

CHAPTER 4

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः

(प्राकृतप्रल्पवर्णनम्)

पराशर उवाच

सप्तर्षिस्थानमाक्रम्य स्थितेऽम्भसि महामुन्ने।
 एकार्णवं भवत्येव त्रैलोक्यमखिलं ततः॥ १॥
 मुखनिःश्वासजो विष्णोर्वायुस्तान् जलदांस्ततः।
 नाशयित्वा तु मैत्रेय! वर्षाणामधिकं शतम्॥ २॥
 सर्वभूतमयोऽचिन्त्यो भगवान् भूतभावनः।
 अनादिरादिविश्वस्य पीत्वा वायुमशेषतः॥ ३॥

When the waters have reached the region of the seven R̥sis, and the whole of the three worlds is one ocean, they stop. The breath of Viṣṇu becomes a strong wind, which blows for more than a hundred years, until all the clouds are dispersed. The wind is then reabsorbed, and he of whom all things are made, the lord by whom all things exist, he who is inconceivable, without beginning of the universe, reposes, sleeping upon Śeṣa, in the midst of the deep.

एकार्णवे ततस्तस्मिन् शेषशय्यास्थितः प्रभुः।
 ब्रह्मरूपधरः शेते भगवानादिकृद्भारिः॥ ४॥

जनलोकगतैः सिद्धैः सनकाद्यैरभिष्टुतः।
 ब्रह्मलोकगतैश्चैव चिन्त्यमानो मुमुक्षुभिः॥५॥
 आत्ममायामयीं दिव्यां योगिनिद्रां समास्थितः।
 आत्मानं वासुदेवाख्यं चिन्तयन् परमेश्वरः॥६॥
 एष नैमित्तिको नाम यैत्रेय! प्रतिसञ्जरः।
 निमित्तं तत्र यच्छेते ब्रह्मरूपधरो हरिः॥७॥

The creator, Hari, sleeps upon the ocean, in the form of Brahma— glorified by Sanaka and the saints who had gone to the Janaloka, and contemplated by the holy inhabitants of Brahmaloaka, anxious for final liberation—involved in mystic slumber, the celestial personification of his own illusions, and meditating on his own ineffable spirit, which is called Vāsudeva. This, Maitreya, is the dissolution termed incidental, because Hari, in the form of Brahmā, sleep there, as its incidental cause.

यदा जागर्ति विश्वात्मा स तदा चेष्टते जगत्।
 निमीलत्येतदखिलं योगशय्याशयेऽच्युते॥८॥
 पद्मयोनेदिनं यतु चतुर्युगसहस्रवत्।
 एकार्णवाप्लुते लोके तावती रात्रिरिष्यते॥९॥
 ततः प्रबुद्धो रात्र्यन्ते पुनः सृष्टिं करोत्यजः।
 ब्रह्मस्वरूपधृग् विष्णुर्यथा ते कथितं पुरा॥१०॥

When the universal spirit wakes, the world revives; when he closes his eyes, all things fall upon the bed of mystic slumber. In like manner as a thousand great ages constitute a day of Brahmā, so his night consists of the same period; during which the world is submerged by a vast ocean. Awaking at the end of his night, the unborn, Viṣṇu, in the character of Brahmā, creates the universe anew, in the manner formerly related to you¹.

इत्येष कल्पसंहारश्चान्तरः प्रलयो द्विज।
 नैमित्तिकस्ते कथितः प्राकृतः शृण्वतः परम्॥११॥
 अनावृष्ट्याग्निसम्पर्कात् कृते संक्षालने मुने।
 समस्तेष्वेव लोकेषु पातालेष्वखिलेषु च॥१२॥
 महादादेर्विकारस्य विशेषान्तस्य संक्षये।
 कृष्णेच्छाकारिते तस्मिन् प्रवृत्ते प्रतिसञ्चरे॥१३॥

I have thus described to you the intermediate dissolution of the world, occurring at the end of every Kalpa. I will now, Maitreya, describe to you elemental dissolution. When by dearth and fire all the worlds and Pātālas are withered up and the modifications of Mahat and other products of nature are by all the will of Kṛṣṇa destroyed, the progress of elemental dissolution is begun.

