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CONCEPT OF ULTIMATE REALITY-UNIVERSAL SELF –
ATMAN BRAHMAN –GOD –IN INDIAN IDEALISTIC
CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

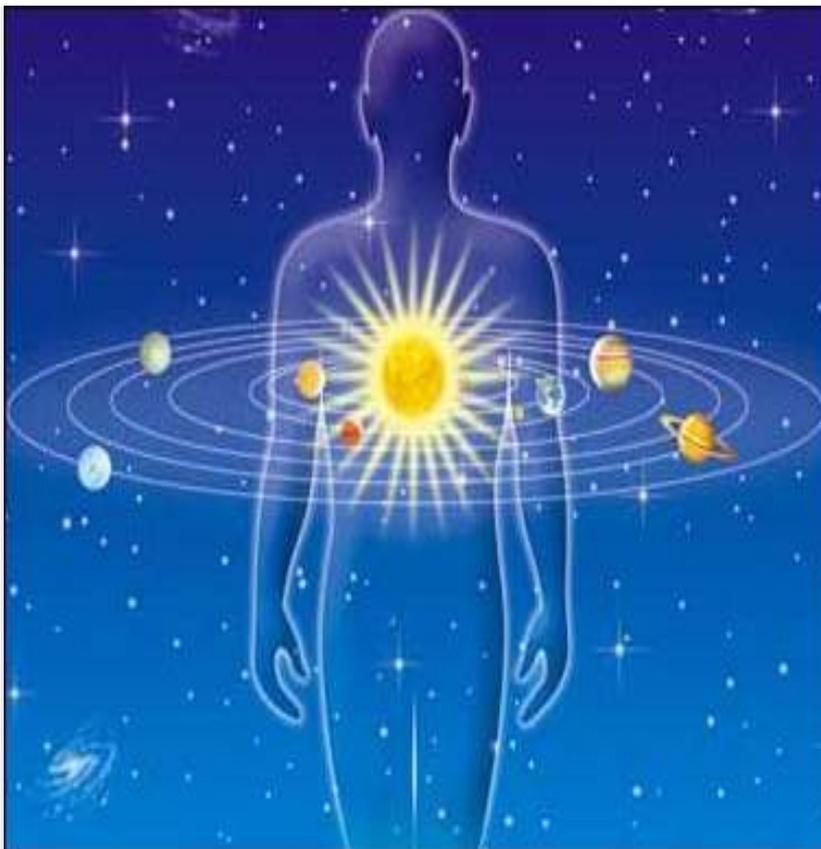


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Short Profile

For being M.A. from B.R.A. Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar Joyanal Abdin Sheikh has been working as Assistant Professor in Philosophy, West Goalpara College, Balarbhita, Goalpara, Assam since 2003.



ABSTRACT:

In the history of human thought the knowledge of the ultimate reality as Brahman or Self or Atman or God in the core of all religion and found in most pronounced from which has never been forgotten. The greatness of Hindu mind lies not in its religiousness, but in quest for the ultimate reality as well as in the discovery of the profound spiritual truths for the well being of humanity. In the Rig Veda it is referred to in neuter form. In the oldest Brahmanas it signifies universal holiness as manifested in prayer, priest and sacrifice. It is also identified with wind, breathing, sun and the syllable Om, the music essence of the Vedas. In the Upanisadic stage or mystical aspect of Hinduism it has developed into a pure and holy principle. The concept

of Brahman which becomes central to the Upanisads and Vedantic systems epitomizes the whole evolution of religion and philosophical thought of India. The same tendency is seen in Greek Philosophy in Parmenides or Plato or at Modern Philosophy in Kant.

KEYWORDS

Ultimate reality, Brahman, God, Atman and Soul – Self.

INTRODUCTION:

The idea of Ultimate Reality or Existence as the highest law as well as their identity is a special characteristic of contemporary Indian thought.

Brahman is the ultimate unifying principle. It is by its nature the highest universal, the material cause of the world out as gold is the material cause of all the ornaments that may be made of it. The conception of treating the highest law runs throughout the whole of Indian idealistic thought both Vedantic and Buddhist as well as in contemporary Indian thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Bagavondas and Mahatma Gandhi. It is for the first time in the history of human thought that the distinction between Absolute and God is brought out. In the Nisprapanca concept what is emphasized in the transcendence of the world. Brahman is being regarded as the wholly other. In the Suprapanca conception the world is the manifestation of Brahman.

In the Upanisads as well as in latter Vedanta literature it is described as existence, consciousness and bliss on the basis of frequent references to the separate elements scattered in the older upanisads. Brahman is not ignorance, unreality and sorrow. They are not attributes of Brahman, they indicate its essential nature, and they are not three but one and the same.

In latter Vadantic literature the two are often spoken of as Nirguna and Saguna Brahman. Many acharyas such as Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava etc. have tried to give expression to the concept of Brahman and made special contributions to Indian philosophy. This is indeed a landmark in history of human progress.

