

MODE OF CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE IN THE LIGHT OF GURBANI

ARTICLE

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INTRODUCTION

Creation means coming into existence of the universe, as we know it, from the 'embryo' – or the 'cosmic egg' - as it is figuratively called in ancient philosophy. Creation, for the man of religion, however, is the entirety of the natural world believed to have been established by the divine activity. How was universe evolved? How was energy transformed into matter? How *Nirgun* Brahma converted Itself into *Sargun* Brahma? After remaining in *Sunn-Samadhi* for millions of years how God transformed Itself into Universe? What happened at that time? All these questions need to be answered.

DISCUSSION

Hinduism has several creation beliefs, "According to *Vampurana*, Brahma lay within an egg and after it broke, the sacred word 'Om' emanated... In *Brahmanda Purana*, Brahma hatched from a golden egg and made the sky and the Earth from the egg shell. After creating rocks and mountains, Brahma created Saraswati and fell passionately in love with her. He persuaded her to marry him and at the end of the wedding night Manu, the first human being, was born. To him Brahma gave eight gifts: five senses, movement, reproduction and intelligence." [12, p 44]

According to Holy Bible the creation of the universe is the manifestation of God. Creation started flowing from the sound of the word 'Logos'. [2] Logos is a Greek word. In Greek philosophy Logos means 'Word'. [2] Though the word 'Logos' has Greek origin but it has been developed too much by the Christians. God pronounced the word 'Logos' and creation started emanating. The whole process of creation was completed in six days and on seventh day God rested. "And on the seventh day God ended his work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." [3, Genesis: 2.2]

Six days here does not mean six solar days because even the Sun (on which our solar time depends) was created on the fourth day. If the solar time is taken as the measurement of time then nothing can be said about the first three days of creation. Moreover it has been stated in the Bible that Lord's one day is equal to one thousand years. "But, beloved, be not ignorant

of this one thing, that one day is with Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." [3, Peter II, 3.8] From this statement it can be inferred that the creation of the universe was completed in six thousand years by the Lord.

According to Islam, "Allah created the Universe from void or *Sunya* by saying *KUN*." [4, p 243] When the Allah spoke the word '*Kun*' there was creation all around. "Allah created the universe through the Divine word '*Kun*' which was with him. As and when he spoke the word '*Kun*' concerning a thing that thing emerged in the Universe." [7, p 72] Thus sound of a word '*KUN*' is the mode by which creation has started. "Some accounts deal with the creation more specifically stating that the Earth was created on a Sunday and Monday. On Tuesday, He created the mountains and on Wednesday trees, water and cultivation came into existence. On Thursday God created heaven and the stars, Sun and Moon and the angels were created on Friday." [12, pp 46-47]

Gurbani is full of example of creation of the universe. Gurbani says that there was a sound at the time of the creation of the universe. With that sound the universe has come into existence. Entire creation is governed by Hukm. There is no exception to it and this Hukm cannot be described.

Thus, “The Quran almost repeats the Biblical version of the Genesis story that God created the universe with all its manifestations in just six days but does not state that God took rest on seventh day.”[12, p 46]

Differences notwithstanding regarding their views about the creation of the universe, one thing is common among them that they all agree that at the time of the creation a sound was produced. This sound has been given different names by different religions. All the things came into existence only after this divine sound.

According to Gurbani a single word, sound, order (*Onkar, Anhad Sabd*) was produced giving rise to the millions of streams of creation.

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ॥

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖਦ ਰੀਆਉ॥

You created the vast expanse of the universe with One Word! Hundreds of thousands of rivers began to flow.

Rivers here may not mean the large water bodies, as we generally take it. But it means the different streams of creation.

AGGS, Jap 16, p 3.

ਵਣੁਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਪਾਈ॥,

ਚਾਰਿ ਬੇਦ ਚਾਰੇ ਖਾਈ॥

ਖੰਡ ਦੀਪ ਸਭਿ ਲੋਆ॥

ਏਕ ਕਵਾਵੈ ਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਹੋਆ॥੧॥

The forests, meadows, three worlds, water, the four Vedas, the four sources of creation,

The countries, the continents and all the worlds,

Have all come from the One Word of the God. ||1||

AGGS, M.5, p 1003.