आपो ग्रसन्ति वै पूर्वं भूमेर्गन्धात्मकं गुणम्।
 आत्तगन्धा ततो भूमिः प्रलयत्वाय कल्पते॥१४॥
 प्रनष्टे गन्धतन्मात्रेऽभवत् पृथ्वी जलात्मिका।
 रसाञ्जलं समुद्रभूतं तस्माज्जातं रसात्मकम्॥१५॥
 आपस्तदा प्रवृद्धास्तु वेगवत्यो महास्वनाः।
 सर्वमापूरयन्तीदं तिष्ठन्ति विचरन्ति च।
 सलिलेनैवोर्मिमता लोका व्याप्ताः समन्ततः॥१६॥
 अपामपि गुणो यस्तु ज्योतिषा पीयते तु सः।
 नश्यन्त्यापस्ततस्ताश्च रसतन्मात्रसंक्षयात् ॥१७॥
 ततश्चापो हतरसा ज्योतिष्टवं प्राप्नुवन्ति वै।
 अग्न्यवस्थे तु सलिले तेजसा सर्वतो वृते॥१८॥
 स चाग्निः सर्वतो व्याप्त आदत्ते तज्जलं तदा।
 सर्वमापूर्य्य तेजोभिस्तदा जगदिदं शनैः॥१९॥
 अर्धिर्भिः संवृते तस्मिन् तिर्च्यगूढध्वंमधस्तथा।
 ज्योतिषोऽपि परं रूपं वायुरति प्रभाकरम्॥२०॥
 प्रलीने च ततस्तस्मिन् वायुभूतेऽखिलात्मनि।

Then, first, the waters swallow up the property of earth, which is the rudiment of smell; and earth, deprived of its property, proceeds to destruction. Devoid of the rudiment of odour, the earth becomes one with water. The waters then being much augmented, roaring, and rushing along, fill up all space, whether agitated or still. When the universe is thus pervaded by the waves of the watery element, its rudimental flavour is licked up by the element of fire, and, in consequence of the destruction of their rudiments, the waters themselves are destroyed. Deprived of the essential rudiment of flavour, they become one with fire, and the universe is therefore entirely filled with flame, which drinks up the water on every side, and

gradually overspreads the whole of the world. While space is enveloped in flame, above, below, and all around, the element of wind seizes upon the rudimental property, or form, which is the cause of light; and that being withdrawn, all becomes of the nature of air.

प्रनष्टे रूपतन्मात्रे हृतरूपो विभावसुः ॥ २१ ॥
 प्रशाम्यति तदा ज्योतिर्वायुर्दोषयुते महान्।
 निरालोके तदा लोके वाखवस्थे च तेजसि ॥ २२ ॥
 ततस्तु मूलमासाद्य वायुः सभ्रवमात्मनः।
 ऊर्ध्वञ्चाधश्च तिर्यक् च दोषवीति दिशो दश ॥ २३ ॥
 वायोरपि गुणं स्पर्शमाकाशो ग्रसते पुनः।
 प्रशाम्यति ततो वायुः खन्तु तिष्ठत्यनावृतम् ॥ २४ ॥
 अरूपमरसस्पर्शमगन्धं न च मूर्तिमत्।
 सर्वमापूरयद्यैतत् सुमहत् सम्प्रकाशते ॥ २५ ॥
 परिमण्डलं तच्छुषिरमाकाशं शब्दलक्षणम्।
 शब्दमात्रं तदाकाशं सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ २६ ॥
 ततः शब्दं गुणं तस्य भूतादिर्ग्रसते पुनः।
 भूतेन्द्रियेषु युगपद् भूतादौ संस्थितेषु वै ॥ २७ ॥

The rudiment of form being destroyed, and fire deprived of its rudiment, air extinguishes fire, and spreads resistlessly over space, which is deprived of light when fire merges into air. Air then, accompanied by sound, which is the source of ether, extends every where throughout the ten regions of space, until ether seizes upon contact, its rudimental property; by the loss of which, air is destroyed, and ether remains unmodified: devoid of form, flavour, touch, and smell, it exists unembodied and vast, and pervades the whole of space, Ether, whose characteristic property and rudiment is sound, exists alone, occupying all the vacuity of space. But then the radical elements egotism devours sound, and all the elements and faculties are at once merged into their original.

