

## **The Science of Upanishads – Part 57: Conclusions-Part-3**

**(April 18 –April 24, 2018)**

In Part-2 of Conclusions last week, it was explained that **knowing the Ātmā is not simply understanding it, but is actually experiencing it!** We also discussed how one can go about experiencing the Ātmā **through Meditation**. However, that was too simplistic an explanation since we already know from several weeks of detailed studies on **Yoga Sutras of Patanjali** that **Meditation is only one part (Anga or Limb) of the total eight parts of Ashtanga (Eight-Limbed) Yoga**, and is in fact the penultimate step to Samadhi, the state of self-realization. So, there are six steps, including Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, and Dharana, all of which must be mastered before Meditation can be successfully executed.

Now let us summarize and reflect and upon **the important messages relayed by each of the 11 Principal (Mukhya) Upanishads (out of 108) that we covered in 54 parts during the past year**. As outlined in Part-1 of Conclusions, these include Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Yejurveda), Chandogya Upanishad (Samaveda), Ishavasya Upanishad (Yejurveda), Katha Upanishad (Yejurveda), Kena Upanishad (Samaveda), Mandukya Upanishad (Atharvaveda), Mundaka Upanishad (Atharvaveda), Prashna Upanishad (Atharvaveda), Taittiriya Upanishad (Yejurveda), Aitareya Upanishad (Rigveda), and Shvetashvatara Upanishad (Yejurveda). In addition to these 11 Mukhya Upanishads, we have also touched upon two other secondary Upanishads from Samaveda, including Maitrayani Upanishad and Vajrasuchi Upanishad.

1. **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Yejurveda)** is one of the oldest and longest Upanishads, literally meaning *“Upanishad of the great forests”* and it centers around the fundamentals of the Atman, Soul or Self. It touches upon the internal meaning of almost every phase of human life. It emphasizes the fact that things are not what they outwardly appear, and it unfolds of the mystery that lies behind physical phenomena.
2. **Chandogya Upanishad (Samaveda)** helps us to discriminate the reality of being from the appearance of becoming through several illuminating teacher-student dialogues. In a brief utterance of deep spiritual and philosophical import, it prescribes a knowledge of this innate divinity of man as the one remedy for the deeper ills of life. It instructs us in the true nature and technique of man's spiritual quest and the blessings that flow from spirituality. It is an impressive account of man's spiritual education, his growth from worldliness to spirituality. It points out the limitations of materialism as a philosophy of life and the evils that flow from it.
3. **Ishavasya Upanishad (Yejurveda)** is one of the shortest Upanishads, embedded as the final chapter (*adhyāya*) of the Shukla Yajurveda. In its very opening verse, it embodies the central theme of all the Upanisads, namely, the spiritual unity and solidarity of all existence. It is a key scripture of the Vedanta sub-schools, and an

influential Śruti to diverse schools of Hinduism in that it is referenced by both Dvaita (dualism) and Advaita (non-dualism) sub-schools of Vedanta.

4. **Katha Upanishad (Yejurveda)** clearly explains the role of an accomplished Guru, the one who has already attained the Sidhi, in our own spiritual growth, comprehension and realization of Atman and Brahman. The Upanishad further dictates that The syllable OM (Aum) is nothing but Brahman. In addition, it presents a convincing argument that "All is One, Indivisible, Pure, Conscience." The charm of the Katha Upanishad is enhanced by the two characters of its dialogue, namely, old Yama, the teacher, and young Naciketa, the student.
5. **Kena Upanishad (Samaveda)** is one of the most analytical and metaphysical of all Upanishads, its purpose being to lead the mind from the gross to the subtle, from effect to cause. By a series of profound questions and answers, it seeks to locate the source of man's being; and to expand his self-consciousness until it has become identical with God-Consciousness. Kena Upanishad is notable in its discussion of the Brahman with attributes and without attributes. It asserts that the efficient cause of all the gods, symbolically envisioned as forces of nature, is Brahman.

*Stay Tuned for Part-4 of Conclusions with Summary of the Remaining 6 Mukhya Upanishads....*