath by its self-law
In the beginning was darkness hidden by darkness,
And all was an ocean of Inconscience.”

(Or is it what is described in the Katha Upanishad):

There the sun cannot shine and the moon has no lustre:
all the states are blind:
there our lightnings flash not,
neither any earthy fire.

BhagavadGItA chapter 15 (na tadbhAsayatE sUryO...na nivartantE) has a similar verse.

This process of Involution is again beautifully described in the Nasadiya Sukta:

“In the beginning that moved as desire within,
Which was the first seed of mind,
The seers, having meditated in their hearts
Discovered the connection of the Existent in the Non-Existent.
A ray stretched out that cut the Existent from the Non-Existent.
What was there below? what was above?
There were impregnators, there were mighty forces,
There was self-law below, and a Will above.
Who truly knows? Who here may declare it?
Whence it is born? Whence indeed this creation?
Even the gods were subsequent to the world's emergence;
Then who knows from whence it arose?”

The Nasadiya-Sukta of the Rig-Veda proclaims, for the first time, intimations of the Seer's sounding the depths of being. The astounding vision of the Transcendent by the relative is the apparent theme of this famous hymn. The Ultimate State is here depicted as not capable of being designated either as existence or as non-existence, for there was none, then, to perceive it, before the manifestation of the heaven and the earth. There was only an indescribable stillness as it were, deep in its content and defying approach to it by anyone. The Sukta says that there was neither death nor immortality, for there was no differentiation whatsoever. Naturally, there was neither day nor night. There was only That One Presence, throbbing in all splendour and glory but appearing as darkness to the eye that would like to behold it. There was nothing second to it; It alone was. From It creation arose. However, how it all happened no one can say, for everyone came after creation. This is the central point of the Nasadiya Hymn, varied forms of the development of which lead to many ramifications of philosophic and religious meditations, in the Upanishads and the later established forms of religion. In a famous Mantra, the R'g-Veda declares that "Existence (or Reality) is One, though the wise ones call It by various epithets like Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Yama, Vayu", thus unifying all the gods in a singleness of Being.