

HIDDEN IN HINDUISM

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What is hidden in Hinduism? First, it is 6,000 years old. Parts of the *Veda* were composed then from hymns that were already ancient. An Oxford University scholar Fredrick Muller stated that the *Veda* was written around 1000 BCE because, as a Christian, he believed that the world was created in 4004 BCE as the Bible said. Because of his stature, this was accepted for many years. However, the *Veda* mentioned a mighty river, the Sarasvati. Satellite imagery in the early 1980's allowed people to see a dry river bed 5 miles across at one point. It had dried up around 1900 BCE (before the Christian Era) helping to correct the *Veda*'s dating. The *Veda* was written in Sanskrit. Sanskrit had the same advantage as Latin did in Europe – a common old language that the religious leaders, who spoke many Indian languages, could understand.

Secondly, this ancient faith embodies major aspects of Unitarian Universalist belief! Linda Johnsen, with an MA in Eastern Studies, says, "Everyone in the universe is interconnected in a vast network of consciousness called Mahat – 'The Great One'". The *Veda* consistently portrays all the different gods as ultimately just different faces of one supreme being. Sir Aurobindo said, "One central idea of Vedic religion [is] the idea of the one being, with the gods expressing innumerable names and forms, the many sidedness of his unity."

"Though His light extends in every direction, Surya, the sun, is only one. That one Being has become all this. All this is only One." *Rig Veda* 8:10 1-2

"They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varunda, Agni. They call Him Garutman. They call Him Yama and Matarishvan. There is one god: he is known by many names." *Rig Veda* 1:164.46

From this last quote from the *Rig Veda* you see the tolerance of other religious faiths that Hinduism has promoted for thousands of years – universalism. However, they have less compassion for the Muslims after the Muslims killed so many of them, and destroyed hundreds of temples, especially in the north of India.

Now let us look more closely at the faith of 860 million people – 1/6 of the world's population. At 6,000 years ago, thousands of years before the Ten Commandments, comes the third hidden thing: the ten **commitments**. "The ultimate goal of the Hindu spirituality is liberation from the wheel of rebirth, but while we're still here:

- (1) Do not harm anyone
- (2) Do not lie
- (3) Do not steal
- (4) Do not overindulge
- (5) Do not be greedy
- (6) Cleanse yourself
- (7) Be content
- (8) Discipline yourself
- (9) Study
- (10) Surrender to God

These ten sound like the ten commandments except the last one, which sounds almost Muslim, so let me be more precise on that one. **In the *Bhagavad Gita*, surrender is "perform your duty without any expectation of reward. Do what you have to do because it is the right thing to do. Not because there is something you want out of it."** Fulfilling our dharma, one's role in life, we do our best --and then it is up to the universe – we are free. We should also notice that in the ten commitments we do not have any jealous tribal god requiring that one worship only him.

The fourth amazing hidden thing is that this ancient religion had mastered logic and the atomic theory a millennium before the Greeks. They had the idea that the universe started from one small spot several millennia before the Big Bang theory was presented. Their ideas fit well with modern quantum mechanics. (For further details see my previous service on “Buddhism and the Atom” or the works of Deepak Chopra.)

Let us look at their basic beliefs, especially how similar they are to “respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part.” The gospel of *Sri Ramakrishna* states their beliefs involve “Reincarnation. Karma. An immortal soul. An infinite ocean of divine energy that underlies the universe we perceive with our senses. And an inner universe of consciousness through which we connect with the whole”. Hindus believe that the goal should be exploring ourselves. The goal of spiritual practices is to reunite our awareness with the infinite.

At its core Hinduism asks one to explore the very depth of your own soul yourself. “All Hindu spiritual practices are designed with the ultimate goal of helping us find the ‘pearl of great price’ that lies buried in our mind encrusted with the mud of generally petty run-of-the-mill thoughts. That gem is the pure, undying awareness that illuminated our lives.”

“There are some especially pure souls who have obtained self realization, establishing their awareness permanently in their Inner Self,” writes the Hindu Adept (*that is like a guru*) Shankaracharya. “They bring blessings to all humanity, coming like the spring. They have crossed the ocean of birth and death, yet selflessly remain here among us and help others to cross, too. It is the very nature of these great men and women to help others.” They are the Buddhas.

Selflessness and sacrifice was given in the following example in the *Veda* - in the beginning of time Prajapate, the Supreme Being, performed the first act of karma. He sacrificed himself to create us, splitting his consciousness into an infinite number of souls.

A fifth hidden factor was the early practice of psychosomatic medicine. Charaka Sanhita about 1 CE, working on ideas from thousands of years before, recognized this and wrote down that happiness is the cause of health. Thousands of years ago Seashrictra, a plastic surgeon, was working with prostheses and reconstructing missing parts of the body.

“Nirguna Brahman, the Supreme Reality in Hinduism, transcends gender. But when the Divine Being takes form, it assumes both male and female attributes.” The forms are to help those having difficulty with the abstraction of its oneness. However, we should note the gender equality way back when.

So to briefly review: To our astonishment, 6000 years ago there were UU ideas, an ancient social contract on how to live, not too different from our own, but without a jealous god, logic and atomic theory, psychosomatic medicine, and with women treated better.