

Order in the Universe

by Melkote Ramaswamy*

The Hindu tradition permits its devotees to worship in many ways. This is a result of vision and wisdom of our ancient rishis who were trying to accommodate a diverse spectrum of maturity levels.

Hindus can choose to worship from an array of *ishtadevatas*—each representing some aspect of one and only God. We also have the choice of praying to God with form (*sakaara*) or without form (*niraakara*) or to one with attributes (*saguna*) or without attributes (*nirguna*). Further, one may worship God in the form of Earth, Fire, Space, Air or Water. In South India there are temples dedicated to each of these: at Chidambaram for Space; at Arunachalam for Fire; at Kancheepuram for Earth; at Kalahasti for Air and at Jambukeswaran for Water.

There are several other subtle manifestations of God. It doesn't take much to realize and recognize that the world around us in all its ramifications is simply given to us—the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the rivers, the oceans, the vegetation, the forests, animals, birds. We had absolutely no hand in creating any of these.

In a sense, these are all God-given gifts to us. If we accept this premise, we can recognize the hand of the Lord in myriad other ways. One such is Order. The Sun always rises in the East and sets in the West, the moon goes around the earth, and all the planets merrily revolve around the Sun without ever colliding with each other following what physicists and astronomers call Kepler's laws and exerting gravitational forces. There is a certain rhythm/regularity in the occurrence of seasons. No wonder, one can

create a hundred year calendar and almanac with so much certainty. Solar and lunar eclipses are equally predictable. There is regularity in the occurrence of tides.

In the human body, we can discern three types of Order: physical, physiological and psychological. If one were to look at the number of drugs and over the counter medicines in a typical drug store, we get an idea of the number of ailments that can possibly exist in the human body. Many things can go wrong, but don't because of an inherent order; there is harmony in the way the organs work. A disease is simply a breakdown of order in the body-mind complex.

Order also manifests as harmony in nature. Humans and animals co-exist living in their own worlds but enriching and supplementing the creation, which in itself is part of a big Order.

Tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters—these are also part of the Order. No matter, how tragic their consequences may be on a macroscopic scale, they are still a part of the larger Cosmic Order. So is the beauty of a rainbow and of the waterfalls. It is humbling to realize and recognize that everything in the Universe is just Order and we are just blessed to be part and parcel of this divinity called God.

Various natural forces and conservation laws of momentum and energy should be convincing enough to convert an atheist's views on God.

We often speak of Seven Wonders of the world, without ever realizing we are part of the biggest wonder—one that transcends all religions.

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