

# ANANDA MARGA

## Cosmology

The cosmology of Ananda Marga philosophy centers around the Cosmic Cycle – the Cycle of Creation, or Brahmachakra. It is a cycle because the finishing point is the same as the starting point, as will become apparent. Note that the cycle is a continual and concurrent process of transformation, with different parts of it at different stages at any one time.

The Cosmic Entity is Brahma. It is everything. Everything exists within It, and nothing exists outside It. It is the one infinite, eternal and intransmutable bliss.

Brahma is composed of two parts: the Cognitive Principle (Consciousness), and the Operative Principle (Force). They are inseparable, just as fire cannot be separated from its burning characteristic.

For philosophical purposes, Consciousness is arbitrarily assigned the male gender, and is known as Purusa, or Shiva. He is the nucleus and witnessing entity of the universe. His Force is assigned the female gender, and is known as Prakrti, or Shakti. She is the force which – under Purusa's direction – transforms a part of Him into the universe. She is a blind force and is always under His control. He does not act but allows Her to act. He is the witness and the witnessed, and She is the action.

Prakrti has three attributes, or binding principles (gunas): the sentient force (sattvguna), mutative force (rajoguna), and static force (tamoguna).

In the first phase of the cycle, first a small portion of Purusa is metamorphosed into the cosmic sense of existence (Mahattattva – feeling of "I am") by the sentient force. Then a small portion of that "I am" feeling is transformed into the Ahamtattva (feeling of "I do") by the mutative force. Then part of the Ahamtattva is transformed into the Cittatattva ("I have done" feeling) by the static force. The Cittatattva contains all the previous states before it, and all three (Cosmic Mahat, Aham and Citta) constitute the Cosmic Mind, existing within the original Consciousness, Purusa.

Continued bondage by the static force on the Cosmic Citta causes further metamorphosis of Purusa into the fundamental factors of the universe.

The universe is composed of five fundamental factors: ethereal factor (space), aerial (gas), luminous (heat/light), liquid and solid. Each factor is formed from the subtler factor preceding it – from the transformation of part of that factor from which it comes – and as a consequence contains the essence of that preceding factor. Hence the aerial factor comes from (and contains) the ethereal factor, the luminous comes from the aerial and so on. All factors exist within the Cosmic Mind from which they came, and the Cosmic Mind in turn is inherent within them all. The universe is thus a thought-projection of the Cosmic Mind. And as the Cosmic Mind also exists within Purusa, everything is a part of Him and He is within everything.

The dominance of Prakrti over Purusa increases, with each successive stage being cruder and denser than the one before it, the solid factor being the crudest stage of manifestation. Energy (prana) is formed in each factor from the pressure of the static force on that factor.

Vital energy (pranah) is formed from the combination of all the different praòas of each fundamental factor within a solid body (the solid factor contains all previous factors within it).

Due to the continued pressure of the static force on the solid factor, eventually the pressure becomes excessive and one of two things occurs:

Explosion (jadasphota):

If the factors are not in the right balance, eventually the solid factor (as a celestial body) will explode, and its constituent factors will merge back into their respective factors of the universe.

Life:

If the environment is congenial, and the factors are in the right balance, some portion of the solid factor gets pulverized subtler than ether, and the Citta within it manifests as mind-stuff, which gives the feeling of "Done-I" to a new unit mind. That mind gets attached to an appropriate body and controls the vital energy of that body, which in turn controls the body's functions.

Because the individual mind comes out of the solid factor from a small part of the Cosmic Mind latent within that factor, it is said that "the microcosm is a miniature of the Macrocosm." It can therefore be seen that mind comes from matter, and matter – via the Cosmic Mind – in turn comes from Consciousness.

Now the Witnessing Consciousness (Purusa) begins to withdraw the power from His Operative Principle. He has allowed Her to bind Him to the ultimate state of crudity (this process is called Saincara), and He now gradually contracts Her power until the unit mind merges back into Him. This returning phase is known as Pratisaincara.

