What are you looking for? Why are you here? How do you intend to achieve whatever you set out to gain? Although I mean the questions literally, they may as well be topics of long spiritual discussion.

But the study of the Upaniṣads is something else altogether. It is truly an undertaking of the rarest kind. No amount of theorising or rote chanting of these esoteric texts can yield meaningful profit – unless students apply themselves earnestly and immerse their entire personality into the silent waters of this sacred wisdom.

With this initiative, Pūjya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji has brilliantly – and selflessly – presented the complete adhyātma-śāstra in a manner and structure that is not only easy to comprehend at the intellectual level, but also delightful to practise at the contemplative and meditative levels. Recognising this is vital to one’s being able to appreciate the incomparable value of this Upanishad Course. Few indeed are the places in the world that can offer the same depth of insight into – and experience of – pure Advaita.

Remembering that, embrace the course wholeheartedly, leaving aside all hint of conceit or prejudice. Focus on the ideas presented, and the ideas alone. Internalise them. Seek to make them actual discoveries, lucid and irresistible, within your own heart. Never forget why you started.

My congratulations to the Chinmaya International Foundation and its dedicated team on successfully organising this course. I invoke the blessings of the Lord, of Pūjya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji and of all the Upaniṣadic Gurus and their śiṣyas, that you may all excel and shine as worthy recipients of this Highest Knowledge.

With Prem and Om,

Swami Swaroopananda
Head, Chinmaya Mission

19th October 2017
Diwali
Our first gratitude goes to all of you, the eager students. It is your interest that is the prime mover behind Pūjya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji envisioning and authoring this Upanishad Course.

We shall ever be indebted to the Rṣis who have benevolently shared their Wisdom that is enshrined in the sacred Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are inspirational and timeless and have stood like a lighthouse from time immemorial guiding all seekers endeavouring to cross the ocean of saṁsāra.

Many individuals dedicated themselves to creating this fascinating Upanishad Course and to all of them Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) offers its heartfelt gratitude. Brni. Shripriya Chaitanya, Chinmaya Mission, London, and Acharya Shreevidya, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Mumbai, assiduously transcribed all the 23 lectures that Pūjya Guruji delivered in the ‘Upanishad Darshan’ Camp held at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai, in January 2017. Simultaneously, Smt. (Dr.) Anita Raina Tapan, New Delhi, worked with great devotion and diligence and converted the transcripts into the lesson format that forms the very foundation and basic structure of the entire Upanishad Course. We are truly indebted to her for her labour of love.

The CIF team thereafter took the responsibility upon themselves and set to work. Br. Sundar Chaitanya not only undertook the production coordination, but also typeset, proofread and exhorted the team to pull together; it is his immense energy and skills that brought the project to a timely completion.

Smt. Radhika Manoj took care of the pagination; Br. Chirantan Chaitanya and Br. Sanath diligently checked all the cross references and proofed the pages.
as and when their assistance was sought. Smt. Sarala Suresh, Research Fellow at the CIF Shodha Sansthan, even while she was recuperating from an unexpected hospitalisation, went through the content with great devotion and helped in making it error free. Br. Sagar Chaitanya too contributed his best to this end.

Br. Ved Chaitanya from Chinmaya Mission, Navi Mumbai, and Br. Narayana Chaitanya from Chinmaya Mission, Vikarabad, Telangana, created the questionnaires that accompany these lessons. Deeply thought through, the questions have been framed such as to consistently push the learner to a further contemplation of the lesson. They have also worked on the Glossary as well as the Subject Index. Br. Ved Chaitanya with his eagle eye has also proofread the final versions.

The contribution of Swami Shashvatananda, Acharya, Chinmaya Mission Salem; Acharya Rammohan and Acharya Shanthi Rammohan from CIF; Smt. Rajalekshmi, Librarian, CIF Shodha Sansthan; and Vidhi Modi, Yuveeveer at CIF, during the initial drafts cannot be overstated. Aishwarya Seetharam, Yuveeveer at CIF, also joined the team at the end of the work and lent her youthful enthusiasm to the completion of the Course.

We truly thank Smt. Sandhya Sundar, Chennai, for the English language edits. She has given this Course a finesse that is characteristic of her work, without which it would not be such a good read for all of us. Indeed her work is a labour of pure love.

We are very grateful to Sri Venkata Pula and Smt. Mahalakshmi Pula, the dedicated Chinmaya Family couple from Boston, USA, for voluntarily coming forward and sponsoring the Upanishad Course project. Smt. Mahalakshmi also serves as a Director on the Board of Chinmaya Mission West.

On all these devotees and seekers of the Reality I invoke the abundant grace of the Lord and the choicest blessings of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji.

We are very grateful to Pujya Swami Swaroopanandaji, Head of the Chinmaya Mission, for the Benediction and the abundant guidance, support and blessings that he has always showered CIF with.
Our deepest love and gratitude is for Pūjya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji, whose love of the Upaniṣads fills these pages; his erudition and simplicity, profundity and ease of expression are evident in full measure, and these pages carry to you his encouragement and blessings to help you along in your study and spiritual pursuit.

Beyond and above all, we bow our heads in reverence to all those great masters and students whose astounding philosophical and spiritual ruminations have weathered the scourge of time; this Upanishad Course brings to you in abundant measure that received Wisdom so that we may understand, live and pass this treasure on to future generations. We are ever indebted to them.

We are sure that the study of the Upanishad Course will inspire you to next take up for study the Upaniṣads in their original. We hope this Course will not only help you comprehend the eternal message of the Ṛṣis but also inspire you to walk with confidence the path envisaged by them and attain the summum bonnum of life.

In Śrī Guru Smṛti,

Swami Advayananda

Ācārya, CIF

19th October 2017

Diwali
Welcome to this Upanishad Course. Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) takes great pleasure in offering this new study in its bouquet of Home Study Courses, available in webinar, online and postal modes. Authored by Pūjya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, mentor and guide of the Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, this course extracts the essence of the Upaniṣads and presents it to the student embellished by Pūjya Guruji’s insights and wisdom.

Every person seeking answers to the wonders and pains of life and living must at some point in the spiritual journey stop and face the fundamental questions: Who am I? What is this world? These two essential questions lead us into a twofold enquiry: one, into the nature of the Self and, two, into the cause of this world. The answers to these form the theme of the Upaniṣads: Brahma-vidyā.

Keeping to the traditional framework and method of instruction in Advaita-vedānta, Pūjya Guruji has presented the core of the Upaniṣadic teachings within the framework of the anubandha-catuṣṭaya. Mantras that deal with each concept have been selected from multiple Upaniṣads and a comprehensive explanation given for each.

The Upanishad Course has been divided into 24 lessons and we expect that you will cover it in a year at the rate of two lessons a month. At the end of each lesson, you will be required to answer a questionnaire based on the lesson. Take a fortnight to study each lesson and submit your answers to these questions. As and when you complete the lessons you will receive further lessons. The glossary of Sanskrit technical terms used in these lessons, as well as

© Chinmaya International Foundation 2017
the subject index, are also a part of this course material and will be a very useful reference throughout your study.

If you fail to submit your answers regularly and on time, you will be taken off the rolls, and you will have to re-register and start afresh from the first lesson should you choose to get back to the course. Of course, all genuine and valid reasons for failing to submit the answers on time will certainly be given due consideration. In such cases, do contact the Course Administrator.

