

CHAPTER 7

ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

In the first chapter, I gave the meaning of word *upaniṣad*, which means 'Sitting close to a teacher and understanding the secret and spiritual knowledge'. The three main subjects of *upaniṣads*, namely *Ātman*, *Brahman*, World, and their inter-relationships were explained.

The essences of the ten major *upaniṣads* were summarized along with the four *Mahāvākyas*. The relationship between *upaniṣads* and Indian culture were brought out with the powerful message of Swami Vivekananda from the *Kaṭa upaniṣad* that is *uttaiṣṭata jāgrata prapya varāṇnibodhata* (Arise, Awake, and Stop not till the goal is reached).

In the second Chapter, the *Māṇḍūkya upaniṣad* consisting of 12 verses translated by Swami Krishnananda was provided with diacritical marks.

In the third chapter, the subject matter of *Māṇḍūkya upaniṣad* was explained. The *upaniṣad* gives the concept of consciousness, its three states namely *jāgrat* (waking state), dream (*svapnam*), and deep-sleep (*susupti*). It explains the importance of fourth state called *Turīyā* which is unique compared to western philosophy. Here I explained the importance of *Omkāra*, one of the *mahāvākyas* namely *Ayam Ātma Brahmā*, with the analysis of Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*.

In the fourth chapter, an analysis of the three states and *Turīyā* was undertaken with all the *prakaraṇas* of Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*. Here other names of three states called *Vaiśvānara*, *Taijasa*, and *Prajñā* were also analyzed with their linking and de-linking with body, mind, intelligence and consciousness which were explained and the unity of subject-object relationship was brought out as per the *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* and *Śankara Bhāṣya*. *Turīyā* state is non-dual in nature (*Ādvaita*) and almost similar to one's self. In the words of King 'The fourth factor is [Turīyā](#), pure consciousness. It is the background that underlies and transcends the three common states of consciousness. In this consciousness both absolute and relative, [saguna Brahman](#) and [Nirguna Brahman](#), are transcended. It is the true state of experience of the infinite (*ananta*) and non-different (*Ādvaita/abheda*), free from the dualistic experience which results from the attempts to conceptualize reality (King 1995, p. 300 note 140).

Here the three letters of *Omkāra* namely *A-kāra*, *U-kāra* and *Ma-kāra* are linked with three states and related with *vaiśvānara*, *taijasa*, and *prajñā*. *Omkāra* in its final analysis is *Parabrahman* itself. Thus the nature of the world and its apparent reality or duality is explained. With the *Māyavāda* of *Ādi Śankarācārya* for which he got the clue from sage Gauḍapāda, the consciousness in its absolute nature is realized as supreme *Brahmān* which is in its purest form (*śuddha caitanya*).

Ranade calls the aphoristic style of *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* as highly influential on the *Sūtras* of Indian philosophies that followed it, and that the Upanishad has served as a foundational text of the major [Vedānta](#) school of Hinduism.

He states:

We are told in *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* that "the syllable Om is verily all that exists. Under it is included all the past, the present and the future, as well as that which transcends time. Verily all this is *Brahman*. The *Ātman* is *Brahman*. This *Ātman* is four-footed. The first foot is the *vaiśvānara*, who enjoys gross things, in the state of wakefulness. The second foot is the *Taijasa*, who enjoys exquisite things in the state of dream. The third is the *Prajñā* who enjoys bliss in the state of deep sleep. The fourth is *Ātman*, who is alone without a second, calm, holy and tranquil". This passage has been verily the basis upon which all the later systems of [Vedantic philosophy](#) have come to be built (RD Ranade, [A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy](#), Chapter 1, pages 35-36).

In the fourth chapter sleep and dreams were covered and analyzed from modern angle through psycho-analysis. According to western thoughts during ancient times, dreams were treated as visits by ghosts and sprits, serving as an instrument between gods and demons. But Sigmund Freud interpreted dream as a conflict between consciousness and un-consciousness mind. Later several psychologists such as C G Jung, Erich Fromm, Adler and others analyzed the consciousness, dream and sub-consciousness, mind of people and propounded their own theories.

Sleep was analyzed through Electro Encephalo Graph (EEG) by neuroscientists and they came out with four levels of sleep called Stage 1 to Stage 4. Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep was analyzed along with EEG patterns of the brain and duration of dream, REM sleep, non-REM sleep. It was observed that limited expression of unconscious impulses resulted in necessary functions and also some time leading to compensatory dreams. Now it is

understood that all physiological activities have psychological significance leading to physical functioning.

