

Every Indian is proud of one's own varied culture and heritage. We derive the information about this culture and heritage from historical sources which includes the Vedic literature. Along with the four Vedas, this Vedic literature include, Brahmana Books, Aranyakas, Upanisads, Sutra literature as well as shruti, smriti, Ramayana and Mahabharata; and Jain and Buddhist books. This literature can be considered as the source of philosophy of eternal culture of India.

### **Brahmana Books**

Brahmana-books is a part of Vedic literature. Immediately after the Vedic Samhita Brahmana books were written. They include guidance regarding the origin of the words of Vedic mantras, interpretation, experimentation, etc. The books of Vedic literature written in prose form, present the explanation of Vedic Samhita and its criticism. According to the scholars, for every branch of Veda there was one Brahmana. In Antrey Brahman for Rig Veda Samhita there is a detailed description of different yajnas. For Yajur Veda, there are shatapatha and Taittiriya Brahman. Shatpath Brahmana is for Shukla Yajur Veda. Among all the Brahman books, Shatpath is the most important and ahuge volume. It includes detailed description of yajnas for Pitru, Som, Rajsuya, etc. It also includes the names of ancient kings of India and biographical sketches. Hence it has historical importance too. It is believed that they had been written by rishi Yagnavalkya.

Taittiriya Brahmana is for Krishna Yajur Veda. Compilation of eight different Brahmanas is done for Sama Veda Samhita and Gopatha Brahmana is for Atharva Veda Samhita, in which there is an explanation for Gayatri. Thus Brahmana books provide extensive information about the performance of yajna and along with it they also provide information on the customs of Indian society and philosophical ideologies of the Vedic times.

### **Aranyakas**

Aranyakas in Vedic literature were written after Samhitas and Brahmanas. The resultant compilation of books of reflection and meditation done by the Aryans in the forest, in the end part, are called Aranyakas. They contain simple yajnas for the vanprasthis and ascetics living in forests, their routine and reflective criticism of Brahma, etc. Here, performance of yajna is described along with its criticism of spiritual form. The preachings on Brahma and philosophy of Atma are given in Aranyakas. Thus it has great significance from the point of view of spiritual and philosophical aspects. Rig Veda aranyakas are Aitariya and Shakhayan and Shukla Yajura Veda aranyakas are Madhyadin bruhadaranyaka, kanva bruhadaranyaka and jaiminiyopanishad . It can be seen that religious fervor is matured in this Aranyakas.

### **Spiritual and Philosophical Thoughts Described in Upanishads**

In general, the term 'Ved' is very common, but in reality Vedic literature is extremely vast. Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda were constructed during the entire Vedic Age. Vedas are not written by any one person. Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyas and Upanishads together form one Veda. When during Vedic Age the religious rituals of propitiating gods by praises (stutis) and offerings (ahutis) developed, simultaneously, the climax of philosophical reflection and philosophical revelation beyond yajnas and beliefs in gods-goddesses are found developing in shruti, smriti, samhita, brahmanas, aranyakas, upnishads, shadadarshana etc.

### **Spiritual Thought-described in Upanishads**

Upanishad = upa + nishad. 'Upa' means near or close and nishad means one who is sitting. Thus, the literal meaning of Upanishad is, "To acquire mystical or profound knowledge by sitting at the feet of teacher

(guru) or Supreme Being”. Some critics of Upanishad, consider the meaning of the root ‘sad’, ‘motion’ and ‘destruction’ both. Therefore, it also means, scripture that destroys ignorance and enables motion towards supreme element or knowledge. The Upanishads were compiled towards the end of Vedic literature; hence it is called Vedanta or end of Veda.

According to scholars the compilation of it continued for a long period of time. Initially they were oral and later on they were scripted. There are about 108 upanishads, of which the main Upanishads are as follows:

• Ishopanishad	• Kenopanishad	• Kathopanishad
• Prashnopanishad	• Mundakopanishad	• Mandyukopanishad
• Taitariyaupanishad	• Aitareyupanishad	• Chhandogyaupanishad
• Nrsinhpurvatapupanishad	• Bruhadaranyupanishad	

The initial Upanishads like Bruhadaranyaka and Chhandogyak are in prose and dialogue form whereas Kenopanishad is in poetry form.

