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Relevance of Upanishads in Corporate Management and Governance

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Abstract

Upanishads are the quintessential essence of the Vedas. They are at the very roots of the Indian Knowledge System, and in the list of prominent scriptures, the Upanishads are amongst the most profound scriptures and are highly relevant today, with a rider. Upanishads need to be interpreted in a modern context without diluting their profundity. This article examines the relevance of lessons from the Upanishads in the context of governance and various levels of activities in the field of corporate management, viz., managing oneself and other individuals, managing a team, managing an organisation through exalted touch of leadership, and managing a larger cause of humanity without losing sight of the spiritual growth of self and others. For relevant elaborations, at the beginning of the article, the Vedas have also been referred to sparingly, as the Vedas are the original sources of the Upanishads.

Keywords: Upanishads, Vedas, Indian Knowledge System, prominent scriptures, corporate management, spiritual growth

Introduction to Upanishads and their relevance

Majorly, there are two divisions of Upanishads – Vedic Upanishads and Non-Vedic Upanishads. A Vedic Upanishad is a portion of one of the four parts of the Vedas. Later on, some more Upanishads were written, and they form the set of Non-Vedic Upanishads. Upanishads are also called Vedaanta (the pinnacle or the most profound part of the Vedas) or Uttar Meemaansaa (one of the six major philosophies in the field of Indian Knowledge System). In total, 194

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Upanishads are available. It is commonly accepted that the 11 Upanishads are called the Principal Upanishads. The reason for such counting is that these Upanishads were chosen for further interpretation for writing commentaries by Aadi Shankaraachaarya. The 11 Principal Upanishads are Iishaavaasya Upanishad, Kena Upanishad, Kathaa Upanishad, Brihad-aaranyak Upanishad, Chhaan-dogya Upanishad, Mun-dak Upanishad, Maan-dookya Upanishad, Prashna Upanishad, Taitti-reeya Upanishad, Shwetaa-shwa-tar Upanishad and Aita-reya Upanishad. While understanding scriptures, the learner is required to keep the mind open, but is expected to be an empathetic receiver. The sixth verse of the Yoga Tattva Upanishad makes us alert by saying that if the profound meaning of the verses of scriptures is missed, the difference in the apparent meaning of different scriptures may create infatuation even for a person of vast knowledge.

Whether Upanishads, or so to say, any ancient scriptures are relevant to resolve the challenges posed in the present time? In this context, Brahm-vidyaa Upanishad (consisting of 32 secret doctrines) states that no proposition can be against the dictates of scriptures; what is not a right proposition would be calamitous - *shrutyaa viro-dhe, na bha-vet pramaa-nam; bha-vet anar-thaaya, vinaa pramaa-nam*.

Upanishads, while offering profound pieces of wisdom, also follow their own unique methodologies. One of the methodologies of the Upanishads is *Neti-neti*, or it could be said *Na Iti - Na Iti*. It means not only this, not only this. Thus, the Upanishads respect the methodology of examining any issue from all possible angles. The second methodology to understand the truth is concerned with the cause-and-effect relationship. Whereas the modern methodologies for exploring the domain of knowledge mainly follow the cause-effect relationship, the Upanishads always followed the methodology of searching the root cause of the cause itself and, in turn, attempting to know the cause of the cause of the cause, unless the most root cause is discovered. Kosheetaki-Braahmana Upanishad (3/8 - Adhyaya 3 verse 8)) states that speech is not what one should desire to understand, one should know the speaker; sound is not what one should desire to understand, one should know the listener; the deed is not what one should desire to understand, one should know the doer; mind is not what one should desire to understand, one should know the thinker -*na vaa-cham viji-gyaa-seeta, vak-taaram vi-dyaat; na shab-da viji-gyaa-seeta, shro-taaram vidyaat; na karma viji-gyaa-seeta, kar-taaram vi-dyaat; na mano viji-gyaa-seeta, man-taaram vidyaat*. So, Upanishads have followed a much more comprehensive methodology compared to even the general methodology of cause-and-effect related methodology of modern times. Could we say that modern time methodologies are only inclined to examine the fact, whereas the methodology of the Upanishads is about examining much deeper aspects of truth?

Vedas in the modern context of Management and Governance: Glimpses

It would be relevant here to take a brief account of insights from the Vedas, as the Vedas are the genesis of all the Vedic Upanishads.

