

AUM, THE PRANAVA AND HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN MANDUKYA UPANISHAD, YOGA SŪTRA, AND VIJÑĀNABHAIRAVA TANTRA

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Abstract

This paper reveals the exegetical framework of AUM that correlates the mantra and its syllables A-U-M with states of human consciousness as well as with Supreme Consciousness. We shall examine *Māndukya Upaniṣad*, Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra*, and the *Vijñānabhairava Tantra* to explore how these texts reveal that the sound and syllables of AUM help us to understand the connection between human and cosmic paradigms. More importantly, we would see how the description of AUM in these texts forms an experiential gateway to reach the realm in which that Supreme Reality unfolds within our own consciousness.

Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra* famously declares AUM to be the denotation of Supreme Reality (*Puruṣa*). The four states of human consciousness—three of *Jāgrat*, *Svapna* and *Suṣupti* and the fourth *Turīya*—described in the ancient *Māndukya Upaniṣad* become the foundation for a fifth state called *Turīyātīta* (beyond *Turīya*) in the Kashmir Śaiva texts of *Śiva Sūtra* (9th century) and the *Vijñānabhairava Tantra* (8th century).

Keywords: Consciousness, AUM, *Māndukya Upaniṣad*, *Yoga Sūtra*, *Śiva Sūtra*, *Vijñānabhairava Tantra*,

Naming the 'Unnamable': Path of Inner Enquiry

The Supreme Reality that governs our existence in the Universe is intangible; therefore it is difficult to name it. Even though the very function of human senses is to serve us as our windows to the world¹. Senses are there to experience the creation and to interact with it. At the same time, we know that what lies in front of our

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senses and what can be accessed with our mind is not all, there is much more than what can be comprehended by human mind and senses². Humans are endowed with higher extrasensory faculties, which can be accessed by those few who put effort in that direction (*yamevaiṣavṛṇutetenalabhya*).³

In India, many sages and rishis have taken the path of inner inquiry and contemplation on which they discovered principles behind the visible world of phenomena. The rishis have handed down knowledge that they received in deep states of contemplation called *Samādhi*. They did their best to name these unnamable principles in human language so that others could also comprehend them.

These knowledge systems are preserved in the Śruti-s⁴ (lit. ‘that which is heard’). Vedas and Upanishads come under the category of Śruti-s. Due to spiritual and oral temperament of our culture and our languages respectively, we are fortunate to have this unbroken body of wisdom in the form of a living tradition.

Māndukya Upaniṣad: The A-U-M is Brahma and the A-U-M is also Ātmā

Amongst thousands of Vedic Upanishad, the *Māndukya Upaniṣad* from the Atharvaveda offers an extremely profound philosophical statement on the nature of Brahma, the Supreme Reality. It simultaneously associated AUM with human consciousness. Primarily, it projects AUM as a bridge between Brahma, the Supreme Reality and Ātmā, the individual reality. In just twelve verses, this shortest *Upaniṣad* first connects *mantra* AUM with Brahma; then connects the Brahma with Ātmā; and finally reveals the correspondence of AUM with various aspects of human consciousness. In the process, it shows how the human consciousness can experience oneness with the extensive Supreme Consciousness through realization of AUM.

The *Māndukya Upaniṣad* is very concise yet astonishingly comprehensive in dealing with the theoretical framework as well as experiential tools on the subject of AUM.

Sound of AUM and the Silence and the Nature of Human Experience

Through the sound components of A-U-M and the silence from which sound arises and into which it dissolves, the Upanishad leads us into the gross, subtle and the causal aspects of human existence.

In parallel, it reveals the nature of human experience at levels

of ordinary as well as the extra-sensory experience that human consciousness is capable of.

Many Indian creation theories ascribe 'Vāk', the Supreme Speech to be the origin of the world. It is significant to note that the Sanskrit alphabet (*Varnamālā* lit. 'garland of letters') are called as *akṣhara-s* (lit. 'imperishable'). The Śruti-s consider the letter 'A' (*akāra*) to be the source of all speech, '*Akāro Vai Sarvā Vāk*'. All the other alphabets - the vowels as well as the consonants- originate from the letter 'A', the *akāra*. It is the vowels and consonants that form the words that are used to name our objective reality. The *Samsāra*, the world is nothing but names the forms, '*nāmarūpa*'. This world of names and forms originates in the primal sound of *Akāra*, which is the first component of *AUM*.

