


“Few causes are more worthy than that of enlightening Westerners about India’s sacred heritage, and this book succeeds in doing that wondrously.”

— HUSTON SMITH, author of *The World’s Religions*

# SACRED JEWELS OF YOGA

A close-up of a hand with a detailed henna design, palm facing up. The design features a central floral motif with intricate patterns radiating outwards. The hand is positioned in the center of the cover, with the fingers slightly curled. The background is a warm, golden-yellow gradient with silhouettes of Indian temple domes and a string of prayer beads hanging from the hand.

WISDOM FROM INDIA’S  
BELOVED SCRIPTURES,  
TEACHERS, MASTERS,  
AND MONKS

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## INTRODUCTION

This anthology is meant to give lovers of yoga a reference book in which they will be able to easily find cherished passages from some of the most revered yoga scriptures and commentary in India's history. Because *yoga* is one of the oldest living religious words, and because over the millennia it has had so many different and even contradictory meanings, I wanted to present yoga's most important source scriptures and teachings in the clearest and most accessible way possible: in one-page passages where readers can experience for themselves the original and highest intent for the word, the wisdom, and the practices of yoga.

For thousands of years yoga teachers have taught the scriptures one passage at a time, having their students study and meditate on each passage for hours, even days at a time before moving on to the next. This is a time-tested process that has consistently cultivated great spiritual progress throughout history, allowing for the deepest meanings of the wisdom to take root in the hearts and minds of earnest aspirants.

In our modern world this seems too painstaking and even detrimental a process. Most of us just want to get through whatever material is before us — let's just read it, learn it, and be done

with it. But this approach is antithetical to the tradition and practice of yoga. Yoga is meant to be thoughtful and contemplative, yet active and even scientific in its conscious and methodical approach to spiritual growth.

I have compiled this book so that the reader may open to any page at any time, and, with ease, be introduced to a yoga passage of great historical and spiritual significance. I can certainly attest to the power of these passages in my own life. I will never forget when I was first introduced to many of them. I remember reading them over and over again, my whole being on fire in a constant and overwhelming experience of awe, reverence, and gratitude for the glorious insights and revelations they were bringing into my life. At the time I had no idea how many people throughout history had experienced the same exquisite feelings that these scriptures were evoking in me. My most powerful recognition of the enormous love that others have felt for these spiritual treasures came when I first read Ralph Waldo Emerson's description of the Bhagavad Gita. Having been raised Unitarian, as Emerson was, I knew him to be one of the most brilliant and eloquent philosophers that America had ever produced, and so his words of praise were extraordinarily powerful to me. I will never forget the tears of joy and recognition I experienced when I first read these words: "I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.... Let us cherish this venerable oracle."

This is exactly how I have felt since the first day I was exposed to India's great yoga scriptures and teachers, and for this I will be forever grateful. It is in the spirit of my deepest gratitude for these spiritual treasures that I offer them to you in this anthology.

## THE UPANISHADS

The word *yoga* comes from the root word *yuj*, meaning to “yoke” or “unite.” The earliest yoga teachings are found in the Upanishads, which are the final portions of the Vedas, India’s most ancient and venerated scriptures. The Upanishads contain the oldest extant teachings of the spiritual wisdom, ideals, and practices of yoga: the Oneness of existence, the divinity of each human soul, meditation, karma, rebirth, maya, spiritual psychology, Self-realization, and so on.

The wisdom of the Upanishads is known as the *Vedanta*, meaning the culmination of the Vedas. The Upanishads are the ecstatic expressions of unknown sages who lived thousands of years ago regarding the nature of reality and our relationship to that reality, and they contain the first teachings of the various spiritual disciplines and practices that would come to define the four main mystical yoga pathways in future scriptures.

There have been many subdefinitions of the word *yoga* in the thousands of years of its teachings and practice, with many modern Western definitions reducing its meaning to a series of physical postures, or asanas, but the oldest, truest, and highest meaning of *yoga* is the union of our spirit with the Infinite Spirit, and the many paths and practices that lead to that union. Swami Nikhilananda put it beautifully: “The word ‘yoga’ denotes the union of individual soul with Universal Soul, and also the means to such union. Hence yoga is the goal of all religions and the basis of all religious practices.”

The Upanishads contain the original seeds of all the yoga wisdom from which the vast library of yoga practices would subsequently be fashioned and perfected by countless generations of anonymous spiritual masters devoted to these incredible wisdom pathways.

The first of the great Upanishadic revelations is that the true



nature of reality is Oneness. The Upanishads call the Eternal Oneness *Brahman*, the “great breath” or “expanse.” Everything in the universe is a temporary expression of the One: everything comes from the One, has its being in the One, and returns to the One. There is nothing in the universe that is not a manifestation of Brahman. According to the *Taittiriya Upanishad*,

He who has no form assumed many forms;  
He who is infinite appeared finite;  
He who is everywhere assumed a place;  
He who is all wisdom caused ignorance;  
He who is real caused unreality.

It is He who has become everything.  
It is He who gives reality to all.  
Before the universe was created,  
Brahman existed as unmanifest.

This is not mere pantheism, which equates God with nature. According to the Upanishadic seers, even the vast, unimaginable expanse of the known physical universe is absolutely insignificant in scope when compared to the totality of Existence that is Brahman. As the *Isha Upanishad* proclaims,

Filled with Brahman are the things we see,  
Filled with Brahman are the things we see not,  
From out of Brahman floweth all that is:  
From Brahman all  
Yet He remains the same.

