A person who has controlled his sense organs and turned his intellect towards the innermost part in the body realises the Self. He now understands that the only real thing, the Self, is distinct from whatever he experiences in his daily life. Our concept of the world and things in it is only through the five small peep-holes (sense organs) in our body. What we cognize in our life is explained in terms of the sounds heard, the
touched felt, the forms seen, the tastes enjoyed or the smells experienced. Our cognition of the world constituted of matter is explained in terms of the properties of matter. But, to the Self-realised person, the only real thing is revealed which is ever devoid of sound (śabda), touch (sparśa), form (rūpa), taste (rasa) and smell (gandha). Kaṭhopaniṣad states that it (the Self) is without decay. It is without beginning or end. Having known this, a person is freed from the jaws of death. The spiritual path of Yoga taking us from the perceptions of plurality to the vision of unity is described as sharp and thin as the edge of a blade. But it leads a determined and sincere seeker beyond death to the state of immortality.

2. KU.I.iii.15
Self-realised different from Ignorant

*Kāthopaniṣad* uses the word *bālas* (children) to denote those who are ignorant of the Self. They seek external pleasures and fall into the bondage of death. In contrast, a man of strong will, who has sought the inner Self and realised it, do not desire anything in this world because he knows that the Self alone is eternal and all other objects are non-eternal. He knows, as *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* states, that the Self does not increase or decrease by action. One who is ignorant of the Self engages himself in the three pursuits — *putraśanā, vittaiśanā and lokaiśanā*.

3. KU.II.i.2
4. *na karmāṇaḥ vardhate no kaniyān*- Bu.IV.iv.23.
5. KUSB.II.i.2
Omniscience of the Self-realised

The Self-realised understands that it is the Self that cognizes all objects of the sense organs. The sense organs themselves do not perceive their objects. The eyes see the form or the colour, the tongue takes the taste, the nose catches the smell, the ears hear the sounds, the skin recognizes the touch and the mind enjoys conjugal pleasures only because of the Self\(^6\). There is nothing in this world which is not cognized by the Self. The Self alone is capable of understanding whatever that exists in the world. The hymn of the \textit{Kathopanishad} putting forth this idea is condensation of the theme of the entire

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6.KU.II.i.3
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Self-realised does not grieve

The strong-willed (dhīra) when he knows that it is the Self by which he perceives all objects in the dream state or in the waking state does not grieve at all. The identification “I am the Ātman” makes a person courageous enough to face all adversities in life. He knows that the Self is omnipresent (vibhu) and that it is that very Self is within him. Whatever in the world is working only because of the only real thing. This knowledge makes a person free from all worries.

7. KU.II.i.3
8. KU.II.i.4
If life were not in any particular body, however great and noble that Mahātmā might have been, however intelligent the Scientist, however emotional the poet, however great genius the painter, none of them would any more function, when once the life has ceased to preside over the body. Thus, the intelligent entity, the Ātman, is the illuminator of our awareness of the waking-state-world during the periods of our wakeful existence⁹.

There could be none who had not yet experienced what a dream is. The dream-world certainly exists only within ourselves; and since we ‘see’ them, and they are objects, we surely

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must need have some sort of a light to illumine for us the inner objects in our mental region. Lord Death explains that the dream-world is also illumined for us by the Light of the same Divine Intelligence, that presides in us as our Real Nature\textsuperscript{10}.

**Self-realised does not fear**

The one who has realised the Self knows that it is the Ātman limited in the adjunct of the body that enjoys the fruits of activities. It is the Universal Self that appears as Jīva manifested so near in the body\textsuperscript{11}. Everything in the world is

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11. KU.II.i.5.
controlled by the Self only called by the name God (Īśa). What fear is there for one who understands that there is nothing in this world from whom he shall keep something hidden. One who has realised his Self as eternal and non-dual shall not desire to keep something secret. Therefore he has no need of fear.

Self-realised treats all equally

The Self-realised knows that the Self was there before the creation of water, which is considered in some Śruti as Salila evaiko draṣṭā to be the first of all creations. It is in all the five elements as their substratum. It was there even before the origin of heat (tapas). It has entered the cave, i.e., the heart of all beings. There (in the
body) it is seen with the elements$^{12}$.

The Self manifested in the body is called the deity Aditi in the Upaniṣad$^{13}$. Aditi means one who enjoys the objects of the sense organs. Aditi(eats, i.e., enjoys) iti aditiḥ. The goddess Aditi dwells in the bodies of all creations along with the five elements. Since a Self-realised person knows this, he treats all creatures as equals.

No discrimination

A Self-realised person cannot discriminate between any two beings in the world because he knows that it is the very same Self that is

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$^{12}$KU.II.i.6
$^{13}$KU.II.i.7
manifested in everything. The Brahman, which is in one person is the same in other creatures. So a person who has realised the Self cannot differentiate any being from others. He who beholds difference between one being and another being will proceed from death to death\textsuperscript{14}. The Self can be understood by the perfected mind only. Considering the oneness of the Self in all beings, it can be said that nehamānāsti kiñcana, meaning there is nothing which is different from others.

As pure water poured into pure water becomes the same only, the Self of the thinker who knows this also gets dissolved in the Supreme Self\textsuperscript{15}.

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\textsuperscript{14}KU.II.i.10

\textsuperscript{15}KU.II.i.15
**After Death**

When a creature lives, the Self exists in the middle of his body. One lives not because of the activities of the Prāṇa or Apāna, but because of the Self. It throws the Prāṇa up and sends down Apāna. All the gods i.e., the sense organs serve the Self only.

The city of the Self is having eleven gates. By city is meant the physical body. The gates are the openings in the body like the ears, nose, etc.

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16. *madhye vāmanam* KU.II.ii.3
17. KU.II.ii.5
18. KU.II.ii.3
19. KU.II.ii.1
The eleventh gate is very subtle which is called Brahmarandhra. It is a subtle aperture at the crown of the head. If a person adores the lord of that city, i.e., if he practises Yoga, he will be free from all sorrows and when he is released from his body by death, he attains the final release (Mokṣa). By Yoga, a person is able to send his Self out of the body through the Brahmarandhra. That is the right path leading to the final release.

In the case of a person who has not realised the Self (Ātman), his individual Self enters another body after his death. What birth he will take depends on his actions in the present life. Those who have done not much meritorious deeds

20.KU.Π.ι.7
will be born as humans, animals and birds. Those who have done very good deeds will become human beings. Those who have done evil deeds will be reborn as trees and other plants. The question as to how the same Self takes other different forms in rebirths is explained with the example of fire. Fire is only one, but it burns differently in different woods\textsuperscript{21}.

The Sun is only one. It is seen by different persons differently according to the defects of their eyes. However, the defects of the eyes of the seers do not affect the orb of the Sun. Similarly, the Self is not affected by any thing in the world\textsuperscript{22}.

\textsuperscript{21} KU.II.ii.9
\textsuperscript{22} KU.II.ii.11
It is the one who realises this truth that attains the final release.

Social Relevance

The Self-realisation taught by the *Kathopanishad* has a very important message to the society. The society is divided on many different lines of caste, religion, politics, etc. We see that such divisions cause rivalries paving the way for inequalities. If the idea of oneness of the Self can be effectively taught to the modern generation, there is a possibility of bringing peace. In this respect the *Kathopanishad* deserves the attention of social reformers.