At the individual level, self-management, overall well-being and life-management are the important issues to be addressed in the modern context of management and governance. The issue of well-being has been emphasised by the Vedas. For a long, healthy life, Rigveda (7.66.16 - 16th verse of the 66th hymn in the 7th book of the Rigveda) offers prayers that may we live for a hundred years and may we see for a hundred years *-pashyem sharadah shataam, jeevem shardah shataam*. Life is an opportunity for serving others as well as experiencing the deeper aspects of existence. A long life gives the opportunity to witness all facets of life, and a healthy life supports one's vow to serve others. This sutra of the Veda suggests that all possible measures should be taken to have a long, healthy life. The indicative measures could be appropriateness in everything like food, exercise, sleep, activities, intentions, healthy entertainment, meditation, companionship, etc. Atharvaveda (19.60.1-2 -1st and 2nd verse of the 60th Sukta in 19th kand) contains further prayer that may I have breath in my nostrils, voice in my mouth, sight in my eyes, hearing in my ears, hair that has not turned grey, teeth that are not discoloured, and much strength in my arms; may I have power in my thighs, swiftness in my legs, steadfastness in my feet; may all my limbs remain unimpaired and my soul unconquered.

Sensing and perception are the prime factors influencing the observation-based data collection and the process of giving meaning to the data at the individual level. At several places, the Vedas, through the language of prayers, talk about having desirable conditions around. In the context of right sensing and right perception, Rigveda (1.89.8 – 8th mantra verse of the 89th Sukta in 1st mandala) offers a prayer suggesting let we all listen from ears the speeches bestowing welfare unto us! Let us all see with our eyes the objects bestowing welfare upon us! By offering prayers through a physical body that is equipped with stable and fortified constituents, let us all get engaged in the welfare of Devatas (all types of energy sources) till we breathe last.

One of the aspects emphasised by the Vedanta is to live life in this world with detached involvement. This is the basic pillar of the art of living. Neither be attached (creating entanglements) nor unattached (not caring for one's own responsibilities), but be detached (taking full responsibilities of the chosen role without entanglements and infatuation).

Individuals live in society and often work in organisations, whether small or big. An individual needs to communicate and work in a group or team. Healthy management practices or good governance could not be imagined without appropriate communication. Practising truth and speaking truth have been emphasised, but it has also been emphasised that truth should not be spoken in a harsh manner. Atharvaveda (16.2.2) suggests that let our speech be full of sweetness

-madhu-mateem vaacham udeyam. To my understanding, in the context of management, it is being suggested that experience profundity and express with humility.

Emphasising the importance of the optimum level of group cohesion and team building, Rigveda (10.191.2) stated that walk together, speak together and let the minds be together – *sanga gach-chha-dhvam, sanga vada-dhvam, sanga vo ma-naansi jaa-na-taam*.

At the macro level, individuals are part of the ecological environment as well as one has also have a role in nation building. The Vedas often describe various energy forces in the ecology as the Devatas. Rigveda (1.89.2) states that may we develop friendship (harmony) with Devatas (energy forces), and be closer to them – *Devaanaam sa-khyam upa sedi-maa vayam*. Yajurveda (7.45 – 45th mantra in 7th kanda) suggests that we all follow the path that leads to harmony – *ritasya pa-thaa pre-ta*.

Rigveda (10.18.10) appeals that may you bestow your services unto the motherland *-upa sarpa maa-taram bhoo-mim*. For the wholesome development and prosperity in the context of those days, Yajurveda (22.22) offers prayers that O Brahman! Let there be in our nation: Braahman who are equipped with Brahm-bhaava and conduct accordingly; chivalrous warriors equipped with science and art of war, those who win over enemies and can be always victorious on their chariots; fast moving horses, bullocks capable of carrying loaded carts, milk giving cows available to citizens; women full with all qualities and who are full of humility; excellent speakers in assemblies with pure minds; youth who are bold and upfront; rain according to need whenever we want; prosperity full of fruits, medicines and grain; security and prosperity of all varieties. These are the important ingredients of a healthy nation.

Management at various levels in the organisation and Governance in the Upanishads

Upanishads are readily relevant for many issues of management and governance, especially dealing with human beings in the context of organisational setup.

