



Vedic Period

Introduction to Vedic Culture



Vedic culture emerged **after Indus Valley Civilization**. It was the rural culture of **Indo-Aryan** speakers who spoke **Sanskrit** and migrated into India from the **north-west**.

Vedic Period Timeline

The Vedic period (1500 BC – 600 BC) can be divided into two phases:

Vedic Period (1500 BC – 600 BC)

Early Vedic or Rigvedic Period (1500 BC – 1000 BC)

Later Vedic Period (1000 BC – 600 BC)

// The Vedic Age and the Vedas //

The Vedic Age refers to the period during which the Vedas were composed. This era is named after the Vedas, which provide the primary source of information about this period. The Vedic Age began with the arrival of the Aryans or Indo-Aryans in India.

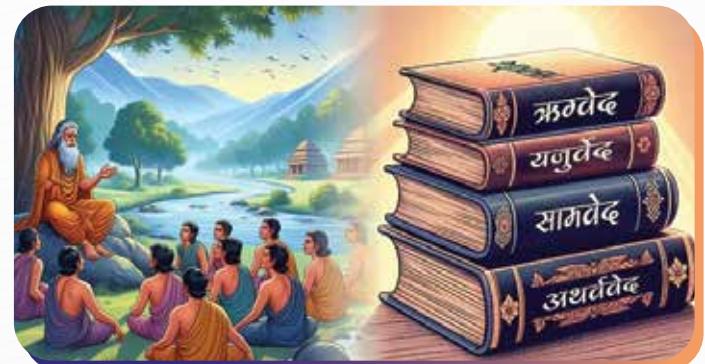
// Veda: Meaning and Significance //

- ◆ **Definition:** The word "Veda" means "sacred spiritual knowledge" and is derived from the Sanskrit word "Vid" (to know).
- ◆ **Sacred Texts:** The Vedas are compilations of hymns and prayers dedicated to various deities. They were considered infallible and transmitted orally.
- ◆ **Divine Origin:** The Vedas are considered revelations from God, and thus are **Apauroshaya** (not of human origin).
- ◆ **Oral Tradition:** Initially passed down orally, the Vedas were not written down when composed, which makes it difficult to date their exact origins.
- ◆ The Vedas were so sacred that they were memorized and called '**Shruti**', meaning "that which is heard." **Shruti** represents eternal, revealed truth.
 - ◆ In contrast, '**Smriti**' means "that which is remembered," supplementary, and subject to change over time.

The Vedas are divided into four main collections, known as Samhitas, each serving a unique purpose:

1. Rigveda:

- ◆ **Name:** Book of Mantras
- ◆ The **Rigveda**, the oldest and most important Veda, contains 1,028 hymns divided into **ten books (mandalas)**. Mandals 2 to 9 contain the oldest hymns, while the first and tenth Mandal seem to be later additions.
- ◆ These hymns praise deities like Agni, Indra, and Soma, offering insights into early Vedic religious beliefs, rituals, and society.



2. Samaveda:

- ◆ **Name:** Book of Mantras
- ◆ **Content:** Hymns from the Rigveda, adapted with musical notation for ritual chanting.

3. Yajurveda:

- ◆ **Name:** Book of Rituals
- ◆ **Content:** Contains prose formulas and hymns for sacrificial rituals.

4. Atharvaveda:

- ◆ **Name:** Book of Spells
- ◆ **Content:** Includes incantations, spells, and rituals for everyday life.

VEDAS & ALLIED LITERATURE

FOUR VEDAS



UPAVEDA - Applied Knowledge

UPAVEDA

Ayurveda

Gandharvaveda

Dhanurveda

Arthaveda

VEDANGA - Auxiliary to Veda

VEDANGA

Śikṣā

Vyakarana

Jyotiṣa

Nirukta

Kalpa

Chandas

Subclassification
of each Veda

Samhita

Brāhmaṇa

Aranyaka

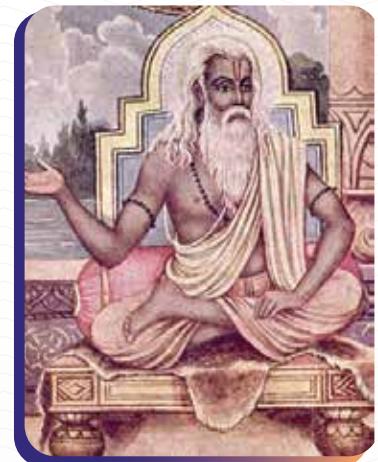
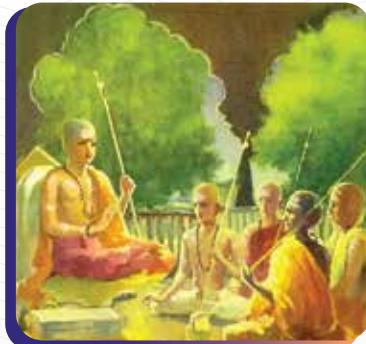
Upanisad

