

**EVOLUTION OF
VĪRĀŚĀIVA CONCEPTS
PART II: UPANIṢADS**

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Depiction of Sanskrit and Kannaḍa Words

Most of the articles written in English, and published in this book, have many Samskr̥ta (Sanskrit) and Kannaḍa words that are written using the English alphabet. Transliteration of these words for proper pronunciation is a challenge with only about half the number of letters in the English alphabet. Furthermore, in general, the sounds of the English letters f, q, w, x and z, are not usable in both Sanskrit and Kannaḍa, leaving even a lesser number of English letters for the depiction. Each letter/syllable of the Sanskrit and Kannaḍa alphabets has only one pronunciation, and the alphabet is arranged according to the functional structure of the mouth to produce these sounds. There are no capital letters; all the letters are in one case only. The following is the English representation of the letters of the Kannaḍa alphabet and the corresponding Dēvanāgarī script of Sanskrit that are in common use nowadays. The lines, dots and other marks used here are called 'diacritics' or 'diacritical marks'. The diacritics are combined with English letters to represent new sounds. This representation is slightly modified from the scheme of transliteration given in ŚŪNYASAMPĀDANE Volumes I through V, published by Karnatak University, Dharwar, India.

Vowels: The vowels are either of a short or of a long duration. The sound of short vowels is held for one count, and that of long vowels is held for two counts. The sound of complex vowels is held for two counts.

Short vowels	Long vowels	Complex vowels
ಅ/ಆ/ a	ಆ/ಆ/ ā	
ಇ/ಇ/ i	ಈ/ಈ/ ī	
ಉ/ಉ/ u	ಊ/ಊ/ ū	
ಋ/ಋ/ ṛ	ೠ/ೠ/ ṝ	
ಎ/ಎ/ e	ಏ/ಏ/ ē	ಐ/ಐ/ ai
ಒ/ಒ/ o	ಓ/ಓ/ ō	ಔ/ಔ/ au

Anusvāra (Nasalization):

ಅಂ/ಅಂ/ aṁ (also aṅ)

Visarga (Aspiration):

ಅಃ/ಅಃ/ aḥ

Consonants: Five sets of five each of the twenty-five consonants are arranged according to five points of articulation with the first vowel 'a' added for pronunciation.

Velars or gutturals - the sound is produced in the throat or back of the mouth:

ಕ/ಕ/ ka, ಖ/ಖ/ kha, ಗ/ಗ/ ga, ಘ/ಘ/ gha, ಙ/ಙ/ ṅa

Palatals – the sound is produced with the tongue touching the palate (roof of the mouth):

ಚ/ಚ/ **ĉa**, ಛ/ಛ/ **ĉha**, ಜ/ಜ/ **ja**, ಝ/ಝ/ **jha**, ಞ/ಞ/ **ña**

Retroflex or cerebrals – the sound is produced with the tongue bent backwards:

ಟ/ಠ/ **ṭa**, ಠ/ಠ/ **ṭha**, ಡ/ಡ/ **ḍa**, ಢ/ಢ/ **ḍha**, ಣ/ಣ/ **ṇa**

Dentals – the sound is produced with the tongue touching the back of the upper teeth:

ತ/ತ/ **ta**, ಥ/ಥ/ **tha**, ದ/ದ/ **da**, ಧ/ಧ/ **dha**, ನ/ನ/ **na**

Labials – the sound is produced at the lips:

ಪ/ಪ/ **pa**, ಫ/ಫ/ **pha**, ಬ/ಬ/ **ba**, ಭ/ಭ/ **bha**, ಮ/ಮ/ **ma**

Semi-vowels: ಯ/ಯ/ **ya**, ರ/ರ/ **ra**, ಲ/ಲ/ **la**, ವ/ವ/ **va**

Palatal sibilant: ಶ/ಶ/ **śa** Retroflex sibilant: ಷ/ಷ/ **ṣa** Dental sibilant: ಸ/ಸ/ **sa**

Aspirate: ಹ/ಹ/ **ha** Lateral: ಳ/ಲ/ **la**

Conjunct (combination of two letters): ಕ್ಷ/ಕ್ಷ/ **kṣa**, ಜ್ಞ/ಜ್ಞ/ **jña**

If the diacritical marks cannot be used for some reason, then there are a few accepted ways of representing some of the sounds/letters: aa for ā, ee for ī, oo for ū, and sha for the retroflex ṣa. In this version the palatal śa, as in Śiva, seems to have been written both ways – sa and sha.

It is not too difficult to use this type of representation in the articles. Although it takes more effort to properly depict the Saṃskṛta and Kannaḍa words, it is worthwhile to use the diacritical marks so that the words are sounded properly.

Upaniṣads

Vēdas, the most sacred of all the Hindu scriptures, consist of the specific Saṁhitās and their appendages. The appendages are the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. Upaniṣads are the best known aspects of the Vēdic literature. They not only come at the end of the textual presentation of the Vēdas but also contain the ultimate goal of the realization of the end-product of the Vēdas. Thus the Upaniṣads as a group are called Vēdānta. Vēdas, in all, are generally considered to have two portions. The first part is the portion dealing with action or rituals (karma kāṇḍa) with the belief that Mōkṣa (salvation/liberation) can be obtained through the right performance of rituals as enjoined in the Vēdas. And the second part comes at the end of the Vēdas, in the Upaniṣads, dealing with knowledge (jñāna kāṇḍa), that is said to be the quintessence of the Vēdas (4).

Upaniṣads contain the esoteric spiritual knowledge meant for reflection and contemplation. The principles and teachings that originated from the seers' experience became the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads do not have a single author, and they do not set forth any systematic philosophy. The ordinary knowledge which deals with the empirical truth such as biology, psychology, philosophy, and so on, is available through the senses and the mind. But the knowledge revealed in the Upaniṣads is unique; it is not available to the sense organs and the gross mind; it is the Truth of the truths, the Self, the essence of the Being, the Reality (2). The Upaniṣads mention that the nature of the **Reality** is that it is **Infinite** where one sees nothing hears nothing and understands nothing; and that the Reality is **transcendent** meaning that it is indefinable, attribute-less and free from all relationship. The knowledge of Reality is the knowledge pertaining to one's own **Self**. It is through the Self-knowledge that one knows anything and everything (2).

Of the 200 or so available Upaniṣads, it is said that only 108 are of any importance and are worthy of study, and that eleven of these are the most popular (5). These are - Īśāvāsyā, Kēna, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitarēya, Āchāndōgya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Śvetāśvatara. Upaniṣads other than these are considered as 'minor' Upaniṣads.

The Upaniṣads begin with one or more peace invocations before the main teachings, and also end with the same or different peace invocations. For example, Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad has the following peace invocation at the beginning as well as at the end; and the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads also use the same peace invocation.

'Ōm, that *invisible* is the Infinite, this *visible* too is the Infinite; from the Infinite the whole *universe* has arisen. Of the Infinite the whole *universe* having come, the Infinite alone remains the same. Ōm! Peace! Peace! Peace!'

All the peace invocations close with the repetition of 'peace' three times. It is said that this repetition is to ward off three types of obstacles: *ādhyātmika*, pertaining to mental and/or physical bodily afflictions; *ādhibhoutika*, pertaining to sufferings from other terrestrial things; and *ādhidaivika*, pertaining to obstacles from celestial objects, dēvas and such.

Meditation on the Supreme Self as the way of redemption is the theme of the Upaniṣads. **The Upaniṣadic teachers have declared that Truth is open for thorough inquiry, and that, being universal, it can be realized in anyone's life at anytime. It is not reserved for any one privileged person or a group, nor is it confined by time or space (2).**

Upaniṣads and Viraśaiva Scriptures

It is said that the Upaniṣads are the authorities for the formulation of the religious as well as the philosophical concepts of Viraśaivas, and that, from the Upaniṣads, the Śivāgamas and the Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi are totally influenced in the elucidation of these concepts (7). The most important one of all the Viraśaiva concepts is the Ṣaṭsthala system. In this system, spiritual ascent in six stages involves Bhakti/devotion, Jñāna/knowledge, and Kriyā/action. Development of the Ṣaṭsthala system, by harmoniously combining devotion, knowledge and action, has been through the influence of the Upaniṣads (7).

Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi (7, 18) and Śūnya Saṃpādane (1) are the two main scriptures of the Viraśaivas. Explanatory notes and comment sections of these two scriptures frequently refer to the Upaniṣads for their elucidation. The referenced Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi book (7), at its beginning, gives a list of abbreviations of the references. Of the listed 109 material, 49 are for the Upaniṣads. Similarly, the referenced Śūnya Saṃpādane (1) which has five volumes has lists of abbreviated references in its five volumes.

Volume I has a list of 76 references, and 38 of them are for the Upaniṣads.

Volume II has a list of 57 references, and 5 are for the Upaniṣads.

Volume III has a list of 79 references, and 9 are for Upaniṣads.

Volume IV has a list of 59 references, and 4 are for Upaniṣads.

Volume V has a list of 25 references, but there are no references to Upaniṣads.

More importantly, it is not just the number of references to the Upaniṣads; it is how the Upaniṣads are incorporated into the Viraśaiva scriptures.

Right at the outset in the Preface of the referenced Śūnya Saṃpādane (1), a Śāntipāṭha/peace-lesson of the Upaniṣads is used to explain what Śūnya is. All the Upaniṣads begin with a peace invocation before the main teachings, and also end with the same or a different peace invocation. Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad has the following peace invocation at the beginning as well as at the end; and the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads also use the same peace invocation.

*Ōm pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṃ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudaḥcyate
Pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate.
Ōm śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ!*

'Ōm, that *invisible* is the Infinite, this *visible* too is the Infinite; from the Infinite the whole *universe* has arisen. Of the Infinite the whole *universe* having come, the Infinite alone remains the same. Ōm! Peace! Peace! Peace!'

Before giving this peace invocation in transliterated Sanskrit only, the Śūnya Saṃpādane

states that 'Śūnya' is identical with the Upaniṣadic word 'Pūrṇa' in this śāntipāṭha. It is the Absolute, the Infinite. It is described as only one, eternal, permanent, beyond the pairs of opposites, free from the three qualities/guṇas, always a witness of all actions, and it is perfect and complete in all respects. After giving the peace invocation, it says "So the Śūnya of the Vīraśaiva Śaraṇas is not 'emptiness', but is equivalent to the Upaniṣadic Parabrahman or Paramātman". Then it states again "...the word 'Śūnya' of the Vīraśaiva Śaraṇas indicates the Infinite, the Absolute, the Brahman or Parabrahman of the Upaniṣads ..."

What is more striking is the statement in the concluding remarks of the Śūnya Saṃpādane itself. It is as follows:

This is the best guide, the philosophical system of exalted Vīraśaiva doctrine.

This is that which expounds and firmly establishes the Vīraśaiva practice.

This is the crest-jewel of the divine Vēdānta.

This is the chief mirror of all the sciences.

This is the teaching of the highest Experience to promote the Supreme Knowledge.

This is a catalogue of those who, endowed with all kinds of religious practice, have attained the Height.

This is a treasury of the attainment of the great Rājayōga.

This is a happy feast of the ambrosial essence of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, eternal and perfect.

This is a great conference of Prabhudēva on the attainment of Śūnya – an instrument to remove the blindness of ignorance.

This concluding remark is a profound statement. It has a great impact on the philosophy and practice of the Vīraśaivas. As above, one of the statements is that the Śūnya Saṃpādane is the crest-jewel of the Divine Vēdānta. Upaniṣads are the Vēdānta; they come at the end of the Vēdas. The Upaniṣads, dealing with knowledge (jñāna kāṇḍa), are said to be the quintessence of the Vēdas.

Vīraśaiva Philosophy and Vīraśaiva practice have evolved from what is in the Upaniṣads. Thus it is advisable to review the Upaniṣads. For details of the ten 'major' Upaniṣads, please refer to the book 'A Journey Through Sacred Hindu Scriptures' by Linga Raju, M.D. Published in the year 2013 by Sid-Asha Publishing Company, 70 Rieder Road, Edison, NJ 08817; the electronic version of the second edition is published by Veerashaiva Samaja of North America in 2013. Brief descriptions of Major and Minor Upaniṣads applicable to the Vīraśaiva concepts are in this book as follows.

Major Upaniṣads

Of the 200 or so available Upaniṣads, it is said that only 108 are of any importance and are worthy of study, and that eleven of these are the most popular (5). These are - Īśāvāsya, Kēna, Kaṭha, Prasna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitarēya, Ćhāndōgya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, and Śvetāśvatara. Other Upaniṣads are considered as 'minor' Upaniṣads. Brief descriptions of the first ten of the major Upaniṣads are given here in this article. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is given separately because of its greater importance to the Vīraśaivas.

Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad

Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad is an integral part of the last chapter of the Śukla Yajurveda Samhitā. It has only eighteen mantras. It derives its name from the first two words of the first mantra 'Īśā vāsyam' which means 'should be enveloped by the Lord (Īśā)' (17). The peace invocation at the beginning of the Upaniṣad is as follows.

*Ōm! pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudaĉyate
Pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate.
Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!*

Ōm! That invisible is the Infinite; this visible too is the Infinite. From the Infinite, the whole visible universe has come out. The whole universe of the infinite having come, the Infinite alone remains.

Ōm! Peace! Peace! Peace!

[The referenced Śūnyasāmpādane (1) states that 'Śūnya' is identical with the Upaniṣadic word 'Pūrṇa' in this śāntipāṭha. It is the Absolute, the Infinite. "So the Śūnya of the Vīraśaiva Śaraṇas is not 'emptiness', but is equivalent to the Upaniṣadic Parabrahman or Paramātman".]

The Upaniṣad describes what appears to be the guideline for different types of spiritual aspirants. The jñānins/saṅnyāsins adhere to the path of knowledge and do not perform sacrificial rites. They are attuned to the reflection and contemplation on the real nature of the inner Self/Ātman. Realization of the true nature of the Self/Ātman, Ātmajñāna, results in the liberation from the cycle of births-deaths, and thus immortality; this is the direct attainment of Oneness even when alive, the Jīvanmukti state. The jñānins are to renounce all the impermanent things - the worldly life and desires pertaining to it. They are to support themselves, and not to crave for any possessions or wealth. The Self is One, unmoving, beyond the reach of the senses, and by its mere presence, it enables the cosmic energy to sustain the activities of all living beings. It is within all 'this', and also outside all 'this'. **The wise one who perceives all beings as not distinct from one's own Self, and one's own Self as the Self of every being, that one, by virtue of**

that perception, does not hate anyone.

[The realized individual has no conflict with anyone, because everything is Ātman. It seems that the division into castes and the stations of life appears to be meant to suit the comprehension of ignorant persons, and not meant for those who have the right understanding. **Viraśaivas** have no conflict with anyone, because they do not subscribe to the division into castes or the stages of life (do not believe in varṇāśramadharmā). It is to be noted that Viraśaivas also do not perform the sacrificial rites. Viraśaivas are attuned to the reflection and contemplation on the real nature of the inner Self/Ātman, and believe in the direct attainment of Oneness even when alive, the Jīvanmukti state.]

Those, who have not attained the necessary internal development needed to renounce desires, are bound to the world by the desire to enjoy it. The ignorant ones and the ones engaged in the ritualistic observations, enter into blinding darkness. As long as one is fond of human life and desirous to live a hundred years, the only way to be free from the taint of evil deeds is to perform the scripture-oriented works. Many worship God in order to secure worldly happiness and spiritual emancipation. For them, the advice is to perform sacrificial rites and duties ordained by the scriptures, and to engage in meritorious and altruistic works. At the same time, they are to acquire spiritual knowledge. By pursuing this discipline, one may attain, after death, the highest objective. This is considered as the gradual or indirect liberation/emancipation, in contrast to the direct attainment even when alive, the Jīvanmukti state, which is attained only by the realization of the true nature of the Self/Ātman.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Kēna Uaniṣad

Kēnōpaniṣad derives its name from the first word of the first verse, 'Kēna' which means 'by whom'. It is mainly in the form of a dialog between the teacher and the disciple. It has thirty-five verses that are distributed into four parts (25).

The teaching of the Kēnōpaniṣad is that it is the **Ātman**, the Absolute Consciousness, by whose power the ear hears, the eye sees, the tongue speaks, the mind understands, and the life (prāṇa) functions. The wise one separates the Ātman from the faculties. The Ātman can not be known as a thing of the world in an objective sense. It can not be explained by words like explaining other objects. It is different from the known, and it is beyond the unknown. The senses can not reveal it, but what reveals the senses is 'That (Ātman)' the Brahman, and not this the people worship here. That which can not be comprehended by the mind, but by which the mind is cognized is Brahman, and not this people worship here. If one states "I have known Brahman well", that person knows very little, and needs to enquire further about Brahman. Any mental conception for Brahman is a sign of ignorance. The Absolute is beyond all conceptions of the mind. Only those with true illumination can understand its non-objective reality, and thus make no conception of it. Ātman is not experienced as an object. Ātman is the intelligence that

gives self-awareness to thoughts or mental modifications. For every mental modification that results in relative experience of life, there is a simultaneous revelation of the Ātman. The awareness of these mental modifications disappears into the substratum that is Ātman. If one has realized here in this life, then the True life is here. The wise, realizing the Ātman in all beings, rises from sense-life, and attains the Jīvanmukti state of immortality in this very life.

[The above is part of the philosophy of the Vīraśaivas; Prabhudēva, particularly, asserts the concept (1).]

An allegorical story is told where the Dēvas (Gods) are the senses and Brahman is Brahman (Ātman). In a dispute between gods and demons, Brahman won the victory for the gods. Gods/Dēvas were rejoicing the victory, but they did not comprehend that Brahman was the cause for the victory, and did not even know who or what that was when Brahman appeared. Dēvas sent Agni, the divinity of fire, to find out the identity of Brahman. Agni approached Brahman and stated that he is Agni and he has the power to burn everything on earth. Brahman placed a straw down and asked Agni to burn it. Agni could not burn the straw, and returned to the Dēvas without finding out the identity of Brahman. Dēvas then sent Vāyu, the divinity of wind. Vāyu approached Brahman and stated that he is the king of air and he can blow away anything on earth. Again Brahman put down a straw and asked Vāyu to blow it away. Vāyu could not do it, and returned without finding the identity of Brahman. Then the Dēvas requested the chief god Indra, the divinity of lightening thunder and rain, to go and find out. When Indra arrived, Brahman disappeared, and in that spot a wonderfully beautiful woman **Uma the Haimavatīm** appeared. 'Haimavatīm' means the 'daughter of Himavat'. The meaning of Himavat is 'snow covered mountain'. Haimavatīm also has another meaning – well-adorned with golden ornaments. [Uma is considered as the consort of Śiva, and Vīraśaivas consider Brahman to be Śiva.] Indra asks Uma who or what that adorable Spirit was. Uma responds by saying that it was Brahman and that Brahman won the victory for them and made them attain greatness. It is only then that Indra and the Dēvas understood that it was Brahman and that only through the power of Brahman that they can carry out their functions.