Managing Self

Let us first explore the Upanishadic lessons for managing individuals in an organisation. Feeling-thinking-doing are interconnected in a sequential way. Nrisinha-Poorva-Taapinya Upanishad states that whatever a person feels, it is first expressed through words, and later is accomplished through action. The quality of action determines the possibilities of efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and the emotions behind the action that determines the self-growth, deeper satisfaction and meaningfulness of life. Upanishadic lessons are unique in the sense that, like the Bhagavad-Gita, they also give ample emphasis on emotions behind the action, which is understood in a more wholesome manner as Karma-yoga. The concept of Karma-yoga, if to be captured in one short sentence, is about putting well-thought-out actions with utmost commitment and not hankering

on the fruits of the action while putting in the effort. Though action does not guarantee the result but well-performed action creates two impacts. It increases the probability of gaining the result, and it does not go to waste as it yields some other derivatives of the fruits of action. While prescribing art of karma and art of living, Iishaawaasya Upanishad (2) states that while doing deeds here for the greater welfare to all, one may desire to live a hundred years; thus, the deeds (karma) adhere not on the person and the person remains liberated from the cycle of karma and karma-bhoga (the joy or sufferings based on karma). Upanishads, unlike other literature on management, do not link the action to only the result of action but are much interested in providing an understanding of the impact of karma on the qualitative aspects and quality of inner being of the doer. Upanishads emphasise actions to be performed for the sake of it, with detachment towards the fruits of action; thus breaking the cycle of karma and karma-bhoga. Taittireeya Upanishad (1/11) states that those acts which are irreproachable should be practised, and no others. Like the Bhagavad-Gita, Akshya Upanishad (2/3) also states that do actions while established in Yoga – *yogasthah kuru kar-maani*. Mahaa Upanishad (6/68) suggests that appear like a doer externally but internally remain a non-doer; thus, do exist with your pure Self in this world – *kartaa ba-hih kar-taa, antah loke vihar shuddha-dheeh*.

The inner purity or the purity of feeling as well as thought has been a matter of highest priority for managing self as per insights from the Upanishads. Maitreya Upanishad (1/5) states that the world is manifested according to the quality of mind or chitta; so, one should make efforts to purify the mind; as the mind is, so is one's way, this is an eternal principle – *chittam iva hi san-saarah, tat prayat-nena shodha-yet; yat cha-chittah tat mayo bhavati, guhyam etat sa-naa-ta-nam*. To chastise oneself, some measures have been suggested. Sanyaas Upanishad (116) states that to chastise oneself for (wrong) speech, observe silence, to chastise the body, observe fasting, and to chastise the mind, do appropriate breathing and meditation – *vaak dande maunama atishthet, kaaya dandet abhojanam; maanase tu krite dande, praa-naa-yaa-mo vidhee-yate*.

Learning at the individual level requires sincere effort. In terms of the highly encouraging analogy of Aatmabodh Upanishad (28), as a small flame of a lamp destroys deep darkness, so a little understanding destroys deep darkness of ignorance – *swalpa api deepa kanikaa, bahulam naasha-yet tamah; swalpo api bodho nibi-dum, bahu-lam naasha-yet tamah*. An individual learns from various sources, and the modus operandi of learning in the case of one individual may differ from that of another individual. In this context, Brahma-bindu Upanishad (19) highlights that cows have many colours, but their milk has the same colour; similarly, learned persons may acquire thoughts from different doctrines, but their understanding of the truth would be similar – *gavaam anek var-naa-naam, ksheera-sya a-anek varnataa; ksheera-vat pa-shyate gyaa-nam, lingam astu gavaam yathaa*. For learning, one should not hesitate to consult others. Taittireeya Upanishad (1/11) declares that if you are in a dilemma about the choice of

an action or about a conduct, persons having knowledge should be consulted; as they conduct themselves, you should follow accordingly. For learning through listening, the framework of Shrawan-Manana-Nididhyaasana has been underlined by the Upanishads. Aadhyaatma Upanishad (33–34) describes that to think on the meaning of what has been listened to is Manan (pondering); on the basis of listening and pondering over, establishing the mind with concentration in the derived quintessential understanding is Nidi-dhyaa-sana (establishing in the mind). Describing three types of knowledge Shaareerak Upanishad (13) states that the knowledge of Truth is saatwik, knowledge of righteousness is raajasik, and stupidity due to darkness (absence of knowledge) is taamasik – *samyak gyaanam saatvikam, dharma gyaanam raajasam, timira andham taamasam iti*.

