

UPANISHAD RATNĀVALI

(A Lucid Exposition of the Principal Upanishads)



Kalanidhi Satyanarayana Murthy

Shri Veda Bharathi

“BRAHMAVIDĀPNOTI PARAM”
UPANISHAD RATNĀVALI

A lucid exposition of the principal Upanishads

1

(Introduction, Isavasya and Kena Upanishads)

KALANIDHI SATYANARAYANA MURTHY

Law Secretary (Retd.)

Government of Andhra Pradesh

EDITOR

“SAMSKRITA MITRA”

Dr. Remella Avadhanulu

M.Sc.(Nuclear Physics), M.A.Ph.D.(Sanskrit), M.A.Ph.D.(Jyotisha)

Dy. Director(Computers) (Retd)., NIMS, Hyderabad.

Foreword By

Prof I.V. Chalapathi Rao,

Chief Editor, ‘Triveni’

SHRI VEDA BHARATHI

Hyderabad

2011

UPANISHAD RATNĀVALI - 1

Kalanidhi Satyanarayana Murthy

First Edition : 2011

Copyright: Shri Veda Bharathi

Price: Rs.250/- for a set of four volumes

For copies:

1. Shri Veda Bharathi

H Block - 34, Madhuranagar,

Hyderabad - 500 038.

Phone : 040-23812577

Cell : 9849459316

e.mail : shrivedabharathi@gmail.com

www.shrivedabharathi.org

www.shrivedabharathi.in

2. K.S.N. Murthy,

D-118, Madhuranagar,

Hyderabad - 500 038.

Phone : 040-23810590

Cell : 9490295269

Cover Design:

Bhima Rao K.V., Computer Arts

Bhimaraokv@yahoo.com

Printed at:

Samhita Graphics

Ameerpet, Hyderabad - 500 016

Ph: 040-23731620, 23741620

UPANISHAD RATNĀVALI

(Introduction, Isavasya and Kena Upanishads)

1

CONTENTS

Editors' Note	i
Foreword	v
A Word of Delight	ix
Preface	xiv
Author's Note	xix
1. Eternally relevant Literature	xix
2. Goal of Life	xx
3. Harmonious blend of Knowledge with Wisdom	xx
4. The Upanishads - Science and Rationalism	xxii
5. The Timeless Indian Culture	xxiii
6. The Institution of Family	xxv
7. Serious Challenge	xxvii
8. Discrimination Against Indian Thought	xxviii
9. Inspiring thought in simple language	xxx
I. Introduction	1
1. Hinduism	1
2. Hindu religion and Indian Philosophy	2
3. Ancient India	4
4. Indian thought and way of life	5
5. Scientific Knowledge	6
6. Dharma Sastras	7
7. The Vedas	9

8. The Age of Vedas	11
9. What is Veda?	11
10. Importance of Guru	12
11. Division of Vedas	13
12. What do the Vedas contain	14
13. Vedic Chanting	18
14. Commentaries	19
15. The Smritis	19
16. Our Immediate Task	21
II. The Upanishads - Their Contents and Message	24
1. Introduction	24
2. Form and Contents	26
3. The focus is on the Self Within	28
4. Of What Use	30
5. A Mass of Literature	33
6. Some Important Aspects	35
III. ISAVASYOPANISHAD	38
1. Brahman is all - pervasive	40
2. Greed is detestable	41
3. Householder's Duties	42
4. The nature of Atman	44
5. Universal Brotherhood	46
6. Atman is Indefinable	47
7. A harmonious combination of Ritualism with Devotion	48
8. A synthesis of Jnana and Bhakti	52
9. Purpose of an Integrated Approach	56
10. Last prayer to Sun God	57

11. In praise of Agni	59
12. Death and Re-birth	61
13. The process of death	64
14. Deliverance	66
15. Self - surrender	67
IV. KENOPANISHAD	69
1. Introduction	70
2. The core question	71
3. The Answer	73
4. The Self is only a witness	74
5. Atman is not cognizable through senses	75
6. Knowledge of the Brahman	77
7. To become one with Brahman is Brahmajnana	79
8. Spiritual discipline is the only path	81
9. Atman is pure consciousness	82
10. Here and Now	83
11. A fascinating story	83
12. Has Brahman a form?	87

EDITOR'S NOTE

1. When the peerless devotee Pahlada said "Father! I learnt the essence of all learnings", he referred to the Upanishad Truths experienced by the Holy Sage Narada in himself and passed on to the former.
2. When a seeker after Truth (Saunaka) approached sage Angirasa and asked him "Venerable Sir, what is that knowledge by knowing which everything else is known?", the reply was 'para vidya' - higher knowledge contained in the Upanishads.
3. To unravel the secrets behind the phenomenal world scientifically what the world renowned scientists and thinkers like Einstein and Schrodinger studied in-depth are only the Upanishads.
4. What Jagadguru Sri Krishna handed down to the world at large through Bhagavadgita taught to Arjuna is nothing but the essence of Upanishads.
5. Sadly, this quintessential knowledge contained in the Upanishads is not reaching our modern youth. Among the various reasons for this unfortunate plight, some are -
 - i) In a secular educational curriculum, there is no place for it;
 - ii) A false propaganda that it is difficult to understand the Upanishads since they are in Sanskrit language;
 - iii) They are irrelevant in a tender age; they are of no use to students and employees; they can be reserved for post-retirement time-pass;
 - iv) An attitude that in this present day competitive world only money-spinning keeps us happy and secure; if necessary a part of our earning can be donated for charitable causes;

