


INDIAN MYTHOLOGY & HISTORY

VEDIC ERA

TIMELINE

| | -3000 BCE | -2500 BCE | -2000 BCE | -1500 BCE | -1000 BCE | -500 BCE | 0 CE | 500 CE | 1000 CE | 1500 CE | 2000 CE |
|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|--|-----------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| | 5000 ya | 4500 ya | 4000 ya | 3500 ya | 3000 ya | 2500 ya | 2000 ya | 1500 ya | 1000 ya | 500 ya | now |
| India | Indus Valley Civilization | | |  Gangetic Valley Vedic Civilization | | | Jainism/ Buddhism / Mouryas | Satavahans/ Sakas/ Hunas | Guptas/ Adi Sankara | Muslim Invasion | Mughals/ Marathas/ British/ Independent India |
| Mesopotamia | Mesopotamian | | | | | | Parthian | Romans | Islamic | | |
| Egypt | Egyptian | | | | | Greek | Byzantine | | Islamic | | |
| Europe | | Greek | | | | | Greeks / Romans | Romans | Byzantine / Romans / Dark Ages | | Renaissance / Colonization / Industrial Revolution / World Wars |
| Persia | | Ancient Persian | | | | Persian | | | Islamic | | |
| China | | | Ancient China | | | Imperial China | | | | | Ming, Qing, Communists |
| Americas | | Mayan | | | | Aztecs & Incas | | | | | Europeans |

BRONZE AGE

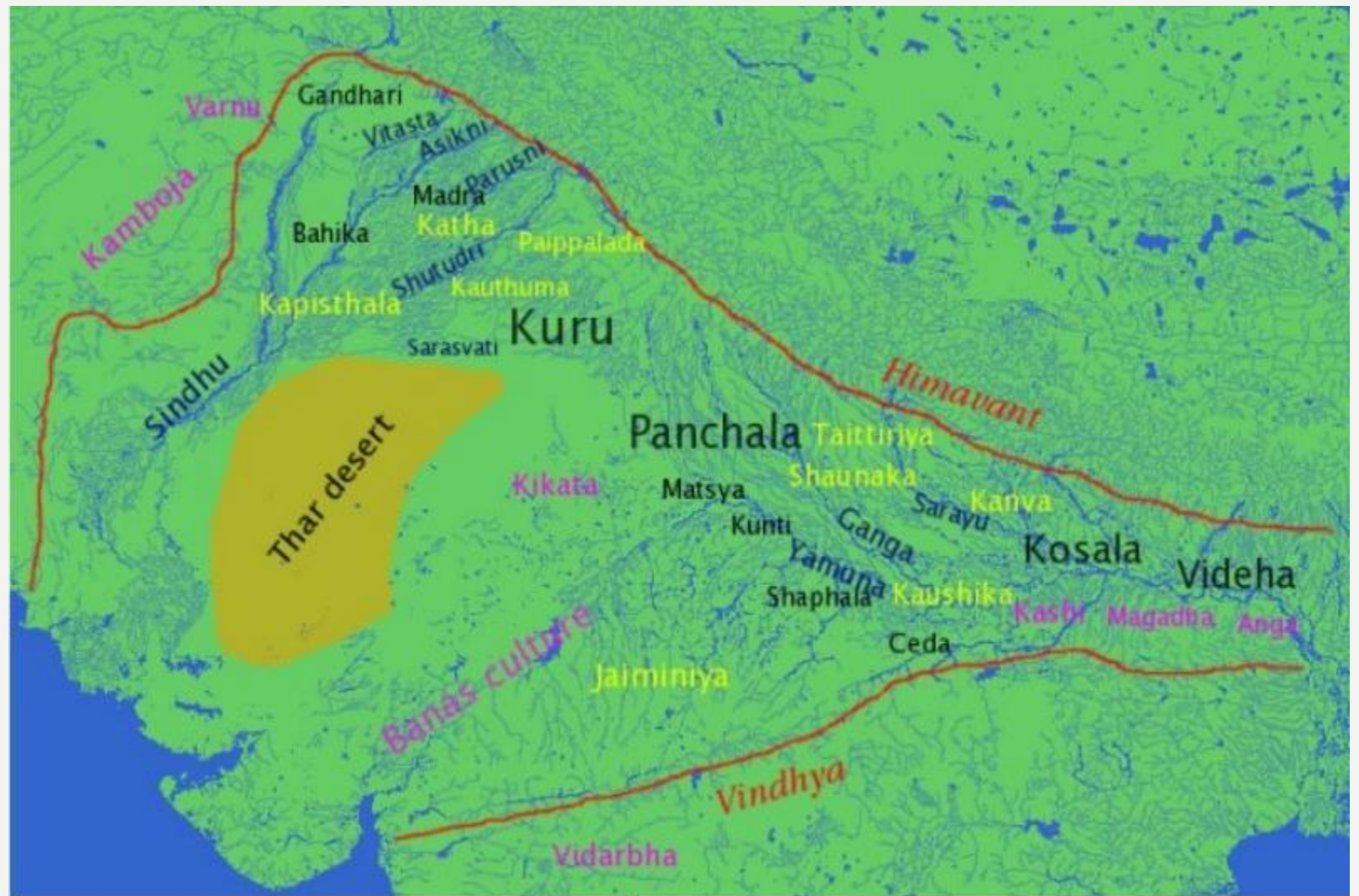
IRON AGE

LOCATION OF INDUS VALLEY



ORIGINS

- Theories
 - Migrated from Caspian Sea
 - Northern Himalayas
 - Indus Valley Civilization
- Location of Settlement
 - Current Punjab area (Sapta Sindhu)
 - Ganga Yamuna Doab