Upanishads keep reinforcing that the qualities of the inner being of an individual get reflected and keep creating a positive or negative impact on the world. Bri-ha-daa-ranyak Upanishad (4/4/5) places a flowchart between the desires of an individual and the extrinsic outcome of such desires. It explains that a person is full of desires only; as one's desire is, so is one's will; as one's will is, so is one's action; as one's action is, so is the outcome – *kaama-maya eva, ayam purush iti sa; yathaa kaamo bhavati, tat kratuh bhavati; yat kratuh bhavati, tat karma kurute; yat karma kurute, tat abhi-sam-padyate*.

Upanishads keep highlighting the ways of self-motivation. Kathaa Upanishad (1/3/14) invites one to arise, awake and obtain one's boons and understand them; however, the poets alert that it is a difficult path like a sharpened edge of a razor and hard to traverse – *uttishthat jaa-grat, praa-pya varaan nibo-dhat; kshura-sya dhaa-raa nishi-taa du-ratya-yaa, dur-gam pathah tat kava-yo va-danti*.

In the domain of management literature, job satisfaction is an important subject. However, in practice, we observe that in many cases, persons having job satisfaction do not have overall life satisfaction. The wealth accumulated, the positions acquired, or the accolades received appear to be unable to provide the deeper sense of fulfilment. Kathaa Upanishad (1/1/27) states that a person cannot be satisfied by (any amount of) wealth – *na vittena tar-pa-neeyo manu-shyo*. It means that though wealth is an important aspect of life, but only wealth has not have the potential to satisfy a human being. According to Bri-ha-daa-ranyak Upanishad (2/4/2), an acute limitation of worldly wealth is that one should not hope to taste the elixir of life (Amritatva) through accumulation of wealth – *amritatvasya tu na aashaa asti vittena iti*.

Effective listening is a very important skill that has a multiple-layer multiplier effect on effective decision-making. Both the sender as well as the receiver are responsible for making listening effective on the part of the receiver. Kathaa Upanishad (1/1/15) explains the proof of effective listening, stating that when the listener is able to recapitulate the matter in toto as spoken by the

speaker, it is a test of effective listening – *tat pratya-vadat, ya-thaa uk-tam*.

Health and Well-being

Upanishads contain sublime knowledge and a deeper understanding. Take a matter of discussion, and the Upanishads address the issue from a very high level of consciousness. Upanishadic insights are like sunrays that dispel the fog of confusion and doubt. Regarding how to care for the physical body, the Maitreyee Upanishad helps reconcile the two apparently stark, anomalous statements. The first is – the body is like a temple and the Jeeva residing there itself is the Supreme Truth – *deho devaa-layah prok-tah, sa Jee-vah keva-lah Shivah* (2/1). The second is – the body is like the abode of sins and is ephemeral – *paap mandiram adhru-vam* (2/5). Both statements are true at the same time. The first statement describes the supreme possibility of the human body. The second statement describes the physical nature of the body and its tendencies to dwell in the lower self. An energetic body is important for higher achievements. It has been stated in Taittireeya Upanishad (1/4/1) that let my body be full of energy, let my tongue speak sweet words, let my ears be ever engaged in auspicious listening, let the knowledge learnt be not forgotten and be protected – *shareeram me vichar-shanam, jih-vaa me madhu-matta-maa, karnaa-bhyaam bhoori vishru-vam, shru-tam me go-paaya*.

Upanishads and other profound scriptures suggest not to get infatuated with the physical body and body-level enjoyment. However, it does not mean that the Upanishads are against the physical body. Even for spiritual growth, good physical health and vigour are required. Upanishads recommend all the possible efforts to be taken to maintain good health and overall well-being at the physical, mental, social, and spiritual levels. The invocation of Kena Upanishad states that O Lord! may my all parts, speech, sight, hearing, all senses of action, all senses of knowledge, breathing, physical strength, mental strength, and vigour, be subjected to nurturing and growth – *Om aa-pyaa-yantu mama angaani, vaak praanah chak-shuh shrotram atho, balam indri-yaani cha sar-vaani*.

