

THE EVOLUTION OF COSMOS

The theories of *tantra sastra* do not treat the universe and its existence as an illusion or myth. According to the tantric theory, the undifferentiated primordial consciousness (*Parabrahman* of vedantist and *paramasaiva* of tantric) experienced a fundamental movement or vibration within. This is called the primary explosion (*adi sphota*). This is the first sprout of energy (*adi sakti*), for which no cause can be assigned. *Sakti* thus becomes an inseparable component of *Siva* and this vibrant primordial consciousness is called *Sabda Brahman* or vibrating *Brahman*, to differentiate it from the quiescent and primordial *parabrahman*.

This primeval energy sprout afterwards solidified into “mind stuff” (*mahat tatva*) and then transformed into the fundamental particles with which the universe is built up. In this process it lost its all-encompassing unity and became many. The *Vedas* declare this process in the hymn : “*So akamayatha bahusyam prajayeyu*” (He began to desire; let me become many). This process of creation is illustrated by the evolution from consciousness (*purusa*) to gross earth (*prithvi*) or the solid stage in twenty five different stages according to sage Kapila, the exponent of *Samkhya* philosophy. In *tantra* these twenty five principles (*tatvas*) are elaborated into thirty six principles from the pure undifferentiated consciousness (*paramasiva*) to the grossest solid state (*prthivi*), beyond which so far as we know, the process of creation has not advanced yet. In simple terms, we should understand that this *sabda Brahman* became unmanifest (*avyakta*) and then converted itself into the primordial or universal “mind stuff” (*mahat tatva*) which differentiated into manifold ego consciousness (*ahamkara*) which again evolved into *akasa*, *vayu*, *agni* and *prthivi*. (These terms are often erroneously translated as ether, air, fire water and earth). These five fundamental divisions of matter or levels of condensation so commonly encountered in all Indian sciences could be roughly translated as matter in the ethereal or wavy forms as in wave mechanics, matter in particle form as in modern particle physics, matter in the form of chemical atoms as in the field of all chemical reactions, matter in the form of elementary molecules in a state of free motion or fluidity and finally matter in the complicated crystalline form bound together with no apparent freedom of movement as in solid substances. Beyond this state we do not know any condensation of energy or matter in the universe and hence these five states of matter, according to the Indian *Weltanschauung*, bear a striking resemblance to most of the modern scientific thought. This theory can be called the theory of creative movement of the universe. The reverse movement of evolution is called *samhara*. This process of dissolution of the created universe into the fundamental particles and the primordial consciousness also goes on. The evolution of *adi sakti* into these evolutes is described by Sankaracharya in verse 35 of *Saundarya Lahari*, the famous treatise of *tantra sastra*.

Manas tvam vyoma tvam marud asi marut sarathir asir

Tvam apas tvam bhumis tvayi parinatayam na hiparam

Tvam eva svatmanam parinamayitum visva vapusa

Cidanandakaram sivayuvati bhavena bibhrase.

(Oh youthful spouse of Siva! Thou art the mind, Thou the ether, Thou the air, Thou the fire, Thou the water and Thou the earth. When Thy has transformed Thyself (thus) there is nothing beyond. Thyself with a view to manifesting Thyself in the form of the universe, inwardly assumes the form of consciousness and bliss).

It is needless to state that this view of creation is nearer to that of modern physics, according to which the first tremor or explosion gradually expanded and spread out as energy waves which later on got transformed into sub-atomic particles probably releasing cosmic rays and these particles in turn condensing step by step into molecules of the solidified universe we experience.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that the essence of divinity which we term as the Creatrix assumes gradually the shape of the universe around us which we can experience with our mind and give senses. This in turn reminds us of the concept of universal body of God (*viratpursa*), as expounded in the celebrated vedi hymn *Purusasukta* thus : “*Sahasiva sirsa purusa sahasraksa sahasrapad*”. Expressions like “thousand – headed being”, “thousand – eyed”, “thousand – footed” etc are nothing but the truth realized and poetically expressed by our vedic seers.

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