How the present work tends to the general advancement of knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

The Vedic Literature comprises of (1) The Samhitas, (2) The Brähmanas, (3) The Ṛānyakas and (4) The Upaniṣads. As the exposition of the Upaniṣads would be the concluding portion or the climax of the Vedic Literature, the Upaniṣads bore the name Vedānta i.e. the ending portion or climax of the Vedas. Upaniṣads, the essence of the Vedas, point out emancipation (Mokṣa) through the realization of Ātman by means of knowledge. Hence they can be designated as the complete vehicles of developed philosophical systems. They are not the work of a single genius but the total philosophical product of an entire epoch. Thus, in the Upaniṣads, we find a great variety of conceptions dominated by the one thought of the sole reality of Ātman.

About the number of Upaniṣads there are different views. According to some scholars there are about 200 Upaniṣads, some are of a view that there are 123 Upaniṣads. But majority of authorities hold the view that they are about 150 Upaniṣads. Dr A Weber speaks of 235 and Barth says that there are nearly 250. The Muktikopanisad asserts that there are 108 Upaniṣads.

THE PLACE OF UPAŅIṢADS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The Upaniṣads occupy a unique place in the development of Indian thought as well as form the source of all latter philosophical thinking of India. In fact, all the schools of philosophy have developed from this common source. As Upaniṣads contain the doctrines and views of schools of philosophy and religious sects, according to its purpose and contents, they may be classified as follows:-

(1) Those works which present Vedānta doctrines,
(2) Those which teach Yoga,
(3) Those which extol the ascetic life.
(4) Those which glorify Viṣṇu,
(5) Those which glorify Śiva as the highest divinity,
(6) Upaniṣads of the Sāktas and of other more insignificant sects.

It is the Yoga Upaniṣad (YU) that are most occult in their character giving clues to the mysterious forces located in nature and man as well as to the ways by which they may be conquered. They treat of many centers including the heart. All the centers may be divided under the main headings of head, heart and the portion of the body from the navel downwards.

The principal aim of Yoga is to produce two states – (1) The removal of consciousness of plurality (Bhedanivṛttiḥ). (2) The removal of all desires (Rāgamuktih).

Foot Note 1: Dr A Weber History of Sanskrit Literature, P. 153
As the Yoga system regards the union with the real Atman as a separation (Kaivalya) of the Purusa from Prakrti, the philosophy of the path of Yoga as propounded in YU aims at (open up) a new interest in Yogic practices in the life and practice of Samnyasins and the characteristics of the sects:

There are 20 Upanisads which mainly focus the path of Yoga and hence are considered Yoga Upaniṣads. Moreover as the theory of realization of Brahman has dealt with the Yogic practices such as meditation, the control of mind etc., YU deal with the subject of Yoga as an auxiliary path to knowledge on the basis of the eight āṅgas or sometimes six āṅgas.

**NEED FOR THE STUDY OF THE YU**

Much less research has been done in the areas of the YU. The different kinds of Yoga are distinguished and the various Yogic postures are described too. Thus the study aims at the topic wise analysis and a comparative study of the contents of 20 YU. The compartmental study of YU was not properly done so far and the separate treatment has escaped the sight of scholars, hence there was a need to make a systematic study of the topics discussed. Moreover the treatment given to the different aspects of Yoga in different Upaniṣads are being given full concentration in the present thesis.

Thus, in the present thesis, study is presented in the following manner
(1) The well-arranged topical study as well as the analytical study of the YU
(2) The assessment of the topics in the light of various doctrines of the Yoga
(3) The concordance of the theories presented which are found dispersed in the YU.

All these are studied and discussed from a critical and comparative point of view. Over and above some minor topics are also discussed as and when required. The diagrams wherever necessary to explain and elucidate the relevant point are also given which can be useful to have an idea about YU at a glance

It is, in this humble way that it tends to contribute towards the development of various theories on YU in the latter period and substantially in the area of YU in general.

To the best of my knowledge, such an exclusive study has not been made so far. Hence a humble attempt is made here to study YU in detail.

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Foot Note 2: Pt A. Mahadeva Shastri.(Ed) The Yoga Upaniṣads:(with the commentary of Shri Upanisad Brahmayogin) The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Adyar, Chennai 1983