

Vedas:Info-Graph



Vedas are the supreme source book of Ancient Indian thought.

- **Spirituality (*Darshana*)** **Pathway for progress (*Yoga*)**
- **Sciences (*Vijnana*)** **Offerings (*Yajna*)**
- **Art-Aesthetics (*Sangeeta Kalaa*)** **Rules of conduct (*Shaastra*)**

Immortal Invocations from Vedas

Universal Vedic Prayer:

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥

sarvē bhavantu sukhinaḥ sarvē santu nirāmayāḥ

sarvē bhadraṇi paśyantu mā ka ścit duḥkhabhāgbhavēt ॥

May every one be Healthy, Happy, Enjoy auspicious living.

May none be visited by pain and suffering.

The concluding mantra of Rig-Veda:

समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः समानमस्तु वो मनांसि
samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ samānamastu vō manānsi

Let all men meet and think as with one mind. Let all hearts unite in love. Let the God be common. May all live in happiness with common purpose.

भद्रं कर्णेभिः श्रुणुयाम देवाः भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैः तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिः व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

bhadraṁ karṇēbhiḥ śruṇuyāma dēvāḥ bhadraṁ paśyēmākṣabhiryajatrāḥ | sthirair-
agnaiḥ tuṣṭuvāṁsastanūbhiḥ vyaśēma dēvahitaṁ yadāyuh ॥

Let us hear all auspicious news ; Let us see all good things ; Let us all have good health. Strong in our body and mind and let us attain Self- realization. Let all divine powers bless us.



Vedas : The word ‘Veda’ is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘*Vid*’ to *know*. Vedas are guidance on ways of exploring the process of knowing.

Different Vedas provide different modalities of this exploration.

Other names for Vedas : *Shruti, Amnaaya, trayee, Chandas, Aagama, Nigama.*

Major Classification of Vedas: The entire Vedic documents are classified and positioned under four major headings. *Rig , Yajus, Sama, Atharva*. Vedas are organized in the form of collections called *Mandalas /Ashtakas*. Upanishads are special segments of Vedas. Each veda has its special segment marked as Upanishad, deliberating on key philosophical themes.

Traditional Classification within Vedas (for teaching and analytical purposes):

Samhita , Brahmana Aaranyaka Upanishad

Language of Vedas: Ancient Indian language called Sam-skrutham, to be decoded using the guidance rules of grammar and dictionary enumerated in works called Vedanga’s.

Six **vedangas**, which provide traditional methodology for understanding Vedas. *Shiksha, Vyakarana, Chandas, Nirukta, Jyotisha, Kalpa* These needs to be additionally supplemented with keys in special categories of works (as provided by Masters of tradition) : *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Purana, Aagamas.*

Focus of All Vedas : Supreme Divine. This is the essence of tradition.

यज्ञो वै विष्णुः -yajñō vai viṣṇuḥ (Taittiriya Samhita 1.7.4)

सर्वैश्च वेदैरहमेव वेद्यः sarvaiśca vēdairahamēva vēdyaḥ (Bhagavad-Gita 15-15)

वेदे रामायणे चैव भारते पाञ्चरात्रके । आदावन्ते च मध्ये च विष्णुरेव प्रकीर्त्यते ॥

vēdē rāmāyaṇē caiva bhāratē pācñarātrakē | ādāvantē ca madhyē ca viṣṇurēva prakīrtyatē || (Acharya Madhva)

Veda related Vocabulary: These are some of the key words in relation to all Vedas.

Mantra /Rik : The primary unit of Veda. Example: Gayatri Mantra

Sukta: A collection of Mantras. One practical unit, associated with one application. Example: Purusha Sukta.

Rishi: The visionary seer –composer of Sukta.
Example: Vishwamitra, Kashyapa

Devataa: The Divinity –God –Theme associated with Mantra –Sukta.
Example: Narayana.