The Upanishad states that *AUM* is *akṣhara* as well as *adhyakṣhara*-the imperishable and also that which is beyond. That which cannot be seen cannot be a part of human transactions done with our senses, it cannot be grasped by touch, cannot be said to have any characteristics, cannot be conceived with mind, intellect, and cannot be described in human speech⁵. It is the eternal being, which is past, present, future and beyond time. It is Brahman (the expansion of cosmos), it is *ātmanā* (the limited individual self) and it is the phenomenal world (*samsāra*). In other words, it is the experiencer; the experience, and the experienced. It is also that which is beyond experience.

Correspondence between four syllables (*mātrā-s*) and four Components (*pādāḥ*) of *AUM* with states of human consciousness and the whole Creation (i.e. Brahma)

AUM is the integral whole of existence with four components called as *pādāḥ* and four *mātrā-s* (i.e. measure of sound)⁶. The four components should not be considered as distinctly different from each other. These are not separate like the feet of a cow, but are integral like the four mental mathematical divisions of one rupee into twenty-five paisa' each. Thus, *AUM* has three *mātrā-s*, which can be accessed and a fourth one called as *adhimātrā* that is highest after the three *mātrā-s*.⁷ The four *mātrā-s* of *AUM* i.e. three (A-U-M) plus the fourth one that is beyond measure (*adhimātrā*) correspond to the four *pādāḥ* (components) of *Jāgrat*, *Svapna*, *Suṣupti* plus the fourth one *Turīya* that is beyond as well as within the three components of this integral whole.

The sound and syllables of *AUM* together form the symbol of *AUM*, which represents the Supreme Reality along with everything

else that exists in this creation. In human languages we give various names to this Supreme Reality like God, *Ishvara*, *Brahma*, *Paramātma* etc. The Upanishads including the *Māndukya Upaniṣad* use the word 'Brahma' for Supreme Reality. The *Māndukya* describes each *ātmā*, (i.e. the individual self) along with the whole creation of Brahma's body. The *Māndukya* reveals how the sound of A-U-M can become a means to have full realization of the creation and ourselves.

In other words, AUM as Brahma is the pervasive foundational reality. If one wants to visualize it like a body, then one may see that one's own being is a part or limb of this expansive and all pervasive body of Brahma. AUM symbolizes this expansive body.

AUM as Individual Consciousness

The *Māndukya Upaniṣad* states that the human consciousness in its fullness or its complete expansion is equivalent to the Supreme Consciousness, however, in its ordinary form it has only three levels of mental awareness. The three syllables or *akṣhara-s* of AUM are signifiers of the three levels of the human mind- conscious, subconscious and the unconscious⁸. The *Māndukya Upaniṣad* defines the characteristics of each syllable and what it signifies for the individual self.

Syllable 'A' signifies *Jāgrat*, the Waking Consciousness

The first sound measure (*mātrā*) 'A' is the first component (*pādah*) of integral whole, AUM. It is first because the subsequent components can be known only after knowing this. It denotes wakeful state of our consciousness, the *Jāgriti*.

The *Māndukya Upaniṣad* gives a name and a form to this aspect of our self, which is responsible for giving us external awareness of world. It is called as *Vaiśvānara*. The *Vaiśvānara*, (lit. 'man of the universe') shapes our wakeful consciousness. Its form is conceived as having seven limbs⁹ and nineteen mouths. Our entire experience in the wakeful state receives its food from these nineteen mouths, which include five senses of perception (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin), five senses of action (speech, hands, feet, excretory organ and reproductive organs), five vital energy channels (*prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*), and the mind, intellect, and ego. Each of these shapes our existential life in the universe. Our knowledge about the world and about ourselves depends on these nineteen mouths with which we perceive the objective world.

In the wakeful state we are *Vaiśvānara* who is externally oriented

(*bahihprajñah*). So the knowledge we get about our selves in the wakeful state is limited because in this state our perception is dominated by sense organs.

In other words, sense objects are the focus of our attention in this state; therefore, the level of experience in this state is gross or superficial.

Here we consume and partake of the worldly joys (and sorrows) with the senses and other channels (i.e. the nineteen mouths) mentioned above.

