

Relevance of the Turīya and Advaita Principles Expounded in the Twelfth Mantra of the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad in the Context of World Peace: A Critical Study

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100800909>

Received: 07 September 2026; Accepted: 12 September 2026; Published: 20 September 2026

ABSTRACT

The contemporary world, despite remarkable scientific and technological advancement, continues to face serious challenges such as war, violence, terrorism, hatred, intolerance, cultural polarization, identity-based conflicts, and social divisions. Therefore, the question of world peace is not merely a political, military, or diplomatic issue; it also requires examination from the perspectives of human consciousness, ethics, and interpersonal relationships. Within the Indian knowledge tradition, the concept of peace is closely associated with inner consciousness, self-restraint, non-violence, equanimity, the welfare of all beings, and the awareness of fundamental unity.

The twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes Turīya through a series of significant philosophical attributes such as “amātra,” “the fourth,” “avyavahārya,” “prapañcopaśama,” “śiva,” and “advaita.” The primary concern of this mantra is spiritual and philosophical realization of the Self and Turīya; it does not directly formulate a modern political or military theory of peace. Nevertheless, when its non-dual and consciousness-oriented principles are reinterpreted in the contemporary context, they can enter into a meaningful philosophical dialogue with values such as human unity, human dignity, reduction of othering, non-violent orientation, dialogue, coexistence, and universal welfare.

The present study adopts a qualitative, text-based, philosophical, analytical, and interpretive methodology. The twelfth mantra is examined with reference to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, Gauḍapāda’s *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*, and Śaṅkarācārya’s commentary. It also establishes a dialogical relationship between Advaita Vedānta, theories of consciousness, non-violence, and contemporary peace thought. The central argument of the study is that the perspectives of Turīya and Advaita can provide a philosophical basis for the inner transformation of human consciousness, and that such inner transformation may contribute to a psychological and ethical environment conducive to non-violence, dialogue, and coexistence. However, it would not be appropriate to regard these principles as the sole or direct cause of world peace.

Keywords: *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, Twelfth Mantra, Turīya, Amātra, Advaita, Prapañcopaśama, Human Consciousness, Non-violence, Human Unity, World Peace.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world is advancing rapidly in the fields of science and technology; however, humanity continues to confront numerous forms of conflict. War, violence, terrorism, hatred, intolerance, cultural polarization, nationalist tensions, identity-based politics, and social divisions pose serious challenges to world peace. Consequently, the question of peace cannot be confined merely to the political or military sphere; it is also closely related to human consciousness, ethics, social relationships, and attitudes toward others.

Within the Indian knowledge tradition, the concept of peace is not restricted merely to the absence of external conflict. Inner peace, self-restraint, equanimity, non-violence, the welfare of all beings, and awareness of unity constitute important dimensions of this concept. Upaniṣadic philosophy presents profound reflections on the relationship between the individual and ultimate reality and seeks to understand the nature of consciousness.

Although the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* is a brief Upaniṣad consisting of only twelve mantras, it presents profound reflections on the Self, Om, and the different dimensions of consciousness. Its twelfth mantra describes the nature of Turiya as follows: **अमात्रश्रुतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव संविशत्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं य एवं वेद ॥ १२ ॥**

The primary intention of this mantra is spiritual and philosophical. Nevertheless, placing its principles of Advaita, *prapañcopaśama*, and Turiya-consciousness in dialogue with contemporary perspectives on human consciousness and peace opens an important interdisciplinary field of inquiry.

The present study does not interpret this mantra as a direct “formula for preventing wars.” Rather, it critically examines the possibilities that may emerge from its philosophical meaning for understanding contemporary human consciousness, human unity, non-violence, and world peace.

Research Problem

Political, diplomatic, economic, legal, and institutional approaches are of great importance for preventing and resolving modern wars and social conflicts. Nevertheless, the psychological and ethical dimensions of conflict cannot be ignored. Fear, hatred, prejudice, intolerance, othering, egoism, retaliatory attitudes, and power-centred mentalities may deepen and complicate violent conflicts.

Against this background, the central research problem of the present study is: **How can the perspectives of Turiya and Advaita articulated in the twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* become philosophically relevant to the transformation of contemporary human consciousness, human unity, non-violence, and world peace?**

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the present study are: To analyse the fundamental philosophical meaning of the twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

To examine the philosophical concept of *amātra*.

To analyse the non-dual consciousness-nature of Turiya.

To clarify the philosophical meaning of *avyavahārya*.

To examine the traditional meaning of *prapañcopaśama*.

To explain the philosophical significance of the term *śiva*.

To understand *Advaita* as a central philosophical principle of the mantra.

To examine the relevance of these principles to contemporary human consciousness.