- v) When we hardly have any time to look after our family affairs, how can we spare any time for a study of the Upanishads?
6. None of the above reasons is defensible. We do whatever the circumstances demand, spend any amount and waste any amount of time on anything after our heart. But we don't turn our attention towards the Upanishads. The real reason for this is, we have absolutely no idea of the Upanishads. In the current context of the world, the chances of our youth to know of our cultural and spiritual heritage have badly and sadly receded. In fact a large majority of our elders also have no knowledge of what the Upanishads deliberated upon;
 7. In fact, teachings like '*Matrudevobhava, Pitrudevobhava, Acharyadevobhava* - regard your parents and the teacher as your Gods should be inculcated in the tender minds but not in retired minds about to depart from this world;
 8. Many people are leaving no stone unturned to spread the Upanishad knowledge. Some scholars have written commentaries, some have written word for word meanings and synopsis, suitable to the relevant times. But yet their reach is limited;
 9. Our immediate tasks in these circumstances are,
 - i) The parents themselves study the Upanishads in the first instance and make their children enjoy the stories in the Upanishads and their broad ethical and spiritual message they convey;
 - ii) The goal of life and an ideal value system should be set by elders to themselves in the first instance and should be made known to their children at an impressionable age;
 - iii) Inspired by the Upanishad thought we must mould our lives into a joyful and purposeful ones and gradually make this life itself a stepping stone for liberation.

10. The need to teach the mysteries of Universe hidden in the Upanishads in simple racy style in a booklet form was realized long time back. Shri Veda Bharati has been looking forward to participate in such a programme of action.
11. By the grace of Veda Mata, we came to know Sri Kalandihi Satyanarayana Murthy (Retired Law Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh). Influenced by higher spiritual values, he is a cultured person. Our earlier publication “Towards an Autonomous Temple Administration” has largely reflected his ideas. That book was written in simple prose in order to bring the dismal condition of our temple administration and the diversion and misappropriation of temple funds to the knowledge of the Hindu Public. A number of measures to put the temple administration back on rails have also been made in that work. The book was well-received by thousands of people.
12. When Sri Murthy told us that he was writing a book expounding the essential contents of the ten Upanishads in a manner understandable to our students and youth, we requested him to allow us to publish the same with the title “Upanishad Ratnāvali”. He agreed to the same. We convey our deep felt thanks to him.
13. To outline the contents of this work briefly, they are as follows:
 - Part one:** The basic tenets of Hinduism and the challenges it is now facing, our ancient literature, the form and contents of the Upanishads in brief, Isavasyopanishad and Kenopanishad.
 - Part two:** Mundakopanishad, Prasnopanishad and Taitriyopanishad
 - Part three:** Chandogyopanishad, Aitareyopanishad and Kathopanishad
 - Part four:** Brihadaranyakopanishad, Mandukyopanishad and Svetasvetaropanishad.

14. Mahamahopadhyaya, Padmasri, Acharya Pullela Sri Ramachandrudu, has kindly gone through the four parts with a critical eye and gave us his blessings under the heading 'A word of Delight'. We convey our respectful regards and grateful thanks to him.
15. We are much indebted to Prof I.V.Chalpathi Rao for his kindness, despite his age, in reading through the book and making many valuable suggestions. His foreword has greatly added to the value of this book. We convey our gratefulness, respectful regards and thanks to him.
16. We sincerely hope that the readers will appreciate and bless this modest effort and ardently appeal to them that, in their turn, they too should do everything in their power to spread the admirable, inspiring message of the Upanishads among the students and youth.

Hyderabad,
Gita Jayanthi, 2011

Dr. Remella Avadhanulu
Editor 'Upanishad Ratnāvali'
Founder: **Shri "Veda Bharathi"**
(A Charitable Institution)

Prof I.V.CHALAPATHI RAO,
Retd Registrar CIEFL & presently
Chief Editor, 'Triveni'.

Hyderabad,
01.12.2011

FOREWORD

Swami Vivekananda, the morning star of Indian independence and the saviour of Hinduism, addressing a meeting in Chicago said: "Five thousand years ago when Greece was not known and Rome was not thought of and the forefathers of the present day Europeans lived in jungles painting their faces blue, there was activity in this country". The first university in Europe, Bologna university was started in 13th century after the birth of Jesus Christ, where as our first university, Takshasila was started in 5th Century B.C. which means that we were in advance of the Europeans by hundreds of years. Albert Einstein, the great scientist wrote: "We are indebted to India for all scientific progress because it is they who taught us how to count and calculate without which no scientific progress could have been achieved". India invented the number system. Bhaskara and Varahamihira were pioneering astronomers. Ayurveda is the earliest system of medicine which produced Charaka, Jeevaka and Susruta. In fact India was shining in all fields of knowledge, sacred and secular.

