

# The Urban Well

## The Mercy Seminar 2023, Term 1

### Reading 1.2

#### The Isha Upanishad

*All this is full. All that is full.  
From fullness, fullness comes.  
When fullness is taken from fullness,  
Fullness still remains.  
OM shanti shanti shanti*

1 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.

2 Thus working may you live a hundred years.

Thus alone will you work in real freedom.

3 Those who deny the Self are born again

Blind to the Self, enveloped in darkness,

Utterly devoid of love for the Lord.

4 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.

5 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.

6 Those who see all creatures in themselves  
And themselves in all creatures know no fear.

7 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?

8 The Self is everywhere. Bright is the Self,

Indivisible, untouched by sin, wise,

Immanent and transcendent. He it is  
Who holds the cosmos together.

9–11 In dark night live those for whom  
The world without alone is real; in night  
Darker still, for whom the world within  
Alone is real. The first leads to a life  
Of action, the second to a life of meditation.  
But those who combine action with meditation  
Cross the sea of death through action  
And enter into immortality  
Through the practice of meditation.  
So have we heard from the wise.

12–14 In dark night live those for whom the Lord  
Is transcendent only; in night darker still,  
For whom he is immanent only.  
But those for whom he is transcendent  
And immanent cross the sea of death  
With the immanent and enter into  
Immortality with the transcendent.  
So have we heard from the wise.

15 The face of truth is hidden by your orb  
Of gold, O sun. May you remove your orb  
So that I, who adore the true, may see  
The glory of truth.

16 O nourishing sun,  
Solitary traveler, controller,  
Source of life for all creatures, spread your light  
And subdue your dazzling splendor  
So that I may see your blessed Self.  
Even that very Self am I!

17 May my life merge in the Immortal  
When my body is reduced to ashes.  
O mind, meditate on the eternal Brahman.  
Remember the deeds of the past.  
Remember, O mind, remember.

18 O god of fire, lead us by the good path  
To eternal joy. You know all our deeds.  
Deliver us from evil, we who bow  
And pray again and again. *OM shanti shanti shanti*

**The Mandukya Upanishad**

*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*

1 *AUM* stands for the supreme Reality.  
 It is a symbol for what was, what is,  
 And what shall be. *AUM* represents also  
 What lies beyond past, present, and future.

2 Brahman is all, and the Self is Brahman.  
 This Self has four states of consciousness.

3 The first is called *Vaishvanara*, in which  
 One lives with all the senses turned outward,  
 Aware only of the external world.

4 *Tajasa* is the name of the second,  
 The dreaming state in which, with the senses  
 Turned inward, one enacts the impressions  
 Of past deeds and present desires.

5 The third state is called *Prajna*, of deep sleep,  
 In which one neither dreams nor desires.  
 There is no mind in *Prajna*, there is no  
 Separateness; but the sleeper is not  
 Conscious of this. Let him become conscious  
 In *Prajna* and it will open the door  
 To the state of abiding joy.

6 *Prajna*, all-powerful and all-knowing,  
 Dwells in the hearts of all as the ruler.  
*Prajna* is the source and end of all.

7 The fourth is the superconscious state called  
*Turiya*, neither inward nor outward,  
 Beyond the senses and the intellect,  
 In which there is none other than the Lord.  
 He is the supreme goal of life. He is  
 Infinite peace and love. Realize him!

8 *Turiya* is represented by *AUM*.

Though indivisible, it has three sounds.  
 9 *A* stands for *Vaishvanara*. Those who know this,

Through mastery of the senses, obtain  
The fruit of their desires and attain greatness.

10 *U* indicates *Taijasa*. Those who know this,  
By mastering even their dreams, become  
Established in wisdom. In their family  
Everyone leads the spiritual life.

11 *M* corresponds to *Prajna*. Those who know this,  
By stilling the mind, find their true stature  
And inspire everyone around to grow.

12 The mantra  
*AUM* stands for the supreme state  
Of *turiya*, without parts, beyond birth  
And death, symbol of everlasting joy.  
Those who know  
*AUM* as the Self become the Self;  
Truly they become the Self.

*OM shanti shanti shanti*

## The Kena Upanishad

*Lead me from the unreal to the Real.  
Lead me from death to immortality.  
OM shanti shanti shanti*

[i]

THE STUDENT

1 Who makes my mind think?  
Who fills my body with vitality?  
Who causes my tongue to speak? Who is that  
Invisible one who sees through my eyes  
And hears through my ears?

