CHAPTER-V (A)

THE PHILOSOPHICAL HYMNS OF THE

ṚKṢAṀHITĀ- THE NATURE OF THEIR CONTENTS

I. Views and observations of various scholars on the philosophical hymns:

There are scholars both from India and abroad who have studied various aspects of philosophical hymns of the Rgveda. However, those studies have not been made on the nature of the content of these hymns solely in the light of the Rksamhitābhāṣya of Śāyāna. Following is a survey of the works of some of the scholars.

In the first volume of the book Indian Philosophy, Delhi, 2008, pp.71-76 Radhakrishnan has presented his observations on the cosmological hymns of the Rgveda. In course of his deliberations he states that “the method of creation is differently conceived” in these hymns. According to him, in the hymn X.81.4 Viśvkarman is spoken of building the world like a carpenter building a house. In the Puruṣa Śūkta the gods are said to have created the world through a sacrifice. The body of the Puruṣa becomes the material out of which the world is created. This hymn he says points out the oneness of whole world and god. And in essence the idea presented in it is not inconsistent with that of the Nāsadiya Śūkta.
which presents the idea of the creation rising out of One Absolute. This is because in this hymn too the Absolute is shown as becoming the subject and the object. Here the Absolute becomes the active Puruṣa, he is both the begetter and the begotten. In the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta (X.121) according to Radhakrishnan is given “an account of creation of the world” out of pre-existing material by an “Omnipotent God”. In his view in this hymn is reflected a “lower monotheistic” concept. In his opinion it is the Nāsadiya Sūkta which subscribes to a “higher monistic conception of the world”. He holds that as absolute reality behind the world “cannot be characterized” by human beings either as existent or as non-existent, the Absolute is referred to in this hymn as something which is neither existent nor non existent. Radhakrishnan further points out that as stated in this particular hymn kāma which is “the sign of self-consciousness, the germ of mind” is the secret behind the existence of the world.

Verma in his book Studies In Indology, Delhi, 1976, pp.24-29 has presented a brief study of the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Rgveda. This hymn according to Verma is the most important hymn from the point of view of the metaphysical speculation of the seers of the hymn poetry. He holds that the concept of the Puruṣa as presented in it is akin to the concept of Brahman which “represents an all-enveloping phenomenon”. As observed by the author the entire idea presented in the Puruṣa Sūkta seem to have been inspired by “a very primitive idea about Giant God” found in
primitive stories from across the world such as Nordic, Babylonian, American and the like. Verma states that in the Puruṣa Sukta “a primitive mythical supposition” of the birth of the world from the body parts of a Giant God has been “transformed into a most wonderful explanation of a most complicated phenomenon i.e., Creation”.

Ramamurty in his book The Central Philosophy Of The Rig-Veda, Delhi, 1991, pp.29, 34-40 in course of his discussions on the nature and meaning of the Divine, has take into account very briefly the philosophical hymns of the Rgveda. However, during his discussions he has not directly mentioned the philosophical hymns, barring the Puruṣa Sukta. Ramamurty believes that the Divine becomes known to humans only through its revelations in nature. He states that “man’s experiences and knowledge are limited to the realm of manifestation or becoming and anything that is not revealed within it cannot be known by him”. This as it seems according to him is the reason behind the fact that a skeptical attitude on the part of the Vedic seers is seen in hymns containing speculations “on the nature of the ultimate reality or the divine in itself”. As the Vedic deities in spite of being self manifestations of the Divine are revealed only in nature and its workings and as they are later than the Divine in itself, the deities too are unable to know it. This is the idea indicated in the Násadiya Sūkta, X.129.6. Ramamurty further states that the idea that the Divine in itself is more and beyond the deities is clearly expressed in the Puruṣa Sukta where
it is said that while one fourth of the Puruṣa has become the creation including the gods, three fourth of him remains in highest heaven. He further shows that in the hymns to Hiranyagarbha (X.121) and Viśvakarman (X.82,5) the “transcendental unity” of all deities is clearly suggested, when it is said that the lord of the deities which is within all of them and at the same time is beyond all is but one, or when the seers enquire about the garbha of all the deities. It should be noted here that in course of his discussion on the nature of the Divine, Ramamurty has not dealt with the Vāk Sūkta, but has simply stated that Vāk is “divine speech or wisdom”.

Mainkar in his book Mysticism In The Rgveda, Bombay, 1961, pp.36-50, 111-112 has made the following observations on the two hymns to Viśvakarman, the hymn to Hiranyagarbha, the Nāsadiya hymn, the hymns to Puruṣa and Vāk.

The seers of the first four hymns are “philosophical mystics” who are “markedly intellectual and...primarily concerned with Truth or Wisdom”. Mysticism is a “curious blend” of intuition and intellect and in the philosophical hymns of the Rgveda one can clearly see this blend. Hence the speculations contained in these are of the nature of “philosophical mysticism”. Of the two hymns to Viśvakarman, in X.81 it is clearly shown that questions arise in the minds of the wise regarding the ārambhaṇa and adhiṣṭāṇa of the process of creation and such questions
take one to the period of the Upaniṣads. Mainkar feels that perhaps the hymn X.82 is more important than X.81. In this hymn has been expressed the idea of a single Reality and it contains an “extremely well-knit and artistic expression of the first visitation of the Highest”. This hymn speaks about the “limitations of human intellect” and “the ultimate despair” faced by a mystic as he sets his foot on the path of “Knowledge of Truth”, for knowing the maker of the world. In the hymn to Hiranyagarbha has been reflected a sense of doubt and the hymn is a very good example of the beginning of speculative philosophy. According to Mainkar, the interpretation of the word ka in the refrain kasmī devāya etc. as Prajāpati is far fetched for the refrain is but expressive of doubt. In the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta the seer seeks the “golden truth” behind the creation, behind immortality and behind the grandeur of Hiranyagarbha who is the god among the gods, and whose command they follow. Hiranyagarbha according to Mainkar is Savitra-who is “pre-eminently a golden deity”. The Nāsadiya Śūkta as it has been very significantly pointed out by Mainkar indicates that the Rgvedic thinker is not satisfied with the “traditional answers” to the queries on the mystery of the creation and its creator. He not being ready to accept the gods as makers of the world makes a “deliberate and determined” attempt to unravel the mystery of creation. This hymn which exhibits a blend of intuition and intellect in a “fine mystic utterance” in which passion dominates rationality. An important
conclusion arrived at by the seer of this hymn is that there exists a close relation between sat and asat.

According to Mainkar, Puruṣa Sūkta comes under the domain of “ritualistic mysticism” and the seer of this hymn is the greatest ritualistic mystic of the ऋग्वेदic era. This hymn subscribes to the idea that “Sacrifice is the ultimate Reality”: As shown in it, reality exists in the world itself and there also exists a mystical relation between the created entity and the entity from which it results.

In the opinion of Mainkar the Vāk Sūkta comes under the category of “typical mysticism”. Vedic mysticism is a “typical blend of knowledge, Devotion and Materialism”. In this hymn has been described “the mystical importance of Speech”. In it the seer having realized the importance of speech speaks about its all-penetrating quality. Through the depiction of the nature of Vāk “the perception of the unity of the world” has been reflected in this hymn. Mainkar holds that to this hymn may be traced the उपनिषदic idea that everything depends on speech and has a beginning in speech.

Raja in his book Poet-Philosophers Of ऋग्वेद Vedic And Prevedic, Madras, 1963 has presented his views on the philosophical hymns of the ऋग्वेद in chapter VIII. The salient features of his views are as follows-

In the नासदिया hymn the poet speaks about the condition that prevailed before the “evolution and diversification” of the finite world
from the infinite. At the very outset he offers his speculations on the
infinite in which there is neither any movement nor any change nor time
nor any space. The infinite is neither a being nor a non being. There is life
in it, but without any sign of life. From this infinite in which everything is
still is born the diversified world which is finite and is characterized by
movement and change. The infinite from which the finite and knowable
world results has no knower, because it is unknowable. The hymn does not
mention any creator but suggests that the evolution of the finite world is
form within the infinite. There is not even any “Super Being” to control the
process of evolution. In this poem Raja notices some affinity with
Sāṃkhya philosophy. According to him the atheism expressed in it is the
“atheism of the Sāṃkhya system”.

In the Puruṣa Sūkta is described transformation of the world “from
an Absolute, thought of as a Person”. The transformation is brought forth
by the gods who are the active agents in the process. And this process of
transformation is shown as the process of “conducting a ritual worship”.
During the process of transformation first arose a manifold being called
Virāt. On this Virāt arose another Person who became the diversified
world, but at the same time exceeded the finite world. When the
transformation took place time was already there. According to Raja in this
hymn can be seen Vedānta philosophy in its original form. Just as in
Vedānta there is one Parabrahman and one Sagunabrahman so in the Puruṣa Sūkta there is one “Absolute Person” and one “later Person”.

In the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta, the poet puts forward a different line of thought about the formation of the world. In it is presented the idea that there is “a great architect” who remains constantly engaged in fashioning the world. He is an all powerful, omnipotent, single agent of creation. According to Raja “there is nothing that can be called a philosophy in this poem”.

Like Hiranyagarbha, Viśvakarman too is an almighty supreme architect of the world who has fashioned it from pre-existing materials. In the hymn to Viśvakarman (X.81) too there is a hint to a ritual worship prior to the creation of the world. The ritual is performed by Viśvakarman himself in which he offers the entire world as oblation for creating a new one. After the new world is born he encompasses it and enters the beings as life. In the hymn to Viśvakarman and Hiranyagarbha is presented the concept of a God who is a supreme agent of creation and thus the doctrine in them may be called theism.

In the Encyclopedia Of Vedic philosophy, Volume 8, edited by S. Kapoor, Delhi, 2002, pp.2097-2102, has been incorporated some discussions on the hymns to Viśvakarman, Hiranyagarbha, the Nāsadiya hymn and the hymn to Puruṣa. The noteworthy observations on these hymns found therein are as follows-
In the hymn to Viśvakarman and Hiranyagarbha there is “the idea of God as a Supreme personal Being”, who is the creator and ruler of the world. Viśvakarman is the “unborn sustainer in his navel of the primeval germ of the Universe”. Hiranyagarbha born in the primeval water is the golden germ itself and has been identified as Prajāpati in the last verse of the hymn. In the cosmogonic hymn called Nāsadiya Sūkta is reflected the philosophical inquisitiveness of the human mind. This hymn is the earliest source of Māyāvāda which at a later period was postulated by Śaṅkarācārya. It is also of “greatest philosophical interest” for it contains the germs of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. The Nāsadiya hymn provides an insight into the nature of the Supreme Being as personal God and as a pure spirit detached from the empirical world. The other cosmogonic hymn viz., the Puruṣa Sūkta is about the birth of the world from one primeval person—the first Puruṣa from which Virāṭ who is “an evolved person also called Purusha was born”. It was the body parts of this evolved Puruṣa that subsequently became the world. The depiction of the Supreme Being in the hymn as the highest being whose essence is immortality is the true basis of the Vedānta philosophy around which in course of time grew numerous schools of Indian philosophy.

Agrawala has discussed these philosophical hymns in his Vedic Lectures: Proceedings of the summer School of Vedic Studies, May-June, 1960, Banaras, 1963. In it he has analyzed the important terminologies
used in each of the hymns and in doing so, he has taken the help of the Brhāmaṇas, Upaniṣads and the even Purāṇas and Smṛti Śāstras. According to him, in the hymn of creation i.e., the Nāsadiya Sūkta, one can find that there are in it doctrines like Sadasadvāda, Rajovāda, Vyomavāda, Aparavāda, Amrta-Mṛtyu-vāda, Āvaranavāda, Ambhovāda, Ahorātravāda and so on. (pp. 134-185)

There are two other works viz., Rgvedīya Darśana, Delhi, 2003, of Murulimanohar Pathak and Rgvedasya Dārśanikadharātalam, Delhi, 2004, authored by Omkarnath Tiwari in which the authors have discussed these hymns and in doing so both of these two writers have followed in toto the views of V. S. Agrawala.

M.Sundarraj’s Rg Vedic Studies, General Editor., N. Mahalingam, Chennai, 1997, Revised ed. pp. 481-528, is another book where Puruṣa Sūkta is analyzed. As stated by him, the central purpose of the Puruṣa Sūkta is to look at Creation as an outcome of a religious sacrificial worship. It elevates the Vedic sacrifice to the highest divine status, and sees the godhead as residing in it. (p.483)

Ashutosh Bhattacharya Shastri also discussed these hymns in his book Vedāntadarśan-advaitavād, part-I, Vedāntacintār Kramavikāś, Calcutta, n.d., pp. 60-61, 64-69, 71. As observed by him, the idea of one God is expressed in the Viśvakarman Sūkta and is more distinctly expressed in Hiranyagarbha Sūkta of the Rgveda whereas the Vedāntic
concepts viz., *sarvam khalvidaṁ brahma* and also *so 'ham* are expressed in the Rgvedic *Vāk Sūkta*. (pp.60-61). Again according to him, the concept of monotheism can be noticed in *Puruṣavāda* of *Puruṣa Sūkta* and it is transformed into the doctrine of Ātmavāda or *Brahmavāda* at later times. (p.71) Here the writer also discussed about *Nāsādiya Sūkta* where the process of creation is described.

There are research papers by various writers on these philosophical hymns (except Viśvakarman Sūktas) which are collected in a book as *Vaidika Darśana* edited by Raghuvir Vedalankar, Delhi, 1987. In his research paper-*Nāsādiya Sūkta ki Dārśanikatā*, pp.82-85, Raghuvir Vedalankar discussed about the process of creation which is described in *Nāsādiya Sūkta*. Sashi Tiwari in her paper *Rgvedīya Puruṣa Sūkta*, pp.86-95, said that the idea which is expressed in *Puruṣa Sūkta* as *puruṣa evedṁ sarvaṁ* is the basis of *sarvam khalvidaṁ brahma, brahmaivedaṁ sarvaṁ* of Advaitavāda. Again Vedavati Vaidik in her paper *Vāk Sūkta-Ek Dārśanik Vivecan*, pp.96-102, said that Vāk and Brahman are one and same. Sarad Lata Sarma observed in her paper *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta-Ek Vivecan*, pp.103-113, that monotheism is expressed in this hymn which is the seed of Brahma in later Upaniṣadic period. (p.113)

Muir in his work *Original Sanskrit Texts On the Origin And History Of The People Of India, Their Religion And Institution*, Vol.5, London, 1870, has provided his own translation of the Rgvedic *Puruṣa Sūkta* and
has presented his observations on the hymn in pages 367 to 373. According to him the hymn to Puruṣa though somewhat obscure in many places is an important hymn. In it has been recognized in a pantheistic way the unity of Godhead. He holds that it is not easy to grasp the precise meaning of the contents of the latter part of this hymn. He further holds that the hymn was a product of a period when the efficacy and sanctity of ritualistic worship had become well established and “mystical meaning” had been imposed on the ingredients and instruments of the rituals. This was the reason behind the fact that to the ritualistic poet of the Puruṣa Sūkta the idea of the immolation of the Supreme Puruṣa for the sake of creating the world did not appear as profane.

In the book The Cosmology Of The Rgveda, An Essay, London, 1887, its author Wallis has dealt with the contents of the Rgvedic philosophical hymns in chapters II and III. There the author has made the following noteworthy observations on these hymns-

In the two hymns to Viśvakarman who is depicted as a primordial sacrificer and a creator, one comes across the idea of the “cosmological significance of the divine sacrifice”. However, in these hymns the nature of the relation between the process of sacrifice and the process of creation has not been clearly stated by the seer. The nature of the relation between the two becomes clear only in the Puruṣa Sūkta. As felt by Wallis in the personality of Viśvakarman has been embodied the ritualistic character of
Agni—the primordial priest and the father of all creatures. As pointed out by him the verses 5 and 6 of X.82 which is dedicated to Viśvakarman have some affinity to the verses 6 and 7 of the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta where occur references to the Unborn One (aja) and to seed (garbha) of the world held by the primordial waters. In these verses has been expressed the conception of the sun as “the first born of the world and the prototype of subsequent generation”. (pp.80, 84 and 86)

In the Puruṣa Sūkta which is one of the latest hymns of the Rgveda the seer has adapted an ancient myth found in many cultures, of the formation of the world from the limbs of a giant. In this hymn the sacrificial worship which in the Veda has been projected as the “most efficacious” act performed by a human being is depicted as effecting the creation of the world. (pp. 87 and 89)

In the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta the solar god is glorified as the great power from which have come “all other powers and existences, divine and earthly.” The very name hiranyagarbha found in the hymn is indicative of the fact that in it the seer glorifies the phenomenon of light. In it one finds clear association of the sun with a god who is being abstracted into an “independent figure.” (p. 50)

In the Vāk Sūkta, Vāk is a personification of “all that has voice in nature” i.e., all the sounds that are produced in nature such as the sound of thunder storm, the sounds that the creatures make at day break and so on.
Through the glorification of all embracing sounds of nature in the shape of a goddess, the seer of the hymn has expressed in his own way the unity of nature. This interpretation of the Vāk Śūkta stands apart from all the observations and opinions on Vāk put forward by all of the other scholars. (p. 85)

In the Nāsadiya Śūkta has been mentioned one “primordial substance or unit” from which the world is said to have evolved. This substance is referred to as “the one thing” and the hymn clearly speaks about “the automatic evolution of the world” from “the one thing.” In this process of evolution desire acts as the first principle of generation. And tapas i.e., warmth spoken of therein shows how the generation of the world became possible. In this hymn the speculations of the seer on “the first state of the world and the first signs of life and growth...” run in “a strain” which is akin to the philosophical speculations contained in the Upaniṣads. (pp. 58 and 61)

Keith has discussed in brief the nature of the Rgvedic philosophical hymns in his book The Religion And Philosophy Of The Veda And Upanishads, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol.32, 1925, Indian Edition, Delhi, 1976, pp. 435-439. The noteworthy features of his discussion is given below-

The Nāsadiya Śūkta is the most important hymn “in the history of Indian philosophy.” The hymn is not easy to understand because of “its
conceptions are full of vagueness and crudely seek to unite opposites.” In it
the seer has made attempts to realize the nature of the universe but he has
not been able to satisfy himself in his endeavour. The statement that the
first cause of the universe is neither a “not being” nor a “not not-being”
asserts that it was totally different from anything known to the seer. This is
because the seer further states that in It which is neither a being nor a non
being the sages find the root of the not being in the being. One cannot
really say whether the seer has at all deemed “the first cause of the world”
as a conscious entity. However, in spite of all the vagueness in it, the hymn
presents a fully developed concept of unity of the world.

