

## The Spiritual Science of Universal Creation

*I'm astounded by people who want to "know" the universe when it's hard enough to find your way around Chinatown.*

—Woody Allen

When you're talking about universal creation, you have to move into a bigger picture view that goes beyond just one planet, one time frame, and one physical dimension. The theory of universal creation I introduce to you here offers a big picture view of the universe that has a place for just about anything you can possibly think of.

Whether you're talking about Christian ideas of heaven and hell, Tibetan descriptions of different realms of existence, new age messages from the "other side," or various worlds of gods described by the cultures of Greece, Egypt, and India, all these different realms can coexist within the theory of universal creation that I share with you in this chapter.

### Different ways to view life

Each religious tradition has its own ideas about the nature of life. Different people and traditions see life differently, whether as a game, as a series of challenges, as an opportunity to grow, or as a divine play. Some believe that life is made of suffering, while others say it is of the nature of supreme bliss.

Seen from a more universal perspective, these views are neither right nor wrong, but merely different faces of the ultimately unknowable nature of life.

One common analogy used to describe how seemingly opposing theories can fit together within an unknowable bigger picture is the story of six blind men who came upon an elephant.

The first man touched the elephant's leg and announced, "The elephant is a pillar." The second man touched the tail and disputed the first, saying, "Oh, no, it is like a rope." The third touched the trunk of the elephant and said, "It is like a thick branch of a tree." The fourth touched the elephant's ear and said, "It is like a big hand fan." The fifth blind man touched the belly of the elephant and declared, "It is like a huge wall." And the sixth man touched the tusk of the elephant and said, "It is a solid pipe."

Different philosophical approaches to the nature of the universe are like the different interpretations of these six blind men. All these blind men are both right and wrong, with each giving a different piece of the puzzle of what an elephant really is. Each viewpoint is valuable to consider and contemplate, but you wouldn't want to limit your understanding of the elephant or the universe to any one definition or close the door to other possibilities.

## Consider

Instead of trying to memorize the specific details covered in this section, let the words enter your awareness gently, without straining or feeling frustrated if you don't fully understand the stages of creation being described. This kind of teaching is not meant to be memorized as you would study for a test, or to be used to build a rigid belief system. Theories of universal creation should be used to bathe your mind in higher-concept spiritual philosophies that have the potential to transform your outlook and uplift your life.

The map in Figure 14-1 is based on the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, which is said to have developed around 900 A.D. in the state of Kashmir, which is in the northwestern corner of India. This chart shows how divine universal Consciousness becomes all the levels of creation, down to the physical world and your experience of it.

Now, even though Figure 14-1 may look like a sequential process that moves from supreme consciousness at the top to the physical universe at the bottom, the truth is that the whole chart is happening all at once. Universal Consciousness is always there — pure, eternal, and unaffected by the creation that is described as being projected like a big multidimensional movie upon its screen. And just as a movie screen is unaffected by the nature of the movie being projected on it, so the screen of pure consciousness remains unaffected by all the universal creations that play upon its screen.

Don't worry if you don't fully understand how this process of universal creation works. Sages from many traditions have spent decades of intense spiritual practices to catch even a glimpse of a higher universal view of creation. Just to come upon elevated spiritual teachings shows that you've already achieved a certain resonance with higher truth and are ready to open up to its gifts in a new way.

Is Figure 14-1 a perfectly accurate and all-inclusive map of reality? No, of course not. Is there such a thing as an all-inclusive map of reality? No way. If a map were all inclusive, it would not be a map, but the thing itself. Is this graph of universal creation a set of ideas that can open many doors to understanding how the entire universe — including you — can be divine? Yes indeed!

The following sections describe each stage of creation as numbered on the chart. Again, these stages are both sequential and eternal: They take place in order and are also happening all at once. The goal of spiritual efforts in the context of this philosophy is to move your awareness from the bottom rungs of this ladder of universal creation — representing the physical world and sensory experience — up to the higher realms of spiritual realization and universal freedom.

# A Simple Chart of Universal Creation Based on the Philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism



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Figure 14-1: A map of the stages of universal creation.

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