

'Shunya' in Indian Wisdom Tradition

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ABSTRACT

'Shunya' is a Sanskrit word meaning 'zero', 'empty' or 'void'. It is derived from the root meaning "hollow". It is the root word for the term 'sunyata', which means "emptiness" or "nothingness". Shunya is related to the ideas of samadhi, amaratwa, turya and brahman. According to Buddhism sunyata, the voidness that constitutes ultimate reality; sunyata is seen not as a negation of existence but rather as the undifferentiation out of which all apparent entities, distinctions, and dualities arise. Shunya means that every material and spiritual entity emerges from nothingness and merges into nothingness, but this supreme nothingness is the all encompassing Brahman who is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Aryabhata, a great astronomer of the classic age of India was the one who invented the digit "0" (zero) for which he became immortal. 0 (zero) is a number representing an empty quantity. Adding 0 to any number leaves that number unchanged. In mathematical terminology, 0 is the additive identity. Multiplying any number by 0 has the result 0, and division by zero has no meaning in arithmetic. Shunya define to the formless, shapeless, abstract, omnipresent, invisible, eternal, transcendental and immanent form of ultimate reality or God in Hinduism.

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Discussion:

It is said in the Upanishad that –

**"Purnmidang Purnamadah Purnat
Purnamudchyate.
Purnasya Purnamadaya Purnamebah
Vashishya."**

It is a contradictory stanza about the term 'zero'. The voice of the Shunya (void) has been ongoing since the beginning of life in the universe. 'HE' was full, is full and will be full again. This stanza signifies completeness. If we explore, we will find that the value of zero is very significant in the eastern subcontinents. In the Eastern mysticism and philosophy, sunya (zero, nothing) and Akasa (sky, ether, void) have great importance. But sunya can mean many things. Some theologians have interpreted as infinity. For example Krtsnam sukham sunyam means wholeness brightness and infinity though sunya literally means zero. Specially in mathematics, science, literature, religion, etc we found the weight of zero. It is known that people in India have been using zero(0) since ancient times. Apart from this, Aryabhata was considered as the prophet of zero. '0' is neither a positive number nor a negative number. It's a neutral number. If we put zero on the left side of a number, it indicates decrease in value while zero in right side of a number signifies increase in price or

value - Example: 02 & 20. Later in the 7th century, Brahmagupta expanded '0'(zero) as a mathematical term

In India, the concept of zero was established long before the birth of Jesus. India provided numbers like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0 to the world. The number system designed by India is very unique and its application is remarkably elegant. So, it abundantly spread all over the world in a short period of time. The first form of zero is a small dot (.). The great Scholar of ancient India, Jinachandra's 'Ganita Koshabali', Pingal's 'Chandrasutra', Subandhu's 'Basavadatta', Sridhar's 'Void' and Aryabhata's 'Aryabhattayam', Vidushi Lilavati's 'Lilavati Sutra' are plays a vital role and explained about zero. Importance of these texts cannot be denied to know the knowledge about Indian counting thoughts.

Use of 'Zero' in Odia Scripts:-

In odia literature significance of zero is taught in two different ways. Before learning odia alphabet or varnamala, children are taught about three circle (O,O,O). These symbols are introduced as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar. Such spherical head is also observed in Shunya (0). Whatever the theoretical reason behind it, it cannot be denied that it was the

first attempt at learning the circular script. Secondly, the odia consonant 'tha' (ଠିଆଁ 'O'), the 2nd consonant of the 'Murdhanya Barga' is rounded in shape. Archaeologist Satyanarayan Rajguru, an orthodox linguist in odia literature said that, "the Murdhanya 'tha'(O) vyanjan is very ancient, it has been used unchanged since 2300 years ago." (Evolution of Odia script-Pg.5, O.S.A., 3rd edition- 1996) For example - Thakura (ଠାକୁର), Kathau (କଠାଉ), Matha (ଠା), etc. Furthermore, the zero form is also written as a conjunctive; as Anuswara (ଠ). For example - Kansa (କଠଠ), bansha (ବଠଶ), etc. Therefore, different pronouns in a form carry the principle of preserving our theory and connection of characters.

Utkal religion and 'Shunya':-

Utkaliya Dharma means it explains about lord Jagannath. Jagannath's name does not appear in the Dashavatar form of god Bishnu. But Jagannath's analysis in the decade introduces zero in a form and formless. The dashavatar are as follows: Matsya(fish), Kachhapa (turtoise), Baraha (pig), Nrusimha (lion), Baman, Parashuram, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Kalki. The form of lord Jagannath of Nilakandar do not come together with the dashavatar. So the image of Jagannath is formless and empty. The structure and description of the gods of this culture is unique as compared to other deities. In this connection, Pandit Nilakantha Das has mentioned in his book 'Kramparinama of Odiya Sahitya' - "He was great, empty. He is void of light and consciousness. It is elsewhere referred to as void-light or luminous darkness. ××× The 'Jagannath' voice of its Chaturdhamurti or the 'Jagannath'-form of the Universal ." (p-129) In mantras it is taken as 'Jagannath' is the 'Kling mantra or Kamabija', 'Subhadra' is the 'Shling' mantra or 'Raja', and 'Balabhadra' is the 'Hling' mantra or shy organ. In relation to the Yogamaya of Void, everything is the creation. Bringing, these three forms indescribable, the four-way or 'Chaturdha' sculpture of a great void, taking in the 'Sudarshan'." (p-129) Jagannath Dharma consists of worship and hymns. Its worship is like being near the idol or being absorbed in the idol. Similarly, Bhakti or Bhajan is 'Paranurakti'. In Jagannath Dharma, the ethical foundation of karma is doing work for others or helping others. "Its basic and true meaning is connected with the the word 'Purusottam'. Thus Shunya is the trend of all-religious harmony. In literature along with religion and philosophy, it has been named as 'empty'. This is a complete contradiction. It is also called 'infinite' because it has no end in the total sense.