In the Hiranyagarbha Sukta has been put forward the idea of the
unity of the world by depicting Hiranyagarbha as an omnipotent personal
god who is at once the creator, ruler and preserver of the world. In the
hymns to Viśvākarma, it is implied that creator of the world is both its
material cause and efficient cause. In these hymns one comes across the
idea of one creator god who is the “first-born of creation.” According to
these hymns creation goes through a three-fold process. The Vāk Sukta
glorifies holy speech as constantly accompanying the gods and is spoken of
as the foundation of all ritual worships. In it Vāk is shown as supporting
the world. Keith has found some affinity between Vāk as presented in this
Sukta and the personality of Brahmanaspati as the god of prayer. The idea
that the process of creation is similar to the process involved in sacrificial
act, which has already appeared in the hymn to Viśvakarman (X.81) becomes fully developed in the Puruṣa sūkta. In this hymn too appears the idea of the three stages of creation viz., through the First Puruṣa, the Virāṭ and finally the Second Puruṣa.

Discussions on the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta and the Nāsadiya Sūkta by MaxMüller are found in two of his books viz., A) A History Of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, Varanasi, 1968, pp. 512-523 and B) The Vedas, Calcutta, 1956, pp. 28, 80, 81 and 84.

About the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta, MaxMüller has the following to say in his A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature-“...the idea of one God is expressed with such power and decision, that it will make us hesitate before we deny the Aryan nations an instinctive Monotheism.” In his translation of the hymn he has given the meaning of the word hiranyagarbha as “the Source of golden light.” In this hymn which seems to belong to the later part of the Rgvedic era one comes across “a yearning after truth, and after true god” which is yet to be hampered by “names and traditions”. Another significance of this hymn is that in it one finds “an assertion of the unity of the Divine” (The Vedas, pp. 28, 84)

So far as the Nāsadiya Sūkta is concerned in the book The Vedas (p. 81) MaxMüller has said that “this hymn is important not only by what it says, but by what it presupposes.” According to him, “many generations of thinkers” must have gone by before the kind of questions raised in this
hymn by its seer could have been raised. In his *A history of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, MaxMüller has discussed at length about the contents of the *Nāṣadiya* hymn. The noteworthy features of his observations are as follows-

In this hymn which deals with the beginning of creation and the state of things before creation, the seer has spoken of the first source of creation as “That One”, without using any qualifying term to describe It. This was done to indicate the abstract nature of “That One.” This One for the sake of the birth of the world which till then had existed as a mere germ, started to grow by Its “innate heat.” Thereafter the impulse of the mind viz., love or desire or will to produce fell upon the One which till then “was neither self sufficient nor dead” with the manifestation of this particular mental impulse began the “transition of the nothing into the something.” Thus, there was a conscious effort to create. After having thus speculated on the birth of the world as an evolution from One Substance the seer creates confusions by first expressing doubts about the Creator and the source of the creation and then by speaking about an overseer or contemplator of the world who knows about the process of creation. The seer at first refers to this overseer of the world as its source, but thereafter expresses further doubt by saying that perhaps he too does not know whether he himself created the world or not.
In the book *Vedic Mythology*, Strassburg, 1898, Indian Reprint, Delhi, 1981, the author Macdonell in chapters II and III in course of his discussions on Vedic cosmology and on the abstract deities (pp. 11-14, 118-119 and 124) has presented his observations on the Ṛgvedic philosophical hymns. The noteworthy points of his observations are as follows-

Macdonell has included the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, the *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta* and the *Nāsadiya Sūkta* among the cosmogonic hymns of the Veda. According to him the *Puruṣa Sūkta* gives “a mythological account of the origin of the universe involving neither manufacture nor generation, The central theme of this hymn viz., the birth of the world from the limbs of a Giant Man with whom the gods performed a sacrifice “is very primitive.” The hymn gives a pantheistic interpretation of the universe by stating that all that existed, still exists and shall exist is Puruṣa. In the hymn to *Hiranyagarbha* it is the sun ‘the golden embryo’ which is “glorified as a great power of the universe.” Here in the last verse ‘the golden embryo’ is depicted as the lord of all the creatures i.e., Prajāpati. Macdonell accepts Hiranyagarbha Prajāpati as an abstract deity who is clearly shown as a supreme god- the one lord of all that exists and who rules over all including the gods. In the refrain of the first nine verses, however, this supreme god is referred to as an unknown being by using the interrogative term *ka*. The content of the *Nāsadiya* hymn which affirms that in the beginning there
was nothing but a void, is “more abstract” and “very sublime.” In this hymn the seer states that the “primordial substance” of the world was produced by the heat from which arose “desire the first seed of mind.” This according to Macdonell is the bond between that asat and the sat. The seer of the hymn however, finally “gives up the riddle of creation as unsolvable.” Viśvakarmāna, as viewed by Macdonell is an abstract god. While two entire Rgvedic hymns are dedicated to Viśvakarmāna, the word occurs once as an epithet of Indra and once of the “all creating” sun in the Rgveda and in later Vedic text as a name of Prajāpati. According to Macdonell, the word visvakarman was at first perhaps used as an epithet of the sun-god, but later on became the name of one god thought of as the architect of the world, owing to the very epithet visvakarman. So far as the Vāk Sūkta is concerned, Macdonell holds that goddess Vāk is “personified Speech” who accompanies all the gods, embraces all beings and her abode is “in the waters, the sea”.

In his work The Religion Of The Rgveda, Delhi, 1971, pp. 344-350, Griswold in course of his discussions on pantheism and monotheism in the Rgveda has taken into account the hymns to Puruṣa and to Hiranyagarbha. According to him in the later part of the Rgvedic era one can see a steady movement towards the concept of unity. This movement took two forms of which one moved toward pantheism and the other toward monotheism. The best expression of pantheism is seen in the hymn to Puruṣa. In it monism
and polytheism exist side by side. On one hand it contains monistic idea in the shape of the all-encompassing Purusa and on the other hand belief in polytheism in the form of the gods who are depicted as agents of creation. The hymn also gives a spiritual interpretation of the universe through the conception of the whole nature “as a living organism, the body of an original Purusa ‘Man’ or ‘Spirit.’

According to Griswold Hiranyagarbha Sukta is an instance of speculative monotheism. In it Hiranyagarbha—the one god above all gods is identified as Prajapati who is a “personification of the creative activity of nature.” Griswold states that apparently it is Agni who is spoken of in this hymn as the one life (asurekah) of all the gods and as it seems Prajapati is “identical with the generative Agni.”

In his work Fundamental Teachings of Vedas, Delhi, 2004, Phillips in chapter III, pp. 96-103 has taken into account the hymns to Hiranyagarbha, Viṣvakarman, Purusa and the Nāsadīya Sūkta. As pointed out by him all Vedic accounts on cosmology recognize one “omnipotent intelligent being” as the creator of the world, but so far as the mode of creation of the world is concerned these accounts do not always agree with one another. As per one view the world was created by the omnipotent being by his own inherent power without any pre-existing matter. The other view is that the author of the world produced it from some pre-
existing matter. Yet others like the Upaniṣadic thinkers look upon the creation as a “phenomenal emanation from the deity.”

The Nāsadiya Śūkta is the “most striking illustration” of creation from nothing. This hymn introduces the reader to a period when there was neither the “non-entity (asad) nor entity (sad)” and neither death nor the opposite of death. According to Phillips in these two sets of conditions one not being there the other too was absent. The rest of the hymns under reference speak about creation from pre-existing matter. Hiranyagarbha is depicted as shaping the world into its present form the chaotic state of matters referred to as the water which were already there when he arose out of the golden embryo. Same was the case with Viśvakarman who existed independently of the original chaos and created the world out of matters already available to him. In the Puruṣa Śūkta, the gods acting as agents of creation are said to have produced the world “from the dismembered limbs of Puruṣa, the primeval male, whom they sacrificed”.

II. The philosophical hymns in the light of Śāyaṇa’s commentary:

A.

VIŚVAKARMAN SŪKTAS, X. 81& 82

In the Rksamhitā, two entire hymns have been dedicated to the glorification of Viśvakarman. In these two hymns one comes across for the
first time the Vedic Aryans’ longing to know about the creator of the world around him. He is found asking again and again how the creator fashioned the empirical world. In these two hymns one also come across speculations on the process of creation as well as the nature of the creator. This creator has been called Viśvakarman. Etymologically the word means the creator of all- viśvakarmā sarvasya kartā. He is the maker of all that has been created, is all that is being created and all that will be created. It may be recalled here that while in these two hymns he has been called the pitā, janitā and bidhātā, in later Vedic texts, Viśvakarman has been directly identified with the creator Prajāpati. Etymologically the word Prajāpati means prajānām janitā and pālayitā.

In hymn X.81, the seer asks the following questions about the beginning of the process of creation:

a. kiṁ svīdāśīdadhiśṭhānamārambhānam katamatsvītkaṁ sphāritāṁ

   yato bhūmiṁ janayanviśvakarmā vi dyāmaurṇonmahinā

viśvacaksāḥ // [What was the place whereon he took his station? What was it that supported him? How was it? Whence Viśvakarman, seeing all, producing the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens.]3

While explaining this verse, Sāyaṇa refers to Viśvakarman as Isvara that is the Lord of the world. The implication of this hymn according to

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1 Nir., 10.12.
2 cf. AB., 4.22; VS., 13.16; 14.5, 9; ŚB., 7.4.2.5; 8.2.1.10; 8.2.3.13.

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Sāyaṇa is as follows: when Viśvakarman began the process of creation he neither had any place to stand upon nor did he have the materials (Upādānas) for creating the world. Sāyaṇa chooses to interpret the word ārambhānaṁ in the verse as upādānakāraṇaṁ. Through the phrase kathāsvid, the seer intends to say that even if upādānakāraṇa was there, its nature was not known for there was neither sat nor asat.

b.  kim svidvanam ka u sa vrkṣa āṣa yato dyāvāprthīvi nisṭatakṣuh /

   maniśino manasā pracheantu tadyadadhyaṭiṣṭhadbhuvanāni dhārayan//

[What was the tree; what wood in sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven? Ye thoughtful men enquire within your spirit whereon he stood when he established all things.]⁴

In this verse (X.81.4), the poet expresses his desire to know about the nature of the material ‘cause (upādānakāraṇa) of the world. In this verse the poet uses the symbolism of a crafts-man fashioning his craft out of some wood. As pointed out by Sāyaṇa, in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, it is said that the tree or the wood from which the world was fashioned was Brahman Itself; brahma vanam brahma sa vrkṣa āṣid.⁵

It should however be remembered here that the concept of Brahman as the Universal Being is not met with in the Rksamhitā. The implication of

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⁴ cf. v., 4 & Griffith, R.T.H., ibid.
⁵ cf. TB., 2.8.9.
the questions asked by the seer in the aforementioned verse may however, be explained as follows:

It has already been implied in the second verse of the hymn that there was no *upādāna* available for creating the world, nevertheless the world was created by Viśvakarman. This seems to imply that Viśvakarman created the world out of his own body. In other words, he himself became the *upādānakāraṇa* of the world. In this context one may refer to the idea expressed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (2.33) that the creator himself became many: *prajāpatirvā idameka evāgra āsa / so’akāmayata prajāyeya bhīyāntsyāmiti* // Thus, the idea developed in the later philosophical literature that the Supreme Being (Brahman) is both the *nimittakāraṇa* and the *upādānakāraṇa* of the empirical world seems to have its root in the idea expressed in this hymn dedicated to Viśvakarman.

In X.82.5 has been raised the following question:

_c. kam svidgarbhāṃ prāthamaṃ dadhra āpo yatra devāḥ samapāsyanta viśve//_

[What was the germ primeval which the waters received where all the Gods were seen together?]²

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² cf. sah (prajāpatiḥ) ...akāmayat prajāyeyeti /...sa jaghanād surānasāktatā...sa mukhādevānasṛjat //prajāpatir vā idameka asīt sokāmayat bahu syām prajāyeyeti //TB.,2.2.9.5-8. Also see, TMB., 4.1.4;6.1.1;6.5.1;7.5.1;7.6.1;10.3.1; JB.,1.46.1.

Here the seer asks about the seed of the universe which was held in the primordial waters. This question was apparently raised to show that it was Viśvakarman himself who appeared in the primordial waters as the seed (garbha) of the entire creation. Here it is said that the Gods saw each other in this very seed of the creation. Thus, expressing the idea that the Gods were the first sentient beings born from Viśvakarman.

The idea which appears in the hymns to Viśvakarman is the desire to draw a parallel between the process of creation of the universe and a sacrifice. In his personality one can notice the combination of the characters of a primeval sacrificer and a creator. This is so because in the Vedic texts a yajña is looked upon as a process of creation. In the very first verse of X.81 has been described how Viśvakarman at the end of a yuga annihilated the world for starting the process of recreating the world: ya imā viśvā bhuvanāni juhvadṛśirhotā nyasīdatpitā naḥ / sa āśiṣā draviṇamichamānaḥ prathamacchadavorā ā viveśa // [He who sate down as Hotr-priest, the Rṣi, our Father, offering up all things existing,- He, seeking through his wish a great possession, came among men on earth as archetypal.]8 Viśvakarman who sat down as a sacrificial priest sacrificed all created beings in a universal sacrifice. This he did for the purpose of starting a new creation. The significance of this has been explained by Sāyaṇa as follows- Viśvakarman, the Lord of the universe at the time of

final dissolution of the world dissolved the world in himself: yo viśvakarmanā paramesvara imā viśvā bhuvanāni jhuvatprayakāle prthivyādīnāṃśapa. lokānśvātmanyāhutiprakṣeṇapavatsaṃharaṇ-nṛṣirāṇāṃvadraśā sarvajño hota saṃhārarūpasya homasya kartā na'smākaṁ pitā janako niṣāsāda svayam sthitavān // Being desirous of obtaining wealth (dravīnaḥ) in the shape of the world, through the yajña of creation he finally obtained the world he desired. Having produced the world through the yajña, he himself entered the created beings (avaran).

According to Śaṇāya: svatān prānīḥprayadeśān āviveṣa āvīṣṭavān jīvarūpena. As the soul of all beings Viśvakarman covered the entire creation which he produced from his own self. Thus, here one comes across the idea that the creator and the creation are inseparable. Furthermore, in this verse, as pointed out by Śaṇāya, it has been implied that Viśvakarman withdraws the creation into himself at the time of annihilation and releases it during the time of its recreation. This very idea has been expressed in later Upaniṣadic literature. In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (3.1.6) it is said: yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayantyabhisamviṣanti, tad vijīnāsāsva, tad brahmēti //

It may not be out of context to state here that Yāśka (whom Śaṇāya has quoted) has stated that Viśvakarman, during his yajña or the ritual of creation offered himself along with the other created object as haviṣ. This appears to imply that the created beings being manifestations of
Viśvakarman himself, when they were offered as havis he too being the upādānakāraṇa of all the beings too became an offering.

The first material object that was produced through the ritual of creation was the waters\(^9\) and in these waters Viśvakarman appeared as the seed of all living beings.\(^10\) It is said in X.82.6 that this seed appeared from the navel (nāvi) of the immortal one and it contained the entire world: 
\[ ajasya nābhāvadhyekamarpitam yasminviśvāni bhuvanāni tasthuḥ. \]
Commenting on this Śāyana says, 
\[ ajasya janmarahitasya brahmaṇāḥ svasrṣte jale śayāṇasya nābhau sarvajagadbandhaka udakāṁ ekam brahmāndamarpitam sthāpitam. \]
The idea expressed in this passage of the hymn is that the mortal world was born of the immortal being.

In these waters heaven and earth were also produced and stabilized:
\[ yadedanta adadrhanta pūrva ādiddyāvāprthivī aprathetāṁ // [Then when the eastern ends were firmly fastened, the heavens and earth were far extended.] \]
\[ V.82.1. \]
Viśvakarman as the creator of all has been extolled in the hymns dedicated to him by using attributes like pitā, janitā, vīmanā, vīhāyā, dhātā, vidhātā, prama samārāk, devānām eka nāmadhā, caksusāh pitā, vācaspati, manojuvā and so on.

