

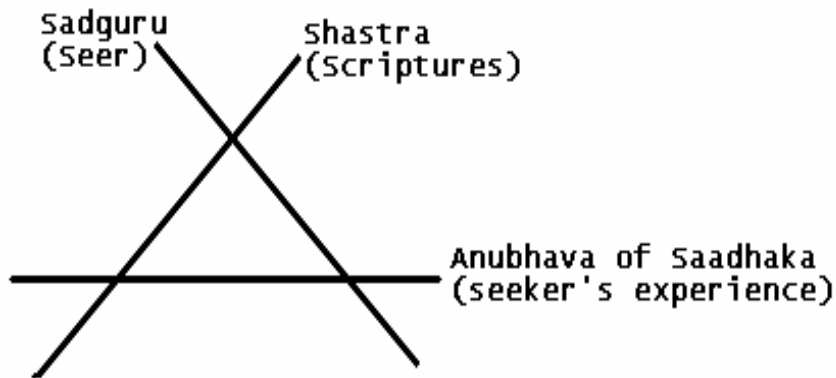
Vision and Approaches of Upanishads

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Vedic Triadic Approach to Seek Spiritual Knowledge

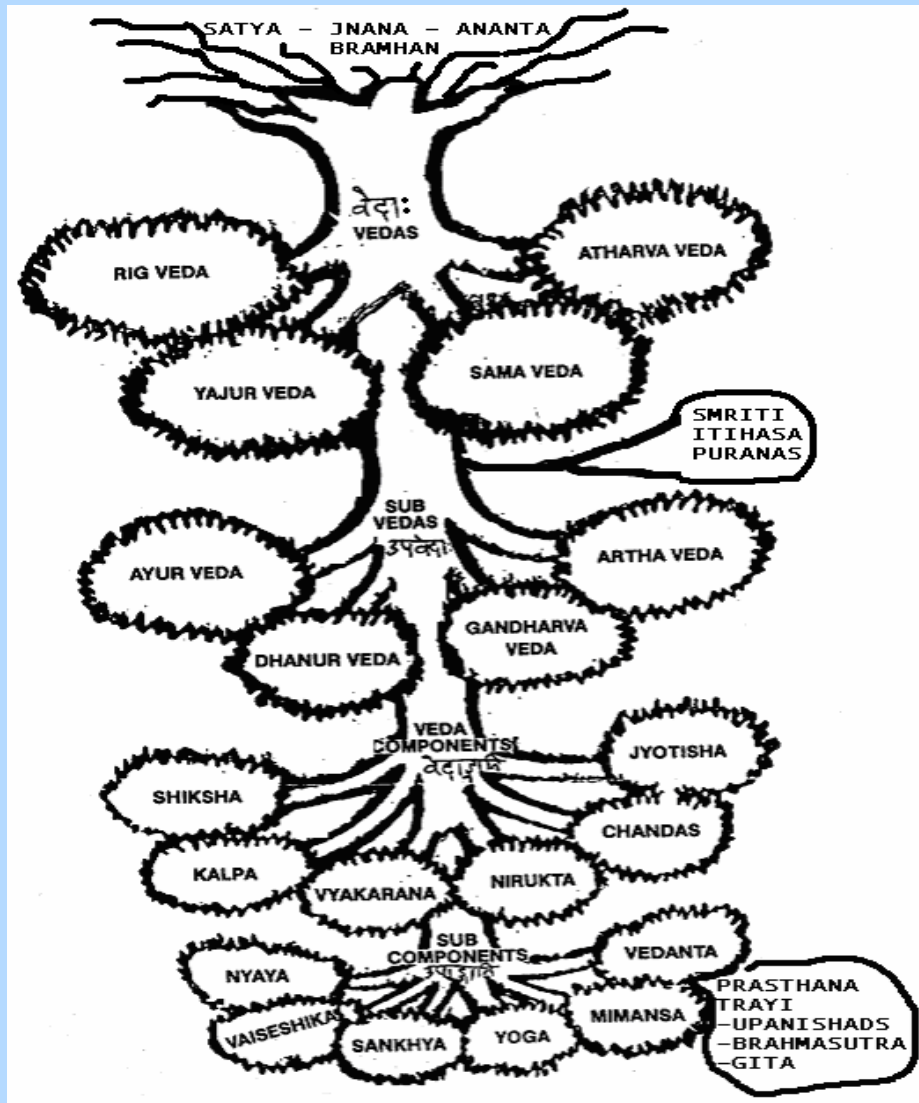
Three essential components for making an effort to acquire any knowledge, particularly spiritual knowledge are:

- The *Sadguru* refers to the guiding energy in the form of mother, father, acharya, spiritual mentor
- *Shastras* refers to the body of knowledge (Vedic literature)
- *Anubhava* means the experience of the seeker



Eventually, the seeker should advance towards spiritual enlightenment.