The next monumental revelation of the Upanishads is of the divinity of each human soul. The Upanishads teach that the true essence of each human being is the *Atman*, the sacred Self,

Brahman indwelling. Atman *is* Brahman, Brahman within, and this is the reality of who we are. We are not our bodies, we are not our minds, we are not our thoughts, we are not our ego. We have a body, we have a mind, we have thoughts, and we have an ego, but our highest truth is the Ever-Blessed Atman, the fountainhead of all joy and light and love that is the core and fundamental truth of our being.

One of the most beloved spiritual affirmations, or *mahavakyas*, of the Upanishads is “Tat Tvam Asi,” “Thou Art That.” It is the supreme teaching that each of us is actually the Divinity in expression, and it is beautifully expressed in the *Chandogya Upanishad* by Uddalaka as he teaches his son Shvetaketu about his and about our relationship with the Infinite:

“In the beginning was only Being,  
One without a second.  
Out of Himself He brought forth the cosmos,  
and entered into everything in it.  
There is nothing that does not come from Him.  
Of everything He is the inmost Self.  
He is the truth; He is the Self supreme.  
You are that, Shvetaketu; you are that.”

The next great spiritual teaching of the Upanishads is that the highest purpose of life is realizing and manifesting the Divinity within us, uniting with It and allowing It to flow unhindered through us in all Its glory. As the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* so eloquently expresses, union with Brahman is the supreme goal and the supreme treasure of life:

Where there is unity,  
One without a second,  
That is the world of Brahman.

This is the supreme goal of life,  
The supreme treasure,  
the supreme joy.  
Those who do not seek this Supreme goal  
Live on but a fraction of this joy.

The scriptures teach us that not only is it our sacred duty, our *dharma*, to uphold the highest in us, but it is the *only* way to abiding joy and peace. They tell us that by dedicating ourselves to the sacred goal of uniting with the highest within us, we will eventually reach the goal, the bliss of union with the Supreme Soul.

The next Upanishadic revelations concern the human condition: the makeup of the soul, the causes of our mental and emotional pain, and the impediments that keep us from living in the light and love of the Atman. These teachings form the foundations of the oldest living spiritual psychology. Eloquently, powerfully, and yet with easy-to-understand terminology, the Upanishads teach us how moment to moment there are two modes of knowing through which we can choose to experience life: through the sacred Self, the very truth of our being, where we experience ourselves and the world through wholeness, love, and joy, or through the individualized and unaware ego, where we experience ourselves and the world through the painful illusions of separation, lack, and need. From the *Mundaka Upanishad*:

Like two golden birds  
perched on the selfsame tree,  
intimate friends,  
the ego and the Self dwell in the same body.

The former eats the sweet and sour fruits  
of the tree of life,  
while the latter looks on in detachment.

As long as we think we are the ego,  
we feel attached and fall into sorrow.  
But realize that you are the Self,  
the Lord of life,  
and you will be freed from sorrow.

When you realize that you are the Self,  
supreme source of light,  
supreme source of love,  
you transcend the duality of life  
and enter into the unitive state.

The Upanishads teach us that as long as we remain identified with the separate ego, we remain attached to its constant parade of like and dislike, happy and sad, and all its selfish demands, fears, and cravings. The futile struggle of the individual self to experience wholeness through external gratifications will continue as long as we remain ignorant of our Divine Nature and Its inexhaustible joy. According to the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*:

On this ever-revolving wheel of being  
the individual self goes round and round,  
through life after life,  
believing itself to be a separate creature,  
until it sees its identity with the Lord of Love  
and attains immortality in the indivisible whole.

Until we come to know the abiding joy of the Atman, we will continue to suffer in ego's false experience of isolation and the fear it perpetuates, oblivious to who we truly are and what is actually causing our neediness and dissatisfactions. And this is nowhere more profoundly illustrated than in the famous chariot analogy of the *Katha Upanishad*:

Know the Self as lord of the chariot,  
the body as the chariot itself,  
the discriminating intellect as charioteer,  
and the mind as reins.  
The senses, say the wise, are the horses;  
selfish desires are the roads they travel.  
When the Self is confused  
with the body, mind, and senses,  
they point out, He seems  
to enjoy pleasure and suffer sorrow.

When one lacks discrimination  
and his mind is undisciplined, the senses  
run hither and thither like wild horses.  
But they obey the rein like trained horses  
when one has discrimination  
and has made the mind one-pointed.

Those who lack discrimination,  
with little control over their thoughts  
and far from pure,  
reach not the pure state of immortality  
but wander from death to death;  
but those who have discrimination,  
with a still mind and a pure heart,

reach the journey's end,  
never again to fall into the jaws of death.

With a discriminating intellect as charioteer  
and a trained mind as reins,  
they attain the supreme goal of life,  
to be united with the Lord of Love.