अभिमानात्मको ह्येष भूतादिस्तामसः स्मृतः।
 भूतादिं ग्रसते चापि महान् वै बुद्धिलक्षणः ॥ २८ ॥
 उर्वी महांश्च जगतः प्रान्तेऽन्तर्बाह्यतस्तथा ॥ २९ ॥

एवं सप्त महाबुद्धेः क्रमात् प्रकृतयस्तु वै।
 प्रत्याहारे तु ताः सर्वा प्रविशन्ति परस्परम् ॥ ३० ॥

This primary element is consciousness, combined with the property of darkness, and is itself swallowed up by Mahat, whose characteristic property is intelligence; and earth and Mahat are the inner and outer boundaries of the universe. In this manner, as in the creation were the seven forms of nature (Prakṛti), reckoned from Mahat to earth², so, at the time of elemental dissolution, these seven successively re-enter into each other.

येनेदमावृतं सर्वमण्डमप्सु प्रलीयते।
 सप्तद्वीपसमुद्रान्तं सप्तलोकं सपर्वतम् ॥ ३१ ॥
 उदकावरणं यत्तु ज्योतिषा पीयते तु तत्।
 ज्योतिर्वायौ लयं याति यात्याकाशे समीरणः ॥ ३२ ॥
 आकाशञ्चैव भूतादिर्ग्रसते तं तदा महान्।
 महान्तमेभिः सहितं प्रकृतिर्ग्रसते द्विज ॥ ३३ ॥
 गुणासाम्यमनुद्रिक्तमन्यूनञ्च महामुने ।
 प्रोच्यते प्रकृतिर्हेतु प्रथानं कारणं परम् ॥ ३४ ॥

The egg of Brahmā is dissolved in the waters that surround it, with its seven zones, seven oceans, seven regions, and their mountains. The investure of water is drunk up by fire; the stratum of fire is absorbed by that of air: air blends itself with ether: the primary element of egotism devours the ether, and is itself taken up by intellect, which, along with all these, is seized upon by nature (Prakṛti). Equilibrium of the three properties, without excess or deficiency, is called nature Prakṛti, origin (Hetu), the chief principle (Pradhāna), cause (Kāraṇa), supreme (Param).

इत्येषा प्रकृतिः सर्वा व्यक्ताव्यक्तस्वरूपिणी।
 व्यक्तस्वरूपमव्यक्ते तस्मिन् मैत्रेय! लीयते ॥ ३५ ॥
 एकः शुद्धोऽक्षरो नित्यः सर्वव्यापी तथा पुमान्।
 सोऽप्यंशः सर्वभूतस्य मैत्रेय! परमात्मनः ॥ ३६ ॥
 न सन्ति यत्र सर्वेशे नामजात्यादिकल्पनाः।
 सत्तामात्रात्मके ज्ञेये ज्ञानात्मन्यात्मनः परे ॥ ३७ ॥
 स ब्रह्म तत् परं धाम परमात्मा स चैव सः।
 स विष्णुः सर्वमेवेदं यतो नावर्त्तते यतिः ॥ ३८ ॥

This Prakṛti is essentially the same, whether discrete or indiscrete; only that which is discrete is finally lost or absorbed in the indiscrete. Spirit also, which is one, pure, imperishable, eternal, all-pervading, is a portion of that supreme spirit which is all things. That spirit which is other than (embodied) spirit, in which there are no attributes of name, species, or the like— which is one with all wisdom, and is to be understood as sole existence— that is Brahma, infinite glory, supreme spirit, supreme power, Viṣṇu, all that is; from whence the perfect sage returns no more.

