

# Concept of God in Veda and Nyayaphilosophy

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**Abstract:** Veda is that by the study of which we attain the knowledge. Since the Sanskrit root ‘ vid’ can ‘ to know’ to experience, to discover or to learn. Rigveda and other Vedas discuss that Brahman with a view to its attainment, or they establish the existence of Brahman. The Vedic literature reveals the origin, progress and culmination of man’s concept of God or the ultimate Reality from polytheism to monotheism and from monotheism to monism, from the many with names and forms to the one impersonal Reality i.e. beyond name and form. One of the six orthodox systems of Indian Philosophy,

Nyayastra, God is considered the efficient cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. God does not create the world out of nothing, or out of himself but rather out of the eternal atoms of space, time, mind and soul. The creation of the universe refers to the ordering of these entities which are in co-existence with God in a mortal world.

## I. CONCEPT OF GOD IN VEDA

The Rigvedic concept of the ultimate Reality is unique. In various texts of the Rigveda the gods we spoken of as being 33 in number. In the Satapatha Brahmana the number of 33 Gods is explained as made up of 8 vasus, 11 rudras, 12 adityas, together with heaven and earth, or according to another passage together with Indra and Prajapati instead of heaven and earth.

The enumeration of Gods as 33 is not adhered to throughout the Vedas. In the Rigveda, the Gods are mentioned as being much more numerous, 3000,300,30 and nine Gods have worshipped Agni. Vedic Indian believed in the existence of a much larger number of Supernatural being than 33.

The Gods were believed to have had a beginning, they were started to be mortal, but capable of over coming death by the practice of austerity. The Rigveda says that the Gods acquired immortality by drinking soma. Still the Gods are not self-existent or unbeginning beings. It has been seen that they are described in various passages of the Rigveda as offsprings of heaven and earth. In various texts of the Rigveda, the birth of Indra is mentioned, and his father and another are also included.

The Vedic Gods can be classified as deities of heaven, air and earth. Celestial Gods, Atmospheric Gods, Terrestrial Gods.

*“Pasyemasaratamsatamjivemasaratamsatam”*

As like these are verses in which the devotee asks various

Deities for wealth, intelligence and prosperity. On the other hand in some verses, the rishi says that the same God (Agni) appears in various forms as Indra, the giver of rains, Vishnu, who dwelling with the heart of all, protects the world and so on several mantras in the Upanishads and several Vedic Suktas describe the evolution of the Vedic mind. The Kenoupanishad, for example asks *“kenaishitampatatipreshitammanah”* called by whom does the directed mind go towards its object. Though it can be argued that the central theme of the Rigveda Samhita is the propitiation of Gods and Goddesses. In most Vedic Suktas, the Gods are depicted as the controlling and presiding powers behind natural phenomena, such as rain, storm and thunder. Very often, the same characteristics are attributed to various deities. The Vedic Seers saw the moon, the stars, the sea, the sky the dawn and nightfall as divine phenomena and not as integral parts of lifeless nature. Saraswathy is described as ‘nadinamsuchi’, sacred and pure among rivers, the rivers are described as rushing to the ocean as charioteers at the behest of Indra. I

*“Indra ishitesamudramratyevayatah”*

It is asserted that the Reality behind the five principle is one, the same truth is behind the Sun which illumines the universe, the same reality underlies Ushas which makes everything effulgent, and so on. In the 10th mandala, there is a mantra.

“How many are the fires, how many suns, how many dawns, how many waters, I address you, O pitris, not for the sake of disputation. I ask you sages, in order to know the truth”.

In reply to this, there is the mantra in the 8th mandala, where the unity of the divine principle is established.

“Agni is one though ignited in various form, the one sun rises in all the worlds, the one down lights up all this, the one alone has become all this”.

In the Nirukta, Yaskacharya has defined the word ‘deva’ as follows-

A deva is one who gives gifts (devo danat) who effulgent (devo dipanat) who illumines (devo dyotant) and who resides in heaven or the celestial world ‘dyustanebhavati’.

The word Isha is defined by Yaska as ‘ishteitiishah’, because he controls and rules over the whole creation, he is called Isha. Following the first definition given for the word Deva, the word Isha is defined as one who bestows the eight powers like Anima, Garima, and the like.

Yaska’s Nirukta discusses the question whether Devatas have form or not. After discussing the three different views (namely, they have form, they do not have form, and a combination of the views), the Nirukta finally concludes that, is reality, then is only one Devata, who can be addressed in various ways depending upon the temperament of the aspirant. Infact, our concept of the God head is largely determined by our cultural milieu, intellectual make up and spiritual stature.

Here we discuss the God is many or one. Man’s concept of God or the ultimate Reality from polytheism to monotheism, ultimately leading to monism. That is why the Rigvedic rishi asks ‘kasmaidevayahavishavidyema?’ To what God shall we offer our oblations and again ‘kodadarsaprathamajayamanam? Who saw the first born.

The 1st mandala of the Rigveda brings out this idea most beautifully

“indrammitramvarunamagnimahu-

Ratho divyahasuparnogarutman

Ekamsadviprabahudhavadantya-

Gnimyamammatariswanamahuh.”

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and he is the heavenly, noble winged Garutman. The Reality is one, but sages call it by many names, they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvana and so on.

The idea that names may be many and different but they all denote the one God occurs in Viswakarnasukta too. It is stated-

“Yodevanamnamadha eka eva

Tam sampratambhuvanayantyanya”

The name giver of the Gods is one, other beings come to him to inquire.

