TEN PRINCIPAL UPA\\nISHADS
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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TRANSLATION

East and West: Some Reflections by S. Radhakrishnan (Translated into Kannada)
TEN PRINCIPAL UPAHISHADS

SOME FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS

A Dialectical and Analytical Study

N. A. NIKAM

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MY PARENTS

मातृदेवो भव
पितृदेवो भव

—Taittiriya Upanishad (I, II.2)
ॐ पूर्णमद: पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णसुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्ति: शान्ति: शान्ति: ॥
FOREWORD

Before attempting what can at best be only an approach to an appreciation of Professor Nikam’s work on the Upaniṣads, it is necessary to make out the type of study and reflection it embodies.

The work concerns itself with the ten principal Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads have exercised a tremendous fascination over the Indian mind right through the ages, and evoked the admiration of the scholars and philosophers of the West. The interpretation of these texts is no easy matter, as they are in an archaic and semi-poetical form, and demand an elucidation in terms of their intellectual matrix. Hence the aid of traditional commentaries is utterly indispensable for construing the language of those difficult classics. But the traditional interpretations, such as that of Shankara, are embedded in certain definite philosophical systems, and the reading of the Upaniṣads within such or any fixed modes of thought may rob appreciation of freshness and independence, and we may eventually lose the explorative spirit, the delightful mobilities and even significant uncertainties of these bracing outbursts of creative insight. A difficult exercise has to be performed, and traditional scholastic exegesis and traditional schools of thought are to be left aloof, at least provisionally. This is the daring procedure that Professor Nikam has adopted with a conspicuous measure of success. He has been enabled thereby to grasp the core of the Upaniṣads in all their freshness and vastness of vision; and he brings out in his brief chapters on the ten Upaniṣads their central affirmations. This whole series of individual studies is appropriately introduced by an analysis of the fundamental questions raised in the Upaniṣads and an indication of their major revelations concerning Reality and Life. It is concluded with a comprehensive Epilogue. Each of the Upaniṣads is also given a Prologue and an Epilogue. Thus
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Professor Nikam has endeavoured to furnish adequate aids to our comprehension of his discourses. It is also to be noted at the outset that the studies of the several Upaniṣads do not attempt a mechanical survey of their contents but focus themselves on the central characteristic thought of each. This adds crispness, brevity, and free handling of essentials. The enormous scholarship of the author is kept in the background, as it were, and in significant allusions we discern the Platonic and the Kantian heritage, and the evidences of mastery of recent philosophy such as that of Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore. The style of writing is lucid, pithy and aphoristic, brimming with ‘leaps’ of illumination. There is a captivating gusto enlivening austere philosophic argument, and Professor Nikam performs difficult, dialectical movements with aesthetic ease.

This is a rough description of the work, so far. But it is important to go forward and give an idea of the discoveries of the author in the great Upaniṣads.

The first two chapters draw up the basic procedure in interpreting the Upaniṣads. “The Upaniṣads are dialogues of the civilization of man. . . . are a demonstration of the fact that man can bring about a revolution in his nature through dialogue.” The dialogues embody fundamental questions, and fundamental questions are such because they imply fundamental distinctions. The distinctions fundamental to the Upaniṣads are between ‘Seer and Seen,’ śreyas and preyas, and parā-vidya and a-parā-vidya. In the march of the upanisadic inspiration, ‘rational scepticism’ is also reached, a ‘failure’ to grasp and express occurs. But the ‘failure’ is followed by ‘rational delight.’ The orientation furnished herein emanates directly from the Kena, Kaṭha, Mundaka and Taittiriya Upaniṣads, but covers, in reality, the whole world of upanisadic thought. The ‘seer’ of the Kena is ultimately the Atman of the Aitareya, the parā-vidya of the Mundaka is identical with the teaching of Uddalaka and Yajnavalkya of the Chāndogya and the Brhad-Aranyaka, and the śreyas of the Kaṭha is the
immorality spoken of in all the *Upaniṣads*. Thus an inclusive perspective is set up in the first two chapters.

Professor Nikam reverses the conventional order of viewing the *Upaniṣads*, and starts with the *Bṛhad-Aranyaka*. And he does well in giving initially an idea of the structure of the *Upaniṣad*, as he invariably does with all the *Upaniṣads*. The *Bṛhad-Aranyaka* declares that 'in the beginning everything was covered with death.' Professor Nikam now brings in his dialectical method and asks what are the dialectical implications of this statement? This statement is *like* a report made by a witness; if so, there *was* an 'observer' of death. All was not death if there *was* an observer of death who himself was not subject to death. Therefore there *was* immortality and not mere death. Therefore when the *Upaniṣad* says 'lead me from death to immortality,' this is not what is yet to happen but what, in fact, has happened. Now, who is this Observer? Where is he? In Man. The Observer is in Man. He is the Light within him. He is the Light that is the Self. Therefore the moral is: 'See the light within you'; 'Be a light unto yourself.'

In the *Bṛhad-Aranyaka*, there is an equation between *Satya* and *Dharma*, between Truth and Righteousness. Professor Nikam offers an illuminating elucidation of the equation of these two 'indefinables' of Indian Culture.

But the heart of the *Bṛhad-Aranyaka* is certainly what Professor Nikam calls 'Non-duality and Value', which is the theme of the focal dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi. This non-duality is characterized by a double negation, *neti neti*. In the interpretation of this double negation Professor Nikam is most original. He says: "No negation which is not also self-negation is *absolute*." This means that the nature of the Absolute is the negation of self-transcendence: "He had no fear because He had no 'second' to fear from; but He had no delight; therefore He *negates* Himself in a 'second'."

And Professor Nikam reads in 'form' (*mūrta*) and in 'formless'
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(amūrta), a fundamental doctrine of Truth and Beauty: Form is Beauty, the Formless is Truth. This is an innovation which does justice to a neglected aspect of upaniṣadic teaching, its aesthetic philosophy. The last section in the chapter on the Brhad-Aranyaka interprets the threefold Categorical Imperative of the Upaniṣad, damyata, datta, dayadhvan. Professor Nikam’s central discovery in this Upaniṣad is ‘Non-duality and Value’ and his special contribution is his fruitful interpretation of the double negation, neti neti.

After the Brhad-Aranyaka comes the Chāndogya; the Chāndogya is the longest of the Upaniṣads and Professor Nikam observes that the longest of the Upaniṣads ‘is in no hurry’ to come to purely philosophical issues! But it does arrive at three profoundly important questions in three important dialogues. The first dialogue is that between father and son, Uddalaka and Svetaketu, and it arrives at the proposition, “That Thou art.” This is a mahāvākyya, a Fundamental Proposition. And a Fundamental Proposition is about Being, and is a Fact of Experience. Professor Nikam has discovered a criterion, as it were, of a mahāvākyya: He says that there is no mahāvākyya without a self-referential symbol, I or Thou. In support of this he says that the proposition, “This, verily, is That,” which occurs eleven times in the Kāṭha is no mahāvākyya although it is an identity. Therefore Professor Nikam distinguishes between a realized identity and a postulated identity in his happy phraseology. A mahāvākyya is ‘a realized identity’ and not a mere ‘postulated identity.’ And he thinks that the proper logical order of “That Thou art” is “Thou art That.” Without his knowing it, he has the support of Suresvara on this point. His thesis about the test of a mahāvākyya is a special discovery of great value.

In the same chapter on the Chāndogya, Professor Nikam distinguishes between the ‘spurious’ infinite and the ‘real’ infinite. The ‘spurious’ infinite entails the notion of ‘another,’ ‘one greater than another,’ whereas, the ‘real’ infinite has no
'other.' The real infinite is the non-dual. The non-dual is Happiness absolute, and absolute Happiness issues itself in activity. This is a novel interpretation of Plenitude, Bhūma. Among traditional commentators, Madhva stresses this dynamic aspect of Ananda.

Professor Nikam deals briefly with the dialogue between Prajapati, Indra and Virocana. It could have borne ampler elucidation if he had included a consideration of the Dhara–Vidya to which it is attached. He says that, that 'which 'arises' from the death of the body is the 'arisen,' and makes a fundamental distinction between what 'arises,' samutthanam, which goes through death, and what 'originates,' sambhahkuva, but which has no death to go through; for example, Brahma, who 'originates' as the 'first' among the Gods, as in the Mundaka. The first is 'resurrection' which is conquest of death, while the second is the unlimited emerging power of Being. This useful distinction is also original.

But for its grand opening and conclusion, the Aitereya is a difficult and obscure Upaniṣad. It is a supreme merit in Professor Nikam's interpretation that he discerns in it a design, the great design of the macrocosmic Purusa disintegrating himself in order to be re-generated and re-integrated in the microcosmic, 'well-made' form, puruṣo vava sukertam, that is Man, who is the 'Measure' of all things. And so, Man is as the Universe is; and the Universe is as Man is. And Man is 'resurrected' in man.

The central teaching of the Taittirīya is the ordered hierarchy of Being, anna, prāṇa, manas, vijnāna and ānanda. By the dialectic of inquiry, the pupil reaches the highest and the most inward realm, ānanda, and 'stops not' at any lower level or realm. But what is the nature of this ānanda? A 'rational delight,' which is freedom from fear, present in spite of a 'failure,' a failure of thought and speech to comprehend the highest, a rational delight accompanying a rational scepticism: we know that we don't know. As this double aspect is present in mysticism, Professor Nikam
describes the Taittiriya as a ‘mystical’ Upanisad. And the ‘I am’ of mysticism becomes in the Taittiriya a powerful chant, echoing in the cosmos. Professor Nikam distinguishes between Serial Order, which applies to Space, Time and Number, and Hierarchical Order which applies to Being, and says that the concept of a Universe is the progressive concept of Hierarchical Order of the self-transcendence of Being: aksarat paratah parah, ‘higher than the highest.’

The Isa Upanisad is rightly regarded as weighty by all commentators out of all proportions to its size. Professor Nikam seizes with special precision its outstanding propositions. He opens with the declaration that the Isa sees the presence of the Lord in all that moves in this moving universe, and sees Him as seated in the heart of man; therefore the Isa “discloses the sources of the dignity of man as man.” No more fitting introduction is conceivable. The Isa speaks of the presence of the Lord and not merely of the existence of the Lord. This capital distinction, which does away with the labours of the Ontological Argument, brings in the ultimate principle as an immediate reality of experience. The Lord is present, here, in Nature and History. To ‘see’ the presence of the Lord in all that moves in this moving and evolving universe is to render the otherwise illusoriness of the world illusory. Professor Nikam makes a further distinction between identity and unity; identity is absence of difference; unity is more of an organic notion not incompatible with difference of function. And oneness is a value concept; for, there is oneness in sorrow, as Professor Nikam says; but this oneness must be transformed into a value, the value of the delight of the oneness of Being. Besides, the Isa revels in dialectical contradictions in its descriptions of the Lord, the self-existent ‘Seer.’ The moral of the paradox is well brought out by Professor Nikam. On the analogy of a similar question asked in the Bṛhad-Aranyaka, Professor Nikam invents a dialectical question: ‘If everything here is food for contradiction, what is that for which
contradiction is food?” This is the Pūrṇam, the “Full.” Similarly, the enigmatic pairs, vidya and a-vidya, sanbhuti and a-sanbhuti, are resolved into ‘variables’; this ingenuity does away with the ingenuity of the commentators; for, it is an open secret that no interpretative fixing of their meanings has been satisfactory. Finally, ‘enjoyment through renunciation’ is presented as the ethical dimension of the metaphysical dissolution of opposites. The substance of the Upaniṣad is presented in all its glory, as it were.

The questions and negations of the Kena Upaniṣad seem to have made a special impact on Professor Nikam. Who raises the question in the opening verse of the Kena? The “Seer.” He affirms himself in the very process of questioning; therefore he that asks the question is he about whom the question is asked. What is he? He is the ‘Because’ and not the ‘cause.’ This is a fundamental distinction. The ‘Seer’ is ‘One’ although his functions are many. This unity is assumed by the very question asked. The ‘Seer’ does not belong to the realm of the ‘Observable’; therefore there is no such doctrine as the Berkeleyan doctrine in the Upaniṣads: “To be is to be perceived.” If the ‘Seer’ does not belong to the ‘Observable,’ is he known by inference? No. If he is neither known by observation nor by inference, is he unknown or unknowable. No, on what grounds do we, then, say ‘No’ unless we know? And there is a ‘verification’ principle in the Upaniṣad. For, what is ‘heard’ is verified by what is ‘seen’; and what is meditated upon is verified by what is ‘lived,’ lived, here and now.

While the Kena ends with a myth, the Katha begins with one. Amidst universal death, immortality seems so much like a myth. Immortality is not mere ‘survival’ in a Yonder World; for, it is in a Yonder World to which he has gone that Nachiketas raises the question of immortality. It seems that immortality is what is desired even in the Yonder World. What is ‘immortality’? It is the sreyas, the Good, the Good ‘beyond good and evil.’
How is this attained? By “seeing inward”; but “seeing inward” is “being inward.” “Being inward” is the *adhyatma yoga*, a process of conscious merging of the senses in the mind, etc., and ultimately, in that reality, which is the tranquil and the peaceful, which is awake in those that are asleep. If ānanda was the highest in the hierarchical order of Being in the *Taittirīya*, it is *santam*, peace, that is the highest in the *Katha*. The immortal (*aṅgara*) is not merely the ‘indestructible’ but the Good; for, Good is not destroyed by evil. The Good, the Immortal, the Peaceful, is symbolized by the Word, *Aum*. The *Upaniṣads* are Yoga.

Professor Nikam thinks that the six pupils who went to Pipplada are like biologists seeking the origin of life and the meaning of Matter. As Prajapati, the Lord, created a ‘pair,’ Matter and Life, to create creatures, Professor Nikam constructs a paradox: ‘Creation is creating that which creates.’ And the Lord, says the *Upaniṣad*, was overcome by ‘desire.’ What is this ‘desire’? The ‘desire’ of the abundant to ‘give’ its abundance away and yet remain abundant. Desire here is not ‘want’; for the rich and the poor both have ‘wants’: the rich ‘wanting’ to keep what they have, and the poor ‘wanting’ to have what they have not. Therefore, ‘give.’ Matter and Life are opposites; they are symbols of all opposites. Ultimately ‘Matter’ is the cycle of birth, death and re-birth, while, life is immortality and a ‘stopping’ (*nirūdhha*) of this cycle.

In the exposition of which *Upaniṣad* is Professor Nikam more of a dialectician? Perhaps in the three problems whose meaning he discusses in the *Mundaka*: (a) the meaning of ‘Brahma arises’ (b) the meaning of the distinction between *parā-vidya* and *a-parā-vidya*; and (c) the meaning of *aṅgara*. (a) The statement ‘Brahma arose’ is like a report by someone who was a witness to the arising of Brahma. Who is this witness? Whoever it is, He cannot also arise. He is one who *was*. He was like *Atma* that *was* as the *Aitereya* says. Just as the reflection of the Moon
entails the existence of the Sun, so the ‘arising’ of Brahma entails the existence of the one who is or was but never arises or arose. Professor Nikam points out that this dialectical point recurs in the Upaniṣads. We saw this in the Brhad-Aranyaka. The statement that ‘in the beginning all this was covered with death’ entails that there was an observer or witness of death who was not subject to death. (b) In discussing the meaning of the distinction between parā-vidya and a-parā-vidya, Professor Nikam asks a fundamental question: Is the word ‘lower’ in the term a-parā-vidya a ‘value’ judgement? No; for, the ‘lower’ part of the house is its foundation; therefore, far from being ‘lower’ or ‘lessen’ or ‘unnecessary’, a-parā-vidya is foundational knowledge. And (c) If aksara is the object of parā-vidya, what is the meaning of aksara? Is it simply the notion of what is ‘indestructible’? If so, Matter of physical science is also ‘indestructible.’ But it cannot be that the object of parā-vidya is the same as the Matter of physical science. Then, what is the aksara of the parā-vidya? That which is aware that it is indestructible. This apparent tautology means that Being is Delight of Being.

In discussing the arising of Brahma and Brahma-vidya, it is pointed out that although avidya is beginningless, avidya is not a tradition. The tradition is Brahma-vidya although it is said to ‘arise.’ But it ‘arises’ in exactly the same sense in which the Sun ‘arises.’ If avidya which is beginningless is to end, Brahma-vidya which has no end must arise and begin. If Brahma ‘arises,’ through what knowledge do we know the arising of Brahma except through Brahma-vidya? Therefore Brahma-vidya was. It never ‘arose.’

Professor Nikam sees a lot in the Māṇḍukya; in this he is well within the bounds of the non-dualist tradition. This brief Upaniṣad enjoys a singular unity of theme, and is unsurpassed from that point of view. Professor Nikam’s exposition of this great Upaniṣad is a marvel of perfect exposition and clarity of analysis and grasp of the integral design. If his dialectical skill
is evident in the *Mundaka*, it is his analytical skill that is at play in the exposition of the *Māṇḍukya*.

The *Upaniṣad* contributes the three important insights; *(a)* It sees in *Aum* the whole import of the *vedānta*, the entire doctrine of the *Atman*. *(b)* It analyses the three states of consciousness. Professor Nikam’s treatment of *suṣupti* is the clearest I have come across. *(c)* It depicts the *Turiya*, miscalled the ‘fourth state,’ which in reality is the pure *Atman* transcending and running through the three states, in terms of necessary negations, but positively as tranquil, holy, and non-dual, *santam, sivam, advaitam*. There is one significant innovation in Professor Nikam’s treatment. The declaration of the *Upaniṣads*: “This is the Lord of all; this is the Knower of all; this is the inner controller; this is the the source of all; this is the beginning and end of all things.” Although this verse follows the 5th verse on *suṣupti*, Professor Nikam interprets it as dealing with the *Turiya* and not with *suṣupti*. It seems that this adjustment stands and is well within the upanishadic tradition; for, the *Bṛhad-Aranyaka* applies almost the same terms to the Supreme Atman in the *Jyotirbrahmana*, and the *Chāṇḍogya* does the same in the famous *Dhara-vidya*, not to speak of the *Kaustitaki* in a similar context *(3rd chapter)*.

On the model of Professor Nikam something of an epilogue must be added to this survey of his exposition of the Ten Principal *Upaniṣads*. He employs a style, at once vigorous and lucid, and happily free from unnecessary mystification and laboured elaboration. He goes straight to the fundamentals and, indeed, wrestles with them for gaining right perception. He rises to heights of intuition with the perennially inspiring vision of the Originals. There is a pleasing repetition of exegetical discoveries of moment. The traditional background is not ignored and is actually used in understanding the texts although he has not come to the study of the *Upaniṣads* through any of the commentaries as he says. He does not surrender his freedom of judgement, and succumbs to no school wholly. There are Advaita Absolutism and Theistic
schools of Vedanta in happy fusion rendering the scholastic demarcations obsolete. This is a creative reconstruction of upanisadic thought at once adventurous and profound. There is a judicious and subdued appreciation of the wisdom of the West for clarifying parallel thoughts. The book provides a rich education in the riches of the best in Indian philosophy and religion.

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The subject-matter of this 'study' are the ten principal *Upaniṣads*: *Brhad-Āraṇyaka*, *Chāṇḍogya*, *Aitareya*, *Taittiriya*, *Īṣa*, *Kena*, *Kathā*, *Praśna*, *Mṇḍaka* and *Māṇḍukya*. To know an *Upaniṣad* it is sufficient to know any one of them: For, they are all ultimately on *Brahman* or *Atman*. Although the ultimate subject-matter of the *Upaniṣads* is the same, yet each *Upaniṣad* has its own, unique Idea or Ideas and its own method of Inquiry. For instance, the *Mṇḍukya* is, exclusively, on the "States of Consciousness", while the *Kathā* is an inquiry into Immortality and the Good Life. Each *Upaniṣad* has its own Fundamental Idea or Ideas; this gives the *Upaniṣads* variety of form and content. The intent of this 'study' is to 'isolate'—to use a word from Kant's Critique of Pure Reason—*some* of the fundamental ideas of the ten principal *Upaniṣads*. Therefore this 'study' is not a 'commentary' on any one *Upaniṣad* as a whole nor an Introduction to the *Upaniṣads*. On the contrary, it assumes some prior acquaintance with the principal *Upaniṣads*. My inquiry into the Fundamental Ideas of the *Upaniṣads* asks two questions: (a) What does an Idea imply? and (b) What are the distinguishable or analysable elements in it? I name the first 'dialectical' and the second 'analytical' inquiry. So far as I can see, they seem to converge and not contradict each other.

"Verily, when one thinks, then one understands," says the *Chāṇḍogya*. To understand through one's own thinking is to make an intellectual tradition such as that of the *Upaniṣads* both new and your own. Outside this nothing is original in philosophy: And no one is alien to this tradition.

"Yajnavalkya", said he, "how many (kinds of) Rg verses will the ṭotṛ priest use to-day in this sacrifice?" "Three". "Which are these three?" "The introductory verse, the verse accompanying the sacrifice, and the benedictory as the third".
In this sacrifice, all the three hymns have been appropriately recited. When I started on this 'Study,' I delivered two lectures called “The Indian Philosophical Congress Foundation Lectures” at the Centre for Advanced Study of Philosophy at the University of Madras; when I was in the middle of my studies I gave a Graduate Seminar at the Department of Philosophy at the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Illinois; and when I was nearing the end of my writing I delivered three Extension Lectures at the Department of Post-Graduate Studies in Philosophy at the Sri Venkateswara University at Tirupati. So, all the three hymns, the introductory, the accompanying and the benedictory, have been duly chanted in 'praise' of the Upanisads.

At the end of the questions that Yajnavalkya was asked in the Brhad-Aranyaka Upanisad, it was asked: “What does one win by these?” Yajnavalkya replied: “Whatever that is here that has breath.” It is, indeed, so; for, I have won back my breath.

A reviewer from abroad reviewing my book Some Concepts of Indian Culture said: “Good interpretative essay written in a very readable style. . . . However, it will present difficulties. Nikam presupposes a degree of sophistication in Indian Philosophy and Culture.” This book also, I fear, “will present difficulties” of the same sort.

I am grateful to Professor S. S. Raghavachar and to Dr G. S. Koshe; and I thank the Publications Division of the Government of India for permission to use a revised version of chapter 1 of The Upanishadic Teachers I wrote for them earlier which is under publication.

Basavangudi, Bangalore, India

N. A. Nikam
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I am grateful to the University Grants Commission for giving me a research grant under the Award for retired teachers to make me ‘retire’ to write on the Upaniṣads. Indeed, no one can write on the Upaniṣads unless he has ‘retired’ and no one retires in the Indian tradition unless he has ‘renounced’ what can be renounced. Accordingly, I have renounced what the Brhad-Āraṇyaka desires a student to renounce, viz., pāṇḍityam—here, the learning of the commentaries—and approached the Upaniṣads like a ‘child’ seeking to learn directly from them: tasmād brāhmaṇaḥ pāṇḍityam nirvidya bālyena tisthāset (III.5-10).

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TEN PRINCIPAL UPAISHADS
Chapter I

THE UPAHISADAS

naisā tarkena matir āpaneyā: Not by mere “skill” of reason is apprehension (of this) ever attainable—Kaśha:
1, 2, 9.

1. In the Upaniṣads, Philosophy arises as a question and lives as a dialogue. But not all questions give rise to dialogue; as not all questions give rise to a dialogue, the sort of question that gives rise to a dialogue may itself become the subject matter of a dialogue. In some cases, the title of the Upaniṣad is the question that it asks; for instance, Kena: The word Kena means “By What” or “Because of What”. The Kena Upaniṣad is about the question, Kena. An Upaniṣad arises because of a question asked but not every question gives rise to an Upaniṣad. And the wisdom that makes an Upaniṣad an Upaniṣad is not in the answer but in the question. Therefore it is not easy to ask a question. He that asks a question seems ignorant but it is not ignorance to ask the question that he asks. The questions of the Upaniṣads arise because an ignorance has become aware of itself. And ignorance that is aware of itself does not say, “I know well”; nor, “I know not at all”. Neither would lead to inquiry. As not all questions give rise to a dialogue, there are questions and questions. As Philosophy is not information or only definition no question seeking information or definition leads to a dialogue. Essential for a dialogue is a good question and a good questioner: “May we find a questioner like thee, Naciketas” said Yama to Naciketas.

2. There is no inquiry if there is no question. A dialogue arises not because a question is asked and is answered but because a question is questioned. And the dialogue is between one who “knows” and one who “inquires”. There is need for one who “knows” as there is need for one who “inquires”. He that
“knows” is a “teacher” and he that “inquires” a “pupil”. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says: “na nareṇa āvareṇa proktā, eṣa suvijñeyah, “if taught by an inferior man, He (the Self) cannot be truly understood”. But can an “inferior man” teach; or, is a teacher an “inferior” man? Do the pupils “go” to an “inferior” man at all? Although the teacher is “for the sake of” a pupil, it is the pupil who “goes” to a teacher. The pupil *knows* that he does not know but does not say that he does not know who is a teacher. He “goes” to a teacher who “will explain all” (*eṣa ha vai tat sarvam vaksyatiti*). A pupil will have selected his teacher long before the teacher will have selected his pupil. In the Upanisadic tradition, no teacher imparts instruction to a pupil unless he is “fit”; the “fitness” is the ability of the pupil to ask questions: “Come to me with what you know. Then I will teach you what is beyond that”, said Sanathkumara to Narada. Dialogue, said Plato, is “giving and taking reason”. In the *Upaniṣads*, dialogue is giving and taking *experience*.

3. Answering questions is an art. One skilled in this art is a teacher or a “dialectician” in Plato’s words. But he must not use his skill in answering questions asked merely but in discovering how or why they arise at all; for, the kind of questions we may ask may arise from the kind of life we live. And so in the Upanisadic tradition, questions are answered as the teacher Pippalada did in the *Praśna Upaniṣad*: “Live with me with austerity, chastity, and faith. *Then* ask what questions you will. And if we know, we shall, indeed, tell you all”. If we change the way we live, the same questions may not arise. Therefore what we must do is to change our life, and what changes our life is austerity, chastity and faith, *tapas*, *brahmaṇacārya* and *śraddhā*. The “living together” of teacher and pupil is therefore in itself a communication. A pupil who goes away satisfied makes no dialogue but one who returns after having examined what was taught. Indra returned to his teacher, Prajapati, and said, “I see no good in this”. The formula therefore for a *good* dialogue is: “I see no
good in this”.

4. In the Upanisadic tradition, a teacher teaches what he lives, and lives what he teaches. He verifies in his “experience”, which does not mean merely sense-awareness, what is verifiable but the unverifiable is not meaningless to him. What does he live and what does he teach? Truth “as he sees” it. The word “see” is a symbol of direct, immediate, certain and verified knowledge in the Upaniṣads: i.e. What he “sees” not with eyes turned without but with eyes turned within āvṛttā caksuḥ. And the intent of the dialogue is, as Plato said, not to give eyes for we have them already but to give the eyes we have a direction they have not. The direction is to turn the eyes within. Inquiry then becomes self-inquiry, and dialogue between two becomes the dialogue of silence within one’s own self. The inner dialogue of silence is not the soliloquy of an ego involved in tragic, inner conflict: “To be or not to be that is the question”.

5. A teacher belongs to a galaxy, and falls in line with others who preceded him. But the line is not completed. The line is the tradition of teachers who guard the tradition that produces them. The tradition is ancient and undated, sanātanaḥ and purāṇaḥ, “ancient even in ancient times”. But it “arises”. It arises with someone who arises. The tradition of Brahma-vidyā which is “the Foundation of all knowledges” was first taught by Brahmā, who arose as the First among the gods, devanām prathamah sambabhūva. What he taught to others was taught by others to others: each teacher was both the last and the first. Therefore what ever has in it both the last and the first does not end. Brahma-vidyā has a beginning but no end. If ignorance (avidyā) which has no beginning is to end, then Brahma-vidyā which has no end should have a beginning.

In the Upanisadic tradition, the teaching is more important than the teachers. Therefore in some cases the teaching is known but not the teacher or teachers. Apart from their teaching, the teachers have indeed no biography. In some cases the teaching
has not even the name of the teacher who taught it. In other cases, the teacher is known only by a Name. As getting a “Name” is so difficult, it is immortality to be known by a “Name”: Who is the teacher who warned his pupil against saying “I know Brahman well” and who is that alert pupil who replied: “I do not say, Sir, that I know Brahman well; nor do I say that I know Him not at all”? And who is he that uttered the paradox: \textit{yasya amatam tasya matam; matam yasya na veda sah}: “He that says he knows not, knows; (and) he that says he knows, knows not”? Whoever was the teacher who uttered that paradox, he was a Socrates before Socrates.

6. What do we know about God except His Names? What do we know about the Upanisadic teachers except their Names?: “Now the line of tradition (of teachers); Pautimasya (received the teaching) from Gaupavana, Gaupavana from another Pautimasya. This Pautimasya from another Gaupavana. This Gaupavana from Kausika, Kausika from Kaundinya, Kaundinya from Sandilya, Sandilya from Kausika”, and so on till “paramestin who received it from Brahma. Brahma is self-born. Salutation to Brahma”. (\textit{Bṛhad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad}, II. 6, 11.3).

7. The “openness” of the Upanisadic tradition is so “open” that, anybody, it seems, could be a teacher and anybody a pupil: A god who is a child like Sanatkumara teaching the aged Narada; and a man, Prajapati, teaching gods; a kshatriya teaching a brahmana; a father teaching his son; a husband his wife; demons coming as pupils to the same teacher along with gods and men; and the “householder” (grhastha) the family man, returning to his teacher for his “continuing” education. But in all cases it is the pupil who asks questions unlike Socrates who questions his pupils or friends in Plato. Socrates questions others to make them become aware of their ignorance. In the Upaniṣads, it is ignorance that has become aware of itself that seeks out a teacher and “goes” to him for instruction. The instruction is sometimes through symbol; sometimes through paradox;
sometimes through silence. The intent of the teaching and its effect on the pupil's mind, in all cases, is like that of a demonstration or experiment conducted before him which carries with it its own authentic proof and therefore its own authority. The *Upaniṣads* are a demonstration of the fact that man can bring about a revolution in his nature through dialogue. The *Upaniṣads* are therefore dialogues of the civilization of man.
CHAPTER II

SOME FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

Yajñavalkya iti hovāca, yad idam sarvam mṛtyor annam, ka svit sa devata, yasya mṛtyur annam iti: “Yajñavalkya, said he, since everything here is food for death, what, pray, is that divinity for whom death is food?” (Br. Up. III. 2.10).

1. Philosophy arises in the Upaniṣads as a question and lives as a dialogue. What is the sort of question by which philosophy arises and lives as a dialogue? The question by which philosophy arises and lives as a dialogue is a “fundamental” question; it is fundamental because it “goes to the root of the matter”. But a fundamental question is not answered in the Upaniṣads directly but indirectly: it is answered by making the pupil become aware of a fundamental distinction that the question implies. The Upaniṣads do not assume that the pupil is aware of the distinction. A question is called fundamental because of the fundamental distinctions it implies. And the fundamental distinctions that go to the root of the matter cut across schools and systems of philosophy; and as the Upaniṣads ask fundamental questions and make us become aware of fundamental distinctions, the Upaniṣads are “greater than”, to use a phrase from the bhūma vidya of the Chāndogya, schools and systems of philosophy. The fundamental distinctions that arise from the fundamental questions asked in the Upaniṣads are: (a) the fundamental distinction between the “seer” and the “seen” in the Kena; (b) the fundamental distinction between sreyas (good) and preyas (pleasure) in the Katha; and (c) the fundamental distinction between parāvidya and aparāvidya in the Mūndaka. To understand the metaphysics of the Upaniṣads is to understand the analytic and the dialectic of these distinctions.

The fundamental questions are types of fundamental inquiry.
Although these questions will be expounded in their appropriate places in each *Upāniṣad*, a brief introductory note on each question may now be offered.

2. The *Kena* asks: “By whom willed and directed does the mind light on its objects? By whom commanded does life the first, move? At whose will is this speech uttered? And what “god” or power is it that prompts the eye and the ear?” The *Kena* distinguishes between life, sense and mind; and having distinguished between them, it inquires into their source or ground; the implication is that neither *life* nor sense nor mind is the source of the other. And the inquiry into the source is an inquiry into a *Because* and not merely into a *Cause*. The *Upāniṣads* are an inquiry into a *Because* and not like the schools of philosophy an inquiry into *Cause*. The *Kena* is an inquiry into a *Because*: Because of what does life move, the senses perceive and so on. Now, the question that the *Kena* asks conceals a question which answers the question: For, *what* is it that asks the question: is it life, sense, or mind? None of these. Therefore it seems that about which the question is asked is *that* which asks the question. It seems therefore clear from the *Upāniṣads* that questions which question or deny existence are questions that affirm existence.

