



## HINDU COSMOLOGY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

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### ABSTRACT

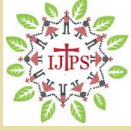
*This paper tries to comprehend Hindu narrative of creation in the framework of modern cosmology and psychology. The objective is to build a conversation for mutual understanding. The following concordance between the two streams is suggested. The state of the Primeval Being before It desired to become many is not known in the Hindu stream just as the state of the universe before the Big Bang is not known in the modern stream. The Primeval Being desired to grow according to the Hindu stream. Modern psychology says there is an innate desire to grow among human beings that we extrapolate backwards to suggest that the Singularity desired to grow. The Brahman pervades the entire Universe according to the Hindu stream. The panpsychists hold that every particle in the universe has consciousness. Brahman is the fused consciousness of all the particles in the universe according to the Hindu stream. In parallel the panpsychists hold that the fused consciousness is more than the sum of the parts. The collective consciousness of a subset of the universe is “devta” according to the Hindu stream. This concurs with the “unconscious substrate” created in social organizations according to modern psychology. The collective consciousness of individuals having their consciousness at the Vishuddhi, Manipur and Anahata chakras is known as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. These concord with the collective consciousness of individuals who have evolved to the needs of cognition, belonging and esteem according to Abraham Maslow. The devtas can descend into a living person who is then called an avatara. This concurs with the descent of the libido into the unconscious as said by Carl G. Jung. In conclusion, Hindu Brahman is modern God. Hindu devtas are modern gods. Hindu avataras are modern individuals in whom the gods have descended. In this way we can make the Hindu cosmology understandable to the modern mind and vice versa.*

**Keywords:** Hindu; Psychology; Cosmology; Creation; Brahman; God;

### 1. INTRODUCTION: GENESIS AND PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

The Hindu spiritual world has been an enigma to me. From childhood I used to wonder who created this world, and why? I was taught that the world was unreal. It had no purpose. The question arose as to how this world came into existence if there was no purpose for its existence? I once had a discussion with most respected Swami Ramanand Saraswati at Onkareshwar. He said that Brahman had a special quality of creating without having a desire. But it seemed more obvious that the Brahman must have had a desire to create this world.

I used to wonder what- or who- were Vishnu and other devtas? Vishnu was supposed to live in Vaikuntha. But I could not find Vaikuntha on this earth. Another question was why the avataras were pained? Why did Rama have to wage a difficult war against Ravana? Why did he expel Sita? Why did Krishna leave Dwarka? The explanation that the avataras made pretense of such suffering as a teaching to the people did not jell with me because their suffering was too real to be mere pretense. I wondered how the Western countries that had no



devtas or avataras were yet able to make progress while India was declining despite having her devtas and avataras. These and many more such questions led me to undertake the present study. It was difficult to get into this subject trained as I was in economics. However, I note with satisfaction as well as despair that I have had a streak of physics and psychology in me. I got an offer from the Department of Nuclear Physics at the University of Utah to join them as a graduate student when I landed at the University of Florida to study Agricultural Engineering. For some unknown reason I did not accept that offer and instead opted to study Agricultural Economics at Florida. I read Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* and other similar books. That was my failed entry into modern cosmology. At the same time I volunteered at the Suicide and Crisis Intervention Service of my University and attended meetings of societies of psychology. I read Sigmund Freud's *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* and Irving Stone's *Passions of the Mind*. These were my failed entry into psychology. These books nevertheless left a deep impression on my mind. Needless to say I was brought up as a practicing Hindu and was much influenced by the *Gita*. I was thus torn between my readings of the modern sciences and my inheritance of the Hindu thought. The time has perhaps now come to pursue these failed attempts. I have thus explored in this paper whether the Hindu concepts of Brahman, devtas and avataras could be explained in terms of modern cosmological and psychological concepts. I find that this can indeed be done.

A brief note on the texts is in order here. There exist multiple interpretations of the scriptures among Hindu scholars as well as multiple theories among modern scientists. Our purpose here is limited to examining if certain views in the two streams concord with each other. Towards this end we have consciously invoked those particular views from the two streams that are in harmony with each other. We do not claim that the particular view invoked was "correct." It is beyond the scope of this paper to "defend" the particular view relied upon us vis-à-vis the other views. It suffices for this paper that *an* interpretation of Hindu scriptures exists that concords with *a particular* view of the modern scientists.

This paper has been structured as follows. First, I present the relevant Hindu concepts. Then, if required, I discuss the difficulties with the Hindu concepts. Next, I discuss the modern concepts that concord with the Hindu concepts that are mentioned. Lastly, if required, I discuss the difficulties with the modern concepts. I put forth the concordance so arrived in the last section of the paper. We begin with the narrative of cosmic creation.

## 2. THE BEGINNING OF CREATION

### 2.1 Who knows whence it was born?

The Rig Veda says that the state before the creation is not known:

Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation? The gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being? He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it, Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not (10:129:5-7).

The Sanskrit word for "gods" in this verse is "deva." We shall show subsequently that devas or devtas are collective consciousness of a subset of the universe. This verse thus says that the devtas who were created after the creation did not know what existed earlier. The *Gita*, however, suggests that the Lord is without a beginning or an end (11:19). We understand this to mean that there is no *known* beginning or end. The *Gita* presents this lack of knowledge as there being no beginning or end. Thus interpreted this verse is consistent with the Lord, Being or creation being infinite the origin of which is not known.



## 2.2 Uncertainty before the Big Bang

The unknowability of the origin of the universe is expressed by modern cosmologists in terms of various theories:

*Born in greater universe.* Our universe has a beginning in quantum disturbances in a greater universe that is constantly inflating.

*Cyclic universe.* Our universe oscillates between Bang-Crunch states.

*Bounce.* Our universe bounced from an earlier universe. It does not have an initial singularity wherefrom it all began.

*Pre-existing black hole.* Our universe was born in a black hole.

*Pre-existing branes:* Our universe arose from the collision of two pre-existing branes having a number of dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

*Collision.* The universe was formed by a collision as a result of which it became hot and began to expand.<sup>2</sup>

*Big Bounce.* The cyclic universe is continually bouncing between big bangs and big crunches for eternity back in time and for eternity into the future.<sup>3</sup>

*Dark Matter.* The universe consists of 4% normal matter, 22% dark matter and 74% dark energy. We are oblivious to 96% of the universe.<sup>4</sup>

*Fluctuating quantum fields.* Our known universe started as an extremely small patch of vacuum. The quantum vacuum is not a true emptiness or nothingness. It has fluctuating quantum fields in it. The present material world had origin in quantum fluctuations of this vacuum.<sup>5</sup>

The multiplicity of these theories suggests that modern science has no credible knowledge as to what existed before the Big Bang. One possibility is that something preexisted and led to the Big Bang. This view suggests that existence has an infinite past. Second possibility is that Big Bang was created *de novo* with no prior existence. The first view concords with the Hindu stream.

## 2.3 Can infinity exist?

The possibility of prior existence of the universe has been debated in the modern stream in relation to the existence of infinity. If infinity can exist then it is plausible that the universe may have existed for an infinite time before the Big Bang. On the other hand, if infinity itself cannot exist then there has to exist a particular starting point when the universe was created *de novo*. This debate was carried out between Professor of Philosophy at Houston Baptist University William Lane Craig and Professor of Philosophy at University of Colorado Wes Morriston. Craig argued for non-existence of infinity, for a divine intervention leading to *de novo* creation of the universe, or for the existence of God. Morriston, on the other hand, argued that infinity could exist which, then, does not necessitate divine

<sup>1</sup> Lim, Emmanuel, "Before the Big Bang," Retrieved from [https://webhome.phy.duke.edu/~mkruse/PHY105\\_S11/projects/Emmanuel\\_Lim\\_Phy105\\_project.pdf](https://webhome.phy.duke.edu/~mkruse/PHY105_S11/projects/Emmanuel_Lim_Phy105_project.pdf), August 17, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Brustein, R. and Kupferman, J., "The creation of the world--according to science," in *Hist Philos Life Sci.*, 34(3):361-72 (2012). Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23316566/>, August 15, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Sutter, Paul, "What happened before the Big Bang?" in *Space.com* (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.space.com/what-came-before-big-bang.html>, August 15, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Steiner, João E., "The Origin of the Universe," in *Estudos Avançados* 20(58), (2006), Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/ea/a/L4Cn5NyczfTBhdXTDsr4Kng/?lang=en&format=pdf>, August 15, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Vasavada, Kashyap, "Concepts of Reality in Hinduism and Buddhism from the Perspective of a Physicist," in *Conference Proceedings: Quantum Reality and Theory of Shunya*, Springer, New Delhi, 2016, p. 17.



intervention or the existence of God. Graig's key argument against existence of infinity is built on Hilbert's Hotel paradox.

The familiar story of Hilbert's Hotel involves a hotel with infinitely many rooms, numbered 1, 2, 3, each of which is occupied by a guest. When a new guest arrives, the proprietor asks the guest in Room  $N$  to move to Room  $N+1$  (for  $N = 1, 2, 3, \dots$ ), thereby freeing up Room 1 for the new guest to use... if all the guests in odd numbered rooms (1, 3, 5, ...) check out, there will still be infinitely many guests remaining: all those in even numbered rooms (2, 4, 6, ...). However, if all the guests in Rooms 4, 5, 6, checked out, then the hotel would be nearly empty, with only three rooms remaining occupied.

The two scenarios above indicate that one could remove infinitely many objects from an infinite collection (if one existed) in two different ways, and end up with a different number of objects left over.<sup>6</sup>

The argument is that if infinity existed then in all cases infinite numbers of objects should be left over. The example, in our view, is misplaced. The error is that the infinite numbers of the rooms re said to start with the finite no 1. Let us think of a hotel with infinite numbers of floors below and above with the room numbers as ...-4, -3, -2, -1, 1, 2, 3, 4... In this case if the infinite numbers of guests in room numbers 4 and above checked out then still infinite numbers of guests in rooms numbered ...-4, -3, -2, -1, 1, 2, and 3 would remain. Thus, we suggest that the conclusion drawn from Hilbert's hotel example is misplaced and infinity can exist.

To put the question another way, it is asked can infinite regress exist? If infinite regress can exist then there is no necessity of a creator. Craig argues that infinite regress cannot exist because the past events are already frozen:

...the events that led to the formation of our sun, for example, have already happened, that is, they have already been actualized, and their number is no longer increasing perpetually but a determinate whole. Hence, when we ask whether there could be an infinite regress of causes or events... we are asking whether there could be an actual infinite regress... The past is either actual infinite or actual finite.<sup>7</sup>

The term "actual" implies that although the regress is infinite but, whatever its extent may be, it cannot expand further in the past. That, in turn, means that there is a particular starting point even though it may be infinitely in the past. We see three problems with this formulation. One, how can an infinite past have a starting point because if it has a starting point then it no longer is infinite. Two, granting for a moment that the actual infinite will have some starting point, our *knowledge* of the past infinite can be potentially infinite. The past may be finite but we can continue to expand our knowledge of the past infinitely. Three, as point out by James East, the author of the paper from which the above quote is extracted, the principles of mathematics need not apply to the real world. We conclude that infinity can exist and there is no necessity to stipulate the existence of a creator outside the universe.

This formulation concords with the Hindu view that no one knows whence this creation has come. The common theme is that the universe can stretch infinitely into the past and we do not know whether it has a beginning.

<sup>6</sup> East, James, "Infinity Minus Infinity," in *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*, 3(4), (2013), Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/216990711.pdf>, August 25, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Loke, Andrew Ter Ern, "On beginningless past, endless future, God, and singing angels: An assessment of the Morriston-Craig dialogue," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, 58(1): 57-66, (2016), Retrieved from <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/nzsth-2016-0004/html>, August 25, 2021.

### 3. CREATION OF TIME

#### 3.1 May I become many

The lack of knowledge about whence this universe came into being is depicted as “?” at Step 1 in Figure 1. At the same time, the texts say that the Primeval Being alone existed at a particular point of time. This is depicted at Step 2 in Figure 1. Then It divided itself to become many:

In the beginning, dear boy, this was Being alone, one only, without a second... That Being willed, "*May I become many, may I grow forth.*" It created fire. That fire willed, "*May I become many, may I grow forth.*" It created water (Chhandogya Upanishad 6:2:1-3).

[The Brahman desired] *I may become many.* He undertook penance. He created all this by undertaking penance. Then He entered the creation (Taittiriya Upanishad 6:1).

