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Tender Heart High School,
Sector 33B, Chandigarh
Class IX

Subject:- History and Civics

Chapter 2 The Vedic Period

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Good Morning Students!

This lesson is of Class IX for the subject of History Chapter 2 The Vedic Period starting on Page No. 16 of your textbook titled Total History & Civics ICSE 9 and is being submitted to you on 26.4.24.

The Aryans came and settled down in India in the around 1500 B.C. So this period from 1500-1000 B.C. is called as Early Vedic Period. It is generally believed by the historians that the Aryans migrated from Central Asia to different parts of Asia and Europe. In India they came and settled around the Sapta Sindhu region. The Aryans later came and settled around the regions of the Ganga-Yamuna. The use of iron along with other metals facilitated the growth of Aryan civilization. This period came to be known as Later Vedic Period.

Before we study about the early and the later Vedic Period let us study the sources for this period which are divided into two - Early Vedic texts and the Later Vedic texts.

The Rigveda, the first of the Vedas, is probably the earliest literary work that humanity possesses. It contains hymns

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in praise of different gods and goddesses like Indra, Varuna and Agni. It consist of 1028 hymns divided into ten Mandalas or Books. The Sama Veda is the Veda of melodies and chants which are meant to be sung at the time of the sacrifice by the priests. The Yajur Veda contains hymns which are to be recited during a ritual sacrifice with a specific objective. The Atharva Veda contains hymns dealing with magic, charms and medicines for treatment of various diseases.

Each of the Vedas mentioned above consist of two parts: the Samhita and the Brahmanas. The Samhita is comprised of hymns and prayers to be sung at rituals and sacrifices. The Brahmanas are prose texts that explain in detail the meaning of the hymns. Besides, there are the Aranyakas (forest texts) and Upanishads which contain the philosophical thoughts of learned sages on Soul, God and the ultimate truth or reality.

The most famous literary works of the later Vedic period were the two great Epics, — the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. While the Ramayana is believed to be the work of sage Valmiki, the Mahabharata is the work of Ved Vyasa. Students you may give a reading to Page No. 18 about both these epics. What is important for our study is

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the importance of the epics

1. The Epics provide information on the political institutions and social and cultural organisation during the Epic Age.
2. They provide information about the various Arayan Kingdoms, their armies and the weapons they used. For a Kshatriya the death on the battlefield was the noblest act of the warrior.
3. The Epics are acclaimed for their literary and philosophical value.
4. They reveal the high ideals of the family life as set by the Aryans.
5. The Bhagavad Gita, which forms part of the Mahabharata, is one of the most popular religious texts considered sacred by the people of India. The interest of the self might conflict with duty and whenever there is such a conflict the Gita does give the answer.

Let us take a short break. You are requested to read the assignment above and attempt the following questions in your notebook.

1. Which is the oldest Veda? What does it contain?
2. What is contained in the Upanishads?
3. List one importance of the Epics.

We will now discuss the answers

1. Rig Veda which contains hymns dedicated to

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gods and goddesses.

2. The Upanishads contain the philosophical thoughts of learned sages on soul, God and the ultimate truth or reality.

3. The Epics reveal the high ideal of the family life of the Aryans.

Iron Artifacts: The discovery of iron made it possible for the Aryans to move eastwards. Axes made of iron made it easier to fell trees and clear forests. Iron ploughshares made deep ploughing easy. It helped peasants to produce varied crops. Carpenters, masons, metal workers started working with better iron tools. This gave rise to development of different crafts. Increased agricultural productivity led to the growth of trade and commerce. This gave a momentum to the rise of towns and cities.

We will briefly study here about the pottery. The Rig Vedic Aryans had Grey Ware and The Ganga-Yamuna doab is associated with Painted Grey Ware (PGW). So the Later Vedic Period is related to PGW. It is fine and smooth, even-coloured pottery.

After studying about the sources of the Vedic Period we will study about the society during early and later Vedic period. The basic unit of the social structure was the family. The joint family system was

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prevalent. The Rig Vedic society was patriarchal in which Grihyapati dominated in family and social life. In the early Vedic Period women were respected and took part in all the religious rites. Women were given education and there were women scholars who composed hymns. Girls had freedom in choice of their husband. In the later Vedic age women were generally given a lower position. Instead of monogamy, polygamy was practised at least in higher sections of the society. So the women naturally assumed a subordinate position.

Students we will continue with our study of the comparative study of Early and Later Vedic Period in different spheres next week. Please give a reading from Page No. 16-22 of your textbook and complete the following home assignment.

1. Short Answer Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11
2. Structured Questions 1(a, b) ; 2(b)

Thank You!