However, every individual needs to be alert while using the sense organs so that the journey goes on an auspicious path. The invocation of Prashna Upanishad suggests that O Lord! may our ears listen only to those words, which are benevolent; may our eyes behold only benevolence; through our strong parts (of bodies), submitting our prayers to God, may we utilise our life span for the cause of the Supreme – *Om bha-dram kar-nebhi shrinu-yaam Devaa, bha-dram pashye-ma aksha-bhih yaja-traah; sthi-raih angaih tushtu vaak sasta-noobih, vya-shema Deva hitam yat aayuh*. On the other hand, Yoga Kundali Upanishad (1/56-57) alerts us by informing the sources of diseases. It is stated that diseases attack quickly due to sleeping during the daytime, keeping awake during the night, excessive copulation, excessive walking, holding the forces of calls of nature, improper posture, excessive force in Pranayama and remaining engaged in worries – *divaa sup-tih Nisha-ayaam tu, jaaga-raat ati maithu-naat, bahu san-kra-manam nityam, ro-dhaat*

moo-tra puree-shayoh, visham aasana doshaat cha, prayaas praana chinta-naat, sheeghram utpa-dyate rogah.

Managing the distractions created by the mind is one of the most important aspects of well-being. Mahaa Upanishad (5/83) states that varieties of mud are contaminating this gem-like mind; attain glory by cleaning the mind with water-like wisdom – *enam mano manim, bahu panka kalanki-tam; vivek vaa-rinaa siddhyai, pra-kshaa-lya aalok-vaan bhav*.

A balanced life is often suggested for a healthy life and well-being. Amritnaad Upanishad (28) suggested that for a yogi, fear, slothfulness, too much of sleep, too much of food, too much of keeping awake, going without food, and indulgence in anger, are shunned – *bhayam krodham atha aalasyam, ati swapna ati jaa-garam; ati aahaaram anaa-haaram, nityam yogi vivarjayet*.

Scriptures talk about four Purusharthas: Artha, Kaama, Dharma and Moksha. Artha is connected with wealth creation. Kaama is concerned with fulfilling legitimate desires. Dharma is about operating through the righteous path. Moksha is about liberation from mundane entanglements and dwelling in a higher level of consciousness. Though everyone appears to be engaged in chasing wealth, Kathaa Upanishad (1/1/27) asserts that a human being cannot be satisfied by (any amount of) wealth – *na vitten, tarpaeeyo manu-shyo*. It means life satisfaction depends on many other qualitative factors, other than quantitative factors, like wealth or what wealth could purchase in the marketplace.

Leadership at the Interpersonal, Group and Team Level

Authenticity of communication has been amply emphasised in the Upanishads. Communication has to be without pretension. The invocation of Aitareya Upanishad states that may my sense of speech be established in mind, may my mind be established in sense of speech; I will speak appropriate words and truth only; may that Absolute, protect me; may He protect the preceptor – *Om vaak mei, manasi pra-tish-thitaa; mano me, vaachi pratishthitam. . . ; ritam vadi-shyaami, satyam vadi-shyaami; tat maam avatu, tat vak-taaram avatu*. This underlines the importance of integration among *manasaa* (what we think), *vaachaa* (what we speak) and *karmanaa* (what we do).

Chhandogya Upanishad suggests the ways to effectively share the knowledge in a team by describing how the teacher (in the present context, the senior or trainer or expert in the team, irrespective of position) and students (in the present context, the junior or participants as learners) used to interact. The Upanishad narrates that when Uddaalak is explaining to Shwetaketu, Shwetaketu keeps asking for further explanation. Uddalak also happily and untiringly keeps clarifying the doubts from different angles with different examples. Ultimately, Shwetaketu gets satisfied. A good learner should know the issue from multiple angles, and a good facilitator should explain the issue from all angles. Until the learner expresses his satisfaction, the facilitator

needs to continue explaining. Further, in a dialogue with Naarad, Sanat-kumar suggests that the seeker Naarad should first tell what he knew; thereafter, further knowledge would be discussed. This suggests that a facilitator should be explorative and should generate participant-centred learning. Further, the facilitator should explain the subjects in ascending order of profundity.