“Becoming” involves a progression between two points of time. Thus, “time” was created as depicted at Step 3 in Figure 1. Then the Shwetashwetar Upanishad lists time as the first cause followed by various causes such as intellect, emotions and will:

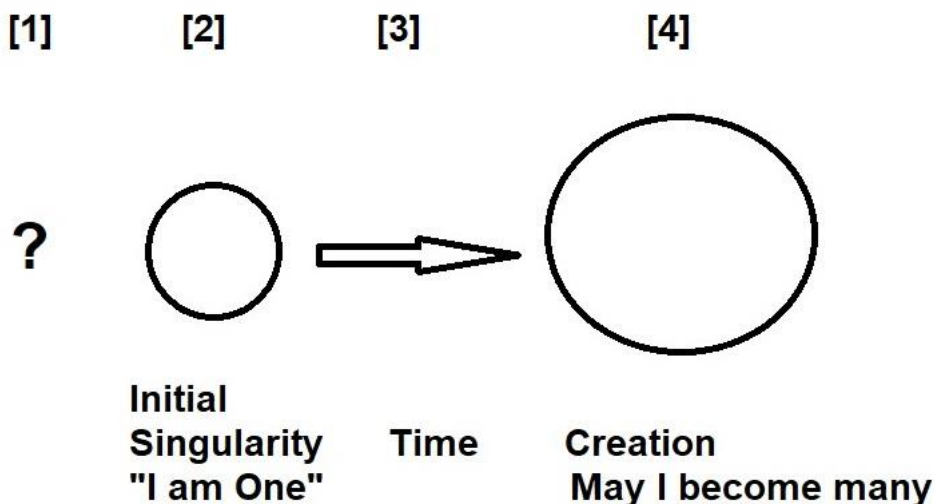


Figure 1: Time and creation

[The Being] who is the source of the intellect, emotions and will; who is one without a second; who presides over all the causes enumerated above, *beginning with time* and ending with the individual soul (Shwetashwetar Upanishad 3).

A similar view is held by the Atharva Veda:

Time created the earth; in time burns the sun; in time [are] all existences; in time the eye looks abroad (Atharva Veda 19:53:5-6).

On the other hand, the same Shwetashwetar Upanishad says that time is not a free agent:

Time, nature, law, chance, matter, energy, intelligence—neither these, nor a combination of these, can bear examination because of their own birth, identity and the existence of the self (Shwetashwetar Upanishad 2).

The seemingly contradictory verses above read together indicate the following sequence as depicted in Figure 1. The Being existed as indicated in Step [2] in Figure 1. Then the Being “became,” that is, time was created as indicated in Step [3]. Thus it is said that time



is not the creator. Time, in turn, led to the creation of nature, law, chance, matter, energy, intelligence, and self as indicated in Step [4].

### 3.2 Real time was created after the Big Bang

Most modern theories accept that a Big Bang took place around 13.8 billion years ago leading to the creation of the present universe as proposed by Belgian astrophysicist Georges Lemaitre in 1931:

We could conceive the beginning of the universe in the form of a unique atom, the atomic weight of which is the total mass of the universe ... [and which] would divide in smaller and smaller atoms by a kind of super-radioactive process.<sup>8</sup>

English astronomer Fred Hoyle, who first coined the term “Big Bang,” postulated that a tiny amount of matter led to the creation of the universe.<sup>9</sup> This creation may be described in the Hindu texts as “May I become many” as said above and as has been noted by a number of scholars.<sup>10</sup>

Stephen Hawking concludes in a short lecture that “time itself had a beginning in the Big Bang about 15 billion years ago.”<sup>11</sup> Hawking does not address the question from where the Big Bang arose. In doing so he remains silent on Step 2 in Figure 1. He acknowledges this in the statement that, “science could not predict, how the universe would have begun.”<sup>12</sup>

We conclude that the Hindu and modern thinking concord: There is uncertainty before creation [1]; then there was the existence of a Being or Singularity [2]; followed by the creation of time [3] and lastly this multifarious universe [4].

## 4. THE DESIRE AND EVOLUTION OF THE BEING

### 4.1 “May I become many”

Question arises what caused the Being to become many as suggested at Step [4] above? Most, if not all, scholars of Hinduism follow the footsteps of Shankaracharya (late first millennium by most estimates) that the Being was desireless. However, the Upanishads do not say that the Being was desireless. The attributes of the Being are given as follows:<sup>13</sup>

*All pervasive.* ‘In the heart of all things, of whatever there is in the universe dwells the Ishwara/Brahman (Isa Upanishad 1; Chhandogya Upanishad 3.14.1).

<sup>8</sup> Kraugh, Helge, “The Origin and Earliest Reception of Big-Bang Cosmology,” in *Publ. Astron. Obs.* 2008. 85:7-16.

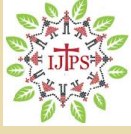
<sup>9</sup> Kragh, Helge, “Cosmology and the Origin of the Universe: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives” in *History and Philosophy of Physics*, Cornell University. Retrieved from <https://arxiv.org/abs/1706.00726>, September 3, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Vishwanadha, Rayalu, “Origin Of the Universe: On Nasadiya Sukta of Rig Veda, in *vedaravindamu*, Retrieved from <https://vedaravindamu.wordpress.com/2011/10/11/origin-of-the-universe-nasadiya-sukta-of-rig-veda/>, August 15, 2021; Humphrey, Robert L., “Cosmogogenesis In Ancient Hindu Scriptures And Modern Science,” in *InSight: Rivier Academic Journal*, 11(1), (2015). Retrieved from [https://www2.rivier.edu/journal/ROAJ-Spring-2015/J904\\_Humphrey\\_revised.pdf](https://www2.rivier.edu/journal/ROAJ-Spring-2015/J904_Humphrey_revised.pdf), August 15, 2021; Ragavendrasamy, B., Nanjundaiah, R. M. and Krishnamurthy, M. N., “Nāsadiya Sūktam: The earliest cosmology on origins of life,” in *Int J Yoga - Philosop Psychol Parapsychol* 5:24-5, (2017).

<sup>11</sup> Hawking, Stephen, “The Beginning Of Time,” Retrieved from <https://www.hawking.org.uk/in-words/lectures/the-beginning-of-time>, September 12, 2021, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Hawking, *The Beginning Of Time*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Durga, T. K., Sridhar, M. K. and Nagendra, H. R., “Consciousness in Upanishads,” in *International Journal of Sanskrit Research*, 4(5), (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.anantaajournal.com/archives/?year=2018&vol=4&issue=5&part=B&ArticleId=675>, August 18, 2021.



*Powerful:* This is the truth of Brahman in relation to people: in the movement of the mind, the power that is shown is the power of Brahman (Kena Upanishad 4.5).

*Imperishable, immortal.* He, the self-luminous, subtler than the subtlest, in whom exist all the worlds and all those that live therein—he is the imperishable Brahman. He is the principle of life. He is speech, and he is mind. He is real. He is immortal (Mundaka Upanishad 2:2:2).

*Beyond Space and Time:* You are the dark butterfly, you are the green parrot with red eyes, you are the thunder cloud, the seasons, seas, you are without beginning, beyond space and time. From you sprang the three worlds (Shwetashwetar Upanishad 4.4).

*Consciousness.* Consciousness is Brahman (Aitreya Upanishad 3.1.3)

All the above attributes are consistent with the Being being desirous. The Chhandogya Upanishad explicitly says that the Being had pure desires:

He, who is permeating the mind, who has Prāna for his body, whose nature is consciousness, whose resolve is infallible, whose own form is like Ākāsha, whose creation is all that exists, *whose are all the pure desires*, who possesses all the agreeable odors and all the pleasant tastes, who exists pervading all this... (Chhandogya Upanishad 3:14:2-3).

We conclude that the Being had desires that led it to become many. The terms “Being,” “Brahman” and “Ishwara” are used in the above verses for the same Primeval Being and this difference in nomenclature is not relevant here. The next question is whether the Being self-triggered its growth or it was triggered by an external agent? The Vedas and Upanishads say that the Brahman itself breathed and thought:

That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever (Rig Veda 10:129:2).

In the beginning this was Self alone, in the shape of Purusha. He looking round saw nothing but his Self... He feared... He thought, “As there is nothing but myself, why should I fear.” But he felt no delight... He wished for a second... He then made this his Self to fall in two, and thence arose husband and wife (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1:4:1-3).

These statements read with the statement that the Being was alone (Chhandogya Upanishad 6:2:1-3, quoted above), leads to the conclusion that the Being existed alone and Itself triggered Its own growth. This same is said in the Yoga Vasishtha: “This Brahman obtains to growth in-itself by-itself” (3:13).

#### 4.2 Strategic negation of Brahman’s desires

Seemingly contra to our above proposition the Kathopanishad says that the One Atman is not contaminated:

As the sun, which helps all eyes to see, is not affected by the blemishes of the eyes or of the external things revealed by it, so also the one Atman, dwelling in all beings, is never contaminated by the misery of the world, being outside it (2:2:11).

The Sanskrit word for “contaminated” is “लिप्त.” It means “smeared, anointed, soiled, defiled”<sup>14</sup> Now, a desire need not be defiling. For example, the desire of salvation cannot be said to be smeared, anointed or defiled. Thus, this verse is consistent with the pure desire of Brahman to create. Another verse invoked to support the idea that Being has no desires is from the Gita:

O Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds — heaven, earth, and the lower regions — that should be done by Me, nor there is anything unobtained that I should obtain, yet I engage in action (3:22, quoted above also).

<sup>14</sup> Monier-Williams, Monier, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Southern Publications, Madras, 1987, p. 902.



This verse says that there is no compulsion on the Lord to do anything. It does not say that the Lord does not desire anything. Yet another verse invoked in favour of a desireless Brahman is Sankara's oft quoted statement "ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्याः"

Brahman alone is the Real and the phenomenal world is unreal is known as discrimination between the real and the unreal (Vivekchoodamani 20).

Brahman alone being real does not mean that It is undesirous. Brahman can be real as well as desirous. We conclude that the Brahman had desires. Indeed they may be purer than the material desires but they are desires nevertheless.<sup>15</sup>

Another conception is that there is no *change* in the Being which implies that it cannot become many:

Just as from a single lump of clay, dear boy, one would know about everything made from clay, the difference being a mere verbal distinction, a name, the reality is only 'clay.' (Chhandogya Upanishad 6:1:4).

This verse seems to say that the clay is changeless. However, the quality of the clay may change. The clay may be wet or dry, smooth or coarse, etc. Likewise, we may consider the total mass of the universe not changing but the quality changing.

Question arises, why should the Gita portray a non-desiring Brahman when the Upanishads tell of the Brahman having desires? Our sense is that the non-desiring Brahman is said as a strategy to get the individual to disengage with his own desires and align with the desires of Brahman.<sup>16</sup> To give an example, a manager would be undertaking desireless action if she detaches from her own desires and works to fulfill the desires of her employer.

In conclusion, we suggest that the Brahman desires and evolves. It is depicted as not having desires as a strategy to get the person to align with the desires of the Brahman.

#### 4.3 The innate desire to grow

The Big Bang theory does not suggest that the Singularity was conscious though it considers it as the source of all the energy, matter, forces and activity.<sup>17</sup> The same evolution is seen in the living things. Thus, Carl G. Jung says:

We would laugh at the idea of a plant or an animal inventing itself, yet... the mind has grown to its present state of consciousness as an acorn grows into an oak or as a saurian [reptile] developed into mammals.<sup>18</sup>

Psychologist Abraham Maslow has provided evidence from a number of disciplines to suggest that there is an innate tendency for growth among human beings:

1 *Psychotherapy*. The pressure towards seeking better health makes therapy possible. Therapy could not take place if there was no seeking of better health.

2 *Brain-injured soldiers*. A brain-injured soldier tries to reorganize his capacities after injury because he wants to self-actualize himself.

3 *Psychoanalysis*. Neuroses are a distorted version of impulse towards growth, towards perfection of development, towards the fulfillment of the person's possibilities.

4 *Creativeness*. The theory of art calls for a concept of growth and spontaneity.

5 *Child Psychology*. Healthy children enjoy growing and moving forward, gaining new skills, capacities and powers.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> I am thankful to Ramprakash of Theosophical Society for drawing attention to this point.

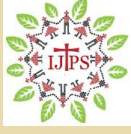
<sup>16</sup> I am thankful to Ashok Vohra for pointing to the need to explain this.

<sup>17</sup> Robert L. Humphrey, *Cosmogony in Ancient Hindu Scriptures*, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Jung, Carl G., *Man and his Symbols*, Doubleday Windfall, New York, 1964, p. 81:

<sup>19</sup> Maslow, Abraham, *The Psychology of Being*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968, p. 23.