Upanishads have shown the way from unreality to reality, from death to life and from darkness to light. Atman is in every man. It is Brahma and similarly everything is the form of Brahma. The philosophical reflection is found in words like ‘tatvamasi’, ‘soham’, and ‘brahmasmi’. The one who sees brahma in the creation is the true knowledgeable person. He has the innocence, simplicity and the curiosity to know the truth; like a child. Every Upanishad does not talk about leaving the samsara to attain knowledge or to experience Brahma. Some upanisads believe that it is necessary to retire from samsara, in order to attain truth. However every Upanishad considers it necessary to have good conduct and following of moral life in order to attain knowledge. Captions like, “Follow religion”, “Don’t be lazy in study”, “speak truth” and “Consider mother-father, guest and teacher equal to God”; every Upanishad preaches the same message. In short, the philosophy of Upanishads gives importance to Atman. According to the principle of Karma, everyone gets the fruit of his karma either in the present birth or in the reincarnation. Upanishads mention that man can attain moksha (salvation) by listening, reflection, or acquiring knowledge by nididhyas; and can be free from the cycle of rebirth.

The master pieces of the Advaitavada (Non-duality) of Shakaracharya, the Dvaitavada (duality) of Madhavacharya and Vishistdvaitavada (special duality) of Ramanujacharya are the results of the thoughts of Upanishads. Upanishads provided the base for the spirituality of middle path of Buddha. Due to the spiritual thoughts of Upanishads, Gargi, Lopamudra, Jambali, Ghosha, Vishwambhara, Apala, etc. became the women scholars. Philosopher Maxmuller remarks that the Upanishads are at the root of Vedanta and it seems that the reflection of man has reached to its climax in them.

### **Philosophical Thought-Shaddarshana (six darshana) described in Upanishad**

In the Indian philosophical Thought, Shadadarshana has typical importance. Shadadarshana is a philosophy of Indian way of spiritual life. These darshanans are not merely some thought patterns. But they are way of life, which are inseparable from the way of Indian life. Religion is the conduct of the ideology of a person and external culture of faith. But philosophy is the soul of culture. The word 'Darshan' (philosophy) is derived from the root 'Krush', its meaning is to see or the one who can see. The philosophical thought of Upanishad is born from the intense desire of searching the solution for the problems of life.

### Shadadarshana

No.	Darshan	Compiler	Philosophical Ideology
1	Samkhya	Maharshi Kapil	Genesis of Creation by the duality of Prakruti and Purusha
2	Yoga	Maharshi Patanjali	Practical ways of attaining Truth
3	Nyaya	Maharshi Gautam	The Remedy of acquiring Relevant Knowledge
4	Vaisheshik	Maharshi Kanad	Expansion of the form of Physical World
5	Purva Mimansa	Maharshi Jaimin	Principles related to Karma and re-birth
6	Uttar Mimansa	Maharshi Badrayan	Brahma, Supreme Authority in living being, world and Ishwar (god).

#### Samkhyadarshan

This darshan, written by Acharya Kapil, occupies very important place in Indian philosophy. Two views are prevalent why this darshan is called Samkhya darshan. One is that it is defined after counting 25 elements in number and another is that the meaning of samkhya is “discussion” or “deliberation”. Hence, as this darshan is projecting the balanced thought of the elements of the creation, it is named Samkhya darshan. The world is created by the duality of Purush and Prakruti. While un-accepting the existence of God, this scripture has called satva, rajas and tamas, the attributes of Prakruti. Samkhya calls knowledge and prudence the instruments of moksha.

#### Yogadarshan

“yoga” is the excellent wealth of the spiritual path of Indians. Every darshan scripture considers the process of yoga as the instrument of moksha. In Yoga darshan, the prevention of the tendency of the mind is termed as Yoga. “Yogasutra” of Maharshi Patanjali is the first volume of Yogadarshan. This darshana thinks of the practical way of reaching truth. No philosophical ideology is found on jiva, jagat and ishwar in it. Patanjali has named three instruments in Yogsutra: tapa, swadhyay (exercise), and ishwarapranidhan (surrender). Yam, niyam, asana, pranayama, pratyahar, dharna, dhyana and Samadhi are the eight instruments known as Ashtang yoga. By them, man steadies the tendency of consciousness and acquires light of the soul (atmapraksh) or knowledge. In this Ashtang Yoga the first five (Yam, niyam, asana, pranayama, pratyahar) are bahirang (related to body) instruments. The following three (dharna, dhyana and Samadhi) are antarang (mind and soul) instruments. The final step is the Samadhi. It is considered the best state. In it, Dyata (one performing dhyana) and dhyey (goal) get unified.

The utility of this yoga is not only theoretical but practical. With it, man could unify body, heart and consciousness and attain moksha.