It is universally accepted that the Vedas constitute the earliest literature of the world. They survive through the ages only through oral transmission from generation to generation. The Vedas have one common goal, the well being of the entire world and all the creatures living in it and the uplift of the self in each one of us and its everlasting union with the Ultimate Reality. One of the most conspicuous contributions of the Vedas is their emphasis on the unity of the people. They talk at the universal level. Other religious fear to talk at universal level lest they might lose their exclusion or existence as a separate entity. Vedas shun isolationism. The Vedic assembly displayed harmony in its conduct as laid down in Rigveda. The concluding sukta of Rigveda contains

a hymn which is a prayer for amity among nations: “May mankind be of one mind May it have a common goal, May all hearts be united in love and with the mind and goal being one, May all of us live in happiness”. This is a truly international anthem.

Upanishads are at the end of the Vedas - rightly called the Vedanta. The Vedantic tradition is not one of changeless continuity, or mindless veneration. It stands for courageous attitude of introspection and action. Upanishads do not preach blind faith and rigid doctrines. They are not about the religious conditioning of the mind of the faithful as most other religions are found to be. They encourage questioning and philosophical discussion. One of the Upanishads is even named ‘Prasnopanishad’. The mantras are the living words issued forth from the consciousness of our great rishis who preferred to remain anonymous.

Speaking about our culture and philosophical traditions and path-breaking treatises, Mark Twain, the great American writer, said “India is the cradle of the human race, the birth place of the human speech, the mother of history and the grandmother of legend. Our most valuable and instructive material in the history of man are treasured up in India only”. Arthur Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher said, “In the whole world there is no study more beautiful and elevating than the study of the Upanishads. They are the products of the highest wisdom of the Indians. They are the solace of my life. They will be the solace of my death”. R.W. Emerson, the American writer and philosopher, said, “Upanishads haunt me. I cannot put them away. In them I found eternal compensation, unfathomable power and unbroken peace”.

Bhagavadgita, the epitome of the Upanishads, is the noblest of the scriptures and the grandest of the sagas. Speaking about it Thoreau, the great American thinker, said: “In the morning I breathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical Bhagavadgita. In comparison with it our modern world and its

literature seem petty and trivial". Gita unfolds the essence of India's age-old philosophy, time honoured tradition of meditation and how to attain higher levels of consciousness. In short it is simplified message of the Upanishads.

Sri Kalanidhi Satyanarayana Murthy, retired Law Secretary of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, and erudite scholar who is proficient in the English and Telugu Languages and has a fairly good working knowledge in Sanskrit, has written this latest book on the Upanishads with scholarly commentary on each of them. As we know, there are 110 Upanishads now available. He has chosen the well-known ten cardinal Upanishads plus Svetasvatara Upanishad. The Principal ten Upanishads were commented upon by Sankaracharya and other erudite scholars. Sri Satyanarayana Murthy explained their seminal value with special reference to the origin of the universe, the cosmic energy, the body-mind syndrome, focus on Advaita, the three states of consciousness, Meditation, Pranavopasana on OM, Liberation and many things of Spiritual importance.

In support of the Upanishadic theory of creation the author quotes liberally from modern scientists with particular reference to space and atmosphere.

What is unique about Sri Satyanarayana Murthy's exposition of the Upanishads is his modern approach to explain our ancient wisdom in a simple and clear manner without jargon, by supplementing the traditional commentaries with convincing quotations from Indian thinkers past and present and foreign modern scholars like Freud, Stephen Hawking, Einstein, Somerset Maugham etc. This novel approach will appeal to the educated people who are otherwise misled by the so called rationalists and the atheists who stigmatize our scriptures as outdated and unscientific. In fact our Government has scant regard for our cultural heritage and by their wrongheaded policy in education created the impression that religious illiteracy is secularism and democracy does not need ethics. As a consequence, we have been

witnessing wide spread corruption and scams galore involving even ministers.

As the author has suggested, Upanishadic knowledge should be included in the curriculum of education. Students will certainly find it interesting to study the stories and parables. The teachers themselves should learn the upanishadic method of teaching which is not straight jacket method of lecturing but questioning and dialogue. Even abstruse, subjects are brought within the reach of ordinary people through examples and illustrations from real life. He has absolute command over language to use the right word in the right place.

Another important thing about the book is, the author has removed the popular misapprehension that Upanishads are against the rituals. He has repeatedly pointed out that the rituals gradually prepare the mind towards liberation. Sri Satyanarayana Murthy has added a new dimension to the existing commentaries on Upanishads.

I congratulate him and also Samskritamitra Dr. Remella Avadhanulu of Shri Veda Bharathi for his missionary zeal in his tireless efforts to protect, preserve and promote our endangered cultural and spiritual heritage.

I.V. Chalapati Rao
Chief Editor, 'Triveni'

Vachaspathi, Vedantasagara,
Sastra Kalanidhi, Pratibhamurthy,
Mahamahopadhyaya, Padma Sri
Acharya Pullela Sri Ramachandrudu.