The manifestation of Brahman as the cosmic power is the source of everything; Brahman is what illuminates lightening; Brahman is what makes one wink. Because of Brahman the mind knows the external world, and remembers and imagines things. Brahman is known as 'Tadvanam' meaning 'adorable as being the Ātman of all living beings', and thus, Brahman is to be meditated upon as Tadvana. Here, the Upaniṣad seems to mean that the best way of progress in spiritual life is to worship one Deity immanent in all, and discourage the worship of minor deities for gaining worldly blessings, as it did above by expressing 'and not this that they worship here' [this is precisely what the Vīraśaivas believe]. One, who realizes and discerns that the Ātman is in every living being, rises from the sense-life and attains immortality. Austerities, restraint, dedicated work, are the foundations for gaining the knowledge of the Upaniṣads. Verily, one who knows the wisdom of the Upaniṣads destroys ignorance and becomes established in the Brahman.

[Viraśaivas consider 'Tadvanam' to be another name for Śiva based not only on the meaning of 'Tadvanam', but also because of the sudden appearance of Uma as above. It could be construed, from the above, that this is one of the Viraśaiva Upaniṣads.]

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Kaṭhōpaniṣad is mainly about what happens to the soul after death. This information is given in the form of a story, the main part of which is a dialog between the Divinity Yama, the prime controller of human destiny, and a boy named Naçikētā (26). It is said that Kaṭhōpaniṣad is probably more widely known than any other Upaniṣad, and is considered as one of the most perfect specimens of the mystic philosophy and poetry of the ancient Hindus.

Naçikētā, though a young boy, was filled with Śraddha which is a strong belief in the reality of the teachings of the scripture. Śraddha is a basic virtue that is necessary for the development of spiritual life; without it, spirituality is not attained. Most of that teaching is as follows.

There are two things: one is the good, the Supreme Truth, the Knowledge; the other is the pleasant, the sensual pleasures and desires. They both bind to man. Good comes to one who follows the good, but the one who chooses the pleasant, loses out on the goal (emancipation/liberation from the bondage of life). The wise one discerns the difference between the two, and prefers the good. But the fool chooses the pleasant through avarice and attachment, and perishes by going through this path.

Wide apart are the differences between Ignorance and what is known as Knowledge. Fools in the midst of ignorance, fancy themselves to be wise and learned, and go round and round in the cycles of birth and death, not achieving the emancipation from bondage of life. For them the path of hereafter does not appear. For many the Knowledge is not available; for many even if available, it can not be comprehended. It requires a wonderful teacher and an intelligent student. It is wonderful when one comprehends what is taught by an able preceptor. The knowledge is not attained by mere argumentation; it is more to be felt by intuitional perception. It becomes easy to comprehend when taught by another. [The Sanskrit word 'vaktā' is used for teacher, not the term 'Guru'. But this concept leads to the Viraśaiva concept of the Guru.]

The treasure is transient. The Eternal Ātman is never attained by the transient non-eternal things. The wise one, having realized, by means of meditation on the Self, that ancient effulgent One, difficult to be seen, subtle, immanent residing within the body, relinquishes both joy and sorrow. One who has comprehended well that subtle principle Ātman, and has properly discerned it to be different from the body and mind, verily attains it, and rejoices having attained it.

The 'padam', which means 'word' but is also interpreted here as 'goal', which all Vēdas proclaim, and which all penances declare, is **Ōm**. The syllable Ōm alone is Brahman. Ōm is called Śabda-Brahman as it is the only phonetic symbol of Brahman. This syllable is both the lower Saguṇa-Brahman which is the manifested Brahman, and also the highest Nirguṇa-Brahman which is the un-manifested Absolute Brahman. Having known this syllable whatever one wishes, one is that. [This is also the Vīraśaiva concept; the terms 'Saguṇa-Śiva' and 'Nirguṇa-Śiva' are used instead. The terms Sakala-Śiva and Niṣkala-Śiva are also used.]

This Ātman is not born, nor does it die. It has not come out of anything, nor does anything come into being out of it. This unborn ancient One is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. It kills not, nor is it killed.

The Ātman is smaller than the smallest, and is greater than the greatest. It is lodged in the cave of the heart of creatures. The desire-less one, free from grief, realizes the glory of Ātman through the purity of senses and mind. [The term '**dhātuprasādāt**' is used here to mean 'through the purity or tranquility of the senses and mind'; it is also interpreted to mean 'through the grace of God'. The word '**prasāda**' appears here; it is one of the important concepts of the Vīraśaivas.]

The wise one, knowing that the bodiless all-pervading supreme Ātman is in impermanent bodies, does not grieve. **This Ātman is not attained by the study of the Vēdas or by intellect or even by much learning.** It is attained by the Self of the aspirant who does not desire anything whatsoever other than the Self or Ātman; the aspirant's own Ātman reveals its true nature. Those who have not refrained from wickedness, those unrestrained, the un-meditative, and those with unspecified mind can not attain this Ātman even by knowledge. [This is also the Vīraśaiva concept. You do not need to know the Vēdas to attain Sūnya – this has been incorporated into Prabhudēva's and Basavaṇṇa's vaċanas.]

Ātman is the master inside the body which is a chariot. Intelligence is the charioteer, and the mind is the reign. The senses are the horses, and their roads are the sense objects. When the pure Ātman is superimposed on the attributes of the body the senses and the mind, It is Jīva the doer of the deeds and enjoyer of their fruits. If one is of unrestrained mind and devoid of right understanding, that one's senses are uncontrollable like the wicked horses of the charioteer. But one who is always of restrained mind and has the right understanding, that one's senses are controllable like the good horses of the charioteer. One who has no proper understanding, thoughtless, and always impure, never attains it and gets into the round of births and deaths. But one who is intelligent, always pure with controlled mind, attains it and is not re-born. The Ātman hidden in all beings does not reveal itself to all, but is seen by the seers with subtle and sharp intellect. The wise should merge the speech in the mind, then that in the intellect, that in the Great Self, and that again in the Self of Peace.

The Self-existent has made the senses going outwards. The ignorant sees the external and not the internal, and pursues the external pleasures that lead into the widespread snare of death. The wise ones turn the senses inwards and see the inner Ātman; having known the internal, they attain immortality. Whatever is here in the manifested world is there in the Absolute. What is there, the same is here. One who sees them as different meets with death after death. By mind alone is this to be realized that the difference does not exist. One who sees no difference attains immortality. As pure water poured into pure water becomes the same without any difference, so does the Self of the sage who knows the unity of the Ātman. Having meditated upon Ātman and being liberated from the bonds of ignorance, verily, one becomes free from the cycle of births and deaths.

Nothing remains of the Ātman when freed from the body after the death of the body. Some souls enter the womb to have a body; others go to the immovable according to their work and knowledge. The one Ātman that exists in all beings appears in forms according to the different objects, but it transcends and exists beyond them all. Being beyond the world, the Ātman that resides in all beings does not get attached to the miseries of the world.

The wise who perceive the Ātman of all beings, the one controller who makes one into manifold forms, as existing in their own Self, to them belongs the eternal bliss. They describe that incredible joy as 'this is that'. The sun does not shine there, nor does the moon and the stars, nor do these lightening and fire. But when 'that' shines everything shines; by its light all this is lighted. That is verily the pure, that is Brahman, and that is also called immortal. If one is able to realize that Brahman before the fall of the body, that one is immortal.

Brahman is in the Self as one sees oneself in the mirror, as one sees oneself in a dream, as one sees one's reflection in the water. Brahman can not be seen by one's own eyes, but can be visualized by the intuition of the intellect which resides in the heart and controls the mind. When the five senses of perception remain still with the mind, even when the intellect is not at work, that state is the supreme state. That firm control of the senses is known as **Yōga**, and the Yōgin becomes free from the vagaries of the mind.

The Upaniṣad also brings out the meditation on the manifested-Brahman. Hiraṇyagarbha, born of the Knowledge (the Tapas), born even before the elements, is the macrocosmic aspect of Brahman; Jīva, dwelling inside the body that is made of the five elements, is the microcosmic aspect of Brahman; one who knows Brahman through both of these aspects knows Brahman indeed. Aditi, the soul of the gods (meaning Hiraṇyagarbha), who manifests in the form of Prāṇa, and was created with the elements, dwells in the heart, and one who knows that verily knows Brahman. Omniscient Agni lodged in the fire-sticks is worshipped day after day by the jñānins as well as the householders. By mind one comes to perceive that this universe is only the manifestation of Brahman, and that there is no difference. Those who have not attained the Absolute Brahman, but have

attained the Brahman with attributes, go after death by the central Suṣumnā nāḍi (central channel/conduit/pathway/current), going upwards, from the heart to the crown of the head, and then beyond through the solar plane and other planes to Satyalōka/Brahmalōka where they reside until the end of this cycle of creation-evolution-maintenance-dissolution, and at dissolution are absorbed into the Brahman – this being the slow or delayed path to immortality. Those who have not attained either aspects of Brahman, depart in all directions from the heart to be reborn according to the accumulated deeds. The Upaniṣad here implies that essentially there is no difference between the two states of Brahman, the Absolute state and the manifested state; but Śaṅkarācārya of the Advaita Vēdānta Philosophy considers only the Absolute state to be true, and everything else to be an illusory transformation of Brahman.

The inner soul is visualized by the Yōgins as a flame of a burning oil lamp with its emanating light illuminating and pervading everything. This visualized flame of the size of a thumb resides in the heart of beings. Here it is to be noted that Ātman is meditated upon by the Yōgins as a flame of the size of a thumb in the cavity of the heart; Ātman is beyond all limitations of time and space; assigning the size of a thumb should not be taken literally. One should separate it from the body, and know it to be pure, the immortal. That Ātman can not be reached by speech or by eyes or even by the mind. When the ignorance and all the desires that dwell in the heart are destroyed, then the mortal becomes immortal, and attains Brahman even here in the body while still living. That surely is the injunction of the Vēdānta. [This flame located in the heart with its emanating light illuminating and pervading everything is often referred to as 'Jyōtirliṅga' by the Vīraśaivas. Kāṭhōpaniṣad is considered as one of the important Upaniṣads of the Vīraśaivas.]

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Praśna Upaniṣad

'Praśna' means 'question'. Six questions are asked by six disciples, and answered by the venerable Ṛṣi Pippalāda. It is notable that this Upaniṣad states the Creation to be originating from **Matter** and **Energy**. The teaching gradually progresses from the gross to the subtle principles of life, un-wrapping the folds of matter that envelop the Ātman (27).

The first question is about the origin of the created beings. 'The Creator' (the term '*Prajāpati*' is used here, and it means Lord of the creatures) desirous of progeny, performed austerity in the form of meditation, and created the pair, matter/food (*rayim*) and energy/*Prāṇa*, thinking that matter and energy together in manifold way would bring forth creatures. Matter is all these with form and also what is formless. All the manifestations of life and energy are influenced by the Sun. Sun, by its rays, holds all the Prāṇas. The Prāṇa of universal life and universal form is identified with the Sun and Agni the divinity of fire. The year is Prajāpati, meaning the Time is Prajāpati, and everything

is in the control of Time. Prajāpati (Time) has set out two paths for the departing souls after the death of the body. Those who perform Vēdic sacrifices and charitable work go by the southern path, Matter being this path of the forefathers, to the world of the Moon (Cāndralōka), and after enjoying fruits of their deeds/karma are re-born. Those who seek Ātman by austerity, abstinence, faith and knowledge attain Āditya (Sun), the source of all Energy, and go by the northern path to the supreme resort Brahmalōka, and at the end of this cycle of creation-evolution-maintenance-dissolution are absorbed into Brahman, this being the gradual liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

The second question is about the Dēvas/Divinities/Gods, their manifestations and functions. The sky, air, fire, water, earth, speech, mind, eye and ear are the manifested Dēvas. But the Chief Prāṇa by dividing into five parts is the one that holds this body, and supports it. Prāṇa burns as fire, is the Sun, is the cloud, is Indra and is the wind. When Prāṇa pours down rain, the creatures are delighted, hoping that there will be food to satisfy their desire. Prāṇa is the ruling force of nature, is the universal lord of existence, and whatever exists in the worlds is all under its control.

The third question is about the nature and origin of Prāṇa. The Prāṇa is born of the Ātman. It is like the shadow of the Ātman, and has no separate existence. It comes into the body by the act of the mind. The Chief Prāṇa engages its five parts differently. One part, the *Prāṇa*, dwells as seven flames in the eyes, ears, nostrils and the mouth. *Apāna* is in the organs of excretion and reproduction. *Samāna* is in the middle, and it distributes the offered food equally to all parts of the body. Ātman is in the heart; from here the branching nāḍīs emerge and go to all parts of the body. Nāḍī is a conduit visualized when the difference between the arteries and nerves was not known to the ancient Ṛṣis. In all these nāḍīs the *Vyāna* moves. And *Udāna*, the subtle aspect of Prāṇa, by way of one of the nāḍīs (Suṣumnā nāḍī) carries the soul upwards from the heart to the top of the head, and then to the virtuous world by virtuous deeds, to the sinful world by the sinful acts. The Sun is the external Prāṇa, and its rays make the Prāṇa in the eye see. The God which is in the earth controls the Apāna. The ether/sky which is in the intermediate space is the Samāna. The air is the Vyāna. And the fire is the Udāna. Whatever the thoughts are at the moment of death, with the senses absorbed in the mind, the Jīvātman/soul comes to the Prāṇa, and the Prāṇa united with the fire leads on with the Jīvātman unto the desired world according to those thoughts. The wise one, having known the origin of the Prāṇa, its all pervasiveness, its five-fold distribution, and its internal aspect, attains immortality.

The fourth question is about the states of deep sleep, dream sleep and the awakened state. During the awakened state, all the senses and the mind are active and the physical world is cognized. During the dreaming state of sleep, the senses are at rest but the mind is still active; it builds up the world of its own out of the impressions received in the awakened state. During the dreamless deep sleep, all the senses as well as the mind are dormant. All the gross and subtle elements, senses of perception, sensory and motor organs, the mind, the intellect, the ego and the object of egoism, rest in the superior Ātman. Only the fires of Prāṇa remain active. One who knows the Imperishable, in which

the mind, the senses and the Prāṇas rest, verily becomes omniscient and enters into all. [More details are in the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad.]

The fifth question is about the benefit of meditating upon the Ōmkāra (Ōm). Ōm is both the higher and the lower Brahman. The higher Brahman is the Supreme Un-manifested Absolute Brahman. The lower Brahman is the manifested Brahman. The knower, by this, attains either of the two states of Brahman. The sound of Ōm is produced by the combination of the sounds of A, U and M. These three sounds are mātrās (components or parts). If one meditates on only one mātrā, then that one returns to this world soon after death. If one meditates upon two mātrās, one is united with the mind after death, taken to the world of the Moon (Sōmalōka/Āndralōka) in the sky, and having enjoyed the grandeur there, is returned to this world. The one who meditates upon the syllable Ōm constituted of all the three, after death is taken to the world of Brahmā (Brahmalōka), and from that Macrocosmic-Self (Hiraṇyagarbha) one beholds the Supreme Puruṣa existing in the heart.

The sixth question is about Puruṣa. The answer: Here within this body exists the Puruṣa from which arise the sixteen parts - *Prāṇa*, and then from Prāṇa come *Śraddha* (faith), ether, air, fire, water, earth, the senses, the mind, and food; from food come vigor, penance, the Vēdas, the Yajñas, and the worlds; and in the worlds the Name. By the practice of Yōga, similar to the flowing rivers merging into the ocean and losing their individual identity, all these sixteen *Kalās*, which are cognized in the ordinary ignorant state, merge into Puruṣa and the names and forms are destroyed. Then in the Samādhi state of the Yōga, devoid of the Kalās, where their existence is not perceived by the consciousness, the Conscious Principle Ātman alone remains. That is the Supreme Brahman; there is nothing higher than that.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

'Muṇḍaka' means a 'shaven head' denoting a person with shaven head the saṅnyāsin or a monk, and implying that this Upaniṣad is intended for the saṅnyāsins. It also gives a sense that the wisdom taught in this Upaniṣad removes the superimposed veil of ignorance obscuring the Ātman just as a razor shaves off the hair covering the head (28). The teaching is as follows.

There are two kinds of knowledge that are to be acquired. The lower knowledge consists of the study of the Vēdas, Vēdāngas, and such; it is the knowledge acquired by the senses and the mind; it is the intellectual knowledge. The higher knowledge is that by which the Imperishable is attained. It is not the knowing of an object or a thing, but being and becoming one, becoming the Knowledge itself, the Knowledge of Brahman.

The Imperishable is what is invisible, ungraspable, un-originated, and attribute-less; it has neither eyes, nor ears, nor hands, nor feet; it is eternal, all pervading, immeasurably subtle, and limitless in manifestation. The wise perceive that Imperishable as the source of all beings. From the Imperishable the universe projects out. From that the food is born, and from food, the Prāṇa (energy), the mind, the true, the worlds and the entanglement of karmas (deeds). From the all-knowing, all-wise whose creative thought is the knowledge itself, from that, Brahmā, all beings and food came.

Whatever sacrificial works the sages have found in the mantras that have been elaborated in the Vēdas are true. The seekers of Truth perform those sacrificial Yajñas; for them that is the path to the world of meritorious deeds. One whose sacrificial works are not according to the scriptural injunctions, that one's future in any of the seven upper worlds is destroyed. Here the Upaniṣad is referring to Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svaḥ, Mahaḥ, Janaḥ, Tapas and Satyam; Bhūḥ is earth; after death, the soul is said to go to one of these worlds for good deeds performed during life; for bad deeds, the soul is said to go to one of the seven nether-worlds not mentioned here. If one offers oblations in proper time into the shining flames of the fire, then that would lead to where one lord of the gods resides. However, it is a mistake to claim that that is the highest good, because such sacrifices do not lead to complete liberation from the cycles of births and deaths. The ignorant fools, thinking they are wise and learned, consider sacrifices and charitable works to be the highest, and continue the sacrifices without gaining the Knowledge; for them when the fruits of their good deeds in the heavens, the seat of sensual enjoyment, are exhausted they enter back into the cycle of worldly life. [The Vīraśaivas despise this type of sacrificial work.]