We extrapolate this innate desire in the living beings backward to postulate that the Singularity had a similar desire to grow into the universe.

#### 4.4 Wave-particle duality and false illusion

Emeritus Professor of Physics at Purdue University Kashyap Vasavada has concurred the modern theory that the particle is both a wave and particle with the concept of Maya in Hindu philosophy.<sup>20</sup> He refers to Shankaracharya's statement "Brahman is the only truth; the world is a false illusion" to support his case (Vivekhoodamani 20, quoted above). Indeed, quantum physics tells us that just as it is not possible to determine whether a particle is a wave or a particle. The idea can be extended to say that it is not possible to say what the world really is.

Shankaracharya, however, had made that statement in the context of a seeker not using his faculty of discrimination and taking the existing world for real and ignoring the real Brahman.<sup>21</sup> He had no doubt that Brahman alone was real. The two ideas do not concord because Shankaracharya considers the Brahman to be real and the perception to be unreal; while Quantum Physics considers both wave and particle to be unreal.

Again, Vasavada says that the fact that it is not possible to clearly say where a particle is at a particular moment, concurs with the statement in the Isa Upanishad "It moves and it moves not; it is far and it is near..." (5). This requires reconsideration because the Sanskrit word for "move" in this verse "ej" means "stirs, moves, trembles, shakes."<sup>22</sup> Thus the two statements may be mentioning different things. Quantum physics is telling strictly about movement while Isa Upanishad could be telling about shaking.

## 5. MATTER HAS CONSCIOUSNESS

### 5.1 All-pervading Brahman

The Hindu texts say that Brahman is all-pervading:

He is Brahma, He is Indra, He is Prajapati; He is all these gods; He is the five great elements—earth, air, akasa, water, light; He is all these small creatures and the others which are mixed... All this is guided by Consciousness, is supported by Consciousness. The basis of the universe is Consciousness. Consciousness is Brahman (Aitreya Upanishad 3:1:3).

The Spirit by whom this entire universe is pervaded is indestructible (Gita 2:17).

These verses indicate that Brahman not only pervades all existence including matter but also is conscious. This idea concurs with panpsychism.

### 5.2 Panpsychism and Orch-OR Theory

Philip Goff of Durham University says that "consciousness is a fundamental and ubiquitous feature of the physical world."<sup>23</sup> The Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) theory in quantum physics states that a particle can simultaneously exist at two places and be self-aware of its existence at the other location. We give below the Orch-OR theory in our words below:

<sup>20</sup> Kashyap, Vasavada, Concepts of Reality in Hinduism, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> The student must use discrimination which "is the capacity to know the real from the unreal" (Chinmayananda, Swami, *Talks on Sankara's Vivekhoodamani*, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Bombay, 1976, p. 31).

<sup>22</sup> Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 231. This is noted by Simoes, Stephanie, *Isa Upanisad*, Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/17430464/Isha\\_Upanishad\\_Word\\_for\\_Word\\_Translation\\_with\\_Transliteration\\_and\\_Grammatical\\_Notes?auto=download](https://www.academia.edu/17430464/Isha_Upanishad_Word_for_Word_Translation_with_Transliteration_and_Grammatical_Notes?auto=download), August 18, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Goff, Philip, "About me," Retrieved from <https://www.durham.ac.uk/staff/philip-a-goff/>, October 23, 2021.

Standard quantum mechanics postulates that the same particle can be in two places at the same time. Which of these is seen can be an illusion, an approximation, a convenience, dependent on the observer’s viewpoint,<sup>24</sup> or a split in the observer’s awareness.

The Orch-OR theory states that there is a real physical distance between the two states that is not dependent upon the external observer. The particle itself is conscious of its simultaneous existence at the two locations and this is its proto-consciousness or subjective experience.<sup>25</sup>

The common strand in the Hindu, panpsychist and Orch-OR theories are that every particle has consciousness. Kashyap Vasavada does not agree with this concordance saying that the Orch-OR model does “not compare Vedanta and modern physics.”<sup>26</sup> We, however, see no reason to keep them separate and suggest that the common strand in them is that every particle has consciousness.

## 6. BRAHMAN FROM VIRAJ, VIRAJ FROM BRAHMAN

### 6.1 The Framework

The Rig Veda and Atharva Veda say that the Primeval Being Purusha created the material world Viraj; and then Purusha was born from Viraj:

A thousand heads hath Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide... *From him Viraj was born; again Purusha from Viraj was born* (Rig Veda 10:90:1, 5).

He indeed together brought beings; he indeed together went about beings; *being father, he became son of them* (Atharva Veda 19:53:4).

The sequence here is Purusha/Father > Viraj > Purusha/Son. Elsewhere the Atharva Veda only tells of the latter part of this sequence; They call Viraj the father of Brahman (8:9:7). Viraj verily was this [universe] in the beginning (8:10:1).

Here, only Viraj > Brahman is stated. The two sets of verses can be synchronized as Purusha/Brahman/Father > Viraj > Purusha/Brahman/Son. With this preliminary discussion, we have tried to depict our understanding of this sequence in six steps indicated in Figure 2.

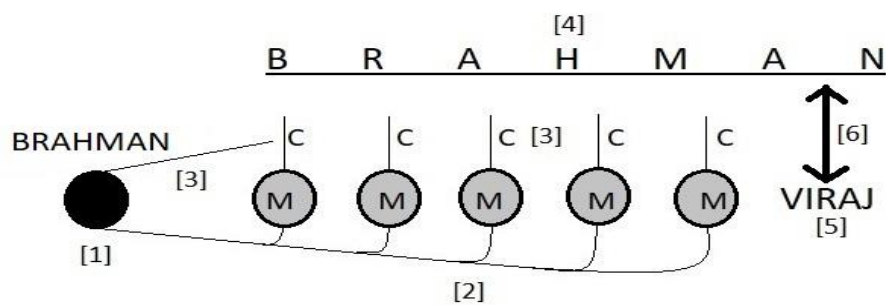


Figure 2: Brahman and Viraj

<sup>24</sup> This is same as particles having dual nature of wave and particles (Kashyap Vasavada, Concepts of Reality in Hinduism.)

<sup>25</sup> Hameroff, Stuart and Penrose, Roger, “Consciousness in the universe: A review of the ‘Orch OR’ theory,” in *Physics of Life Reviews* 11, (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1571064513001188>, August 17, 2021, p. 70-71.

<sup>26</sup> Personal communication by email August 20, 2021.



We briefly explain our understanding of these six steps below followed by detailed discussion of each step.

*Step 1.* In the beginning there was only fused matter-consciousness or Brahman as shown by the black circle on the left.

*Step 2.* The Brahman then wanted to become many. It split into infinite number of material particles depicted by grey circles. Each of these particles had dominant matter as indicated in “M” marked in these circles. Collectively these may be called Viraj. This step is mentioned as Brahman > Viraj in our discussion above.

*Step 3.* Simultaneously with Step 2, the consciousness of Brahman also split into infinite number of components as indicated in “C.”

*Step 4.* The consciousness component “C” of all the particles fused into one recreated Brahman—now only consciousness. This step is mentioned as Viraj > Brahman in our discussion above.

*Step 5.* The new Brahman now guides each of its constituent parts “M.” Thus, Brahman created the universe twice. First at Step 1, where Brahman as matter-consciousness split into matter and consciousness; and then at Step 5, where Brahman as pure consciousness guides the material particles.

*Step 6.* Brahman is continuously created by the fusion of the consciousness of the particles as in Step 4; and also continuously guides the particles as in Step 5. There takes place a continuous two-way communication between the pure consciousness Brahman and the constituent particles collectively called Viraj.

We now discuss each of the above six steps in detail.

### **6.2 Step 1: Fused material-consciousness of the Primeval Being**

The Rig Veda says:

Then there was not non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it (10:129:1).

A commentator from the Vedanta school interprets the phrase “not non-existent nor existent” as there was a “lack of gross forms such as the Universe and embodied selves.”<sup>27</sup> Translator of Rig Veda Satwalekar renders this verse as “Then there was not absence nor five elements...”<sup>28</sup> Both commentators agree that there was no matter or “gross form;” and there was also no soul as “embodied self.” Perhaps only matter-consciousness existed as a plasma like fused entity. We call this the primeval Brahman or Purusha. Thus the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that in the beginning only Purusha existed:

In the beginning, this (universe) was but the Purusha.<sup>29</sup> He reflected and found nothing else but himself. He first uttered, 'I am he'... (1:4:1-3).

Translator Swami Madhavananda translates “Purusha” in this verse as “self (Viraj) of a human form.”<sup>30</sup> However, there is no statement equivalent to “human form” in the text hence I have omitted it. The result is that in the beginning there existed an undifferentiated entity.

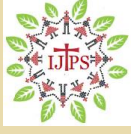
### **6.3 Step 2 and 3: Separation of Particulate Matter and Consciousness**

<sup>27</sup> Srinivasan, “Nāsadiya Sūkta – Vedantic Commentary,” in *IndiaFacts*, Retrieved from <http://indiafacts.org/nasadiya-sukta-vedantic-commentary/>, **August 21, 2021**.

<sup>28</sup> Satwalekar, Sripad Damodar, *Rig Veda Simple Commentary*, Swadhyay Mandal, Pardi, 1985, Vol 4, p. 274.

<sup>29</sup> One translator translates “Purusha” as “self (Viraj) of a human form.” There is no statement equivalent to “human form” in the text hence I have omitted it (Madhavananda, Swami, (Trans), *The Brhadarnyaka Upanisad*, Advaita Ashram, Champawat, 1950).

<sup>30</sup> Madhavananda, Swami, (Trans), *The Brhadarnyaka Upanisad*, Advaita Ashram, Champawat, 1950



The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad continues from the previous verse:

He (Purusha) parted this very body into two... From that came husband and wife... He was united with her. From that, men were born (1:4:1-3).

The person who is in the right eye is named Indra<sup>31</sup> ... The person who is in the left eye is his wife, Viraj. The akasa that lies within the heart is their place of union (4:2:2-3).

The use of the term “wife” for Viraj needs explanation. The Manu Smriti mentions the male as the “seed” and the female as “soil”:

By the sacred tradition the woman is declared to be the soil, the man is declared to be the seed; the production of all corporeal beings (takes place) through the union of the soil with the seed (9:33).

We understand the seed as consciousness and the soil as matter. Thus, the mention of Viraj as “wife” corresponds with it being female or matter. On the other hand, Indra is a devta which we shall show subsequently is pure consciousness. The parting of the body into husband and wife may accordingly be understood as parting of the Primeval Being into consciousness and matter or the separation of Brahman into Indra (“C”) and Viraj (“M”) as depicted at Steps 2 and 3 in Figure 2. The Atharva Veda, however, also attributes consciousnesses to Viraj:

Viraj is speech, Viraj is earth, Viraj is atmosphere, Viraj is Prajapati, Viraj became death, the over-king of the perfectible... (9:10:24).

In parallel, the Sanskrit Dictionary defines Viraj as “ruling far and wide, sovereign, excellent, splendid.”<sup>32</sup> We suggest the creation of the matter “M” at Step [2] and its subsequent evolution is mentioned here in steps from Brahman to speech (primeval sound Om) to matter (earth or “M”) to atmosphere to human being (Prajapati) and death. In other words this verse describes the movement from Step [2] to Step [6] skipping the intermediate steps [3], [4] and [5].

#### 6.4 Step 4: Brahman is fused Universal Consciousness

We have shown that the Brahman split into matter and consciousness. We suggest that each particle of matter also had consciousness. The split matter-consciousness can then be depicted as “M/C.” Now we suggest that the consciousness component “C” of “M/C” of the split particles fused to make a collective consciousness that is known as Brahman as depicted at Step [4]. Thus it is said “Consciousness is Brahman” (Aitreya Upanishad 3:1:3). Dr. H. R. Nagendra, Chancellor of SVYASA Deemed to be University and his colleagues say: “One of the most important concept embedded in the Upanishads is the Consciousness. It is called as chit, prajna, chaitanya or Brahman.”<sup>33</sup> Kashyap Vasavada says that Brahman is the “universal cosmic super consciousness.”<sup>34</sup> The texts, however, seem to avoid giving a clear statement on Brahman being collective consciousness as indicated in the conversation between Gargi and Yajnavalkya:

Gargi: By what, pray, is the world of Brahman pervaded?

Yajnavalkya: Do not, O Gargi, question too much, lest your head should fall off. You are questioning too much about a deity about whom we should not ask too much. Do not ask too much, O Gargi (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3:6:1).

<sup>31</sup> “Indha” in the original text.

<sup>32</sup> Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 982.

