

# DRAFT YOUR ANALYTICAL QUESTION AND WORKING THESIS

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## 1 Analytic Question

Why is Purusha still immortal given that he has already been sacrificed?

## 2 Question Justification

Perhaps the most confusing sentence of the sukta is “From him was born Viraj, and from Viraj, Purusha”. I had a knot inside stomach when I was hindered by this wheel-like expression. By continuing studying the rest of the hymn, I realized that we could address this confusion by seeing the resemblance: born and create are synonyms, and the structure “from ... created/born...” not only appears in this sentence, but also appears in the creations after the sacrifice. By connecting the two and the rest of the text, we find a bigger issue: why is Purusha immortal, especially since he has been immolated?

One can approach this question in many ways. For example, some could argue that the “sacrifice” wasn’t really performed literally, so Purusha didn’t really die. Or one can argue that though the body of Purusha was dismembered and burnt, his spirit didn’t actually die, or, argue that one of his heads wasn’t burnt, and could still talk despite chopped off, because gods don’t die. We could even argue more fundamentally, that Purusha did, die. There isn’t a single “right” answer. And these claims contradict each other, which makes them controversial.

One of the first questions I have raised was: “What can be inferred about the Hindu beliefs from the story?” Thanks to our community, I now know by heart that a good analytic question starts with a “How” or a “Why”. I should ask: “How the story reflects Hindu beliefs in general?” However, this topic is too broad. Instead, focusing on one specific aspect of the Hindu beliefs is better. My new question is just such a manageable one discussing only about the reason behind immortality.

Lastly, to support my thesis, I will draw all the evidence from the sukta itself, without using outer sources.

### 3 Working Thesis

I will argue that disappearing and reappearance is a recurring theme in the Purushasukta, reflecting the idea of transmigration. Although Purusha was sacrificed, he has transmigrated into other beings.

### 4 List of Evidence

- Transmigration is a repeating theme in the hymn.  
“From him was born Viraj, and from Viraj, Purusha”, a seemingly chicken and egg problem. (Paragraph 5)  
The three seasons were sacrificed along with Purusha, but the quarters are then created from the sacrifice. (Paragraph 6 and 14)
- Purusha is immortal.  
“...whatever has been and whatever shall be. He is also the lord of immortality...” (Paragraph 2)  
“Purusha is superior to this ...immortal in the sky.” (Paragraph 3)
- Purusha has transmigrated to the world itself.  
“He was then diffused everywhere over things which eat and things which do not eat.” (Paragraph 4)  
“From that universal sacrifice ...in this manner (the gods) formed the worlds.” (Paragraphs 8-14)