

English-Language Approximation of Aum̐ (Om̐)

The root of Onkar is traceable to the Hindu sacred syllable Om, also written as Aum. Historically, in the beginning, Om was used as a reply of approval or consent. It is equivalent to the English word 'Amen' uttered at the end of a Christian prayer, meaning 'so be it'.

At a later stage, with the evolution of Indian philosophic thought, the sages of Upanishads pronounced it as an adequate symbol of the Absolute Transcendent Reality, Brahma. It is considered as the unity of all sound to which all matters and energy are reduced in their primordial form, hence fit as a symbol for Atman (soul) or Brahma, the Supreme Being, which is the unity of all existence. These - and possibly some other - considerations led the Vedic sages to accord to Om the highest Divine reverence and worship. As a very sacred and powerful Mantra it forms part of daily worship and meditation by Hindu devotees. It is treated as the holiest symbol of Divinity calling it Nada Brahma or Shabda Brahma in the form of sound. Its nearest equivalent in the West is Logos or the 'Word'. St. John's Gospel expounds it thus:

"in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." The Word was the true light that enlightens all men!

Written in original, it is composed of three letters of Sanskrit alphabet, corresponding to A U M of English alphabet. According to the polytheistic tradition of Hinduism it also represented the Hindu Trinity, each letter standing for one of the deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

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