A person of spiritual interest should become indifferent to such, because the deeds, which are originated, can not attain what is not originated, the Supreme. Therefore, to procure the Knowledge, one should, with proper attitude, go to the **Guru** who is well-versed in the Vēdas and is established in the Brahman. To such a seeker, whose mind is peaceful and controlled, the learned Guru imparts the knowledge of Brahman in its very essence, the knowledge by which one knows the true Imperishable. [The word 'Guru' is used in this Upaniṣad. Guru is an integral part of the Vīraśaiva seekers' spiritual advancement.]

Manifesting very close, moving in the cavity of the heart is the Brahman. The imperishable Brahman, alone is life, speech, mind, truth, and immortality. That is to be penetrated by mind. Taking Ōm as bow the mighty weapon furnished by the Upaniṣads, drawing Ātman the arrow rendered sharp by constant meditation, having withdrawn from the senses with the mind absorbed in its thought, and fixing on it, one should penetrate that target the imperishable Brahman. That mark should be hit with an undistracted mind, and the Ātman must become absorbed in the Brahman becoming one with It.

In whom the heaven, the earth, the inter-space, and all the Prāṇas together with mind are centered, that one, the Ātman, only is to be known; that is the bridge to immortality. Where all the nāḍīs meet like the spokes in the hub of a chariot-wheel, there within the heart, this Ātman moves; one should meditate on that Ātman as Ōm.

The all-wise, all-knowing, Ātman is established in the city of Brahman in the heart, controlling the mind, Prāṇa and body, and its presence is felt all over the body. By perfect knowledge of that, the wise realize the state of blissful immortality. The knowers of Ātman realize that pure, indivisible Brahman, the light of all that shines; verily, everything shines reflecting the glory, and the whole world is illumined with the light. All this is the immortal Brahman who is everywhere; all this universe is indeed is the Supreme Brahman.

Closely united in friendship, two birds clasp close the self-same tree, one eating and relishing the fruit, the other looking on without eating. On the self-same tree, sunken in ignorance, Puruṣa, the individual soul, being deluded, grieves for its impotence. But when it sees the other, the worshipful Lord as its own glory, it becomes free from dejection. Here the two birds are Jīvātman and Paramātman, and self-same tree is the body. Jīvātman is the individual-Self called here as Puruṣa. Because of its attachment to the body and mind, it is limited by ignorance, and through the mind enjoys the fruits of good deeds (karma). The Paramātman is Pure Consciousness which is untainted by the phases of life. When the individual beholds the reality of one's own-Self untouched by the transient nature of life, the suffering and enjoyment disappear, and the one attains one's own eternal bliss. This two-bird self-same tree story is also given in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad. [Vīraśaivas often use the term Aṅga for Jīvātman and Liṅga for Paramātman.]

The sinless self-controlled saṅnyāsins visualize this resplendent pure Ātman within the body. The Self is attainable through constant devotion to truth, austerity, self-restraint and wisdom. Truthfulness alone wins; by truthfulness, the 'divine path' is laid out, by which the Ṛṣis ascend to that supreme abode of the True. That vast Divine beyond imagination, subtler than the subtle, and farther than the farthest, shines here in the body, and the seers visualize it in the heart in this life.

Ātman can not be perceived by the eyes or other senses; it can not be described by words; and rituals and penances do not reveal it. By refinement of the understanding, the mind becomes purified and calm; then through meditation the undivided Ātman is realized. [Vīraśaivas also believe that the mind is to be purified and stabilized before performing meditation.] The subtle Ātman within the body in which Prāṇa in five parts has entered should be realized by means of thought. The thought is interwoven with Prāṇa, the senses and the mind; when that thought is purified by withdrawing it from the senses and all, the Ātman appears.

The Ātman is not attained through discourses, intellectuality or learning; it is attained by longing for it with the whole heart. The Ātman is not attainable by weak spiritual state, or improper **Liṅga** (insignia); the wise who strive with vigor, attention and propriety attain the Ātman. Having attained the Ātman, the seers, satisfied with wisdom, are perfected in soul, unattached and tranquil. Having realized the all-pervading, they enter into the All. Through the Yōga of saṅnyāsa, with their nature purified, all those saṅnyāsins are absolved of all bondage at the time of emancipation, and they attain immortality in Brahman. Similar to the flowing rivers losing name and form upon entry into the ocean,

the wise ones, free from name and form go into the highest of the high. **One who knows the Supreme Brahman, verily, becomes the Brahman.**

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

Māṇḍūkyaōpaniṣad is probably named after its seer Maṇḍukha (29). It is the smallest of all the Principal Upaniṣads; it has only twelve mantras. Though it is short, it is noted for its efficacy in enunciating a method of approach to Truth, and is said to be the quintessence of the teachings of all the Upaniṣads. The teaching of this Upaniṣad is as follows.

All this universe is the syllable **Ōm**. The past, the present, the future, everything is Ōm. Furthermore, whatever transcends beyond these three divisions of time, that too is Ōm.

All this, assuredly is Brahman. **This Ātman is Brahman.** 'Ayamātmā Brahma' meaning 'this Ātman is Brahman' is considered as one of the Mahāvākyas or great sayings. Ātman is said to have four states of consciousness.

Wakeful state or the state of being awake: During this state, the consciousness is outwardly cognitive, and enjoys the perceived gross objects. The Upaniṣad describes this as the created '*Vaiśvānara*' meaning the 'universal man' or the 'commonality of all men'. It is the micro-cosmic aspect or the individual aspect of the soul in the gross form, as compared to the macro-cosmic aspect of the universal soul in the gross form which is called *Virāt*, the cosmic manifestation.

Dream state: During the dream state of sleep, the consciousness is directed inwards, is inwardly cognitive, and enjoys the mental impressions only. These mental impressions, the subtle elements, are the impressions of waking life stored in the memory. This state is the '*Taijasa*' meaning the 'shining' or 'brilliant' mental condition. This created Taijasa is the micro-cosmic aspect of Ātman in a subtle form; the macro-cosmic aspect of Ātman in a subtle form is *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the universal mind.

Deep sleep state: During the deep sleep state there is no feeling of desires, and there are no dreams. Mind is withdrawn in sleep. All the experiences of the waking and the dream states are unified, and cognition is reduced to an indefinite mass. The experiences are not destroyed; they remain dormant without any specific detail. The consciousness is content-less and enjoys the bliss/peace. It is '*Prāñña*' meaning 'one who knows properly', the micro-cosmic Intellectual condition equivalent to *Īśvara*, the macro-cosmic First Cause, the Creator, the Lord, the source of all ensuing from it, and the cause of dissolution where everything is absorbed back into it.

Turiya the Fourth: Although this state is listed in the order of the fourth, it is present in all the states, and it is the whole of reality. It is not to be compartmentalized like the

other three states are. This state is explained mostly in the negative way: it is not inwardly cognitive; it is not outwardly cognitive; nor is it cognitive in the intermediary sense between the waking and the dream states; it is not an indefinite mass as the sleep state; nor is it a collective cognition identifiable with anything else including Īśvara; it is not mere non-cognition; it is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, un-inferable, unimaginable, indescribable, the negation of all phenomenon; it is non-duality. It is the essence of the one self-cognition common to all states of consciousness. It is peace, it is bliss, and it is oneness. It is Ātman, the Self, and it is to be realized.

This Ātman is identical with Ōṃ only when Ōṃ is considered as a single syllable. When Ōṃ is considered to be composed of mātrās (components or parts), then, the quarters of Ātman are to be identified with the mātrās; and the mātrās are to be identified with the quarters. The mātrās of Ōṃ are A, U, and M.

Vaiśvānara whose field is the waking state, is 'A' the first mātrā of Ōṃ. On account of both being pervasive and having a beginning, one who knows this verily obtains all desirable objects and becomes the first.

Taijasa, whose field is the dream state, is 'U' the second mātrā of Ōṃ. On account of superiority and being in-between in the middle, one who knows this, gains increasing knowledge, becomes equal to all, and no one ignorant is born in the family.

Prājña, whose field is deep sleep, is 'M' the third mātrā of Ōṃ. On account of it being like a measure into which grain is put and then the grain is poured out to measure it, and it being the end, one who knows this, measures everything with the knowledge, and comprehends everything.

The Fourth is the syllable Ōṃ without mātrās. It is transcendental, devoid of all phenomenal existence, '**Śiva advaita**', the 'Supreme Bliss of Non-duality'. Thus the syllable Ōṃ verily is Ātman. One who knows Ātman as one's own Self is Ātman.

It is said that Māṇḍūkyaōpaniṣad is famous for describing the Fourth (Turiya) as "**Śivam Advaitam**" 'the beautiful and without a second' (4).

[The actual term 'Śiva-advaita' is used in the Upaniṣad. Śūnyasaṃpādanē (1) explains one of Prabhudēva's vaċanas referring to Turiya state as follows: The real Self-consciousness transcends these three states and abides in its own glory. Prabhu describes this state as 'the reflection of a rootless tree mirrored in a waterless shadow'. This phrase is said to exactly coincide with the description of the fourth state of consciousness, or Turiya Avasthā. In the Turiya Avasthā there are no traces or roots of the world-tree, or Saṃsāra Vṛkṣa, because it is beyond the reach of all dualities and relativities. Hence Avasthā is symbolized by the rootless tree, or Vivēka Vṛkṣa. This consciousness is reflected in a pure mind which is devoid of restless activity. When pure mind and clear consciousness are identified, the Silence remains supreme. Furthermore, Śūnya

Śaṁpādane states that the Śiva-advaita (Śivādvaita) Philosophy is the Vīraśaiva Philosophy, and uses the term 'Śivādvaita Bhakti' to explain the worship where the worshipper and the worshipped is one and the same. Māṇḍūkyaōpaniṣad is also considered as one of the Vīraśaiva Upaniṣads.]

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Taittirīya Upaniṣad

Taittirīyōpaniṣad has a total of thirty-one lessons which are distributed into three chapters, known as Śikṣā-valli, Ānanda-valli and Bhṛgu-valli (30).

Śikṣā-valli gives the principles of Vēdic phonetics, so that the student pronounces the sacred Vēdic texts properly, and avoids any incorrect recitation. The meaning of the Vēdic text can be understood only if proper attention is given to this Vēdic phonetics. Then the lessons formulate suitable meditations, including and particularly, the meditation upon Ōm. It is to be noted here that meditation on the Paramātman is for the purpose of Self-realization, and does not allow any shifting; one has to adhere to it, constantly repeating the same process, until the objective is reached. All other meditations other than those on the Paramātman are considered as Symbolic Meditations. Self-realization is not the aim of all the symbolic meditations. In the symbolic meditations, one meditates on a visible or visualized object outside one's own innermost-Self, and exalts it as a great Deity or Brahman itself. During symbolic meditations, the symbol should be regarded as superior to what it actually represents; the meditation may be performed without an eye on the symbol (30).

Meditation lesson declares that, to start with, one should meditate upon the elements that constitute the universe; and after that meditation, one should meditate upon oneself (*adhyātman*). The next meditation lesson states that one should contemplate on Ōm; Ōm is Brahman; the entire universe, perceived as well as imagined, is Ōm. Although it is laid down that one should meditate purely upon Ōm without thinking of any supervising factor, in practice, it is said that, one should repeat the syllable Ōm with the mind fixed on its meaning that is Brahman (30).

Having instructed in the Vēda, the preceptor advises the disciple and gives the commandments of the teaching; some of these are – speak the truth, follow the prescribed conduct (dharma), never abandon the study of Vēdas and following one's dharma, marry and beget children to pass on the torch of Dharma, express the virtues of charity and duty, and treat the mother, father, teacher, and guest as divinities. In addition it states that, should any uncertainty arise regarding one's acts, or doubts arise in respect of one's conduct in life, then one should rule oneself, exactly in the manner as the approved authorities would act in respect to such matters. It also states that with regard to those who are falsely accused for some crime, one should not be quick to judge a person, and one should conduct oneself on the model of those approved authorities.

Ānanda-valli has a memorable popular saying '*one who knows/realizes Brahman attains the Supreme*'. Here the knowing and attaining is the same, and Brahman is the Supreme. Then it declares that Brahman is Existence, Intelligence and Infinitude, and whoever realizes Brahman treasured in the cave of the heart in the highest ether, fulfils all wants together as Brahman the omniscient. The same Reality referred to as Brahman is then referred to as Ātman to convey the notion that 'It' is one and the same.

It then gives the evolutionary process, progressing from Ātman through the gradations of ether, air, fire, water, earth, vegetation and food, and from food the person (puruṣa). It is said that the five elements sum up the inorganic creation which in turn gives rise to the organic creation through vegetation and food. It is stated that all creatures on earth are born from food, by food alone they remain alive, and they return into it at the end; those who contemplate on the food as Brahman, obtain all food. Further, as the doctrine of five sheaths, five Selves are described, each forming a sheath concentrically with the true Self being inside the five sheaths. The outermost *Annamaya* (anna is food, and maya, not Māyā, means constituted of) is what is formed of existence of food, and it is the elemental-self; next is *Prāṇamaya* (prāṇa is vital-energy) which breathes inside the Annamaya, and it is the vital-self; *Manōmaya* (mana is mind) which creates thought, is inside that, and it is the thinking-self; *Vijñānamaya* (vijñāna refers to knowledge) which distinguishes right and wrong is next, and it is the knowledge-self; and the innermost sheath is the *Ānandamaya* (ānanda is bliss) which is the bliss-self. The outermost is the grossest, with the inner ones successively being subtler than the one just outside, and the most subtle one is the true Self which is inside the five sheaths; the true Self is the foundation of all, and is the Ātman-Brahman Reality. The significance of the five sheaths/selves is that the Ātman-Brahman Reality is to be realized in and through these five selves, and may be rationally derived by introspection. It is to be noted that Ātman/Brahman is not confined inside the sheaths as a seed inside a fruit.

Before the evolution of the manifest universe, non-Being alone existed. From that non-Being the Being came about. It became everything, and everything is that Reality. This Ātman desiring to become many, projects all that is here, and having entered it, becomes both Being and Beyond, both defined and undefined, both supported and unsupported, both knowledge and non-knowledge, both real and unreal, and whatever else there is, this entire Reality. Both the ignorant and the wise have their share in Brahman. The ignorant one thinks that one's Self is separate from the essence of Reality, and therefore does not attain Brahman. One's own existence indicates the existence of Brahman; one who denies the existence of Brahman, negates one's own existence.

This Ānandavalli chapter then gives the gradations of ānanda/joy/bliss. All joy experienced by beings of different grades is but a reflection of the Supreme Bliss which is Brahman. A noble youth, who is most swift and alert, very resolute, most vigorous, of good learning, and who is commanding the wealth of the world, experiences one human unit of bliss. From this level, the next higher unit is 100 times the basic human unit. Each

succeeding higher unit is 100 times that of the preceding unit. There are ten gradations of these units: *manuṣya-gandharva*, translated as a human genie which is a supernatural spirit that often takes a human form, has a joy unit 100 times the human joy unit; next level is that of *dēva-gandharva*, the heavenly genie; then it is the joy of *pitr*, the manes inhabiting the long-enduring world; next is of *Ājānadēvas*, the gods by birth in the Ājāna heaven; then it is that of *Karmadēvas*, those who became gods by the force of their deeds; then it is the joy of the highest *Dēvas*/gods, also experienced by men who attain godhood by their own deeds; next is joy of *Indra* the chief god; that of *Brhaspati* the Lord of prayer and the preceptor for Dēvas and Indra; and then it is the joy of *Prajāpati* the Lord of the creatures; and the highest one is the unit of bliss experienced by the creator *Brahmā*. Even the joy of Brahmā the creator can not be the Bliss; it is peculiar to the Upaniṣads that the Supreme Brahman is not a Being full of Bliss, but the Bliss itself. One's own Self and the Self of the Sun are one and the same, and the one who renounces all the desires and realizes the truth, transcends all the five sheaths and attains the Supreme Bliss.

Bhṛgu-valli re-tells the doctrine of five sheaths through a youth named Bhṛgu and his father-teacher Varuṇa. Bhṛgu approaches his father Varuṇa and respectfully requests him, as a student would of a teacher, to impart knowledge about Brahman. Varuṇa teaches him to first know food, vital-airs (*prāṇa*), sight, hearing, mind and speech as a means to the knowledge of Brahman, and further adds to seek to know 'that' from which all beings are born, by which alone they remain alive, and into which, upon departing, they enter; 'That' is Brahman. Accordingly, Bhṛgu, after performing austerity, understands that food is Brahman. He then goes back to his father, and requests him to further instruct him about Brahman. Varuṇa instructs him to seek to know Brahman through *tapas*/austerity; austerity is Brahman. Bhṛgu through austerity comes to know this time that Prāṇa is Brahman. This step-by-step type of instruction by Varuṇa, and repeating his instruction 'seek to know Brahman through tapas' at each step, encourages Bhṛgu to personally conduct deep enquiry within, and experience the results. In order to control the powers and energies of the mind and body, a determined and vigilant exercise of will becomes necessary. Austere devotion or tapas is the primary and most effective means of attaining realization of Brahman. Tapas consists of the mastery of will and thought by the habitual practice of exercising restraint over the bodily desires and afflictions so that the aspirant may advance in the spiritual life. Tapas is withdrawal of the mind from the hindrances and temptations of the world, and clarification of the vision for what is spiritual and true. Thus Bhṛgu first realizes Annamaya, and then through austerity and concentration of thought, progressively transcends through Annamaya, Prāṇamaya, Manōmaya and Vijñānamaya, and reaches Ānandamaya where he comes to know that Bliss is Brahman. Here the narration of Varuṇa-Bhṛgu teaching in the Upaniṣad abruptly stops.

Then, a meditation on Brahman as food is introduced. Body is the eater of food; body is set in life; life is set in body; life is food; therefore food is established in food; so one who knows and contemplates on food becomes firmly established in food, for the body built

by food is the first gateway to further realization. One should not condemn food, one should not reject/waste food, one should produce abundant food, and one should not turn away anyone at the residence, and so on.

[This is a part of the Viraśaiva Philosophy pertaining to Āhāraśuddhi or sacredness of food or purity of nutrition; this is essential for Sattvaśuddhi or purity of internal organs which leads on to the attainment of Brahman as explained in the Ćhāndōgya Upaniṣad.]

Contemplations are formulated to help the aspirant to accustom oneself to meditations which purify the mind. Contemplations suitable for a person consist of meditation on Brahman as wellness in speech and the like, meditation on various attributes of Brahman such as support, greatness, mind, reverence, Vēda, and the Powers. Whatever attribute of Brahman one meditates upon, one becomes the possessor of that attribute. If the meditation has no special desire behind it, then the result is said to be spiritual elevation and mental purity.