Not only does the leader or manager need to get subjected to continuous learning, one requires to create an environment for continuous learning for the team members also through informal or formal processes of learning. Learning and Development is a well-established mechanism in professional organisations. In such activities, the intelligent and sharp questions raised by the participants need to be encouraged. Prashna Upanishad describes instances in the teacher (or trainer) used to appreciate the student (or participant) for raising difficult questions and used to rejoice because the level of the question reflected the level of the questioner. A trainer or coach or counsellor or facilitator, or mentor needs to feel happy observing the growth and development of the participants. Taittireeya Upanishad talks about the uniqueness of the teacher–student relationship; if it is properly adapted to the modern context, the present-day corporate training could become more effective. This Upanishad describes that the teacher never used to feel that he was the provider of knowledge and the students were the receivers of knowledge. The student and the teacher used to pray together that they should receive knowledge in the process of imparting and receiving knowledge. That was the grace of the teaching process and the humility of a teacher. Taittireeya Upanishad (1/3/2-3) states that in the process of learning, the teacher is the pre-stage, the student is the later-stage, the knowledge is the copulative agent, and the teaching coordinates the link between the teacher and the student – *aachaaryah poorva roo-pam, ante-vaa-see uttar roo-pam, vi-dyaa san-dhih, pra-vacha-nam san-dhaa-nam, iti adhi-vidyam*.

Leaders need to inspire to make the decisions that are beneficial in the long run. Upanishads extend two words for consideration, and this set of two words is a powerful tool to resolve any decision-related dilemma. These two words are – Preyas and Shreyas. Preyas deal with pleasanter, and Shreyas deal with the better or superior decisions. Preyas lead to short-term amusement but cause sorrow in the long term. It is like taking those decisions which cause merriment in the beginning, but crying at the end of the journey. On the other hand, the decisions that are based on Shreyas principle may not provide early amusement, but they help take the last laugh, meaning thereby such decisions may or may not provide short-term gain, but they ensure long-term gain. Upanishads declare that choosing Shreyas is an intelligent act, and preferring Preyas over Shreyas is an act of the opposite nature. Kathaa Upanishad (1/2/1-2) states that both the Shreyas (better) and the Preyas (pleasanter) come to a person, and going all around the two, the wise man discriminates; the wise chooses the better, indeed, rather than the pleasanter, the stupid chooses the pleasanter – *shreyah cha preyah cha manu-shyam etah tau, sam-pareetya vivi-nakti dhee-rah; shre-yo hi dhee-ro abhi pre-yaso vri-neete, pre-yo mando yoga-kshe-maad*

vri-neete.

Various Upanishads, especially Aksha-Maalikaa Upanishad, Nrisinha Uttar Taapinya Upanishad and Yoga Kundali Upanishad, indicate about framework of effective leadership communication. There are four stages of communication – Paraa, Pashyanti, Madhyamaa, Vaikharee. Paraa is connected to deep original experiencing. Pashyanti is about being able to observe abstract understanding in concrete form in the consciousness. Madhyamaa is concerned with the inner faculty of communication, like thoughts, intelligence applied to communication, subtler understanding of language, paralanguage, and body language. Vaikharee is the actual expression of communication. If leadership communication passes through these four stages, the communication becomes authentic, expressed with conviction, clear and effective. Gaayatree Upanishad (3/1) states that there is a deep connection between the mind and speech; mind is the inspirer, speech is the inspired; where there is mind, there is speech; where there is speech, there is mind; these two are like two entities but one pair – *yatra hi eva manah tat vaak, yatra vai vaak tat mana, iti ete dwe yonee ekam mithu-nam*. Akshya Upanishad (2/7) explains that communication should contain affection, love, softness, appropriateness, and need to be in contextual alignment with respect to place, time, and persons involved in the communication – *sneha pranaya gar-bhaani, peshal anya uchi-taani cha; desh kaal upa-pannaa-ni, vachana anya abhi-bhaa-shate*.