<sup>33</sup> T. K. Durga, *Consciousness in Upanishads*.

<sup>34</sup> Kashyap Vasavada, *Concepts of Reality in Hinduism*, p. 22.



We suggest that such diffidence is unnecessary. Brahman is pervaded by the consciousness of all the particles of the universe. Indeed, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad elsewhere suggests that Brahman is made up of such consciousness:

‘As, dear boy, the bees make honey by collecting juices from different trees and reduce them into one essence, and there, as these juices have no such discrimination as “I am the juice of this tree, I am the juice of that tree”; even so, dear boy, all these creatures having merged into Being, do not know, “We have merged into Being.” (6:9:1-2).

‘These eastern rivers, dear boy, flow along to the east and the western ones to the west. They rise from the ocean and merge in the ocean, and become that ocean itself. And there as these rivers do not know themselves as “I am this river, I am that river”, even so, dear boy, all these creatures, having come from Being, do not know, “We have come from Being” (6:10.1-2).

The merging of the honey or the rivers indicates that the particles lose their separate identity and is depicted by us at Step [4].

Theosophical thinking supports this approach. It holds that “Human beings are the cells in the body of a Heavenly Man.”<sup>35</sup> Here fusion of the cells may be understood as fusion of consciousness “C” to form the Brahman as depicted at Step [4].

#### **6.5 Step 4 Continued: Fused consciousness is more than sum of the parts**

We find support for Brahman being collective consciousness from the panpsychists. There are two strands among them. The constitutive panpsychists hold that the total consciousness is the sum of the parts:

...facts about the consciousness of the animal are grounded in facts about the consciousness of its most fundamental parts... the grounded states of affairs are nothing over and above the grounding states of affairs... (the fact that there is a table wholly consists in the fact that there are atoms arranged table-wise)...

In contrast, the emergent panpsychists hold that the total consciousness is more than the sum of the parts:

...*animal consciousness is an extra layer of being causally dependent on but ontologically additional to the forms of consciousness that reside at the micro-level*” (italics added).<sup>36</sup>

Here it is said that the animal consciousness is more than the consciousness of the parts of the animal body, mentioned here as “micro level.” In parallel, Neuroscientist Giulio Tononi postulates that the brain “consists of billions of neurons: think of them as if they were transistor like bits that, when tallied, sum to equal more than their parts. That increment above and beyond represents the degree to which any being, whether human or mule, remains conscious.”<sup>37</sup> We may clarify that Tononi’s discussion is limited to the “mind” and he does not consider matter to have consciousness as Philip Goff does.<sup>38</sup> Yet, Tononi and Goff are in

<sup>35</sup> Lansdowne, Zachary F., “The Purusha Sukta | Planetary Logo | 101,” in Mathomathis, Retrieved from <https://mathomathis.com/the-purusha-sukta-101/>, August 22, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Goff, Philip, “Panpsychism,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (2019). Retrieved from [http://www.philipgoffphilosophy.com/uploads/1/4/4/4/14443634/routledge\\_panpsychism.pdf](http://www.philipgoffphilosophy.com/uploads/1/4/4/4/14443634/routledge_panpsychism.pdf). Retrieved October 24, 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Tononi, Giulio, “What Is the Fundamental Nature of Consciousness?” Excerpt, *Scientific American*, 2012, Retrieved from <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-is-fundamental-nature-consciousness-giulio-tononi-excerpt/>, July 31, 2021.

<sup>38</sup> “Unlike traditional panpsychism, however, the IIT does not attribute consciousness indiscriminately to all things. For example, if there are no interactions, there is no consciousness whatsoever. For the IIT, a camera sensor as such is completely unconscious...” (Tononi, Giulio, “Consciousness as Integrated Information: A



agreement insofar as the total consciousness being more than sum of the parts is concerned. The Orch-OR theory mentioned previously further states:

The particles are entangled with others in the environment. Hence, like individual particles, the entangled collective also becomes conscious of its existence at the other location and develops a proto-consciousness.<sup>39</sup>

Sociologist Emile Durkheim gives a similar idea in the quote given at the footnote and expressed below in our words:

The society is collective ideas, beliefs, and sentiments that is produced from the fusion of individual consciences. This “collective consciousness” is *unique*. Just as water is a wholly new entity even though it is a combination of hydrogen and oxygen atoms, so also the collective consciousness is greater than the sum of the individual consciences.<sup>40</sup>

Here it is said that the collective consciousness is greater than the sum of the individual consciences. These ideas concord with our submission that the Brahman is the fusion of the consciousness of the parts.

#### 6.6 Step 4 Continued: “I” and “Brahman” are both sovereign

The fusion of individual consciousness is not complete. The constituent parts retain part of their individual consciousness. Thus, the texts place “I” and “Brahman” on equal footing:

All that is seen is Brahman. May I not neglect Brahman. May not Brahman reject me. May I have non-rejection, may I have non-rejection. (Kena Upanishad Preamble).

Look at the power of My divine mystery; in reality, I—the sustainer and creator of all beings—do not depend on them, and they also do not depend on Me (Gita 9:05).

Here “I” and “Brahman” are both independent and sovereign. The seeker is praying that at the individual level, his consciousness [3] may not neglect the Universal Consciousness [4]. And, at the collective level, the Universal Consciousness [4] may not reject the individual consciousness [3]. In distinction to above quote, other verses from the Gita seem to place the Brahman beyond the individual:

This entire manifestation is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form. All living beings’ dwell in Me, but I do not dwell in them (9:04).

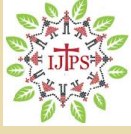
The verse may be understood as “I [*wholly*] do not dwell in them.” Thus understood these statements are consistent with the Brahman being the fusion of part consciousness of its constituent particles.

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Provisional Manifesto,” in *Biology Bulletin*, 215: 216–242 (2008), quoted by Francis Fallon, “Integrated Information Theory of Consciousness,” in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://iep.utm.edu/int-info/>, August 18, 2021).

<sup>39</sup> Stuart Hameroff, *Consciousness in the universe*, p. 70.

<sup>40</sup> “The society is an ensemble of ideas, beliefs, and sentiments of all sorts that are realized through individuals; it indicates a reality that is produced when individuals interact with one another, resulting in the fusion of individual consciences. This fusion of individual consciences is a *sui generis* (*unique*) reality. This means that the social fact, much as water is the product of the combination of hydrogen and oxygen atoms, is a wholly new entity with distinct properties, irreducible to its composing parts, and unable to be understood by any means other than those proper to it. In other words, society is greater than the sum of its parts; it supersedes in complexity, depth, and richness, the existence of any one particular individual. This psychic reality is sometimes... referred to by Durkheim with the term... collective consciousness” (Carls, Paul, “Émile Durkheim (1858—1917),” in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Retrieved from <https://iep.utm.edu/durkheim/>, September 5, 2020).



### 6.7 Step 4 Continued: Multiple Brahman

Question arises what is the extent of the universe, the consciousness of which is the Brahman? We have suggested previously that infinity *can* exist. The question then is whether universe is infinite and whether the consciousness of the universe, namely Brahman, is also infinite? The invocation of the Isa Upanishad throws light on this matter. We give below three translations of the verse with the translations of the Sanskrit word “पूर्ण” or “purna” in italics:

That Brahman is *infinite*. This phenomenal world is also *infinite*. But “this” is only a projection of “that.” If “this” is taken away, “that” remains *infinite* as before.<sup>41</sup>

That is *Whole*, this is *Whole*; from the *Whole*, the *Whole* becomes manifest; from the *Whole*, when the *Whole* is negated, the *Whole* alone is what remains.<sup>42</sup>

The *whole* is all that is invisible. The *whole* is all that is visible. The *whole* was born out of the *whole*. When the *whole* is absorbed into the *whole*, the *whole* alone remains.<sup>43</sup>

The word “purna” is translated either as “infinite” or as “whole.” Monier-Williams translates it as “filled with, abundant, rich, complete, all, entire” etc.<sup>44</sup> These verses suggest that Brahman is the consciousness of the one infinite universe. However, Mathematician Georg Cantor suggested that multiple infinities may exist.<sup>45</sup> The argument is like this:

[1] There are infinite natural numbers 1, 2, 3, 4...

[2] There are infinite squares of the natural numbers  $1^1, 2^2, 3^3, 4^4$  or 1, 4, 9, 16...

The second infinity appears bigger than the first infinity. The same idea can be conveyed in another way:

3] Let us say we insert decimals between the numbers 1 and 2 as given in line [1] above. These numbers can be infinite such as 1, 1.1, 1.11, 1.111, 1.1111... The number of these numbers will be more than the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4... at line [1] because there additionally will exist infinite numbers between any two numbers at line [1].

Thus, we can have a number of infinities that are relatively big- and small and correspondingly we can have a number of Brahman that are relatively big- and small. The same idea is suggested by modern cosmologist in terms of multiple universes. We render the discussion in our words below.

There exists an ensemble of possible universes X, and an ensemble of really existing universes Y. Human universe Z lies in a small subset of Y. We cannot preclude that there may exist one or more universes Z.<sup>46</sup>

The possibility of the existence of multiple Brahman could also be derived by understanding infinite as without beginning and without end. The Gita says:

<sup>41</sup> Lokeshwaranand, Swami, *Isa Upanishad*. Retrieved from [https://archive.org/details/ishavasyaupanishadswamilokeshwaranandar.k.mutt\\_202003\\_234\\_B](https://archive.org/details/ishavasyaupanishadswamilokeshwaranandar.k.mutt_202003_234_B), August 22, 2021.

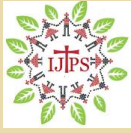
<sup>42</sup> Gurubhaktananda, Swami, *Isavasya Upanishad*. Retrieved from [https://www.v0.chinfo.org/images/userupload/Reflections/19\\_Isavasya\\_Upanishad.pdf](https://www.v0.chinfo.org/images/userupload/Reflections/19_Isavasya_Upanishad.pdf), August 22, 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Sastri, S. Sitaram, (Trans.), *The Isa, Kena & Mundaka Upanishads and Sri Sankara's Commentray*, G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, 1905, Retrieved from [https://rarebooksocietyofindia.org/book\\_archive/196174216674\\_10153237327691675.pdf](https://rarebooksocietyofindia.org/book_archive/196174216674_10153237327691675.pdf), August 22, 2021.

<sup>44</sup> Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 642.

<sup>45</sup> Dehornoy, Patrick, “Cantor's infinities,” in *bibnum*, Retrieved from <http://www.bibnum.education.fr/sites/default/files/cantor-analysis-33.pdf>, August 26, 2021.

<sup>46</sup> Ellis, G. F. R., Kirchner, U., and Stoeger, W. R., “Multiverses and physical cosmology,” in *Mon. Not. R. Astron. Soc.* 347, 921-936 (2004). Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/mnras/article/347/3/921/1021585>, August 26, 2021.



O Lord of the universe, I see You everywhere with *infinite* form, with many arms, stomachs, faces, and eyes. O Universal Form, I *see neither your beginning nor the middle nor the end* (11.16).

The word used for “infinite” in this verse is “अनंत” or “without end.” Let us think of an ant in a football field. The ant can go only so far. The area that the ant can go is “vast.” But the field does not end at the last point reached by the ant. So there is “vast” remaining after the ant has covered the “vast.” Thus the word “अनंत” can mean either infinity as translated in above verse, or it can mean “vast” as discussed by us above. It follows that there can be many Brahmans if Brahman is fusion of vast.

The later Theosophical thinking supports this approach. The early Theosophical thinking held that the Causeless Cause is the One Absolute, Infinite, Eternal Divine Principle. The later thinking in distinction held that the highest conception of the Divine was the “Solar Logos,” or the “God of our Solar System.”<sup>47</sup> If the Divine is God of the solar system, then we may postulate there would exist other Divine that are Gods of other planetary systems and galaxies. In view of above, we suggest that there could exist multiple Brahmans. We have completed the discussion of Step [4] of Brahman being fusion of collective consciousness and we now move to Step [5].

#### **6.8 Step 5: Material Universe guided by Brahman**

The Hindu texts say that the Brahman guides and supports its constituent parts. We have quoted the Aitreya Upanishad above to the effect that “Consciousness is Brahman.” We give the longer quote below:

He is the origin—those born of an egg, of a womb, of sweat and of a sprout; He is horses, cows, human beings, elephants—whatever breathes here, whether moving on legs or flying in the air or unmoving. All this is *guided by* Consciousness, is *supported by* Consciousness. The basis of the universe is Consciousness. Consciousness is Brahman (3:1:3).

