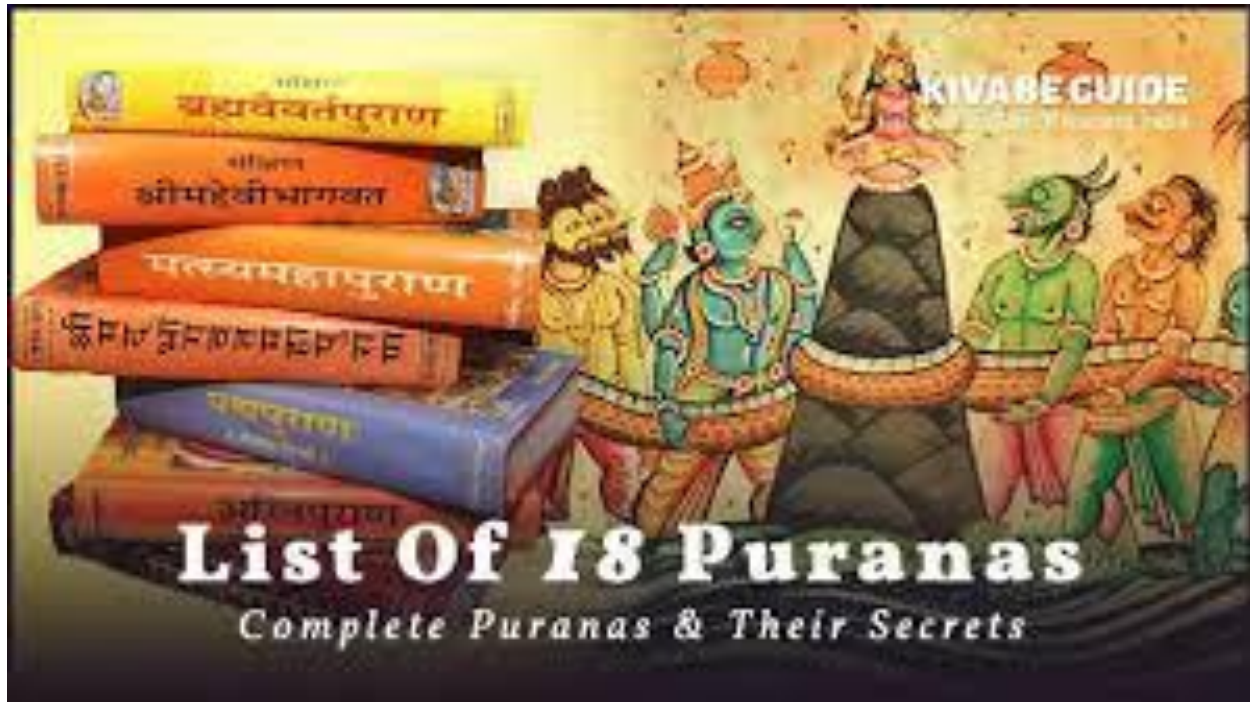




Puranas



The Puranas are a genre of ancient Indian texts that are part of Hindu literature. They are a collection of religious and mythological stories, legends, genealogies, cosmology, and historical narratives. The word "Purana" is derived from the Sanskrit term "pura," meaning "ancient" or "old," and they are considered to be some of the oldest scriptures in Hinduism.

There are a total of 18 major Puranas, which are further categorized into three groups:

1. **Brahma Puranas:**

- Brahma Purana
- Padma Purana
- Vishnu Purana
- Shiva Purana
- Bhagavata Purana

2. **Vaishnava Puranas:**

- Narada Purana
- Garuda Purana
- Bhavishya Purana
- Padma Purana
- Varaha Purana

3. **Shaiva Puranas:**

- Shiva Purana
- Linga Purana
- Skanda Purana
- Agni Purana

Each Purana typically contains a mixture of religious teachings, legends of gods and goddesses, cosmological and cosmogonical discussions, genealogies, rituals, and moral teachings. They play a significant role in preserving and transmitting various aspects of Hindu mythology, philosophy, history, and culture.

The Puranas were composed over a long period of time, with some parts dating back to around 300 BCE and others continuing to be composed up until the medieval period. The texts vary in content, style, and emphasis, but they collectively provide a comprehensive overview of Hindu thought and beliefs.

It's important to note that the Puranas are not considered primary scriptures like the Vedas or the Upanishads. While they are highly respected and influential, they are not necessarily considered the ultimate authorities in Hindu philosophy and spiritual practice. Instead, they serve as a valuable source of traditional knowledge and mythology.