

## A Brief Study on Śvetāśvataropaniṣad

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**How to cite this paper:** Nilachal Mishra "A Brief Study on Śvetāśvataropaniṣad" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-3 | Issue-3, April 2019, pp.281-285, URL: <http://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd21743.pdf>



IJTSRD21743

### ABSTRACT

Upaniṣads are the highest portion of Veda and upaniṣads are called as vedānta. It is the compound word of Sanskrit like upa-ni-sad, which denotes sitting at the feet or presence of a guru. The upaniṣads are called disclosure of god. There are one hundred and eight upaniṣads in Indian philosophical tradition. But their numbers exceed two hundred Among of them 11 number of upaniṣads are treated as major upaniṣads. The śvetāśvataropaniṣad is a major upaniṣad and there are 113 mantras in this upaniṣad and which belongs to kṛṣṇayajurveda. The śvetāśvataropaniṣad describes the yoga, its usages and merits vividly. There are seen many more descriptions of the supreme soul and the descriptions about the individual soul in this upaniṣad very beautifully.

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**Keywords:** svetasvataropanisad, mundaka upanisad, brahman, krsnayajurveda, adisankaracarya, sankarananda

### INTRODUCTION

The upaniṣad presents the highest portion of Veda and ancient Indo-Aryan thought and their culture. Upaniṣad is the wisdom portion of Vedas. In every of four great Vedas viz. Ṛk, sām, yajur, and Atharva and there is a large portion which relates mainly with rites and rituals. Every Vedas has another portion which called as upaniṣad. The upaniṣads are called as vedānta, means the end or the final achievement of wisdom

The name like upaniṣad has interpreted from various aspects. Somebody says that it is a compound word of Sanskrit up-ni-sad, which denotes sitting at the feet or in the presence of a guru. At the same time, according to others, it means 'to smash or ruin' the manacles of ignorance. Ādiśaṅkarācārya, the great Indian philosopher and commentator say regarding the term of upaniṣad that, the word like upaniṣad is denoted from the root 'sad' and that prefixed by 'upa' and 'ni' and then followed by suffix 'kwp'. So that relieves bondage of rebirth, old age, etc. and which empowered the man to meet with Brahman and ruins rebirth, death etc. and that is called Upaniṣad.

**Saderupaniṣadpūrvasya kvipi copaniṣadbhavit/  
mandīkaraṇabhāvāṅca garbhādeḥ śātanāttathā//1**

The upaniṣads are called as 'srutis, means what is heard, the term is generally used as the secret disclosed to others. The upaniṣads are called a disclosure of God when other smritis and minor scriptures received through memory. śaṅkarācārya says about the definition of upaniṣads that, the

upaniṣads are commenced for dispersing the knowledge of Brahman and by which the ignorance might have vanished and the existing of transmigration has removed and that comes to an end forever.

**Tasmādājñānahānāya saṁsāraviniṣṭtaye/  
brahmavidyāvidhānāya prārabdhopaniṣṭtviyam//2**

No date is fixed for the origin of upaniṣads. Prof. max.muller tells in his lectures on Vedanta philosophy 'one feels certain that behind all these lightning-flashes of religious and philosophic thought there is a distant past, a dark background of which we shall never know the beginning'. Some researcher says that the Vedic period as far back as 4000 or 5000 b.c and other says from 2000 to 1400 b.c. But some conservative admit it predates, the Buddhist period which starts in the sixth-century b.c.

According to Indian philosophical tradition, there are one hundred and eight (108) upaniṣads but their number exceeds over two hundred (200). Except this, others are called as minor upaniṣads. Among the one hundred and eight upaniṣads, the eleven(11) number of upaniṣads like iśa, kena, kaṭha, praśna, mūṇḍaka, māṇḍukya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, chāṇḍogya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka and śvetāśvetara on which saṅkar has given his commentaries.

The śvetāśvetaropaniṣad is a upaniṣad which consists of 113 mantras and divided into six chapters and it belongs to kṛṣṇayajurveda. The name of the upaniṣad comes from the

name of the sage, which name is śvetāśvetara who has been taught to his disciple (chapter-6, mantra-21). But according to śaṅkarānanda 'śvetāśvatara' means who controlled his senses. There are many passages in this upaniṣad which are associated to dualism, non-dualism, Advaita and that also related to other branches of vedānta but yoga and sāṅkhya ideas are occupied a significant place in some verses and this upaniṣad is also gained as the place of major upaniṣad in upaniṣadic calculations.