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\(^9\) cf. RV., X.82.1.
\(^10\) ibid, X.82.6.
\(^11\) ibid, X.82.6b. The word āja which means ‘the unborn one’ also implies ‘the deathless one’. Thus, the word ultimately means one who is immortal.
\(^12\) ibid, X.82.1b. Also see, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit, p.591.
The word *pita* derived from the root *pā* to protect means the protector. Viśvakarman is the protector of the world he has produced. Being the producer of all he becomes *janitā*. In the words of Śaṅkara: *asmākam pita pālayitā / na kevalam pālakah kintu janitotpādakah /*\(^{13}\) The two words *dhatr* and *vidhātr* also denote the sense of a creator as well as a bestower and establisher. As he is looked upon as the bestower of life and of earthly blessings (*viśvasambhu*),\(^{14}\) therefore, Śaṅkara explains the word *vimanā* as *vibhūtamanā* i.e., mentally mighty and *vihāyā* as *mahān* i.e., great. Another epithet of Viśvakarman is *manojīvā* i.e., fast as the mind. It is interesting to note that in later Vedic text mind has been accepted as a sheath (*koṣa*) of Brahman.\(^{15}\) The words *parama samādrk* depicts Viśvakarman as the great seer of the sense organs: *paramaśca samādraśta indriyānām.*\(^{16}\) Viśvakarman in fact has been called *caksuṇāh pita* in X.82.1. and *vācaspati* in X.81.7. Thus, calling him the creator of all the sense organs: *caksurūpaḥ pālakṣitaśyendriyasaṅghāṭmakasya śarīrasya pitotpādayitā.*\(^{17}\) It is interesting to note here, that in X.82.2. the seer seems to imply that Viśvakarman the creator of the senses (which are sustained by *anna* i.e., food) cannot be reached by them. In this verse the senses have been referred to as the *Sapta Rśis*. The word *sapta* here seems to denote the

\(^{13}\) Śaṅkara on *ibid*, X.82.3.

\(^{14}\) *ibid*, X.82.7.

\(^{15}\) See, *TUp.*, 3.4.

\(^{16}\) Śaṅkara on *RV*, X.82.2.

\(^{17}\) Śaṅkara on *ibid*, X.82.1.
sense of sarpana i.e., movement. The root rs from which the word rśi is derived is used to denote the sense of movement. The sense organs, as one knows, are ever-active and are always as it were, approaching the objects of senses. The word rśi, means a draṣṭā i.e., a seer. A sense organ is called a rśi, for it helps a living being to see as it were, the nature of the empirical world. Viśvakarman is the bestower of these organs in living beings, but living beings cannot realize him through their sense organs, for he stands beyond the senses. Thus, according to Śāyāna, the idea of the passage sapta rśīn para ekamāhuḥ is as follows, saptasāṁkhyākebhyaḥ sarpanasvabhāvebhya vā paraḥ paraśādvartamānāmindriyādyatātateśeṣam paramātmānāmāhustattvavidah.  

What has been stated in a nutshell in the above stated Rgvedic passage, has found fuller and clearer expression in the Upaniṣadic texts. Thus, for instance, in the Kenopaniṣad it is said that the eyes can see, the ears can hear by virtue of the Supreme Reality, but this Supreme Being cannot be reached out by the eyes and the ears. 

A very significant attribute given to Viśvakarman, seems to be the one found in X.82.3. There he is called devānām nāmadhā eka eva. He is one without a second (ekā eva) and he bears (dadhāti) the names of all the Vedic gods. This seems to imply that there is but only one Supreme Being who appears as different gods. In other words, the multitudes of gods are nothing but manifestations of one and the same Viśvakarman, the father of

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18 ibid, X.82.2. & Śāyāna ibidem.
19 See, KnUp., 1.7,8. Also see, KUp., 2.1.
all created beings. This very idea has been clearly stated in *Rgveda*, I.164.46. which runs as follows: *indram mitram varuṇamagnimāhuratho divyāh sa suparno gāṛutmān / ekam sadviprāh bahudhā vadantyagnīm yamam mātariśvānamāhūḥ.* [They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutmān. To what is One, sages give many a title: they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvān.]*\(^{20}\)

It is to be noted here that Sāyaṇa chooses to explain the word *nāmadhā* as *nāmnām dhātā indrādīnnimāya teśāṁindrādi nāma kṛtvā tatratyadevesu sthāpayītā.* This does seem to be an apt interpretation, when one takes into consideration the passage *devānāṁ nāmadhā eka eva* which means in spite of being ‘only one’ he is *nāmadhā* of all the gods. Furthermore, the derivative meaning of the word *nāmadhā* appears as *nāmāni dadhātītī nāmadhā (nām + vdhā + kvip)*\(^{21}\)

The omnipresent nature of Viśvakarman has been referred to in the following passage from X.81.3a: *viśvataścaksuruta viśvatomukho viśvatobāhuruta viśvatsapāt.* He has eyes, faces, arms and feet in all directions i.e., he exists everywhere in the shape of all living beings. It may be noted that in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* this very passage has been used to describe the omnipresence of Rudra.\(^{22}\) The omniscience of Viśvakarman has found expression in the passage... *yo vidhātā dhāmāni veda bhuvanāni*


\(^{21}\) See, Sāyaṇa’s interpretation of the word *ratnadhā* on *RV.*, I.1.1.

\(^{22}\) *cf. SvUp.*, III.3.3a. Also see, *RV.*, X.81.3; *AV.*, XIII.2.26; *VS.*, XVII.19; *T.S.*, 6.2.4; *TA.*, X.1.3.
Viśvā. Viśvakarman being the bestower of everything knows all the places, nay the entire creation. All the creatures in the three regions viz., heaven, atmosphere and the earth are said to be his bodies. Thus, in X.82.4 the *uttama, madhyama* and *avama* manifestation of Viśvakarman have been mentioned. In X.82.3, it is said that the intelligent beings entertain in their hearts a desire to know about the true reality of Viśvakarman, the creator and protector of all. In yet another passage i.e., in X.82.7, the idea has been expressed that the ordinary mortals are unable to realize him, who has created them and resides in them as their inner being. This is because, this inner being is different (*anyat*) from the physical form of a human being which is denoted by the word *aham*. Sāyaṇa says: *jīvānāṁ antaram anyat ahampratyayagamyādatiriktaṁ sarvavedāntavedyamīśvaratvam babhūva bhavanti vidyate.* Ordinary mortals are unable to grasp the true nature of Viśvakarman, because the seekers’ minds become enrapt in mist: *nihāreṇa prāvṛtāh* and *jalpyāh* i.e., confused. In this passage the poet seems to say that the mist of ignorance hinders the true or clear knowledge of the Supreme Being.

In verses six and seven of X.81 the seer invokes Viśvakarman as a sacrificial deity. Sāyaṇa says that when considered from the point of view of *ādhidāiva* interpretation he is Āditya- the solar deity. *Brāhmaṇa* texts

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23 *cf. RV.*, X.82.3a.
24 See, Sāyaṇa on X.82.2.
too look upon Viśvakarman as a solar god. Thus in the *Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇa* it is said: *asau vai viśvakarmā yo ’sau tapati.*\(^{25}\)

\(^{25}\) *KB.*, 5.5. Also see *GB.*, 1.13.
Hymn X.90 of the Rgveda consists of sixteen verses and is popularly known as Purusa Sukta. The importance of this hymn is well recognized in Indian tradition. It is the only Sukta which is found in all the four Vedas (excluding Black Yajurveda) with some variations and some transpositions. This same Sukta found in Vājasaneyīsāṁhītā, adhyāya 31th consists of twenty two Mantras. Of these twenty two Mantras, first sixteen practically are same as those of Rksāṁhītā, whereas the last six Mantras which constitute a group called as Uttaranārāyaṇa do not belong to the original Purusa Sukta. The Purusa Sukta which occurs in Atharvaveda (XIX.6) has sixteen verses with some transpositions and variations of words, from Rgveda, X.90. This Sukta is also found in Sāmaveda (1.13), 317-21 where the last five Mantras are same with little variations. And this hymn is also found in Taittiriya Āranyaka, 3.12.

As mentioned in the Sarvānukramaṇī, Nārāyaṇa is the Rṣi of X.90, Puruṣa is the Devatā and Anuṣṭup and Triṣṭup are the metres. Regarding the word puruṣa, Yāṣka in his Nirukta has forwarded three interpretations viz., puruṣāḥ purīśādāḥ (pur +ṣad to go, to sit, to split) purīśayāḥ...
Commenting on the first interpretation of Yāśka, Durgācārya says: puḥ sarīram buddhirvā tayorasau sidatīti purisādaḥ iti puruṣaḥ. Whereas Skandasvāmin takes the meaning of the sid as denoting movement and says: puram sarīram bhoktrtvena gacchatīti. Thus, according to the first two interpretations, Puruṣa is that who resides in or goes into or sleeps in the body. As per these interpretations Puruṣa is prāṇa. In his third interpretation, Yāśka clearly indicates that Puruṣa is the Supreme Being, by quoting the following Upaniṣadic verse: yasmāt param nāparam asti kiṁcit yasmān nāṁyo na jyāyo'sti kiṁcit / vrkṣa iva stabdho divi tīṭhatye kас tene'dam pūrnam puruṣena sarvam // [Then whom there is naught else higher, than whom there is naught smaller, naught greater, (the) one stands like a tree established in heaven, by Him, the Person, is this whole universe filled.] It may be stated here that the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa also says, ime vai lokāḥ pūrayameva puruṣo yo'yaṁ pavate so'syāṁ puri ṛte tasmāt puruṣaḥ.

The first verse of this hymn describes Puruṣa as follows: sahasraśīrśa puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt / sa bhūmin viśvato

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1 Nir., 2.3.1.
2 See, Durgā ibidem.
3 Skandasvāmin ibidem.
5 cf. SB., 13.6.2.1. Commentators like Mahādhara say that Puruṣa is avyakta mahadādi vilakṣaṇa-cetano yah puruṣaḥ whereas Uvāta says that Puruṣa is nārāyaṇa puruṣaḥ. See, Mahādhara and Uvāta on VS., XXXI.1.
vṛtvātyatisṭhadasāṅgulam // [A THOUSAND heads hath Puruṣa, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side pervading the earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.]⁶ As stated by Śāyaṇa, Puruṣa is avyaktamahādādivilakṣaṇaçetana yah puruṣah⁷ i.e., Puruṣa is unmanifest and hence is different from mahat (Prakṛti) and is pure consciousness. Furthermore, he says that Puruṣa is sarvapraṇisamaśṭirūpo brahmāṇḍadeho virādākhyo yah...⁸ Thus according to Śāyaṇa, Puruṣa in this verse is conceived of as a Giant Being who has for his body the entire creation (brahmāṇḍadeha) and he is the sum total of all beings. Here in this verse the word sahasra stands as a symbol of infinity or endlessness. Śāyaṇa says, sahasraśabdasyopalakṣanatvādanantaiḥ śirobhīryukta ityarthah.⁹ It is the Giant Puruṣa from which all creatures are produced, and thus the body of all the created objects both living and non living are nothing but this Puruṣa.¹⁰ As per Śāyaṇa the word daśāṅgulam is an upalakṣana and says: daśāṅgulamīti upalakṣanam brahmāṇḍādvahirapi sarvato vyāpyāvasthitā ityarthah.¹¹ This means that the Giant Puruṣa is bigger than the whole of the universe. The first verse of the hymn denotes the immeasurability of Puruṣa. It may be noted here that the Upaniṣadic

⁷ See, Śāyaṇa on RV., X.90.1.
⁸ Śāyaṇa ibidem.
⁹ Śāyaṇa ibidem.
¹⁰ cf. anekaparyāyah sahasraśabdah; sahasraśabdo bahutvavācī- See, Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara on VS., XXXI.1. As stated by Uvaṭa, this word signifies as ‘many, numerous’ etc. whereas according to Mahīdhara, this word signifies as ‘abundance’ and thus, it implied as ‘one who has abundance heads’.
¹¹ cf. Sayana loc.cit.
concept of Puruṣa having eyes, feet, heads etc. on all sides owes its origin to the Rgvedic Puruṣa Sūkta. When the Rgvedic seer refers to Puruṣa as sahasraśīrṣā, sahasrākṣa and sahasrapāt, he as a matter of fact hails Puruṣa’s omnipresence. What the seer means to say through these epithets is that Puruṣa exists everywhere in every shape and size. This reminds one of the following passages from the Mundakopaniṣad which hails the omnipresence of Brahman: brahmaivedam amṛtam purastād brahma, paścād brahma, daśinataś cottaṛena / adhaścordhvaṁ ca prasṛtam brahmaivedam viśvamidam variṣṭham. While in this Upaniṣadic passage Brahman is called immortal, in the second verse of X.90 Puruṣa has been depicted as the Lord of immortality and as eternal entity. He is all that was born, all that is being born and all that will be born. The second verse of this hymn says: puruṣa evedam sarvam yadbhūtam yacca bhavyam / utamṛtatvasyeśano yadannenātirohati // [This Puruṣa is all that yet hath been and all that is to be; The Lord of Immortality which waxes greater still by food.] Commenting on the word idam, Śāyaṇa along with Uvaṭa and Mahēdhara says that it means idam vartamāṇam jagat i.e., the visible world. The implication of this verse according to Śāyaṇa is that Puruṣa here is completely identified with the material world, both in its projection

12 cf. ŚvUp., III.11,16. The verses 1 & 2 of Puruṣa Sūkta reappears in Śvetāsvataropaniṣad, verses 14 & 15. Also see, Mahānārāyanopaniṣad, 11.1.
13 cf. MUp., II.2.12.
14 Griffith R.T.H., op.ūktap.602.
15 See, Śāyaṇa, Uvaṭa and Mahēdhara on v., 2.
in terms of space and time: yacca bhūtaṁ atītaṁ jagat yacca bhavyaṁ bhaviṣyajjagat tadaṁ puruṣa eva / yathāsminkalpe vartamānāḥ prāṇidehāḥ sarve'pi virātpuruṣasyāvayavāḥ tathaivaśītāgāminorapi kalpayordrāṣṭavyamityabhīprāyah.¹⁶ In this verse while the word amṛta is used to denote ‘immortality’, the word anna stands for ‘mortality’. This is because, the word anna means that which can be eaten and thus destroyed adyate iti annam and that which can be eaten or destroyed is mortal. Therefore, this mortal world is called anna in this verse. Here, the Supreme Being who is called the overlord of amṛta is said to assume the (atirohāti) shape of the whole mortal creation (anna). From this it follows that Puruṣa who in reality is immortal and eternal, projects himself as the mortal world. However according to Śāyaṇa he assumes a mortal shape in order to enable the living beings to attain the fruits of their actions: utāpi cāmṛtatvasya devatvasyāyamiśānaḥ svāmī / yadyasmāt karaṇādannena prāṇināṁ bhogyenānānena nimittahūtenātirohāti svakāyāṁ karaṇāvasthāmatikramya paridṛṣyaṁānāṁ jagadavasthāṁ prāpaṁ tasmātprāṇināṁ karmaphalabhogāya jagadavasthāsvākaraṇānena tasya vastutvamityṛthah.¹⁷

The third verse of this hymn speaks about the greatness of Puruṣa. Here it is said that the material projection of Puruṣa is made up of only one fourth part of him, while his true reality which is beyond the reach of

¹⁶ Śāyaṇa ibidem.
¹⁷ Śāyaṇa ibidem.
morts constitute three fourth of him. The universe (which is only one fourth of him) with its innumerable stars, planets and other heavenly bodies is unimaginably big for the ordinary mortals. The greatness of Puruṣa lies in the fact that in his real nature he exceeds the glory of this whole universe. So far as the Eternal Being is concerned, this universe with all its glory is a very insignificant projection of him. The third verse runs as follows: 

\[ \text{etāvānasya mahimāto jyāyānśca puruṣah / pādo'sya viśvā bhūtāni}
\]

tripādasamārtham divi // [So mighty is his greatness; yea, greater than this is Puruṣa. All creatures are one-fourth of him, three fourths eternal life in heaven.] The nature of the Puruṣa as depicted in this verse as having immortality as his essence forms the basis of the Upaniṣadic concept of the Supreme Reality. In this context one thing is to be mentioned that the concept of Puruṣa having four parts should not be understood in its literal sense, for the Supreme Reality does not consists of parts. Commenting on this verse Sāyaṇa says, 

\[ \text{atītānāgatavartamānarūpam jagadyāvadasti etāvānsarvo'pyasya puruṣasya mahimā / svakīyasāmarthaviśeṣaḥ / na tu tasya vāstavasvarūpam / vāstavastu puruṣo'tu mahimno'pi jyāyān / atiśayenaśhikāh} \]

It is this world which is only one fourth of his reality and can be reached out by humans by their sensory organs, other three fourth of him lies beyond the reach of the ordinary people. Sāyaṇa explains

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18 The same idea is also found in the Bhagavadgītā as follows: viṣṭabhyāhamidam kṛtsnamekāṁśena sthito jagat. cf. Bhagavadgītā., X.42.
20 Sāyaṇa on v., 3.
this as follows: \textit{asya puruṣasya viśvā sarvāṇi bhūtāni kālatrayavartīni prānijātāni pādaḥ / caturtho'annyaḥ / asya puruṣasyāvaśiṣṭaṁ tripātsvarūpamamṛtam vināśarahītaṁ saddivi dyotanātmake svapraṅkāśasvarūpe vyavatiṣṭhato iti śesāḥ.} \footnote{Sayāṇa \textit{ibid.}} In this context one may quote the following passage from the \textit{Mundkopanisad} which speaks about the unattainable nature of the Self: \textit{nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā, na bahunā śrutena...} \footnote{cf. MUp., m.2.3a}

