

Teachings of Upanishads - Scientific Perspective

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Upanishads have very important place in Vedic literature. The word Upanishad has three parts; Upa +Ni + Sad. Upa and Ni are prefixes. 'Upa' means near; 'Ni' means fully and 'sad' means to sit. Upanishad means to sit fully with the Brahma (pronounced as Br-h-m). Ten of the most famous Upanishads are - Eesha, Kena, Kath, Prashna, Mundak, Mandookya, Tattireey, Aitareya, Chhandoga, Vrihdaranyak. Teaching of Brahmvidya is main subject of Upanishad but spiritual science is also an important subject.

Mainly there are three entities in spiritual science – Parmatma/God, Aatmaa/soul and Prakriti/matter. These are described in many Mantras of Upanishads. I would like to quote two Mantras from two Upanishads:

1. ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत्। तेन ... ईशोपनिषद् १

O men! Every being and every particle (animate or inanimate) of this universe is created, pervaded and sustained by the Supreme Power, Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent Parmatma/God. Enjoy all things given by the Almighty Lord, but do not covet the wealth of any other person.

2. द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते। .. मुण्डक ३.१.१

The God is called as Brahma almost in all Upanishads. There is one Shlok in Kenopnishad which is repeated five times - तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि!- Tadeva. Brahma tvam viddhi. It means that is Brahma who gives strength to all organs of the body, who knows the mind of every one, by whom the eye sees, the ear hears and by whom the Praan act/gets strength, indeed know him only as Brahma.

Etadhyevakshram brahm Etadhyevakshram param (Kath 1.1.16) He is smaller than the atom (minutest) and greater than the great (greatest). अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान् Everything dwells in him and he lives everywhere. He is the only creator of this universe. This Brahman is Imperishable and Eternal He is one and only one but is called by several names. Second eternal entity is Soul or Aatmaa. Almost in all Upanishads soul is described extensively. According to Kath (1.2.18) this soul never takes birth nor dies, nor it came from anywhere, it is not formed or made of matter or other substance. It is unborn, eternal, without beginning, ancient and is not killed; only the body is perishable. Know that soul to be the master of chariot - this body (Kath 1.3.3).

Third chapter of Aitreyaopnishad starts with a question "Who is this spirit - soul or Aatmaa, whom we may worship?" कोऽयमात्मेति वयमुपास्महे। Aitareya 3.1. Next Mantra gives the answer that Aatmaa is to be worshiped which has 18 qualities.

हृदयं - feelings – heart; मन - concentrating mind; संज्ञान – consciousness; आज्ञान - direction, commander will; विज्ञान - special scientific knowledge - physical as well as spiritual; प्रज्ञान - higher wisdom or intelligence; मेधा - retentive intellect, दृष्टि - vision or sight, धृति - patience or

firmness; **मति** - considered opinion or thinking power; **मनीषा** - control of mind; **स्मृति** - force or momentum; **संकल्प** - memory, **क्रतु** - volition, action or effort: **असु** - vital power; **काम** - Imbalanced desire; **वश** - control of one's self.

These are all names of the higher wisdom and are the qualities of soul -Aatmaa. Third entity of spiritual science is Matter Prakriti. Prakriti is the name of three collective things called Sattva or pure, Rajas or middling, and Tamas or inert.

This universe is created by these three eternal entities. The Braham or God, Soul and matter; Parmatma, Aatmaa and Prakriti. This fact is revealed in a Mantra of Shvetashvataropnishad 4.5. In the creation of this universe Parmatma or God is Nimitt Kaaran -**निमित्त कारण** or efficient cause; as a n artist who make something say for example a pot; Upaadaan Karan -**उपादान कारण** is the material used in making that pot. If the pot is made of clay then clay is the Upaadaan Karan -**उपादान कारण** The Panch Mahabhootas - **पंच महाभूत** are - sky, air, fire, water, and earth. These play an important part in creation of every particle.

Taittireeyopnishad – **तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद्** 1.3 describes the chain of the creation as follows: **तस्माद् वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः सम्भूतः आकाशाद्वायुः वासोऽग्निः अग्नेरापः अद्भ्यः पृथ्वी, पृथिव्या ओषधयः ओषधिभ्यः अन्नम्, अन्नाद् रेतः रेतसः पुरुषः** - The Supreme Soul created the ethereal space, afterwards from eternal matter - air, after air fire, after fire water, after water earth, from earth herbs, plants, and food grains etc., from food virile semen from virile semen man was born. This is the way the creation of Purush occurs.

All these elements are thoroughly explored and explained by modern science. Many other entities also play important part in this spiritual science. Such as Vidya- Avidya, Para-Apara, vomb etc.

Introduction of Author

Dr. Subhash Vedalankar is Professor Emeritus. He is Head Chairman Department of Sanskrit, Rajasthan University, Jaipur, India. He is also a reputed, well-known Vedic scholar, eminent interpreter and commentator on Vedas. He is authority on Panini Sanskrit methodology and has vast original and authentic contribution to Sanskrit literature. Dr. Vedalankar is recognized for spreading message of Vedas as a Vedic missionary and continuous propagator of Indian culture and traditions. Because of his untiring work and contribution for betterment of mankind, he has been honored and recognized by various organizations, institutions and personalities throughout India.