### **The whole universe is a wheel which has one felly and triple tires**

The śvetāśvataropaniṣad describes that, the whole universe is like a wheel and which has one felly and triple tires and sixteen extremities, fifty spokes and twenty counter spokes and twenty counter spokes with six sets of eight and that wheel runs on the three different types of roads with the help of a belt which is also a single but manifolds and which each revolution gives increase to two.

### **Tamekanemiṁ trivṛtaṁ sodaśāntam Śatārdhāraṁ viṁśatipratyarābhiḥ/ aṣṭakaiḥ śadabhirviśvarupaikapāśaṁ trimārgabhedaṁ dvinimittaikamoham//3**

Brahman is the endless wheel and everything lives and takes rest in this. The devoted soul travels about that. For knowing the individual soul, so far called as separated. Itself is the moving force or god and favored by him and it gains immortality.

### **Sarvājīve sarvasaṁsthe bṛhante asmiṁ haṁso bhrāmyate brahmacakre/ Pṛthagātmanaṁ preritāraṁ ca matvā juṣṭastatastenāmṛtatvameti//4**

Muṇḍaka upaniṣad says in this regard that, he is just like all the spokes of a wheel who meet that axle, he is that place of a body from which arteries flow. He is the om, which placed in the inner heart and that meditated by all. One can get success and one can gain that goal. You may get him who is the beyond of all darkness. The language of the upaniṣad is like this.

### **Arā eva rathanābhau saṁhatā yatra nāḍayaḥ Sa eṣo;ntaścarate bahudhā jāyamaṇaḥ/ omityevaṁ dhyāyatha ātmānaṁ Svasti vaḥ pārāya tamaṣaḥ parastāt//5**

### **Supreme Brahman is imperishable and the knower of that Brahman became free from all the bondages or chains.**

This is explicitly announced as supreme Brahman and that Brahman is strong support, in the triad and that is imperishable. For the inner essence, the brahmavid ( the knower of the Vedas ) sacrifices himself to that Brahman and they merge in it and became free from birth.

### **Udgītametatparamaṁ tu brahma tasmiṁstrayaṁ supraṭiṣṭhā.kṣharaṁ ca/ atrāntaraṁ brahmavidō viditvā linā brahmaṇi tatparāḥ yonimuktāḥ//6**

The universe is supported by the lord. That is the perishable and imperishable, manifest and unmanifest. Whereas the ātmā(the self) cannot able to know the lord and became

attached with the worldly objects but when he knows the reality of the supreme soul, at that time he can able to be free from all the bondage of the world.

### **Samyuktametāt kṣaramakṣaraṁ ca vyaktāvvyaktaṁ bharate viśvamiśaḥ/ aniśascātmā badhyate bhokṛḥbhāvāj jñātvā devaṁ mucyate sarvapāśaiḥ//7**

When the person is well known to the god, at that time his all manacles are declined with the decreasing of ignorance, birth and death come to an end. The body became more conscious by the practicing of meditation and someone gains the third stage like the universal lordship. By this, his all desires are satisfied and he became able to get the attachment of that supreme soul.

### **Jñātvā devaṁ sarvapāśāpahāniḥ kṣhīnaiḥ kleśairjanmamṛtyuprahāniḥ/ tasyābhidhyānātṛtitaṁ dehabhede viśvaiśvaryaṁ kevala āptakāmaḥ//8**

The supreme soul or paramātmā is alone the protector of the universe at the proper time. He exists in the inner hearts of all beings. All the saints who are the knower of Brahma and all the gods are merged with him. One can able to remove the fetters of death by realizing the supremacy of that supreme soul.

### **Praṇava and its meditation**

Firestick is not realized as the cause of the fire, till that ignited by the collision. The fine nature of fire, normally it is not absent in the stick. Fire can be gained from that source like fire stick, by the action of striking. The realization of Ātman is like that fire and the ātman is realized with a meditation on praṇava(the symbol om).

### **Vanheryathā yonigatasya mūrtirna Dṛśyate naiva ca liṅganāśaḥ/ Sa bhūya evendhanayonigrhya- Stavadobhayaṁ vai praṇavena dehe//9**

This upaniṣad describes regarding praṇava that, you can make your own body as the lower piece of the wood and the syllable om or praṇava, make the upper piece of the wood and one should realize the presence of God by practicing churning in the mode of the meditation and one can able to see which is the secret.