The fused consciousness guides its constituent parts. This idea is depicted in the downward arrow at Step [5] in Figure 2. This same idea is expressed by psychologist Carl G. Jung in terms of the influence of the unconscious on our decisions:

A man likes to believe that he is the master of his soul. But as long as he is unable to control his moods and emotions, or to be conscious of the myriad secret ways in which unconscious factors insinuate themselves into his arrangement and decisions, he is certainly not his own master.<sup>48</sup>

Here Jung is describing the influence of the individual unconscious on the individual conscious mind. However, the individual unconscious is connected with the collective unconscious of which it is a constituent part. Thus the collective unconscious or Brahman may be said to guide the individuals or “all this” as said in the above verse.

#### **6.9 Step 6: 2-way communication between Viraj and Brahman**

We suggested at Step [4] that the consciousness of vast numbers of independent material particles fuses to make Brahman. We refer to these independent particles collectively as “Viraj.” We clarify that the Brahman is *fused* consciousness while Viraj is the independent material particles addressed *collectively*. The upward movement takes place

<sup>47</sup> United Lodge of Theosophists, “Original Theosophy and Later Versions: Five Main Distinctions To Be Considered,” in *Theosophy*. Retrieved from <https://blavatskytheosophy.com/original-theosophy-and-later-versions/>, August 22, 2021.

<sup>48</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, p. 83.





individually as at Step [4] as well as collectively as at Step [6] in Figure 2. Viraj forms Brahman as depicted at and Brahman guides Viraj as at Step [6]. Thus, the Atharva Veda tells of Viraj ascending and descending in the world:

Viraj verily was this [universe] in the beginning.

She ascended; she descended in the house-holders fire.

She ascended; she descended in the fire of offering.

She ascended; she descended in the southern fire.

She ascended; she descended in the assembly.

She ascended; she descended in the gathering.

She ascended; she descended in address (*amantrana* or invitation) (8:10:1-7).

A similar concept is mentioned by the later Theosophists. It is said that the Planetary Logos “has worked ‘his’ way up to that state by passing through various grades of initiation.” This concurs with the ascending of the Viraj. Further, the “Universe comes into being as a result of the Logos being radiated forth from the Absolute.”<sup>49</sup> This concurs with the guidance given by Brahman.

#### 6.10 Step 6 Continued: The nature of God

The relationship between the Universal Consciousness and Its constituents is brought out in the modern framework in the paradoxical nature of God. His wisdom seems counterpoised to His omnipotence. If it is said that God rules by his whims then His wisdom is questioned. On the other hand, if it is said that God rules according to rules external to him then He becomes subject to those laws and is no longer omnipotent.<sup>50</sup>

This problem dissolves when the God is understood to be the fused Universal Consciousness. God rules by the collective desires of the constituents. These desires may appear whimsical to a particular constituent who may not comprehend the totality. God’s wisdom too is limited by the wisdom of His constituents. It is possible for God to go wrong—perhaps the decline of the Mayas and Incas was due to such lack of collective wisdom. He is “omnipotent” in the sense of the ability to implement the collective desires; but He is not omnipotent in the sense of going beyond the same collective desires.

Another commentator says that God’s wisdom is intrinsically good.<sup>51</sup> Here we need to define what is “good?” We have suggested that every particle has a desire to grow. The fused consciousness of the particles then would also desire to grow. Thus, what leads to growth of the universe may be considered to be “good;” and that which leads to decline of the universe may be considered to be “bad.” Now, since God is made up of the consciousness of the particles that desire to grow, therefore, God will always embrace that which leads to growth or is “good.” However, this proposition assumes that the constituent parts will continue to want to grow. We have established the idea that all particles desire to grow *empirically* on the strength of observation of the acorn and human beings, not theoretically. There is no reason to say that this will always necessarily be so. It is conceivable that the particles may not

<sup>49</sup> United Lodge of Theosophists, “Original Theosophy and Later Versions: Five Main Distinctions To Be Considered,” in *Theosophy*. Retrieved from <https://blavatskytheosophy.com/original-theosophy-and-later-versions/>, August 22, 2021, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Kołakowski, Leszek, *Is God Happy? Selected Essays*, Basic Books, New York, 2013.

<sup>51</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, quoted in Ross, Kelly L., “Religious Value and the Antinomies of Transcendence, after Kant,” in *Philosophy of Religion*, Retrieved from <https://www.friesian.com/antinom.htm>, August 30, 2021.



desire to grow as indicated in historian Arnold J. Toynbee's concept of "loss of soul."<sup>52</sup> We could conceive of a situation where decline can be "good" such as a person wanting to commit suicide. All we can say is that as per the presently observed situation the particles have a desire to grow. But they are free to not to want to grow. In that case, God will become anti-growth. That anti-growth God may still be "good" because that is what the universe may want at that time. In fact, the statement that "God is inherently good" is a tautology because the desire of the particles of the universe will be done by God and the same is good by definition.

## 7. DEVTA: THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

### 7.1 Devtas are subsets of Brahman

The fusion of consciousness of all the particles of the universe is Brahman as said above. Similarly, the fusion of consciousness of a subset of the universe such as fire, earth, fish, human beings, Indians, Buddhists, etc. is called "devta." This definition is brought out in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The sages were discussing "Brahman." At this time the following discussion took place:

Vidaghdha: How many devtas are there, Yajnavalkya?

Yajnavalkya: Thirty-three.

Then Vidaghdha repeatedly kept asking, "How many devtas are there, Yajnavalkya?" and Yajnavalkya sequentially replied, six, three, two, one and a half, and one. Yajnavalkya named the devtas at each of these numbers as follows:

Thirty-three: These include 8 elements (fire, earth, air, sky, sun, heaven, moon and stars); 11 senses and organs (eyes, ear, nose, tongue, skin, hand, feet, mouth, rectum, sexual organ and mind); 12 months, Indra and Prajapati.

Six: Fire, earth, air, sky, sun, heaven.

Three: Fire-earth, air-sky and sun-heaven.

Two: Matter and vital breath.

One and a half: Air that blows.

Lastly, Vidaghdha asked "How many devtas are there, Yajnavalkya?" To which Yajnavalkya replied:

One: Brahman (3:9:1-9).

Here it is clearly said that the one devta was Brahman. This is so because the one devta is constituted of the consciousness of the entire universe which is also Brahman. The Rig Veda points in the same direction:

The devtas are later than this world's production (10:129:6).

Initially there was one undifferentiated Being—Brahman. At this time the consciousness of the universe was undivided. Subsequently, the Beings divided and the presiding deities of the divided parts were created. Thus we may conceive of the water devta Varun presiding over the collective consciousness of all particles of water. This idea is affirmed by the Chhandogya Upanishad saying that the devtas are psychic entities with no physical form who do not eat or drink (3:6:1ff).

The Theosophists come close to our understanding. They refer to the collective consciousness of the planet earth as "Planetary Logos;" and the presiding officers of the

<sup>52</sup> Rahim, Shahzada, *Beyond Civilization and History: A philosophical study of modernist and post-modernist perspectives on History*, Copyright Material, 2020. Retrieved from <https://philpapers.org/archive/ABBBCA.pdf>, October 24, 2021, p. 39.

“spiritual kingdom” as “Chohans.”<sup>53</sup> The word Chohans used in plural indicates there are many Chohans. Thus, the “spiritual kingdom” would refer to the collective consciousness of subsets of universe while Chohans would refer to the presiding deities. They clarify that all human beings constitute the Planetary Logos while a group of human beings form a part of the same.<sup>54</sup> This idea concurs with all human beings form the Brahman while a group of human beings form the devtas.

### 7.2 Durkheim and Jung

We would like to clarify the usage of certain terms before we proceed to develop concordance of devtas and modern psychology. The conscious mind is the seat of reason. Thus, we use the terms “conscious,” “conscious mind” and “reason” interchangeably. However, we suggest that there does not exist a “universal mind” because communication at the mental level takes place through spoken or written word or images and, therefore, cannot include the universe. On the other hand, unconscious communication can take place telepathically over vast areas. Thus, “collective unconscious” can encompass vast numbers.

The conscious and the unconscious mind are located in different part of the brain. Physiologists say that the seat of the conscious mind is the cerebrum in the middle of the brain;<sup>55</sup> while the brain stem has a role in the regulation of “cardiac and respiratory function, consciousness, and the sleep cycle.”<sup>56</sup> Of these, the cardiac and respiratory functions are unconscious. Thus, we may say that the conscious mind is located at the cerebrum while the unconscious mind is located at the brain stem. We visually depict the conscious mind as “M” located in the middle of the head (not to be confused with “M” used for matter in “Figure 2: Brahman and Viraj”); and the unconscious mind as “U” located it in the heart in Figure 3. Then we connect the “Cs” and “Ms” with dotted lines to denote their group- or collective dimensions.

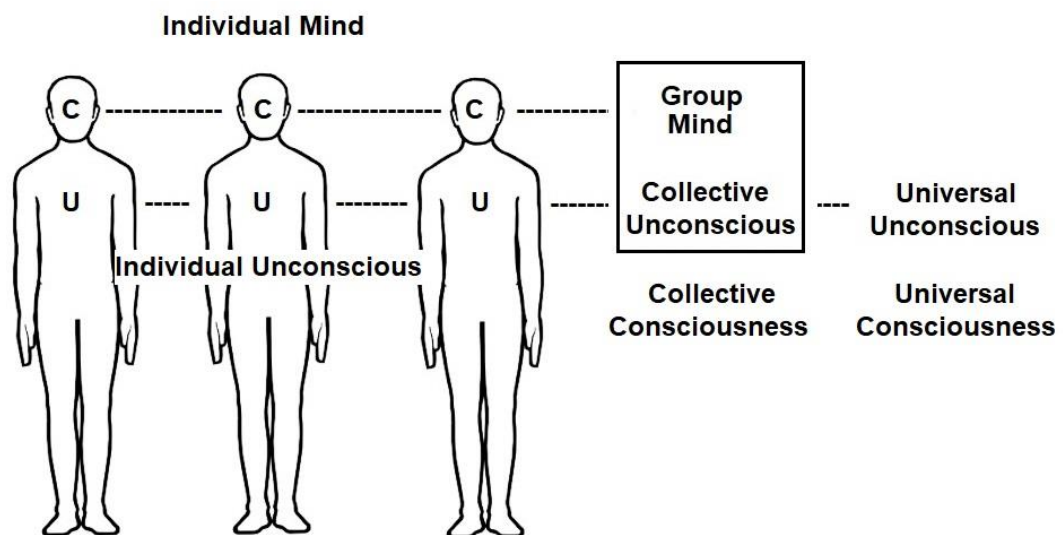


Figure 3: Group Mind, Collective Unconscious, Universal Unconscious,

<sup>53</sup> Zachary F. Lansdowne, The Purusha Sukta.

<sup>54</sup> Zachary F. Lansdowne, The Purusha Sukta.

<sup>55</sup> Bowditch, Andrew and Bowditch, Matthew, “The Human Brain: Anatomy and Function,” in *Visible Body*, Retrieved from <https://www.visiblebody.com/learn/nervous/brain>, September 17, 2021.

<sup>56</sup> Lumen Learning, “The Brain Stem,” Retrieved from <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-ap/chapter/the-brain-stem/>, September 17, 2021.



## Collective Consciousness and Universal Consciousness.

We use the term “consciousness” to include the conscious as well as the unconscious mind. Consciousness, in turn, arises at various levels:

*Individual consciousness:* Combined individual conscious and unconscious mind.

*Collective consciousness:* Combined collective conscious and collective unconscious.

The collective conscious is like the World Wide Web providing a pathway for sharing common thought and moving towards the making of a “global brain.”<sup>57</sup> Sociologist Floyd Henry Allport said that group mind is a mere collection of individual minds and does not have an independent existence of its own.<sup>58</sup> We understand the term “mind” to refer to the conscious mind here. Various subsets of human beings form their collective unconscious. A mother and her infant child, for example, can form a collective unconsciousness between them.

*Universal consciousness:* Combined universal unconscious to the exclusion of conscious since there exists no universal conscious mind.

Our interest lies in the collective consciousness which is the combined collective conscious and collective unconscious. Modern scholars acknowledge the existence of the collective unconscious variously as follows:

The collective unconscious may be a product of telepathic communication.<sup>59</sup>

The interaction in social organizations leads to the development of an “unconscious substrate”<sup>60</sup> such as in the collective identity of the members of a labour union.<sup>61</sup>

The collective unconscious of all humanity is called “soul of humanity.”<sup>62</sup>

*Symbols.* The symbols of social organizations have the same role as the collective unconscious in the society. “The contents of the collective unconscious are archetypes which are manifested in the form of organizational symbols in organizations.”<sup>63</sup>

The contents of the collective unconscious are the result of man’s whole ancestry and are the matrix of experience from which all future ideas will come.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Theiner, Georg and Wilson, Rob, “Group Mind,” Draft entry for Kaldis, Byron (ed), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences*, Sage Thousand Oaks, 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Allport, Floyd Henry, *The Group Fallacy in Relation to Social Science*, The Sociological Press, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1927, p. 2-12.