The contemplation leads up to the grand mystic experience. 'This' one in the person, and 'that' one in the Sun are one and the same. The knower of this, upon departing from this world, transcends the Anna, Prāṇa, Manas, Vijñāna, and Ānanda mayas (the five sheaths), and while traversing through these worlds enjoying food at will and assuming forms at will, sings: Oh! I am food! I am the food-eater! I am the link! I am the first-born of the cosmic order, even prior to the gods! I am the center of Immortality! Who gives me away assuredly protects me! I have overcome the whole universe! I shine like the Sun! One, who knows this, verily has the sacred wisdom. Thus ends the Upaniṣad.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Aitarēya Upaniṣad

Aitarēyōpaniṣad belongs to Rḡvēda (31). Mahāvākya, the great saying, 'Prajñānam Brahma', meaning 'exalted actual experience alone is Brahman' or 'the thought itself is Brahman' or simply 'the Supreme Knowledge is Brahman', is in this Upaniṣad. The 'Ātman' taught in the first lesson of the Upaniṣad is equated with 'Prajñāna Brahma' taught at the conclusion of the Upaniṣad.

The first chapter elaborates the creation of the world and the worldly life. Here, 'in the beginning' refers to the beginning of a new cycle of creation-evolution-maintenance-dissolution; the creation is beginning-less and endless with an infinite series of these cycles. In the beginning, verily, all this was Ātman alone, and nothing else existed. Desiring to create the worlds, Ātman created Ambhaḥ the super-celestial region of waters supported by, Marīcīḥ the heavens with celestial lights in the middle region, Maram the earth of mortals, and the Āpaḥ the region of waters below the earth. Then desiring to create the guardians for the worlds, Ātman raised Puruṣa the cosmic-Being out of these waters (supposedly meaning the five elements namely, sky, air, fire, water and earth).

As Ātman brooded over Puruṣa, and similar to a chick pecking out of an egg, the mouth burst forth, from the mouth proceeded speech, and from the speech Agni/fire; the two nostrils burst forth, from the nostrils proceeded the power of smell, and from the power of smell Vāyu/air; the eyes burst forth, from the eyes proceeded sight, and from sight the Sun; ears burst forth, from the ears proceeded hearing, and from hearing the quarters (diśaḥ); skin burst forth, from the skin proceeded hairs, and from the hairs the divinities of herbs and trees; the heart burst forth, from the heart proceeded the mind, and from the mind the Moon; the navel burst forth, from the navel proceeded Apāna the down-breathing, and from Apāna the divinity of death; the generative organ burst forth, from the generative organ proceeded the seed, and from the seed the waters.

Thus created, these Dēvatas, the gods or guardians of the world, in this mighty ocean of existence, were subject to hunger and thirst. They needed a body in which they could eat food. As the cow's body or the horse's body was not sufficient, a human body similar to that of cosmic Puruṣa was fashioned. The Dēvatas took their respective places: Agni/fire having become speech entered the mouth; Vāyu/air having become scent entered the nostrils; Sun having become sight entered the eyes; the divinities of the quarters having become hearing entered the ears; divinities of plants and trees having become hairs entered the skin; Moon having become mind entered the heart; the god of death having become Apāna the down-breathing entered the navel; and the god of waters having become the seed entered the generative organ. Hunger and thirst were assigned to these gods so that they share whatever offerings are made to the gods. Food was then created. The first embodied enjoyer of food could not seize the food with speech by calling, could not be satisfied merely with the scent, sight, hearing about it, by touching it, by thinking about it or with the generative organ, but was able to seize the food by Apāna the down-breathing. Thus Vāyu/air of the Apāna is the chief cause in supporting life by digesting the food.

To support this living body, Ātman, split open a suture at the top of the skull/head, and entered the body through this well known opening called Nāndana, the place of happiness. Being born as beings, the soul, had three places of dwelling, waking state, dream state and deep sleep state; it comprehended what other things can be proclaimed; and it perceived the most pervasive Brahman, and having seen, named it Idandra, 'Idandra' meaning 'this-seeing'; the Idandra then being indirectly called Indra by the mystery-loving Dēvas the gods.

The second chapter deals with procreation and the cycle of births and deaths from which one has to attain liberation. The essence of man, referred to as the seed, deposited into the womb of woman, causes it to be born. The child nourished by the parents, hence, appointed to continue the world's progeny uninterrupted. This Self, having discharged all the duties satisfactorily, and as the body gets worn out of age, departs from the body, but soon to be born again to continue the cycle of births and deaths; the liberation from this cycle being possible only through the realization of the nature of Ātman. On that there is a Ṛgvēdic verse IV/27/1 where sage Vāmadēva states 'as I lay within the womb,

I thoroughly considered all generations of these gods in order; a hundred iron fortresses confined me, but I rent through and like a hawk quickly came forth'. Sage Vāmadēva emerged out of the body and rose to the Oneness, and having enjoyed all the delights in the abode of bliss, became immortal.

The third chapter elaborates the Mahāvākya 'Prajñānam Brahma'. We meditate upon the Self the Ātman, by which one sees form, hears sounds, smells a scent, articulates speech, and differentiates what is sweet and what is sour; that which is heart and mind is the same as 'That'. Perception, direction, understanding, intelligence, retentive power, insight, firmness, power of reflection, freedom of thinking, resolute fearlessness, memory, imagination, determination, vitality, desire, love, all these are only name of Prajñāna the Supreme Consciousness. All the Gods, the five great elements earth, air, ether, water and lights, these of various kinds from the smallest living organisms, the seeds, those born of eggs, from womb, of heat and of shoots, horses and cows, people, elephants and whatever that breathes, that walks (the word '**jaṅgama**' is used here to mean 'that walks'), that flies, and what is immovable, all that is guided by Prajñāna the Consciousness. Prajñā is the support of all the worlds; 'Prajñānam Brahma' the Supreme Consciousness is Brahman. By this realization of Ātman, having transcended/risen above this world, and having attained the world of Bliss, one becomes immortal.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Āchāndōgya Upaniṣad

Āchāndōgyōpaniṣad is one of the larger Upaniṣads, discussing about 130 topics in its eight chapters (32). The Sanskrit verb root 'āchanda' means 'to please'. The Sāmavēda itself is sometimes referred to as 'Āchandas', because the melody of Sāmans, the musical hymns of Sāmavēda, is delightful to listen to. The great saying 'that-thou-art' is in this Upaniṣad. The Āchāndōgyōpaniṣad is considered to contain messages of many Ṛṣis.

After the peace invocation, the first chapter starts with a statement 'one should meditate on the syllable Ōm the Udgītha' (up-beat song/chant), and then it gives the explanation. It is to be noted that the syllable Ōm is identified here with the Udgītha. The Udgītha Ōm is the Ōm in that part of the Sāman which is sung by the Udgātr̥ priest. Udgītha is an element of the Vēdic sacrifice.

It is said that for a person who is habituated to the performance of Vēdic rites, it is difficult in the beginning to entirely give up the rites, and resort exclusively to meditation; therefore, it is indicated that meditation is to be performed as a part of the sacrifice. One who knows only the ritual aspect and not the true nature of the syllable Ōm, and another who knows both the ritual aspect and the true nature of Ōm, may perform actions with it, but only what is performed with knowledge, faith and meditation is effective. All meditations except that on the Paramātmān are symbolic. In the symbolic meditations, one meditates on a visible or visualized object outside one's own innermost-Self, and

exalts it as a great Deity or Brahman itself. During symbolic meditations, the symbol is regarded as superior to what it actually represents. Various forms of meditation are described in the Upaniṣad.

For a meditation on the Udgītha referring to the body (*adhyātma*), a story is told about Dēvas and Asuras, both as descendents of Prajāpati. Here the term Dēvas stands for the functions of the senses purified by the performance of scriptural duties, the functions being the cause of righteousness; the term Asuras stands for the functions of the senses connected with the enjoyment of worldly objects, the functions being the cause of unrighteousness; and the term Prajāpati stands for the person entitled to both rituals and knowledge. The story uses a fight between the Dēvas and Asuras to explain the struggle between the two tendencies going on in everyday life in everyone. In this fight, the Dēvas, in order to defeat the Asuras, perform rites of the Udgātr̥ priest, and meditate on the divinity Prāṇa (vital breath) connected with the nose and the sense of smell as Udgītha. But the Asuras somehow pierce it with evil so that, the nose, in addition to smelling the fragrant things, also smells the foul. Similar fights for speech resulting in truth and untruth, for ear resulting in hearing of both pleasant and unpleasant, for the mind resulting in both good and evil thoughts, are described. Similar fights for touch and taste are implied but are not mentioned. The Dēvas then meditate on the Prāṇa in the mouth as Udgītha, the Asuras come in clash with it, but they get destroyed; therefore the Prāṇa in the mouth is intact and is pure. With this Prāṇa in the mouth, one eats or drinks through the mouth, and maintains the other Prāṇas. At the time of death, the Prāṇa in the mouth and its dependents depart, and thus one opens the mouth at the time of death. One who knows this and meditates on the Udgītha as the syllable Ōṃ, that one becomes the procurer of the desired objects. This is the meditation referring to the Prāṇa of the body.

Then the meditation on the Udgītha with reference to the dēvas/gods (*adhidaiva*) is described. One should meditate on the divinity of the sun as Udgītha; when the sun rises it sings aloud like the Udgātr̥ priest for the sake of producing food for all creatures, and it dispels darkness and fear. The Prāṇa in the mouth and that sun are the same; this Prāṇa keeps the body warm and the sun keeps all the creatures warm. Therefore one should meditate on this Prāṇa and that sun as Udgītha. Many other symbolic meditations are described. Because the syllable Ōṃ can be meditated upon in various ways, the Upaniṣad explains other methods of its meditation and introduces stories to explain some of the meditations.

In the second chapter, meditation on the whole of Sāman is given. Sāmans are the hymns of Sāmavēda, and they are sung melodiously. A number of ways of adoration are described. Each Sāman is divided into parts called Bhakti. Meditations on the five-fold Sāman and the seven-fold Sāman with analogies are described.

The meditations on Ōṃ as part of the Udgītha and on the Sāmans are said to be for the purification of various objects which are used in the rites, or for obtaining various results, and are not the means for liberation to attain immortality. The term 'Ōṃkāra' is then

introduced which means 'Ōm-form' or 'Ōm-symbol', the symbol that stands for Brahman. By meditating upon this symbol Ōm, as the all-pervading Brahman, one can attain immortality.

The third chapter starts by saying 'the Sun is honey to the Gods'. The sun embodies the result of all sacrifices; hence, after giving the explanations of the sacrifices, the meditation on their result in the form of the sun is described; and then a description of how that leads to the result of gradual liberation is given. Next the meditation on Brahman as Gāyatrī is narrated. Gāyatrī is the name of a Vēdic metre having six syllables in each of its four pādas/feet to a total of 24 syllables. Other metres have more syllables than the Gāyatrī, so Gāyatrī is considered as the root of all other metres. Various meditations are described.

After the above description of meditation on Brahman with the help of symbols, the description of meditation on Brahman with attributes is given. The Upaniṣad gives this famous saying *'All this, verily, is Brahman, from Brahman do all things originate, into Brahman they dissolve, and by Brahman they are sustained; on Brahman one should meditate in tranquility with the control of mind and senses'*. The meditation on the attributes of Brahman brings out the worship and faith in the spiritual aspirant. The nature of faith is described and then Ātman is introduced. One who is permeating the mind, who has Prāṇa for its body, whose nature is consciousness, whose resolve is infallible, whose own form is like Ākāśa the sky, whose creation is all that exists, whose are all the desires, who possesses all the odors, who possesses all the tastes, who exists pervading all these, who is without speech, who is free from agitation – this is Ātman residing inside in the heart, this is Brahman. Meditation on the attributes results in gradual liberation as per this statement 'on departing hence I shall attain to His being'.

Meditation to bring about the longevity of a son, and meditation and recitation to live long for the full 116 years in order to live and enjoy the company of the son are given.

In chapter four many stories are used as a medium of instruction to make the teaching interesting. The seeker's respect for the teacher, and the method of imparting sacred knowledge by the teacher to the disciple, are brought out. It also states that the person who is seen in the eye is Ātman the immortal and fearless, and this is Brahman. This Brahman is to be meditated upon as the center of all blessings. Such a person whether performs the rites or not, goes to light, and through this northern path ultimately reaches Brahman (Hiraṇyagarbha) in Satyalōka/Brahmalōka and does not return to the human whirlpool in this cycle of creation-dissolution, but may return in the next cycle. It is noted that Brahman in Satyalōka is not the highest principle of the Upaniṣads; realization of the Upaniṣadic Parabrahman/Paramātman does not require traversing a path or reaching a goal outside one's own Self.

Through the performance of the rites, the soul is neither helped nor hindered in its progress to perfection. Those who perform the spiritual discipline such as the knowledge

of the fire sacrifices or strict Brahmaçarya, go towards Brahmālōka, and after their fruits of good deeds get exhausted, return to the cycle of births and deaths. This path is not condemned; the way of getting the results of the sacrifices is described.

The sacrificer employs four types of priests to conduct the sacrificial ceremonies. The Hotṛ priest with three assistants recites the Ṛk-mantra from Ṛgvēda to invoke/summon the respective Divinities. Adhvaryu priest with three assistants prepares the things needed for oblations and pours the oblations on the sacrificial fire reciting the Yajus-mantra from Yajurveda. The Udgāṭṛ priest with the help of three assistants sings the Sāma-songs from Sāmavēda. The Brahmā priest who also has three assistants supervises the whole sacrificial ceremony, and if any mistakes occur, rectifies them by performing corrective sacrifices. A total of 16 priests are involved in the ceremony.

Two components, mind and speech, are involved in the sacrifice. Both components must be performed properly for a successful sacrifice. Brahmā priest embellishes with the mind, and silently (without speaking) observes the performance of the sacrifice. The other priests embellish the speech, and perform their duties. If both mind and speech components are performed properly, and the sacrifice is completed without any mistake, the sacrifice is intact, and the sacrificer remains intact and becomes great by performing the sacrifice. If either component is defective, the sacrifice is defective, and the sacrificer suffers spiritual injury. Then it is the responsibility of the Brahmā priest to rectify the problem by performing appropriate corrective ceremonies which are also explained in this chapter.

The fifth chapter starts with a dispute among the divinities of sense organs about their personal superiority. Prāṇa, the vital-force is the eldest and the best, and whoever knows this becomes the eldest and the best. Speech is the richest, and whoever knows this becomes the richest. Eye is the stable basis, and whoever knows this becomes stabilized. The ear is prosperity, and whoever knows this becomes prosperous and attains all desires. Mind is the resort/abode, and whoever knows this becomes resort/abode of the relatives. To settle the dispute, the senses go to father Prajāpati who indicates that the one, whose departure would cause the body to appear its worst, would be the best. The speech, eye, ear and mind depart one at a time, but none of that makes the body to be its worst. As the Prāṇa is about to depart, the other senses realize that without Prāṇa the body would be dead, and hence Prāṇa is superior to them all. The organs are then said not to be separate from Prāṇa, indeed, Prāṇa is them all.

Description of Mantha rite is then given for the knower of Prāṇa who desires to attain greatness. Mantha is a mash of many herbs and grains, and curd and honey; it is offered as oblation into the sacred fire, with the saying of the mantra Svāhā.

The worship of Brahman with attributes/qualities having been explained, the chapter five then describes how a householder knowing the doctrine of five fires, and a celibate engaged in the practice of austerity could achieve similar results. Then it describes a path

many take when they merely perform rites without meditation and without the knowledge of the underlying philosophy. Further it describes results of the way of many ordinary worldly people who do not go through either of the above two paths but are reborn right away as creatures on this world; this mainly to create in them, dispassion towards the world, which is required for spiritual growth.

A story is then given to prescribe meditation on the five fires, which may lead one to the northern path after death.

Being born, the person lives whatever the length of life may be, and when dies, as ordained in accordance with past actions, is carried away for cremation going into the fire from which one arose. Those who are endowed with the knowledge of meditation, as well as those who are not, both proceed in the spiritual path, but get separated from each other at the point of the cremation fire, and their paths diverge.

The householders who know the knowledge of the five fires, and the forest dwellers devoted to faith and austerity, after their death, go to the divinity of light, from light to the day, from the day to the bright fortnight, from bright fortnight to those six months during which the sun travels northward, from the months to the year, from the year to the sun, from the sun to the moon, and from the moon to the lightening. From there are caused to go to the region of Brahmālōka. This is the northern path, the path of the gods.

Those householders who merely practice the sacrifices, conduct works of public utility such as constructing wells, water-tanks and parks, and give gifts/donations to the deserving persons, without meditation and without the knowledge of the underlying philosophy, after their death, do not go in the northern path; they go to the divinity identified with smoke, from smoke to night, from night to the dark fortnight, from the dark fortnight to those months during which the sun travels southward, and from there they do not reach the year; from the months they go to the region of the fathers, from the region of the fathers to Ākāśa/sky, from Ākāśa to the moon which is the King Sōma, the food of the divinities. This is the southern path, the path of the fathers. From there, having enjoyed the results of their actions, those who have good residual results of action are born on earth as people, where as those with bad residual results are born on earth as dogs or hogs or some other animals.

Those who do not worship or meditate, and who do not perform sacrifices or beneficial acts, do not go in either of the above two paths; they right away are reborn as small creatures, and are subject to 'be born and die'. Hence, one should be disgusted with this state. The region of the moon is never filled up because those who go through the southern route return to this world, and many who do not go through either of the paths do not go there at all.

Then the meditation on the Vaiśvānara Ātman is described. Ātman is Brahman and Brahman is Ātman, it is one and the same. Sometimes the term Ātman is used to mean

the limited individual-Self encased in the body. Vaiśvānara Ātman, the Universal-man or the essence of all men/people carries individual-selves of all men/people to their states in accordance with their merit and demerit. Again using a story, details of meditation on the whole Vaiśvānara Ātman, not on the individual parts of it, are explained. Then Agnihōtra in Prāṇa is introduced and details explained. Agnihōtra is pouring of oblations in sacrificial fire at home by the householder. A point is clearly made here that if the offerings are made without the knowledge of Vaiśvānara and Agnihōtra, it would be like removing the embers and pouring the oblation on the ashes – utterly useless. If Agnihōtra to Prāṇa is made with proper knowledge, then it is like pouring the oblations into all the worlds, all the beings, and all the Selves - everyone enjoys.

Chapter six uses a story to convey the great message '**tattvamasi**' meaning '**that thou art**'. The teaching is that the Self is only One in all beings. Śvetakētu, a twelve year old boy is sent by his father to live as Brahmaçārin, the life of a Vēdic student. After living as Brahmaçārin at the preceptor's residence for twelve years studying all the Vēdas, he returns at the age of twenty-four somewhat egotistic, arrogant, and thinking very highly of himself as a very learned person. His father noticing this arrogance asks him whether he had the teaching through the knowledge of which, what is unheard becomes heard, what is un-thought of becomes thought of, and what is unknown becomes known. Śvetakētu, as he did not know anything about it, becomes humbled by this inquiry, and requests his father to teach him the nature of that.