While the Self is the absolute lord of the chariot, it dwells quietly within the lotus of our heart, detached from the drama of our lives. It does not force itself on us, but waits for us to grow weary of the chase for happiness outside ourselves. As long as we continue to give the selfish desires and sense cravings of the separate ego the power to choose our destinations in life, we will be forced to travel roads that lead to an ever-increasing bondage to the lower in us and an ever-increasing isolation from the highest in us. Until we wake up to our condition and slavery and take a stand, the lower urges will continue to use us for their own selfish ends and, in doing so, will keep us from uniting in purpose with the Atman. Yoga is the great spiritual struggle against the lower and for the higher, and that battle within each of us that must be fought in order to unite with Atman has never been more powerfully portrayed than in the Bhagavad Gita, the most beloved yoga scripture in the world.

## THE BHAGAVAD GITA

For thousands of years the Bhagavad Gita, or the Song of God, has been revered for its spiritual power, beauty, clarity, and catholicity. Although not technically an Upanishad, it carries on the Upanishadic tradition in philosophy and form, taking the great and uncoded revelations of yoga wisdom and practice first offered in the Upanishads and fashioning them into a masterwork



on spiritual growth. As with the Upanishads, the fundamental philosophical stance of the Gita is that all existence is a manifestation of God, that God exists in all beings as their innermost Self, that the knowledge of and union with the Self, or yoga, is the supreme goal of life, and that ignorance of our Divinity is the true cause of our suffering.

The teachings of the Gita are presented in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The background story of the Gita is important because it forms the basis of an exquisite allegory on the human condition and the internal struggle to unite with Spirit that most profoundly encapsulates the power and the glory of yoga philosophy and practice.

Facing each other on the battlefield of Kurukshetra are two families of royal cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, the sons of Pandu and Dhritarashtra, respectively. Arjuna is one of the Pandava brothers. Because Dhritarashtra was born blind, his younger brother Pandu inherited the ancestral kingdom from their father. Pandu died young, so the five young Pandavas, heirs to the throne, were raised in the care of their uncle and interim king, Dhritarashtra.

The Pandava brothers grew up as great testaments to goodness and righteousness, while the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra, and in particular Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kaurava brothers, grew up to be greedy, cruel, self-centered, and unscrupulous. Duryodhana was jealous of the Pandavas and tried to destroy them so that he could possess the kingdom, and while Dhritarashtra tried to be impartial, he did nothing to stop or control any of his son's unrighteous ways. Duryodhana sabotaged the rightful ascension of the Pandavas to the throne, banished the Pandavas from the kingdom, and assumed the rulership of the territory. As a result, the kingdom experienced great pain and suffering

for many years at the hands of Duryodhana and his unrighteous brothers. Finally the Pandavas had no choice but to take up arms against the Kauravas for the welfare of the kingdom. And so the Gita begins as Arjuna and his charioteer, Krishna, turn to face the Kauravas on the battlefield.

In this profound allegory, Arjuna represents you and me, the spiritual seeker and individualized soul, while Krishna represents the Supreme Soul, the Atman within each of us. The blind king Dhritarashtra represents the blind and undisciplined mind under the spell of ignorance, and his hundred sons the numerous selfish tendencies and forces of negativity that live inside us: greed, anger, fear, self-doubt, lust, jealousy, conceit, possessiveness, and so on. Duryodhana represents the selfish and uncontrolled ego, determined to have its way at all costs and without consideration for others, while the Pandavas represent the highest qualities of goodness, courage, selflessness, wisdom, and love within us.

The kingdom being fought for in the Gita represents the kingdom of the soul within each of us, and the battle, a perennial one, represents the struggle between the power of goodness and the power of selfishness within, and whether the highest or the lowest will be allowed to rule.

The Gita teaches us that if we don't fight against the lower urges within us they will continue to rule over us. Like Duryodhana, they will never just stop. They must *be* stopped, consciously, purposefully, and methodically. We must defeat and destroy them, or they will never relinquish their power over us. The heart and mind must be purified of selfishness and darkness if we are ever to be united with our Highest Self.

It is to this glorious end that the Gita gives us detailed instruction on the spiritual practices available to us in our quest to successfully eliminate the selfishness and negativity within us. The paths to Self-realization that Krishna teaches Arjuna are

the four sacred yoga pathways to spiritual union. And the Gita's great promise is that all spiritual aspirants who faithfully follow any or all of these paths will achieve *Moksha*, or liberation from their bondage to the lower, and victory in their struggle to attain to the Highest Good.

## PATHWAYS TO UNION: THE FOUR SCRIPTURAL YOGAS

The four yoga pathways to spiritual union taught in the Gita are built on the profound recognition, made by yoga masters thousands of years ago, that human beings have four faculties through which they can learn to purify the heart, discipline the mind, restrain the senses, and unite with the Self within: the intellect, love, psychic control, and work. Swami Vivekananda describes the four yogas taught in the Gita as such: "Each soul is potentially divine, and the goal of yoga is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. We can do this either by work (Karma yoga), or worship (Bhakti yoga), or psychic control (Raja yoga), or knowledge (Jnana yoga) — by one, or more, or all of these, and when we do, we shall be free. Always remember that the bringing forth of the Divinity within us is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books are but secondary details."

Jnana yoga is the path of intellectual discrimination between the real and the unreal. It is the path to union through knowledge, not the mere knowledge of things, but the direct apprehension of the One Infinite Reality *behind* all temporal things. The renunciation of the jnani is the renunciation of all illusions of two-ness. The aim of the jnani is to develop the superconscious ability to see the Divine One everywhere, expressing itself through and as everyone and everything.

