CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

Vedic Tradition

The cultural heritage of India is enshrined in the Vedas. The Hindus trace the original source of their cultural life to the Vedas. All orthodox schools of Indian Philosophy recognize the authority of the Vedas.

The word *veda* literally means knowledge, the knowledge par excellence. The term *veda* is derived from the root *vid* which bears the meanings – (i) *vid* (jñāne) to know, (ii) *vid* (viśaraṇe) to think about, (iii) *vid* (sattāyāṃ) to exit, (iv) *vid* (labhe) to obtain, (v) *vid* (to feel, to declare, to dwell).\(^1\) Dayānanda Sarasvati explains the word *veda* as the work by which man reaches true knowledge, that work by the study of which one becomes learned, that work, that helps to attain knowledge, that work, that sets man to think about knowledge.\(^2\)

Śāyaṇācarya has defined *Veda* in the very beginning of his commentary on the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* as ‘the book which reveals the knowledge of supernatural methods for the achievement of the desired object and avoidance of

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1. satyāyāṃ vidyate jñāne vetti vinte viśaraṇe/ vindate vindati prāptau syanluksnasmesvidam kramāt // Giridhar Sarma, Paramesvarananda Sarma (ed.), *Vaiyākaraṇapāsiddhiṇantakaumudi* (Part III, p. 399
2. vindati jānanti vidyante bhavanti vindanti vindante labhante vindante viśaraṇyanti sarve manusvāḥ sarvāḥ satyāvidyāḥ yaitreṣu vā tathāvidvāṁśaśca bhavanti te vedāḥ / Svāmi Sampurnāṇḍa Saraswati (ed.), *Rgvedadhāsyaḥabhūmiḥ*, p. 35
the undesirable. This knowledge has been handed down from generation to
generation by the verbal transmission which got compiled about 1500 B.C.4

The Vedic literature comprises four Vedas, viz. the Rgveda, the Sāmaveda,
the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. Each of the four Vedas consists of its own
Saṁhitā, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka and Upaniṣad literature. The Saṁhitās are the
collection of hymns, prayers etc. There are four principal Saṁhitās, viz. the
Rgveda Saṁhitā, the Sāmaveda Saṁhitā, the Yajurveda Saṁhitā comprising the
Taittirīya Saṁhitā or the Black Yajurveda and the Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā or the
White Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda Saṁhitā. Besides there are three other
Saṁhitās, viz. the Kaṭhaka, the Kapisthalakatha and the Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitās of
the Black Yajurveda. Of these Saṁhitās the Rgveda Saṁhitā is the earliest one.
The Sāmaveda Saṁhitā consists of stanzas taken (excepting only 75) entirely
from the Rgveda Saṁhitā which were meant to be sung to certain fixed melodies.
The Yajurveda Saṁhitā consists of in addition to the verses taken from the
Rgveda, many original prose formulas. The verses of the Yajurveda were
employed in various religious sacrifices. The Atharvaveda is considered as the late
addition to the Vedas and contains many mantras of the Rgveda. Swami
Sharvananda remarks,5 “The very word trayī which is commonly used to signify

3. īstapāpyanistaparīhārayorolaukikam upayaṁ yo grantho vedayati sa vedah / Aitareya
   brāhmaṇabhāṣyabyahūnīkā
5. Swami Sharvananda, The Vedas and their Religious Teachings, Cultural Heritage of
the Vedic scriptures, denotes that originally the Vedas were only three in number and that the *Atharvaveda* was a latter addition.”

The Brāhmaṇas deal with the sacrificial rites and ceremonies. After the Saṁhitās, the Brahmanas grew up as theological treatises. These are written in prose which explain the sacred significance of different rituals to those who are not familiar with them. Each of the Vedas contain one or more Brāhmaṇas. The *Rgveda* possesses two Brahmanas, viz. the *Aitareya* and the *Kauśitaki* or *Sāṅkhya-yāyana*. The *Sāmaveda* possesses the *Tāṇḍya* or *Pancaviṁsa*, the *Ṣadviṁsa* which includes *Adbhūta*, *Jaiminīya* or *Talavakāra*, *Satyāyana*, *Ārṣeya* and *Vaṁsya*. The Black *Yajurveda* has the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. The White *Yajurveda* possesses the *Ṣatapatha* in two recensions, viz. the *Kāṇva* and the *Madhyandina*. The *Atharvaveda* has the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* only.

The Āranyakas are forest treatises. These works contain esoteric doctrines. As a further development of the Brāhmaṇas the Āranyakas were composed for old men who had retired into the forest. The Upaniṣads form the closing part of the *Veda* and thereby they are called *Vedānta* or because they contain the highest and ultimate goal of the *Veda* as they deal with the doctrine of Self and Supreme Bliss.

The expression Vedānta is significant in the sense that the teaching of the Upaniṣads represents the aim or goal of the *Veda*. The Sanskrit word *anta* like the English ‘end’ may be used to mean both ‘terminus’ and ‘aim’ or goal. Sadānandayati⁶ says that the term Vedānta signifies the Upaniṣads, the means of

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right knowledge (in respect of the Self), the Śrīrākaśūtra and other works (like Śrīmadbhagavadgītā) helpful in (understanding) them — vedānto

nāmopanisātapramāṇam tadupakārtiḥ Śārirakaśūtrādīṇi ca

Every system of Vedānta accepts its doctrine from the three texts (prasthānatraya), namely the Upaniṣads, the Brahmaṇa, and the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā. The Upaniṣads are Śruti, i.e. revelation while the Brahmaṇa and the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā are Smṛtis, i.e. tradition or human compositions embodying the meaning of the Śrūtis.

The Term Upaniṣad

The term Upaniṣad has been interpreted variously by the scholars. Apte7 explains, Upaniṣads are of certain mystical writings attached to the Brahmaṇas, the chief aim of which is to ascertain the secret meaning of the Vedas. Max Muller8 agrees in deriving Upaniṣad from the root sad, to sit down, preceded by the two prepositions ni, down and upa, near, so that it would express the idea of session or assembly of pupils sitting down near their teacher to listen to his instruction. In the Trikāṇḍaśeṣa, Upaniṣad is explained by sāmīpasadana, sitting down near a person. Further, Max Muller9 says, “The history and the genius of the Sanskrit language leave little doubt that Upaniṣad meant originally session,

7. Apte, Vaman Śivram. The Student’s Sanskrit English Dictionary, under the word upaniṣad
9. Ibid., p. XXI.
particularly a session consisting of pupils, assembled at a respectful distance round their teacher.”

The word *Upaniṣad* denotes secret doctrine, mystic knowledge or instruction, true knowledge regarding the Supreme Spirit, religious lore etc. The Sanskrit root *sad* indicates different meanings such as *viṣaraṇa* (destruction or annihilation) *gati* (going) and *avasādana* (loosing). The *Dhātupātha* of Paṇini¹⁰ states, *sad viṣaraṇagatyavasādanaṣu*. Śaṅkarācārya defining the word *Upaniṣad* states in his introduction to the *Katha Upaniṣad,* “Those seekers after liberation who being averse to things of the senses, whether here or hereafter, take up this knowledge and practise it with steadfast devotion, have their ignorance etc., which are the seeds of their transmigration, shattered or destroyed or it makes those aspirants attain the Supreme Brahman. The word *Upaniṣad* also means a doctrine that looses the bond of ignorance from the very root of the disciple who approaches the teacher.”¹¹

In the *Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣyabhinīmikā*, the meaning of the word *Upaniṣad* is explained thus by Śaṅkarācārya: *upaniṣaditi vidyocytat/ tatsevinaṁ garbhajanmajarūḍīnīstatrutodavasaṅdanadvā* brahmaṅo *vopaniṁgamayigameyitṛtvādupaniṣanṇāmagasyāṁ paramśreyā iti/tadarthatvād*

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¹¹ ye mumukṣavo......teṣāmavidyādeḥ samārṇājasya .....vidyopaniṣadityucyate/ Śaṅkara on *Kathopaniṣadbhāṣyabhinīmikā.*
granthopy upaniṣad, i.e. By the word Upaniṣad, knowledge alone is meant, since in the case of those who strive to acquire it, it enfeebles or destroys the stay in the womb, birth, old age etc., or since it takes one near Brahman, or since the highest good abides in it. The book itself is called the Upaniṣad since it serves the above purpose.

In the commentary of Taittirīya Upaniṣad Śaṅkarācārya again declares the purpose of Upaniṣad which states “param sreyōṣyaṁ niṣaṇṇam, i.e. the highest Bliss is contained in the Upaniṣad.\(^\text{12}\)

In the beginning of his commentary on Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Śaṅkarācārya declares the meaning of the term Upaniṣad majestically, seyaṁ brahmavidyopaniṣṭabdadvacyaṁ tatparanāṁ sahetoh samśārasya-tyantāvasādanaṁ / upanipūrvasya sadestadarthatvāt / ṭādarthyaḥ, grantho 'pyupaniṣaducyate / i.e. This knowledge of Brahman is called Upaniṣad because it entirely removes this relative world together with its cause from those who have taken themselves to this study for the root sad prefixed by upa ni. Books are also called Upaniṣads as they have the same end in view.

Śaṁyānacārya\(^\text{13}\) in his commentary on the Taittirīya Āranyaka states that this Upaniṣad is secret knowledge. Highest Bliss is contained here. It is the derivation of the Upaniṣad.sa copaniṣadrahasya vidyā upaniṣāṇyangamasyaṁ param śreyā iti vyutpatteḥ /

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12. Śaṅkara on T.U., 2.9
13. Śaṁyāna on T.A., 8.2
The second and third Vallī of the Taittirīya Upanīṣad end with the word ityupanisat. It denotes secret import. In many upanīṣads the terms rahasya and guhya are used as synonyms of Upanīṣad.\textsuperscript{14}

According to Paul Deussen, the word Upanīṣad conveys the sense of secret sign, then the secret word, secret import, secret formula and secret instruction. He states, "Less easy is it at first sight to understand how the word Upanīṣad has come to signify secret meaning, secret instruction, a secret. For Upanīṣad derived as a substantive from the root sad, to sit, can only denote a 'sitting', and as the preposition upa (nearby) indicates, in contrast to parisad, saṁsad (assembly) a "confidential secret sitting", we must assume, even if actual proof is wanting that this name for 'secret sitting' was used also in course of time to denote the "purpose of this sitting", i.e. "secret instruction".\textsuperscript{15}

Another explanation to the word Upanīṣad as upāsanā is found being presented by Paul Deussen giving its patronage to Oldenberg.

"Another explanation of the word Upanīṣad has been recently put forward by Oldenberg according to which Upanīṣad, precisely as upāsanā, would have originally meant 'adoration', i.e. reverential meditation on the Brahman or Ātman."\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} iti rahasyam / Nṛsiṁha U., 8 Cf. C.U., 3.5.2; K.U., 1.3.17; Sv.U., 5.6
\textsuperscript{15} Paul Deussen. \textit{The Philosophy of the Upanishad}, p. 12
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., pp. 12-13
The explanation is objected by Deussen and he observes thus: “The suggestion deserves attention, but is open to the following objections (i) The word ‘upa + as’ ‘to sit’ before someone or something (in adoration),’ and ‘upa+ sad’ (upa + ni + sad) does not occur in the Upaniṣads’ to sit oneself before some one (for the purpose of instruction) are according to prevailing usage, to be carefully distinguished from one another. Even if in the older texts the linguistic usage was not rigorously fixed, yet in the Upaniṣads (at a glance at Jacob’s concordance proves), upa + as is always to worship’ never ‘to approach for instruction’ and upa + sad always to approach for instruction, never to worship; and the reason for forming the substantive Upaniṣad not from upa + sad, but from the rarer upa + ni + sad, was perhaps merely that the substantive Upaniṣad had been already adopted as the name of a well-known ceremony preliminary to the Soma sacrifice. (ii) Even if mention is frequently made of worship of Brahmā or the Ṛta, especially under a definite symbol (as manas, prāṇa etc.) yet, strictly speaking the Ṛta is not like the gods an object of worship, but an object of knowledge.”