The fourth verse of this hymn also conveys the same idea of Puruṣa in a different way. The verse runs as follows: \textit{tripādūrdham udaitpuruṣaḥ pādo syehābhavatpunah / tato viṣvāng vyakrāmatsāsanānaśane abhi // [With three-fourths Puruṣa went up: one-fourth of him again was here. Thence he strode out to every side over what eats not and what eats.]} \footnote{Griffith, R.T.H., \textit{loc.cit.} • -132-}

The word \textit{viṣvāk} in this verse denotes an all round expansion of Puruṣa. The figurative terms \textit{sāśana} and \textit{anaśana} denote \textit{cetana} (conscious or living being) and \textit{acetana} (non-conscious or non-living being) in this verse. The Primeval Being spread out in all directions over all who eat (cetana) and all who do not eat (acetana). This has been done by his one-fourth only because with the remaining three-fourth he went up (ūrdhvam) to heaven and this three fourth is immortal. Commenting on this Sāyaṇa says that the Absolute Being assumed various forms like gods, men and
animals which are capable of enjoyment i.e., who can taste the rewards and punishments of good and evil deeds. He also assumed the forms of those which are incapable of such enjoyments like the mountains, rivers etc. After thus assuming different forms he had spread all around them:

\[
\text{viśvaḥ devamanusyatiryagādirūpena vividhaḥ san vyākrāmat / vyāptavān /}
\]

\[
\text{kiṁ krtvā / sāśanānāsane abhilakṣya / sāśanām bhojanādīvyavahāropetam}
\]

\[
\text{cetanaṁ prāṇijātāṁ / anāsanaṁ tadrahitam cetanaṁ girinadyādikāṁ /}
\]

\[
\text{tadubhayāṁ yathā syāttathā svayameva vividho bhūtvā}
\]

\[
\text{vyāptavānityarthāḥ.}^{24}
\]

Again commenting on the words 'urdham udait, Śāyaṇa says: yo'yan tripātpuruṣaḥ samsārarahito brahmāsvaṁpāḥ

so'yan 'urdhvaṁ udait / asmādajñānakāryātyāṁsārādhvahirbhu陀'trtyair-

\[
\text{gunaśaśarāpṛṣṭa utkārṣena sthitavān //}^{25}
\]

The sum and substance of this verse may be stated as follows- The one fourth of Puruṣa which assumes the forms of different objects is subject to birth and death. The three fourth which spreaded out on all directions, encompassing the material world is beyond the cycle of birth and death and hence immortal. It has no beginning and therefore no end, in other words it is infinite. In Śāyaṇa’s interpretation of the fourth verse of X.90 one can see the influence of \textit{Vedānta} philosophy in which it is held that the world is nothing but the Supreme Consciousness which is under the grip of ignorance or māyā. As

\[^{24}\text{Śāyaṇa on v., 4.}\]

\[^{25}\text{Śāyaṇa \textit{ibid.}}\]
Śāṅkarācārya says, *eka eva parameśvaraḥ kūṭasthānityo vijñānadhāturavidyayā māyayā māyāvidanekadā vibhāvyate.*

While the first four verses of X.90 deals with the nature of the Giant Being, the remaining verses depict the genesis of the world. The fifth verse runs as follows: *tasmādvirādajāyāta virājo adhi puruṣah / sa jāto atyaricyata pacṣādbhūnimimatho purah.* [From Him Virāj was born; again Puruṣa from Virāj was born. As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward o’er the earth.]

Interpreting the word *virāt* Sāyaṇa says: *tasmādipuruṣādvirādbrahmāṇḍadeho jāyata / utpannah.* Again he says: *vividhāni rājante vastūnyatreti virāt* i.e., Virāt is that in which is manifested the multitude of object. It (Virāt) according to Sāyaṇa denotes primordial matter (*Prakṛti*). There are various internal evidences in the Vedas which indicate the same. As it seems, Virāt and Hīranyagarbha are synonymous in the Vedas. As one can see in *RV.* X.121, Hīranyagarbha the first born of the Primeval Being is depicted as *bhūtaprakṛti* i.e., the one in whom all beings are born.

The same idea is met with in the following passages *tasmādvirāt ajāyata* in *Yajurveda* (XIII.4); and in *Atharvaveda* (XIX.9) *virāt agre samabhavata* etc. In this verse it is said that in the

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Sāyaṇa on v., 5.

*ibid.*

prakriyante'syāṁ sarve vikārā iti prakṛtib, sa sattālaksano mahānātmā hiranyagarbha iti, Durga on *Nir.*, 7.4.
bosom of Virāt who was born from the Primeval Being, was born another
Puruṣa, who as it is said in the rest of the verses of the hymn became
directly involved in the creation of the world. This idea finds a parallel in
X.72.4 where it is said that Dakṣa was born from Aditi and again from
Dakṣa Aditi took birth. And she gave birth to the solar deities- the Ādityas.
In this context, it may be recalled that in the Brhadāranyakopaniṣad has
been described the birth of a female counterpart of the self from the
Supreme Self. There it is said that at the beginning of creation there was
nothing but the Self in the form of a Puruṣa (ātmā). He felt lonely and sad
and desired a second. He therefore, split himself into two parts one half
became a male and the other a female. These two halves formed one whole
like the two halves of a split pea. And out of these two who were husband
and wife, all beings from the humans down to the ants were born. It is to
be noted here that the word virāt is in the feminine gender and as such the
concept of Virāt may be explained as representing the Mother Principle or
the Creative Principle. According to the Puruṣa Sūkta, the second Puruṣa
born of Virāt became the diversified world.

In the aforementioned verse it is read that this Vairāja Puruṣa as
soon as he was born he extended westward and eastward over and beyond
the entire earth. Sāyaņa however, interprets the passage as follows: sa jāto
virāt puruṣo 'tyaricyata / atirikto 'bhūt /... paścāt devādīvabhāvādārdham

31 BUp., 1.43, 4.
bhūmim sasarjeti ṣeṣah / atho bhūmisṛṣṭeranantaram teṣām jīvānām purah sasarja / pūryante saptabhīrdhātubhiriti purah śarīrāni.\textsuperscript{32} According to Sāyaṇa, the Vairāja Puruṣa became greater (atirikta) i.e., he expanded himself and became gods, animals, humans and the like. The earth was created from him only after the birth of the entities like the gods and the Jīvas. Thereafter he created the bodies so that the Jīvas may enter into them.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Śrutam}
\end{quote}

The creation of the material world took place when the Puruṣa was offered as \textit{havīś} in a \textit{yajñā} performed by the gods. In Vedic parlance the word \textit{yajñā} besides denoting the sacrificial rituals performed by the humans also denotes the ritual of creation. In the \textit{Ṛksaṁhitā}, \textit{yajñā} has been called \textit{bhūbanasya nābhi} i.e., the source of creation.\textsuperscript{33}

\textit{Yajñā} was performed for the first time by the gods in heaven with Puruṣa as the sacrificial \textit{paśu} and the world was the fruit obtained from that \textit{yajñā}.\textsuperscript{34} This mythical \textit{yajñā} has been described in detail in the \textit{Puruṣa Sūkta} in verse six, seventeen and fifteen. These verses run as follows:

\begin{quote}
yatpuruṣena havīśa devā, yajñanatavata / vasanto asyāṣīdājyaṁ grīṣma idhmah saradhāvah // taṁ yajñāṁ barhiśi prauṣanpuruṣam jātamagratah
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{32} Sāyaṇa on v., 5.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{RV.}, I.164.35.

\textsuperscript{34} The \textit{yajñās} performed by humans are in imitation of this heavenly \textit{yajñā}. In the \textit{Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa}, 3.9.4.2 one come across an etymology of the word \textit{yajñā} where it is said that \textit{yajñā} is a process by means of which in exchange of a certain object is obtained. See, Bora, M., \textit{Facets of Vedic Religion & Culture}, New Delhi, 2009, pp.56, 57.
When Gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusa as their offering, Its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn; summer was the wood. They blamed as victim on the grass Purusa born in earliest time. With him the Deities and all Sadhyas and Rsis sacrificed. ...Seven fencing-sticks had he, thrice seven layers of fuel were prepared, When the Gods, offering sacrifice, bound, as their victim, Purusa. When the gods began the task of spreading out i.e., began the performance of the sacrifice with Purusa as the principal offering, the spring season became the clarified butter, summer became the fuel and autumn other materials meant for offering. In this ritual the Vedi had seven Paridhis. According to Sāyaṇa, the first six Paridhis in this yajña are three around the Āhavaniya in the Aiṣṭika Vedi i.e., the Vedi meant for Iṣṭi and three around the Āhavaniya fire in the Uttara Vedi meant for Soma sacrifice. These six Paridhis along with Aditi make up the seven Paridhis. By the word aditi, Sāyaṇa perhaps has meant the earth around the altar. The seven Vedic metres became the seven Paridhis in the ritual of creation. The twenty one sticks of fuel wood

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35 See, verse 6, 7 & 15. Also see, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit, pp.602, 603.
36 cf. purvam purusasya havilśmānyarūptvena sankalpaḥ / anantaram vasantādināṃjyādyādivišeṣarūptvena sankalpa iti draṣṭavyam, Sāyaṇa on verse 6.
37 The word paridhi is a technical term of three encircling sticks of wood known as madhyamā, dakṣiṇā and uttarā. These are used for encircling the Āhavaniya fire on the west, south and north and are placed before the offerings of oblations. See, Sen, Citrabhanu., A Dictionary Of The Vedic Rituals, Delhi, 2001, p.81.
according to Sāyaṇa were made up of the twelve months, five seasons, the three lokas and the sun.\(^{38}\)

For performing the ritual the sacrificers placed the Puruṣa paśu on the Barhis i.e., the sacrificial grass which was strewn over the Vedi in layers and then the gods consecrated it by sprinkling ājya over it.\(^{39}\) The sacrificers consisted of the gods and the mythical Rṣis. In the verse the gods are referred to as Sadhyas. According to Sāyaṇa, the word sādhyā means srṣṭi sādhanayogyā i.e., gods who are capable of acting as agents in the act of creation. Here it may be recalled that in the Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇa it is said that the Sadhyas were primordial gods who preceded the other gods.\(^{40}\) The mythical sages mentioned in the Veda are the Aṅgiraśas, the Virūpas, the Navagvās and the Daśagvās and the Saptarṣis. All of them are said to have divine origin. They are the souls of heaven. The Navagvās are called the ancient fathers of men and the Daśagvās were the first who have offered oblations.\(^{41}\)

It is interesting to note that in verse 6\(^{th}\) of the hymn the Puruṣa paśu has been referred to as yajña i.e., the creation itself. It seems that Puruṣa has been identified as yajña because he was both the nimittakāraṇa and the upādānakāraṇa of the creation which resulted from the ritual of creation performed by the gods and the ancestral sages.

\(^{38}\) See, Sāyaṇa on v., 15. cf. AB., 1.30.
\(^{39}\) cf. Āpastambihya Śrauta Sūtra., 7.12.9.
\(^{40}\) See, sādhyā vai nāma devehyo devāḥ pūrva ā san, TMB., 25.8.2.
\(^{41}\) See, RV., III.53.7; X.62.5.6; X.130.7; VI.22.2; II.34.12.
In seven verses from eighth to fourteenth have been described the birth of the various objects both sentient and insentient. In the eighth verse is described the birth of animals which are in the air, in the forest and in the villages. The verse runs as follows: 

`tasmādyajñātsarvahutaḥ sambhṛtam prśadājyaṁ / paśuntamścacre vāyavyānāranyāngrāmyānāṁśca ye //`

[From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up. He formed the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and tame.]\(^42\) The implication of the word `sarvahuta` as Sayana says is that the sacrifice in which the Puruṣa who is everything was sacrificed: `sarvatmakah purusah yasmin yajña hūyate so'yam sarvahuta.`\(^43\) The first object that resulted from the `yajña` was `prśadājya`. `Prśadājya` is speckled butter i.e., clarified butter in which is mixed curdled milk. It is interesting to note here that `prśadājya`, in an animal sacrifice is used by the `Samitr` priest to sprinkle the heart of the animal at the time of cutting the different limbs of the animal.\(^44\) The creation of the `prśadājya` was followed by the birth of the birds, and wild and domestic animals. Under the category of wild animals come both herbivores and carnivores. So far as man is concerned in Vedic times he was counted among the domestic animals. In the `Atharvaveda` have been

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\(^42\) Griffith, R.T.H., *op.cit*, p.603.
\(^43\) Sayana on v., 8.
mentioned five kinds of domestic animals viz., cows, horses, men, goats and sheep: \textit{taveme pañca paśavo vibhaktāh gāvo 'vsvāh puruṣāh}...//\(^{45}\)

The next two verses are continuations of the previous verse where the same process of creation is described. These two verses run as follows:

\textit{tasmāyajñātsarvahuta rcah sāmāni jajñire / chandāmsi jajñire tasmādyajustasmādajāyata // tasmāśvā ajāyanta ye ke cobhayādatah / gāvo ha jajñire tasmāttasmājjātā ajāvayah //} [From the great general sacrifice Ṛcas and \textit{Sāma}-hymns were born: There from were spells and charms produced; the \textit{Yajus} had its birth from it. From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth: From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.]\(^{46}\) As can be gathered from the ninth verse the Vedas arose from that very primordial sacrifice. It may be recalled here that in Indian tradition the Vedas are looked upon as divine i.e., not written by mortals. The poets of the hymns are supposed to have received these through their power of extra sensory perception, hence the word \textit{draśṭā} is used to mean a Vedic poet. The chronology of the three primary Vedas as given in this verse is as follows- \textit{Rgveda, Sāmaveda} and \textit{Yajurveda}. The seer of the \textit{Puruṣa Sūkta} says that along with the Vedas the Vedic metres too came out of the sacrifice of ritual performed by the gods. This seems to indicate the important role played by the metres in the Vedic compositions.

\(^{45}\) cf. \textit{AV.}, XII.2.9.

\(^{46}\) See, verse 9&10; and Griffith, R.T.H., \textit{op.cit.}
In the verse 11 are raised a number of questions: yatpuruṣaṁ vyadadhukh katidhā vyakalpayan / mukham kimasya kau bāhū kā āru pādā ucyeṭe [When they divided Puruṣa how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?]

The answers to the above stated questions are given in verses twelve thirteen and fourteen- brahmaṇo 'syā mukhamāśidbāhū rājanyaḥ kṛtah / āru tadasya yadvaisyaḥ paḍbhyaṁ śūdro ajāyata // caṇḍramā manaso jātaścakṣoḥ sūryo ajāyata / mukhādindraścāgniśca prāṇādvyāyurajāyata // nābhyā āśiḍantarikṣaṁ sīrṣo dyauḥ samavartata / paḍbhyaṁ bhūṁir diśaḥ śrotraṭtathā lokān akalpayan // [The Brähman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rājanya made. His thighs became the Vaiśya, from his feet the Śūdra was produced. The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth; Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vāyu from his breath. Forth from his navel came mid-air; the sky was fashioned from his head; Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions. Thus they formed the worlds.]

From the mouth of the Puruṣa came the deities Indra and Agni and also the Brähmin caste. The mouth is the sense organ of speech (vāgindriya) and it plays a vital role in studying, teaching, holding discourses on Vedic learning and reciting Mantras all of which in Vedic

48 See, verse 12, 13 & 14. Also see, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit.
times were the sacred duties of men born into the Brāhmin caste. Hence, the Brāhmīns were thought of as born from the mouth of the Puruṣa. The idea of the birth of Indra and Agni seems to signify the importance of these two deities in Vedic pantheon. Indra happens to be the Vedic god par excellence and Agni plays the most important role in the Vedic ritual both as a deity who is believed to carry the oblations to the deities and as the sacrificial fires without which no ritual was possible.

The Kṣatriya caste was made up of the arms of the primordial Man. The arms of a man symbolize physical strength and the foremost duty of a Kṣatriya was to protect the people from the enemies. The thighs of the Puruṣa became the Vaiśya caste. Vaiśyas were the people engaged in business. They contributed significantly towards the economic condition of a kingdom. Just as the thighs support the upper torso (containing the vital organs) of a man so the Vaiśyas gave support to the kingdom by ensuring its economic stability. The Śūdras were born of the feet of Puruṣa. A man stands on his feet and walks with them. The kingdom in ancient times stood and walked as it were with the help of the Śūdras who offered physical labour and performed the so called lowly works without which a society would in fact collapse.

The mind of the Primordial Man became the moon and his eyes became the sun. Vedic tradition connects the human mind with the moon.49

49 See, JUB., 1.28.5; 2.2.2; 3.27.14; TB., 3.10.8.5; ŚB., 10.3.3.7.
The sun has been looked upon as the eye of the gods and the world in a number of Vedic Mantras.\textsuperscript{50} It may also be recalled that in Rgvedic hymns the sun besides being called the spy of the world has been also referred to as all seeing and far seeing.\textsuperscript{51} He also is a witness to all the good and bad actions of man.\textsuperscript{52}

Vāyu, the god of wind is said to have been produced from the \textit{prāṇa} i.e., the life breath of Puruṣa. Being the product of the \textit{prāṇa} of the Primordial Man, Vāyu in this universe stands as the symbol of cosmic \textit{prāṇa}.\textsuperscript{53} The navel of Puruṣa became the mid region and from his head was born the celestial region. The earth was born from his feet and the worlds from his ears.

Through this heavenly ritual of creation with Puruṣa as the principal offering, not only was the universe created, but along with it the primary laws (\textit{prathamāṇi dharmāṇi}) that govern and sustain the universe were also established.\textsuperscript{54} Thus, in the last verse it is said: \textit{yajñena yajñamayajanta devāstāni dharmāṇi prathamāṇi āsan //} [Gods, sacrificing, sacrificed the victim: these were the earliest holy ordinances.\textsuperscript{55}] Commenting on this

\textsuperscript{50} See, \textit{RV.}, V.50.8; I.115.1; VI.51.1; VII.61.1; VII.77.3; X.37.1. In the \textit{AV.}, V.24.9 the sun is called the lord of eyes.