Sree

*Om Swasthi Sri Ganesaya Namaha
Sri Shankara Bhagavatpadaha Vijayante*

A WORD OF DELIGHT

One among the varied meanings assigned to the word 'Upanishad', is 'secret'. It means, though difficult, through effort one can understand it. A thing far away too is unknown to us, but we do not say it is 'secret'. What is close to us but not known to us is a great secret. Such a great secret is the knowledge of the Self. As 'I' and 'mine' the Self is experienced by all of us. Yet its nature and true form is not known to anybody. The word 'Upanishad' is understood not merely in the sense of that 'secret' but also as meaning the treatise that teaches about that secret.

As Upanishads are at the end of Vedas, they are also known as Vedanta. Uttara Mimamsa (aphorisms which enquire into the latter part of Vedas), also popularly known as Vedanta Sastra, expounds the rules of interpreting and understanding the Upanishads. Brahma Sutras, (a compendium of aphorisms dealing with the Ultimate Reality) authored by Badarayanacharya forms the source material to this Sastra or science. The subject of inquiry in this Sastra is entirely the nature of the Self. So it is also known as Sariraka Mimamsa, which means an enquiry into the nature of the embodied soul. Embodied Self means the consciousness pervading in the body with an 'ego sense'.

Sri Shankara wrote a detailed commentary known as 'Mimamsa Bhashya' and this is the oldest commentary extant. He also wrote commentaries on the ten principal Upanishads

which form the foundation to Brahmasutras, and also on Bhagavadgita, which is the essence of Upanishads. To this trinity known as Prasthanā Traya, and more particularly to Upanishads, Dr. Remella Avadhanulu as well as the Author Sri Kalanidhi Satyanarayana Murthy have given an introduction in the beginning of this book.

A desire to know what is in the Upanishads arises as a result of one's own noble deeds in the previous birth. Those who have such a desire cannot understand or appreciate the text or the commentaries thereon unless they have a fairly good knowledge of Sanskrit language as well as the traditionally established methods of appraisal. To fully satisfy the desire of such seekers of knowledge, Sri Kalanidhi Satyanarayana Murthy authored this book 'Upanishad Ratnāvali' in four parts which is designed to transmit the quintessence of Upanishads. Dr. Avadhanulu, the founder of Shri Veda Bharathi undertook the noble task of publishing this book to adorn the hands of those who are blessed with an inquiring mind.

All the cardinal doctrines propounded by the ten principal Upanishads and the Svetasvatara Upanishad have been explained lucidly in simple, delightful language. The essential doctrine propounded by these ten Upanishads is Advaita-non-dualism. But to reach the non-dual state, one has to travel a long way in the path of dualism. Advaita philosophy can be elucidated in a few words. But if it has to transform into a conviction, it is imperative to dwell on matters like the nature of this universe, why and how it emerged, what is the real nature of these living beings with diverse ways of life-styles and the process through which one can acquire that advaitic vision. These matters have been explained by the Upanishads ideally in the form of entertaining story-like dialogues between the preceptor and disciples. To achieve this, thirty two varied meditative practices (upasanās) have been prescribed. Even if one or two meditative practices are followed by the seeker after Truth with dedication, a non-dual

enlightenment dawns on him. Sri Satyanarayana Murthy dwelt on all these aspects under different heads and clarified its spiritual dimension, in a way acceptable to modern times and modern line of thinking.

As whatever is seen or felt is pervaded by the spirit of God Almighty, there is hardly any scope for greed for wealth or mutual hatred, is the message of Isavasyopanishad. Incidentally while explaining this, the Author briefly dwelt on different approaches of scholars on the nature of Vidya (knowledge) and Avidya (ignorance). Sri Shankara propounded at various places in his commentaries that one and the same person at the same time cannot club action and meditation, so to say, that treading two different paths at the same time, is impossible. The author touched on this aspect also. Sri Shankara believed that a person who acquired the knowledge of the Self as one without a second is not required to tread the path of action and that so long as one acts in this world with a feeling of duality will never acquire the knowledge of the Self. Some people do not realize that what Shankara meant here is a knowledge of the Self as one without a second and argue that 'knowledge is the path that leads to devotion or Bhakti', thus theorizing that a combining of meditative practices with devotional practices is acceptable. Bhakti or devotion is worshipping a God with attributes, with a dual mind, that is that God and the worshipper are different from each other. One who wants to take that path is required to have a full knowledge of the deity he wants to worship and also about the devotional practices particular to that deity. That may be a limb or subsidiary to meditation and devotion; they can be together too at the same time. This is acceptable to Sri Shankara also. To speak the Truth, devotion too is a part of karma or action. So there is no independent path of devotion. In this context Sri Krishna exhorted in Bhagavadgita:

“O Sinless Arjuna! In ancient times, I taught two types of self-disciplines, Gnana-yoga (the path of knowledge) to the

Sankhyans (those who follow meditative practices) and Karma Yoga (the path of action) to Yogis (those who take the path of action)”.

Sri Krishna’s exposition reveals that there are only two paths. Therefore, the view expressed by a distinguished political leader long time back that ‘to think that Gnana and Bhakti are different is ignorance and that Gnana without Bhakti is useless tinsel’ is not consistent with the commands of the treatises.

