CHAPTER VII

THE UPANISADIC CONCEPT OF UPĀSANĀ

Upāsanā may be generally called as meditation or the act of worship. It is related to the idea of worshipping. It should be mentioned that in various Upaniṣads, we find the discussions upon meditation or worship in a much flourishing manner. For example, the first five chapters of the Chandogyopanishad deal with this topic of Upāsanā or meditation elaborating different types and methods in a quite significant and specific way. In the Taittirīyopanisad also, we find the illustrations of Sāhhitā-Upāsanā that holds a much important position in the day-to-day life of Brahmaṇcarins. It is stressed that they must know the meaning of the Vedic mantras, and reflect upon them, rather uttering and chanting them roughly, in a mechanical process. In Upāsanā, differences are there between the meditating object and the meditator. But through it, the purity of citta (mind or intellect) is assured that leads a man to the path of karma-mukti. This distinction of meditator and meditation is clearly mentioned in the Chandogyopanishad as that after death he will

1. TU, 1.3.1-4
2. CU, 1.3.6,9
The Upāsanās are regarded as a gradual process of acquiring Brahmapidya i.e. the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality. According to Śaṅkarācārya, these activities of Upāsanā or meditation, through the perfection of consciousness or cittaśuddhi, avoiding all distractions of thought, caused by various desires set free any one for spiritual perception of Truth.

MEANING OF UPĀSANĀ

Before going into elaborate discussions about the Upaniṣadic meditation or Upāsanā, we firstly propose to discuss the actual import of the term Upāsanā. Śaṅkara defines Upāsanā as the inner transformation to acquire a higher mental state, where one concentrates on one object constantly recommended by the Scriptures like the uninterrupted flow of water or oil etc. In another place he says that when one has taken an object following the Scriptures and penetrates into it by surpassing all

3. etamitaḥ pretya abhisaṁbhāvitasmīti CU, 3.14.4
4. upāsanānāṁ ... cittaśuddhidvārā jñānakāraṇatvāt ŚB on CU, Intro.
5. upāsanānāṁ nāma yathāśāstramupāsyasyārthasya viṣayākaraṇeṇa sāmīpyamupagamya tailadhāravat samānapratyayapravāheṇa dirghakālam ca śanam tadupāsanāmācakṣate ŚB on BG, 12.3
fluctuations of mind and thought, so that no disturbances are further caused anymore, then that is called Upāsanā. It is an undisturbed meditation of a contemplating mind upon one object, whether be it a deity or an idol of worship. It is regarded as higher mental attitude related with “daily avocations, social contacts and religious pre-occupations.” In the view of S. Radhakrishnan, “Upāsanā or worship is the basis of the doctrine of Bhakti or devotion.” The Śvetāsvatara regards this as equivalent to tapasyā or contemplation which is recognised as a means to acquire the knowledge of Brahman or to attain liberation. Upāsanā is revealed as the process in which one has approached mentally nearer or closer to an ideal of deities etc. as indicated in arthavādas (elocutions) of the Vedas in the form of prayers. In that process, nothing mundane can enter into it. All other conventional thoughts are entirely disrupted till one

6. upāsanaṁ tu yathā śāstrasamāpitarṁ kiṁcidālaṁbanaṁ-upādaṁya tasmin samānacittavṛttisantānakaraṇam ŚB on CU, Intro.
7. CU, Intro., Trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, pp. 13-14
8. Radhakrishnan, S., The Principal Upaniṣads, p. 137
9. tapahprabhāvāddevaprasādāccha brahma ha śvetāsvataro’tha vidvān ŚU, 6.21
10. ŚB on BU, 1.3.9
becomes identified with the object of *Upāsanā* or worship so that it can be regarded as one's own self like worldly notions associated with one's own body. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* therefore rightly says that the real self of the meditator is *Brahman* or *Īśvara* that dwells within one's own heart.\(^{11}\) It dwells in the little space or ether within the heart, in the *Brahmpura* (the city of *Brahman*, i.e., the body).\(^{12}\) In a pure mind or consciousness of a contemplator, the realisation of *Brahman* is possible.\(^ {13}\)