\textsuperscript{51} See, \textit{RV.}, IV.13.3; VII.356.8; X.37.1; I.50.2.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{ibid.}, I.50.7; VI.51.2; VII.60.2; VII.61.1; VII.63.4.

\textsuperscript{53} See, \textit{SB.}, 10.3.3.7; \textit{KB.}, 8.4; \textit{AB.}, 2.26; 3.2; \textit{TMB.}, 4.6.8; \textit{JUB.}, 1.29.1; 4.22.11 etc.

\textsuperscript{54} In \textit{RV.}, I.164.35 \textit{yajña} is hailed as \textit{bhuvanasya nābhi} i.e., the source of creation. This statement seems to refer to the ritual of creation described in the \textit{Puruṣa Sūkta}. Again in the \textit{ŚB.}, 1.3.4.16 \textit{yajña} is called \textit{ṛtasya yoni} i.e., the source of cosmic law.

\textsuperscript{55} Griffith, R.T.H., \textit{op.cit.}
Sāyaṇa has made the following statement: 

पूर्वम प्रपाण्चनोक्तामरथम् सांक्षिप्यात्रा दर्शयति/ देवाः प्रजापतिप्राणारुपाः यज्ञेनाय यथोक्तेन मानसेना सांकल्पेना यज्ञां यथोक्तयाज्ञास्वरुपां प्रजापतिमायाजांता/ पूजितावंताः/ तस्मात पुजानांति प्रसिद्धाः धर्माः जगार्दपविकारांश्च धार्काः प्रथंमाः मुखायासन।

Here Sāyaṇa points out that through the ritual of creation (यज्ञेना) the gods worshipped the यज्ञा i.e., Puruṣa himself who is यज्ञा incarnate (यज्ञामायाजांता). The implication of this passage is that here the word यज्ञा means the Creation Itself and this Creation is identical with Puruṣa. This has already been clearly stated in the passage: 

पुरुषा एवं इदं सर्वं यद्भूतं याच भव्यं।
C.

HIRANYAGARBHA SŪKTA, X.121

The hymn X.121 of the Rgveda popularly known as Hiranyagarbha Sūkta consists of ten verses written in Trishtubh meter. All the verses of the Rgvedic Hiranyagarbha Sūkta are found scattered over various Adhyāyas of the Śukla Yajurveda. In the Atharvasamhitā this Sūkta reappears in IV.2 with many changes and transposition of words and passages.

The Rṣi of this hymn X.121 is Hiranyagarbha Prajāpati and the deity of this hymn is named as Hiranyagarbha. The hymn ends with a prayer to Prajāpati.1 Sāyaṇa in his commentary clearly states that Hiranyagarbha is Prajāpati: hiranyagarbhaḥ hiraṃmayasyaṃḍasya garbhabhūtaḥ prajāpatir hiranyagarbhaḥ tathā ca taittirīyakam- ‘prajāpatirvai hiranyagarbhaḥ prajāpateranurūpaṃpatvāya’ iti.2 Thus, the subject matter of this hymn is the glorification of Prajāpati- the Lord of all created objects. It may not be out of context to recall here that Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (6.2.2.5) also supports this view and says: prajāpatirvai hiranyagarbhāḥ. It may also be mentioned here that Hiranyagarbha has become an appellation of Brahmā,

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1 cf. prajāpate na tvadetāṇanyo viśvā jātāni pari tā babhūva / yatkāmāste juhumastamo astu vayāṁ syāma patayo rayāṁ hī- RV., X.121.10.
2 Sāyaṇabhāṣya on RV., X.121.1.
the later mystical creator of the world in the Purānic period. The word *ka*
appears in this hymn, in all of its first nine verses, all of which has the refrain *kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema*. While commenting on this refrain Sāyaṇa has forwarded a number of meanings of the word *kasmai* as follows: 

\[\text{kimśabdo'niṛjñātásvarūpatvāt prajāpatau vartate} / \text{yadvā srṣtyarthām kāmayata iti kah} / \text{kāmerḍapratyah} / \text{yadvā kam sukham, tadrūpatvāt ka ityucyate} \]

Commenting on the word *ka* Durgācārya also has said that Prajāpati is known as *ka*, for he is the means of fulfilling all desires: 

\[\text{prajāpatirvai kah} / \text{sa kasmāt kah kāmānah vā kāminām kāmyeśvartheśu sādhanaṁ} / \text{prajāpatirakāmayata' iti bahukāmatvāt kah prajāpatiḥ.} \]

It has been clearly stated in later Vedic texts that the word *ka* refers to Prajāpati.6

Again the implication of the above mentioned passage *kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema* is that the oblation is to be offered only to Hiranyagarbha and to no one else. And although the name Hiranyagarbha occurs only in the first verse of this hymn, the presence of the word *ka* in the other verses implies that in all these verses Hiranyagarbha Prajāpati is worshipped. The hymn starts with the glorification of the birth of Hiranyagarbha. The word *hiranyagarbha*, meaning ‘the golden germ’ is

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3 cf. agre hiranyagarbhaḥ sa prādurbhūtaścaturmukhaḥ //VP.,6.36.
4 cf. Sāyaṇa on ṚV., X121.1. Also see, AB., 3.21.
5 Durgācārya on Nīr., 10.22.
6 cf. ko vai nāma prajāpatih //AB., 6.21; ko hi prajāpatih //ŚB., 6.2.2.5. Also see, AB., 2.38; 6.21; TMB., 7.8.3; TB., 2.2.5.5.
the Supreme God who is referred to as ‘one Lord of all that exists’ (bhūtasya patireka). The verse runs as follows: hiranyagarbhaḥ samavartatāgre bhūtasya jātah patireka āsūt / sa dādhāra prthivīṁ dyāmutemāṁ kasmāi devāya haviṁā vidhema // [In the beginning rose Hiranyagarbha, born Only Lord of all created beings. He fixed and holdeth up this earth and heaven. What God shall we adore with our oblation?]\(^7\)

Sāyaṇa has forwarded different interpretations of the word hiranyagarbha as follows: (i) hiranyagarbhaḥ hirānmayasyānḍya garbhabhūtah prajāpatirhīranyagarbhaḥ, (ii) hirānmayo’ṇḍo garbhavadd yasyodare vartate so’sau sūtrātmā hīranyagarbham ityucate.\(^8\) In this interpretation Hiranyagarbha has been referred as the world soul (sūtrātmā). Here one may also refer to Uvaṭa who says: hiranyagarbhaḥ yo hiranyagarbhākhyah puruṣah.\(^9\) Whereas Mahīdhara says as follows: hiranye hiranyapuruṣarūpe brahmāṇḍe garbharūpenaṣṭhitaḥ prajāpatirhīranyagarbhaḥ bhūtasya prāṇijātasyāgre samavartata prāṇijātoṭpatteḥ purā svayam śarīradhārī babhūva.\(^10\) Hiranyagarbha was thus the first entity to have come into existence. As soon as he was born he became the sole master of all created beings. In other words, he became Prajāpati. Here arises the question: where from was he born? The answer to this question may be sought in the


\(^8\) cf. Sāyaṇa on v., 1.

\(^9\) cf. Uvaṭa on VS., XIII.4; XXIII.1; XXV.10.

\(^10\) cf. Mahīdhara *ibidem.*
following comment made by Śaṅkara: prapañcotpattah prak māyādhiyakṣat sisrksōḥ paramātmanah sakāśāt samajāyata. According to Śaṅkara, Hiranyagarbha was born from the Supreme Reality (Paramātma) who presided over the mortal world as soon as it came into existence. When Paramātma entertained the desire to create, he first of all created Hiranyagarbha out of himself. This implies that Paramātma himself evolved into Hiranyagarbha. This is evident from the fact that in the verses of the hymn, Hiranyagarbha is depicted as presiding over the empirical world (māyādhiyakṣa), imbibing it with life, strength and sustaining it with his prowess. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the first verse of the hymn seems to say that Hiranyagarbha is the prakṛti (the source) of all objects when he says: yadyapi paramātmaiva hiranyagarbhabhastathāpi tadupādhibhūtānām viyadādīnām sūkṣmabhūtānām brahmaṇa utpattestadupahito 'pyutpanna ityucyate. Here Śaṅkara points out that while there is no question of Paramātma being born, the world which manifests itself through him does take birth. Therefore, in the verse the seer speaks about the birth of Hiranyagarbha in the shape of the empirical world. In this context one may refer to the following comment of Durga: prakriyanteśyāṁ sarve vikārā iti prakṛti, sa sattālakṣaṇo mahānāṭma hiranyagarbha iti.12

11 cf. Śaṅkara on v., 1.
12 Durga on Nir., 7.4.
The birth of Hiranyagarbha has been described in verses 7 and 8 of the hymn X.121. In the seventh verse of this hymn is depicted the unstable state of the universe at the beginning of creation by using the symbolism of the waters. As stated in this verse, the embryo of all gods was concealed in the waters. The verse runs as follows, āpo ha yadbṛhatūrviśvamāyahangarbham dadhānā janayantīragnim / tato devānām samavartatāsurekaḥ kasmai devāya havīṣā vidhema // [What time the mighty waters came, containing the universal germ, producing Agni, Thence sprang the God’s one spirit into being. What God shall we adore with our oblation?] As described here, the all pervading waters which were generating tremendous heat (Agni) kept concealed in them the embryo. Out of this embryo was born the one asū i.e., the prāṇa of all the gods. Commenting on it, Śaṅkara says: hiraṇmayāṇḍasya garbhhūtam prajāpatinām dadhānāḥ dhūrayantāḥ āpo ha āpa eva viśvam āyan sarvam jagadvyāpnuvan / yat yasmāt tataḥ tasmādhetoh devaṃ devādinām sarveṣāṁ prāṇinām asūḥ prāṇabhūtah ekāḥ prajāpatiḥ samavartata samajāyata. Thus, as pointed out by Śaṅkara the one asū of the gods was Prajāpati himself. In this context the passage janayatīragnim needs to be explained. Here the generation of Agni seems to mean the creation of heat.

13 Griffith, op.cit, pp.628-629.
14 See, Nir., 1.3. In Ch.III, has been already discussed about the significance of the word asū which is used in the sense of prāṇa in the Rgveda. Again discussion is made on the significance of word āpaḥ which indicates the unstable nature of the universe at the beginning of creation in the same chapter.
15 See, Śaṅkara on v., 7.
The embryo is said to have resulted from the heat created in the so called waters. Here one may refer to a myth found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 11.1.6.1. According to this myth, the primordial waters longed for progeny and started austerity (tapas) with this end in view. As a result of this tapas a golden egg was born. This word tapas in Vedic parlance signifies the generation of heat. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Agni has been actually called tapas: tapo vā'gniḥ.16 Agni as one knows, is golden in colour. Hence, arose the concept of a golden embryo. When Prajāpati is called the asu of all gods i.e., Prajāpati is spoken of as emerging out of this golden egg, the implication appears to be that Prajāpati is thought of as a manifestation of Agni and is therefore, identical with Agni. This idea is supported by statements found in later Vedic texts.17

The eighth verse runs as follows: yaścidāpo mahinā paryapaśyaddaksam dadhānā janayantīḥ yajñāṁ yo deveśvadhi deva eka āsīt kasmai devaḥ haviśā vidhema // [He in his might surveyed the floods containing productive force and generating Worship. He is the God of gods, and none besides him. What God shall we adore with our oblation?]18

As stated in this verse the one asu of the gods i.e., Prajāpati as soon as he arose out of the golden egg (hiranmayo 'ndah), by dint of his greatness

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16 cf. ŠB., 3.4.3.2. Also see, ibid, 8.7.1.5.  
17 cf. agnir vai devatānāṁ mukham prajanayitā sa prajāpatiḥ //ŚB., 3.9.1.6; agnir vai sarveśāṁ devānāmātmā //ŚB., 14.3.2.5; prāṇo vā agnih //ŚB., 9.5.1.68. Also see, eṣa vai prajāpatiḥ/yadagnīḥ //TB., 1.1.5.5; prajāpātreśo agnih //ŚB., 6.5.3.7; 6.8.1.4. Also see, ŚB., 2.3.3.18; 6.2.1.23, 30; 6.5.3.8; 7.2.2.17.  
18 cf. v., 8 & also see, Griffith, op.cit., p.629.
surveyed the waters which pervaded the entire space and which produced
the Yajña (janayantih yajñam) and which contained dexterity (dakṣam
dadhānāḥ). It has already been pointed out (in chapter II) that the word
yajña besides standing for the Vedic ritual is also used to mean both the act
of creation and the Creation Itself. Again the expression that the waters had
in them dakṣa i.e., the dexterity seems to mean that in them there existed
the potency or power of manifesting the creation. Sāyaṇa identifies this
power as Prajāpati who was about to emerge as the world. Commenting on
the eighth verse Sāyaṇa says: yajñam yajnopalakṣitam vikārajātam
janayantih utpādayantistadartham dakṣam prapañcātmanā vardhiṣṇum
prajāpatimātmani dadhānāḥ dhārayitrīḥ /...svamāhātmyena yaḥ śca
prajāpatiḥ paryapasyat parito drṣṭavān.19

When the one asu of all the gods arose he surveyed these waters.
The questions that arise here are 'What was the purpose behind this act of
surveying the waters by Hiranyagarbha? Did he by his might bring forth
the creation out of the existing shapeless chaos which was called 'the
waters'? Does Hiranyagarbha’s act of surveying the waters mean that he
was looking for the creation (yajña) that was lying hidden in the waters? It
may be mentioned here that Phillips believes that the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta

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19 See, Sāyaṇa on v., 8.
suggests that the creator created the world from shapeless pre-existing matter.\(^{20}\)

In the verses 2 and 3, Hiranyagarbha is described as the bestower of the self and vitality in all living beings, he is the one whose command the gods obey, whose shadow is death and immortality. It is he who is the sole lord of men, beasts etc. The verses run as follows: *ya ātmadā baladā yasya viśva upāsate praśīṣam yasya devāḥ / yasya chāyāmrētaḥ yasya mṛtyuḥ kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema // yahi prāṇato nimiṣato mahitvaika īḍrājā jagato babhūva / ya īṣe asya dvipadaścatuspadaḥ kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema //* [Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour, he whose commandments all the Gods acknowledge: The Lord of death, whose shadow is the life immortal. What God shall we adore with our oblation? Who by his grandeur hath become Sole Ruler of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers; He who is Lord of men and Lord of cattle. What God shall we adore with our oblation?]\(^{21}\) Hiranyagarbha is the bestower of the soul in beings for, it is he who is the one *asu* of all and hence the source of all life. In this context may be quoted the following passage from the *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad* (2.1.20.): *sa yathorṇanābhiś tantunoccare*,
yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphulingā vyuccaranti, evam evāsmād ātmanah sarve prāṇāḥ, sarve lokāḥ, sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti.  

Where there is life there is physical strength and inner strength. Therefore, Hiranyagarbha is called baladā. Commenting on the word ātmādā, Sāyaṇa says as follows: ātmāṁ dātā / ātmano hi sarve tasmāt paramātmana utpadyante. There is another interpretation given by him as follows: ātmanāṁ sodhayitā. 23 Regarding the word baladā he says balasya ca dātā sodhayitā va. 24 The implication of it seems to be that, Hiranyagarbha is the giver of the self (which is inherently pure) and of inner strength which is unimpaired. Being the bestower of life and vitality, as described in the first verse, Hiranyagarbha became the sustainer and the lord of the entire creation. Commenting on the first verse Sāyaṇa says: sa ca jātaḥ jātāmātra eva ekaḥ advitiyaḥ san bhūtasya vikārajātasya brahmāṇḍādeḥ sarvasya jagataḥ patiḥ iśvara āsīt / na kevalaṁ ekaḥ patirāśideva api sar hiranyagarbhaḥ prthivīṁ vistirnāṁ dyāṁ divaṁ uta api ca imāṁ asmābhir dhṛṣṭyamānāṁ purovartinīṁimāṁ bhūmīṁ / yadvā prthivyāntarikṣanāma / antarikṣan divaṁ bhūmīṁ ca dādhaṁ  

22 Also see, yathāgner jvalataḥ sarvā dīśo visphulinga vipratisṭheran, evamevaśaṁdātmanah sarve prāṇāḥ yathāyatanam vipratisṭhante, prāṇebhyo devā debebhyo lokāḥ //KUp., III.3; yathā sudiptat pāvakaḍ visphulingaḥ sahasraśaḥ prabhavante sarūpāḥ / tathāksarādvividhāḥ somya bhāvāḥ prajāyante tatra caivaśānti //MUp., II.1.1.