In the course of Pratisaincara the unit mind gradually evolves over many different births, in many different bodies. It adopts more complex physical structures as it evolves, appropriate to its desire of expression. Note that there is a clear distinction here between body and mind. The body is the vehicle that the mind adopts according to its degree of evolution – life being the existence of mind in association with a particular body, and death being the temporary loss of the physical structure until a new one is attained by the mind.

The mind develops as the bondage of the binding principles decreases. At first the static force within the mind dominates, and citta (instinct) is the predominant tendency. In the course of development, the mutative force eventually becomes dominant, and the unit aham ("doer I") evolves out of the citta. The dominance of aham over citta manifests as the intellect, or ego. Finally, the sentient force dominates the mutative, and unit mahat (existential "I-feeling") evolves out of the aham. The dominance of mahat over aham manifests as intuition.

So we may find creatures and plants with only instinct, or with intellect as well, or with all three (instinct, intellect and intuition). In undeveloped beings it is instinct which dominates. In developing beings there is an increase of intellect over instinct. But it is only at the human stage that intellect is predominant.

At this stage the mind starts to question the nature of its own existence and the spiritual quest begins. The desire for spiritual practice increases as the ego is gradually eclipsed by intuition and the attraction for the Supreme Nucleus. This attraction is called devotion, or

bhakti. Devotion is love for the Infinite. It is said that when devotion is attained, everything is attained, because it leads to final merger with the Supreme.

"Knowing oneself is the real knowledge;  
serving all with the ideation of God the real action;  
and the vow to please God the real devotion."

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

Attraction towards the Cosmic Nucleus accelerates as the mind expands and becomes more subtle. One begins to experience the merger of mind in the Goal. This is called samadhi, which literally means "sameness (absorption, or oneness) with the Goal." Although there are different types of samadhi, they can all be classified into two general categories: savikalpa and nirvikalpa.

Savikalpa means "with vikalpa," or "with mental thought or feeling." So Savikalpa Samadhi is the state of absorption in the Cosmic Mind. Because the essence of mind (even the Cosmic Mind) is the "I am" feeling (the existential "I-feeling"), there remains in this samadhi the feeling of existence, or "I am."

Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the state of non-qualified absorption, where the tendencies of mind are completely suspended. Nirvikalpa means "without vikalpa," or "without mental thought or feeling." It is the state of absolute bliss – complete absorption in Cosmic Consciousness. It is not possible to come even close to thinking about this state, let alone describing it, because it is beyond the mind. One's mind exists in and of Consciousness. We cannot think about it simply because it is not possible to think of anything beyond the boundary of one's own mind. The only way of recognizing that one has been in that supreme state is the experience of waves of bliss in the mind that follow it.

"I do not say that I know Him; nor do I say that I do not know Him.  
Because I know that He is beyond all knowing and not knowing."

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

Savikalpa Samadhi of permanent nature is called liberation, or mukti. It is the dissolution of mind into the Cosmic Mind. Nirvikalpa Samadhi of permanent nature is called salvation, or moksa. It is the permanent absorption of mind in Cosmic Consciousness.

Spiritual practice, therefore, is the process of transcending the mind into the Consciousness within which it exists: the Cosmic Consciousness. It is this transcendence of the "I-feeling" that results in the supreme experience of the Absolute: "Where 'I' is, 'He' is not; where 'He' is, 'I' is not."

"Cosmic Consciousness abides in the very sense of existence,  
in one's very heart's desire."

*Shrii Shrii Anandamurti*

Where Consciousness exists both as the nucleus Witnessing Entity and the metamorphosed Cosmic Mind (and universe), that state of Brahma is known as Saguna Brahma. Where Consciousness exists only in its un-metamorphosed state (Prakrti here is dormant), that state is known as Nirguna Brahma.

Taraka Brahma is the common point between the two. In this state Brahma adopts a physical body of the five fundamental factors (Mahasambhuti) and manifests as Sadguru (the highest guru). It is said that when the desire for liberation arises in the mind, one attains one's Sadguru. He is the guru in the real sense of the term because He is the bridge between Nirguna and Saguna Brahma, and is able to teach the proper method of transcendence from the manifested worldly state to the unmanifested state of Supreme Bliss. This is essentially a devotional process.

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