

UPANISHATHS

KATTOPANISHATH -1

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*. They are often designated as the crown of the *Ve:das*. *Upanishads* are defined as “*Upanishi:dya gruhya ma:nathva:th Upanishad.*” Which means the knowledge, which is to be learnt by sitting down near the preceptor is known as *Upanishad*. The term *Upanishad* is split up as ‘UPA’ ‘NI’ ‘SHAD’. ‘UPA’ means sit, ‘NI’ means down and ‘SHAD’ means near. The *Upanishads* were closely guarded secrets and were revealed only to 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 defined as “*Upanishi:dathi ithi Upanishad.*” Which means that which takes one nearer to the Supreme Lord. The *Upanishads* loosen the bondage of *samsa:ra* i.e. the material world and thereby take us nearer to the Lord. The *Upanishads* are also called as *Veda:ntha*. That which comes in the end of *Ve:das* is called as *Ve:da:ntha*. The *Upanishads* form the concluding part of the *Ve:das*, hence the *Upanishads* are called as *Veda:ntha*. The term *Veda:ntha* can also explained as, that which is the conclusion of the *Vedas*. The *Upanishads* are said to be the culmination of the *Ve:das*, hence they are also called as *Ve:da:ntha*. The *Upanishads* tell us about the Self (individual Self and the universal Self). Hence they are also called as *a:thma vidya* or *adhya:thma vidya*. The term

Upanishad is also used to denote “confidential knowledge”.

One can find more than two hundred *Upanishads*. However only hundred and eight of them are accepted in the tradition. Out of these only ten of them are honoured as the principal *Upanishads*. They are *I:sa, Ke:na, Kattha, Prasna, Mundaka, Ma:ndu:kya, Aithare:ya, Thaiththiri:ya, Chha:ndo:gya* and *Brihada:ranyaka*. Apart from these *Upanishads*, the great spiritual preceptors have frequently referred to *Suba:la, Swe:tha:swathara, kaushi:thaki* and *Maho:panishad*. Hence these *Upanishads* are also accorded the status of the principal *Upanishads*. All the traditions (schools of thought) accept these principal *Upanishads* as the most authoritative scriptures.

The most acclaimed *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, which was revealed by Lord Krishna to Arjuna, is also regarded as an *Upanishad*. It is said that The Lord revealed the essence of all the *Upanishads* to Arjuna in His *Bhagavad Gi:tha*. All the *Ve:dic* religions are said to have originated from the *Upanishads*. According to the prescribed standards, one has to explicate *Veda:ntha Su:thras* in accordance with the above mentioned *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gi:tha*, to establish a *Ve:dic* school of thought.

The *Upanishads* tell us about the three realities. They are *I:swara* (the Supreme Lord), *Ji:va* (the individual soul) and *Prakrithi* (material nature). The *Upanishads* tell us about the various aspects of the creation, purpose of the creation, source of creation, nature of the soul, auspicious qualities of the Supreme Lord, the means of attaining



the Supreme Lord and the nature of the Bliss after attaining the Supreme Lord. The process by which one can reach the Supreme Lord is called as *Vidya* or *Bramha Vidya*. There are thirty-two *Vidyas* like *Karma*, *jna:na*, *Bhakthi* etc, mentioned in the *Upanishads*. Most of these *Vidyas* are mentioned in the *Chha:ndo:gya* and *Brihad a:ran'yaka Upanishads*.

The *Upanishads* also tell us about the various aspects of human life. They describe the various duties and non-duties of a man. They explain the benefits of leading a righteous life through various allegories. For instance that of Nachikethas in *Katto:panishad*. The *Upanishads* are said to be eternal. The highest doctrine revealed in the *Upanishads* is applicable to all times. The benefits of practicing the science prescribed in the *Upanishads* are unlimited. However the *Upanishads* are liable to misinterpretations and misrepresentations. The most confidential knowledge mentioned in the *Upanishads* does not manifest to everybody. Hence more often than not they are misinterpreted. It is advisable to learn them from a Spiritual Master who is immersed in the tradition and well versed in the scriptures.

The *Upanishads* are in a paradoxical language. They teach us the basic truths of thought and action. Many pseudo spiritualists often tend to mislead the people by misinterpreting these scriptures. Hence one has to cautiously approach the Spiritual Master who does not deviate from the tradition. A Spiritual Master will not only help us to understand these scriptures but also will reveal the esoteric truths mentioned in them. He will also initiate us to the practice of the truths mentioned in these scriptures.
H.H. Sri Sri Sri Tridandi Chinna



Srimannarayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamiji the greatest Spiritual Master of the modern times is known across the Globe for His style of interpreting these scriptures. We are presenting *Katto:panishad* in pictorial form for the benefit of our young readers.

Katto:panishad forms a part of *Katta sa:kha* of *Krishna Yajur Ve:da*. As this *sa:kha* (branch of Veda) was taught to *Katta Maharishi* by *Vaisampa:yana* this *sa:kha* came to be known as *Katta sa:kha*. The *Upanishad* also is named after the *sa:kha* to which it belongs. This *Upanishad* tells us about one of the thirty two *Bramha vidya:s* known as *Na:chike:tha:gni vidya*. It also tells us how a small boy called *Nachike:tha* was instrumental in bringing that *vidya* to the world of mortals.

Sage *Uddalaka* unintentionally said in anger, that he would give his son *Nachike:tha* to Lord *Yama* (god of death). *Nachike:tha*, though a small kid was conscious of the subtleties of righteousness. In order to save his father from the sin of uttering falsehood, *Nachike:tha* went to the planet of *Yama*, much against the wishes of his father. Lord *Yama* being pleased with *Nachike:tha* offered him three boons. *Nachike:tha* sought the knowledge by which one can attain eternal bliss as one of the boons from Lord *Yama*. Lord *Yama* initially hesitates to impart the sought knowledge. However, in the end, Lord *Yama* reveals it to *Nachike:tha* after testing him and ascertaining his mental maturity and determination to procure it. Lord *Yama* also named that knowledge after *Nachike:tha*. Let us know more about the same in detail, from the story in pictures from the next issue