

ANCIENT BRITAIN

AN INDO-EUROPEAN HERITAGE

BY: YADUVENDU DAS

I've been studying the parallels between the ancient religion of Britain and Hinduism for many years and have made some interesting discoveries.

Most people are unaware that there are any cultural links between Britain and India and that the two (along with many other ancient civilisations) actually share a religious heritage, which can be traced back thousands of years.

Known as Hinduism in India and Druidism in Britain – neither were the original names of the traditions. We understand that the religion of India had no name apart from dharma, which roughly translates as duty. It also has no founder, no religious leader and no official headquarters.

The religion of India is known as Vedic because it is based upon the codes of the Vedas, but Veda simply means knowledge. All forms of knowledge are therefore Veda and one thing that the Brahmins of India and the Druids of Britain had in common was that they had sole responsibility for education in their respective societies and not only gave spiritual instructions, but also taught sciences such as mathematics, astronomy and engineering, as well as all arts and crafts.



Anyone who learnt a trade, be it metallurgy, cloth-making or carpentry were taught by the priestly class, who had many other traits in common. For example, both were of the same general appearance: they shaved their heads leaving a single lock of hair which hung down from the crown of their heads; they wore cotton robes and went barefoot inside the temple and the senior priests of both traditions carried a staff.

Brahmins and Druids were both vegetarian, taught the transmigration of the soul and handed their spiritual

knowledge down to initiated disciples by word of mouth. Both were the most revered members of their respective societies higher in status than kings. In Britain they were called 'gods on earth' and in India they were known as bhudevas, which means exactly that in Sanskrit.

Dudley Wright says in his book 'Druidism – The Ancient Faith of Britain (1927)', that a disciples education was not considered complete until he had committed to memory 20,000 verses and Indian scholar Dr. Subash Kak of Louisiana University writes in an article called 'The Church and the Temple' that the verse count of the Vedas is 20,358.



Both Brahmins and Druids divided their societies into four social and four spiritual orders (Varnashrama) they also performed ceremonial fire sacrifice calling the sacred fire Agni. Both were the lawmakers and magistrates of their respective societies. Both acted as advisers to their kings both received a maintenance and both were forbidden to engage in manual labour.

We also find many places around Britain which had Sanskrit names such as Mona the ancient name of Anglesey (meaning wisdom), Bala in North Wales, Ynys Y Manu (the Isle of Man) and Deva – the ancient name for Chester, to mention but a few.

There are dozens of such similarities but one of the most significant is that both priesthoods made the mark of the Swastika symbol. This must be considered as evidence of a Vedic past for the Swastika symbol has a very specific design and an equally specific meaning, which graphically demonstrates that the two ancient cultures were actually one unified system.

The word Swastika is derived from the Sanskrit syllables Su-vasti-ka, which might be translated as SU – good, VA – everywhere, ASTI – be, KA – happiness. In other words, the Swastika is a sacred symbol bestowing good fortune and happiness from all sides.

Sanjiv R. Malkan Phd. writes in his 'Vedanta Letters' that the Swastika is one of many symbols of Vishnu and is also the most ancient symbol of prosperity and good fortune in the world.

Thus, the four arms of the Swastika represent the four arms of Vishnu and His dominion over the four directions. The sign is associated with gods like Surya, Agni and Ganesh because of their affinity to Vishnu as expansions of the Purusha.

It is perhaps the best known of all Hindu symbols and like Hinduism its beginnings go so far back in history that its origins cannot be traced. In India, it is found in temples, on Hindu deities, above the doors of homes, on food stalls, in folk-art and on many household items.



Remarkably, this sacred symbol of Vishnu is to be found not only in India but on almost every continent of the world including Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Egypt, Italy, Turkey, Crete, Scandinavia, Africa, China, Japan, Russia and North and South America.

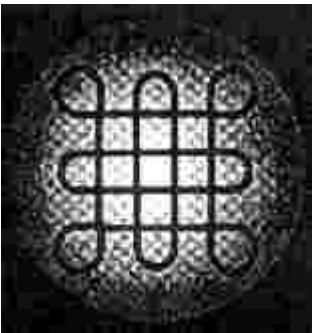
The Swastika occurs sixty times on an ancient British funeral urn found in Norfolk. It is found on 'Stone Age' archaeology such as pots and spinning whirls, as well as on rock drawings such as the one at Ilkley in Yorkshire, which dates back many thousands of years.

We therefore, find exact correlations and can easily deduce from this that the ancient culture of Britain was not half as primitive as the Roman invaders would have us believe – not only based upon the same Vedic codes as Indian society, but clearly centred on the worship of Vishnu.