In literal meaning, the word *Upāsanā* denotes to think by approaching near (*up + āsana*). The term *upa* always means *samipe* i.e. 'come nearer to' or manner of approaching. But here, it denotes to approach nearer mentally, to worship or to reflect upon an ideal. This *Upāsanā* is again conveyed sometimes by several other terms, such as *upaniṣadam*, *tapah*, *brahma* or *veda* etc. It is a mental activity

\(^{11}\) *esa ma ātmā-antarhrdaya* CU, 3.14.4
\(^{12}\) Ibid, 8.1.1
\(^{13}\) *jñānaprasādāna viśuddhasattvastastattu tanaś paśyate niṣkalam dhyāya-
mānah* MU, 3.1.8
\(^{14}\) TU, 1.3.1
\(^{15}\) Ibid, 1.9
\(^{16}\) Ibid, 1.8
enhancing *sattvaguna* or the attitude of purity in the mind. All other imperfections of *citta* or consciousness as excitement, restlessness, intensity, drowsiness etc. caused by *rajas* and *tamoguna* are removed. According to Śaṅkara, it is very useful to acquire the right knowledge of the one and only, non-dual principle i.e. *Brahman* through purification of mind.\(^\text{17}\)

In Vedāntic views, various definitions of the term ‘*Upāsanā*’ are available. In the *Vedāntasāra*, this *Upāsanā* is depicted as the process of worship of *Saguṇa Brahman* or the qualified *Brahman* like *Śaṅdilya-vidyā* etc.\(^\text{18}\) But this definition is considered as an inadequate one. Because except the *Upāsanā* of *Brahman*, no other object of meditation is included here. But in reality, in the Upaniṣads, we have found many *Upāsanās* related with different objects including Vedic deities, images, symbols, other concepts etc. So, there are many more objects of worship than the qualified *Brahman* alone. The Upaniṣads deal with both *Brahman* and *Abraham* in regard to the *Upāsanās*.

Again in the *Pañcadasī*,\(^\text{19}\) *Upāsanā* is described as quite

\(^{17}\) upāsanāni sattvasūdhhikaratvena vasttu-tattvāvabhāsakatvāt
advaitajñānopakārakāṇi ...., ŚB on CU, Intro.

\(^{18}\) VS, 12

\(^{19}\) Cf, PD, 9.74-82
different from knowledge or *jnāna*, because *jnāna* is objective or *vastutantra*, but *Upāsanā* is subjective or *kartiṇtantra*. It is totally dependent on the desire of the agent or doer. According to this definition, in the process of meditation, there are three things which come to our notice such as the worshipper, the worshipping object as indicated by the Scriptures and lastly the constant flow of concentration are most importantly required things. Here, faith is generated as the urgent factor among them. The significance of logical speculation and reasoning is less in *Upāsanā*, as compared to knowledge. In the view of the commentators, there is the difference between the act of contemplating and the contemplator, otherwise *Upāsanā* is not possible to happen. Thus *Upāsanā* gives us the right attitude to become reunited with the inner force through which the ultimate renunciation can be attained. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Upāsanā* is narrated as dedicated to the God or *Tāvara*.²⁰ It draws a man inward from all other outward multiplicity and therefore *Upāsanā* is totally different from the order of manifestation. This idea is correctly flourished in the *Kathopaniṣad* that a wise man absorbs his speech along with other sense-organs into the mind, the mind into the intellect, again the intellect is being merged in the great cosmic Self or *Hiranyagarbha* and then

²⁰ *Śodhyamānāṁ tu taccittamāṁśvarārpaṁkarmabhiḥ* A on BG, 3.4

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ultimately, the cosmic Self into the tranquil Self, devoid of all actions-reactions and empirical objects.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF UPĀSANĀ