The teaching begins with a simple comparison example. From a single clod of clay, all that is made of clay, such as brick, clay pot, vase, jar and other items, would become known; all these modifications of clay take form and name; the clay pervades them all, and is, alone, real; the name and form are different in each case, and are unreal – just name and form. Ātman/Brahman is the Reality; everything else is name and form. In the beginning there was Being alone, one only, without a second. That Being willed to be many, and became many.

This teaching continues with many comparison examples and statements; arguments are built up step by step until the main message is taught – '**that the Pure Being, the subtle essence of all, is the Self/Ātman of the whole universe; that is the True Reality; that is the Ātman; you are That**'. This great message is repeated nine times with different examples of explanations; this repetition indicates that those who cannot understand the doctrine by a single attempt must reflect over it repeatedly until it becomes direct experience. This realization of the Divine nature of the human soul is liberation.

Chapter seven is related to chapter six. It expands on the modification concept, because if further explanation is not given, one may misunderstand that there are objects other than the Being. The explanation given is that the modifications are gradations of the Reality with differing values, each level of reality possessing greater value and magnitude than that of the preceding one. By following the grades of reality from name, and

ascending through gross categories and subtle categories to Prāṇa, one may reach the ultimate Truth which is beyond sense-knowledge, and which had been referred to as 'Sat' in the previous chapter, is here referred to as 'Bhūman' which means all space that is full of matter.

To explain this part of the philosophy, two of the greatest personalities in the field of religion are brought together as disciple and preceptor. Maḥarṣi Nārada's extensive knowledge which included all the Vēdas, rules of worship, mathematics and various branches of science, do not bring him any peace. Therefore he approaches Sage Sanatkumāra, and after stating that he is only the knower of verbal text and not Ātman, requests that he be taught how to attain this highest Truth. Sage Sanatkumāra, saying that what Nārada knows is only a name, takes him through the teaching. When there is purity of nourishment (*Ahāraśuddhi*) then there is purity of the internal organs (*Sattvaśuddhi*); when reflection and higher understanding become pure, the memory becomes strong, and then there is release from all the knots of the heart; this is achieved by the purification of the mind. Thus the revered Sanatkumāra rendering Nārada pure showed him how to attain the highest Truth. The chapter then ends with the statement 'people call Sanatkumāra as Skanda – yea, they call him Skanda'. 'Skanda' means 'learned person', and **Skanda is another name for Kārtikēya, the son of Śiva.**

The teaching in chapter eight is in the form of instructions by a preceptor to a disciple. It describes how Ātman is to be attained. Only aspirants of a higher caliber who can achieve purity, concentration and discipline, are capable of realizing the highest principle. For the lesser aspirants, the scripture describes how, through meditation, worship and such, it is possible to attain the highest truth. These aspects of spiritual endeavors are described in this chapter. The physical body of a person is the city of Brahman. The abode of Brahman is the lotus in the heart. In it is the inner Ākāśa/space. One should seek what is within that, and one should desire to know it. The inner space in the heart is the same outer space that encompasses the whole universe. Indeed it contains both heaven and earth, fire and air, sun and moon, lightening and stars, whatever there is of Brahman in this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it. It does not age with the aging of the body; it does not die when the body dies. It is free from evil, free from sorrow, free from hunger, free from thirst, whose desire is of the truth, whose resolve is of the truth; that is the Ātman/Self. If a seeker of liberation with the help of the preceptor and the scriptures comes to know the Ātman as characterized, such a one is ever free and finds complete fulfillment of all the desires.

Knowledge is the only direct means to the realization of Ātman, and Brahmaçārya is a subsidiary to the Knowledge. Brahmaçārya, in a larger sense, includes celibacy, sacrifice, *iṣṭa* which means worshipping and longing for the attainment of the Ātman, the vow of silence, course of fasting, life of a hermit, and such. For those who attain Brahman-world by means of Brahmaçārya, there is freedom to act as they wish in all the worlds and whatever they desire is available for them to enjoy. An individual soul moving in the region of Brahmaḷōka, and the objects of desire available there, are to be considered to

belong to the mental order, and not the physical one. Of the one hundred and one *nāḍī*/channels/conduits that diverge in various directions from the heart, one courses upward to the crown of the head. When departing from the body, the knower, proceeds upwards in this *nāḍī*, meditating *Ōm*, and attains immortality, while the non-knower does not go upward, just departs through one of the other diverging *nāḍīs*.

One who has read the *Vēda* according to the prescribed rule in the time left over after performing the duties to the teacher, who after having come back from the teacher's house, settles down in one's own household, continues the study of the *Vēda*, and has virtuous sons and disciples, who withdraws all the senses into the *Ātman*, who practices non-injury to all beings, and who behaves thus throughout one's life, reaches the world of *Brahman*, and does not return again. The *Upaniṣad* ends with the same peace invocation that is at the beginning of it.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad

Brhadāranyakōpaniṣad belongs to *Śukla Yajurveda*. It is the largest of the *Upaniṣads*. 'Brhat' means 'big' or 'great'. There are two versions; the *Kāṇva* version is more popular. It is in prose form and has six chapters (33).

After the peace invocation, the first chapter starts by describing the body of the sacrificial horse as the cosmic form of *Prajāpati*, the presiding divinity of the horse sacrifice. 'Prajāpati' means 'Lord of the creatures', and it is the cosmic person. When it identifies with the sum total of all the subtle bodies in the universe, it is called 'Hiraṇyagarbha' which means 'golden-egg' or 'cosmic-egg', and it is the cosmic vital-force *Prāṇa*, also called *Sūtrātman*. When *Prajāpati* identifies with the sum total of all the gross bodies in the universe, it is called 'Virāj' which is the first embodied being that appears in the cosmic-egg. The superimposition of the parts of the body of the sacrificial horse on to the body of *Prajāpati* is a meditation. This symbolic meditation is said to result in the same benefit to anyone who performs this meditation, as the sacrifice itself without actually performing it. The horse sacrifice is one of the greatest *Vēdic* rites performed only by the kings; it could take the sacrificer, after death, to *Brahmalōka*.

Then it describes the origin and nature of *Agni*/fire used in the horse sacrifice, as the manifestation of the universe. Meditation on the sacrificial horse and the sacrificial fire as *Prajāpati*, and combining it with the performance of *Vēdic* rites, takes the performer, after death, to identity with *Hiraṇyagarbha* which is *Brahmalōka*. The *Vēdic* rites are of two kinds: one is wholly mechanical, and it results in the attainment of *Pitruḷōka* the world of the manes and so forth; the other is the rites and the meditation coupled together, resulting in the attainment of worlds ranging from *Dēvalōka* the world of gods to the *Brahmalōka* the world of *Hiraṇyagarbha*. But the result of all the *Vēdic* rites is not everlasting; it does not destroy ignorance; only the knowledge of *Brahman* can destroy

ignorance and result in the attainment of liberation while still living.

Then it brings in a story of the rivalry between dēvas and asuras who are all considered as the descendents of Prajāpati. Here it is more elaborate than the one in Āchāndōgyōpaniṣad I.2.1-10. (See Āchāndōgya Upaniṣad.)

Next it goes into one of the great sayings. During creation, the embryonic state of the universe is called the cosmic egg; and the first embodied being called Virāj appears within the embryonic universe. Before the manifestations, the universe was Ātman/Self/Virāj in the form of a person. People and different species of animals were then created, and the gods were projected out. All these were the manifestations of the Self in name and form. After manifesting the universe with diverse bodies, the Self entered into all of them. The individual Self is identical with the Supreme Self the Brahman. But in the state of ignorance, the Self forgets its Supreme nature, and identifies with the individual. Eradication of this ignorance is the achievement of perfection. One should meditate upon the Supreme Self. Only the knowledge of Brahman can destroy ignorance and stop the cycle of re-births. The great saying in this Upaniṣad '*aham brahmāsmi*' meaning '**I am Brahman**' comes here. The knower of Brahman whether a god or a person becomes Brahman.

The projected gods are then classified into four categories: Fire projected out of the mouth is the Brāhmaṇa of the gods; Indra (chief god), Varuṇa (god of the aquatic animals), Moon, Rudra, Parjanya (god of lightning), Yama (god of the manes), Mṛtyu (god of diseases and death), and Īśāna (god of the luminaries), projected out of the arms become the Kṣatriya gods; groups of gods such as Vasus, Rudras, Ādityas, Viśvadēvas and the Maruts, projected out of the thighs become the Vaiśya gods; Pūṣan the nourishing god, the earth that nourishes all that exists, projected out of the feet becomes the Śūdra god. From these four categories of the divine castes, the four human castes come about. Still there was no prosperity; thus a noble form '**Dharma**' the righteousness was created. It is said that there is nothing greater than the righteousness, and that what is righteousness is indeed the Truth; that 'Truth' is the theoretical knowledge, and when it is put into practice, it is called the righteousness.

Chapter two starts with a short story of discussion between an eloquent Bālāki and the king of Kāśī Ajātaśatru. Bālāki tries to teach about conditioned Brahman that is in the sun, the moon and such, which the king already knew. The king then describes to him the unconditioned Brahman into which the individual self merges during deep sleep. Prāṇa the vital-force is then described to have a special place in the head, the body being its abode, and that its vigor comes from food and drink. In this context, it gives the list of the '*sapta ṛṣayaḥ*', the great seven sages. Two ears are *Gōtama* and *Bharadvāja*, two eyes are *Viśvāmitra* and *Jamadagni*, two nostrils are *Vasiṣṭha* and *Kaśyapa*, and tongue is *Atri*. One who knows this becomes the eater of food, and everything becomes that person's food.

Then 'not this, not this' explanation comes. Two contrasting forms of Brahman are given – gross and subtle, mortal and immortal, limited and limit-less, perceptible and imperceptible. The specification of Brahman is '*neti neti*' meaning 'not this, not this', because there is no other specification. The gross and subtle forms of the body are considered as adjuncts of Brahman, and do not describe Brahman; Brahman has no distinguishing marks whatsoever. There is no other specification or distinguishing mark.

Next, another story is given to teach that the renunciation of the world is a means to Self Knowledge. Sage Yājñavalkya, the sage who composed the Śukla Yajurveda, intending to go into solitude as a saṅnyāsin, divides his wealth between his two wives Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī. Maitreyī asks him, if all the wealth in the world belonged to her, would that bring her immortality. The sage replies that it would not. She then refuses to accept the wealth, and indicates her desire to learn from him, the means to attain immortality. In an elaborate way Yājñavalkya tells Maitreyī that **the knowledge of the Self is the only means of immortality. Love and attachment to the loved ones, wealth, and such, bring satisfaction and happiness to oneself, but that does not mean that the nature of Ātman is love and happiness. A wife does not love her husband merely because of his or her satisfaction; she loves her husband because she feels the oneness of her soul with his soul; she is merged in her husband and becomes one with him.** [This type of husband-wife oneness relationship is exemplified in **Śūnya Saṃpādane** – Āydakki Mārayya and his wife Lakkamma in the chapter titled 'Āydakki Mārayya's Saṃpādane', and Mōḷige Mārayya and his wife Mahādēviyamma in the chapter titled 'Mōḷigeyya's Saṃpādane']. To understand the nature of Ātman, one has to renounce all these attachments, and then the real Self is to be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon. On account of the various attachments, separate consciousness stands out as an individual entity, but as soon as these are destroyed, the separate consciousness is also destroyed. After attaining this isolation, there is no particular consciousness. It is the consciousness/knowledge itself. When all has become the very Self, there is no another.

The third and fourth chapters narrate Yājñavalkya's philosophical discussions:

The details of how the meditation is to be combined with the sacrificial rites so that death can be transcended are given. The nature of death is then given. Because of one's ignorance, one is attached to the sense organs and the objects they perceive; this attachment is like the food of death. Death is destructive, but the death itself can be destroyed. Fire can destroy everything, but water destroys fire; similarly, the realization of the Self destroys death. One has to overcome further death by realization of the identity of the Self and Brahman.

Then what happens to the one who dies without attaining the highest knowledge is discussed. The karma/work determines what happens to the disembodied soul. One becomes noble through righteous work, and ignoble through un-righteous work. The results of work are a range of existence; even if work is combined with meditation, it

does not lead to liberation.

The Brahman that is immediate and direct is the inner Self. It is the seer, hearer, thinker and knower in everyone, but it cannot be directly seen, heard, thought or known. It exists within all, and is imperishable; everything besides this Self is perishable. The real nature of the Self that is within all is one's own self which is beyond hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, decrepitude and death. Realizing this very Self, one gives up the desire for sons, for wealth and for worlds. Having mastered the Self-knowledge through the teacher and the scriptures, and having the strength to completely shut down all ideas of non-Self, one becomes meditative. This meditation is a state of mind in which there is only the thought of the Self, and nothing else. That is the realization of Brahman.

Fire, the presiding deity of the organ of speech, air, the presiding deity of the vital force, sun the presiding deity of the eye, the presiding deities of the ear the directions, moon the presiding deity of mind, and heart the presiding deity of the intellect, are mere aspects of the Supreme Brahman; meditating upon them results, after death, in merging with the respective gods.

Where one goes, after one is dissociated from the body, is then discussed. Vaiśvānara, the universal person, pervades the universe as both the experiencing subject and the experienced objects. Vaiśvānara becomes Virāj in the individual during the waking state, Taijasa in the dream state, and Prājña which corresponds to Hiraṇyagarbha on the cosmic scale, in the state of dreamless deep sleep. The Self is identified with these three states corresponding to the gross, the subtle and the causal bodies.

As the intellect is transparent and is next to the Self, it reflects the consciousness of the Self. The intellect appears luminous by the light of the Self, similar to a glass jar placed in the sun shining the light of the sun. The Self alone is luminous; its light illuminates the sun, the moon and all the shining objects of the universe. It is the illuminator of all, and it is not illuminated by anything. It is different from all material lights, it does not belong to the body, and is absent in the dead body. The light is within a person, and it belongs to the Self.

The Self is reflected in the intellect. The intellect moves between the waking and the dream states. When the intellect is transformed into the dreams, the Self creates a dream-body akin to the body of the waking state; most often the dream is a memory of past experiences in the waking state; the objects that are seen in dream are created using the impressions of the waking world. After wandering in dream and merely witnessing the results of good and bad deeds, it hastens back to the previous waking or dreamless deep sleep state. It is not affected by whatever it sees, because it is disassociated from and unattached to the body and the dream. In deep sleep, the individual Self sees no dream and seeks no desire. It is free from all relative attributes, and enjoys the highest serenity. The individual Self, fully embraced by the Supreme Self, is free from duality, knows nothing external or internal, and is beyond all afflictions of the heart. However, ignorance

persists in an un-manifested form during deep sleep. This unawareness during deep sleep means the existence of intellect in its causal state. The same individual Self, after rejoicing and wandering, and merely seeing the results of the deeds in the dream state, hastens back to the waking state.

Transition of the Self from one body to another is compared to its passing from dream to the waking state. When the body is worn out by old age or disease, the Self separates from the gross body, and hastens back to another body that has been made ready according to the person's work, knowledge and previous impression. However, when going to another body, the vital force is not left behind to guard the previous body as in sleep; the vital force forms the subtle body to transport the individual Self. The presiding deities of all the organs and the mind and intellect are withdrawn into the heart; the Self then departs the gross body with these deities. In its travel to the next world it is surrounded by the five gross elements namely, earth, water, fire, air and ether; these gross elements serve as material for the next gross body when the individual Self is reborn in this world. As the Self is identified with desire, the desire dictates one's actions, good or bad; the doer of virtuous action becomes virtuous, or the doer of vicious acts becomes vicious; it attains the results of the work it does. After experiencing the results in another world, it comes back to this world and is reborn in a new gross body. That is what happens to the one with the desires.

But in the one, who has no desires other than the desire in the Self itself, there is no going or coming or taking another body; one realizes the Brahman in this very body even when alive. The Self no longer identifies with the body, and, in this disembodied state, it is immortal, the Supreme Self, the Brahman, the Light of Pure Intelligence. The illumined knower of Brahman, becoming emancipated in this very life, reaches the realm of liberation after release from the body.

[Śūnya Sāmpādane (1) explains the above concept as follows: The triple body – the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body – are known in the Vīraśaiva terminology as tyāgāṅga, bhōgāṅga and yōgāṅga respectively. These three Aṅgas must possess the three Liṅgas - Iṣṭaliṅga, Prāṇaliṅga and Bhāvaliṅga. Just as one cannot live without any one of these bodies, so a Śaraṇa cannot do without any one of the Liṅgas. The threefold body invested with the threefold Liṅga becomes the whole being suffused with the Divine nature. The apartness of these three must be destroyed in order to know the Absolute.]

Those who adore rites as a consequence of ignorance, and those that are attached to ritual meditation, enter into blinding darkness. People, who are ignorant and devoid of Self-knowledge, go to those worlds known as cheerless and covered with blinding darkness. The intelligent seeker of Brahman, after knowing about the Self from a teacher and the scriptures, should strive for realization by practicing renunciation, calmness, self-control, withdrawal of the senses, fortitude, and concentration. Brahman is to be known by the mind in accordance with the instructions of the teacher, and there should be no diversity in it. It is to be realized only as homogeneous Pure Intelligence. It is

indescribable, unchangeable, and free from impurities. This Self is 'That' which has been described as 'not this, not this'. Knowing this, becoming self-controlled, serene, and free from desire, possessed of fortitude and concentration, and seeing the Supreme Self in one's own Self, one sees everything as the Self. That is Brahman.

The last two chapters together constitute a supplementary book; it contains many messages that are scattered in various places.

Chapter five explains three disciplines - self-control, charity and mercy -in a short story format. Three kinds of Prajāpati's sons, namely, the gods, humans and demons, live with their father as students. After finishing the term, they ask Prajāpati for further instructions. Prajāpati gives the same instruction 'Da' to the three groups, and asks them what they understand from that instruction. The gods, who lack self-control, indicate that they understand it as 'dāmyata' meaning 'control your-selves'. Humans, who are very greedy, state that they understand it as 'datta' meaning 'be charitable'. Demons, who are aggressively cruel, say that they understand it as 'dayadhvam' meaning 'be merciful'. Prajāpati tells them that they have understood it. That very instruction is the heavenly voice of the thunder-cloud 'Da, Da, Da', meaning 'control yourselves, be charitable and be merciful'. The terms, 'gods, humans and demons', apply to different sections of people who lack self-control, who are very greedy, and who are cruel. Therefore, one should learn these three disciplines. Then it describes some auxiliary meditations which confer prosperity and lead one gradually to liberation. At the end of this chapter, last four verses of Īśāvāsyaōpaniṣad are repeated; a dying person who has practiced meditation and rites appeals to the Sun for the removal of obstacles to the northern way after the death.

