

# A Big Bore

It would be terrible indeed if a day dawns when we have all the answers to the mysteries of the universe, writes **ASHWIN SANGHI**

**W**hat is spirituality? Numerous sages, philosophers and thinkers down the ages have attempted to answer that question. Many of them saw spirituality as a quest to connect with a greater power — the divine.

I see it a little differently. I believe that there is no difference between the greater power and me. Every rivulet, stream or river must eventually connect to the ocean. We may look upon the ocean as vast and mighty and the rivulet as small and inconsequential, but we cannot forget that they are made from the very same material — water. What if my relationship with God is precisely the relationship that the river has with the ocean?

Recent revelations from research have shown that there is no real difference between matter and energy. Albert Einstein did tell us about the interchangeability of matter and energy, but we are only now realising that the entire universe is nothing but energy. Even what we call matter is actually energy programmed to behave like matter. In effect, there is little to differentiate our bodies from the houses we live in, the trees and shrubs around us, the air that we breathe, or the fires that keep us warm. Anything and everything around us—including our own bodies—is simply energy. In that case, isn't it also possible that our thoughts are energy? That our souls are also energy?

## Ancient Beliefs

The Big Bang theory tells us that the universe was created from a singularity — a point of intense energy from which the universe began expanding. Scientists tell us that our universe continues to expand; the distances between stars are growing. The very notion of the Big Bang is to be found in the Sanskrit word for universe — *Brahmānda*. *Brahm* means 'expanding' and *anda* means 'egg'. Thus, the word *Brahmānda* literally means 'the expanding egg'.

In effect, our ancient seers knew that the entire universe had emerged from a single point of energy. They also knew that one day the universe may collapse back into that very singularity — what physicists now call a black hole. And finally, they were aware that the process of the creation of a new universe would start from that singu-

larity all over again. What if that singularity were God? In that case, wouldn't everything that was created thereafter from that singularity also be God?

Ancient Egyptians saw the sun rise in the east and set in the west. They worshipped the sun as a god. They called him *Ra*. *Ra* woke in the morning and travelled across the sky in his chariot during the day until he stopped to sleep at night. In later years, it was proved that the sun was a giant ball of flam-



moment. Having eliminated sequential time, I now wonder how I can possibly be punished for misdeeds of a previous life if I am living all my lives simultaneously. What if my soul is simply the invisible connecting tissue that links my multiple forms in various dimensions? Is it possible that when I'm dreaming in one parallel life, I may actually be living in yet another?

Victor Hugo famously asked, "Where the telescope ends, the microscope begins. Which of the two has a grander view?" The fact is that both instruments show us precisely the same thing. Looking through a microscope, one sees particles in motion and looking

through a telescope, one sees planets in motion. We look to the skies to see the universe and forget that there is a universe within the atom. What if the outward universe that we observe is actually an atom under observation by someone else? What if the atom that we observe under the microscope is someone else's universe?

## Seeking Answers

The question that physicists who gave us the Big Bang theory are unable to answer is this: what was there before the singularity? If we accept the theory that the universe is like a balloon that gets inflated or deflated with alternating Big Bangs and Big Crunches — we still are unable to answer who or what created that first point of energy from which it all began. And you know what? It's fine that we can't answer it. As I see it, spirituality is not about having the answers. It's about seeking answers to questions. That the journey is the destination

is absolutely true when one considers the spiritual journey.

Not surprisingly, I'm delighted that we can't answer the question about who or what was there before the Big Bang. It worries me to think that someday science would be able to answer every possible question, thereby completely eliminating the unknown, and consequently the delicious imagination of the form, shape, size and location of God! A world without divine mystery would be a big bore. I suggest that we continue asking questions, and keep our fingers crossed that answers are few. ■

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PAPYRUS PAINTING DEPICTING THE ADORATION OF RA, 14TH CENTURY BCE

ing energy around which several planets rotated, thus causing the phenomenon of day and night. Once science could explain the sun, the planets, and the mechanics of day and night, *Ra* 'lost' his divinity. Divinity, in a sense, is that which cannot be explained. As we find rational explanations via scientific progress, we seem to leave a little less room for God in our lives.

There was a time when I believed in *karma*. Business training in financial accounting had taught me to believe that every debit had a corresponding credit and vice-versa. But then I read about the multidimensionality of time. In effect, I realised that I could be living in parallel universes at the present

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