In the Upaniṣad, we find different types of Upāsanās narrated in different contexts. Among them, frequent references are found basically of two classes of Upāsanās namely, Brahmopāsanā and Praṭikopāsanā. About these two Upāsanās, Sāyaṇācārīya has stated in his commentary of the Aitareya-āranyaka that in Brahmopāsanā, Brahman alone is meditated upon with numerous attributes, whereas in Praṭikopāsanā, one has to meditate upon an pratīka or a symbol e.g. idol etc., being incapable of concentrating on Brahman itself, due to strong worldly attachments. In pratīka, in general, the qualities of the real object of worship are superimposed on that particular pratīka for Upāsanā. These pratīkas are auṃkāra, śālagrāma (stone symbol of Viṣṇu), different images of Gods and Goddesses, different names, sentences etc. which come to our notice from the Vedic and other classical-historical literatures of India. The

\[21. \text{KU, 1.3.13}\]
\[22. \text{taccopāsanāṁ dvividhaṁ brahmopāsanāṁ praṭikopāsanāṁ ceti,}
\text{brahmaṇa eva guṇa viśiṣṭatvena cintanaṁ brahmopāsanāṁ. pravala-}
\text{laukikapadārtha-vāsanopetasya tatparityāgena brahmaṇi citsasyā-}
\text{praveśād brahmabhāvanayaṁ laukikavastucintanaṁ praṭikopāsanāṁ}
\]
Sāyaṇā on AĀ, 1.2
prānikas have occupied a huge place and great significance in the religious context of this country.

Praśikopāsanā

In the Upaniṣads, we find both these kinds of Upāsanās i.e. Brahmapāsanā and Praśikopāsanā. Further the Praśikopāsanā can be divided into two sections; that which is related to sacrifice, aṅgāṅgavaddha or yajñāṅga and which is not so, i.e., yajñā-vahirbhūta.²³

Now for example of Praśikopāsanā, we can mention that the word Aum is regarded as the name or symbol of Brahman in the Kaṭhopaniṣad.²⁴ By meditating on Aum, one can be united with Brahman or get liberation. The worship of Aum can be done following both these two ways, sometimes associated with the sacrificial actions and sometimes only as Brahman itself. Again, in the Chāndogyopaniṣad, different objects other than Brahman i.e. name, speech, mind etc. are advised to be worshipped as Brahman, in the legend of Nārada and Sanatkumāra.²⁵ The Munḍakopaniṣad presents a beautiful description based on Aum or prāṇava where it is stated as a bow, in which an arrow sharpened by the

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23. Sāyaṇa on AA, 1.2
24. KU, 1.2.16-17
25. CU, 7.1.5-7.15.1
deep, continuous penetration is attached. It is then stretched fully or in other sense, distracting the mind and senses from all other objects is prepared to hit the target alone i.e. *Brahman*, the Imperishable one. Here *pranava* is the bow, the individual self is the arrow and *Brahman* is the target which can be attained through constant meditation, with no fickleness of the mind. In the *Praśnopaniṣad*, this *pranava* is revealed both as *para* (higher) and *apara* (lower) *Brahman*.

Everything belongs to *Aum* as *Brahman*. Again through this *Aum* alone, all the words or sentences are pervaded and bounded with one another, therefore it is everything. All the three parts of time-present, past and future are transcended by the *Aum*. From the subjective and the objective outlook, this *Aum* is not different from the very Self or *Ātman*. There is no difference of *vācaka* and *vācyā* or word and meaning, because both are *Ātman* or *Aum*. The elements (*mātrāḥ*) of *Aum* are the quarters (*pādāḥ*) of *Ātman*, which are *a* (*akāra*), *u* (*ukāra*) and *m* (*makāra*). In this connection we can

26. prāṇavo dhanuḥ śaro hyātmā brahma tallakṣyamucyate/
apramattena veddhavyaṁ śaravattanmayo bhavet// MU, 2.2.3-4