Syllable ‘U’ signifies *Svapna*, the Dream state

The second sound measure (*mātrā*) ‘U’ is the second component (*pādah*) of the integral whole, AUM [that is Ātmā and *Brahmā*]. This is named as *Tejas* (lit. light).¹⁰ It is the seer of dream state of human consciousness.¹¹

In the dream state, mind perceives and consumes the world not in gross material sense but in subtler light of consciousness. Here, the experience is completely internal. It is not dependent on any external object. But the desires that arise from attachment to the sense-objects remain in this state. We as *Tejas* fulfill our desires in the dream by regulating the objects and impressions in our own way.

Here, we must note that the mind can look outward as well as inward but in comparison with the senses it is very powerful as it has the power of inner dimension. (*Indriyebhyaḥparaṁmanomanasaḥsattvaṁuttamam/* Kathopnishad. II.2.7a). So it can enjoy the objects of senses without the objects being there. In the dream state, mind’s own light shines on the impressions gained from senses in the absence of sense-activity. In dream state all the senses get withdrawn and get dissolved inside the mind. The experience of *Tejas* is subtle because this is objectless consumption of the objects.

Syllable ‘M’ signifies *susupti*, the Deep Sleep State

The third syllable or sound measure (*mātrā*) ‘M’ is the third component (*pādah*) of the integral whole of AUM. The first two syllables find repose in this syllable ‘M’ of the AUM. Its name is *prājñah* (lit. the wise). It is the witness or seer of deep sleep state. In the deep sleep state, there is complete cessation of desires and dreams. Here, the senses as well as the mind dissolve into the deeper self of bliss. The seer of this state enjoys the bliss due to intense harmony with the inner self.

The nature of experience in this state is defined as causal because the diversity of the world of objects or *samsāra* which is the 'kārya' or the effect dissolves back into oneness of the very source, the 'kāraṇa' or the cause of the world i.e. Supreme Consciousness.¹²

The silence that follows AUM signifies *Turiya*, the Fourth state of the Human Consciousness

The fourth component (*pādah*) of the integral whole, AUM is beyond the three measures or the three syllables (*mātrās*) of A-U-M.

The Upanishad attempts to define the fourth state through the technique of negation¹³ as it cannot be named or defined in human language. It is the blissful state of non-dual consciousness in which the individual consciousness experiences harmony with its own wholeness. This is nothing but the integral whole of Supreme Consciousness named as Brahma in the Upanishad.

Thus the last verse of the Upanishad ends with the fourth measureless syllable (*mātrā*), which is the fourth component of Supreme Brahma, the AUM.

Experience with Awareness

An experience is a realized knowledge. It is complete awareness of something that happens to us. If this is not realized in our consciousness then the experience has not happened to us. How does the experience become real? Experience is realized by paying total attention to that which is being experienced.

The most significant contribution of the *Māndukya Upaniṣad* is not elucidation of the states of human consciousness and their coordination with syllables of AUM, and not even its description of AUM as the connecting thread establishing the unity of individual self (*Ātmā*) with Supreme Self, (*Brahmā*). The most significant contribution of the Upanishad is its statement on 'Awareness' about the 'Experience' at each level and the effect of 'Awareness' at each level of experience. It emphasizes on 'awareness' by repeating the last phrase twice, '*Yaevamveda*' (the one who knows in this [particular] manner).

Only through 'awareness'¹⁴ (*sajgtā*), by 'total attention' does an experience actually happen, otherwise, it is null and void. For instance, let us say that there are flowerbeds on both sides of his pathway but the passerby does not pay attention to them. In that case, the flowers are non-existent for him and he cannot experience

them. Thus, in spite of flowers being there, just because there was no awareness on the part of the passerby, it can be said that he doesn't know that there are flowers on his path and so he cannot have any experience of them.

The emphasis of *Māndukya Upaniṣad* is on awareness of what can be experienced by individual self in various states of human consciousness. After putting the knowledge about Ātmā and Brahma in the four-fold framework of the sound of AUM, the *Māndukya Upaniṣad* explains the benefits that can be derived by putting awareness on each of the four components or states of consciousness.

The benefits happen only to those few who put their awareness on these *mātrās*, *ṣādāḥ* and the integral AUM. Perhaps, that is why the Upanishad ends with a repeat statement about 'knowing' in a particular manner, '*Yaevamveda, yaevamveda*' - 'the one who knows in this manner, the one who knows in this manner' the reality of AUM with its four components actually conquers the world and attains bliss of the expansive self.

