

Table 1: Brāhmaṇas vs Śramaṇas (before intermixing)

	Brāhmaṇas (of the Vedic period)	Śramaṇas
Prominent period	~ 2500-500 BCE (Vedic), then Hindu synthesis (HS)	~ 500 BCE – 500 CE , then Hinduism predominates
Environmental cradle	Pastoral nomads/villagers in the Ganga-Yamuna doab. Growth of population wanted. (Later urbanization >corruption>opposition by Śramaṇas)	Hermits and wandering mendicants living under trees mainly in the lower Gangetic plains. Growth of population unwanted.
Social outlook	Householders living integrally in communities	Renunciates living isolated in <i>āśramas</i>
Focus & goal	Bhukti, pragmatic enjoyment of life's diversity & guṇas. Long life, health, wealth, male progeny for one's <i>śrāddha</i> that grants <i>svarga</i> .	Mukti, idealistic freedom from life's deception of diversity & <i>guṇas</i> . Liberation from <i>saṃsāra</i> in <i>saṃādhi</i> , merging into oneness.
Philosophy	Ritualistic polytheistic dualism (mainly)	Experimental atheistic monism (among others)
Cause of upliftment	Boons of the Gods through communal yajña	Individual śram , exertive striving/laboring
Unique ethos & concepts	Ṛta (life-positive linear cosmic order), <i>ṛni</i> , <i>satya</i> , <i>pītri-devas</i> , <i>yajña</i> , <i>dharma</i> , <i>omkāra</i> , <i>gāyatṛī</i> , <i>vāk</i> , <i>varṇas</i> , <i>svarga/nāraka</i> , <i>kula</i> (family), <i>gotra</i> , <i>soma</i>	Saṃsāra (life-negative cycle of reincarnation), <i>mokṣa</i> , <i>sādhana</i> , <i>ahimsa</i> , <i>nirguṇa</i> , <i>dhyāna</i> , <i>saṃādhi</i> , <i>bīja-mantras</i> , <i>āśrama</i> , <i>monestaries</i>
Practices	Rituals. <i>Vedas</i> recital, <i>svādhyāya</i> , bathing, fire/animal sacrifice, cremation, <i>śrāddha</i>	Sādhanas (mostly non-ritualistic). <i>Tapas</i> , <i>dhyāna</i> , <i>yoga</i> , <i>mauna</i> , <i>japa</i> and <i>arcana</i> .
Rule & patronage	Co-dependency with rulers & establishment	Anti-establishment (later accepting patronage)
Conformism	Orthodox, conformist (deemed <i>paṣu</i> or bonded/animal by some heterodox <i>Tantras</i>).	Heterodox, non-conformist (deemed <i>pāṣaṇḍa/nāstika</i> ; atheistic/non-Vedic heretics by <i>Purāṇas</i>).
Obedience, authority	Obedient to Vedas , elders, forefathers	Non-obedient, dissent, independent, maverick
Education	+/- Fixed curriculum by kula-gurus in <i>sampradāya</i>	+/- Free choice of teachers and teachings
Structure of society	Dynasties & castes: <i>gotra</i> , <i>varṇa</i> (after HS: <i>āśrama</i>)	Rejection of the caste system
Clergy	Exclusive priesthood. Monopoly on certain rituals, entitlement of clergy.	Non-clerical, inclusive. No intermediators to the absolute, enabling access to all strata of society.
Physical appearance	Priestly attire commanding respect. Long hair/ <i>śikhā</i> . Sacred thread for twice-born men.	No caste symbols. Nudity or soiled cloth (>saffron). Dreadlocks (<i>jaṭa</i>) or shaven (<i>muṇḍaka</i>).
Embodiment	Body-positive because family-centric (<i>yajña</i> requires couple) & pro-progeny. Orig. anti- <i>tyāga</i>	Body-negative because of being renunciation-centric. <i>Tyāga</i> -oriented and anti-family-life
Eros	Eros-friendly (erotophilic) because of being body-positive, <i>bhoga</i> -oriented & pro-progeny	Eros-negative (erotophobic) due to being body-negative, <i>tyāga</i> -oriented & anti-family-life
Other designations	<i>Bhumi-deva</i> , <i>dvija</i> , <i>vaidika</i> , <i>smārta</i>	<i>Parivrajaka</i> , <i>mauni</i> , <i>muṇḍaka</i> , <i>ūrdhva-retasaḥ</i>
Reforms	Hindu synthesis (post-Vedic, ~500 BCE, to slow conversion): Incorporation of <i>śramanic</i> values	Abandonment of caste system, clergy, family & <i>Vedas</i> . Equal rights for women.

▽ indicates causation, however it is not exclusive

*Content is at times idealized and polarized