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## Personality development: through the light of Upaniṣadic education

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### Abstract

We, all the creatures in this universe are mortal but the spirit soul by the laws of nature, takes his birth and gets a suitable body and sense organs for enjoying matter in the material world. So, we the persons mean not our body but our soul. In such way personality development means spiritual development which we should achieve for reestablishment of our lost relationship with the supreme personality of Godhead. The personality of Godhead, who is fully cognizant of everything in His creation, informs us that it is in our best interest that we desire to get out of this miserable existence. We should not deeply addict with the material things for becoming a spiritual man. The spiritual activity is not the negation of material action but the activation of our real life. We must be anxious to search out eternal life, or spiritual existence in Upaniṣadic education.

**Keywords:** Upaniṣads, soul, Ātman, spiritual, value, education.

### Introduction

What do we mean by development of personality by knowledge or education? Is it physical growth of body? Or, is it an outward growth associated with social status and worldly prosperities? Or, is it a mental growth? I would say none of them is development of personality. Development of personality is not a bodily growth. Many great personalities, we know, were very lean and thin. To have a large amount of prosperity is also not a development of personality, because we know many kings, emperors, rich men doing hateful deeds. Development of mind for aspiring more and more is also not a personality development because a man becomes great by controlling his mind, not by letting it run after worldly pleasure uncontrolled. As a matter of fact, development of personality is the development of soul which we call Ātman. 'Self' is not an appropriate word for Atman, as it has lost its proper connotation going down to 'selfishness'. The word Ātmīyatā is a correct word for it and development of personality is the development of Ātman or Ātmīyatā. As much as we develop the feeling of Ātmīyatā to our family, society, nation, world, even to the animal, plants, etc., our personality would be greater and greater. When a man begins to think on this line that 'my district', 'my village', 'my family', and I alone be happy, this is the gradual downfall of the personality. This type of thinking gives birth to many struggles, quarrel, and hatred, with all upper planes. This is the downfall of Atman.

Everyone in the world has its own corporal entity which we call 'body' in which the Ātman resides. On the lowest level, it is corporal self. On the basis of this corporal body or self we distinguish personalities like human body, animal body, bird body and so on. On this level, the basic requirements for these bodies activate one for one's continued existence. On this level there is no difference between the men, animal, birds, etc., because food, sleeping, fear and sex are common basic instincts for all. But there is only one property called self-realization which makes a man different from animal, birds, etc. This kind of self-realization we can gain through the light of Upaniṣads.

In Ultra-modern nuclear age we are madly addicted with the material things motivated by our desires therefore our morality, humanity and spiritual value is decreasing day by day. I think that's real cause lack of self-realization. We should ask each me three question who am I? Where from am I coming? And why? Actually we think we mean our body, our out figure, physically existence but nothing is eternal only Atman in this world. Kathopaniṣad says "ajo

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nityah śāsvato yaṁ purāno na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre" [1]. and we are all the part of our supreme God who is the creator of this world, everything. So it is our duty to serve him. But due to lack of this self-realization we think ourselves the owner of the world. Our mind is consisting last, anger, greed, egoism, selfishness. Man is the best of all creature as said in the Mahabharata, "na hi mānuṣāt śreṣṭhātaram kiṁchit", and he has the best sense organ but without its proper cultivation of our mind we are making ourselves none but a speaking and thinking animal.

Manas, mind is both pure and impure. Jaiminīyopaniṣad remarks that the mind is a pond filled with the desires 'sa eṣa hardaḥ kāmānāṁ purānaḥ yan manaḥ' [2] and the speech is a channel to flow out- 'tasyaiṣā kulyā yad vāk'. Maitrāyaṇi Upaniṣad observes- "mano hi dvividhaṁ proktaṁ śuddhaṁ cāśuddhaṁ eva ca/ aśuddhaṁ kāmasamparkāt śuddhaṁ kāmavivarjitaṁ" [3]. The mind becomes perturbed when associated with (wild) desires. It become pure when freed from such desires.

Naturally when mind is impure - filled with desires, especially wild desires, a person out breaks into evil abusive language. For a sophisticated and sweet speech one's mind also must be pure free from wild desires. The manas, therefore, needs a treatment for being pure. To perform a sacrifice performing deeds without attachment is its treatment. Even in usual sacrifice, the sacrifice offers the oblations- reciting 'idam na mama.' When a sacrifice is performed without attachment to its fruits, is supposed to be a *Sattvika* sacrifice.

Such Nobel mind of pious intentions relishes that the ultimate reality is one and that it pervades every atom and controls all from within. In that ultimate reality, hundreds of brilliant stars become one, all the Vedas become one, all the sacrifice become one. The Atman – the ultimate eternal reality dwells in all of them and can be realized by meditative Nobel mind.

Reversed Swami Vivekananda addressed the American audience with the words 'brothers and sisters'. Reality the feeling of universal fraternity was running through his veins. Such feelings were fostered in his mind, by the values of universal brotherhood, as reflected in Vedic and Upaniṣadic philosophy.

In Sveātsvatara Upaniṣad, the Rṣi addressed his disciples with "śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ" [4] 'o ye descendants of immortals.' The ancient seers mean to say that everyone is a *putra*, a descendant of that all-pervading, immortal, eternal Truth, and as a result, there is the relationship of brotherhood between all Beings.