<sup>59</sup> Pillay, Srinii, “The Biology of Telepathy: Is brain-to-brain communication possible? Here’s what research finds,” in *Psychology Today*, (2018), Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/debunking-myths-the-mind/201804/the-biology-telepathy>, September 23, 2020.

<sup>60</sup> “Jung calls ‘social facts,’ or elements of collective life that exist independently of and are able to exert an influence on the individual... His position then ultimately is that while the social fact is unmistakably a sui generis product of social interaction, it is produced and resides exclusively in this special substratum of the individual mind” (Carls, Paul, Émile Durkheim, p. 2, 8).

<sup>61</sup> Carls, Paul, “Émile Durkheim, p. 23.

<sup>62</sup> “In his 1916 essay, Jung distinguished between “the ‘personal,’ Freudian unconscious, filled with sexual fantasies and repressed images, and the ‘collective’ unconscious encompassing the soul of humanity at large,” (Jung, Carl G., *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, “The Structure of the Unconscious” (1916), quoted in Wikipedia, “Collective unconscious.” Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective\\_unconscious](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_unconscious), September 7, 2020).

<sup>63</sup> Kocoglua, Ipek, Akguna, Ali Ekber and Keskinb, Halit, “The Collective Unconscious at the Organizational Level: The Manifestation of Organizational Symbols,” in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042816315671>, September 7, 2020, p. 3-5.

<sup>64</sup> International Association for Analytical Psychology, “Abstracts of the Collected Works of C.G. Jung, “The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche,” Retrieved from <https://iaap.org/resources/academic-resources/collected-works-abstracts/volume-8-structure-dynamics-psyche/>, October 24, 2021.



Because Spirit exists in all things that have life, as well as the universe as a whole, there follows a sense of interconnectedness between all life forms and natural and cosmic processes.<sup>65</sup>

At the same time, modern scholars appear to refer to the collective consciousness in terms of nationalism.<sup>66</sup> This would include the conscious and unconscious minds. While other scholars dispute the importance of collective consciousness in explaining nationhood, they nevertheless acknowledge the existence of such consciousness.<sup>67</sup> These endorsements of the collective unconscious, we suggest, is referred to as devta in the Hindu stream.

## 8 THE TRINITY: BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA

### 8.1 Seven Psychic Centers

The Hindu system holds that there are seven major psychic centers or chakras are located at seven locations in the spinal cord as mentioned in Table 1. The six lower psychic centers are connected with different parts of the brain while the seventh is connected with all the lower six chakras. Swami Satyananda, doyen of Yoga and author of *Kundalini Tantra* says that these six chakras “are directly connected with the higher unilluminated centers of the brain... the six chakras serve as switches for turning on different parts of the brain.”<sup>68</sup> In order to avoid confusion it is clarified that another classification of the seven chakras is made in five “kosha” or sheaths as detailed at the endnote.<sup>69</sup> This classification, however, is not relevant for our discussion since they overlap with the seven chakras.

The five lower chakras are associated with the elements earth, water, fire, air and ether. This association arises from the correspondence of the psychic nature of a chakra with the nature of a particular element. For example, the Manipur chakra is considered to be the seat of “heat” in the body and is also associated with the element “fire.” The chakras are also associated with colours, senses and body regions as given in Table 1, and with particular animals, shapes, motor part of the body and other qualities that we omit for brevity.

Table 1: Qualities of Chakras.<sup>70</sup>

Sl	Chakra	Physical Location	Element	Colour	Sense	Body region
1	Sahasrara	Pineal Gland	-	-	-	Brain
2	Ajna	Cavernous Plexus	Mind	Brown	All	Third Eye
3	Vishuddhi	Laryngeal Plexus	Ether	White	Hearing	Throat
4	Anahata	Cardiac Plexus	Air	Smoky	Touch	Heart
5	Manipur	Solar Plexus	Fire	Red	Sight	Navel
6	Swadhishtana	Prostatic Plexus	Water	Silver white	Taste	Sex organs
7	Mooladhara	Sacral Plexus	Earth	Yellow	Smell	Anal region

<sup>65</sup> Durand, Kjrsten, *A Spiritual Framework of Organic Oneness: The Eco-Theological Shift Towards a Collective Ecological Consciousness*, Thesis, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, 2017, p. 28-29.

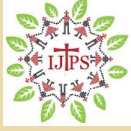
<sup>66</sup> Malczewski, E., “Durkheim and the nation,” *Istanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi*, 39, 41–64. (2019). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.26650/SJ.2019.39.1.0013>, October 24, 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Majumdar, Margaret A., *Postcoloniality: The French Dimension*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2007, p. 127.

<sup>68</sup> Saraswati, Satyananda, *Kundalini Tantra*, Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, 1984, p. 23, 25.

<sup>69</sup> Brahmrandhra (chakra)=Anandamaya (kosha), Ajna and Vishuddhi=Vigyanamaya, Anahata=Manomaya, Manipur and Swadhishtana=Pranamaya, and Mooladhara=Annamaya (Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, 1994, p. 113, 84, 102, 92, and 88).

<sup>70</sup> Saraswati, Shantidharmananda, *Holistic Yoga*, SriKunj Sadbhavana Manch, New Delhi, 2004, p. 269-272.



The seven chakras are psychically connected with the corresponding chakras of other human beings and form their psychic auras. These auras can be understood as subsets of the collective unconscious. We have mentioned that the presiding deity of the collective consciousness of a subset of the universe is called devta. Now we suggest that one particular way these subsets can be constituted is at the seven chakras. The presiding deities of these seven auras are seven devtas. Thus, Swami Sivananda says:

The Chakras are centers of... vital force... the presiding Devtas of which are the names for the Universal Consciousness as It manifests in the form of these centers.<sup>71</sup>

This connection between the chakras and devtas is also indicated in the Atharva Veda: Time in the form of a horse pulls the world in the form of a chariot, it has seven rays, it has thousand eyes, it does not decay, it is strong. The wise ride on it. Its chakras are the worlds<sup>72</sup> (19:53:1).

The seven rays refer to the psychic auras of the seven chakras. The thousand eyes could refer to the thousands of auras at each of these chakras made by subsets of human beings. The wise riding on the chakras tells of the wise having their psyche at these chakras under their conscious control. The worlds of the chakras refer to the psychic worlds. The Atharva Veda continues:

This time pulls the seven chakras. It has seven navels. It has ambrosia. It manifests these worlds. Time is the first deva and it keeps running (19:53:2).

The seven navels point to the seven physical centers in the spinal cord. The ambrosia indicates the state when the seven psychic dimensions are in harmony. The manifestation of the world refers to receiving signals from the worlds at these seven chakras. The time keeping running indicates that the movement of the breath has a corresponding movement of the psyche through the seven chakras.

We may mention that two commentaries by Satwalekar and Whitney do not give any explanation of the number seven that occurs thrice in these two verses. They also do not make any exposition of the association of chakras, navels and worlds.<sup>73</sup> We fill up that silence with seven devtas at the seven chakras.

## 8.2 Maslow and Jung

Psychologist Abraham Maslow helps build a concordance between the seven chakras and modern psychology. He has developed a seven-level hierarchy of needs: Physiological, Safety, Belonging, Esteem, Cognitive, Aesthetic, and Self-Actualization.<sup>74</sup> Dr. Diane Roberts Stoler, neuropsychologist and trauma therapist has drawn a concordance between Maslow's five lower needs and the lower five of the seven chakras in the spine as described by the Hindu psychology above.<sup>75</sup> Stoler has subsumed the higher three needs into one, namely, "self-actualization" as shown in Figure 4.

<sup>71</sup> Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, p. xi.

<sup>72</sup> We translate "bhuwana" as worlds. Monier-Williams gives its meanings as "world, earth, place of being, abode, residence, a house" (Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 760).

<sup>73</sup> Satwalekar, Sripad Damodar, *Atharva Veda*, Swadhyay Mandal, Pardi, 1985; and Whitney, William Dwight *Atharva-Veda Samhita*, Harvard University, Cambridge, 1905, Retrieved from <https://www.worldcat.org/title/atharva-veda-samhita/oclc/3011168>, October 23, 2021.

<sup>74</sup> Clark, Donald, "Maslow (1908 - 1970) Hierarchy of needs. 5 or 7 levels? Useful or useless?" Retrieved from <http://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.com/2012/04/maslow-1908-1970-hierarchy-of-needs-5.html>, September 13, 2020.

<sup>75</sup> Stoler, Diane Roberts, "Maslow's Hierarchy vs. 7 Chakras- Interestingly Similar!" in *Psychology Today*, (2018), Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-resilient-brain/201804/maslows-hierarchy-vs-7-chakras-interestingly-similar>, September 21, 2020.

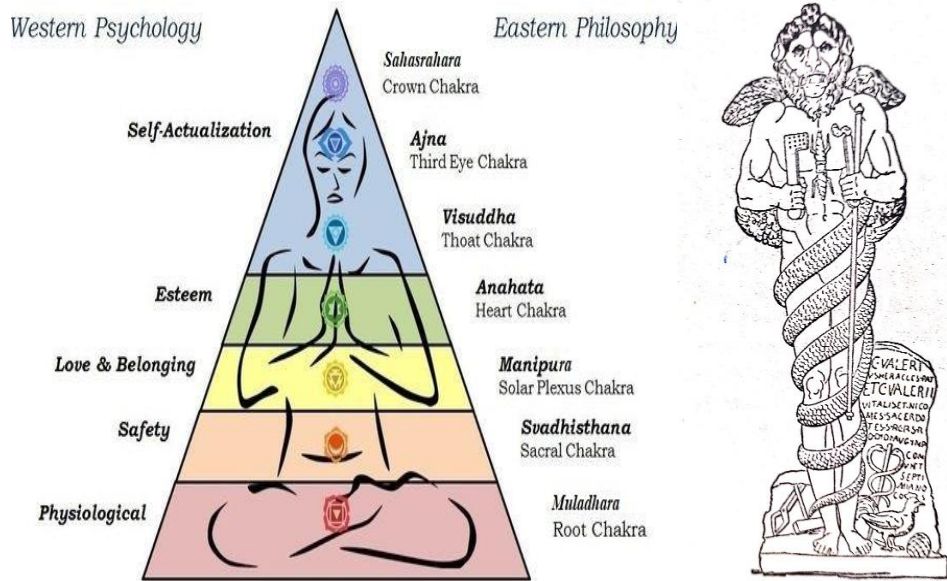


Figure 4: Correspondence of Maslow's need and Hindu psychology's chakras.

Figure 5: Roman Image

We have mentioned Swami Satyananda above to the effect that the chakras are switches for certain areas of the brain. Jung points in the same direction in his discussion of the Hindu Chakra system:

The chakras... are symbols. (The) word symbol... has to do... with a heap of material thrown together, which we... take as a whole.<sup>76</sup>

The “heap of material” could refer to the psychic material repositied at the chakras. We feel the distinction between the term “symbol” used by Jung and the term “switch” used by Satyananda is more semantic than substantial. The overall picture is that there are seven psychic centers in the spine. These centers act as switches for particular areas of the brain. They have particular psychic qualities or needs that are represented by the five elements as shown in Table 2.

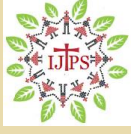
Table 2: Chakras, needs and psychic aspects.

Sl	Chakra	Physical Location	Need (Maslow)	Psychic Aspect (Jung) <sup>77</sup>
1	Sahasrahara	Pineal Gland	Self-Actualization	-
2	Ajna	Cavernous Plexus	Aesthetic	Receiving Command
3	Vishuddhi	Laryngeal Plexus	Cognitive	Spiritual
4	Anahata	Cardiac Plexus	Esteem	Consciousness
5	Manipur	Solar Plexus	Belonging	Emotions, Passion
6	Swadhishthana	Prostatic Plexus	Safety	Desire
7	Mooladhara	Sacral Plexus	Physiological	Unconscious, Latent

Jung associates the 6<sup>th</sup> Ajna Chakra with “Receiving Command” which is the location of the conscious mind according to the Hindu psychology. Consequently, the lower five

<sup>76</sup> Jung, Carl G., Sonu Shamdasani (Ed.), *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga*, , Bollingen Series XCIX, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 60-61.