A further indication of this is found in the order of the gods. In Hinduism, there is one Supreme God (Purusha), three principle gods (tri-murti) representing creation, annihilation and destruction and a pantheon of over three hundred minor gods (devas) who are superintendents in charge of the various functions of nature.

In Druidism, there was one Supreme God (Hu), three blessed gods (Tri-Menwydigion) representing creation, maintenance and destruction and the same pantheon of over 300 minor divinities.

So close are these parallels deemed to be that the Encyclopaedia Britannica.com includes the following remarks under the heading of Druid:



Many scholars believe that the Hindu Brahman in the east and the Celtic Druid in the west were lateral survivals of an ancient Indo-European priesthood'.

French author Jean Markale also states in her book "The Druids – Celtic Priests of Nature":

In the opinion of all religious historians the Druids were the Celtic equivalent of the Brahmanas of India.'

While author Peter Berresford Ellis, who is the author of many works on ancient Britain history writes in his book "The Druids" 1994:

The Indo-European hypothesis is important to any study of the Celts and is one to which we must return as a means of explaining the extraordinary parallels and similarities between Celtic and Hindu cultures, occurring in the areas of language, law, religious attitudes, mythology, music and caste'.

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Stardust

By: Ananta Shakti Das

Huge electron telescopes penetrate the night sky. Astronomers patiently observe the celestial spheres as they move relentlessly forward in their fixed orbits marking the course of time. The heavens also attract the attention of exploitative politicians and ambitious scientists who conspire to blast technological probes into outer space. Inspired by this, movie moguls fuel the crippled imagination of the masses with celluloid fantasies of starship voyages into unknown and alien-infested galaxies. Conveniently such entertaining enterprises take the sting out of the huge tax revenues expended on Government space programs.

Yet long ago, hidden far from the light of the sky and deep in the secret recesses of the earth, Mother Bhumi worked her ancient alchemy. Elements stirred and geological juices crystallized as she forged magnificent arrays of rubies, emeralds and rare gemstones that when cut and polished resembled the stars themselves in eye-dazzling splendor. In those Aryan days Mother Earth freely spurned forth her abundant treasures in mountain caves and at the roots of fortunate trees. Her gems had great power then, but now, in this dark iron age, beasts in human guise ravage the defenseless planet for no good purpose so she withholds her bounty and the jewels prysed from her body by brute force do not yield the same benedictions as before.

And so the bewildered world pre-occupies itself with amassing riches and vainly seeks its future in the stars – but what is the use, for on the giddy roller-coaster of Samsara, cruel death terminates man's best laid plans and steals his wealth so easily. Yet conversely, for the Vaishnavas, death is a dear friend who opens the door to the continuance of devotional service that is eternal and joyfully performed. In the pursuit of bhakti, devotees also contemplate the sky and scoop up treasure but in a different way and for a different purpose.

Devotees, like buttercups, raise their bright faces to the sky and see Krishna's brilliant eye, the sun, gazing down benedicting the world with life, light and sight. They consider how Krishna's night eye, the moon, not only appears as a great reservoir of luminous nectar but also gives inspiration to poets and lovers while nourishing the vegetation with his soothing rays.

Devotees appreciate how Visnuloka, the transcendental Pole Star, radiates auspiciousness due to the presence of the all-powerful soul of the universe, Lord Visnu, Who can at will minimize, counteract and override any malefic influences exerted by other planets upon his devotees.

Taking shelter of the Lord through devotional service, devotees care little for their personal destinies for His merciful hand guides them towards the self-illuminated planets way up in the Vaikuntha sky.

Through the eyes of devotional service this world becomes chintamani as it provides unlimited opportunities for devotees to gently prise out effulgent souls trapped in Maya's coalmine of forgetfulness. Devotees dive deep into the ocean of bhakti and gather so many priceless pearls of realization. They enter deep into the purports of Srimad Bhagavatam and extract wonderful meanings to enhance their days. They explore the caverns of their own hearts and with the torchlight of knowledge directed by the spiritual master discover therein the ultimate treasure, the beautiful jewel-like Supreme Personality of Godhead, Shri Rasaraja Nilamani whose spiritual form shines with great splendor. He is the ultimate refuge of all yogis. All things considered between heaven and earth, it must be said that Lord Krishna is both the brightest star in the firmament and the best of gems. Who but an unfortunate soul would not worship Him and thankfully glorify His holy names –

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama,
Rama Rama Hare Hare**