Appraisal of Upaniṣads

The Upaniṣads are highly appreciated by the scholars. The Spanish writer Mascaro described the Upaniṣads as the Himalayas of the soul. In this respect P.

17. Ibid., pp. 12-13
Nagaraja Rao remarks, “Just as that great mountain height determines the climate, the rainfall and the physical features of the peninsula, so do these heights of light and wisdom determine the scope and the quality of the spiritual life of the race that inhabits it.”

Schopenhauer, the German Pessimist philosopher in the middle of the nineteenth century, had influenced the whole Europe as well as India. Max Mullar quotes the view of Schopenhauer thus, “In the whole world there is no study beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upaniṣads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death.”

Jawaharlal Nehru quotes the same context in his book The Discovery of India as follows:

“In the whole world there is no study beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upaniṣads. (They) are products of the highest wisdom. It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people. And again “The study of the Upaniṣads has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death.”

According to Max Muller the Upaniṣads are “like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains – so simple, so true, if once understood.”

Max Muller declares openly, “My real love for Sanskrit Literature was first

19. P. Nagaraja Rao, Introduction to Vedānta, p. 46
21. Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India, pp. 92-93
22. Vide T.M.P. Mahadevan (trans), Ibid., p. xxx
kindled by the Upaniṣads. It was in the year 1844, when attending Schelling’s lectures at Berlin, that my attention was drawn to those ancient theosophic treatises, and I still possess my collections of the Sanskrit MSS, which had then just arrived at Berlin, the Chambers collection, and my copies of commentaries, and commentaries on commentaries, which I made at that time.”

Swami Vivekananda24 states, “The Upaniṣads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world. The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them. They would call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds, all sects, to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upaniṣads.”

Paul Deussen25 asserts that the Upaniṣadic thought possesses “a significance reaching far beyond the Upaniṣads, their time and country may, we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind.” Deussen26 also exhorts, “Undoubtedly according to Schopenhauer’s great teaching, the will and not the intellect forms the core of man; equally undoubtedly, the preference of Christianity is for the promotion of the rebirth of the will, which is the really central and the essential one. But at the same time, there is no doubt that the man is not mere will but is also, at the same time, intellect. Therefore, that Christian

25. Paul Deussen, The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, p. 39
rebirth of the will can be surely demonstrated, on the otherside, as the rebirth of knowledge, just as the Upaniṣads teach it."

R.E. Hume\textsuperscript{27} states that the Upaniṣads are of great present day importance. R.D. Ranade\textsuperscript{28} holds "It will not be possible hurriedly to estimate the contribution which the Upaniṣads are likely to make to the formation of tendencies in contemporary thought." Reading the central theme of all the Upaniṣads in the opening verse of the Ṛṣa Upaniṣad, Mahatma Gandhi\textsuperscript{29} declared, "I have now come to the final conclusion that if all the Upaniṣads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to asses and if only the first verse in the Ṛṣopaniṣad were left intact in the memory of the Hindus, Hinduism would live forever." Swami Ranganathananda\textsuperscript{30} says that the Upaniṣadic truths are universal and perennial and will always inspire humanity. Today, the opportunity has come through modern means of communication, modern methods of transmitting ideas, to effect the widest diffusion of this immense fund of inspiration.

**Age of the Upaniṣads**

It is difficult to ascertain the exact date of the Upaniṣads. Modern scholars generally agree that the ancient prose Upaniṣads, *Aitareya, Kauśitaki, Chandogya,*

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} R.E. Hume, The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads,
\item \textsuperscript{29} Mahatma Gandhi (ed.), *Harijan,* March. 2, 1940, p. 23
\item \textsuperscript{30} Swami Ranganathananda, *The message of the Upaniṣads,* p. 7
\end{itemize}
Kena, Taittiriya and Brhadāranyaka, together with Isa and Kaṭha belong to eight and seventh centuries B.C. Max Muller holds that "the ancient Upaniṣads, i.e. those which occupy a place in the Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, and Āraṇyakas, must be, if we follow the chronology which at present is commonly thought, it may be, provisionally only, received by Sanskrit scholars, older than 600 B.C., i.e. anterior to the rise of Buddhism." Hume also fixes the age of Upaniṣads by 600 B.C. just prior to the rise of Buddhism. Keith also fixes the date of the older Upaniṣads before the advent of Lord Buddha, i.e. 500 B.C., S.N. Dasgupta points out that the Upaniṣads were compiled by 500 B.C. and they continued to be written even so late as the spread of Mohommadan influence in India. According to R.D. Ranade the upper limit of the period of the Upaniṣads is 1200 B.C. and lower limit is 600 B.C. Jawaharlal Nehru observes that they were compiled by 800 B.C.

Number of the Upaniṣads

The Upaniṣads are the monuments of the ages. It is very difficult to ascertain the exact number of the Upaniṣads which goes to exceed two hundred and more. The Upaniṣadic literature has continued to be composed from time to

33. R.E. Hume, Ibid., p. 6
34. A.B. Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, p. 50
time till the recent period. The *Pīṇḍa Brahmanda Upaniṣad* is considered to be composed in 20th century by Swami Keshavananda. The *Āllopaniṣad* was composed during Akbar’s reign.

The *Muktika Upaniṣad*\(^{38}\) gives a list of one hundred and eight Upaniṣads in the following order.

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38. Muktika. U., 1.30-39
Pañcabrahma, Prānāgnihotra, Gopālatapana, Kṛṣṇa, Yajñavalkya, Vaṛaha, Satyayani, Hayagrīva, Daśātreya, Garuda, Kalisanṭaraṇa, Jabali, Saubhāgyalakṣmi, Sarasvati rahasya, Bahvṛca and Muktika. For the sake of metre some of the titles in this list are given in an abridged form.

The Upaniṣads are included into the four Vedas and thus the Upaniṣads belonging to the Rgveda are Aitareya, Kauśitaki, Nādabindu, Ātmaprabodha, Nirvāṇa, Mudgala, Aksānālikā, Tripura, Saubhāgya and Bahvṛca. The Upaniṣads belonging to the Samaveda are Kena, Chandogya, Aruni, Maitreyani, Maitreyī, Vajrasucikā, Yogacūdāmani, Vasudeva, Mahat, Sannvāsa, Vajra, Kundikā, Savitri, Rudrakṣajābala, Darśana and Jabali. The Upaniṣads belonging to the Śuklayajurveda are Īśavasya, Brhadāraṇyaka, Jabāla, Haṁsa, Paramahāṁsa, Subala, Mantrikā, Nirālamba, Trīśikhibrahmaṇa, Maṇḍalabrahmaṇa, Advyatāraka, Paingala, Bhikṣu. Turīyatītī, Adhyātma, Tārāsara, Yajñavalkya, Satyayani and Muktika. The Upaniṣads belonging to the Kṛṣṇayajurveda are Kāṭha, Taittirīya, Brahma, Kaivalya, Śvetāśvatara, Garbha, Nārāyaṇa, Amṛtaśīrṣa, Amṛtāśīrṣa, Kalāṅgirudra, Kṣurikā, Sarvasāra, Śukarahasya, Tejobindu, Dhyānabindu, Brahmagīḍā, Yogatattva, Daksinamurti, Skanda, Śāriraka, Yogāsikā, Ekākāśa, Aksi, Avadhūta, Kāṭharudra, Hydāya, Yogakundalini, Pañcabrahma, Prānāgnihotra, Vaṛaha, Kalisanṭaraṇa and Sarasvati rahasya. The Upaniṣads belonging to the Atharvaveda are Prāśna.

The Upaniṣads are also broadly classified into two broad divisions, viz. principal or major Upaniṣads and minor Upaniṣads.

(i) Principal Upaniṣads

The Principal Upaniṣads are accepted as those which Śaṅkarācārya, the great commentator of the Prasthānatraya chose to comment upon. They are ten in number and collectively designated as ‘Ten Principal Upaniṣads’. They are enumerated as follows:

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\text{īśakenakathaprasnānamundakamāṇḍūkya tittirih} / \\
tattareyam ca chāndogyam ca brhadāranyakaṁ tatha
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According to some scholars Śaṅkarācārya also commented on an eleventh Upaniṣad, the Śvetāsvatara. In his great commentary on the Brahmaśūtra he refers to four more Upaniṣads namely Kauśītaki, Jābala, Mahānārāyaṇa and Paingala. The Kauśītaki Upaniṣad is also stated to have commented by

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40. Muktika U., 1.30-39
41. The text of the Upaniṣad was printed by Dr. Roer in the Bibliotheca Indica with Śaṅkara’s commentary. F. Max Muller, The Sacred Books of the East, Vol. I, Part II. Introduction, p. xiii
Śaṅkaṇaṭārya. Max Muller\(^{42}\) gives certain hints on this aspect and he himself refutes the same stating that of Śaṅkarāṇanda and not of Śaṅkaṇaṭārya.

(ii) Minor Upaniṣads

The Upaniṣads which are not commented by Śaṅkaṇaṭārya are called minor Upaniṣad. These Upaniṣads though called minor with a view to distinguishing them from the ten well-known Upaniṣads commented by Śaṅkaṇaṭārya, are nonetheless very valuable. Out of 108 Upaniṣads cited in the Muktikopanisad ten only are principal, viz. Ṛṣa, Kena, Katha, Praśna, Mundaka, Maṇḍūkya, Taıtārīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya and Brhadāraṇyaka and the rest ninety-eight are called minor Upaniṣads. These minor Upaniṣads also reflect cultural heritage of India as well as philosophical and spiritual messages. Paul Deussen\(^{43}\) enumerates the Upaniṣads of the Atharvaveda into five fold classification.

(i) Pure Vedānta Upaniṣads

These Upaniṣads remain faithful to the old Vedānta doctrine which are as follows:

Mundaka, Praśna, Maṇḍūkya (with the Karikā) Garbhā, Prāṇāgniḥotra,

Piṇḍa, Ātma, Sarvopaniṣatsāra and Guruḍa.

\(^{42}\) The style of the commentator differs in so marked a manner from that of Śaṅkaṇaṭārya that even without the fact that the author of the commentary on the Kauśitaki Upaniṣad is called Śaṅkarāṇanda, Ibid., Vol. I, p. C

\(^{43}\) Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, pp. 8-9
(ii) Yoga Upanisads

The Upanisads from the standpoint of the Vedanta treat predominantly and exclusively of the apprehension of the Atman through Yoga by means of the moral of the syllable, Om. They are – Brahmadīya, Kṣurikā, Culikā, Nādabindu, Brahmabindu, Amrītabindu, Dhīyanabindu, Tejobindu, Śikhā, Yogatattva, Hāmsa.

(iii) Sannyāsa Upanisads

These texts are equally one-sided and enjoin and describe the life of the Sannyāsin, as the practical issue of Upanisad teaching. These are: Brahma, Sannyāsa, Āruṇeya, Kanīthaśruti, Paramahamsa, Ṣabala, Āṣrama.