The *Māndukya Upaniṣad* unfolds a manner of realization for those who are keen to know the foundational reality of being (*Sat*). The *Sat* or truth is inside as well as outside our perception; it is visible and imaginable and is also beyond vision and imagination; it cannot be captured in words or speech. But the Upanishad says that this ultimate truth can be realized through proper knowledge of A-U-M in its sound form and also in its universally pervasive form¹⁵.

We shall now see what benefits are derived through awareness of each level of Human Consciousness according to *Māndukya Upaniṣad*.

Fulfillment of all desires by awareness of the *Vaiśvānara*, wakeful state or the Conscious Mind

The one who pays attention to the visible world of senses and considers it equivalent to sound syllable 'A' identifies with *Vaiśvānara*, the man of the universe. He attains all that he can desire i.e. all his desires are fulfilled and he becomes the first amongst men in all his ventures.

Light of Wisdom by awareness of *Tejas*, the Dream State or Subconscious mind)

One who pays attention to dreams and understands this state to be the sound syllable 'U' identifies with *Tejas*, the seer full of splendor and light of wisdom. Not a one, who doesn't have realization of supreme reality (Brahmā), is born in his family.

Self Realization by awareness of *Prājñah*, the Deep Sleep state or the Unconscious Mind

The one who remains aware in the state of deep sleep and understands it with the sound syllable 'M', identifies with *Prājñah*, the one in whom all names and forms merge into a singular denseness of bliss. Such a way, one acts with profound wisdom and gets realization of the Ātmā, i.e. self-realization. He becomes capable of merging the universe into the self just as sound 'M' merges the sounds of 'A' and 'U' into itself.

Unending Bliss in *Turīyā*, the fourth state of non-dual Consciousness

The who is aware of all the three states in their difference such as wakeful, dream and deep sleep, and as well in their oneness as the integral AUM, identifies with the fourth, the *Turīyā* state. Thus one attains the blissful non-dual Supreme Consciousness, (Brahma) within the individual self (Ātmā). The Kevalyopnishad¹⁶ describes this state very beautifully as:

*Triśu Dhamasuyadbhogyambhoktābhogaścayadbhavet /
tebhyoḥvilakṣaṇaḥsākṣhīcinmātrohamSadāśivaḥ' /*

Kevalyopnishad.1.18.

[Whatever be the experiencer, the experienced and the objects of experience in the three states, completely distinct from them yet an aware witness of them, I am the eternal pure consciousness, the eternally sacred (*Sadāśiva*).]¹⁷

A Note on The non-dualism (Śivadvyaavāda) of Kashmir Śaivism in contrast with non-dualism (*Advaita Vedānta*) of Śankarācārya

The Advaita Vedānta philosophy propounded by Adi Śankarācārya (9th century) and his guru Gaudapadācārya¹⁸ integrated the essential knowledge of the Upanishads. Yet the perspective taken on these texts is often Śankara's Advaita Vedānta perspective. His philosophy is named as non-dual (*Advaita*) but it actually presents the dual principles of Brahma and Māyā to explain the existence in the universe. Therefore, the term, 'Advaita' is inadequate to describe his idea of monism or non-dualism.¹⁹ In contrast to Śankara's Advaita Vedānta that is grounded in the Upanishads, we have supreme non-

dual (*mahādvayavāda*) of Trika Śaiva philosophy commonly known as Kashmir Śaivism, which is grounded in the Tantric or the Agama tradition. The Tantra texts that form the foundation of Kashmir Śaivism or the Trika, also reflect a strong affinity with Upanishadic revelations but their teachings differ from the Advaita Vedānta teachings of Śankarācārya. We shall see how the Trika philosophy takes four states of consciousness announced by the Upanishad into its fold and adds another dimension of a fifth state and beyond. This fifth state is stated as equivalent to Supreme state or the Parabhairava state of Supreme non-dual consciousness in Trika philosophy.