Governance at the Macro Level for a Larger Cause of Collective Co-existence

The governance of a nation or an organisation must take the issues of larger-scale welfare and social responsibilities into the fold. The act of giving, be it in the form of charity or in the shape of help, must be done in a graceful manner. Taittireeya Upanishad (1/11) suggests the art of giving, stating that one should give with respect, one should not give without respect, one should give with plenty, one should give with modesty, one should give with fear, and one should give with sympathy – *shraddha-yaa deyam, a-shraddha-yaa a-deyam, shriyaa deyam; hriyaa deyam, bhiyaa deyam, samvidaa deyam*. Here, a question arises as to why the Upanishad suggests that one should give with fear? Let us understand it. In general, there is a possibility that a giver might develop an egoistic personality and a superiority complex while getting engaged in the act of giving. That is why it is suggested that while giving, there should be a sense of fear against the possibility of a growing ego within.

Regarding righteous governance and its role in nation building, Mundak Upanishad (3/1/6) assures that the truth alone conquers, not falsehood – *satyam eva jayati, na anritam*. The first half of this shloka is also part of the national emblem of India.

India has witnessed literature containing deeper wisdom since that era when most parts of the world were in search of preliminary rays of basic civilisation. One of the most profound and now a very popular sutra (*Vasu-dhaiva Kutumba-kam*) reflects the wisdom that the whole world is

one family. The full sutra of Mahaa Upanishad (6/71) offers the piece of wisdom suggesting – 'this is my friend and that is not my friend' such thoughts are nurtured by persons of less intelligence; for broad-minded persons the whole world is their family – *ayam ban-dhuh ayam neti, gana-naa laghu cheta-saam; udaara charitaa-naam tu, vasu-dhaiva kutumba-kam*. In the context of concern for the entire humanity of the world, including environment, ecology, normative economics, transfer and sharing of resources, this sutra is a very illuminating guiding lighthouse.

Upanishads appear not to be interested in incremental development of human beings but in transcendental development. This is the reason that sometimes by some persons it is misunderstood that Vedantic insights or Upanishadic lessons may be against enhancing worldly wealth or against the propensity to become reputed. Taittireeya Upanishad (1/4/3) contains prayers for being reputed and for being wealthy, as reputation and wealth in themselves create no harm in the spiritual progress of the individual or society. It has been prayed that, let among all we be reputed, and let we happen to have more wealth among wealthy persons – *yasho jane asaani, shre-yaana vasya-so asaa-ni*.

In the context of a market-driven and consumption-led economy, the Upanishads do not prohibit having a desire for enjoyment. They suggest that we may enjoy this world, but there is a rider. Iishaa-vaasya Upanishad (1) suggests that we may enjoy with a sense of detachment – *tena tyak-tena bhun-jee-thaa*. Gopal Uttar Taapinya Upanishad does not suggest that one should run away from consuming worldly products. It only suggests improving the quality of the consumer. Whereas the study of Economics, Commerce, Business, and Management emphasises upon quality of the product to be consumed, the Upanishads emphasise on quality of the mental framework of the consumer itself. Desires that keep raising their heads, causing dualities, are poison. Mahaa Upanishad (3/54-55) states that it is not poison that is the real poison; poison takes away life once, but desires spoil lives after lives. Upanishads are in favour of desire-fulfilment but not in favour of chasing misplaced desires.

Conclusion

Upanishads Integrate Spiritual Growth and Worldly Prosperity

Yoga-tattva Upanishad (11–13) aptly narrates the human being's entanglements with the dualities as well as with conditioned emotions stating that, the creature got engrossed in body being attached to pleasure and pain, so he is called Jeeva; freed from desire, anger, fear, greed, ego, Rajoguna, birth, death, apprehension, grief, dormancy, hunger, thirst, longing, bashfulness, sorrow, infatuation, pleasure, and such inadequacies, Jeeva is called 'Kewal' i.e. the purest form of being. Trishikh-Braahmana Upanishad (13) clarifies about the reasons for longings, stating that, like Kosha (shell), like Jeeva (creatures); Jeeva is no other than the Shiv; the difference

is that Jeeva is with longings, and the Shiv is without longings; Kosha is the blueprint of the longings of Jeeva, which sets the Jeeva in motion.

Upanishads describe the entire range of grossest to subtlest ingredients of the existence of the self. When the consciousness operates at a lower level, one dwells at the lower self, and when the consciousness operates at a higher level, one dwells at the higher Self. The subtler is more powerful than the grosser. Kathaa Upanishad (1/3/10–11) states that higher than the senses (parts of the physical body) are the objects of sense, higher than the objects of sense is the mind, higher than the mind is the intellect, higher than the intellect is the higher Self, higher than the evolved Self is the Unmanifest, higher than the Unmanifest is the Purusha, higher than the Purusha there is nothing at all. That is the goal. That is the highest course.