THE TEACHER

2 The Self is the ear of the ear,  
The eye of the eye, the mind of the mind,  
The word of words, and the life of life.  
Rising above the senses and the mind  
And renouncing separate existence,  
The wise realize the deathless Self.

3 Him our eyes cannot see, nor words express;  
He cannot be grasped even by the mind.  
We do not know, we cannot understand,

4 Because he is different from the known  
And he is different from the unknown.  
Thus have we heard from the illumined ones.

5 That which makes the tongue speak but cannot be  
Spoken by the tongue, know that as the Self.  
This Self is not someone other than you.

6 That which makes the mind think but cannot be  
Thought by the mind, that is the Self indeed.  
This Self is not someone other than you.

7 That which makes the eye see but cannot be  
Seen by the eye, that is the Self indeed.  
This Self is not someone other than you.

8 That which makes the ear hear but cannot be

Heard by the ear, that is the Self indeed.  
This Self is not someone other than you.

9 That which makes you draw breath but cannot be  
Drawn by your breath, that is the Self indeed.  
This Self is not someone other than you.

**[ii]**

THE TEACHER

1 If you think, “I know the Self,” you know not.  
All you can see is his external form.  
Continue, therefore, your meditation.

THE STUDENT

2 I do not think I know the Self, nor can  
I say I know him not.

THE TEACHER

There is only one way to know the Self,  
And that is to realize him yourself.

3 The ignorant think the Self can be known  
By the intellect, but the illumined  
Know he is beyond the duality  
Of the knower and the known.

4 The Self is realized in a higher state  
Of consciousness when you have broken through  
The wrong identification that you are  
The body, subject to birth and death.  
To be the Self is to go beyond death.

5 Realize the Self, the shining goal of life!  
If you do not, there is only darkness.  
See the Self in all, and go beyond death.

**[III]**

1 Once upon a time the gods defeated  
The demons; and though the victory  
Was brought about through the power of Brahman,  
The gods boasted, “Ours is the victory,

And ours the power and glory.”

2 Brahman saw their foolish pride and appeared  
Before them. But they recognized him not.

3 They said to Agni, god of fire, “Find out  
Who this mysterious being is.” “I will,”

4 Promised Agni and approached the being.  
“Who are you?” asked the mysterious one.  
“I am Agni, god of fire, known to all.”

5 “Are you powerful?” “I can burn all on earth.”

6 “Burn this:” and Brahman placed a straw in front.  
The god of fire attacked the straw, but failed  
To burn it. Then he ran back to the gods  
And confessed, “I have failed to discover  
Who this mysterious being is.”

7 They said to Vayu, god of air, “Find out  
Who this mysterious being is.” “I will,”

8 Promised Vayu and approached the being.  
“Who are you?” asked the mysterious one.  
“I am Vayu, god of air, king of space.”

9 “Are you powerful?” “I can blow all away.”

10 “Blow this away.” Brahman placed a straw in front.  
The god of air attacked the straw, but failed  
To move it. Then he ran back to the gods  
And confessed, “I have failed to discover  
Who this mysterious being is.”

11 They begged Indra, leader of gods, “Find out  
Who this mysterious being is.” “I will,”  
Promised Indra and approached the being,

12 Who disappeared instantly. In his place  
Appeared the lovely goddess of wisdom,  
Uma, daughter of the Himalayas;  
And Indra asked her, “Who was that being?”

[IV]

1 Uma replied, “That was Brahman, from whom  
Comes all your power and glory.” The gods  
Realized at last the Self is Brahman.

2–3 Agni, Vayu, Indra – these three excel  
Among the gods because they realized Brahman.

4 The light of Brahman flashes in lightning;  
The light of Brahman flashes in our eyes.

5- 6 It is the power of Brahman that makes  
The mind to think, desire, and will. Therefore  
Use this power to meditate on Brahman.  
He is the inmost Self of everyone;  
He alone is worthy of all our love.  
Meditate upon him in all. Those who  
Meditate upon him are dear to all.

THE STUDENT

7 Teach me more of this spiritual wisdom.

THE TEACHER

I shall share with you fully what I know.

8 Meditation, control of the senses  
And passions, and selfless service of all  
Are the body, the scriptures are the limbs,  
And truth is the heart of this wisdom.

9 Those who realize Brahman shall conquer  
All evil and attain the supreme state.  
Truly they shall attain the supreme state!

*OM shanti shanti shanti*