The *Kena* uses the simple demonstrative symbol, *That*, and seems to play as it were with it. It uses it to denote existence. On the one hand, it uses the demonstrative symbol *That* in this way: It says: *That* about which the question is asked is *That* which asks the question. On the other hand, it distinguishes between two irreducible senses of the same symbol by distinguishing between: (a) That which is seen *by* the eye; and (b) That *by* which the eye sees; The first is the “seen” and the second is the “seer”. This is a fundamental, irreducible distinction of the *Upāniṣads*.

3. Let us now go to the *Kaṭha*. Says the *Kaṭha*: “There is this doubt with regard to a man who has departed: some say he is,
and some he is not”. It seems as if this is an inquiry only into human survival and into the possibility of life after death. And it seems as if the inquiry is satisfied with “possibility”; and in being satisfied with possibility, the inquiry implies that, in this case, possibility is the same as reality. In some cases, this is the case. The possibility of this possibility is the difference between materialist schools like the Carvaka who think that everything perishes with the death of the body, and those who believe in the possibility of survival after death. But in this possibility there are degrees of possibilities, and these degrees of possibilities are the adventures of belief between those who believe in rebirth and those who do not.

In its inquiry into the good of man śreyās or the good life and of life after death, the Katha means by “life” “resurrected” life, a life that arises from death untouched by death. But it asks: is not such a life possible before death? If it is possible, then what is that life which is “free from the bonds of death before death” (mṛtyu pāśān puratod pranodya). Asked Naciketās to Yama: “Who wants to Live too long?” Is Naciketās desirous to help Yama in his work?

Naciketās asked Yama to tell him “what is other than dharma and adharma, what is other than the past and the future, and what is other than the cause and the effect”. Indeed, Naciketās asked Yama to tell him by implication what is other than both “birth” and “rebirth”. For, in this “Circle of Nature”, as the Greeks called it where life passes into death and seems again to arise from it, do we know that a “birth” is not, indeed, a “rebirth?” But to be born again only to die again: is this the śreyās (the good) of man? If every birth is a re-birth, then man is caught up in an unending receding series of re-births past and future where a cause is an effect and effect a cause. But the ostensive inquiry into life after death is, in reality, an inquiry into the possibility of the conquest of death before death; a “stopping”, nirodha, as the Praśna Upanisad says, of the seemingly unending cycle.
If the question in the Kena conceals a question, the question in the Katha gets altered into another question. Therefore the ostensive inquiry into life after death is in reality, an inquiry into the possibility of release from the cycles of births and deaths before death. This is the meaning of the good life that is the immortal life. But immortality is never free in human culture from myth; and the immortal life is conceived to be always fresh and young; therefore it is appropriate for the Katha Upaniṣad to conceal the truth about immortality in the form of a myth and symbolise such a life that can talk face to face with death in the person of the young Naciketas and his never-ceasing spirit of inquiry.

4. There is the fundamental question asked in the Mundaka: “By knowing what, Sir, is all this known?” This question is answered by drawing a fundamental distinction between parāvidya and a-parāvidya, “higher knowledge” and “lower knowledge”. This distinction is paradoxical as it includes the Veda and the accessories to the study of the Veda under “lower knowledge”. If the Veda is brought under “lower knowledge”, it is obvious that the term “lower” is symbolic and is not a value judgement and does not mean “inferior”. The “lower” part of a house, for instance, is the foundation of the house which cannot exist without it; therefore the term “lower” does not mean what is unnecessary but what is necessary. And “higher Knowledge” and “lower Knowledge” are not contradictory opposites where one is true and the other is false. The terms “higher” and “lower” are like the terms “earlier” and “later”; and “earlier” and “later” are distinctions in the same thing, viz. Time. Therefore we ought to ask: What is that which in its nature comprehends both the “higher” and the “lower”? What is that in which the higher we go, the higher we can go? And what is that which is the same the “higher” we go or the “lower” we go? The Upaniṣads symbolise this as the Full (pūrṇa), the undivided and the indivisible, smaller than the smallest and
greater than the greatest, añoraniyān, mahato mahiyān. The Muṇḍaka defines “higher knowledge” as knowledge of aksara; this literally means the “indestructible”. But the indestructible is a notion that is also the foundation of natural science; for the Matter of physical science which undergoes only transformation is also “indestructible”. Therefore, are we to say that the aksara of the parāvidya and the indestructible of physical science are the same? No; if not, then what is the indestructible of the parāvidya? The indestructible of the parāvidya is the indestructible that is aware that it is indestructible: that which is aware that it is neither born nor ever dies, na jāyate mṛiyate vā. This seems a tautology. But truth is a tautology: I am that I am.

5. But a fundamental question is also a fundamental doubt: i.e. a doubt that doubts itself. A doubt that does not doubt itself is no doubt. Therefore, the fundamental question, “By knowing what, Sir, is all this known?” is followed by the fundamental doubt, “By what can you know that by which everything else is known?” So the great Yajnavalkya asked: “By what, my dear, is the knower known?” But in the Upaniṣads, unlike in other philosophies, rational scepticism is followed by rational delight. So the Taittirīya says: yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān na bibheti kutaścana (II. 9.1): “Whence words return along with the mind, not attaining It, he who knows that bliss of Brahman fears not from anything at all”. This is a “failure” of the mind to grasp and of the word to express. Yet this failure lives with an immediate, pervasive, ineffable experience which is a freedom from fear and a delight of Being (ānanda). To have this experience is to be a “Knower” (vidvān). Therefore of what use is knowledge if it is not a freedom from fear and a delight of Being? Or, where is the “failure” if freedom from fear and delight of Being is a fact of one’s experience?

6. But the human mind is sometimes weary of inquiry. And in its quest of truth it is beguiled and captivated by “fiction”. And
“fiction” seems more “wonderful” than truth. Not all can inquire but all can wonder. And all love the “wonderful”. All talk about the “wonderful” (āścaryo vakta, āścaryo jñāta). How can dialectic stimulate wonder and use the human love of the “wonderful” to lead the same human mind weary of inquiry to the inquiry of that which is more “wonderful” than “fiction”, viz. Truth? For, “wonderful” is he that knows truth which is “wonderful”. Therefore the philosopher must be a master of the art of re-capturing the human mind captivated by fiction and myth to lead it to truth through myth and fiction if it need be. Therefore dialectic and myth co-exist in the Upaniṣads like the “two birds” seated on the self-same tree as in the Muṇḍaka. The Kaṭha begins with a myth while the Kena ends with a myth. Where then is the adventure of the human mind more: in dialectic or myth? Dialectic and myth are two adventurous ways to that which is “wonderful”: “wonderful” therefore are the Upaniṣads.
Absoluteness of Being or non-duality is revealed in act. This act is renunciation. A double negation states absoluteness of Being or non-duality, neti, neti, not-this, not-this. For, non-duality is not merely negation of a “second” but is a negation of that which negates a “second”. No denial which is merely denial of “another” without “self-denial” is true. The act which reveals non-duality or absoluteness of Being which is renunciation, is also a double negation, a negation not merely of “possessions” but of the “possessor” too. But that which negates the “possessor” is, is non-dual. Therefore by what can that which negates the “possessor” be known? This is the ultimate scepticism of non-dual mysticism: Brhad-Aranyaka.
Chapter III

THE BRIHAD-ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

astamita āditya, Yājñavalkya, candramasy astamite, śānte agnau, śāntāyām vāci, kim- jyotirevāyam puruṣa iti ātmaiva- sya jyotir bhavati: When the Sun has set, Yajnavalkya, and the Moon has set, and the fire has gone out and speech has stopped, what light does a person here have? The Self, indeed, is his light. (IV. 3.6.)

1. Introduction

1. The Brhad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad has six chapters; each chapter has parts which are called Brāhmaṇas; chapter one has six; chapter two has six; chapter three has nine; chapter four has six; chapter five has fifteen; and chapter six has five Brāhmaṇas respectively. The six Brāhmaṇas of chapter one have eighty verses, the six Brāhmaṇas of chapter two have sixty-six verses, the nine Brāhmaṇas of chapter three have ninety two verses, the six Brāhmaṇas of chapter four have ninety-two verses, the fifteen Brāhmaṇas of chapter five have thirty-three verses, and the five Brāhmaṇas of chapter six have seventy-five verses: altogether, the Upaniṣad has three hundred and thirty eight verses. In the Brhad-Āranyaka we are at leisure to hear the same conversation between Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi twice, and to twice receive the list of teachers and pupils.

2. The Brhad-Āranyaka postulates a fundamental aspiration of man. This aspiration is three-fold and is neither "obscure nor needs any explanation" says the Upaniṣad: nātra tirohitamivaṣṭi (I. 3.28.): The three-fold aspiration is this: asato mā sad gamaya, from the unreal lead me to the real; tamaso mā jyotir gamaya, from darkness lead me to light; mãrtiyur mã amṛtam gamaya, from death lead me to immortality. Here darkness and the unreal
are death, while immortality is light and what is real. The passage implies that the passage from the one to the other is yet to be, and it further implies that there is an act or process which leads us from death to immortality. Therefore there are two questions: (a) what is that act or process?; and (b) is it the case that it is yet to be?

On the other hand, here is a passage which refers to what was in the beginning: “There was nothing whatsoever in the beginning. By death indeed was this covered. . . .” (I. 2.1). This passage refers not merely to what was in the beginning but to the act or process by which we were lead from what was: viz. death. Therefore the passage from death to immortality is not what is yet to be; and whatever is the actual act by which we were led from what was is the same act which will lead us from death to immortality. In the Upaniṣads, this act is Yajña: Yajña is Creation and Creation is Yajña. In Yajña, the sacrificer is the sacrifice and the sacrificed. This is the dialectic of the ‘self-emptying’ ethical act that is Yajña.

3. The passage says: “There was nothing whatsoever in the beginning (naiveha kīmcanāgra āsit). By death indeed was this covered (mṛtyunaivedam āvṛtam āsit). This sentence is in the past tense. It is like the report of an observer who had observed what he is reporting. Like the historian who reports about the past this reports about the past. But who is the observer who can report about what was “in the beginning”? Whoever he is, he at least must have existed since the beginning. If indeed “by death was (all) this covered”, there was a reporter about death who did not or does not die. As death cannot report about itself, it needs a reporter to report about death who does not himself die. Therefore this passage affirms what it denies or denies what it affirms. Therefore there is no essential difference in the meaning of this passage and the passage with which the Aitareya begins: ātma vā idameka evāgra āsit, nanyat kīmcanāniṣat. “The Self, verily, was (all) this, one only, in the beginning. Nothing
else whatsoever winked”. Aitereya. (I. 1.1.) “Nothing else whatever winked” as the Aitereya says because “there was nothing whatsoever in the beginning” as the Brhad-Aranyaka says: There was an observer “in the beginning” who had “nothing” to observe “in the beginning”.

4. The relation between the observer and the observed is not merely in the external world. If there is someone who is asleep and an observer of one who is asleep, then this relation between the two exists within a person in the same sense in which it exists in the external world. Some part of a person which is asleep is observed by some other part of the same person which is never asleep. This is the demonstration that Ajatsatru offers to Dripta-Balaki in the Brhad-Aranyaka. What is it that is asleep and what is it that observes what sleeps but itself never sleeps? What go to sleep are the senses, and what sleeps not is not sense. “Having struck down in sleep what belongs to the body, he himself sleepless, looks down upon the sleeping (senses)”. (IV. 3.11). It is a nonsensory awareness that is “awake in those that are asleep” (esa supteśu jāgarti). If so, sleep never reports about itself. And death is like sleep. Both need an observer who neither sleeps nor dies. And the observer that observes the sleeping senses is the same as the observer that observes the dying senses at death.

5. “Lead me from darkness to light”. That which leads from darkness to light is light. “Lead me from darkness to light” means, “Be a light unto yourself”. To be a light unto yourself is to know that there is a light within you. This light shines when all other lights have gone out.

King Janaka asked Yajnyavalkya: “What light does a person here have?” “He has the light of the sun, Your Majesty”, he said, “for with the sun indeed as the light one sits, moves about, does one’s work, and returns”. “Just so, Yajnyavalkya.”

“When the sun has set, Yajnyavalkya, what light does a person here have?” “The moon is, indeed, is his light, for with the moon
indeed as the light, one sits, moves about, does one’s work and returns”. “Just so, Yajnyavalkya”.

“When the sun has set, Yajnyavalkya, and the moon has set, what light does a person here have?” “The fire, indeed, is his light, for with the fire, indeed as the light, one sits, moves about, does one’s work and returns”. “Just so, Yajnyavalkya”.

“When the sun has set, Yajnyavalkya, and the moon has set and the fire has gone out, what light does a person here have?” “Speech, indeed, is his light, for with speech, as the light, one sits, moves about, does one’s work and returns”. “Therefore, Your Majesty, even where one’s own hand is not discerned there when speech is uttered one goes towards it”. “Just so, Yajnyavalkya”.

“When the sun has set, Yajnyavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out and speech has stopped, what light does a person here have?” “The self, indeed, is his light”, said he, “for with the self, indeed, as the light, one sits, moves about, does one’s work and returns”.

“Which is the self?” “The person here who consists of knowledge among the senses” (Vijñānamayah prāneśu); he is the light within the heart (hrdy antarjyotiḥ puruṣah). He remaining the same, wanders alone the two worlds seeming to think, seeming to move about. He on becoming asleep transcends this world and the forms of death”.

6. The Brhad-Āranyaka discourses on immortality and nonduality. Non-duality is the negative, neti, neti, “not-this”, “not-this”. This occurs thrice in the Upaniṣad. There is an exclusive and inclusive sense of neti, neti: the exclusive excludes “not-this”; the inclusive includes “not-this only”. Non-duality is negation which does not negate merely the “other” but negates itself: For, no negation which is not self negation is absolute. There is the neti of ignorance which is dogmatism and there is the neti of wisdom which denies itself. The Upaniṣads are the neti of wisdom or wisdom that is a neti.
7. The dialogues of the Upanisads were carried out between teachers and pupils in the beatific silence of the forests. But in the *Bṛhad-Āranyaka*, the dialogue is carried on in a court, in the court of king Janaka. Forests were not for meditation and courts for intrigues. And it seems that there was no difference between kings and philosophers. In the court of king Janaka, the Philosopher and the King met in the combat of conversation and in the intellectual duel of inquiry. And the King inspite of his kingdom excelled the Philosopher in his renunciation: Were I to lose my kingdom, nothing of "mine" is lost said Janaka, the King. Janaka was a king of the "Kingdom of Ends". And the Philosopher did not refuse to win the wealth of the King if he could win over him in philosophical debate; for, the winner in debate had a prize to carry, a thousand cows with ten gold coins tied to each horn! Obviously, king Janaka and the Philosopher, Yajnyavalkya, were members of an "affluent society", affluent in wealth and affluent in inquiry. And when two men of renunciation like Janaka and Yajnyavalkya meet what sort of questions would each ask the other? The questions asked are about death, about time, and about the support of that which has no support: So here are the questions: "Since everything here is pervaded by death, by what does the sacrificer free himself from the reach of death?"; "Since everything here is pervaded by day and night, by what does the sacrificer reach the heavenly world?" The Philosopher Yajnavalkya's answer to all these questions is the same: "By that which is within". If it be asked, "What is it that is within?" the answer is: "That which is yourself which is (also) within all things". If it be asked "What is that self which is within all things?" the answer of the *Bṛhad-Āranyaka* is: "You cannot see the seer of seeing, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking, you cannot understand the understander of understanding". Why? Because you *are* that seer of seeing, hearer of hearing, thinker of thinking, understander of understanding.
2. The Indefinables, Satya and Dharma

1. There are two indefinables in the Brhad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad, satya and dharma. What is an indefinable? An indefinable is what requires no definition. Why? Because its meaning is "so directly and universally understood" that as the Cambridge Logician W. E. Johnson says "it would be mere intellectual dishonesty to ask for further definition". Therefore the indefinable is not what is not understood but what is understood. Unless there is something that is understood, definition or explanatory definition would not be possible. For, if X is defined in terms of Y and Y is defined in terms of another term and so on without end no explanatory definition would be ever possible. "By a shorter or longer route" W. E. Johnson says "every definition must end with the indefinable". (Logic, Part I, p. 105). There is no understanding of the understander and there is no definition of that by which definition is possible are parallel ideas in the Brhad-Āranyaka. Definition is understanding one indefinable in terms of another indefinable. Says the Upaniṣad: yo vai sa dharmah satyam vai tat: tasmāt satyam vadantam ānuḥ, dharmam vadatīti, dharmam vā vadantam, satyam vadatīti: etad hyevaidad ubhayam bhavati: "Verily, that which is justice is truth. Therefore they say of a man who speaks the truth, he speaks justice or of a man who speaks justice that he speaks the truth. Verily, both these are the same". (I. 4. 14.). He that understands one indefinable satya understands the other indefinable dharma.

2. "Verily, both these are the same": i.e. one is "the same as" the other: satya is "the same as" dharma. If so, in what sense? Satya is derived from the root sat which means "What is". The "is" is not a tense. What "is" means "what never was not”. And "what never was not" is what "will never cease to be": i.e. not merely arises and passes away but endures and is imperishable. But what is the imperishable? Not merely the indestructible but that which is aware that it is indestructible; otherwise,
matter is also indestructible. Is the notion of the indestructible merely the notion of what is physically indestructible? No; therefore the indestructible is not matter or merely matter. In what sense is the indestructible, indestructible? In the sense that no evil can destroy it; for, it is evil that destroys. Evil destroys not only other things but itself. Therefore that which is indestructible is not only that which is aware that it is indestructible but what cannot be destroyed by evil. Therefore that which is aware that it is indestructible is "the same as" that which is "untouched by evil" (apāpaviddham) as the Isā says of the Self. Therefore the immortal is "the same as" the good and the good is "the same as" the true, and truth alone is, exists or "prevails". Satya and dharma are the universals of human culture. The universals of human culture are also the indefinables of human culture. And satya and dharma denote the enduring universal relevance of Indian Culture. Satya and dharma are the two standards that the Brhad-Āraṇyaka gives Indian Culture by which it should measure its survival and unending evolution.

3. Non-Duality and Value

1. To whom do pupils "go" in the Upanisadic tradition for dialogue? To him that is in the dialogue of silence within himself. No one gets the authority to be in dialogue with others who has not been in the dialogue of silence within himself. Mauna is conscious silence, not merely abstention from speech. To be in Mauna a person "retires". He retires to solitude. He retires to the solitude of the forest (upavasany aranye) as the Muṇḍaka says, although solitude is in the mind of man. In the sublime silence of the forest and out of the more sublime, inward meditative silence of man were the dialogues of the Upaniṣads born. It is not easy therefore to create a dialogue. To create a dialogue we have to 'create' silence. To create silence is to silence the mind, manas. Silence is there in the deeper levels of man's
being (as we shall see in the *Katha*). The silence that is there within *communicates* itself through silence, and transforms those who receive its communication.

To retire to the forest is indeed to retire within, to retire into one’s self. It is to make a *conscious* withdrawal into the depth of one’s self. A symbol of this act is renunciation (*sannyāsa*). Renunciation is an act of non possession (*nivṛtti*), freedom from possession. Indeed, it is freedom from a sense of “mine”: freedom from an ignorant sense of mine to an *awakened* sense of mine. “If the city of Mithila were burnt, nothing of mine would be lost” said the Philosopher-King, Janaka. So there is a sense of “mine” which is not renounced in renunciation. What is that “mine” which renounces, disowns, withdraws? This is the question. It is to seek and find that, that a person retires, renounces, disowns, withdraws.

2. Here is a conversation between a husband and wife, between Yajnyavalkya and Maitreyi: “Maitreyi”, said Yajnyavalkya, “lo, verily, I am getting away from this state (the state of the house-holder, *grhasta*) into the forest. Forsooth, let me make a settlement for you and Katyayani” (his second wife). “Then”, said Maitreyi: “My Lord, if, indeed, this whole earth filled with wealth were mine, do I become immortal by it or not?” “No”, replied Yajnyavalkya. “As the life of people who have plenty of things will your Life be, but there is no hope of immortality through wealth”. Then Maitreyi said: “What shall I do with that by which I do not become immortal? What you know of the way to immortality, venerable Sir, that, indeed, explain to me”. (*Bṛhad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad*, IV, 5.1-4).

3. There are some significant implications of this delightful and intimate conversation. Firstly, how is a wife who renounces what her husband renounces, renounced?: “What shall I do with that by which I do not become immortal?” In what is woman the equal of man and has the same Right as man? In renunciation. “In the defence of the State woman has the same
function as man” said Plato. The Upanisads show that woman has the same ‘function’ as man in non possession and renunciation. Secondly, Maitreyi is not to be tempted by wealth. She is awakened enough to know that there is no hope of immortality through wealth. Indeed, Maitreyi who seems to be a symbol of woman’s easy ‘bewilderment’ as it were would have been more ‘bewildered’ had her husband said that the way to immortality is through wealth. But Maitreyi is yet to be awakened to the “I” in immortality: “If, indeed, this whole earth filled with wealth were mine, do I become immortal by it or not?” But it is the “I” that renounces the “I” that is the immortal.

When Sri Ramakrishna was asked by a disciple “When will I be liberated?” Sri Ramakrishna replied “When you are liberated from the “I”. If so, there is an “I” liberated from the “I”. When Yajnavalkya said to Maitreyi that there is no consciousness—consciousness of “I”—in immortality, Maitreyi said that she was “bewildered”. “When he has departed” said Yajnyavalkya, “there is no more (separate or particular) consciousness”, (consciousness of “I”), Maitreyi said: “Here, indeed, venerable Sir, you have caused me to reach utter bewildermont”. (IV. 5.14). Yajnyavalkya replied: “I do not say anything bewildering”. Plato said in the Republic that the human mind suffers from two kinds of ‘bewilderment’: going out of light into total darkness and coming out of darkness into brilliant light. Immortality is like coming out of total darkness into brilliant light, a ‘bewilder- ing’ vision and experience. Thirdly, Maitreyi asks: “What you know of the way to immortality, venerable Sir, that, indeed, explain to me”. In immortality, the Way is the same as the Goal, Means same as the End: To be immortal is to be on the Way to immortality. Fourthly, Maitreyi is not yet awakened to know non-duality and its value.

4. Here is a poetical passage in prose and its alliteration from the Brhad-Aranyaka Upanisad:

“Verily, not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear
but for the sake of the Self is the husband dear. Verily, not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear but for the sake of the Self is the wife dear. Verily, not for the sake of the sons are the sons dear but for the sake of the Self are the sons dear. Verily, not for the sake of wealth is wealth dear but for the sake of the Self is wealth dear. Verily, not for the sake of the cattle are the cattle dear but for the sake of the Self are the cattle dear. Verily, not for the sake of the Brahmana is the Brahmana dear but for the sake of the Self is the Brahmana dear. Verily, not for the Ksatriya is the Ksatriya dear but for the sake of the Self is the Ksatriya dear. Verily, not for the sake of the worlds are the worlds dear but for the sake of the Self are the worlds dear. Verily, not for the sake of the gods are the gods dear but for the sake of the Self are the gods dear. Verily not for the sake of the Vedas are the Vedas dear but for the sake of the Self are the Vedas dear. Verily not for the sake of the beings are the beings dear but for the sake of the Self are the beings dear. Verily, not for the sake of all is all dear but for the sake of the Self is all dear. Verily, the Self, Maitreyi, is to be seen, to be heard, to be reflected on, to be meditated upon; when, verily, the Self is seen, heard, reflected on, and known, then all this is known”.

5. “Not for the sake of all is all dear but for the sake of the Self is all dear”: this is the fundamental proposition of the Brhad-Aranyaka. This proposition implies a fundamental unity of reality and value. “For the sake of” is a teleological concept. But why is X, for instance, “for the sake of” Y? Because X is “because of” Y. And the Because is not a Cause. Therefore the notion “for the sake of” necessarily entails the notion “because of”. Outside this identity, the two notions have no meaning. And if the notion “for the sake of” is to be a value, the notion “for the sake of” must be a conscious and not a mechanical relation; otherwise it would mean that something is merely used as a
means to something else. And the *conscious* relation is the awareness that whatever is, is "because of" that "for the sake of" which everything else is. Outside this, nothing *is* and nothing is a value.

Although the notion "for the sake of" involves unity of reality and value and implies that non-duality is a supreme value, yet the notion "for the sake of" has an ostensive sense of duality which must be transcended. If X is "for the sake of" Y, then X is one thing and Y "another". And if one thing is for the sake of "another" without end, then there is duality and there is an endless regress. One thing for the sake of another without end. This contradicts both reality and value. Therefore the notion of "another" must be negated. This is negated if it is understood that, that "for the sake of" which everything else is, is for "its own sake" and is not for the sake of "another". And that which is "in itself" is that which is "for itself". And that which is "in itself" and is "for itself" is that which is not conceived or understood through "another": Therefore the notion "for the sake of" is both reality and value if and only if the duality that it ostensively implies is transcended or negated.

Now, it is not only the notion of "for the sake of" that has in it an ostensive duality in the *Bṛhad-Āranyaka* but the notion "greater than" in the *Chāndogya*.

One thing is greater than "another": Speech is greater than Name: mind (*manas*) greater than Speech; will (*samkalpa*) greater than Mind; Thought (*citta*) greater than Will; Contemplation (*dhyāna*) greater than Thought; Understanding (*vijñāna*) greater than Contemplation; Strength (*balam*) greater than Understanding; Food (*anna*) greater than Strength; Water (*āpah*) greater than Food; Heat (*tejas*) greater than Water; Ether (*ākāśa*) greater than Heat; Memory (*smara*) greater than Ether; Hope (*āśā*) greater than Memory; Life (*prāna*) greater than Hope; Truth, (*satyam*) greater than Life, and so on. And greater than all is Happiness. But Happiness is not in anything that entails the notion of "another". Happiness is not in
"another". What is that which has no "another"? That which has no "another" is the Infinite (bhūma).

The Brhad-Aranyaka and the Chāndogya arrive in different ways at negation of duality. Here is a passage from the Brhad-Aranyaka:

"For where there is duality, as it were, there one sees the other, one smells the other, one tastes the other, one speaks to the other, one hears the other, one thinks of the other, one touches the other, one knows the other. But where everything has become just one's own self, by what and whom one should see, by what and whom should one smell, by what and whom should one see, by what and whom should one smell, by what and whom should one taste, by what and to whom should one speak, by what and whom should one hear, by what and whom should one touch, by what and whom should one know? By what should one know him by whom all this is known? The Self is to be described as not this, not this. He is incomprehensible for he cannot be comprehended. He is indestructible for he cannot be destroyed. He is unattached for he does not attach himself. He is unfettered. He does not suffer. He is not injured. Indeed, by what would one know the knower?"

And here is a passage from the Chāndogya:

"Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the infinite. But where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, that is the small, the Finite. Verily, the infinite is the same as the immortal, the finite is the same as the mortal. Venerable Sir, on what is the infinite established? On its own greatness, or not even on greatness".

6. Non-duality is, indeed, a "bewildering" negation. There is a distinction in the Upaniṣads between two sorts of negation:
(a) a negation which negates an opposite; and, (b) a negation which has no opposite to negate and therefore negates itself. Non-duality is affirmation which is a denial. It is a conception of reality which has no opposite to negate like the Sun which negates darkness but knows no darkness to negate it. No denial is absolute which is not a self-denial: *Therefore that which has no opposite to negate negates itself.* That that which has no opposite to negate negates itself is illustrated by the conception in the *Bṛhad-Āranyaka* of the One who has no fear because He has no “Second” to fear from. But he has no delight. Therefore He negates Himself in a “Second”. This leads us to the notion of Being and Negation in the *Bṛhad-Āranyaka*.

4. *Being and Negation*

1. In the previous section on “Non-duality and Value” a distinction was made between: (a) that which negates an opposite, and, (b) that which has no opposite to negate and therefore negates itself. Non-duality appears to involve both types of negation. And both types of negation appear to be involved in the notion of the Absolute. The non-dual which has no opposite to negate negates itself. If this is the case, then no denial is absolute without self-denial. And there is no denial merely of another which is not a denial of one’s self. This is how truth “prevails”, *satyam eva Jayate*. The *Vedānta* is truth which “prevails” by not opposing its own negation. This is also the ultimate truth involved in renunciation: renunciation is not merely of “possession” but of the “possessor” too. That which negates an opposite and that which has no opposite to negate and therefore negates itself is involved in a dialectical movement within itself. The following passage from the Fourth *Brāhmaṇa* of the First Chapter of the *Bṛhad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad* illustrates this dialectical movement.

Says the *Upaniṣad*: ...
"In the beginning this (world) was only the self (ātma) in the shape of a person (purusa). Looking around he saw nothing else than the self. He first said "I am". Therefore arose the name of I. Therefore even to this day when one is addressed he says first "This is I" and then speaks whatever other name he may have. . . ."

"He was afraid. Therefore one who is alone is afraid. This one then thought to himself: "Since there is nothing else than myself, of what am I afraid". Thereupon his fear, verily, passed away; for, of what should he have been afraid? Assuredly, it is from a second that fear arises".

"He, verily had no delight. Therefore one who is alone has no delight. He desired a second. . . ."

2. There are many significant ideas in this passage: (a) The "I" is Name; Name "originates" from "No-Name"; the "I" is Name which has a Name, "I am so-and-so". And "Whatever has Name has Form"; this is a synthetic a priori proposition as it were in the Upanisads; and so Name and Form (nama and rupa) always go together in the Upanisads; therefore, liberation is liberation from Name and Form (vidvān nāma rupād vimuktaḥ). (Mundaka, III.2.8). (b) There is an existential distinction between being "free from fear" and "having delight"; one is a condition of the other: being free from fear is a "necessary" condition for the experience of delight but is not a "sufficient" condition; and so the two refer to different aspects of the consciousness of absolute existence; consciousness of absolute existence is, firstly, a negation of the "Second" from whom fear arises; but consciousness of absolute existence or absolute consciousness of existence which negates a "Second" and is therefore free from fear is only a partial experience of absoluteness. (c) There is a distinction between two significant senses of "Second": a "Second" from whom fear arises and a "Second" from whom delight arises. The "Second" from whom fear arises must be
negated. But there is no delight unless that which negates the "Second" from whom fear arises negates itself to discover itself in a "Second" from whom delight arises. (But the "Second" from whom delight arises is not a "Second" at all because the One is without a "Second"). (d) Therefore that which has no opposite to negate, negates itself in desiring a "Second". If so, this "desire" although called Kāma is not "Want". It is not a "Want" to have what you have not, nor a want to have what you have. Both are "wants". Both are forms of "possession". There is "desire" which is "possession" but there is a "desire" which is not "possession". This is the "desire" of the abundant not to possess its abundance for itself. The proper antithesis therefore is not between "desire" and "desirelessness" merely, but between "desire" and "desire": the desire to possess what you possess and the desire not to possess what you possess. Therefore that which has no opposite to negate negates itself in this way. The "desire" for a "Second" is a symbol of a negation of itself. Consciousness of absolute existence or absolute consciousness of existence is an antinomial but a simultaneous movement of negating a "Second" and a negation of its own negation in "desiring" a "Second". This is another aspect of the problem of Non-duality and Value.

5. Beauty and Truth.

1. The Brhad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad speaks of "two forms" of Brahman: dvī vāva brahmaṇo rūpe, mūrtaṃ caiva-mūrtam ca: "Verily, there are two forms of Brahman, that which has Form and is formless". (II. 3.1.). This means that Brahman is both. This is a dialectical device to make a fundamental distinction in Brahman which is one and non-dual. But there is a dialectical difficulty: "Formlessness" is not a "Form" of Brahman to speak of Brahman as having "two" Forms. In other words there is no amūrtā rūpa, "Formless Form". Now that which
distinguishes between “Form” and “Formlessness” is not one of the two. It is other than both. Therefore Brahman is neti, neti, i.e. “not this alone”, neither Form alone, “not that alone” nor Formless alone. If this is true, then the law of contradiction does not apply to Brahman. Martin Buber said: “It is certainly not possible to speak of God other than dialectically, for He does not come under the principle of contradiction”. (Between Man and Man, Collins, Fontana Library, p. 75.). If the principle of contradiction does not apply to Brahman, then “Form” and “Formlessness” are not contradictories.