Some scholars take this to mean that God uttered Its word and the whole world appeared at once. But this is not proper interpretation. This is not in line

with the true spirit of Sikh Gurus. According to Sher Singh, “*Pasau* does not mean a sudden creation. *Pasau* is from *Pasarna*: to expand, to spread or to evolve. *Kawao* means Word, but it does not mean an order for sudden appearance of the world. As I shall explain below, the word is ‘Will’ which is the cause of all the manifestation what we call ‘world’ or the cosmos. Moreover the view of sudden appearance of the world is in contradiction with the Guru’s ideas expressed elsewhere.”[10, p 184] The evolution of the world has been compared with a tree whose branches blossoms slowly, not at once.

ਤੂੰ ਪੇਡੁ ਸਾਖ ਤੇਰੀ ਫੁਲੀ॥

You are the tree; Your branches have blossomed forth.

AGGS, M 3, p 102.

Now the question is what this first sound was. According to Islam this sound was ‘*Kun*’ and Hindus calls it ‘*Om*’.

Gurbani says this first sound was ‘*Onkar*’. When for countless ages there was utter darkness, there was no creation at all, suddenly a sound of *Onkar* appeared and millions of streams of existence started flowing.

According to Harpinder Kaur, “*Kavao*’ is the sound of *Ekonkar* which is manifested in the form of *Oankar*”. [5, p 92] “*Oankar*’ is the sound of That existence which is there before the creation. That existence has created the universe out of Himself and is still present in the universe to sustain it.”[5, p 91] According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha the meaning of *Oankar* is the sound of ‘*Oang*’.[6, p 21] Giani Sant Singh Maskeen also takes the word *Onkar* in the same sense. He says that *Ek Onkar* is a combination of three words, i.e., *Ek+Oang+Kar*. Here *Ek* means one; *Oang* means sound and *Akar* means creation. [2]

It means there was one and only one God. When the God willed to create the universe a sound of *Oang* produced and through that sound creation started flowing.

The word *Onkar (Onkar-Onam)* is the core of creation. It means that sound *Onkar* gave rise to everything. Even Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh were created after that sound. The sound *Onkar* created physical forms in time and space. The sound *Onkar* gave rise to the physical intellect (meaning sources of knowledge). All the days and the nights, the forests, meadows, three worlds, water, the four Vedas, the four sources of creation came into being.

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸਭ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਈ॥

ਸਭੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਤਮਾਸਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥

The One Universal Creator created the entire Universe.

All the plays and dramas are to Your glory and greatness.

AGGS, M 3, p 1061.

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਉਤਪਤਿ॥

ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ॥

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸੈਲ ਜੁਗ ਭਏ॥

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਬੇਦ ਨਿਰਮਏ॥

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਉਧਰੇ॥

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਤਰੇ॥

ਓਨਮ ਅਖਰ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ॥

ਓਨਮ ਅਖਰੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਰੁ॥੧॥

From Onkar Brahma was created. He kept Onkar in his consciousness. From Onkar, the mountains and the ages were created. Onkar created the Vedas. Onkar saves the world through the Sabd. Onkar saves the Gurmakhs. Listen to the Message of the Universal, Imperishable Creator Lord. The Universal, Imperishable Creator Lord is the essence of the three worlds. ||1||
AGGS, M 1, pp. 929-930.

ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ॥

ਕੀਆ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਸਭ ਰਾਤੀ॥

ਵਣੁਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ॥

ਚਾਰਿ ਬੇਦ ਚਾਰੇ ਖਾਣੀ॥

The One Universal Creator Lord created the creation. He made all the days and the nights. The forests, meadows, three worlds, water, The four Vedas, the four sources of creation.
AGGS, M. 5, p. 1003.

In Gurbani references are also available which suggest that the creation started through Sabd (Word). According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, “Sabd as a noun has come in the meaning of sound, voice.”[6, p156] In the words of Principal Pritam Singh Jalandhar, “Sabd’ is a voice through which this universe has come into existence.”[11, p14]

But it is worth mentioning here that in Gurbani *Onkar* and Sabd denotes the same thing. *Onkar* is a name given to the sound produced by Sabd. *Onkar* is another name of Sabd. “Guru Nanak accepts the Sabd, the essence of the universe. He gave the name *Onkar* to this sound.”[11, p11] *Onkar* is a specific name and Sabd is general name.

