

# Mundaka Upanishad Questions:

## Chapter 1, Section 1:

### Verse 1/2: Guru Parampara

1. What knowledge did Brahma (Creator) teach to his son Atharva? What's the symbolism?
2. What does "sarva-vidya-pratishtha" mean? [Foundation of all knowledge] Explain.
3. Why is knowledge described as vastu-tantram? [Captures object as-is] Explain.

### Verse 3: Shaunaka's Question

1. How is Shaunaka described in the text? [Mahāśālah - great householder]
2. What did Shaunaka ask Angiras? [Knowing one, everything known]
3. How should a student approach a teacher traditionally? [With reverence, curiosity, faith]
4. What analogy explains Shaunaka's question? [Gold-ornaments example] Explain.
5. What's the relationship between the ornament and the gold?
6. What's the purpose of the gold-ornament example?

### Verse 4: Two Types of Knowledge

1. What are the two types of knowledge mentioned? [Para and apara vidya] Give many features of each.
2. What type of knowledge can be negated and why? [Apara-vidya/Lower knowledge]
3. Which knowledge leads to moksha and why? [Para-vidya/Higher knowledge]

### Verse 5: Definitions of Knowledge

1. What is purpose of studying the Vedāṅgas, the six limbs of Vedas (EG: grammar, metrics, phonetics, etc)?
2. What happens when you know para-vidya? [Knowing itself is fruit]
3. What does Vyākaraṇa study? [Grammar/Word formation/Sanskrit language] Why is it important?
4. Why can knowing Upanishad words remain apara-vidya? [Without proper understanding]

### Verse 6: Nature of Higher Knowledge

1. Brahman (Consciousness) is adreśyam (unavailable to 5 senses). Explain.
2. Why can't Consciousness be grasped? [Not located in place] Explain.
3. Awareness is unborn (agotram). Demonstrate how your awareness is never born.
4. Why must Brahman (the final reality of all things) be free of attributes?
5. Consciousness is sarvagatam (all pervasive). What does this mean?
6. How do the wise "see" Brahman by help of the mind, when Brahman can't be seen or grasped by the mind?

### Verse 7: Three Similes (Spider, Plants, Hair)

1. What does the spider analogy demonstrate? And what is limitation of spider example?
2. What does the earth and plants analogy demonstrate?
3. What does the hair growth analogy demonstrate?
4. Which analogy best explains all three? [Dream analogy]. Show how.

### Verse 8: How Creation Comes

1. What does "Brahman bulges through knowledge" mean?
2. Why is "potential for universe" called "anna" (food)?
3. What emerges from potential? [Hiranyagarbha]. What is Hiranyagarbha?
4. Four stages of creation are: (1) Causal - anna (2) Subtle - hiranyagarbha (3) Gross - 14 lokas (4) Results - jiva acts > punya/papa
  - Create story of creation using the stages. "Once upon no-time, Awareness alone was, and \_\_\_."
5. Why is Awareness and its potential hidden from jiva? [stuck seeing snake / veiling power]. Talk about both.

### Verse 9: Thorough Knowledge

1. Jnani is "sarvajña" (knows everything in general), but not sarvavid (knows everything in detail). Explain.

2. “Brahman’s tapas (visualization) is nothing but knowledge alone”. *Give examples of this via dream.*
3. “By knowing Brahman, everything known”. *Why does this put end to one’s spiritual search?*
4. Names, forms, food, mates you’re discussing with this right now – are all born of Brahman. *How does this change your perspective?*

## Chapter 1, Section 2: Rituals

### Verse 1: A Close Look at the Karma Kanda

1. What can rituals do and not do?

### Verse 2: Description of Agnihotra

1. What can you recall about Agnihotra (the ritual where you throw oblations into the fire)?
2. What happens if any ritual is done incorrectly?
3. What’s the hidden purpose behind the strict requirements for rituals? [Any action takes much time]. What else?

### Verse 8: Over-Confidence in Rituals Can Lead to Deluded Spiritual Teachers

1. What drives the person convinced rituals are the ultimate goal of life? [I am doer/enjoyer]. Explain.
2. How is a blind lineage (spiritual philosophy or school) created?

### Verse 9: Upanishads calls them "Immature Children"

1. Why does Upaniṣad call them children (bālāḥ) - those who only perform rituals / Hare Krishna / dualistic worship / etc? What intention is Upanishad coming from? Are such practices useless?