2. Now, exactly the same words are used of Matter in the Praśna Upaniṣad: rayir vā etat sarvam yan mūrtam cāmūrtam ca: “Matter is, verily, all this whatever is formed and is unformed”. (1.5.). Do the words “formed” and “unformed” mean the same as regards Brahman and as regards Matter? No. It could not be. The words “formed” and “unformed” as regards Matter refer to change and the substratum of change and refer to the “visible” and the “observable”. Matter as the “formed” and Matter as the “unformed” refer to what is perceived or what is perceptible. Both refer to the Observable Kind. Therefore to use the words “formed” and “unformed” to Brahman is to commit the fallacy of Observable kind.

If Brahman has “Form”, then “Form” does not mean what is “visible” or “observable”. It means both what is “imperceptible” and has “Form”. Therefore what is true of aksara in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad is also true of “Form”: “That which is ungraspable (adreyam); “without sight or hearing” (acaksuḥ-śrotam); “without hands or feet” (apānipādam). And yet it is a “Form” that is all-pervading (vibhu). Indeed, there is no “Form” of Brahman which is not an “all-pervasive” Form. And the “all-pervasive” Form that is seen is Beauty, the Beauty of Divine Form seen by the mystic in his vision of the Divine. And so the contrast between “Form” and the “Formless” is a contrast between Beauty and Truth: Truth does not have “Form” but Beauty is not
without Form. But the Upaniṣad says that Brahman who is “Formless” is satyasya satyam, “the truth of truth”: Beauty is Truth because Truth is the Ground of Beauty. Beauty is variety of “Form”, indeed, variety of new Forms: the infinity of the “Formless” it seems is self-fulfilled in the infinite variety of new Forms.

Form: Beauty.
Formless: Truth.

6. Categorical Imperative and Its Three Forms

1. The Upaniṣads are dialogues that arise out of questions. And the question is a symbol of awakened ignorance. But what is an awakening? Is it only intellectual? “Lead me from the unreal to the real. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality.” This is an awakening that is moral although the words good and evil are not used. Not only “Lead me from what is evil to what is good” but “lead me to the good that is beyond good and evil”: this is the ethics of the Upaniṣads. Although it seems as if there is only metaphysics in the Upaniṣads and no ethics, yet, the not easily discovered ethics of the Upaniṣads is a condition of its metaphysics: brahmacarya is a condition of inquiry into Brahman: this condition is unconditional.

2. Awakening is not only not merely intellectual but is not limited only to man. The awakening that is moral and which transfigures extends to all the three classes of beings, gods, men, and demons. This is its sublimity. Like the lightening that descends from heaven to earth and comprehends earth and heaven, the moral law binds all, gods, men, and demons.

3. But who has the authority to teach the moral law?: gods? Not necessarily. Any one that is awakened and has the eyes to see the moral law in its operation and the ear to hear its stern warning: “This very thing the heavenly voice of thunder repeats da, da, da, da, that is control yourselves, give, be
compassionate”. This what the teacher Prajapati says to gods, men, and demons. The heavenly voice of thunder lays down the same law but according to the nature of each, gods, men and demons. It says to the nature that is wanton and self-indulgent and given to abandon, “control yourselves” (danyata); to a nature that is overruled and consumed by a passion for possession and possessiveness, “give” (datta); to the nature that tends to be brutal and delight in cruelty, “be compassionate” (dayadhwam). In each case the law lays down what is the exact opposite of each nature. But who ‘repeats’ what? Does the heavenly voice of thunder repeat what Prajapati says or does Prajapati repeat what the heavenly voice of thunder says? In another sense of the word ‘repeat’ the heavenly voice of thunder repeats the same syllable symbolic of the Law three times, da, da, da, but it is Prajapati who ‘repeats’ to gods, men and demons what the heavenly voice of thunder says: For, it is a law that is not man made. And it is a Law that is not “made”. It is a Law that is. And since it is a law that is not “made” it says not “do” or “act” but “be”: “be compassionate”: It says, “be awakened”: therefore “to be” is “to be awakened”: “Awake” and “Arise”: these are the two commandments of the Upaniṣads: To “arise” is to be “awakened”.

Epilogue

To state the mystery Being, the Brhad-Aranyaka makes a fundamental distinction in the nature of Being: (a) between a One that negates a “second” to be free from fear, fear of a “second”; and, (b) between a One that although has no fear of a “second” has yet no delight of Being and therefore negates itself in its free delight (to be in a “second”). If so, the mystery of Being is not merely in freedom from fear; the mystery of Being is in the discovery of positive delight of Being. But there is between them a fundamental gap in Being. That which is free from fear
is a "One without a Second". It is what is "non-dual". But is even "non-duality" the meaning of monism in the Upaniṣads? It seems not. Why? Because the dialectic of negation in the Upaniṣads is such that negation "stops not": it "stops not" at the negation of a "second" but moves to the negation of that which negates a "second", neti, neti. Therefore there is, it seems, a distinction in the Upaniṣads between monism and monism such that the nature of monism in the Upaniṣads is "inexpressible", not-Two, but not, also, "One": The One Who is "Alone", merely free from the fear of a "Second".
CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD
Essence is Nothing if "to be" means "to be perceived". Essence is not the perceived. Unless there is a sense of "to be" independent of the proposition "to be is to be perceived", "to be" is involved in a regress. Nor does "perceive" mean only "seeing outward". Essence is not known as the perceived. Essence is known as the perceiver. Therefore the proper logical order of the proposition, tat tvam asi is tvam tat asi. This order makes tvam tat asi parallel to the proposition, aham brahmāsmi, "I am Brahman". Chāndogya.
Chapter IV

CHANDOGYA Upanishad

atha yad yajña ityācaksate brahmacaryam eva tat: Now, what people call ‘sacrifice’ is really the disciplined life of a student of sacred Knowledge. (VIII. 5.1.)

1. Introduction

The Chāndogya is the longest of the Principal Upaniṣads. It has eight chapters. Its eight chapters have one hundred and fifty-two sections. The one hundred and fifty-two sections have altogether six hundred verses. The longest of the Upaniṣad is in no hurry to come to purely philosophical issues.

The Chāndogya is part of the Sāma Veda: The Sāma Veda is the Veda of Song: Knowledge of the Divine has become a Song of the Divine in the Sāma Veda. The Song is the Udgitha, a measured, melodious Chant. The Chāndogya begins with Chant. The Brhad-Aranyaka begins with sacrifice (yajña). Both begin with the same as the Chant is chanted at the time of the Sacrifice.

There is essence (rasa) of everything, says the Chāndogya: “The essence of a person is speech. The essence of speech is the Rk (Hymn). The essence of the Rk is the samān, the Chant. The essence of the Chant is the Udgitha (song)”. The measured Udgitha interval of the Chant symbolises ORDER.

The Upaniṣads are both Song and Silence: In the Chāndogya, it is Song; in the Katha, it is Silence, śānta-ātma. The Brhad-Aranyaka speaks of Form and the Formless; consistent with this, there is Song and Silence. But there is a symbol which signifies both Song and Silence, Form and Formless: This is OM, the Primal WORD.

But why is there the Chant? Why is there Metre? Because there is death, and there is the desire of man in which all his
desires are satisfied, the desire to become free from death. It seems that even the gods were once afraid of death! What did they do? "They covered themselves with metres. Because they covered themselves with these, the metres are called chandas". There is chandas because there is death: Chandas protects us from death. Chandas is chanted beginning with OM: This Sound or WORD is the symbol of the immortal and the fearless: "He, knowing it thus, praises this syllable, takes refuge in that syllable, in the immortal, fearless sound, and having entered it, he becomes immortal, even as the gods became immortal". Therefore OM is the essence (rasa) of the Upaniṣads.

2. The Upaniṣads speak of death only to speak of what protects us from death. As death is the 'great fear', so the Upaniṣads speak of that by which man becomes free from 'the great fear'. The process by which the gods who once feared death became immortal is the process by which man also becomes immortal. There is not one law for the gods and another law for man, and by the same law man can become free from death like the gods. But the process by which he becomes immortal is also the process by which he becomes free from sickness and lives a full life. (The desire for immortality is not merely a desire for a life in a hereafter but for a full life here). This process is the Chant or the Metre, the measured, melodious Chant symbolic of ORDER in which the gods of yore took shelter. But the Chant is chanted only at the sacrifice. If therefore life is to be freed from illness in order that it may be lived to its fullness by the chanting of the Chant, life must become symbolic of sacrifice. As sacrifice is what is continued to its full completion without break, life as a sacrifice must be desired and lived to its full completion. Life should not be broken off in the middle. Guarding each period of man's life and carrying it on to the next stage are three appropriate Chants: the gāyatri Chant which has twenty-four syllables symbolises man's first twenty-four years; if, during these years, he is overtaken by illness, let him chant the gāyatri
Chant. The Tristub metre has forty-four syllables and guards the next forty-four years of a man's life; let him chant this if in this period he is overtaken by illness. The jagati metre has forty-eight syllables and guards the next forty-eight years; this is to be chanted if in this period he is overtaken by illness.

In the measured melody of the Chant, the Upanisads seem to have discovered a psychological medicine for the health of man's mind and body. Therefore what is health but a balance of mind and body? In their inquiry into man's freedom from the "great fear" and his liberation from it the Upanisads seem to have discovered the healing and liberating power of Song and Silence, of Song as Chant. Life is lived to the full and becomes music if it is ordered like the ordered measure of the Chant. The Chandogya chants the music of life.

The Chandogya has three profoundly important dialogues: the dialogue between Uddalaka the father and Svetaketu his son; the dialogue between the aged Narada and the ever young Sanatkumara; and the dialogue between the teacher, Prajapati, and his pupils, Indra from among the gods and Virocana from among the demons.

2. Being and Nothing

1. In the Upanisads, it is generally the case that the pupils question the teacher as in the Prasna and the Mundaka, and the son questions the father as in the Taittiriya. In the Chandogya, the father questions the son. But when the pupils question the teacher in the Prasna and the Mundaka, and the son questions his father in the Taittiriya, they do not 'examine' the teacher or the father. In the Chandogya, Uddalaka, the father, examines his son, Svetaketu, after he has returned home from his education. In the son there is a learning that does not inquire; in the father there is inquiry that exposes the ignorance and the "conceit" of the learning.
Uddalaka asks his son, Svetaketu, to become learned in the Veda. Why? Because no one in the family, he says, is unlearned in the Veda and is a “brahmana only by birth”. But unless the father was himself learned in the Veda and was not only a brahmana by birth, he could not ask his son to become learned in the Veda. Therefore for the son to become learned in the Veda, the father, who must himself be learned in the Veda, should instruct the son in the Veda. This means that there is no better place than the family for the instruction of the Veda and no better teacher than the father. In the instruction of the Veda, the home is the school and the father a teacher and the son a student of sacred knowledge. In awakening his son to his responsibility, Uddalaka awakens him to the responsibility he owes to the family and to the continuity of a tradition which he must inherit consciously, and consciously transmit. The stability of a tradition is the stability of the family. If the family disintegrates, the tradition disintegrates. But who is to preserve the family except the family? Plato saw the need for the Guardians of the State. Uddalaka sees the need for the Guardians, as it were, of a Tradition, the Tradition of the study of the Veda. States are as the men are, said Plato. Uddalaka seems to imply that societies are as families are and families are as the parents and the children are. In human culture, what is true of the Veda is true of other skills and excellences. The excellences of Indian Culture have had a life and a continuity by conscious inheritance and transmission of the learning and the skills. Is the family then to be abolished in the interest of the State to make the State “one family” as Plato said? The State is “secular”. Is the family “secular”? To make the State “one family”, is the State to universalise the secular function merely of procreation and breeding? But Uddalaka thinks that values are not transmitted merely by birth and breeding.

2. “Svetaketu”, said Uddalaka, “since you are now so greatly conceited, and think yourself well read and arrogant,
did you ask for that instruction by which the unhearable becomes heard, the unperceivable becomes perceived, the unknowable becomes known?" yenaśrutam srutam bhavati, amatam matam, avijnātam vijnāam iti. Svetaketu did not say 'yes' or 'no' but asked a sceptical question about the very possibility of such knowledge: "How, venerable sir, can there be such a teaching", khatam nu bhagavah sa ādeso bhavatit? This is the difficulty of "learning"; it "thinks" that it knows, is well read and therefore is "arrogant". It seems that ignorance is governed, as it were, by one negation, "how can there be such a teaching", and wisdom by another, neti, neti, "not-this", "not-this". The problem of inquiry is how to make the negation of ignorance become the ignorance of wisdom. How is inquiry to liberate doubt and denial from its own dogmatism?

3. Uddalaka's question is an inquiry into Being; he gives an illustration of that instruction "by which the unhearable becomes heard, the unperceivable becomes perceived, the unknowable becomes known". "Just as, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay becomes known, the modification being only a name arising from speech while the truth is that it is just clay". And so on with iron and gold. This illustrates three preliminary distinctions involved in the notion of Being: (a) The distinction between 'name and form' which perish and that which assumes name and form which does not perish; (b) the notion of what is "common" to all things made of clay like what is "common" to all members of a "class" that constitute a "class"; (c) thirdly, the notion of a "material cause", the ultimate constituent which is behind all material transformation. The inquiry into Matter which is the irreducible, ultimate constituent behind all physical change is the goal of natural science, and was the goal of speculation in the cosmology of the Greek Philosophers. But the problem of Being is other than these although it is inclusive of them. Uddalaka's inquiry into Being is "progressive".
4. In his progressive inquiry into Being, Uddalaka puts the main problem of Being as a question, “How can Being arise from Non-Being?” *khatam asatah sajjāyaret?* The son and the father use the same word *khatam* in their questions to each other. When the father asked his son whether he asked for that instruction by which the unhearable becomes heard etc., the son asked, “How can there be such a teaching?” The truth to which his father referred seemed to the son to be as it were an absurdity. How is the son, then, to be awakened to truth? By a dialectical device: to present an absurdity to the son as if it were a truth: “How can Being arise from Non-Being?”

5. What is absurd? Is the arising of Being “from” Non-Being or the “arising” of Being itself absurd? The “arising” of Being is absurd. Being “never comes to be”. As it “never comes to be”, it “never ceases to be”. Being is: i.e. it “has been”. Or, Being was āsīt i.e. “never was not”. Being is denoted by a “non-temporal” sense of “is” and “was”.

6. The *Upanishad* says, *sat eva saumya, idam agra āsīt ekam evādvitiyam,* “In the beginning, my dear, this was Being alone, one only without a second”. But the “one” which is “one only” is not “one” which is “only this” or “only that”. The appropriate expression to denote “one only without a second” is not the impersonal “one” but the personal “I”. The *ekam, “one”, is “I”, “I” that has no second. As the “I” has no second, the “I” which is *ekam “sees nothing else”, nānyat kiṃ cana miṣat.* (Aitareya. I. r.). Therefore the “I” which “one only without a second” is a “seer of nothing”. Therefore the dialogue on Being in *Chāndogya* passes from “one” to “I”: “It thought may I be many”: *tad aiksata bahusyām prajāyeyeti.* But the “I” that becomes “many” remains still the “I”. The “I” is already Brahman, said Ramana Maharishi, and we need not think, “I am Brahman”, and the “I” is known to everyone, he said.

7. Being does not arise “from” Non-Being or Nothing. But nothing can be “said” about Being. Hegel therefore
thought that the category of Being is, as it were, the same as Nothing. As nothing can be “said” about Being, there is a tendency to commit the “fallacy of super-imposition” about Being. It seems that the only way to avoid the “fallacy of super-imposition” is by the use of negative predication, neti, neti, “not-this”, “not-this”. Or, the alternative is a tautology in which we predicate existence of what exists. But existence is not a predicate; this is the defect of the Ontological Argument. Therefore, Socrates who was a philosopher of Being, it seems, was “afraid” to say “It is”; so says Walter Pater is his Plato and Platonism.

These difficulties are resolved in the fundamental propositions or Mahāvākyas of the Upaniṣads. Being is not Nothing. Being does not arise. Being is not a tautology which predicates existence of existence. Being is not a postulated identity between two variables X = Y. Therefore Being is not symbolised in terms of demonstrative symbols, “This” and “That”; there is the equation etad vai tat, “This, verily, is That”, which is a postulated identity, which occurs eleven times in the Katha Upaniṣad. But etad vai tat is not a Mahāvākyā. If so, then what is a Mahāvākyā? There is no Mahāvākyā in the Upaniṣads without a self-referential symbol, “I” or “Thou”. Therefore Being is self-awareness of Being. Otherwise, there is no Mahāvākyā. And the Mahāvākyā, for instance, “I am He” and “I am Brahman” is not a postulated but a realised identity.

8. The significant statements of the Upaniṣads are in the third person and read like reports, like the reports of a witness who reports what he has witnessed. And these statements are in the past tense, “was”: e.g. “The self, verily, was (all) this, one only in the beginning” (Aittareya). Who was the witness to the Self that was? Are there two, the Self and a witness? The third person is ostensive; there is the third person singular because there is the first person singular. All the Mahāvākyas, so’ham asmi, “I am He”; aham Brahmasmi, “I am Brahman”;


ayam ātma Brahma, “this Atman is Brahman”; prajñāam Brahma, “Brahman is intelligence”; and Tat tvam asi, “That thou art”, mean that Being is self-awareness of Being. What the nature of the awareness that is Brahman or Atman is the subject-matter of the three states of consciousness; the analysis of these three states and their implication is of fundamental importance to the notion of Being in the Upaniṣads.

9. There are two factors in the dialogue on Being; one is question and the other is illustration. Reason uses question to awaken reason: e.g. How can Being arise from Non-Being? And what is impossible has no illustration. There are nine illustrations to illustrate the notion of Being “That thou art”; and each one is about the universal aspect of Being. The nine illustrations begin with man and return to man.

(i) The first illustration is about one who is asleep: “when a person here sleeps, as it is called, then, my dear, he has reached pure Being. He has gone to his own”. The relation between one who sleeps and one who watches him asleep is within us; for, there is, in fact, something in us that is asleep, and there is, in fact, something in us which observes what in us is asleep; therefore there is an awareness that is awake in those that are asleep, eṣa suptesu jāgrati, and therefore is always awake. If so, then Being is self-awareness of Being. (ii) The second illustration is about bees; honey is the same essence collected from different trees. But essence is not a “collection” of essences. (iii) The third illustration is about rivers that join the ocean; the ocean is Being that transcends “name and form”, and there is in Being a “movement”, like the rivers, to transcend “name and form”. (iv) The fourth illustration is that of the tree; the tree renews itself if its branches are cut; Being is like the tree that renews itself; Being is Life. (v) The fifth illustration is of the nyagrodha tree and its seed; when broken open, its subtle essence is not perceived; essence which is not nothing appears as nothing to outward perception. (vi) The sixth illustration
is of salt dissolved in water; although not actually seen, its immanence is revealed to taste. Like salt in water, Being is what is pervasive and immanent. (vii) The seventh illustration is that of a man who, having lost his way, inquires his way of others and returns home; therefore there is need of a teacher to show the way, because man has lost his way to his own Being. (viii) The eighth illustration conveys that Being is in evolution and involution; it is the order of emergence and mergence, “voice in mind, mind in breath, breath in heat, and heat in the highest deity”, vān manasi sampadyate, manāh prāne, prānāh tejasi, tejāh parasyām devatāyām. (ix) The ninth and the last illustration is ordeal by fire. It illustrates that a man of truth remains untouched by fire even when he touches a heated axe; so pure is he that even fire, the purifier of all things, cannot purify him. In this illustration, Being is the same as Truth. And the word sat means both.

These nine illustrations convey that Being is self-awareness of Being, the awareness that is aware in sleep; that Being is the same essence present in different flowers; that Being is movement that transcends “name and form”; that Being is life that renews itself; that Being seems nothing to outward perception; that Being is all pervasive and immanent; that Being is the object of inquiry that needs a teacher; that Being is in evolution and involution; and Being is the same as Truth. In these nine illustrations, the Chāndogya expounds a complete philosophy of Being.

10. But the fifth illustration of the fruit of the Nygardha Tree needs closer analysis. Here is the conversation.

“Bring hither a fruit of that nygardha tree. Here it is, venerable sir. Break it. It is broken, venerable sir. What do you see there? These extremely fine seeds, venerable sir. Of these, please break one. It is broken, venerable sir. What do you see there? Nothing at all, venerable sir”.
“Then he said to him, “My dear, that subtle essence which you do not perceive verily, my dear, from that very essence this great nygrodha tree exists. Believe me, my dear”.

“That which is the subtle essence, this whole world has for its self. That is the true. That is the self. That art thou Svetaketu”.

Being is essence, and essence is Being. Are there two kinds of essence; (a) “that very essence from which this great nygrodha tree exists”; and, (b) that “subtle essence (which) this whole world has for its self”? No; essence is one. Essence is that by which everything exists. And that by which everything exists is that which the whole world has for its self. If so, essence is self. And the self is the seer, not the seen. If so, was Uddalaka’s question “what do you see there?” appropriate? Is essence seen?

Uddalaka’s question would have been appropriate if, and only if, “to be” means “to be perceived”. This is Berkeley’s doctrine; but there is no such doctrine in the Upanisads. To the question “what do you see there?”, the son replied “Nothing at all, venerable sir”; although the question was not appropriate, the reply was not inappropriate. Why is not essence seen? (a) Is essence not actually perceived but perceivable?; Or, (b) because it is not perceivable it is not actually perceived? Why is it not perceivable? Because it does not belong to the observable kind. What, if any, are the entities that do not belong to the observable kind? Only one: This entity is the observer or the seer. This is ātma, self. If so, essence is not the seen but the seer. Uddalaka’s question “what do you see there?” and Svetaketu’s reply “Nothing at all, venerable sir” dialectically need another question “who sees nothing?” to direct Svetaketu from the seen to the seer. In the Upanisads, the “what” generally changes into the “who”. For instance, there is the question that the Kena asks: “Impelled by what does the mind fall on its objects, etc.” The answer to this question is the question “who is it
that asks this question?” The dialectical transition from “nothing at all, venerable sir” to the seer of nothing is necessary; otherwise, there is no ground for the Mahāvākyā. There is here a parallelism between Svetaketu “the seer of nothing”, and the opening verse of the Aitareya: ātma vā idam eka evāgra āsit, nānyat kiṁ ca ca miṣat, “The self, verily, was (all) this, one only, in the beginning; nothing else whatsoever was”. In both cases, the self is the “seer of nothing” because “nothing else” is there besides the self. If so, the two symbols tvam and tat in the Mahāvākyā, tat tvam asi, whatever the order, tat tvam asi or tvam tat asi, denote one and the same reality, the reality that is “one only without a second” “which the whole world has for its self”. But as the essence is the seer and not the seen, the appropriate logical order of the Mahāvākyā is, tvam tat asi; the verb asi “art” does not add anything to the meaning.

If so, then the instruction to which Uddalaka referred by which the unhearable becomes heard is not about what becomes “heard” but about that by which what is heard is heard; that instruction by which the unperceivable becomes perceived is not about what is “perceived” but about that by which what is perceived is perceived; and that instruction by which the unknowable becomes known is not about what is “known” but about that by which what is known is known: viz. the knower. Therefore that instruction to which Uddalaka referred is about the “hearer”, about the “perceiver”, and about the “knower”. This is the Self. This is the subtle essence which the whole world has for its Self. This is Being. But the inquiry into the Self or Being and its dialectic is not complete without an ultimate and seemingly sceptical question: “By what should one know the knower?” as there is no second. Therefore the Chāndogya completes its dialectic into Being by the statement with which it began: “In the beginning, my dear, this Being was alone, one without a second”, sadeva, saumya, idam agra āsit ekam-evād-vitiyam.
3. Two Forms of the Infinite

1. The ever recurring subject-matter of the Upaniṣads is the Infinite. The idea of the Infinite recurs in the Upaniṣads in ‘infinite’ ways. The most significant statement which states the mystery of the Infinite is the Invocation at the beginning of the Iṣa Upaniṣad: “That is Full; This is Full. The Full arises out of the Full. The Full alone remains if the Full is deducted from the Full”. The Infinite is both what “is” and what “arises” from the Infinite: pūrṇat pūrṇam udacyate. What “arises” from the Perfect is not the imperfect. The imperfect does not arise from the Perfect. The finite does not arise from the Infinite. What arises from the Infinite is also Infinite. What is the finite? But the question asked in the Upaniṣads is not what is the finite but what is the Infinite: “What is that by knowing which everything else is known”? 

2. Let us reflect on time: everything that arises in time perishes as it arises. But time also perishes. If everything that arises in time ceases to be, then time in which everything ceases to be also ceases to be. If what arises in time perishes because what has a beginning has an end, then what has no beginning has no end. These two propositions are only analytically true. If what arises in time perishes, then what does not arise in time does not perish. This is only analytically true. But the conception of the Infinite in the Upaniṣads is not analytical although it is expressed in analytical terms: na jāyate mriyate vā “neither is it ever born, nor does it ever die” (because whatever is born dies). Nor is the conception of the Infinite merely a negation although what is “beginningless” or “endless” seems to be negative. And the notions of the beginningless and the endless are expressions of a logical and not merely a temporal regress: viz. the regress involved in a beginningless and endless series.

3. The notions of the “beginningless” and the “endless” are not stated in the Upaniṣads in only one way. What is the appro-
appropriate statement that states the idea of the “beginningless”? The statement will be a form of the verb ‘to be’ no doubt, but what is the most appropriate verb to state it?: IS or WAS? The Upaniṣads state IS through WAS, (āsīt). And WAS is an affirmation, not a tense. There is a fundamental distinction in the Upaniṣads between the WAS as affirmation and as tense. As tense, WAS denotes that which was not before it was, that which came to be. As affirmation, WAS denotes that “which never was not”: ātma vā idam eka evāgra āsīt, “The Self, verily, was (all) this, (and) One only”. What WAS means is “what never was not”; this is the same as “What had never ceased to be”; “What had never ceased to be” is the same as “What had never come to be”; “What had never come to be” is the same as “What shall never cease to be”. All these are expressions of the verb “to be”.

4. The idea of the Infinite generally involves the two-fold idea of the “beginningless” and the “endless”. It seems that the “beginningless” is the same as the “endless”. This is only analytically true. According to the Law of Contradiction, it seems a contradiction of the “beginningless” is not the same as the “endless”. But the Upaniṣads contradict this contradiction. The Upaniṣads seem to deny the necessity that the “beginningless” is or should be also the “endless”. In fact, it is difficult to discover necessity of any kind at all in the Upaniṣads. That the “beginningless” is the same as the “endless” is a matter of definition and is not a necessity: Therefore who knows necessity who only knows necessity?

5. The Upaniṣads reveal the nature of the Infinite by the denial that what is “beginningless” is or must be “endless”; or, that the “endless” must be the “beginningless”. Why should not the “beginningless” end? And why should not the “endless” begin? If this is a possibility, then what is “beginningless” ought to end in order that the “endless” might begin. Why not: avidyā is “beginningless” and brahma-vidyā is “endless”; avidyā which is “beginningless” ends; that which ends avidyā is brahma-
vidyā, and brahma-vidyā has no end but has a beginning. Brahma-
vidyā "arises". He that teaches it also "arises". But His "arising"
is not a perishing like that which perishes as it arises. So the
Mundaka Upaniṣad speaks of Brahma: "Brahma arose as the
first among the gods, the maker of the Universe and the protector
of the world. He taught the knowledge of Brahman, the founda-
tion of all knowledges to Atharvan, his eldest son". And Athar-
van taught it to others: the continuity of a tradition continues
like life which continues. And the "arising" is not a caused
becoming but the "emerging" power of Being.

6. The Mundaka Upaniṣad speaks of what "arises": Brahma
who "arose". Although it speaks of Brahma who "arose", in
reality it speaks of what WAS and never "arose". The Upaniṣad
seems to imply that Brahma-vidyā was taught by Brahma after
He "arose". But through what vidyā do we know the arising of
Brahma except through Brahma-vidyā? Therefore Brahma-vidyā
WAS; it WAS before Brahma "arose". The Upaniṣad speaks of
what WAS indirectly through what "arose". But the verb
"arose" is like the verb WAS which is not a tense but an affirma-
tion. The Infinite is both what WAS and what ARISES. But
Brahma "arises" in the same sense in which the Sun who never
arises, "arises".

7. In the Chāndogya, inquiry into the Infinite has two charac-
teristics: Firstly: It is a significant distinction between the Full
and the merely Endless. The Endless is what involves endless
regress. An Endless Series is not ever completed. Is the Infinite
merely the negative notion of what is not or cannot be 'comple-
et', a 'not-this', 'not-this'? No. The Infinite is what is self-
complete and not that which is not 'completed'. Secondly:
The Infinite is Movement, a dialectical movement of transcenden-
tce, a movement involving the notion of "greater than". It is
significant that the movement is not a conflict, a conflict of oppo-
sites as in Hegelian and Marxism Dialectic. Since Marxian
Dialectic is derived from the Hegelian Dialectic and the Hegelian
Dialectic is based on conflict, Marxian Dialectic views History as a “conflict”, as a “class struggle”. So is natural evolution in Darwin, a “struggle for existence”. Not so in the Chândogya. In the Chândogya, the dialectical, progressive movement or evolution is a movement from what is ‘great’ to what is ‘greater than’. What is ‘great’ moves to what is ‘greater than’ to find itself in what is ‘greater than’. In the individual, the dialectical movement from what is ‘great’ to what is ‘greater than’ is yoga: yoga is ordered, peaceful evolution towards the peaceful. Is it impossible for man to make the evolution of history like the yoga of his inward evolution, a peaceful evolution towards Peace? This is the question.

But the Chândogya is not satisfied even with the notion of “greater than”. Why? Because the notion of “greater than” involves the notion of “another”: One thing greater than another, and so on without end. This is the quest of the Endless, the endless quest of endless “another”. In the Chândogya, Narada discovered that the endless quest of the endless is not liberation from sorrow. The quest of the endless is a vain quest. It is a quest which is like a mirage which recedes as you approach it. The merely endless is an illusion, not a reality. It is a “spurious” Infinite. That which is “greater than” another is not the Infinite but the finite however “great” it may be. The true Infinite negates “another”: “Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the infinite. But where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, that is the small, the finite. Verily, the infinite is the same as the immortal, the finite is the same as the mortal”. (Chândogya, VII. 24.1.).

8. The quest of the Infinite is a quest for Happiness. The Infinite is the Full, and the Infinite is Happiness: “The Infinite is Happiness. There is no happiness in anything small. Only the Infinite is Happiness”. (Chândogya, VII. 23.1.). The Chândogya says that Happiness is Activity: “When one obtains happiness,
then one is active. One who does not obtain happiness is not active. Only he who obtains happiness is active”. (VII. 22.1.).

The quest of the Infinite is a quest for Happiness. And Happiness is activity, not inactivity. But it is an activity that desires nothing and yet is active. It is out of an Happiness that is "Full" that an activity that is "Full"—desires nothing—arises. A Happiness that desires nothing gives rise to a never ceasing, infinite activity that desires nothing: out of the Full, the Full arises.

4. “Arising” and “Origination”

1. The Chândogya concludes with a rare dialogue where a teacher instructs both gods and demons who “go” to him as his pupils. Is there an instruction which interests both gods and demons? If both gods and demons “go” to the same teacher and are instructed by the same instruction, why do gods remain gods and demons, demons? Could not that instruction change or transform demons? In spite of the same teaching, demons remain demons. Why? Maybe because while the teaching is the same, the understanding of that teaching is not the same. In the Brihad-Aranyaka, another teacher by the same name, Prajapati, instructed gods, men, and demons. His instruction also to all of them was the same, da. When he asked the three, “Have you understood?”, they all said, “Yes, we have understood” but all of them had understood the same teaching in their own ways but appropriate to their natures:

2. In the Chândogya, Prajapati’s teaching has two aspects: (a) there is a ‘gradualness’ in his teaching; (b) not to accept but to examine his teaching is a requirement. As is the pupil’s advancement in the examination, so is the advancement of the teaching. Therefore he that goes away with a ‘tranquil heart’ and does not examine what is taught and therefore does not return to the teacher does not continue the dialogue. This then is the difference
between the gods and the demons. It may seem odd but the
demons are likeable fellows who are easily pleased: They are
so happy that they are weary of inquiry. Not so the gods. The
gods examine and are not easily pleased. Their restlessness leaves
them ever dissatisfied. And because they are dissatisfied they
return with persistence to the teacher to continue the dialogue.
They persevere to “the bitter end”. Indra returns to Prajapati
saying, “I see no good in this”. This is the condition of a good
dialogue: a pupil ‘returning’ to the teacher saying “I see no
good in this”.