### **Śvadehamaraṇiṁ kṛtvā praṇavaṁ cottarāraṇiṁ/ dhyānanirmathanābhyāsāddevaṁ paśyennigūḍhvat//10**

Regarding praṇava muṇḍaka upaniṣad says that om is the bow and arrow is the human mind. The object which is hit by us, that is Brahman and that object can hit by a concentrated mind. The mark hits by the arrow and it can enter into the object and become united. Hence, the arrow and the mind and which thrown to the object, that became merges with him.

### **Praṇavo dhanuḥ saro hyātmā brahma tallakṣhyamuyate/ apramattena veddhavyaṁ śaravat tanmayo bhavet//11 Supreme soul is omniscient, omnipresent,self- luminous,pure conscious and destroyer of ignorance.**

This śvetāśvataropaniṣad says that as sesame oil in sesame seeds, as butter exists in curds, as the stream of water available in the underground, as fire is seen in wood and the self is known in the self. The self can able to see him frequently by means of concentration of mind, and truthfulness. He, who is all-pervading like butter and he is supreme Brahman, the destroyer of ignorance and the cause of self-knowledge and meditations.

**Tileṣu tailaṁ dadhīnīya sarpirāpaḥ srotaḥsvaraṅṣu cāgni/  
evamātmmani gr̥hyate.sou satyenainam tapasā yo.  
nupaśyati//  
Sarvavyāpīnamātmānam kṣīre sarpirivārpitam/  
Ātmavidyātapomūlaṁ tadbrahmhopaniṣatparam//12**

That is the quality of immanent soul who is omniscient, omnipresent, great and self-luminous. He is known to the limited persons who undergo spiritual practices and disciplines. The wise men can able to control the mind and intellect and that supreme bliss is only obtainable through the meditation and concentration.

**Yuñjate mana uta yuñjate dhiyo  
viprā viprasya vṛhato vipāścitaḥ/  
vi hotrā dadhe vayunāvideka  
enamahi devasya savituh pariṣtutiḥ//13**

The personal Brahman is the infinite supreme Brahman. He covered in all the living creatures of this universe. Although he is single, yet he pervades the whole universe. The person who knew him as the lord in real, he becomes immortal.

**Tataḥ param brahma param bhantaṁ yathānikāyaṁ  
sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaṁ/  
viśvasaikaṁ pariveṣṭitāramīśaṁ tam jñātvā.mṛta  
bhavanti//14**

So he is divine lord and who is all-pervading, omnipresent and benevolent. He resides in the inner hearts of all and he possesses the power of making use of all faces.

**sarvānanaśirogrīvaḥ sarvabhūtāśyaḥ/  
Sarvavyāpī sa bhagavānnstasmāt sarvagataḥ śivaḥ//15**

Muṇḍaka upaniṣad says in this regard that, he is immortal. He exists before us, He exists on our right side and on the left side also. He is our beneath and he is our above.

**Brahmaivedamamṛtaṁ purṣtād brahma  
Paścād brahma dakṣiṇataścottareṇa/  
adhaścordhvaṁ ca prasṛtaṁ  
Brahmaivedaṁ viśvamiḍaṁ variṣṭham//16**

God is one who pervaded the whole universe and he is the inner self of all the creatures. He is the head of all actions and all the creatures dwell in him. He is the pure consciousness, witness and he is free from the three guṇas of nature like sattva,rajas and tamas.

**Eko devaḥ sarvabhūeṣu guḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī  
sarvabhūtāntarātmā/  
karmādhyakṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivasaḥ sākṣī cetā kevalo  
nirguṇaśca//17**

**A controlled mind can gain supreme bliss**

The self-luminous immanent soul manifested by the controlled mind. We will strongly take attempt for the attainment of bliss.

**Yuktena manasā vyaṁ devasya savituh save/  
Suvargeyāya śaktyā//18**

Their mind gets perfection, where the fire is created, where the air is controlled and where soma juice overfilled.

**Agniryatrābhimathyate vyuāyatrādhirudhyate/  
somo yatrātiricyate tatra sañjāyate manaḥ//19**

**Description of yoga and its merits**

This śvetāśvataropaniṣad describes the yoga, its usages, and its merits vividly. Controlling the senses which is a good effort and regulating the activities of the body. One should take breathe through nostrils and that activity became gentle. The knowing person should control his mind like the reins which attached to edgy horses.

