Vēdas and Hinduism

By

Venkata R Chaganti
Vēdas and God

• Vēda means to know.
• Vēdas are given by God. (Why?)
• Because God Created the world and so He gave his knowledge in this form. (why?)
• So as to benefit all Humans and life in the Universe.
• Because God has eternal knowledge, He and only He can give us the truth about the Universe.
Vēdas and God

• How many Vēdas are there?
• 4 Vēdas and are called Rig-Vēda, Yajur-Vēda, Sāma-Vēda and Atharva-Vēda.
• Why 4? Why not one?
• God’s knowledge is in one form but the contents in the view of Humans is different. Something like energy. Energy is of different forms like Mechanical, Heat, Sound, Light etc.,
Vēdas and God

• When were Vēdas given?
  • About 1.9 billion years ago when first Humans were born.

• To whom the Vēdas were given?

• To 4 Sages. Rig-Vēda to Agni, Yajur-Veda to Vāyu, Sāma-Vēda to Sūrya and Atharva-Vēda to Angirasa.

• Why to these only?

• Because they are eligible.
How are they eligible?
Because they were the best among those who did good deeds in the past Creation. (What?)
Yes after every Creation there is a Destruction and after every Destruction there is a Creation. This Cycle has no beginning and no ending. This is the basis of Karma theory.
How many years does a Creation exist? And how many years does a Destruction exist?
4,320,000,000 years for each.
In which language were Vēdas given? Sanskrit (Why?)
Because it is not any one’s language.
What does Vēdas contain?
Knowledge of God in the form of Mantras.
Mantra means thoughts.
Mantras are given in the form of poems.
There are totally 20,349 Mantras.
Rig-Veda

- What does Rig- Vēda contain?
- Rig Vēda contains knowledge about every matter and its property that is present in the world including God.
- God is regarded as a matter.
Yajur- Vēda

- What does Yajur- Vēda contain?
- Yajur -Vēda describes every act that humans must follow. Also it describes government, dharma, yagna, getting education from Vēdas, how to win over enemies in the war, how to use agni (Fire, Electricity, Nuclear energy) and such materials in vehicles, how to live more than 300 years, medicine, mathematics, construction of buildings, what food should be taken, description of God, final rituals etcetera.
Sāma-Vēda

What does Sāma-Vēda contain?

In Sāma-Vēda mainly Upāsana (Getting Close to) of God is described.

Sāma-Vēda is sung as a song.
Atharva-Vēda

What does Atharva-Vēda contain?

There are 9 branches in this Vēda.
(1) contains medicine and surgery.
(2) contains Physical world knowledge.
(3) contains Brahma Gnana.
(4) contains knowledge about water
(5) contains knowledge about Agni
(6) contains about Brahma
(7) contains knowledge about how to increase mind and age.
(8) contains the duties of jeeva and Brahma
(9) contains knowledge about electricity, scientific activities, chemical, air, water, poison, artillery etcetera.
Upasana or Meditation
What is a Dēvatha?

- Dēvatha means divine body. Every important material like air, water etc., are considered as Dēvatha.
- Even God is one of the Dēvathas.
- Names of these Dēvathas are important.
- There are hundreds of Dēvathas names in Vēdas.
- In Vēdas there is no Idol worship.
What is the essence of Vēdas?

- To know God.
- To know what to do according to science and to know what is science.
- To know every dharma and act accordingly.
- To perform the duties righteously.
- To get salvation.
What is Vēdic peoples religion?

- Vēdic peoples religion is to do what is prescribed in Vēdas.
- Vēdic people do NOT do Idol worship.
- Then whom do the Vēdic people pray?
- According to Vēdas God is only one.

So Vēdic people pray God.
According to Vēdas Who or what is God?

- God is a matter or soul that is present inside and outside of everything in this Universe including living beings and He is more than the Universe and does not contain parts (He is a single entity).
- God is omnipotent, ubiquitous and has eternal knowledge.
- God is the creator, protector and destructor of the Universe.
- God has neither friends nor enemies. God is relative to every living being in the Universe.
- God is not bound by any materialistic world.
According to Vēdas Who or what is God?

- God is the witness for every deed we do.
- God gives punishment or reward according to our deeds.
- God has control over everything in this world.
- God has different names according to His properties. For example He is called Fire because He separates bad ideas from us and adds good ideas to our mind just as physical fire separate elements and combines them.
How do Vēdic people pray?

