

Satsang with Sri Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam
The Essentials of Hindu Dharma - 2

Question

Swamiji, you mentioned that the whole universe is the manifestation of the Lord. What about the creation of the universe itself? When did it begin and what is the Hindu view of the creation?

Answer

We have an elaborate time scale corresponding to the creation. In fact, we can provide a specific age for the universe as it is calculated in our almanac. I am glad to say that as described in Hindu almanac and as recited in the Hindu worships, the age of the universe nicely coincides with the age of the universe arrived at by geo-physical considerations and also by using cosmological methodology. The cosmologists study the expansion of the universe, because it is an expanding universe. By backward integration, they arrive at a particular figure for the age of the universe. The Hindu philosophy or the Hindu Dharma looks at this universe and also arrives at a particular age for it. This age coincides with the cosmological age and also the geophysical age. In fact, we have the concept of *Kalpa*. The *Kalpa* is one cycle of creation and consists of thousand *mahāyugas*; and each *mahāyuga* consists of 4.32 million years. Thus, a *Kalpa* is 4.32 billion years, while the age of the universe calculated by scientific methods is 4.5 billion years.

Question

So this universe is as old as *Kalpa* but before the *Kalpa*, what was there? What is the Hindu view of that?

Answer

You see, before the creation, it was the Being Absolute, which is non-dual

and there was no time and space. As this Being Absolute, which is the Godhead, starts manifesting in terms of a time/space framework, there arises this universe of plurality. So before the creation it was the Godhead unmanifest and after the creation it is the same Godhead manifest. That's all. So it is all one non-dual Godhead either before the creation or after the creation. And the creation is not some special creation in the sense that a non-existing thing comes into existence. The creation is nothing but the manifestation and hence, our view of cosmology and cosmos creation nicely coincides with the modern physics view¹.

¹ This transcript is based on Swami Tattvavidanandaji's TV interview in California with Mr. Vijay Kapoor. Transcribed and edited by Mohan Bhujle.