

HINDUISM: PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

INDIC (1700-3500 BCE)

- Early societies along the Indus river
- Archaeological evidence for:
 - Yoga/meditation
 - Lingams
 - Swastikas

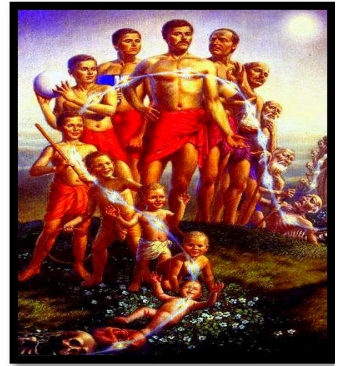


VEDIC (1700-500 BCE)

- Aryan religion based on the Vedas (scriptures)
- Ritualistic
 - Fire Sacrifice rituals that seek practical goods
- Caste System
 - Priests, Rulers/Warriors, Merchants, Labourers
 - Some are below the caste system (outcastes)

UPANISHADS (c. 500 BCE)

- Philosophical writings by sramanas (strivers) who reject caste and vedic sacrifices
 - Create new views of divinity, self, world and life
 - Spiritual experimenters (e.g. fasting, meditation, substances)
- All is Brahman (sacred cows, rivers, etc.)
 - Atman (the self) is Brahman
- Moral karma, reincarnation, moksha (liberation)



BHAKTI (c. 500 CE)

- Most popular of three paths (yogas) to god: karma (action), jnana (wisdom), bhakti (heartfelt devotion)
- Great temples built
- Murtis (statues) house divinity
 - Visual scriptures (act as teaching aids)
- Emphasis on darshan (to see and be seen by the gods)
 - Home altars
- Key deities: Vishnu, Shiva, Goddess, Krishna, Ganesh

WESTERN INFLUENCE (c. 1800s CE)

- Protestant influence: privileges monotheism, books & beliefs (over polytheism, images, and practices)
- British schools and census emphasize "Hindu" category
 - Must define "Hindu" → leads to orthodoxy
- British bring nationalism
 - Need national identity, transcending family or caste identity
 - Some suggest India is "Hindu," thus excluding Muslims (religious nationalism)