Consciousness in Tantra-s: Fifth state, the *Turīyātīta*

The Tantra-s, especially, purely non-dual Bhairava Trika Tantra-s reveal the means and techniques to attain Supreme Bhairava Consciousness. *Turīyātīta* represents this state. It is a continuous consistent state of non-dual consciousness in which all mental content merges into the void of vibrating light of consciousness. It is a more intense state than the fourth one, the *Turīya* mentioned in *Māndukya Upaniṣad*.²⁰

Kashmir Śaiva text of Śiva Sūtra-s and states of consciousness

The Śiva Sūtra-s (9th CE), one of the most fundamental texts on Kashmir Śaiva or Trika philosophy interprets the third state of consciousness i.e. *Suṣupti*, the deep sleep to be a state of *aviveka* (non-discrimination). This is a very different interpretation of the third state of consciousness than the one seen in the *Māndukya Upaniṣad*. The *Māndukya Upaniṣad* describes the third state of deep sleep as a blissful state but the Trika text calls it a state of delusion, which is overpowered by *tamoguna*.

However, we find that the commentators like Kṣemarāja (10th CE) and Bhāskarācārya describe the '*avivekaḥ*' (non-discrimination) as '*vivecanābhāvaḥ*' (complete lack of awareness) in their *Vimarśinī*²¹ and *Vārtika* commentaries respectively. Moreover, these commentaries describe the three-fold character of each state of consciousness. Consequently, in each state, the other two states also remain in passive mode. For instance, in wakeful state, there would be elements of dream and deep sleep and so on. Thus, we get nine states of consciousness within the three that the Upanishad describes but the Śiva Sūtra-s states that in each of these states there is an awakened witness, the *prabuddha*'. Thus, even in deep sleep, *prabuddha*,

the awakened one will be fully aware and cannot be said to be in 'delusion' - that is the meaning.²²

In Trika philosophy to know the states of Consciousness is to
attain Self-sovereignty

Just as the Upanishad ascribes various extraordinary powers to the experiencer/seer of the state of consciousness, the Trika texts also mention that the experiencer of the state beyond *Turīyā* actually gains absolute freedom (*Svātāntraya*) of knowledge and action.

In his commentary to the verse I.11 of the Śiva Sūtra-s²³, Kṣemarāja says:

“He, who (as witnessing consciousness) knows both what is said to be the object of experience and the subject of experience in all the three states is not tainted (with conditions of these) even while he is aware of both the subject and the object. In this way, he enjoys unrivalled Self-sovereignty, which is full of highest bliss, and becomes master of his senses... One who is not of this sort becomes an object of enjoyment of the forces of the waking and other states, and remains simply the usual empirical subject... he will remain only a confounded being.”

In *Māndūkya Upaniṣad* as well as the Śiva Sūtra text, the emphasis is on the knowledge of each state as a detached witness. The difference between the fourth state (*Turīyā*) and the state beyond that (*Turīyātīta*) lies in the Yogi's ability to remain in the non-dual state even when he appears to do ordinary transactions in the world.

Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtra-s*

The Supreme Reality named as Brahma and Bhairava/Paramāśiva in the Upanishad and Kashmir Śaiva texts respectively is named as Īśvara in the Yoga philosophy. Sage Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtra* describes the Īśvara as someone who is the master of masters because he is not bound by the Time, “*Sa eiṣapūrveṣamaṣiguruḥkālenānavacchedāt*” (*Yoga Sūtra*.I.26.). Moreover, the commentator Vyāsa in his *Bhāṣya* on this sūtra clearly relates Īśvara with the Brahma of the *Vedānta*.²⁴

Symbol of Īśvara is AUM, “*Tasyavācakaḥpraṇavaḥ*”

Patañjali declares that the *Praṇavaḥ* (AUM) is the connotative word for Īśvara -*Tasyavācakaḥ Praṇavaḥ*[*Yoga Sūtra*.I.27.]. Also the relation between AUM and Īśvara, connotative and the connoted is inherent,

the relation is not devised by convention. In this regard, Vyāsa says:

“In the case of the Yogi to whom the relation between the Connoted and the Connotative is known (by repetition of *Pranava*, i.e. AUM with awareness)... the gradual development of Truth and the Revelation of Īśvara are sure to follow.”²⁵

In the above discussion we have seen that the *Pranavaḥ* (A-U-M) appears as a symbolic representation of human–spiritual consciousness, a denotation of states of consciousness, and a quantifiable sound to understand the full span of our own mind (consciousness). Knowing this full span of our consciousness is equivalent to knowing the Supreme Reality. Thus, AUM and Tantric *Pranava-s* explicated in the traditions of Vedānta, Yoga and Tantra provide a very reasoned exposition of the states of consciousness that are within as well as beyond human mind. These texts also chalk out methods that reveal how AUM can open doors for humans to realize their full potential by accessing the states that are beyond conscious human mind.