The sixth chapter starts with a dispute among the sense organs about their personal superiority. It is as at the beginning of the fifth chapter of Āchāndōgyōpaniṣad, except here there is another organ, the organ of generation, the procreant, in addition to Prāṇa, organ of speech, eye, ear and the mind. It shows that Prāṇa, the vital force is the eldest and the best of all the organs (see 'Āchāndōgya Upaniṣad' article). Next, it gives the story of Śvetakētu where the King Pravāhaṇa asks five questions and then gives the answers as Śvetakētu and his father did not know the answers; this story is the same one as in the fifth chapter of Āchāndōgyōpaniṣad. Then there is a detailed description of the Śrīmantha ceremony which is performed to attain greatness and wealth; it is more elaborate than the Mantha (mash) rite described in the fifth chapter of Āchāndōgyōpaniṣad. After that, somewhat indecent passages of ceremonies for the householder are given. It ends with the Vamśa, the line of teachers for the whole Upaniṣad from Hiraṇyagarbha to the son of Pautimāṣī; most of the teachers are named after their mothers.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad belongs to Kṛṣṇa Yajurvēda. It is named after the sage Śvetāśvatara who taught it to his disciples. The term 'Śvetāśvatara' is said to be an honorific title meaning 'one who has controlled the senses – Śveta meaning pure, and Aśva referring to the senses' (34). The literal meaning of śvetāśvatara is white mule, and that of śvetāśva is white horse or pure horse (35). Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad is said to be one of the most difficult, and at the same time one of the most interesting works of its kind (35). It is not one of the Upaniṣads that form the basis of enquiry in the Brahmasūtras, but it is relatively more popular than the rest of the Upaniṣads, mainly because many of its mantras are referred to by the commentators in support of their opinions. Although it is Vēdic in language and conception, it is Purāṇic in expression and presentation in some passages reflecting the philosophical and religious views current at the time of its composition. It does not advocate any particular orthodox philosophical system, but has passages allied to Sāṅkhya, Yōga, Dvaita (dualism), Viśiṣṭādvaita (qualified non-dualism), Advaita (non-dualism/monism), and other Vēdāntic philosophies. It gives equal emphasis on Jñāna, Bhakti and other paths of spiritual life. This Upaniṣad interposes both masculine and neuter pronouns to identify the Supreme Being, indicating that the Supreme Being is both personal and impersonal (34). When speaking of the Highest-Self or the Highest-Brahman, it applies such names as Hara, Rudra, Śiva, Bhagavat, Agni, Āditya, Vāyu, and such. Although the later developed Sāṅkhya philosophy considers the nature Prakṛti to be independent of Puruṣa, Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad states distinctly that nature is not an independent power, but the Power forming the very Self (35). The Upaniṣad has 113 mantras in six chapters.

[On the basis of what is in this Upaniṣad, it can be construed that the Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad is the main Upaniṣad of the Vīraśaivas. The preceding ten main or principal Upaniṣads teach us that the Absolute Brahman is impersonal, that meditation on this Supreme Self is what leads to liberation from the cycle of births and deaths, and that the Yōgic practices and ethical principles make the meditation effective. The Upaniṣads have recognized that this type of strict practice is difficult for an ordinary person. In order to overcome this problem Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad shows that the same goal can be achieved by anyone and everyone, and teaches how that can be done. It considers the Absolute Brahman to be personable, and establishes a theistic Parabrahman/Paramātman; considers Rudra-Śiva to be this personal 'God'; amalgamates Jñāna/knowledge and Bhakti/devotion to achieve perfect devotion; and brings in the concept of Prasāda, the Divine Grace. The theistic Parabrahman possesses Power/Śakti, by means of which it works the wonders of projecting, protecting and reabsorbing the universe .]

Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad has three Peace Invocations. The first one is the same one that is in the Īśāvāsyaōpaniṣad and the Bṛhadāraṇyakōpaniṣad. It is as follows.

*Ōm! pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam pūrṇāt pūrṇamudaçyate
Pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate.
Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!*

*Ōm! That invisible is the Infinite; this visible too is the Infinite. From the Infinite, the whole visible universe has come out. The whole universe of the infinite having come, the Infinite alone remains.
Ōm! Peace! Peace! Peace!*

[The Upaniṣadic word 'Pūrṇa' in this śāntipāṭha is identical with the Viraśaiva term 'Śūnya'. It is the Absolute, the Infinite. The Śūnya Saṃpādane (1) states "So the Śūnya of the Viraśaiva Śaraṇas is not 'emptiness', but is equivalent to the Upaniṣadic Parabrahman or Paramātman".]

The second Peace Invocation is a mantra from Rgvēda I.89.8. It is also used in the Praśna, Muṇḍaka and Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣads. It is as follows.

*Ōm! O wonderful Ones, with our ears may we hear what is auspicious. May we, efficient to worship, see with our eyes what is auspicious. May we, who sing your praise, live our allotted span of life in perfect health and strength.
Ōm! Peace! Peace! Peace!*

The third Peace Invocation is the same one used in the Kēna and the Kaṭha Upaniṣads. It is as follows.

*Ōm! May (Brahman) protect us both (the teacher and the disciple) together. May (Brahman) nourish us both together. May we work together with great energy. May our study be vigorous and effective. May we not hate each other.
Ōm! Peace! Peace! Peace!*

Then, chapter one starts with a discussion among some students of Vēda about philosophy and religion. The questions raised and discussed are: What is the cause? Is Brahman the cause? Whence or why are we born? Why do we live? Where is our final rest? By whom or what the knowers of Brahman are controlled and subjected to the law of happiness and misery?

The cause is something that immediately precedes the effect. The students of Vēda note that neither of the time, inherent nature, law, chance, matter, energy, intelligence, nor a combination of these can be considered as the cause, due to their own identity, and to the existence of the Self. Also the Self is not master of itself, being under the influence of happiness and misery. Then practicing the method of meditation and Yōga, they experience the Self-conscious power, which had been concealed in them by Guṇas/qualities; this One without a second, which had been incomprehensible because of the limitations of the intellect of the spiritual aspirants, presides over all these causes

beginning with time and ending with the individual Self.

The universe as it appears to our intellect is explainable as an expression of the Supreme Self, and is compared to a wheel using the terminology of the later Sāṅkhya Philosophy. The rim of the wheel represents Nature which is variously referred to as un-manifested ether, Prakṛti, Māyā, Śakti, Ajñāna and such; it is the cause of the whole creation. Three tires on the rim of the wheel represent three Guṇas/qualities, namely, Sattva (purity and harmony), Rajas (passion and activity), and Tamas (dullness and inertia). The wheel has sixteen extremities which represent the sixteen products; they are eleven indriyas/organs, and five gross-elements/pañcābhūtas; creation becomes complete with their evolution. The wheel has fifty spokes which represent five Viparyayas/misconceptions, twenty-eight Aśaktis/disabilities, nine Tuṣṭis/satisfactions, and eight Siddhis/perfections. It has twenty counter-spokes or wedges that strengthen the spokes, representing ten senses and their ten objects. It has six Aṣṭagas/sets-of-eight each consisting of eight entities – eight-fold nature, eight ingredients of the body, eight psychic powers, eight mental states, eight superhuman beings, and eight virtues. It is driven along three different roads, Dharma, Adharma and Jñāna, by means of a belt Kāma/desire that is single yet manifold because of differences in the objects of desire, and with each revolution giving rise to two, meaning mōha/delusion giving rise to two opposites, merit and sin or happiness and misery.

The expressed universe is also compared to a river that has the waters of five streams, five big turnings due to five causes, five Prāṇas for waves, the mind which is the basis of five-fold perception for the source and five-fold misery for its rapids, and such sets of five; the sets of five are said to represent the five senses, the five elements, the objects of five senses, and such. This comparison signifies that the universe springs from, and goes back to God, just as the river water comes from the sea, and flows back to the sea, and that the life in it is full of danger as it is in the river.

In this infinite wheel of Brahman in which everything lives and rests, the individual self is whirled about in the cycle of births and deaths; but knowing the Self not to be separate from Brahman, and itself the moving force of everything, one attains immortality. This Supreme Brahman, the firm support of all this, is imperishable; knowing the inner essence of this, the knowers of Vēda become devoted to Brahman, merge themselves in It, and are released from the cycle of births. **Īśa** the Lord supports the universe of the perishable and the imperishable, the manifest and the un-manifest. One not knowing the Lord because of being the enjoyer is bound and gets attached to worldly pleasures; but when one knows the Lord, the one is released from all fetters.

The subject with consciousness and the object without consciousness, the master and the dependent, both are unborn; another one who is engaged in bringing about the relation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed is also unborn. When this triad, the subject, the object, and the relation between the two, is realized as Brahman, this Self becomes infinite and universal. Matter is perishable, but **Hara**/God is imperishable and immortal.

The only God rules over the perishable and the individual souls. By meditating on, by uniting with, and by becoming one with God, there is cessation of all illusion. With the knowledge of God all fetters fall off, and with waning ignorance births and deaths cease. By continuous meditation and going beyond the consciousness of the body one reaches the universal lordship thus fulfilling all the desires and becoming one without a second. This eternally existing self in one's own self is to be known only, and there is nothing to be known beyond that. The enjoyer, the enjoyed, and that which brings about the enjoyment as a result of meditation, all this are the three aspects of Brahman.

Fire is latent in a fire-stick, and it can be kindled by striking that piece of wood with another fire-stick; similarly, as oil in sesame seeds, as butter in curds, as water in the underground springs, the Ātman is there in a latent state in the body, and by meditating on the Praṇava/Ōm, the Ātman can be perceived. One, who by means of truthfulness, self-control and concentration, looks again and again for this Self which is all pervading and rooted in self-knowledge and meditation, that one becomes Supreme Brahman, the destroyer of ignorance.

The second chapter shows how the application of Yōga is helpful in the realization of the knowledge of Brahman. In order to realize the Truth, one has to attain purity of mind by a life of self-control in accordance with the rules of righteousness. Pure Consciousness is separate from the ordinary consciousness of the intellect, and it is referred to as 'Jyōti' or 'Light' of the fire, the fire being the ordinary consciousness and Light being the Pure Consciousness. Once the mind is controlled, one will have the capacity to discriminate between truth and ignorance. Having attained this capacity, the evolving Ātman brings itself out of attachments to the pleasures of the world; this is renunciation. Constant and vigorous practice of the control of mind is required for the manifestation of the self-luminous and for the attainment of supreme bliss. With the help of the mind and the intellect, controlling the senses which have a natural tendency to run after the worldly pleasures, is necessary for the immanent soul to manifest the self-luminous infinite Light. The wise ones undergo the necessary discipline and spiritual practice to control the activities of the mind and intellect, and only the knowing ones attain the great glory of the all-pervading, infinite, all-knowing, self-luminous Immanent Soul. Only by continued meditation, one will merge in the ancient Brahman; this is Nirvikalpa Samādhi.

Where, like fire from the stick the intellectual knowledge is churned out as a result of study, reflection and philosophical inquiry (as in Jñānayōga), where air the vital functions is controlled (as in Prāṇāyāma of Rājayōga), and where Sōma juice overflows when ritual gives place to self-sacrifice, and when work becomes unattached and is elevated to worship and service to God in oneself (as in Karmayōga), then the mind attains Perfection. Attaining Perfection, one destroys the mind which is the source of the phenomenal world, and rids the troubled results of the past actions; one should be devoted to that ancient Brahman - towards the Immanent Soul conceived as the Prime Cause (as in Bhaktiyōga).

[This mantra II.7 uses the term '*juṣēta*' for 'should be devoted to', and does not use the term '*bhakti*'. Explanation for this passage on page 45 of reference 34 is as follows. The Absolute is beyond thought and speech, and cannot be the subject of devotion. Devotion

requires the duality of devotee (bhakta) and the Divine (Bhagavān). Therefore to approach the unity of the Absolute through some best possible form of devotion is that towards the immanent Ātman conceived as the Prime Cause, whose presence is felt by all devotees in their hearts.]

The body along with the chest, neck and head, held erect in a straight posture (as in the *Āsana* part of Yōga), and placing the senses and the mind in the heart, meaning withdrawal of all senses and stabilizing the mind (as in the *Pratyāhāra* part of Yōga), the one who knows the meaning of Ōm and practices meditation, crosses over the fearful currents of rebirth. Controlling the senses with an effort (as in the practice of *Yama* part of Yōga), and regulating the activities in the body (as in the practice of *Niyama* part), and then, when the vital activities become gentle, and only then, one should breathe through the nostrils (as in *Prāṇāyāma* part of Yōga). Then the knowing one, without being distracted, should keep the hold on the mind and continue the meditation (as in *Dhāraṇa* and *Dhyāna* parts of Yōga). One should perform these exercises in mind control and concentration, in a place where the ground is level without any pebbles, where there is no wind, dust, fire, dampness and disturbing noises, and where the scenery is pleasing to the eyes. During the Yōga meditation, as part of the various stages of mental modification, forms like snow, smoke, sun, wind, fire, fire-fly, lightening, crystal and moon may appear and herald the manifestation of Brahman.

When the Yōgi understands that the physical body is made up of five elements namely earth, water, light, air and ether, and that the real Self is separate from the body, the Yōgi becomes possessed of a body made of the fire of Yōga, and is not subject to diseases, old age and death. When the Yōgi realizes the truth of Brahman through the perception of the truth of Ātman resembling a light in the body, and knowing the Divinity as free of all modifications, the Yōgi is freed from all sins. This Divinity pervades all directions in their entirety, and it is the first born, meaning it is Hiraṇyagarbha. It alone is born and is to be born in the future, meaning that Hiraṇyagarbha is the first born of each cycle of creation-evolution-maintenance-dissolution. Obeisance is then given to the Divinity who is in the fire, in the water, in the plants and in the trees, and who has pervaded the whole universe.

The third chapter depicts God **Rudra** as the one and only Brahman, and also uses the term **Śiva** in the literal sense to mean calm, blissful, kind, auspicious, propitious, benevolent, and such.

The one and only who exists at the time of creation and dissolution of the universe, and who with inscrutable Power appears as the Divine Lord, He, having innumerable forces working therein, controls all the worlds. Those who know this become immortal. Rudra is the only One; there is no other standing to make Him the second. O people, He who controls and protects these worlds by His own powers is inside every being. He projects all the worlds out of Himself, maintains them, and at the end of time, withdraws them into Himself.

Then it has this mantra X.81.3 from Ṛgvēda [which has been used word for word in one of Basavaṇṇa's vaċanas]. 'Having eyes everywhere, having a face everywhere, having arms everywhere, and having feet everywhere, it traverses heaven with arms, earth with swift-moving feet, and exists a God without companion generating heaven and earth' (Ṛgvēda saṁhitā book).

Rudra, the creator and supporter of the gods (senses), and the Lord of them all, the great seer, who in the days of yore brought into being the cosmic soul Hiraṇyagarbha, endows us with good thoughts. The following are two mantras from Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda IV.5.1.3&4. O Rudra, by your Śiva-self (calm and blissful self), blessing all creatures through the Vēdas, and rooting out sin, are bound to make us happy. O revealer of the Vēdas, what arrow that You hold in your hand for throwing, o protector of the devotees, make that propitious (Śiva), and do not injure the divine person Puruṣa who has manifested as the universe.

Higher than the personal Brahman is the Infinite Supreme Brahman who is in all beings hidden in their bodies. Knowing that to be the Lord who envelops this whole universe, one becomes immortal. That Divine Lord, pervading everything, omnipresent, benevolent (Śiva), dwells in the hearts of all beings. The Self, the mighty Lord, the controller, the internal light, guides the intellect of all beings in the attainment of this extremely Pure State. It is to be noted that the Upaniṣad implies that although the devotee would be satisfied with the personal God, the highest form of liberation is possible only by realizing the Absolute; it leads the aspirant from the personal God to the impersonal Brahman.

Two mantras from Puruṣa Sūkta of Ṛgvēda X.90.1-2 are interposed here:

The cosmic Puruṣa has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet; having enveloped the earth on all sides, He extends ten-fingers beyond.

The cosmic Puruṣa is all that is, all that was, and all that is to be; also, even though He increases beyond His own nature in the form of the objective universe, He remains the Lord of immortality.

Then it continues. With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, 'That' exists pervading everything in the universe. Subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest, the Ātman is hidden in the heart. By the grace (**Prasāda**) of the Creator one becomes free from sorrows and desires, and realizes the great Īśa. The expounders of Brahman declare this primeval Immanent Self of all, who is omnipresent because of His all-pervasiveness, to be free from birth.

Chapter four first describes the one formless God that assumes or creates many forms using His own **Śakti**/Power, and in the end reabsorbs everything into Him. Then it gives two verses from Muṇḍakōpaniṣad 3.1.1-2 where two birds on the self-same tree are compared to Jīvātman and Paramātman in the body, and the Jīvātman then realizing its own greatness as Paramātman (see 'Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad' article).

Then it continues. The Vēdas, sacrifices, spiritual practices, religious observances, past, future, and the whole world including ourselves, is projected by God the Lord of Māyā. Jīva/soul is bound by **Māyā**, and is entangled in the created world. Prakṛti is Māyā, and the Great-God **Mahēśvara** is the Lord of Māyā. Verse 3.4 is repeated again with very slight modification; here, Rudra who witnessed the birth of Hiraṇyagarbha, instead of Rudra who brought Hiraṇyagarbha into being, endows us with good thoughts. This Divinity, who created the universe and who is the all-pervading soul, dwells in the hearts of creatures, being perceived through emotions, intellect, will and imagination, and not perceived through the senses; those who perceive this Divinity through the faculty of intuition as thus seated in their heart, become immortal. When ignorance is dispelled, there is no day, there is no night, there is neither being nor non-being, there is only that Śiva. Then there is this obeisance: Some, being afraid of the cycle of births and deaths, approach You the unborn, O Rudra, protect me with that benevolent face of Yours. Another obeisance, a mantra taken from Ṛgvēda I.114.8 is given. O Rudra, do not injure us in your anger; we invoke You always with offerings.

