



OUR SCRIPTURES

Part: - 3

THE SRUTHIS

In our last issue we had very briefly dealt about the different classifications of the *Ve:da:s*. As the name itself says, the *Ve:da:s* deal with everything that is to be known. In fact these scriptures deal with everything in this creation. There were 1131 branches of *Ve:da:s*. Each and every branch of *Ve:da* deal with different practices and methods to accomplish various worldly and eternal benefits. Material sciences like Medicine, Astrology, Astronomy, Aeronautics etc. are also a part of them. They deal with the subjects in such a wonderful manner that there is no better way to pack so much of working detail for the good of those who really understand and follow them. They converge on to a pin point called the goal that every soul is destined to reach, for which all other activities are prescribed. They deal in such a manner that Man can live in coherence with the That part of *Ve:das* which explore and lead us towards the ultimate goal of life is called as *VEDA:NTHA*. It may be dealt in the beginning, in the middle or in the end, wherever. *Ve:da:ntha* means that which leads us to the essential penultimate goal that *Ve:das* finally proclaim. *Veda:ntha* is also called as *UPANISHAD* and *UTHTHARA KA:NDA*.

The part that deals with the regular duties to be performed, various practical methods and practical details, to accomplish various tasks according to the needs and desires of the aspirants are collectively called as *KARMA*

KA:NDA.

Karma ka:nda mainly comprises the *Samhitha:s*, *Bra:mhanas* and parts of *A:ranjakas*. They mainly deal with various rituals and ceremonies that are to be performed. They also tell the benefits of performing and the consequences of neglecting the prescribed rituals and ceremonies. They also prescribe certain atonements to escape the reactions of neglecting the prescribed duties. One has to study *Karma ka:nda* initially and perform the rituals mentioned in it. By doing so, one will realize that the fruits derived from performing them are of ephemeral nature. As a result of that realization he strives to attain eternal bliss and studies *Veda:ntha* in the process. Now, after realising *Vedantha* through a preceptor, one continues to do everything, as usual, as ordained, without neglecting any of his duties or escaping from any of his responsibilities. But... now he does everything for the good of others, with **more perfection** and with added flavour of **Divine attitude**, with **Supreme realisation** and irresistible **Universal Love** towards all the beings, as long as he lives.

The *Upanishads* mainly deal with the three realities i.e. Supreme (Bramhan), *Jiva(soul)* and *Prakruthi (Nature)*. *Upanishads* also explain the source of creation, human life and its goal, the means to attain the goal and the nature of the goal (about the Supreme Brahman and the eternal bliss, which one would attain).

Each and every word of the *Veda* is adored as the personification

of the Supreme Lord Himself. However, special importance is attached to the *Upanishads*. The term *Upanishad* is split as 'UPA' 'NI' 'SHAD'. 'UPA' means near, 'NI' means properly and 'SHAD' means makes one to sit. The *Upanishads* were closely guarded secrets and were revealed only to a few selected disciples. The selected disciple or disciples were made to sit very close to the preceptor and these treatises were taught in a very low tone or whispered into the ears of the disciples. Hence, these treatises are called *Upanishads*. They are also called so because they take us near to the Supreme Lord. The *Upanishads* loosen the bondage of *samsa:ra* i.e. the material world and thereby take us to the ultimate happiness.

All the schools of Vedic thought have originated from the *Upanishads*. There are more than two hundred *Upanishads*. However the tradition recognizes only hundred and eight of them. Only ten of them are honoured as the authoritative *Upanishads*. They are *I:sa*, *Ke:na*, *Katta*, *Prasna*, *Mundaka*, *Ma:ndu:kya*, *Aithare:ya*, *thai:ththiriya:*, *Chha:ndo:gya* and *Brihada:ranjaka*. Apart from these *Upanishads* the great spiritual preceptors have frequently referred to *Suba:la*, *Swetha:swathara*, *kau:shithaki* and *Maho:panishad*. Only the above mentioned *Upanishads* are considered to be the most authoritative scriptures.

Vedic scriptures are presented in a mystical and encrypted language. Hence, if one tries to read the Vedic texts, just as we read any other literature, he will not be able to realise or understand them. One has to be well versed in all the six auxiliary branches of Vedas

to interpret the right meaning of the Vedic texts. The six auxiliary branches of Vedas are:

- 1) *SIKSHA* - The science that details the rules of analysis to the Vedic syllables basing on position, duration, origin, tone etc.
- 2) *VYAKARANA* - Grammar which deals with right interpretation to the Vedic words according to their syntax and semantics.
- 3) *KALPA* - That details the activities to perform and the methods followed in conducting Vedic Yagnas.
- 4) *NIRUKTHA* - the science that deals with definitions, word formations phonetic interactions, contextual interpretations etc.
- 5) *CHHANDAS* - Meter and
- 6) *JYOTHI:SHYAM* - Astrophysical science that deals with the practical aspects of right times suitable (and durations) to perform various ordained activities.

Even if well versed in all the six auxiliary branches of the Vedic literature one can only know the literal meaning of the Vedic text. They often seem paradoxical but, they are filled with esoteric meanings. As they are capsules of highly unimaginable, very far advanced technologies highly condensed into manthras, these scriptures were taught only to a few trusted disciples in the disciplic succession, by word of mouth. For, if they are tampered by ignorant, lazy or negligent, then, the original, profound underlying knowledge may be lost and also it may yield undesirable results. Hence, one has to deeply immerse into the tradition to understand them properly. It is our good fortune that we are a part of such a glorious tradition.

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