'Shunya' reflected in philosophy:-

During the composition of the Veda Upanishad in the Indian Dharma, Aryans the observant monks sought it from nature itself. So when the Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Banaprastha and Sannyasa and Sadhakas have realized the Unseen, they have attained self-satisfaction and closeness and have rated zero. It is unique. Such a concept is derived from the natural beauty of nature. No-one is the author of it. So, Veda is known as apurusheya. Hence it is zero. Generally, the sky above man's head, the earth under his feet, the moon and the sun who giving light, the flow of coolness and warmth all are observed by him. Again the woods, hills, Looking at the seas, he wondered who is the creator of all this? Who is this? Pursuing the search, closed his eyes, lost himself in consciousness and sat in silence, he is the one who is thought to be the addresses from our philosophy to literature, introducing the 'void'. He remains only in the world of thoughts. Void is conceived in Buddhist philosophy as-"The basis of this idea is that the four elements can be applied to determine the volume of a substance - asti, nasti, tadubhaya (asti and nasti) and nobhaya (na asti and na nasti). But the determination of God cannot be done with the help of these crores. The word 'void' is used to acknowledge the very indeterminable because that divinity is imperceptible to the mind." (Indian Philosophy pg. 175-176) According to this ideologue, matter is not only imaginary truth, but also not imaginary non-existence rather, its volume can be determined on the point of both true and false, which is called void. This zero is absolutely different from lack, but this zero is an indication of neutrality. As the inventor of such a spiritual medium, this philosophy is given the name 'Madhyamika' in Buddhism, and its propounder was Nagarjuna. Acharya Nagarjuna, while explaining the Supreme Being, admitted - "The Truth of the Supreme Being is absolutely honorable, but its voice is so unspeakably unknowable that we cannot call it true and we cannot call it false, or we cannot say that truth contains falsehood, or that it is not both true and false." Zero is used in this vision only to give such information." (Indian Philosophy) While highlighting the development of Indian religion and philosophy centered around this void, it has uniquely identified itself as the Nirvuga movement. In Odisha, there is harmony between virtue and virtue behind the diverse religious beliefs.

A glimpse of Shunya in orthodox poetry:-

The appearance of emptiness in Odia poetry begins with the composition of religious literature. 'Zero' is emphasized in astrology. In the manifestation of Natha Dharma, 'Sishurveda' has given the means to manifest zero. The composers of Panchasaka have not

been able to embrace 'zero' in Vaishnavism. In religious literature, Ida (left nadi), Pingala (right nadi) and Susumna (backbone / spinal) have designed the void at the top of the 'Shreyomarga'. Some have also named it as 'Trikut', 'Golhat'. Such an idea of the void has traditionally been cherished over time based on religions from ancient times.

Conclusion:

Some critics says it 'Nihilism' and some recognized it as consciousness, mind, spirit and breath. Such compositions can be seen in the compositions of Hadi Das, Arakshit Das in the 17th century, poet Bhimbhoi in the 19th century and Abhiram Paramahansa in the 20th century and Tadi Sarubai in the 21st century. Therefore, the traditional shunya method can be seen in the compositions of some worshipers even today in the monastery ashram. These are neglected or incomplete. Saints have recognized the void of consciousness in both form and formless. In the 5th chapter of Jagannath Das's 'Gupta Bhagavat', it is said when Hari's name is revealed 'Nirakar Hari'. In this sense, zero is a consciousness. It is purely spiritual. In the poetic tradition, such a harmony of formlessness and reality is the first glimpse of poet Abhimanyu Samantasinghar's 'Bidagdha Chintamani'- "Aprakrta premamurti jai Radhahari/ Abyakta lilaku byakta kara abatari". (Jai Radhahari, the idol of love Express the unexpressed rhythm)

In the 19th century, zero can be seen expressed in two processes. One is void associated with sadhana, the other is void influenced by Brahma. Between these two, there is a meaningful and conscious time. But the Brahmanical poets have made the void in nature accessible and joyous. It can be estimated from the writings of poet Madhusudan Rao, Fakir Mohan Senapati and Kuntala Kumari Sabat. The void has born the mystery at that time. Realistic poet Gopbandhu Das vision of the void is expressed in a simplified sphere of mystery - **“There is no need to**

go far to the temple Look inside yourself.” (Shivaratri) It is indicated in the compositions of poets Laxmikant Mahapatra, Baikunthanath Pattanayak and Nandakishor Bala that it has ever taken the form of a spiritual or brahma. Here it cannot be denied that Brahmatism and mysticism are a modified form of emptiness. From the sixties of the 20th century, it also sheltered the inconsistency from time to time. And the ancient void became meaningless from the mystical meaning. In spite of all this, modern poet Gangadhar Meher's theory of manifestation of void is a beautiful synthesis of mathematical process.

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