27. paraṁ cāparaṁ ca brahma yadonkāraḥ PU, 5.2

28. CU, 2.23.3

29. bhūtaṁ bhavad bhaviṣyaditi sarvam auṁkāra eva MāU, 1

30. pādā mātrāḥ, mātrāśca pādāḥ MāU, 8

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quote an important view of Gaudapāda thus: “The sacred syllable aum is
verily the lower Brahman and it is also said to be the higher Brahman. Aum is without beginning, unique, without anything external to it, unrelated to any effect and imperishable—

praṇavo hyaparam brahma, praṇavāsca paraḥ smṛtaḥ/
apūrvo’nantaro’bāhyo naparaḥ praṇavo’vyayah!//(26)”. 31

In the Māṇḍukyopaniṣad, this very concept is presented significantly that at last without any differentiations of pāda and mātrā, all are resolved into the Aum, which has no elements then (amātraḥ) and is Turīya i.e. the Ātman or non-dual Self. 32 Therefore, in the Upaniṣad, both the concept of higher and lower Brahman as featured by Aum is narrated. This type of Upāsanā can lead a man to the path of liberation which is revealed as kramamukti.

About the other kind of Praṭīkopaṇa, related to the sacrifices or yajñāṅgas, we find an elaborate discussion in the Chāndogyopaniṣad. From the very first chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad to the twenty-second part of the second chapter, the discussions of this type of Upāsanā are forwarded very elaborately. In these, the praṭīkas are used basically in connection to Vedic sacrifices. As in Chāndogyopaniṣad, the worship of

31. Qt. by Radhakrishnan, S., The Principal Upaniṣads, p. 703
32. MaU, 12
Aum is connected with Udgītha. Udgītha is one kind of eulogy or stuti or a hymn of praise of the Sāma-veda that is being chanted in a Vedic sacrifice. In a sacrifice, the hymns of the Sāma-veda are chanted by udgāṭy, one of the four principal priests. These are divided into certain distinct portions called bhakti. These songs are sometimes pañcabhaktika i.e. with five bhaktis or saptabhaktika i.e. with seven bhaktis. All these bhaktis are associated with different names, such as hiṁkāra, prastāva, udgītha, pratihāra and nidhana of the pañcabhaktika Sāma-hymns, while the names of the saptabhaktika Sāma-hymns are hiṁkāra, prastāva, ādi, udgītha, pratihāra, upadrava and nidhana. In the Chāndogyopanisad, we find both these kinds of examples of pañcabhaktika and saptabhaktika with reference to Upāsanā.

Thus it is an accessory of the Vedic sacrifices. The identification of Udgītha and Aum is again pronounced in another passage of the same Upaniṣad as ‘atha khalu ya udgīthah sa praṇavaḥ sa praṇavaḥ sa udgīthah iti, (Now that what is Udgītha is praṇava and which is praṇava, is again Udgītha). Again in the Taittirīyopaniṣad, this Aum is related with the

33. CU, 22-2.1
34. Ibid, 2.8-2.10
35. Ibid, 1.5.1
four kind of priests of the Vedic sacrifices and also with the *agnihotra* sacrifice.\(^{36}\)

**Sampad-Upāsanā and Adhyāsa-Upāsanā**

From another point of view, there are again two types of Upāsanās of the symbolic worship, they are *sampad-upāsanā* and *adhyāsa-upāsanā*.

When an object or symbol of a lower grade is taken and superimposed on it, the qualities of a thing of higher grade, due to the similarity between them, that is called *sampad-upāsanā*. *Sampad* is always related to some kind of superimposition i.e. *āropa* where the nature or properties of the higher thing is attributed to a lower thing. *Adhyāsa* is basically related to *adhiśṭhāna* or a basis or support.\(^{37}\) For example, the worship of Viṣṇu on the stone symbol i.e. the *śulagrāma* or the worship of Śiva on *śivalīṅga*, is a kind of *adhyāsa-upāsanā*, where the symbol is highlighted and not ignored. It is a kind of *avalambana* or a support. But when the importance is shifted to the *āropa*, then it will be a kind of *sampad-upāsanā*. In the *sampad-upāsanā*, one does not emphasise on the lower things, but on the higher things which the lower ones indicate as

