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Which came first, the chicken or the egg? This is a well known and oft repeated question meant to confound those who try to answer it. After all, how can one define the beginning or the end of a circle? Existence is based on cycles: the inhalation and exhalation of breath; the food web; all biogeochemical cycles; the lunar cycle and movements of the heavens; the seasons. When studying the cycles of life, what other conclusion can one make than that the life of the universe itself must be cyclical.

Vedic cosmology explains that our current universe is not the only one ever to have existed. Just as it has been noted about solar systems and galaxies by modern scientists, the universe [also is also](#) born, dies and then is recycled into a new universe. There are many different versions of how the universe is re-born in Hindu mythology. However, whether the universe was sneezed out of Brahma's nose, grown from an egg, or birthed from a lotus blossom, the histories all agree that the universe expanded from a single small point. If this theory sounds familiar, you may be thinking about the Big Bang, a beginning separately theorized by scientists millennia after it was noted in the Vedas. Some stories then go on to describe that Brahma helped the universal matter to coalesce into the stars, planets, and solar systems, much as scientists describe galaxies forming today.

[As a whole, m](#)Modern science has not yet addressed the possibility that the current universe was re-born from a previous universe and will be followed by the birth of a new universe [\(although several great minds such as Stephen Hawkins and Carl Sagan are currently exploring the possibilities of multiple universes\)](#). However, there are natural laws which, if held true, clearly point to this cycle as true. The laws of the conservation of matter and energy say that neither of the two is created or destroyed. If that is true, how could there have been a time when the matter of the universe did not exist? Between the death of one universe and the birth of a new one, matter and energy return to the Almighty from which they are derived.

The Vedas and shruti and smriti literature—ancient texts written before the Greeks and Romans were building their empires—tell of phenomenon such as fertile rivers drying up, the sun rising on one area of earth as it sets on another, the rise and erosion of mountains, and even the death of the solar system, described exactly as scholars today have predicted using modern methods. That myth tells of a boy named Markandeya who lived during the world cycle before ours. It was predicted that he would die on his sixteenth birthday. When that day came, Markandeya took refuge in a temple of Lord Shiva who appeared when Death came to take the boy. Lord Shiva was furious that Death would try to take a devotee during worship and scared him so badly that Death refused to come take Markandeya ever again. Markandeya lived through the remainder of his world’s cycle and then watched as the universe died. When the universe was reborn and he was able to walk amongst humans again, he reported that when the solar system dies, the sun slowly turns red and expands, scorching the surface of the earth, rendering it uninhabitable, before exploding, taking out the planets with it. The rishis of old gleaned much of this information about the universe through deep meditation. However, modern science has allowed us to rediscover this information through measurement and mathematics.

Hinduism ‘s true name is Santana Dharma, roughly meaning “the eternal religion”. By studying the ancient literature and discovering the parallels between modern science and what was written around the time that other religions believe the world was just beginning, one can begin to appreciate why Hinduism should be considered so. It is made up of timeless truths, of which the creation of the universe is only a small part, which shall be forgotten and rediscovered an uncountable number of times, not just through religion and faith, but through science, logic, and discovery as well.

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