

# TWELVE UPANISHADS

Joma Sipe

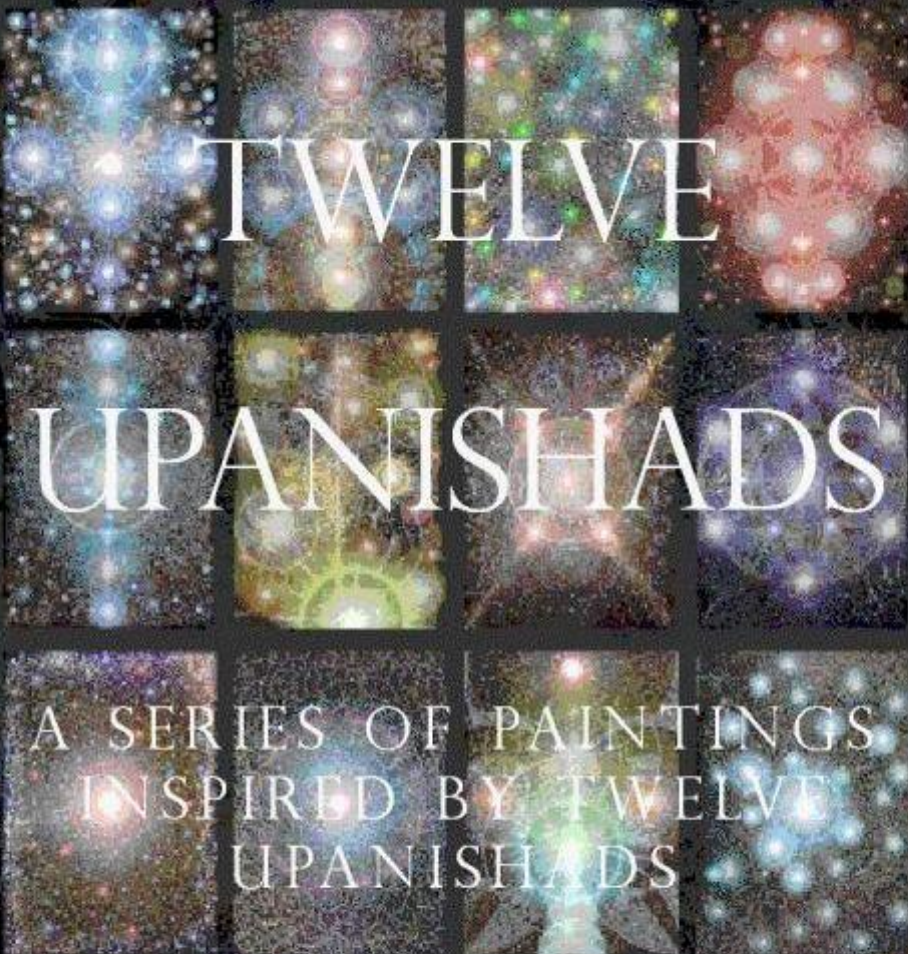
**The 12 Upanishads**

Compilation of texts with art work by Joma Sipe

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# TWELVE UPANISHADS

A SERIES OF PAINTINGS  
INSPIRED BY TWELVE  
UPANISHADS

"ILLUMINATED VERSION" EXHIBITION 2012

## Joma Sipe

 **Theosophy Forward**

# Joma Sipe



was born in the city of Porto, Portugal, on August 2, 1974. He spent his childhood in the city of Vila Nova de Gaia, near Porto, where he still lives and has his own studio. He started painting conventional pictures, such as landscapes and portraits, using oils and acrylics with exuberant colors. Eventually he realized that this was not the way he wanted to express his spiritual and artistic feelings. Step by step he became aware of an inner yearning.

When he was between thirteen and fifteen years old, he started to feel restless, wanting to discover the reasons for living on this planet, trying to find answers to questions we all ask: "Where do we come from?" "What are we doing here?" "Where do we go after our bodies die?"

