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***Relevance of Shwetashvatara Upanishad in the  
Tradition of Yoga***

**Abstract:** The Ideology and intellect of Bharat are basically based on two visible facts the Nature and the Body. The Nature includes the mass and Energy taken into different forms. The body has the organs and mind functioning as a single system. A compulsory harmony is very much essential between

**1. The mind and Body**

**2. Body and Nature**

**3. Nature and energy.**

These concepts are well discussed in Shwetashvatara Upanishad. It talks about Dhyana which was called as Antaranga sadhana in Patanjali's Yogasutra and in this Upanishad we able o see a deep elobrated description of the practicing of Pranayama, Prior Symptoms of Yoga Siddhis, Nature of God and Attainment of Liberation. This article is an attempt made to explore the essence of Shwetashvatara Upanishad.

**Key words :** Ideology, intellect, Nature, compulsory harmony, Dhyana, Antaranga sadhana, Patanjali, Upanishad, Pranayama, Yoga Siddhis, Attainment of Liberation.

**Introduction: Shwetashwataropanishad belonging to the Krishna Yajur Veda, talks about the real nature of the self, and atma and how to get enlighten ourselves by practicing dhyana, chanting “OM” and what its true nature are all described in detail.**

**The word “Upanishad” derived from the root “Shadalru” with adding “upa” and “ni” prefixes upasargas the meaning af upa means to near and “ni” means accurate and the root shad” it contains three meanings**

“Visharana” means –eradicator or destroyer of the ignorance.  
Gati means to lead to move towards the path of truth.  
Avasadana means to weaken or ends the circle of death and reborn

**The**

### **Techniques and Importance of Dhyana:**

Dhyana Yoga is the process of fixing the mind on the Self and Meditating on it.

“te dhyānāyogānugatā apaśyan devātmaśaktim svaguṇairnigūḍhām, yaḥ

kāraṇāni nikhilāni tāni kālātmayuktānyadhitiṣṭhatyekah.

te dhyānāyogānugatā apaśyan devātmaśaktim svaguṇairnigūḍhām, yaḥ kāraṇāni nikhilāni tāni kālātmayuktānyadhitiṣṭhatyekah.

It is described as the means to attain Self Realisation.

The Upanishad contains Hymns and a prayer to the Sun God to grant one the power of Knowledge and illumination for success in Dhyana Yoga.

The Technique of undertaking Dhyana Yoga is :

To sit steady with the head, neck and chest held erect and

To withdraw the sense organs into the heart using the mind.

Suitable Place for Dhyana:

The place for Dhyana according to the Shvetashvatara Upanishad has to be:

A Shelter, such as a cave,

An even and clean surface,

Free from wind, pebbles, fire and sand,

Free from sound and water,

Not a public shelter and

Pleasing to the mind but not painful to the eyes.

### **Sequence of Pranayama and its Importance:**

Adi Shankaracharya, in his Bhashya to the Shvetashvatara Upanishad quotes from the Yajnavalkya Smriti about the practice and importance of Pranayama:

One has to Practice Pranayama the Asana in which one has attained perfection.

One should sit facing East or North, spreading Kusha grass and Deerskin on a soft seat.

The person should sit with his head and neck straight, mouth closed, placing the left hand on the other and fixing the eyes on the tip of the nose.

Ganesha should be worshipped before commencement of the practice.

**The practice of Pranayama is as follows:**

Yajnavalkya Smriti talks about the practice of Nadi Shuddhi-inhalation through Ida (left nostril) for 12 matras and exhaling slowly through Pingala (Right Nostril) then inhaling through Pingala and exhaling through Ida.

One should practice this everyday in a solitary place as per the instructions of the teacher after bathing and performing Sandhyavandanam.

Yajnavalkya Smriti also prescribes Kumbhaka Pranayama. Pranayama with retention.

**Kumbhaka Pranayama is to be practiced as follows:**

There are three parts to the practice of Pranayama –

Rechaka-exhalation

Puraka- Inhalation

Kumbhaka- Retention.

One should inhale for 16Matras, hold the breath for 64 matras and the exhale for 32 Matras – in a ratio 1:4:2.

There is also another technique which some rishis speak of. One should inhale through both nostrils for 16 matras, hold the breath for 64 Matras and then exhale through one nostril for 16 Matras in a ratio of 1:4:1.

Yajnavalkya Smriti compares Pranayama with the syllables of Omkara as follows:

A-kara- Represents Rechaka and Srishti (Creation).

U-kara Represents Puraka and Pralaya (Dissolution) and

M-kara Represents Kumbhaka and Sthiti (Preservation).

The importance of Pranayama is as follows;

It leads to the purification of the Nadis and removal of all physical impurities.

One who practices Pranayama for 3 years gets freed from his sins.

Lightness of the body, brightness, increase in the digestive fire and audibility of Nada are the signs seen in one who has purified his Nadis.

### **Prior Symptoms of Yoga Siddhis:**

The first signs of entering Yoga are;

Lightness

Health

Non-covetousness

Clearness of complexion.

Beautiful Voice.

Agreeable body odour and

Reduced excretion of urine and faeces.

One who has attained Yoga Siddhis is said to possess a body made of the fire of yoga (Yoga-Agnimayam Shariram).

Such a person goes beyond diseases, old age and death.

Yoga Siddhis lead to the realisation of the self, which is the goal of Dhyana Yoga.

Tattva Jnana.

Tattva Jnana means Knowledge of reality.

Brahman which is the Supreme Reality is described as birth less, unchanging and untouched by all categories.

It is reality of one's own self and exists everywhere as the underlying Reality.

When the Yogi realises Brahman through Dhyana Yoga, he gets freed from all bondages and attains Moksha.

### **Nature of God**

God or Deva ( the Bright one) is repeatedly described as the cause of creation.

He is the knower of the whole universe and also pervades it.

He is the creator of time, the substratum of the 5 elements and the one who brings about the association between the self and Prakriti.

He remains hidden in all beings as the sakshi (witness) and supervisor of actions.

God is called as Hamsa- The Swan since it represents discrimination.

Conclusion: The Shvetashvatara Upanishad lays emphasis on Dhyana Yoga the path of contemplation to realise God.

The Upanishad mentions Samkhya and Yoga as the means of realising God.

Therefore the metaphysical understanding of samkhya combined with the Practical knowledge of Yoga serve as the technique to realise god.

When one realises the Deva residing in the intellect, he attains everlasting happiness.

One becomes freed from all bondages and goes beyond death on attaining liberation.

It is the realisation of the Self alone that will result in the cessation of sorrows.

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