The priceless wisdom of the Upaniṣads is being offered to you in capsule form, so as to make you familiar with its key concepts. This Course is indeed an ‘Upanishad-darshan’, empowering you with the vision of the Upaniṣads. For this to truly happen, it is essential therefore that you internalise the ideas and concepts through diligent study and practice. With this as the objective we recommend the following method of study:

- Devote at least half-an-hour daily to study these lessons. Regular study and reflection is the key to spiritual knowledge becoming transformative.
- You must devote at least four hours a week on study and reflection.
- Once you are confident that you have understood the contents of the lesson, answer the questionnaire that pertains to the lesson. We expect your answers to be to the point and in your own words. Refrain from referring to the lesson while answering the questions. As much as possible, answer all the questions at one stretch.
- Make it a point to revise the earlier lesson before you begin a new one. Once in six months revise all the lessons you have studied.
- Record all your doubts in a separate book. As the concepts unfold in the subsequent lessons, most of your doubts will clear. Hence we discourage learners from writing to us about their doubts as and when they first arise. If the questions persist, of course you are welcome to write/e-mail us.
In a separate book jot down the ideas and concepts that truly inspire you. Read this book often and make a conscious attempt to practise these ideals in day-to-day life. Simply browsing through this book that you have prepared will certainly give you the insight and inspiration to face problems and meet life as it unfolds.

We recommend that you also discuss and share these ideas and insights with like-minded friends. Such discussion can only enhance your clarity on the subject matter.

For spiritual knowledge to be truly kindled in us, two factors are imperative: purity of mind (heart) and clarity of knowledge (head). Reflect on these lessons and the knowledge gained therein; mull over the ideas as you go about your daily work and there will be moments of sudden insight which will take you another step forward in your spiritual journey.

That sincere study and reflection will transform your life – the way you feel, think and interact with others – and through you the lives of the people around you cannot be doubted. For further study we suggest that you look at the individual commentaries on each Upaniṣad by Pūjya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.

All these books can be purchased from CIF or local Chinmaya Mission Centre or ordered online from http://eshop.chinmayamission.com/

All correspondence with respect to the Upanishad Course should carry your registration number and should be addressed to:

The Administrator, Upanishad Course
Chinmaya International Foundation
Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg
Veliyanad, Ernakulam - 682 319 Kerala, India.
Ph: +91-92077-11140, +91-484-2749676
Email: upanishadcourse@chinfo.org

We wish you the very best in your study and spiritual unfoldment.
**Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation**

The Sanskrit language, written in the Devanāgarī script, has nearly twice as many characters in its alphabet as has English. In these lessons, the Devanāgarī characters have been transliterated according to the scheme adopted by the International congress of orientalists at Athens in 1912 and since then generally acknowledged to be the only rational and satisfactory scheme. The following is the key for the transliteration and pronunciation of the Sanskrit alphabet. One ‘sound value’ is given to each letter; f, g, w, x, and z are not used at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devanāgarī</th>
<th>Romanization</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>अ</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>like the o in son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>आ</td>
<td>ā</td>
<td>like the a in far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>इ</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>like the i in if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ई</td>
<td>ī</td>
<td>like the ee in feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>उ</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>like the u in full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऊ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td>like the oo in pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>क्र</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>like the ri in rig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>क्र</td>
<td>ō</td>
<td>no equivalent in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>लङ</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>no equivalent in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ए</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>like the a in gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऐ</td>
<td>ai</td>
<td>like the y in my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ओ</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>like the o in note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>औ</td>
<td>au</td>
<td>like the ou in loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>क्</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>like the k in look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>खः</td>
<td>kh</td>
<td>like the kh in khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ग्</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>like the g in gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>घः</td>
<td>gh</td>
<td>like the gh in ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>च्</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>like the ch in chuckle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>छः</td>
<td>ch</td>
<td>like the ch in treachery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>जः</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>like the j in jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>झः</td>
<td>jh</td>
<td>like the geh in hedgehog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation

\[\begin{array}{ll}
\text{ट} & \text{t} \quad \text{like the } t \text{ in tank} \\
\text{ठ} & \text{th} \quad \text{like the } th \text{ in ant hill (approximate)} \\
\text{ड} & \text{d} \quad \text{like the } d \text{ in dog} \\
\text{ढ} & \text{dh} \quad \text{like the } dd \text{ in midday (approximate)} \\
\text{त} & \text{t} \quad \text{like the } th \text{ in thump} \\
\text{थ} & \text{th} \quad \text{like the } th \text{ in Othello} \\
\text{द} & \text{d} \quad \text{like the } th \text{ in then} \\
\text{ध} & \text{dh} \quad \text{like the } dh \text{ in dhobi} \\
\text{प} & \text{p} \quad \text{like the } p \text{ in put} \\
\text{फ} & \text{ph} \quad \text{like the } ph \text{ in uphill (approximate)} \\
\text{ब} & \text{b} \quad \text{like the } b \text{ in bad} \\
\text{भ} & \text{bh} \quad \text{like the } bh \text{ in bhangra} \\
\text{ै} & \text{n} \quad \text{like the } ng \text{ in sing} \\
\text{ॉ} & \text{n} \quad \text{like the } ny \text{ in canyon (approximate)} \\
\text{ण} & \text{n} \quad \text{like the } n \text{ in under} \\
\text{न} & \text{n} \quad \text{like the } n \text{ in nose} \\
\text{य} & \text{y} \quad \text{like the } y \text{ in yap} \\
\text{र} & \text{r} \quad \text{like the } R \text{ in Raja} \\
\text{ल} & \text{l} \quad \text{like the } l \text{ in lap} \\
\text{व} & \text{v} \quad \text{like the } v \text{ in avert (approximate)} \\
\text{श} & \text{s} \quad \text{like the } sh \text{ in shri} \\
\text{ष} & \text{s} \quad \text{like the } sh \text{ in shall} \\
\text{स} & \text{s} \quad \text{like the } s \text{ in sand} \\
\text{ह} & \text{h} \quad \text{like the } h \text{ in hat (approximate)} \\
\text{ः} & \text{h} \quad \text{a distinct hard aspiration that echoes the vowel which immediately precedes it} \\
\text{़} & \text{n} \quad \text{the nasal belonging to the preceding vowel, the precise sound of which depends upon the consonants that follow it. Represented by a dot above the alphabet.}
\end{array}\]
COURSE CONTENT

(24 Lessons)

1. Introduction
   Upaniṣads as Śāstra
   Methodology of Study
   The Vedas
   Dharma
   Pravṛtti-dharma
   Nivṛtti-dharma
   The Term ‘Upaniṣad’
   Anubandha-catuṣṭaya
   Vedānta
   Yajurveda-śāntimantra

2. Adhikārin: Essentials and Gurūpasadana
   Viveka
   Parīkṣā: How to Analyse a Topic?
   Vairāgya
   The Viveka and Vairāgya of Maitreyī
   Naciketas – An Exemplary Adhikārin
   Seeking the Guru
   Who is a Guru?
   The Guru’s Duty

© Chinmaya International Foundation 2017
3. Adhikārin: Sādhana-catuṣṭaya
   Sādhana-catuṣṭaya