These thoughtful questions sent him to the local public library in Porto, where he found books written by H. P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant, translated into Portuguese. Soon after reading those books, he felt a deep and

inexplicable connection with H. P. Blavatsky and her teachings. He had the opportunity to read *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Voice of the Silence*, and other works by H.P.B. While finding his way through esoteric literature, he learned about the chakras, occult anatomy, sacred geometry, the golden number, several techniques for meditation and concentration, the alchemical process, the Kabbalah, and many other arcane subjects.

Additionally, Joma also got acquainted with the ideas of Rudolf Steiner, Gurdjieff, and Ouspensky.

This series on the Upanishads was inspired by some lines in H.P.B.'s book *Gems from the East*, published in 1890. In it she quotes from the Katha Upanishad. Joma Sipe began reading this Upanishad and created a series of twenty-two works on the "Jewel in the Lotus," and then read other Upanishads. He discovered a lot of hidden wisdom in these ancient texts and decided to create this series of twelve art works based on twelve important Upanishads.

A series of 100 illuminated works appears in *Soul of Light: Works of Illumination* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, Quest Books, 2012).

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Excerpt from the  
**Secret Doctrine**

Summing Up  
Vol 1, pages 269-271

"The History of Creation and of this world from its beginning up to the present time is composed of seven chapters. The seventh chapter is not yet written."

(T. Subba Row, *Theosophist*, 1881.)

"As a whole, neither the foregoing nor what follows can be found in full anywhere. It is not taught in any of the six Indian schools of philosophy, for it pertains to their synthesis - the seventh, which is the Occult doctrine. It is not traced on any crumbling papyrus of Egypt, nor is it any longer graven on Assyrian tile or granite wall. The Books of the Vedanta (the last word of human knowledge) give out but the metaphysical aspect of this world-Cosmogony, and their priceless thesaurus, the *Upanishads* - Upa-ni-shad being a compound word meaning "the conquest of ignorance by the revelation of *secret, spiritual* knowledge" - require now the additional possession of a Master-key to enable the student to get at their full meaning. The reason for this I venture to state here as I learned it from a Master.

The name, "*Upanishads*," is usually translated "esoteric doctrine." These treatises form part of the *Sruti* or "revealed knowledge," *Revelation*, in short, and are generally attached to the *Brahmana* portion of the Vedas, as their third division. There are over 150 *Upanishads* enumerated by, and known to, Orientalists, who credit the oldest with being written

probably about 600 years B.C.; but of *genuine* texts there does not exist a fifth of the number. The *Upanishads* are to the Vedas what the Kabala is to the Jewish Bible. They treat of and expound the secret and mystic meaning of the Vedic texts. They speak of the origin of the Universe, the nature of Deity, and of Spirit and Soul, as also of the metaphysical connection of mind and matter. In a few words: They **CONTAIN the beginning and the end of all human knowledge, but they have now ceased to REVEAL it**, since the day of Buddha. If it were otherwise, the *Upanishads* could not be called *esoteric*, since they are now openly attached to the Sacred Brahmanical books, which have, in our present age, become accessible even to the *Mlechchhas* (out-castes) and the European Orientalists. One thing in them - and this in all the *Upanishads* - invariably and constantly points to their ancient origin, and proves (a) that they were written, in some of their portions, *before* the caste system became the tyrannical institution which it still is; and (b) that half of their contents have been eliminated, while some of them were rewritten and abridged. "The great Teachers of the higher Knowledge and the Brahmins are continually represented as going to Kshatriya (military caste) kings to become their pupils." As Cowell pertinently remarks, the *Upanishads* "breathe an entirely different spirit" (from other Brahmanical writings), "a freedom of thought unknown in any earlier work except in the Rig Veda hymns themselves." The second fact is explained by a tradition recorded in one of the MSS. on Buddha's life. It says that the *Upanishads* were originally attached to their Brahmanas after the beginning of a reform, which led to the

exclusiveness of the present caste system among the Brahmins, a few centuries after the invasion of India by the "twice-born." They were complete in those days, and were used for the instruction of the chelas who were preparing for their initiation.

