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Yajur Vedic Upanishads - VI

Turiyatita Upanishad is a minor Upanishad belonging to Shukla Yajurveda. Lord Brahma approaches Lord Vishnu and asks about the path of an Avadhuta (fully realized human), after he has reached turiyatita (beyond the 'turiya,' or the fourth state of consciousness) stage. The Turiyatita Upanishad is Vishnu's elaborate answer to this question. The monk, having been first a hut-dwelling ascetic (Kutichaka), reaches the stage of a mendicant monk (Bahudaka); the mendicant monk attains the stage of a Hamsa ascetic; the Hamsa ascetic becomes the highest kind of ascetic (Paramahamsa). By this time he realizes the entire world as non-different from his Self; and he renounces all personal possessions.

He is one terminating all religious and secular duties; free of religious merit or otherwise in all situations; giving up both knowledge and ignorance; conquering (the influence of) cold and heat, happiness and misery, honour and dishonour; having burnt up in advance, with the latent influence (vasana) of the body, etc., censure, praise, pride, rivalry, ostentation, haughtiness, desire, hatred, love, anger, covetousness, delusion, (gloating) joy, intolerance, envy, clinging to life, etc.; viewing his body as a corpse, as it were; becoming equanimous effortlessly and unrestrainedly in gain or loss; sustaining his life (with food placed in the mouth) like a cow; (satisfied) with (food) as it comes without ardently longing for it; reducing to ashes the host of learning and scholarship; guarding his conduct (without vaunting his noble way of life); disowning the superiority or inferiority (of any one); (firmly) established in non-duality (of the Self) which is the highest (principle) of all and which comprises all within itself; cherishing the conviction, absorbing in the Self the fuel (of concept) other than the secret known only by the gods; untouched by sorrow; unresponsive to (worldly) happiness; free of desire for affection; unattached everywhere to the auspicious or the inauspicious; with (the functioning of) all senses at standstill; unmindful of the superiority of his conduct, learning and moral merit (dharma) acquired in the previous stages of his life; giving up the conduct befitting caste and stage of life (Vanaprastha); dreamless, as night and day are the same to him; ever on the move everywhere; remaining with the body alone left to him; his water-pot being the watering-place (only); ever sensible (but) wandering alone as though he were a child, madman or ghost; always observing silence and deeply meditating on his Self, forgetting everything (else) in consonance with the absorption in his Self; this Turiyatita sage reaching the state of the Avadhuta ascetic and completely absorbed in non-duality (of the Atman) finally gives up his body as he has become one with Om (the Pranava): such an ascetic is an Avadhuta; he has accomplished his life's purpose.

Paramahamsa Upanishad is a minor Upanishad is associated with the Shukla-Yajurveda. It addresses some questions asked by Sage Narada to Lord Brahma regarding the path of the Paramahamsa Yogis and their duties. Brahma tells Narada about the extreme difficulty of becoming a Paramahamsa and goes on to define a true Paramahamsa as one who rests in the ever-pure Brahman; he is verily the Brahman inculcated in the Vedas. A Paramahamsa is one who has relinquished all his desires.

The Paramahamsa carries neither the staff, nor the hair-tuft, nor the holy thread nor any covering. He feels neither cold, nor heat, neither happiness nor misery, neither honour, nor contempt etc. It is meet that he should be beyond the reach of the six billows of this world-ocean. Having given up all thought of calumny, conceit, jealousy, ostentation, arrogance, attachment or antipathy to objects, joy and sorrow, lust, anger, covetousness, self-delusion, elation, envy, egoism, and the like, he regards his body as a corpse, as he has thoroughly destroyed the body-idea. Being eternally free from the cause of doubt, and of misconceived and false knowledge, realising the Eternal Brahman, he lives in that himself, with the consciousness "I myself am He, I am That which is ever calm, immutable, undivided, of the essence of knowledge-bliss, That alone is my real nature." That (Jnana) alone is his Shikha. That (Jnana) alone is his holy thread. Through the knowledge of the unity of the Jivatman with the Paramatman, the distinction between them is wholly gone too. This (unification) is his Sandhya ceremony.

He who relinquishing all desires has his supreme rest in the One without a second, and who holds the staff of knowledge, is the true Ekadandi. He who carries a mere wooden staff, who takes to all sorts of sense-objects, and is devoid of Jnana, goes to horrible hells known as the Maharaauravas. Knowing the distinction between these two, he becomes a Paramahamsa.

The quarters are his clothing, he prostrates himself before none, he offers no oblation to the Pitris (manes), blames none, praises none - the Sannyasin is ever of independent will. For him there is no invocation to God, no valedictory ceremony to him; no Mantra, no meditation, no worship; to him is neither the phenomenal world nor That which is unknowable; he sees neither duality nor does he perceive unity. He sees neither "I" nor "thou", nor all this. The Sannyasin has no home. He should not accept anything made of gold or the like, he should not have a body of disciples, or accept wealth. If it be asked what harm there is in accepting them, (the reply is) yes, there is harm in doing so. Because if the Sannyasin looks at gold with longing, he makes himself a killer of Brahman; because if the Sannyasin touches gold with longing, he becomes degraded into a Chandala; because if he takes gold with longing, he makes himself a killer of the Atman. Therefore, the Sannyasin must neither look at, nor touch nor take gold, with longing. All desires of the mind cease to exist, (and consequently) he is not agitated by grief, and has no longing for happiness; renunciation of attachment to sense-pleasures comes, and he is everywhere unattached in good or evil, (consequently) he neither hates nor is elated. The outgoing tendency of all the sense-organs subsides in him who rests in the Atman alone. Realising "I am that Brahman who is the One Infinite Knowledge-Bliss" he reaches the end of his desires, verily he reaches the end of his desires.

Bhikshuka Upanishad is a minor Upanishad belonging to the Shukla Yajur Veda. This Upanishad is about

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the Bhikshus or mendicants, who seek Liberation. The four types of Bhikshukas are Kutichaka (hut dwelling), Bahudaka (those staying near holy water), Hamsa (sustaining on cow's products), and Paramahamsa (those who become absorbed in Brahman the Supreme). Instances of Kutichakas are sages like Gautama, Bharadvaja, Yajnavalkya and Vasistha, who subsist on eight mouthfuls of food and seek liberation alone by the path of yoga. The Bahudaka ascetics are known by the three-fold emblematic staff and water vessel they carry, as well as the sacred tuft of hair, sacred thread and ochre coloured garment they wear. Avoiding wine and meat, they subsist on eight mouthfuls of food secured as alms from the houses of Brahmana sages and seek liberation alone in the path of Yoga. The Hamsa ascetics take shelter for one night in a village, five nights in a town and seven nights or more in a holy place. The Paramahamsa ascetics like Samvartaka, Aruni, Svetaketu, Jadabharata, Dattatreya, Suka, Vamadeva and Harita, are typical avadhutas who live on eight mouthfuls of food and seek liberation alone in the path of Yoga. They take shelter under the shade of trees, in deserted houses or in a cemetery. They may wear a dress or be unclad. In the paramahamsa stage, a monk realizes Brahman.



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