

# The Later Vedic Civilization

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## Keywords

1. **Hereditary:** is what is passed from one generation to another from previous generation to new generation.
2. **Rajasuya yagna:** It was performed when a king ascended the throne to confer supreme power on him.
3. **Ashvamedha yagna:** The horse sacrifice was performed to establish undisputed authority of the king over the territory through which the horse moved unchallenged.
4. **Brahmacharya:** It was the first stage of a man's life during which he lived with his guru or teacher and received education.
5. **Grihastha:** It was the second stage of a person's life during which he got married and led a family life as a householder.
6. **Vanaprastha:** It was the third stage of a person's life when he gave up his worldly life and went to the forests to meditate.
7. **Sanyasa:** It was the last stage of a person's life when he renounced all worldly ties and became an ascetic spreading the principles of religion and truth.
8. **Gurukul:** was the house of the guru or teacher where the young boys were sent to get education.
9. **Guru dakshina:** It was paid to the guru after a student completed his education. It was paid according to the students's capacity.
10. **Dharma:** It means that every person has a moral duty to do what is right and lead a pious life.
11. **Karma:** It means that people must face the consequences of their actions, i.e.. good deeds must be rewarded and evil deeds must be punished. Transmigration of the soul .It means the passing of a person's soul, after death, into another body.

## EXERCISES

### A. Fill in blanks:

1. The two Indian epics of this period are **Ramayana** and **the Mahabharata**.
2. When a king ascended the throne, the purohita performed the **Rajasuya yagna**.
3. In the Later Vedic Age, the classification of society into four varnas became **rigid** and **hereditary**.
4. A guru treated his students like his **own children** and the students regarded the guru as their **spiritual father**.
5. **Maitreyi** and **Gargi** were two highly educated women of the Early Vedic period.

B. Match the following:

A	B
1. Magadha	(a) creator
2. Avadha	(b) destroyer
3. Grihastha	(c) Kosala
4. Ashvamedha yagna	(d) householder
5. Shiva	(e) Patna and Gaya
6. Brahma	(f) horse sacrifice

Answer:

1. Magadha	(e) Patna and Gaya
2. Avadha	(c) Kosala
3. Grihastha	(d) householder
4. Ashvamedha yagna	(f) horse sacrifice
5. Shiva	(b) destroyer
6. Brahma	(a) creator

C. Choose the correct answer:

1. The Mahabharata/Rig Veda/Arthashastra was composed during the Later Vedic period.

**Ans.** The **Mahabharata** was composed during the Later Vedic period.

2. In ancient times, Varanasi was known as Kashi/Kosala/ Kuru.

**Ans.** In ancient times, Varanasi was known as **Kashi**.

3. During the vanaprastha/brahamacharya/grihastha stage of his life an Aryan stayed in a gurukul and received education from a guru.

**Ans.** During the **brahamacharya** stage of his life an Aryan stayed in a gurukul and received education from a guru.

4. A boy was sent to gurukul at the age of 7/15/25 and stayed there till he was 40/25/50 years old.

**Ans.** A boy was sent to gurukul at the age of **7** and stayed there till he was 25 years old.

5. Agriculture/Trade/Industry was the main occupation of the Aryans.

**Ans. Agriculture** was the main occupation of the Aryans.

**D. State whether the following are true or false:**

1. The Upanishads were composed during the Later Vedic period.

**False.**

Correct: The Upanishads were supposed to have been composed during the Later Vedic period.

2. Excavations indicate the use of iron during this period.

**True.**

3. The sabha and samiti became very powerful during this period.

**False.**

Correct: The sabha and samiti lost much of their control during this period.

4. The caste system became flexible in the Later Vedic Period.

**False.**

Correct: The caste system became rigid in the Later Vedic Period.

5. Education in a gurukul was very expensive.

**False.**

Correct: Students paid fees according to their means.

**E. Answer the following questions in one or two words/ sentences:**

**Question 1.**

What are epics?

**Answer:**

Epics are lengthy poems that describe the brave deeds and adventures of warriors.

**Question 2.**

Name the four kingdoms that developed from small tribal organizations.

**Answer:**

The four kingdoms that developed from small tribal organizations were

1. Kuru (near modern Delhi)

2. Kosala (Awadh)
3. Magadha (Patna and Gaya) and
4. Kashi (Varanasi).

**Question 3.**

What was the importance of the Rajasuya yagna in the Later Vedic period.

**Answer:**

When a king ascended the throne the purohita performed the Rajasuya yagna to confer supreme power on him. The king was elevated to the position of God's representative on earth.

**Question 4.**

What was the highest duty of a woman in the Epic Age?

**Answer:**

Their highest duty was to serve their husbands and take care of the family. However, they continued to participate in religious ceremonies.

**Question 5.**

What was the relationship between the guru and his students?

**Answer:**

The teacher (guru) treated his students like his own children and the children regarded the teacher as their spiritual father.

**Question 6.**

Where was an Aryan educated?

**Answer:**

Aryan was educated in gurukul.

**Question 7.**

In Hindu philosophy, what does the term 'dharma' mean?

**Answer:**

Dharma means that every person has a moral duty to do what is right and to lead a pious life.

**F. Answer the following questions briefly:**

**Question 1.**

Explain the important features of the political organization in the Epic Age.

**Answer:**

Epics are lengthy poems that describe the brave deeds and adventures of warriors.

**Question 2.**

How did the society get sharply divided during the Later Vedic period?