#### Occultism in the Upanishads

This lasted so long as the Vedas and the Brahmanas remained in the sole and exclusive keeping of the temple-Brahmins - while no one else had the right to study or even read them outside of the sacred caste. Then came Gautama, the Prince of Kapilavastu. After *learning* the whole of the Brahmanical wisdom in the *Rahasya* or the *Upanishads*, and finding that the teachings differed little, if at all, from those of the "Teachers of Life" inhabiting the snowy ranges of the Himalaya,\* the Disciple of the Brahmins, feeling indignant because the sacred wisdom was thus withheld from all but the Brahmins, determined to save the whole world by popularizing it. Then it was that the Brahmins, seeing that their sacred knowledge and Occult wisdom was falling into the hands of the "*Mlechchhas*," abridged the texts of the Upanishads, originally containing thrice the matter of the Vedas and the Brahmanas together, without altering, however, one word of the texts. They simply detached from the MSS. the most important portions containing the last word of the Mystery of Being. The key to the Brahmanical secret code remained henceforth with the initiates alone, and the Brahmins were thus in a position to publicly deny the correctness of Buddha's teaching by

appealing to their *Upanishads*, silenced for ever on the chief questions. Such is the esoteric tradition beyond the Himalayas.

Sri Sankaracharya, the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages, wrote many a *Bhâshya* on the *Upanishads*. But his original treatises, as there are reasons to suppose, have not yet fallen into the hands of the Philistines, for they are too jealously preserved in his *maths* (monasteries, *mathams*). And there are still weightier reasons to believe that the priceless *Bhashyas* (Commentaries) on the esoteric doctrine of the Brahmins, by their greatest expounder, will remain for ages yet a dead letter to most of the Hindus, except the Smârtava Brahmins. This sect, founded by Sankaracharya, (which is still very powerful in Southern India) is now almost the only one to produce students who have preserved sufficient knowledge to comprehend the dead letter of the *Bhashyas*. The reason of this is that they alone, I am informed, have occasionally real Initiates at their head in their mathams, as for instance, in the "Sringa-giri," in the Western Ghats of Mysore. On the other hand, there is no sect in that desperately exclusive caste of the Brahmins, more exclusive than is the Smartava; and the reticence of its followers to say what they may know of the Occult sciences and the esoteric doctrine, is only equalled by their pride and learning."

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

## The Twelve Principal Upanishads, as considered in the book by Doctor E. Roer, in 1906

1. Aitareya
2. Kaushitaki-Brahmana
3. Brihad-aranyaka
4. Svetasvatara
5. Katha
6. Taittiriya
7. Chhandogya
8. Isha
9. Mundaka
10. Kena
11. Prasna
12. Mandukya

Texts and translations adapted from the books:

1. The Sacred Books Of The East  
- Translated by various Oriental Scholars  
- and Edited by F. Max Muller  
- Vol. I and II - The Clarendon Press - 1879
2. Essays on the religion and philosophy of the Hindus  
- Henry Thomas Colebrooke  
- London: Williams and Norgate - 1858
3. The Principal Upanishad  
- S. Radhakrishnan -  
London: George Allen and Unwin - 1969





