

Ratri Sukta as per Tantra :

ॐ विश्वेश्वरीं जगद्धात्रीं स्थितिसंहारकारिणीम् ।
निद्रां भगवतीं विष्णोरतुलां तेजसः प्रभुः ॥ १ ॥

*Oṃ viśveśvarīm jagaddhātrīm sthitisamhārakāriṇīm |
nidrām bhagavatīm viṣṇoratulām tejasah prabhuḥ || 1 ||*

[I worship] the goddess controlling this Universe, the support of this World, maintainer and destroyer [of this World.] [I worship] the Beneficial Sleep, the uncomparable splendour and authority of Vishnu.

Sleep – when God has absorbed the Universe in Himself after the destruction of the Creation, he is supposed to be sleeping (because he has no work to do!). This is called the Sleep. Referring to the Introduction, this Sleep is the state of deepest meditation of a person, when there is complete cut-off from the external and also internal perceptions.

The asurs Madhu and Kaitabha are said to be generated from the ear-wax of Vishnu. They are representing any kind of disturbance which will lead to injection of a Vritti, a thought-seed, in the mind that is meditating. Brahma, the Ego in Nirvikalpa Samadhi state, prays to the Sleep, the active component of myself, "please deal with this disturbance". This prayer, which seems to be occurring in a very uninteresting situation, explains the basis of Indian philosophy in brief.

The interpretation can be extended to the case of a person who has achieved dual-mode.

त्वं स्वाहा त्वं स्वधा त्वं हि वषट्कारः स्वरात्मिका ।
सुधा त्वमक्षरे नित्ये त्रिधा मात्रात्मिका स्थिता ॥ २ ॥

*tvam svāhā tvam svadhā tvam hi vaṣaṭkārah svarātmikā |
sudhā tvamakṣare nitye tridhā mātrātmikā sthitā || 2 ||*

O Devi, you are only svaha, svadha, vashatkar. The svara are a form of yours only. You are the nectar giving life. You are present in the form of three matras a, u and m of the indistructible syllable aum.

svaha – स्वाहा *svāhā* – when a person is doing any active work, he takes in information, analyses it and takes decisions. This activity in his mind is like offering oblations in Agni – agni that is his surface consciousness. Svaha is the word uttered following any such offering. When we are consciously doing any work, as if we are saying svaha, svaha, ..., that is the rhythm of the work. I do this work not for myself, I do it as an agent of God, that is the etymological meaning of svaha. Our Muslim friends also say "Bismillah" (I start in the name of God), almost same idea is here.

svadha – स्वधा *svadhā* – an invocation to oneself, during a meditation; this is a technical word; a thought sequence which leads one to deeper levels of meditation;

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vashatkar – वषट्कारः *vaṣaṭkārah* – another technical word; certain sounds and sound element sequences have direct effect on the deeper regions of the human brain – this was well known to Indian Rishis. Normally, when you hear any speech (or any sound), under normal circumstances the auditory and speech regions of Cerebral Cortex analyse it and try to find the meaning. This meaning conveys the knowledge content of that sound. It is this knowledge that is absorbed by the deeper levels of our self, by integrating it within the network of existing knowledge. As said before, certain sounds, under proper circumstances, will bypass this stages of analysis and go directly to the deeper regions of the brain. A rough and ready example is good, soothing music. You do not hear individual sound or note of the music, you "enjoy" the music. That kind of sound element is called वषट्कारः *vaṣaṭkārah*.

svara – स्वरात्मिका *svarātmikā* – all the Language elements, at whatever level, are called svara.

nectar – सुधा *sudhā* – one which support my life, without Devi, there would not be life as we know it.

three matras – त्रिधा मात्रा *tridhā mātṛā* – this directly refers to माण्डुक्य उपनिषद् *māṇḍukya upaniṣad* the sacred syllable aum ॐ, called अक्षरः *akṣaraḥ* (see below) has three and half matras, out of which the first three अ उ म् *a u m* are spoken and heard. The last half matra is called silent or unheard matra. As explained in detail in माण्डुक्य उपनिषद् *māṇḍukya upaniṣad*, the three matras represent the waking state, the dreaming state and the state of deep sleep, respectively. These are the three major states in which a person moves about.

aum – अक्षरः *akṣaraḥ* – aum is called akshara, indestructible, because it represents Paramatma.

