

## **Abhu**

Creation is a seamless, eternal process in which two fundamental elements, diametrically opposite in character, are involved. One of them has existed eternally, has no form and does not change. It is pervasive and exists in all living and non-living beings. It is known as abhu. The second element emerges from abhu itself and is known as abhva. These two elements constitute Brahma, the fountainhead of Creation.

Abhu is known by many names. Since it is eternal, it is known as amruta. It is called brahman because it is the tattva or essence which forms the observed universe. It is called satya or truth because it is present at all time. It is rasa or nectar because it is the fuel of existence, without which nothing can exist.

When rasa is infused with bala or power, Creation comes into motion. Whereas rasa is abhu, what emerges from its interaction with bala is abhva.

An easier way to understand the complex term of abhu is to examine space or void. Space exists within as well as outside an object. For instance, if you are sitting inside a room, you can experience the space within and it is equally possible to realise that the room itself exists in a space. Just as every object, big or small, has space, rasa or abhu exists in everything.

Abhu has another significant meaning—that of drashta or the one who sees. While abhva is what can be seen, abhu is what sees. Abhu is not bound by direction, space and time while abhva is. To illustrate, on seeing a pitcher, one says, ‘I see a pitcher’. Here ‘I’ is drashta or the one who sees and the ‘pitcher’ is what is visible or abhva.

The notion of abhu as a springboard of Creation is a fundamental principle of Vedic Vijnana. Other schools of philosophy have different versions. Brahma is considered to be the source of Creation by the Advaitavedanta philosophers, while the Sankhya school of philosophers consider Purusha as the source. Among the Nyaya school of philosophers, it is atom.

References to abhu is found in Rigveda, Yajurveda and the brahmanas. Pandit Madhusudan Ojha has explained the concept in his work, Samshayataduchchedavad.

## **Abhva**

Abhva is the element that has a name, form and function and is born when bala or power interacts with abhu.

Abhva is something which can be seen. It is the observed universe which is constantly changing and hence it is destructible. It is bound by time and space.

To illustrate, a car, a house, a farm, a mountain, a river or any object or person one can see is abhva—it is observable, it has a name, form and purpose, it is located somewhere and exists within a time-frame. In other words, it is not eternal.

Any object that exists have a form; and if there is a form, there ought to be a name and role, purpose or function of that object. While name, role and functions of an object can change, they never cease to exist, because they are based on amruta or abhu. To illustrate, take the simple example of a shirt. It is made of cotton which comes from cotton plants, which grows in soil. The shirt may become tattered over the period, torn and discarded. Thus there could be a change in the name, form and purpose. Even when the tattered cloth becomes decomposed and becomes soil, it only undergoes another round of change in name, form and purpose.

This process can be understood by anyone. When we look at an object, we have to realise that it is nothing but rasa and the outcome of its interaction with different balas upon it. The objects appear to be different because of the variations in the bala acting on the rasa.

While term abhva is synonymous with bala, karma, prakriti, maya and asatya, it also conveys a sense of awe and dread. The awe is evoked because it is something which comes into existence from a non-existent state. But, on the other hand, since it also separates and creates distortions in an ``unbroken, harmonious and homogenous phenomenon,<sup>1</sup>`` it creates a sense of dread. Abhva is also called yaksha which stands for something terrible.

References to abhva can be found in the Rigveda, Yajurveda and the brahmanas. Pandit Madhusudan Ojha has explained this term in Samshayataduchchedavad and Brahmavinaya.

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<sup>1</sup> Rishi Kumar Mishra, The Cosmic Matrix, Rupa.