## 1. Aitareya

*"This person is, at first, the germ in a man. That which is the semen is here called the germ. This semen is the vigour drawn from all the limbs. The man bears the self in the self. When he pours the semen into a woman, he gives it a birth. This, indeed, is the first birth of the embodied soul. That semen becomes one with the woman? just like a limb of her own. That is why it does not hurt her. She nourishes this self of his that has come into her. She, being the nourisher, should be nourished. The woman nourishes the embryo. Immediately after its birth he nourishes the child, which in the beginning was already born. Nourishing the child from birth onward, he thus nourishes himself for the continuation of these worlds. For thus alone are these worlds perpetuated. This is one's second birth. He who is the one self of his, is made his substitute for virtuous deeds. Then the other self of his, having accomplished his duties and reached his age departs. So departing hence, he is born again. This is the third birth. About this a rishi has said: "While still lying in the womb, I came to know all the births of the gods. A hundred strongholds, as if made of iron, confined me, yet I burst through them all swiftly, like a hawk." Vamadeva spoke, in this wise, even while lying in the womb. Thus endowed with Knowledge, he, becoming one with the Supreme Self and soaring aloft on the dissolution of the body, obtained all desires in the heavenly world and became immortal? yea, became immortal."*

Aitareya Upanishad, Part 2, Chapter I, Verses 1 to 6

## 2. Kaushitaki-Brahmana

*"Om ! May my speech be based on (i.e. accord with) the  
mind,  
May my mind be based on speech.  
O Self-effulgent One, reveal Thyself to me  
May you both (speech and mind) be the carriers of the Veda  
to me.  
May not all that I have heard depart from me  
I shall join together (i.e. obliterate the difference of) day  
And night through this study.  
I shall utter what is verbally true,  
I shall utter what is mentally true.  
May that (Brahman) protect me;  
May That protect the speaker (i.e. the teacher), may That  
protect me;  
May that protect the speaker – may That protect the speaker."*

