

Vedasamhitās. The aim of Vyāsa was to bring about uniformity in the religious observances by performing rites and rituals, religious ceremonies such as sacrifices etc. without any flaw. Following this a very wide Vedic literature grew up. The study of the Vedas, critical review of meaning, the connection between mantras and tantras (Chants and rituals), Grammar, etymology, all these became inevitable. As the Vedas could be looked at from different points of view, from very early days, various types of expositions of the Vedas came out. Seven types of commentaries, Nairukta, Yājñika, Vaiyākaraṇa Jyauṭiṣa, Sāmpradāyika Ādhyātmika, Aitiḥāsika (pertaining to etymology, sacrifice, grammar astronomy, customs of a tribe, Brāhma or Spiritual legends and ancient lore) were the prominent among them. When the westerners began research work in the Vedas, another branch of literature also took form, known as the Āgamikas (the historical). Even in the time of Yāska, who was an authority on Nirukta (etymology) the Vedas were expounded on the basis of legends and ancient lore. Hints to this effect are seen in Yāska's works. Mention is made about other types of expositions also, in them. The last book of importance in the Sāmpradāyika type of exposition, was Vedārthaprakāśa, of Sāyaṇa. But the commentary of Skandasvāmī, the books Ṛgarthadīpikā and Udgīthabhāṣya of Mādhavācārya etc. have spread the sāmpradāyika type of speculations in India. There is another cult in India which believes that everything seen in the Vedas is spiritual and that the spells and incantations are esoteric.

6) *The gods of the Vedas.* All the gods known today are not found in the Vedas. Even those who are found do not have the prominence that is given to them now. For example, the deity Viṣṇu, worshipped as one of the three godheads today, is not as omnipotent as the Indra of the Vedas. Though Viṣṇu is praised in five spells in Ṛgveda, when compared with other deities, he was not of much prominence. In the Vedas the incarnation of Vāmana is not given much importance. Even though Rudra is a recognized deity and mention occurs about Kapardī, in the Vedas, there is not a song of praise of Śiva in the Ṛgveda. There is no mention at all, about the worship of the Phallus, Devī and so on in the Vedas. The Vedas celebrate the Omniscience of Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Mitra, the Maruts and so on. The lustre of Indra was gradually dimmed with the efflux of time and he became a mere libertine in the Purāṇas. The importance of many deities such as Varuṇa, Agni, Mitra, Aśvin and so on was greatly diminished in the Purāṇas. Thirtythree deities pertaining to Earth, Ether and Sky are praised in the Vedas.

7) *The rites concerning instruction in Vedas.* Manu has given certain instructions as to how the teaching of Vedas should be conducted.

8) *The teachers of Veda.* See under Guruparamparā.

9) *The period of the Vedas.* The Indians believe that the spells and incantations and the Brāhmaṇas are not man-made, but are revelations by God. So they are considered to be beginningless and endless. The hermits are considered to be seers of the spells. It is mentioned "Mantradraṣṭāraḥ na tu Kartāraḥ". (They are seers of Mantra, not makers). In the opinion of one party, according to this maxim, it is not necessary to search

for the creators or the period of creation, of mantras. They hold that only the Sūtras (thread, clue, guide, rule, aphorism) are made by man.

The westerners and the modern thinkers of India do not agree completely with this view. They believe that the early Āryans who entered India, first settled down in the Punjab and that the local civilization which they had assumed, broke out as songs of praise. In course of time, these songs of Praise took the form of Ṛgveda mantras (saying, song, formula). In the beginning there was only one Veda. Many believe that this state continued up to B.C. 1500. It is a fact universally acknowledged, that this Vedic literature is the most ancient literature of the world. There is difference of opinion as to the period of origin of this Vedic literature. Prof. Macdonell and Prof. Jacobi are foremost among those who have made their opinions. In the opinion of Prof. Macdonell, the Vedic literature originated in the period between B.C. 1500 and 1200. But Jacobi's opinion is that all the Vedas were made before B.C. 4000.

VEDADIṢA. The son of Brhadratha, the King of Cedi. Mention is made about him in Bhāgavata, Skandha 9.

VEDAGARBHĀ. A name of Devī. When Devī killed Śumbha and such other Asuras, Indra got pleased with her and praised her as follows :

"Āryā, Durgā, Vedagarbhā,
Ambikā, Bhadrakālī; Bhadrā, Kṣemyā
Kṣemakarī, Naikabāhū, I praise you."

(Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 12).

VEDAKALPA. A section of Atharvaveda. The hermit Muñjakeśa divided Atharva Veda into five Saṁhitās (collections) called Nakṣatra Kalpa, Veda Kalpa, Saṁhitā Kalpa, Āṅgīrasa Kalpa, and Śānti Kalpa. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Aṅśa 3, Chapter 6).

VEDANĀ. A goddess who caused pain to living things. Adharma married Himśā. Two daughters named Nṛtā and Nirṛti were born to them. From them Bhaya, Naraka, Māyā and Vedanā were born. Mṛtyu was the daughter of Māyā. Duḥkha was the son of Vedanā. (Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 20).

VEDĀNGA. See under Veda.

VEDANIDHI. A hermit. For further details see under Pramohinī.

VEDĀNTA. See under Veda.

VEDAŚARMĀ I. The son of a brahmin named Śivaśarmā. (See under Śivaśarmā).

VEDAŚARMĀ II. See under Vidura.

VEDAŚIRAS I. A hermit born in the clan of Bhr̥gu. He was born to the hermit Mārkaṇḍeya by his wife Mūrdhanyā otherwise called Dhūmrā. Pīvarī was the wife of Vedaśiras. (Brahma : 2, 11, 7; Vāyu Purāṇa 28 : 6).

While Vedaśiras was doing penance once, a celestial maid named Śuci came to make him deviate from penance. A daughter was born to him by her. Yamadharmā wished to kidnap that daughter. Vedaśiras cursed Yamadharmā to become a river. (Skanda Purāṇa, 4 : 259).

VEDAŚIRAS II. A hermit. He was the son born to Kṛśāśva by his wife Dhiṣaṇā. Vedaśiras learned Viṣṇu Purāṇa from the Nāgas (serpents) in Pātāla (underworld) and taught it to his disciple Pramati. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, 6 : 8 : 47).