**Prāṇān prapīdyeha saṁyuktaceṣṭaḥ kṣīṇe prāṇe  
nāsikayocchrsit/  
duṣṭāśvayuktamiva vāhamenaṁ vidvān mano  
dhārayetāpramattaḥ//20**

The person should do his exercises in full of concentration where the places are the plane and that should be free from pebbles, fire, and dust and also that place should free from creating the noises and dampness. The prāṇāyama may be dangerous, where the air became impure and dusty. So the person should concentrate the mind and his concentration to be enhanced by a pleasing scenery but not displeasing to the eye.

**Same śucou śarkarāvanhivālukā vivarjite  
śabdajalāśrayādibhiḥ/  
manonukūle nā tu cakṣupīḍane guhānivātāśrayaṇe  
prayojayet//21**

The forms like snow, smoke, sun, fire, wind, Firefly, lightning, crystal and moon and these are the manifestations of Brahman in the practice of yoga.

**Nihārdhūmārkānilānām khadyotavidyutsphatikaśinām/  
etāni rupāṇi puraḥsarāṇi brahmaṇyabhivyaktikarāṇi  
yoge//22**

Man's body is a combination of five elements like air, earth, light, water, and ether, these are the perception of yoga and that should appear to yogin. When he became able to get a body, which made of fire of yoga, at that time his physical body will not be touched by any disease, old age or death.

**Prthivyaptejoni lakhe samuthite pañcātmake yogaguṇe  
pravṛte/  
Na tasya rogo na jarā na mṛtyuḥ prāptasya  
yogāgnimayaṁ śarīram//23**

By practicing the yoga man get a lot of merits and it is said that lightness of the body, healthy, thirstless, complexion of body's clearness, pleasant smell, melodious voice and crunch of excretions are the first signs of entering to yoga.

**Laghutvamā rogyamalolupatvam varnaprasādaḥ svarasauṣṭhavam ca gandhaḥ śubhou mūtrapuriṣamalapaṁ yogapravṛttiṁ prathamām vadanti//24**

Yoga makes a man just like dust free and cleaned. He shines brightly and he realizes the oneness and the truth of Ātmā(soul) and also free from sorrows by yoga practice. The yogin feels the truth of Brahman and he realizes about the soul(Ātmā) as self-luminous, eternal, unborn and free from all the adaptations of prakṛti and also he can able to be free from all type of sins.

**Yadātmatavena tu brahmatatvam dīpopameneha yuktaḥ prapaśyet/ ajam dhruvam sarvatatvairviśudham jñātvā devam mucyate sarvapāpaiḥ//25**

**The description of the difference between the individual soul(jīvātmā) and the supreme soul (paramātmā).**

The two birds who are inseparable and birds of beautiful feathers and they both resides on the same tree. One eats the fruits and other looks without eating. Here the body is a tree and the individual soul (jīvātmā) and the supreme soul (paramātmā) both reside in the same body. Jīva- Ātmā enjoys the worldly objects and suffers the consequences but the supreme soul or paramātmā although reside in the same body he stays as non attached to actions and their results and he is the witness of this extraterrestrial play. The śvetāśvataropaniṣad says like this.

**Dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā samāna vṛkṣam pariṣvasajāte/ tayoranyaḥ pipalaṁ svādvattyanaśnannanyo abhicākaśīti//26**

The same description has seen in the muṇḍaka upaniṣad. The vedānta philosophy is almost the same story. There are two birds on the branch of the same tree but one silent, calm and resides on the top level and he is majestic and submerged in the self-glory. But on the other hand, the bird who sits on a lower and that bird eats fruits and feels happy but stays in miserable conditions.

**Dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariṣvasajāte/ tayoranyaḥ pippalaṁ svādvattyanaśnannanyo abhicākaśīti//27**

Further, this śvetāśvataropaniṣad describes that the individual soul (jīvātmā) resides on the same tree and gets entangled but he forgets sorrows. When he looks to another as the lord of all, at that time he realizes his greatness and then he gains the relieve from that misery.

**Samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno.nīśyā śocati muhyamānaḥ/ juṣṭam yadā paśyatyanyamiśamasya mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ//28**

The same description has described in muṇḍaka upaniṣad like this.

**Samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno.nīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ/ juṣṭam yadā paśyatyanyamiśamasya mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ//29**

**Description of the supreme soul in śvetāśvataropaniṣad**  
The supreme soul is the fire, the sun, the air, and the moon also and that is called as Brahman(Hiranyagarbha) that is praṇāpati brahmā and that is the waters and that is also the starry firmament.