Mind is one of the most important as well as powerful inner instruments for a human being. Brahma-Bindu Upanishad (1–2) strongly underlines that the mind is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation – *mana eva manu-shyaa-naam, kaara-nam bandh-moksha-yoh*. (Mahaa Upanishad (2/34) clarifies that through the will of the mind, entanglements are created, and with the destruction of that (will of mind), entanglements are also annihilated. Mahaa Upanishad (4/99, 4/101) describes that the very nature of mind is fickleness, and the mind without fickleness is like nectar – *chanchalatwam mano dhar-mo*; *yat tu chan-chala-taa hee-nam, tat mano amri-tam uchya-te*. The mind that is regulated is the best friend, and the mind that itself regulates the being is the greatest enemy. However, the mind's role in regulating the mind itself is precious. Mahaa Upanishad (6/33) throws light on this aspect by using an apt analogy suggesting that as an axe having a wooden handle cuts the wood, transcend the mind through the mind – *manasaa iva manah chhitwaa, kuthaar-ena iva paadapam*. During the beginning stage of the journey on the path of meditation, the mind has a great role to play.

For spiritual growth Upanishads emphasise penance. Maitraayanee Upanishad (4/3) clarifies that observance of penance leads to Knowledge, Knowledge leads to control of mind, control of mind leads to attainment of the Self, which then leads to liberation from the world – *tapa-saa praa-pyate sa-ttvam, sa-ttvaat sam-praa-pyate ma-nah; mana-sah praa-pyate hi aatmaa, yam aap-tvaa na nivar-tat iti*.

Upanishads are very clear about the most supreme purpose of life. Bri-ha-daa-ranyak Upanishad (4/4/14) alerts that if we know Him (Absolute Truth) while living in this body (we become gratified and happy), and if we do not know Him, then it is a great loss; those who know Him become like nectar; but others are subjected to sorrow only – *iha eva santo atha vidmah tat vayam, na cheda-vedih mahatee vinashtih; ye tat viduh amritaah te bhavanti, atha etare duhkham eva apiyanti*. Adhyaatma Upanishad (14) also warns that never observe negligence in your endeavour to realise Brahma, because this negligence itself is death; such is the saying of those

who have acquired knowledge of the Supreme – *pramaado Brahma nishthaa-yaam, na kar-tavyah kadaa-chana; pra-maado mrityuh iti aahuh, vidyaa-yaam Brahma vaa-dinah*. Regarding the methods to understand the Ultimate Reality, Kaivalya Upanishad (2-3) suggests that to realise the Supreme one has to observe reverence, devotion, meditation and yoga, so one should also follow them – *shraddhaa bhak-ti dhyaa-na yo-gaat eva ehi, tyaa-gena aike amri-tattva maana-shuh*.

Upanishads often use terse statements to unearth truth or explain something with total clarity. While differentiating between a wise and a fool, Niraalamb Upanishad (30–33) clarifies that the one who knows the inner beings of everyone as seats of omniscient soul is wise and the one who is afflicted with egoism rides on the thought of 'I am the doer' is a fool – *vidwaan iti cha, sarva antas-tha swasam-vit roo-pa vid-waana; moodh iti cha, kartri-tvaat ahan-kaara bhaava aa-rudho moodhah*. Thus, the Upanishad hammers on egoistic tendencies.

For detached living that creates no perturbation, Mahaa Upanishad (5/177) suggests that those who are aware of the entanglements of this world neither expect response from this world nor renounce it; in all interactions, they remain detached – *na tya-janti, na vaan-chhanti, vyava-haaram jagad-gatam; sar-vam eva anu-var-tante, paa-raa-waar vido ja-naah*.

Upanishads keep a very high standard for any aspect related to self-growth. According to the Upanishads, not only is violence committed violence, even a thought or speech of violence is also violence. Jaabaala-darshan Upanishad (1/7) states that violence is committed through body (physical attack), mind (having foul thought), and speech (foul uttering) – *kaayena mana-saa vaa-chaa hin-saah, hin-saa na cha anya-thaa*. While maintaining inner blissfulness, getting involved in welfare for all, with detached involvement, is the key.

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