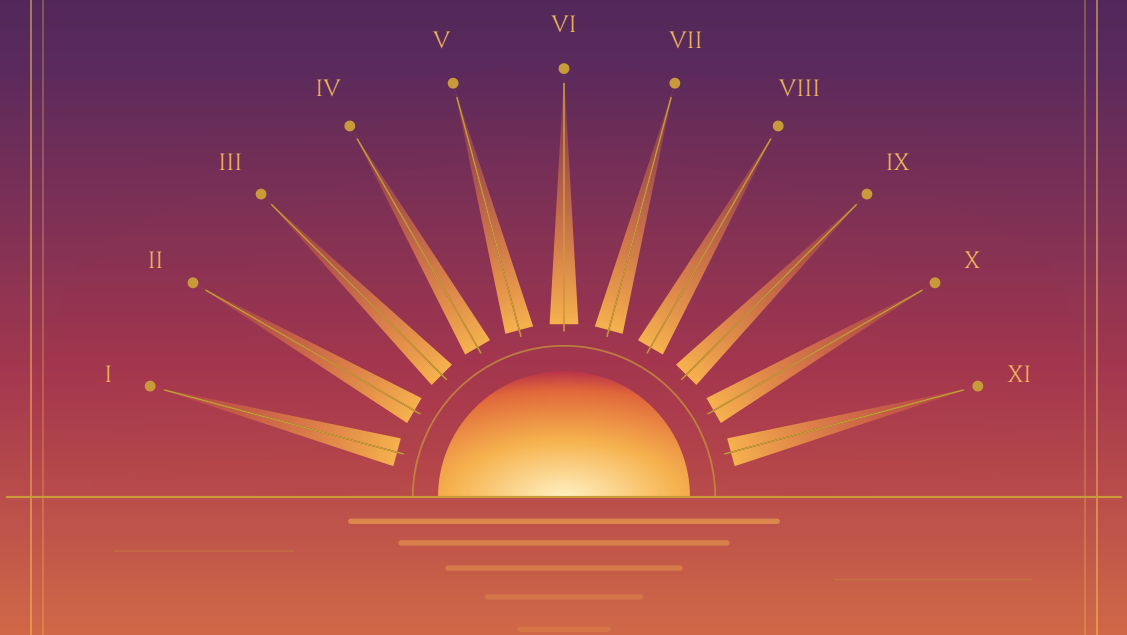
THE ELEVEN PRINCIPAL UPANISHADS

AS THE DAWN RUSHES IN

Rendered for the modern reader

SCOTT STOJETZ



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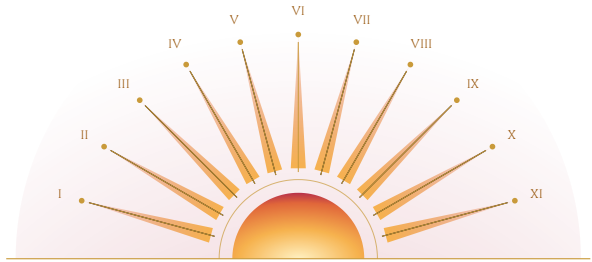
The Eleven Upanishads



A WORD BEFORE THE DAWN

THE DAWN, COMPLETE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I — The Isha — SHUKLA YAJUR VEDA · 18 VERSES

II — The Kena — SAMA VEDA · 35 VERSES

III — The Katha — KRISHNA YAJUR VEDA · 118 VERSES

IV — The Prashna — ATHARVA VEDA · 64 VERSES

V — The Mundaka — ATHARVA VEDA · 64 VERSES

VI — The Mandukya — ATHARVA VEDA · 12 VERSES

VII — The Taittiriya — KRISHNA YAJUR VEDA · 31 VERSES

VIII — The Aitareya — RIG VEDA · 17 VERSES

IX — The Chandogya — SAMA VEDA · 30 VERSES

X — The Brihadaranyaka — SHUKLA YAJUR VEDA · 25 VERSES

XI — The Shvetashvatara — KRISHNA YAJUR VEDA · 113 VERSES



BEFORE THE FIRST UPANISHAD

A Word Before the Dawn

I want to begin with the truth, because these texts deserve nothing less.

I am not worthy to translate the sacred wisdom of the Upanishads. I am not a scholar of Sanskrit. No lineage has authorized me; no one handed me the right to touch these words. The men who first carried them earned that right with their lifetimes in the forests — and I have not.

What I have done is simpler, and I will say it plainly: I have rendered them — with the help of AI, honestly used and honestly credited, and held faithful to the original Sanskrit — into plain modern English that the modern reader can understand. I am not the authority on these texts. I am a student of them: one who reads them every morning as the dawn rushes in, and who wanted his countrymen to be able to read them too, without a dictionary and without a robe.

Why go to the trouble? Because of what I have watched this wisdom do — in my own one life, at my own kitchen table. When we understand ancient knowledge such as this, and when we incorporate it into our daily expressive behaviors, three things happen. Our world slows down. Our truth becomes reality. And our behavior changes — toward the good, away from the pleasant — the oldest choice there is, named in these very pages by Death himself, teaching a boy.