According to Upaniṣadic seers' education is the initiation into the life of the spirit, a training of human souls in the pursuit of truth and practice of values. But in the present era man making education provides us a degree or a job, but does not develop our morality and humanity. Therefore, we are living by a critical phase where human civilization witnesses a rapid distortion of moral as well as social values. In the Vedic tradition, the first and Principal value of education was the quest for liberation of individuals from the slavery of evils; "sā vidyā yā vimuktaye". According to the Vedic seers man making education is a training of self-realization for the holistic development of humanity and the process by the harmonious combination of material and spiritual science. Education (śikṣā) is a means to impart knowledge (vidyā), which is the real goal of life, and is indeed knowledge. (ātmanā bindate bīyram vidyayā bindate amṛtṁ) [5] It is Veda, it is vidyā, that has been explained by

the ancient seers as bhadraḥ kṛtavah, i.e., 'noble and auspicious thoughts', which are aspired for to come from all corners. Such noble thoughts are instruments in the development of one's personality.

In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (śikṣādhyāya) of the Yajurveda the receptor in his convocation instructs his disciples to nourish human values. He exhorts "Satyaṁ vada, dharmam cara, svādhyāyānmā pramadaḥ...satyāna pramaditavyam, dharmāna pramaditavyam, kusalanāna pramaditavyam, bhutyai na pramaditavyam, svādhyāyappravacanābhyām na pramaditavyam" [6]... mātṛdevo vaba, pitṛdevo vaba, ācāryadevo vaba, athitidevo vaba..." [7]

(Speak the truth, do your duties, never swerve from the study of the Vedas....Never err from the truth, never fall from duty, never overlook your own welfare, never neglect your prosperity and never neglect the study and the propagation of the Vedas....May the father be, to thee, a good. May the preceptor be, to thee, a God. May the guest be, to thee, a God)

So, these are the thoughts oriented value of ancient India, which have to be reestablished for our eternal welfare. From the Kathopaniṣad, we must recall the inspiring instruction of Naciketā, a mere boy of tender age who was determined to know the mystery of death instead of getting the opportunities for a lot of material wealth like a horse, elephant, herds of cattle, gold, musical instrument, long life as he wishes and fair maidens etc. But Naciketā said-

"na bittena tarpaṇyō manuṣyo lapsāyamahe vittamadrakṣma cet tvā  
Jīviṣyāmo yābadīṣisyi tvaṁ varastu me varaṇīyaḥ sa eba." [8]

(Wealth can never make a man happy more ever since I have beheld you, I shall certainly obtain wealth I shall also live as long as your rule therefore no boon will be accepted by me but the one that I have asked)

So we can easily understand from the vivid vision of great Naciketā that the education of this period was so enriched that they could realize the spiritual knowledge beyond the material senses and could easily get rid of the material desires. At Taittirīya Upaniṣad it is maintained that every day during the study of the rest of the book the teacher and student both chanted this peace-convocation...

"Om saha nāvavatu, saha nau bhunaktu,  
Sahavīryam karavāvahai  
Tejasvi nvāadhītastu mā vidviaṣāvahai  
Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ." [9]

(This knowledge may protect us both the teacher and his disciple. We may work together with vigor. Our knowledge may make us illumined. May there be no dislike between us.) But in the modern college this teaching cannot be learned merely from the bazaar notes. The perfect unison between the teacher and the taught generally gets molested by some misunderstanding between them. It may be either in the form of teacher's dissatisfaction towards his students or it can be due to the student's misjudgment of the teacher's attitude or words.

In the Isopaniṣad two fundamental knowledge material (Avidyā) and spiritual (Vidyā) are highlighted. Through material knowledge we can fulfill all of our material desires and through spiritual knowledge we conquer the immortality and liberation. From Isopaniṣad, "avidyayā mṛtyuṁ trtvā

vidyayāmṛtaṃ aśnute”.<sup>[10]</sup> So in recent days we should follow the same path so that we can gain both the above goals. In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad related to the Yajurveda, remarks- “tad etat evaisa daivi vag anuvadati stanayitnur da da da iti, damyata, datta, dayadhvam iti”.<sup>[11]</sup> The heavenly voice of thunder that is sounds da da da – control yourself, give, and be compassionate. One should practice this triad – self-control, giving and compassion. These three instructions provide the base for General Ethics (samanya dharma) but the instruction of ‘datta’ – sharing wealth with others, associated with the concept of yagna is significant.

### Conclusion

Therefore, we can conclude that the education in Upaniṣadic era and the way of teaching was proper to accumulate the material and especially spiritual knowledge. So we should recast our modern outlook in the Upaniṣdic framework to overcome the hurdles and bandeaux in our modern educational system. By reestablishing Upaniṣadic culture, we can lead to a class of properly educated persons who can ignite to the whole society to be a wisely developed one.

### Endnotes

1. Kathopaniṣad, 2nd vallī, śloka 12
2. Jaiminīyopaniṣad 1.58
3. Maitrāyaṇi Upaniṣad 6.34
4. Śveātsvatara Upaniṣad 2.5
5. Kenopaniṣad, 2<sup>nd</sup> part, śloka
6. Taittirīya Upaniṣad, śikṣā vallī, section xi, 1
7. Taittirīya Upaniṣad, śikṣā vallī, section xi, 2
8. Kathopaniṣad, 1<sup>st</sup> vallī,
9. Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Brahmānda- vallī, santipatha.
10. Īsopaniṣad, śloka, 1
11. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.2.3

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