(iv) Śiva Upanisads

These Upanisads interpret the popularly worshipped Śiva (Īśāna, Maheśvara, Mahādeva etc.) as a personification of Ātman. They are – Atharvaśiras, Atharvaśīkhā, Nīlarudra, Kaṅgirudra, Kaivalya.

(v) Viṣṇu Upanisads

These Upanisads explain Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa, Nṛsiṁha etc.) similarly in the sense of the Upaniṣadic teaching and regard his various avataras as impersonations of Ātman. They are – Mahānārāyaṇa, Ātmabodha, Nṛsiṁhapurvaṭapaniya, Nṛsiṁhottaraṭapaniya, Rāmapurvatapaniya, Rāmottaratapaniya.
The composition and growth of different Upaniṣads

The oldest Upaniṣads are composed in prose. Next, metrical Upaniṣads are written. “The oldest Upaniṣads” remarks S.N. Dasgupta⁴⁴ “are written in prose. Next to these we have some in verses very similar to those that are to be found in classical Sanskrit. As is easy to see, the older the Upaniṣad, the more archaic is it in its language. The earliest Upaniṣads have an almost mysterious forcefulness in their expressions at least to Indian ears. They are simple, pithy and penetrate to the heart. We can read and read them over again without getting tired. The lines are always as fresh as ever. As such they have a charm apart from the value of the ideas they intended to convey.”

Winternitz divides the Upaniṣads into four groups according to the time of their composition. In the first period he includes Brhadāraṇya, Chaṇḍogya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Kausitaki and Kena. In the second, he includes Kathaka. Ṣa, Śvetāṣvatara. Mundaka Mahāvīra and in the third period he includes Prāṇa, Maitrāyanī and Māndukya. The rest of the Upaniṣads are included in the fourth period.⁴⁵

R.E. Hume⁴⁶ has arranged the thirteen principal Upaniṣads in the following order. Brhadāraṇya, (2) Chaṇḍogya, (3) Taittirīya, (4) Aitareya,

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(5) Kauśītaki, (6) Kena, (7) Katha, (8) Ṣā, (9) Mundaka,

R.D. Ranade⁴⁷ has arranged the Upanisads in five groups which are as follows:

(i) Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya
(ii) Ṣā and Kena
(iii) Aitareya, Taittirīya and Kauśītaki
(iv) Katha, Mundaka and Śvetāsvatara,
(v) Praśna, Maitrī and Māṇḍukya.

Paul Deussen⁴⁸ has arranged the upaniṣads into four periods as follows-

(i) The Ancient Prose Upaniṣads

In this period Upaniṣads are composed in prose which are full of allegories. They are collectively the Vedānta texts of the existing Śakhaśas. The language is still almost entirely the ancient prose of the Brāhmaṇa as and the Āraṇyakas. The Upaniṣads composed in this period are:
(i) Brhadāranyaka, (2) Chāndogya, (3) Taittirīya, (4) Aitareya, (5) Kauśītaki and (6) Kena.

(ii) The Metrical Upaniṣads

The language of these Upaniṣads are throughout metrical. The difference between this period and the preceding one is very long. The connection with the Śakhaśas appears sometimes doubtful, sometimes artificial, and in any case is loose. The Upaniṣads belonging to this period are as follows:
(i) Katha, (ii) Ṣā, (iii) Śvetāsvatara, (iv) Mundaka and (v) Mahānārāyaṇa.

⁴⁸. Paul Dessen, The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, pp. 21-24
(iii) The later prose Upaniṣads

In this third period the Upaniṣads were composed in prose but the prose is markedly different from the archaic language of the ancient Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads belonging to this group are as follows:

(i) Praśna, (ii) Maitrāyaniya and (iii) Māndukya

(iv) The later Atharva Upaniṣads

The sectarian and minor Upaniṣads were composed in this period. These Upaniṣads concern partly with the continuous development of older themes, or refrain from deviating from the beaten tracks, partly turn its attention to glorification of the Yoga or of the Sannyāsa. They are: (i) Yoga Upaniṣads, (ii) Sannyāsa Upaniṣads, (iii) Śāṅkya Upaniṣads, (iv) Śaiva Upaniṣads, (v) Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣads, (vi) Śaṅkta and (iv) Minor sectarian Upaniṣads.

Ten Principal Upaniṣads at a glance

(1) The Īśā Upaniṣad

This Upaniṣad is the fortieth and the last chapter of the Vājasaneyī Samhitā of the Śukla Yajurveda and consists of eighteen verses only. Īśā or Īśavasya which is called after the first word of the first verse⁴⁹ is the central theme of all the Upaniṣads, namely, the spiritual unity and solidarity of all existence. This Upaniṣad goes to impart the knowledge of the Highest Self. Īśa is really the

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⁴⁹ Īśa vasyam idam sarvam yat kimca jagatyam jagat /
    tena tyaktena bhunjithā ma grdhah kasyasid dhanam // Īśa U., 1
Supreme. The very first verse says that Reality pervades everything. The world or *samsāra* is moving away but Brahman or *Īśa* abides even in this movement. The opening verse hints that nature of *Brahman* resides in *Ātman*. So one should do good to others. Though the *Īśa* is a very small *Upaniṣad*, it is a very famous and authentic one in the Vedāntic literature. Here one can notice the synthesis of action and knowledge. Knowledge without action is not fruitful and action without knowledge is meaningless. Spiritual aspiration and material prosperity should be well-balanced.

The fifteenth verse\(^{50}\) of the *Īśa Upaniṣad* declares a great and inspiring idea. In this verse the teacher has clearly pointed out that action must not delude one away from the path of truth. The spiritual experience is a process of uncovering. Truth has been covered over. There are veils after veils of manifestation which have covered the face of truth. Reality or Truth is covered over with a golden veil. The veil is golden because it attracts one not to uncover the veil. So, though Brahman is in front of one, one can not realize Him. When the veil of mind’s projections is removed then there shines the Brahman. “When the spirit or Brahman,” says Rohit Mehta\(^{51}\), is seen, does not every object of the manifested world shine with a new light? When the light of Reality shines then the quality of each object is revealed. And when this happens man cries out with great

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50. hiraṇmayena ātareṇa satyasāpihitam mukham /
       tvāṁ puṣṇapavṛtuḥ satyadharmaṁ drṣṭaye // Ibid., 15
51. Rohit Mehta, *The Call of the Upanishads*, p. 29
jubilation and says to himself – tenatyaktena bhunjīthā, mā grdhah kasyasvid dhanam, i.e. “Enjoy what is given unto you, do not covet the wealth of other.

(ii) The Kena Upaniṣad

The Kenopaniṣad is the ninth chapter of the Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa. Hence it is known as Talavakāropaniṣad. The first mantra of this Upaniṣad starts as kenesītaṁ patati…. and thus the name Kena is assigned to it. It is divided into four parts. The first two parts are in the form of questions and answers and the other two are presented as an akhyāyikā. The first two parts describe the nirguṇa or unqualified Brahman and other two parts describe the saguṇa or qualified Brahman.

Cordial relationship between the teacher and the pupil can be observed in this Upaniṣad. This Upaniṣad represents a deep inquiry into fundamental problems of existence. The teacher of the Kena Upaniṣad instructs the disciple to worship Brahman as He is Tadvanam52 because He is worshipped by all. The Kena Upaniṣad has been frequently published and translated by the Vedic scholars.

(iii) The Kaṭha Upaniṣad

The Kaṭha Upaniṣad belongs to the Kaṭha school of the Kṛṣṇayajurveda. The text is divided into two chapters with three sub-chapters each. Each of the sub-chapters is called Vallī. The discourse between Yama, an excellent teacher

52. Ke.U., 4.6
and Naciketas, a Brähmaṇa boy of tender age on the Ultimate Reality is the central theme of the *Upanisad*. It is the most widely known among the Upaniṣads. Its mystic philosophy and poetry attract both the scholars of the East and the West. Its teaching is profound and magnificent. The *Katha Upanisad* is a beautiful example of the cordial relationship of the teacher and the disciple. “The *Katha* holds” remarks Swami Ranganathananda,53 “a special fascination for all students of the Upaniṣads for its happy blend of charming poetry, deep mysticism, and profound philosophy, it contains a more unified exposition of *Vedānta* than any other single *Upanisad*, its charm is heightened by the two characters of its dialogue, namely, old Yama, the teacher and young Naciketa the student.”

The *Katha Upanisad* compares spiritual struggle to walking on the edge of a razor. It is obvious that the great teacher can teach about the Great Beyond who himself has known It. That is why exhorts the seeker of the truth, *uttisthata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata*,54 i.e. arise, awake, having approached the excellent teachers know the truth. The secret knowledge cannot be obtained through reasoning. The secret is communicated by the teacher to the pupil only in a state of communion.55 The teacher of the science of the Self is a wonderful person, i.e. *āśeṣṭa vaktā* and the seeker of the truth should be highly talented, i.e. *kuśalo 'syā labhathā*.56

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53. Swami Ranganathananda, *The Charm and Power of the Upaniṣads*, p. 6
54. K.U., 1.3.14
55. Ibid., 1.2.9
56. Ibid., 1.2.7
The teacher of the *Katha Upanishad* tells that there are two paths — “The good and one, the pleasant. These two, having different purposes, bind men. It is well with him who accepts the good; but he who chooses the pleasant falls away from the goal.”

The teacher of the *Katha Upanishad* sums up the whole teaching of the *Upanishad* by saying:

\[
yadā sarve pramucyante kamā ye ' sya hṛdi śrītāh / 
atha martyo 'mrto bhavatyatra brahma samaśnute //
\]

When all desires which cling to the heart are cast away, then the mortal becomes immortal. Here he attains Brahman. When all the bondages here of the heart break, then the mortal becomes immortal. This is the teaching. This is the philosophy of life and death.

(iv) The *Praśna Upanishad*

This *Upanishad* belongs to the Pippalada school of *Atharvaveda*. Pippalada is mentioned in the *Upanishad* as the principal teacher. According to Śaṅkaraśārya this *Upanishad* is intended for a detailed exposition of the *Mantra Upanishad*, i.e. *Mundaka* belonging to the *Atharvaveda*. In the beginning of the commentary on

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57. Ibid., 1.2.1
58. Ibid., 2.3.14
this *Upaniṣad* he says *mantroktasyārthasya vistaranuvadiddan brahmanamārabhyate*, i.e. This Brahmana is commenced to more fully repeating what has been declared in the *Mantra*. This *Upaniṣad* contains six sections in the form of six questions put to the great sage Pippalada by six disciples seeking knowledge of Brahman and the teacher’s answer to the questions. Because it consists of questions, the *Upaniṣad* is significantly called *Praśna Upaniṣad*. Once Sukeśa, son of Bharadvāja, Satyakāma, son of Śibi, Gārgya, grandson of Surya, Kausalya, son of Asvala, Bhārgava of the Vidarbha country and Kabandhi, son of Katya — these six who were devoted to Brahman and intent on Brahman approached the gifted teacher Pippalada in search of the Supreme Brahman with sacrificial fuel in their hands. The teacher asked the aspirants to stay with him for another one year under the required spiritual discipline in form of penance, austerity and devotion and allowed them to ask whatever questions they desired to put. He promised to answer them provided he had the requisite knowledge. In any serious inquiry, the formulation of a question is of utmost importance. The answer to a question depends upon how the question has been put. Pippalada knew that his disciples would be able to put questions on serious subjects but he was not sure whether they were capable of exploring the very process of questioning without which no deep understanding can ever come.