This chapter also brought out the history of psychology regarding mind - body problem according to western philosophers from the times of Boring (1950) to Richards (1980). All have analyzed mind - body problem and they treated this problem either dualistically or non-dualistically. It was William James who treated psychology as study of consciousness or streams of consciousness and rejected the theories of earlier psychologists.

He opined that consciousness is personal, sensibly changing, continuous and dealing with objects other than itself. Through perception, it chooses and it is nothing but a stream of consciousness and helps a person in adapting with new environment and further helps him to cope up with situations and contexts.

This chapter also makes an explorative journey into the concepts of mind as explained in the Indian philosophical traditions. The chapter explains about knowledge domains in the traditions and their distinctive features, different connotations and denotations of mind, the different methods being used in explaining mind. Yet they may not appear to be opposed or conflicting in nature.

The chapter also elaborated on the concepts such as mind (*manas*) and mind apparatus (*citta*) in Indian philosophical traditions and compared with traditional western psychology where the primary emphasis was given to the mind. It was explained here that in the Indian philosophical tradition, mind helped in knowing consciousness whereas in the western paradigm, mind became the subject as well as the object of knowing. Knowing gives an understanding of the truth and could lead to realization. In the eastern tradition, knowing becomes a being and becoming. This knowledge of the self (*ātman*) helps the individual in attaining happiness (*sukha*) and welfare (*abhyudaya*) in this world, and realization of the supreme reality (*Brahman*) leading to liberation (*mokṣa*). Thus knowing and understanding about consciousness become complimentary in both the traditions.

In Indian philosophy both mind and matter are placed in the same category as they become the objects of knowledge. But in western philosophy both are based on a clear distinction between mind and matter.

In the sixth chapter an analysis of the results obtained by the researchers at SVYASA was done and it was found that they were in close accordance with the Patañjali *Yoga sūtras*' concept of the development of mindfulness. It was found out that the duration of the meditation practice and that of mindfulness during cyclic meditation, would lead to positive correlation between level of mindfulness and duration of meditation practice.

Previous studies of mindfulness being analyzed with the help of several neuro-imaging and Electro Encephalography (EEG), Event Related Potentials (ERP) studies showed changes in activation of prefrontal cortex (PFC) and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) as well as significant increases in alpha and theta activity during meditation.

This pattern of activation was commonly associated with meditation and relaxation (Chan, Polich, 15) meditation status and traits, EEG, ERP and neuroimaging studies (Psychol Bull, 2006:132:180-211, 15).

There is enough evidence of changes in PFC during mindfulness meditation, which is associated with attention, concentration and emotion regulation. There have been other studies covering brain related self awareness whose findings show a great promise for the individual's ability to train the mind which not only changes the emotional experiences but also structure of the brain and its functioning.

Patañjali informs that among the six types of *Samādhi*, In the state of *nirvicāra samādhi*, the mind becomes pure and will be full of truth. The continued thought waves which are coming to the mind from the outside world would have been taken over by the great wave of concentration as the mind is fixed on a single object in these states, there is still seeds of attachment but in a state of suspense and such thoughts will not disturb the spiritual seeker and does not affect him in any way.

The mind is full of truth as the seeker has experienced the supreme knowledge; it is experienced objectively by him. This supreme knowledge brings in the total transformation of the mind and the self and as Patañjali says "The impression which is made up on the mind by contemplation wipes out all other impressions (PYS I 50)".

Then as Patañjali tells the spiritual seeker attains the seedless *Samādhi* (PYS I 51). This is called *nirvikalpa samādhi*. It is seedless as it is pure and it has no impressions of any kind. This seedless *samādhi* is one with supreme *Brahman*, as at this level he experiences the real nature of the universe, with all its forms and being. This experience of reaching *nirvikalpa samādhi* has been wonderfully explained by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa as follows: "Every time I gathered my mind together, I came face to face with the blissful form of divine mother. However much I tried to free my mind, from consciousness of mother, I did not have the will to go beyond. But at last, collecting all the strength of my will, I cut mother's form to pieces with the sword of discrimination, and at once my mind became seedless and I reached *nirvikalpa* it was beyond all expression" (*Līlāprasaṅga*, pp 319-20).

Nirvikalpa Samādhi has been described by Śankara as follows (*Viveka Cudamani* 427-30).