The story at the end of Kenopnishad, though small, gives a great message to humanity. The author skillfully narrated this for the benefit of the readers. How Kathopnishad expounds the Advaitic vision and the process of achieving the same, has been ably brought out in the form of an entertaining story. Among the many, the Prasnopanishad propounds two important aspects. Those who are not reasonably conversant with Upanishads have really a slim opportunity to understand the principle of ‘prana’ or life force. There is scope to understand ‘prana’ as meaning only the popularly known five vital airs like ‘apana’ etc. But in fact ‘prana’ is different from ‘air’, and it is indeed a principle that pervades the entire body. Though it appears to be functioning in the form of ‘air’, it is different from air. So long as it resides in the body, the body is alive and once it departs, the faculties of all the vital organs too depart. The Sutra Bhashya states that this ‘prana’ too is a principle that is born out of Paramatma. The Prasnopanishad explained in detail the sixteen aspects of Purusha (the Ultimate Reality). Sri Satyanarayana Murthy deliberated on all these aspects with sufficient clarity.

The doctrine of five sheaths, which is not adequately explained in other Upanishads, but extensively dealt with in Taithiriya Upanishad, has been brought out with precision and established the nature of the Ultimate which exists transcending the Annamaya - Pranamaya - Manomaya - Vignanamaya - Anandamaya kosas or sheaths. The Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads are by their size and varied aspects

dealt with therein are fairly exhaustive. Several upasanas or spiritual practices are taught in these Upanishads. To convey the contents of these Upanishads in a nut-shell is no ordinary task. This task also has been ably accomplished by Sri Satyanarayana Murthy. In the context of extensive philosophical disputations between Yagnavalka and Gargi he quoted extensively from other works so as to convince the modern readers on the scientific validity of Upanishad thought.

To present the essence of the ten Upanishads in a language understandable to all is possible only to a person who relentlessly reflected on them for long. When I read this book I got the feeling that Sri Satyanarayana Murthy obviously pondered over it and worked hard on it for a considerable time.

If the essence of the Upanishads handed down to us by him constitutes one important part, another and strikingly important part is the first fifty odd pages under the headings 'Author's Note' and 'Introduction'. They reveal his profound understanding of the various aspects of Hindu Religion and his keen observation and analysis of the current situation. Once the book is in one's hands, a reading of these two parts is a must.

Dr. Avadhanulu dwelt on various aspects relating to Upanishads in his Editor's Note and preface. Dr. Avadhanulu, the founder of Shri Veda Bharathi has published and is publishing a number of books. Among all these, as this book is replete with various aspects useful to the society - as Vidyanatha described Goddess Saraswathi as "Shruti Sirah Seemantha Muktamani", it is my strong feeling that this book will shine as "Sri Veda Bharatee Sirah Seemantha Muktamani".

Pullela Sri Ramachandrudu

Dr. Remella Avadhanulu
Founder : “Shri Veda Bharathi”

PREFACE

So long as this creation lasts the one thing that every person seeks is ‘Bliss’. He is charged with an ambition to attain that bliss and make it his own. There is no scope for any difference of opinion on this. But it gives rise to certain questions: What is meant by ‘bliss’? How can we cross all hurdles to attain it and reach the state of bliss? What exactly is the nature and form of the bliss one wants to attain? What is the real nature of the person who wants to attain that bliss?- and many more questions.

To provide satisfactory answers to these endless questions, a few intuitive thinkers came forward. A number of doctrines were propounded. A number of religions arose out of the doctrines. Debates and disputations took place. Countless treatises were written. Some said physical pleasure alone is bliss, while others rejected that theory outright.

However, detailed and comprehensive answers to all these questions are found in the Vedas. All people say with one voice that ‘Veda’ means knowledge. Sri Sayanacharya who wrote a commentary on Vedas said: “Every human being aspires to secure what he likes and to drive away what he dislikes - to this end the treatise that suggests non-conventional solutions is Veda. But then of what use are the Vedas? - to satisfy the mundane desires by non-conventional methods like rituals? Or is there anything beyond that? On this a number of *sastras* or treatises arose.

Sage Jaimini said that to know the Dharma or righteousness and strictly practice it, is the object of Vedas. The treatise that elaborates on this subject is known as Purva Mimamsa sastra. Some thinkers did not stop at that and questioned as to of what use is it if one knows the Dharma after a deep study and strictly

practices it. Sage Badarayana answered these questions by saying that the real object of all this is to still the mind, purify it of all that is base, thereby attain knowledge of the Self and eventually attain eternal bliss. The treatise that contributes to the advancement of the subject from this angle is known as Uttara Mimamsa. It mainly consists of three parts: 1. The Upanishads; 2. The Brahma Sutras (the treatise that presents the essence of Upanishads in the form of aphorisms); and 3. The Bhagavadgita. This trinity is known as *Prasthanatraya*, final goal of life (=prasthana). Among the three, since the Upanishads are found at the end of Vedas they are popularly known as Vedanta also. Since the Uttara Mimamsa is the quintessence of the Upanishads, it is also called as a treatise on Vedanta. Before we embark on knowing about the Upanishads, it becomes imperative to at least have a minimum idea of what the Vedas are of which the Upanishads form part. It is now common knowledge that the Vedas are four in number and they are Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvana Veda. At one time these four Vedas had 1131 branches of which now only 13 are extant and among these 13 only seven are now being taught. The rest of them have vanished during foreign invasions. Sri Veda Bharathi has been striving hard to preserve at least what is available now.