// Parts of the Vedas //

Each Veda is divided into four parts:

1. Samhitas: Collections of sacred hymns dedicated to gods and goddesses.

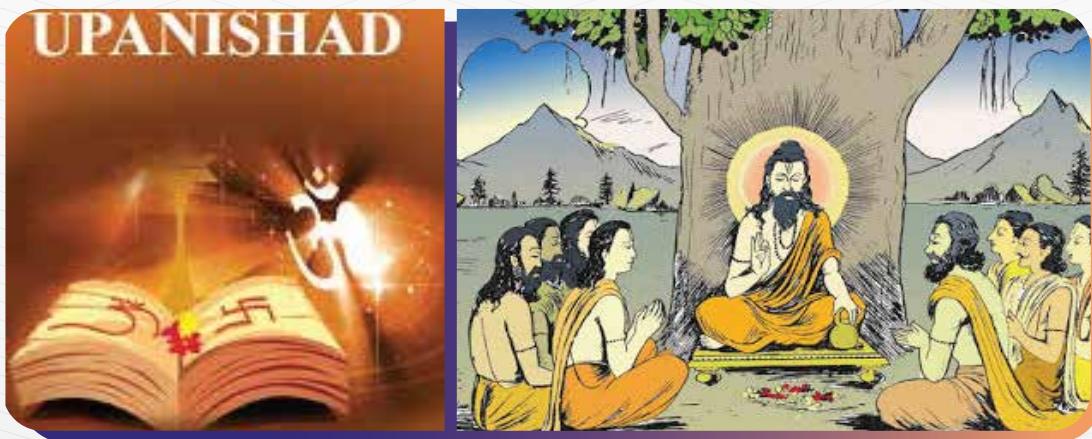
2. Brahmanas: Prose texts explaining sacrificial rites (Yajna).



3. Aranyakas: The Aranyakas or ("Forest Treatises") bridge ritualistic worship and philosophical contemplation, linking the Brahmanas with the Upanishads for deeper spiritual insight

4. Upanishads: The Upanishads are philosophical texts that explore the nature of reality, the self (Atman), and the ultimate truth (Brahman).

The word Upanishad in Sanskrit means "sitting down by the side" which actually relates to hearing the teachings of the saint by sitting close to him.



Kalpa Vedanga or also known as the Kalpa Sutra are divided into four types:

- ◆ **Srauta Sutra** deals with **Vedic sacrifices**.
- ◆ **Dharma Sutra** deals with **social duties**.
- ◆ **Griha Sutra**: deals with household rites
- ◆ **Sulva Sutra**- Deals with the rules of measuring fire-altars

Veda	Brahmanas	Aranyakas	Upanishads	Upveda	Priest
Rigveda	Aitareya, Kaushiki	Aitareya, Kaushiki	Aitareya, Kaushiki	Ayurveda	Hotra
Samaveda	Jaimini	Chandogya, Jaminiya	Chandogya, Jaminiya	Gandharvaveda	Adhvaryu
Shukla Yajurveda	Shatapatha	Brihadaranyaka	Brihadaranyaka, Isha	Dhanurveda	Udgata
Krishna Yajurveda	Taitriya	Taitriya	Kathopanishad, Taitriya, Maitriyani, Shvetashvatara	Dhanurveda	Udgata
Atharvaveda	Gopatha	None	Mundaka, Mandukya	Shilpaveda/ Arthashastra	Brahma

// Notable Texts and Concepts //

- ◆ **Mundaka Upanishad:** Famous for the phrase "**Satyameva Jayate**," meaning "Truth alone triumphs."
- ◆ **Shatapatha Brahmana:** Describes agricultural rituals like ploughing and introduces **the idea of reincarnation (rebirth)**.
- ◆ **Aitareya Brahmana:** Explains the duties and responsibilities of **all four varnas** (social classes) in Vedic society.
- ◆ **Shukla Yajurveda:** Describes the **Rajasuya Yagya**, an elaborate royal sacrifice performed by kings to assert their power.
- ◆ **Chandogya Upanishad:** Highlights **the three Ashramas (stages of life)**.
- ◆ "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" is a Sanskrit phrase found in the **Maha Upanishad**, a philosophy that inculcates an understanding that the "**whole world is one family**".



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