Kaushitaki-Brahmana Upanishad, Final Prayer

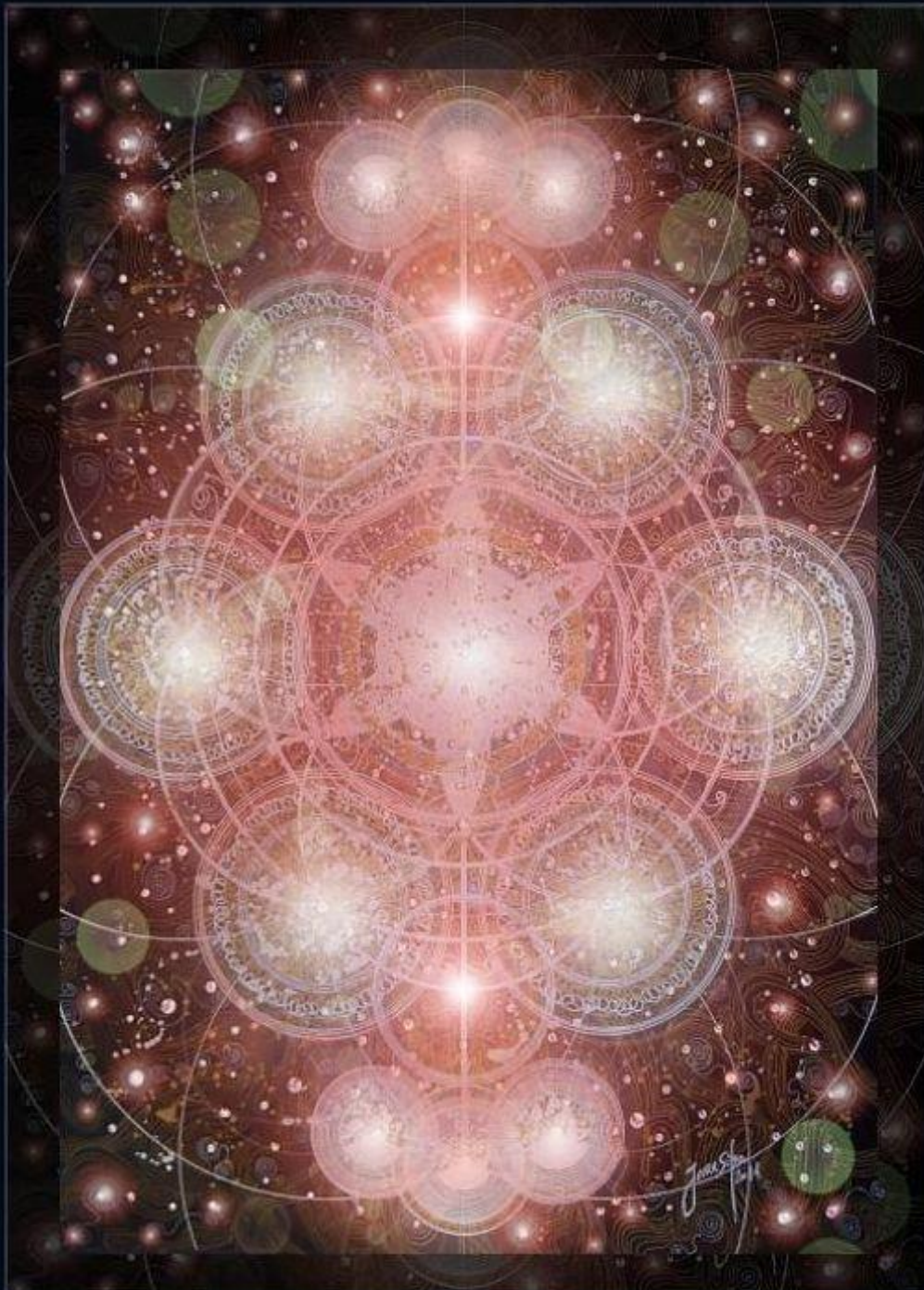




### 3. Brihad-aranyaka

*"Next follows the edifying repetition (abhyaroha) only of the hymns called pavamanas. The priest called prastoti indeed chants the saman. While he chants it, let the sacrificer recite these [Yajur verses]. "Lead me from the unreal to the real. From darkness lead me to light. From death lead me to immortality." When the mantra (verse) says: "Lead me from the unreal to the real," "the unreal" means death, and the "real," immortality; so it says, "From death lead me to immortality," that is to say, "Make me immortal." When it says: "From darkness lead me to light," "darkness" means death, and "light," immortality; so it says: "From death lead me to immortality," that is to say, "Make me immortal." In the verse: "From death lead me to immortality," there is nothing that is hidden.*

Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad, Part I, Chapter III, Verse 28



## 4. Svetasvatara

*"The Maker of all things, self-luminous and all-pervading, He dwells always in the hearts of men. He is revealed by the negative teachings of the Vedanta, discriminative wisdom and the Knowledge of Unity based upon reflection. They who know Him become immortal. When there is no darkness of ignorance, there is no day or night, neither being nor non-being; the pure Brahman alone exists. That immutable Reality is the meaning of "That"; It is adored by the Sun. From It has proceeded the ancient wisdom. No one can grasp Him above, across, or in the middle. There is no likeness of Him. His name is Great Glory (Mahad Yasah). His form is not an object of vision; no one beholds Him with the eyes. They who, through pure intellect and the Knowledge of Unity based upon reflection, realise Him as abiding in the heart become immortal."*

Svetasvatara Upanishad, Chapter IV, Verses 17 to 20



## 5. Katha

*"This Self is never born, nor does It die. It did not spring from anything, nor did anything spring from It. This Ancient One is unborn, eternal, everlasting. It is not slain even though the body is slain. If the slayer thinks that he slays, or if the slain thinks that he is slain, both of these know not. For It neither slays nor is It slain".*

