



Hindu Awareness Week
Arise. Awake.



NATIONAL HINDU
STUDENTS' FORUM (UK)

VEDAS

Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda

- The Vedas are the oldest texts of Hindu literature, stemming from an oral tradition believed to go back to at least 1500 BC. Written down in Vedic Sanskrit, an early form of Sanskrit, around 600 BC, the forms we have originate from texts written around 300 BC.
- There were originally three Vedas: the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, and Yajur Veda, which constituted "threefold knowledge" (trayi vidya), with the fourth Veda, the Atharva Veda, added during the Vedic period.
- Veda means knowledge.
- Legend has it that the Vedas were actually composed at the beginning of Creation, but that this "Divine Revelation" was gradually polluted by Man. Some people even suggest that all human knowledge is present in the Vedas, at least in symbolic form. Regardless, the Vedas remain the most sacred of Hindu texts, and provide the foundation for Hindu religion.
- It has been actually suggested that the Vedas were originally connected to the oral tradition of the Harappan civilisation of the Indus Valley.
- The theology of the Vedas was further developed in the Upanishads, which became regarded as essential summaries of all the wisdom of the Vedas themselves.
- **Rig Veda** - means the Veda of Adoration and contains verses adoring or adulating deities. But it also dealt with other subjects such as; wedding procedure, the folly of gambling etc. It contains a sense of intimate communion between Nature and the Rishis (visionaries). The Rig Veda is the oldest, largest and most important of the four Vedas, containing over 10,000 verses.
- **Yajur Veda** - is the Veda of sacrificial formulas consisting of prose mantras. Yajur Veda refers to acts of worship such as oblations made into Agni (fire), each mantra that is recited is also accompanied by an action within the sacrifice. There are two major renditions of this Veda known as the Krishna (black) and Shukla (white).
- **Sama Veda**- is the Veda of chants or knowledge of melodies, and the name is derived from the term *Saman* which in Sanskrit means a metre or song of praise. The hymns from the Sama Veda are supposed to be sung according to certain fixed melodies/metres.
- **Atharva Veda** – this is the Veda associated with the name of the ancient poet Atharvan. Many of the hymns found in the Atharva Veda glorify the curative powers of herbs and waters, and they also contain hymns praising Prithvi (Mother Earth).
- Vedas are the foundation of all Hindu traditions. They cannot be dated (since are inherently an oral tradition) and are vast both in number and knowledge.