



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

अनन्ता

ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2024; 10(3): 05-07

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www.anantaajournal.com

Received: 11-02-2024

Accepted: 13-03-2024

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Beyond Samādhi: The profound teachings of cid-aditya realization in the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/23947519.2024.v10.i3a.2360>

Abstract

This paper explores the concept of Cid-aditya Realization outlined in the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat, focusing on recognizing consciousness's source within oneself. While Samādhi traditionally marks the pinnacle of all yogic practices and the ultimate goal of yoga, the Upaniṣat assert Cid-aditya Realization to be the highest, surpassing esteemed achievements like yoga siddhis, Laya and even Samadhi. According to the Upaniṣat, this realization leads to understanding the unity between individual and universal consciousness, culminating in realizing the self as Sachidanand.

This profound teaching is exclusively reserved for highly qualified seekers known as the Tivra-tara seekers. It precisely conveys that focusing on and understanding the essence of normal breathing, particularly the Ajapā Gāyatrī, can lead one to this realization. Those who attain this understanding perceive the phenomenal world as Brahman, while those who do not remain under the veil of ignorance known as Avidyā.

The Upaniṣat unequivocally asserts that Cid-aditya Realization holds the utmost significance within the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat, which occupies a distinguished position as the Shirsha of the Atharva Veda. Consequently, grasping the conceptual essence of this teaching becomes imperative for all spiritual seekers.

Keyword: Cid-aditya realization, Mahāvākya Upaniṣat, Tivra-tara seeker, Hamsa Vidya, Jivan Mukti, Satcitananda

Introduction

The Yoga Upaniṣat's stand as venerable repositories of ancient yogic concepts, with the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat holding a distinguished position ^[1]. Generally, the term "Mahāvākya" denotes profound declarations in the Principal Upaniṣats that assert the unity between universal and individual consciousness ^[2]. While the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat resonates with this sentiment, it introduces a distinctive concept known as Chidaditya realisation, acknowledging the Sun of absolute consciousness within oneself and in the external phenomenal ^[3].

Lord Brahmā designates this teaching within the Upaniṣat as the most profound secret, reserved exclusively for Tivra-tara seekers. Tivra-tara seekers are characterised by possessing a Sāttvika rhythmic temperament, an inward-turning propensity, and the necessary receptivity to receive the Guru's grace. This realisation is asserted to transcend all yogic Siddhis, Laya, and even Samādhi ^[3].

To attain this Truth, the Upaniṣat prescribes the Hamsa Vidya, wherein the practitioner must discern the connection between the Ajapā Gāyatrī (the automatic normal breath) and the Hamsa (the Sun), symbolising the Brahman ^[3,4].

The overarching objective of various yogic pursuits is the attainment of Samādhi ^[5]. However, this Upaniṣat extends its teachings to encompass Cid-aditya realisation, surpassing even the concept of Samādhi ^[4]. Surprisingly, more comprehensive studies on this matter are needed. This paper aims to fill that gap by thoroughly analysing the Upaniṣat's teachings, presenting insights with clarity, depth, and a distinctive perspective.

Methods and Materials

The study employed a comprehensive analytical research approach, centering on the various commentaries of the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat as the principal source.

Supplementary materials included relevant Hatha yogic texts and pertinent research papers, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the subject matter.

Cid-aditya Realisation: The State Beyond Siddhi, Laya, and Samādhi

The term "Cid-aditya" originates from the Sanskrit roots 'Cid' denoting consciousness and 'Aditya' signifying Sun, symbolising the Sun of consciousness. It refers to the pervasive universal consciousness within oneself and the external world. Cid-aditya corresponds to Brahman (Haṃsa), intertwined with the Ajapā Gāyatrī, a natural process linked to inspiration and expiration^[3,6].

This realisation is not a yogic accomplishment like Siddhi, Laya, or Samādhi but signifies recognising the inherent unity of individual consciousness (Ātma) with universal consciousness (Brahman)^[7]. The Upaniṣat emphasises that upon actualising this existential unity, erroneous knowledge dissolves, leading to the self-realisation of Sat Chit Ananda—Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss. This realisation is deemed the exclusive path to attaining liberation and immortality, which is the ultimate goal of human life^[3,4].

The Tivratara Seeker: Ideal Candidate for Cid-aditya Realization

The Upaniṣat commences by asserting that the realisation of Cid-aditya represents the pinnacle of profound teachings, reserved exclusively for qualified individuals. This transcendental knowledge is deemed unfit for laypeople. It is imparted solely to those possessing three essential qualities: A Sāttvika rhythmic temperament, an inward-turning propensity, and the requisite receptivity to receive the Guru's grace. Such aspirants, identified as Tivra-tara seekers, are considered the ideal recipients of this profound wisdom^[3].

The Upaniṣat further mentions the importance of the Tivra-tara seeker, emphasising their role in prioritising the comprehension of Vidyā, the knowledge of the absolute Truth embodied in Brahman^[3]. The seeker is specifically urged to grasp Cid-aditya, described as the Sun of absolute consciousness, emphasising the immediacy and directness of this approach. The Tivra-tara seeker's significance lies in their firm commitment to understanding the absolute Truth, in contrast to other qualified knowledge that may lead to the same goal but with a considerable delay.

