

# *1 – Creation and human life in it*

## **The genesis**

### **What came first?**

I was once sitting at my friend's house. Suddenly, his son aged eight came in and asked my friend, "Dad, tell me who came first – the chicken or the egg." My friend thought of playing along and said, "Son, chicken must have come first because it lays eggs." The son triumphantly said, "But, Dad, chicken comes out of an egg!" Then my friend said, "Okay. I do not know the answer. Do you know it?" Son said, "Nobody knows. So, I caught you for once. Otherwise, you seem to have answers to all my questions!" Then he ran out again to play with his friends. Now the two of us got talking about this metaphysical question.

**Friend** : The Darwinists claim that evolution of "something" led to a chicken first. Then the chicken grew into a hen and laid eggs from which more chicken came out. Thus the cycle perpetuated.

**I** : But I don't think Darwinists have an answer to the question - what was that original "something" that evolved and how did that original "something" come into existence?

**Friend** : So, do you have any answer, may be a spiritual one?

**I** : Imagine a circle. As it appears to us, there is no beginning or the end of the circle. Now how can something be without a beginning? It is said that a solution to an apparently intractable problem often lies in another dimension. Thus, to figure out the beginning of a circle that is a two-dimensional figure, we have to introduce a third dimension, namely the drawer of the circle. As we can figure, the drawer of the circle would certainly have begun at some point and drawn a full circle from there.

**Friend** : I think you are driving at a parallel to the creation of this universe.

**I** : Scientists do not like to accept the concept of an unseen Creator who created the universe. That is why we have the Big Bang theory. Astrophysicists propose that a primeval soup exploded at one fine moment with a big bang and then the universe evolved gradually from there. But then again we get stuck with the same question – what was that primeval soup and how did it come into existence? Scientists cling to the Darwinian theory of evolution, again to reject the concept of a Creator. But that is akin to rejecting the concept of a drawer of the circle and instead saying that a point somehow started moving on a circular path and traced the circle!!

**Friend** : Now, how about going back to the chicken and egg conundrum?

**I** : The question - which came first, the chicken or the egg - has two dimensions, as it were – the chicken and the egg. But since the question seems intractable, we have to introduce a new dimension, that is the Creator. Then we can say that the Creator could have begun with either of them or even both simultaneously! It would entirely be up to the Creator's sovereign mind.

**Friend** : But then, it throws up a similar problem – how did the Creator come into existence?

**I** : I agree. But I find the concept of a Creator creating chicken or egg more acceptable than the argument that "something" somehow evolved into a chicken! Evolution may be akin to a fully automated manufacturing process. Both may appear to be going on by themselves. But there is a designer / creator behind them.

### **"Self" defines the rest of the Creation**

It is nothing but a single principle viz. pure consciousness which wishes to become many (*ekosmi, bahu syaam*) and accordingly, first splits into multiple parts. One of the parts is the ‘observer’ (the limited self) and the other parts are ‘observed’ (the rest of the creation - others).

The “self” and the “others” are relative to each other and not independent. To understand this, look at the following picture of a rectangle that is divided into two parts by a zigzag line.

Fig.1

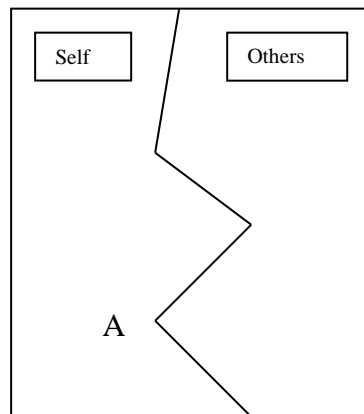
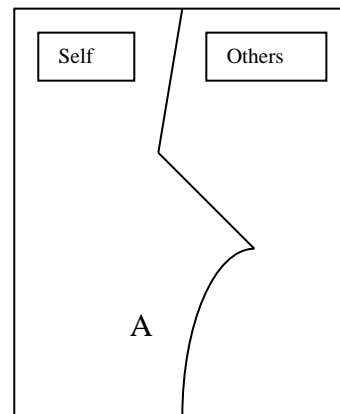


Fig.2



Now look at the point A in Fig.1 which likely gives a “feel” of a pinprick to the Self. Now just change this “<” part to “(“ as in Fig.2. The pinprick disappears.

From the “Self” point of view, it can feel like a pinprick because of the single-pointedness of the interface there. It can also be seen that the pinprick may be due to the receptacle of the “Self”, being as narrow as a point. So, if the Self can make its receptacle “broader” or more “rounded”, the “pin” on the other side also changes into something else that is no longer prickly (Fig. 2)! It can thus be seen that the Self by changing himself, will experience a different ‘Others’. It is because of this that wise people say – “Change yourself; don’t try to change the world.”

### ***Paramaatma* (supreme soul) becomes many *jivaatmaas* (embodied soul)**

The supreme soul, the Paramaatma, is singular. He feels like becoming many and hence splits Himself into many embodied souls (“*jivaatma*”) on one hand and the myriad objects to be experienced on the other hand. The experience that the *jivaatma* gets in this world is necessarily based on the concept of duality – hot and cold, soft and hard, etc.

It is like a king sending many of his spies in all the different directions. Each one will gather a different set of information. Each one may have some information that is useful in its own different way. Each one may also have some information that may not quite be useful. But taken together, the king can make good use of the information brought in by the different spies.

If one spy happens to be assigned a particular region which is quite friendly to our king, there may not be anything of particular interest happening there. On the other hand, a spy going into some other region may come to know of some secret happenings there that may be of interest to the king. In short, the information may or may not be of any value to the king and it has no bearing on the individual spy, nor does it entail any comparisons between the different spies.

Similarly, the *Paramaatma* uses each *jivaatma* to experience a particular subset of the huge number of possibilities of the dual experiences. It, therefore, follows that each *jivaatma* cannot be expected to experience EVERYTHING that this world has on offer. It also follows that there is no point in “comparing” the experiences of one *jivaatma* with those of the other because it is just some way the *Paramaatma* has “distributed” the task of getting all the different experiences.

A disclaimer : I am not saying that the *Paramaatma* is actually and literally sending us as spies! It is just an allegory to drive home the concept of the variety and the different role of each individual in the totality.

### **Three *Gunas***

It is said in our spiritual literature that each of the created objects, including us living beings, is made up of a varying combination of three *gunas* (The three fundamental constituents of living beings that decide how the being behaves in life. They can be taken to be like the scientific concept of genes.) viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The primary characteristic of *sattva guna* is spiritual orientation; that of *rajas* is self interest and enjoyment in the material world; and *tamas guna* causes laziness and blunders arising out of ignorance about this creation, leading to harm to others. Depending on the relative proportion of these three *gunas*, each one of us lives his / her life in an individual way.

For those scientifically minded, I may say that *gunas* may be nothing but the genes that we are made up of.