

[This is an excerpt from a forthcoming book “Vedic Cosmogony” based on interpretations of selected hymns of the ṛgveda.]

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## RV 10.149

पञ्चर्चस्यास्य सूक्तस्य हैरण्यस्तूपोऽर्चनृषिः । सविता देवता । त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः

सविता यन्त्रैः पृथिवीमरम्णादस्कम्भने सविता द्यामदृंहत् ।  
अश्वमिवाधुक्षुद्धनिमन्तरिक्षमतूर्ते बद्धं सविता समुद्रम् -1

सविता यन्त्रैः	came spread with restraints
पृथिवीमरम्णादस्कम्भने	from that pillar suitably knowing the way to earth
सविता द्यामदृंहत्	spread as attached to the heaven
अश्वमिवाधुक्षुद्धनिम्	manifested as distributed, emitted, moved and emaciated
अन्तरिक्षमतूर्ते	and as an atmosphere instantly came
बद्धं सविता समुद्रम्	bound as a well spread ocean

From that pillar suitably knowing the way to reach the earth, spread with restraints and as attached to the heaven while spreading, emitted, distributed, moved and emaciated, an atmosphere that manifested instantly, well bound and as a well spread ocean.

The expansion and spreading of the universe took place from the heaven to the earth duly maintaining the orientation to the *viśvacakṣus*, which was the epicentre of the universe and referred to here as the pillar. This reference could be identified with the norm for the position of the epicentre, which in the altar space of the *vaidikayajña* got represented by the *yūpaṃ*. Matter was emitted, distributed and moved from heaven which became emaciated as progressed. The space extending from the heaven to the end of the universe, named as atmosphere, that formed instantly and along with the flow of the objects, appeared as an ocean with waves to which the objects created were bound. The universe was thus a limited entity in spite of being incalculably large. Here, the overall shape of the universe was approximately spherical; a conclusion obvious from other segments of the *ṛgveda*. It was stated that the universe became gradually emaciated by the time it expanded to the 7th *vyāhrti*.

यत्रा समुद्रः स्कम्भितो व्यौनदर्पा नपात् सविता तस्य वेद ।  
अतो भूर्त् आ उत्थितं रजो ऽतो द्वावापृथिवी अप्रथेताम् -2

यत्रा समुद्रः	such a way as the ocean in which
स्कम्भितो व्यौनदर्पा	floated and as the separated haughtiness that moved
नपात् सविता	as descendants that spread
तस्य वेद	property wise
अतो भूर्त् आ	moved from that constantly to earth, became
उत्थितं रजो ऽतो	raised as dust that spread
द्वावापृथिवी	from the heaven to earth
अप्रथेताम्	not spreading greatly

Such a way as floating in that ocean and as the separated haughtiness from which descendants spread property wise, moved constantly towards the earth, raised as dust that spread but not spread greatly, right from the heaven till the earth.

In the atmosphere that was the ocean extending from the heaven to the earth while the objects lay floated, some of them were carried by the waves and got separated gravity wise. The term “*vyāunadarpām*” denoted that differentiated properties of haughty persons as if these were the different densities of the objects. These objects were later found to agglomerate property wise. This was definitely a description of the sands that would get separated, density and property wise, on to the shores of an ocean with the waves as the carriers. In a like fashion the dust form entities agglomerated in that great atmosphere, which was an ocean with waves, and which extended from the heaven till the very end of the universe. These agglomerations still remained in the ocean according to one way of interpretation of the word “*samudra:*”. If so, it would amount to a statement of the ring formations around the planets, such as Saturn, which clusters could be remaining in orbit along with a density wise, size wise agglomeration. This interpretation gained ground on the basis of the stated tendency of the dust to ‘move towards earth’ and remain ‘constantly’. Alternately, this could be a reference to the mere segregation, density and property wise that was observed in the high skies and till earth. All said, it could be concluded that at least the phenomenon of these agglomeration on to the shores of the sea were well observed by the venerable sages.

पश्चेदमन्यदभवद् यजत्रममर्त्यस्य भुवनस्य भूना ।  
सुपर्णा अङ्ग सवितुर्गुरुत्मान् पूर्वी जातः स उ अस्यानु धर्म -3

पश्चेदमन्यदभवद्	yet another and later time reckoning of what occurred was that
यजत्रममर्त्यस्य	the self as obtained by oblations till the man
भुवनस्य भूना	the universe as reaching the earth
सुपर्णा अङ्ग	as beautifully winged <i>suparṇa</i> eagerly
सवितुर्गुरुत्मान्	as a heavenly bird piercing
पूर्वी जातः	from earlier and born
स उ अस्यानु धर्म	as shrieking and similar theories

Yet some and later time reckoning of what occurred was that this universe was bestowed by oblations of the self that extended up to man, and that piercing from the earlier state the beautifully winged heavenly bird *suparṇa* was eagerly born, shrieking and reaching the earth and similar theories.