To analyse the philosophical relationship between Advaita and human unity.

To examine the possible relationship between inner peace and external peace.

To analyse the ethical relationship between Advaita and non-violence.

To establish a dialogue between Advaita and modern concepts of human dignity and coexistence.

To propose a conceptual framework for world peace based on the twelfth mantra.

To identify the limitations of this approach and suggest directions for future research.

Research Questions

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

What is the traditional philosophical meaning of *amātra*, Turiya, *avyavahārya*, *prapañcopaśama*, *śiva*, and *Advaita* in the twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*?

How can these principles enter into dialogue with contemporary human consciousness and self-reflection?

What ethical possibilities concerning human unity and human dignity can be developed from an Advaitic perspective?
What kind of philosophical relationship can be established between Advaita and non-violence?
What are the limitations of applying the twelfth mantra to the contemporary discourse on world peace?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is primarily **qualitative, text-based, philosophical, analytical, and interpretive** in nature. The primary sources include: the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*, and Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

At the secondary level, literature relating to Advaita Vedānta, Indian philosophy, human consciousness, non-violence, peace studies, human dignity, and conflict transformation has been consulted. The study employs methods of textual analysis, philosophical interpretation, comparative dialogue, and conceptual analysis.

Philosophical Analysis of the Twelfth Mantra

Amātra

At the beginning of the mantra, Turīya is described as *amātra*. The ordinary meaning of *amātra* is “without a measure” or “without a syllabic unit.” However, it should not be understood merely as the absence of sound. In the preceding mantras of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the three syllabic components of Om—“A,” “U,” and “M”—are associated with the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep respectively. In this context, the fourth principle is designated as *amātra*.

Thus, *amātra* indicates a dimension of consciousness that cannot be completely determined through ordinary measurement, classification, or sensory experience.

In the contemporary context, this concept can stimulate philosophical reflection on the limitations of human consciousness, self-reflection, and inner awareness.

Turīya

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* discusses the three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and subsequently describes the fourth principle, known as Turīya.

It would be inadequate to understand Turīya merely as a fourth ordinary psychological state existing alongside waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. In the context of Advaita Vedānta, Turīya indicates the supreme and non-dual nature of consciousness.

Therefore, in the contemporary context, the concept of Turīya may be useful for philosophical reflection on self-observation, inner awareness, and psychological-ethical transformation.

Avyavahārya

The term *avyavahārya* does not imply a complete rejection of social interaction or worldly conduct. Philosophically, it indicates that ultimate reality cannot be apprehended as an ordinary object of transaction, categorization, or sensory perception.

This distinction is particularly important. If *avyavahārya* were interpreted as a rejection of social life itself, the philosophical meaning of the Upaniṣadic teaching would be misunderstood.

In a contemporary ethical context, this principle can inspire reflection on the need not to reduce human beings merely to instruments, consumers, voters, workers, national identities, or representatives of particular social categories.

Prapañcopaśama

Prapañcopaśama is one of the most significant concepts in the twelfth mantra. It does not mean the destruction of the physical world or the annihilation of worldly existence.

Within the Advaitic and ultimate philosophical context, it refers to the subsiding of phenomenal differentiation and the recognition of the non-dual nature of reality beyond name-and-form-based distinctions.

In the contemporary social context, this idea may be reinterpreted as an invitation to critically reassess rigid mental divisions such as “us and them,” “ours and theirs,” and “friend and enemy.”

It is important to clarify that such an application constitutes a **modern interpretive extension** and should not be presented as the original political or social teaching of the mantra.

Śiva

The term *śiva* should not be restricted exclusively to a particular deity. In this philosophical context, it may also be understood as “auspicious,” “beneficent,” or “welfare-oriented.”

The principle of *śiva* can therefore be connected, within a contemporary ethical framework, with universal welfare, benevolence, and a life-oriented toward the well-being of others.

Thus, the concept of *śiva* can provide a philosophical basis for reflection extending from individual spiritual well-being to the broader welfare of all beings.

Advaita

Advaita signifies the non-dual nature of ultimate reality and constitutes one of the central philosophical principles of the mantra. Its significance is not limited to metaphysics; it also offers possibilities for contemporary ethical reflection.

Nevertheless, Advaita should not be directly equated with modern democracy, social equality, or human rights. These modern concepts have their own distinct historical and intellectual contexts.

However, the Advaitic perspective creates a philosophical possibility for reflecting upon the fundamental unity of existence. This possibility can contribute to a contemporary ethical dialogue concerning human dignity, mutual respect, coexistence, and resistance to othering.

The Twelfth Mantra in the Context of Modern Wars

Modern wars do not arise from a single psychological cause. Political struggles for power, territorial disputes, historical circumstances, economic interests, competition over resources, national security concerns, ideological differences, identity-based politics, and international power relations may all contribute to the emergence and continuation of conflicts.

