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Speak Up

THE UNIVERSE THAT WAS NEVER BORN EXPLORING JAINISM'S TIMELESS PERSPECTIVE ON CREATION AND INFINITY

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Throughout history, human beings have tried to understand the origins of the universe. Modern science has proposed theories such as the Big Bang, which suggests the universe began with a massive explosion from a single point, and the now largely outdated Steady State Theory, which suggested the universe has always existed in the same condition, continuously generating matter as it expands.

In contrast to these scientific models, Jain philosophy presents a fundamentally different view through the concept of *anādi-nidhana*. According to this idea, the universe is eternal; it has no beginning (*ana+ādi=anādi*) and no end (*a+nidhana=anidhana*). It was never created by an external force and will never cease to exist. It is in a constant state of motion and transformation, but it is never born and never destroyed. This principle stands at the heart of Jain metaphysics.

Rather than seeking a starting point or origin event, Jain thought emphasizes the cyclical nature of time and existence. The universe is seen as uncreated, self-sustaining, and governed by eternal natural laws. Change is ongoing, but the underlying reality remains without origin or conclusion. Closely related to this idea is the Jain concept of infinity, which was developed with remarkable



depth and clarity in ancient times. Jain scholars identified different categories of numbers and infinities, distinguishing between:

- Countable (*saṃkhyāta*): things that can be measured or enumerated
- Uncountable (*asaṃkhyāta*): things that are too many to count but not truly infinite
- Infinite (*ananta*): quantities that have no limit

These classifications reflect a sophisticated understanding of abstract concepts long before similar ideas were formalized in Western mathematical thought.

The Jain worldview offers a philosophical framework in which the universe is eternal and unbounded, governed by natural principles rather than divine creation or destruction. This perspective does not conflict with curiosity or scientific inquiry but provides a distinct lens through which reality is understood—as something continuous, infinite, and deeply interconnected.

Such concepts, though rooted in Jainism, invite reflection across all cultures and beliefs. Whether one approaches them through the lens of faith, philosophy, or intellectual curiosity, they represent a valuable contribution to humanity's ongoing exploration of existence.

