

Community Circles

March 17, 2021

Hold the Center, with Rev. Melanie Eyre



Aired 3/14/2021 – [Watch on YouTube](#) (high-speed available)

*As the same fire assumes different shapes
When it consumes objects differing in shape,
So does the one Self take the shape
Of every creature in which he is present.*

~ Katha Upanishad

This Sunday we explored the wisdom and beauty of the Hindu Upanishads, ancient scriptures written between 700 and 200 BCE that convey a message of peace and enlightenment that is so timely today.

As we know, the term Hinduism is a descriptor given by the British to identify a range of religious traditions in the Indian subcontinent, not simply one faith tradition. These traditions are more generally known by practitioners as Sanatana Dharma, or the eternal duty, and they represent a rich range of beliefs and practices.

The authors of the Upanishads were among the first sages to turn away from ritual practice to explore the world of inner consciousness. Their leap of understanding was extraordinary, and it's a journey we continue today.

These scriptures teach us that we are more than we think – that there is a unity underlying all things, the Self, and it is the essence of us, as well. We are more than this problem, this body, even this life. Absolute reality is Brahman, the essence of all that is, and we are that as well. Our individual bodies, all the multiplicity we see, are simply manifestations of the One. Our awakening to this truth leads us to peace, and to joy.

Is this an idea that is useful to you? If so, how? Do you agree that it is true? How does this notion contrast with ideas of God and of yourself that you may have learned as a child? How do you take this idea beyond cognition and into deep knowing?

What other faith traditions in your experience give this same message? What does that tell you?

This idea, that there is one Unity and we are manifestations of it, can be seen as theoretical and not much more. It may even, in your view, be so abstract as to have no practical meaning in our lives. *Does it? What are the real world repercussions of this idea? If you believe it to be true, how does it show up in your life? What in your experience, if anything, leads you to believe it may be true?*