Each Veda is again divided into four parts. Among them, the first part is called *Samhita*, the second part *Brahmana*, the third part *Aranyaka* and the fourth part is *Upanishads*. The first two parts contain ritualistic details, while the third part deals with the norms of a righteous, retired life of a renunciate living in the forests. And then in the fourth part one finds discussions on philosophical problems revolving round the knowledge of the individual Self, the universal Self etc., Among the several Upanishads ten Upanishads have been identified as principal Upanishads. The Svetasvatara Upanishad also gained importance over the years. The Table below specifies the Upanishads and the Vedic branch to which each one belongs.

TABLE

S.No.	Name of the Upanishad	The Vedic branch to which it belongs
1	Aitareya	Rigveda
2	Katha	Krishna Yajurveda
3	Taithiriya	Krishna Yajurveda
4	Ishavasya	Shukla Yajurveda
5	Brihadaranyaka	Shukla Yajurveda
6	Kena	Samaveda
7	Chandogya	Samaveda
8	Prasna	Atharvanaveda
9	Mundaka	Atharvanaveda
10.	Mandukya	Atharvanaveda
11.	Svetasvatara	Krishna Yajurveda

Though the Upanishads dwell on philosophical problems in the main, it seems at least some of them lay stress on devotional practices as well. Nevertheless, the ten Upanishads regarded as principal Upanishads commented upon by Sri Shankara as also Svetasvatara are studied in general.

For the well-being and a secure, pleasant, comfortable life, individuals, society, social organizations and the Government have formulated several plans, programmes and strategies and have been implementing them to the best of their ability. But their overall approach, the objects and the planning behind them have been extremely shallow and are of a limited scope. But our ancient sages have realized the hollowness of all such plans and strategies even in ancient times and designed strategies and drawn a roadmap which transcends all hurdles for a magnificent, blissful life, which is not momentary but eternal. All these strategies for a permanent bliss are found in the message of the Upanishads, which are acknowledged gems in world literature. In them is found a rare harmonious blend of spiritualism with scientific outlook. The questions raised and answers that followed in the Upanishads

bear testimony to the fact that they carried on their heroic adventure of searching for the Truth in an atmosphere of absolute freedom, at the same time leading a life of orthodoxy.

To catch the spirit of the Upanishads, we must be able to first divert our minds from the vicious environment of modern times and attune it to the serene life-style of our ancient seers and think on their plane. Then only we will be able to grasp the message of the Upanishads atleast to some extent.

Sri Shankara extensively examined the origin and meaning of the term 'Upanishad' in his brilliant commentary on Kathopanishad. On the basis of his masterly exposition which largely depends on Sanskrit grammar, the scope of the term 'Upanishad' is indeed so vastly enlarged that it has varied connotations.

- They are known as Upanishads as they destroy the ignorance in men, which arises out of worldly pursuits and entanglements, known as *Samsara*;
- As they lead men seeking liberation to the Almighty, they are called Upanishads;
- As they relieve men of the maladies and grief arising out of birth, old age and death by teaching them the science of the Self, they are called Upanishads;
- To those who study them Upanishad means in one sense a book and in another sense the 'knowledge' it imparts

And there are many more meanings.

Sri Shankara himself raised the question as to what exactly is the benefit we derive by a study of the Upanishads and answered it thus:

“When pure water is mixed with water, they become one; so too the individual Self of a meditating sage merges with the universal Self and loses its identity by becoming one. So O Gowthama! “Let people shed the irrational vision of duality. Let

them cultivate the non-dual vision handed down to us by the Veda which is more anxious than thousands of parents to enlighten us. Let them shed the egotistic attitude and accept it with an open heart". This is real bliss. The singular goal of one and all is to attain that eternal bliss.

The 'Upanishad Ratnāvali' is a series of books which dwell on the core teachings in the Upanishads that lead to eternal bliss. We appeal to the reading public to bless this effort to reach out to the people and spread the lofty, inspiring ideas of the Upanishads.