#### Nyaya

The meaning of Nyaya in the scriptures of darshan is quite broad. Nyayadarshan means to examine the matter with the help of different measures and bases. It is also known as logic or standard scripture because the main purpose of Nyayadarshan is to acquire relevant knowledge. Nyaya considers knowledge as light and word as standard. According to this darshana soul, body and mind are beyond senses. Here the final goal is moksha. Here the proof of the existence of God is also given. Like other darshana, nyaya also explains how to attain moksha by relevant knowledge.

#### Vaisheshika

According to scholars, “Vaisheshik sutra”, compiled by Maharshi Kanad has 317 sutras. This darshana, considering the physical world as real, thinks about it extensively. This world is created by 7 different physical and metaphysical substances. Nyaya and Vaisheshika, both, accept the creation and God. In short, by combination

of both darhsanas complete knowledge of darhsan can be acquired. The belief of Vaisheshika is like Nyaya. Perhaps that must be the reason why both together are named as “Nyaya-Vaisheshika”. The followers of this darshana lived life of complete monks.

### **Purvamimansa**

The original volume of this mimansa is “Jaimin Sutra”, compiled by Maharshi Jaimin. Here Karma is given importance. It advocates the Yajna ritual and religious performances mentioned in Vedic literature. That is the reason why it is called Purvamimansa. Any action when done with the desire of fruit then man falls into the bond of sin and righteousness. But the work done without the desire of fruit gives moksha. Consequently everyone should work without the desire of fruit to attain self knowledge. Here, there is a discussion about karma and rebirth; hence it is also called karmamimansa. It is also darshan of religious performance, hence it also called practical-oriented darshan. The principles related to karma and rebirth, “shakti” and “apurva” are given by Purvamimansa.

### **Uttarmimansa**

The thoughts that were here and there, were presented as sutras by Maharshi Badarayana in Upanishads. They are also called Vedant Sutras or Brahma Sutras. In every darshan there is discussion and reflection on jiva, jagat and Ishwara. In mimansa, Jagata and every aspect of it are considered true.

Mimansa darhsana is also called Vedant darshana. In it, Brahma is considered supreme. It also explains the unity of Brahma and soul. The thought of Upanishads and Brahmasutras compiled by Maharshi Badarayana is one and the same. Thus this darshana is related to the final forms of Vedic literature. Hence it is called Uttarmimansa or gyanmimansa.

### **Sutra Literature**

Sutra Literature is also the part of Vedic Literature. In Smirti Age, the six printing branches of Indian philosophy were constructed as sutras. As at this time, since there was still the lack of printing, different Viddhyas were lerned by heart and passed on from one person to another. If the learnt sentences of Viddhyas are long then to memorize is difficult. Hence in this age they were remembered as Sutras. Consequently, with the help of the construction of Sutra Literature at this time, in least words, most thoughts were encompassed. They consisted of six divisions: Shiksha, Chhand, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Kalpa and Jyotish. Shiksha and Chhand were for verbalization; Vyakarana and Nirukta for understanding; and Kalpa and Jyotish were necessary for the ritual of yajna. The Sutra Literature consisted of Shrotasutra, Guhyasutra and Dharmasutra as main and other were Shulva sutra and Kalp sutra. Shrotasutra consists of description of religious performance of yajnas. Guhaya sutra describes various samskaras related to man and religious rituals. The meaning of Shulva is “the rope of measurement”. It gives information about making of altar for yajna, its measure and calculation.

Besides this, Shruti and Smruti literatures as well as Ramayana and Mahabharata epics give information of the cultural, spiritual and religious thought of this time.

### **The Connection of the Thought of Jain, Buddhist and other Thoughts with the Upanishads**

#### **Thought of Jain :**

The genesis of Jain religion, its branches, principles, books and philosophy present spiritual aspects. It possesses realistic thought. In Jain Revelation, the principle of anekantvad is very important. Thus Jain religion has a thought which looks at reality from all the angles.

The principle of Karmafala of Hindu religion is seen in the five vows –satya, ahimsa, brahmcharya, asteya and aparigraha -of Jain religion. And in five samitis, three guptis and four emotions; with simplicity, control and detachment, friendliness and mercy as well as good food, the path is shown to liberate from bondage. It matches with the Indian thought of moksha. There is also a connection in the vow of Ahimsa and anekantvad of Jain and the Indian Darshanas thought. It has expressed not to kill anyone by mind, word or body and even



the mental violence by not accepting the view of others is also condemned. Like the principle of Karma of Vedic religion, Jain religion too emphasizes principle of action (purusharthvada).