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Notes

1. *Parāñcikhānīvyatṛṇatsvayambhuḥtas mātparaṅgpaśyatīnāntarātman/Kaściddhīrahpratyagātmānamekṣhadāvṛttacakṣhuramritatvamichchan/ Kathopaniṣad*. 2.1.1
2. *Indriyebhyaḥparāhyārthāarthebhyaścaparammanah/manasastuparabuddhirbuddherātmāmahānparah/ Kathopniṣad*. I.3.10
3. *Ibid. Kathopaniṣad*. I.2.23b.
4. Besides Śruti-s, another stream of knowledge body is known as ‘Smirti’. ‘Smriti-s’ are the knowledge systems or disciplines that were put down by the wise ones in written form.
5. “...*adṛṣtam, avyavahāryam, agrāhyam, alakṣaṇam, acintyam, avyapdeśyam...*” Ref. *Mandukyopniṣad*. Verse 7 b.
Also, ‘...*yanmanasanamanute ,yenāhurmanonmatam*’ “That which one cannot think with mind, but by which , they say, the mind is made to think...”. *Kenopniṣad*. I.5.
6. Units or measure of sound utterance are described in terms of a cock’s crowing in the morning. A rooster crows with a short, then with a long and then with a very long utterance, in the same way, a vowel sound utterance is short, long and protracted. (*hṛsva, dīrgha, and pluta*) consisting of one *mātrā*, two *mātrā* and three *mātrā-s* respectively.
The time taken to utter a vowel in *hṛsva*, (short) form is equal to one *mātrā*. The pronunciation can be with *dīrghamātrā* (long) , which is equal to two *mātrā-s*, and *pluta* which is equal to three *mātrā-s* with a prolonged sound.
7. Ref. *Amakośa*. “*pādasturīyobhagaḥ*”(2.9.89), and “*pādāraśmyaṅghrituryān śā*”(3.3.89).
8. The 19th century Austrian Psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) divided human psyche into three levels – the conscious, preconscious (subconscious) and the unconscious and the Western world for the first time acknowledged the presence of a hidden storehouse of experiential reality that lies behind the visible personality of a human being. There is a very superficial similarity between Freud’s discovery of three states of mind and what the *Māndukya*

Upaniṣad had already described more than 2500 years before him. In fact, the *Māndūkya Upaniṣad* establishes a much deeper philosophical, psychological and experiential truth by going beyond the three states of mind and by talking about the fourth state (*Turīyā*) which beyond the three and yet is present in the three.