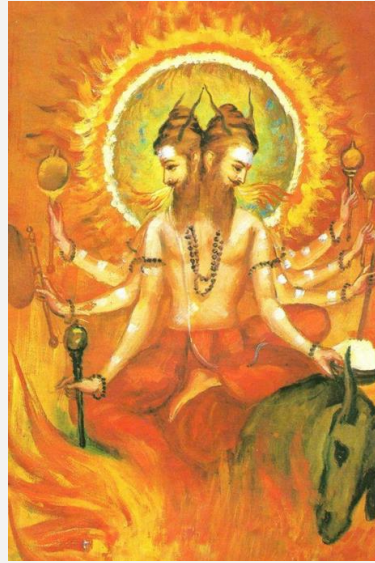


RELIGION

Nature Worshipers with elaborate chanting of hymns



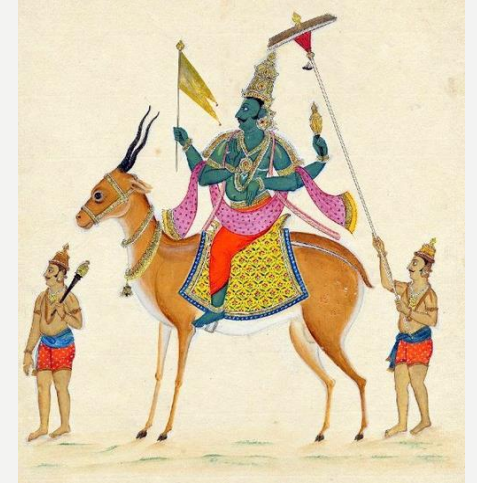
Indra – King of all Devtas – thunderstorms



Surya – Sun



Agni – Fire



Vayu – Air



Varuna - Water



Yama - Death



Soma- Drink



Yagya - Sacrifice

ECONOMY

- Agriculture
- Hunting
- Spinning & Weaving
- Pottery
- Carpentry
- Metal Work
- Leather Work
- Iron work
 - Forest cleaned by iron tools
 - Used as weapons
 - Led to urbanization

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Four levels of political structure:

- Kula – Family
- Gram – The Village
- Vish – Commoners
- Jana or Rashtra – The kingdom or tribe

VEDIC CONCEPTS

STAGES OF LIFE (ASHRAMS)

- Brahmacharya – At Gurukul – teachers home
- Grihastha – Householder
- Vanprastha - Retired
- Sanyasa – Renunciation

AIM OF LIFE

- Dharma – Duty, Religion, Conduct
- Artha – To earn a living
- Kama – To enjoy life
- Moksha – To release oneself from cycle of life

VEDIC LITERATURE - VEDAS

Veda – Literally means knowledge

- Considered to be Shruti (What is heard from God) i.e. divine
- 4 vedas
 - Rig Veda –
 - Knowledge of the Hymns of Praise”, for recitation.
 - praise of dieties, origin questions, virtues such as *Dana*
 - 1028 hymns & 10600 verses
 - Sama Veda –
 - “Knowledge of the Melodies”, for chanting. Rearrangement of Rig Veda in a melodic way
 - Yajur Veda
 - “Knowledge of the Sacrificial formulas”, for liturgy – prose on how to conduct rituals
 - Atharva Veda
 - “Knowledge of the Magic formulas”, named after a kind of group of priests - folklorish

[Nasadiya Sukta](#) (Hymn of non-Eternity): Who really knows?

Who can here proclaim it?
Whence, whence this creation sprang?

Gods came later, after the creation of this universe.

Who then knows whence it has arisen?

Whether God's will created it, or whether He was mute;
Only He who is its overseer in highest heaven knows,

He only knows, or perhaps He does not know.

—[Rig Veda](#) 10.129.6–7^[80]

All in Sanskrit

VEDIC LITERATURE - UPANISHADS

- From here onward, all literature is considered Smriti – i.e. memory i.e. history.
- They are called Vedanta (“the conclusion of the Vedas”)
- the first “philosophical treatises” of India
- The Upanishads present a vision of an interconnected universe with a single, unifying principle behind the apparent diversity in the cosmos, any articulation of which is called BRAHMAN.
- The Upanishads teach that Brahman resides in the ATMAN (soul), the unchanging core of the human individual.
- Tat Tvam Asi – You are It; Aham Brahmasmi – I am Brahma
- Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti – Truth is one, wise call it by many names
- 13 Upanishads, about half of which are in poetry form and half in prose

VEDIC CONCEPTS - TRINITY

- Limited mention in Vedas, but starts appearing in Unanishads & Puranas

Brahma – The Creator

Vishnu – The Sustainer

Shiva – The Destroyer



SOCIAL LIFE

Early Vedic Period

- Village Based
- Caste System (Varna System) - Fluid
 - Brahmin – Academic / Priests
 - Kshatriya – Warrior
 - Vaishya – Businessmen
 - Shudra – Labor
- Entertainment
 - Music, Dancing, Chariot Racing, Gambling (Dice)
- Education for women too

Later Vedic Period

- Urbanization
- The caste system became rigid
- Women's position became weaker

VIDEO

- A video on Vedic Civilization -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NR1lz2KqM8A>

FURTHER STUDIES

<http://www.historydiscussion.net/history-of-india/vedic-civilization/vedic-civilization-and-culture-in-india-indian-history/6488>