

Ancient man abstracted from the stars the patterns of animals, men, and gods, and thereafter was unable to look at the sky without seeing such entities in it. Modern man knows that what is really behind this view is an immeasurable universe of stars, galaxies, galaxies of galaxies, etc., and that each person, having a particular place in this universe, obtains a certain perspective on it, which is what is seen in the night sky. Such a man does not see animals, gods, etc., in the sky, but he sees an immense universe there. But even the view of modern science is probably only true in a certain domain. So future man may form a very different notion of the invariant totality that is behind our view of the night sky, in which present notions will perhaps be seen as a simplification, approximation, and limiting case, but actually very far from being completely true.

-- David Bohm, physicist

Vedic religion in general revolved around the ideas that the wondrous marvels and powers of nature, the diverse personalities and behavior of the many gods and goddesses who gave form to and enlivened the world, the composition and dynamics of the human community, and the structure and destiny of the individual person are all somehow linked to one another through a transcendent universal order and harmony of being; that the power of this hidden principle could be harnessed and expressed in effective language; that, because of the interconnectedness of all being, actions performed in any one of such realms therefore affect the status of all others; and that by inwardly knowing the nature and structure of that timeless unifying principle one might thereby free one's spirit from the vicissitudes of life and the constraints of death.

-- William Mahoney, western Vedic scholar, practitioner of Siddha yoga

SANSKRIT TERMS: BEWARE! YOU MAY BE TESTED ON THESE!

VEDA: knowledge

RITA: cosmic order

PURUSHA: literally "man"; primeval cosmic man

RISHI: sage, wise person

YAJNA: Vedic fire ritual

MANTRA: efficacious sacred utterance

BRAHMAN: foundational cosmic utterance; underlying matrix of reality

MAYA: creative power