Just as Ashtangayoga is emphasized in Yogadarshana, so is the right knowledge, right darshan and right character in Jain religion. It matches with the idea of tatvamasi of Veda. Like God, in Jain temples, the idols of Tirthankaras are installed and are worshipped with complete rites and rituals, whose fruit is attaining of moksha.

### **Buddhist Thought :**

When during Veda period, the religion became yajna-oriented, then Gautam Buddha preached the religion of non-violence. He gave the message of love for all the living beings of the earth. Entry was given too all in Buddhist Sangha without any discrimination of caste. Darmamangal was considered the best mangal. Buddha gave a message of modified way of life, which was beyond both ideologies -extreme body suppression or extreme consumerism. The entire samsara is suffering because of desire. In order to liberate from suffering, desire has to be got rid of. Ashtang way was shown to liberate from the suffering of samsara. That would give nirvana state. Man by his own uplifting, can acquire self-victory. The preaching of Buddha's philosophy can be compared with the Shadadarshana of Vedic literature, which aims at purushartha (action) for the goal of moksha.

### **Other New Currents**

Along with Jain and Budhists religions among other spiritual currents, Bhakti Marga could be included. During the Smruti Age, sects have emerged in Hindu religion. With the passing of time newer sub-sects too came into existence. Thus Vaishnava and Shaiva sects became more famous.

The path adopted in place of the yajnas and rituals of Vedic religion is known as Bhaktimarga (path of Devotion). It took a form of bhaktimarga by the addition of love with respect towards the elements of nature, person or incarnated power. Vaishnav sect gives importance to devotion. At that time the thought emerged that devotion can give liberation. Vaishnavs believe in Navadha-devotion of shravan (listening), smaran (remembering), Kirtan (singing), vandan (bowing), dasyabhav (servanthood) and antya expression of the attributes of God. Bhagvat dharma was not opposed to Veda dharma because they do accept the existence of God. But they liked the bhaktimarga instead of yajna and rituals to attain moksha.

Along with Vaishnav sect Shaiva sect too confirmed its form. In fact, Shaiva fact is even more ancient than Vedic Age. Because in Rig Veda Rudra is mentioned. The form of Rudra was conceived as destructive. Here, the form of Shiva or Shankara is accepted as beneficial. Shivabhakti and Shiva-appreciation were preached mostly by the Puranas, Agamas and Tantras. Shivabhakti too possesses Yoga, Dhyan and other elements. Today, too, in all the parts of India the worship of Shiva is seen with some variations.

### **The Contribution of India in Global Philosophy**

The philosophy contained in Indian Vedic Literature is not only for Indians. But it is for the welfare of the entire world. In short,

- The Indian philosophy is contained in Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. It is the invaluable gift of India to the world. The crux of the ancient Aryan people's life is Rig Veda.
- The Indian philosophy has presented four orientations of human life. It includes dharma, artha, kama and moksha. To achieve these four a system is related to four ashramas. Kama and Artha are related to brahmacharyashram and gruhasthashram; dharma and moksha are related to vanaprashtha and sanyasa ashramas.
- The final aim of human life, moksha, how that could be attained, its spiritual knowledge and philosophy are found in Upanishads.
- Vedanga Darshanagrantha, Sutra Literature, Samkhyayoga, Nyayamimansa and Shadadarshanas are the gifts of India to the world.

- Two epics of the world – Ramayana and Mahabharata are also the gifts of India to the world.
- Bhagvad Geeta is one of the parts of Mahabharata. It talks about knowledge, devotion, renunciation, karmafala or karma of spirituality.
- The primacy of Karma is found in the shloka written in Geeta: “कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन”. The inspiration of living a practical life is meant for all the human beings.
- The gift of Ashtangayoga of Patanjali is the greatest gift of spirituality to the world.
- Indian philosophy contains spirituality. The Indian tradition upholds different religions and spiritualities.
- The spirituality of Jain religions is found from its principles. To get rid of karmas attached to soul, philosophical matters “aasrav”, “samvar”, “nirjara” etc are received as spiritual heritage of the world.
- Buddhist religion has also shown the path of the ascent of human life through middle-path thought. Desire is the cause of all suffering. Get rid of desire to attain moksha. If there is no desire then there is no suffering – is the basic knowledge of philosophy. Such an invaluable heritage has been given to the world by India.

Besides this, with truth and the right view Indian Philosophy has given many gifts of profound mysteries to the world.