Vedic Knowledge as an Inverted Tree



**Bramhan - God
Non - Dual Reality**

4 Vedas

Vedic literature

Vedic Literature

- Samhita, Bramhana and Aranyakas form the Vedas
- Vedas are classified as Rik, Yajus, Sama and Atharva.
- Maharishi Vyasa classified them, hence Veda Vyasa.
- There are large number of Upanishads (108, 32, 10)

Principal Upanishads

- Ten Upanishads are considered as major ones.
- Rigveda ---Aitareya
- Sukla Yajurveda ---Isavasya and Brihadaranyaka
- Krishna Yajurveda --Katha and Taittiriya
- Samaveda ---Kena and Chandogya
- Atharva ---Prasna, Mundaka and Mandukya

Upanishads

- Upanishads refers to the spiritual knowledge obtained by disciples sitting near the realized Guru, that destroys the ignorance of disciples.
- Upanishads are the Vedanta (essence of the Vedas)
- Upanishads are essentially in the form of stories and dialogues such as those of Yama-Nachiketa, Varuna-Bhrigu, Yajnavalkya-Maitreyi, etc.
- Upanishads are the super conscious experiences of Atman by several rishis and they form the foundation of Sanatana Dharma. The other two are Bramha Sutras and Bhagavadgita.

Upanishads (continued)

- Upanishads deal with the fundamental questions about existence, life, creation, death etc.
- Upanishads deal with nature of soul, universe and God and their relationships
- The various systems of philosophy namely Advaita, Vishishta advaita and Dvaita refer to the Upanishads as their source material.

Upanishads (continued)

- “What is that by knowing which everything in this universe will be known?” (Mundaka)
- “Commanded by whom does the first vital breath force move forward?”- (Kena)
- “When a person passes away there is this doubt, some hold that the person exists and some that the person does not. This I should like to know, instructed by you”------(Katha)
- “Please instruct me about Bramhan”-(Taittiriya)

Isavasya Upanishad

- Small in size (18 verses)
- Mystical experience of ubiquitous Atman.
- Karma yoga

Kena Upanishad

- Subjective (psychological-spiritual) and objective (cosmological) approaches to proof of Atman.
- Atman as Ultimate Reality
- Omnipotence of Atman (Uma, the Goddess and Indra)

Katha Upanishad

- Dialogue of Yama-Nachiketa
- Sacred fire and yajna
- mortal body and immortal soul
- role of yoga and discipline

Prasna Upanishad

- String of questions to rishi Pippalada by Sukesi, Satyakama, Gargya, Aswalayana, Bhargava and Kabandhi
- Systematic presentation through questions and answers
- “Whence is all this that is visible”-(Kabandhi)
- “Who is the Purusha with sixteen kalas”-(Sukesha)\

Mundaka Upanishat

- Refers to the visions and experiences of Samnyasis
- Para and Apra Vidya
- Cosmology
- Karma and Jnana Marga

Mandukya Upanishat

- Four levels of consciousness (wakeful, dream, deep sleep, fourth (samadhi))
- OM : its various aspects

Taittiriya Upanishat

- Ethics, learning and advice at the end of studies
- Sheaths of Bramhan
- Levels and scale of happiness (bliss)
- Dialogue of Varuna and Bhrigu about Bramhan
- Ecstatic expressions of experience of Bramhan

Aitareya Upanishat

- Creation of world through Viraj
- Philosophy of three births
- Nature of Atman

Chandogya Upanishat

- Yajna and upasana
- Raikva, Satyakama Jabala, Usasti
- Pravahana (Life after death), Narada (Para and Apra)
- Bramhachari (worship of Prana), Indra (about Atman)
- Thus spake Uddalaka Aruni

Brihdaranyaka Upanishat

- Karma (Soma sacrifice)
- Creation of Universe and four varnas
- Gargi-Yajnavalkya, Balaki-Ajatashatru,
- Bramhan as Antaryamin
- Thus spake Yajnavalkya

Essence of the Upanishadic Teaching

- Atman is the antaryamin (Divine power) as the ultimate source of all the distinct aspects of external nature as well as inner faculties of humans and other beings.
- Atman is to be realized (anyone can) from direct personal knowledge through the practice of disciplines austerities of very arduous and exacting nature. The grace and guidance of realized Guru is required.
- Atman thus realized in the pure space of the enlightened seer's heart is of the nature of indescribable bliss.
- The human life is completely fulfilled with the realization of Atman.