अर्धमात्रास्थिता नित्या यानुच्चार्या विशेषतः ।

त्वमेव संध्या सावित्री त्वं देवी जननी परा ॥ ३ ॥

ardhamātrāsthitā nityā yānuccāryā viśeṣataḥ |
tvameva saṁdhyā sāvitrī tvaṁ devī janānī parā || 3 ||

You are the unpronounceable half matra at the end of aum. You are Sandhya, Savitri. O Devi, you are the original Mother.

half matra As we started to discuss above, the sacred syllable aum is considered to have a half matra, which is not pronounced or heard. Mandukya Upanishad says that it represents the basis on which all the three remaining states of mind

are standing. This state is called तुरीय *turīya*, the Fourth one. This is not a separate state of our mind, it is rather always present as the basis, only we are not aware of it, as it is our true self and there no way we can know it by means of our senses.

snadhya the process of establishing link with Paramatma; Brahmins are expected to perform this as a ritual three times a day. A kind of meditation. A flavour of what is contained in Sandhya is already given in Introduction. There are two basic steps — atonement of sins committed during the day and जप *japa*, silent repetition, of Gayatri mantra.

savitri the content or meaning of the so called Gayatri mantra;

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्व । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गोदेवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om bhūrbhuvahḥ sva | tatsaviturvareṇyam bhargodevasya dhīmahi | dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt ||

[I exist as awarer of three levels of fields] भूः, same as the Earth, भुवः same as the Sky and स्वः, same as the Heaven. We worship That, Savita, who should be strived for, beneficial to all my thought processes; may He direct our intelligence [to Himself]

Actually this is a prayer to one's self, because Savita is nothing but one's innermost Self, Atma. The word That तत् *tat* indicates that an equivalence is sought to be established between Atma and Paramatma.

Mother because every thing is created from you; see (4) below.

त्वयैतद्धार्यते विश्वं त्वयैतत्सृज्यते जगत् ।

त्वयैतत्पाल्यते देवि त्वमत्स्यन्ते च सर्वदा ॥ ४ ॥

*tvayaitaddhāryate viśvaṁ tvayaitatsrjyate jagat |
tvayaitatpālyate devi tvamatsyante ca sarvadā || 4 ||*

You are supporting this Universe, you create this World, you sustain this [World]. [At the end of the Universe], you absorb in yourself everything.

Here, the idea that Devi is the cause of every thing is pointed out. A clear link to Vedanta.

विसृष्टौ सृष्टिरूपा त्वं स्थितिरूपा च पालने ।

तथा संहतिरूपान्ते जगतोऽस्य जगन्मये ॥ ५ ॥

*visṛṣṭau sṛṣṭirūpā tvam sthiti rūpā ca pālane |
tathā saṁhṛtirūpānte jagato'sya jaganmaye || 5 ||*

At the time of generation of this World, you are Srushti – the Creation, while the world continues to exist you are Sthiti – its stability, and at the time of Dissolution you are Samhriti – the Destroyer

महाविद्या महामाया महामेधा महास्मृतिः ।
महामोहा च भवती महादेवी महासुरी ॥ ६ ॥

mahāvidyā mahāmāyā mahāmedhā mahāsmṛtiḥ |
mahāmohā ca bhavatī mahādevī mahāsūrī || 6 ||

You are the ultimate knowledge, illusion, intelligence, memory, ignorance, goddess and controller.

प्रकृतिस्त्वं च सर्वस्य गुणत्रयविभाविनी ।
कालरात्रिर्महारात्रिर्मोहरात्रिश्च दारुणा ॥ ७ ॥

prakṛtistvaṁ ca sarvasya guṇatraya vibhāvinī |
kālarātrirmahārātrirmoharātriśca dāruṇā || 7 ||

You are the Prakriti — the Fundamental material — which creates the three Gunas — the properties. You are three kinds of Night — Time, the Fundamental and Ignorance

प्रकृति *prakṛti* – the material cause of the Universe; this concept comes from सांख्य *sāṅkhya* philosophy. Prakriti is ever present material cause of the Universe, but it is अचेतन *acetana*, without an activating principle. That is provided by पुरुष *puruṣa*, who activates Prakriti but is aloof from it.

गुणत्रय *guṇatraya* – the three Fundamental properties : सत्त्वस् रजस् तमस् *satvas rajas tamas* which can be variously interpreted, depending on situation. Generally Tamas denotes the gross aspect, Rajas denote the active or useful aspect and Satvas denotes the higher or philosophical aspect of any entity. For example, when you are hearing some music, the sound waves are Tamas, the melody is Rajas and the abstract concepts generated in your mind due to the music is Satvas aspect of the music.

कालरात्रि *kālarātri* – the illusion in form of Time; please refer to our explanation of the Sandhya mantra in Introduction;

महारात्रि *mahārātri* – the Original Mistake or Fundamental Ignorance; please refer to our explanation of the Sandhya mantra in Introduction;

मोहरात्रि *moharātri* – once the creatures of this Universe are created, they are under the spell of an ignorance which makes them believe of existence in reality of the World. That false notion is called the Ignorance.

त्वं श्रीस्त्वमीश्वरी त्वं ह्रीस्तं बुद्धिर्वोधलक्षणा ।

लज्जा पुष्टिस्तथा तुष्टिस्त्वं शान्तिः क्षान्तिरेव च ॥ ८ ॥

*tvam śrīstvamīśvarī tvam hrīstaṃ buddhirbodhalakṣaṇā |
lajjā puṣṭistathā tuṣṭistvam śāntiḥ kṣāntireva ca || 8 ||*

You are Shri – the Wealth, Ishvari – the controller, Hri – modesty, and intelligence in form of perceptions. You are bashfulness, enrichment, satisfaction, peace and forgiveness.