Jnana is considered the most difficult of the four yoga pathways, for it calls not only for the rejection of all illusions of duality

outside ourselves but also for the rejection of every mental or emotional state within us that hides the truth of Oneness from us. Swami Vivekananda offers us a taste of this:

As long as you see the many, you are under delusion. “In this world of many, he who sees the One, in this ever-changing world, he who sees Him who never changes as the Soul of his own soul, as his own Self, he is free, he is blessed, he has reached the goal.” Therefore, know that you are He; you are one with the God of this universe.

All these small ideas that I am a man or a woman, sick or healthy, strong or weak, or that I hate or love or have little power, are but hallucinations. Stand up then. Know that every thought and word that weakens you in this world is the only evil that exists. Whatever makes you weak and fearful is the only evil that should be shunned. Stand as a rock; you are the Infinite Spirit. Say, “I am Existence Absolute, Bliss Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, I am He,” and like a lion breaking its cage, break your chains and be free forever.

Karma yoga is the path of selfless service, the path to union through work offered in the spirit of worship. It is the aim of Karma yoga to sacralize each of our actions through the conscious, constant, and loving offering of our work and the fruits of our work to God. When we work in this way, detached from outcome and in the spirit of service, the bonds of ego-attachment fall away, and our identification with the highest within us grows stronger. Acts of selfless service in devotion to the higher purifies our hearts, destroys our selfishness, and spiritualizes our ego. As Swami Nikhilananda explains:

Behind a man's work there may be different motives. He may work for his own satisfaction, or he may work to please God. In the former case he regards his individualized self as the doer, is elated by success and depressed by failure, and clings to the result. In the latter case he knows that the Lord alone is the Doer, and himself only His instrument; he then works viewing alike success and failure, for the fruit of the action belongs to God alone.

Egocentric action creates bondage for the doer, whereas action performed to please God leads to liberation. Through such action the heart becomes pure, and the man of pure heart acquires the fitness to cultivate Self-knowledge. And through Self-knowledge, he attains liberation. This is called karma yoga, the performance of duty as a yoga.

The renunciation of the Karma yogi is the renunciation of all selfishness and attachment in thought or deed. In this passage from the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna's emphasis on the spiritual power and significance of selfless service is unambiguous:

Every selfless act, Arjuna,  
is born from Brahman,  
the eternal, infinite Godhead.  
He is present in every act of service.  
All life turns on this law, O Arjuna.  
Whoever violates it,  
indulging his senses for his own pleasure  
and ignoring the needs of others,  
has wasted his life.

Bhakti yoga is the path of love and devotion to a personal God. It is the unceasing adoration of God in any of God's Divine forms:

Heavenly Father, Holy Mother, the Beloved, Christ, Krishna, Shiva, the Lord of Love within, or any embodiment of God that the bhakta can love with all of his or her heart. Through a constant and unbroken flow of adoration directed to God, the bhakta disintegrates all selfishness through the fervor of divine love.

The renunciation of the bhakta is the renunciation of all that is unloving within and all unloving feelings projected outward into the world. The bhakta sees the whole universe as God's and therefore offers unswerving love to all of God's creation. It is through the power of this intense and blissful relationship with God that all the petty desires of the little ego fade away naturally and without struggle, until nothing is left to experience but the Lord of Love Himself. Swami Vivekananda explains:

Bhakti Yoga is the science of higher love.

It shows us how to direct love:

how to manage it, how to use it,

how to give it a new aim;

and from it, it shows us how to obtain

the highest and most glorious results;

that is, how to make it lead us

to spiritual blessedness.

Bhakti yoga does not say, "Give up";

it only says, "Love the Highest!"

and everything low

will naturally fall away from him,

the object of whose love

is this Highest.

What is really required of us in this yoga

is that our thirst after the beautiful

should be directed to God.



What is the beauty in the human face,  
in the sky, in the stars, and in the moon?  
It is only the partial manifestation of the real,  
all-embracing Divine Beauty.  
“He shining, everything shines.”

Raja yoga is the path to union through meditation, concentration, and psychic control. It is for the devotee who is contemplative in nature and who enjoys mining the depths of the soul for the treasure within. The renunciation of the Raja yogi is the renunciation all the mental and emotional states within that hide the glory of the Supreme Soul. Through mastery of Raja yoga comes the complete command of the mind, intellect, and senses, culminating in samadhi, the perfect internal stillness and clarity that reveals the Atman in all its glory. According to the Gita:

Closing their eyes,  
steadying their breathing,  
and focusing their attention  
on the center of spiritual consciousness,  
the wise master their senses, mind,  
and intellect through meditation.  
Self-realization is their only goal.  
Freed from selfish desire, fear, and anger,  
they live in freedom always.

## THE ANTHOLOGY

The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita form the foundation wisdom for all subsequent yoga pathways and practices, and that is why yoga teachers throughout history have placed such emphasis on them. Simply stated, they are essential reading for any student of yoga, and no anthology on yoga wisdom would be complete

without them. However, each of the four yogas has other scriptures essential to its path as well, and I have included passages from five of them. They include Patanjali's magnificent Yoga Sutras, which is the uncontested bible of Raja yoga; Narada's Bhakti Sutras and the Srimad Bhagavatam, two of the most sacred Bhakti scriptures; the Astavakra Samhita, an important Jnana yoga scripture; and the Dhammapada, the yoga teachings of the blessed Buddha.