**Answer:**

During the later Vedic period society got sharply divided. Caste was decided by birth and not by occupations. The brahmins and kshatriyas formed the ruling class. The vaishyas were the artisans, traders and farmers. The shudras were the uneducated workers who served the other three classes.

**Question 3.**

What was the position of women during the Later Vedic period?

**Answer:**

The position of women declined in Later Vedic period. She was not allowed to take part in political life. Swayamvaras were no more allowed. She was not given much respect and importance at social and religious gatherings. Women were not allowed to study Vedic literature. The birth of girl was not welcomed.

**Question 4.**

Mention the four ashramas/stages in the life of an Aryan. State the distinctive features of each ashrama.

**Answer:**

The life of an Aryans was divided into following four ashramas.

1. **Brahmacharya:** It was the first stage of man's life when he lived with his guru and received education.
2. **Grihastha:** It was the second stage of man's life during which he got married and led a family life as a householder.
3. **Vanaprastha:** It was the third stage of man's life when he gave up his worldly life and went into the forest to meditate.
4. **Sanayasa:** It was the last stage of a man's life when he renounced all worldly ties and became an ascetic spreading the principles of religion and truth.

**Question 5.**

Describe the Gurukul system of education.

**Answer:**

When a boy was 7 years old. He was sent to gurukul. He stayed there till he was 25 years old.

In a gurukul students had to memorize lesson, which were taught orally. After completing their education, the students paid guru dakshina according to their means. The students led simple and highly disciplined lives in gurukul. They helped their guru in many ways like to cleaned house, drew water from the well, gathered wood and worked in the fields. Students had to memorize lessons which were taught orally.

#### Question 6.

Mention the important features of the religion of the Later Vedic period.

#### Answer:

New ceremonies and rituals were gaining importance day by day in the religion of Later Vedic period. The mode of worship became complex. Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver and Shiva the destroyer, became the most important gods. The status of the brahmans rose up because they made rituals complicated.

#### Question 7.

What are the basic elements of Hinduism? State and explain any one of the three main principles of Hindu Philosophy.

#### Answer:

The word Hindu comes from the word Sindhu, the Sanskrit term for the river Indus. The roots of Hinduism can be traced to the Indus Valley culture.

Hinduism was not founded by any spiritual leader. It is a philosophy and a way of life that evolved over hundreds of years. The mixing of social and religious beliefs of the Indus Valley people and the Aryan settlers led to the evolution of Hinduism.

The essence of Hinduism is the belief in an omnipotent and omnipresent single force or energy (shakti)- the source of all creation. This creator of the universe is God. This God is known by different names and different forms, depending on which aspect of his force is being worshiped. God is the creator, the preserver and the destroyer of this universe.

**There are three main principles on which Hindu Philosophy is based. They are following:**

1. **Dharma**— It means that every person has a moral duty to do what is right and lead a pious life.
2. **Karma**— It means that people must face the consequences of their actions good deeds must be rewarded and evil deeds must be punished.
3. **Transmigration of the soul**— It means the passing of a person's soul, after death, into another body.

**Question 8.**

What were the main occupations of the people of the Later Vedic period?

**Answer:**

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people of the Later Vedic period. The use of iron and improved farming implements brought about increased prosperity. The people also used painted grey vessels. This Period saw the growth of towns and cities as well as the development of trade by barter system.

**Question 9.**

What is the impact of the Aryan civilization on India?

**Answer:**

The Aryans civilization is the cradle of India culture. The Hinduism of today is based on the Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads. The Vedic literature binds the vast majority of Indians into one nation.

**G Picture study.**

This is a picture of a gurukul.

**Question 1.**

Into how many ashramas was the life of an Aryan divided? Name them.

**Answer:**

The life of an Aryan was divided into four following Ashramas.

1. Brahmacharya
2. Grihastha
3. Vansprastha
4. Sanyasa.

**Question 2.**

Give a detailed account of the life of an Aryan during the first ashrama.

**Answer:**

Brahmacharya was the first stage of life during which a person stayed with his guru in the gurukul and received education.

**Question 3.**

The life of an Aryan was divided into stages or ashramas. Which ashrama is depicted in this picture?

**Answer:**

Brahmacharya Ashrama is depicted in this picture.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS**

**Question 1.**

Name the Age in which Later Vedic Period known as?

**Answer:**

The Later Vedic Period is known as Epic Age.

**Question 2.**

Name the two highly educated women of the Early Vedic Period?

**Answer:**

Maitreyi and Gargi were two highly educated women of the Early Vedic Period.

**Question 3.**

What lesson do you draw from the Mahabharata?

**Answer:**

From Mahabharata we draw a clear message that if you have to fight with bad character even though he is your brother or relative as Arjuna in the beginning, refused to fight against his own kith and kin but Lord Krishna gave the divine message to Arjuna, which is now contained in the Bhagvbadgita.



**Question 4.**

Write in three or four lines about the importance of the Ramayana?

**Answer:**

The Ramayana gives us excellent picture of the struggle of the Aryans with the non Aryan and their march in the eastward and southward directions. A picture of perfect characters like the ideal father, son, brother, husband, friend or devotee, appealing to millions up to this day.

**Question 5.**

How did the king become more powerful during this period?

**Answer:**

The king became more powerful during this period because kingship became hereditary. The sabha and samiti lost much of their control over the king. Many new officials assistants like treasurers, collector, chamberlain had come into prominence. The king was elevated to the position of God's representative on earth.