### Verse 11: Upanishads Gives Them One Higher Step (Meditation)

1. What is one higher step on the spiritual ladder than rituals? [meditation]. Why?

### Verse 12: Approaching the Guru

1. To understand the final reality, one needs dispassion. *What is dispassion? Give example(s).*
2. Action can do 4 things: Create. Reach. Purify. Modify. *Awareness can’t be created, reached, purified, modified. Why?*
3. Ideal student has **(1)** purity of thought **(2)** reasoning ability **(3)** intense yearning. *Discuss.*

## Chapter 2, Section 1: Brahman and Creation

### Verse 1: Sparks From the Flaming Fire

1. What analogy explains how many come from one? [Sparks from fire]. *Why is this example used? What does it illustrate?*
2. What causes beings to appear different? [Different upādhis/conditioning]. *How? Explain...*

### Verse 2: Absolute Nature of Brahman

1. Awareness is Self-shining/self-revealing. *What does this mean?*
2. Consciousness needs nothing to reveal itself. *Demonstrate using bhāti-anubhāti (shines, shines-after method).*
3. Brahman is formless (without form), yet can be recognized as the “is-ness” in all forms. *Explain...*
4. What is the I-sense (ego)?
5. How to distinguish I-sense from Consciousness?

### Verse 3: Everything arises from Brahman

1. What can you remember about each of the 5 elements? [Space, Air, Fire, Water, Earth]
2. What is purpose of the 5 elements model?

### Verse 4: Brahman as Virat

1. Brahman viewed from standpoint of total physical is called \_\_\_\_\_. [starts with V]
2. Brahman viewed from standpoint of total subtle is called \_\_\_\_\_. [starts with H]

3. What is virāt's relationship to all living beings (including you reading this)?

### Verse 5: Five Fires That Sustain Life

1. Comment on this: Sun > Rain > Vegetation > Male semen > Woman impregnated > Birth > Jiva does action > Punya-papa > Rebirth. *What does it want to show us?*

### Verse 8: The Secret of "Groups of Seven"

1. Imagine your eyes are closed. Then they open. Imagine a beam of awareness "reaches out" and prostrates to a tree. Then perception takes place. What is the purpose of this imaginary employed in the verse?

### Verse 10: Purusha (Brahman) & Universe Are One

1. What are the two types of statements made in Vedantic scriptures? [Adhyāropa-vākya or deliberate superimposition, and apavāda-vākya or negation]. *What is purpose for each?*
2. How does "knowing Brahman" differ from "knowing an object"?
3. What happens when you know this reality? [Heart knots resolved]. *What are these knots referring to?*

## Chapter 2, Section 2: Light of all Lights

### Verses 3 & 4: Bow and Arrow: Meditating on OM

1. "Om" comes from root "av" which means "to protect, to bless". *True/False.*
2. "Om" (AUM) symbolically covers all sounds (names), thus forms. So it's perfect name for Ishvara. *True/False.*
3. What does the silence after Om represent? [Turiya]. *What is turiya?*
4. OM is actually AUM. List all things AUM can stand for?

### Verse 9: The Knower of Brahman

1. Upon liberation, 3 knots are resolved: Ignorance, Desire, Action. *What about them is resolved?*
2. "Sancita-karma is destroyed upon moksha". *What does this mean? How is it possible?*

### Verse 11: Light of all Lights

1. How is Brahman's "light" different from physical light?
2. What is Brahman called in this verse? [Light of all lights]. *Why is it called this?*
3. If the mind had it's own light, you couldn't go to sleep. *True/False. And why?*

### Verse 12: Brahman in All Directions

1. "Brahman is in all directions". *What does this imply?*
2. What does "sat" refer to in a flower?
3. What does "cit" refer to in a flower?
4. When you say "I hate \_\_\_", what are you wanting behind that statement?

## Chapter 3, Section 1: Nuances

### Verse 1: Two Birds Metaphor

1. What do the two birds in the verse represent?
2. What does the tree symbolize in this metaphor?
3. What type of relationship exists between the two words - the body-mind and Consciousness? [Satya-mithya relationship]. *Resolve your body into Consciousness – step by step. Do same with mind (remember, thoughts are made of 5 elements – think of it as subtle matter).*
4. Demonstrate presence of intelligence in the body, limb (choose one), cell, dna, molecule, atom, particles. Then in the orders such as psychological order, chemical (there's chemistry between us!!), physiological, etc.

### Verse 2 Questions:

1. What causes the first bird's grief?
2. Three-step methodology to arrive to the truth: [Step 1: See that body-mind is not-self. Step 2: Reveal nature of self. Step 3: Show body-mind is nothing but self]. *Expand on these steps.*

3. “Tree is no longer a tree. But Ishvara (intelligence) taking form of a form we call a tree”. *True/False.*

#### **Verse 4 Questions:**

1. Why doesn't the vidvān (knower of self) debate, or sees no purpose to debate?

#### **Verse 7 Questions:**

1. What does “limitless” mean?
2. Why is Brahman not available for thought?
3. “Brahman is nearer then the nearest, and farther then the farthest”. *What does this mean?*

## **Chapter 3, Section 2: Qualities seen in a sage**

#### **Verse 5, 7, 8, 9 Combined:**

1. “When jnani’s body is dropped, his microcosmic ahamkara is now ishvara’s macrocosmic ahamkara.” *What does this mean?*
2. In the river analogy of verse 8, what do rivers give up when reaching the ocean? What does the jnani give up after dropping the body?
3. According to verse 9, what happens in a knower of Brahman's family circle?
4. Are you ok after all this? :)