\(^{36}\) TU, 1.8; BU, 1.1

\(^{37}\) aropyapradhānā sampad adhiśṭhānapradhāno’dhyāsaḥ

*Vedānta Kalpataru*, 1.1.4

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being their symbols. Thus in the Bhamati\textsuperscript{38}, it is revealed that the Viśvadevas, have similarity with the mind on one point of infinity (\textit{anantatva}). Hence they are super-imposed on the mind by almost ignoring its own status and thus the worship of Viśvadevas is being highlighted, though it is only an \textit{āropa} (super-imposition). Through this, one can attain the Infinite worlds. This is a kind of \textit{sampad-upāsanā}. Citsukhācārya in his \textit{bhāṣya} Bhāvaprakāśika says that, \textit{sampannāṁ alpe vastuni ālamvane kenacit sāmānyena mahāvastudarśanaṁ. yathā manaso 'nantatvasāmānyena viśvadevatva darśanaṁ, adhyāse tu ālamvanasyaiveti.}\textsuperscript{39}

In \textit{samipad} depending in the lower object, something higher object is visualised based on resemblance. For example, through the resemblance of infinity, inherent in the mind Viśvadevas are visualised. On the other hand, in the \textit{Chāndogyopaniṣad}, it is stated that the mind and the space are distinctly reflected upon as \textit{Brahman} itself.\textsuperscript{40} Again \textit{āditya} or the sun is meditated upon as \textit{Brahman}\textsuperscript{41} and this is the profound command there by the Upaniṣadic seers. In all these cases the identity of the mind, the space and the sun are emphasised regarding \textit{Upāsanā}. Therefore, these

\textsuperscript{38.} Bhamati on BSS, 1.1.4
\textsuperscript{39.} Qt. by Swami Gambhirananda, \textit{Upanisad Granthavali}, Part-II, p.8
\textsuperscript{40.} CU, 3.18.1
\textsuperscript{41.} Ibid, 3.19.1

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are definitely be called as \textit{adhyāsopāsanā}. Their own status is not seized away by the thought of the higher thing or \textit{Brahman}. So in \textit{adhyāsopāsanā}, “The symbol itself predominates and on it are superimposed the qualities etc. of the deity”.\textsuperscript{42} As in the \textit{Chāndogya}, Sanatkumāra has told Nārada to worship \textit{nāma} (names) because all earthly objects are more or less associated with the names only. Here, the nature of \textit{nāma} is not lost, though on it, is superimposed the vision of \textit{Brahman}.\textsuperscript{43}

Now, there are also certain examples of \textit{sampad-upāsanā} as found in the Upaniṣads. In the Jānaśrutī-Raikva legend of the \textit{Chāndogyopaniṣad}, Vāyu or the air and the breath or \textit{prāṇa}, to be worshipped as \textit{saṁvargah} (absorbert). Now on these \textit{vāyu} and \textit{prāṇa}, based on the similarity of some quality such as the absorbent (\textit{saṁvargah}) and numbers, the lower \textit{Brahman} (\textit{virāt}) is super-imposed and highlighted, because it is the ultimate support or resolvent of everything at the time of destruction.\textsuperscript{44}

Again in the very first chapter of the \textit{Chāndogyopaniṣad}, when the symbol \textit{Aum} is explained to be worshipped as \textit{Udgītha}, then it is ignored, whereas \textit{Udgītha} is being highlighted.\textsuperscript{45} Here \textit{Udgītha} is the adjective (\textit{Viśeṣaṇa}) of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[42.] \textit{The Cultural Heritage of India}, Vol.-I, p. 380
\item[43.] CU, 7.1.4-5 - 7.14.2; BSS, 3.3.9
\item[44.] mahātmanaścaturō deva ekaḥ \textit{CU}, 4.3.1-8
\item[45.] Ibid, 1.1.1
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Aum (visesya). The Aum is resided on *Udgītha-bhakti* i.e. a particular section of the *sāma*-songs, where it is symbolised for it. Aum is reduced by attributing *Udgītha* and therefore it is a kind of *sāmpad-upāsanā*. The *Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* also delineated this type of *Upāsanā* in the legend of Gārgya-Ajātaśatru.\(^{46}\)