4. Viṣaya: Questions from the Upaniṣads
   Question from the Kaṭha-upaniṣad
   The Necessity of Knowledge
   Question from the Kena-upaniṣad
   Significance of the Question
   Why this Question?
   Beyond the Assemblage
   This the Student Seeks to Understand
   Ātma-jijñāsā or Ātma-vicāra
   Question from the Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad
   Question from the Chāndogya-upaniṣad
   Question from the Praśna-upaniṣad
   Brahma-jijñāsā or Brahma-vicāra

5. Viṣaya: Ātma-vicāra (Part I)
   Śreyas and Preyas
   Jijñāsā-pūrti
   Ātma-vicāra
   Pāramārthika-svarūpa or Absolute Identity
   Matter, Energy, Sentience and Consciousness
   Turning the Mind’s Attention to the Truth
   Nature of Self-knowledge
   Nature of Consciousness

6. Viṣaya: Ātma-vicāra (Part II)
   Vyāvahārika-svarūpa
   Māyā
   Ātman and Jīva
   Jīva-bhāva
Three States of Experience
Waking State or Jāgrat-avasthā
Dream State or Svapna-avasthā
Deep Sleep State or Suṣupti-avasthā
What Makes a Jīva Wake up from Sleep?
The Three States and the Three Bodies

7. Viṣaya: Brahma-vicāra
   Brahma-jiñāsā
   Svarūpa-lakṣaṇa
   Brahman and Māyā
   Taṭastha-lakṣaṇa
   Purpose of Discussing Creation

8. Viṣaya: Creation
   The Process of Creation
   The Virāṭ-puruṣa
   Creation of the Vedas
   Dīkṣā in the Vedas
   Yajñas and Lokas
   Duties and Other Beings
   Values and Virtues
   The Inner Sevenfold Ritual
   Conclusion

9. Viṣaya: Brahmātmaikya (Part 1)
   Dvaita and Advaita
   The Significance of ‘Subtle’ and Ātman
   Absolute Reality
   Brahman and Ātman are One
   Tat Tvam Asi
   Theme of Oneness
Mahāvākyā
Absolute Identity
Brahma-vidyā – Questions
Brahma-vidyā

10. Viṣaya: Brahmātmaikya (Part II)
Nature of Brahman
Limitation or Finitude
Significance of the Term ‘Brahma’
Location of Brahman
Nature of the Knowledge of Brahman
Result of the Knowledge of Brahman

11. Viṣaya: Pañcakośa-viveka
Pañcakośas
The Ānanda-ātman
Ahaṅkāra or Ego
Brahma-vidyā is Upaniṣad
Means for Realising the Self
The Right Attitude for Śravaṇa and Manana

12. Viṣaya: Śravaṇa, Manana and Nididhyāsana (Part I)
Śravaṇa
Doubts after Śravaṇa
Manana or Reflection
Manana in the Taittirīya-upaniṣad
The Infinite Alone is Brahman
Nididhyāsana

13. Viṣaya: Śravaṇa, Manana and Nididhyāsana (Part II)
The Practice of Meditation
External Preparation
Internal Preparation
Obstacles to Meditation
Key to Success

14. Viṣaya: Meditation Aided by Om
   Om in the Kāṭha-upaniṣad
   Om in the Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad
   Om in the Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad
   The Four Quarters of Om
   Practical Aspect of Om Meditation
   Benefits of Chanting Om
   Recapitulation of Meditation on OM

15. Viṣaya: The Practice of Meditation
   Merging into the Self
   The Process of Merging
   Implication of Meditation
   The Supreme State

16. Viṣaya: The Mahāvākyas and the Chariot Metaphor
   Mahāvākyas
   Interconnecting the Four Mahāvākyas
   Consciousness or Prajñāna
   The Chariot Metaphor
   Building the Metaphor
   From the Gross to the most Subtle
   The Supreme State
   Subtle Intellect versus Sharp Intellect

17. Prayojana: The Result of Knowledge
   Self-realisation and Its Results
   The Knots of the Heart are Cut Asunder
   Purpose Served by Upaniṣad
All Doubts are Dispelled  
Freedom from the Bondage of Karmas

18. Prayojana: The Vision of Oneness  
End of Delusion and Grief  
Superficial Solution for Sorrow  
The End of Ignorance  
The End of Fear  
End of Revulsion, Hatred and Dislike  
Attaining the Supreme  
The Experience of Bliss

19. Sambandha: Bodhya-bodhaka-bhāva  
The Aprāpta Goal  
The Prāpta Goal  
Knowledge and Its Result  
Bodhya-bodhaka-sambandha  
What is Bondage?  
What is Liberation?  
Knowledge: The Means for Liberation  
Is it Fanaticism?  
Is Bhakti Not a Means for Mokṣa?  
What Does Knowledge Reveal?

20. Prayojana: The Jīvanmukta and His Characteristics  
Jīvanmukti and Jīvanmukta  
Jīvanmukti – A Fact  
Bondage and Liberation  
Beyond Puṇya and Pāpa  
Jīvanmukta is Desireless  
Jīvanmukta is Satyasaṅkalpa
Behind the Jīvanmukta’s Wish-fulfilling Abilities
The Jīvanmukta’s Expression of Bliss

21. **Prayojana: From Jīvanmukti to Videhamukti**
   - Qualities of a Jīvanmukta
   - A Jīvanmukta Alone Attains Videhamukti
   - Merging with the Infinitude
   - The Sixteen Kalāś
   - Prāṇa, Pañca-mahābhūtas, Indriya, Manas, Annam and Viryam
   - Śraddhā
   - Annam and Viryam
   - Tapas
   - Mantra
   - Karma
   - Loka
   - Nāma
   - What is Mahāsamādhi?

22. **Self-realisation: Success and Failure**
   - Single-pointed Aspiration
   - Self-effort, Grace of God and Guru
   - Moral Strength
   - Pramāda
   - Tapas without Liṅga
   - Who Does Not Realise the Ātman?
   - Factors that Accelerate the Realisation of Ātman

23. **Śānti-mantras**
   - Rgveda-śāntimantra
   - Sāmaveda-śāntimantra
   - Atharvaveda-śāntimantra
24. Conclusion

Yajurveda-śāntimantra
Gratitude of the Disciple
Blessings of the Guru
Summary
Upanishad Course as Adhyātma-śāstra
**Glossary**

**A**

*abhidyāya* – material prosperity

*acintya* – that which cannot be thought of by the mind

*adbhuṭa* – a wonder

*adharma* – unrighteousness

*adhikārin* – an aspirant qualified for the Self-knowledge

*adhiṣṭhāna* – substratum, ādhāra

*adhyaṭma-śāstra* – science of spirituality or science of the Self

*adṛśya* – unseen

*advaita* – non-dual

*advaita-vedānta* – philosophy of non-dualism

*aham* – I

*ahaṅkāra* – ego, the concept of possessiveness or egoism

*aikya* – oneness

*aja* – unborn

*ajñāna* – ignorance

*akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti* – the thought that has taken the form of the Homogenous. This thought is also called as ‘brahmākāra-vṛtti’. Both these terms stand for the firm ‘I am Brahman’ thought which puts an end to ignorance.

