**The Mathematical Basis of Creation in Hinduism**

The Hindu scriptures say that God manifested in the form of a Cosmic Person (Purusha) at the beginning of time.  He is the *Prathama Jatha*, the ‘First-Born’ through whom the solar system and life in it came into existence in a long process of creation.  Navajyoti Sri Karunakara Guru (1927-1999), the socio-spiritual reformer and founder of Santhigiri Ashram in Kerala has reinterpreted this creation myth by identifying Manu, the human progenitor, with the Purusha, also called Hiranyagarbha in the Vedas. Contrary to the common perception, the Guru reveals that it was Manu who conceptualized the solar system, and not Brahma, Vishnu, or Shiva, as mentioned in the Puranas.[[1]](#footnote-1) The role of Brahma in the process of creation is different from Manu. The myth of Brahma was made popular through Puranas - the Hindu mythology, and folklore.

The Puranas describe Manu as the son of Brahma, and as the human progenitor in earthly terms, after raising Brahma to the status of a Creator. Probably, the demotion of Manu was to promote the Trimurti concept under which the patriarchs of three major sects, namely Shiva, Vishnu, and Goddess could be brought under the Vedic religion in a process of integrating the faith and rituals of ancient people. This marked the beginning of a major deviation from the original Vedic cosmology that places the First-Born Purusha (Manu) at the source of creation.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The universe has an ethereal spiritual structure, which is unalterably linked to space and time. The ancient sages linked the concept of space and time to manvantara, the cycle of spiritual epochs traceable to Manu, the first ethereal image of God in the conception of a human universe. The Brihadaranya Upanishad mentions thus:

‘In the beginning, this was but the Self in a form similar to that of a Man’[[3]](#footnote-3).

Manu Smriti, the treatise on dharma, also mentions Manu, the First Born of God. The Vedas and Upanishads mention that the world originated from this Cosmic Purusha:

“I have created all the worlds.  Let me now create a Protector for this. With this purpose, he created a Purusha (Cosmic Person) from his own being. (Aitareya Upanishad, 1:1:3).

The Guru identifies the First-Born Purusha with Manu as the creator, and controller of this universe consisting of the solar system, twelve constellations (Rashis), and twenty-seven Nakshatras. The Vedic idea of God appearing as a Cosmic Person is found adopted in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam with slight modification. It is said that Adam, the first man was created in the image of God, and the Almighty asked the angels to worship him.

“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am going to create a human being from clay. So, when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My soul, then fall down to him in prostration.’ So, the angels prostrated – all of them entirely. Except for Iblees, he was arrogant and became among the disbelievers.” [38:71-74].

From this Koranic verse, it becomes clear that the formless and unseen God made himself known through the form of an archetypal human. God did this since man was unable to conceive him in any other way.  So, the argument of Islam that God cannot have a form is contradictory. The controversy about God’s form and formlessness has arisen because of the scriptural misinterpretations, contradictory to the original teachings.

The process of creation could be mathematically related to the form and formlessness of God. The episodes of creation are measured by the Rishis in terms of Manvantaras, the epochs of Manus. The Manvantaras are successive episodes of creation by different Manus in the process of evolution of souls to their absolute potential that must happen during a Manvantara and Kalpa. Kalpa is a long cycle of creation ending with the total dissolution (pralaya) of the universe. A Kalpa consists of fourteen Manu cycles or Manvantaras, the seventh running now, according to the calendar of Manu. Major Puranas mention the names of 14 Manus, both past and future.

What is the process by which the formless God takes up a form? That shall be explained now:

The Upanishads reveal that in the beginning, nothing existed:

“This was but non-existence in the beginning. That became existence. That became ready to be manifest”. (Chandogya Upanishad 3.15.1)

“In the beginning all this was but non-existence. From that sprang existence”. (Taitiriya Upanishad 2.7)

From this state of non-manifest state comparable to (0) the process of creation started. If any number of zeros are added to Zero (0), the result will be a big Zero because (0) is a neutral concept having no manifest qualities.  Once the (0) becomes attached to qualities, motion, and time, it will no longer remain a (0); it loses its neutral status as it gets altered into a different state. The Zero becomes kinetic, as it were, to become (1), the first number.

“He who diversifies the single seed.” (Swethashwathara Upanisad 6:12).

“That created itself by itself.” (Taitiriya Upanishad 2.7).

The subsequent creation takes place from the First-Born Purusha:

“Let me manifest name and form by Myself entering in the form of this Individual Being.” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.3.2).

Mathematically, the subsequent numbers are possible only when we begin from (1), the First-Born Purusha here. Number (1) has a positive and negative pole or a male and female aspect. When this primary number (1) gets split, it becomes two, producing the number (2). Shatapatha Brahmana, a part of the Vedas mentions the birth of male and female thus:

“Before there was anything there were the primeval waters. These seas were vast and deep and dark; all that was - was non-Being. Over time, these waters produced a single golden egg, which floated over the waters for nine months. After nine months, the egg burst open, and there was Prajapati standing in its shell. Prajapati was neither male nor female, but an all-powerful combination of both. He rested there on the golden shell for almost a year without speaking or moving… Prajapati was lonely, and he desired a mate in this vast emptiness. He divided himself into two beings, a husband, and a wife, and together they created the first gods, the elements, and mankind. By these acts of creation, time was created. Prajapati became the embodiment of time itself….” (Shatapatha Brahmana, XIV. 4, 2)

Number (1) denotes Manu, the First-Born Purusha. When it gets split into two - male and female, we have the numbers (1) and (2). From the union of (1) and (2) (the first family), the child of the second family is generated; that is number (3). The number (3) has the male and female counterparts like the number (1); it produces the number (4) when it splits itself into male and female. From the male and female parts of (3&4), the third family (5) is produced, which is the parent of the next. Thus, it goes on to produce the primary numbers up to (9). These primary numbers could be related to the evolutionary biospheres of the Purusha, the manifest Brahman.