**Brahmopāsanā**

In *Brahmopāsanā*, Brahman alone is meditated upon by attributing different qualities and hence it is *Saguṇa* to the full extent. Here, the main theme of contemplation is the qualified personal God or qualified Brahman. These attributes are not attached to Brahman in real sense, but for *Upāsanā* they are necessary as mere suggestions (*Upādhi*) on Brahman. In the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, when it is said that the *puruṣa* (person) dwelling in the eyes (*aksipuruṣa*) is identical with the *Hiraṇmayah Puruṣah*, which resided in the region of the sun, then through this, Brahman alone is conveyed directly.\(^{47}\) According to Śaṅkarācārya, though basically Brahman is completely incomprehensible, indescribable, absolute principle, but with reference to *Upāsanā* for the help of devotees, it is qualified with certain names and forms through his will or

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46. BU, 2.1.6 - 13; 2.1.2 - 5

47. CU, 1.6.6; 1.7.5; 8.14.1; 8.3.3
Maya. These limited powers are only for facilitating in contemplation. Here he has referred to a beautiful verse, “O Nārada, this Maya or nescience is created by me, for which you have seen me as such, endowed with all qualities, otherwise, you will never know me”.

The direct meditation on Brahman through Gāyatrī also come under the class of Brahmopāsanā. It should be mentioned that Gāyatrī is one of the Vedic metres, having 24 syllables all total in the four pādas (lines). This metre is highly significant among the Rgvedic hymns and regarded as the mother of all the metres. Here Gāyatrī is the indicator or laksaka of Brahman. Through this, Brahman is to be worshipped directly.

From another point of view, according to the final results, the Upāsanās are sometimes divided under the three heads: (a) Firstly which are connected with sacrifices lead to the greater fulfillment of desires, (b) Secondly which are not related to sacrifices, proceed in the way of attaining results as heaven or other enjoyable objects i.e. abhyudaya-sādhana. (c) Lastly Upāsanās associated with Saguna Brahman which

48. BSS, 1.1.20
49. Cf. parameśvarasyāpi-icchāvaśanmāyāmayāṁ rūpaṁ sādhakānu-grahārtham, māyā hyeṣā mayā srṣṭā yanmāṁ paṣyasi nārada/ sarvabhuṭagūnąairyuktāṁ maivaṁ māṁ jñātumarhasi/ BSS, 1.1.20
50. CU, 3.12; BS, 1.1.25
51. BG, 10.35
lead to the path of *kramamukti* or gradual liberation. In this way, *Upāsanā* can be both *sakāma* or endowed with worldly desires and *niṣkāma* or desireless. From the desireless *Upāsanās*, the purification of *citta* or intellect is attained, which helps indirectly to acquire *mokṣa* or liberation. Therefore, it is higher than the previous one. Some Vedāntins also recognised the worship of *Nirguṇa Brahman*. In the *Praśnopaṇiṣad* also, we find that one who has contemplated upon the entire three *mātrās* (elements) of *auṃ*, he can attain the Supreme person or *paramapuruṣa*.\(^{52}\)

Here, the *Upāsanā* of *Nirguṇa Brahman* has been announced. The *Brahmaṣūtra* also recognised this type of *Upāsanā*.\(^{53}\) But most of the scholars do not agree on the point that the *Nirguṇa Brahman* can also be worshipped.

**Other Types of *Upāsanā***

There are also some other kind of *Upāsanās* which are frequently referred to in various Upaniṣadic texts. Among them we may refer to the *ahamgraha* *Upāsanā* or meditation based on identification of the self with *Brahman*. In this kind of *Upāsanā*, *Brahman* is worshipped as *aham* or the *jīvātmā* (individual self) and *aham* too is worshipped as

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52. *trimātreṇa, aumityetenaiva akṣareṇa, panaḥ puruṣamabhidhyāyīta*