3. Prajapati declared his teaching thus: “The self which is
free from evil, free from old age, free from death, free from
grief, free from hunger and thirst, whose desire is the real, whose
thought is the real, he should be sought, him one should desire
to understand. He who has found out and who understands that
self, he obtains all worlds and all desires”. Thus spoke Prajapati.
Both the gods and the demons heard this and both came to Praja-
pati and lived with him as students of sacred knowledge do. And
the instruction begins thus:

“Look at yourself in a pan of water and whatever you do not
understand of the self, tell me. Then the two looked in a pan of
water. Then Prajapati said to the two, what do you see? Then
the two said, ‘We both see the self thus altogether, venerable
Sir, a picture even to the very hairs and nails’.

Now, there is this question: “What do you see?” This ques-
tion, here, has the same difficulty as in the conversation between
Uddalaka and Svetaketu. It is an apparently misleading question.
For, is the self that is “free from evil, free from old age, and free
from death”, seen? Does it belong to the Observable Kind?
No: It is not the seen. It is not the seen whether seen in the
pupil of the eye, in a mirror or in a pan of water. It is
not even like what is seen in dream. That the self is not
the seen: it is to this that the pupil must be awakened. From
the question “what do you see?” the pupil must be gradually
led to the question, “who sees” or “who is the seer”? How is this done? Through the experience of dreamless sleep (susupti)? Nothing is seen there, and yet there is awareness, awareness that is “awake in those that are asleep” as the Kaṭha says. The transition to the question “who sees” or “who is the seer” from the question “what do you see” is through dreamless sleep where nothing is seen. But one who sees nothing, is. What about it? Is Indra satisfied? No: “In truth, this one does not know himself that ‘I am he’ . . . he has become one who has gone to annihilation. I see no good in this”. Then, “who is the seer”: He that sees the death of his own body and “rises up from this body” and “appears in his own form”. He “arises” from the body. Why? Because he is the “arisen”. Who is he? He is a Person, the Supreme Person, uttamaḥ puruṣaḥ. And, he is “the seeing person”, cākṣuṣaḥ puruṣaḥ.

4. The Chāndogya speaks of what “arises” (samutthāya) from the death of the body; the Muṇḍaka speaks of what “arises” but which does not “arise” from death. “Brahma arose”, sambabhūva. But Brahma did not “arise” from death. There is here a distinction between that which “originates”, if we may say so, and that which goes through death and “arises” from the dead. It seems that “origination” is a necessary and sufficient condition of “arising”. This distinction is not definable. (See the Muṇḍaka).

Epilogue

The Chāndogya gives the place that is due to the sacred Chant in religious life. But its emphasis is upon understanding. To understand is to think: “Verily, when one thinks, then he understands; one who does not think does not understand. Only he who thinks understands”.

It is significant that in the twenty-four ‘categories’ of the bhūma vidyā of the Chāndogya and the progressive definition of Brahman
in the *Taittiriya*, Happiness (*sukham*) and Delight (*ānanda*) are reached respectively in the two *Upaniṣads* only after the two *Upaniṣads* have discoursed on *vijñāna*, Understanding. As neither Happiness (*sukham*) nor Delight (*ananda*) is finite in its essential nature, the two *Upaniṣads* equate them with the Infinite: The "The infinite is happiness. There is no happiness in anything small. Only the infinite is happiness". And Happiness arises from understanding.
There is no cosmogenesis without anthropogenesis. Anthropogenesis is the re-birth of a re-birth. It is the re-birth of Ātma, the Formless, in the Universal Form that is Puruṣa, Cosmic Man. Re-birth, the re-birth of Universal Form in the Form that is Man, is like the re-birth of the father in the son. Cosmogenesis is the re-birth of the macrocosm in the microcosm. This is Man. Therefore “Man is the Measure of All Things”. This is the metaphysics and the myth of human existence. Aitareya.
CHAPTER V

AITAREYA UPAnishad

Sarvam tat prajña-netram, prajñāne pratiṣṭhitam, prajñānam brahma: All this is guided by intelligence; is established in intelligence; (and) Brahman is intelligence. (III. 3.).

1. Introduction

The Aitareya has three chapters; while, chapters second and third have only one section each and six and four verses respectively, chapter one has three sections, and each section has four, five and fourteen verses; the Upaniṣad has altogether thirty-three verses which makes it the third shortest Upaniṣad.

1. The Aitareya is mainly on Creation. In the Upaniṣads, Creation is not altogether free from myth. Why? Because, Creation may be itself a myth. Creation is many things to many people like the elephant to the blind. The Upaniṣad implies that Creation is activity of the same sort in the individual and the universe. The human individual is born. Is Creation like “birth”? Is Creation involved in a Cycle like birth and death? If birth entails death, does Creation as birth presuppose death? Sasyamiva martyrāḥ pacyate sasyam iva jāyate punah, “A mortal ripens like corn, and like corn is born again”. So says the Katha. There are three distinguishable notions of “re-birth”: (a) a “re-birth” after death in another body conditioned by Karma; yathā karma, yathā śrutam, re-birth “according to one’s merit and one’s karma”, as the Katha says; (b) “re-birth” not in another body but “re-birth” which is a change in one’s consciousness, when, because of the inner change of consciousness which Plato called “conversion”, the individual consciously “disowns” and is left alienated from his past, and even performs funeral rites over
its death as the sannyasi does: this re-birth is a discontinuity; (c) the "re-birth" of which the Aitareya speaks is not a discontinuity like (b), nor a continuity, if it be, like (a). It is a "re-birth" which is continuity of the kind involved in Creation. The Aitareya says that the "birth" of a son to a father is the "re-birth" of the father in the son. It is the continuity of the father in the son. It is in this sense that Creation is activity of the same sort in the individual and the universe, a living continuity. Says the Aitareya: "While he (the father) nourishes the child before birth and after birth, he thus nourishes his own self, for the continuation of these worlds; for, thus are the worlds continued. This is one's second birth". Creation is Continuation. It is appropriate that the Upanisads which are "for the continuation of these worlds" should make an Upanisadic teacher give, as a last word, to the departing pupil this advice: "Do not cut off the thread of the offspring". Says the Prasna: prajā kāmo vai prajā-pātiḥ, "the Lord was desirous of offspring". Creation is continuity: while the father is born in the son, the world is born in God.

2. Genesis is cosmogenesis; cosmogenesis is anthropogenesis. (In the Aitareya, Cosmogenesis is creation not of a world but of "worlds", a hierarchy of worlds, dyauḥ (heaven), antarikṣam ("atmosphere"), prthvi (earth) and what is beneath, āpah (waters). As the birth of a son to a father is the "re-birth" of the father in the son, so is anthropogenesis a "re-birth" of the Cosmos in in man, the "re-birth" of the macrocosm in the microcosm. But "re-birth" of the universe in man entails, in the Aitareya, a condition, the condition that the Universe is a person (puruṣa), a Cosmic Person. But this may be a "fallacy". If it is, the opposite hypothesis that the universe is a "thing" and not a "person" is a greater fallacy. But opposite hypotheses and contradictory fallacies entail the same conclusion: Man is as the Universe is; the Universe is as Man is. Therefore Man is the Measure of all Things.
2. Man: *The Measure of All Things*

1. In the *Aitareya Upanishad* there is a distinction between two senses of the verb “Was”, a distinction between affirmation and tense, a distinction between a ‘timeless’ and temporal sense of “Was”. The timeless sense of “Was” means “what never was not”, while the temporal sense of “Was” means “what was not before it was”: Asoka “Was”; but he was not before he “was”. And “what never was not” is in a timeless sense. And the timeless sense of *is* is a proposition about Being. So is the timeless sense of “Was”.

2. The *Aitareya* says: ātma vā idam eka evāgra āsit, na anyat kiñcana miṣat: “The Self, verily, was (all) this, (and) One only, in the beginning”. The Self alone was. Nothing else was. This implies that denial—denial of the other—is essential to Monism. But ātma that “alone” was, was not this or that alone, neti, neti, “not–this alone” or “not–that alone”. Atma was “all” this. And ātma, which was “One, only in the beginning” was not One, “only in the beginning”.

3. The sentence, “The Self, verily, was”, is in the third person singular and is in the past tense; as such, it reads like a report which reports about something. If so, who is it that reports? Are there two: the Self that was, and an observer who reports about what was? No; it need not be; for, it is not the case that all cases of the use of “was” are like a report by someone about another. For, there is the sentence, “I was asleep”; the “was” is recollected awareness, a regress into one’s memory of the past. If the “was” is recollected awareness, does the *Upanishad* prove identity from memory? Is memory the basis of identity or identity the basis of memory? If, however, the *Aitareya* were to prove identity from memory, then the statement, “to remember is to be” is as bad as the statement, “to be is to be perceived”.

The *Praśna Upanishad* asks: Because of what does life move etc.? And the *Kena* speaks not only of seeing and hearing etc., but of a
seeing of the eye, and a hearing of the ear. The same sort of questions arise with regard to memory. Because of what does memory remember and recall? If there is a seeing of the eye, then is there a remembering of what is remembered and what is not remembered. For instance, the sentence, “I do not remember”. This is a recollection that recollects the recollector without any recollection. Since memory is a kind of awareness, what is that awareness that is present both in memory and in lapses of memory? Whether it recollects or not, it follows that this awareness is. This is awareness of Being and Being that is awareness. The Aitareya defines, as it were, this awareness: prajñānam brahma. This awareness was. Of what was it aware? Of “nothing else” except itself. It is an awareness that was never unaware. And “nothing else” there was to report about it. Nor can it say anything else about itself except that it was and that it was aware.

4. Awareness that was becomes aware of itself: Becoming aware of itself is Creation. If Creation is like becoming aware of the father in the son, then in what does awareness become aware of itself since there is “nothing else” except itself? There is no “another” in which it becomes aware of itself. To become aware of itself in “another” is also to deny that it is “another”. And so the Aitareya asks: “Of what here would one speak of as another?” Kim ihānyam vāvādīsadīti. (I: 3. 13.)

Creation is creating “another” as well as a denial that the created is “another”. What is the “another” in which that which was becomes aware of itself? Is it an entity? No; not an entity but Form. Formless awareness that was becomes aware of itself in Form. Therefore Form is not what was. Form “originates”. Of what form is Form? Has it shape and size, hands and feet? No. Form is Name, puruṣa, person, “I”. Puruṣa is Universal Form and Universal Name: And the “I” is Universal Name which “originates” from No-Name. Puruṣa is Universe as Form; or, it is Universalised Form. It is that “original” and “primeval”
Form of which the Myths of the Upaniṣads speak as “originating from the waters”, sodbhya eva puruṣam samuddhṛtyāṃūrchayat. (Aitareya. I. 1-3.).

Manifest Form is Name. But what is manifest is not merely Name and Form, nāma and rūpa, but karma, activity involving desire and desire involved in activity: (trayam vā idam, nāma rūpam karma, “Verily, this (world) is a triad of name, form and work”). (Br. Up. I. 6.1.). Karma is kāma, work involved in desire.

Behind the manifest which is Universal Form which is Universal Name “I”, which is the Form that awareness assumes in becoming aware of itself in Form, there is Formless awareness: Formless awareness Was: i.e. it never was unaware. Formless awareness that was and never was unaware is prajñā. In its opening verse, the Aitareya implies that prajñā that was and never was unaware is ātma; in its concluding chapter it says that prajñā is brahma, prajñānam brahma. Prajña is a “seeing intelligence” which comprehends in its awareness, that never was unaware, a totality: sarvam tat prajñānetram. (Aitareya. III.1.3.). It is a “seeing intelligence” that sees itself as ātma and brahma, as ātman and brahman.

5. The Aitareya could have well concluded here its coherent account of awareness that was, and the becoming aware of this awareness in Universal Form that is puruṣa. But it cannot stop here; for cosmogenesis is anthropogenesis. It is not enough if the “Ocean” of Being that is Formless awareness has its “re-birth” in Universal Form that “originates” as puruṣa. This “re-birth” is necessary but is not a sufficient condition if cosmogenesis is anthropogenesis. Creation is the “re-birth” of a “re-birth”. Creation is the “re-birth” in the Form that is Man, of the “re-birth” of Universal Form that is puruṣa, which is the “re-birth” of Formless awareness that was. As there is in the Upaniṣads a negation of negation neti, neti so there is, as parallel to this, “re-birth” of a “re-birth”. The “re-birth” of a “re-birth”
is a symbol of the continuity of Creation, a continuity that "stops not".

6. Now, by what process does Universal Form find its "re-birth" in the Form that is Man? This is the question. The "re-birth" of Universal Form in Man is mediated by a double process of "separating out" of Universal Form and "gathering together" of Form, "gathering together" again of what was "separated out". One is followed by the other. The process of "separating out" is disintegration, disintegration of Form. Indeed, it is death. It is death, as it were, of puruṣa. It is a Law in Creation that Form disintegrates to find itself again in Form. Creation is continuity of Form in Form.

7. The Aitareya began by speaking about what was: ātma that was "in the beginning". The Aitareya seems to have a partiality to what is regressive, to what was "in the beginning". And it speaks of an "original splitting", as it were, like the "splitting" of the atom. And as in the case of the splitting of the atom, so in the "original splitting" of Universal Form there is a "fall out". Here is a description of the "original splitting" of puruṣa: "The mouth was separated out: from the mouth speech, from speech fire. The nostrils were separated out: from the nostril breath, from breath air. The eyes were separated out: from eyes sight, from sight the sun. The ears were separated out: from the ears hearing and from hearing the quarters of space. The skin was separated out: from the skin hairs, from the hairs plants and trees. The heart was separated out: from the heart mind and from the mind, the moon. The navel was separated out: from the navel, the out-breath, from the out-breath, death. The generative organs were separated out: from it semen, from semen water". (Aitareya, I. 1.4.).

8. What is all this? All this is a description of death; death is a "separating out" of the functions of speech, hearing, seeing, thinking etc. The "separated out" functions become: become their counterparts in Nature: speech becomes fire, breath becomes air,
and so on. Does the Aitareya imply that disintegration of Function is disintegration of Form? Is the “separating out” and disintegration of Function a death of puruṣa and his Cosmic Form? If so, is “Form” a “unity of composition”? If the double process of “separating out” and “gathering together again” is a succession in which one is logically prior to the other, and if death precedes life, then death is not “a ceasing to be” but part of a sequence, and part of the process of Becoming that is Creation. If so, then the Aitareya implies a pair of opposites, life and death, or death and life, like the Praśna which implies the pair of opposites, matter and life, as mediating factors in Creation.

Is this all? No. The Upaniṣads invariably speak of opposites but do not stop with them. To know opposites is to know what is other than or beyond or above them. What is that which is aware of life and death but what does not die nor is ever born, na jāyate, mriyate vā? What is this? It is That which is aware that It was: Was ‘in the beginning’. What was ‘in the beginning’ was One only. But it was not One, “only in the beginning”. For, it is what it was. This is atma with which the Aitareya begins.

9. But to return to the myth of Creation: what happens to the parts when they are “separated out”? What happens to a ripe apple when “separated out” from the tree happens to the parts “separated out”. They “fall”. (This is the only conception of “Fall” in the Upaniṣads. On the other hand since there is no bottom to cosmic space how is it a Fall?) They “fall” pulled, as it were, by the “gravity” of another Form, the Form that is Man. The powers alienated and “separated out” from the Form that is puruṣa are unhappy and restless. Why? Because outside Form they cannot function. So they demand to be rehabilitated in another Form but reject all other animal forms. They are satisfied only with the “well-made form that is Man”, puruṣo vā va sukṛtam.

The Universal Form that “originates” and is puruṣa, Cosmic Person, comprehends the Form that is Man and presupposes it.
And so when Universal Form that is *purusa* disintegrates, as it were, it discovers itself and finds its "re-birth" in what it presupposes.

10. But why the Human Form? Because it is the only Form in which the "separated out" elements could, again, become what they were in the Form that is *purusa*, and return to their original functions. So, Becoming is becoming what they were "before". And so: "Fire becoming speech, entered the mouth; air becoming breath, entered the nostrils; the sun, becoming sight, entered the eyes; the quarters of space, becoming hearing, entered the ears; plants and trees, becoming hairs, entered the skin; the moon, becoming mind, entered the heart; death, becoming the outbreath, entered the navel; water becoming semen, entered the generative organ". (*Aitareya*, I.2.4.).

So the Image of Man is the same as the Image of the Universe, and the Image of the Universe is the same as the Image of Man. Man is the measure of all things. Why? Because, he is the "abode" of all things. Man is a macrocosm in microcosm. And so the *Aitareya* compliments Man: "Well done, indeed": *sukrtam bāteṭi*. In giving an account of Man, the metaphysic and the myth of Man, the *Aitareya* has also "Well done, indeed".

**Epilogue**

One of the three Ideas of Reason in the Transcendental Dialectic of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is the Idea of an absolute, completed Totality. No Idea of Reason is "deduced" but an Idea of Reason "originates". But how is the Idea of an absolute, completed Totality known, if known at all? By the principle of "This and no other".

In his *Principles of Mathematics*, Russell says that Mathematics is a system of formal implications. Implications follow from Axioms. Axioms must be *known*. Axioms are *known* when and only when they are known by the principle, "This and no other".
The *Aitareya* affirms this principle, the principle of "no other", *na anyat kiñcana miṣat*, "Nothing else whatever winked". The *Upaṇiṣad* not only says that "ātman was one only in the beginning" but "nothing else" was. The *Upaṇiṣad* affirms the Idea of a completed Totality in both these ways. But the *Upaṇiṣad* distinguishes between "no other" (*anyat*) and "no another (*anyam*). While the *Upaṇiṣad* denies that there is an "other" (an "other" *ātma*), it denies also that "another" is "another". It asks: "Of what would one speak here as another?"*, kim ihānyam vāvadiśed iti?* He that sees not "another", as "another" is the "seer". He is "the seer of this"* idandra*: He "sees all beings in his own self (or as his own self) and his own self in all beings (or as the self of all beings)", as the *Īśa* says. Without the second, he that sees not "another" as "another"—there would be no Idea of a completed Totality. The *Upaṇiṣads* state the truth and nothing but the truth, and nothing "other than" the "whole" truth.
Being is self-ascent or self-transcendence or Hierarchy of Being. In the ascent from matter to life etc., there is behind this transcendent evolution, neither chance nor necessity nor the inverted mechanism of calculated purpose but a pure, original, underived, positive joy or play of delight (ānanda). Therefore nothing in its self-fulfilment is left where it is. Everything is self-transcended or transcended in itself. As the ascent of Being “stops not”, the inquiry into Being “stops not” with any level or plane of Being. Taittiriya.
Chapter VI

Taittiriya Upanishad

kö ḫyevānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt, yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt?: Who, indeed, could live, (and) who (indeed) could breathe, were there no delight in (this vast and spreading) sky? (II, 7.1.).

1. Introduction

1. The Taittiriya Upanishad is in three chapters or Vallis: the first chapter has twelve sections and the twelve sections have altogether twenty-nine verses; the second chapter has nine sections and the sections have altogether nine verses; the third chapter has ten sections and the sections have altogether fourteen verses: altogether the Upanishad has fifty-two verses.

2. The Taittiriya brings together some of the components of mystical experience: (i) a mystical sound or word as a mystical symbol; (ii) a mystical place as a mystical symbol; (iii) the mystical experience of unity as a manifold of planes of consciousness and planes of Beings; (iv) an all-pervasive delight as a fundamental quality of mystical experience; and, (v) the mystical “I am”, aham.

(i) Silence is prior to sound. Although silence and sound are opposites, there is a sound which symbolises mystic silence or the silence of the mystic. This is Aum. Aum originates out of silence and becomes the silence out of which it originates. Aum is the symbol of meditation, and of what is meditated upon. Aum is the symbol of what is both beginningless and endless. It is a symbol of the Full (pūrṇa). It is a sound that is heard only in silence. It is a sound that silence creates, into which it fades away. Aum is that in which there is no rigid distinction between silence and sound. It is that in which one becomes the other; Silence
becomes sound and sound becomes silence. Aum symbolises both Being and Becoming. “Aum is Brahman. Aum is this all”, Aum iti brahma, Aum itidam sarvam. (Taitiriya, 1.8.1.). Yama says in the Kaṭha that Aum is “That word which all the Vedas declare, sarve vedā yat padam āmananti, which all the austerities proclaim, tapāṇi sarvāṇi ca yad vadanti”. (I. 2.15.).

(ii) There is mystic sound and there is mystic space. The mystic space is a “place”. The “place” is “the space within the heart”, antar-hṛdaya ākāśa. But the “heart” is not physical. Physical space has parts and is divisible. But antar-hṛdaya ākāśa is not physical; it has no parts and is not divisible. As such, the space within the heart is both infinitesimal and infinite. And it is not a “void”. The space within the heart is the “Full”. It is a Plenum. It is a “place”; indeed, it is a “secret” place. It is a “place” that is the “highest heaven” wherein is Brahman, who is satyam, jñānam, anantam. As the mystic meditates on Him who is seated in the “secret place” of his heart and not on what is outside, the mystic’s meditation is a meditation on himself. The first and the second components of mystical experience are a necessary part of the mystic’s meditation. And every man is a “secret” mystic.

(iii) The mystic sees unity as a manifold of planes of Being and planes of consciousness. And he sees a one-one correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm. These planes of Being and consciousness have the order of a hierarchy. And in the hierarchy, the highest is the most inward. As the highest is the most inward, the order that is a hierarchy is an order that is an ingression. There is in each plane another plane which is different from it and yet is within it. For instance: “Verily, different from and within that which consists of the essence of food (anna), is the self which consists of life”. Within life prāṇa mind manas; within mind, understanding (vijñāna); within understanding, bliss (ānanda). There are five planes of Being and consciousness, Matter, Life, Mind, Understanding and
Delight. The *Taittiriya* asks: “For who, indeed, could live, who breathe, if there were not this bliss in space?” *ko hyevānyāt kah prānyāt, yad esa ākāśa ānando na syāt?* This ākāśa is not physical space or extension but “the space within the heart”, *antar-hṛdaya ākāśa*. There in that plane of consciousness, the inmost plane within the planes of consciousness is delight, a delight of Being ānanda which is the nature of the Self, ātmā ānanda-mayaḥ. But between the *Taittiriya* and the *Kaṭha* there is a difference: the inmost plane of Being and consciousness in the *Taittiriya* is ānanda (delight); in the *Yoga* of the *Kaṭha*, the inmost plane is a silence, a peace, a tranquillity (*śānta-ātma*): “The wise man should restrain speech in mind; the latter he should restrain in the understanding self. The understanding self he should restrain in the great self, *mahān ātma*. That he should restrain in the tranquil self, *śānta-ātmani*”. (I. 3.13).

(iv) Mysticism is experience, an experience of “form” and an experience of “formlessness”. The passage from one plane of Being or consciousness to another and to what is within it is a passage from one “form” to another that is within it: “Verily, different from and within that which consists of the essence of food is the self that consists of life. By that this is filled. This, verily, has the form of a person”, *prāṇamayaḥ*. “Verily, different from and within that which consists of life is the self consisting of mind. By that this is filled. This, verily, has the form of a person, *manomayaḥ*”. “Verily, different from and within that which consists of mind is the self consisting of understanding. By that this is filled. This, verily, has the form of a person, *vijñāna-mayaḥ*”. “Verily, different from and within that which consists of understanding is the self consisting of bliss. By that this is filled. This, verily, has the form of a person, *ānand-mayaḥ*”: ātmā is ānanda-mayaḥ.

Now, this is a progression of Forms, *anna-mayaḥ*, *prāṇa-mayaḥ*, *mano-mayaḥ*, *vijñāna-mayaḥ* and ānanda-mayaḥ. This ingestion towards a Form within a Form is indeed an ingestion
towards that which is the basis of all forms, \textit{viz.} the "Formless". Mysticism as experience of what is Formless is a "failure", "a failure of speech, and a failure of mind", \textit{yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saḥ}, as the \textit{Taittirīya} says. But this "failure" co-exists with a positive delight which is an unfathomable joy liberated from fear, \textit{ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān na bibheti kācāna}, "He that knows that bliss of Brahman fears not (from anything) at any time": Mystical experience is a delight which is freedom from fear.

(v) It is delight which is freedom from fear that is affirmed in the mystic proposition, "I am" (\textit{aham}). "I am the immortal one", \textit{svamṛtam asmi}; so said the mystic, Trishanku, in the \textit{Taittirīya Upaniṣad}.

2. \textit{The Good Life and Four Types of Commandments}

1. In the \textit{Taittirīya Upaniṣad}, (I.II. \textit{Anuvāka}), there is an ancient Convocation or 'Commencement' Address. The Address is brief. The teacher addresses his pupil or pupils about to leave him after having lived with him and received instruction from him. The address is in terms of Obligations and lays down Four Types of Commandments.

But in a significant sense the pupil practised the precepts when he lived with the teacher which he is enjoined to observe when he leaves the teacher. These precepts are an essential part of the life of the student who seeks knowledge of Brahman and its realisation. These precepts are a necessary condition of that life. The precepts are Four Types of Commandments:

2. (a) One of the definitions of Justice in Plato's Republic is "Speaking the truth and paying one's debt". Now, 'debt' does not mean merely returning what is borrowed but what one 'owes' another. It seems that in ancient Greek and Indian thought recognition of Obligations and their fulfilment came first, and Rights only afterwards. In fact, the Commandment implies
that there are no Rights if there are no Obligations. In these Commandments, human relations are conceived essentially in terms of Obligations. In this Commandment, the pupil is asked to pay his ‘debt’: what he ‘owes’ others: what he ‘owes’ his father, mother, teacher and his superiors.

The problem of the good life which concerns the individual and the community and the world is Peace. This is not a matter only for nations and States but is a concern of the individual. It is a matter of the education of the individual. As Plato said, “States are not made of oak and rock but grow out of the constitution of men, and States are as the men are.” How is the individual then to be educated? What is education except an awakening in him of a consciousness of Obligations, not what others ‘owe’ him but what he ‘owes’ others? In international relations, Obligations have a priority in the building up of a world community. Obligations are prior to Rights. Peace and the elimination of force will not come about only through Rights or consciousness of Rights. And in times of emergencies, the moral nature of man thinks less in terms of Rights and more in terms of Obligations.

3 (b) The second Commandment is related to the first and is severe: It is a Commandment against negligence, pramāda, against negligence of any kind, forgetfulness or indolence. Negligence is vice; it is the enemy of virtue. Negligence makes excellence, moral or intellectual, impossible or difficult of attainment. The way to human perfection is to guard ourselves against negligence. Therefore the pupil is commanded to neglect nothing good. He is asked not to be negligent about study, about speaking the truth or practising virtue, about welfare or prosperity or become negligent in promoting the blessings of family life: (“Paradise was Home to Adam; for a good man, Home is paradise.”). No other ethical instruction in Indian culture lays emphasis on the moral dangers of negligence as the Taittiriya Upanishad.
4 (c) The third Commandment enjoins the pupil to give: not merely to give in return for what he ‘owes’ others. ‘Ask and it shall be given’: The Upanishad rather speaks of the giving that gives unasked. It does not speak merely of the propriety of giving but of the necessity of giving. And the Upanishad gives many worthy motives for giving: give out of faith; do not give without faith; give out of sympathy; give out of modesty; give according to one’s plenty, (i.e., let not your giving be miserly or extravagant); and, give out of fear. Why out of fear? For fear that if you will not give what you have, what you have will be taken away from you. Or, if you do not give, it will not be given unto you. Giving is the Law for man. The Brhad-Aranyaka Upanishad lays down different Commandments unto different natures: to those who are restless, the commandment is damyata, ‘be self-controlled’; to the cruel, the commandment is dayadhvam, ‘be compassionate’; to the selfish who acquire and possess, the commandment is datta, ‘give’. The commandment ‘give’ is appropriate to human nature as human nature is possessive and selfish. But the true spirit to give arises when, as the Isa Upanishad says, it is realised by man that all that he has belongs to God, and comes from Him as a gift so that he may likewise give what he has to others.

But as giving is a social act, does the ethics of giving lead to a class of “givers” and a class of “receivers”, a class of the “idle rich” and a class of “the idle poor”? Does not the act of giving create a ‘class’ which will eat without working? In a significant sense, those who “cook” only for themselves, as the Gita says, are “thieves”; but those who eat without doing any work and do not earn what they earn are greater “thieves”. The act of giving is an act of “sharing” which creates equals. But the act of giving is not a desirable good if it creates unequals, givers and receivers, receivers who are inferior to givers.

Lastly, what are we to give? Only money? No; the Upanishad means giving whatever can be given, wealth, knowledge, service,
and whatever promotes welfare and prosperity and builds up the Commonwealth of Man.

5. (d) The fourth and final Commandment is, 'Behave yourself'. Conduct yourself in the manner in which the wise and virtuous conduct themselves. Moral precepts arise out of moral life and practice. Moral principles are derived from moral examples. But this does not mean that moral virtue is 'imitation'; for, imitation of even the virtuous is no virtue. While the pupil needs moral examples to learn moral precepts, he will not practise dharma if he cannot be himself. And if he is not himself, how can he be an example to others? He is an example to others in not merely what he "does" but in what he is. Therefore the commandment is not merely 'do' but 'be': Be yourself: this is the ultimate liberty.

These Commandments which have passed into the currency of Hindu life are addressed to the pupil who goes out into the world. He goes out into the world to do what he can for the world whether or not the world does anything in return for him. And what he does for the world is to transmit a tradition. He goes out into the world as the transmitter of a tradition, the tradition of the Good Life.

3. Order and Hierarchy

1. In Chapter XXV entitled "The Meaning of Order" in *The Principles of Mathematics* Bertrand Russell asks the question, "What is Order?" He says that "this is a difficult question". All those who have written on Order "are content to exhibit the genesis of order", says Russell, "and they confound the genesis of order, with its nature". To exhibit the "nature" of order, Russell discusses the relation "between". He says: "The minimum ordinal proposition, which can always be made wherever there is an order at all is of the form: "Y is between X and Z". This proposition means: "There is some asymmetrical, transitive rela-
tion which holds between X and Y and *between Y and Z*” (p. 217, *Principles of Mathematics*).

What is an “asymmetrical” and “transitive” relation? A relation is “asymmetrical” where if X has some relation to Y, Y does not have the same relation to X. And a relation is “transitive” where if X has a relation to Y, and Y has a relation to Z, X has a relation to Z. But in discussing the nature of asymmetrical and transitive relations, Russell is analysing the nature only of *serial* order and not of order in general. Now, serial order is what is common to space, time and cause. All of them have the same kind of order. But order is a notion that is more comprehensive than serial order.

2. Order is a transcendental notion in the *Upaniṣads*. Order is what is prior and what is self-existent. Order does not arise with Creation. Creation pre-supposes order. And the “gods’ are “born of order”, *ṛta jāta*. *Rta* is a fundamental notion. And as the *Upaniṣads* are not concerned with cosmology, with the nature of space, time and cause, they do not discuss serial order. In the *Upaniṣads*, *Order is Hierarchy*. There is a distinction between serial and hierarchical orders. Why or how does this distinction arise? This is the question. This distinction arises because of two conceptions of the nature of the Infinite: (a) the Infinite as the “beginningless” or “endless”; and, (b) the Infinite as that which transcends itself: *i.e.* that which is “higher than the highest”, *akṣarāt paratoḥ paratoḥ*. Both mathematics and metaphysics have different conceptions of the infinite. Serial order is based on the relation “between” and pre-supposes the notion of “transition”. Hierarchical order is based on the notion of “higher than” and pre-supposes the notion of “levels” or “planes” of Being. Therefore the *Upaniṣads* do not refer to the “world” but to the “worlds”; the “worlds” are “planes” or “levels” of Being. The “planes” and “levels” of Being are also “planes” and “levels” of Consciousness.

3. How many “planes” or “levels” of Being are there?
Are they peculiar to the Upanisads? The Dictionary of all Scriptures and Myths edited by G. A. Gaskell distinguishes between five planes or Realms of Being. He says that these are common to all Scriptures and Myths, although their symbolism varies from Scripture to Scripture, from one Myth to another. Gaskell distinguishes a hierarchy of five “planes of Being”:

- Sun —realm; —Light; —Celestial.
- Sky —realm; —Fire; —Spiritual.
- Air —realm; —Air; —Mental.
- Water —realm; —Water; —Astral.
- Earth —realm; —Earth; —Physical.

“These ideograms”, says Gaskell, “are universal symbols of the five planes of existence, all in their proper order”. But what is proper order? The proper order is this: The highest is the most inward and the lowest is the most outward. “They are recognised”, he says, “in all the Sacred Books of the World, and this Dictionary cannot be understood without regard to them”. (Dictionary of All Scriptures and Myths; edited by G. A. Gaskell, Julian Press, New York, 1960 p. 14.)