23 See, Sāyaṇa on v., 2. According to him, ātman-yaḍā+vṛc=ātmadā, ātman+daip śodhane+vṛc=ātmadā.

24 ibid.
It may not be out of context to recall here that in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa also it is said that Prajāpati (who is identified as Hiranyakagarbha) is the lord of the world; bhuvanasya hyaiṣa patiḥ prajāpatiḥ; dhārakaḥ ha vai nāmaśa.26

In the second verse of the hymn, quoted above Hiranyakagarbha Prajāpati is said to have under his control both immortality and mortality. He in fact is life (āmrta) itself27 and death which is the opposite of immortality is his shadow.28 In this context may be quoted a verse from the Atharvasamhitā, IV.2.2.in which occurs the passage: yasya cchāyāāmrtaṁ yasya mṛtyuḥ Commenting on the passage Sāyana says: yasya devasya āmrtaṁ maraṇābhāvopalaksitam āmrtaṁ vartate / mṛtyuḥ maraṇam sarvajanasambandhi chāyeva yasya varttate. Thus, the implication of the passage according to Sāyana is that both life and death are under the control of Hiranyakagarbha. Just as the shadow of a human being is under his control (sva adhīna) so are āmrtaṁ and mṛtyu are under the control of the Creator God. Such is the might of Hiranyakagarbha who is the sole king of all that the entire creation including the gods abides by his command (prāśaṁ). All the living beings both two footed and four footed have Hiranyakagarbha as their sole ruler. It may be mentioned here that the

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26 cf. ŚB., 9.4.1.16; 11.6.2.10.
27 cf. praśataṁ vā mṛtyuḥ //ŚB., 6.3.1.17. The word āmrta means na mṛta and thus stands for life.
28 In later Vedic texts Prajāpati is identified with death itself. cf. anto vai praśataṁ //ŚB., 5.1.3.13; eṣa vai mṛtyuḥ yat praśataṁ prabhūmāneva nāma //JB., 1.
The contents of the next three verses are continuations of the above two verses where the greatness of Prajāpati is described. The verses are as follows:

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yasyema himavanto mahitvā yasya samudram rasayā sahāhūḥ /
yasyemāḥ pradiṣo yasya bāhū kasmāi devāya haviṣā vidhema // yena
dyaururgrā prthivī ca ēṛjēh yena svāh stabhitam yena nākah / yo antarikṣe
rajaso vimānaḥ kasmāi devāya haviṣā vidhema // yam krandaśī avasā
tastabhāne abhyaikṣetām manasā rejamāne / yatradhi sūra udito vibhāti
kasmāi devāya haviṣā vidhema // [His, through his might, are these snow-
covered mountains, and men call sea and Rasā his possession: His arms are
these, his are these heavenly regions. What God shall we adore with our
oblation? By him the heavens are strong and earth is steadfast, by him
light’s realm and sky-vault are supported: By him the regions in mid-air
were measured. What God shall we adore with our oblation? To him,
supported by his help, two armies embattled look while trembling in their
spirit, When over them the risen Sun is shining. What God shall we adore
with our oblation?] ³⁰
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In verse 4 it is said that the range of snow-covered mountains came into existence through the might of Hiranyagarbha, so did the ocean which

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29 See, RV., X.125.4a
30 cf. v., 4, 5&6. And also see, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit.
is continuously fed by the waters of the rivers (rasayā). The four directions including the interim directions known as Agni, Vāyu, Nairta and Isāna are like the mighty arms of Hiraṇyagarbha. It is Hiraṇyagarbha who has made the heaven majestic and the earth steadfast. By him the realm of light and the vault of the sky are upheld. It is he who creates the water-bearing clouds in the mid-region. Both heaven and earth (krandasī) which are supported by him, look up to him at sun rise, with trembling mind. The word used in verse 6 to denote heaven and earth is krandasī and it is a synonym of rodasī. Heaven and earth are called krandasī and rodasī because these are filled with the cries of the warriors in battle fields. The purport of the statement that krandasī look up to Hiranyaagarbha with trembling mind may be that rival armies who are about to start fighting at sun rise tremble with fear, with death hovering above them, and thus being overpowered by fear they look up to their sole lord for help, support and deliverance from fear.

In the ninth verse there is a supplication that may Hiraṇyagarbha, the creator of heaven and earth, and of the vast sparkling waters not harm his worshippers. In this verse Hiraṇyagarbha has been referred to as satyadharma which seems to mean the one who rules by fixed ordinances which are infallible. Commenting on the word satyadharma Sayana indeed has made the following comment: satyamavitatham dharanam yasya sa tādrśah prajāpatih. The ninth verse runs as follows:
mā no himśūjanītā yah prthivyā yo vā divāṁ satyadharmā jajāna /
yāsccāpaścandrā brhatirjajāna kasmāi devāya haviśā vidhema //
[Ne’er may he harm us who is earth’s Begetter, nor he whose laws are sure, the
heaven’s Creator, He who brought forth the great and lucid waters. What
God shall we adore with our oblation?]31

All the nine verses quoted and discussed above, as it has already
been mentioned, end with the refrain kasmāi devāya haviśā vidhema. This
meaningful refrain has served the purpose of deepening the tone and tenor
of the hymn, which seeks to tell the world that there is but One God who
rules and sustains the entire creation. While the word kasmāi on one hand
means prajāpataye hiranyagarbhāya, on the other hand it implies that
‘What God other than Hiranyagarbha indeed is there whom man may
worship?’

The tenth verse with which the hymn ends runs as follows:
prajāpate na tvadetānyayo viśvā jātāni pari tā babhūva /
yatkāṃste jhumastanno astu vayam syāma patayo rayānāh //
[Prajāpati! thou only comprehendest all these created things, and none besides thee. Grant us our
heart’s desire when we invoke thee: may we have store of riches in
possession.]32

32 Griffith, R.T.H., ibid.
In this verse Hiranyagarbha has been directly addressed as Prajāpati. Here the worshipper says that there is no god other than Prajāpati by whom the entire universe consisting of living and non-living being has been encompassed. This statement reminds one of the following passages from Īsopaniṣad (1a): iśāvasyam idam sarvam yat kimca jagatyāṁ jagat. The hymn ends with a prayer that may Hiranyagarbha bestow upon the worshippers their desired goals so that they may become the masters of all riches.
D.

VĀK SŪKTA, X.125

The Rgvedic hymn X.125 which is popularly known as Vāgāṃbhṛṇīya Sūkta is presented in the form of a speech delivered by the mistress of the world. It is one of the rare hymns which consist of Rks known as Ādhyātmika Mantras. Yāśka has defined Ādhyātmika hymns in Nirukta (7.12) as follows:

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\text{athādhyātmikya uttamapuruṣayogāḥ / aham iti caitena sarvanāmāyah yathaitadindro vaikuṇṭhī lavasūktān vāgāṃbhṛṇīyamātī //}
\]

Hence, as stated by Yāśka, this Vāgāṃbhṛṇīya Sūkta and the other two hymns which are dedicated to Vaikuṇṭha Indra (X.48,49), and the Lava Sūkta (X.119) come under the category of Ādhyātmika hymns. According to the definition of Yāśka, in Ādhyātmika hymns a divinity proclaims his or her greatness or supremacy. Thus, Yāśka has not meant the hymns which contain philosophical ideas or speculations by using the word ādhyātmika. As one can see the contents of the afore said hymns X.48, 49 and 119 are certainly not philosophical in nature.

In the Atharvasaṃhitā this Sūkta reappears in IV.30 with many changes and transpositions of words and passages. According to Durga, Vāk is the deity of RV., X.125. As stated by him, Vāk (the personified speech) denotes the Vedic Mantras recited by the priests in the course of
performance of sacrifices.\(^1\) The Śr̥ṣṭi Commentator Veṅkaṭamādhava also has a similar view regarding this hymn. Whereas according to Śaṇḍīka, Ambhrni Vāk, the brahmavidusī daughter of seer Ambhrṇa is the seer as well as the deity of this hymn containing philosophical notions. According to Śaṇḍīka, in this hymn the goddess Ambhrni Vāk identifies herself with the all-pervading Supreme God (paramātmā) and praises herself as the substratum and source of all that is to become. Śaṇḍīka says, saccit- sukhamakah sarvagataḥ paramātmā devatā / tena hyesā tādāmyamanubhavantī sarvajagadrūpeṇa sarvasyādhiṣṭhānatvena cāhameva sarvam bhavāmīti svātmānam stauti //\(^2\) This very idea has been expressed in later Brahmanical and Upaniṣadic literature too. In the Īśāṅa śaṁhitā (8.1.2.6) it is said, vācā hi idam sarvakṛtam ; in Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6.1) it is said, vācārambhānām vikāro nāmadheyām whereas in the Jāminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa (2.8.6) it is said vāgiti brāhma.\(^3\)

One can also notice that the name of the seer of this hymn viz., Ambhrṇa Vāk i.e., the daughter of Ambhrṇa appears to be a very significant one. Though one cannot find this name of the seer in the Śr̥ṣṭi Commentator, and in the Nighante (3.3), the word ambhrṇa appears among the synonyms

\(^1\) Durga on Nīra, 7.2.
\(^2\) Śaṇḍīka on X.125.1.
\(^3\) Also see, vāgbrahma, GB., 1.2.10; vāgvaibrahma, AB., 6.3., ŚB., 2.1.4.10; vāgādhībrahma, AB., 2.15; prajāpatīr hīvāk, TB., 1.3.4.5.
of the words *mahat* and *brhat*.* Here, one may recall that commenting on this word which has once occurred in one of the hymns of the *Rgveda* (1.133.5) Śaśāṇa has said as follows: *atibhayāṅkaraṁ śabdāyamānaṁ, bhraṇa śabde...yadvātiprabṛddham.* According to Yāśka’s science of etymology, the word *brahman* also is used to mean *atiprabṛddham.* This very word *brahman* which occurs in the *Nighaṇṭu* (1.8) has been explained by Yāśka as, *brahma prabṛḍhvam sarvataḥ.* The word has been explained in the *Viśvakoṣa* as follows, *bṛṇhati vardhate niratiśayamaha-tvalaksanavrddiman bhavati.* In this context, one can also refer to *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (2.2.9.4) where it has been said that heaven and earth, the two worlds are jointly known as *Rodasī* because *Brahman,* the creator of the whole universe had filled these two worlds with his terrible cry at the very beginning of creation. Again one can also notice that Vāk has been presented as the second Self as well as the embodiment of the very greatness of the creator in later Vedic literature. There is another passage in *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (2.2.8.5) where Goddess Vāk is described as the immortal first born of *Rta.* She has been addressed as the mother of the Vedas and the very source of immortality to whom one can offer oblations in the rituals. There is another Vedic text where it has been said that

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5 *Nir.,* 1.8.
6 *Viśvakoṣa,* Vol. 13, p.141.
7 *cf praṇāparit vā idameka āśīt tasya vāgeva svamāśīdvāgadvīṭīyā, Kāṭhakasamhitā, 12.5; vāgyā asya svo mahimā, SB., 2.2.4.4.
Goddess Vāk was produced by Prajāpati so that she may be omnipresent and be the impeller of all.8

Sāyaṇa is of the opinion that in the first two verses of the hymn, the goddess Vāk having realized the fact that she and Brahman which the primary cause of the universe are one and the same declares that she has manifested herself as all the groups of deities like the Rudras, Vasus, the Ādityas, the Viśvedevas and as the dual divinities like Indragrni, Mitra-Varuṇau and the two Aśvinas. Thus, Sāyaṇa says, ahām sūktasya draṣṭrī vāgāṃbhṛṇī yadbrahma jagatkāraṇām tadrūpā bhavanī rudrebhī rudrairekadasabhī /...tadātmanā carāmi / evam vasubhirityādau tattadātmanā carāmīḥ yojyam ///9 In the same way, the single deities like Soma, Tvaṣṭr, Pūṣan, Bhaga are but her manifestations. She is the upholder of the universe. All the gods are sustained and powered by her to carry on their activities. The purport of this according to Sāyaṇa is that she is the only Reality behind the world. The world is nothing but an illusory projection. It is superimposed on her like the superimposition of silver on oyster: mayi hi sarvam jagacchuktau rajatamivādhyaśtam sad drśyate ///10 It is goddess Vāk who assumes the forms of various deities and grants the sacrificers the fruits of the rituals performed by them: ahām dadhāmi

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8 cf. KS., 12.5.
9 See, Sāyaṇa on X.125.1.
10 See, Sāyaṇa on ibid.
dravīnaṁ hāvīsmate / suprāvye yajamāṇāya suṇvate // [I load with wealth the zealous sacrificer who pours the juice and offers his oblation.]11

For the sake of Rudra, she stretches the bow so that Rudra may destroy with his arrow the enemy of the holy prayer (brahmadvīsa): ahāṁ rudrāya dhanurā tanomi / brahmadvīṣe śarave hantavā u ।।12. For protecting the humans, she fights in battles. This statement seems to mean that Vāk dwells in every warrior and impels him to fight in the battle field.

Whomever she wants to make valorous (ugra) to him, she gives mental and physical strength. And it is Vāk who makes a person a priest (the brahmā), a seer (rṣī) and the man of intellectual excellence (sumedhā):

yāṁ kāmaye tam 'taṁ ugrāṁ kṛnomi tam brahmāṇāṁ tamṛṣīṁ tam su'medhāṁ ।।13 Humans eat, see, breath, and hear because of her: mayā so annamatti yo vipākyati yah prāṇiti ya im śrṇotyuktam ।।14 The purport of this passage is that humans function only because of her. In this passage as it appears Vāk has been spoken of as the life-principle i.e., prāṇa. In this context, one would like to refer to the following statement of Nikhilananda: 'It (prāṇa) denotes the vital organs, the breathing, and also the life principle which animates the vital organs...when the prāṇa begins

12 See, v., 6a. It is to be noted here that while commenting upon the first half of the verse, Sāyaṇa has taken recourse to the Paurāṇik legend Tripura Vijaya and thus had ignored the historicity of a Vedic passage.
13 See, v., 5b.
14 See, v., 4a.
to work, all the organs work.\textsuperscript{15} Prāna is the power by virtue of which organisms live and when it leaves them the living beings turn into corpses. In the \textit{Chāndogya Upaniṣad} it has been indicated that all living beings are nothing but prāṇa.\textsuperscript{16} Śaṅkarācārya has called this prāṇa the prajñānātman i.e., the conscious self which enters the inanimate bodies to manifest a variety of animate beings.\textsuperscript{17} It may not be out of context to recall here that while in \textit{Kausitakī Upaniṣad}, 1.5; 2.1. & 2, prāṇa is identified with Brahman. In the \textit{Chāndogya Upaniṣad} (3.18.4.), it is said that prāṇa constitutes one-fourth of Brahman: prāṇa eva brahmaṇas caturthah pādaḥ // It is by virtue of the fact that Vāk dwells in every living being that she has been called bhūristhātrā (one who exist in many places) and bhūryāveśayantī (one who has entered into many).

Another aspect of the characteristic of Vāk to be taken into consideration is that while in the seventh verse in the hymn, it is said that Vāk exists in the entire universe: vi tiṣthe bhuvanānu viśvā, in the eighth verse she declares that she pervades the whole world and at the same time extends beyond it like the wind: ahameva vāta iva pra vāmyārabhamānā bhuvanāni viśvā / paro divā para enā prthivyāḥ // \textsuperscript{18} As it has been pointed out by Nikhilananda, prāṇa besides being the life principle in individuals, is also a cosmic principle. And because of its pervasive nature, in the

\textsuperscript{15} Swami Nikhilananda., \textit{The Upanishads}, New York, 1963, p.52.
\textsuperscript{16} See, \textit{CUp.}, 7.15.1 & 3.
\textsuperscript{17} Śaṅkarācārya on \textit{ibid}, 7.15.1.
\textsuperscript{18} See, v., 8.

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Upaniṣads it is identified with Vāyu. In this context, one may quote a verse from the Kathopanisad (II.2.10.) where Vāyu has indeed been spoken of as a symbol of the inner self as follows: vāyur yathaiko bhuvanam praviṣṭo rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo babhūva, ekas tathā sarvabhūtāntaratmā rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo bahiś ca // [As air which is one, entering this world becomes varied in shape according to the object (it enters). So also the one Self within all beings becomes varied according to whatever (it enters) and also exists outside (them all)]

The purport of the above stated depictions of goddess Vāk seems to be that, the seer of the hymn who is Vāk herself tells the people that she is both immanent and transcendent. Thus, in these passages one finds the seed of the idea of an all pervading entity propounded in the Upaniṣadic texts. Śaṅkara therefore has said, diva ākāśasya parastāt...prthivyāḥ paraḥ parastāt / dyāvāprthivyorupādānamupalaksanām / etadupalaksitatsarvādvikāraśajātapatrastādvartamaṁvāmaṁgodāśīnakūṭastha brahmacaitanyarūpāhan mahinā mahimnā etāviati sam babhūva //

In the seventh verse Vāk says: aham suve pitaramasya mūrdhan // Commenting on this Śaṅkara says, pitaram divam aham suve / prasuve / janayāmi / ātmanā ākāsah saṁbhūtah iti śruteḥ / kutreti tadāha / asya paramātmano mūrdhanmūrdhanyupari / kāraṇabhūte tasminhi

19 Swami Nikhilananda., op.cit, p.52. cf. vāyuh prāṇah, MaUp., 1.4; prāṇāvai vāyuḥ, MaUp., 3.3.
21 See, Śaṅkara on X.125.8.
Dyoloka has often been referred to as the father in the Rgveda. And the earth has been looked upon as the mother of all earthly creatures. Hence, they are jointly been given the epithets mātaraus, pitarau, and jānitr meaning parents, besides their separate epithet like pitā and mātā.\footnote{cf. RV., I.159.2; I.159.3; I.185.10, 11; VII.53.2; I.185.6; I.160.2; VI.70.6.} In the above quoted passages from Śāyaṇa, he said that the dyoloka has been created by Vāk on the head of paramātman. And thus, in this context, he contradicts his earlier observations on Vāk to the effect that she is identical with paramātman\footnote{See, Śāyaṇa on v., 1.} by projecting her as an entity different from paramātman. Śāyaṇa however has offered an alternative and more acceptable explanation of the same passage as follows: yādvā asya bhūlokasya mūrdhan mūrdhanyupari aham pitaram ākāśam suve // Heaven and earth are together looked upon as one entity called by the terms āyavāprthivī and rodaśī. They form the two semi-spherical halves which make up one sphere within which lies the whole creation. The two are compared to two bowls which are turned towards each other.\footnote{See, RV., II.27.15; III.55.20.} It may not be out of context to state here that on a number of occasions the pair dyāvāprthivau is depicted in the Rksamhitā as husband and wife.\footnote{ibid, I.164.33; I.185.10, 11; I.191.6; VI.70.6. etc.} It has been also said that this pair preserves all living beings everywhere with blessings.\footnote{ibid, I.185.9, 10; VII.53.3.}
The origin of Vāk is said to be in the waters within the ocean: *mama yonirapasv’antaḥ samudre* /\(^{27}\) According to Sāyaṇa, the passage means *samudravantyasmād bhūtajātānīti samudraḥ paramātmā / tasmin apsu vyāpanaśīlāsu dhīrīttisvāntarmadhye yadbrahma caitanyam tanmama kāraṇamityarthāḥ //* According to Sāyaṇa, the word *samudra* means *paramātmā* out of whom everything arises (*samudravanti*) and the word *āpāh* denotes the all pervasive intellectual faculty (*vyāpanaśīlādhiṛitti*). According to him, she is born of the Supreme Consciousness (*brahmacaitanya*) which pervades the entire creation.