<sup>77</sup> Carl C. Jung, *The Psychology*, p. 76.



chakras may be considered to be part of the “unconscious mind.” We may accordingly conceive of the brain in two parts—the conscious mind located at Ajna chakra; and the unconscious mind having switches at the five lower chakras in the spine. The seven centers in the spinal cord have been noted since ancient history. Joseph Campbell produces an image from ruins of a temple of a Roman Port dated to 190 CE in which a serpent is shown winding up in six turns up the human body and rests its head above the brow on the 7<sup>th</sup> turn as shown in **Eroare! Fără sursă de referință.**<sup>78</sup> The seven turns or centers likely correspond with the seven chakras.

Only limited evidence of the existence of the chakras in the spine is available from modern psychology. Japanese parapsychologist Hiroshi Motoyama has said that “there are significant difference in the physiological function of the organ associated with the chakra that the individual subjects claimed to have awakened.”<sup>79</sup> Professor of kinesiology Valerie Hunt of University of California tells of a direct correspondence “between the distinctive wave form [recorded on electromyograph] and the psychic’s description of the colour emanating from the chakra.”<sup>80</sup> Indeed these evidences may be considered to be weak. That is not surprising because the chakras do not have psychic qualities themselves and are only switches for specific parts of the brain.

### 8.3 Presiding Deities

Swami Sivananda associates the seven chakras with seven psychic regions. Here we have extracted his discussion of three specific chakras that we associate with the trinity of three devtas, namely, Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma:

When the consciousness evolves to Manipur, the [person] gets a glimpse of the higher *lokas* or planes of existence. Anahata belongs to the first of the immortal planes. Vishuddhi belongs to the fifth loka...<sup>81</sup>

“Loka” means “free or open space, intermediate space, region, the wide space or world...”<sup>82</sup> In the context of the chakra, “loka” would be a “psychic” region. The location of devtas at the chakras is also mentioned by Shankaracharya: “The devtas located in the chakras tremble by the movement of consciousness in the spinal cord.”<sup>83</sup> We may think of the chakras as psychic receivers-cum-transmitters that are connected with the respective chakras of a number of other living beings thus forming a psychic cloud at that chakra. The presiding deity of such a psychic cloud is called a devta. However, there is no unanimity among the Hindu sages regarding the deity that presides over a particular chakra. We give our understanding of the devtas along with supporting evidences while acknowledging that there exists alternative identification of the particular devtas.<sup>84</sup>

The presiding deity of Mooladhara chakra (element earth) is goddess Devi.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Campbell, Joseph, *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1962, p. 262-266.

<sup>79</sup> Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, p. 371.

<sup>80</sup> Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, p. 376.

<sup>81</sup> Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, p. 100, 102, 109.

<sup>82</sup> Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 906.

<sup>83</sup> Shankaracharya, Adi, Shantidharmananda Saraswati (Trans.), *Yati Danda Aishwarya Vidhanam*,” Satyam Sadhana Kutir, Rishikesh, 2021, Verse 362.

<sup>84</sup> For example, Sivananda gives the deities of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Chakras as Siva, Maheshwara and Sadasiva (Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, p. 21); while Shantidharmananda Saraswati, gives them as Isana, Pancavakra and Linga (Shantidharmananda Saraswati, *Holistic Yoga*, p. 270).

<sup>85</sup> “Devi Mother is the centre of the universe. She is seated in the Muladhara Chakra of every human being” (Dash, Durgamba, “Worship of Mother Kali,” in *Orissa Review*, November 2008, Retrieved from <http://magazines.odisha.gov.in/Orissareview/2008/November-2008/engpdf/1-5:pdf>, October 24, 2021); “Mula



The presiding deity of Swadhishtana chakra (element water) is Varun.<sup>86</sup>

The presiding deity of Manipur chakra (element fire) is Vishnu;

The presiding deity of Anahata chakra (element air) is Shiva.<sup>87</sup>

The presiding deity of Vishuddhi chakra (element ether) is Brahma.<sup>88</sup>

There is no clarity on the presiding deities of the two highest chakras—Ajna and Sahasrahara. We make no comment on this since our purpose is to clarify the concept of devta which is primarily associated with the five lower chakras.

The psychic clouds and their presiding deities are limited by space. The Vishuddhi chakra of a number of persons can connect with each other and create one Brahma. The Vishuddhi chakra of another number of persons can connect with each other and create another Brahma. The same applies to the other chakras. We have depicted this in Figure 5 where we have shown three Vishnus, two Shivas and four Brahmas. These are the psychic clouds made by the constituent individuals. Thus, the Devi Purana says that there exist “millions of Brahmas and innumerable Vishnus” (59:21).

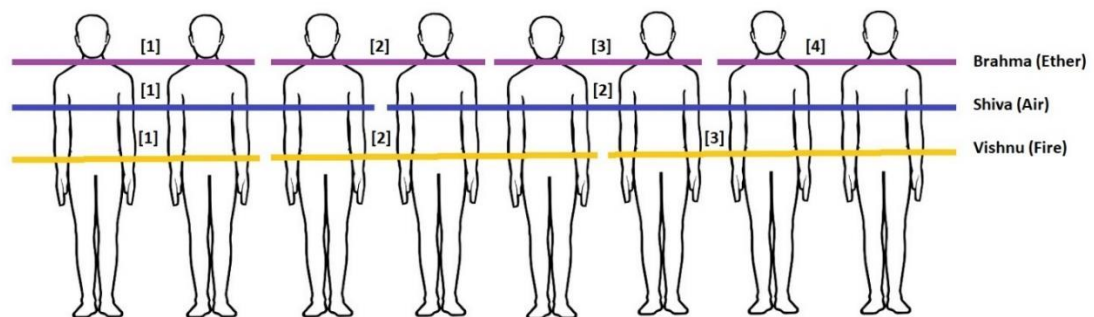


Figure 5: Three Vishnus, Two Shivas and Four Brahmas

To summarize, we suggest Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma are the presiding deities of the innumerable psychic clouds made at the Manipur, Anahata and Vishuddhi chakras of the constituent individuals.

#### 8.4 Existence of Evil

We define “good” as that thought or action that is in sync with the Universal Consciousness; and “evil” as that which is contrary to the Universal Consciousness as shown in Figure 6. Each constituent part of Brahman has freedom. Some parts use the freedom in sync with the desires of Brahman. These are “good.” Other parts use the same freedom contra the desires of Brahman. These are “evil.” Some constituent parts will always act in sync and some will act contra hence the battle between good and evil takes place perpetually.

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relates to Kali, the Goddess of Time who rules eternity as well. Mula relates to Adya Kali as the origin, the Mother of the Universe and ultimate creative force. It connects to the Muladhara or root chakra at the base of the spine and to the Kundalini Shakti, the serpent power” (Frawley, David, “The Shiva-Kali Axis in Vedic astrology and its Alignment in 2020,” in American Institute of Vedic Studies. Retrieved from <https://www.vedanet.com/the-shiva-kali-axis-in-vedic-astrology-and-its-alignment-in-2020/>).

<sup>86</sup> Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, p. 21.

<sup>87</sup> Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*, p. 21.

<sup>88</sup> “The Divinity of the Vishuddhi Chakra is Brahma, the Creator, the symbol of Consciousness” (Puri, Maheshwarananda, “Vishuddhi Chakra,” in *Yoga in Daily Life*, Retrieved from <https://www.yogaindailylife.org/system/en/chakras/vishuddhi-chakra>, October 6, 2020); Saraswati, the consort of Brahma, “is the deity governing the fifth chakra, the vishuddha chakra” (Marin, Kim, “Speak Your Truth with a Clear Throat Chakra (Vishuddha),” (2016), Retrieved from <https://beyogi.com/vishuddha-chakra/>, October 6, 2020).

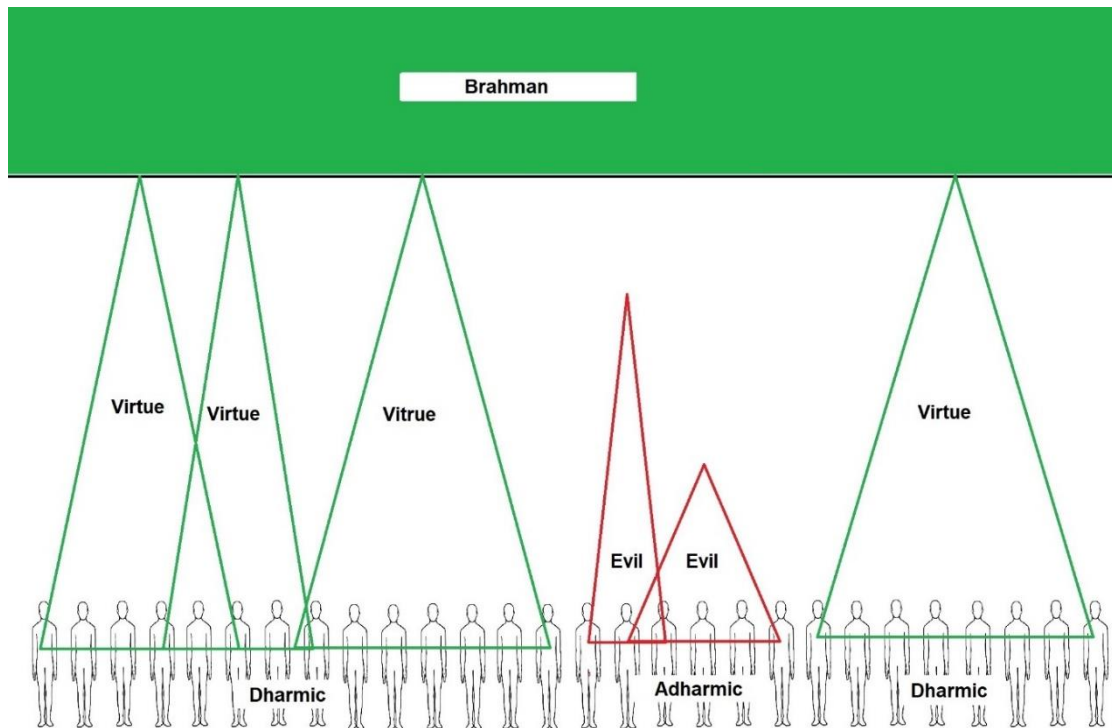


Figure 6: Virtue and Evil

### 8.5 Autonomy of the Collective Unconscious

Jung says that the personal unconscious holds the mental patterns or memory traces of the individual. Similarly, the collective unconscious holds the mental patterns or memory traces of a group. These mental patterns can be fused unconscious of the constituents. Thus, Jung says, “The collective unconscious consists of the sum of the instincts and their correlates, the archetypes.”<sup>89</sup> The collective unconscious, so to say, floats in the psychic world. It is constantly added to by the present memories. The infant is subjected to-, and inherits this collective unconscious at the time of her birth. Thus, Jung says, “The [psychic] form of the world into which [a person] is born is already inborn in him, as a virtual image.”<sup>90</sup> Indian Sage Aurobindo has explained this concept in terms of a changing-yet-continuous psychic entity:

The secret cosmic consciousness... creates also collective powers of consciousness which are large subjective formations of cosmic Nature; but it does not provide for them an organised mind and body, it bases them on the group of individuals, develops for them a group-mind, a *changing yet continuous* group-body.<sup>91</sup>

Aurobindo uses the term “group mind” to denote the conscious-and-unconscious mind or “collective consciousness” as we have defined above. He says the collective consciousness

<sup>89</sup> Carl G. Jung, “Carl Jung Quotes,” <https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/carl-jung-quotes>, Retrieved October 24, 2021.

<sup>90</sup> McLeod, Saul, “Carl Jung,” in *Simply Psychology*, (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/carl-jung.html>, October 24, 2021.

<sup>91</sup> Aurobindo, Sri, “The collective consciousness of Nature,” in Aurobindo, Sri, *The Life Divine*, Retrieved from <https://sriarobindostudies.wordpress.com/2011/05/09/the-collective-consciousness-of-nature/>, October 24, 2021.



is changing continuously. It follows that the collective consciousness or the devtas Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma at the Manipur, Anahata and Vishuddhi Chakras are changing continuously. Next, Jung says these archetypes are autonomous:

A man likes to believe that he is the master of his soul. But as long as he is unable to control his moods and emotions, or to be conscious of the myriad secret ways in which unconscious factors insinuate themselves into his arrangement and decisions, he is certainly not his own master. These unconscious factors owe their existence to the autonomy of the archetypes.<sup>92</sup> Sociologist Emile Durkheim says that the collective consciousness acquires an independent existence of its own: (The collective consciousness is endowed) “with quite distinctive characteristics: it forms a determinate system with its *own life*... it is the *same in different locations*, classes, and occupations; it *connects successive generations* rather than changing from one to another; and it is *different from individual consciences*, despite the fact that it can be realized only through them.”<sup>93</sup>

We discuss the four phrases marked in italics in the above quote. One, the collective consciousness forms *its own life*. Though formed by the “sum of the instincts and their correlates” in the words of Jung above, the collective consciousness becomes free of its constituents. In terms of Hindu concordance this supports the idea that Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma form their own life that is distinct from that of their constituents.