And finally, I have included inspired commentary on the yoga scriptures, primarily by Sri Ramakrishna (1836–1886) and Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), two of India's greatest yoga masters. Ramakrishna, who is considered by millions to be an incarnation of God and the absolute embodiment of all the yoga pathways to Self-realization, is credited with having been the catalyst for the enormous worldwide growth of interest in the wisdom of ancient India since his passing. Swami Vivekananda, whose extraordinary spiritual presence, eloquence, and life of selfless service to humanity continues to make him one of the most beloved yogis in India, will also forever be the father of Western Yoga, the first realized yoga master to bring the great yoga scriptures and teachings to the West at large, first by being the uncontested star of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and then, for years afterward, by teaching and spreading the gospel of yoga and Vedanta throughout America and Europe. Two of my favorite testaments to the stature of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda were offered by Sri Aurobindo, one of the most revered yogis of the twentieth century. First regarding Ramakrishna:

In the life of Ramakrishna we see a colossal spiritual capacity first driving straight to the divine realization, taking the Kingdom of Heaven... and then seizing upon

one yoga method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realization and possession of God by the power of love.... His was the great super-conscious life....

And Aurobindo's testament to Vivekananda:

Among all the divisions of mankind it is India... who must send forth from herself the Eternal Religion which is to harmonize all religion, science, and philosophies, and make mankind one soul.... It was to initiate this great work... that Bhagawan Ramakrishna came and Vivekananda preached....

The going forth of Vivekananda as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it was the first visible sign that India was awake... He was a power if ever there was one, a very lion among men. We perceive his influence still working gigantically in something grand, intuitive, upheaving.

It is my great hope that the sacred jewels offered in this book will provide the reader with the same kind of joy, illumination, understanding, and spiritual guidance that they have provided to countless lovers of yoga wisdom throughout history, and that these passages will inspire those new to these yoga treasures to pursue the study of the complete scriptures they are drawn from. Please refer to both the recommended books and the acknowledgments sections for suggestions on further study.

I will end this introduction with a wonderful summation of yoga by the blessed Swami Prabhavananda, whose teachings

have been particularly valuable to me: “The culmination of all the yogas is the complete unconditional surrender of the lower self, or ego, to God, or the Supreme Self. When the barrier of the ego is removed, by following the path either of knowledge, or of work, or of love, or of meditation, or by following all of them at once, the omnipresent, omniscient, immortal Lord of the universe becomes revealed as the Lord of the heart — the Supreme Self.”



# SACRED JEWELS OF YOGA





## CREATION HYMN



There was not then what is  
nor what is not.  
There was no sky, and no  
heaven beyond the sky.  
What power was there? Where?  
Who was that power?  
Was there an abyss of fathomless waters?

There was neither death nor immortality then.  
No signs were there of night or day.  
The One was breathing  
by its own power, in infinite peace.  
Only the One was: there was nothing beyond.

Darkness was hidden in darkness.  
The All was fluid and formless.  
Therein, in the void,  
by the fire of fervor,  
arose the One.  
And in the One arose love:  
Love, the first seed of the soul.  
The truth of this the sages found  
in their hearts:  
seeking in their hearts with wisdom,  
the sages found that bond of union  
between Being and non-being.

— RIG VEDA

## THE SUPREME TREASURE



Where there is unity,  
One without a second,  
That is the world of Brahman.  
This is the supreme goal of life,  
The supreme treasure,  
the supreme joy.  
Those who do not seek this supreme goal  
Live on but a fraction of this joy.

— BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

## FOR THE SAKE OF THE SPIRIT



The wife loves the husband not for the husband's sake,  
but for the sake of the Spirit that is in the husband.

The husband loves the wife not for the wife's sake,  
but for the sake of the Spirit that is in the wife.

Children are loved not for the children's sake,  
but for the sake of the Spirit that is in the children.

Wealth is loved not for wealth's sake,  
but for the sake of the Spirit that is in wealth.

The universe is loved not for the sake of the universe,  
but for the sake of the Spirit that is in the universe.

Everything is loved not for its own sake,  
but for the sake of the Spirit that lives in it.

This Spirit has to be realized.  
Hear about this Spirit and meditate upon Him.  
When you hear about the Spirit,  
meditate upon the Spirit,  
and finally realize the Spirit,  
you come to understand everything in life.

— BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

## THE SELF-EXISTENT



The Lord of Love willed:

“Let me be many!”

And in the depths of His meditation

He created everything that exists.

Meditating, He entered into everything.

He who has no form assumed many forms;

He who is infinite appeared finite;

He who is everywhere assumed a place;

He who is all wisdom caused ignorance;

He who is real caused unreality.

It is He who has become everything.

It is He who gives reality to all.

Before the universe was created,

Brahman existed as unmanifest.

Brahman brought the Lord out of himself;

therefore He is called the Self-existent.

— TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

## THIS SELF IS BRAHMAN



The Self,  
who can be realized by the pure in heart,  
who is life, light, truth, space,  
who gives rise to all works,  
all desires, all tastes,  
who is beyond words,  
who is joy abiding —  
this is the Self dwelling in my heart.

Smaller than a grain of rice,  
smaller than a grain of barley,  
smaller than a mustard seed,  
smaller than a grain of millet,  
smaller even than the kernel of  
a grain of millet is the Self.  
This is the Self dwelling in my heart,  
greater than the earth, greater than the sky,  
greater than all the worlds.