Nevertheless, individual and collective psychological dimensions cannot be ignored. Fear, hatred, prejudice, dehumanization of the perceived enemy, othering, and retaliatory attitudes may intensify violent conflicts.

In this context, the Advaitic perspective can contribute to a philosophical reassessment of mental constructions such as “enemy” and “outsider.”

However, caution is necessary here as well. The claim that wars will automatically disappear through Advaitic realization alone would be philosophically excessive and empirically unsubstantiated.

Advaita and Human Unity

The fundamental metaphysical meaning of Advaita should not be identified with the modern political or legal concept of human equality. Nevertheless, the Advaitic perspective of unity provides scope for deeper philosophical reflection on the interconnectedness of human existence.

If individuals do not restrict their understanding of existence merely to narrow personal or collective identities, but reflect upon the broader unity of existence, the possibility of developing respect, empathy, and coexistence may be strengthened.

Therefore, Advaita may more appropriately be understood as a dialogical philosophical framework for engaging with contemporary ideas of human dignity and human unity.

Advaita, Non-Violence, and Peace

The relationship between Advaita and non-violence should not be understood as a simple cause-and-effect relationship. Connecting the original Advaitic principle with contemporary ethics of non-violence requires interpretive caution. Nevertheless, a possible ethical relationship may be formulated as follows: Advaitic awareness → awareness of unity → respect for others → human dignity → non-violent orientation → dialogue → coexistence

This sequence should not be regarded as an empirically established causal relationship but rather as a philosophical possibility.

A non-violent way of life involves not only abstaining from physical violence but also reducing hatred, humiliation, dehumanization, and retaliatory mentalities. In this area, a contemporary ethical reinterpretation of Advaita may prove intellectually significant.

Human Consciousness and Inner Peace

In discussions of world peace, internal psychological conditions are also significant alongside external institutions. At the individual level, fear, anger, insecurity, egoism, and hatred may increase tension in social relationships.

The concept of Turīya encourages reflection on deeper dimensions of consciousness. Self-reflection and conscious awareness can create possibilities for reconsidering one's attitudes, reactions, and perceptions of others.

Therefore, rather than treating inner peace as the sole cause of external peace, it is more appropriate to recognize a **complementary relationship** between inner and external peace.

A Conceptual Framework for World Peace

On the basis of a dialogue between the principles of the twelfth mantra and contemporary peace thought, the following conceptual framework may be proposed: Realization of Turīya

Conscious Awareness-Self-Reflection-Inner Peace-Reassessment of Ego and Narrow Identities-Possible Reduction in Othering and Hatred-Advaitic Vision of Humanity-Human Dignity-Non-Violence-Dialogue-Coexistence-Human Unity-Universal Welfare-Possibility of Sustainable World Peace This model should be understood as a philosophical-conceptual framework rather than an experimentally validated scientific causal model.

DISCUSSION

The present study demonstrates that the primary focus of the twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* is spiritual knowledge and the realization of Turīya. World peace is not its direct subject. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to present the mantra as a ready-made theory of modern political peace.

Nevertheless, the relevance of philosophical thought often lies in its ability to enter into dialogue with new questions beyond its original historical context. From this perspective, Turīya and Advaita raise important questions concerning human consciousness, self-reflection, and the unity of existence.

In contemporary peace studies, analysing the structural and political causes of conflict is indispensable. At the same time, the psychological structure of individuals and societies can also influence the character of conflict. Therefore, Advaita should not be regarded as an alternative to political solutions but as a complementary ethical and consciousness-oriented approach.

From this perspective, world peace may be understood at three interconnected levels:

1. **The inner level** – consciousness, self-reflection, and inner peace;
2. **The social level** – human dignity, non-violence, dialogue, and coexistence;
3. **The global level** – justice, diplomacy, international law, economic cooperation, and peacebuilding institutions.

Only through an appropriate integration of these three levels can a comprehensive approach to sustainable peace be developed.

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:

The central concern of the twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* is the philosophy of the Self and the realization of Turīya.

1. *Amātra* should not be interpreted merely as the absence of sound.
2. Turīya should not be understood simply as an ordinary fourth psychological state.
3. *Avyavahārya* does not imply a complete rejection of social interaction.
4. *Prapañcopaśama* does not mean the destruction of the physical world.
5. *Śiva* may be understood as auspiciousness or beneficence.
6. Advaita is a central principle indicating non-dual ultimate reality.
7. Advaita cannot be directly equated with modern democracy or social equality.
8. Advaita provides a philosophical possibility for reflecting upon the unity of human existence.
9. Modern wars arise from multiple political, economic, historical, and social factors.
10. Psychological factors such as fear, hatred, prejudice, and othering may intensify conflict.
11. The Advaitic perspective may contribute to a reassessment of the ethical foundations of othering and dehumanization.
12. There is a possible complementary relationship between inner and external peace.
13. A meaningful philosophical connection can be established between Advaita and non-violence.