Two, the collective consciousness is the *same in different locations, classes, and occupations*. All constituent persons at different locations, classes, and occupations contribute to the making of the particular collective consciousness. Thus, the collective consciousness is same for all constituent persons at that particular location, class, and occupation. Let us say, 100 persons in a suburb are interested in making a good community garden. They form a collective unconscious even though they may live in different homes etc.

Three, it *connects successive generations rather than changing from one to another*. The collective consciousness is a moving psychic cloud. It is made anew every moment by the fusion of the thoughts of its constituents. New members are continually added while others get dropped just as the voter list changes from one election to the next. The statement “*rather than changing from one to another*,” we suggest, refers to there being no discrete transformation such as extinction of one collective consciousness and creation of another. The consciousness transforms continually thus it connects successive generations.

Four, the collective consciousness is *different from individual consciences* since it is made by the fusion of individual consciences.

## 9. AVATARA: DESCENT OF THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

### 9.1 Avatara

The connection between and individual and the collective consciousness can take place at varying intensities, say, from zero+ to 100- percent. The lower level of connection may be understood as partial *avatara*. For example, every living person has some

<sup>92</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, p. 83.

<sup>93</sup> Durkheim, Emile, *The Division of Labor in Society*, 1893, in Robert Alun Jones, *Emile Durkheim: An Introduction to Four Major Works*, Sage Publications, Inc., Beverly Hills, 1986. Retrieved from <https://durkheim.uchicago.edu/Summaries/dl.html>, September 16, 2020.



consciousness at the Manipur chakra which is in continual two-way communication with devta Vishnu. Thus, Ramana Maharshi says, “Everyone is an Avatar of God.”<sup>94</sup>

However, the connection is *perceived* as “avatara” if it exceeds some unspecified level of connection “X.” The New World Encyclopedia explains:

Hindu traditions also typically distinguish between two different types of avatars: Those that are direct incarnations of Vishnu (*purna avatara*), and those in which the personality of Vishnu is only partially manifest (*ansa avatara*)... Among most Vaishnava traditions, Krishna is considered to be the highest kind of purna avatar. The ansa avatars, meanwhile, are generally not worshiped as the Supreme Being. This category of avatars is said to include the remainder of the Dasavatara, as well as many other incarnations.<sup>95</sup>

We understand the “direct” incarnation to have a connection with the collective Vishnu at a level higher than “X” and partial incarnations to have the same connection at a level less than “X.” This connection is considered to be a “descent” of the collective consciousness which, in turn, is understood as Vishnu having taken avatara. This connection is not considered to be an “ascent” even though ascent does take place because the ascent is miniscule while the descent can be large. To illustrate, we may consider the collective to have a psychic weight of, say, 100,000 units. A contributing individual may have a psychic weight of, say, 10 units. In this situation a 5-unit descent from the collective to the individual would be “large” at 5/10; while a 5-unit ascent from the individual to the collective would be miniscule at 5/100000. Hence the descent is discussed in the literature widely while the ascent is mostly ignored. The descent takes place at different chakra, time, space and intensity as discussed below.

*Chakra.* The collective consciousness at Manipur, Anahata and Vishuddhi are personified as Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma. All three are said to have undertaken a number of avatars.<sup>96</sup>

*Time.* Krishna said to Arjuna, “Both you and I have taken many births. I remember them all, O Arjuna, but you do not remember... I appear from time to time for protecting the good...” (Gita 4:5, 8). Here it is said that the collective consciousness at Manipur chakra descended in the past as well.

*Space.* The devtas have descended in a number of sages at approximately the same time though at different places. For example, the incarnations of Rama and Parusharama took place at the same time but separated by space.

*Intensity.* Between the avatars of Rama and Parusharama, and Krishna and Balarama, the former are considered to be “higher” avatars than the latter. This indicates differing levels of intensity.

The Theosophists point towards the idea of descent: “The Chohans of the Hierarchy now on Earth ... work consciously carrying out the Will of the Planetary Logos in the planet...”<sup>97</sup> Here “Chohan” may be understood as avatara; “Hierarchy” may be understood as devta; and “Planetary Logos” may be understood as Brahman. This quote may thus be

<sup>94</sup> Ramana, Maharshi, *Peace*, 1931, Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/RamanaMaharshi/posts/the-following-article-was-first-published-in-the-september-1931-monthly-magazine/116880295131015/>, July 13, 2021.

<sup>95</sup> New World Encyclopedia, “Avatar,” in *New World Encyclopedia*, Retrieved from <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Avatar>, August 9, 2021.

<sup>96</sup> Swati, “The Complete List of 19 Avatars of Lord Shiva,” in *Vedicfeed*. Retrieved from <https://vedicfeed.com/avatars-of-shiva/>, July 13, 2021; Scientific Monk, “7 Avatars of Brahma, all you need to know,” Retrieved from <https://scimonk.com/index.php/2021/04/14/avatars-of-brahma/>, July 13, 2021.

<sup>97</sup> Zachary F. Lansdowne, *The Purusha Sukta*.



paraphrased: “The avatars of the devtas now on earth ... work consciously carrying out the will of the Brahman in the planet...”

The animals have chakras although their numbers and functions may differ. The fish, for example, “have a hive mind, or a collective mind that functions communally. They are all connected to a group chakra...”<sup>98</sup> The collective consciousness of Vishnu may have descended in the group chakra of fish hence it is said that Vishnu incarnated as fish avatara. The boar and lion are mammals. Both have a spine and have seven chakras in the spine like humans.<sup>99</sup> The collective consciousness may have descended and impelled these animals to behave in a particular fashion hence it is said that Vishnu took avatara in them.

The concept of avatara has raised a number of questions given below in italics.<sup>100</sup> We give below our understanding of these in normal font.

*The physical organs are formed through karmic residues. But by definition the avatara does not possess any karmic residues. Hence how is the gross body of an avatara formed?* The avatara is born like any other person. Due to his karma of previous lives he is able to connect with the collective consciousness at a high level of intensity and attains avatara status. The statement that an avatara does not possess any karmic residues must be understood as having miniscule levels of karmic residues.

*Does the human being become an Avatar by adoption?* A human being connects with the collective consciousness with his own effort; followed by descent of the collective consciousness into him. This is not a one-way adoption of the individual by the collective but a 2-way interaction.

*What is the difference between a divine descent and a revelation?* A “divine descent” is a *continual* top-down part of live connection in the 2-way interaction between the collective consciousness and the individual. A “revelation” is an *occasional* top-down communication from the collective consciousness to the individual. The Quran was revealed to Prophet Mohammad is an *occasional* only top-down communication. The Hindu texts tell of worshippers getting occasional, mostly once in a lifetime, vision of their deity. This is similar to revelation.

*What is the difference between an avatara and a divinized human being?* An intensely divinized human being is an avatara.

*Does the deity descend into an avatara only occasionally?* The deity has a continual 2-way live connection with an avatara.

## 9.2 Descent of the Libido

The key point in the making of an avatara is the descent of the collective consciousness into the individual. This descent is spoken of by Jung in term of the activation of the collective images in the unconscious by the descent of the libido:

(In this passage) Jung equates the regression of libido with the descent to the underworld, which is conceived of as maternal... The entire book, in fact, is concerned with this struggle to return to and be re-delivered from the mother, who, as the underworld,

<sup>98</sup> Smith, Jane Ma’ati, “Do Animals Have Chakras Like Humans?” in Chakra Healing Sounds, Retrieved from <https://balance.chakrahealingsounds.com/do-animals-have-chakras-like-humans/>, July 13, 2021.

<sup>99</sup> Komitor, Carol, “Healing Touch for Animals® Level 1 Workbook,” in Komitor Healing Method, Inc. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.healingtouchforanimals.com/v/vspfiles/assets/images/HTALevel1Workbook.pdf>, October 24, 2021.

<sup>100</sup> We have extracted these questions from Parrinder, Geoffrey, *Avatar and Incarnation*, Faber and Faber, London, 1970.



symbolizes the matrix of those “*collective images (archetypes) that are activated by the libido’s descent*” (italics provided).<sup>101</sup>

We give our understanding of this quote along with the phrases used by Jung: “The movement of consciousness is equated with the connection of the individual consciousness with the collective unconscious.” A distinction may be noted here. Jung uses the word regression that conveys a negative sense. He says the individual may struggle to break free from the collective unconscious. However, there is no inherent reason for this connection to be negative. It can just as well be positive. In that case, the connection makes one an avatara. Yoga and Tibetan meditation teacher Alex Myles points in the same direction:

Collective consciousness is a set of shared beliefs, throughout the energy of the whole universe and has always existed and will continue to exist throughout eternity... All minds are able to tap into and add to this knowledge and these minds consist of scientists, artists, philosophers and spiritual leaders.<sup>102</sup>

Such tapping into the unconscious knowledge is done by the avatars.

## CONCLUSION: CONCORDANCE

We summarize the concordance suggested in this paper as follows:

Hindu texts say that the Brahman desired to become many. This concurs with the innate desire to grow of all living beings.

Hindu texts say that Brahman pervades all existence. This concurs with the panpsychist view that all matter has consciousness.

Hindu texts say that Brahman was created from Viraj. This concurs with the panpsychist view that the consciousness of individual parts fuses into more than the sum.

The Hindu texts say there are numerous devtas. These are the collective consciousness of subsets of the universe or “gods” in modern parlance.

The Hindu Trinity of Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma are the collective conscious at the Manipur, Anahata and Vishuddhi chakras of a group of persons.

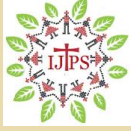
Certain individuals are able to establish a live 2-way communication with the collective consciousness. They are called avatara.

In this way Hindu concepts concord with modern scholarship. We suggest that presenting Hindu cosmological and psychological concepts in these terms can make Hinduism understandable to the modern mind.

Two implications of this discussion for present day Hinduism may be mentioned before concluding this paper. The above presentation calls into question the contemporary understanding of Sankara’s oft quoted statement “ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या” or “Brahman is real, the world is unreal.” Implied is that the Brahman does not desire anything and the existent world is unreal and meaningless. In our view, this approach denies the desires of Brahman as manifested in this world. We understand that Shankaracharya may have made this statement as a teaching strategy to prod the individual to disengage from her personal desires and align with desires of the Brahman. However, it has been interpreted theoretically rather than strategically to suggest that the Brahman itself has no desires. In doing so, the Hinduism has actually denied the desires of Brahman. There is a need to restate this statement as “Brahman

<sup>101</sup> Smith, Evans Lansing, “The Descent to the Underworld: Jung and His Brothers,” in Barnaby, Karin and D’Acierno, Pellegrino (eds.), *C.G. Jung and the Humanities: Towards a Hermeneutics of Culture*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990, p. 251-64.

<sup>102</sup> Myles, Alex, “Connecting to the collective consciousness,” in *Elephant Journal*, 2015, Retrieved from <https://www.elephantjournal.com/2015/11/connecting-to-the-collective-consciousness/>, July 13, 2021.



is real, the world is real.” Such restatement would encourage the Hindus to interact positively in the material world and lead to faster evolution of the Brahman.

Another area of re-examination is the focus on idol worship of avatars like Rama and Krishna. These individuals connected with the Brahman at the time that they lived. They acted and contributed to the evolution of Brahman at that time. The Brahman of today is constituted of the universal consciousness of today. Its needs of evolution are different than the needs at the time of the avatars. However, in the idol-worshipping paradigm, one connects with the present Brahman via the past Brahman. It is like connecting with modern Germany with the Germany of before World War II. Furthermore, the intensity of connection between the worshipper and the Brahman gets diluted. In accessing the present Brahman through idol worship, one proceeds in the following steps: Worshipper > One of the many avatars of the past > One of the many Vishnu of the past > Brahman of the past > Brahman of the present. The connection of the present worshipper with the present Brahman thus gets diluted. There is a need to re-examine idol worship from this point of view.

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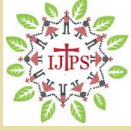


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