In the *asyavāmīyasūkta* (RV 1.164.46) it was stated that there were more than one theory regarding the origin of this universe. Similarly here it was stated that one theory was that this universe came as a series of *yajñā* from heaven extending till man. This agreed with the concept put forward by the *puruṣasūktam* i.e, RV 10.90. Yet another theory was that the bird *suparṇa* that remained in the heaven circled and flew down till earth as this very universe. Elsewhere in the *ṛgveda* it was stated that the large bird *suparṇa* that remained idle yet restless in the heaven for a long period, suddenly shrieked, ran and flew away and came down to the earth endlessly sprinkling objects to become this very large universe. And as stated, there were some more theories on the subject.

गाव इव ग्रामं यूयुधिरिवाश्वान्वाश्रेव वत्सं सुमना दुहाना ।  
पतिरिव जायामभि नो न्येतु धर्ता दिवः सविता विश्ववारः -4

गाव इव ग्रामं	a community moved downward as if
यूयुधिरिवाश्वान्वाश्रेव	set aside, set free, distributed, moved and flowed
वत्सं सुमना दुहाना	beloved off-springs favourable and with pains
पतिरिव जायामभि	as husband and wife
नो न्येतु धर्ता दिवः	as falling yet supported by the heaven
सविता विश्ववारः	spreading and bestowing all treasures

As if falling from the heaven, but supported by it, spread and bestowing all treasures, as a husband giving beloved and favourable off-springs to a wife along with pains, a community moved downward as if set aside, set free, distributed, moved and flowed.

As yet another theory, comparable to the common births of this earth and as the off-springs born to a young couple, it was stated that a community of objects moved downward from the heaven as fallen, spreading and bestowing all the benevolences of this universe. They appeared like the good off-springs given to the wife by the husband though she was subjected to pains of births. The objects and their groups appeared like communities that went astray, set free, distributed, moved or flowed. They became objects of varied loyalties and bonds that spread and existed as everywhere.

हिरण्यस्तूपः सवितर्यथा त्वा ऽऽङ्गरसो जुह्वे वाजे अस्मिन् ।  
एवा त्वार्चन्नवसे वन्दमानः सोमस्येवांशं प्रति जागराहम् -5

हिरण्यस्तूपः	from that heap of golden entity
सवितर्यथा	spread appropriately
त्वा ऽऽङ्गरसो	thyself becoming a body of semen virile
जुह्वे वाजे अस्मिन्	the self with extended tongues energetically shot out
एवा त्वार्चन्नवसे	thyself appropriately shining and not remaining
वन्दमानः	as an arrangement extolled as
सोमस्येवांशं	a part that came from <i>soma</i>
प्रति जागराहम्	born, moved and bestowed to opposite sides

From that heap of a golden entity, thyself became a body of semen virile spread appropriately to below, thyself became the extended tongues that energetically shot out, thyself became appropriately shined and not remained, and an arrangement extolled as of parts that came from the *soma*, born, moved and bestowed equally to opposite sides.

Then there was that theory in which everything originated from *soma* that remained in the heaven and which later flowed down in different paths carrying all the objects of this universe. The description would remind a painting of the shining sun in our sky with the golden flames to all sides. From the heaven which contained the golden embryo which stood as a golden heap, shining and energetic hands as the paths of creation were extended to all sides and in three dimensions. The learned extolled that this was *soma*

itself that so came down, bestowing and moving the energetic entities around. The paths that proceeded from the heaven maintained a left-right balance and equilibrium. That this contained the semen virile was well known.

The atmosphere that extended from the heaven till the far end of the universe appeared to be an ocean that suddenly sprung out. In this ocean objects floated and were carried by the waves as urged to move towards the larger earths. In this process the dust like entities got segregated density wise, size wise and then regrouped. While these being the phenomena that really and generally occurred, there were other theories on how this universe was born. One of these was that this universe was born as series of *yajña* that started in the heaven and extended till this earth and man. The other was that the large bird *suparṇa* flew down from the heaven and sprinkled the objects till this earth and so this universe was born. A third theory was a description of a biological progress in which as if a husband and wife procreated their good off-springs, this universe came with different objects to the surroundings duly supported by the heaven and the divinity that spread as everywhere. Yet another theory was that this universe came from the *soma* that remained in the heaven and that itself manifested as the arms of creation that extended till earth containing the objects it created, while acting as a receptacle for the semen virile and remaining so for ever.