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Vedic Literature - Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, Atharv Veda and Aranyakas

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Rig Veda

- It is the earliest among the Vedas.
- It is a con-temporary composition.
- It is a collection of hymns offered to various deities by various families of poets and sages.
- It has 1028 hymns of which 1017 are original and 11 were added to it later.
- It is divided into 10 Mandalas:
 - a.* Mandalas U - VII are the oldest.
 - b.* The 'Battle of Dasrajya' is mentioned in the VII Mandala.
 - c.* Mandalas I and X were added later.
 - d.* IX Mandal is dedicated to Soma.
- The famous *Purushasukta* telling us about the four *varnas* - Brahmins, Kshat-riyas, Vaishyas and Shudras - is mentioned in the X Mandala. According to it,
 - i.* Brahmins originated from mouth of Brahma.
 - ii.* Kshatriyas originated from the arms of Brahma.
 - iii.* Vaishyas originated from the thighs of Brahma.
 - iv.* Shudras originated from the feet of Brahma.
- The famous Gayatri Mantra addressed to solar deity Savitri is also mentioned in the X Mandala.
- A number of Brahmanas is associated with the Rig Veda. Some important are:
 - i.* Aitareya Brahmana called Panchika, written by Mahidas Aitareya.
 - ii.* Kaushitiki Brahmana or Sankhayan Brahmana.

Yajur Veda

- It is called the Book of Prayers.
- It is partly written in prose and partly in verse.
- It has two parts: Shukla Yajurveda and Krishna Yajurveda.

- Taiteriyā Samhita is related to Krishna Yajurveda.
- Vajseniya Samhita is related to Shukla Yajurveda.
- The maximum number of commentaries is written on Yajur Veda.

Sama Veda

- The earliest reference of singing is found here.
- It has 1603 verses of which only 99 are original and the rest have been derived from the Rig Veda.
- Gandharva Upaveda is related to Sam Veda.
- The following Brahmanas are related to the Sam Veda:
 - i.* Chandogya Brahmana mentioning about marriage and birth ceremonies.
 - ii.* Kena Brahmana.
 - iii.* Jaiminiya Brahmana also called Talabgar Brahmana.
 - iv.* Panchvisa Brahmana also known as Tandya Mahabrahmana.
- It has 25 Mandalas and the 26th Mandala of this Brahmana is called Sadivas.

Atharva Veda

- It is called the Book of magic.
- It contains charms and spells to ward off evils and diseases.
- It is related to the holy magic formulae and has 26 sections or Kharid.

<u>4 Vedas</u>	<u>6 Vedangas</u>	<u>Part</u>	<u>4 Upa Vedas</u>
Rig Veda (10,552 Mantras)	Siksha (Phonetics)	Nose	Ayur Ved (Charak, Sushrut)
Yajur Ved (1,975 Mantr)	Vyakarna (Grammar)	Mouth	Dhanur Ved (Vishwamitra)
Sama Ved (1,875 Mantras)	Chhandas (Meters)	Feet	Gandharva Ved (Bharat Muni)
Atharva Ved (5,987 Mantras)	Niruktam (Etymology) (Origin of words)	Ears	Stapathya Ved & Artha Sastra (Bhrugu, Ved Vyas)
	Jyotisham (Astronomy)	Eye	
	Kalpam (Ceremonies)	Hands	

- It contains 711 or 731 hymns whereas somewhere it has been mentioned that it contains 737 hymns.
- It has 5978 mantras.
- **Trayi** was the combined name of three early vedas -Rig Veda, Sam Veda and Yajur Veda.
- Atharva Veda was a later development. It is also known as Brahmadeva.
- The Upaveda related to it is known as Shilpa Upaveda.
- The important Brahmanas related to it are Gopath Brahmana and Mundaka Brahmana.

Aranyakas

- These are Vedic texts originally written by the forest hermits and students living in jungles.
- These are the concluding portions or appendix of the Brahmanas.
- They laid emphasis on meditation and not on sacrifices.

- Aranyakas (depicting transition from karmkand to karmyog) are philosophical rather than ritualistic and form a bridge between Brahmanas and Upanishads i.e.. between the Karma Marg of the Brahmanas and the Gyan Marg of Upanishads.