

Zero: an Integrative Spiritual Perspective

With One and Infinity

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CENTRAL PROPOSITION

Beyond quantity.
Towards meaning.

Zero, one and infinity illuminate different ways of interpreting existence and spiritual experience.



Read the research

01 Background and question

Zero is usually encountered as a mathematical concept. This chapter examines its spiritual meanings alongside one and infinity, bringing selected Indian philosophical sources into an interdisciplinary conversation.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What can zero, one and infinity reveal when interpreted through an integrative spiritual perspective?

02 Conceptual framework

Number

A language for quantitative relations.

Meaning

A lens on existence and experience.

The chapter relates form and formlessness, qualities and their absence, and finite and infinite perspectives. Its analogies concern spiritual meaning; they are not claims of mathematical equality.

03 Evidence and method

Conceptual exploration of ancient and contemporary literature using a hermeneutics of contemplation.

Selected Sanskrit sources are interpreted alongside modern accounts of zero and spirituality. The aim is philosophical understanding, rather than an experimental test or a demonstration of historical priority.

CONCLUSION

An integrative reading treats zero, one and infinity as resources for philosophical inquiry into existence and knowing.

SELECTED REFERENCES

[1] Nandram, S. S., Bindlish, P. K., Joshi, A., & Dhital, V. (2024). Zero: an Integrative Spiritual Perspective with One and Infinity. In P. Gobets & R. L. Kuhn (Eds.), The Origin and Significance of Zero, 479-501. Brill. doi:10.1163/9789004691568_027.

04 Original conceptual illustrations

Two illustrations from the chapter connect spiritual interpretations of form, qualities and an encompassing whole.

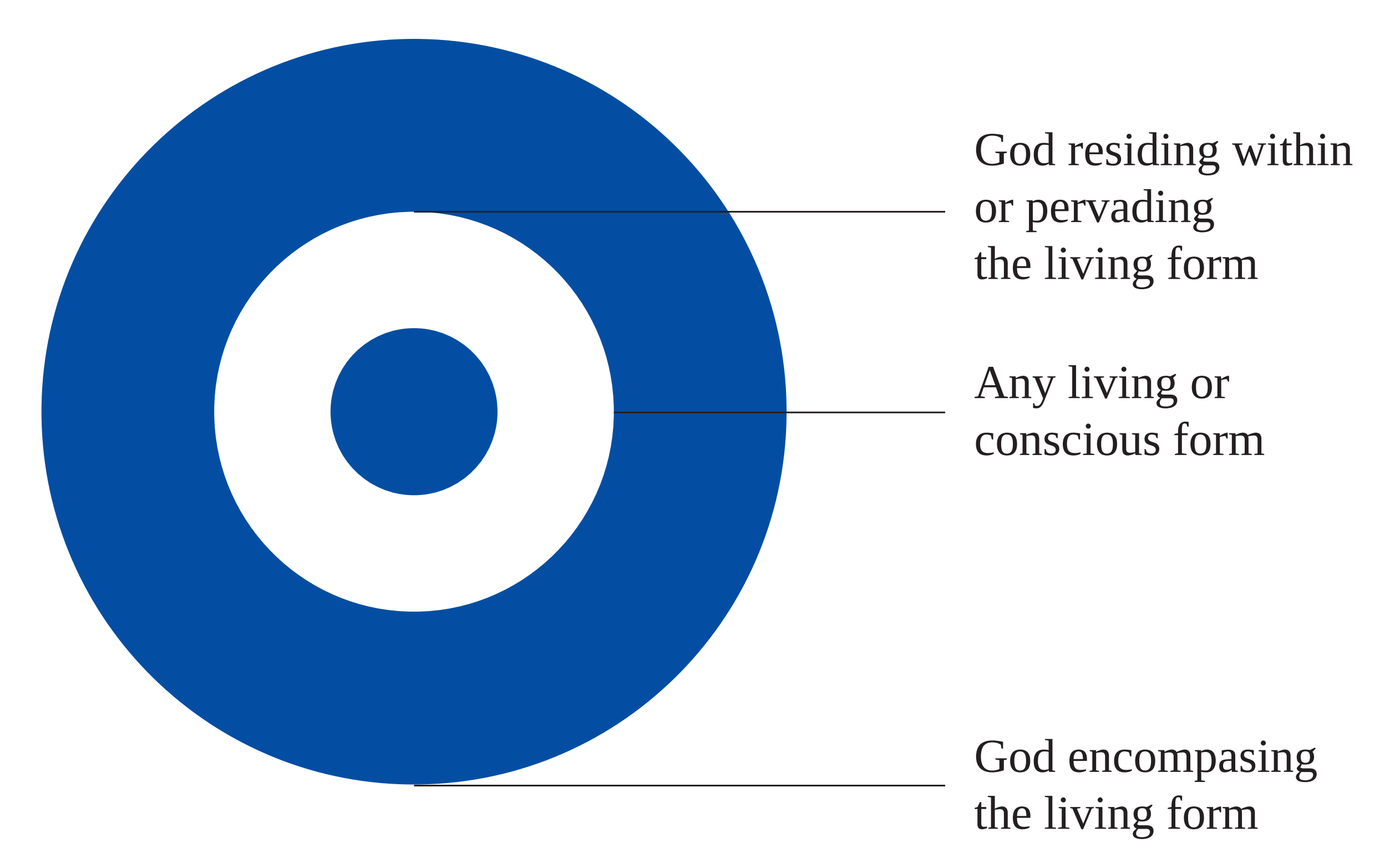


FIGURE 23.3 The idea of pervasive as well as all-encompassing nature of God

Original Figure 23.3, [1], p. 489: a theological illustration of the pervasive and all-encompassing nature of God.

TABLE 23.1 One, zero and infinity – an integrative spiritual perspective

	Quality-less	With quality
Form-less	<i>nirguṇa-nirākāra</i> 0	–
With Form	<i>nirguṇa-sākāra</i> ∞	<i>saguṇa-sākāra</i> 1

Original Table 23.1, [1], p. 495: form and qualities interpreted through zero, one and infinity.

05 Findings and contributions

A More than absence

Zero is explored through meanings such as subtlety, formlessness and the unmanifest.

B Unity and multiplicity

One and infinity help articulate relationships between particular forms and a wider spiritual whole.

C Limits of quantification

The chapter invites attention to the unknown and to knowing beyond formal numerical description.

06 Discussion

The integrative approach allows different meanings to coexist without reducing them to one disciplinary vocabulary. The original figure and table show how theological and philosophical interpretations extend the conversation about number.

07 Limitations and next steps

These are interpretations of selected traditions and texts. They do not establish empirical equivalence between spiritual concepts or alter the arithmetic properties of zero, one and infinity.

[2] Sherma, R. D., & Sharma, A. (Eds.). (2008). Hermeneutics and Hindu Thought: Toward a Fusion of Horizons. Springer.

[3] Bhawuk, D. (2011). Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita. Springer.

[4] Nandram, S. S. (2022). Spirituality: The Discipline for Doing Business with the Unknown. Inaugural lecture, Nyenrode Business Universiteit.