4. In the Upanisads, the hierarchy of realms of Being varies. It is sometimes three, sometimes four, sometimes five, and sometimes six. But it is at least three or generally five. The threefold hierarchy is Earth, the Atmosphere, and the Heavens. In the Aitareya, it is four: Heaven (dvāuḥ); the Atmosphere (antariksham); Earth (prthvi); and the Waters (apah): dvāḥ pratiṣṭhita; antariksham Maricayah; prthvi maro, ya adhastā ōpah. (Aitareya, I. 1-2.). In the Katha; it varies between five and six: (a) Senses (indriya); mind (manas); intelligence (jñāna-ātmā); the “great self” (mahān-ātmā); and śānta-ātma. (I, 3.13.); (b) Senses, indriyas; mind, manas; intelligence, sattva; the “great self”, mahān-ātmā; the unmanifest, avyaktam; and, beyond the unmanifest, the person, puruṣa. (II, 3.7.). In the Taittiriya; it is five: matter, anna; life, prāna; mind, manas; intelligence, viññā; and the fifth, delight, ānanda. The highest and the most
inward “plane” of Being or Consciousness in the five “levels” is śānta or peace in the Kaṭha; whereas the fifth and the highest and the most inward in the Taittiriya is delight, ānanda. Matter, Life, Mind, Intelligence and Delight are “planes” or “levels” of Being; but the definition of Brahman applies exactly to every one of the “planes” or “levels” of Being. Brahman is defined as: “That, verily, from which these beings are born, that, by which, when born they live, that into which, when departing, they enter. That seek to know. That is Brahman”. (III, 1-1). Matter is defined in exactly the same words. So is Life, Mind, Intelligence and Delight. Now, if in his inquiry into Brahman the pupil knew that Matter is Brahman, why did he not stop at Matter? If he had, the pupil would have been the founder of “Dialectical Materialism” long before “Dialectical Materialism”. Therefore the implication in the Taittiriya is that Materialism is a phase and a first step in the inquiry into Brahman. In the teaching of the Self by Prajapati to Indra among the gods and Virocana among the demons in the Chāndogya, Virocana stopped at the first stage of the teaching: viz. that the Self is the Body, whereas, Indra did not. Materialism in Philosophy is a failure to proceed onwards in inquiry. And if the pupil did not stop at Matter in the Taittiriya and was not satisfied with the definition of Matter as Brahman, then the inquiry into Brahman is involved in the inevitability of a dialectic that will take the pupil beyond Matter. The dialectic says “stop not”. It says: Be “awake” in the inquiry into Brahman and “stop not”. This is what the pupil did in the Taittiriya. He did not stop at Matter, nor at Life, nor at Mind, nor at Intelligence, vijñāna. But why is what is only a “plane” or “level” of Being defined in terms of what is a definition of the Absolute? Why is Matter, Life, Mind, Intelligence defined in the same terms as the Absolute? Why, unless there is a paradox of the Absolute: There is no Absolute which has no part of it also as Absolute (if, indeed, the Absolute has “parts”). Therefore: That is Full, This is Full; Out of the Full,
the Full arises; if the Full is deducted from the Full the full alone remains.

Epilogue

Says the Aitareya: “The Self, verily, was (all) this, one only, in the beginning”. Says the Isa: “All this, whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by the Lord”. Both statements are in the third person singular; as such, they read like a report. The third person singular and the past tense is ostensive. The Upanisads use the language of the Observable Kind about what in fact does not belong to the Observable Kind. Who was the Observer, if any, of the Self that, verily, Was and was one only? Who is the Observer of “all this” but He and He alone that is in “all this”? A completed totality that leaves the Observer of that totality outside that totality is not a completed totality. Absolute, completed totality could never be stated, it seems, in the third person singular or in the past tense.

Absolute, completed totality is an identity. There is the proposition in the Chandogya, tat tvam asi, “that thou art”. It is an identity “between” a ‘that’ and a ‘thou’. If the verb ‘art’ is interiorised, then, ‘that’, ‘thou’ and ‘between’ are interiorised; then, the interiorised totality is the simple, indivisible identity, aham, “I am”. Therefore, absolute, completed totality is stated in terms of “I am”: “I am Brahman”. And so the concluding mystical and poetical and powerful chant of the Taittiriya which blazes forth: aham annam, aham annam, aham annam; aham annadah, aham annadah, aham annadah; aham slokakrt, aham slokakrt, aham slokakrt; aham asmi prathamajā ṛtasya, pūrvam devebhya amṛtasya nābhāi, yo mā dadāti, sa id eva mā, vāh, aham annam annam adantam ādmi, aham viśvam bhuvanam abhyā-bhāvan. Suvarṇa jyotiḥ. Ya evam vedātity upaniṣat: “I am food, I am food, I am food. I am the food-eater, I am the food-eater, I am the combining agent. I am the combining agent. I am the first-born of the
world-order, earlier than the gods, in the centre of immortality, who so gives me, he surely does save thus, I, who am food, eat the eater of food. I have overcome the whole world. I am brilliant like the sun. He who knows this. Such is the secret doctrine”. But the Upanisad lapses into the third person: “He who knows this”, Who is He? He is the “I am”: “I am He who knows this”. This is the only answer.
ISHA UPANISHAD
Transcendence is the same as immanence as the highest is the most inward. What is inward is what is indivisible. This is the Self (ātma), the Ruler and Lord. What is indivisible envelops all things and comprehends all things. Therefore comprehension is the same as immanence. He that knows both—both of what seems an ‘either-or’—knows. Sorrow that makes unity a delusion conceals a unity that makes sorrow a delusion. Isā.
CHAPTER VII

ISHA UPANISHAD

kurvan eveha karmāni jījiviṣet śataṁ samāḥ evaṁ tvayi
nānyatheto'sti, na karma lipyate nare: Always doing one’s
work here, one should desire to live a hundred years.
There is no way other than this to live as a man; then,
work does not bind you. Iṣa, 2.

1. Introduction

1. The Ṭṣa has only eighteen verses; next to the Māṇḍūyka,
it is the shortest of the Upaniṣads. Most of the fundamental para-
doxes of the Upaniṣads occur in the Ṭṣa. The Ṭṣa sees the presence
of the Lord in all that moves in this moving universe, and sees
Him as seated in the heart of man; therefore the Ṭṣa discloses the
source of the dignity of man as man.

In philosophy sometimes words are words; in some other
cases, words are symbols. Symbols denote. To denote or to point
at is way of affirmation. And the Upaniṣads affirm without using
a verb by using the demonstrative symbols ‘that’ or ‘there’.
These symbols denote existence.

Mathematics and Metaphysics involve the notion of the infinite
and the notion of the infinite is involved in contradiction.
In The Principles of Mathematics, Bertrand Russell says: “I wish,
leaving Mathematics aside, to inquire whether any contradic-
tion can be found in the infinite” and says that it is “one of the
great merits of Kant” to have pointed out that the notion of
the infinite involves contradiction. But it does not follow
that whenever there is a contradiction there is the notion of the
infinite.

2. The invocatory verse of the Ṭṣa points to a contradiction in
the notion of the infinite. The verse says that the infinite arises
out of the infinite; that if the infinite is deducted from the infinite, the infinite alone remains. And the Isā Upaniṣad exhibits this contradiction in practical life as “enjoyment through renunciation”.

3. The Isā comes nearer to a person’s life than most Upaniṣads. It refers to an invaluable moment in a person’s life when his entire life is gathered up in that last moment when he examines himself and remembers what he has done or not done, kṛato smara kṛtaṁ śmara. It is not a moment when he merely “repents” and “disowns” himself. The last hour is the hour of the last desire, and the last desire of man is to see “the veiled face of truth”, satyasya apiḥitham nukham. It is the moment of discovery when in that last focus of consciousness truth dawns on him and awakened in that last hour he affirms: “What so ever is that (yonder) person, (there, in that Sun) that person, verily, am I”, yo’sāvasau puruṣāḥ so’ ham asmi: “I am He (who is there)”.

2. Existence and Presence

1. There is no knowledge, neither science nor philosophy if there is no inquiry. Inquiry which is adequate to the nature of knowledge and reveals it is the question asked in the Muṇḍaka: “By knowing what, Sir, is all this known?” This has two implications: (a) Although it is not known what it is by knowing which everything else is known, (It is “conceivable that we don’t know what we don’t know” as Russell says) yet, it is known that there is a “That” by knowing which everything else is known; and, (b) “That by which everything else is” and “everything else” are distinct: “That by which everything else is”, does not itself “follow from” anything else but “follows from” itself. The Isā says that, “That by which everything else is”, is the same as “That which is in everything else”.

2. There is a distinction between a category and a symbol. A category is a type of unity; it is a unity introduced into a mani-
fold. There are as many categories as there are types of unity. As a type of unity, a category may be a category of thought or existence. And one category may be distinct from another category; the category of Substance is distinct from the category of Quality.

A symbol is not a category. A symbol has uniqueness of significance. A symbol denotes and has objective reference. A symbol is not defined; a symbol is understood. As definition is impossible without something being understood and not further defined, a symbol is what is understood and therefore not defined.

Īśa, Lord, in the opening verse of the Upaniṣad, is a symbol and not a category. (In fact, there are only symbols in the Upaniṣads and no categories.) As a symbol, it has uniqueness of reference. The symbol Lord denotes; it denotes one who rules and that over which He rules. And the symbol Lord refers to one entity or individual and does not refer to more than one entity or individual; as such, the symbol Lord functions like a Proper Name.

3. There is a significant distinction between “existence” and “presence” implied in the Upaniṣad. The Īśa speaks of the “presence” of the Lord. There is a distinction between “existence” and “presence”; the notion of “existence” is the notion of “what is” or “what is there”; consistent with this distinction, the Upaniṣads use the demonstrative symbol “that” or “there”: “that which is seen by the eye”, “that by which the eye sees”: “there, the eye goes not”, etc. And as it is not merely of the existence of the Lord that the Upaniṣad speaks, no Ontological Argument is involved in the Upaniṣad. The Upaniṣad affirms “presence”, presence of the Lord in all that moves or evolves in this moving or evolving universe. If philosophy speaks of “existence”, religion speaks of “presence”; “presence” refers to a direct, immediate experience; it involves “seeing”, the “seeing” of a Presence. The demonstrative symbol, “that” or “there” denotes existence, while, the demonstrative symbols,
“here” and “now” denote “presence”. And so the Upanisad points to the presence of the Lord “here” in Nature and History, in all that moves in this moving and evolving universe. To “see” the presence of the Lord in all that moves in this moving and evolving world is to render the otherwise illusoriness of the world illusory.

4. But there is a distinction between two conceptions of “presence”, an “operative presence” and an “indwelling presence”. Both entail different concepts of Nature. The notion of an “operative presence” puts the observer of Nature that Nature implies “outside” Nature: the observer is passively aware of and does not do anything; this is the conception of “presence” implied in the Sāṅkhya: the puruṣa is of the nature of an awareness that is merely aware. The notion of “operative presence” is paradoxically the notion of an “unoperative” presence: what does not do anything.

The Iśa speaks of an “indwelling presence”; “indwelling presence” is not merely the notion of “in”. It is not a notion merely of immanence but a notion of what “functions” within: Like the person who lives in what he builds, the Lord “dwells” in the world as its Ruler and Inner controller. The conception of an “indwelling presence” in Nature entails personification of Nature. Every power in Nature is a “Thou”; for, all Nature’s acts are the acts of the Lord immanent in Nature. This is a “Naturalism” in which Man is universalized or Nature is personified, purusa eva idam sarvam, “All this is (the form of) Person”.

5. The opening verse of the Iśa says: “All that moves in this moving universe is enveloped by the presence of the Lord”. There are three implications of this statement: (a) the notion, “all that moves” involves an apparent contradiction, the contradiction of “a completed infinite”. The notion “all” involves the notion of a class of infinite members; it implies that we have completed examination of a class whose members cannot be completely enumerated because they are infinite; (b) the state-
ment that all that moves in this moving universe is enveloped by the presence of the Lord is in the third person; as such, the statement is like a "report". It reads like the "report" of an observer who had observed the presence of the Lord in all that moves. Who is the observer or witness to the presence of the Lord in all that moves in this moving universe except the Lord Himself: "I am the Self, O, Gudakesa, dwelling in the heart of every being; I am the beginning, and the middle and also the end of all beings". (Gītā X, 20.); (c) The notion of an "indwelling presence" cannot be adequately and correctly expressed except by a symbol whose significance is self-referential; for, a presence that is not a presence to itself is no presence. As Hegel said, Man's consciousness of God is God's consciousness of Himself in man. The Upanişad therefore refers to the "indwelling presence" through a self-referential symbol, ātmā, Self. The Lord is the Self of all beings. He is a Universal presence.

6. In some cases, there is no evolution without involvement: There is no evolution if Form is not "in" Matter in Aristotle. But there is no evolution only with involvement: For, in Aristotle, the goal of evolution is separation of Form that is "in" Matter from Matter. Not so in the Iṣa. The evolution that the Iṣa conceives is the evolution of a universe which discloses more and more its indwelling presence, and the indwelling presence is revealed more and more fully as the evolution of the universe goes on more and more fully.

3. Identity and Unity

The Iṣa asks: tatra ko mohaḥ kah śokah ekatvam anupasyataḥ: What delusion or what sorrow can there be to him who has seen the oneness? ekatvam, "oneness", is analysable into distinguishable concepts, identity and unity. Identity is absence of difference; unity is absence of multiplicity. Identity is more of a logical notion involved in definition, while unity is more of an organic
notion not incompatible with difference of function. In the Isā both concepts are present, identity and unity. But the Isā does not think of these concepts only in their logical or ontological meaning; identity is not merely abstract consistency and unity not merely coherence and freedom from contradiction. The Upaniṣad thinks of these notions as value concepts, as regulative and teleological concepts, as what they can do to transform human experience, transform human sorrow and delusion. In the human situation such as it is, sorrow seems so very real and unity so much of a delusion. But what is sorrow? Are not all hearts united in sorrow? Therefore is not sorrow also a unifying force? Sorrow which seems so very real conceals a unity that seems so much of a delusion. Therefore sorrow conceals what can transform sorrow: viz. “oneness”. If there is no “oneness” through understanding, there will be the “oneness” that sorrow brings. Must this be so? This is the meaning of the question that the Isā asks. Out of the Full, the Full arises, pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate: therefore out of the oneness that sorrow conceals arises or ought to arise the oneness that transforms sorrow.

4. Atma: Self

1. The psychology of the Isā, as of the Upaniṣads in general, distinguishes between, ātma, Self, manas, Mind and indriya, Senses. All of them are compared in the Isā with each other and described in terms of “swiftness”, javāh. This description is not inappropriate; for, the goal of “all that moves in a moving world” is to move faster than it has moved before; and the faster it moves, the faster it moves. In this goal there are only two distinctions: (a) moving faster than we have moved before; and, (b) reaching what we want to reach without moving from where we are, dūram vṛajati, sayāno yāti sarvataḥ, “Sitting, he moves far; lying down he reaches everywhere”. (Katha, I.2.21.). In realising this goal, we give to the physical world a characteristic that
belongs to Mind, viz. "swiftness". And so the Isā says: Mind is swifter than the Senses and the Self swifter than Mind, manaso javiyah; therefore ātma is "beyond" reach of the Mind and the Senses. And the nature of ātma is in reaching everything from where it is without moving. It "outstrips those who run", dhāvato anyānāyeti. And so in reaching things by moving faster than we have moved before or in overreaching them from where we are without moving, we are making the Sensible World a "Copy" (to use a word from Plato) of the Intelligible World.

2. The Upaniṣad says: "The Self is everywhere. Bright is He, bodiless, without scar of imperfection, without bone, without flesh, pure, untouched by evil. The Seer, the Thinker, all-pervading, Self-Existent He it is that has established perfect order among objects and being from beginningless time".

(a) The Isā says that ātma is "untouched by evil", apāpavid-dham. What is evil? Evil is what destroys. Therefore what is "untouched by evil" is what is never destroyed; what is never destroyed is eternal, immortal and good. Good alone is what is immortal and eternal. But there is a distinction between doing evil and suffering evil without doing it. It is the second that is meant by "untouched by evil". Plato said that the Just man does not do evil but has experience of evil because he suffers and endures evil without doing it. The fact that man is ātma and is "untouched by evil" is revealed more by the conscious suffering that he endures without doing it. Therefore conscious suffering exists both in the "ethic of perfection" as in asceticism and in the "ethic of action". In the "ethic of action", conscious suffering is a principle of action by which the good man acts upon a hostile world to bring about in it "a change of heart". The good man changes the world; he changes "the worldly by the non-worldly". The proof that ātma is "untouched by evil" requires an ethic, the ethic of suffering evil without doing it; this is conscious suffering; conscious suffering is not merely
what man "endures" but by what he "prevails".

(b) The *Upaniṣads* speak of ātma as "The Seer", *Kavīh*. In the language of modern logic and epistemology, a linguistic expression containing a definite article of the sort "the—So and—So" is known as a Definite Description. A Definite Description has meaning and has objective reference; there is only one entity and at least one entity and not more than one entity denoted by a Definite Description. Some philosophers think that Definite Descriptions have meaning but may have no application. Some philosophers say that this is the case with the Ontological Argument. The Definite Description, "The Perfect Being" has meaning but may have no application. It may be so in some cases. But there is in the Definite Description "The Seer" a peculiar difficulty; for, the statement "He is the Seer" which is grammatically in the third person singular implies as if there is a "Seer" of "The Seer". This is not the case. When the *Īśa* refers to ātma as "The Seer" it implies that there is no "Seer" of the "Seer". "You cannot see the seer of seeing, you cannot hear the hearer of hearing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking, you cannot understand the understander of understanding". (*Bṛhad-Āranyaka*, III.4.2.).

(c) The *Īśa* speaks of ātma as the "Self-Existent" and says, "He it is that has established perfect order among objects and beings from beginningless time". The concept of a World is not merely "What moves in a moving world" but what has ORDER. It implies that Change and Order, Evolution and Order, Process and Order, Freedom and Order are not incompatible. In fact, it is "ordered change" that is the concept of a World. And if the *Īśa* says, Order is what is established from "beginningless time", then Order is not what is "created" but what is presupposed by Creation. Order, like ātma, is self-existent; or, order is a symbol of the Self-Existent; as such, Order is what is "constitutive". As constitutive, Order is immanent. It is what is in everything, in the macrocosm and the microcosm and in
what moves in this moving world.

5. Opposites

1. The law of contradiction states that a thing cannot be both A and Not-A at the same time. If anything is free from contradiction, is it free from contradiction because it is not contradicted by another or is it free from contradiction because it is free from self-contradiction? It is obvious that it could be both. For instance, when the Aitareya says “ātma was one only in the beginning and nothing else whatever winked”, it means both that it was not contradicted by another and was free from self-contradiction. In discussing the nature of contradiction, it seems, the same sort of question that the Upaniṣads ask about death arises. The Upaniṣads ask: If everything here is “food” for death, what is it for which death is “food”? We may ask likewise: If everything, here, is “food” for contradiction, what is that for which contradiction is “food”? This is pūrnam, The Full. But the nature of the Full that is free from contradiction is stated in the Iṣa by a contradiction: pūrṇam adah pūrṇam idam, pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate; pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya, pūrṇam evāvasiṣyate: “That is full, this is full; out of the full the full arises; deduct full from the full, the full alone remains”. The Iṣa implies that the law of contradiction is involved in its own paradox.

2. There is in the Upaniṣads a dialectic of the Full. The dialectic of the Full may be described as “moving in the secret”, guhā-caram nāma. The dialectic of the Full is formless but assumes forms. There are three main forms: (a) a dialectic of negation: “there the eye goes not”; “there is no understanding of the understander”; neti, neti, not-this (alone), not-that (alone); negation of negation: a negation which negates a “second” negates itself to discover itself in a “second”; (b) a dialectic of transcendence symbolised by the comparative “greater than”,
"higher than"; the comparative completes as it were by implication a progressive, ascending infinite series which is not actually ever completed. It is a movement that keeps going "forward" and "stops not"; (c) a dialectic of inclusiveness and comprehensiveness that includes and comprehends "all", "all that moves in this moving world". This third form needs opposites to symbolise its enveloping movement of comprehension: "It moves; it moves not; It is far; It is near; It is within all this; It is outside all this". The dialectic of the Full comprehends "all this" by being in "all this": Therefore the principle of comprehension is the principle of immanence.

3. The formless dialectic of the Full that "moves in the secret" is a mediated process. It is mediated by opposites. The mediating opposites of the dialectical movement are "dialectical" opposites and not contradictory opposites. Contradictory opposites involve "either-or"; "dialectical" opposites involve no "either-or" but "both" and "neither". The dialectic of the Full that moves towards that which is in all things which is the One or Oneness ekatvam, comprehends in its enveloping movement "all things"; it comprehends "both", both the opposites; therefore vedobhayam, "we have to know both". Why? To transcend both. In the Upaniṣads, an opposite is not transcended in its opposite but in what has no opposite: For instance, avidyā is more "ignorance"; vidya is only a "learned" ignorance; avidya does not know; vidya thinks it knows. Ignorance that becomes aware of itself says neti, neti, neither avidya nor vidya. The Upaniṣads have names for opposites but have no name for what has no opposite. Ignorance that becomes aware of itself asks the question: What is that Vidya by which both avidya and vidya are to be transcended, Vidya which has no opposite?

4. Like Mathematics, the Upaniṣads have variables. And among the variables of the Iṣa are the pairs, vidya and avidya, sambhūti and asambhūti. Like variables these have varying values. Commentators commenting on the Iṣa have shown some ingenuity
in trying to say what they are and yet seem to leave the problem where it is.

Says the Katha: duram ete viparīte viśuci, avidya ca vidyeti jñātāt “Widely apart and leading to divergent ends are these, ignorance and what is known as wisdom”. (1.24). But are there in the Upaniṣads two kind of pairs of avidya and vidya, one pair leading to “divergent ends”, and another pair leading to the same end, “as it were”? For, the Isa says: andham tamah praviśanti ye’vidyam upāsate, tato bhūya ivate tamo ya u vidya-yam ratāḥ “Into blinding darkness enter those who worship ignorance and those who delight in knowledge enter into a still greater darkness, as it were”. (Isa, 9). The pair that lead to the same end, “as it were”, are vidya and avidya, Sambhūti and asambhūti. The point that is relevant is not “what” these two pairs of “Variables” are but whatever they may be, that they lead to the same end, “as it were”. If both lead to the same end, is it not sufficient to know only one of them? No. we are to know both. Why? In order to transcend both. This is necessary; otherwise, we do not know the “whole” truth. “Awake”, “Arise” and “stop not” says the Katha. It means that while we have to “awake” from ignorance it is no awakening if our awakening from ignorance merely “stops” at the dogmatism of a “learned” ignorance which thinks it knows but knows not that it knows not. If one is a danger, the other is a more positive danger. And so in the process of transcending opposites, the dialectic that “moves in the secret” keeps moving and “stops not”. It “goes forward” with an audacious negation, neti, neti, “not-this”, “not-that”, “neither this nor that” or “neither this nor that alone”.

5. Therefore the dialectic that ‘moves in the secret’ moves not merely from one opposite to another nor moves merely between opposites. Its ‘secret’ movement is towards a “secret” reality which has no opposite whatever. For, there is a distinction that the dialectic ‘secretly’ implies between: (a) that which has an opposite or opposites to overcome, and (b) that which has
no opposite whatever to be overcome. *What* is it that has no opposite to overcome? This is the Full, *pūrṇam*. The dialectic that "moves in the secret" arises from the Full and moves towards the Full. Therefore it is obvious what the inquiry should be in the analysis of these dialectical pairs of opposites in the *Upaniṣads*. The question that must be asked is this: If everything here is food for opposites, then what is that for which opposites are "food"? If the question is this, then the answer is this: That which has no opposite whatever: How is this possible? By what principle? By the principle of immanence. The dialectical principle of comprehension which transcends all opposites is the dialectical principle of immanence: That which is indivisible in its oneness and is in all things. And so the most significant verses of the *Īśa* are not the alluring paradoxes about dialectical opposites, *vidyā* and *avidyā*, *sambhūti* and *asambhūti* interesting although they are as antinomies, but the true paradoxes about oneness, a fundamental oneness, *ekatvam*, that sorrow 'secretly' conceals which ought to awaken us to a oneness that is liberation from sorrow which is man's fundamental aspiration. Therefore:

\[
yastu sarvāṇi ātmanyevanupāsyatī sarva bhūteṣu cātmanī tato na 
vijūgupsate yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtāny ātmaivābhūd vijñāṇataḥ tatra 
ko mohaḥ kaḥ sokaḥ ekatvam anupāsyataḥ.
\]

"He that sees all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings, he feels not any revulsion. (And) when all beings have, verily, become one with his own self, then what delusion or sorrow is there to him? This is a question that answers the question it asks.

*Epilogue*

The dialectic that 'moves in the secret' states the nature of what is free from contradiction by using a dialectical contradic-
tion. The Īṣa states the nature of the Full, purṇam, by a contradic-
tion, and states the nature of man’s Good also by a contradiction: 
“enjoy through Renunciation”, tyaktena bhujītha. What is ‘en-
joyment’ in this context, and what is ‘renunciation’? To be 
one’s self or to be true to one’s self is ‘enjoyment’. For, those 
that are not true to their self are “slayers of the self”, atma hano 
anāḥ as the Īṣa says. To be one’s self or to be true to one’s self 
is to be the same in thought, word and deed. He that is the same 
in thought, word and deed is “untouched by sin”, apāpa-viddham; 
for, “sin” is what you cannot do by being the same in thought, 
word and deed.

What is ‘renunciation’? Renunciation is not renunciation of 
action. And so it is in action that man must find his good—
enjoyment and renunciation—in the action by which he is the 
same in his deed as he is in thought and word. Then and only 
then is man liberated from the vicious regress of action, na karma 
lipyate nare.

The Īṣa seems to have thus discovered a basic, universal ethic 
of man and what is right for him to do in all situations. To do 
is to be: To be one’s self; to be the same in thought, word and 
deed. And he that is the same in thought, word, and deed can 
leave the rest; for, he is then ready to accept the consequences 
of his action, to ‘enjoy’ them as they come. In this way, man 
can live a full hundred years performing his actions. And at the 
end of a completed life when the time comes for him to con-
sciously lay down his body, he becomes by recollection of his 
completed life, a ‘spectator’ of his life and directs, as it were, by 
the power of sincerity of wish and desire where it should go: 
“(Now) May this life enter into the immortal breath; then, 
may this body end in ashes”, vayur anilam amṛtam athedam bhasmā-
ntam śarīram. He enjoys renouncing his body without fear or 
regret.
Definition must be in terms of an indefinable. The indefinable which needs no definition is what is understood. Unless there is an indefinable sense in which Being or Knowledge is understood and is not further definable, neither Being nor Knowledge is known. Therefore he that becomes aware of himself inquires about himself. This is a necessary "Circularity" of Being and Knowledge. Kena.
Chapter VIII

KENA UPANIŠAD

Yasyāmatam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda saḥ;
aviṣṭātam viṣṇuḥ tattvāḥ, aviṣṭātam aviṣṭātam: To whomsoever it is not known, to him it is known; to whomsoever it is known, he does not know. It is not understood by those who understand it; it is understood by those who do not understand it. (II. 2.3.).

1. Introduction

The Kena Upaniṣad has only four sections; each of the four sections has nine, five, twelve and nine verses respectively making altogether a total of thirty-five verses. Of the four sections, the first two are in verse and the other two are in prose. Its four sections can be divided into the following topics: Brahman as the real Agent or Source; the fundamental paradox entailed in knowing Brahman; knowing Brahman, “here and now”; and the myth of the vedic gods and their ignorance of Brahman.

The Kena Upaniṣad gets its title from the question Kena, “Because of what”? The question “Because of what” is an Upanisadic question. The Upaniṣads do not ask “How” but “What”, “By what” or “Because of what”. For instance, the Muṇḍaka asks: “By knowing what, Sir, is all this known?” As a “What” entails a “That”, the questions asked in Upaniṣads are about “That”: “That” is not a concept but a demonstrative symbol which denotes: “That” which is “there”, what is “objective” and “public”.

In the Upaniṣads, dialectic and myth co-exist. In the Kena, dialectic precedes myth; in the Katha, myth precedes dialectic. “Dialectic, and dialectic alone”, says Plato in the Republic, “goes to a principle, and is the only science which does away with
hypotheses in order to establish them”. Plato makes a significant
distinction between “hypothesis” and “principle”. Although
both are logically prior to what follows from them, yet a
principle is more fundamental. A principle is required in order
to establish a hypothesis: A principle is self-evident and self-
established. Dialectic is concerned with hypotheses in the sense
that it ‘destroys’ them in order to establish them. And the
principle with which dialectic is concerned is a First Principle.
A First Principle is the Source or Ground as well as the Goal of
inquiry. A First Principle is a “Because”. The question that the
Kena asks is about a “Because”, not about a “Cause”. The Kena
is an inquiry into a First Principle.

In the Kena, the subject-matter of dialectic is also the subject
matter of myth. This is Brahman. While dialectic inquires,
myth narrates. The myth in the Kena narrates the “story” of the
“ignorance”, “once upon a time”, of the vedic gods of Brahman.
While the myth of Naciketas going to Yama’s house in the
Katha is transcendential because it is about the “great beyond”,
the myth in the Kena is regressive, because it is a narration of
what occurred in the receding past of “unrecorded” history.
Dialectic goes to the “original” ignorance of man; myth goes,
as it were, to the “original” ignorance of gods: the original
ignorance of the gods in the Kena, about the source of their own
Being. But their original ignorance is in their egoism. Like
the “egoism of the saint” there is an egoism of the gods. How
are the devas gods then, different from the asuras, demons?
As far as their egoism and ignorance is concerned the devas
are like asuras. Therefore a necessary and sufficient condition
of the knowledge of Brahman is the disappearance of ignorance
whether of gods or men, the ignorance that is egoism. If the
ceasing of egoism is the ceasing of ignorance, or if the ceasing
of ignorance is the ceasing of egoism, then and only then, does
the paradox of knowing Brahman appears, the paradox that
Brahman is “Known” but there is no “Knower” of Brahman.
Therefore Brahman is known by him that says he knows not, not by him that says he knows, \textit{yasya amatam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda sahi}. When Sri Ramakrishna was asked: "When will I be liberated?" Sri Ramakrishna replied, "When you are liberated from the 'I'". There is liberation but no one to be liberated. The dialectic and myth of the \textit{Kena} converge on this point.

The \textit{Kena} has a singular unity of theme like the \textit{M\=and\=ukya}. The \textit{M\=and\=ukya} is on the three states of consciousness; the \textit{Kena} is exclusively on Brahman. There are two distinguishable questions about Brahman: (a) "What is Brahman?" and (b) "What is Brahman like?" To the first question, the \textit{Kena} answers that Brahman is the "Because", the "Source" and the "Goal". As the Goal, Brahman is "the Object of all desire". As the object of all desire, Brahman is "the dearest of all", \textit{tadvanam}. And all 'go' to him who knows Brahman. He that knows Brahman, knows Brahman "here and now", \textit{ih a ced avedid atha satyamasti}. And he knows "through all the modes of his being", \textit{pratibodhavidan matam}. He seeks Brahman through \textit{tapas}, austerity, \textit{dama}, self-control and \textit{karma}, dedicated work and service. To the second question, "What is Brahman like?" the \textit{Upanishad} answers that Brahman is \textit{like} lightning. The \textit{Upanishad} distinguishes between the instantaneous illumination which transforms and illumines like lightning instantaneously and the mere instantaneousness or momentariness of a point—event which is transcendent and perishes as it arises. The \textit{Upanishad} symbolises through the symbol of lightning what "awakening" is. Awakening is the the \textit{simultaneity} of a succession in which there is no lapse or interval between the ceasing of ignorance and the arising of knowledge.

There are many kinds of paradoxes in the \textit{Upanishads}. The \textit{Kena} states the paradox of Knowledge. And it betters the Socratic paradox of knowledge. Socrates said: "I know that I do not know". Therefore Socrates inquires. On what condition is
inquiry possible? On two conditions which the Kena states thus: "Not that I know well" nor "that I do not know at all". Nobody who knows well or thinks so will inquire, nor he that knows not at all and is not aware of his ignorance. He that inquires knows, knows into what he should inquire: "Concerning what have you come to inquire?" is the question that a teacher asks in the Upanisadic tradition to the pupils who "go" to him. And the pupil asks the question Kena with which the Kena Upanisad begins: "Because of what does the mind light on its objects? Because of what does life move? Because of what do the senses function, the eye and the ear?"

