

**Contemporary Relevance of the Upanisadic Message:
*natato viju-gupsate***

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Abstract

The expression “na tato viju-gupsate” found to be used in the Katha Upanisad at several places and also once in the Isa Upanisadas “tato na viju-gupsate”, suggesting the possibility of overcoming the hatred towards others. Because in its use this expression stands for the meaning “there is no hatred for others”. The aim of this paper is to look the context and the purpose of the use of the expression tato na viju-gupsate and find out the practical suggestion given by the Upanisadic seers to overcome the social evil like feeling of differences and also to proceed a step forward towards social harmony.

Reference to this paper
should be made as follows:

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*Contemporary
Relevance of the
Upanisadic Message:
natato viju-gupsate,*

RJPSSs 2018, Vol. 44,
No.1, pp.14-18,
Article No. 3

Online available at :
[http://anubooks.com/
?page_id=2012](http://anubooks.com/?page_id=2012)

Out of the evils witnessed in the modern society ‘developing hatred towards others’ happens to be quite usual and alarming. It is quite obvious that it cannot be checked by the help of any kind of law or administrative means. For the purpose it is important to develop proper understanding about equality consideration among the mass so that people in general will develop an attitude not to hate others and such an evil possibly can be checked. The Upanisadic seers were able to see such possibility for which they have suggested the means to give up hatred towards others at different occasions.

In this context it is important to point out that there is one expression “*na tato viju-gupsate*” found to be used in the *Katha Upanisad* at several places and also in one place of the *Isa Upanisadas* “*tato na viju-gupsate*”, suggesting the possibility of overcoming the hatred towards others. Because in its use this expression stands for the meaning “there is no hatred for others”. Here the obvious question follows: under which circumstances there can be no hatred for others? The aim of this paper is to look the context and the purpose of the use of the expression *tato na viju-gupsate* and find out the practical suggestion given by the Upanisadic seers to overcome the above mentioned social evil and also to proceed a step forward towards social harmony.

First of all I would like to spell out the context in which such an expression is used in the *Isopanisdad*. In the verse VI it has been said that “he who sees all the beings in his own self and also sees the self in all beings, for that reason he feels no hatred.”¹ Sankara, in this context, has said that such a state where one is unable to see anything else other than his own self (*atma vyatirikanti napasyanti*) for him, self is everything and the same self is present everywhere. Here the ontological assertion is “how unity is the basis of multiplicity and upholds the multiplicity. ... Multiplicity is its becoming. Brahman is the one self of all and the many are the becomings of the one being.”² But the simple understanding of the verse is that this verse clearly emphasizes on the oneness of the self. Because the same self is shared by everyone it is possible for a being to see himself in all other beings and also all other beings within himself. If it is possible then that being cannot hate others as self hatred is not possible. In his case hating others would be as good as self hatred. Here the message is that this knowledge of oneness obviously dispels hatred for others.

Thus through this expression the two Upanisads preach equality. The consideration of equality can dispel all sorts of feelings possible out of the feeling of differences. In this context, Swamy Chinmayananda nicely writes that “I would suggest that even those who do not know much of *Samskrta* would somehow or

other memorise this stanza, maintaining an association with sounds, and would keep it as a ready antidote for all the inner poisons of mental agitations and intellectual unrest.”³

It has been said in the *Katha Upanisad* (2.1.12) that “The *Purusa*, of the size of a thumb, dwells within the body. He is the Lord of the past and future. By virtue of this knowledge one does not hate any other”.⁴The significance of this saying is that the atman is dwelling inside the body as *purusa*. It does not refer to the vital force that controls the being which is pure and luminous. It has been further said in the same Upanisad (2.1.5) that “He who knows very nearly to this Atman, the enjoyer of honey, the sustainer of life, the lord of the past and future, there after he has no hatred for others”.⁵

In these two verses the message imparted is that the same atman dwells in everyone’s body which is the sustainer of life. So multiplicity for the reality has to be discarded and unity of the self has to be admitted. The main purpose behind this knowledge is that such right knowledge about the reality will take away the hatred for others. Because, the right knowledge about the reality teaches us “oneness” or “non-difference” among all humans. The humanity is one race having no difference between one another so far as the reality of man is concerned. The differences are there in the surface level. Thus it is hinted that since there is no difference between one being and another, there should not be hatred for others.

