

Hinduism, Parts 1 & 2: Introduction, The Vedas and Sacrifice

Hinduism, Part 1

(I) Introduction

- sanātana dharma (“eternal” dharma: timeless)
- orthopraxis in orientation

(II) Prehistoric Indian Religion (ca. 2,500-1,500 BCE)

- Harappan (Indus Valley) Civilization

Hinduism, Part 2

(III) Vedic Religion: the Aryans and the Veda (ca. 1500-500 BCE)

2 senses of the term “Veda”: broad (4 collections) and narrow (4 books)

1. Saṃhitās =	R̥g (Rig)	Yajur	Sāma	Atharva
Priests =	(hotṛ)	(udgaṛ)	(adhvaryu)	(Brahman)
2. Brāhmaṇas				
3. Āraṇyakas				
4. Upaniṣads				

characteristics of the Vedas: - satyā (“truth”)
- vāc (“speech”)
- sanātana (“eternal”)
- śruti (“heard”) vs. smṛti (“remembered”)
- apauruṣeya (“non-human origin”)

transmission by ṛṣis (mythical “seers”)

preservation of the Veda: (1) oral transmission through recitation
(2) use in Vedic liturgy/ritual

Vedic Ritual: the Sacrifice (yajña) and the Sacrificial Meal

- (1) as “business deal”
 - principle of “do ut des”
 - fire (Agni)
 - 2 kinds of fire ritual: śrauta (solemn) and grhya (domestic/life cycle)
- (2) as “world maintenance”
 - tapas (heat)
 - Puṛusa Sūkta (“Hymn of the Man,” in R̥g Veda 10:90)