



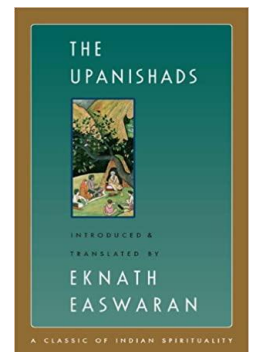
The Mandukya Upanishad - The Commentary

Introduction to the Upanishads

This is the edition I have and it has wonderful introductions on each chapter also. It is not necessary to get the same version (unless you want to). You can find it on Amazon and most major book stores:

The Upanishads (Easwaran's Classics of Indian Spirituality, 2) – by Eknath Easwaran [link](#).

There is also an abridged audio version available on Audible and Apple Books.



In the Bhagavad Gita, we find a more practical description of the natural state of human beings when they have realised the Truth. The Gita also describes the main pathways of meditation, devotion and wisdom as the fastest ways to Truth. By contrast, in the Upanishads we see a collection of writings that have much less instruction of how to actually realise what you are but are rich in descriptions of that essence of Truth and what it is like to live it. The Upanishads are some of the oldest scriptures known to us and they are so old we do not even really know who wrote them. We can place them in a different category to the Gita if we see their function is to inspire us, light a fire or even to make us jealous of the Rishis (ancient seers) who wrote them. If the Gita is here to help us understand the power of devotion to the Truth, then the Upanishads are here to make the flame of our devotion a raging fire.

We could think of the Gita as the “How to reach it and why it’s worth making the journey” and the Upanishads as the “Here’s what you are missing out on - Love letters from the Self” If we look at the meaning and etymology of “Upanishad” we will see it is describing a transmission from Truth directly into the illusion of our thoughts and penetrating it deeply. Infusing our minds and hearts with the power of Truth, the Upanishads are legendary in their power to pierce the veil of illusion. If we read them softly, gently and with reverence we will feel more focused, devoted and inspired that we too can live in freedom. The Upanishads are not to be read to try to understand or to achieve deeper knowledge (although that may happen) and are best taken in as if you are listening to some beautiful music that moves you. Simply letting them into your heart, they will work their magic on you.

Some of the Upanishads come in a story form and some are the records of a dialogue between teacher and student. Often the teacher can come in a very surprising form and so we can see immediately that the Upanishads are already pointing to a pivotal understanding that Truth can come from anywhere at any time and need not necessarily come in a formal way. Each Upanishad is complete on its own and does not rely on any other teaching or even any other Upanishad. We are going to study eleven main Upanishads and allow them to infuse us with their wisdom, power and love. You will notice there are some that you resonate more with and some you may feel an indifference to at first. I would urge you to pay special attention to the ones you do not feel a

resonance with at first as these will be the ones that have potential to provide the greatest breakthroughs. The spiritual power of these great writings is such that our mind senses it and may immediately offer resistance to the words. Your mind may say "I don't like the names and the language used" or it may think that this information is too old to be relevant today but let's not let this type of resistance stop us from reaping the rewards of diving deeper into this powerful body of scriptures.

The Upanishads are teachings based on the description of the One Being/Self of all/Noumenon and so whilst the Gods may be mentioned (such as Brahma, Agni and more) they are mentioned as individual aspects of this One Consciousness and are not to be taken to be separate entities. If we can see the Infinite Self can show itself in an infinite number of ways, we can come to think of these Gods (and even demons) as aspects of our own Divinity.

It is important to note also that whilst the Upanishads have often been associated with ritual and religion, they are describing the Reality that is beyond any such religion (and all religions). They are also beyond philosophy and mind and stand alone in their wisdom. The wisdom in these writings is powerful enough to cause a shift in our spiritual understanding of Reality (as is any authentic non-duality teaching) and as such can be as powerful as any teaching, teacher, retreat, prayer or otherwise. They are a true Darshan or blessing. We must read the words of each Upanishad and then meditate upon them until we bring them into our actual experience. It is with this in mind that I am offering these commentaries on this revered body of scripture, so that you may fall in love with the Upanishads as much as I have and maybe even more. I initially had resistance to these great teachings just like we may all do and I thought they would hold no relevance to me as a seeker of Truth and I am overjoyed to admit how utterly wrong I was. I would not be writing these words without the insight, inspiration and power of the Upanishads and they infused my being with love for the great Sages and Seers of ancient India that I will never know but will eternally offer my gratitude to.

Notes for reading these commentaries.

