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Yajur Vedic Upanishads - XVII

Narayana Upanishad

Narayana Upanishad belongs to the Krishna-Yajur-Veda. The Upanishad is about Narayana, who is considered to be Vishnu in his highest aspect as the supreme lord and creator of the universe. Interestingly the name Narayana was originally associated with Brahma and later ascribed to Vishnu. In the Puranas we also come across another name, Nara Narayana, associated with Vishnu as one of his minor incarnations. According to one version, Narayana was one of the four sons of Dharma Deva, the others being Nara, Hari and Krishna. According to another version, at the end of his incarnation, Lord Narasimha split himself into two. His lion part became sage Narayana and his human part sage Nara. Both Nara and Narayana were sages. They did many great penances and attracted the attention of Indra, who sent celestial damsels to distract them so that he could safeguard his own position. When Narayana saw the damsels, he patiently watched them singing and dancing knowing well for what purpose they were there. Then to teach Indra a lesson he produced a more dazzling damsel from his thigh and named her Urvasi. Indra realized his mistake and apologized for his transgression. Narayana accepted his apologies and in return gifted him the beautiful Urvasi. This Upanishad depicts Lord Narayana as the creator and explains the spiritual significance of the mantra, "Om Namō Narayanaya!" -

"Om adha purusho ha vai Narayano akaamayath. Praja srujeyethi. Narayanath prano jayathe. Mana sarvendriyani cha kham vayur jyothirapa prithvi viswasya dharini. Narayanath brahma jayathe. Narayanath Rudra jayathe. Narayanath Indro Jayathe. Narayanath prajapathi prajayathe. Narayanath Dwadasa aadhithya Rudra Vasava sarvaani Chandamsi Narayana deva Samudpadyanthe. Narayanath pravarthanthe. Narayane praleeyanthe. Eethath Rig veda siro adithe."

Om! Narayana desired to create people. Because of this thought, Soul (prana) rose from him. Mind and all body parts, sky, air, light, water and the earth which can carry all these created beings took their form. From Narayana, Brahma was born. From Narayana, Rudra was born. From Narayana, Indra was born. From Narayana those people who rule these human beings were born. From Narayana, the twelve suns, eleven Rudras, Eight Vasus and all those meters (for writing) were born. All these function because of Narayana. All these end in Narayana. Thus is read, the Upanishads of Rig Veda.

[The twelve Adithyas (sons of Adithi) are Datha, Mithra, Aaryama, Rudra, Varuna, Surya, Bhaga, Vivaswan, Poosha, Savitha, Thwashta and Vishnu. The eleven Rudras are Manyu, Manu, Mahinasan, Mahan, Shivan, Ruthudwajan, Ugra rethas, Bhavan, Kaman, Vamadevan and Druthavruthan. The eight Vasus who are children of Vasu who is the daughter of Daksha are Dharan, Druvan, Soman, Ahass, Anilan, Analan Prathyushan and Prabhasan.]

"Adha nithyo Narayana. Brahma Narayana. Shivascha Narayana. Shankrascha Narayana. Kaalascha Narayana. Disascha Narayana. Vidhisascha Narayana. Oordhwascha Narayana. Aadhascha Narayana. Anthar bahischa Narayana. Narayana evedam sarva yad bhootham yachcha bhavyam. Nish kalanko niranjano Nirvikalpo niraakhyatha shabho deva eka Narayano na dwitheyesthi kaschit. Ya evam veda sa vishnureva bhavathi sa Vishnureva bhavathi. Ethad Yajur veda siro adithe."

He is perennial. Narayana is Brahma. Narayana is Shiva. Narayana is Indra and Kaala (god of death). All directions are Narayana. All sides are Narayana. Inside and outside is Narayana. Narayana is what has happened, what is happening and what will happen. Narayana is the only God who is blemish less, stain less, order less, end less and who cannot be described and when Narayana is there, there is no other second. He who knows this, becomes himself Lord Vishnu. Thus is read, the Upanishads of Yajur Veda.

"Om ithyagre vyaahareth nama ithi paschath. Narayanasa ethyuparishath. Om ithyekaksharam. Nama ithi dhwe akshare. Narayanayethi Panchaksharani. Ethadwai Narayanasyashtaksharam padam. Yoha vai Narayanasya ashtaksharam pada madhyethi. AAnapabroova sarva mayurethi. Vindathe Prajapathyam rayasposham gowpathyam thatho amruthathwamasruthe thatho amrutha masnutha ithi. Ethath Sama Veda siro adithe."

Tell "Om" first and then tell "Nama" After this tell "Narayana". There is one letter in "Om". There are two letters in "Nama". There are five letters in "Narayana." Together is formed the eight lettered "Om Namō Narayanaya". He, who tells these eight letters, attains full life without any blemish. He would attain salvation after becoming the lord of the people and be blessed with lots of wealth, lots of cows and all other forms of wealth. Thus is read the Upanishads of Sama Veda.

"Prathyganandam" brahma purusham pranaswaroopam. Aakara. Uukara, makaro ithi. Thaa anekadha samabhavath thadho mithi yamukthwa muchyathe yogi janma samsara bandhaath. Om namo Narayanayethi manthropasako vaikuntabhuvanam gamishyathi. Thdidam pundareekam vignana danam thasmad thaddhabamathram. Brahmanyō devaki puthro brahmanyō madhu soodhana. Brahmanya pundarikaksho brahmanya Vishnurachyutha ithi. Sarva bhoothasthamekam vai narayanam karana purusha makaranam parabrahmom ethad adharva siro adithe."

That ever happy brahma purusha (soul) is of the form of pranava ("om") which is made of joining "Aa", "Uu" and "Ma". That pranava (Brahma Purusha) growing in several ways becomes "Om" and that yogi (student of yoga) who meditates on it attains salvation. That yogi who meditates on "Om Namō Narayanaya" reaches

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Vaikunta, the abode of Lord Vishnu. That Vaikunta is nothing but the Hrudaya Kamala (lotus like heart) which is full of eternal wisdom from which a streak of light similar to lightning emanates. The son of Devaki is Brahmam. The Madhu Sudhana (he who killed Madhu) is Brahmam. The lotus eyed one is Brahmam and also Lord Vishnu who is Achyutha. That Purusha which is the reason for existence of all beings is surely Narayana. He is also the causeless "Om", which is Para Brahmam. Thus is read the Upanishads of Atharva Veda.

"Pratharadhiyano rathri krutha papam nasyathi. Sayam adhiyanom divasa krutha papam naasyathi. Maadhyam dinam aadhithyaa abhimukho adhiyana pancha maha pathako upa pathakath pramuchyathe. Sarva Veda parayana punyam labhathe. Narayana sayujyamvaa prothi. Sriman Narayana Sayujyam mavapnothi cha evam Veda."

He who reads this in the morning destroys the sin he has committed at night. He who reads this in the evening destroys the sins he has committed during day time. He, who reads this at noon addressing the Sun, gets rid of the five great sins as well as subsidiary sins. He also gets the holy effect of reading all Vedas. He becomes one with Lord Narayana at the end. This is the knowledge of Veda.