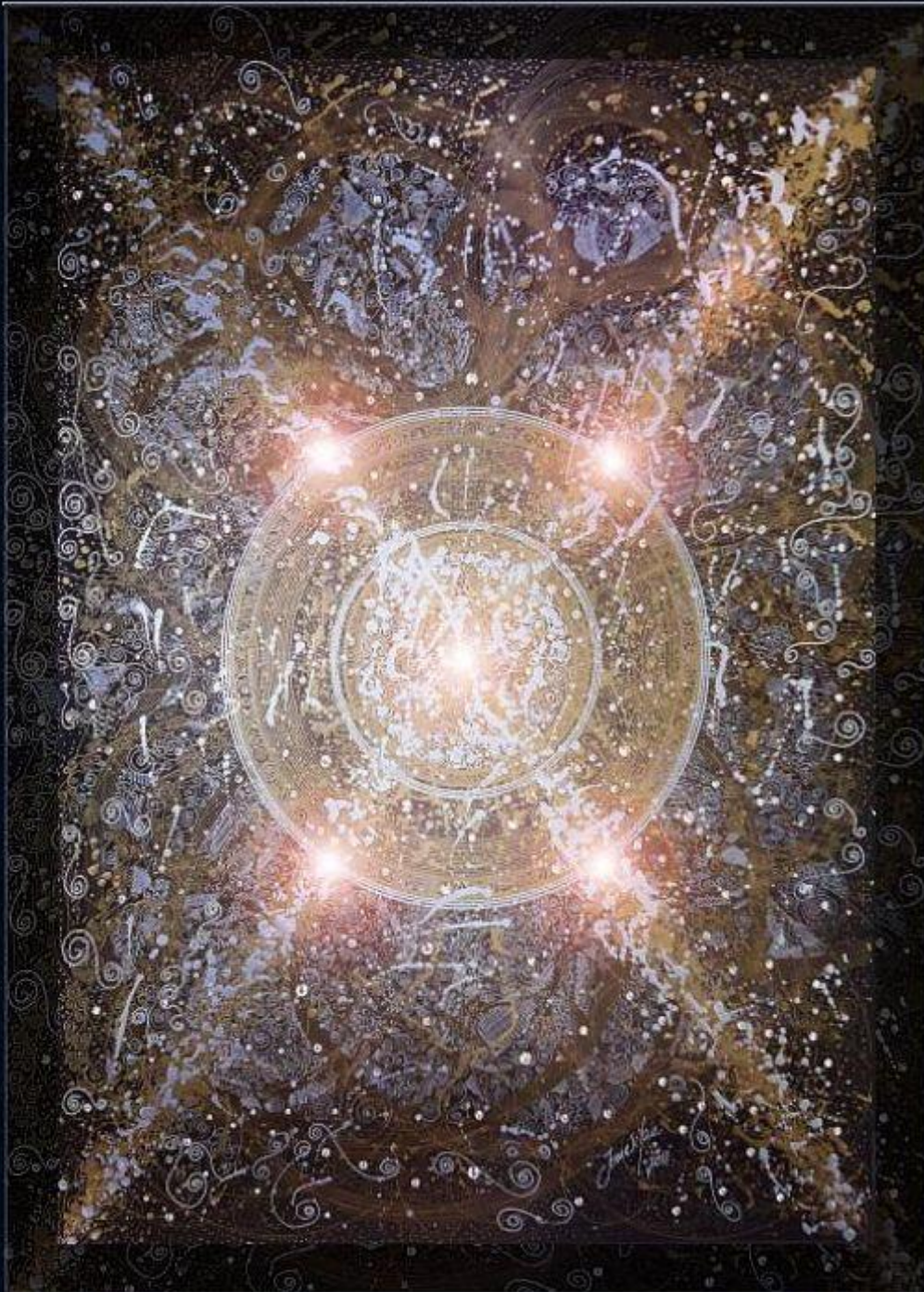
Katha Upanishad Part 1, Chant 2, Verses 18,19



## 6. Taittiriya

*"I am the mover of the tree of the universe. My fame rises high, like a mountain peak. My root is the Supremely Pure Brahman. I am the unstained essence of the Self, like the nectar of immortality that resides in the sun. I am the brightest treasure. I am the shining wisdom. I am immortal and undecaying. Thus did Trisanku proclaim after the attainment of the Knowledge of the Self of the Self."*