The source of all created beings, the nature of *prāṇa*, the Supreme Being, the nature of the power of the sound *Om* and the relation of the Supreme to the constituents of the world, these are the subjects dealt with in the *Praśna Upaniṣad*. 
From the Vedāntic point of view this Upaniṣad is very important and significant. Its scientific approach of Vedānta is glorified by Rohit Mehta59 as follows. “This scientific approach of Vedānta is nowhere seen clearly than in the Praśna Upaniṣad where the teacher and the student are engaged in a truly scientific inquiry into the nature of things. This Upaniṣad leads the inquirer from the known to the unknown, from the manifest to the unmanifest, from the grossly material to the supremely spiritual.”

(v) The Mundaka Upaniṣad

The Mundaka Upaniṣad belongs to the Atharvaveda. It consists of three chapters called muṇḍakas and each muṇḍaka is divided into two sections called khaṇḍas. It is a Mantra Upaniṣad, i.e. it has the form of a mantra. The mantras are not used for sacrificial purposes. Its only object is to teach the knowledge of Brahman which cannot be obtained either by sacrifices or by worship. The term muṇḍaka is derived from the root muṇḍ means to shave which implies that the knowledge received from this Upaniṣad is sufficient to shave off or clear of the ignorance totally. The teaching of the Upaniṣad are sharp like a razor, clearing the forests of the mind. Indeed it cut through the confusion of thought with a sharp razor, cleansing the inner dirt. The Upaniṣad is presented in the form of a discourse between Angiras, a teacher of great repute and learning and disciple

Saunaka, a householder. The *Mundaka Upanisad* begins with a question put by Saunaka to his teacher Angiras. The question is – *kasmin nu bhagavo viññāte sarvamidam viññātam bhavatiti* \(^{60}\), i.e. “What is that, revered Sir, which when known all is known?”

The teacher does not give a straight answer to this question. He only classifies all knowledge into Para and Apara, i.e. the higher and the lower. Of these the lower knowledge is the knowledge of the *Rgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, Phonetics, Ritual, Grammar, Etymology, Matrics and Astronomy and the higher knowledge is that by which the Imperishable is known.\(^{61}\)

By means of the higher knowledge the wise behold Brahman everywhere which otherwise cannot be seen nor seized, which is without origin and without qualities, which has no eyes, no ears, no hands, nor feet, which is eternal and omnipresent, all pervading and extremely subtle, which is imperishable and the source of all beings.\(^{62}\)

The *Mundakopanisad* describes Brahman as material and efficient cause of the creation. It states the phenomenal world as springing from the Supreme Reality. The nature of creation and the relation of the created world with the creator are highlighted in the following words.

As the spider sends forth and withdraws its web, as herbs grow on the earth,

\(^{60}\) M.U., 1.1.3  
\(^{61}\) Ibid., 1.1.5  
\(^{62}\) Ibid., 1.1.6
as hair grow from a living person, so the whole creation here arises form the Immutable.63

The teacher says that Brahman is the target, one’s Self indeed is the arrow. The praṇava, i.e. the syllable Om is the bow. It is to be hit by a man who is not thoughtlessness, and then as the arrow becomes one with the target, he will become one with Brahman.64

The teacher describes the nature of such a man who realizes Brahman.

bhidyate hṛdayagranthishchidyante sarvasamsāyah /
ksiyante cāsyā karnāṇi tasmindṛṣte parāvare //65

i.e. The knot of the heart is broken, all doubts are solved and his actions perish (with their effects) when Brahman has been realized both as immanent (lower) and transcendent (higher).

The teacher expresses the simultaneous experience of the immanent and transcendent in the following beautiful verse.

dvā suparnā sayujā sakāṅāya samānām vrksam parisasvajāte /
tayoranyah pippalaṁ svādvattyanasannanyo 'bhicakasiti //66

i.e. Two birds, ever united companions, cling to the self same tree. Of these two, one eats the sweet fruit, the other looks on without eating.

Though the above mentioned two birds appear as two, they are one, for

63. Ibid., 1.1.7
64. Ibid., 2.11.4
65. Ibid., 2.2.9
66. Ibid., 3.1.1
they are united and are known by the same name and they cling to the same tree. It is the simultaneous existence of the two. One bird eats and the other witnesses. The eating and the witnessing of the birds are simultaneous. Here one may notice the immanence and the transcendence existing together.

(vi) The *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad*

The *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Atharvaveda*. It is named probably after the teacher Māṇḍūka. The *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* consists of twelve passages. Though it is the shortest among the ten principal Upaniṣads yet, its teaching is very profound. It acquires very high reputation by the scholars.

There are karikās on this *Upaniṣad* by Gaudapāda, the grand teacher of Śāṅkaraśārya. Govindaśārya, the teacher of Śāṅkaraśārya was the disciple of Gaudapāda.

In the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad Pranava* or the mystic letter *Om* is glorified which states: All this is that syllable *Om*. Here is explanation of that. What has been, what is and what will be – all this is only the sound *OM* and what is beyond the threefold time all is *Om*.  

The *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* declares the infinite dimension of man in a pregnant voice *ayaññatmā*. i.e. this *Atman* is Brahman. This is one of the four great Upaniṣadic principal sentences (*mahāvākyas*).

68. Ibid., 2
The opening verse speaks of Brahman in time and Brahman beyond time and this is illustrated by the articulate and the inarticulate sound which is in the mystic syllable Om. If the sacred word Om is all and if Brahman too is all — then the word and Brahman are identical. The word is Brahman. Again the Maṇḍūkya Upaniṣad says that Atman is Brahman and so the word is indeed Atman. The articulate sound represents Atman in manifestation and the inarticulate sound represents Atman in unmanifestation.

The Maṇḍūkya Upaniṣad represents the psychological approach of Indian minds well. Rohit Mehta69 observes, "Now the Indian psychology took all the three factors of the subconscious, unconscious and the super conscious into consideration. And nowhere is the complete approach of Indian psychology seen so clearly as in the Maṇḍūkya Upaniṣad."

The teacher of the Maṇḍūkya Upaniṣad70 surveys the three states of consciousness, waking, dream and deep sleep. The first part is Vaisvānara who beholds the external objects. The second part, i.e. the dream state constitutes a different level of human consciousness. It is described as Taijas, meaning shining or bright. It beholds the internal objects. That state of consciousness is deep sleep, where one, being fast asleep, does not desire. It is the state of oneness which is described as Prajña. He is the lord of all; he is omniscient, he is the inner controller, he is the source of all he is the beginning and end of all beings.

70. Ma.U., 8-12
The individual soul should attempt to attain the state of *Turiya* by overcoming all other states, i.e. waking, dream and deep dream. By achievement of *Turiya* state, the individual Self can enjoy bliss and feel non-dual state.

(vii) The *Taittiriya Upanisad*

The *Taittiriya Upanisad* belongs to the Black *Yajurveda* which occupies an unrivalled place in the cultural heritage of India. The word *Taittiriya* is derived from the term *tittiri* which means ‘partridge’. There is an interesting story\(^\text{71}\) behind this name. Once Vaisampayana, the teacher of Yajñavalkya, incurred the sin of Brahminicide by failing to attend a council of the sages on the Mount Meru, where he was obliged to go by invitation. To get absolution from the sin, Vaisampayana requisitioned his disciples to perform the necessary expiation for him. Yajñavalkya volunteered to do all that was needed to be done, himself alone telling that his co-disciples are incompetent for that work. The teacher got annoyed with his proud disciple and asked him to give up the *Veda* committed to him. Yajñavalkya vomited out the mantras that he had acquired from his guru. This knowledge was very sacred, glorious and precious. So, it could not go in vain. According to the teacher’s advice, the other disciples temporarily transformed themselves into partridges and picked up the knowledge. Through this connection with the *tittiri* (partridge) birds, this section of the *Veda* is called *Taittiriya Yajñavalkya* was an exceptional person. He worshipped the Sun-god by

\(^{71}\) Mbh., 12.319; Vis. P., 3.5
whose grace he got the same Veda in different shape. The Veda that he acquired is Sukla, i.e. white.

The seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka constitute the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. These three chapters are respectively known under the titles Śikṣā Vallī, Brahmāṇḍa Vallī and Bhṛgu Vallī. The term Vallī is used to denote subdivision of a Vedic work, which is observed in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad also. Max Muller\textsuperscript{72} states, “The name of vallī, lit, creeper, as a subdivision of a Vedic work, is important. It occurs again in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. Professor Weber thinks that vallī, creeper, in the sense of chapter, is based on a modern metaphor and was primarily intended for a creeper, attached to the sākhās or branches of the Veda. More likely, however, it was used in the same sense as parvan, a joint, a shoot, a branch, i.e. a division.”

The Taittirīya Upaniṣad itself is not a single composition.\textsuperscript{73} Saṃyācārya in his commentary on the Sāmhitā Upaniṣad of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka says that the Taittirīya Upaniṣad is three fold the Sāmhitā, the Yajñīki and the Varūṇī.... Among these three, the Varūṇī is the most important – 

\textsuperscript{73} G. Gispert Sauch, S.J., \textit{Bliss in the Upaniṣads}, p. 23
mantrastattrāṇātā at astadrūpoṇaṇiṣad yajñīkī tāṣām tirṇām madhye vārūṇī mukhya tasyām paramapuruṣārthasya brahmaḥ maṇḍapī ṛṣṭiṣṭhānāya 

Most scholars opine that the Taittirīya Upaniṣad comes under the group of the older prose Upaniṣads, generally after the two famous Upaniṣads the Brhadaranyaka and the Chāndogya. G. Gispert Sauch remarks “But we know how uncertain is even the relative chronology of the Vedic works, and we must content ourselves with noting that even if the Taittirīya is later than the two great Upaniṣads, its preoccupations seem to be different from, and its content generally independent of the two previous works. It has a strikingly greater internal unity, its language is simple and apparently more disentangled from the ritualistic speculations of the older Upaniṣads.”

The Taittirīya Upaniṣad is comparatively short. It is hardly one-sixth of the size of the Brhadaranyaka Upaniṣad. But it is one of the most important Upaniṣads. There is tradition that Śaṅkarācārya wrote his commentary first on this Upaniṣad. In the Introduction of his commentary on the Taittirīya Upaniṣad he states that with the grace of his teacher, and for the benefit of those who prefer a clear exposition, he composes this explanation of this Upaniṣad that is the quintessence of that section of the Vedas called the Taittirīya.

74. Saṅyaṇa on T.A., 7.1
In south India the *Taittiriya Upanisad* is more popular than earlier portions of this branch of the *Veda*. Even today it is recited there with proper accent and intonation.

The *Taittiriya Upanisad* majestically proclaims that the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme — *brahmavidāpnoti param*\(^{76}\) reveals in brief Śaṅkara\(^{77}\) declares in his *Taittiriya Āranyakabhasya* that this is the essence of all Upaniṣads — *adau kṛṣṇopaniṣatśāram saimgrahaṇa śūtrayati om brahmavidāpnoti paramāni*

This Brahman is the inmost Self of all. But none is conscious of the fact because the Self is hidden under several layers, or sheaths, called kośas. According to the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* human personality is made up of five sheaths — the grossest or material, the vital, the psychical, the intellectual and the intuitive (the sheath of Bliss) — in the innermost core of which resides the Self of man, the Ātman, the source of Bliss. These sheaths are really levels of consciousness and arranged from gross to fine, one inside the other. The goal of life is to go beyond the levels and to reach the eternal Bliss. The main theme of the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* is *vāruṇī vidyā* or *anandavidyā*. Here Brahman is established as Bliss, i.e. *ānanda*. Here in the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* the term *ānanda* is used thirty seven times.