It is natural to seek its feature in the doctrine of the world of man, reality, human existence etc. these are the problems with which Sankaradevas Vaishnavism has been dealt through the Advaitic theory of Mayas Vaidartavada and the doctrine of God as the material and efficient cause of the world.

All the important trends of Indian philosophy are sounded in the page of the Upanisads. If one single doctrine were to be selected from the old Upanisads as the essence of philosophy and if we are asked to sum it up in one sentence that sentence would be "The Universe is Brahman but the Brahman is the Atman." The name given to the origin, support and destiny is sometimes Brahman, sometimes Atman.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: The present paper is designed with the following basic objectives:

- 1.The main objective of this paper is to find out the identity in the conception of Brahman –Absolute- God-Self Atma and Brahman in Indian Idealistic thoughts.
- 2.This paper is to examine the nature of ultimate reality.
- 3.Another objective in this paper is to find out the conception of ultimate reality of treating the highest law runs throughout the whole of Indian idealistic thought both vedantic and Budhistic as well as in contemporary Indian thinkers.

METHOD OF THE STUDY:

The present paper is descriptive. This paper is basically compiled with the help of various sources like Books, Journals, magazines etc.

DISCUSSION:

The word Brahman is not a new term. It was used in the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahman and Aranyaks also. The word Brahmin is derived from the root "Brah", to grow, to trust, to forth, or to evolve.

In the Brahmanas, Brahman denotes the ritual and so in regarded as omnipotent. He who knows the Brahman knows and controls the universe. Brahman is the guiding spirit of the universe, if we have knowledge of Brahman it is due to the working of Brahman in us. Thinkers of the Upanishads based the really

off on the fact of spiritual experience ranging from simple prayer to illuminated experience. Balaki defines Brahman as the person in the Sun (adity Purusah) and successively as the person in the moon is lightening, in ether, in wind, in fire, in the water also. As the person in the mind, is in the shadow, in echo and in the body. King Ajatastru asks, "Is that All". When Balaki confesses that he can go no further. The king says, "He who is the maker of all these persons"? He verily should be known. Brahman is satyasya satyam, the reality of the real, the source of all existing things.

The Kata Upanisad tells us that fire having entered the universe, assumes all forms. The Chandogya Upanisad however makes out that fire is the first to evolve from the primaeval being and from fire come water and from water the earth. Verily is the beginning of the world was Brahman. The Taittiriya upanisad says "Brahman is that one ultimate reality whence all these beings arise, whereby they live in this world and whether they recede at death.

The identification of the individual soul and supreme reality is stated over and over again in the Upanisads. Brahman is Atman, Deussen observes, "If we strip this thought of the various forms figurative to the highest degree and let seldom extravagant, under which it appears upon it solely in its philosophical simplicity as the identity of god and the soul, Brahman, the Brahman and the Atman.

In the Bhagavad gita the very word Brahman stands for ultimate reality. The philosophy of the gita develops like that of the upanisads. It maintains the homogeneity and oneness of Brahman. The Brahmasutra holds that Brahman is the ultimate reality from which the origin subsistence and destruction of the world proceed.

The absolute is conceived by S. Radhakrishnan as "pure consciousness and pure freedom and infinite possibility. S. Radhakrishnan absolutism contains the elements of both the Advaita Vedanta and the Hegelian tradition. He believes that the ultimate explanation of the universe has to be monistic. The absolute in itself is essential one. According to him the ultimate reality is the Brahman- The Absolute – Which is the logical ground of everything real and existent.

God and Absolute are names of the one universal spirit in different aspects. Brahman-in –it which is nirguna and Brahman –in-relation-to-the world which is Saguna are not true Brahman it is same Brahman viewed from two different standpoints. While Brahman is the supreme as spirit, God is the supreme as person. Brahman is god as he is and Isvara is god as he seems to us. The difference between Brahman and God is not of essence but of standpoint.

S. Radhakrishnan observes as Brahman is the eternal quiet underneath the drive and activity of the universe, Atman is the foundational reality underlying the conscious powers of the individual, the inward ground of the human soul. The Brahman and Atman are two complementary concepts which complete the very concept of ultimate reality.

CONCLUSION:

In the contemporary, idealistic thought of India Brahman is the ultimate unifying principle. It is by its nature the highest universal, the material cause of the world just as god is the material cause of all ornaments that may be made of it. The formal cause of a thing corresponds to the Brahman as the highest universal. Brahman turns out to be the efficient cause also. The identification of the universal with the efficient cause is to be formal in the thought of Plato. The conception of treating the highest law runs throughout the whole of the Indian idealistic thought both Vedantic and Budhistic as well as in contemporary Indian thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Bhagvandas and Mahatma Gandhi. The idea of ultimate reality or existence as the highest law as well as their identity is a special characteristic of contemporary Indian thought.

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