

# Creation of the Universe

## As Expounded in Guru Nanak's Bani

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### PART I

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Guru Nanak, in his hymns of *Jap(u) Ji*, *Asa di Var*, *Siddh Goshth* and *Maru Sohile* has shown incredible understanding of the mystery of creation. It is fascinating to note that some of the concepts/theories expressed in these *Banis* were not known to modern science until eighteenth century. In this way one can safely observe that Guru Nanak's ideas were the forerunner of the modern scientific tradition. Let us now analyse the ideas about the physical world as mentioned in Guru Nanak's hymns.

### Before Creation

Using advanced scientific techniques scientists have been able to know numerous secrets of the universe during the present century. By the analysis of the light coming from distant galaxies, nebulae, pulsars and newly found stars, the scientists have calculated that our universe was born about 12 billion years ago.

How was the universe created? When and Why was it created? Scientists are unable to pinpoint the answers to these questions. Many theories are in vogue concerning the evolution of the universe.

It is generally assumed that our universe started out as a super dense ball called the 'cosmic egg' or the 'primal atom'. On explosion of the 'cosmic egg' all the fundamental particles of matter came into existence in a very very short span of time. With passage of time, galaxies, nebulae, pulsars, suns, stars, planets, moons and earth... took birth from this cosmic dust. This process is still in progress in several galaxies and nebulae.

In the expanse of the universe, millions of stars are taking birth, getting evolved and are dying on completion of their life span even now. Ultimately all these are being converted into a highly dense matter of 'cosmic egg'. The existence of 'black holes' confirms this fact. This process of creation and destruction is going on and on in the universe.

Another prevalent theory is that our universe was created about 12 billion years ago. Since its birth, it is expanding and will continue as such for the next 29 billion years. Then under the force of gravitation its contraction will start which will continue for next 41 billion years, till, it again takes the shape of the 'cosmic egg'. Even this is not the end. This whole process of creation and destruction will start again with the explosion of the newly formed 'cosmic egg'. This cycle of creation and destruction will continue forever.

In Guru Nanak's hymns many interesting facts about the creation and evolution of the universe are present, which appear in consonance with the modern scientific concepts. Scientists agree that there was nothing like the moon, the sun, the earth, the galaxies and the day or night before the creation of the universe. Guru Nanak had expressed such a view about 500 years ago in one of his hymns of '*Maru Sohilee*' :

Arbd nrbd DuMDUkwrw ]

arubud nurubud dhundhookara

For endless eons, there was only utter darkness.

Drix n ggnw hukmu Apwrw ]

dhuran n gugunaa hukum apaaraa

There was no earth or sky; there was only the infinite Command of His Hukam.

nw idnu rYin n cMdu n sUrju suMn smwiD lgwiedw ]1]

naa dhin rain n chundh n sooruj sunn sumaadh lugaaeidhaa  
There was no day or night, no moon or sun; God sat in primal, profound Samaadhi.

||1||  
(SGGS, Maru M. 1, Page 1035)

iJlimil iJkY cMdu n qwrw ]

jhilamil jhilukai chundh n thaaraa

The dazzling light glitters, although neither the moon nor the stars are shining;

sUrj ikrix n ibjuil gYxwrw ]

sooruj kiran n bijul gainaaraa

neither the sun's rays nor the lightning flashes across the sky.

AkQI kQau ichnu nhl koel pUir rihAw min Bwiedw ]8]

akuthee kutho chihun nehee koe poor rehiaa man bhaaeidhaa

I describe the indescribable state, which has no sign, where the all-pervading Lord  
is still pleasing to the mind. ||8|| (SGGS, Maru M.

1, Page 1035)

### **Birth of the Universe**

In 1930, a Belgium astronomer Georges Lemaitre expounded the 'big bang' theory, which describes the way in which the universe began. He suggested that about 10,000 million years ago all the matter of the universe was contained in a primal atom- which he described as a super dense 'cosmic egg'. This he said exploded and its many fragments became galaxies – one of which contains our solar system. All these galaxies are moving apart at incredible speed. Thus in the great explosion an unlimited number of material particles flew across space, which gave birth to planets, stars, galaxies, etc.

Another popular belief – The Steady State Theory – was advanced in 1948 by British cosmologists Harmann Bondi, Thomas Gold and Fred Hoyle, who suggested that the universe was eternal and that it has always existed. They said that matter is continuously created, apparently from nothing, at the rate of 62 atoms of hydrogen per cubic inch of space every 1000 million years. This is sufficient to form new galaxies to fill in the gaps caused by the expansion of the universe.

In 1965, an American astronomer Professor Allan Sandage adapted the 'Big Bang Theory' and developed it into his 'Pulsating Universe Theory'. He suggested that the universe is created, destroyed and then re-created in 82,000 million – year cycles. At the moment, he said, the universe is only 12,000 million years along the expansion stage, and it will continue to expand for another 29,000 million years before the galaxies overcome the force of the 'Big Bang' and begin to contract. Eventually, he maintained, moving at millions of miles an hour, they will converge and fuse again into their primal atoms which will then explode once more to re-start the whole cycle. A universe is, in other words, not without end but with an infinite number of endings ... and beginnings. Thus, scientists have different views about the universe's birth. They are unable to say something definite about it with strict confidence.