This Self,  
who gives rise to all works, all desires, all tastes,  
who pervades the universe,  
who is beyond words,  
who is joy abiding,  
who is ever present in my heart —  
This Self is Brahman indeed.  
To him I shall attain when my ego dies.

— CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

## WISDOM IN THE SELF



Brahman is the first cause  
And the last refuge.  
Brahman, the hidden Self in everyone,  
does not shine forth.  
He is revealed only to those  
who keep their mind one-pointed  
on the Lord of Love,  
and thus develop a superconscious  
manner of knowing.

Meditation enables them to go  
deeper and deeper into consciousness,  
from the world of words,  
to the world of thoughts,  
then beyond thoughts,  
to wisdom in the Self.

— KATHA UPANISHAD

## THE ETERNAL ONE



I know the Self, the sage Shvetashvatara said,  
to be immortal and infinite.  
I know this Self who is the Self of all,  
whom the sages call the Eternal One.

May the Lord of Love, who projects himself  
into this universe of myriad forms,  
from whom all beings come  
and to whom all return,  
grant us the grace of wisdom.

He is fire and the sun, and the moon and the stars.  
He is the air and the sea, and the Creator, Prajapati.  
He is this boy, He is that girl,  
He is this man, He is that woman,  
and He is this old man, too, tottering on his staff.  
His face is everywhere.

He is the blue bird, He is the green bird  
with red eyes; He is the thundercloud,  
and He is the seasons and the seas.  
He has no beginning, He has no end.  
He is the source from which the worlds evolve.

From His divine power comes forth all this  
magical show of name and form, of you and me,  
which casts the spell of pain and pleasure.

Only when we pierce through this  
magic veil do we see the  
One who appears as many.

— SHVETASHVATARA UPANISHAD



## IN THAT UNITIVE STATE



As a man in the arms of his beloved  
is not aware of what is without  
and what is within,  
so a person in union with the Self  
is not aware of what is without  
and what is within,  
for in that unitive state,  
all desires find their perfect fulfillment.  
There is no other desire  
that needs to be fulfilled,  
and one goes beyond sorrow.

In that unitive state there is  
neither father nor mother,  
neither worlds nor gods,  
nor even scriptures.  
In that state there is neither  
thief nor slayer,  
neither low caste nor high,  
neither monk nor ascetic.  
The Self is beyond good and evil,  
beyond all the suffering of the human heart.

— BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

## THE LORD IS THE SUPREME REALITY



The Lord is enshrined in the hearts of all.  
The Lord is the supreme Reality.  
Rejoice in him through renunciation.  
Covet nothing. All belongs to the Lord.  
Thus working may you live a hundred years.  
Thus alone will you work in real freedom.

The Self is one. Ever still, the Self is  
swifter than thought, swifter than the senses.  
Though motionless, he outruns all pursuit.  
Without the Self, never could life exist.

The Self seems to move, but is ever still.  
He seems far away, but is ever near.  
He is within all, and he transcends all.

Those who see all creatures in themselves  
and themselves in all creatures know no fear.  
Those who see all creatures in themselves  
and themselves in all creatures know no grief.  
How can the multiplicity of life  
delude the one who sees its unity?

— ISHA UPANISHAD

## TWO SELVES



There are two selves,  
the separate ego  
and the indivisible Atman.

When one rises above  
I and me and mine,  
the Atman is revealed  
as one's real Self.

When all desires  
that surge in the heart  
are renounced,  
the mortal becomes immortal.

When all the knots  
that strangle the heart  
are loosened,  
the mortal becomes immortal.

This sums up the teaching of the scriptures.

— KATHA UPANISHAD

## THE JOY OF THE ATMAN



The joy of the Atman ever abides,  
but not what seems pleasant to the senses.  
Both these, differing in their purpose,  
prompt us to action.  
All is well for those who choose  
the joy of the Atman,  
but they miss the goal of life  
who prefer the pleasant.

Perennial joy or passing pleasure?  
This is the choice one is to make always.  
The wise recognize these two,  
but not the ignorant.  
The first welcome what leads to abiding joy,  
though painful at the time.  
The latter run, goaded by their senses,  
after what seems immediate pleasure.

— KATHA UPANISHAD

## THE HIGHEST MYSTICAL TEACHING



Like oil in sesame seeds, like butter in cream,  
like water in springs, like fire in firesticks,  
so dwells the Lord of Love, the Self,  
in the very depths of consciousness.  
Realize Him through truth and meditation.

The Self is hidden in the hearts of all,  
as butter lies hidden in cream.  
Realize the Self in the depths of meditation —  
the Lord of Love, supreme Reality,  
who is the goal of all knowledge.

This is the highest mystical teaching;  
This is the highest mystical teaching.

May we harness body and mind to see  
the Lord of Life, who dwells in everyone.  
May we ever with one-pointed mind  
strive for blissful union with the Lord.  
May we train our senses to serve the Lord  
through the practice of meditation.

— SHVETASHVATARA UPANISHAD

## THE ONE SELF OF ALL



The Lord of Love  
is the one Self of all.  
He is detached work,  
spiritual wisdom,  
and immortality.

Realize the Self  
hidden in the heart,  
and cut asunder  
the knot of ignorance  
here and now.

Bright but hidden,  
the Self dwells in the heart.  
Everything that moves,  
breathes, opens, and closes  
lives in the Self.