- Vēdic people pray God with the help of Mantras present in Vēdas.
- Vēdic people meditate on the Mantras and analyze them.
- Vēdic people try to adjust their ideas, methods and behavior according to the Mantra. This is called Praying.
- Vēdic people ask the God for what they do not have this is called Yāchana prescribed by Vēdas.
- Vēdic people do Upāsana (Being near to God) by following some rules prescribed by Vēdas.
Duties of Vēdic People

• Yagna or Homam is the most important part of the Duties of Vedic people.
• Brahmacharya, and following the four ashrams is next.
• Culture of the Vēdic people is dependent on the ashrams.
What is Yagna

- Yagna is a process by which atmosphere is purified and is the one extensively prescribed by Vēdas.
- In this process good smelling materials, herbs, gold like metals, pearls etc., are dropped in the fire while chanting the mantras.
- Chanting of the mantras is necessary because the mantras give the meaning and use of the process and material dropped in the fire.
- These materials become minute particles and reach the air particles and purify them.
Four ashrams

- Childhood and Brahmacharya. This is from the age of 5. During this age both boys and girls are suppose to join school and complete their education. During this period boys and girls are taught separately. This is called Brahmacharya-ashram. During this period the students live on charity.

- Between 25 and 48 years persons get married and live a family life and earn money for them and society. This is called Gruhast-ashram. During this period people are expected to do charity and immerse in services.
Four ashrams

- Third ashram is called Vānaprasta-ashram and starts when the married couple completes their duties towards their children. That is, a couple after giving their children proper education, should search for proper match and perform their children’s marriage. Once the duties towards their children are completed they may join Vānaprasta. During this period the couple joins the elite group of the society and learn about God and other social activities and stay together.
Four ashrams

Once one of the couple dies the other joins the fourth ashram called Sanyās-ashram by renouncing everything he or she has. During this ashram the person called Sanyāsi goes around the country and helps and advice people in need and immerses in the services of God. He or she does not stay at one place for a longer time. The living of this person is solely on charity. Finally when a person dies, the body is burnt and the ashes mixed in river.
Important Ceremonies in a human’s life of Vēdic people

- Birth function
- Naming ceremony
- Food ceremony
- Upanayana ceremony
- Graduation ceremony
- Marriage ceremony
- House warming ceremony
- Vanaprastashram
- Sanyasam
- Final ritual
- In addition to the above, Vēdic women have the following ceremonies. 1) First night after marriage
  2) Pregnancy    3) Baby Shower.
- During all of these ceremonies Yagna is performed.
Food of Vēdic people

- Only that food is prescribed by Vēdas that is prepared without harming, killing and stealing.
- All vegetables, milk, fruits, leaves, herbs and lentils are taken.
- Cow milk is considered the best food. So food prepared with cow milk is considered good for health.
Dressing of Vēdic people

- Any dress that fits the climate and covers the body appropriately is considered.
- Men and Women wear different dresses.
- All colors are appreciated.
- Mostly cotton and occasionally silk is used.
Marriage of Vēdic people

• Marriage is performed between a man and a woman. Man is definitely elder to woman.
• Woman is given the choice to select a man. And if that man agrees then marriage is performed.
• Vēedic marriages are performed along with Yagna.
• Once married the partnership lasts for a life. No divorce system existed nor it is prescribed by Vēdas.
• In most cases after marriage the bride stays with the bridegroom’s family along with the bridegroom. She gets the family name of her husband.
What is Hinduism?

- Hinduism is the recent version of Vēdic religion with a number of changes.
- Hinduism has evolved after Buddhism and Jainism.
- All the three religions have their origin in the Indian Sub-continent.
- Buddhism was started by Buddha.
- Jainism was started by Mahā-Vēra.
- Hinduism has its origin in Vēdas.
Similarities of Hinduism and Vedic religion

• Yagna is performed by both.
• Aum is the name of the God for both.
• Vēdas are the sacred texts for both.
• Marriage ceremony is similar for both.
• Both believe in Varnashramas but strictly followed by Vēdic people.
• Caste system exists in both. But in Vēdic people caste system depends on the nature of work a person does. In Hinduism caste system depends on the family the person belongs to.
Differences in Hinduism and Vēdic religion

• Vēdic religion does not allow Idol worship but Hinduism does Idol worship.
• Idols in Hinduism were made on the name of God given in the Vēdas.
• In Vēdas God was defined with hundreds of names depending on the property or work God does.
• These names were personified by Hindus and stories were made around them. On the name of these persons Idols were made and worshiped.
• Vēdic people do not eat food by killing or harming animals. Some castes in Hinduism does killing and eating of animals.
• Hinduism has been influenced by number of invasions of other religions.
THANK YOU