Guru Nanak Dev, the first Sikh Guru, says:

jw krqw kEu swjy Awpy jwxY soie ]

Ja karta sirthhi ko saaje, Aa-pe jaa-nai soee.

(Jap(u), Stanza

21)

i.e. that only the creator knows that when and how the universe was created.

### **The Process of Creation:**

In 'Jap(u) Ji' Guru Nanak points out the process of creation of the universe in the following verse:

klqw pswau eyko kwwau ]

keethaa pusaa eaeko kuvaa

You created the vast expanse of the Universe with One Word!

iqs qy hoey IK driAwau ]

tis tae hoeae lukh dhureeaa

Hundreds of thousands of rivers began to flow.

(SGGS,

Jap(u) Ji, Page 3)

i.e. The Creator created the whole universe with one word. Then lakhs of streams of life began to flow. Doesn't this 'eko kavao' (i.e. cosmic sound) appear as the sound of the explosion of the 'cosmic egg' (from which the universe is thought to be created by the scientists.)?

### **Concept of Time:**

There are several different ideas in vogue about the time of creation of the universe. According to Christians, the universe was created in 4004 BC. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, scientists were convinced that our earth was only a few thousand years old. Using geological data and analyzing the fossils, Kelvin, a famous scientist, suggested by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the earth is about 20 million years old. During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, using 'Radioactive Dating Technique' it became known that our earth was created about a few billion years ago. Our solar system is found to be 4.6 billion years old. Our Milky-Way galaxy is said to be about 10-15 billion years old.

The founder of the Big Bang Theory, Georges Lemaitre had suggested that the explosion of the super dense 'cosmic egg' took place, about 10 billion years ago, which led to the creation of the universe. There is no precise date of creation. British cosmologists Hermann Bondi, Thomas Gold and Fred Hoyle, who had proposed 'The Steady State Theory', suggest that the universe is eternal and that it has always existed. The founder of the 'Pulsating Universe Theory' Allan Sandage is of the view that about 12 billion years ago, a great explosion had occurred resulting in the birth of the universe. But he is unable to tell us about the precise date of its birth. Thus it is obvious that even the great astronomers and cosmologists of the twentieth century had been unable to pin point the exact date or time of the creation of the universe.

Just like the above trend ... it seems almost definite that even in the present century the scientists will not be able to find out the exact time when the universe began either. Now let us have a look at what Guru Nanak had said on this issue in his hymns. In 'Jap(u)' written in the first half of sixteenth century, he had raised a pertinent question:

kvxu su vylw vKqu kvxu kvx iQiq kvxu vwru ]

kuvun s vaelaa vukhuth kuvun kuvun thith kuvun vaar

What was that time, and what was that moment? What was that day, and what was that date?

kvixu is ruql mwhu kvxu ijqu hoAw Awkwru ]

kuvan s ruthee maahu kuvun jith hoaa aakaar

What was that season, and what was that month, when the Universe was created?

vyl n pwelAw pMMfql ij hovy lyKu purwxu ]

Vel na paa-ee-a pandati, je hovai lekh puran.

Pundits did not know the time otherwise they would have written it in Puranas.

vKqu n pwieE kwdIAw ij ilKin lyKu kurwxu ]

Vakhat na paa-eo kaadee-a, je likhan lekh Kuran.

The Kadies (Quazies) also knew not otherwise they would have recorded it in the Quran.

iQiq vwru nw jogl jwxY ruiq mwhu nw koie ]

Thit var na jogi jaan-ai, rut maaho na koe.

Yogis do not know the lunar date or the weekday, nor does anyone know the season or the month.

jw krqw isrTI kEu swjy AwpY jwxY soie ]

Ja karta sirthhi ko saaje, Aa-pe jaa-nai soee.

Only the creator of the universe knows all that. (Jap(u) Ji, Stanza 21)

Let's take a deeper look into these verses...Guru Nanak raises the questions in his above cited hymns as: What was the time, lunar date or the day, which was that weekday, season or month when the material world came into being? Then he himself has replied: The *Pundits* (Hindu Scholars) did not know the answer otherwise they would have recorded it in *Puranas* (Hindu Holy Books).The *Kadies* (Quazies) also knew not otherwise they would have written it in the Quran (Muslim's Holy Book). Yogis do not know the lunar date or the weekday, nor does anyone know the season or the month. Only the Creator of the universe knows all that.

Thus Guru Nanak has pointed out very clearly that it is not possible to know the exact time of the creation by any means. Even with the use of very advanced scientific techniques available in twenty-first century, it has not been possible to arrive at the truth of the subject. Obviously, Guru Nanak's ideas about the creation of the material world (Universe) propounded about 500 years ago are in consonance with modern scientific thoughts.

**[End of PartI]  
(To be concluded)**

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