### **The Heritage of Vedic and Post Vedic Age and its Importance**

#### **Contribution in the field of state organization :**

Like any other ancient countries in Vedic Age India too believed in the divine origin of the king. However, the kingship system here was oriented towards the ideal of the welfare of the people. During Vedic times, the anointing ceremony of the king was like democratic. It was necessary for the king to take an oath before exercising his authority. To prevent the king from becoming uncontrollable, there used to be the control of religion. The representative from every class was called rajkrut (king maker). They had the control over the king. His ministers and feudal lords too had control over him. After anointment as a king, it was understood that, the kingdom was handed over to him. The kingdom used to be handed over to the anointed king by such words as; for agriculture, for universal development, for the welfare of the people, for the prosperity of the kingdom, etc.

In the Post Vedic Age, the idea of empire started developing instead of king. On consolidation of kingship, it became autocratic type of government. For king words like Samrat and Chakravarti were being used. King became free to penalize anyone. In order to stop the king becoming autocratic, he was often reminded about his ‘rajyadharma’ (duty towards kingdom). On the expansion of the kingdom, for the sake of simplicity of governance, it used to be divided in different divisions and the officers were appointed for the administration. Such as for 100 villages, an officer named “shatpati” was appointed. Under him there were officers for 10 and 20 villages and likewise in the villages, administration was of local level.

#### **Contribution at Social Field :**

Vedic society was generous with regard to profession. Their caste or Varna was not dependent on birth but on karma and quality, that is, in Vedic Age there was Vernashram system. The four classes of society; Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra were allocated on the basis of work. It was a social structure as per the work distribution.

In the Post Vedic Age this Varna structure became more complex. The complex rituals of religious performances and yajna increased the supremacy of Brahmins. On the other hand because of the expansion of kingdom the importance of kshatriyas scaled up.

At this time the educational tradition’s main aim was to make man complete. In Vedic Age, woman was the queen of family and was the preserver of kula and had privileges.

In short, during this time, woman’s respect and woman-liberty were values and they were maintained. The status of woman in Post Vedic Period was lower compared to the Vedic Period.

### **Contribution in Cultural Field :**

The religions of Vedic Age were simple and easy and gives an idea of moral life. In cultural field, Sanskrit language which is considered as one of the best languages, enriched the heritage. Vedic Literature is an excellent heritage for world culture. The literature preserved in Darshana principles, Darshana reflection, or Sutra has found place as incomparable in world literature.

In Post Vedic Age Brahmins made the religion confusing and complex by yajnas and religious performances. At the same time Bhagvat and Shaiva religions began. In Vedic Age, the Aryan culture was influenced by Non-Aryan Dravidian culture. Due to conflict between both, integrated culture developed. Non-Aryan gods too became the gods of Aryans. Due to the integration of both the people, it became easier for the Indian culture to adopt Greek, Shaka and Huns and their religion, manners, customs, literature and art.

Thus the formation of Indian Culture became the assimilation of tribes and races. The honour for it should go to the fusion of Aryan and Non-Aryan cultures. The Indian Culture's Unity in Diversity began from this period.

### **EXERCISE**

#### **1. Answer the following questions in detail :**

- (1) Criticize the spiritual ideologies described in Upanishads.
- (2) Give brief account of the ideology of Darshana described in Upanishad.
- (3) Describe briefly the Ideology of Jain
- (4) What is the contribution of India in global heritage of Philosophy.
- (5) Mention the heritage given by Vedic Age to India in state and social field.

#### **2. Answer briefly :**

- (1) Name the main Upanishads.
- (2) Give a brief account of Brahmana Volumes.
- (3) What is Sutra Literature?
- (4) Write briefly about the Buddhist thought.
- (5) Give a short information about Vaisheshik Darshana.

#### **3. Choose the correct option from the given alternatives and give answers :**

- (1) What is the number of main Upanishads?  
(A) 18 (B) 11 (C) 108 (D) 6
- (2) Name the Upanishad, written in the form of Poetry.  
(A) Bruhadarnyak (B) Chhandogya (C) Keno (D) Katho
- (3) What is Shadadarshan?  
(A) Machine of conspiracy (B) Sixty darhsana  
(C) Chhala Darhshana (D) six Darshana
- (4) Who is the compiler of Samkhya Darshana?  
(A) Maharshi Patanjali (B) Maharshi Gautam (C) Maharshi Kapil (D) Maharshi Vedvyasa
- (5) Who is the inspirer of adhwaitavada?  
(A) Madhavacharya (B) Shankaracharya (C) Ramanujacharya (D) Ramakrushnacharya