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76. T.U., 2.1
77. Śaṅkara on T.A., 8.1
times. The means of attaining that Bliss is the chief matter of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* also provides the two definitions of Brahman – *svaṛupalakṣaṇa* and *tātasthalakṣaṇa*. The *svaṛupalakṣaṇa* is described as *satyam* (Truth), *Jñānam* (Knowledge) and *anantam* (Infinity). The *tātasthalakṣaṇa* is provided in a scientific manner as “that from which all these beings are born, by which after being born, they live and into which they merge when they cease to be”.

The entire text of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* deals with the learning – teaching process. The Śikṣā Vallī highlights the *gurukul* system of education. The unique features of the Upaniṣadic education can be understood from the Śikṣā Vallī. Some moral principles are discussed in the convocation address, chief among them are *satya* (truthfulness) and *dharma* (righteousness). In his address, the teacher presents a sublime code of conduct for guidance of the student in his whole life. He encourages his student to keep up his studies for knowledge and wisdom. The teacher wants to build up his student as an integrated person with good moral character so that the society may sustain. The first chapter, i.e. the Śikṣā Vallī is essentially a treatise of the hermit school. The Śikṣā Vallī also praises the worship of *Om*, for *Om* is not only the symbol of Brahman, but it is equated with Brahman also. The mystic syllable *Om* is indeed Brahman. This Vallī recommends worship or *upāsanā* mentioned in the Vedas for self-realization.
(viii) The Aitareya Upaniṣad

The Aitareya Upaniṣad is part of the Aitareya Āranyaka of the Rgveda. It is also known as Bahvrcopanisad. It derives its name from the teacher Mahidāsa Aitareya, the son of Itarā. There are many legends about Mahidāsa, the reputed author of the Aitareya Brahmana and Aitareya Āranyaka. He is quoted several times as Mahidāsa Aitareya in the Āranyaka itself. This Upaniṣad is divided into three chapters. The first chapter contains three sections called khandas and the others contain only one each.

The Aitareya Upaniṣad deals with the Self as the sole primary reality and describes the process of creation. It tells that the first sign of life appeared in the waters. Modern science tells that life must have appeared on the earth first in waters.

The Aitareya Upaniṣad declares the three births of man. These three births of man refer to his journey from the Manifest to the Unmanifest. Here the three births are referred to as born in the seed of the father, in the womb of the mother and the body of the child, these three really constitute the states of consciousness – they are the jāgarita or the waking state, the svapna or the dream and susupti or the deep sleep. The deep sleep is a condition of wisdom, i.e. prajñāna as the Aitareya Upaniṣad declares. It establishes the spiritual character of the Absolute through the discussion of the nature of the Self of man and proclaims one of the four mahāvākyas prajñānam brahma, i.e. Brahman is wisdom or pure
consciousness.\(^78\) It teaches that through real knowledge or prajñāna, one gets away from the process of transmigration and attains immortality.

The \textit{Upaniṣad} highlights the two aspects of Brahman – Brahman in itself, i.e. the Brahman without attributes and Brahman in the universe, i.e. Brahman with attributes or Manifest. This \textit{Upaniṣad} gives a perfect analysis of the functions of the mind. The functioning set of the mind are enlisted as five, namely thought, awareness, continuity, imagination and intelligence. The mind has closed its door to the light of wisdom. When the intellect of man is illumined by the light of intelligence then it is that man sees Brahman in the universe. The \textit{Aitareya Upaniṣad} sums up its entire teaching in the concluding verse:

All this is guided by intelligence, is based on intelligence. The world is guided by intelligence. The basis is intelligence, Brahman is intelligence. Ascending upwards from this world by means of this intelligent Self, he (Vamadeva) enjoyed all desires in that world of heaven and became immortal.

(ix) The \textit{Chandogya Upaniṣad}

The \textit{Chandogya Upaniṣad} belongs to the \textit{Sāmaveda}. The last eight chapters of the \textit{Chandogyabrahmana} of the \textit{Sāmaveda} comprise the text of the \textit{Chandogya Upaniṣad}. The word \textit{Chandoga} means one who sings the \textit{Sāmaveda} and thus the name \textit{Chandogya Upaniṣad} is derived. It is a very long text and the second biggest among the principal Upaniṣads. The \textit{Chandogya Upaniṣad} introduces inquirers to

\(^{78}\) A.U., 3.1.3
earnest truth — seers like Narada, Satyaśāma, Śvetaketu, Indra etc., and outstanding spiritual teachers like Sanatkumāra, Uddālaka Āruṇī and Prajāpati. Through several illuminating teacher, student dialogues, the Chandogya Upaniṣad helps the inquirers to discriminate the reality of being from the appearance of becoming. It begins with the narration of the glories of the sacred word Om as Udgīthā which is the symbol of Brahman and sublimest manifestation of Brahman. The mystic syllable Om is the highest expression of Brahman. As all leaves are held together by a spike, so all speech is held together by Om.

Then the entire Śāmaveda is identified with the highest Reality. In the Chandogya Upaniṣad appears the famous Upaniṣadic statement tat tvam āsi — ‘That thou art’ in which the individual Self is identified with the Supreme Reality. It sings the glory of the divinity of man and prescribes a knowledge of this innate divinity of man as the one remedy for the deeper ills of life. tarati śokamātmavit, i.e. the knower of the Ātman crosses all sorrows.

In the Chandogya Upaniṣad one can easily notice the essential features of the gurukula system of education. Here one can see the fact that the education of ancient India was truly integrated. There are a large number of very interesting stories scattered throughout the text. The magnificent Upaniṣadic teachings about Brahman as transcending the phenomenal world are presented in these episodes. Narada approached Sanatkumāra because, inspite of his vast knowledge in various branches of sciences and humanities, he was unhappy. He wanted to know what

79. C.U., 6.9.4
happiness is. The outstanding teacher tells Narada: “When one is happy, one performs one’s duty, in sorrow one does not. It is in happiness, that one does and so one should understand what happiness is. That which is without any limitation is happiness – there is no happiness in the finite – the infinite (bhūma) alone is happiness.” Infinite alone is happiness – this is the culmination of the great teaching which Sanatkumāra imparted to Nārada. Finite is always perishable.

Śvetaketu received the teaching of the identity of the individual Self with the Supreme from his father Uddālaka Aruni. The whole of the sixth chapter of the Chandogya Upaniṣad consists of the teaching of Uddālaka to his son Śvetaketu and the teaching is known as Sadvidyā. The Chandogya Upaniṣad declares Nothing as the source of everything. In true sense Being without attributes is Nothing, i.e. Being without attributes for it is indefinable and indescribable. In the tiny seed of the banyan fruit there was Nothing – and yet that Nothing was the source of the vast banyan tree.

From the instances of Jāناسruti and Satyakāma, it can be assumed that the teacher of the Upaniṣadic age laid great emphasis on the simplicity of mind and purity of heart of the students. The story of Upakosala Kamalāyana is introduced to show that both faith (śraddhā) and austerity (tapas) are essential on the part of the student for achieving the highest knowledge. The admission of Satyakama to gurukula shows that the teacher of the Upaniṣad is truly catholic in temperament and free from social bias.

80. Ibid., 7.22.1; 7.23.1
(x) The *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*

The *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Satapathabrahmana* of the White *Yajurveda*. It is the greatest among Upaniṣads both in size and vision. This *Upaniṣad* belongs to both the branches of the said Veda namely the *Madhyandina* and *Kāṇya*. Śaṅkara affectionately accepted the latter and commented upon. It consists of six chapters and each chapter is divided into several sections (brahmanas). Śaṅkara gives an explanation to the significance of the name assigned to this text in the beginning of his commentary on the *Upaniṣad* thus —

\[
\text{seyāṁ sadadhyāyi aranyeye nucyanatvadaranyakam} / \text{brhatvātparimānato brhadāranyakam} /, \text{i.e. This Upaniṣad consists of six chapters and it is aranyaka because it is disclosed in the forest and brhat, i.e. greatest. Considering these two aspects it is Brhadāranyaka. The six chapters of the text are classified under three heads viz. Madhukāṇḍa, Munikāṇḍa and Khilakāṇḍa. The word madhu in Sanskrit means honey, nectar, essence etc. The Madhukāṇḍa contains the essence of the Upaniṣadic knowledge, i.e. the identity of the human Soul and the Supreme Brahman. The Munikāṇḍa presents Yajñāvalkya as an excellent and gifted teacher and unbeatable hero of Brahnavidyā. Khilakāṇḍa deals with miscellaneous matters. The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad contains the highest teaching about Brahman as the one without second. Four outstanding personalities – Janaka, the philosopher king, Yajñāvalkya the sage and outstanding teacher, Maitreyi, the spiritual wife of Yajñāvalkya and Gargī, the gifted woman speaker}\
\]
and Philosopher are the illuminating characters of the Upaniṣad. The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad majestically expounds through dialogues conducted by these personalities and lesser personalities, the central theme of the Upanisads, namely the divinity of man and the spiritual solidarity of the whole universe in Brahman.

The first chapter emphasizes the importance of meditation. The knowledge of Brahman is essential for attaining the highest Bliss. The second chapter deals with the self knowledge which is the means to attain immortality. Maitreyi, the deeply spiritual wife of Yājñavalkya, renounces all worldly possessions for the sake of knowledge that would lead her to spiritual illumination or immortality. Yājñavalkya mentions the three stages of spiritual quest, viz. śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana – the hearing, the reflecting and meditating. He tells Maitreyi that the Self should be realized, should be heard of, reflected on and meditated upon.81 The third chapter deals with the great discussion of Yājñavalkya in the assembly of learned scholars at the royal court of Janaka where Yājñavalkya established himself as a distinguished knower of Brahman. In the fourth chapter Yājñavalkya describes before Janaka the three states of the Self. The Self is identified with the gross, subtle and causal bodies in the state of waking, dream and deep sleep respectively called vaisvanara, taijasa and prājñā. The fifth chapter deals with some meditation which leads one to liberation. The episode of thunder clap82

81. B.U., 2.4.5
82. Ibid., 5.2.1-3
in the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad text is a very significant aspect in education and requires particular attention to the present context. Prajāpati had his lineage classified into three groups such as deva (gods), manusya (mankind) and asura (demons). They were undergoing training under him. After the completion of their training they asked their father for a message. Prajapati uttered the letter da to each and the meaning of the same has been imbibed by the gods as damyata (be restrained), by the mankind as datta (give generously) and by the demons as dayadhvam (be merciful). The thundering has its echoes as da-da-da to mean be restrained, give generously (be charitable) and be merciful. amuvadati stanayitnuh da da da iti damyata datta dayadhvamiti /

V.S. Idaykidath\(^3\) observes, “The episode indicates the extent of the aims or objectives in education. The three classes (the lineage) represent the upper class, common middle class and the lower class. All of them have their prejudices rooted in selfishness. The same need to be uprooted for the interest of the whole human race. This can be achieved only through education. The divine beings represent the upper class and they are always proud of their position, wealth and other amenities. They always show their interest to project and dominate before others and not restraint. To make them restrained they have to be well educated. To them the syllable has its message! Be educated and be restrained.

