

Reflections

Deerfield Beach High School, Deerfield Beach, Fla.

Hinduism is the world's oldest religion. It is not a religion that was created by a person, but its origins are unique and like no other. Also, it was developed over a period of several centuries through divine revelations by God to hundreds of enlightened saints, so it does not have one founder and philosophy, but many. It is often referred to as a family of religions because of its many deities, sacred texts, philosophies and spiritual leaders.

It is more than a religion; it is as way of life, and all of its aspects can be seen in the secular, cultural and spiritual lives of the Hindus. It is alive and vibrant today in millions of homes and mandirs (temples), and through festivals, rituals, and everlasting traditions. The essence lies in its core beliefs: it advocates the belief in one supreme God called Bhagwan. Hindus are not polytheistic. It is a monotheistic, or henotheistic to be exact and one believes and worships one supreme God, without denying the existence of other deities or forms of the supreme God. The fundamentals of Hinduism consist of Avtarvad, atma, karma, reincarnation, idol worship, non violence. Hinduism believes in one supreme God, a fact that has been confused so many times.

In Hinduism, god is believed, by some, to have a personal form; and by others, not to have a form. It is believed that there are 24 incarnations of god who have come down on earth to grant redemption. There are four characteristics of God that all Hindus believe in: supreme, all doer, having a divine form, and being ever present in the form of a God, realized guru. The reason that God takes a form on earth is not because he cannot control from heaven, but it is to fulfill the devotion and desires of devotees. One of the most basic concepts in all religions is the concept of the soul. In Hinduism, the main concept is liberation through self-realization of the soul.

One of the core concepts of Hinduism is Karma which means action or deed. No one can remain without doing karmas for even a moment. Any physical, mental or emotional action is called karma. For every action there is a resultant reaction, and this is karma, or the universal law of cause and effect. Hinduism believes that karma is responsible for good and bad phenomena in a personal life and responsible for the disparities apparent in human life. Nothing in our world is merely accidental or a chance happening. Possibly the most confusing of all Hindu concepts is the concept of re-incarnation.

Hinduism teaches that the soul is intrinsically pure, but because of things such as ego, lust, jealousy, greed and selfishness, the soul accumulates karmas, and these cause the person to gain a life in the cycle of life and death. All of the sects under Hinduism emphasize the need for an ethical life as a prerequisite to spiritual realization. Right speech, right thought and right action are emphasized by all, advocating principals of truth, compassion, non-violence, celibacy, not stealing and not having greed. Our religion is a holist view with a universal outlook, it is not only a religion, but a way of life, and this is what makes Hinduism unparalleled.



Samip Doshi

Creation



Jhanile' Smith

Evolution

This complex world is full of questions that will remain unanswered for ages to come. Many people will configure their minds to believe in someone or something that hasn't been 'seen' in order to answer these questions.

"The Creation Theory" is a great story to hear when you're an adolescent, but at some point there comes a time when "The Creation Theory" becomes just like the Easter Bunny and Kris Kringle; both legends that have travelled from generation to generation. I'm not belittling religion at all; I think it's a wonderful thing if it gives you something to believe in. But for me, the story of creation just doesn't seem applicable to reality. How could the Earth possibly have been created in seven days? We all know Rome wasn't built in a day, so how could this Earth, full of diverse species, various landforms, different atmospheric compositions and temperatures have been?

Evolution is the most logical explanation for the way the world functions. The Earth has gone through several stages that started with the Precambrian times, which was approximately 4,600 million years ago. During this era, according to Concepts of Evolution in Biology Connections and Concepts, it has been determined that the concentration of atmospheric oxygen began to increase and the oldest fossils of cells and rocks known to Earth's surface were found. It has been scientifically proven that humans didn't roam this Earth until the Cenozoic Era, which is post the Paleozoic and Mesozoic Era (keep in mind that each Era lasted more than day. It's approximately hundreds of millions of years).

Plus, the origin of microbiological life forms is known as prokaryotes and protists. There are also animals that have lived on this planet for ages that weren't mentioned as part of the seven day plan. For example, the most commonly known: dinosaurs. Also, scientists have been able to determine that evolution has occurred through natural selection, genetic drift and gene flow. Even though changes in species occur in spurts and not gradually through time, it is still logical that the earth was created through evolution.

The Big Bang Theory may be the only reliable solution to some of the mysteries that leave us pondering major life questions in the middle of the night. It's evident that there are still many questions that will remain unanswered, but the best way to even draw some kind of conclusion would require an understanding of evolution; since "The Creation Theory" is only a story and has been proven scientifically false.

Theme: Absolutely

This yearbook staff's "Absolutely Uncensored" section is a debate masterpiece, made even more special because non-yearbook staff students wrote the stories. The editor introduces the section (previous spread) in a clear, yet passionate way. The design and clever titles make these pages sing. The choice of black and white photography lends gravity to the controversial topics; the clean, unfussy typography pays respect to the students' differing opinions.