*aṅkara* – the imperishable principle

*amanas* – without mind

*amṛta* – immortal

*amūrta* – formless

*ananta* – infinite

© Chinmaya International Foundation 2017
ananya-bhakti – single-pointed devotion
anātman – not-Self
aṅga-aṅgī-bhāva – relation of the part to the whole
anirvacanīya – inexplicable
anitya – impermanent
aniyatākṣara – indefinite words
annamaya-kośa – food sheath
anna-vikāra – modification of food
antah-karaṇa – inner instrument made up of manas, buddhi, citta and ahaṅkāra
antarāṅga-sādhana – advanced or spiritual practice within
anubandha-catuṣṭaya – the four preliminary considerations related to the study of a text
anumāna-pramāṇa – inference as a means of knowledge
apāna – physiological function of evacuation
aparokṣa-jñāna – direct Knowledge of the Self
aprāṇa – without prāṇas
aprāpta – that which is not gained
artha – wealth or meaning
arūpam – formless
asura – demon
atyāśrama – the last stage of life called renunciation
avara – lower
avasādana – decay, weakening, wearing out
avidyā – ignorance
avidyā-granthi – the knot of ignorance
avyakta – unmanifest
avyakta-rūpa – unmanifest form
ābhyañtara – inside
ācārya – teacher
ādhibhautika – pertaining to things, beings and situations of the world around us
ādhidaivika – pertaining to the devatās or cosmic forces
ādhyātmika – pertaining to our body, mind and intellect
āgāmi-karma – results born from the actions of the present embodiment that will accrue to the individual in the future
āhuti – oblation to be offered in the fire
ākāśa – space
ālambana – support
ālocanāyām – with respect to thinking
ānandamaya-kośa – bliss sheath, corresponding to the causal body
ānanda-sāgara – ocean of Bliss
ānanda-svarūpa – of the nature of Bliss
āpa – water
āsana – posture
āstika-darśana – philosophies that believe in the authority of the Vedas
āśrama – hermitage or stage of life
Ātman – the true Self, the unconditioned pure Consciousness
ātma-jijñāsā – enquiry into the Self
ātmajñānī – the knower of the Self
ātma-kṛpā – grace of the Self
ātma-svarūpa – of the nature of the Self
ātma-vicāra – enquiry into the Self
āvaraṇa-śakti – concealing or veiling power of māyā
āvirbhāva – to become manifest

B
bahiraṅga-sādhana – external spiritual practice
bala – strength
bandha – bondage
bāhya – outer, external
bhadra – auspicious
**Glossary**

*bhajan* – devotional song

*bhakta* – devotee of the Lord

*bhakti* – devotion

*bhakti-mārga* – the path of devotion

*bhautika-śāstra* – physics

*bhaya* – fear

*bhāvanā* – feeling or attitude

*bhoga* – experience or enjoyment

*bhogārthin* – seeker of pleasure

*bhoktā* – enjoyer

*bhoktṛtva* – enjoyership

*bhūtayoni* – cause of this world

*bodhaka* – revealer

*bodhya* – revealed

*bodhya-bodhaka-sambandha* – relationship between the revealer and the revealed

*brahmacārin* – seeker walking the path of Brahman

*brahmacarya-āśrama* – student life

*brahma-jijñāsā* – enquiry into the Brahman

*brahmajñānī* – knower of Brahman

*Brahman* – supreme Truth, infinite Reality

*brahmāṇḍa* – cosmos, a total of fourteen worlds (lokas)

*brahmaniṣṭha* – person established in the Brahman

*brahmasūtras* – aphorisms composed by Veda Vyāsa

*brahma-svarūpa* – of the nature of Brahman

*brahma-vicāra* – enquiry into Brahman

*brahma-vidyā* – Knowledge of Brahman

*brahmātmaikya* – oneness between the Self and the Brahman

*buddhi* – intellect, the decision-making power of the individual
C

caitanya – Consciousness
caturtha – fourth

chandas – Vedic prosody or metres, such as gāyatrī, triṣṭup, anuṣṭup and so on
cit – Consciousness
citta – memory, thoughts of the nature of memory

D

dakṣiṇā – reward given at the end of the rituals to the priest who performs them or to the teacher who instructs a student
dakṣiṇa-mārga – the southern path
dama – control of the senses
darśana – a school of philosophy
deha – body
deśa – space
deśatal – with respect to space
deva or devatā – god or deity
dhanārthi – seeker of wealth
dharma – essential nature of an object or righteousness or nobility
dīrī – an intelligent person
dhṛti – fortitude, the ability to hold on to a goal
dhyāna-yoga – path of contemplation
divya – divine or self-shining
dīkṣā – initiation
dīkṣānta-samāroha – graduation ceremony
dṛk – seer

dṛg-dṛśya-viveka – differentiation between the seer and the seen
dṛṣṭa – seer
dṛśya – seen
dvaita – duality
dveṣa – dislike
Glossary

E
ekākṣaram – monosyllable

G
gadya – prose
gandha – smell
gati – destination
ghrṇa – hatred
gītī – song
golaka – physical aperture of the senses
gotra – lineage
granthi – knot
gṛhastha – householder
gṛhastha-āśrama – household life
guhā – cave
guṇātīta – the man of Self-realisation who has transcended the three guṇas
Guru – teacher
guru-kṛpā – grace of the Guru
gurukula – traditional residential schools
gurūpasadana – traditional way of approaching a teacher
gūḍha – hidden

H
hiranyagarbha – the supreme Consciousness associated with the total mind-
intellect
ḥṛdaya – heart
ḥṛdaya-granthi – knot of the heart

I
idam – this, the entire world
indriya – the senses
iṣṭa-devatā – personal or favourite God
iṣṭa-mantra – japamantra of iṣṭa-devatā
itihāsa – epic
Īśa or Īśvara – the Lord
īśvara-kṛpā – grace of the Lord

J
jāda – inert
jagat – world
japa – repetition of the Lord’s name
jāgrat-avasthā – waking state
jijñāsā – quest for knowledge
jīva or jīvātman – the limited individual or the bound self
jīva-bhāva – the notion or sense of being a limited individual
jīvabrahmaikya – oneness between jīva and Brahman
jīvanmukta – the person liberated even while living
jīvanmukti – the final Liberation
jīveśvaraikya – oneness between jīva and Īśvara
jñāna – knowledge
jñāna-mārga – path of knowledge
jñānendriya – organs of knowledge such as ear, skin and so on
Jñānī – the one endowed with Self-knowledge
jyoti – fire

K
kalā – part or facet or phase or aspect of the personality
karma – action
karmādhyakṣa – Īśvara who presides over all karmas
karma-kāṇḍa – the ritual portion of the Vedas
karmaphala – fruits of action
Glossary

karmaphalaṅdātā – bestower of the fruits of action
karma-yoga – path of action
karmendriya – organs of action such as speech, hands and so on
kartā – doer
kartṛtva – doership
karuṇā – compassion
kāla – time
kālataḥ – with respect to time
kālātīta – one who has transcended time
kāma – desire
kāraṇa – cause
kāraṇa-śarīra – causal body
kārya – effect
kāryakāraṇa-viveka – discrimination between cause and effect
kāśṭha – the final limit
kośa – sheath, such as annamaya-kośa and so on
kriyā-śakti – the power to act
kṛtakṛtyatā – complete fulfilment

L
lakṣaṇa – definition
lakṣyārtha – implied meaning
laya – dissolution
laya-sthāna – abode of dissolution
liṅga – marker or sign
loka – world or field of experience