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\(^3\) V.S. Idaykidath, Upaniṣads on Education, p.106
The next class represents the mankind, which comprises of the common masses. Struggling for existence, they are generally selfish. They will not give up their belongings in normal circumstances. To them the syllable has its message: 'be educated and give up selfishness.

The asuras represent the lowest educated group. In the absence of discriminative knowledge they are often cruel and acts as brutals. To them the syllable has its message: 'be educated, acquire the power to discriminate and be merciful to every being.

The idea behind the syllable da as presented in the text thus resembles the national goal, the distant aim of education, the integration of the whole citizens by surrendering personal as well as class prejudices.

The fourth mahāvākya – aham brahmāsmi is attributed to the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. There is the famous prayer for reality, light and immortality: asato mā sadgamaya tamaso mā jyotirgamaya mātryoḥ mā'ṃś tamo gamaya.

The Theme of the Upaniṣads

The Upaniṣads deal with the greatness of the Supreme Spirit. Bhāṭṭa Bhāskara Misra the commentator of the Taittirīya Aranyaka states that the

84. B.U. 1.4.10
85. Ibid., 1.3.28
86. parasya śreyassampe niṣidantitii upaniṣadaḥ paraprātihetavo vidyāḥ/ Bhāṭṭa Bhāskara on T.A., 71
Upaniṣads lead the aspirant to the highest good. The central theme of the Upaniṣads is that Brahman and Atman are identical. Omniscient Brahman is nothing but Atman. Brahman and Atman deal with the objective and subjective aspects of the life respectively. There may not be qualitative difference between the two. This theme of Brahman and Atman makes the substratum of the whole Upanisadic philosophy. In the Śāntimantra of the Upaniṣads one can notice the keynote of the whole Upaniṣadic teaching. It contains the quintessence of the Vedānta Philosophy which reads –

\[
\text{om pūrṇamadāḥ pūrṇamidāṁ pūrṇat pūrṇamadacyate} / \\
pūrṇasya pūrṇamadāyā pūrṇamevaśāsiṣyate //
\]

i.e. That is whole, this is whole. The whole comes out of the whole. Taking the whole from the whole, the whole remains.

The above verse indicates that the quantitative increase or decrease of the parts does not affect the whole. The whole resides even in the part. Brahman is saccidānanda and in nature Atman is also saccidānanda, i.e. Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. The four maññavākyas, i.e. the great Upaniṣadic statements hold the oneness of Brahman and Atman. The Aitareya Upaniṣad declares that wisdom is Brahman—praśīnānam brahma. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad says that Thou art Brahman – tattvamasya. The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad declares that I am Brahman – aham brahmāsmi and the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad declares that this Self is Brahman—ayam ātmā brahma. The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad declares, ‘That which

87. yo’yaṁatmedamamratamidāṁ brahmaṁ sarvam B.U.2.5.9
is immediately present and directly perceived is Brahman, That is the soul within
all things. The Taittiriya Upaniṣad holds that Brahman is Ātman. It again
declares that He who is within this body and he who is within that solar orb above
are one and the same.

Without Ultimate truth man can not attain his true integration. The teaching
of the Upaniṣad is completely integrated. The Taittiriya Upaniṣad holds that
Brahman is Truth. Knowledge and Infinity and Brahman is verily, the essence of
existence. For truly on getting these essence, one becomes blissful.

The Upaniṣad holds that the universe in essence a spiritual unity. All is
pervaded by ṭīṣa, i.e. Lord, whatever moves or moves not. The Supreme Being
can be recognized where the ego is abolished. One attains immortality by Self
knowledge.

Abhedananda states, “The central message of the Upaniṣads which is also
the spirit of our culture is “One who sees maniness in the world moves from death
to death.”

The pleasant is one thing and the good is another. Both these come to a
man. The wiseman discriminates between the two and chooses the good rather
than the pleasant. But the foolish one chooses the pleasant rejecting the good and

88. yatsakṣādāparokṣād brahmaya ātmā sārvāntarāḥ / Ibid., 3.4.1
89. tadbrahma sa ātmā/T.U., 1.5
90. ‘yaścayān puruṣe yaścāśāvāditye sa ekaḥ / Ibid., 3.10.
91. satyaṁ jñānāmanantāṁ brahmaḥ / Ibid., 2.1
92. raso vai saḥ / rasaṁ hreyvayan labdhvanantī bhavati / Ibid., 2.7
93. īśā vāsyamidaṁ sarvam yat kiṅca jagatīyam jagat / Īśa U, 1
94. Abhedananda, The Upaniṣadic Doctrine of the Self, p. 132
for attachment falls into the net of death. The knower of Brahman attains the Supreme. The divinity of man is one of the fundamental doctrines of Śaṅkara. The identity between the individual Self and Brahman is not apparent but real.

The Personal God is called Īśvara. Īśvara is the appearance of Brahman in māyā. Īśvara is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. The Advaita Vedanta looks upon mokṣa as the great spiritual ideal that man should seek. Mokṣa or liberation is the permanent state from which there is no return to samsara. It is called niḥsreyasa. All branches of Indian philosophy agree that bondage is due to ignorance and liberation is due to knowledge. Mokṣa aims at radical termination of all sufferings. According to Śaṅkara, mokṣa is the realization of the oneness of the soul with Brahman.

The spiritual aspirant must learn the Upaniṣadic teaching from an enlightened and illumined guru. The Upaniṣad declares, ‘He that has a guru knows. The aspirant can learn by three stages of spiritual quest, śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana — the hearing, the reflecting and meditating.

The Upaniṣads describe the world of the not-Self as Truth and the Self or Ātman as ‘Truth of Truth’. This is revealed in a passage of Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.95 Elucidating this Vedāntic idea Swami Vivekananda96 proclaims, ‘There is really no difference between matter, mind and spirit. They are only different phases of experiencing the one. This very world is seen by the five senses

95. tasyopaniśat satyasya satyamiti, pṛaṇa vai satyam, teṣām esa satyam/B.U, 2.1.20
of matter, by the very wicked as hell, by the good as heaven, and by the perfect as God.”

The ultimate aim of the Upanisadic tradition is realization of Brahman in every action, each being and even in all particles of dust – *sarvam khalvidam brahma*97

In the *Katha Upaniṣad* stress has been laid upon a clear exposition of the nature of the Self or the Ultimate Reality which is declared as the indwelling spirit of all beings – *sarvabhūtāntarātmā*.98

Ethical conduct is an indispensable step for spiritual realization. Ethics is the study of human conduct and behaviour in the light of moral principles. Spiritual realization is not possible without moral excellence. Indian thought advocates that moral, philosophical and religious activities have the same goal *mokṣa* or liberation. P. Nagaraja Rao99 remarks in this respect “Equally emphatic is the *Upaniṣad* on the need for ethical excellence for the spiritual aspirant. In everyone of the Upaniṣads the need for self control and integration of human personality is stressed. That is the first step, which can never be bypassed. The *Katha Upaniṣad* asks the aspirant to direct the senses to look in and divert them from their natural way of looking outward. The *Upaniṣad* pleads for yoking the senses to spiritual aim. The need for ethical life is an imperative.”

Self-dedication as a highest law of life, prevails at the ethical and spiritual

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97. C.U., 3.14.1
98. K.U., 2,2,9,10,11
planes. For lofty spiritual experiences the ethical qualities like tranquility of mind (śama), self control (dama), freedom from compulsive activity (uparati), fortitude (titikṣā), faith in the ideal (śraddhā) and power of concentration of mind (samādāhāna) are essential. The Upaniṣad exhorts that when all desires lodged in the heart are liberated for ever, then the mortal becomes immortal and attains the Supreme.\textsuperscript{100} The knot of the heart is cut, all doubts are dispelled and his deeds perish, when the higher and lower Brahman has been realized.\textsuperscript{101}

In the Taittiriya Upaniṣad\textsuperscript{102} the teacher exhorts the outgoing student to speak the truth, to practise righteousness (dharma) etc. Actually this is the zenith of ethical principles. In the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad the entire philosophy of ethics is given in the form of the da-da-da sound of thunder. The three das stand for the three imperatives: dāmyata, datta and dayadhvam, meaning “Be self-controlled”, “Be charitable” and “Be compassionate.” The three classes of sons of Prajāpati, i.e. gods, men and demons understood the sound da to signify one of the three commands in the order mentioned.

The individual is envisaged in the Upaniṣad as a composite of the conscious, sub-conscious, unconscious and the absolute aspects of consciousness. The Taittiriya Upaniṣad makes classification of the psychological states into the physical (annamaya), vital (prāṇamaya), mental (manomaya), intellectual (vijñānamaya) and blissful (ānandamaya) sheaths of consciousness. The first

\textsuperscript{100} K.U, 2.3.14
\textsuperscript{101} M.U., 2.2.9
\textsuperscript{102} T.U., 1.11
sheath is known as the gross body (sthulasarīra), the next three constitute the subtle body (sūkṣmaśarīra) and the fifth or last is called the causal body (kāraṇaśarīra). These five sheaths together constitute “the empirical home” of the soul. The Bliss, i.e. Brahman lives in this home. The Katha Upaniṣad compares the Self to the Lord of the chariot, the body to the chariot, the intellect to the charioteer, the mind to the reins, the senses to the horses, and the sense-objects to the roads, when the Self is in union with the body, the senses, and the mind, then wise people call him the enjoyer (bhokta).\textsuperscript{103}

\textbf{Summary of the Taittiriya Upaniṣad}

The following chapters of the dissertation deal with the detailed study of the Taittiriya Upaniṣad and therefore, a summary of the text of the particular Upaniṣad is furnished.

The first chapter, i.e. Sikṣā Vallī consists of twelve sections called Anuvākas.

\textsuperscript{103} K.U., 1.3.3-4
CHAPTER – I

ŚIKṢĀ VALLĪ

Section – I

The first section starts with a peace – invocation om śaṁ no mitrāḥ etc. where various deities like Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Indra, Brhaspati, Viṣṇu and Vāyu are invoked for their help and blessings in the study of the Upaniṣad. Viṣṇu is wide-striding. The salutation is offered to Brahman and Vāyu as a symbol of Brahman and he is Pratyakṣa, i.e. visible or perceptible. The student vows to speak ṛta and satya for without these no society can sustain. At the end of the invocation the word peace (śaṁti) is uttered thrice to ward off ādhyātmika, ādīdaivika and ādhibhautika troubles.

Section – II

This section deals with the science of phonetics. Without right pronunciation of each word nobody gets the proper meaning and for better communication purity of speech is essential. This science includes varṇa (speech sound), svara (the accent), mātrā (measure, quality), bala (power of force of articulation) śama (modulation) and santāna (the combination).

Section – III

The third section begins with a prayer for the yaśas (glory) and brahmavarcas (spiritual preeminence) for the teacher and the disciple. This section deals with the significance of saṁhitā. There are five great saṁhitās
(mahāsaṁhitā) found in five objects (adhikarana). They are (1) concerning the universe (adhiloka), (2) concerning light (adhijyotiṣa), (3) with regard to knowledge (adhividyā), (4) concerning progeny (adhiprajā) and (5) with regard to body (adhyātma). The adhiloka constitutes the earth, heaven, ether and air, the adhijyotiṣa constitutes fire, the sun, water and lighting; the adhividyā constitutes the teacher, pupil, knowledge and instruction; the adhiprajā constitutes mother, father, progeny and procreation and the adhyātma constitutes the lower jaw, upper jaw, speech and tongue which is the means of union. He who meditates on these great conjunctions (saṁhitā), will attain progeny, wealth, food and the happy abode of Brahman. This meditation or upāsanā is a means to lead towards Brahman.