It may be noted in this context that the unstable state of the universe at the beginning of creation has been described in the *Hiranyagarbha Sūkta* (X.121.7.) by using the symbolism of the waters. In this hymn, it is said that the embryo of all gods was contained in the waters. These all pervading waters may be called the *samudra* for out of that embryo arose the gods and subsequently all the beings: *garbham hiraṇmayāṇḍasya garbhahūtam prajāpatim dadhānā dhārayantuḥ āpāh ha āpa eva viśvān āyan sarvaṁ jagadvyāpnuvan / yat yasmāt tataḥ tasmāddhetoḥ devānāṁ devādīnāṁ sarveśāṁ prāṇināṁ asūḥ prāṇabhūta ekaḥ prajāpatih samavartata samajāyata //\(^{28}\)

In this hymn, in the third verse, goddess Vāk has described herself with the following words: *aham rāṣṭrī samgamanī vasūnāṁ cikituṣī*

\(^{27}\) cf. v., 7a.

\(^{28}\) See, Sāyaṇa on *RV*, X.121.7.
prathamā yajñīyānāṁ. The word rāstrī occurs only thrice in the Rksamhita. In VII.4.5, the word is used as an epithet of Vāyu. Śaṅkara in this case has interpreted the word as follows: vāyu iva rāstrī īśvaranāma etat, rāstrīm rājyaṁ tadvānvaṁyuryathā sarvanūṣṭe tadvatsarvasya īśvarah.

In VIII.100.10, the word is an epithet of Vāk (speech) who is called rāstrī devānāṁ and Śaṅkara has interpreted it as rājanaśīlā devānāṁ i.e., ‘the shining one among the gods’. In his commentary on the Vāk Sūkta while Śaṅkara interprets the word as īśvara nāma etat, Veṅkaṭatīmādhava gives the word īśitī as the meaning of rāstrī. In the light of these interpretations of the word, it can be said that the all powerful omnipresent and omniscient goddess Vāk has been rightly given the epithet rāstrī i.e., the mistress of the world of the immortals as well as mortals. Being the mistress of the world she becomes vasūnāṁ samgamanī i.e., ‘the gatherer of treasure’. Śaṅkara has interpreted the word vasūnāṁ simply as the treasure resulting from the performance of sacrifices. However, as one knows there is a group of Vedic gods known as the Vasus and this group has been mentioned in the very first verse of the Vāk Sūkta, along with the Rudras. The number of the Vasus in the Rksamhita has not been clearly depicted. In VII.10.4, the Vasus are associated with Agni and in VII.35.6 with Indra. In later Vedic texts, the group seems to have been identified with Agni by referring to the close associations of the groups with gāyatrī metre,
prātaḥsvaṇanāṃ and vasanta rtu.²⁹ If considered in the light of this factor Vāk becomes the gatherer of all the gods. This is because in the Rgveda Agni has been identified with all the gods and also has been called the origin of all gods.³⁰ It may not be out of context to recall here that in later Vedic texts, the Vasus has been identified as prāṇa. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.16.1) it is said prāṇa vāva vasavaḥ ete hīḍam sarvam vāsayanti whereas in the Brhadāraṇyakopanisad (3.9.3) one finds the following statement: eteṣu hīḍam sarvam hitam iti, tasmād vasava iti. In the same vein, it is said in Jaiminīya Upaniṣad (4.2.3) prāṇā vai vasavaḥ / prāṇā hīḍam sarvam vasvādatte. From this it follows that Vāk may be called the gatherer of all life. In the ultimate analysis, the phrase vasūnāṁ saṁgamanī may be construed to mean that Vāk is an entity which gathers in itself all the deities and all the beings.

So far as the epithet cikitusī (the knower) is concerned, the term seems to refer to the omniscient nature of Vāk. Sāyaṇa however, has interpreted the word as yat sāksātkartavyaṁ param brahma taj jñāvatī. She becomes the foremost among the deities that deserves oblations in the rituals: prathamā yajñīvānām, by virtue of the fact that she is the manifestation or receptacle of all the gods.³¹

²⁹ cf.TMB.,1.2.7; GB.,2.9; ŠB.,4.3.5.1;4.6.5.1;14.1.1.15; TS.,1.5.11.3;2.6.19.1; KB.,16.1,31.
³⁰ cf. AB., 1.1; 2.3; 1.22.
³¹ See, RV., X.125.6.
It may not be out of context to state here that according to the *Nighantu* (1.1 & 11; 2.11 & 3.30) the word Vāk occurs among the synonyms of Aditi, Prithvī, Go and Dyāvāpṛthivī also. Sāyaṇa says that the word *aditi* means *adīnā akhyāndanāyā vā.*32 Yāṣka in his *Nirukta* (4.22) gives the meaning of the word *aditi* as *adīnā* i.e., undecaying or undiminishing. In the *Rksamhitā* she is hailed as the mother of the Ādityas.33 She has been associated with almost all the Rgvedic deities.34 It is very interesting to note that in *Rksamhitā* (I.89.10) Aditi has been identified as the entire world. The verse runs as follows:

\[
\text{aditir dyauraditirantarikṣamaditir mātā sa pitā sa putraḥ} / \\
\text{viśvedevā aditir pañcajanā aditir jātamanit jnanitvam} //
\]

In this verse, goddess Aditi has been identified as male, female and neutral. She has been called the father, the mother and the son in the same breath. It has also been said that she is all the regions, all the gods and the five races of man. More importantly it is declared in this verse that she is all that has been born and will be born. Thus, in this verse Aditi is worshipped as a deity who is identical with the entire creation and at the same time who as a goddess transcends the visible world. It may be recalled here that Skandāsvāmin has offered a philosophical interpretation

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32 cf. Sāyaṇa on *ibid*, I.89.10.
33 cf. *RV.*, X.72.8-9; X.165.3 and Sāyaṇa on *ibidem*.
34 *ibid*, I.89.10; 95.11; 96.9; 100.19; 101.11; 102.11; 103.8; 105; 107.3 etc.
of the concept of Aditi by saying adhyātmanā a dītā prakṛtiḥ.35 As a matter of fact, in the Kathopanisad (II.1) and Brhadāraṇyakaopanisad (1.2.5), Aditi has been depicted as prāṇa of all living creatures. She is made up of all the gods who are the mighty manifestations of the universal life-force which pervades and activates the entire creations. In the Rgvedic invocations of Aditi as an imperishable deity one may see the precursor of the concept of the mighty goddess Vāk of Ṛksamhitā.36

According to Phukan, in the concept of Vāk one may find the essence of all the Śāstras.37 The very idea of an omnipotent and omniscient goddess contains in it, the seed of the Sāmkhya concept of the creative potency of Prakṛti.

Keith has drawn some parallel between the concept of Brahmanaspati the god of prayer (brahman) and that of goddess Vāk. He holds that through the personality of Brahmanaspati has been expressed ‘the mighty power of the prayer to secure the ends of man’ and that this very idea has also been expressed in the hymn to Vāk where she is glorified as ‘speech, as the supporter of the world, as the companion of the gods and the foundation of religious activity...’38 One however feels that

35 cf. Skandavāmin on Nir., 4.22.
36 cf. RV., X.125.
38 See, Keith, A.B., The Religion And Philosophy of The Veda And Upanishads, 1925, Second Indian Reprint Delhi, 1976, p.438.
this hymn becomes known as *Vāk Sūkta* because it is through the vāk (speech) delivered by the goddess herself that her nature has been revealed to man, in this hymn. As the hymn becomes known as *Vāk Sūkta* the goddess depicted in it too is called as *Vāk*. 
Hymn X.129 of the Rgveda is known as the Násadīya Sūkta. In the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa this Sūkta reappears in 8.9 with many changes and transpositions of words and passages. It is a remarkable hymn in which one gets a very good idea of Vedic cosmogony as it was conceived by the seer of the hymn. This hymn occupies a unique place among the philosophical hymns of the Vedas. It has for its deity the Universal Self (paramātman) and as per tradition its seer is Prajāpati himself. According to Śāyaṇa in the hymn has been described the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe:

\[ \text{viyadādibhāvānāṁ srṣṭisthitāpralāyādīnāmatra} \]

It is to be noted here that according to Indian tradition the universe keeps moving in a cycle of creation, sustenance and dissolution. At the end of an epoch it gets annihilated and is reborn at the beginning of the next epoch.

In the first verse of the hymn, the seer presents a deliberation on the state of affairs before the birth of the universe. Before its birth the entire creation remains merged in the Absolute in whom it remains in a state of inaction and without any sign of life. This state of quiescence is known as pralaya-vasthā (the state of dissolution). Thus Śāyaṇa says: \textit{agre srṣṭih}
The first verse of the hymn runs as follows: nāsadāśītno sadāsītadānīṁ nāsīdrajo no vyoma paro yat / kimāvarivāḥ kuha kasya īśarmannāmbhaḥ kimāśīḍgahanam gabhīraṁ \ [Then was not non-existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it. What covered in, and where? And what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?]¹

When the universe remained merged in the Absolute there existed neither the manifest (sat) nor the unmanifest (asat). According to Vedic seers, the manifest world was born from the unmanifest: devānāṁ pūrvye yuge asataḥ sadajāyata.² But here it is said that even the asat out of which the sat evolves was not there in the pralayāvasthā. This seems to mean that even Prajāpati or Puruṣa who is both the nimittakāraṇa and the upādānakāraṇa of the world too was not there. The implication of this will be that even Prajāpati remained merged in the Absolute when the universe was in the state of dissolution. Thus, Śāyaṇa says: tadanīṁ pralayadaśāyāmavasthitam yadasya jagato mūlakāraṇaṁ tannāsacchaśaśaśaśavānirūpākhyam nāsit / na hi tādṛśātkaṇāṇādasya sato jagata uthatīḥ sambhavati. It was a state in which there was no aerial space and what ever could have existed beyond space too was not there nor did the worlds (rajāṁsti) exist. The seer of the verse raises three loaded

² cf. RV., X.72.2.
Commenting on the statement tamo āsīt etc. Sāyaṇa seems to say that the implication of this passage is that, at that time the universe made up of nāma and rūpa being covered by impenetrable tamas remains hidden and thus is totally unknowable: tasyāṁ daśāyāṁ nāmarūpabhyāṁ vispaṣṭaṁ na jñāyat iti tādātmyavarṇanam. (the tādātmya spoken here is that of the dormant world and the veil of pitch darkness).

In the second pāda of the verse the seer tries to give an idea of the implication of what has been said in the first pāda. He says that the world before its creation remains beyond human knowledge and is as it were, hidden in pitch black darkness because it stays merged in the Absolute: apraketaṁ salilam sarvamā idaṁ. Sāyaṇa interprets the word apraketa as prajñayamānam i.e., unknowable. The reason behind this according to him is that the world remains merged in its primary cause and thus cannot be distinguished: salilam sala gatau ...idaṁ drṣyamānam sarvam jagat salilam kāraṇena saṁgatam avibhāgāpannam āh āsīt.

In the last part of the verse is stated the beginning of the process of creation. When the time comes for starting the creation of the mortal world, the all encompassing (ābhū) Absolute modifies itself and evolves into a dimensional form or finite form which is smaller or inferior (tucchya), than the Absolute which is infinite and as such beyond all measure. In the language of the seer poet, for creating the mortal world the Absolute as it
questions which seem to contain the answers in themselves. The first question consists of three parts: ‘what was the covering? where was it and what gave shelter and for whom?’ The obvious answer to these questions is there was neither any cover nor anything which could have needed a covering and consequently there was no question of any shelter. According to Sāyaṇa, the āvaraṇa is a symbol of the bhoktā jīva who for the sake of fulfilling its desire for sensual enjoyment covers the material world. This bhoktājīva which is the āvaraka of the material world does not exist at pralayaavasthā simply because the objects of enjoyment remain dormant, Sāyaṇa says: kimāvaranīyam tattvamāvarakabhūtajātāṁ...
atyantamāvṛṣṇyāt / āvaryābhāvāttadāvarakamapināsid...
jīvānāmupabhogārthā hi srṣṭiḥ / tasyāṁ hi satyāṁ brahmāṇḍasya bhūtairāvaraṇāṁ. Furthermore, the bhoktā jīva too does not exist at the time of pralaya: pralayadaśāyāṁ ca bhoktāro jīvā upādhivilayāt pralīnā iti kasya kaścidapi bhoktā na sambhavati.

The next question that the seer asks is were there unfathomable waters? This question apparently has been raised because elsewhere in the Rksamhitā it has been said that before the birth of the empirical universe there was a vast body of indistinguishable water covering everything, for example in X.121.7 and 8. The answer to the above question may be given in the language of Sāyaṇa who says: gahanāṁ duspraveśam gabhīram
The aforementioned questions regarding the āvaraṇa and the ambhas when taken together may lead to yet another interpretation which may be as follows: The embryo of a living being begins its life inside a sac known as the amnion, in its mother’s womb. It develops and grows into a body inside this sac which is filled with amniotic liquids. In a passage of the hymn X.82 of the Rksamhitā there is a reference to the embryonic stage of the universe where the primeval waters are said to have given shelter to the embryo. Similarly, in the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta the very first life (asu) of the gods is said to have been given birth by the primeval waters. When considered on the basis of the above stated factors through questions as to whether at the time of pralaya ‘was there any cover? or any shelter or any water?’ the seer perhaps has been asking about the possibility of the existence of any Mother Principle. And through such a question he seems to have tried to say that the Mother Principle which is vital for starting any process of creation also lies dormant in the bosom of the Absolute when the world stays dormant.

Description of the state of affairs in pralayāvasthā continues in the next verse which runs as follows: na mṛtyurāśidamṛtam na tarhi na rātryā

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3 See, tamidgarbham prathamam dadhra āpah, RV, X.82.6.
4 ibid, X.121.7.
Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal: no sign was there, the day's and night's divider. That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever.\(^5\)

In this verse the seer tells his listeners that when the creation remains in a state of quiescence, there exists neither death nor deathlessness i.e., no life. Etymologically the word *amrta* denotes the opposite of death and the opposite of death is life. Commenting on this verse Sāyaṇa suggests that here the question of the existence of death arises because when the world is annihilated there must be an annihilator: *nanuktasya pratisamhārasya samharapekṣatvāt sa samharat eva mṛtyurvidyāta ityāta āha / na mṛtyurāsādīti.* It should however be pointed out that as per Vedic philosophy it is the Absolute which withdraws the creation unto itself at the time of annihilation and the creation returns to its source. The world at this stage is not looked upon as dead but simply as lying dormant or in a state of hibernation. In this connection one may refer to the following passage from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad:* *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayantyabhīṣaṃviṣanti, tad viṣṇūḥ jīvante, tad brahmāḥ.* [That from which the beings are born, that through which the beings live, that towards which they proceed and finally

unto which they enter— it is Brahman, this Brahman is to be realized.[6] Moreover, the mortal world not being there, the question of its death does not arise. And when there exists no beings the question of the existence of the quality of deathlessness too does not arise.

The significance of the passage na mṛtyurāśīd amṛtam na tarhi may be explained in yet another manner as follows: It has already been stated above that an implication of the statement that in pralayāvasthā neither sat nor asat exists may be that even Prajāpati remains merged in the Absolute at that time. Now, in the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta, Prajāpati is said to have as his shadow both death and immortality.7 In the light of this one can say that at the time of pralaya Prajāpati not being there, his shadow too has no existence. In other words, when the creation in its entirety lies dormant in the Absolute, Prajāpati and all the qualities (Upādhis) associated with him lie dormant in the Absolute.