Chapter five starts with a statement. Ignorance leads to the perishable, and wisdom leads to immortality; the Supreme Brahman is entirely different from ignorance and wisdom, because both are modifications of the mind; both ignorance and wisdom exist in, and are controlled by the Supreme Brahman. Then, it reiterates that the Supreme Brahman not only controls the whole evolution of the universe and its dissolution, but also is responsible for the endless and beginning-less cycles of creation-evolution-maintenance-dissolution. The Supreme Brahman is the witness to these cycles; each cycle starts with the first born Hiraṇyagarbha, and the cosmic process of birth and growth of individuals occurs in accordance to the law of Karma. One, who gets attached to the pleasurable qualities of things, works to the sake of its fruits, and enjoys the fruits of the deeds; despite being master of the senses, becomes bound by the three Guṇas, and assumes various forms, wanders about through the three paths – the path of the Gods, the path of the Fathers, and the path to the lowest birth – as a result of ones own deeds. This subtle (meaning incapable of being known by the gross mind and senses) individual soul, on account of limitation of the intellect, gets associated with egoism and Saṅkalpa (wanting something not deserved). But the subtle soul is potentially infinite, and is to be known. It is neither female, nor male, and not even neuter; whatever body it assumes, it becomes identified with it. Similar to the body growing nourished by food and drink, the embodied soul, by desire and delusion successively assumes various forms and places according to the deed of the body, mind and action. The cause of all this is God, and realizing this, one becomes free from all fetters. One, who realizes this Divinity which created both life and matter, which can be intuited by pure and devoted mind, and which is the blissful (Śiva), the incorporeal, and the nameless, is freed from further embodiment.

Chapter six starts with a remark. 'Some deluded thinkers', referring to those not recognizing God, speak of Nature as the force that revolves the wheel of Brahman, and others think of time as this force; but really all this is the glory of God. Energy assumes various forms such as earth, water, light, air and ether at the command of the Pure

Consciousness itself, which is the master of Guṇas and the maker of time, and by whom all this is ever enveloped. After setting the creation in motion, He unites the principle of Spirit with the principle of Matter - with one (Avidyā/ignorance), with two (Dharma and Adharma), with three (three bodies – gross, subtle and causal), and with eight (the five elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether – and mind, intellect and egoism) - through the mere instrumentality of time and their own inherent properties. The creation starts when there is disequilibrium of the three Guṇas – Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; when the three Guṇas regain their equilibrium, they no longer are operative, and this absence results in Praḷaya, the cosmic dissolution.

The adorable God who appears as the universe and who is the true source of all the creatures, can be perceived by meditating as seated in the heart, even though He is the primeval cause of the union as well as the part-less entity transcending the three divisions of time and form. The Divinity is simultaneously realized, as Immanent in the self, and as transcending the cycle of births and deaths as well as transcending time and form. To those wise ones, who feel in their own hearts the presence of Divinity, belongs eternal happiness. The implication, here, seems to be that, loving contemplation and worship is a necessary preliminary step in the realization of both the Personal God with attributes and the Impersonal Absolute.

Then sage Śvetāśvatara, the composer of this Upaniṣad declares: 'To the One, who at the beginning of creation projected Brahmā/Hiraṇyagarbha, who delivered the Vēdas unto him, who constitutes the supreme bridge of immortality, and who is without parts, free from actions, tranquil, faultless and taintless, seeking liberation I go for refuge to that Effulgent One whose light turns the understanding towards the Ātman'. Then the Upaniṣad states that after realizing Brahman by the power of self-control and concentration of mind, as well as by the **Grace of God (Dēva Prasāda)**, sage Śvetāśvatara expounded the truth of that holy Supreme Brahman to the highest order of Saṅnyāsins.

Finally it is implied that a true spiritual instructor must be a knower of Brahman. It then states that this highest mysticism expounded in the Vēdānta should not be taught to one whose passions have not been subdued, neither to one who is not a worthy son, nor to an unworthy disciple. These truths, when taught, shine forth only in the one with a great-soul who has supreme devotion to God, and an equal degree of devotion to the spiritual teacher. They shine forth in the one with a great-soul.

Om

Minor Upaniṣads

These Upaniṣads, although labeled as Minor Upaniṣads in order to differentiate them from the well known ones, are nonetheless very valuable (36). Some of these Upaniṣads are described below.

Śivasāṅkalpa-upaniṣad

Śivasāṅkalpa-upaniṣad is an integral part of the Saṁhitā of Śukla Yajurveda, and therefore it is one of the oldest Upaniṣads. First six hymns of chapter 34 of Śukla Yajurveda form this Upaniṣad. The term 'Śiva' is used here for its meaning. Śivasāṅkalpa means 'auspicious resolve' or 'benevolent resolutions'. The Upaniṣad is so named because each of the six mantras ends with '*tanmē manaḥ Śivasāṅkalpamastu*' which means 'may that, my mind, be moved by right intention'. **The Upaniṣad is about the powerfulness of the mind, and directing that mind to make the resolution for the well-being of all.** The hymns are as follows (10, 11, 37).

That which moves far when awake and returns when asleep, that light of lights, the illuminator of all perceptive senses, may that, my mind, be moved by right intention.

That to which the scholars resort to in order to perform their offerings, deeds and duties, that peerless spirit in all, may that, my mind, be moved by right intention.

That which is wisdom, intellect, and firmness, that ever-lasting light within all, that without which no single action is performed, may that, my mind, be moved by right intention.

That, the ever-lasting, by virtue of which all that is and that is to come is comprehended, and by virtue of which good deeds are made by seven kinds of great priests, may that, my mind, be moved with right intention.

That in which the Ṛças, Sāmans and Yajus-mantras are setup like the spokes of the wheel of a chariot, that in which all the knowledge of living-beings is embedded, may that, my mind, be moved by right intention.

That which leads the people to their aim like a skilful charioteer guides the fleet of horses in a proper way to the destination, that most dynamic and agile which dwells within the heart, may that, my mind, be moved by right intention.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Amṛtabindu-upaniṣad

There are five Bindu Upaniṣads, namely, Amṛtabindu, Brahmabindu, Nādabindu, Dhyanabindu, and Tējabindu. The texts of Amṛtabindu and Brahmabindu Upaniṣads are

virtually the same. Amṛtabindu literally means 'drop of nectar'; the Upaniṣad is like a drop from the fountain of Eternal life, and it is a potential cure for Saṁsāra the cycle of births and deaths. The Upaniṣad first asserts that the control of mind is the most effective way for the attainment of liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. The teaching is as follows (36, 37).

The mind is of two kinds, the pure and the impure. The pure mind is devoid of desire. The impure mind is dominated by the resolve to gain pleasure from all sense-objects. The mind that is attached to the sense-objects leads to bondage to the cycle of births and deaths. The mind that is dissociated with sense-objects tends to lead to liberation from this Saṁsāra. Therefore, the mind should always be made free from such desires by the seeker in order to attain liberation. When the mind is detached from the sense-objects and fully controlled within the heart which is the seat of pure Consciousness, the mind realizes its own essence, and that is how the Supreme State is to be gained. The mind is to be controlled to such an extent that it gets merged in the heart. This is Jñāna the wisdom and Dhyāna the meditation, everything else is argumentation and verbiage by which no real purpose is served.

The Supreme State is neither to be thought of as being something external and pleasing to the mind, nor as unworthy to be thought of as something unpleasant to the mind. It should be thought of as the essence of eternal supreme Bliss Itself. Brahman which is free from all partiality, being equally present in all, is attained in that State.

One should first according to the instructions practice Yōga concentration on Ōm with svaras, the sounds of A, U, M. Then one should practice on Ōm without regard to svaras. Only this type of meditation on Ōm without any svaras/mātrās/letters leads to the essence of Brahman that is free from all aspects and limitations. That alone is Brahman without any component parts, without doubt, and without taint. Whoever cognizes 'I' to be that Brahman, certainly attains that Brahman.

Ātman that is to be contemplated on is one and the same in the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. For one who has transcended these three states, there is no rebirth.

Being one only, the Universal-Self is present in all beings. Though one, it is seen as many. The Ātman which is omniscient is not always aware of its true nature. Being covered by Māyā which is a mere sound, It does not, through darkness, know that Blissful One. When the ignorance is cleared, then It being Itself, sees that It is the One only.

Two kinds of Vidyā (knowledge/science) are to be known. The Śabdabrahman (word-Brahman or sound-Brahman) is the lower knowledge that refers to the Vēdas, Upavēdas and such. This lower knowledge helps in the realization of the Higher Knowledge; therefore, it is also to be known to attain the Higher Knowledge that is the Supreme Brahman. After studying the Vēdas and such to acquire the lower knowledge Jñāna, the

one who is solely intent on acquiring Vijñāna the Self-knowledge, should then discard the Vēdas altogether and attain the Self-realization.

The cows are of many different colors, yet their milk is of the same color. Similarly, many branched Vēdas can be considered as the cows, and Jñāna as milk. Butter is hidden in milk, so is the Vijñāna the Self-Knowledge latent in every being. With mind as the churning-stick and Jñāna as the rope, one should bring out the Supreme Brahman. In whom reside all beings, and who resides in all beings, I am that Ātman of the universe, the Supreme Being.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Kaivalyōpaniṣad

Kaivalyōpaniṣad belongs to Atharvavēda. Kaivalya means 'reward of final emancipation'. It has been called the 'Brahma Śatarudrīya' because it glorifies the unconditioned Brahman like the glorification of Rudra-Śiva in Śatarudrīya. It is said to be a concise, poetic, and highly philosophical Upaniṣad, and thus is considered as one of the most valuable among the Minor Upaniṣads (36). The teaching is as follows (36, 37).

Know the Supreme by means of Śraddha/faith, Bhakti/devotion, Dhyāna/meditation and Yōga, and also by means of renunciation, that is how some attain immortality, not by work done with a motive of gaining gratification, not by progeny, nor by wealth. Ascetics of pure mind well-ascertained by Vēdānta-Vijñāna and through sannyāsa enter into that which is above Svarga/heaven in the cave of the heart. They attain the Brahmālōka and at the time of the dissolution of the universe get absorbed in the Brahman.

In a secluded place, sitting in a comfortable posture with the neck, head and body held erect, having given up the duties of the four orders of life, with a pure mind, having controlled all senses, having saluted the preceptor with reverence, meditating in the middle of the lotus of the heart on Brahman who is taintless, pure, worry-free, unthinkable, un-manifest, Śivam, of endless forms, peaceful, immortal, the origin of the worlds, without beginning, middle or end, the only one, all-pervading, Consciousness-Bliss, the formless, and the wonderful, then meditating on Paramēśvara the highest Lord who is always with Uma, powerful, three-eyed, blue-necked and tranquil, the meditating holy person reaches One who is the source of all, the witness of all, One who is beyond darkness. He is Brahman, He is Śiva, He is Indra, He is indestructible, the Supreme, the Self-luminous, He alone is Viṣṇu, He is Prāṇa, He is Time and Fire, He is the Moon, He alone is all that was and all that is to come, the Eternal; all this is Mahēśvara and none else. Knowing Him, one transcends death; there is no other way to freedom from the cycle of births and deaths.

Seeing the Ātman in all beings and all beings in the Ātman, one attains the Parabrahman, not by any other means. Making the Ātman the lower fire-stick and Ōm the upper fire-

stick, by repeated friction of knowledge, a wise person burns up the bond of ignorance.

With the Self deluded by Māyā (or ignorance), one identifies with the body and does all sorts of things. In the waking state it is the Jīva that is gratified with the objects of enjoyment. In the dream-state, the Jīva feels pleasure and pain in the dream-world created by Māyā. During deep sleep when everything is dissolved into the causal state, one attains the form of happiness. Again, through the connection with the deeds done previously, the very Jīva returns to the dream or waking state. The three states are absorbed into the One who is the source of all, the Bliss and the Consciousness. Parabrahman is the great support of the universe, subtler than the subtle, and eternal, that is yourself, you are That.

I am Sadāśiva (eternal happiness) who is other than the enjoyer, the enjoyed and the enjoyment, and who is witness to Pure Consciousness. In me everything is born, in me does everything stand, and in me everything dissolves, I am that non-dual Brahman. I am smaller than the smallest and also the greatest of all, I am the manifold universe, I am the ancient, the Puruṣa and Īśā, and I am the Effulgent and the form of Śiva (All-good). I have neither hands nor feet, but I have unthinkable power. I see without eyes. I hear without ears. I know all, I am always the Intelligence. I am the one known through all the Vēdas. I am the revealer of the Vēdānta. I have no merit or demerit. I can not be destroyed. I have no birth, nor body, nor organs of senses or mind. For me there is no earth, water, fire, air or sky/space.

One who thinks Paramātman as being in the cave of the heart, as having no form, as being the witness of all, and as beyond both existence and non-existence, that one attains the Pure Paramātman. One who studies this Śatarudriya is purified of all kinds of sins. Through this, one goes into Avimukta. The term 'Avimukta' means 'one never deviates from the inner essence of Oneness', and Avimukta is a common epithet for Śiva. Avimukta is also said to be a place in Vārānasi that is not deserted by Śiva even at the time of praḷaya or the dissolution of the universe (Minor U). By virtue of this, one acquires the knowledge that destroys the cycle of births and deaths; therefore, knowing this, one attains Kaivalya, the reward of liberation.

[In the vaċana 33 on page 72 of volume II of Śūnyasaṃpādane (1), referring to the city of Basava Kalyāṇa, it says that it is not a lie that the place where Śivabhakta dwells is indeed the Avimuktakṣētra. And then in the explanatory note on page 375 for this vaċana, it says that Avimuktakṣētra is one of eight names of Kāśi which is regarded by the Hindus as the holiest place of all.]

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Jābālōpaniṣad

Jābālōpaniṣad belongs to Śukla Yajurveda. In this Upaniṣad, sage Yājñavalkya, the

composer of Śukla Yajurvēda, explains and answers the questions that are respectfully asked by others (37).

First explanation is about the region (in the body) of sacrifice of gods and the abode of Brahman for all beings. He calls it 'Avimukta'. When the vital breath departs out of a person, in Avimukta, Rudra preaches the formula by virtue of which one attains immortality and is liberated. The infinite, un-manifest Ātman is to be worshipped in the Avimukta. This place Avimukta is enshrined in the middle of the thing that eliminates the defect or evil committed by the organs of the body, and the one that dispels the sins committed by all the senses. This location is at the adjunction of the eyebrow and the nose. One who knows Brahman adores this connecting place, and hence, Avimukta is only adorable. The person who has acquired this knowledge is competent to preach this to others. (See the 'Kaivalyōpaniṣad' above for the explanation of Avimukta.)

Then Yājñavalkya in answer to the question 'by what recitation one can attain immortality' says that immortality is attained only by recitation of Śatarudrīya. This Śatarudrīya is in the sixteenth chapter of the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā of Śukla Yajurvēda. It is also in the fifth chapter of the fourth book of the Taittirīya Saṁhitā of Kṛṣṇa Yajurvēda where it is a part of what is called as 'Śrī Rudram' (20).

Yājñavalkya then explains Sannyāsa, the renunciation. One should first observe the rules of brahmaçarya/ceibacy. After successfully completing that stage, one should become a householder. After that, one should become a vānaprasthin the forest dweller. Then one should finally accept the life of sannyāsa. However, a direct entry from any of the above three stages of life into sannyāsa may be had by complete renunciation. Whether the person has observed a vow or not, whether one has taken the final ablution or not, and whether one has maintained the householder-fire or not, from the day on which one renounces, one becomes a sannyāsi, and that one should wander as a pilgrim.

With regard to the concern about the type of Brāhmaṇa who does not wear the sacred thread, Yājñavalkya explains that the Ātman only is the sacrificial thread, and that there is no need for another external thread.

Then there is this description of Paramahaṁsa. The Paramahaṁsa is a great recluse without any visible sign or symbol of reclusion. Paramahaṁsas do not wear any clothes and do not wear the sacred thread. They have completely renounced everything, and they have no belongings. They are firmly devoted to the way of true knowledge that is Brahman. They do not worry about whether they get anything to eat or not. They do not worry about having an appropriate residence or not. They live in deserted places, under a tree, at the bank of a river, in the mountain, in the trenches or caves and near streams. They engross themselves in concentration and uplifting of their inner-Self. Such a one who becomes free from the body by means of renunciation is called Paramahaṁsa.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Paramahamsōpaniṣad

Paramahamsōpaniṣad is related to Śukla Yajurvedā. It describes the characteristic marks of the one who reaches the highest stage of life (the Jīvanmukta state; the Jīvanmukta is one who has attained liberation from the cycle of births and deaths, even when alive), and the ideals of the knower of Truth (36, 37).

There are very few persons who are Paramahamsa Yōgis. They are of the nature of the people of the Vēdas, and they are firmly established in the consciousness that is Brahman. They are the great ones, though living in the body they are not conditioned by anything. Having renounced the family and friends, having done away with the study of the Vēdas, and renouncing all work as well as all desires, they use just enough clothes to barely protect their body, and use whatever is necessary for the good of all people.

Paramahamsa does not carry the staff, does not maintain a hair-tuft, does not wear a holy thread, and does not wear any garment; feels neither cold nor heat, neither happiness nor misery, does not feel insult or honor, so also the vicissitudes of worldly life; gives up all thought of conceit, jealousy, arrogance, joy, sorrow, lust, anger, self delusion, elation, envy, egoism, display of spiritual practice in front of others to please them or to gain name and fame, and the like; regards the body as a corpse and has destroyed the body-idea; realizing the eternal Brahman, lives in That with the consciousness 'I am That, I am that which is ever calm, devoid of duality, and that which is the essence of Knowledge-Bliss'; considers Jñāna/knowledge alone as the sacred thread, and does not perform any Sandhyā according to the Vēdic injunction, but performs the true import of Sandhyā that is the union of the Individual-Self Jīvātman and the Supreme-Self Paramātman.

The Paramahamsa, having relinquished all desires, exists in the non-dual Supreme state and holds the staff of Knowledge.

Paramahamsa does not prostrate in front of anyone, does not offer any oblations to forefathers, and neither blames nor praises anyone. For the Paramahamsa there is no invocation to God, no ceremony, no Mantra, no worship, no phenomenal world or the world that is unknown; does not see duality nor does perceive unity; neither sees 'I' nor sees 'Thou', nor 'all this'. Paramahamsa does not have a home, does not accept anything made of gold, and does not accept wealth. All desires of mind have ceased to exist; the outgoing tendency of all the sense-organs has subsided; and the Paramahamsa rests in the Ātman alone. Realizing the Brahman who is One Infinite Knowledge-Bliss, the Paramahamsa has nothing more to desire, thus reaches the end of the desire.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Ātmōpaniṣad

Ātmōpaniṣad is one of the small Upaniṣads. It is appended to the Atharvavēda. It explains

the real nature of Ātman step-by-step. Although, in general, the Upaniṣads emphasize that the body and mind are not identical with Ātman, for the purpose of simple explanation, in this Upaniṣad, the body and mind are called outer Ātman and inner Ātman respectively. And then the Paramātmān is explained as something entirely different (36).