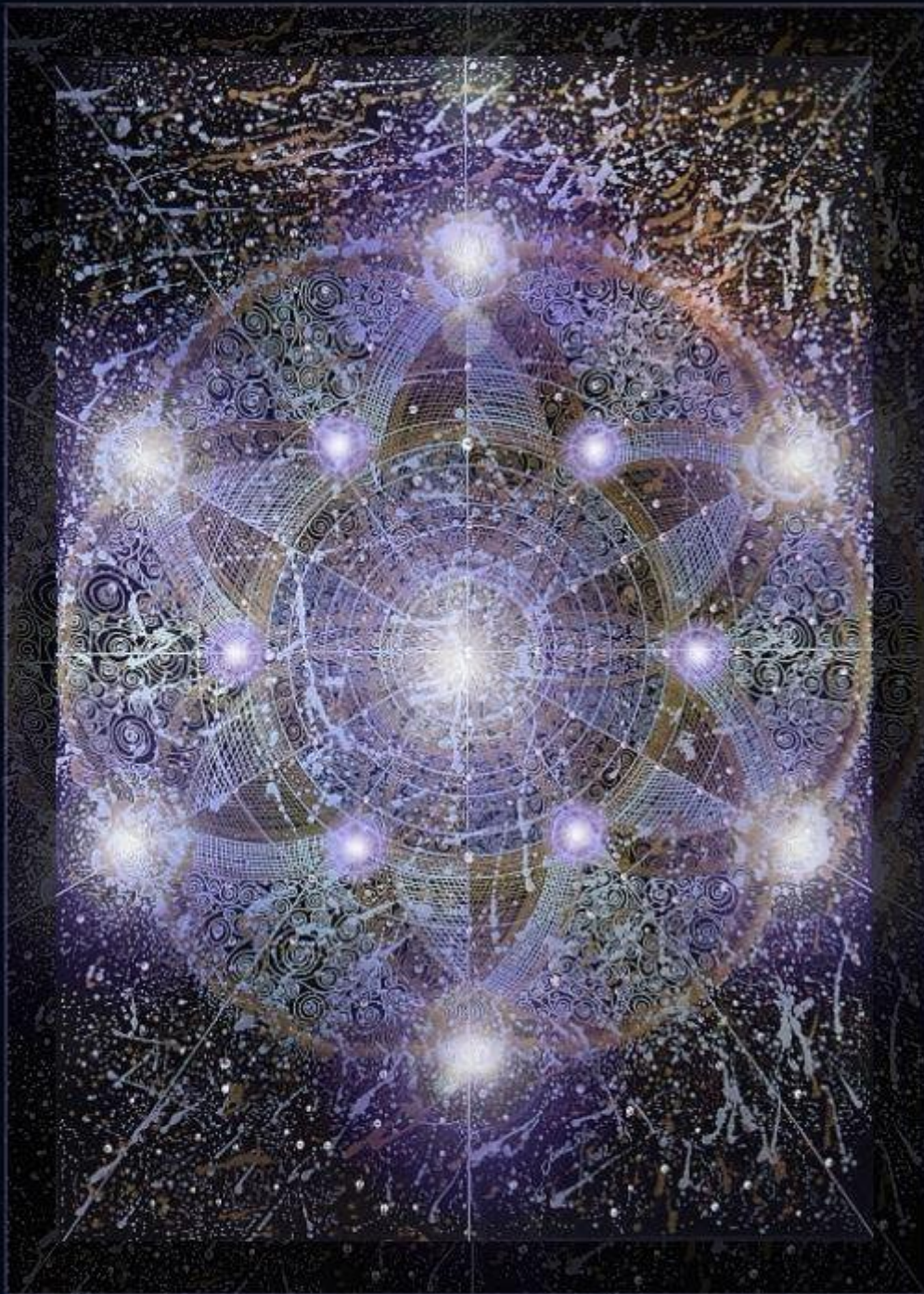
Taittiriya Upanishad, Part I, Chapter X, Verse 1