After having stated that there is neither death nor immortality during the pralayāvasthā, the seer states that the one which indicates day and night also does not exist at that time. According to Sāyaṇa, the sun and the moon which are the harbingers of day and night not being there, time which is made up of month-year- the seasons etc. remain non existent. Under this circumstance, all that exists is the Absolute Itself and nothing else. And this Absolute does not breath i.e., does not show any sign of life,

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6 TUp., 3.1.1. Also see, MUp., 2.1.1.
7 See, X.121.
yet it lives by dint of its intrinsic power (svadhayā): ānīt avātaṁ svadhayā,

According to Sāyaṇa, the One spoken of in this passage is none other than the Supreme Brahman which is nirupādhika and aprāṇoḥyamanah śuddhaḥ.⁸

In this context it may be stated that the idea presented through the statement ānīt avātaṁ. svadhayā reappears in Upaniṣadic passages. One such passage found in the Kena Upaniṣad is as follows: yat prāṇena na prāṇiti yena prāṇah praṇīyate / tadeva brahma...⁹

The third verse of the hymn suggests that when the world lies dormant and there exists nothing except the Absolute, the world remains unknowable just like inert darkness hidden inside inert darkness. The verse under reference is as follows: tama āsūtāmasā gūḷhamagre’praketaṁ salilam sarvamā idam / tucchyenaḥvapihitām yadāsūtātapastamahinājāyataikam. [Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos. All that existed then was void and formless: by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit.]¹⁰

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⁸ Sāyaṇa interprets the word svadhā as māyā and goes on to say that māyā, during the dissolution of the world becomes one with the Supreme Brahman. But then he goes on to say that, such an idea though impossible, has been expressed by the seer because such an idea may be formed due to avidyā, see, Sāyaṇa on verse 2. It should however, be noted that the use of the word svadhā in the sense of māyā is not found in Vedic Texts. Besides, the word māyā in the Vedas do not connote the sense of avidyā. For the use of the word svadhā to mean intrinsic power, see, RV., I.144.2; IV.13.5.

⁹ KUp., I.9. Also see, MUp., II.1.2 & 3; TUp., 2.7.

¹⁰ cf. v., 3& also see, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., p.633.
Commenting on the statement *tamo āsīt* etc. Sāyaṇa seems to say that the implication of this passage is that, at that time the universe made up of *nāma* and *rūpa* being covered by impenetrable *tamas* remains hidden and thus is totally unknowable: *tasyāṁ daśāyāṁ nāmarūpabhyaṁ vispaśṭāṁ na jñāyat iti tādātmyavarṇanam*. (the *tādātmya* spoken here is that of the dormant world and the veil of pitch darkness).

In the second *pāda* of the verse the seer tries to give an idea of the implication of what has been said in the first *pāda*. He says that the world before its creation remains beyond human knowledge and is as it were, hidden in pitch black darkness because it stays merged in the Absolute: *apraketam salilam sarvamā idam*. Sāyaṇa interprets the word *apraketa* as *prajñayamanam* i.e., unknowable. The reason behind this according to him is that the world remains merged in its primary cause and thus cannot be distinguished: *salilam sala gatau ...idam drṣyamānam sarvam jagat salilam kāraṇena saṁgatam avibhāgopannam āh asīt*.

In the last part of the verse is stated the beginning of the process of creation. When the time comes for starting the creation of the mortal world, the all encompassing (*ābhū*) Absolute modifies Itself and evolves into a dimensional form or finite form which is smaller or inferior (*tucchya*), than the Absolute which is infinite and as such beyond all measure. In the language of the seer poet, for creating the mortal world the Absolute as it
were, covers Itself in the dimensional or the inferior. Then out of it there arises the 'One' through the power of tapas: tapasah tat mahinā ajāyata ekaṁ. Śāyaṇa chooses to explain the word tapasah as sraṣṭavyaparyālocanarūpasya i.e., contemplation of the objects to be created and thus seems to take the word as connoting a 'creative will' on the part of the Creator.

In the next verse, it is suggested that as a result of the tapas there arises kāma which is the first seed of the mind. The verse runs as follows:

\[
\text{kāmastadagre samavartatādhimanasoretaṁ prathamam yadāsit} / \text{satobandhumasatiniravindan hr̥dipratīṣyākavyamanīsa} // \]

[Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit. Sages who searched with their heart’s thought discovered the existent’s kinship in the non-existent.] When considered in the light of the passage kāmastadagre samavartatādhi manaso retah, the finite form which is said to have been assumed by the infinite seems to be the Universal Mind. It is the mind which is the seat of desire and will and it is the mind which performs acts like contemplation. And compared to the Absolute this Mind is tucchya. In this context one may mention that in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa occurs the following passage which states that at the beginning

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11 The word tucchya occurs in RV, V.42.10. and Śāyaṇa has given the meaning of the word as naśvara.
12 In Upaniṣadic texts tapas is the creative moulding power or power of concentrated thinking. See, BUp., 1.4.10-11; MāUp., 6.17.
of creation the cosmos exists and does not exist, all that exists is the Mind: 
śūḍiva vāidamagre na evāśūḍha tanmana evāsa.\textsuperscript{14} It is further said that this 
Mind after its creation wished to become manifest, more defined and more 
substantial and with this end in view it practiced tapas: tadidāṁ manaḥ 
srṣṭimāvirabubhūsat niruktataram mūrtataram tadātmānamanvaicchat tat 
tapo tegyatu.\textsuperscript{15} In this context it may further be recalled that in later Vedic 
texts the Mind has been identified as Prajāpati in texts like yah 
prajāpatistatan manaḥ etc.\textsuperscript{16}

Commenting on the first part of the fourth verse Sāyaṇa says:
nanuktiśrityā yadiśvarasya paryālocanam jagataḥ punarupattau kāraṇam 
tadeva kimnibhandhanamityata āha kāmastadagre iti. As pointed out by 
him the immediate cause of the cosmos is the desire arising in the mind of 
the Lord to create (sisṛksā): tasyāṁ sisṛksāyāṁ ca jātāyāṁ sraṣṭavyāṁ 
paryālocya tataḥ sarvāṁ jagatsṛjati.\textsuperscript{17} In this way the Mind laid the first 
ever seed of the cosmos which is to be born.\textsuperscript{18} Then he points out that the 
appearance of desire being impossible without a mind, the mind of the lord 
also is born before the beginning of the process of creation: 
manovyatirikteṇa kāmanāyā upatterasambhavāt manastattvamapi...

\textsuperscript{14} ŚB., 10.5.3.1.
\textsuperscript{15} ibid., 10.5.3.3.
\textsuperscript{16} JUB., 1.33.2. Also see, TB., 2.2.1.2; KauB., 10.1; SāVB., 1.1.1. etc.
\textsuperscript{17} In the CUp., 6.2.1. it is said that kāma or desire brings forth objects from the 
Primeval Being.
\textsuperscript{18} Here it may be mentioned that the first part of this Rgvedic verse is repeated in the 
Atharvasamhitā, XIX.52.1. There Sāyaṇa interprets the passage as follows: asya 
vikārajatasya srṣṭeh prāgavasthōyam paramesvarasya manasi kāmaḥ... 
samyagajāyata sisṛksā jātā ityarthāḥ.
jatamityarthah... isvarasya manaso utpatteranantaram kāmah samavartata ityarthah. 19 In the second part of the verse quoted above it is said that the transcendental seers (kavayah) having contemplated through their wisdom, realized in their hearts the kinship or the connection between the manifest world and its unmanifest cause. On this Sāyaṇa says: satvenedānim anubhīyamānasy sarvasya jagato bandhum bandhakam hetubhūtam...asati sadvilaksane'vyākṛte kāraṇe...nihskṛṣyālabhanta. The word sat in this particular passage seems to stand for gross matter which can be seen and touched and the word asat seems to denote the life principle i.e., prāṇa the existence of which cannot be felt by human sensory organs. As a matter of fact, in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa it has been clearly stated that the word asat stands for prāṇa. The passage under reference is as follows: asadvā idamagre āsīt / tadāḥuh kim tadasadāsīdīti rṣayo vāva te'gre asadāsīt tadāḥuh ke ta rṣaya iti prāṇā vā rṣayah. 20 Prāṇas are called rṣayāḥ for these exist in all living individuals and the word rṣī derived from ṛṣī to go denotes that which has the capacity to go anywhere and into anything. 21

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19 There occur a number of passages in later Vedic texts where the creation is shown as the result of desire on the part of Prajāpati. See, AB., 2.33; TMB., 4.1.4, 6.1.1, 6.5.1, 7.5.1, 7.6.1, 10.3.1, JB., 1.46.1; TB., 2.2.9.5-8.

20 In this passage the plural form of the word prāṇa apparently signifies the Prāṇas that exist in living individuals.

21 The number of Prāṇas mentioned in Vedic texts varies from three to many. See, for example JUB., 2.5.2-11.
According to Vedic tradition, it is this prāṇa (asat) which creates matter (sat). Prāṇa or life principle which in its essence is but energy and therefore, very subtle is basically different from gross matter. Yet these two exist as inseparable companions in the living bodies. The Rgvedic passage sato bandhum asati niravindan specifically refers to this relation between the two. These two are as it were, kith and kin and have a common origin in the Creator. In the Rgvedic idea of the origin of the manifest from the unmanifest lies the seed of the Upaniṣadic concept of the birth of the sat from asat.

The fifth verse of X.129 is as follows: tiraścīno vitato raśmireśāmadhaḥ svidāṣṭudupari svidāsīt / retodhā āsannahimāno āsantsvadhā avastātprayatiḥ parastāt // [Transversely was their severing line extended: what was above it then, and what below it? There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder.]

According to Sāyaṇa the word ēṣām seen in the first pāda of the verse refers to the activities involved in the process of creation like the emanation of the Mind from the Absolute and the appearance of desire in that Mind, through tapas, and the birth of the creation etc. In the verse the seer says that the light (raśmi) of these activities moved across, upwards

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22 See, chapter III of this thesis under the heading Gods as the Creators of the Universe, p.51.
23 See, CUp., 3.19.3; 6.2.1; TUp., 2.7.
24 cf. v.,5. And also see Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., p.633.
and downwards. The meaning of this statement according to Sāyaṇa is that all these activities took place with great speed like the flash of sun-light. Just as the rays of the sun engulfs the entire world in the twinkle of an eye, so these activities spread over the cosmos in great speed. Sāyaṇa holds that so fast was the process of creation, that it was impossible to state whether the objects that were across the world i.e., in its mid-region were created first or those which were in the lower region of the space or those which were in the upper region. He goes on to say that although these objects might have been created one after another, like for example the sky was created from the self, from the sky the wind, from wind the fire and so on, yet so quick was the process of creation that it took place as it were, like a flash of lightning. He says: \[ \text{vidyutprakāśavatsargasya śīgravyāpanena tasya kramasya durlakṣaṇatvādetesu triṣu sthāneṣu prāthamam kutreti vicāryate / evam nāma śīgrham sarvato dikṣu sargo nispanna ityarthāḥ.} \]

Sāyaṇa holds that the meaning of the statement retodhā āsan-mahimāno āsan is that among the created objects some were living beings and other non living. Here living beings are called retodhā for they proliferate through the act of fertilization of the female. The other objects having great dimensions and power like the sky etc. are according to him indicated by the word mahimāna. He calls the living beings the bhoktāra jīvāh. The non living objects as stated by him make up the objects of enjoyment for the living ones. He also states that the great God having
created the objects entered into them and divided them into two categories viz., the enjoyer (bhoktr) and the enjoyed (bhoga) i.e., the living and non living ones. Thus, he says: *paramesvarah sarvam jagatsṛṣṭvā svayam cānupraviśya bhoktr bhogyādirūpeṇa vibhāgaṁ kṛtavāntyarthāh.*

In the last pāda of the fifth verse it is said that svadhā existed in the lower region and prayati in the upper space. Śāyaṇa interprets the word svadhā as food and the word prayati as the enjoyer who has control over the object of enjoyment.

In this context one would like to examine the significance of the word retodhā occurring in other Rgvedic passages. Such an inquiry is necessary for this word, in this Veda is not found to denote the earthly living beings. This word besides occurring in X.129.5., occurs in III.56.3, V.69.2, VII.101.6 and IX.86.39. In III.56.3 the word occurs as an epithet of saṅvatsara i.e., time. Here, saṅvatsara is referred as vṛṣabha and retodhā.

It is also interesting to note that in this verse time is called māhimāvān i.e., possessed of greatness. While the first word as stated by Śāyaṇa means apāṁ varṣaka, the word retodhā is interpreted by him as udakasya dhartā.

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25 In support of his view Śāyaṇa has referred to a passage from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* where it is said that the Supreme Soul desired to become many, so he created the world and having created it, he entered it and having entered it he became the actual and the beyond, the defined and the non defined, the founded and the non founded. (See, *TUp.*, 2.6.1.) As one can observe in this passage, there is no reference to the concepts of bhoktr and bhoga. It may not be out of context to mention here that in fact a passage to the effect that this world is made up of food and the feeder occurs in the *Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, 1.4.6. where it is said *etāvadvā idāṁ sarvāṁnamnāṁ caiva annādaśca.*
According to him ‘time’ is given these epithets because, it is in the bosom of time that the rains pour down on earth so that the plant world may bear flowers and fruits. In V.69.2. the three deities Agni, Vāyu and Āditya are referred to as retodhāḥ i.e., the bearers of waters.26 In VII.101.6 Prajanya the deity of the clouds is hailed as retodhāḥ. And in IX.86.3 the word occurs as an epithet of Soma Pavamāna i.e., the deified soma-juice. Here the word is interpreted by Sāyaṇa as reta udakāṁ tasya dhātā yadvā oṣadhīnāṁ retah prajanana sāmarthyam tasya dhārayitā bhuvanesu udakesvarpitaḥ.

When considered in the light of the contents and implication of the above stated Rgvedic passages it seems that the word retodhāḥ in X.129.5 seems to stand for the gods in the sky who fertilize the earth below so that plants may grow and proliferate and thus provide food for the denizens of earth. These are great gods (mahimānah) for they sustain the beings on earth. They are the prayati i.e., the controllers of life and it is because of them that there is svadhā i.e., food on earth.

Furthermore, when the word retodhāḥ is interpreted as standing for the gods it follows that the sum and substance of the fifth verse of the Nāsadiya Sūkta is that the gods are the first entities to be born as the result of the process of creation initiated by the Mind of the Creator.

26 cf. agnir vā ito vṛṣṭimudirayati marutah srṣṭāṁ nayati yaddā khalu vāsau ādityo nyan rāṣṭmibhiḥ paryāvarṣate atha varṣati, TS., 2.4.10. Also see, KāS., 11.10.
In the last two verses of the *Nāsadiya Sūkta* the seer poet with child-like simplicity asks a few questions about the mystery of the process of creation and the creator. He wants to know from what material cause and what creative power this world of varied creatures has arisen and expresses a feeling of doubt to the effect that perhaps even the Master of this world does not know where from this creation has come into existence. The verses run as follows:

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ko aṅgā veda ka iha pra vocatkuta ājātā kuta iyāṁ
visṛṣṭih / arvāgdevā asya visarjanenāthā ko veda yata ābabhūva // iyāṁ
visṛṣṭiryata ābabhūva yadi vā dadhe yadi vā na / yo asyādhyakṣaḥ parame
vyomntso aṅga veda yadi vā na veda // [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? He, the first origin of this creation, whether he
formed it all or did not form it, Whose eye controls this world in highest
heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.]²⁷
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Commenting on the sixth verse Sāyāṇa observes that the creation of the world being unknowable it is not possible to elaborately explain the same: *sā srṣṭir-
durviñānā iti na vistaraṇābhhihitetyāha.*

Through the questions asked in these verses, is suggested the unknowability of the mystery of creation. Here it is said that even the gods do not know how and whence the cosmos has appeared, because when the

process of creation has been in motion, the gods are not yet born. So deeply mysterious in the nature of the Creator and His act of creation, that even the Divine Over Lord (adhyakṣa) of this empirical world who is the first born of the Creator may not be able to delve into this mystery and understand it. The seer seems to suggest here that when even the gods and the Divine Lord do not have any inkling about the nature of the source of the creation, there is little wonder that humans are unable to grasp the mystery. Thus, in the hymn to Viśvakarman it has been declared by the seer that man will never be able to find him who produced this cosmos and ordinary mortals cannot realize the true nature of the Creator because the mind of an ordinary man is confused.\textsuperscript{28}

In this context one may refer to the following verse from the first mandala of the Rksamhitā in which the seer has expressed an idea similar to the one found in the afore stated two verses of the Nāsadiya Sūkta: ko dadarśa prathamān jāyamānān asthanvantam yadanasthā vibharti / bhūmyā asurasrgātmā kva svit kah vidvāṁsānapagāt praśūmetat // [Who hath beheld him as he sprang to being, seen how the boneless One supports the bony? Where is the blood of earth, the life, the spirit? Who may approach the man who knows, to ask it?]\textsuperscript{29}

One would like to state here that Sāyaṇa’s commentary on this hymn has been based on later Indian philosophy like Vedānta and

\textsuperscript{28} See, RV., X.82.7.
\textsuperscript{29} ibid, I.164.4. Also see, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit, p.110.
Samkhya. In this connection he has resorted to hair splitting reasoning which is usually found in the commentaries on the Vedānta Sūtras, the Samkhya Sūtras and so on. In this process he has brought in concepts of, Satkārya, Māyā, Avidyā, Bhoktājīva, Bhogya prapañca and the like. In this hymn the seer has not been trying to impart any lesson or knowledge which philosophers usually do. It therefore, appears that much of the contents of Śāyāna’s commentary on this hymn are rather anachronistic. In view of this, while deliberating on the significance of the contents of the hymn many of the observations made by Śāyāna in his commentary on this hymn have not been taken into consideration. It seems by explaining this hymn in this way Śāyāna has ignored the factor of historicity.

While concluding this chapter, it is to be noted here that while in this chapter is presented discussions on the contents of the individual philosophical hymns, the correlations between these hymns are taken into account in the concluding discussions in the last chapter of the dissertation.