Section – IV

This section starts with a prayer to Om which is pre-eminent in the Vedas, that pervades all words and that emerged from the immortal Vedas as their quintessence. The prayer is for tenacious memory, good intellect, able body, sweet speech and fitness to receive immortality. The prayer for wealth is meant for the maintenance of the disciples. The teacher prays for competent disciples. The prayer is done in form of homa and that is why the sacrificial word svāhā is used.

Section – V

This section instructs the aspirant to meditate Brahman through the mystic utterances (vyāhṛtis). bhur, bhuvas and suvar. A fourth vyāhṛti mahas was denoted
by the sage Māhācāmasya, which is identified with Brahman. The vyāhṛti bhūr stands for the earth, Agni, the Rgveda and prāṇa, i.e. the vital air that is breathed in. The vyāhṛti bhuvās stands for the space between the earth and heaven, Vāyu, the Sāmaveda and apana, i.e. the vital air that is breathed out. The vyāhṛti suvar stands for heaven, the sun, the Yajurveda and vyāna, i.e. the air that is all over the body. The fourth vyāhṛti mahās is the sun, the moon, the Brahman and food. Verily through the Sun all worlds, through the moon all lights, through Brahman all the Vedas and through food all animate beings are magnified. One who meditates upon these vyāhṛtis knows Brahman and as a reward all gods offer homage to him.

Section – VI

The cavity of the heart is presented as the place for the direct realization of and the meditation on Brahman of which those vyāhṛtis are the limbs. Brahman, mentioned above is intelligent, imperishable and effulgent puruṣa. This puruṣa is called manomaya because it is the sum total of all minds. There is a vein called the susumna which goes upward from the heart into the head and runs between the palates and pierces through the head. This passage is called Indrayoni. Indra means Brahman and Indrayoni means where Brahman is manifested. The meditator at the time of his final departure rests in Agni, Vāyu, Sun and Brahman which is the vyāhṛti mahās. He gets sovereignty and obtains the Lord of mind, and becomes the ruler of speech, the ruler of eyes, the ruler of ears.
knowledge. Thereafter he becomes Brahman whose body is the ether, essence is truth, delight is the vital force, mind is bliss which is enriched with peace. Prācinayogya is instructed in this way by his teacher Mahācamasya.

Section – VII

This section instructs the spiritual aspirant to meditate Brahman through the Pāṅktas, i.e. the sets of five objects. The number of five has its special significance because of its familiarity in two Vedic connections. A sacrificial worship has five factors and there is a common Vedic metre called Paṅkti having five feet of eight syllables each. The Pāṅktas form three sets of five. The earth, the intermediate space between the earth and heaven, heaven, the four quarters and the four subquarters – these five constitute the group of lokas (lokapāṅktas). Agni, Vāyu, the sun, the moon and the stars – these five constitute the devatāpāṅktas, the group of devatās. Water, plants, the trees, the space and the body – these five constitute the group of elements, i.e. bhūtāpāṅktas. Worship of Brahman through these pāṅktas is called adhibhūta worship i.e. worship of physical objects. Now the following three sets of pāṅktas indicate worship of the body (adhyātma) – prāna, vyāna, apana, udāna and samāna, these five are prānapāṅktas; skin, flesh, muscle, bone, marrow these five are dhātapāṅktas and organs of sight, hearing, thinking, speech and touch – these five are the indriyapāṅktas. The seer who revealed this by intuition, having grouped these various objects, proclaimed that the whole
universe is based on five-fold principle, and that one set of five preserves the other set of five.

Section – VIII

This section enjoins meditation through the symbol *Om* which is verily is the symbol of Brahman. *Om* is everything just as Brahman is everything. *Om* is both *Para* Brahman (Brahman without attributes) and *Apara* Brahman (Brahman with attributes). In this section the syllable *Om* suggests the Brahman and the whole universe. The priests officiating at the sacrifice direct the assistant with the word *Om* which is used to express compliance in the ritualistic performances. Agnidhra makes it known to the Devas that the oblation is ready to be offered and he utters *Om*. Starting with *Om* the Sāman-chanting Udgātṛ priests sing. Uttering *Om* in the beginning, the Hotṛ priests recite the invocations. The Adhvaryu addresses his response to the Hotṛ with the syllable *Om*. The priest called Brahma says *Om* to indicate his approval of something. Those who perform the Agnihotra sacrifice say *Om* to signal the beginning of the sacrifice. A Brahmana, recites the Vedas and utters *Om* with the idea in his mind ‘I shall attain Brahman.’ Thus wishing Brahman, he verily attains Brahman.

Section – IX

In the ninth section, the duties of students are discussed so that they may attain the Supreme knowledge. *Karma* properly done produces *cittasuddhi*, i.e. a pure mind and purity of mind is a pre-requisite for the attainment of Self-
knowledge. A spiritual aspirant must be righteous, dutiful, well-behaved, self-controlled and tranquil. The highest good depends on the study and teaching of the Vedas. So importance has been given on svādhya and pravacana. He should perform the Agnihotra sacrifice everyday and treat his guests with great respect. He should practise humanity and aspire for offspring for the propagation of the race without neglecting the main duties svādhya and pravacana.

Satyavacas of the family of Rathitara, thinks that truth alone is enough. Pauriśiṣṭi, the son of Puruśiṣṭi who is known as Taponitya had partiality for austerities. But according to Nāka, the son of Mudgala, the study and teaching of the scriptures are above the other performances. This is alone the real austerity, i.e. tapas.

Section – X

The tenth section is a monologue by the sage Triśanku who had known Brahman and become Brahman. The mantra commencing with ahāṃ vrksasya rerivā is introduced for the sake of self-recital (japa). The sage proclaims that he is the inspirer of the tree (of the world) and his fame is high like the ridge of a mountain. He regards himself as pure luminous and immortal one, wise and effulgent wealth.

Section – XI

The eleventh section deals with the final instruction which students in those days received when they completed their study under the competent teacher. After
expounding the *Veda* the teacher advised the disciple to speak the truth, to practise righteousness, not to neglect the study, to offer the desirable wealth to the teacher and not to cut off the line of progeny. The disciple is instructed to pay attention to truth, duties, welfare, prosperity, studying and teaching. There should be no error in the duties towards gods and manes. His parents, teacher and guests should be treated like gods. The deeds that are blameless are to be resorted to, not the others. He is advised to follow the elders and superiors with proper respect. The offering should be made in a friendly way with modesty according to one’s prosperity. This is the instruction. This is the secret of the Vedas.

**Section – XII**

An invocation is being chanted for warding off the obstructions to the knowledge already dealt with. This prayer is the same as the opening peace-chant except that here, the verbs in the second half of the prayer are in the past tense.
CHAPTER – II

BRAHMĀNANDA VALLĪ

The Brahmananda Vallī consists of nine sections (anuvakas) and deals with the Bliss of Brahman.

Section – I

The first section of the Brahmananda Vallī starts with the peace-chant saha nāvavatu... It is a prayer of the teacher and the disciple for attainment of the common aspiration for self-protection, nourishment, strength, progress, brilliance and mutual goodwill. The word peace (sānti) is uttered thrice to ward off all internal, external and heavenly cause of troubles – adhyātmika, adhibhautika and adhidaivika.

The entire purport of the chapter is summed up in the memorable maxim, ‘The knower of Brahman attains the Highest’. Brahman is Truth. Knowledge and Infinite. He who knows that Brahman as existing in the intellect which is lodged in the supreme space in the heart, enjoys all desirable things along with Brahman, the omniscient. From that Brahman indeed, which is Self was produced space (ether), from ether air, from air fire, from fire water, from water the earth, from the earth herbs, from herbs food and from food the Purusa came into existence. That Puruṣa is surely a product of the essence of food. Then the five sheaths (koṇas), viz. annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya and ānandamaya are narrated.
Section – II

This section describes that all beings on the earth are born from food. They live on food and at the end return to food. Food was verily born before all creatures; so, it is called the medicine for all. Those who worship food as Brahman acquire all food. The second part of this section describes the second sheath, i.e. prāṇamaya kośa which is made of vital breath and pervades the annamaya kośa, i.e. the gross body.

Section – III

This section deals with the eulogy of the vital breath. The life of all creatures depends on prāṇa, i.e. the vital force. Therefore, prāṇa is called the life of all. Those who worship the prāṇa as Brahman attain the full span of life. The second part of this section describes the manomayakośa (mental sheath) which is inner to the vital body. The mental sheath is also of a human shape. The Yajus mantras are the head, the Rk. mantras are the right side, the Sāma mantras are the left side, the Brāhmaṇa portion is the self (trunk), the mantras seen by Atharvāngirasa are the stabilizing tail.

Section – IV

The eulogy of the mental sheath is the subject-matter of this section. That from which all speech with thoughts return, being unable to reach it, he who knows the Bliss of Brahman is not subjected to fear at any time. The mental sheath is the self of the vital breath sheath. There is the fourth sheath known as
vijñānamayakośa (intellectual sheath) which is inside the mental sheath. This intellectual sheath is also like a human body. Of him faith is the head, righteousness (ṛta) is the right side, truth (satya) is the left side, concentration (yoga) is the self (trunk) and mahas is the stabilizing tail.

Section – V

This section contains the eulogy of the intellectual sheath. The agent possessing intelligence performs sacrifice and executes various deeds, i.e. duties. All gods worship vijñāna as Brahman, the eldest. If one knows the knowledge Brahman, abandoning all sins, enjoys all desirable things.

The internal Self constituted by Bliss fills up the intellectual sheath. This fifth sheath known as ānandamayakośa has a human shape. Of him joy is verily the head, enjoyment is the right side, delight is left side, Bliss is the trunk, and Brahman is his support and foundation.

Section – VI

If anybody knows Brahman as non-existing, he himself becomes non-existent. If he understands that Brahman is an existent entity then the wise consider him as existing by virtue of that knowledge. Hereafter the following questions arise in respect of what has been taught. Does any ignorant person attain Brahman after having departed from this world? Alternatively, does any one who has known Brahman, departing from here attain it? In reply to the above questions
the teacher of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* narrates the theory of the creation. Brahman created all this that exists and thus, Brahman is the source of all.

**Section – VII**

This section holds that Brahman is self-made. In the beginning all this was but the unmanifested Brahman and from that emerged the manifested. That Brahman created Itself by Itself. Therefore, It is called the self-made. He is verily the source of joy, for one becomes happy by coming in contact with that source of joy. This one, indeed enlivens creatures. The individual soul becomes fearless only when it obtains that Brahman.

**Section – VIII**

This section shows that knower of Brahman becomes blessed and fears nowhere and none. Brahman is equally the cause of fear and fearlessness. Out of fear of Him the wind blows, through fear of Him the sun rises, through fear of Him Agni, Indra and Death, flow forth. After highlighting the controlling power of Brahman an assessment of Bliss is narrated in this section. The gradations of Bliss is explained step by step. The second part of this section declares the result of this evaluation. He that is here in the human person and He that is there in the sun are one. One who realizes the truth transcends all the sheaths.
Section – IX

The verse in the beginning of this section expresses the gist of the Brahmananda Vallī. The enlightened man is not afraid of anything after realizing that Bliss of Brahman, failing to reach which words turn back along with the mind. One who knows the Bliss of Brahman is not tormented by good or evil. This is the secret teaching.
CHAPTER – III

BHṚGU VALLĪ

The Bhṛgu Vallī consists of ten sections (anuvākas) and deals with the means of attaining the supreme end of life. Tapas (concentration) is eulogized as a means of attaining ultimate goal.

