

KEY TERMS

उपनिषद्

upaniṣad
Upaniṣhad

- *to sit down near to, to approach
- *the sitting down at the feet of another to listen to his words, hence, secret knowledge
- *the mystery which underlies or rests underneath the external system of things
- *esoteric doctrine, secret doctrine, words of mystery
- *a class of philosophical writings

ब्रह्मन्

brahman
brahman

- *lit. growth, expansion, evolution, swelling of the spirit or soul
- *the sacred word, the Veda, a sacred text or Mantra (in Vedas)
- *the sacred syllable OM
- *religious or spiritual knowledge
- *the One, self-existent impersonal Spirit, universal Soul, Divine Essence and source from which all created things emanate or with which they are identified and to which they return, the Absolute, the Eternal

आत्मन्

ātman
atman

- *variously derived from: to breathe, to move, to blow, the breath
- *the soul, principle of life and sensation
- *the highest personal principle of life

धर्म

dharma
dharma

- *that which is established or firm, steadfast decree, law
- *right, justice
- *virtue, morality, religion, religious merit, good works

संसार

saṃsāra
samsara

- *going or wandering through, undergoing transmigration
- *a course, passage, passing through a succession of states, circuit of mundane existence, the world, secular life, worldly illusion

कर्म

karma
karma

- from *kri*, to act; thus action, performance
- *making, doing, performing
- (the law governing the fruit of action)

मोक्ष

mokṣa
moksha

- *emancipation, liberation, release
- *release from worldly existence or transmigration, final or eternal emancipation

आनन्द

ānanda
ananda

- *happiness, joy, sensual pleasure
- *pure happiness, bliss, one of the three aspects of Ātman or Brahman in Vedānta

<p>पुरुष puruṣa puruṣa</p>	<p>*a man, male, human being, people (<i>Vedas</i>) *a person, a male person *the primaeva man as the soul and original source of the universe (<i>Rig Veda</i>) *the Supreme Being or Soul, identified with <i>Brahma</i>, <i>Vishnu</i>, and <i>Shiva</i> *the spirit as passive and a spectator of <i>Prakriti</i></p>
<p>प्रकृति prakṛti prakṛiti</p>	<p>*the original or natural form or condition of anything, original or primary substance *cause, original source, origin *the material world (consisting of three constituent essences or <i>Gunas</i>)</p>
<p>वेदान्त Vedānta Vedānta</p>	<p>*the end of the <i>Vedas</i>, complete knowledge of the <i>Vedas</i> *the <i>Upanishads</i> which come at the end of the <i>Vedas</i> *a creed which underlies all the polytheism and multiform mythology of the Hindus *its chief doctrine as expounded by Shankara—that nothing really exists but the One Self or Soul of the Universe called Brahman *the liberation of the human soul, its deliverance from transmigration</p>
<p>सङ्न्यासिन् saṅnyāsin sannyasin</p>	<p>*throwing down, laying aside, giving up, resignation, renunciation of worldly concerns *one who abandons or resigns worldly affairs, an ascetic, devotee</p>
<p>तपस् tapas tapas</p>	<p>*warmth, heat, the five fires to which a devotee exposes himself *pain, suffering *religious austerity, bodily mortification, penance, severe meditation</p>
<p>गुरु guru guru</p>	<p>*important, serious, momentous *valuable, highly prized *a spiritual parent or preceptor (from whom a youth receives the initiatory Mantra or prayer, who instructs him in the Shastras and conducts the necessary ceremonies *spiritual teacher</p>
<p>अविद्या avidyā avidya</p>	<p>*unlearned, unwise; ignorance, spiritual ignorance *illusion (personified as <i>Maya</i>) (in Vedānta Phil)</p>
<p>योग yoga yoga</p>	<p>*the act of yoking, joining, attaching, harnessing; a yoke, team, vehicle *a supernatural means, charm, incantation, magical art *application or concentration of the thoughts, abstract contemplation, mediation, self-concentration *Yoga system taught by Patanjali, its chief aim being to teach the means by which the human spirit may attain complete union with Brahman *the union of the individual soul with the universal soul</p>

ध्यान

dhyāna
dhyana

*meditation, thought, reflection

प्राण

prāṇa
prana

*the breath of life, breath, respiration

*breath, vigour, energy, power

pranayama—breath exercises

काम

kāma
kama

*wish, desire, longing

*love, affection, object of desire or love or pleasure

*pleasure, enjoyment

*love, especially sexual love or sensuality

कल्प

kalpa
kalpa

an immense period of time, a day of Brahmā or one thousand Yugas, a period of four thousand, three hundred and twenty millions of years of mortals, measuring the duration of the world

ज्ञान

jñāna
Jnana

knowing, becoming acquainted with, knowledge

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om
(auṁ)

*a word of solemn affirmation and respectful assent, sometimes translated by 'yes, verily, so be it'; it is placed at the commencement of most Hindu works, and as a sacred exclamation may be uttered at the beginning and end of a reading of the *Vedas*

*also regarded as a particle of auspicious salutation;

**om* first appears in the *Upanishads* as a mystic monosyllable, and is there set forth as the object of profound religious meditation, the highest spiritual efficacy being attributed not only to the whole word but also to the three sounds *a, u, m*, of which it consists

*in later times *om* is the mystic name for the Hindu triad, and represents the union of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva

QUESTIONS

1. What is the primary concern of the *Upaniṣads*? How is this expressed in the secret teaching Naciketas learns from Yama (Death) in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*?
2. What does the *Īśā* and the *Kena Upaniṣads* say concerning the underlying unity of existence and the path to immortality?
3. How does the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* clearly mark a departure from the earlier emphasis on sacrifice that was so characteristic of the early *Vedas*? What is the point in this *Upaniṣad* about the two birds in the tree?
4. What are the four stages of consciousness described in the famous theory in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*? How is the mystic syllable *Om* related to these four states of consciousness?
5. What does the teaching in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* concerning the sheaths or layers of existence reveal about the path to enlightenment?
6. What doctrine is the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* most known for, and how does this doctrine indicate a departure from the sacrificial emphasis of the early *Vedas*?
7. What is the meaning of the famous utterance “*tat tvam asi*” in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*? How does this phrase perhaps sum up the underlying “vision” of the *Upaniṣads*? What are some of the different metaphors by which this concept is explained and how does this lead to different interpretations of the central teaching?
8. What is the meaning of the famous doctrine of “*Neti, Neti*” (“not this, not this”) in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*? What is revealed in this teaching concerning knowledge of *Brahman*? What are the two forms of *Brahman*?
9. What is the distinctive teachings of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* which later became the basis of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies? How does this *Upaniṣad* move in the direction of a theism rather than monistic Absolutism of other *Upaniṣads*?
10. What are the teachings of the *Kauṣītaki* and *Maitrī Upaniṣads*?
11. What are some of the different senses of *mokṣa* suggested in the *Upaniṣads*?