The numbers in brackets/parentheses refer to the verse numbers in the translation in the book itself. I have added comments on sections of each Upanishad that directly affected and inspired me when I have studied these and absorbed them, however this does not mean that if I have not commented on a particular verse that it contains no wisdom or something that may inspire you. For this reason, I would urge you to read each verse slowly and feel inside your body which ones feel most relevant. For some of the Upanishads that may be all or a lot of the text. For others it may be less. After some time has passed you may find you resonate with other sections that you did not before and so with such great works of scripture it is worth revisiting over time.

It has been the most beautiful opportunity for me to do the same in writing these commentaries and I am grateful.

The Mandukya Upanishad - Consciousness and It's Phases

Introduction

Although this Upanishad is one of the briefest of all major Upanishads, it is perhaps the most powerful of all. It is succinct and descriptive of the way to enlightenment without any extraneous information and as such is a valuable aid. We learn about the four "states" of consciousness that the Self goes through in its awakening process as a human being. An understanding of this process and progress through the states of consciousness will allow us to transcend them faster. Each one represents a particular way that we see ourselves.

The great sage Shankara praised this Upanishad as the only one that an advanced soul needs but let's not discount the power of the others individually and collectively. We all need the repetition of the truth for quite some time and the body of the Upanishads provides that and more. What is said in the Mandukya is said in all of them (and every sacred text) and it helps us to hear it described in different ways. The Mandukya provides ultimate wisdom in only 12 verses and packs a powerful punch!

As always we will begin with the invocation:

"May we hear only what is good for all.

May we see only what is good for all.

May we serve you, Lord of Love, all our life.

May we be used to spread your peace on earth.

OM shanti shanti shanti"

Let us take a moment to remember this invocation is spoken by the Self, to the Self, for the Self. As such it simply must manifest and guide our thoughts, words and deeds in all our life.

We begin our study of this Upanishad with a description of the mantra "AUM" which has three sounds. Usually each letter is given emphasis when spoken so that it sounds almost like three different syllables. "AUM" represents all existence including past, present and future. It also transcends those ideas too. What is it that is beyond the idea of past, present and future and yet contains them all? Brahman is all there is and inside Brahman we find the four states or phases of consciousness. The rest of the Upanishad describes these four phases. (1-2)

The first state, "Vaishvanara", is found when we have all our attention turned outwards, we are focused totally on our outer world and other beings through the senses. In this state we may not even realise there is an internal world of thoughts, emotions etc. Our whole focus will be to try to control and change the outer world. (3)

The second phase is called "Taijasa" and is the dream state we experience each night in our sleep. Here we experience any unresolved questions, worries or challenges and desires played out, perhaps in an attempt to reach some resolution. We are unaware of the body and the external world during this time. (4)

The third state is "Prajna" is the deep sleep in which there is no thought activity at all. In Prajna, there is time, space, duality or change which may seem like the awakened state but something vital is missing here. In Prajna we are unaware that all duality has ceased. We are not conscious of this state and as soon as we wake up the next day (or we go back into dreaming before the waking state reappears) we will recreate the sense of duality and begin to suffer again. During Prajna the body and mind can finally rest and there is a healing possible. The average human being spends only a few moments in deep sleep at night time (with no thought or dream activity) and yet this is powerful enough to fuel us through the whole day! (5-6)

The fourth state is called Turiya and is not the fourth in terms of linear progression, but is the one that all the other three appear inside. Turiya transcends the previous three and yet contains them. It is beyond the mind and body, the senses and what we perceive through them; yet it includes all. Turiya is that state in which all else appears. The waking, dreaming and deep sleep states alternate for the body in an endless cycle until the body loses its cohesion and reverts back to its elemental state. Turiya is that place that the body, the three states and the world appear in and Turiya is also these things too. Turiya is Brahman, the Self, the Lord of Love. To live as Turiya is total freedom, not identifying as anything and yet inclusive of everything. (7)

The mantra AUM represents Turiya. In verses 8 to 11 we see the three sounds in AUM and each of the states. As we realise Vaishvanara (the sound of A), we are able to create the life we want to from our desires. Recognising Taijasa (U sound), we are able to master the messages from our dreams and move deeper into wisdom. Finally we master Prajna (M sound) and as the mind becomes still we find peace and are able to inspire others around us. (9-11)

The three sounds together and their corresponding states make "AUM" and this is the place of liberation and fullness. This is the spiritual goal, Turiya and finally, we know uncaused and unsought joy and love. Peace is our constant companion and we lose all fear of death. The Mandukya shows us the stages or progression of our own consciousness, as it goes through the various stages of recognition. Finally, it comes to know itself as the Self and even though the body continues the cycle of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, we are free of any identification with it. (12)

OM shanti shanti shanti

May the power of the Mandukya Upanishad take root in your heart and blossom into deep illumination. Let it be so.