Chandas: The poetic rhythm, the musical flow of the Mantra.
Example: Anushtup

Shakhaa: A special branched study and application of Vedas.
Example: Shukla yajurveda, Shaakala , Maitrayani

Time –Place and Civilization foot prints of Vedas:

Traditional schools : Vedas are Transcendental, Outcome of Yoga practice as Divine-Visions by the grace of Supreme Divine, not bound by spatio-temporal, social –historical constraints and for any select person or communities.

Modern schools: Vedas are ancient historical poetic compositions, prayers, allegories. The time period of Vedas, their composition and collections are placed in a wide time range : Around 1800 C.E to 60,000 BCE in some school. This is a subject of ongoing academic research with many theories and scenarios being explored.

ऋग्वेद Rig



यजुर्वेद Yajur



सामवेद Sāma



अथर्व Atharva



Rigveda

Total Ten books covering 1028 hymns/ 10,170 riks / made of a total 10,552 units called mantra or rcs,/ 432,000 syllables (cf: shatapatha brahmana)

Yajurveda :

More than 1900 mantras, in two versions: Shukla (white) and Krishna (black) and many branched studies as: Kanva, Madhyandina, Taittirīya saṁhitā Maitrayani saṁhitā, Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha saṁhitā, Bahika.

Samaveda

Special mode of chanting Rig and Yajus Vedas. The plain text is mostly co on; ch n ing style and purpose of deployment differs.

Atharva veda:

Large collection of mantra-suktas for special applications, currently surviving in two recensions (śākhās) Śaunakīya and Paippalāda

Rigveda suktas address prayers to many individual *devataa* Gods. This is symbolic. The purpose is to see the One Supreme 'Ekam Sat' in different perspectives . That One Supreme is called by different names.

Two main recensions : Shaakala and Bashkala.

The social milieu of vedic period is best described in Rig-Veda. Eg. Marriage related hymns, Social dialogues .

Rigveda is a master piece of poetic composition. Example: Ushas sukta describing sun raise.

Rigveda has key questions about the Universe and cosmology. Example. Nasadiya sukta, Purusha Sukta.

Yajurveda suktas address mainly the ritualistic *yajna* related practicals and themes.

Shukla yajurveda and Krishna Yajurveda are prevalent and practiced in different parts of India.

Sri Rudra sukta is found in krishna-yajurveda.

Sama Veda suktas are special modes of chanting Rig and Yajus mantras. The purpose is to bring *shanti* peace and tranquility to mind .

The word *saama* also has a special connotation in managing the strategic requirements for life. It is the first of the four : saama, dana, bheda, danda techniques. Saama here means strategy of conquering enemy with love.

Sama veda is the basis of Indian music. The melodies of mantras have provided the foundation of the *sapta-svara* seven basic notes of Indian music.

Atharva veda suktas address miscellaneous topics which guide in use of mantra –suktas for dealing with and overcoming evil, destroying enemies, ways of fulfilling personal desires.

Wonders of world are explored and extolled by paying tributes to creation. Example: Pruthvi sukta.

There are serious philosophical deliberations in segments called Prashna and Madukya Upanishads, integral of this veda.

Atharva veda has its own special *Gayatri mantra*, different from other three Vedas.

ओम् शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

ōm śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

Goal of Veda : Peace and Prosperity for All. at All places and All Times.

ॐ सहनाववतु सहनौ भुनक्तु सहवीर्यं करवावहै ।

तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

ōṃ sahanāvavatu sahnau bhunaktu sahavīryaṃ karavāvahai |
tējasvināvadhītamastu mā vidviṣāvahai | ōṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

May we all be protected in togetherness, May we all work together efficiently, May our work and studies yield success; May we not have any hatred amongst us. May there be abundance of Peace.

असतो मा सद्गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ,

मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

asatō mā sadgamaya, tamasō mā jyōtirgamaya ,
mṛtyōrmā amṛtaṃ gamaya ōṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

Lead us from unreal to real; Lead us from darkness to Light; Lead us from mortal to immortal. May there be abundance of Peace.

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमदः पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyatē |
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamēvāvaśiṣyatē ||

That is Full, Total and Complete; This is total, Full and complete; This is an outcome from That. After taking This from That, That remains Full, as it was originally.