The human body which is born and dies is called the outer Ātman. Skin, nails, hair, fingers, and other parts of the body from head to toe are listed; the body which has all these parts is said to be the gross body called outer Ātman.

The mind that perceives, comprehends and remembers is called the inner Ātman. Here again the Upaniṣad gives a long list of phenomena that is comprehended by the mind. The mind is considered as the subtle matter called the inner Ātman.

Then the Upaniṣad goes on to the Paramātmān which is the Absolute Imperishable, and says that it is to be worshipped. Paramātmān reveals to one who, through Yōga of Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra and Samādhi, or through reasoning, meditates on the Adhyātma. Paramātmān cannot be grasped or perceived, is neither born nor dies, and is beyond all qualities. Paramātmān is all pervading, unthinkable and indescribable. The one without action and the one without any Saṁskāra (which means the impression on the mind of the action performed) is the Paramātmān.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Brahmōpaniṣad

Brahmōpaniṣad belongs to Atharvavēda. It is about the Supreme Knowledge of Brahman. It is briefly described here (36, 37).

Brahman with four feet specially shines in four seats – navel, heart, neck and head [These four seats correspond to the four of seven energy-centers/lotuses/ĉakras - Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddhi and Ājñyā]. The four feet are jāgrata the waking-state, svapna the dream-state, suṣupti the deep-sleep-state, and turīya the fourth. In jāgrata is Brahma, in svapna is Viṣṇu, in suṣupti is Rudra, and in turīya is the Absolute Imperishable.

All the Divinities are in the heart; all the Prāṇas are in the heart; all Prāṇas, jyōti, and the three-plied holy thread are established in the heart. The Ćaitanya (Consciousness) stands in the heart. Putting on yajñōpavīta (holy thread) gives a long life, strength and tējas. The wise ones, having shaved the head should throw away the external thread; one should wear, as the holy thread, the supreme and indestructible Brahman. Practicing the noble Yōga, the wise ones should abandon the external thread. They whose sūtra (thread) is within, and whose yajñōpavīta is jñāna, they only know the sūtra and consider jñāna as the Supreme.

One hidden in all things pervades all things and is the inner Ātman of all beings. Dispensing the fruits of karma, living in all things, witnessing everything is that without

any guṇas or attributes. The great One is making one thing appear as many. The wise ones who see the Self in them, they only attain peace. Having made oneself as the upper fire-stick, and Praṇava (Ōm) as the lower fire-stick, as one would see the hidden fire by rubbing the fire-sticks; by constant practice of meditation one sees the hidden Divinity. As the oil in the sesame seed, as butter in the curds, as the water in the hidden springs, and as fire in the fire-wood, so who practice truth and austerities see the Ātman in them. The heart resembles the lotus flower facing downward; that is to be known as the habitat of the whole universe. During wakeful-state its station is the eyes, during the dream-state it is the throat, during deep-sleep is in the heart, and in the transcendental turiya state it is established in the crown of the head.

The daily worship by meditation is devoid of any offering of liquids, and so also of any exertion and speech. It is the unifying principle for all creatures, and it is the worship for one-staffed saṅnyāsins. From which, the speech and mind bounce back without reaching it, that is the transcendental Bliss of the embodied, knowing which the wise one is set free. This transcendental Bliss is the Self which pervades the whole universe as the butter is diffused within the milk. The supreme wisdom of Brahman, which is in the form of unity of the Ātman of all, founded on the spiritual discipline, and which is the Vidyā or science of the Ātman, is the Brahmōpaniṣad.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Haṁsōpaniṣad

Haṁsōpaniṣad is said to be a treatise on the nature of Haṁsa which gives the fruit of bliss and is like a treasure to the yōgin. The term 'haṁsa' means 'swan', but this Upaniṣad uses the term haṁsa to mean the individual-self Jīva. The term Paramahaṁsa, here, means the Supreme Haṁsa or the Higher Self (37).

Haṁsa is permeating all bodies, like the fire in all kinds of wood or like oil in all kinds of gingili seeds. Having known it, one becomes immortal.

The Upaniṣad goes over the Prāṇāyāma aspects of meditation and mentions the seven energy-pools or energy-centers which are called lotuses or çakras. By breath-control the Vāyu/air is raised from **Ādhāra**, which then circles three times around **Svādhiṣṭhāna** and goes to **Maṇipūra**. Then it crosses the **Anāhata**, activates Prāṇa in **Viśuddhi** and then reaches **Ājñyā**. Then one contemplates in **Brahmarandhra**, and having meditated there always as 'I am of three mātṛās', cognizes the Self and becomes formless. This is that Paramahaṁsa which has the resplendence of crores/millions of suns, and by whom all this universe is pervaded (see 'Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini' article).

The Upaniṣad describes inclinations in a person when Haṁsa passes through different parts of the lotus. Then it goes over different aspects of obeisance and states that one should contemplate on Haṁsa as the Ātman in one's heart. Having thus reflected upon,

one hears Nāda (divine vibrations or sounds) of ten kinds. One goes through these ten stages of Nāda, and in the tenth stage of Nāda, one attains Parabrahman. When this happens, mind is destroyed along with saṅkalpa and vikalpa, then one shines as Sadāśiva of the nature of Śakti pervading everywhere, being effulgent in its very essence and being the most quiescent Ōm. This is the teaching of the Upaniṣad.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Atharvaśira-upaniṣad

Atharvaśira-upaniṣad is affiliated to the Atharvavēda. This Upaniṣad is of interest because it defines Rudra, adores Rudra, and uses the term Bhakta (devotee) among other things (37).

It starts by saying that Rudra, being asked who he is by the gods, answers as I am the One, I am the past, present and future, there is nothing except me, I reside in the hearts of all living organisms and I am in all directions and quarters, I am eternal and non-eternal, visible and invisible, Brāhmaṇa and non-Brāhmaṇa, I am masculine feminine and neuter, I am Gāyatrī Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī the goddesses, Triṣṭub Jagatī and Anuṣṭub the metres of the poetic hymns, I am Ṛças Yajus and Sāman and also the Atharvaṅgiras the hymns of all four Vēdas, I am the fire and all forms; and the Upaniṣad continues with many such things.

The gods then start salutations to Rudra. These salutations are somewhat similar to those in Śatarudrīya of Yajurvēda (see 'Śrī Rudram' article). There are 32 of these, each one ending with 'Namō namaḥ'. After that the praise continues with many statements.

Then the Upaniṣad asks and answers many questions about Rudra. Some of them are as follows.

Why is He called Rudra? He is called Rudra because His essence '*rū-pan*' is grasped instantly '*dru-tam*' by the seers '*ṛ-ṣi*', not by other devotees (*bhakta*).

Why is He called Exalted Mahēśvara? He is called the Exalted Mahēśvara because He permits the devotee ***bhakta*** in the participation of perception, and is gracious towards the devotees; because He withdraws the speech of the Vēdas in himself and again allows it to flow out; because giving up all forms He raises himself and is elevated through the perception of the Ātman and the mastery of the Yōga.

Why is He called the Highest Brahman? Because He is the highest of the highest; He is the highest goal; He is strong and is strengthened by the strong power.

Why is He called the sound Ōm? Because, when Ōm is uttered, He makes the vital breath Prāṇa go upwards; Ōm is recited for conveying salutation to Ṛças, Yajus, Sāman, Atharva and the Brāhmaṇa; hence it is called Praṇava.

The Upaniṣad continues – By means of that sacred sound Ōm, He penetrates into the soul and grants peace; He releases the creatures from their bonds by the three-and-half mora of Ōm. The first mora `a' has Brahma as its deity and it is red in color; one who meditates on it constantly goes to Brahmaḷōka the abode of Brahma. The second mora `u' has Viṣṇu as its deity and it is black in color, one who meditates on it constantly goes to the abode of Viṣṇu. The third mora `m' has Īśāna as its deity and is brown in color; one who meditates on it constantly goes to the abode of Īśāna. But the three-and-half mora which has all these deities is un-manifest; and one who meditates on it continuously goes to the abode of Bliss. Therefore, one should revere it; the silent ascetics proclaim it wordlessly; that is the prescribed way. The wise one, who sees Him as dwelling in oneself, attains peace.

More salutations are given and then the beneficial effects of studying and reciting this Upaniṣad are given.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Rudrōpaniṣad

Rudrōpaniṣad is one of the minor Upaniṣads. It is not the Śrī Rudram or Śatarudrīya of the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda. The confusion might arise because it is said that Śatarudrīya could be considered as an Upaniṣad, and the term `Rudra Upaniṣad' has been used in that reference (20). The Rudrōpaniṣad described here is a very small Upaniṣad with only three mantras (37).

[This Upaniṣad is interesting to the Vīraśaivas because of two reasons. First is that this Upaniṣad considers the term Brāhmaṇa usually applied to a higher caste by birth individuals, and the term Ćaṇḍāla usually applied to a lower caste by birth individuals, to be not birth dependent but to depend on the qualities of the person. Second reason is that it brings out most of the components of Aṣṭāvaraṇa without using the term Aṣṭāvaraṇa.]

The first mantra defines who is a good Brāhmaṇa and who is a Ćaṇḍāla or upa-Ćaṇḍāla. A good Brāhmaṇa is one who worships Śiva for the welfare of all. If a low-caste person by birth worships Śiva for the welfare of all, that person is also a good Brāhmaṇa even if that person is not learned in the four Vēdas.

If the above described good Brāhmaṇa smears **tripuṇḍra** on the forehead, that one is the best Brāhmaṇa. The tripuṇḍra is the sacred ash **Vibhūti/Bhasma** that is applied with three fingers forming three parallel lines (18).

If anyone, irrespective of the caste by birth, worships the **Liṅga** of Śiva, that person is also a Brāhmaṇa.

The second mantra depicts Śiva as **Prāṇaliṅgi** (recognized by breath-control and meditation). Śiva the Prāṇaliṅgi in a dynamic form is **Jaṅgama**. Jaṅgama is revered among Prāṇaliṅgis. Anyone who, irrespective of the caste, worships Śiva is the best Prāṇaliṅgi. Prāṇaliṅgi is therefore the best Brāhmaṇa.

The third mantra depicts Śiva as **Guru**. Ātman is Paraśiva in the form of Guru and Śiva. The Guru should hold all-this-universe with the universal **mantra**. Gods recite these mantras, and the god is the Guru of us all. This food/anna, endowed by all knowledgeable and the Guru, is in the form of Parabrahman. Brahman is understood by self-realization. Guru is Śiva, and Guru is Śivaliṅga. Śiva, coming as light, Prāṇa and Mahēśvara, is the Divine Guru. That Mahēśvara is in the form of Śiva. Flowers and such used for Liṅgābhiṣēka (coronation of Liṅga), **Tīrtha** (holy water) used for the coronation of Guru, and **Pādōdaka** (water that has washed the feet) of Mahēśvara wash away the taints of birth. Their **Prīti** (affection) is Śiva's Prīti. Their **Trupti** (satisfaction) is Śiva's satisfaction. The term 'mantra' used above in this Upaniṣad is said to mean Vēdic hymns, and not the Ṣaḍakṣara mantra 'Ōm Namaḥ Śivāya' of Aṣṭāvaraṇa. The word Prīti however is said to mean **Prasāda** of the Aṣṭāvaraṇa. Thus the Upaniṣad definitely mentions Guru, Liṅga, Jaṅgama, Bhasma and Pādōdaka of Aṣṭāvaraṇa. May be it mentions Prasāda. Mantra mentioned here is not the mantra of Aṣṭāvaraṇa, and it does not mention Rudrākṣa.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Rudrākṣajābālōpaniṣad

Rudrākṣajābālōpaniṣad belongs to Sāmavēda. It is said that the objective of this Upaniṣad is to reveal the importance of Rudrākṣa (37).

It is called rudrākṣa as it is originated from the eyes of Rudra. Rudrākṣa originated from the drops of water that fell on the ground from Rudra's eyes. Rudra closed his eyes for meditation in order to destroy the evil Tripura. After this state of meditation when Rudra opened his eyes, water drops came out from his eyes and fell on the earth. On the spot where the drops fell, Mahārudrākṣa trees grew. The dried fruits/seeds of these trees are the rudrākṣa.

Sturdy, uniformly spherical rudrākṣas are considered as the best ones. Ugly ones or the ones damaged by insects are not acceptable. Holes are to be made through the rudrākṣa beads so that silk thread can be passed through to make strings of rudrākṣa for use. Strings of 36 rudrākṣa for around the neck, strings of 16 each for the arms, strings of 12 for the wrist are recommended. A garland of 108 rudrākṣa is to be held like the sacrificial thread.

Distinction of rudrākṣa according to their mukha/face/mouth and from one to fourteen beads, hymns to be recited while holding the rudrākṣa, some components of diet that are prohibited for the holders of rudrākṣa, benefits that can be attained from the rudrākṣa,

and such information are described.

Devotees of Śiva are expected to make use of the rudrākṣa in the daily worship in order to obtain the maximum beneficial effects from the use of rudrākṣa.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!

Muktikōpaniṣad

Muktikōpaniṣad has been composed as a dialog between Śrī Rāma and Hanumān of the epic (Itihāsa) Rāmāyaṇa (37). The teaching centers on the topic of emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths. It explains this topic in a splendid way as a summary of what is in the Upaniṣads. It lists 108 Upaniṣads, and then it lists these Upaniṣads according to their affiliation with the Vēdas. Of the 108 Upaniṣads, 10 are affiliated with Ṛgvēda, 32 with Kṛṣṇa Yajurvēda, 19 with Śukla Yajurvēda, 16 with Sāmavēda, and 31 with Atharvavēda.

At the outset, the Upaniṣad states that there is only one true emancipation. It goes over several aspects in order to explain this. The teaching is as follows (37).

There are four types of salvation that are attainable after death. Even the soul of a person with evil practices can attain the first level. This lowest level is called *Svālōka* which means 'My world'; this world of the personal God is attainable by mere uttering of the personal God's name. The soul resides blissfully in the abode of the personal God until the fruits of good deeds are exhausted, and then it is reborn on earth. If a person dies in the holy place called Kāśī, Mahēśvara (the Great Lord) initiates the person by whispering mantra into the right ear, and such a soul, freed from all sins, attains *Svārūpa* which means 'My form', the form of the personal God; this is called the *Svālōka-Svārūpa* salvation. A person of virtuous conduct and who without diverting his intellect, meditates upon the personal God, attains *Sāmīpya* which means 'nearness' to the personal God; this is called *Svālōka-Svārūpa-Sāmīpya* salvation. A person who according to the path opened by the teacher, meditates on the Immutable Reality attains *Sāyujya* which means absorption; the soul is absorbed into the personal God, and it is called the *Sāyujya* salvation. Thus, these four kinds of salvation are attainable after death through *Upāsanā* which means worship of the personal God.

If one strives to attain the ultimate emancipation, one should first study the 108 Upaniṣads which are the essence of all the Upaniṣads. As indicated above, the Upaniṣad lists the 108 of the Upaniṣads. It also states that the final emancipation is attainable through Māṇḍūkyaōpaniṣad, which is enough for the salvation of all aspirants.

A person desirous of emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths should approach a Guru who is full of faith, proficient in the Vēdas, of good qualities, and intent upon the welfare of all beings. After studying under the Guru and learning the wisdom of 108

Upaniṣads, one should go through a process of thinking and reflection upon them.

The object of perfection is the attainment of eternal bliss through the removal of pains of agency and such. This has to be achieved through human efforts. It has to be won through the extinction of the *Vāsanā* (craving). Clinging to objects without deliberation through intense longing is stated to be the *Vāsanā*. A person who is entirely under the influence of the *Vāsanās* is subject to delusion, and considers the universe to be a separate reality. This wrong vision makes the person see everything under infatuation. *Vāsanās* are of two kinds, pure and impure. Pure *Vāsanās* alone are to be practiced. Impure *Vāsanās* should be overcome through efforts. *Yōga* is to be practiced for a long time in order to eradicate the *Vāsanās*. The *Vāsanās* perish through well conducted deliberation and truth. After first giving up the *Vāsanās* of objects dependant upon the *Vāsanās* of the mind, pure *Vāsanās* associated with friendship and such are to be attracted. Ultimately even these pure *Vāsanās* including the desire for salvation are to be abandoned. Through the dissolution of *Vāsanās*, mind attains quiescence. When the mind does not think at all, then dawns the state of mindlessness which confers great peace.

In the state of mind completely devoid of the *Vāsanās*, there is some bombardment of the mind through the sensory input. The eyes and other sense organs are involuntarily prompted to their objects that fall on them. Input from these sense organs causes vibration of *Prāṇa* (life-energy). The vibration of *Prāṇa* not only arises through *Vāsanās*, but also through excessive sensory input. All-pervading Consciousness is agitated by the fluctuation of the *Prāṇas*. It is possible to control the mind by sitting up again and again through approved means. The effective means are the attainment of spiritual knowledge, association with the wise, the entire abdication of all the *Vāsanās*, and the control of the *Prāṇas*. The mind cannot be controlled through violent force.

Through the force of breath-control (of *Prāṇāyāma*) and focused concentration of the mind by means of *Dhyāna*, one should be able to control the vibrations of *Prāṇa*. The wise say that the intervals of cessation of breathing after deep breaths experienced by the *yōgins*, is calming. The interval after inhalation and before the next exhalation is called internal *Kumbhaka* (cessation of breath), and the interval of cessation of breath after exhalation and before the next inhalation is called the external *Kumbhaka*. The two intervals of cessation of breath are the intervals of complete equilibrium. Through the force of breath-control and *Dhyāna* the current of modification of the mind flows into the utter quiescence of modification that confers upon the Supreme Bliss that is dear to the *yōgins* (see 'Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini' article). This state that is devoid of light, mind and *Buddhi*, and that is of the nature of mere Consciousness, is said to be the *Samādhi* that does not care or require the aid of another; it is the nature of *Śiva* (auspiciousness).

That *Samādhi* means attainment of the *Jīvanmukti* state where one is completely liberated and has attained Eternal Bliss even while alive. The *Jīvanmukta* continues to be in this state of *Jīvanmukti* until all *Prārabdha Karma* is destroyed. The *Prārabdha Karma* is the discharged karma, the consequences of which are being experienced until the effects are

exhausted. Jīvanmukta has no other karma and cannot accumulate any other karma. Once the Prārabdha Karma is exhausted, removal of the vehicle which is the body takes place. This removal of the vehicle is compared to the breaking of the earthen pot that holds the space inside. This space without the pot is then would be the Vidēhamukta, the one devoid of the body. This is the attainment of the ultimate Vidēhamukti state.

Thus, one should with effort seek the Effulgent within. Whoever, after having abandoned the visible and the invisible, is as the One alone, is not a mere knower of Brahman, but Brahman itself.

Ōm! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ! Śāntiḥ!