2. Being and Knowing

1. The Kena Upanisad gets its title from the question Kena that it asks: this is a rare instance of a philosophical question becoming a Name. The Kena asks: "By whom willed and directed does the mind light on its objects? By whom commanded does life the first move? At whose will do (people) utter this speech. And what god (power) is it that prompts the eye and the ear?" The Upanisad distinguishes between life, sense, and mind. These are empirical distinctions. The question is an inquiry into the ground of what is empirical. Does this mean that the ground of the empirical is not in the empirical? As a "what" implies a "that", the question "By what" implies a "that", a that by which life, sense, and mind are moved. Although we do not know what it is, yet we know "that" it is. And we know it in an indefinable sense as we shall see.

Now as life, sense, mind are not moved by themselves, the Upanisad asks: "By whom" are these "commanded and directed"? To answer this question, we must question the question: Who or what is it that asks this question? Is it life, sense, or mind? In the dialectic of the Upanisads, the answer to the question asked must be found in the question asked by questioning the question.
Therefore, That which asks the question is That about which the question is asked, or, That about which the question is asked is That which asks the question. The question affirms existence of That about which it asks in the question it asks. If so, is the “asking” of a question about existence a way of “affirming” existence? In the dialectical inquiry of the Upanisads, ignorance becomes aware of itself. When it becomes aware of itself it asks a question. Through the question or questions it asks, it affirms what it asks: Who am I?

2. The question Kena means “By what”; this may mean either “cause” or “because”. G. E. Moore once said that the proposition “if p then q” is ambiguous. “If p then q” may mean the relation of implication (entailment) or causality. This sort of ambiguity is in the question Kena “By what”. Is the Kena an inquiry into a “cause” or a “because”? For, the “because” is not a “cause”, and every “cause” is not a “because”. The dialectic of the Kena asks a question about a question. Is the question “By what?” about “cause” or “because”?

3. In the Kena, there is a distinction between “cause” and “because”, and a distinction between “function” and “function of a function”. The Upanisad does not ask “how” anything which functions functions but “by what” it functions. The Upanisad is not interested in the mere empirical fact that the eye sees or the ear hears and so on, but in the other fact that the eye does not see if there is no “seeing of the eye”, the ear does not hear if there is no “hearing of the ear” etc. And the word “see” or “hear” is not of the same order in both the cases. The eye sees; this is a “function” of the eye. But the “seeing of the eye” is a “function of a function”. That there is no proposition about the “form” of the proposition in the same sense in which it is about the proposition is a rule in modern logic. Some such Rule is the basis of what, in modern logic, is called The Theory of Logical Types. This rule of modern epistemology is in the Kena Upanisad.
Why are such phrases "seeing of the eye", "hearing of the ear" etc., at all necessary? Because of a paradox involved in our Knowledge of the External World: That, that through which we see is not what sees but is part of what is seen: e.g. the telescope through which we see is part of the external world that is seen and the eye is like the telescope. Therefore there is no knowledge of the external world without "a seeing of the eye". For, that through which the external world is perceived is itself the perceived part of the external world that is perceived.

5. Two problems arise: (a) first, the notion of "through" is a hierarchial notion. There is not only the eye but "the eye of the eye". This is a hierarchy in which there is a first-order function, a second-order function, etc. without any upper limit. Is this upper limit ever reached? No. Therefore the Upaniṣads speak not of "the highest" but "higher than the highest", of a reality ever involved in its own self-transcendence.

(b) Second, the Kena distinguishes between "functions", seeing, hearing, etc. It implies that what is distinguishable is different. Therefore different is the function of seeing and different is the function of hearing. In other words, "functions" are many. They are a "diversity of the dissimilar". Whereas, that by which all of them function is unitary, and inheres in all of them. How do we know this? How do we know that, that by which all the functions function is unitary? How do we know that the "source" of all of them is a unitary reality? The unitary reality is entailed by the question that the Kena asks, "Because of what". Therefore the answer to a philosophical question is in the question. We get out of a philosophical question only what we have already put into the question as we get out of a bank only what we have already put into it.

6. The distinction between "function" and "function of a function", between the eye that sees and the seeing of the eye, is a distinction between a diversity of functions and a unitary reality that inheres in the diversity. It is a distinction between
the “seen” and the “seer”. The seer is the “because” of seeing and the seen. It is “because of” the “seer” the eye sees.

It seems as if the notion of “because” suggests the Berkelyan doctrine “esse is percipi”, “to be is to be perceived”. Is this the case? No. The notion of esse or Being in the Kena is not the Berkelyan doctrine. Esse is what is not perceived. Why? Because esse is the perceiver. Esse is not only what is not actually perceived but what is not perceivable: The perceiver is neither the perceived nor the perceivable: na tatra caksur gacchati, na vāg gacchati no manah”, “There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind”: “There”, where? Where there is the perceiver.

The Kena distinguishes between two senses of the demonstrative symbol “That”; (a) “That which is seen by the eye”, and, (b) “That by which the eye sees”. Both are “there”. “That which is seen by the eye” is “there”. It is a physical object. It is, as Russell and Broad say, “public” and “neutral”: “public” because it is the same for different observers and “neutral” as between different perceptions of the same observer. “That which is seen by the eye” is the external world. It is “there” as “the terminus of sense-awareness”. As the senses are so “pierced as to look only outward” as the Kaṭha says, the senses see, directly, the external world which is “there” as the terminus of sense-awareness. And as there is no subjective idealism of Berkeley in the Kena, there is no need in the Kena of a proof of the reality of the external world. As the senses are so “pierced” as to look only outward, so whatever they see is outward and external whether a sense-datum, image, or physical object.

Now, “That by which the eye sees” is also “there”. The “there” is not spatial and does not denote place or direction. It denotes what is “objective”. If we ask “where”, the answer is: “there”, where “the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind”. At this point we are involved in a circularity: For, “that” and “there” denote Being, and Being is what is denoted by the demonstrative symbols “that” and “there”. Is Being what is
demonstrated? Is Being what is “pointed to”? No. It is rather that which points to, not what is “pointed at”. “That by which the eye sees”, is “there”: “there”, where “the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind”. Is it “there”, then, as a “thing-in-itself”, unknown or unknowable? This depends upon what is meant by known and unknown. Inquiry into Being is therefore inquiry into knowing: *Now, therefore, the inquiry into knowing.*

7. Inquiry into knowing is not inquiry into what is known but inquiry into that “by which” or “because of” which the known, is known. The question *Kena* “Because of what” which the *Kena* asks is a basic problem of knowledge. By what is the known, known? As the *Upanishad* distinguishes between: “That which is seen by the eye” and “That by which the eye sees”, the question “By what is the known, known?” applies to both. “That which is seen by the eye”, which is “there”, is known by observation and sense-perception, because “That which is seen by the eye” belongs to the Observable Kind; whereas, “That by which the eye sees” does not belong to the Observable Kind and yet is known. How or “by what” is it known? By inference? What is inference? Inference is a relation of “follows from”. (Bertrand Russell distinguished only two kinds of Knowledge: “Knowledge by Acquaintance” and “Knowledge by Description”. But there is a third kind of knowledge, “Knowledge by Inference”). Inference is knowing what “follows from” what. But “by what” is that which does not itself “follow from” another but “follows from” itself, known? Inference is possible if and only if there is a sense of “know” which is independent of knowing by inference. This is the paradox of the “circularity of knowledge”: Nothing is known unless something prior is known. What is known in this sense is known directly and immediately: i.e. known in an indefinable sense. If so, what is the indefinable? The indefinable is what is understood. Therefore there is no knowledge unless there is the indefinable and the understood. This is known or this is the known. What is it
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that is both the indefinable, the understood and the known? That which asks the question: "Because of what". The indefinable, the understood and the known are denoted by the demonstrative symbol That. Therefore unless there is an indefinable sense of know, and we know in this indefinable sense, we cannot answer "No" to the following questions: (1) That which is "the ear of the ear", "the eye of the eye" etc., is it observed? Does it belong to the Observable Kind? No. (2) If it does not belong to the Observable Kind and is not known by observation, is it known by inference? No. (3) If it is not known by observation or inference, is it the unknown or the unknowable? No. (4) If it is neither the unknown nor the unknowable but the known, is it known "well"? Yes. (5) If it is not known "well" is it not known "at all"? No. On what ground do we say "No" unless we "know"? Therefore to know is to have known. What is That which to know is to have known. That is ātman. To know ātman is to have known ātman. Therefore it is that the pupil in the Kena said: "I do not think (or say) that I know it well; nor do I think (or say) that I know it not at all". The dialectic of the Kena is a passage, not from the unknown to the known, but a passage from the known to the known. This passage from the known to the known in the sense that, although you do not know it "well" you know it not "at all"—is a necessary "circularity" which is the fundamental truth of self-knowledge. Therefore the Kena inquires into that into which it inquires.

Epilogue

In the Upaniṣads there is no 'theory' of knowledge; the Upaniṣads are neither empiricism nor rationalism, neither idealism nor realism. The Kena asks "By what": by what does the mind light on its objects, by what does life move, by what do the senses sense? But there is the same question about it: "By what" is that by which life moves, mind thinks and the senses sense,
known? By no particular mode of cognition but by every state or mode of cognition, *pratibodhaviditam matam*. The Self “is to be seen, is to be heard, is to be reflected on, is to be meditated upon; when, verily, the Self is seen, heard, reflected on, and known, then all this is known”. So said Yajnavalkya to his wife, Maitreyi in the *Bṛhad-Āranyaka*. This is a Verification Principle of the Upaniṣads: What is heard is to be seen, and what is meditated upon is to be lived “here and now”, *iha ced avid vathu sayam asti*, truth is to be known and to be lived here, here alone. The Verification Principle is not what is heard is verified by what is heard but by what is seen; and so it is in a life lived “here”, here alone, that truth meditated upon is verified.
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Inquiry into immortality is not inquiry into what is indestructible in a physical sense. Indeed, it is an inquiry into what cannot be destroyed by evil; for, it is evil that destroys. This is the Good, śreyas, the Good “beyond good and evil”, anyatra dharmāt, anyatra adharmāt. Therefore the immortal is the Good, and the Good is the immortal. Both are present in the tranquil, in the tranquil self, śānta-ātmā. This is here and now as the substratum of our Being. To withdraw inward into the tranquility of our Being and to issue forth in thought and action from there is Yoga. Yoga is becoming “awake” to your own self. Yoga is not merely “seeing inward” but “being inward”: Kātha.
Chapter IX

KATHA UPA NiSHAD

Yasya brahma ca kṣtram ca ubhe bhavata odanaḥ mṛtyur yasyopasecanam, ka itthā veda yatra saḥ: He for whom priesthood and nobility both are as food and death is as a sauce, who really knows where He is? (I. 2.25.).

1. Introduction

1. The Katha has two chapters; each chapter has three sections; sections one, two, and three of the First Chapter have 29, 25, and 17 verses respectively; sections one, two, and three of the Second chapter have 15, 15 and 18 verses respectively; and all the six sections of the two chapters have altogether a total of 119 verses. These 119 verses may be divided without straining to be too exact in the attempt as follows: Section I, 1-6, Naciketas and his father; 7-9, Naciketas in the house of Yama; 10-11, Naciketas First Wish; 12-19, Naciketa’s Second Wish; 20-29, Naciketas Third Wish. The first section is a narration of the dialogue between Naciketas and Yama. (In the Katha, we see the anger of a father). Section II, 1-14, The Two Ways, sreyas and preyas; 15-17, The Syllable Aum; 18-25, The Eternal Self; Section III, 1-17, The Method of Yoga. Chapter II, Section I: 1-15, Seeing outward and Seeing inward; Section II, 1-8, Re-birth; 9-15, The Immanent and the Transcendent; Section III, 1-17, The World-Tree, and the last verse 18 concludes thus: “Then Naciketas, having gained this knowledge declared by death and the whole rule of Yoga, attained Brahman and became freed from passion and from death. And so may any other who knows this is regard to the Self”.

2. Even in the Upanisads, it seems, there is a “generation gap”,
and the Katha gives an illustration. The Upanisad discloses who it is that is always absent from his home on duty, and is busier than even the Lord of Creation. It seems that the power that presides over death has human weaknesses enough to believe that misfortune overtakes if a guest is turned out overlooking in its generosity the distinction between an invited guest and a mere visitor.

The Katha has insights into the nature of the human mind. It is somehow aware that in its quest of truth, the human mind is captivated more by fiction. Is human immortality a truth or fiction? It seems as if the distinction between truth and fiction ceases to be about human immortality; for, the truth seems so much like fiction. And immortality is therefore the subject-matter of both Myth and Dialectic, and Myth precedes Dialectic in the Katha.

In the myth of the Vision of Er in Plato’s Republic, it is the soul of a dead soldier killed in battle that goes to the yonder world and reports on its return what it has seen there. In the Katha, it is the anger of a father that banishes his only son to the yonder world. It seems that Yama, the power that rules over death, is a “god” to whom only anger and nothing else offers, as it were, its “Oblations”. And it seems that in the two myths, of the Katha and of Plato, the yonder world is very much like this world. But it is significant that it is in the yonder world to which he has gone that Naciketas desires to know immortality. Is immortality therefore unlike this world and other than the yonder world?

The Myth narrated in the Katha makes the power that presides over death itself immortal. Why? Because of a fundamental paradox, the paradox that death is a report about what dies or is dead by what is a witness to what dies or is dead but does not die. Therefore the power which is a witness to all that dies is itself immortal. And the Upanisad true to the vedic poet’s “pathetic fallacy” personifies this power and names him Yama. Yama
is a symbol of that infinity into which “departs” an infinity that in Creation, arises. But the Upaniṣad is an inquiry into that fundamental infinity which neither arises nor departs. Although Yama is a “god” who holds the Key to a secret and a mystery, yet he is a “god” after whom nobody would like to be named unless in anger or in joke.

3. In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad, the “transcendental imagination” is at free play and nothing is impossible for it. Unless the “transcendental imagination” transcendently saw that the fear of death is the ultimate Myth, it could not build a Myth with which the Kaṭha opens and construct a dialogue between Yama and Naciketas. Between them there is an interesting contrast: Yama is a god; Naciketas is a mortal but a Youth. It is not old age that inquires into the possibility of after life but Youth. Why? Because, to be immortal is to be eternally young. Whereas in all the other Upaniṣads the teacher answers the questions put to him by his pupils and is not evasive, Yama is evasive, is not willing to disclose the mystery and is a great tempter. Yes; the conquest that man makes is through temptations, and man’s success in this is not a defeat of the gods but their success as well. As gods must have become gods through the conquest of temptations one more is added to their heavenly company if man overcomes the temptations they offer. So eventually Yama is pleased with Naciketas and names a sacred, sacrificial fire after him and desires that their be questioners like him.

4. The Kaṭha Upaniṣad has two kinds of propositions by which it affirms the Self: (a) “This is like That”; and, (b) “This, verily, is That”. The first is a product of the “transcendental imagination”; it creates pictures, analogies and parables. The second may be defined as a “Verification Principle” on which empiricism is based.

The first pictures reality. It has created in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad two parables, the Parable of the Chariot and the Parable of the World-Tree. The Parable of the Chariot pictures the Self as
Lord of the Chariot, the body as the Chariot, the intellect (buddhi) as the charioteer, the mind manas as the reins, and the senses indriyas as the horses. This picture pictures the method and mechanism of self-control by which as Plato said man becomes "a royal master of himself". The Mahābhārata says there is no dharma higher than dama, self-control. The second Parable pictures the Universe as a Tree; but it is a Tree whose roots are above, in Brahman, and its branches are spread out below.

The "transcendental imagination" which creates myths and parables constructs analogies. Analogy is a rule by which an endless series is comprehended: as a is to b, so c is to d. And it is by the use of analogy that imagination bridges the transcendental and the empirical. The intent of the analogies in the Katha is to illustrate the one and the many, how the one appears as the many: "As fire which is one, entering this world becomes varied in shape according to the object (it burns), so also the one Self within all beings becomes varied according to whatever (it enters), and also exists outside them all" and so on.

There are eleven verses which conclude with, "This, verily, is That", etad vai tat. All of them occur in the Second Chapter and in different places. The proposition, "This, verily, is That" is a form of identity. But it is not the identity that a definition involves in which one of the terms is understood and the other term is defined in terms of the term that is understood. The proposition, "This, verily, is That" is the identity involved in recognition. But the recognition that the proposition "This, verily, is That" is not merely the recognition that recollection and recall that memory involve. On the contrary, the proposition, "This, verily, is That" means that, That which is "declared" is, "Verily", the same as That which now is a realised actuality; or, This which is a realised actuality is the same as That which was "declared" (declared by the Scriptures). The proposition "This, verily, is That" is not therefore the identity merely of two Descriptions: e.g. "The King of England" is, verily, the same
as "the Emperor of India". The proposition "This, verily, is That" is a Verification-Principle. In the Upaniṣads, this means that what is revealed in śruti is verily the same as that which here and now is verified in experience. Therefore not merely reason but experience is the final test of truth: "He who was born of old from austerity, was born of old from the waters, who stands, having entered the secret place (of the heart) and looked forth through beings. This, verily, is that", yah pūrvam tapaso jātam, adbhyah pūrvam ajāyata, guhām praviśya tiṣṭantum, yo bhūtebir vyapaśyata: etad vai tat. (II. 1.6).

5. Dialectic and Myth co-exist in the Upaniṣads. In the Katha, Myth precedes Dialectic. There are four components of Dialectic, opposition, contradiction, negation, and paradox. Dialectic is a movement; but not movement which is an alternation of opposites which constitutes the movement of Prakṛti in the Sāṁkhya. As movement, Dialectic is ordered progression. The ordered progression is a movement of self-transcendence. (We shall see that the ordered progression of self-transcendence is the Yoga of the Katha Upaniṣad). This is the nature of the Self. This is the nature of the Infinite. Negation is a moment in its movement of self-transcendence. As the Self is greater than itself, in its self-transcendence it negates itself: neti, neti, "not this", "not this alone". It is in this context that the significant negations of the Katha Upaniṣad occur: "This Self cannot be attained by instruction, nor by intellectual power, nor even through much hearing", nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā na bahunā śrutena. "The sun shines not there, nor, the moon and the stars, these lightings shine not, what then of this the fire?" nātatra suryo bhāti, na candra tārkam, nema vidyuto bhānti, kuto ayam agniḥ. And the Self has opposite characteristics: "Sitting, he moves far; lying down he reaches every where", āsino dūram vṛajati, śayāno yāti sarvataḥ.

Paradox is truth which involves a dialectical contradiction; a dialectical contradiction is a contradiction that is necessary to
state a truth. Paradox therefore states the truth through a necessary contradiction. Although a paradox involves a necessary contradiction, a paradox of thought or logic may be distinguished from a paradox of experience. The paradoxes of the Upaniṣads are paradoxes of experience. The paradox of experience is a paradox of consciousness. The central paradox stated in the Kaṭha is this: *ya eṣa supṭeṣu jāgarti*, “one who is awake in those that are asleep”: “That is Brahman, That, indeed, is called the immortal”, *tad brahma, tad evāṁrtam ucayate*.

But a dialectical inquiry into the self-transcendent which arises as a fundamental question in the Upaniṣads—e.g.: “By knowing what, Sir, is all this known?”—is followed by a fundamentally sceptical question: *yasya brahma ca ksatram ca ubhe bhavata odanaḥ, mṛtyur yasyopasecanam, ka itthā veda yatra saḥ*, “He for whom priesthood and nobility both are as food, and death (has the pleasant taste) as a sauce, who really knows where He is?”

2. “Seeing Outward” and “Seeing Inward”

1. The Upaniṣads are a metaphysics of Being. They arrive at Being in several different ways. In their inquiry into Being, the Upaniṣads start with “seeing”, and distinguish between “seeing outward” and “seeing inward”. Both seem to involve contradictions: In “seeing outward” we see, it seems, not Being but “Nothing (as in the Chāndogya); in “seeing inward” we seem to see the “seer” as the “seen”.

2. The distinction between “seeing outward” and “seeing inward” is made in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad. This is one of the fundamental distinctions of the Upaniṣad. The Upaniṣad says: “The self is not to be sought through the senses. The Self-Caused (svayambhūḥ) pierced the openings of the senses outward; therefore one looks outward and not within oneself. Some wise man however seeking life eternal and with his eyes turned within, saw the Self”. (Kaṭha, II. 1.). That the senses look outward
because they are so 'pierced' as to look outward, is a tautology. It implies that the only proof of the reality of the external world is in a tautology: viz., the senses look outward because they are 'pierced' to look outward, such that the external world is perceived by what looks outward. Does the external world exist because it is perceived? No. There is no Berkleyan idealism in the Upaniṣads, esse is percipi.

3. But there are problems: (a) Since "seeing outward" is through an appropriate sense-organ is seeing "inward" also an instance of seeing through an appropriate sense-organ? This is the question. (b) Since perception of the external world is through a sense-organ, and is an instance of "mediate" knowledge, is seeing "inward" also "mediate" knowledge? This is the question. (c) Is "seeing" in "seeing outward" and "seeing inward" a "determinate" under the same "Determinable"? This is the question. (d) If the Upaniṣads say that some wise man saw the Self do not the Upaniṣads also say "there the eye goes not", etc.? This is the question. (e) Even if "seeing outward" and "seeing inward" are altogether different modes of seeing, to say that some wise man saw the Self even with eyes turned within is to say that the Self is the seen. Does the Self belong to the Observable Kind? This is the question.

4. The Kena Upaniṣad distinguishes between: (a) "That which is seen by the eye", and (b) "That by which the eye sees": (The implication is that the eye does not see that by which it sees). This is a fundamental distinction between seer and seen. It is a distinction that is ultimate and irreducible. The wisdom of the wise man understands this distinction. The distinction is incompatible with the statement that the wise man saw the Self. Yet, both are true. To inquire into this problem is to inquire into the use of "see" in the Upaniṣads. Therefore let us go to another passage in another Upaniṣad.

5. Here is a well-known passage from the Chāndogya which is a conversation between Uddālaka, the father, and Svetaketu,
the son. (VI. 12. 1-2.) "Bring hither a fruit of the nyagrodha tree. Here, it is, venerable, Sir. Break it. It is broken, venerable, Sir. What do you see there? These extremely fine seeds, venerable, Sir. Of these, please break one. It is broken, venerable, Sir. What do you see there? Nothing at all, venerable, Sir".

Then the father said to him: "My dear, that subtle essence which you do not perceive, verily, my dear, from that very essence this great nyagrodha tree exists. Believe me, my dear. That which is the subtle essence, this whole world has for its Self. That is the true. That is the Self. That art thou, Svetaketu".

6. In this conversation, the father conveys to the son the metaphysical doctrine that Being is Essence and Essence is Being. But in asking his son "what do you see there?" is he not referring to "seeing outward"? Is he not asking his son to see what cannot be seen by "seeing outward" viz. Essence? And is not the son's answer "(I see) Nothing at all, Sir" very relevant and appropriate? Essence is "Nothing" for "seeing outward". But the son did not say that there is nothing because he sees nothing. The senses that see outward see the external world but not Essence. Why? Because of a significant distinction: (a) there is something which is not actually perceived but is perceivable; and, (b) there is something which is not actually perceived because it is not the perceivable. The father said, "That subtle essence which you do not perceive, verily, my dear, from that very essence this great nyagrodha tree exists". (italics mine). Why did not Svetaketu perceive that Essence? Was it perceivable but not actually perceived?; or, was it not perceived because it is not the perceivable? Was not the son rather asked to perceive something that is not the perceivable, and then told "that subtle essence which you do not perceive" as if that subtle essence was, in fact, the perceivable? But how was this distinction made clear to Svetaketu?

7. The father said, "That thou art": The "That" does not refer to the external world which is perceived by looking outward. It refers to Essence which is not perceived by "seeing
outward”. The “That” is not the perceived nor the perceivable; it is not perceived nor is perceivable by “seeing outward”. But Svetakeru is “That”—That Essence—which is not perceived nor perceivable. He is That which is not the perceivable, not perceivable by “seeing outward”. But is it perceivable by “seeing inward”? This is the question. For “seeing outward” Essence is “nothing”; whereas for “seeing inward” Essence which is his Self is the “seen”. There is an apparent contradiction here. Is the Self seen? Both are contradictions: seeing “Nothing” and seeing the “seer” as the “seen”. How are these contradictions resolved? By understanding the nature of Being: For, Being is “Being inward”. To “see” inward is to be inward. “Seeing inward” is “Being inward”: Seeing is Being: “To see God is be God”. (Ramana Maharshi).

8. But “Be” means “Become”; “Be inward” means “become inward”. The metaphysics of Being is a metaphysics of “becoming inward”. In the metaphysics of the Kātha Upaniṣad this is a Process. And it is a discipline. And it is not mere becoming but self-becoming. As Inquiry becomes self-inquiry, becoming becomes self-becoming. This process which is a discipline and is a self-becoming is Yoga. Yoga is becoming that which you are: “That thou art”: you have to become That which you are. The metaphysics of Being is in the Upaniṣads a metaphysics of self-becoming. The self-becoming which is a process is the opposite of “emergence”. It is a “merging”, (not like a bucket immersed in water to be drawn out again) like a river “merged” into the ocean where it has become the ocean. It is a process of “merging”: merging that into that from which it emerges: speech into mind, mind into understanding, understanding into that great Understanding which understandeth and comprehendeth all things which the Kātha names, mahān ātmā, and the mahān ātmā into that tranquility and peace which is Being and its inwardness. (Kātha, I. 3.13.). This is the śanta-ātmā, the self that is peace and tranquility. The “life eternal”
that the wise man seeks is this and nothing else. It is there in the inwardness of his Being and not in a Beyond. And "seeing with eyes turned within" is not an act but a process, a process of becoming or a process of Be-ing (as Ramana Maharshi said). The metaphysics of Being is a "practice", the "practice" of Be-ing, a practice of Be-ing inward. Why? Because in the metaphysics of the upanisads, the most inward is the most real, and the highest is the most inward.

9. Now, this analysis has made the discovery that "seeing inward" is "Be-ing inward". And it is discovered that this is a dialectical process. A dialectical process was defined in the Introduction to this chapter as a process of self-transcendence, a quest of that which is "higher than the highest" aksarāt parataḥ paraḥ. In the Upaniṣads, the "highest" is the same as the most "inward"; therefore the need of "seeing inward". If the "highest" is the most "inward", then the dialectical process of self-transcendence is an "ordered progression" into what is most inward. This is śānta ātmā, the tranquil Self. The śānta ātmā is what cannot be "spoken of". It is a truth communicated only in silence, mounavākyaprakaṣṭitatatvam. And the wise man that sees "inward" or is "inward" in his Being, practises silence and communicates what he has seen through silence. But there is a WORD which symbolises this silence. It is the mystic WORD Aum. And so when Naciketas asks Yama: "Tell me that which thou seest beyond right and wrong, beyond cause and effect, beyond past and future", Yama says "That is Aum": The WORD which all the vedas declare; and that, verily, is the everlasting, etadd hy evaksaram brahma, and that, indeed, is the highest end, etadd hy evāksaram param.

10. Now, the metaphysics of Being is a metaphysics of Experience. The Upaniṣad says that some (kaścid) wise man saw the self with eyes turned within. Why the word "some", and why the past tense "saw"? The opposite of "Some X" is "No X". If nobody had the experience of seeing the Self with eyes
turned within, then what is said in the Upaniṣads would be a mere speculative possibility and not a fact of someone’s experience. But the Upaniṣad refers, in fact, to “someone’s” experience. This is consistent with the use of the past tense “saw”. The use of the past tense implies that what is said is like an authentic report that someone makes about something that had actually happened and had been actually seen. The use of the past tense implies a witness. The use of the past tense in this significant sense occurs and recurs in the Upaniṣads. By the use of the past tense, the Upaniṣads refer to an actuality and not to a mere possibility; for, a possibility is yet to be. And in using the past tense the Upaniṣad refers to a Fact, a fact of experience; a fact of someone’s experience. Therefore, Reality is experience. And “Experience” is “seeing inward”.

3. Śreyas and Preyas

1. The Upaniṣads are not only a metaphysic of Being but are a metaphysic of Happiness (sukham) and Delight (ānanda). To be is to be Happy: This is an Axiom. If a man is happy, what does he do? The Upaniṣads say that if a man is happy, he is active: sukham eva labdhvā karoti; so says the Chāndogya (VII. 22.1.). But what is the activity which makes man happy, and what is the happiness which makes him active? The Quest for the Infinite: bhumaiva sukhamasti, na alpe sukham; “The Infinite is Happiness. There is no Happiness in the small, no Happiness in the finite”. (Chāndogya, VII. 23.1.). But if the Infinite is Happiness, then Happiness also must be of the same nature as the Infinite. Happiness therefore must be immeasurable. But the Upaniṣads “measure” Happiness. By what measure? By the measure of Happiness that the study of the Veda brings; and by the measure of Happiness that a man of “no-desires” has: śrotiyasya ca akāmahatasya. (Taittiriya, XI. 8.1.). Why has he no desires? Because all his desires are satisfied in his desire for
the Infinite.

2. But Preyas “Pleasure” is distinct and different from sukha, “Happiness” and ānanda, “Delight”. Preyas (pleasure) is the opposite of śreyas (Good). But preyas and śreyas are both in relation to conscious choice. Although both are related to conscious choice, both are “widely apart” and lead to “divergent ends”, and he that chooses preyas “fails of his aim”. But there is here a paradox: śreyas is Good related to free, conscious choice. The pursuit of Good is through free, conscious choice. If there is no free, conscious choice, then there is no Good. But preyas is also related to free, conscious choice in the same way as śreyas. Preyas which is the opposite of Good is chosen through the same free, conscious choice. Both śreyas and preyas are chosen through free, conscious choice. There is neither Good nor its opposite if there is no free choice. If so, what is the difference between free, conscious choice which chooses śreyas, and free, conscious choice which chooses preyas? Free, conscious choice by which man chooses preyas “binds” him; free, conscious choice by which man chooses śreyas leaves him free. It is in the pursuit of the highest and imperishable that man is free etaddhyevākṣaram jīvātā, yo yad icchatī tasya tat. If so, the distinction between śreyas and preyas is a distinction between an imperishable and a perishable good.

3. What is aksara, the imperishable? Is it the indestructible in a physical sense? In the Mundaka, there is, as we shall see, a fundamental distinction between a-parā-vidyā, “lower-knowledge” and parā-vidyā, “higher knowledge”. Parā-vidyā is knowledge of the imperishable aksara. But matter is also indestructible. Is aksara same as Matter? No. aksara is that which is aware that it is indestructible, na jāyate mriyate vā. This awareness is a joy. Therefore there is no sat (reality) which is not chit awareness, and no sat which is chit which is not ānanda (delight).

4. The Katha Upaniṣad is an inquiry into immortality. In the context of its inquiry, aksara (imperishable) has a different mean-
ing. *Aksara* is not merely that which is *aware* that it is indestructible; immortality is not merely the notion of that which is aware that it is indestructible. What is it that destroys? That which destroys other things as well as itself is evil. Therefore *aksara* (imperishable) is that which is not destroyed by evil. Good is *not* destroyed by evil. Good does not do evil but suffers evil. But no suffering destroys what is Good. Therefore the immortal is the Good, and the Good is the immortal. It is relevant that Yama should answer Naciketas inquiry into immortality by pointing to the two paths *sreyas* and *preyas* and show the way to the Immortal through the Good.

5. The following arguments for Immortality are "necessary" but not "sufficient":

(i) One of the arguments for Immortality is an analogy, the relation between body and soul. The relation is compared to the relation between a garment and he that wears the garment: Just as a man casts off old and worn out garments and puts on new ones, so does the soul cast off old and worn out bodies and assume new ones. This analogy is in the *Gita*. (II. 22.). The implication is that just as the man who casts off old and worn out garments and outlasts them all, so does the soul. But this analogy works both ways. In the *Phaedo* Socrates said: "But the more lasting nature of the soul does not prove her immortality; for after having worn out many bodies in a single life, and many more in successive births and deaths, she may atlast perish, or ... the very act of her birth may be the beginning of her death and the last body may survive the last soul, just as the coat of an old weaver is left behind him after he is dead, although a man is more lasting than a coat. And he who would prove the immortality of the soul, must prove not only that the soul outlives one or many bodies but that she outlines them all". (*Phaedo*, Vol. I, Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, p. 384).