53. *BS, 3.3.33; 3.3.11*
Brahman\textsuperscript{54}. In the Chandogya Upanishad, it is stated that within one’s own heart, this Brahman is worshipped through the ultimate identity of jīva and Brahman.\textsuperscript{55} Again, when everything is reduced into Virāt and there is no difference between the food and eater of food (effect and cause), then one finds oneself identical with the non-dual Virāt. Thus everything is ultimately united with the Self in this Upāsanā.\textsuperscript{56}

There are also two other types of Upāsanās found in the Upaniṣads. These are Adhyātma Upāsanā and Adhidvaita Upāsanā. The Adhyātma Upāsanās are subject of the body, because they deal with the elements or parts of it. As in the Chandogya Upanishad, speech is regarded as the ṛk or Ṛgvedic hymns and smell as the sāma, beginning with the words - atha adhyātman, (Now is Adhyātma).\textsuperscript{57} Again when it deals with the gods or their natures, then it is called Adhidvaita Upāsanā. For example the ṛk as the earth and the sāma as fire are delineated in - iti adhidvaitam (It is Adhidvaita or the nature of the deities).\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{54} tvam vā ahamasmī bhagavo devate, aham vā tvamasi BSS, 3.3.37
\textsuperscript{55} CU, 3.12.9
\textsuperscript{56} sarvamasyedaṁ dṛṣṭaṁ bhavatyannādo bhavati ya evāṁ veda ya evāṁ veda CU, 4.3.8
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, 1.7.1
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 1.6.1-8
Some Upāsanās bear a greater significance through association with the life of a human being or the world around us. There are also various Upāsanās prescribed for people belonging to different āśramas or stages of life. Thus, we may refer to the Pañcāgni-vidyā or the meditation of five fires. The whole world of subtle and gross things are adjoined in a cosmic sacrifice of five fires which is known as Pañcāgni-vidyā. Here at first through analogy the heavenly region is identified with Agni i.e. the sacrificial fire, where the sun itself is the fuel. It is the greatest of the fires in which the faith is offered by the gods as the oblation and from this, the moon (soma) comes forth. Secondly, the rain-god (parjanya) is the sacrificial fire where the libation of soma is offered, from which the rain is produced. Rains pour on earth, the third fire and as a consequence, food comes into existence. Food then is offered to man, the fourth fire, from whom the seed is arised. Lastly, the wife is regarded as the fifth fire, from whom another emergence of life is witnessed at childbirth. In this way, the Pañcāgni-vidyā is ultimately associated with the processes of birth and death of a human being. Thus from the sacrificial fires (Agni) alone, the life comes into existence and at the time of death or destruction, it again merges into the fires as a funeral rite, from where it arises. This Pañcāgni-

59. Ibid, 5.4-10; BU, 6.2
vidyā is basically provided for the house holders. Through this Upāsanā, they proceed into the path of the gods i.e. devaṅañah60 and successively attain the Brahmaloka or the world of Brahma.

The students i.e. Brahmacārins also have their particular Upāsanās, as we have found in the Taittirīyopaniṣad with reference to the saṁhitā-upaniṣadam. Here the five factors i.e. adhiloka (earth etc), adhiyautiṣa (illuminating objects like fire etc.), adhiprāja (child) and adhyātma (body etc) are described as being involved in conjunction with the syllables of the Vedic verses. Hence the students must meditate on these syllables rather than announcing them mechanically. This Upāsanā is called Mahāsaṁhitā.61

Again, in the Śaṇḍilya-vidyā also, it is advised to do penance or austerity with a tranquilled heart (śānta upāsita)62 as for everything is transcended by Brahman and hence there is no room for any earthly enjoyments or desires. These are only false satisfactions, not-enduring and always connected with imperfections. Hence, Brahman is the sole reality that dwells in the cavity of heart.63 It is stated that “The highest Upāsanā

60. CU, 5.10.1-2; KU, 1.3.1; BU, 6.2.9-13
61. tā mahāsaṁhitā ityācakṣate TU, 1.3.1-6
62. CU, 3.14.1
63. Ibid, 3.14.4

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is given in the Śāndilya-vidyā, where Brahman is presented as identified with everything that is good, noble and beautiful; and the meditator then thinks himself to be no other than Brahman thus qualified.64