These are all higher functions of human mind. Shri denotes the mental ability to approach the Ultimate Reality, it is generally called wealth and translated as such.

खड्गिनी शूलिनी घोरा गदिनी चक्रिणी तथा ।

शङ्खिनी चापिनी बाणभृशूण्डीपरिधायुधा ॥ ९ ॥

*khaṅginī śūlinī ghorā gadinī cakriṇī tathā |
śaṅkhinī cāpinī bāṇabhuṣuṇḍīparidhāyudhā || 9 ||*

You have these different forms of representations.

Actually, each of these forms has significance, but for lack of space we are not going into details of iconographic science.

सौम्या सौम्यतराशेषसौम्येभ्यस्त्वतिसुन्दरी ।

परापराणां परमा त्वमेव परमेश्वरी ॥ १० ॥

*saumyā saumyatarāśeṣasaumyebhyastvatisundarī |
parāparāṇāṃ paramā tvameva paramaśvarī || 10 ||*

You are Saumya and more Saumya. You are even most beautiful amongst all the Saumya things. You are Parameshvari, beyond the things *near* and *far*.

सौम्य *saumya* – pleasing, agreeable; something which takes one to deeper or meditative state of mind, which establishes the Alpha state. When we see something beautiful, for example, a natural scennary, for a few moments we are cut off from the external world and go deeper into ourselves, perfectly at peace. Different things have different amount of such effect on us.

near and far – near means things accessible to human senses and mind, far means things not easily accessible to even mind.

Devi is beyond things near and far, i.e., to reach her, we will have to make an effort beyond what we normally do in our usual activities.

यद्य किञ्चित् क्वचिद्वस्तु सदसद्वाखिलात्मिके ।

तस्य सर्वस्य या शक्तिः सा त्वं किं स्तूयसे तदा ॥ ११ ॥

yacca kiṃcit kvacidvastu sadasadvākhilātmike |
tasya sarvasya yā śaktiḥ sā tvam kiṃ stūyase tadā || 11 ||

O Omnipresent Devi, whatever things are really there or really not there, and whatever is their ability, you are verily that. Under this condition how can we pray to you?

See Introduction for explanation of the basic concept involved.

Our words will be futile in praying to you, so how do we pray to you?

यया त्वया जगत्स्रष्टा जगत्पात्यत्ति यो जगत् ।
सोऽपि निद्रावशं नीतः कस्त्वां स्तोतुमिहेश्वरः ॥ १२ ॥

yayā tvayā jagatsraṣṭā jagatpātyatti yo jagat |
so'pi nidrāvaśaṃ nītaḥ kastvāṃ stotumiheśvaraḥ || 12 ||

You have put to sleep even Vishnu, who creates, maintains and destroys this World, under that condition who is able to pray to you?

Paramatma is asleep under the spell of His own Maya.

विष्णुः शरीरग्रहणमहमीशान एव च ।
कारितास्ते यतोऽतस्त्वां कः स्तोतुं शक्तिमान् भवेत् ॥ १३ ॥

viṣṇuḥ śarīragrahaṇamahamīśāna eva ca |
kāritāste yato'tastvāṃ kaḥ stotuṃ śaktimān bhavet || 13 ||

You have given a body (or a form) to myself, Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahadeva, so who has ability to pray to you?

This is very interesting. This mantra points out that even the concepts of the three Gods — Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh — is due to Maya, and thus not the Ultimate Reality. Rigveda also clearly says :

एकम् सत् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति *ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*

the One Reality is described variously by learned persons.

सा त्वमित्थं प्रभावैः स्वैरुदारैर्देवि संस्तुता ।
मोहयैतौ दुराधर्षावसुरौ मधुकैटभौ ॥ १४ ॥

sā tvamitthaṃ prabhāvaiḥ svairudārairdevi samstutā |
mohayaitau durādharṣāvasurau madhukaiṭabhau || 14 ||

O Devi, you are praised due to these your beneficial abilities. Please put under a spell these two Asurs, Madhu and Kaitabha, who are difficult to battle with.

Who are Madhu and Kaitabha? Madhu denotes form of anything. Kaitabha denotes

name of anything. When Vishnu is asleep, i.e., I am engrossed in day-to-day routine activities, out of Vishnu's ears are created these two demons. *Ears* denote the information collecting ability of Vishnu. So out of the basic brain activity of mine, the two demons — name and form — are generated. They attack Brahma, the clear perception about the Creation, and try to enforce a world view in terms of categorization by names and forms. These two demons are difficult to conquer.

प्रबोधं च जगत्स्वामी नीयतामच्युतो लघु ।
बोधश्च क्रियतामस्य हन्तुमेतौ महासुरौ ॥ १५ ॥

prabodham ca jagatsvāmī nīyatāmacyuto laghu |
bodhaśca kriyatāmasya hantumetau mahāsaurau || 15 ||

Please wake up Vishnu quickly and also create an idea in him to kill these two mighty demons.

The meaning is clear in view of our explanation of the previous mantra.