9. The seven limbs are the seven worlds in which we live. These are named as- (*bhuh, bhuvah, svah, maha, janaḥ, tapah, and satyam*) and are symbolic of different realms of our universe including the earth. These have been explained in Śāṅkara *Bhāṣya* as fire, sun and moon, directions, air, sky, earth and the rest of the world. Thus, *Vaiśvānara*'s body is imagined as having fire for its mouth; sun and moon for eyes; directions as ears; air as vital force; sky as torso; the earth as feet and the rest of the world as its heart. Ref. Śāṅkara *Bhāṣya* on *Māndūkyaopaniṣad*. Gita Press, p. 10.
10. Its body is conceived as a body of light (*Tejas*) although its organs are same as the *Vaiśvānara* with nineteen mouths and seven limbs. Its nineteen mouths feed not from the senses but from the impressions gathered from the senses.
11. This is equivalent to the preconscious or subconscious state of psyche described in modern Western psychology.
12. Also see the following footnote no. 21.
13. This technique is used to arrive at desirable entity by denying all that it is not. In Vedānta philosophy, for instance, practitioners of *Īnānāyoga* use the notion of '*neti-neti*' ('not this, not this') to deny everything that is beyond words, sight, grasp, hearing, touch, and thoughts etc. to arrive at the idea of Absolute Brahma.
14. "When I use the term total awareness, I mean awareness of the cosmos inside and knowledge of the cosmos outside. In Sanskrit, we call this *brahmānda*, the world out side and the world inside. On the material plane there is the cosmos, which we are aware of while we are awake, but the moment we enter meditation we enter a different realm, another universe." Ref. "*Yoga of Awareness*" by Swami Satyananda Saraswati in *Yoga Magazine*. May 1978. www.yogamag.net
15. To understand further the importance of primal sound, we must look into the concept of *Nāda* and *Bindu*- fundamental aspects of creation that symbolize Śiva and Śakti in Tantric traditions.
16. Ref. There is variation in the second line. For the word '*Sadāśivaḥ*', there is variation of '*Sanātanaḥ*'. Kashmir Śaiva Scholar, Pandit Janakinath Kaul quotes this verse in his commentary on *Siva Sūtras* uses the word '*Sanātanaḥ*' and not '*Sadāśivaḥ*'.
त्रिषुधामसुयद्भोग्यंभोक्ताभोगश्चयद्भवेत्।
तेभ्योविलक्षणःसाक्षीचिन्मात्रोऽहं सनातनः॥ कैवल्योपनिषत् 1.18.
17. The prevalence of the Supreme Seer as *Turīyā*, the fourth, and the witness of all the three states of consciousness, is mentioned in the Śiva Sūtra-s.
Jāgratsvapnasuṣuptabhedeturīyābhogāsambhavaḥ. I.7.
["Even during the three different states of consciousness in waking, dreaming and profound sleep, the rapturous experience of I-Consciousness of the fourth state abides."]. Śiva Sūtra. I.7.
18. Gaudapadacharya's *Karikās* and Adī Śankarācārya's *Bhāṣya* on the Upanishads place the original verses of the Upanishads in the Advaita Vedānta perspective. Śankarācārya has included the Upanishads in his text, the *PrasthānaTrayī*, which consist of *Upaniṣads*, *The Bhagavad Gīta* and *Brahmasūtras*. These three form the foundation on which he builds his monism.

19. For detailed analysis, please see my paper on “*Māyā* as Śakti in Kashmir Śaivism” in IAS journal Summerhill Vol. 26, No. 2 (2020).
20. It is worth noticing that it is AcharyaShankara, who first uses the word, ‘*Turīyā*’ (lit. the fourth one) to describe the fourth state of consciousness. Upanishad just names it as the ‘fourth’. Thus the word *Turīyā* came to denote a spiritual state, which is transcendental Supreme state of non-duality.
21. Śiva Sūtras.I.10. Ref. Jaideva Singh. (Trans.). 1979. rpt. 1998, p. 41.
Also cf. Bhāskrācārya’s commentary on Śiva Sūtras. The Aphorisms of Śiva (Śivasūtra) translated by Mark.S.G. Dyczkowski.
22. Ref.
caturvidhamtupindasyamabuddhambuddhamevaca /
prabuddhamsuprabuddhamcaṇadasthamtaccaturvidham // Mālinī Vijaya. II.43.
Also see. Trans. and Exposition by Jaideva Singh. 1979. rpt. 1998, p. 44.
23. “*Tṛitayabhoktāvīreśaḥ*” [Being the enjoyer of the three states, he is (the Yogi) is verily the master of his senses.]. Jaideva Singh, 1998, p. 48.
24. Ref. “This aphorism denotes *Anantam* (Eternity) of Vedanta. It denotes the unchangeability of the Divinity of Īśvara even in spite of the changes of Creators in different creations.” Bengali Baba, 1976, p. 14.
25. Cf. “The significance of this aphorism is identical with that of seventeenth aphorism in this chapter. It means that the simple utterance of Mantras by a so-called devotee with a rosary in hand cannot reveal the genuine nature of Truth to him; but a good deal of learning of the science is required for the success in this matter, because this ‘repetition’ is possible for him only who knows the relation between the Connotted and the Connnotative. The *Pranava* has four steps: (1) The Waking state (*Jāgrat*) meaning the gross and the subtle appearances (*sthūla* and *sūkṣma*); (2) the dreaming state (*svapna*) signifies the instrumental phenomenon (*kāraṇagrāhaya*); (3) the sleeping state (*susupti*) denotes the subjective phenomenon (*Ahaṅgrāhaya*); and (4) the fourth is the highest subjective or the Eternal state (*Turīyātīta*). Hence, it is proved that the process of the revelation of the Truth signified by *Pranava* is the gross, the subtle, the instrumental and the subjective appearances successively as have been described in the aphorism 17 (vide the *Praśnopaniṣad* question- 5).