प्रकृतिर्या मया ख्याता व्यक्ताव्यक्तस्वरूपिणी।

पुरुषश्चाप्युभावेतौ लीयते परमात्मनि॥३९॥

परमात्मा च सर्वेषामाधारः परमेश्वरः।

विष्णुर्नाम्ना स वेदेषु वेदान्तेषु च गीयते॥४०॥

Nature (Prakṛti), which I have described to you as being essentially both discrete and indiscrete, and spirit (which is united with body), both resolve into supreme spirit. Supreme spirit is the upholder of all things, and the ruler of all things, and is glorified in the Vedas and in the Vedānta by the name of Viṣṇu.

प्रवृत्तञ्च निवृत्तञ्च द्विविधं कर्म वैदिकम्।

ताभ्यामुभाभ्यां पुरुषैः सर्वमूर्तिः स इज्यते॥४१॥

ऋग्-यजुः सामभिर्मागैः प्रवृत्तैरिज्यते ह्यसौ।

यज्ञेश्वरो यज्ञपुमान् पुरुषैः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥४२॥

ज्ञानात्मा ज्ञानयोगेन ज्ञानमूर्तिः स चेज्यते।

निवृत्ते योगिभिर्मागैः विष्णुर्मुक्तिफलप्रदः॥४३॥

Works, as enjoined by the Vedas, are of two kinds, active (Pravṛtta) and quiescent (Nivṛtta); by both of which the universal person is worshipped by mankind. He, the lord of sacrifice, the male of sacrifice, the most excellent male, is worshipped by men in the active mode by rites enjoined in the Ṛk, Yajur and Sāma Vedas. The soul of wisdom, the person of wisdom, Viṣṇu, and giver of

emancipation, is worshipped by sages in the quiescent form, through meditative devotion.

ह्रस्व-दीर्घप्लुतैर्यत्तु किञ्चद्वस्त्वभियुज्यते।

यच्च वाचामविषये तत्सर्वं विष्णुरव्ययः॥४४॥

व्यक्तं स एव चाव्यक्तं स एव पुरुषोऽव्ययः।

परमात्मा स विश्वात्मा विश्वरूपधरो हरिः॥४५॥

व्यक्ताव्यक्तात्मिका तस्मिन् प्रकृतिः सम्प्रलीयते।

पुरुषश्चापि मैत्रेय! व्यापिन्यव्याहतात्मनि॥४६॥

The exhaustless Viṣṇu is whatever thing that is designated by long, short, or prolated syllables, or that which is without a name. He is that which is discrete, and that which is indiscrete: he is exhaustless spirit, supreme spirit, universal spirit, Hari, the wearer of universal forms. Nature, whether discrete or indiscrete, is absorbed into him, and (detached) spirit also merges into the all-diffusive and unobstructed spirit.

द्विपरार्द्धात्मकः कालः कथितो यो मया तव।

तदहस्तस्य मैत्रेय! विष्णोरीशस्य कथ्यते॥४७॥

व्यक्ते च प्रकृतौ लीने प्रकृत्यां पुरुषे तथा।

तत्र स्थिते निशा चान्या तत्प्रमाणा महामुने॥४८॥

नैवाहस्तस्य न निशा नित्यस्य परमात्मनः।

उपचारस्तथाप्येष तस्येशस्य द्विजोच्यते॥४९॥

The period of two Parārdhas, as I have described it to you, Maitreya, is called a day of that potent Viṣṇu; and whilst the products of nature are merged into their source, nature into spirit, and that into the supreme, that period is termed his night, and is of equal duration with his day. But, in fact, to that eternal supreme spirit there is neither day nor night, and these distinctions are only figuratively applied to the almighty.

इत्येष तव मैत्रेय! कथितः प्राकृतो लयः।

आत्यन्तिकमितो ब्रह्मन्निबोध प्रतिसञ्चरम्॥५०॥

इति श्रीविष्णुपुराणे षष्ठांशे चतुर्थः अध्यायः॥

I have thus explained to you the nature of elemental dissolution, and will now expound to you which is final³.

NOTES

1. The Naimittika Pralaya is described in the Vāyu, Bhāgavata. Kūrma, and other Purāṇas, to the same effect, and very commonly in precisely the same words.

2. See Bk. I. Ch. II.

3. The Bhāgavata notices the Prākṛta pralaya much more briefly, and it is omitted in the Vāyu.