**Tadevāgnistadāditya stadvāyustaducaṇḍramāḥ/ tadevaśukram tad brahma tadāpstat praṇāpatiḥ//30**

The supreme soul possesses hands and feet everywhere and he has eyes, heads, and mouths in everywhere and his existence has seen in every object of the whole universe.

**Sarvataḥ pāṇipādam tat sarvato.kṣīṣiromukham/ sarvataḥ śrutimalloke sarvamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati//31**

The same description of the supreme soul has seen in śrīmad Bhagavadgītā. Bhagavān says that the supreme soul has many more hands, feet, eyes, heads, faces, and ears. Paramātmā (supreme soul) pervades the whole universe like this.

**Sarvataḥ pāṇipādam tat sarvato.kṣīṣiromukham/ sarvataḥ śrutimalloke sarvamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati//32**

The supreme soul is higher and different from all. There is nothing greater or more minute than him. He is like a tree and which is rooted in his own glory. He is filled with the power of that puruṣa (supreme soul).

**Yasmāt param nāparamasti kiñcidyasmānnāṇīyo na jyāyo.sti kaścit/ vṛkṣa eva stabdho divi tiṣṭhatyekastenedam pūrṇam puruṣeṇa sarvam//33**

The unlimited being possessed a thousand of heads, a thousand of eyes and a thousand feet. He pervades the whole universe from all sides and he has possessed a beyond of ten fingers.

**Sahasraśīrṣā puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt/ Sa bhūmim viśvato vṛtvā atyatiṣṭhaddaśāngulam//34**

The śvetāśvataropaniṣad describes that the supreme soul is smaller than the smallest, greater than greatest and he resides in the inner heart of all the creatures. He is free from all the sorrows. And all worldly desires and also he is the great lord by the grace of the creator.

**Aṇoraṇīyān mahoto mahīyānātmā guhāyām nihito.sya jantoḥ/ tamkratuḥ paśyati vītaśoko dhātuḥ prsadānmahimānamīsam//35**

God is imperishable and immortal but the matter is perishable. The individual soul and the matter which is perishable, that is overpowered by god. One can cease all the illusion (mayā) by meditation, by uniting and becoming one with him.

**Kṣharam pradhānamamṛtākṣharam haraḥ kṣharātmānāvīśate deva ekaḥ/ tasyābhidy ānādyo janāttatvabhāvāt bhūyaścānte viśvamāyānivṛttiḥ//36**

This is known that Brahman has eternally existed in one's own self. Beyond this, there is nothing to be known. consequently, due to meditation, the enjoyer, the enjoyed and which gives the enjoyment, these all are the three aspects of Brahman.

**Etajjñeyam nityamevātmasamsthān  
Nātaḥ param veditavyam hi kiñcit/  
bhoktā bhogyaṁ preritāraṁ matvā  
Sarvaṁ proktaṁ trividhaṁ brahmetat//37**

### Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is concluded that God is very powerful and he is the supreme soul, imperishable, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. He is the brahman who is like an endless wheel. He is like a tree who rooted in his own glory and he is alone but immovable. The person who knows him as lord in real, he becomes able to be free from all the adaptations of nature and free from all type of sins in this earth forever, there is no doubt at all.

### Footnotes

1. upadeśa sāhasrī.26.
2. upadeśa sāhasrī.25.
3. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.4.
4. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.6.
5. muṇḍaka upaniṣad.22.6.
6. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.7.
7. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.8.
8. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.11.
9. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.13.
10. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.14.
11. muṇḍaka upaniṣad.22.4.
12. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.15,16.
13. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.4.
14. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.3, mantra.7.
15. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.3, mantra.11.
16. muṇḍaka upaniṣad.2.2.11.

17. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.6, mantra.11.
18. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.2.
19. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.6.
20. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.9.
21. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.10.
22. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.11.
23. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.12.
24. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.13.
25. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.2, mantra.15.
26. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.4, mantra.6.
27. muṇḍaka upaniṣad.3.1.1.
28. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.4, mantra.7.
29. muṇḍaka upaniṣad.3.1.2.
30. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.4, mantra.2.
31. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.3, mantra.16.
32. śrīmadbhagavadgītā.chapter.13, mantra.14.
33. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.3, mantra.9.
34. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.3, mantra.14.
35. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.3, mantra.20.
36. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.10.
37. śvetāśvataropaniṣad.chapter.1, mantra.12.

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