One of the grandest conception of God in the whole of vedic literature is found in the last chapter of the Suklayajurvedasamhita, which is known as the Isavasyopanishad. It is said that whatever these in this world is to be filled and covered with Isha or Ishwara “Ishavasyamadamsarvam”. God creates this world, then enters into everything.

In Taittiriyanishad

“Idamsarvamasrujatayadidamkimcatatsruthva

Tadevanupravisattadanupravisyasacatyaccabavat”

It created all this that exists. Having created that. It entered there in. Having entered, it became the formed and the formless.

The Kathopanisad has it that God is the root of this world existence. The realisation of God is regarded as the Supreme blessedness or sreyas, as apart from preyas or temporal experience of satisfaction.

The Prasnopanisad says that God is the Dupreme Prajapati or creator, in whom are blended both the matter and energy of the universe. God is symbolised in Pranava or Omkara.

The Kenopanisad reveals that the Supreme Reality is beyond the perception of the senses and the mind because the senses and the mind can visualise and conceive only the objects, while Reality is the Supreme Subject, the precondition of all sensation, thinking, understanding etc. No one can behold God because He is the beholder of all things.

The Chandogyopanisad says that all this universe is Brahman Manifest in all its states of manifestation. It regards objects as really aspects of the one subject known as the Vaiswanara Atman. It also holds that the Supreme Being is the Infinite, or Bhuma, in which one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and understands nothing else except the self as the only, existence.

The Aitareyopanisad says that the Supreme Atman has manifested itself as the objective universe from the onside and the subjective individuals on the other side, in which process, factors which are effects of God's creation become causes of individual's perception, by a reversal of the process.

## II. CONCEPT OF GOD IN NYAYA PHILOSOPHY

Nyaya is one of the six orthodox school of Indian Philosophy. Nyaya accept only one God i.e. monotheism.

The word monotheism is derived from the Greek nouns meaning 'single'. Theism in the broadest sense that at last one deity exists. It is the belief in a singular God, in contrast to polytheism, the belief in several deities.

Nyaya provides a few arguments to establish the theory of God. The first is the causal argument. According to this line of reasoning, the entire universe is formed by the combination of atom. Mountain, fields, rivers and so on must have a cause, for they are made up of parts, possess limited dimension and are not intelligent. This being so, they cannot be the cause of themselves, they require the guidance of an intelligent cause. That intelligent cause must have direct knowledge of all matter and of the atom that underlie all matter. He must be Omnipresent, Omniscient. This intelligent entity cannot be the individual soul, for instance, does not have the knowledge of other souls. Therefore, there must be he an ultimate intelligent entity, which is based on adrista which means 'the unseen' or 'the unknown' and may be translated as providence or fate. The philosophers of the Nyaya system inquire as to why some people are happy and other are not, why some wise and others ignorant. One cannot say that there is no cause, because every event has a cause. The causes of pain and pleasure must therefore be one's own actions in this life or in previous lives. People enjoy or suffer according to the merits or demerits produced by their past good or bad actions. This law of karma, which governs the life of every individual soul, requires that every human being must reap the fruits of his own actions.

There is often a long interval of time between an action and its effect, however and many pleasures and arrows cannot be traced to any action performed in this life. Likewise, many actions performed in this life do not produce fruits immediately. The subtle impression of all one's action persist long after the actions themselves and are collected in the soul in the form of credits or merits (punya) and demerits (papa). The sum total of all merits and demerits that are accrued from good or bad action is called 'adrsta' fate and this produces present pain and pleasure. Adrsta is not an intelligent principle, however, and it cannot inspire its own fructification. It must therefore be guided or directed by so.

The third one is scriptural testimony. The Vedas, Upanisads and all other authoritative scriptures state the existence of God was directly experienced by individual souls and they expressed their God realization. The Veda is the expression of such direct experiences of God. Therefore, God exists.

Early Naiyayikas wrote very little about God entered into disputes with the Buddhists and tried to prove the existence of God through logic. They made the question a challenge to their own existence. Sri Udayana Acharya's Nyayakusumanjali challenges popular arguments for the nonexistence of God .

Some extracts are given below:

*Suddhabuddhaswabhavaityoupanisadah, Adividwan siddha itikapilah,  
klesakarmavipakasayairaparamrustonirmanakayamadhisthayasampradayakspradyodakoanugrahakascetipatan  
calah, lokavedaviruddhairapinirlepahswatantrascetimahapasupatah, sivaitisaivah, purushottamaitivaishnavah,  
pitamahaitipouranikah, yanjapurushaitiyanjikhah, sarvanjaitisougatah, niravaranaitidigambarah,  
upasyatvenadesitaitimimsakah, yavaduktopapannitinaiyayikah, lokavyavaharasiddhaiticarvakah, kimbahuna  
yam karavopiviswakarmetyupasate,  
tasminnevamjatigotrakaranakuladharmadivadasamsaramprasiddhanubhave bhagavata bhavesandehaeva  
kuta:”*

These are the main proofs for the existence of God.

### III. CONCLUSION

In Naiyayika's view ' Veda is the main evidence for the existence of God. In Vedic literature , concept of God or the ultimate Reality from polytheism to mono-theism and from monotheism to monism, from the many with names and forms to the One Impersonal Reality i.e. beyond name and form. Nyaya accept only one God.i.e.monotheism.It is the belief in a singular God, in contrast to polytheism, the belief in several deities. So we can say that God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe.He is the efficient, not material cause of the universe.

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