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### Vajrasuchi Upanishad

Vajrasuchi Upanishad is one of the 108 Upanishads, belonging to the Sama Veda. This Upanishad has great social and religious significance. Vajrasuchi Upanishad describes that a person becomes a real Brahmin or Brahmana, by realization of the Supreme Brahman and not by merely taking birth in a Brahmin family. Such a person's experience and understanding of Brahman is not indirect but direct, because he has seen Brahman in his very self. Vajrasuchi Upanishad is thus a reminder of the basic truth contained in the ancient scriptures to all those who take pride in their birth, but have none of the exalted qualities that qualify them to be true Brahmanas.

It negates the notion that one belonging to a particular social or religious background has certain privileges and rights over others. It exhorts the younger generation that their prime objective should be in perfecting themselves morally and spiritually in order to realize Brahman. The Upanishad extends hope to those who are willing to make supreme sacrifices in order to realize their inner selves, regardless of their background and their past. One of the most significant features of the Vajrasuchi Upanishad is that it attempts to clarify the concept of caste system which has been grossly misinterpreted in the Indian context.

Vajrasuchi (the diamond needle) pierces ignorance, rebukes the ignorant and ornaments those who have wisdom as eye. The Smritis affirm, following the Vedas that the Brahmana is the most important of the four castes. It must be asked, 'Who is a Brahmana' - the self, body, class, knowledge, action or virtue. The soul is not a Brahmana because the soul is the same in all bodies past and future. The same person takes many bodies according to karma, nor is the body Brahmana - the body is the same from the Chandala (to the highest caste) being made of the five elements and is seen to have old age, death etc., alike. There is no fixity (of colour) such as Brahmana is white, Kshatriya is red, Vaishya is yellow and Sudra is black; also when the father's body is cremated, the son etc., may be guilty of killing a Brahmana.

Nor is the class a Brahmana. Then there would be many classes within the classes. Many are the great sages: Rishyasringa born of a deer, Kausika of reed, Jambuka of a jackal, Valmiki of an ant-hill, Vyasa of a fisher-girl, Gautama of a hare's back, Vasistha of Urvasi, Agastya of a pot according to tradition. These are not Brahmanas by birth but by their knowledge. Nor is knowledge Brahmana: Kshatriyas and others also have knowledge. Nor is karma: all creatures are seen to have similar karma of Prarabdha etc., and all creatures act being impelled by karma. Nor is a man of virtue: There are many givers of gold - Kshatriyas etc.

One who has directly realized, like the berry in the palm, the Atman without a second, devoid of class, quality and action and of defects like the six waves (like hunger), the states (like birth and death), of the nature of truth, knowledge and bliss, free from adjuncts, the basis of all thoughts, immanent in all creatures, present inside and outside like space. Bliss impartite, beyond (ordinary) knowledge, to be realized by experience alone - and having become successful, free from lust etc., rich in mental control, without greed etc., mind untouched by hypocrisy etc. This is the intention of Veda etc. Otherwise the nature of Brahmana cannot be achieved.

One should contemplate one's self as the spirit without a second, truth, knowledge and bliss.

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