Vidyā & Avidyā

The Mahāvākya Upaniṣat succinctly defines the concepts of Vidyā and Avidyā. According to the Upaniṣat, Vidyā involves recognising the phenomenal world's oneness with Brahman. On the contrary, Avidyā refers to perceiving the phenomenal world as separate from Brahman. The Upaniṣat asserts that the vision of the underlying unity with Brahman requires the Vidyā cakṣus. It claims Avidyā is a result of Tamo-dṛṣa, signifying a vision clouded by the Darkness of true knowledge. This conception aligns with the Vedantic perspective that considers Brahman the ultimate reality alone. Avidyā leads to bondage, while Vidyā leads to liberation life^[1, 3, 4].

The Upaniṣat further explains that Darkness is the addiction to observing Vedic rituals to fulfil cherished desires. It symbolises a state of spiritual unawareness and attachment to external rituals for personal gain. On the other hand, "Ātma" is not Darkness. It is the true Self, the inner essence or soul. The text implies that genuine spiritual understanding and

connection with the Self go beyond mere ritualistic practices driven by personal desires^[3].

Chid-Arka Meditation and Its Results

The Upaniṣat instructs practitioners to meditate on the Cid-arka (Sun of Consciousness) to be oneself, emphasising the internalisation of radiant brilliance as an integral aspect of self-realisation. Additionally, it asserts that this Upaniṣat holds the foremost position as the "Shirsha" or primary teaching within the Atharva Veda. The text ascribes specific merits to the timing of its study: early morning absolves sins committed at night, studying at sunset eradicates daytime sins, and practitioners studying both at dawn and dusk find redemption from all sins. Furthermore, studying at noon, facing the Sun, not only frees one from significant and minor sins but also bestows the merits of studying all the Vedas. The pinnacle of attainment is described as achieving oneness with Sri Maha-Vishnu, emphasising the profound spiritual significance embedded in this Upaniṣat's teachings life^[3,4,8].

Discussion

This study aimed to thoroughly analyse the spiritual teachings presented in the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat, with a specific focus on the concept of Cid-aditya realisation. The Mahāvākya Upaniṣat, positioned at the 92nd Upaniṣat in the Muktika canon, is a concise yoga Upaniṣat^[7]. Comprising only twelve verses, this Upaniṣat asserts its significance by claiming the foremost position as the "shirsha" or primary teaching within the Atharva Veda^[3].

The term "Mahāvākya" refers to significant statements in the Principal Upaniṣats that proclaim the unity between the universal and individual consciousness^[2]. This may be why this Upaniṣat is named "Mahāvākya Upaniṣat", as it explores this unity and talks of Haṃsa (that I am)^[6].

The central teaching of the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat revolves around the concept of Chidāitya realisation, which means realising one's true Self as the center of consciousness, acknowledging one's inherent identity as pure and radiant consciousness. The Upaniṣat says that Brahman, the ultimate reality, referred to as "Haṃsa," is connected to the natural rhythm of breathing, known as Ajapa Gayatri. According to the Upaniṣat, meditating on the spontaneous act of inhalation and exhalation is the pathway to realising the unity of the Ātma and the Brahman^[3].

The Upaniṣatic conceptualisation of the ultimate reality as Cid-aditya aligns with the Bhagavad Gītā's portrayal of Vishwaroop Darshan, which was so radiant as if thousands of suns were dazzling together^[9,10]. Lord Krishna confers Divya Drishti (Divine Vision) upon Arjuna to see it. This Divya Dṛṣṭi in the Bhagavad Gita corresponds to the notion of Vidyā-cakṣus in this Upaniṣat. Meanwhile, the Tamodrish, the obscurer of true understanding in the Upaniṣat, parallels the Bhagavad Gītā's Maya, emphasising the veiling nature of ignorance^[11].

Our limited perception of reality arises from our inherent ability to tolerate it only within certain bounds; an excess of reality may prove overwhelming and lead to blindness^[7,12]. Consequently, the practice of tapa (penance and austerities) is emphasised as a necessary preparation^[13]. This rationale may explain why the Upaniṣat says that the realisation of Cid-aditya is exclusively reserved for qualified seekers, particularly the Tivra Tara aspirants possessing the essential strength for this profound understanding.

To attain the realisation of Cid-aditya, this Upaniṣat prescribes meditation on the Ajapā Gāyatrī (normal natural

breathing). Through this technique, practitioners can realise the Hamsa, symbolising the Sun of consciousness and, concurrently, the Ātma^[14]. The meditation on Ajapā Gāyatrī is imparted as a means of achieving self-realisation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the teachings of the Mahāvākya Upaniṣat on Cid-aditya realisation present a distinctive approach to spiritual understanding, transcending conventional paradigms. The teachings of this Upaniṣat are for the earnest seekers and shrouded in secrecy, it discloses a transformative path in harmony with Vedantic philosophy, emphasising the intrinsic unity of Ātma and Brahman. The Upaniṣat advocates a meditative journey, particularly through Ajapā Gāyatrī, as the means to realising one's true Self and acknowledging the profound connection between individual and universal consciousness.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to research scholars, Sharmila, Gauri, Sushil and Harshit, whose collaborative efforts enriched our exploration. Their dedication and thoughtful contributions played a crucial role in shaping the comprehensive analysis of this work. This manuscript stands as a testament to our collective commitment to advancing understanding in this field.

Authorship Confirmation/Contribution Statement:

Abinash Roy conceptualized and conducted the comprehensive analysis as the lead Researcher. Dr. Subramanya Pailoor, provided critical supervision, guidance, and oversight throughout the research process. Abinash Roy and Dr. Pailoor Subramanya jointly contributed to the writing and revision of the manuscript. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript. Correspondence regarding this work can be directed to Dr. Pailoor Subramanya at pailoors@cukerala.ac.in.

Sources of funding

None

Conflict of interest

None

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