The rishis took the most elemental and foundational intelligence there is and expressed it in a way that is graphic, devotional, inspirational, and reverent. These great sages of the forest spoke their highest realizations into the ears of their students, teacher to student, mouth to ear, in an unbroken chain that ran for thousands of years — and by God's grace, that chain was set down on paper for the modern man to absorb. Think of what they carried. No printing press, no library, no institution — only memory, discipline, and devotion, handing the fire forward generation after generation so that it could arrive, still burning, in your hands this morning. And what they carried is the boldest announcement ever made to the human race: that the infinite is not far away — it is seated in your own heart, nearer than your name. These pages do not ask you to shrink. They command you to stand up to your full height. Strength lives in these sentences. Fearlessness lives in these sentences. Every one of them was spoken by men who

had seen for themselves, and who wrote nothing down to impress anyone — only to point the way.

My hope is smaller, and the same: that men and women of this age can pick these wisdoms up and begin to dissect them for themselves. It is a moonshot to behavior change. The launch window opens every morning.

And now you know where this book's name comes from — an homage, and a debt. The rishis of the Rig Veda sang their first hymns to Ushas, the goddess of the dawn — and Sri Aurobindo, whose writings first handed me the phrase, taught what those forest singers actually meant by her: not the sunrise of the sky, but the dawn of the Truth itself — the illumination that breaks over a prepared mind, the light the Veda calls "goddess human in mortals," opulent with the riches of vision. And the rishis even had a word for the exact moment this book lives in: aruṇodaya — the rising of Aruna, the crimson glow that comes before the sun, the herald whose arrival means the light is now unstoppable. That is the foundation of the dawn rushing in: the dawn of intelligence, about to burst into your heart space. The oldest prayers in the oldest book on earth are prayers for the dawn to rush in. Because that is what sets a man on his way: the light, the wisdom, the higher knowledge — the purity and transparency of the message, arriving with the very light of day. She comes again every morning. Every morning, the whole race gets another chance.

Read one at dawn. Let it ring.

— Scott Stojetz

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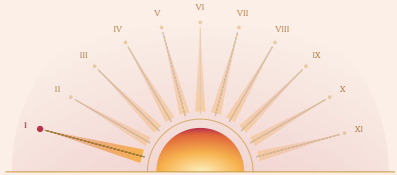

UPANISHAD ONE OF ELEVEN · SHUKLA YAJUR VEDA

The Isha Upanishad

THE PEACE INVOCATION

That is whole. This is whole. From the whole, the whole arises.
Take the whole from the whole — and the whole remains. Om.
Peace. Peace. Peace.

1 All of this — whatever moves in this moving world — is the dwelling of the Lord. Let go of it, and be nourished. Do not reach for what belongs to another. Whose is wealth, anyway?

2 Working, a man may wish to live a hundred years. There is no other way for you than this: work done so leaves no stain on the one who does it.

3 Sunless are the worlds, wrapped in blind darkness, where those go after death who have killed the Self within them.

4 The One never moves — and is swifter than the mind. The senses cannot catch it; it has always already arrived. Standing still, it outruns all who run. In it, the moving air carries every life.

5 It moves. It does not move. It is far. It is near. It is within all of this. It is outside all of this.

6 The one who sees every being in the Self, and the Self in every being, turns away from no one — and shrinks from nothing.

7 When all beings have become the very Self of the knower — what confusion can remain? What grief? He sees only the oneness.

8 That One fills everything: bright, bodiless, without wound, without sinew — pure, untouched by any evil. The seer. The knower. Present everywhere. Born of itself. Through endless years, it has set all things exactly in their order.

9 Into blind darkness go those who worship ignorance alone. Into darkness deeper still go those who delight in knowledge alone.

10 One thing, the wise have told us, comes from knowledge. Another comes from ignorance. So we have heard from the steady ones who explained it to us.

11 The one who knows both together — knowledge and ignorance — crosses over death by ignorance, and by knowledge reaches the deathless.

12 Into blind darkness go those who worship only the unmanifest. Into darkness deeper still go those who delight only in the manifest.

13 One thing, they have said, comes from the manifest. Another comes from the unmanifest. So we have heard from the steady ones who explained it to us.

14 The one who knows both together — the manifest and what lies beyond all becoming — crosses over death by the manifest, and by the unmanifest reaches the deathless.

15 The face of truth is covered by a disk of gold. Nourisher — uncover it, for one whose law is truth, that I may see.

16 Nourisher. Lone seer. Keeper of order. Sun, child of the Father of all beings — draw in your rays, gather up your brilliance. That form of yours — the most beautiful of all — I see it now. That Person there, shining — I am He.

17 Now may this breath return to the immortal wind, and this body end in ashes.

Om. Mind, remember. Remember what has been done. Mind, remember. Remember what has been done.

18 O Fire — you who know every path — lead us by the good road to our fulfillment. Keep far from us the crooked way. To you we offer our fullest word of praise.

Closing Om. Peace. Peace. Peace.

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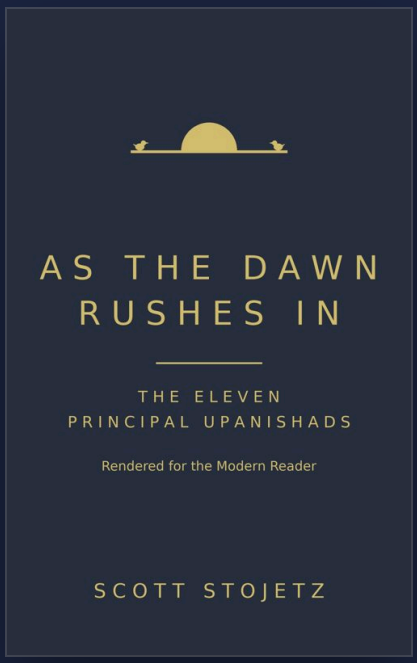

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