14. Advaita can enter into dialogue with contemporary concepts of human dignity and coexistence.
15. Upaniṣadic philosophy can serve as a supplementary intellectual and ethical resource for peace education.
16. A spiritual-philosophical approach alone is insufficient for establishing world peace.
17. Diplomacy, international law, justice, economic cooperation, and institutional peacebuilding are also indispensable.
18. The twelfth mantra can serve as an important philosophical resource for contemporary peace discourse.
19. Ethical transformation of human consciousness can constitute an important dimension of a broader framework for world peace.

Suggestions

In the Educational Field

An interdisciplinary dialogue should be developed between Indian philosophy and contemporary peace education. Upaniṣadic ideas may be used as supplementary resources for cultivating self-reflection, dialogue, tolerance, non-violence, and conflict-resolution skills among students.

In the Social Sphere

Intercultural, interfaith, and intercommunity dialogue should be encouraged to reduce divisive mentalities based on rigid distinctions between “us” and “them.”

At the Global Level

Efforts toward world peace should integrate inner ethical transformation with diplomacy, international law, justice, economic cooperation, human rights, and institutional peacebuilding.

In Peace Education

Indian philosophical concepts such as Turīya, Advaita, non-violence, the welfare of all beings, and coexistence may be introduced into contemporary peace education through dialogical and critical approaches.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is primarily text-based, philosophical, and interpretive. It does not include empirical psychological, sociological, or international-conflict surveys.

The relationship between the twelfth mantra and world peace has been presented at the interpretive and conceptual levels. Therefore, the study does not make an empirical claim that Advaitic realization produces a specific reduction in violence or leads to a particular measurable peace outcome.

The political, economic, legal, and institutional dimensions of world peace have been considered only within the limited scope relevant to the present philosophical inquiry.

Directions for Future Research

Future research may be undertaken in the following areas:

1. Experimental testing of the design and effectiveness of an Advaita-based peace education programme.
2. Study of the impact of meditation and self-reflection on students’ attitudes toward conflict resolution.
3. Comparative study of peace thought in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* and the *Bhagavadgītā*.
4. Comparative analysis of Advaita, Jain *Anekāntavāda*, and Buddhist compassion in the context of peace.

5. Study of othering in the digital age and the relevance of an Advaitic vision of humanity.
6. Comparative research on Indian and Western traditions of peace thought.
7. Interdisciplinary study of consciousness, meditation, and conflict resolution.
8. Empirical investigation into the relationship between the Indian knowledge tradition and global peace.
9. Study of the impact of Advaita-based ethical education on tolerance and coexistence among young people.
10. Comparative study of Upaniṣadic theories of consciousness and contemporary Peace Psychology.

CONCLUSION

The twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* presents a remarkably concise yet profound account of the nature of Turīya within the philosophical framework of Advaita. Terms such as *amātra*, *avyavahārya*, *prapañcopaśama*, *śiva*, and *Advaita* illuminate different philosophical dimensions of Turīya.

The primary intention of the mantra is not to formulate a direct political, military, or diplomatic policy for contemporary world peace. Therefore, the claim that “this mantra can eliminate wars” would be inappropriate from both scholarly and methodological perspectives. However, a contemporary reinterpretation of its principles raises important questions concerning human consciousness, self-reflection, ego, discrimination, othering, human dignity, non-violence, and coexistence.

The concept of Turīya points toward deeper dimensions of consciousness. *Prapañcopaśama* provides a philosophical field for reassessing divisive modes of perception. *Śiva* indicates an orientation toward auspiciousness and welfare, while *Advaita* provides a philosophical perspective on the fundamental unity of existence.

From this perspective, the transformation of human consciousness may constitute an important complementary dimension of broader efforts toward world peace. Nevertheless, inner transformation cannot replace diplomacy, international law, social justice, human rights, economic cooperation, and institutional peacebuilding. Rather, it may provide these external efforts with an ethical and human-centred foundation.

The central proposition of the present study may therefore be expressed in the following formulation: “From Advaitic awareness to human unity, from human unity to coexistence, from coexistence to non-violent dialogue, and from non-violent dialogue to the possibility of sustainable world peace.”

Thus, the twelfth mantra of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* can be regarded not merely as a subject of spiritual knowledge in the contemporary era, but also as an important source of philosophical inspiration for the reconsideration of human consciousness, human dignity, non-violence, coexistence, and universal welfare.

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