UPANISHAD RATNĀVALI

(Mundaka, Prasna & Taittiriya Upanishads)

2

CONTENTS

Editors' Note	i
MUNDAKOPANISHAD	1
First Chapter - First Part	2
1. Introduction	2
2. Angirasa and Saunaka	3
3. The Query of Saunaka	4
4. Lower knowledge and Higher knowledge	5
5. The Brahman	7
6. Sole Cause	8
7. Prakriti or primordial matter	10
8. A few doubts and clarifications	10
9. The process of Creation	11
First Chapter - Second Part	13
10. The path of Karma - the Path of Action	13
11. Vedic Sacrifices	13
12. Fruits of sacrifices	15
13. Sequence of arrangement of Vedas	16
14. In praise of Guru	18
Second Chapter - First Part	20
15. Truth of Truths	20
16. Self-luminous	21
17. Prakriti	22
18. Creation	24
19. The Cosmic Form	26
20. Panchagni Vidya (The doctrine of five fires)	26

Second chapter - Second Part	28
21. The Knowledge of Brahman	28
22. The Significance of Meditation	29
23. Brahman is omniscient and Supreme	30
24. Annihilation of Karmas	31
25. Experiencing the Karmas	32
26. Atman	32
Third Chapter - First Part	34
27. Sequence of practice	34
28. The Twin Birds	34
29. Self-realisation	36
30. Truth Alone Triumphs (Satyameva Jayate)	37
31. Knowledge of the Brahman	38
32. Individual Self and Universal Self	39
Third Chapter - Second Part	41
33. An Ideal Guru	41
34. The importance of Upanishad	42
35. The hurdles	43
36. What is sanyasa (Renunciation)	44
37. Liberation	45
38. No indiscriminate unfoldment	46
PRASNOPANISHAD	48
1. Introduction	49
2. Pippalada	50
3. The First Question	51
4. Pippalada's reply	52
5. The formed and the Formless	54
6. Sun God the Nourisher and Bestower of Knowledge	54
7. The Indian concept of Time	55
8. The Second Question	59
9. Pippalada's Response	59
10. Prana is the greatest	60

11. Prajapathi is the Creator	61
12. In praise of Prana	62
13. Third Question	64
14. Pippala Replies	65
15. Prana is the shadow of Paramatma	66
16. The entry of Prana into the body	67
17. The division of Mukhyaprana	67
18. Prana	68
19. Apana	68
20. Vyana	68
21. Udana	69
22. Samana	69
23. The exact nature of vital airs	69
24. Re-birth	71
25. The Fourth question	72
26. The purport of the questions	74
27. The Dream State	75
28. The life keeps awake in all states	77
29. The dream State	77
30. The dreamless state	79
31. The fundamental characteristics of the body	79
32. The functioning of the body	81
33. The fifth question	82
34. Meditation on Om	82
35. Sixth question	85
36. The Sixteen Parts	87
2. TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD	89
I. Introduction	90
II. Siksha valli (Chapter on Vedic Recitation)	90
1. Vedic science of phonetics	90
2. Learning and teaching	92
3. Meditation of Vyahritis	94

4. Meditation on Brahman	94
5. Five-fold nature of the universe	95
6. Meditation on Om	96
7. Ideal way of Life	96
8. Trisankus declaration	98
9. The convocation Address	98
III. Chapter on Bliss	101
1. The Brahman	101
2. The order of creation	102
3. The five sheaths	103
4. Everything emanates from Brahman	105
5. The existence of Brahman	105
6. Some legitimate doubts	107
7. The nature of Brahman	107
8. Brahman dispels fear	108
9. Evidence for Brahman's existence	110
10. Degrees of bliss	111
11. Classes of celestial beings	113
12. Reaching the sheath of bliss	114
13. A few clarifications	115
14. Brahman is beyond thought and speech	116
IV. Bhrigu Valli	118
1. Introduction	118
2. Varuna teaches Bhrigu	118
3. Essence of Varuna's teaching	120
4. Source of Creation	122
5. Bhrigu's method of examination	123
6. Worshipping of food	125
7. Green Revolution	126
8. Guest is God	126
9. Meditation on Brahman	127
Epilogue	129

UPANISHAD RATNĀVALI

(Chandogya, Aitareya & Katha Upanishads)

3

CONTENTS

Editors' Note	i
1. CHANDOGYOPANISHAD	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Raikva	3
3. Jaanasruti meets Raikva	4
4. Raikva's Teaching	5
5. Satyakama	7
6. Who is superior?	8
7. Swetaketu	10
8. The one without a second	12
9. May I be many	14
10. Food, water and heat	15
11. Emanation of Gross from the subtle	16
12. Thou Art That	18
13. Indispensability of a Teacher	18
14. Narada and Sanatkumara	19
15. The Self-sense and the Self	26
16. Sanatkumara's scheme of instruction	27
17. Bhuman	28
18. Self is within	29
19. Prajapati, Indra, Virochana	30
20. Austere life in the hermitage	32
21. Body and the Self	33
22. Dehatmavada	35

23. Indra stages a come-back	37
24. Dream Self is not Atman	38
25. Doubting Indra returns	39
26. Indra for a third time	40
Prayer	43
2. AITEREYOPANISHAD	44
First Chapter - First Section	44
1. Introduction	44
2. Prior to Creation	46
3. Atman	47
4. One without a second	49
5. Paramatma thought	50
6. The process of creation	52
7. The macrocosm	54
First Chapter - Second Section	57
8. Hunger and thirst	57
9. Microcosm	58
10. The human body	59
First Chapter - Third Section	61
11. Food	61
12. The physiological functions	63
13. The self in the three states of consciousness	65
Second Chapter	68
14. The process of reproduction	68
15. The three births	70
16. Vamadeva	71
Third Chapter - First Part	73
17. Who is this Self	73
18. The subject	74