(ii) The *Katha* says that *atman* is neither born nor does it die, *na jayate mriyate va*. As what is born dies, it is only analytically
true that what is not born does not die. But átman is neither born nor does it die. Why? Because whatever comes into being and goes out of being comes into being or goes out of being “part by part”. The notion of what is not born and does not die is the notion of what has no “parts”. And what has no “parts” is the infinite or the infinitesimal, anoraniyān, mahato mahiyān (Katha, 1.2.20.). This is átma.

(iii) What has no “parts” is indivisible. This is the notion of a “simple” Substance, a Monad. Is a Monad changeless? A Monad is the source of its own change as Leibniz said. But átman is changeless. Although a Monad is not destroyed by any “natural means” yet a Monad has not the attribute of “eternity”, whereas “eternity” is the attribute par excellence of átman. Atman is “eternal”, nityāh. Nothing else has this attribute. It is not “sufficient” to say therefore that átman is “unborn”, ajah. The negative has to be completed by positive attributes nityāh “eternal”, śāsvatāh “abiding”, and purānah, “ancient”. (Appropriate to the notion of what is purānah “ancient” is the doctrine of “Transcendental Recollection” in Plato).

6. But is the Good that the Katha points to a good that has an opposite? No. Because it is Good that distinguishes itself from good and evil. If Naciketas is not tempted by evil, he is not be tempted by a good that is merely an opposite of evil. Naciketas is seeking the Good “beyond good and evil”. His quest is expressed by him thus: “Tell me what thou seest beyond right and wrong, beyond what is done or not done, beyond past and future” : anyatra dharmād anyatādharmaṁ, anyatāsmāt kṛtākṛtān anyatra bhūtāca bhavyāccha yat paśyasi tad vada. There is a good that has to overcome evil but there is the Good that is good because it has no evil to overcome.

7. Aksara, the Imperishable which is the Good, and the Good which is the Imperishable is symbolised by aksara the WORD, AUM. It is the WORD which all the vedas declare, sarve vedāḥ yat padam āmananti. It is the WORD which is the Supreme
Brahman, etaddhyevaksaram brahma. It is the WORD which is the Supreme Goal, etadd hy eva aksaram param. And it is in the choice of the Imperishable Good that whatever chooses or desires is his, etaddhyevaksaram jnativā, yo yad icchati tasya tat. Therefore Aum Tat Sat.

Epilogue

The Katha says, “Awake” and “Arise” and “stop not”. No one arises who is not awake or is not awakened; and to one who is awake or awakened, it is not necessary to say “arise”. But is it necessary to say “awake”? The teacher does not awaken a pupil unless he comes to him already awakened. It is the awakened ignorance of the pupil that makes him ‘go’ to a teacher. The teacher awakes therefore one who is already awakened. He awakes him to the Self that is never un-aware. It is to this that the pupil is awakened. The Self that is never un-aware is awake in those that are asleep, esa suptesu jagari. Therefore there is an awareness that is never un-aware, as distinct from an awareness that is a ‘state’, and like a ‘state’ comes and goes. There is a distinction in awareness between what is merely a ‘state’ and what is not a ‘state’. This distinction is the basis of Yoga; and the basis of Yoga is in the fundamental distinctions of the Upanisads. The distinction between an awareness that is never un-aware, and the awareness that is merely a ‘state’ entails a practical problem. Not only how to attain consciously that awareness that is never un-aware, but how, after having consciously attained it, to issue forth from there consciously into all the activities of life. Both are invariable aspects of Yoga. The Upanisads are Yoga.

Yoga is a master art. Yoga is mastery of the great art of living. In mastering the art, we are like the joyful dancer with a pot on her bare head who executes all her fine movements having yet her entire attention centred on the pot on her head not letting it fall. From that awakening that becomes awake to the Self
that is never un-awake "arises" the integral Yoga of the Upanisads, the Yoga of life and of thought and of action. And the Yoga that arises "stops not".
PRASHNA UPAKISHAD
Life is desire which is “Want”; to have what you have not, or to desire to have what you have. Life is also desire which is not “Want”: neither to want to have what you have not, nor to want to have what you have. By the desire to give away its abundance, the Abundant remains abundant. This is Creation—Praśna.
Chapter X

PRASHNA UPAnishad

Vṛatyastvam prāṇa, ekāṣir attā viśvasya satpaitih: Thou art ever pure, O Life, (thou) the one seer, (thou) nourisher, (thou) the real Lord of all. (II. 11.).

1. Introduction

1. The Praśna Upaniṣad is an Upaniṣad of questions. It is an Upaniṣad of six questions asked by six pupils to the same teacher. The six pupils have ‘selected’ their teacher to ‘go’ to him to ask him questions. And all of them are intent on the inquiry into the Supreme Brahman. They know what their inquiry is, and they know who the teacher is to whom they should ‘go’ with their inquiry. The teacher says that he will answer their questions “as far as he knows” but will answer them on the condition that they live with him for a year. How are they to live? As they like? No: They are required to live with him with austerity, with chastity or purity of body and mind, and with dedication. But the six pupils do not ask only six questions. Each pupil in asking a question asks ‘supplementary’ questions so much so that the teacher says that they question too much. Well, why not? To a teacher to whom they ‘go’ because they know that he will explain “all” to them, they will ask “all” that they want to know. The Praśna Upaniṣad which is an Upaniṣad of six questions has therefore six sections, and each of the six sections has sixteen, thirteen, twelve, eleven, seven, and six verses, making altogether a total of sixty-five verses same as the total number of the verses as the Mundaka.

2. What are the six questions? Here they are in their order:
   (1) Venerable Sir, whence, verily, are all these creatures born?
   (2) Venerable Sir, how many powers (devāh) support the created
world? How many illumine this? (body). And who, among them, is the greatest?; (3) Venerable Sir, whence is this life born? How does it come into this body? And how does it distribute itself and establish itself? In what way does it depart? How does it support what relates to the Self, katham adhyātmam iti; (4) Venerable Sir, what are they that sleep in this person? What are they that keep awake in them? What is the god that sees dreams? Whose is this happiness? In whom, pray, are all these established?; (5) Venerable Sir, what world does he, who among men meditates on the syllable Aum until the end of his life, win by that?; (6) Venerable Sir, a prince of the Khosala Kingdom approached me and asked this question, "Bharadvaja, do you know the person with the sixteen parts? I replied to that prince, "I know him not. If I had known him, why should I not tell you about it. Verily, to his roots, he withers, who speaks untruth. Therefore, it is not proper for me to speak untruth". In silence, he mounted his chariot and departed. I ask you about him where is that person?"

3. All the six questions are about life. Although life as manifest in matter is in all beings, yet, the inquiry of the six pupils is about life and its manifestation—in "this", in this "body", bāṇa; in man who is conscious of his body and of himself. Life has become conscious of itself in man. And Life which is one in its indivisible unity seems to "distribute" itself in its "functions". In becoming conscious of itself, it becomes conscious of its "functions", and of the "states" of consciousness. Therefore the sequence of questions, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The reference to the states of consciousness entails reference to the symbol Aum; each "element", a, u, m is a symbol of the three "states" of consciousness, waking, dream and sleep. (But there is an entire Upaniṣad devoted to this topic, the Māṇḍukya.) Although all beings are awake and go to sleep, we do not know whether whatever has life also has dreams. It seems that man alone dreams; (he "dreams" by night and by day.) And although all that has life breathes, it is only
man that is conscious of his breathing. And as life-processes depend upon breathing, man made the discovery in himself that to control or regulate breath is to control or regulate life. Man’s control of himself seems to start here: Breath-control is an “exercise” in the control of body and mind. Life “enters” into the body with breath, and “departs” with breath, and is sustained by breath. The Upaniṣads distinguish between five kinds of breath, prāṇa, apāṇa, vyāna, samāṇa and udāna, the vital-breath, the out-ward breath, the in-ward breath, the equalising breath, and the up-ward breath. If life is breath which is air, life is Vayu, and so there can be no life where there is no air. Vayu, air, is the outward symbol of life. But life is also warmth. Another Upaniṣad says that there is a light which shines in the highest heaven; that light is in man as warmth in his body. Therefore life is not only air but the sun. But life is dependent upon food; as food is dependent upon bountiful rain, life is bountiful rain. And life is both what eats and is eaten. Life is what sustains life. So the invocation to Life in the Praśna and its glorification in verses 5-11 in the second section. All life-functions are dependent upon the vital-breath, prāṇa, and prāṇa is superior to all of them. Says prāṇa to the others: “Do not cherish this delusion; I, alone, dividing myself five-fold sustain and support this body, bāṇa”. But prāṇa is itself a “function” of another reality: “Not by any out-breath or in-breath does any mortal live here. But by another do they live on which these (life-breaths) depend”. (Kaṭha, II. 2:5.). This is the Person with the “sixteen parts” but who has really no “parts”: For, “these sixteen parts tending towards the person, on reaching the person, disappear, their name-shape broken up, and are called simply the person. That one is without parts, immortal”. (Praśna, VI. 5.). An inquiry about life is an inquiry into what is immortal, an inquiry into the immortal person.

The story of the quarrel between the various life-functions and the vital function about their superiority occurs in other Upa-
nisads also, while the Māṇḍūkya is entirely about the three states of consciousness, waking, dream, and sleep. As the first question asked in the Praśna is the central topic of the Upaniṣad, it is desirable to “isolate” it for analytical study. The Praśna Upaniṣad may be defined as an Upaniṣad on the philosophy of biology: all the six pupils seem to be biologists who have become philosophers. To a biologist matter must be very different from what it is to the physicist. The six biologists of the Praśna inquired, not into the “Origin of the Species”, but into the “Origin” of life, Origin of life on the earth, and its “entrance” into the body: How life “enters” into the body and how it “departs”. But who wishes life to “depart” from his body? And so the enquiry into life ends with a prayer to life in the Praśna: “That form of thine which is well-established in speech, or in the ear and in the eye, which exists continuously in the mind, make that auspicious, sāntatā śivam tam kuru: do not get away, motkrāmiḥ”.

2. Creation: Matter and Life

1. What is the metaphysics of Creation? Is Creation an Act, an act of will or desire? Is even the “Unmoved Mover” moved by desire? Is the mere desire to create sufficient? Is the creative act a mediating process involved in opposites? Is creation creating opposites? These are some of the significant problems that the metaphysics of Creation involves in the Praśna Upaniṣad.

Here is a fundamental question in the Praśna Upaniṣad: “Whence, verily, are all these creatures born?” This is a question like all questions in the Upaniṣads about “source” and not about “origin” or origins. And like all fundamental questions in the Upaniṣads, it is answered not directly but indirectly. It is answered, as in other cases, by pointing to a fundamental distinction. In the Praśna Upaniṣad, the distinction is between Matter and Life. The Upaniṣad says: “Prajā-pati, the Lord of Creation, verily, was desirous of offspring, prajākāmaḥ. (And) He performed
austerity, tapas. Having performed austerity, he created a pair, matter (rayi) and life (prāna), and said that they would create creatures for him variously”. There are several significant terms in this passage: (a) desire, kāma; (b) austerity, tapas; (c) Creation as creating that which creates; and, (d) a duality becoming a multiplicity.

2. Now, about the fundamental distinction between the opposites, matter and life: (i) unlike other opposites in the Upaniṣads, these opposites arise from the same source; (ii) matter and life are “created”; (iii) these are opposites that do not involve “either-or”; (iv) they are mutually exclusive but “require” each other; (v) they have nothing in common but co-exist and co-operate, and do not involve a “struggle” like the opposites, good and evil; and (vi) one is a condition of the manifestation of the other; matter is a condition of the manifestation of life but as life does not arise from matter, life is independent of matter and can be without its manifestation in matter. But is there matter without life?

3. The Kena Upaniṣad says, Kena prānah prathamah praiti: (By whom commanded) “does life, the first, move”? If in the Kena, life is the “First”, are there two “Firsts” in the Praśna: Matter and Life as a “pair”? Prāna as the masculine is the active, and rayi as the feminine is the passive. The two have nothing in common but: “require” each other in the sense of “require” where anything “requires” another either as means to an end or as a condition of manifestation of the other.

4. Although matter is the notion of what is passive and what is acted upon, the passivity of matter has its own “activity”, a dynamism like the prakṛti of the Sāṅkhya, a ceaseless transformation and change. Matter is change and the “substratum” of change. As such, matter is like the “invisible, formless” Receptacle of Plato in the Timaeus devoid of any “geometrical form” and yet that which takes on form. Matter is the “formed” and the “unformed”, mūrtam cāmūrtam ca, as the Praśna says.
(Now, the same words are used of Brahman in the Bhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad: dve vāva brahmaṇo rūpam, mūrtam cāmurtam ca. Although the same words are used there is a significant distinction: matter is the “formed” and the “unformed”, whereas Brahman is pure “Form” and the “Formless” (without the limitation of “Form”).

5. Matter and life are “created”: “The Lord of Creation created a pair, matter and life, and said that they would create for Him creatures”. The Act of Creation creates that which creates. The Lord creates a pair which “create”. The Lord of Creation “desired” to have off-spring. He created matter and life, which, He said, would create for Him creatures. Creation seems to involve a “mediating” factor; matter and life are the mediating factors. They are a duality which create a multiplicity.

6. Now, does the act of Creation involve succession? It seems as if it is so. But matter and life are a pair that are created “together”. Why should this not be the Rule in Creation? Why should not matter and life which are created “together” create creatures “together” with their creation?

7. Now, that which seems successive but is not essentially successive is the relation of Implication. It is expressed by the word “therefore”. In a “therefore”, two or more propositions—a proposition and what follows from it—are apprehended “together”. The act of création may be like a “therefore”, a relation of one-sided dependence not necessarily involving succession.

8. The Upaniṣad uses an analogy to explain matter and life: the analogy is of the Form: as A is to B, so C is to D. In analogy, as in definition, one of the terms is understood. It is in terms of what is “understood” that the other is defined. The analogy is: As the moon is to the sun so is matter to life. If so, matter “reflects” life as the moon reflects the light of the sun. Therefore matter is reflected life. Says the Upaniṣad: “The Sun, indeed, is life. Matter itself is the Moon. Matter, verily, is all this, what-
ever is formed and is un-formed. Therefore whatever is formed is itself Matter”. Matter is what takes on form, shape, and size, and what loses form. It seems that matter is the “outward” form that life takes in its manifestation. The outward form of Life is “body”, bāna.

9. Now in all that lives and has a body, life is breath, prāna. Matter takes on form and loses form. Life, on the otherhand, which is indivisible, divides itself, as it were, into five “functions”. Says Prāna: “I, alone, dividing myself five-fold sustain and support this body”. This means that life-processes are related to breath, and are controlled by controlling the five-fold functions of the vital-breath. The five-fold functions are: prāna, the vital breath, the chief among the five; vyāna, the in-breath; apāna, the out-breath; samāna, the equalising breath, and udāna, the upward breath. Conscious control of breath is conscious control of life-processes: “When breath is restrained, speech is restrained, the eye is restrained, the ear is restrained, the mind restrained”. (Br. Up. II. 1.16). Prāñāyāma is an exercise and a discipline in the conscious control of breath leading to conscious control of mind.

But life as breath is manifest in a body; it is what “supports” the body. But life is universal. What universal life is can only be symbolised. Life is like the Sun: “Now the Sun, after rising, enters the eastern side. By that he bathes in his rays all life that is in the east. When he illuminates all other sides of the south, the west, the north, below, above and in between, by that he bathes in his rays all living beings”. Life is like the sun, and the sun is the “Lord of Lights”. Life is the “Lord” of all living beings. Like the Sun, Life is the symbol of energy. Like fire, life is a symbol of what rises upwards, viz., man’s hopes and aspirations. Like rain, life is a symbol of what gives sustenance to all that lives. Life is what “moves”, moves in the womb. And life reproduces itself. And so the beautiful eulogy to life in the Praśna Upaniṣad: “As fire, he burns; he is the sun. He is the bountiful rain-god; he is wind. He is earth, matter, god.
He is being and non-being and what is immortal’. ‘As spokes in the centre of a wheel, everything is established in Life’. And Life is ‘ever pure’. To describe life is to pass from philosophy to poetry.

10. But life is not merely breath. It is more. Life is desire, kāma. Life is moved by desire: prajāpati prajā kāmaḥ, “The Lord was desirous of off-spring”. The Lord of life was moved by desire. Where there is life there is desire, at least, “hunger” and “thirst”. These are referred to in the Upaniṣads as “divinities” that have a share in the satisfaction of other “divinities”. These “divinities” must be satisfied. The Lord was “overcome” by desire, says the Upaniṣad. Is there anything in existence that is not “overcome” by desire?

But to reflect on life is to reflect on death also. Therefore we must ask: if life is moved by desire, does desire cease with death? This is the question. It would seem that this is possible if and only if life ceases with the death of body. Does life itself desire this? Life does not desire that life should cease with the death of the body. For, there is the question asked in the Bhad-Āranyaka Upaniṣad: “If everything here is food for death, what is that to which death is food?”

11. Now, reflecting on desire, we know as an empirical fact that desires suppressed or unfulfilled in the waking state re-appear in dream. Indeed, dreams are caused by suppressed or unfulfilled desires. They project themselves in dream and create a “world” of their own. If desires are not extinct at death, then, do they by their vital power project themselves as they do in dream and create another body? Why should the psycho-analytic study of desire limit itself to its manifestation in dream and in other pathological states? A psychology which studies the projective power of desire in dream ought to ask itself the question which the psychology of the Upaniṣads asks: Is desire extinct with the death of the body?

12. Therefore in their study of the phenomenon of life, the
Upanisads ask two questions: (a) Is desire extinct with death? and, (b) If not, what are the consequences? In asking both these questions, the Upanisads make a more profound analysis of desire than Psycho-Analysis.

If desire—the desire to live—is not extinct with death, then, may not the desire to live project itself after death and “create” another body? If it does, then, is not life involved in “re-birth”? Therefore how do we know if “birth” is not “re-birth”? But “re-birth” is not necessarily “better-birth”. A “re-birth” may be a “birth” of the same kind involved in the same desires and the same frustrations. Who wants to be re-born to live the same kind of life over again? This is a basic scepticism of the Upanisads in their reflection on desire and life.

In their inquiry into the phenomenon and mystery of life, the Upanisads doubt that desire ceases with death. They recognise the power of the elan vital that “gnaws into the future” (as Bergson says) to project itself into a life in a new body like a man who discards old and worn out clothes and puts on new ones. But the Upanisads are not satisfied with “re-birth”. They see “no good in it”. The Upanisads do not see that the good of life is either: (a) cessation of life—life ceasing with the death of the body; or (b) a “re-birth” only to live again and again the same kind of life. Who wants to endure this boredom? The good that they contemplate is a “neither this, nor that”, neti, neti. What then is the good that they contemplate as the Good of life?

r3. The Good that the Upanisads contemplate has two components: (a) “Conquest” of desire before death: “being free from the bonds of death before death” as Katha says; and, (b) “stopping” (nirodha) of “re-birth” without cessation of life. These two conditions transform the meaning of life and the meaning of desire. The transformed meaning of both may be described as a “negation of négation”: (a) A life that negates death which negates life is life immortal or eternal; and, (b) desire that negates
Desirelessness is DESIRE. But both “desire” and “DESIRE” are symbolised in the Upaniṣads by the same term Kāma. In this sense and only in this sense is Good “the Object of DESIRE”. And the Good which is the object of DESIRE is not a desire for a “hereafter” but for a good “here and now”. The Good is to be attained “here and now” before death: iha ced avedid atha satyam asti; na ced ihāvedin mahati viṇaṣṭih: “The Good is to attain the Good here; not to attain the Good here is the great evil for man”.

14. If this analysis is valid at all, it reveals that one and the same thing is the cause of “re-birth” and freedom from “re-birth”: viz. desire. What is desire? Desire is “want” and its satisfaction. But “want” is not merely to have what you have not. It is also “want” to desire to have what you have. The poor have “wants” in the first sense; the rich have “wants” in the second sense. Both kinds of “wants” are desires for “possession”. Both the rich and the poor are involved in the same kind of pursuit and the same kind of activity.

15. The Upaniṣad says that the Lord was “overcome” by desire, Kāma. Desire is therefore the Original impulse behind Creation. It moves the “Unmoved Mover”. What is the nature of desire Kāma by which the Lord is overcome which is the Original impulse behind Creation? Is it “want”? Is it a “want” to have what the Lord has not, or a “want” of the Lord to have what He has? Is it “possession” and desire for “possession”? Is the Lord “a desirer of desires”? No. Although the desire which the Lord has is described as Kāma, the desire of the Lord is not Kāma as one of the four puruṣārthas, values to be realised by man. The desire of the Lord is not a puruṣārtha. As a puruṣārtha is what is “yet to be realised”, the desire of the Lord is not a puruṣārtha. The desire of the Lord is the desire not to possess anything or to want anything. The desire not to possess or to want anything is also desire. The desire of the Lord is the desire of the abundant to give away its abundance. It is the desire to “give”. The term
“Lord” does not mean he who “possesses” but he that gives away what he possesses. He that renounces what he has, is the “Lord” of what he has. Therefore there is a fundamental distinction between: (a) a desire that desires desires; and, (b) a desire that desires no desires. Both are different kinds of activities. The desire that desires no desires is neither inactivity nor non-activity but activity. Creation is involved in activity. And the activity which is motivated by a desire that desires no desires is of the nature of happiness. It is the cause of happiness as well as the result of happiness: “When one obtains happiness, then one is active”, says the Chāndogya. (VII. 22.1.). Because one is active in this sense one is happy. The Good which the Upaniṣads contemplate as the Good of man is not activity in the sense in which those who have “wants” are active, nor inactivity or non-activity because there are no “wants” to be satisfied. The Good is “desireless activity”, an activity which is not a desiring of desires. This activity does not negate “World and Life”; instead, it affirms “World and Life”. If Creation as the Lord’s desire for “off-spring” is an activity of the Lord which affirms “World and Life”, then, man affirms “World and Life” only if he seeks the Lord in the world that the Lord desired and created.

16. The Upaniṣad says that the Lord was “desirous” of off-spring; being “desirous” of off-spring He performed austerity, tapas. If so, it means that desire is necessary but not sufficient. In the Praśna Upaniṣad, the teacher asks his six questioners to live with him in austerity, tapas. This means that tapas is a necessary and sufficient condition of inquiry into the Supreme Brahman and a necessary and sufficient condition of Creation. If so, Good is not the “Object of desire” merely. Just as the “idea” of a hundred dollars is very different from having the hundred dollars in one’s pocket as Kant said in criticizing the Ontological Argument, the Good that is desired merely and the Good that is realised are two very different things. Creativity or creative activity is not therefore merely an activity that is desired but an activity
that requires austerity, *tapas*. And it is significant that the nature of Creativity or the creative act is the same in the Good that man seeks and realises and the Good that is involved in Creation. To use a phrase from the *Katha*: “This, verily, is That”, *etad vai tat*.

17. There is no understanding of the *Upaniṣads* without understanding the nature of opposites. In the *Praśṇa Upaniṣad*, Matter, *rayī* and Life, *prāṇa* are not merely opposites but symbols of all opposites. There are at least three types of opposite in the *Praśṇa*: (a) opposites which succeed each other like night and day, the dark and the bright half of the moon, the northern and the southern course of the sun, and all those opposites which constitute the cycle and rhythm of nature; (b) opposites which are mutually exclusive but co-exist and require each other like rayi and *prāṇa*; and (c) opposites which lead to “divergent ends” and denote two “worlds”; the Solar and the Lunar world, and two “paths” symbolised by the path of the sun in its northern course and the path of the sun in its southern course that lead to them: viz., “re-birth” and “immortality”. As Matter and Life are symbols of all opposites, “re-birth” and “immortality” are denoted in the *Praśṇa* by the Primary Opposites, Matter and Life: Immortality is Life; “re-birth” is Matter.

Epilogue

In our study of the *Upaniṣads*, we cannot, it seems ask only the question, ‘what is Nature’ but also the question, ‘what is Life’? Or, ask only the question ‘what is Life’ without asking the question, ‘what is Nature’? In the *Upaniṣads*, Nature is a symbol of Life. Many phenomena of Nature have a symbolic significance in the *Praśṇa Upaniṣad*. For instance, the two paths of the Sun, the southern and the northern, are compared to the distinction that the *Upaniṣads* throughout make between the path of ritual and re-birth, and the path of austerity and the ‘stopping’
(nirodha) of re-birth. The Sun is the symbol of universal life; as the Sun is to the manifested universe, so is life to manifest Creation. Life is the Sun of Creation, and the Sun is the life of the manifest Universe. The Chāndogya speaks of "the light which shines above", and says that the same is here, as "warmth" "in this body". (III. 13.8.).
MUNDAKA UPANISHAD
What is That by knowing which everything else is known? That by knowing which everything else is known is the Imperishable aksara. This is in its nature both “higher” and “lower”; therefore knowledge of the Imperishable is both “higher” and “lower”. Both kinds of knowledge are to be known. Just as the lower part of a house is its foundation, so is “lower” knowledge a foundation, necessary but not sufficient. And the Imperishable is known neither as the “highest” nor as the “lowest”; for, the higher we go in our knowledge of the Imperishable, the higher we can go. And the Imperishable is “lowest” nowhere. It is the same in its fullness wherever it is. Therefore, in our knowledge of the Imperishable we can say that we go from the “lower” to the “higher” or from the “higher” to the higher”. The Imperishable is the Formless: neither hands nor feet, neither shape nor size, neither caste nor class, neither name nor form. Therefore the Way to the Imperishable is the same: liberation from name and form, nama rupād vimuktāḥ: Mundaka.
Chapter XI

MUANDKA UPAISHAD

Vidvān nāma-rūpād vimuktaḥ parāt-param puruṣam upaiti
divyam: The Knower freed from name and form attains
to the Divine Person, higher than the high. (III. 2.8.).

1. Introduction

The Muṇḍaka has three chapters; each chapter has two sec-
tions; each of the total six chapters have nine, eleven, thirteen,
ten, twelve, ten and eleven verses respectively and altogether
the Muṇḍaka has sixty five verses.

The word Muṇḍaka is derived from the root muṇḍ “to shave”;
it symbolises the last stage āśrama in the life of an individual in
the Indian Cultural tradition, the stage of sanyāsa. The shaven
head and the ochre robes are symbols of renunciation. The
sannyāsi retires to “the solitude of the forest”, upavasanti araṇye,
has no possessions or roof over his head and lives by alms. He is
heroic in his self-conquest and is a man of tranquility liberated
from sin and the fear of death. The man of tranquility is a man
of illumination: śanta vidvāmso, says the Upaniṣad. But the dia-
logue of the Upaniṣad arises by a fundamental question not a
sannyāsi but a house-holder asks. Any one at any stage of life
could seek to know the knowledge which the Upaniṣads teach.

The Muṇḍaka is like an Epic; like an Epic, the Muṇḍaka has
poetical analogies and similes in the Grand Style. The “trans-
cendental imagination” which builds myths elsewhere is at
creative play here; it moves from earth to heaven, from heaven to
earth, comprehends existence and creation and liberation in
metaphor and analogy: “As a spider sends forth and draws in
(its thread), as herbs grow on the earth, as the hair (grows) on
the head and the body of a living person. so from the
Imperishable arises this Universe” : “As from a blazing fire, sparks of like form issue forth by the thousands, even so many kinds of beings issue forth from the Immutable, they return there to” : “As the flowing rivers disappear in the ocean casting off name and form, even so the Knower, freed from name and form, attains to the divine person, higher than the high”. Analogy is at best a speculative use of the imagination to picture to ourselves what something is like, what Creation or Liberation is like. But Upaniṣads are not speculative but pragmatic, and have an end to achieve here and now. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad compares the Upaniṣads to the bow, meditation to the arrow, the mind engaged in contemplation to the power that draws the arrow, and Brahman to the target that it aims. The target is to be hit without making a mistake. So sure must be the aim. The Muṇḍaka speaks of rituals as “unsafe boats” adṛṣṭha yajna-rūpa, refers to “those that think they are wise”, panditam manyamanāh but are “like the blind leading the blind”, andhenaiva niyamānā yathāndhāh. While Muṇḍaka refers, on the one hand, to the “casting off name and form”, it gives, on the other, “a name and form” to the Universe, the form and shape of a Person, puruṣa: puruṣa evedam viśvam: “Fire is His head, His eyes are the Sun and the Moon, the regions of Space are His ears, His speech the revealed Vedas; air His life, and His heart the World”. It sees within the body a “pure, inner light”, antah śarire jyotirma yo hi subhraḥ. And on the tree of life, it watches, Two Birds, one which eats the fruit and grieves in vain, while, the other eats not and merely looks on. While the Muṇḍaka uses analogy to say what it is like, it uses negation to say what it is not: “The sun shines not there, nor the moon and stars, these lightnings shine not, what then of this fire . . .” : “This self cannot be attained by instruction nor by mere intellect nor by much learning . . .” Then who is the knower of Brahman? He that has become what he knows: “to know Brahman is to become Brahman”, sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma vedabrahmaiva bhavaṭi. The Muṇḍaka is the Upaniṣad in which there is the
sovereign distinction of the philosophy of Indian Culture between parā-vidya and a-parā vidya, “Higher Knowledge” and “Lower Knowledge”.

2. The Tradition of Brahma Vidya

1. The Mundaka Upaniṣad begins with a narration: “Brahma arose as the first among the gods, the maker of the Universe, the protector of the world. He taught knowledge of Brahman (Brahma-vidya), the foundation of all knowledges, to Atharvan, his eldest son”.

“That Knowledge of Brahman, which Brahma taught to Atharvan, Atharvan in olden times told Angiras. He (in his turn) taught it to Satyavaha, son of Bharadvaja, and the son of Bharadvaja to Angiras—both the higher and the lower (knowledge)”.

2. There are three significant interpretations of “Brahma arose”:

(a) Firstly, the passage refers to a Tradition, the tradition of Brahma vidya, a vidya which is “the foundation of all knowledges”. This is a vidya that is communicated and received. What is received is lived, verified, confirmed, communicated and passed on, to be, again lived, verified, confirmed and passed on. Tradition is a “passage”. The tradition of Brahma vidya is a chain of teachers and pupils in which a teacher is “the last of those who have gone before him and the first of those who will come after him”. The tradition has no “last” teacher. But it involves, necessarily, a “first”; for, the tradition starts at the point where it was “first” received. It is appropriate for the Upaniṣad to refer to a “first,” a first who “arises”. The “arising” is not caused but is spontaneous, not an arising that perishes as it arises.

The notion of an infinite series is logically the notion of a series that has no beginning or end. But the notion of an infinite series is distinguishable into: (a) a series that has no beginning
but has an end; and, (b) a series that has a beginning but no end. *Brahma-vidya* belongs to the second. If that which has no begin-
ing is to have an end, then that which has no end has to have a
beginning. This is *Brahma-vidya*. *Brahma-vidya* is a tradition which
has no "end". But it "arises". And He from whom the tradition
arises also "arises".

(b) Secondly, the statement "Brahma arose" is an ostensive
sentence like "the sun arises"; the word "arises" is a metaphor,
a statement about what never arises at all. The statement "the
sun arises" is really a statement about the revolutions of the earth.
It is a statement about change. The "arising" of Brahma is
*presented* in the *Upanishad* as if it were a cosmological "event",
whereas, it may refer to or mean a total change in man’s con-
sciousness, the "arising" in him of a new consciousness when man
is self-awakened, when the "I" perishes or lives only as an instru-
ment of what "arose" in him. (A Prophet says nothing of his
own but everything which he says is strange and prompted by
someone else).

(c) Thirdly, the statement "Brahma arose" is a narrative sen-
tence which is in the past tense. It reads like the report of an
observer who reports what he had observed. If so, who is the
Observer or the Witness to the "arising" of Brahma? He
cannot also "arise". The Witness is not one who "arises" but
one who is. He is prior to the arising of Brahma. He is a Wit-
tness whose awareness could never have arisen or ceased to be.
The main teaching of the *Upanishads* is to affirm the reality of an
awareness that never "arises".

3. The *Upanishad* says that Brahma arose as the "first" among
the gods and taught *Brahma-vidya*. *Brahma-vidya* came into
being *after* the "arising" of Brahma. But through what *vidya*
do we know the "arising" of Brahma except through *Brahma-
vidya*? Therefore *Brahma-vidya* was. It *was* prior to the "arising"
of Brahma. *Brahma-vidya* does not "arise" like our knowledge
of the external world which as Kant said *arises* from sense-
experience. *Brahma-vidya was*. The Observer or Witness to the arising of Brahma *was*. The “*was*” is used in both cases in a “timeless” sense, i.e. without any date. Although the *Upaniṣad* speaks of what “arose”, in reality it speaks of what *was*, and “what never was not” and what never “arose”.