It is seen that the term ‘*Vijugupsa*’ seems to have been used to mean ‘hatred’ or ‘narrow mindednesses or even ‘secretiveness’. This shows that if a human being will have *Vijugupsa* with him then he can never associate himself in the mission of universal brother hood or universal family hood. He will allow selfish desires within and will never try to refrain himself from exploiting others. A narrow minded person can never think of the betterment of others or the betterment of the society. For social harmony it is necessary to give up *vijugupsa*. Giving up *Vijugupsa* will strengthen the virtues like benevolence and fellow feeling.

Upanisadic seers could realize this condition that giving up *Vijugupsa* will lead towards social harmony. Liberation or *Brahmajnana* may be the highest goal of life. It may not be possible on the part of everyone to achieve such a goal. But every man can try to cultivate some of the simple virtues like giving up *Vijugupsa*. As it is a tendency with man to seek reasons for everything he wants to cultivate, Upanisadic seers have provided reasons in support of giving up *Vijugupsa*.

It is clear that ‘*Vijugupsa*’ is not developed for near and dear ones. It is developed for others to whom we do not consider to be our own. It is developed for

those in whose harm we remain unconcerned or unaffected. But it is found to be there with him anyone who is completely indifferent or isolated from social feelings. If we think that we are different from others then it is based on a wrong knowledge about our own self. The Upanisads clearly point out that in respect of 'self' or 'soul' diversity or multiplicity is not possible. Diversity or multiplicity is the product of wrong knowledge or appearance. Sri Ramakrishna has rightly pointed out "knowledge leads to unity and ignorance to diversity".

That the Upanisadic messages are against the feeling of separateness or the notion of diversity is also emphasized by Swami Ranganathananda. He further claims that what Upanisadic literature has recommended long back is now found to be the theme of modern scientific thought as well. Referring to the views of Barnett 'he writes that' "The greatest discovery of science, in physics as well as in biology, in this sense of oneness between things and forces in nature and between nature and man. Physics discovers linkage between living organisms, and between these and their natural environments. One organism is linked with another in a life continuum. Where the surface view sees difference, deeper scientific view discovers linkages." ⁷ Hence in order to give up *vijugupsa* we have to give up the wrong knowledge only. It is definitely an appreciable proposal proposed by Upanisadic seers to give up the wrong knowledge. Once the wrong understanding about soul or self is vanished the *vijugupsa* will vanish automatically. Once the wrong understanding is vanished not only the *vijugupsa* will be vanished there cannot be any type of sorrow or delusion for him. Because both 'soka' and 'moha' are the product of the lack of the right knowledge i.e., the oneness of the self (*ekatva*). (*Tatra ko mohahE kahE sokahE ekatvam anupasyantahE.*)⁸

It is a fact that all our hatred developed when we feel someone is different from us; we do not develop hatred for our own kith and kins or our own relations. But if a consideration can be developed that the entire mankind belongs to one family then obviously the hatred for others will be reduced. It is not merely suggested that treat the mankind to be one family; it is rather argued out that such an understanding is based on the right knowledge of the reality.

In this context it may be pointed out that some scholars like Swami Ranganathananda, and Sarvananda explain '*na toto vijugupsate*' to be 'there is no fear' or 'one fears no more'. It seems that they have emphasized on the ontological aspect of the understanding of the verses i.e. realization of the reality or the self. After the realization of the self one does not continue with any kind of fear. It cannot be said that this interpretation is misleading one. It is also the case that the knowledge

of the ultimate reality brings the stage of fearlessness. A realized being has no fear of death, fear of miseries, etc. But it is more important to understand the expression in the sense of 'lack of hatred for others'. Such an attitude is highly needed in the present day world where most of the evils are found to be emerged out of the revulsion.

For Social peace and harmony Jesus has said "Love thy neighbour as thyself". In the similar way the Upanisads suggest not to hate the neighbour as you are non-different from him. If such an understanding can be accepted by the present generation then certainly the social harmony cannot be far off. Moreover, if social harmony is established the contemporary relevance of the Upanisadic message cannot be challenged.

It is a matter of regret that the upanisadic messages were not given proper emphasis for the reason that those were not properly communicated to human beings. Upanisads, being treated as *Brahmavidya*, kept reserved for eligible beings only. But in its spirit most of the Upanisadic messages are meant for common man's understanding so that the dominance of the ignorance will be reduced and social peace and harmony can be achieved. Social peace and harmony is not the need of a particular time. It is a timeless need of the man. That shows the contemporary relevance of the above upanisadic message when the present day society is far away from peace and harmony.

References

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