M
mahat-tattva – total mind
mahādbhūtā – mysterious
mahāvākya – identity revealing statement
mahāvākya-vicāra – enquiry into the implied meaning of the mahāvākyas
manana – deep reflection
manas – mind, thoughts in the condition of doubt or indecision
manomaya-kośa – mental sheath
mantra – a verse from the Vedas
māyā – illusion or magic or the Lord’s power
medhā – the ability to understand and memorise the śāstras
mithyā – illusion or that which is not truly existent
moda – the thrill prompted by attaining the object of our liking
moha – delusion
mokṣa – Liberation
mukti – Liberation
mumukṣu – one desirous of Liberation
mumukṣutva – the burning desire for Liberation
muni – a reflective person
mūrti – idol
mūrti-pūjā – worship of the ideal through an idol

N
nāma – name
nididhyāsana – contemplation, continuous flow of a single thought directed to Brahman
niḥśreyasa – Liberation
nirгуṇa – without attributes
nirгуṇa-brahman – attributeless Reality
niṣedha – prohibition or what must not be done
niṣkāma – desireless
niṣkāma-karma – actions performed without selfish desires
nitya – eternal or permanent
nitya-mukta – ever-/liberated
nitya-upalabdha – ever-present or ever-available
nivṛtti – actionlessness or renunciation

O
oṣadhi – plant kingdom

P
padya – poetry
pañcāgni-vidyā – a combination of karma and upāsanā on the five fires as explained in the Vedas
pañca-kośa – five sheaths
pañca-mahābhūta – the five great elements
pāpa – demerit
para – higher
parama-guru – grand-guru
paramānanda – supreme Bliss
paramātman – the supreme Self of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss
paramēśvara – the Lord
paramparā – succession
parīkṣā – examination
parivāra – family
parokṣa-jñāna – indirect knowledge gained through a medium
pāramārthika – absolute
pāribhāṣika-śabda – technical word
pitā – father
pluta – elongation of a vowel
prakaraṇa-grantha – topical text
prakārāntara – different mode or manner
pralaya – cosmic dissolution
pramāda – inadvertence
pramāṇa – instrument or means of knowledge
pramoda – the happiness ensuing from actually enjoying the object of our liking
prameya – the object of knowledge
praṇava – Om, the primordial sound
prapañca – world
praśna – question
prathama – first
pratyagātman – the inner Self
pratyakṣa-jñāna – direct knowledge gained through the senses
pravacana – discourse or satsang
pravṛtti – activity
prājña – Consciousness
prāṇa – faculty of respiration that controls the inhalation and exhalation of breath
prāṇamaya-kośa – the vital-air sheath
prāṇa-vīkṣaṇa – observation of the breath
prāpta – that which has already been gained
prāpya – that which is to be gained
prārabdha-karma – results of those actions that have caused the present embodiment and the experiences thereof
preyas – path of pleasure
priya – joy caused by the perception of the object of our liking
prthivī – earth
puṇya – merit
purāṇa – texts which are old yet their teaching is new
pūrṇam – full or complete or infinite or limitless
puruṣa – the supreme Self
puruṣārthas – human goals of life – dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa
pūjā – ritual worship of a deity
pūrti – completion or fulfilment
Glossary

**R**

*rasa* – taste  
*rasāyana-śāstra* – chemistry  
*rāga* – likes  
*rṣi* – those to whom Vedas were revealed  
*ṛtam* – intellectual determination and understanding of the truths enshrined in the scriptures  
*rūpa* – form

**S**

*sagunā* – with attributes  
*sagunā-brahman* – Reality with attributes  
*sakāma-karma* – desire-prompted actions  
*sama* – equal  
*samādhāna* – the ability to keep the mind absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge  
*samādhi* – absorption of mind in the thought ‘I am Brahman’  
*samādhi-avasthā* – state of absorption  
*samāna* – physiological faculty of digestion  
*samasta-sākṣin* – the illuminator or witness of all  
*samaṣṭi* – totality or macrocosm  
*sambandha* – relationship  
*samit* – sacrificial fuel  
*sāṁśara* – realm of transmigration  
*samāṣaya or sandeha* – doubt  
*samskāra* – inherent tendencies  
*sāṁvāda* – dialogue  
*samyag-jñāna* – right knowledge or right thinking.  
*sāñcita-karma* – collection of results of all the actions performed by an individual in all the previous births  
*sāṅghāta* – assemblage
saṅkalpa – wish or desire
sannyāsa – renunciation
sannyāsa-dīkṣā – initiation into the life of renunciation
sat – Existence
satsaṅga – company of the good or a spiritual discourse
sattā - Existence
satya – virtue of truth or Existence
satyasaṅkalpa – one whose every saṅkalpa or wish is readily fulfilled.
sarvātmabhāva – mental attitude of seeing one Self in all
sarva-vyāpi – all pervading
sādhana – means or spiritual practice
sādhana-catuṣṭaya – four-fold qualification comprising viveka, vairāgya,
śamādi-ṣaṭka-sampatti and mumukṣutva
sākṣat-sādhana – direct means
sākṣi-bhāva – attitude of being a witness
smṛti – memory
sparśa – touch
spaṣṭa – clear
ṛṣṭī or sarga – creation
sthira – firm
sthitaprajña – Man of Wisdom established firmly in the knowledge of the Self
sthiti – sustenance
sthiti-kāraṇa – cause of sustenance
sthūla-buddhi – gross intellect
sthūla-pañcamahābhūta – gross form of the five great elements
sthūla-śarīra – physical or gross body
stotra – hymn in praise of the Lord
sukha – joy
sukhāsana – comfortable posture
suṣupti-avasthā – deep sleep state
Glossary

-sūkṣma-buddhi – subtle intellect capable of understanding subtle topics
-sūkṣma-śarīra – subtle body
-sūktam – Vedic hymn
-sūrya – sun
-svamāyayā – by his own illusory power
-svapna-avasthā – dream state
-svarga – heaven
-svarūpa – nature
-svarūpa-lakṣaṇa – definition based on the object’s intrinsic characteristics
-svataḥ-siddha – self-existent
-svayam-siddha – self-existent

Ś

-śabda – sound
-śabda-pramāṇa – scriptures as a means of knowledge
-śakti – power
-śakti-pradātā – giver of power
-śama – control of the mind
-śamādi-ṣaṭka-sampatti – six-fold inner wealth starting with śama
-śaucam – purification
-śānti – peace
-śānti-mantra – invocation of peace
-śāstra – scripture
-śāstrārtha – discussion upon the scriptures
-śīṣya – disciple or student
-śivam – most auspicious
-śoka – grief
-śraddhā – faith
-śravaṇa – listening attentively to the teacher so that the purport of Vedānta is ascertained
śreyas – path of good
śrōtriya – one who is well learned in the Vedic lore
śruti – that which is heard, a term which connotes the Vedas
śubhra or śuddha – pure
śuci – cleanliness or purity
śuddha-ātman – the pure Self
śuddha-vaidika-śāstrīya-paramparā – the pure Vedic and traditional method
śūnya – nothingness

Ṣ
ṣoḍaśa-kalā-puruṣa – supreme Reality associated with sixteen facets

T
taijasa – dream state ego
tamas – darkness
tanmātra – subtle form of the five great elements
tapas – austerity or penance or the single-pointedness of the mind and sense organs
taṭastha-lakṣana – definition of an object based on its relationship with another temporary, external object
tattva – factor
tātparya-nirṇaya – assertion of the essential teachings of the scriptures
titikṣā – forbearance
trayī – the Vedas
tṛpti – contentment
turīya – fourth