"There is a consciousness of the unity of *ātman* and *brahman*. There is no longer any identification of the *ātman* with its coverings. All sense of duality is obtained, there is pure, unified consciousness the man who is well established in this consciousness is said to be illumined. A man is said to be free even in this life when he is established in illumination, his bliss is thus ending. He almost forgets this world, of appearances', even though his mind is dissolved in *Brahman*. He is fully awake, but free from the ignorance of waking life. He is fully consciousness, but free from any craving, such a man is said to be free even in this life. For him, the sorrows of this world are over. Though he possesses a finite body, he remains united with the infinite. His heart knows no anxiety, such a man is said to be free even in this life".

Patañjali informs that one should meditate up on the heart of an illuminated soul or a divine form or a symbol such as *Omkāra* which appears to the spiritual seeker (PYS II. 6 and I 39). The *Upaniṣads* have identified three states of consciousness as elaborated in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. The first is called the waking state (*jāgrat*) and it is characterized by general awareness of all the things, present in the external world experience of gross objects, physical body and the like. When a man is experiencing this state is called *vaiśvānara* (The lord of the physical body). The second state is the dreaming state (*svapnam*). In this state the person is aware of internal happenings of his mind and enjoys all mental impressions and this state is intermediate between waking and deep sleep (*suṣupti*) stage. Here the mind is fully active and is independent of sense organs and has no consciousness of physical body and at this stage it is called *taijasa*.

The 3rd one is called the deep sleep (*suṣupti*) stage. In this, he is not aware of the external world and also of his internal world. The ignorance which is present in deep sleep will cover up all the thoughts of the mind and consciousness. It is called as causal sheath, apart from these three stages there is 4th called the *turīyā*. It is pure consciousness and superceeds all the earilier 3 states as it has no connection with the mind, body, ego, and the supreme reality is realized in this state.

To quote from the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*:

"That is known as the fourth quarter: neither inward-turned nor outward-turned consciousness, nor the two together; not an indifferentiated mass of consciousness; neither knowing, nor unknowing; invisible, ineffable, intangible, devoid of characteristics, inconceivable, indefinable, its sole essence being the consciousness of its own Self; the coming to rest of all relative existence; utterly quiet; peaceful; blissful: without a second: this is the Ātman, the Self; this is to be realised.

सेऽयमात्माऽध्यन्तरमोङ्कारोऽधिमात्रं पादा मात्रा
मात्राश्च पादा अकार उकारो मकार इति

*so 'yam ātmādhyakṣaram auṁkaro 'dhimātram pādā mātrā
mātrās ca pādā akāra ukāra makāra iti".*

Turīyā the fourth is noting but a supreme mystic experience as told by Swami Prabhavananda (Prabhavananda Swami, p. 54). *Upaniṣads* some times consider *turīyā* as the final all pervasive goal of spiritual seekers. Some times these *Upaniṣads* consider *turīyā* as knowledge and sometimes as a state of liberation (Prabhavananada Swami Ibid, p. 61). *Upaniṣads* further declare that in order to achieve and expiernced the *turīyā* state one should observe the moral laws and practice meditation (*Upaniṣad* I; ii; 3-9)

TURĪYĀ OR SAMĀDHI – A UNIQUE PHENOMENON

“*Turīyā*” or *Samādhi* is a Phenomenon well known through out the history of Indian life, today as well as in earliest times. It was experienced by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the greatest saint of modern India, though not a learned man, attained *Samādhi* and having realized the highest illumination spoke words of solace and wisdom to all men, the state is conceivably attainable by any one who strives hard to free himself from the dross of world lines (Prabhavananda Swami, Ibid, p. 15).

According to the ultimate aim of Hinduism, a spiritual seeker should be observed in *Turīyā* which is called as transcendental consciousness, he has become one with the God, on comparative note the *turīyā* of *Upaniṣads* is identified with the *nirvāna* of *Buddhism*. To quote: '*Turīyā* is not subjective experience, nor objective experience, nor experience intermediate between these two, nor is it a negative condition which is neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. It is not the knowledge of the senses, nor is it relative knowledge, nor yet inferential knowledge, beyond the senses, beyond the understanding, beyond all expression, is the fourth, it is pure unitary consciousness, where in awareness of the world and of multiplicity is completely obliterated. It is the supreme good. It is one without a second. It is the self, know it above (Swami Prabhavananda Ibid, pp.179-180).