Section – I

The third chapter begins with the invocatory verse saha nāvavatu. The story of Bhṛgu is meant to eulogize knowledge by showing that it was imparted to a dear son by the father as a valuable heritage. Bhṛgu approached his father Varuṇa and wanted to know the nature of the ultimate Reality. As a means to the knowledge of Brahman, Varuṇa taught him about food, vital airs, sight, hearing, mind and speech and told him to know that, from which all beings here are born, that towards which they move and into which they merge.

Section – II

Having performed austerity, Bhṛgu realized food as Brahman and reported his father about the views regarding Brahman. The father asked him to know Brahman well through austerity.
Section – III

Realizing prāṇa (vital force) as Brahman, Bhṛgu approached his father and requested to teach him about Brahman. Varuṇa asked him to realize Brahman through austerity.

Section – IV

Bhṛgu knew mind as Brahman and approached his father and requested to teach him about Brahman. Varuṇa told him to realize Brahman through austerity.

Section – V

Bhṛgu understood that vijñāna (intellect) is Brahman and approached his father and requested him to impart the knowledge of Brahman. The father told him to practise penance in order to realize Brahman.

Section – VI

Having practiced penance, gradually Bhṛgu arrived at the Ultimate Reality. He knew Bliss (ānanda) as Brahman. It is the source of all. Bliss is the culmination of the enquiry. This is bhārgavī vāruṇī vidyā – the knowledge which was realized by Bhṛgu and imparted by Varuṇa. The knower of this knowledge becomes firmly established. He owns plenty of food and becomes great in progeny, cattle and the lustre of spiritual knowledge and great in renown.
Section – VII

In this section significance of food is narrated. The knower of Brahman should not speak ill of food. That should be observed as a pious rule. Food is worthy of praise for it is the first gateway to realize Brahman.

Section – VIII

One should not reject food. This is a vow (vrata) that one should make food plentiful. One should not try to neglect this physical world, for to attain the Bliss, one has to have a healthy body and a healthy environment.

Section – IX

One should produce abundant food. This is a vow or religious duty. This section shows that one kind of food is dependant on another. One who knows and contemplates food which is based on food becomes firmly established.

Section – X

One should not refuse anyone at one’s residence. This is a vow. So, for the sake of guest one should collect plenty of food by whatever means necessary. Feeding others has its own reward, because food returns to one in the same manner as one gives it.

Meditation is essential for the attainment of Brahman. So the process of meditation on Brahman is being stated in this section. There are three types of meditation (upāsanās), viz. adhyātmika upāsanā, adhidaivika upāsanā and
mānasika upāsanā. As a result of these meditations an aspirant sheds off the limitations of all five sheaths and identifies himself with Brahman and experiences the highest joy and sings the sāman out of ecstasy.

Prominent Commentators of the Taittiriya Upaniṣad

Though comparatively short, the Taittiriya Upaniṣad is one of the most profound and important Upaniṣads. Many a commentators have commented on this Upaniṣad and some of them only are mentioned here.

(i) Acyutakṛṣṇanandatīrtha flourished in 17th century and his commentary on the Taittiriya Upaniṣad is known as Vanamālā which is published by Vanivilasa press, Srirangam in 1913.

(ii) Amaradāsa’s commentary on the Taittiriya Upaniṣad is known as Maniprabhā and is published by Ganesha Printing Press and Nirmaya Sagara Press in 1910.

(iii) Ānandagiri flourished during the latter half of the 13th Century A.D. (His civil name) and was known as Jamārdana. His commentary on Taittiriya Upaniṣad is first published by Bibliotheca Indica in 1860; then it is published by Anandasrama press, Poona in 1889. He wrote the commentaries on Sūrēśvāra’s Vārtika on the Taittiriya Upaniṣad and Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad and wrote many other commentaries on various books.

(iv) Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Mīśra wrote the Taittiriya Upaniṣad bhāṣya besides his other works. He was a Telugu Brahmin and a man of versatile genius. Sāyānācārya quotes Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Mīśra in his commentary on Rgveda. As Sāyānācārya
flourished during 14th century A.D., so definitely Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Miśra flourished before 14th century A.D.

(v) Mādhavaścārya was an elder brother of Śāyaṇācārya. He flourished between 1296 to 1386 A.D. Resorting sannyāsa in 1375 he assumed the name Vidyāranya. He wrote Anupamaprakāśa commentary on twelve principal Upaniṣads besides other compositions.

(vi) Nārāyanamuni was a follower of Rāmānuja who flourished in 1728 A.D. He wrote commentaries known as Dīpikā on the Upaniṣads and his commentary on the Taittirīya Upaniṣad is published by Anandasrama Press, Poona in 1910.

(vii) Rangarāmānuja was a Śuddhāvīśistādvaitavadin. His commentary on the Taittirīya Upaniṣad is called Prakāśikā and is published by Vavilla Press, Madras in 1928.

(viii) Śaṅkarācārya is a Monist and founder of Absolute monism. He was born in 788 A.D. at Kaladi village in Kerala State. His father was Śivaguru and mother was Aryambā. His teacher was Govinda Bhagavadpāda, the disciple of the famous sage Gaudapāda. He travelled all over India for the propagation of saṅnatana dharma and founded four monasteries in the four directions viz. (1) Saradā Matha at Dwārakā, (2) Jyotirmatha at Badrinātha, (3) Govardhana Matha at Puri and (4) Śṛngeri Matha at Mysore District. He died in 820 A.D. at the age of 32 only. He was a Brahmin of Taittirīya śākhā of the Black Yajurveda. So it is said that he wrote the bhāṣya on Taittirīya Upaniṣad first. Swami Ranganathananda

appreciates the writings of Śaṅkara thus: “Śāṅkara’s commentaries on these Upaniṣads, especially on those of their passages pregnant with philosophical and spiritual import, are masterpieces of philosophical discussion illumined by deep spiritual insights. His mastery handling of the Sanskrit language in these commentaries gives us a prose which is marked by brevity and vigour, simplicity and poetic charm.” The commentaries on the Upaniṣads by Śaṅkara along with Brahmaṣūtramāṇamahāsya, Gitābhāṣya and other identical works are highly appreciated by the successors and the enlightened people all over the world.

His works are –

**Bhāṣya literature**

(i) Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, (ii) Gitābhāṣya, (iii) Upaniṣadabhāṣya,
(iv) Viṣṇusahāsrānāmabhāṣya, (v) Sanatsujātiyabhāṣya,
(vi) Lalitatriṣatibhāṣya, (vii) Māṇḍūkyakārikabhāṣya

**Stotra literature**

(viii) Jagannāthastotra, (ix) Daśaslokī, (x) Carpatapanjarikā, (xi) Dvādasapanjarikā, (xii) Śivabhujangaprayātā,
Prakaraṇa literature

(i) Advaitānubhūti, (ii) Advaitapañcaratna, (iii) Advaitarasamanaṁjari,
(iv) Anatmasrivigarhanaprakaraṇa, (v) Aparokṣānubhūti, (vi) Ātmabodha,
(vii) Svātmaprakāśikā, (viii) Ārṣapañcaka, (ix) Svarūpaṁsudhiṣṭāna,
(x) Sadācara, (xi) Vedavedāntatattvasāra, (xii) Saratattvopadeśa,
(xiii) Vākyavṛtti, (xiv) Mahāvākyadarpaṇa, (xv) Mahāvākyaviveka,
(xvi) Saravedāntasiddhiḥantasaimgraha, (xvii) Upadeśapañcaka,
(xviii) Upadesaśāhāśīri, (xix) Ekaśloki, (xx) Kaupinapañcaka,
(xx) Jivanmuktānandalahāri, (xxi) Tattvabodha, (xxii) Tattvopadeśa,
Nirguṇamanasapujā, (xxv) Parapujā, (xxvi) Prabodhasudhākara,
Prachinabalābudi, (xxvii) Prāśnottararatnamālikā,
(xxviii) Brahmajñanāvalīmālā, (xxix) Brahmānucintana,
(xxxx) Mahiratnamālā, (xxxx) Mayāpañcaka, (xxxxi) Mumukṣupañcaka,
Yogataravali, (xxxxii) Vivekacudāmani, (xxxxiii) Vairagyapañcaka.

Tantra literature

(i) Saundaryalahārī, (ii) Prapañcaśara
(ix) Śaṅkaraṇanda wrote the commentary called Dīpikā on the following
Upaniṣads.
(i) Atharvaśikhā, (ii) Atharvasiras, (iii) Atharvasīrṣa, (iv) Amṛtanāda, (v)
Amṛtabindu, (vi) Āruṇi, (vii) Īśavāsya, (viii) Aitareya, (ix) Taittiriya, (x) Kaṭha,

(x) Śaṇṭācārya was the younger brother of Madhava-cārya and he was a Kṛṣṇa-vajurvedīya-brāhmaṇa who belonged to Bharadvajagotra. He flourished in the 14th century A.D. He was a learned scholar and minister of Bukka and Harihara of Bijayanagar. His works are as follows:


(xi) Sureśva-nacārya was born in Mithila. He was a disciple of Kumarila Bhatta but after being defeated by Sāṅkara-cārya, he was initiated as an Advaitin and was named Sureśvara. He wrote the following works:


His Taittirīyopaniṣad-bhaṣya-varāntika was published in Poona in 1889.
Importance of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad

The Taittirīya Upaniṣad is included among the ten principal Upaniṣads. It is very famous for its beauty and profundity of its learning-teaching process. It discusses many of the outstanding teachings of philosophy and religious discipline found in the Upaniṣadic literature. Śaṅkarācārya was deeply impressed by this Upaniṣad. He has cited this Upaniṣad for one hundred and forty seven times in his Brahmaṇa śutrabhāṣya. His successors like Sureśvaračārya, Śayaṇācārya, Śaṅkarānanda, Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Miśra, Ānandagiri and others also prompted its study by writing elaborate annotations on it.

It is already noted that the Taittirīya Upaniṣad is divided into three chapters called Vallīs. The first chapter is called Śikṣā Vallī. It deals with the science of phonetics and mainly the educational aspect. It is also well-known for the convocation address by the teacher to the pupils who were about to leave the gurukula. The eleventh anuvāka of the Śikṣā Vallī of the Upaniṣad contains the profound convocation address. Here the teacher imparted the fundamental principles of the science of education which include social, moral and spiritual values. It is interesting to note that the philosophy of education reflected in this address is not different from the philosophy of life. The Brahmananda Vallī deals with the nature of Brahman. This section begins with the memorable maxim brahma vidyādāpnoti param, i.e. He who knows Brahman attains the Supreme. This key sentence reveals in a flash with aphoristic brevity the what, why and how of Vedānta Philosophy. This Vallī deals with the relationship based on intellectual
understanding and the Bliss of Brahman. The Bhṛgu Vallī deals with the spiritual relationship. It also gives a detailed description of the internal means of the realization of Brahman. The central theme of this chapter is eternal Bliss, i.e. ananda. It also highlights the state of jivanmukti.

Thus, the Taittirīya Upaniṣad is very famous for some unique features of the Upaniṣadic education. It has great influence on the later works also. It is a compendium of rich Upaniṣadic philosophy and, therefore, it is aimed to make an intensive study to evaluate the educational and philosophical teachings embedded therein.