U
udāna – physiological faculty governing the reverse processes like vomiting, burping and so on
upadeśa – teaching
**Glossary**

*upādhi* – conditioning

*upalakṣaṇa* – implication

**Upaniṣad** – the philosophical portion of the Vedas that contains the Knowledge of the Self as its subject matter

*uparama* – withdrawal of the mind from all indulgence

*upāsaka* – worshipper

*upāsanā* – worship

**uttama-adhikārin** – seeker of high calibre

**uttara-mārga** – the northern path

ūrjā-śakti – vital power

**V**

*vācyārtha* – literal meaning

*vairāgya* – dispassion

*varaṇa* – choosing

*vāsanā* – inherent and habitual tendencies born of impressions gained through the experiences in this life or the earlier ones

*vastu* – object

*vastutaḥ* – with respect to the object

*vāda* – argument

*vāyu* – air

**Veda** – the revealed knowledge that forms the foundation of Hinduism

**vedānta** – end portion of the Vedas, also termed Upaniṣad

*vibhu* – all-pervading

*vicāra* – thinking or enquiry

**videhamukti** – liberation associated with the death of the body

*vidhi* – injunction about what must be done

*vidhivat* – in accordance with the injunctions

*vidyārthī* – seeker of knowledge

*vijñāna* – experiential knowledge

*vijñānamaya-kośa* – intellectual sheath
vikṣepa-śakti – projecting power of māyā
vilakṣaṇa – different
viparīta-bhāvanā – contrary notions that are at variance with the knowledge ‘I am Brahman’
virāṭ-puruṣa – the cosmic form of the Lord
viśadam – clear
viśaraṇa – destruction
viṣaya – subject matter
viṣayānanda – pleasures obtained from objects
višeṣaṇa – adjective
Viṣṇu – the all-pervading Reality
viśokam – devoid of sorrow
viśuddham – extremely pure
viśva – waking state ego
vivāha – marriage
viveka – discrimination
vivekī – one who discriminates well
vivikta-deśa – solitary place
vīryam – vitality or energy that one gets from food
vrata – vow or observance
vr̥tti – thought
vṛtti-jñāna – knowledge in the form of a thought
vyāṣṭi – individuality or microcosm
vyāna – physiological faculty of circulation
vyāpaka – all-pervasive
vyāvahārika-svarūpa – empirical or relative nature

Y
yajamāna – one who performs the yajña
yajña – ritualistic fire worship
Glossary

*yajñopavīta* – sacred thread
*yajñopavīta-dīkṣā* – the sacred thread ceremony
*yāga* – ritualistic fire worship
*yātanā-śarīra* – the body that one gets in hell
*yoga* – that which unites one with the Supreme
*yogin* – one who practices yoga
*yogya-vidyārthī* – a qualified or fit student
*yoni* – womb or type of birth
*yuktātmānaḥ* – Man of Realisation whose mind is totally absorbed in the Truth
Upaniṣads as Śāstra

This Upaniṣad Course aims to equip us with a vision of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are verily ‘śāstra’, which term signifies an entire system of knowledge. Thus the term ‘śāstra’ can also be used to indicate the various material sciences such as bhautika-śāstra (physics) and rasāyana-śāstra (chemistry); in the spiritual context, however, the term ‘śāstra’ signifies a ‘scripture’. What is common in both cases – science or scripture – is that the subject matter is dealt with in its totality.

Śāstra (or science) is described as a systematic study of a particular subject. In the case of the Upaniṣads, this science is referred to as ‘adhyātma-śāstra’ because the study is centred on the Ātman. Ātman refers to the Self (I) and that is why this knowledge is also referred to as ‘Self-knowledge’ or ‘spiritual knowledge.’

Methodology of Study

There are numerous Upaniṣads. Some say there are 108, of which ten or eleven are considered the major ones. Although all of them deal with the same knowledge, certain aspects of this knowledge are dealt with more elaborately in one or the other of them. In this course, we highlight such relevant portions from different Upaniṣads that will enable us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the overall vision of the Upaniṣads.
The study and presentation of this subject in this course is in accordance with the tradition of Advaita-vedānta, as handed over to us by our Guru-paramparā and as expounded by its foremost Ācārya, Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. Being thus the śuddha-vidika-śāstriya-paramparā (the pure Vedic and traditional method), the method of study here will be quite distinct from the modern scholarly and academic approach used for the study of philosophy in Universities and other academic institutions.

**The Vedas**
Intrinsic to the study of the Upaniṣads, or Vedānta as it is also known (since it is the culminating section of the Vedas), is the axiom that the Vedas are the authentic, authoritative and valid means of knowledge: *vedāḥ pramāṇam*. The Vedas are described both as (1) the means and (2) the treasure house of knowledge. Because the scope of this Vedic knowledge is so vast, in time it was not possible for any one individual to know all of it. Therefore, Sage Veda-vyāsa in his infinite wisdom and compassion divided the Veda into four different volumes: Ṛg-veda, Yajur-veda, Sāma-veda and Atharva-veda.

The Vedas give us knowledge of dharma: “vedo’khilo dharmamūlam – The Vedas are the very source of the knowledge of dharma.” However, knowledge of dharma cannot be attained through the usual means of gaining knowledge such as sense perception (pratyakṣa) or logic (anumāna). Thus, for those who want to understand what dharma is, the Vedas are the only supreme and valid means.¹

Reflect Upon
There are many aspects of knowledge that are beyond perception and inference. For example, in a particular country what is legal or illegal cannot be known by mere perception or just inference. Such matters have to be known from the nation’s constitution. So too, whether a particular act is according to dharma

¹ Dharmam jīvadharmatvāntah paramānt pramāṇaṃ śrutīḥ.
or not (i.e. righteous or unrighteous) cannot also be known by perception, or inference, or through other available means of knowledge such as postulation. This knowledge of dharma is brought to us by the Vedas alone.

Dharma

Dharma implies much more than its present restricted translation as ‘religion’ or ‘duty’. Dharma is that in which lies the welfare of all beings. Hence the definition of dharma: “yataḥ abhyudaya-nihśreyasa-prāptiḥ, saḥ dharmaḥ – That which enables both material prosperity (abhyudaya) and spiritual unfoldment (nihśreyasa) is ‘dharma’.”

In his introduction to the Bhagavad-gītā, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya elaborates on the full significance of the term ‘dharma’. He explains that dharma is of two kinds: (1) pravṛtti and (2) nivṛtti.

‘Pravṛtti’ signifies the pursuit of some material goal and engagement in such activities as are appropriate to its attainment. Such material goals include prosperity, power, status, pleasure, comforts and even the attainment of heaven and the higher worlds after the fall of the body. ‘Nivṛtti’, on the other hand, means withdrawal from all material goals and their attendant activities in order to pursue spiritual knowledge. In short, ‘pravṛtti’ and ‘nivṛtti’ imply respectively action for worldly attainments and withdrawal from such actions for the Realisation of the Self.