He is the source of love  
and may be known through love,  
but not through thought.  
He is the goal of life.  
Attain this goal!

— MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

## IN THE HEART MADE PURE



Above the senses is the mind,  
above the mind is the intellect,  
above that is the ego,  
and above the ego  
is the unmanifested Cause.

He is formless,  
and can never be seen  
with these two eyes.  
But He reveals Himself  
in the heart made pure,  
through meditation and sense-restraint.  
Realizing Him one is released  
from the cycle of birth and death.

When the five senses are stilled,  
when the mind is stilled,  
when the intellect is stilled,  
that is called the highest state by the wise.  
They say yoga is this complete stillness,  
in which one enters the unitive state,  
never to become separate again.

— KATHA UPANISHAD

## THE CHARIOT



Know the Self as lord of the chariot,  
the body as the chariot itself,  
the discriminating intellect as charioteer,  
and the mind as reins.

The senses, say the wise, are the horses;  
selfish desires are the roads they travel.

When the Self is confused  
with the body, mind, and senses,  
they point out, He seems  
to enjoy pleasure and suffer sorrow.

When one lacks discrimination  
and his mind is undisciplined, the senses  
run hither and thither like wild horses.  
But they obey the rein like trained horses  
when one has discrimination  
and has made the mind one-pointed.

Those who lack discrimination,  
with little control over their thoughts  
and far from pure,  
reach not the pure state of immortality  
but wander from death to death;  
but those who have discrimination,  
with a still mind and a pure heart,  
reach the journey's end,  
never again to fall into the jaws of death.

With a discriminating intellect as charioteer  
and a trained mind as reins,  
they attain the supreme goal of life,  
to be united with the Lord of Love.

— KATHA UPANISHAD



## AS WE ACT, SO WE BECOME



As a person acts, so he becomes in life.  
Those who do good become good;  
those who do harm become bad.  
Good deeds make one pure;  
bad deeds make one impure.

We are said to be what our desire is.  
As our desire is, so is our will.  
As our will is, so are our acts.  
As we act, so we become.

— BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

## THE LORD IS THE OPERATOR



The Lord is hidden in every heart.  
He is the eternal witness,  
beyond the gunas,  
watching our work from within  
as pure consciousness.

The Lord is the operator; we are  
but His innumerable instruments.  
May we, in our consciousness,  
realize the bliss He alone can give us.

Changeless amidst the changing,  
consciousness of the conscious,  
He grants all our prayers.  
May we, in our consciousness,  
realize the freedom He alone can give us.

Neither sun nor moon nor star nor fire shines;  
everything reflects the light of the Lord.

— SHVETASHVATARA UPANISHAD

## THE SELF REVEALS HIMSELF



Not through discourse,  
not through the intellect,  
not even through  
the study of the scriptures  
can the Self be realized.

The Self reveals Himself  
to the one who longs for the Self.  
Those who long for the Self  
with all their heart  
are chosen by the Self  
as His own.

— MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

## ALL OF LIFE IS ONE



“What is that wisdom, Father?” asked the son.  
Uddalaka said to Shvetaketu,

“As by knowing one lump of clay, dear one,  
we come to know all things made out of clay:  
that they differ only in name and form,  
while the stuff of which all are made is clay;

“As by knowing one gold nugget, dear one,  
we come to know all things made out of gold:  
that they differ only in name and form,  
while the stuff of which all are made is gold;

“As by knowing one iron tool, dear one,  
we come to know all things made out of iron:  
that they differ only in name and form,  
while the stuff of which all are made is iron;

“So through that spiritual wisdom, dear one,  
we come to know that all of life is one.”

— CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

## YOU ARE THAT



Father, please instruct me in this wisdom.

“Yes, dear one, I will,” replied his father.

“In the beginning was only Being,

One without a second.

Out of Himself He brought forth the cosmos,

and entered into everything in it.

There is nothing that does not come from Him.

Of everything He is the inmost Self.

He is the truth; He is the Self supreme.

You are that, Shvetaketu; you are that.”

— CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

## THE IMMEMORIAL SELF



The wise, realizing through meditation  
the timeless Self, beyond all perception,  
hidden in the cave of the heart,  
leave pain and pleasure far behind.

Those who know they are  
neither body nor mind  
but the immemorial Self,  
the divine Principle of existence,  
find the source of all joy  
and live in joy abiding.

— KATHA UPANISHAD

## THE INDIVISIBLE UNITY OF LIFE



As long as there is separateness,  
one sees another as separate from oneself,  
hears another as separate from oneself,  
smells another as separate from oneself,  
speaks to another as separate from oneself,  
thinks of another as separate from oneself,  
knows another as separate from oneself.

But when the Self is realized  
as the indivisible unity of life,  
who can be seen by whom,  
who can be heard by whom,  
who can be smelled by whom,  
who can be spoken to by whom,  
who can be thought of by whom,  
who can be known by whom?  
Maitreyi, my beloved,  
how can the knower ever be known?

— BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

## THE SEA OF PURE CONSCIOUSNESS



As a lump of salt thrown in water  
dissolves and cannot be taken out again,  
though wherever we taste the water it is salty,  
even so, beloved, the separate self dissolves  
in the sea of pure consciousness,  
infinite and immortal.

