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Week 3: Primary Source

3.4: The Hymn to Purusha from Th Rig Veda

- 1. Purusha sacrifices himself to create the cosmos, meaning that god and creation are not separate. What are the implications of such a view?**

Purusha is referred to as the transcendent God, supreme Braham, or cosmic man, who was sacrificed by the gods to create all life and worlds from all parts of his body. There are two kinds of Purushas, the body, called the perishable (Prakriti), and the soul (Self), the imperishable. However, the supreme Purusha is beyond the Prakriti and higher than the Self. This masculine force is the source of the Universe and cosmos creation in Indian philosophy and religion. In Hinduism, the idea of God and creation are together. That is why God is everywhere in everything, making himself and the world more respected. A person, by making a sacrifice, can enter the higher worlds and achieve the liberation of itself. So with the correct knowledge of Purusha, humans can find true liberation and self-realization.

- 2. Creation of the cosmos includes creation of hierarchical social order. How might making social order part of nature appeal to those lower in that order?**

As in all religions and societies, there is always a division of opinions between the social hierarchies and classes. Normally, the ones in the lower order will be against the higher ones. They will complain about their behavior and goods because they are aware of the inequality between them. The lower class always looks forward to getting to the higher order and having what the privileged have. However, there will also be a group of them that will accept this social order. They believe in what their religion says, so they do not complain about the differences between these classes. They have to be grateful to the God that created everything by respecting this division.