Ponder Over

Pravṛtti and nivṛtti play out everyday in our lives. During the day, an individual remains active (pravṛtti) but in the evening withdraws from activity as sleep takes over (nivṛtti). Also, pravṛtti or an active life depends on a good night’s rest, nivṛtti. Thus, nivṛtti sustains pravṛtti and pravṛtti leads to nivṛtti. Clearly, our health and well-being depend on both these aspects of life.
Another example of pravṛtti and nivṛtti could be that of any company manufacturing, say cars. While vigorous activity goes on in the factory and office – production and assembly, marketing, publicity, sales and so on – all of this pravṛtti is, in fact, sustained by the work undertaken in the Research and Development Department. And research work is always done with a quiet mind in a calm atmosphere away from feverish activity. This is nivṛtti.

These examples highlight nivṛtti at a rudimentary level. In the spiritual context, pravṛtti and nivṛtti have a deeper significance which will become clear in the course of this lesson.

Pravṛtti-dharma
Pravṛtti-dharma is to be considered at two levels:
(1) For individuals who have no idea what spiritual life is, their entire life is pravṛtti alone. That is why it is said: “yad yad hi kurute jantuḥ tat tat kāmasya ceṣṭitam” – whatever an individual does is only an expression of desire.” The desire may be moral or immoral, ethical or unethical, good or bad. At the basic level, the desire may be just for food, clothing and shelter. And later it could be for more comforts and pleasure, to raise the standard of living, to gain power and position. Or, not being satisfied with this world, individuals may also desire a higher world if they believe in it. The śāstras prescribe certain rituals termed ‘yāgas’ for the attainment of such goals as heaven. By performing such rituals, the gods are propitiated and they in turn shower grace and blessings which enable one to attain those higher worlds.

Such a life of desire-prompted activity for one’s personal gratification is called sakāma-pravṛtti. The only driving question for all sakāma-pravṛtti is “What will I get?” There is little or no concern for others and the desire is merely for physical and tangible results.

(2) A new phase begins when an element of nivṛtti comes into an otherwise purely pravṛtti life. An individual begins to ask: What can I give? How can the
other person benefit from my time, money, skill? and so on. In other words, some actions become niṣkāma-karma, that is the individual’s actions become prompted by selflessness too. Slowly the attitude of niṣkāma-karma increases and while one continues with activities prompted by selfish desires, there opens an aspect in one’s life dedicated to the benefit of others without a feeling of obliging the other. In other words, an element of renunciation (nivṛtti) has entered one’s life. Niṣkāma-karma is thus constituted of selfless action that rises above the need to fulfil selfish desires, leading to purification of the mind.

Various types of worship or upāsanās are also indicated by the Vedas in the context of pravṛtti. Upāsanās too can be practised either for material results (sakāma) or for purity of mind (niṣkāma). Hence pravṛtti-dharma is constituted of both karma (action) and upāsanā (worship). If these are performed with desire for material gain one achieves that. But the advice is to slowly rise above self-centredness and ask oneself what one can do for others. And when such selfless actions are dedicated to God or offered as worship, one’s whole attitude begins to transform. The result of such karma is purity of mind, and such karma is termed ‘karma-yoga’.

We thus see that pravṛtti-dharma leads to abhyudaya (material prosperity). Also, when performed selflessly, it grants purity of mind and prepares the individual for nivṛtti-dharma, the topic of the Upaniṣads.

Ponder Over

A father has three children. Of them one is a professional, another an industrialist. Very proudly he says that his first son is a very successful doctor, a heart specialist, famous and so on. And about the other son the father says, he runs a successful company with an excellent turnover and so on and thus he is proud of him too. What about the third? He is a social worker, doesn’t produce anything. The father starts saying on a complaining note: “And if you ask what is this social work, what do you get?” My son says, “‘Inner satisfaction!’”
The reason why money is so attractive is because it is the currency of survival and also an immediate tangible result of work: If I work for 5 hours I get this much money, if I work for 10 hours I get this much money. Thus, it is very tangible unlike inner satisfaction. And when people do not choose work that gives tangible results they feel that they are not doing something worthwhile.

Nivṛtti-dharma
Nivṛtti-dharma is the path of renunciation. It deals with listening, enquiry, contemplation and meditation into the nature of Truth. Nivṛtti-dharma represents the quest for Reality and constitutes the subject matter of the Upaniṣads. Although there are references to karma and upāsanā, that is pravṛtti-dharma in the Upaniṣads, yet these are not their main theme.

Nivṛtti-dharma, too, is of two kinds: (1) The first is the preparatory stage of renunciation and is known as ‘sādhana-rūpa-nivṛtti’, consisting in the cultivation of the sādhana-catuṣṭaya or the four-fold qualification that the seeker of Truth must imbibe. These qualifications make the mind ready for that higher realm of knowledge that is attained through listening to the scriptures from the teacher (śravaṇa), then reflecting upon it (manana) and thereafter meditating on the teaching (nididhyāsana). (2) The second stage is the absolute state of renunciation and is known as ‘sādhya-rūpa-nivṛtti’, that is attainment of the goal, which is the highest stage of Realisation. It is here that Self-knowledge is gained and one abides in the Self.

The Term ‘Upaniṣad’
Since we are studying the vision and the message of the Upaniṣads it is important to know what the term ‘Upaniṣad’ means. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya explains this in detail in his introduction to the Kaṭha-upaniṣad. The term ‘Upaniṣad’ is derived from the verbal root ‘sad’ and to it are added two prefixes, ‘upa’ and
‘ni’ (upa + ni + sad). There are three meanings to ‘sad’: to lead, to loosen and to end/destroy. The prefix ‘upa’ means ‘near’ (samīpe) and ‘ni’ signifies the ‘determined practice’ (niścayena śīlayati) of the knowledge that one gains from one’s teacher.

When individuals live a life of selfless dedicated activity – niṣkāma-pravṛtti-dharma – their mind is purified and a longing for spiritual knowledge develops. Such an evolved individual approaches a teacher (‘upa’ – samīpe), sits at the teacher’s feet and gains that knowledge, and thereafter firmly practices or abides in it (‘ni’ – niścayena śīlayati). When the seeker does so, this knowledge accomplishes three things: it destroys ignorance, loosens all bondages and leads seekers to their own nature (brahma-gamayitṛtvena).

The term ‘Upaniṣad’ thus refers to this Self-knowledge that is gained from the teacher: “upaniṣad-śabdena brahmavidyā ucyate.” The term ‘Upaniṣad’ referring to a book is only the secondary meaning of the word (granthe tu bhaktyā). The real meaning of the term ‘Upaniṣad’ is knowledge of the Self.

Anubandha-catuṣṭaya

The śāstras refer to the various aspects of Upaniṣadic knowledge collectively as ‘anubandha-catuṣṭaya’ or the ‘introductory four factors’. These are important as it is the awareness of these factors that connects a seeker of this knowledge to its pursuit. These four factors are evident in the following mantra from the Kaivalya-upaniṣad (1.1):

अधीहि भगवन् ब्रह्मविद्या वरिष्ठां सदा सद्य सह्भिः सेव्यम्यां निगूढ्याम्।
यया’चिरात् सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य परात्परं पुरुषमुपैहत हवद्यन्॥

adhīhi bhagavan brahmavidyāṁ variṣṭhāṁ sadā sadbhiḥ sevyamānāṁ nigūḍhāṁ,
ययाः’चिरात् सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य परात्परं पुरुषमुपैहत हवद्यन्॥

O revered sire, teach me the highest science of Reality, cultivated always by the good people, which is ever a hidden secret for man, a Knowledge by which a wise man, discarding all sins, can reach the highest ‘Reality’.
In the above mantra we see Āśvalāyana, the student, approaching the Guru, Brahmā, with a question in which the anubandha-catuṣṭaya, that is the introductory four factors are indicated:

(1) The viṣaya or subject matter is brahma-vidyā (adhihi bhagavan brahmavidyām). This knowledge is deeply hidden (nīgūḍhām), that is its meaning and import cannot be understood at the literal level, making the teacher's presence an absolute necessity.