Separateness arises from  
identifying the Self with the body,  
which is made up of the elements;  
when this physical identification dissolves,  
there can be no more separate self.  
This is what I want to tell you, beloved.

— BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD



## THE PRESENCE OF GOD



All is change in the world of the senses,  
but changeless is the supreme Lord of Love.

Meditate on Him, be absorbed in Him,  
wake up from this dream of separateness.

Know God and all fetters will fall away.  
No longer identifying yourself with the body,  
go beyond birth and death.

All your desires will be fulfilled in Him  
who is One without a second.

Know Him to be enshrined  
in your heart always.  
Truly there is nothing more in life to know.  
Meditate and realize that this world  
is filled with the presence of God.

— SHVETASHVATARA UPANISHAD

## THOSE WHO KNOW THE SELF, BECOME THE SELF



What the sages sought  
they have found at last.  
No more questions  
have they to ask of life.  
With self-will extinguished,  
they are at peace.  
Seeing the Lord of Love in all around,  
serving the Lord of Love in all around,  
they are united with him forever.

They have attained  
the summit of wisdom  
by the steep path of renunciation.  
They have attained to immortality  
and are united with the Lord of Love.

When they leave the body,  
the vital force returns to the cosmic womb,  
but their work becomes a beneficial force in life  
to bring others together in the Self.

The flowing river is lost in the sea;  
the illumined sage is lost in the Self.  
The flowing river has become the sea;  
the illumined sage has become the Self.  
Those who know the Self,  
become the Self.

— MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

## BEHOLD THE GLORY OF THE SELF



Hidden in the heart  
of every creature  
exists the Self,  
subtler than the subtlest,  
greater than the greatest.

They go beyond sorrow  
who extinguish their self-will  
and behold the glory of the Self,  
through the grace of the Lord of Love.

— KATHA UPANISHAD

DA-DA-DA!



The children of Prajapati, the Creator — gods, human beings,  
and the godless — lived with their father as students.

When they had completed the allotted period the gods said,

“Venerable One, please teach us.”

Prajapati answered with one syllable:

“Da.”

“Have you understood?” he asked.

“Yes,” they said. “You have told us Damyata,  
be self-controlled.”

“You have understood,” he said.

Then the human beings approached.

“Venerable One, please teach us.”

Prajapati answered with one syllable:

“Da.”

“Have you understood?” he asked.

“Yes,” they said. “You have told us Datta,  
give.”

“You have understood,” he said.

Then the godless approached.

“Venerable One, please teach us.”

Prajapati answered with the same syllable:

“Da.”

“Have you understood?” he asked.

“Yes,” they said. “You have told us Dayadhvam,  
be compassionate.”

“You have understood,” he said.

The heavenly voice of the thunder  
repeats this teaching. Da-da-da!

Be self-controlled! Give! Be compassionate!

## LEARNING AND TEACHING



Practice right conduct,  
learning and teaching;

Be truthful always,  
learning and teaching;

Master the passions,  
learning and teaching;

Control the senses,  
learning and teaching;

Strive for peace always,  
learning and teaching;

Rouse kundalini,  
learning and teaching;

Serve humanity,  
learning and teaching.

— TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD

OM



I will give you the Word that  
all the scriptures glorify,  
all spiritual disciplines express,  
to attain which aspirants lead a life  
of sense-restraint and self-naughting.  
It is OM.

This symbol of the Godhead is the highest.  
Realizing it one finds complete  
fulfillment of all one's longings.  
It is of the greatest support to all seekers.

Those in whose hearts OM  
reverberates unceasingly  
are indeed blessed  
and deeply loved  
as one who is the Self.

— KATHA UPANISHAD

## THE EFFULGENT SELF



The effulgent Self,  
who is beyond thought,  
shines in the greatest,  
shines in the smallest,  
shines in the farthest,  
shines in the nearest,  
shines in the secret chamber  
of the heart.

Beyond the reach  
of the senses is He,  
but not beyond the reach  
of a mind stilled through the  
practice of deep meditation.

Beyond the reach of  
words and works is He,  
but not beyond the reach  
of a pure heart  
freed from the sway of the senses.

— MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

## TWO GOLDEN BIRDS



Like two golden birds  
perched on the selfsame tree,  
intimate friends,  
the ego and the Self dwell in the same body.  
The former eats the sweet and sour fruits  
of the tree of life,  
while the latter looks on in detachment.

As long as we think we are the ego,  
we feel attached and fall into sorrow.  
But realize that you are the Self,  
the Lord of life,  
and you will be freed from sorrow.

When you realize that you are the Self,  
supreme source of light,  
supreme source of love,  
you transcend the duality of life  
and enter into the unitive state.

— MUNDAKA UPANISHAD



## THE LORD OF LOVE



The Lord of Love shines  
in the hearts of all.  
Seeing Him in all creatures,  
the wise forget themselves  
in the service of all.

The Lord is their joy,  
the Lord is their rest;  
such as they are  
the lovers of the Lord.

— MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

## THE WORLD IS THE RIVER OF GOD



The world is the wheel of God,  
turning round and round  
with all living creatures upon its rim.

The world is the river of God,  
flowing from him and flowing back to him.

On this ever-revolving wheel of being  
the individual self goes round and round,  
through life after life,  
believing itself to be a separate creature,  
until it sees its identity with the Lord of Love  
and attains immortality in the indivisible whole.

— SHVETASHVATARA UPANISHAD