

# The Hindu Monotheist

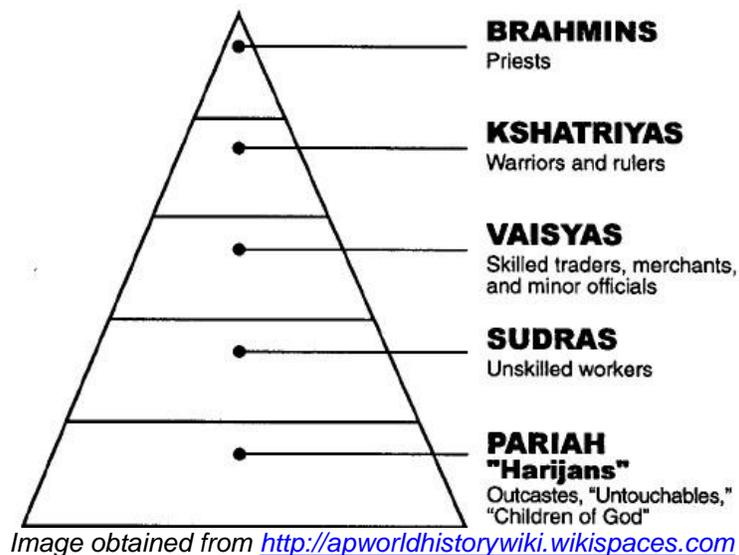
By Fr. Thom Pryor

We of the western world see what we interpret as a pantheon of gods, such as are represented in the Hindu faith, and assume that they are worshipped as they are portrayed; Individual characters in a complex religious play. We are mistaken on this account.

We Christians have our own triumvirate within the church, that of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We recognize that these are not separate and unique entities, but aspects of the one true and ineffable deity. As we of Masonry have discovered, each of the great pantheons of the ancient world, Egypt, Greece, Rome, etc. taught the unity of deity within the highest echelons of their religious establishments. The so called Mystery Schools, taught the initiate that deity is unknowable by our feeble corporeal minds. They taught that the pantheons of the masses were avatars (*ie. incarnations, embodiments, or manifestations*) of some aspect of the one true god. Yet, many today still look at Hinduism as the last great pantheistic tradition.

The Caste structure of the ancient Hindi was a system of social stratification that divided the population into five groups. At the bottom of society where the Pariah, those that we in Western society have come to know as the Untouchables. They did the work that others would not, that of handling the dead and other filthy and unwholesome activities. You will recognize that the Anglicized word Pariah, meaning outcast, or out CASTE, is derived from the Sanskrit word Paraiya, which carries a second meaning, that of "Children of God". This illustrates the Hindi view of what the western world has termed "the unwashed masses".

The next caste was the Sudras, or unskilled workers, such as farmers, weavers, and other trades people. The Vaisyas were the skilled craftsmen, jewelers, stone masons, and bureaucrats. The Kshatriyas were the ruling caste. And at the 'top' of this social hierarchy were the Brahmins, or priestly caste. In the illustration provided below, you will note that the pyramid shape is used to reflect a rough distribution of the various caste by population ratio. This corresponds to the estimated population ratio within the ancient society. As a side note, most Indians today, at least publically, denounce the caste system, though evidence suggests that violence toward previously acknowledged Untouchables has grown in the past ten years, that it is still an active part of the social consciousness.



The Brahmins are analogous to the initiated of the ancient mystery schools. The masses were encouraged to pay homage to the lower deities, such as Ganesh, the remover of obstacles, or Shiva, the destroyer. The masses were concerned with their everyday lives and interacted with

the 'gods' that would have the greatest impact on their daily achievements. You will see the clear echo of the mindset of the ancient worlds of Egypt and Greece, etc. On the other hand the Brahmins were responsible for worshiping Brahma, the Creator. Today, Brahma is the least worshipped of all the deity images of Hindu.

The Trimurti, a Sanskrit word meaning 'three forms', is a concept analogous to the Christian Trinity. The three principle avatars of deity, Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer or transformer, are referred to as the Great Trinity and are often depicted as an asexual body with three heads. Once again, underscoring the unity of deity while giving the masses a more comprehensible image to focus their devotions.

The Swami Radhanandaji, a hindu leader and teacher from Canada is quoted as saying the following:

*As the **Gita** says "The one who sees me everywhere and everything in me is wise."*

*In reality Hinduism is monotheistic. As it says, it is only one god who has manifested and taken many forms like one body with many different parts. Each part plays its own role though it is part of one Supreme Being. All the little Gods in Hinduism are representations of one Supreme God.*

*In short, Hinduism is monotheistic, with one Supreme Being. One cannot really describe this Supreme Being because it has no form, it is beyond time, space, and causation and cannot be speech. God is neither male nor female, or is both and beyond.*

*Man has to see one in many and many in one, i.e. many forms supported by one who has taken many forms. All the waters come from one ocean, whether it is river, pond, or lake. Similarly God is like an ocean and the outlets are small manifestations.*

*Citation from <http://www.gitananda.org>*

The quotation from the Gita, cited above, translates more accurately as "He who sees me everywhere and sees everything in me, to him, I am not lost, nor is he lost to me". This quote is attributed to Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu. He is often portrayed as a beautiful child giving directions to a stranger. This seems to me a particularly interesting image because we in the west often refer to wisdom 'out of the mouths of babes'. Krishna is said to guide us, or entice us, to the path of the gods.

The commonality of these concepts with those of Christianity is not coincidental. The ancient Aryans understood at the very core of their faith that the deity is ineffable, unknowable, and inconceivable to the human mind. Using avatars of the various aspects of deity aids the initiate in comprehending the messages of love, life, compassion, and truth by connecting their own experiences to the great lessons taught in the Bhagavad Gita, the equivalent of our Old Testament, and the Mahabharata, a compendium of allegorical lessons similar to the Jewish Talmud used to teach the laws of existence and how to live a fulfilling life at peace with the deity in all his forms.

Clearly, the knowledge and beliefs of the Aryans did not just move west, but has encompassed the globe. There is no place on earth where the Creator of the Universe cannot be found wearing one face or another to teach us the law of love.

Respectfully Submitted.