What is the conclusion from this?  That the neutral Zero (0) has a dual status; it can transform itself into a binary, into a qualitative and quantitative entity.  Zero on its own has no meaning except when it is kinetic. So, Hinduism defined God both as Arupi and Sarupi, or Saguna or Nirguna, i.e., with and without form at the same time. This is corroborated by the Upanishads when they spoke of God (Brahman) in terms of manifest and unmanifest:

“Brahman has but two forms, gross and subtle, mortal and immortal, limited and unlimited, and defined and undefined.” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 2:3:1)

It is said in the Puranas that Manu, the Cosmic Person split himself into two, as a man and a woman, at the beginning of creation, and the human race originated from their union.  (Vishnu Purana 3:1). The Rishis reckoned the episodes of creation by the Manu calendar since Manu is the authority of creation. The process of creation is cyclical.  It is repeated endlessly, like the waves in an ocean. After nine scales of evolution, the Cosmic Person (1) merges back into the neutral Zero (0) by which time the evolution of all life forms towards their absolute potential would have been completed, thus ending a cosmic cycle. That gives the meaning of the number 10 (1+0), the merger of the ‘First Born’ (1) into the non-dual truth (0). This process is repeated ad infinitum.

If we take (0) as Nirguna Brahman (God without any form and attributes), then from where and how did the universe come into existence? According to Bhagavata Purana, although Nirguna Brahman is neutral, it has a positive, negative, and neutral pole, constituting its Prakriti or nature. Prakriti has three latent Gunas (modes or qualities): Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. They are related to Gyana Shakti (the power of knowledge) Sankalpa Shakti (the power of ideation), and Kriya Shakti (the power of action). Science says that Atom is the basic element from which the universe evolved. The Atom has three nuclei- electron, pluton, and neutron. The Satva, Rajas, and Tamas in Indian spirituality are nothing but the mystical names for the nuclei of an atom.

Prakriti is also constituted of the elements of Time, Karma (action/destiny) and Swabhava (innate nature), according to Bhagavata Purana. Time disturbs the equilibrium of Gunas. From the aspect of Karma is produced an entity called Mahat, in the form of intelligence. Mahat is dominated by Satva and Rajas. From Mahat manifests the next evolute dominated by Tamas with three predominant qualities – Dravya (substance), Kriya (action), as well as intelligence. It forms to become the Ego principle (Ahamkara).

Ahamkara has three modes – Satvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic. Satvic is Jnana oriented, Rajasic action-oriented, and Tamasic Dravya (substance) oriented. From the Tamasic Ahankara, five gross elements are produced (ether, air, fire, water, and earth - Akash, Vayu, Agni, Jal and Prithvi). From the Satvic Ahamkara, guardian deities (the sun and moon, deities of sense organs, and organs of action) and from Rajasic Ahamkara, ten sense organs - five senses of perception and five organs of action, as well as the faculties of intellect and Prana (life breath) are produced.

Bhagavata says that since these energies, elements, and faculties remained disassociated, they were combined to form a Cosmic Egg. The egg floats in the primal waters for a thousand years. Then God enters this Cosmic Egg and manifests himself as the Cosmic Purusha. He is the first nucleus, the God particle equivalent to the number (1) which is the embodiment of everything in the universe. The concept of creation and dissolution in Hinduism can be compared to the waves in an ocean that appear and disappear incessantly. The Manvantaras are such successive episodes of creation emerging from Manu, the Cosmic Person. This Cosmic Person has been described as having fourteen biospheres (heavens) that are inhabited by various life forms in the order of evolution of consciousness. If we begin from the human biosphere (Bhuloka), there are ten astral biospheres that a man must transcend to attain liberation or Mukti from the cycle of births and deaths.

Now, what difference does it make to Hinduism whether the creator is Brahma or Manu? Navajyoti Sri Karunakara Guru mentions that the authority of Manu and his time order should not be violated. The Will of Manu is the Will of Brahman. Manu Dharma is the Will of Brahman, which is carried out through the epochal gurus (Kalanthara Gurus) who appear from time to time in the Yuga intervals. The dharma and karma of every yuga are defined through these Kalanthara Gurus. Manu Dharma is Guru-centric, and central to it is the institution of Ashram. In Manu Dharma, the object of worship is Parabrahm, the Supreme Brahman. The only mediator between man and Parabrahm is Guru, a central figure like in Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Jainism and Sikhism too evolved giving emphasis to the Guru concept.

Manu Dharma is monotheistic and unitive under a central figure that can ensure spiritual and social unity among the followers. Since the Vedic tradition (Puranic Hinduism) is a conglomeration of mutually contradicting sects, there cannot be spiritual unity because of its very loose composition and the impossibility of a central figure that is acceptable to all castes and sects. The Vedic tradition evolved focusing on Trimurti and its family of deities, which gradually got developed into the temple institution. Hinduism should revert to Manu Dharma rediscovering the true structure and cosmology of Sanatana Dharma to be a spiritual force capable of evolving a universal spiritual culture.

Mukundan P.R.

Senior Coordinator

Santhigiri Research Foundation

1. A Dialogue on Human Prospect, Karunakara Guru, P.34, Santhigiri Publications, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Modi-God Dialogues, Spirituality for a New World Order, Mukundan P.R., P:32-34, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Attmaivedamagra aasiit purushavidhah (Brihandaranyaka Upanishad 1:4:1) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)