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All About The Vedic Literature – Static GK

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THE VEDAS

RIG VEDA

- Oldest religious text in the world
- A collection of hymns. Were recited at the time of sacrificial rites and other rituals with utmost devotion.
- Contains 1028 hymns (1017+11 valakhilyas) and is divided into 10 mandalas.
- The X mandala contains the famous Purushsukta which explains that the 4 varnas (Brahmans, kshatriya, vaishya andshudra) were born from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the creator, Brahma.
- The third mandala contains the Gayatri mantra (addressed to sun).

SAMA VEDA

- Derived from the root ‘Saman’, i.e, ‘melody’. It is a collection of melodies.
- It has 1603 verses but except 99 all the rest have been borrowed from Rig Veda.
- Contains ‘Dhrupada Raga’.

YAJUR VEDA

- Deals with the procedure for the performance of sacrifices.

ATHARVA VEDA

- Divided into 20 kadas (books) and has 711 hymns- mostly dealing with magic (along with personal problems of people).

THE BRAHMANAS

- They explain the hymns of the vedas in an orthodox manner.

- Each veda has several Brahmanas attached to it.
- Rigveda: kaushetki and Aitreya
- Yajurveda: Taitriya and Shatpatha
- Samaveda: Panchvish and Jemineya
- Atharvaveda: Gopath

THE ARANYAKAS

- Called ‘forest books’ , written mainly by the hermits living in the jungles for their pupils.
- Deals with mysticism and philosophy. Opposed to sacrifice and emphasize ‘meditation’.

THE UPANISHADS

- The word means ‘to sit down near someone’ and denotes a student sitting near his guru to learn.
- They are the main source of Indian philosophy.
- There are 108 Upanishads.
- They also condemn the ceremonies and the sacrifices.

SMRITIS

- Explains rules and regulations in the Vedic life.
- Main are manusmriti, naradsmriti, yagyavalkyasmriti

VEDANGAS

- Six vedangas are Shiksya, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhanda and Jyotisha.
- Shiksha deals with pronunciation.
- Kalpa with rituals.
- Vyakarana with grammar.
- Nirukta with etymology.
- Chhanda with meter.
- Jyotisha with astronomy.

DARSHANS

- There are 6 schools of indian philosophy known as Shad – Darshanas
- These are given by 6 philosophers of Ancient India
- Nyaya (Analysis) Darshana:
- Vaishesika Darshana: Kanada Rishi
- Sankhaya Darshana : Kapila.
- Yoga Darshana : Patanjali.
- Purva Mimansa : Jaimini.
- Uttara Mimansa : Badaryana or Vyasa (wrote mahabharata, classified Vedas, composed the puranas, gave vedantic philosophy).

UPAVEDAS

- There are four upavedas :
- Dhanurveda (deals with art and warfare) (Upaveda of Yajur Veda).
- Gandharva veda (deals with art and music) (Upaveda of Sama veda).
- Shilpa veda (deals with architecture) (Upaveda of Atharva veda).
- Ayurveda (deals with medicine) (Upaveda of Rig veda).

EPICS

- Though the two epics- the Mahabharata and the Ramayana- were compiled later, they reflect the state of affairs of the later vedic period.
- The Mahabharata, attributed to Vyasa, is considered older than the Ramayana and describes the period from the tenth century BC to the fourth century AD. It is also called Jaisamhita and Satasahasri Samhita and has one lakh verses.
- The Ramayana, attributed to Valmiki, has 24,000 verses. Its composition started in the fifth century BC and passes through five stages; the fifth stage ended in the twelfth century AD. This article is posted in association with clatapult.com