19. Consciousness	74
20. The Mahavakyas - Great utterances	76
21. Cosmic intelligence is the source of creation	78
22. Hiranyagarbha	78
23. Virat purusha - The Aggragate person	79
24. Brahman is only a witness	80
25. A Brief Summary	81
3. KATHOPANISHAD	82
1. Introduction	82
First Chapter - First Section	83
2. Viswajit Yaga	83
3. Nachiketa and Yama	84
4. What is it that survives?	85
First Chapter - Second Section	87
5. The Two paths	87
6. The Self	89
7. Ethics	92
First Chapter - Third Section	94
8. The two atmans	94
9. The metaphor of a chariot	96
10. Role of intellect is crucial	99
11. The gross and the subtle	100
12. How to attain the Self?	102
13. The path of withdrawal	103
14. Arise! Awake!	104
15. Atman is subtlest	105
16. This knowledge is precious	105
Second Chapter - First Section	106
17. The wise person	106
18. The Individual Self	107

19. Hiranyagarbha	109
20. Brahman is one without a second	110
21. Smokeless Flame	111
Second Chapter - Second Section	112
22. Atman is the Ruler	112
23. Rebirth	113
24. Brahman is immanent and transcendent	115
25. Light of Lights	117
Second Chapter - Third Section	118
26. The tree of samsara	118
27. The Supreme commander	120
28. Here and now	121
29. The Self is distinct	122
30. Degrees of subtlety	122
31. How to perceive the formless	123
32. Yoga	124
33. Firm conviction is essential	125
34. Conquering the desires	127
35. Nachiketa is liberated	128

UPANISHAD RATNĀVALI

(Brihadaranyaka, Mandukya and Svetasvatara Upanishads)

4

CONTENTS

Editors' Note	i
BRIHADARANYAKOPANISHAD	1
1. Introduction	1
2. Yagnavalkya	3
3. Lead me from unreal to real	5
4. The manifest and the unmanifest	6
5. Aham Brahmasmi - I am Brahman	7
6. Truth is integral to righteousness	8
7. The nature of this world	9
8. Gargya - Ajatasatru	10
9. Ajatasatru's teaching	11
10. Truth of truths	13
Madhukanda concludes	15
11. Janaka's sacrifice	16
12. The query of Ushastha	17
13. Kahola's question	19
14. Gargi enters	21
15. Uddalaka's question	24
16. Gargi stages a come back	27
17. The imperishable Brahman	28
18. Vidagdha (Sakalya Brahmana)	32
19. Yagnavalkya teaches Janaka	36
20. The Brahman	37

21. Knowledge of the Self	39
22. The three states of the Self	40
23. Body and the Self	42
24. Voices of dissent	44
25. Rebuttal	44
26. More on atman	46
27. Death and Re-birth	48
28. Yagnavalkya and Maitrayi	53
29. Knowledge about past births	58
30. The message of Prajapati	61
31. Upanishads and Devotion	64
Prayer	
MANDUKYA UPANISHAD	70
1. Introduction	71
2. Aum constitutes all	73
3. The three states of consciousness	73
4. Ayamatra Brahma - This Atman is Brahman	74
5. The walking state	75
6. The Dream state	75
7. Sushupti - State of deep sleep	76
8. The experiencer is jiva	77
9. The cause of creation	78
10. Turiya - the state of spiritual consciousness	79
11. Turiya stands for AUM	81
12. Salutations to our ancient sages	81
SVETASVATARA UPANISHAD	83
First Chapter - First Section	83
1. Introduction	83
2. Assembly of scholars	84

3. Modern cosmology	85
4. The causes deliberated upon	86
5. Prakriti - Paramatma	87
6. The world is a wheel - Brahmachakra	88
7. The Virat is lika a river	89
8. The influence of Samkhya	90
9. Eternity	90
10. The manifest and the unmanifest	92
11. The triad	93
12. A comprehensive enlightenment	94
13. The inner Self	95
Second Chapter	96
14. Meditation on Sun God	96
15. Prayer for concentration	97
16. Ye children of Immotal Bliss	98
17. The Path of Yoga	98
18. Some signs of progress	99
19. Salutations to Paramatma	101
Third Chapter	102
20. Ruler of the Universe	102
21. A harmonious blend of Jnana and bhakti	103
22. Allpervasiveness of Paramatma	104
23. Lord Shiva is the Highest Reality	104
24. Of the size of a Thumb	105
Forth Chapter	107
25. Paramatma alone is real	107
26. Two Birds	108
27. Brahman is the cause of creation	110
28. Tenacious effort	111

Fifth Chapter	113
29. Knowledge and ignorance	113
30. Paramatma is the source of creation	114
31. Treasured in Upanishads	115
32. Brahman is sublest of the subtle	117
33. Uplift yourself	118
Sixth Chapter	119
34. The primordial cause	119
35. Desireless action	120
36. The world tree	121
37. The one without a second	122
38. Imperishable and self-luminous	123
39. He is omniscient	124
40. The author of Time	125
41. Body and the Self	126
42. Eternal Ruler	127
43. He is the bridge	127
44. Salutations to sage Svetaswatara	128