## 7. Chhandogya

*"I" Meditation (Dhyana) is, verily, greater than consideration. Earth meditates, as it were. The mid-region meditates, as it were. Heaven meditates, as it were. The waters meditate, as it were. The mountains meditate, as it were. The gods meditate, as it were. Men meditate, as it were. Therefore he who, among men, attains greatness here on earth seems to have obtained a share of meditation. Thus while small people are quarrelsome, abusive and slandering, great men appear to have obtained a share of meditation. Meditate on meditation. "He who meditates on meditation as Brahman, can, of his own free will, reach as far as meditation reaches-he who meditates on meditation as Brahman." Narada said: "Venerable Sir, is there anything greater than meditation?" "Of course there is something greater than meditation." "Please tell that to me, venerable Sir."*

Chhandogya Upanishad, Part VII, Chapter VI, Verses 1,2



## 8. Isha

*"And he who sees all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings, he does not feel any revulsion by reason of such a view. When, to one who knows, all beings have, verily, become one with his own self, then what delusion and what sorrow can be to him who has seen the oneness? He has filled all; He is radiant, bodiless, invulnerable, devoid of sinews, pure, untouched by evil. He, the seer, thinker, allpervading, self-existent has duly distributed through endless years the objects according to their natures. Into blinding darkness enter those who worship ignorance and those who delight in knowledge inter into still greater darkness. Distinct, indeed, they say, is the result of knowledge and distinct, they say, is the result of ignorance. Thus have we heard from those wise who have explained to us these. Knowledge and ignorance, he who knows the two together crosses death through ignorance and attains life eternal through knowledge."*

Isha Upanishad, Verses 6 to 11

## 9. Mundaka

*"By means of the Higher Knowledge the wise behold everywhere Brahman, which otherwise cannot be seen or seized, which has no root or attributes, no eyes or ears, no hands or feet, which is eternal and omnipresent, all-pervading and extremely subtle, which is imperishable and the source of all beings. As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow on the earth, as hair grows on the head and the body of a living man-so does everything in the universe arise from the Imperishable."*

Mundaka Upanishad, Part I, Chapter, Verses 6 to 7



## 10. Kena

*"He by whom Brahman is not known, knows It; he by whom It is known, knows It not. It is not known by those who know It; It is known by those who do not know It. Brahman is known when It is realized in every state of mind; for by such Knowledge one attains Immortality. By Atman one obtains strength; by Knowledge, Immortality. If a man knows Atman here, he then attains the true goal of life. If he does not know It here, a great destruction awaits him. Having realized the Self in every being, the wise relinquish the world and become immortal."*

Kena Upanishad, Chapter II, Verses 3 to 5





## 11. Prasna

*"He, verily, it is who sees, feels, hears, smells, tastes, thinks and knows. He is the doer, the intelligent self, the purusha. He is established in the Highest, the imperishable Atman. He who knows that imperishable Being, bright, without shadow, without body, without colour, verily attains the Supreme, the undecaying Purusha, O my good friend, he who knows Atman becomes all - knowing, becomes all. About it there is the following verse: He, O friend, who knows that imperishable Being wherein rests the intelligent self, together with the gods, the pranas and the elements - he becomes all - knowing and enters into all."*

Prasna Upanishad, Question IV, Verses 9 to 11

## 12. Mandukya

*"The wise, who are free from attachment, fear and anger and are well versed in the Vedas, have realized Atman as devoid of all phantasms and free from the illusion of the manifold and as non-dual. Therefore, knowing Atman as such, fix your attention on Non-duality. Having realized Non-duality, behave in the world like an inert object. The illumined sannyasin does not praise any deity, does not salute any superior and does not perform rites to propitiate departed ancestors. Regarding both body and Atman as his abode, he remains satisfied with what comes by chance. Having known the truth regarding what exists internally as also the truth regarding what exists externally, he becomes one with Reality, he exults in Reality and never deviates from Reality."*

Mandukya Upanishad, Chapter II, Verses 35 to 38

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