Again we find how the concept of life becomes co-related with Upāsanā in the third chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad. This whole concept is presented on the model of Agniṣṭoma Soma-sacrifice with three savanas. Here a man is pronounced as the sacrifice, with three periods like the savanas.65 Hence the first savana as found in the Agniṣṭoma, is compared with the first 24 years of a man's life, which is named as prātaḥ-savana. It is presided over by the Aṣṭavasus, filled with fresh energy. In the middle portion, it is presided over by the Rudras who are a symbol of cruelty. Therefore man in that state, sometimes becomes the cause of suffering for his ownself and for the other. Hence man should be extremely judicious in this state. After that, in the third half or old-age, the life is presided over by the Ādityas, taking everything. In this way, man should worship all those presiding deities in sacrifice, so that this life expands to its full extent. According to this, a full life span is regarded as having 116 years (24 + 44 + 48) in total, which is quite a long life only to live well.

64. The Cultural Heritage of India, P. 385
65. CU, 3.16.1-7
Upāsanā and Bhakti

According to the scholars, there is not much difference between Upāsanā and Bhakti or devotion. In one sense, Bhakti can be called as a particular category of Upāsanā. In the Upaniṣads, Upāsanā is used and performed in a more broad sense than Bhakti. It includes worships of any kind, be it a Brahmpāsanā i.e. connected with Brahman alone or connected with things, symbols, sentences, names etc. other than Brahman. But in Bhakti, we can get reference of only Brahman or some personal God or Goddesses. Bhakti is not assigned to any kind of objects other than God. Therefore, from the point of subject-matter, Upāsanā is much wider than Bhakti.

In spite of this, it is found that in Upāsanā, there is many elements of devotion. Because it is often generated by the eagerness and desire of the mind to get united with the object of worship. Thus in the Upaniṣads, we find the analogy of the union of a couple who become lost to everything within and without embracing each other.66 In the same way with the realisation of identity of the individual self with the Supreme Self i.e. Ātman everything is realised with no thought of differentiation. This is the state of abhaya i.e. fearless form of the Self or Ātman in the individual

66. BU, 4.3.21
heart, where one's satisfaction is full or complete. *Brahman* is indeed worshipped for it is the cause of pure bliss or *ānanda*. The individual self or *jīva* becomes delighted by receiving this Bliss only, *rasaṁ hyevaṁ lavdhānandī bhavati*. Thus like *Bhakti*, in *Upāsanā* also, faith and attachment are necessary, sometimes for a personal God or for the Supreme person. Most importantly, in both cases, the significance of logic or reasoning is very poor.

There are also some devotional *Upāsanās* connected with personal or impersonal God. For example, in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, Rudra or Śiva is worshipped for peace and prosperity; who is pure, bestower of ultimate bliss and endowed with auspicious attributes. Again the *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* declares - 'Lead me from evil to truth, from darkness (of ignorance) to light (of knowledge), from death to immortality.' The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* also used the term *Bhakti* in its common sense.

The instruction for *japa* or a method of doing meditation by uttering the names of personal God or a *mantra* i.e. hymn continuously for

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67. TU, 2.7, 3.6; CU, 4.10.4  
68. SU, 3.5-6  
69. BU, 1.3.28  
70. yasya deve parā bhaktih ŚU, 6.23 ; BG, 18.54
several times is also met with in some Upaniṣads.\textsuperscript{71} By the grace of \textit{Brahman} alone, one can attain it\textsuperscript{72}, as it is conveyed in \textit{devaprasādācca}\textsuperscript{73}, (through the grace of God). But this grace can be attained only through constant meditation being detached from worldly pleasures and selfish desires.\textsuperscript{74} All the elements of \textit{Bhakti} such as love, devotion, faith etc. are available in the Upāsanās too.

\textsuperscript{71} BU, 1.3.28; 6.3.6
\textsuperscript{72} KU, 1.2.23
\textsuperscript{73} ŚU, 6.21
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, 3.20