(2) The adhikārin or qualified student is one who is noble and virtuous (sadā sadbhih sevyamanāṃ). Only such a student will benefit from this teaching.

(3) The prayojana or result/purpose served by this knowledge is freedom from sins and the attainment of the absolute Reality (acirāt sarvapāpaṁ vyapohya parātparam puruṣamupaiti vidvān). In other words, the result is freedom from all sorrow (since sins are the cause of sorrow) and abidance in permanent supreme Bliss. This is termed in the Upaniṣadic literature as 'Mokṣa' (Liberation).

(4) The sambandha is the relationship between this knowledge and its result. Knowledge of the Self reveals the Self, which is already there. Self-knowledge is the experience of the Existence of that which was always there. There is nothing further to do for attaining the Self other than the knowledge of it. This relationship between Self-knowledge and its result is referred to in scriptural literature as ‘bodhya-bodhaka-sambandha’, that is the relationship of the revealer and the revealed and is indicated by the term “yayā – by which.” Other knowledges are distinct in that they usually give us information of something which is not the same as experiencing it. Unlike Self-knowledge, which grants the result, the Self, other knowledges merely motivate us to reach out and strive for the attainment of something.

These four factors thus give us a complete idea of the essential facets of Upaniṣadic knowledge or ‘Vedānta’. 
Reflect Upon
There are certain kinds of knowledge after gaining which some effort is required to actually come to gain it. Suppose someone describes to us his exquisite and divine vision of the Himalayan Mount Kailash and how much his mind was elevated, we can only try to feel it. Still it is not the actual experience of seeing Mount Kailash. So too when someone describes heaven, it may create a desire to reach there. But then we need to make further effort to attain it by undertaking the right scriptural activity like a yāga (Vedic sacrificial act). In all these cases, knowledge merely functions as the motivator that is required to be followed up by action for the result to fructify. But then, if someone points out that the spectacles that I am searching for are right on my nose, then this knowledge itself is the gain and no further effort is required. In the same way, Self-knowledge reveals the Self and therefore Self-knowledge itself is the gain.

Vedānta
The term ‘Vedānta’ literally means the end portion of the Vedas. When a seeker of knowledge follows the spiritual path, purity of mind and single-pointedness of attention are the fundamental requirements. The culmination of such a spiritual pursuit is Upaniṣadic wisdom and hence the Upaniṣads are also known as ‘Vedānta’.

Also, even if somebody has specialised in another field of knowledge, say astrophysics, fulfilment of life comes only with the study of brahma-vidyā, the subject matter of the Upaniṣads. Thus Upaniṣadic wisdom is the very fulfilment (anta) of knowledge (veda).
Yajurveda-śānti-mantra

In many of the Upaniṣads the name of the teacher and the student are not mentioned and the teaching of brahma-vidyā begins directly. We shall later gain more knowledge about what brahma-vidyā is from the study of the various questions that the disciples ask in the Upaniṣads.

What is common to all the Upaniṣads, however, is the śānti-mantra or peace invocation that is chanted together at the outset by the teacher and the student(s). And there are different śānti-mantras for the various Upaniṣads depending upon which Veda the Upaniṣads belong to.

The following is a beautiful śānti-mantra found at the beginning of the Upaniṣads found in the Śukla-yajurveda:

ॐ सि न्यववतु। सि नौ भुनक्ु। सि वीययं किव्यविै।
तेजहवि न्यवधीतमस्ु। म्य हवहद्ष्यविै॥

ॐ श्यह्तिः श्यह्तिः श्यह्तिः॥

Om saha nāvavatu, saha nau bhunaktu, saha vīryaṁ karavāvahai,
tejasvi nāvadhītamastu, mā vidviṣāvahai.
Om śāntih śāntih śāntih.

Om. May He protect us both (the teacher and pupil). May He cause us both to enjoy. May we both exert together. May our studies be effulgent. May we never hate each other.

“Om” – This is remembrance of the Lord, the supreme Reality. It signifies also the invoking of auspiciousness and blessings for the pursuit of knowledge.

“Saha nāvavatu – May the supreme Lord protect us both (the teacher and the student).” Such protection is required also for the physical well-being of both the teacher and the student, for otherwise the teaching and the studying will become difficult. More importantly, wellness at the mental level is essential too, so that the noble attitude (bhāvanā/mano-bhāva) with which the teacher and the student come together to impart knowledge and to learn, respectively, is firmly maintained.
“Saha nau bhunaktu – May He make us both enjoy together.” The fruit of knowledge has to be enjoyment. That is, “May we enjoy the very process of learning and the result of knowledge too.”

“Saha vīryāṁ karavāvahai – May we both put forth effort.” Only with the right effort will the enjoyment that has been spoken of earlier happen. With effort alone can there arise the true communication of knowledge and the joy of learning.

“Tejasvi nāvadhītamastu – May the knowledge we have learnt become bright and brilliant.” Right effort unfailingly brings the effulgence of knowledge. The brightness of knowledge implies here its availability when required. Knowledge if it remains only in books and other media like laptops and other gadgets and is not available in the mind for access when it is immediately needed, it is as good as not being there.

An alternate meaning is may our life be transformed by that knowledge. A person who has learnt that he or she is ānanda-svarūpa-ātman (the very nature of bliss) and yet is all the time feeling miserable has obviously missed the transformation that knowledge brings about in life.

“Mā vidviṣāvahai – Let there not be any misunderstanding between the teacher and the student.” At all times a cordial, loving relationship should prevail between the teacher and student. Misunderstandings will only create a barrier in communication.

“Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ – Let there be peace, peace, peace.” Disturbances come from seen or unseen forces from within or without. The seen could be disturbances from the surrounding world, such as riots, civil war and so on. Examples of unseen forces are earthquakes, floods and other natural calamities. The worst kind of obstacle that could arise is from within us and that is loss of faith: in oneself, in the teacher, or in the knowledge. Without faith, everything is lost.
Ponder Over

This śānti-mantra, which pertains specifically to the right relation between the Guru and śiṣya, is also applicable to all realms of daily life. Wherever two entities come together there is indeed the need for the śānti-mantra!

In the case of husband and wife, it is a prayer to the Lord to protect their relationship (saha nāvavatu), and that they may enjoy grhaṣtha (householder) life together (saha nau bhunaktu). They both must work together (saha vīryaṁ karavāvahai) and avoid misunderstandings (mā vidviṣāvahai). The same mantra could also apply to the management of any organisation and its employees, to the shopkeeper and his customer and so on.

It is up to us to ponder over and recognise this beautiful śānti-mantra’s application in various fields of action in our daily life.¹

---

¹ A detailed study of the śānti-mantras pertaining to the other Vedas is taken up in Lessons 23 and 24.