

The Science of Upanishads - Part 9: Kena Upanishad

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Kena Upanishad is classified as one of the primary or Mukhya Upanishads that is embedded inside the last section of the *Talavakara Brahmanam* of the Samaveda. Like Isavasya, this Upanishad derives its name from the opening word of the text, Kena–ishitam, “by whom directed.” It is listed as number 2 in the Muktikā, the canon of the 108 Upanishads of Hinduism. Among the Upanishads it is one of the most analytical and metaphysical, its purpose being to lead the mind from the gross to the subtle, from effect to cause. By a series of profound questions and answers, it seeks to locate the source of man’s being; and to expand his self–consciousness until it has become identical with God–Consciousness. Kena Upanishad is notable in its discussion of the Brahman with attributes and without attributes, and for being a treatise on "purely conceptual knowledge". It asserts that the efficient cause of all the gods, symbolically envisioned as forces of nature, is Brahman. This has made it a foundational scripture to Vedanta school of Hinduism, both the theistic and monistic sub-schools after varying interpretations. The Kena Upanishad is also significant in asserting the idea of "Spiritual Man", "Soul is a wonderful being that even gods worship", "Atman (Soul) exists", and "knowledge and spirituality are the goals and intense longing of all creatures".

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