In this way Sabd is the cause of creation. Through the Sabd, creation happens. Not only creation but destruction also happens through the Word or the Sabd. ਉਤਪਤਿ ਪਰਲਉ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੋਵੈ॥

ਸਬਦੇ ਹੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ॥

Creation and destruction happen through the Word of the Sabd. Through the Sabd, creation happens again.
AGGS, M. 3, p.117.

ਏਕੇ ਸਬਦੁ ਏਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ

ਵਰਤੈ ਸਭ ਏਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਉਤਪਤਿ ਚਲੈ॥

The One Sabd, the Word of the One God, is prevailing everywhere. All the creation came from the One Lord.
AGGS, M. 3, p.1334.

This Sabd was not only produced at the time of the creation but this is still present in the cosmos. After creating the universe the God has not left it on the mercy of others but He is still engaged in the process of creation.

ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਚਿ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮਨਿ ਕਰਮ ਸੁਕਰਮਾ॥

The Formless Lord is contained in His Creation. To obey God is the best course of action.
AGGS, M.1, p. 1107.

ROLE OF HUKM (COMMAND) IN CREATION

Gurus have also used the word *Hukm* by which the creation started. All are created by His *Hukm*. By His *Hukm* all are subjected to time or death. By His *Hukm*, they merge in truth.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ

By His Command, bodies are created.
AGGS, Jap 2, p.1.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਾਜੀਅਨੁ

ਬਹੁ ਭਿਤਿ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ॥

By His Command, He created the creation, the world with its many species of beings.
AGGS, M. 3, p. 786.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ

By His Command, souls come into being. AGGS, Jap 2, p.1.

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਜੁਗ ਮਹਿ ਆਇਆ

ਚਲਣੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸੰਜੇਗਿ ਜੀਉ॥

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਪਰਪੰਚੁ ਪਸਰਿਆ

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਕਰੇ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ਜੀਉ॥

By the Hukm (of God's Will), they come into this world, and they leave upon receipt of His Hukm. By His Hukm, the Expanse of the Universe is expanded. By His Hukm, they enjoy pleasures. AGGS, M. 5, p 760.

ਹੁਕਮੁ ਸਾਜਿ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਖੈ

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ॥੨॥

By the Hukm (of His Command), He creates, and in His Command, He keeps us. O Nanak, He Himself is True. ||2||
AGGS, M 1, p 145.

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਆਵੈ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਜਾਵੈ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਈ॥

By His Command we come, and by His Command we go; by His Command, we merge in absorption.
AGGS, M 1, p 940.

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਭੇ ਉਪਜਹਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਹਿ॥

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਲੈ ਵਸਿ ਹੈ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਹਿ॥

By the Hukm (of His Command), all are created. By His Command, actions are performed. By His Command, all are subject to death; by His Command, they merge in Truth.
AGGS, M. 1, p 55.

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਸਾਜੇ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਢਾਠੇ

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਦਾ॥੫॥

By the Hukm of Your Command, You create, and by Your Command, You destroy. By Your Command, You unite in union. AGGS, M.3, p 1061

As regards the relation between Sabd and *Hukm* in Gurbani, Gurus and other spiritual personalities have used *Hukm*, Sabd and God all in the same meaning. These are used interchanging in Gurbani. Sabd, *Hukm* and God are one and same thing. It is evident from the following verses.

ਤੇਰਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਹਹਿ ਆਪੇ ਭਰਮੁ ਕਹਾਰੀ॥

The Sabd is Yours; You are Yourself. Where is there any doubt?
AGGS, M 3, p 162.

ਸਭੇ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ

ਆਪੇ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਸਮਤੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ॥੩॥

He Himself is the Commander; all are under His Command. The Fearless Lord looks on all alike. ||3||
AGGS, Bhagat Namdev, p. 1351

CONCLUSIONS

In this way creation, according to Gurbani, is not a haphazard activity. It is very well planned and systemic. It follows certain rules. Rule of the Divine or *Hukm* is supreme and is prevalent in the universe. All the powers emerge from and are governed by this rule. By this are brought forth the countless multitudes. Nobody can describe this *Hukm*.

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