4. In speaking of what “arose” we speak indirectly of what never arises or what *was* in a “timeless” sense. This distinction is reached through dialectical Reason. But the distinction which dialectical Reason “discovers” is also what Revelation reveals: “God the Father, who eternally exists, and God the Son who is eternally begotten”, (Saint Hilary of Poitiers). So is the distinction between: (a) Brahma who arose or arises or is “begotten”; and (b) a Witness to the arising of Brahma who “eternally exists”.

But the *Upaniṣad* does not speak directly of the Witness (to the “arising” of Brahma) who “eternally exists”. It speaks indirectly of the Witness by speaking directly of Brahma who “arises”. How do we know the “arising” of Brahma except through the Witness who never arises but “eternally exists”. The apparent subject-matter of the *Mundaka* is Brahma who “arises” but its real subject-matter is He who never arises but “eternally exists”. *Brahma-vidya* is therefore “Lower and Higher knowledge”.

5. But there is in the *Upaniṣads* a ‘secret’ distinction as it were between arising and arising: between the arising of that which goes through and arises untouched by death, and that which arises like Brahma but knows no death. This distinction is like the distinction between the good which overcomes evil and the good that has no evil to overcome. This distinction between arising and arising is a double aspect of the notion of immortality. That which goes through death and arises from death untouched by death is a power of “resurrection”, whereas, that which knows no death and yet arises is a power of “Origination”. But “Origination” is not Becoming. “Origination” is Emergence.
Emergence is a power of Being. "Brahma is self-born" says the Brhad-\textit{Aranyaka}. Brahma is the "self-born": He is not the "resurrected". Emergence is persistence of Being. Although the two notions of "arising" are distinguishable aspects of immortality in the \textit{Upani\textsc{s}ads}, one is a condition of the other: "Origination" is a condition of "resurrection". Unless there is a reality that knows no death, there is no reality that is resurrected from death untouched by death. One is an immortality of the "gods"; the other is the immortality of man. To "arise" from death is a fundamental aspiration of man; therefore, "Lead me from death to immortality". Although the \textit{Mundaka} seems to dwell on the power of Origination of Being in speaking of Brahma who "arose" to teach \textit{Brahma-vidya}, in reality it is because of the fundamental aspiration of man who desires to be led from death to immortality that an \textit{Upani\textsc{s}ad} arises. An \textit{Upani\textsc{s}ad} arises with the arising in man of this fundamental aspiration. Therefore the "gods" who know no death may know no death but have they a fundamental aspiration? If they have no fundamental aspiration, have they, an \textit{Upani\textsc{s}ad}? This is the question.

3. \textit{Two Sources of Morality and Religion}

In all the \textit{Upani\textsc{s}ads}, in the \textit{Mundaka} in particular, there is a distinction between ritual and renunciation, between the priest and the \textit{Sanny\textsc{a}si} or the mendicant, between heaven and rebirth on the one hand, and immortality and realisation of the imperishable Good here and now on the other. How or why does this distinction arise? It arises because of the distinction there is between desire and desirelessness as values in Life. The \textit{Upani\textsc{s}ads} do not dismiss desire; on the contrary, they discover in desire a source of morality and religion, viz., the desire to attain heaven. It is a desire which comprehends all desires. It is a desire that desires "this world and the next", \textit{imam ca lokam amum ceechate}. There is religion—ceremonial religion—because
there is the desire for heaven; because there is desire for heaven there is “ritual”, *karma*; because there is ritual there is the priest. It is by constant performance of ritual (*tāṇyācarata niyatam*) that the desire for heaven is fulfilled. And the symbol for rituals is Sacrifice, the Sacrificial Fire, *Yajñā*. The Sacrificial Fire is a mystic symbol: it is a “Sacred Flame”, a symbol of Divine Form, “the all-shaped goddess”, *viśva-rūpīcādevī*. Into that Sacred Flame “one should throw with faith his oblations”, *sraddhayā hutam*. And whoever performs sacrifice and makes offerings is taken to that world “where the one Lord of the gods abides”, *devā-nām patir ekō dhivīsah*. He is welcomed here in that world with these words: “This is your holy world of Brahma won through good deeds”, *esa vaḥ punyassukerto brahma-lokāḥ*. Sacrifice generates a power which takes man to heaven, and heaven is the world of good deeds. Therefore “perform them constantly, ye lovers of truth”: *tāṇyācaratha niyatam, satyakāma*: this is the injunction.

2. Heaven, where all desires are satisfied, is the world created by good deeds, *iṣṭā-pūrta*: (If good deeds create a heaven, then it is by good deeds that man can create a heaven on earth). And the good deed which creates a heaven where all desires are satisfied is the act of sacrifice which is the act of “giving”, giving with faith. If you give, it will be given unto you. Sacrifice is the good which is mutual giving. Sacrifice is a power by which man is led up to heaven and by which the gods are brought down to the earth.

3. But the *Upaṇiṣad* makes the significant point that the good deeds that are done to satisfy the desire for heaven in which all desires are satisfied has its merit, but its merit is eventually spent out. When its merit is spent cut, the “ascent” unto heaven becomes a “descent” to the earth: “Having enjoyed in the high place of heaven won by good deeds, they enter again this world or a still lower one”: *nākasya prṣṭhe te sukṛteanubhūtvemam lokam hīnātaram vā viśanti*. This means that heaven is part of a Cycle, the Cycle of conditioned existence which is the Cycle
of birth and re-birth. Such is the realm of desire: a Circle with an upward and downward movement. The desire for heaven which is fulfilled leaves man yet ignorant of the everlasting good of eternal life. Man has ascended unto heaven and descended from heaven but has not attained immortality. Then, what is the way to the everlasting good, the way to immortality? The way is through another “sacrifice”, the sacrifice of desire, the sacrifice even of the desire for heaven. The Way is renunciation. Renunciation is not merely a “stage” in life but a pervasive quality that transforms life. The symbol of the man who lives a life of renunciation or of the inward attitude of renunciation in life is the sannyāsi, the man of shaven head, the mendicant of no possession or attachment, the man who has no roof over his head, the man who has renounced all personal rights and obligations, the “free man” who has no “caste” and does not profess a ‘religion’. He belongs to the “Order of Nobodies”. He is a man of tranquility. He is liberated from desires. But his renunciation of the world is a neverceasing activity for the good of the world. He has no desire for heaven. As he has no desire for heaven he is freed from the cycle of births and re-births.

4. In the Upaniṣads renunciation, it seems, has a double characteristic. It is a “necessary and sufficient” condition of knowing Brahman as well as a direct and immediate consequence of knowing Brahman. And renunciation is a “negation of negation”. Renunciation is not a choice in an “either-or”. Renunciation is the essential freedom to renounce opposites: “Let a Brahmana, after he has done with learning, desire to live as a child. When he has done with the state of childhood and with learning, then he becomes a silent meditator. Having done with the non-meditative and the meditative states, then he becomes a Brahmana”, (a knower of Brahman). (Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka III. 5.1.). If this is true, then renunciation is not merely “desirelessness” which is the opposite of “desire”. Renunciation is not only renunciation of “desire” but renunciation of “desirelessness”
too. If renunciation is not bound or limited by "desire", it is not bound or limited by "desirelessness" also. Then, "How does the Brahmana behave?" "Howsoever he may behave, he is such indeed". (ibid., Brhad-Aranyaka). It seems that the man of renunciation makes nothing "absolute" in his Quest of the Absolute.

4. Parā Vidya and A-parā Vidya

1. In the Mundaka Upanishad, Saunaka, a "great house-holder" duly approached the Seer, Angiras, and asked: "Through what being known, venerable Sir, does all this become known?" It is significant of a cultural tradition that the most significant questions in philosophy were asked not by men who had retired or withdrawn from the world but by men engaged in the daily tasks of running a family. It was not the celibate student brahma-çāri alone who went to a teacher but the gṛhaṇtha, the "house-holder". Family life and inquiry and the study of philosophy are not incompatible.

2. Saunaka's question is an inquiry into the possibility of knowledge of First Principles. It is also an inquiry into a criterion by which a First Principle is known. As the question "what" denotes a "that" it implies that there is a First Principle. It implies that the First Principle is known or is knowable. A First Principle is not a Thing-in-Itself. It implies that there is not only unity of knowledge (such that by knowing a First Principle everything else is known) but unity of Being and knowledge (such that to know a First Principle of Knowledge is to know a First Principle of Being).

3. Is there a criterion or criteria to know a First Principle? In the Upanisads there are three: (a) The principle "no other" or "nothing else"; (b) the principle "alone"; and (c) the principle "not-this or that alone". The Aitareya says: "Atman was one only in the beginning; nothing else winked". This discloses
the first two criteria: “nothing else” and “alone”: Nothing else was and Atman alone was. But there is the third criteria (c) stated with a double negative, neti, neti, not-this, not-this; this means not-this only or not-that only. A First Principle is not merely a denial of another but is a coherent, comprehensive Principle having nothing outside its comprehension. In the Mundaka, the First Principle comprehends both the “higher” and the “lower” knowledge.

4. Saunaka’s question is a fundamental question, a fundamental question goes to the “root of the matter”. But a fundamental question is not answered directly, and a fundamental question entails a fundamental distinction.

What is a fundamental distinction? Is it a relation of contradictory opposition such that if one is true the other is false? Is it an either-or, either one or the other of two? No; a fundamental distinction need not involve the notion of “two”. It may be a distinction in one and the same thing like “earlier” and “later”, a distinction in the same thing. In a fundamental distinction both are to be known. Some fundamental distinctions of the upanisads do not entail duality.

5. To Saunaka’s question the teacher replied: “Two kinds of knowledge are to be known, as, indeed, the knowers of Brahma declare—the higher as well as the lower. Of these, the lower is the Rg-Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Samaveda, the Atharva Veda, Phonetics, Ritual, Grammar, Etymology, Metrics, and Astrology. And the higher is that by which the Imperishable (aksara) is apprehended”. What does this imply? It implies that the Veda which declares Brahma, declares itself “lower” to that which it declares. The Veda is therefore both “higher” and “lower” knowledge.

6. The following is a brief dialectical and analytical commentary on the distinction between “Lower” and “Higher”; Firstly: The distinction is not literal but symbolic. The terms “lower” and “higher” are not value judgements. As the “lower”
part of a house is its foundation, what is “lower” is the “foundation” of what is “higher”. The “lower” is “necessary” although it is not what is “sufficient”. The “lower” may be the Means to the “higher” which is its End. Secondly: The distinction between parā-vidya and a-parā vidya is not a relation of contradictory opposition, an “either-or” such that if one is true the other is false. Both are to be known and not one “only”. Thirdly: The distinction between parā vidya and a-parā vidya like the distinction between “earlier” and “later” refers to the same thing. Both are to be known, the “higher” as well as the “lower” knowledge. Fourthly: If both are to be known “the higher as well as the lower”, then it may be that what is known “by knowing which everything else is known” is immanent in the “higher” as well as in the “lower”. It is that which is in both. Fifthly: Therefore what is that which in its nature is both “higher” and “lower”? That which is the same, the same in its Fullness (pūrna), the “higher” we go or the “lower” we go. Where it is, nothing is “lower”. It is in its Fullness wherever it is. Now, that which is the same the “higher” we go or the “lower” we go is the Infinite, pūrna the Full. In our knowledge of the Infinite, the “higher” we go, the “higher” we can go. The words “higher” and “lower” denote the self-transcending nature of the Infinite. Therefore to the question “By knowing what is all this known” is the appropriate answer: “By knowing that which in its nature is both higher and lower”. In our knowledge of the Infinite the more we know there more there is to be known. There is no “completed” knowledge of the Infinite.

5. The Imperishable

I. The Imperishable, aksara is the object of parā-vidya. The Upaniṣad defines or gives a “Sufficient Description” of aksara: “That which is ungraspable, without family, without caste, without sight or hearing, without hands or feet, eternal,
all-pervading, omnipresent, exceedingly subtle, that is the Imperishable which the wise perceive as the source of beings”. This definition refers to: (a) what does not belong to the Observable Kind; (b) what has no Form, (c) what is not member of a Class and what cannot be classified: but (a) what is eternal, (b) what is everywhere, and (c) what is the Source of existence. The last three characteristics denote that the Imperishable is non-dual. Is aksara a “Neutral Monism”, neither Spirit nor Matter? This is the question.

2. If aksara is the “Indestructible” or the “Imperishable” how does it enter into Philosophy? The notion of the Imperishable enters into Philosophy because it is already there in Science: Matter is “indestructible”. Matter undergoes transformation but is “indestructible”. In Dialectical Materialism, Matter is “uncreated”; Matter has the attributes of “eternity”, “infinity”, and “indestructibility”. Is the aksara of the Parā-vidya same as Matter of physical science on the one hand, and of Dialectical Materialism on the other? Is Parā-vidya same as Physical Science or Dialectical Materialism?

3. To understand the notion of aksara, we have to understand, it seems, a tautology. (Kierkegard said that tautology is the highest philosophy). This is the tautology: The Imperishable aksara is that which is aware that is the Imperishable: na jāyate mriyate vā, “that which is aware, aware of a joy, that it is neither born nor does it ever die”. This implies that there is no reality sat which is not chit awareness, and no chit or awareness which is not an awareness of joy or delight of Being, ānanda. Therefore aksara is sat cit ānanda. There is no sat which is not cit and no sat which is cit which is not ānanda. Being is Delight of Being.

4. There are two propositions which state the Imperishable aksara: (a) the first person singular in the present tense: I am; (b) the third person singular in the past tense ātma was: ātma vā idam agra āsit, eka eva: “atman was before (anything else was) and was one only.”
The proposition “I am” need not be verbalised. “I am” is affirmed by Silence, \( \text{upa} \text{ sānto} \text{ yam} \text{ âtma} \). “I am” is truth expounded in silence, \( \text{maunavākya} \text{prakāśita} \text{tatvam} \): “I am” need not be qualified by “I am Brahman”, \( \text{aham} \text{ brahmāsmi} \). The “I” in “I am” already denotes Brahman. “Brahman abides as \( \text{aham} \) in everyone, and \( \text{aham} \), “I”, is known to everyone”. (Ramana Maharshi). As Brahman abides as \( \text{aham} \) “in everyone”, \( \text{aham} \) “I” is “all-pervading” and “omnipresent”. And “I am” means “ever-awake” (Ramana Maharshi).

To return to the proposition “\( \text{ātman} \text{ was} \)”. The \text{Upāniṣad} says, “\( \text{ātman} \text{ was} \) (before anything was) and one only”. The past tense is a timeless or dateless sense of \( \text{was} \); it means what never was not. And what never was not is what always is. And “is” means “is eternal”. The “is” means Being, and Being is the same as Eternity. Being and Eternity: are the attributes of the Imperishable \( \text{aksara} \).

5. But “\( \text{ātman} \text{ was} \)” is like a report, like the report of an observer who reports what he had observed. (a) Is there a reality which \( \text{was} \), and (b) an Observer who \( \text{was} \)? Are there two Imperishables?: (a) the Imperishable that was; and, (b) the Imperishable observer or witness? The Imperishable that is aware that it is the Imperishable is aware of “nothing else”. It is not two. There is no “Other”.

6. But what is the \text{Vidya} which distinguishes between \( \text{parāvidya} \) and \( \text{a-parāvidya} \) or between \( \text{vidya} \) and \( \text{a-vidya} \)? It is not one of the two that it distinguishes. That which distinguishes between two distinguishes itself from both of them. Therefore that \text{Vidya} is “greater than” (to use a phrase from the \text{bhūma vidya} of the \text{Chāndogya}) than either of them, and “greater than” both of them. This \text{vidya} is “ungraspable” like \( \text{aksara} \). And it is expressed negatively “not-this”, “not-this”. Therefore negation is the original impulse behind the dialectical movement from “Lower Knowledge” to “Higher Knowledge”.

7. The dialectical movement is not a movement of time and
history in the *Upaniṣads*. It is a movement from the “outer” to the “inner”, and a movement which is a “return” to the Source; *tatra caiva pi yanti*.

6. Liberation

Liberation is the same as the dialectical movement which is a “return” to the Source of Being. The *Muṇḍaka* describes it negatively as “loosing name and form”: *vidvān nāma-rūpād vimuktah parātparam puruṣam upaiti divyam*, “the Knower, freed from name and form, attains to the divine person, higher than the high”. If the Supreme Brahman is affirmed negatively as *neti, neti*, “not this”, “not-this”, the nature of Liberation is also a “not-this”: *not* Name and Form. But “not name and form” does *not* mean *Not-Being*. Liberation is therefore *Being*. Therefore Being and Freedom are the same. In a significant sense, there is nothing to be “attained”; for, man has *not* lost either his Being or his Freedom. That he has lost them is his delusion. “Loosing name and form” is therefore being free from a delusion. Liberation is the tautology of one who is free seeking his freedom, *vimuktah vimucyate*.

Epilogue

The *Muṇḍaka* speaks of a “togetherness of companionship” *sāyuja sakhyā* through a symbol of the companionship of “two birds” seated on the same tree, “the tree of life”. One of them eats the fruit of the tree—*not* the fruit of the ‘forbidden tree’—while the other looks on without eating. The image of the “two birds” is a symbol which is like a “Variable”. It may mean the distinction between the “spectator” and the “doer”. (Plato said that the philosopher is a “spectator of all time and existence”). In a play, there are the “actors” and there are the “spectators”. The image of the “two birds” may also suggest
the distinction of the sort between puruṣa and prakṛti of the Sāmkhya, an entity that is conscious but is only passively aware, and a thing that is unconscious but dynamically active and does all the work of Nature. But in these two distinctions between a “spectator” and “actor”, between puruṣa and prakṛti, there is strictly speaking no relation of “companionship”. Nor is the “companionship” of the “two birds” a companionship of sex. Indeed, the image of the “two birds” is the notion of a companion that is always by your side as a friend, and as one whose mere presence (provided you become aware of the presence) is a comfort unto to you. Eating the fruit of the tree and the consequences thereof is a symbol of the experience and its travail that the individual soul goes through in the “Vale of soul making” and works out its karma or destiny. In this travail of the individual soul there is beside it a Companion whose mere presence is a comfort and an example. He seems to ask: Why do you eat the fruit of the tree?

But is the difference between the “two birds” merely in the fact that one eats and the other does not eat the fruit of the tree? No; this in itself is of no significance. The significance is in the fact that the bird that does not eat symbolises non-attachment through mastery of desires—for it is free from the desire to eat—while, the other, out of self-delusion that attachment to desires leads to unhappiness, grieves in vain and helplessly, aniśaya śocati muhyamānaḥ. This meaning is consistent with the general teaching of the Muṇḍaka; for, the main theme of the Upaniṣad is about “him who has mastered his desires, who is a perfected soul, whose desires vanish even here (on earth)”, paryāpta-kāmasya, kṛtāmanas tu ihaiva sarve pravilīyanti kāmāḥ. (III. 2. 2.).
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Empirically, there are three ‘states’ of consciousness, waking, dream and sleep. Sleep is a ‘state’ of consciousness. If so, what is it that is asleep and what is it that is awake? One observes another asleep. This relation is not only in the external world. It is an experience within us. If so, what is asleep is the same that awakes, dreams and sleeps; while what observes what, in us, is asleep is *always* awake. This is not a ‘state’, not a fourth ‘state’, succeeding the other three, waking, dream and sleep. And it is an awareness that is aware in those that are asleep, _esa supteśu jāgarti_. This awareness is the Observer of all the three ‘states’. This Observer is never unawake. This Observer is, is even when the (sensory) awareness that sleeps and awakes perishes with the death of the body. This awareness that is never unaware and is always awake and is behind the three states of awareness is _ātman_. And _ātman_ is _brahman_, _ayam ātmā brahma_. _Atman_ is the tranquil, _śāntam_; it is the gracious and the benign, _śivam_; and this is the non-dual, _advaitam_. About this nothing can be “said”. But it is denoted by the symbol _Aum._—_Māṇḍūkya._
CHAPTER XII

MANDUKYA UPA NISHAD

Sāntam, śivam, advaitam; sa ātmā; savijñeyah: The peaceful, the benign, the non-dual: He is the Self. He is to be known. (Māṇḍūkya, 7).

1. Introduction

The Māṇḍūkya is the shortest of the Principal Upaniṣads. It has no chapters or sections but only twelve verses. And its twelve verses have a singular unity of theme unsurpassed in the other Upaniṣads. Its theme is the three ‘states’ of Consciousness. This theme occurs in the other Principal Upaniṣads along with other topics. But it exists in its undivided unity and marvellous brevity in the Māṇḍūkya. There are two main characteristics of the theme of the Māṇḍūkya. These deal with two fundamental aspects of non-dualist Vedānta: (a) The symbol Aum; and, (b) the “necessary and sufficient” condition, if we may say so, of non-dualism: viz. Negation. (a) The symbol Aum denotes the three ‘states’ of consciousness and also that which is not a ‘state’. Like space which is distinguishable into ‘Quarters’, the Four Quarters, and Time which is distinguishable into Past, Present and Future, consciousness is empirically distinguishable into ‘states’, Waking, Dream and Sleep. And each ‘state’ has a one-one correspondence with one of the three distinguishable but indivisible ‘elements’ of Aum, a, u, m. Aum is the Original Word, aksara, symbol of the Imperishable and the Infinite. Aum denotes both Form and Formlessness, both what is a ‘state’ and what is not a ‘state’. (b) Negation is both “necessary and sufficient” for the Ontology of non-dualism. Negation that is “necessary and sufficient” is not negation of duality merely or negation merely of the “other”. Negation is affirmation through self-denial: For, no denial which
is not also a self-denial is absolute. Negation, Neti, Neti, denies not the “other” only but also itself. That which denies or negates itself exists. Its existence is its self-transcendence.

2. States of Consciousness

In the Māndūkya, consciousness (prajñā) analyses itself (like Pure Reason in Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason). To analyse is to distinguish. What is distinguishable is not necessarily divisible. In analysing itself, consciousness (prajñā) distinguishes itself into “states” of consciousness. There is no “state” merely but “states” of consciousness. And states of consciousness are not co-existent but successive. Succession which is an empirical fact is common to both consciousness and time. As no state of consciousness succeeds itself, each “state” that succeeds and is succeeded is different and distinguishable from what succeeds it: i.e. there is no alteration without alternation. And as all are states of consciousness, the alternating states of consciousness are distinguished in the Māndūkya as Waking, Dream and Sleep. All are states of Consciousness. This entails the paradox that sleep is a state of consciousness. If so, what is it that is awake and what is it that is asleep in Sleep? This is the question. If there is an awareness that is aware in sleep, then this awareness is never unaware. If so, then that awareness, if any, is distinguishable from that awareness which goes to sleep in sleep and becomes awake after sleep. The dialectic of the Māndūkya makes us become aware of this awareness that is never unaware.

3. The Waking State: Jāgrat

The Katha Upaniṣad says that the senses are so ‘pierced’ that they look only ‘outward’; therefore they see as the Katha says only external objects, parān paśyati. The ‘outward’ cognition of the senses that are so “pierced” as to look “outward” is a proof
therefore of the reality of the external world. But the reality of the external world is not “dependent upon” its being perceived by the senses. But the external world is ‘external’ because it is perceived: the external world is the perceived; it is that which is perceived by the senses.

The external world is in reality perceived through the senses. The senses are like a telescope through which something is perceived. But the telescope is also the perceived. That through which the external world is perceived is part of the perceived external world. For, the sense-organs through which the external world is perceived is part of the body which is perceived. It seems therefore that, that which perceive: the ‘outward’ is in fact the ‘outward’.

Is there not at this point a regress? If it is through a telescope that we see, and if we see that through which we see, then there is a seeing of this seeing. And so as the Kena says, there is a seeing of the eye, a hearing of the ear, and so on. If so what is that which sees, asks the Kena? If so, do the senses really see? Does the telescope see?

The Māndūkya refers to the Waking State as bahiṣ-prajña, outward consciousness. What is “outward consciousness”? The entire cognitive apparatus and process as known to the psychology of the Upaniṣads: citta (thought); buddhi (discursive, logical intellect); aham-kāra (ego-sense); manas (mind) an evolute of ego-sense. By outward looking senses, the Māndūkya means also those senses by which we are engaged in outward activity, and include the five vital breaths which keep up the life process. The outward consciousness, bahiṣ-prajña of the Waking State is a “nineteen, multi-mouthed “face”. ekonavimsati-mukhah. And outward consciousness “enjoys” gross, physical objects.

The senses are but instruments of outer cognition bahiṣ-prajña. But not merely because of the outward looking senses is there bahiṣ-prajña, outer consciousness. In truth, it is otherwise. Unless prajña, or consciousness is already outward looking, no
bahiṣ-prajña is there only because of the senses. It is outward looking consciousness that creates outward looking instruments. It follows that even if there were, in fact, no such outward looking instruments, outward consciousness would still be outward looking. Therefore bahiṣ-prajña does not refer only to the physical senses so 'pierced' as to look only outward but to the entire process of outward evolution of consciousness by which there is consciousness of the external world. Therefore consciousness of the external world is 'externalisation' of consciousness.

Now, it is the evolution of the cognitive apparatus from citta to indriya by which there is perception of the external world that is the significant meaning of evolution in Indian thought than merely the evolution of the “species”.


The Māndūkya refers to the Dream State as antah-prajña “inward-consciousness”. In what sense is it “inward”? As distinguished from the outer consciousness of the outer senses that are ‘pierced’ to look only outward as the Katha says, the Katha also speaks of “seeing with eyes turned within”, āvyttta-caksūt. Is the Dream State a state of looking with “eyes turned within”? Is it “inward” in this sense? No. Why not? Because both the bahiṣ-prajña of the Waking State and antah-prajña of the Dream State are “determinates” under the same “determinable”, viz. “The Seen”. Therefore the Dream State has the same nineteen multi-mouthed “mukha” that the Waking State has.

Now, the same kind of object—visual object—seen in the Dream State is seen in the Waking State: e.g. the image of a pin reflected in a mirror. Therefore antah-prajña is a Prajña of images seen, although the seen in the Dream State does not belong to physical space or time and is not subject to the law of cause and effect. What is seen in dream has an “admired disorder” (to use a phrase
from Macbeth) and its own space and time. There is a "succession" in Dream but no "objective succession" as Kant calls it in the Analogies of Experience to make unity of experience possible.

In Act V Scene I of Macbeth, there is the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth. The doctor and the gentlewoman in the Scene who observe it say to each other: "Doctor, you see her eyes are open"? The gentlewoman replies, "Ay, but their sense are shut". The eyes "are shut" in Dream but "their sense" "are (is) open": i.e. open outward.

In analysing the Waking State, it was discovered that: (a) bahis-prajña would be outward looking whether or not there were outward looking instruments or sense-organs; and, (b) bahis-prajña is the entire process of outward looking consciousness and all that it involves citta, buddhi, ahankāra, manas and indriya, and not merely perception of the external world by the physical senses.

Now, the process of externalisation of consciousness is an evolution from the most inward to the most outward. The physical senses are the terminus of this process. But the Waking State and the Dream State are both parts of the process of externalisation as the object and the image are both external, although one is called bahis-prajña and the other antah-prajña. The difference between the two is the difference between manas "mind" functioning through its instruments, the physical senses in the Waking State, and manas functioning without them in the Dream State. But manas is outward looking and is part of outward looking or externalised consciousness whether or not it functions through the senses. "It is with mind, truly, that one sees. It is with the mind that one hears". (Brhad-Aranyaka Up. I. 5.3.)

There is nothing wonderful in manas functioning without outer senses in the Dream State. But it would be wonderful if manas could cognise the external world in the Waking State without the physical senses. Is this possible? It may be possible. But on what condition would it be possible if it were possible would
be a different inquiry not relevant at present.

Now, there are two characteristics of the Dream State: (a) The Dream State is a consciousness of "images" whereas the Waking State is a consciousness of physical objects; but, (b) the Dream State is like the Waking State, a realm of desire Kāma. The Praśna Upaniṣad refers to manas and says that it "enjoys" a certain greatness in Dream: atraiṣa devaḥ svapne mahimānam anubhavati: "There, in dream that ('god') power experiences greatness". Of what sort? "He sees, again, whatever object has been seen, he hears, again, whatever has been heard, he experiences, again and again, whatever has been experienced in different places and directions. What has been seen and has not been seen, and what has been heard and what has not been heard, and what has been experienced and what has not been experienced, what is existent and what is non-existent, he sees all; being all, he sees all". (IV. 5.). The Dream State is not therefore merely a "copy" of the Waking State; it does not see only the "images" of objects seen in the Waking State. If the external World is a "logical construction" out of the sense-data "given" to the physical senses in the Waking State, Dream is a "mental construction" out of the "data" "presented" by manas.

Now, what is common to the Waking and Dream states is manas "mind"; manas functions with the physical senses in the Waking State, whereas it functions without them in the Dream State. And both Waking and Dream States belong to the realm of desire Kāma; both the states are manifestations of the 'play' of desire.

It may be that desires 'repressed' in the Waking State reappear in Dream. It may be that there is a conscious and unconscious aspect of manas. It may be that the conscious aspect of manas thrusts desires into the Unconscious; when the conscious is quiescent in Dream, the Unconscious may appear with its 'play' of unfulfilled desires. How fathomable is the Unconscious? Are all our desires conscious? Do our desires cease with the
ceasing of life? Or, as the Upaniṣads says, are they the cause of rebirth?

All these questions are important. But relevant to the analysis of the three states of consciousness is the point that, where there is manas there is desire, and where there is desire there is manas. Desire and manas invariably co-exist. Does it follow from this that if manas and desire disappear there will be no consciousness at all? No; there is no ground whatever for this inference. What in fact follows is that the two ‘states’ of consciousness, Waking and Dream, which belong to the realm of manas and desire Kāma, will cease as ‘states’ but consciousness as such will not cease but will be free from manas and desire. That consciousness or prajña, if any, will be unlike the bahiṣ-prajña of the Waking State and the antah-prajña of the Dream State. It is prajña. But is it also a ‘state’? Yes; for, anything that comes and goes is a ‘state’. And prajña in which manas and desire have ceased, susupti, deep sleep also comes and goes. So susupti is one of the three ‘states’ of consciousness. Thus to an analysis of susupti.

5: Susupti: Dreamless Sleep—Prajña

Susupti is one of the three “states” of consciousness. The Waking State belongs to the realm of “Outer” sense; as such, it is ‘outer’ consciousness bahiṣ-prajña, consciousness of the external world. The state of Dream belongs to the realm of antah-prajña, inward sense which is manas mind; it is inner consciousness antah-prajña, consciousness of an “inner” world which is like the external world. Although both are opposites as ‘outer’ and ‘inner’, both belong to the same realm desire Kāma: Now susupti is the opposite of both; it is neither ‘outer’ nor ‘inner’ consciousness, neither bahiṣ-prajña nor antah-prajña. It is prajña or ‘pure’ consciousness (like Kant’s use of ‘pure’ in Pure Reason). It is prajña not associated with body (sense) or mind.

In the external world, there is a relation between one who is
asleep and one who watches or observes one who is asleep. This relation is there in sleep. In sleep, something observes or watches over what is asleep, \textit{esa suptesu jāgarti}. But in sleep no desires are consciously desired, \textit{na kancana kāmam kāmayate}. In \textit{sūṣupti}, no dreams are dreamt. In \textit{sūṣupti}, there is no consciousness of “possession”, not even consciousness of the \textit{possession} of the body. But as sleep is \textit{prajña} pure consciousness, and as there are no desires consciously desired in \textit{sūṣupti}, \textit{sūṣupti} is “desireless” \textit{prajña}. There is no “desirer of desires” in Sleep. The problem of self-realisation is how to bring this about in the Waking State: how to make the Waking State a state of “desireless consciousness” \textit{jāgrat-sūṣupti}?

There are two characteristics of \textit{sūṣupti}: (a) Sleep is \textit{prajña}, unqualified consciousness. In \textit{sūṣupti}, \textit{manas} is “merged”\footnote{Therefore to seek the testimony of what is “merged” to disprove one’s existence or awareness in sleep is a contradiction in terms.} Secondly, (b) Sleep is a state of “innocence”. (to use a word from Macbeth): It is a state of “innocence” which is innocent of duality: Sleep is \textit{prajña-naghana}, a “mass” of consciousness, a “simple homogeneity” in which the “complex heterogeneity” of “I” and the “other”, \textit{aham “I”} and \textit{idam “this”} has not yet arisen.

It is appropriate and relevant at this point to note how the \textit{Yoga-Sutras} of Patanjali understand and interpret the nature of “deep sleep”, \textit{nidrā} as the \textit{Sutras} call it. Yoga is the “stopping” of the transformation of the “thinking principle”, \textit{Chitta}; therefore Yoga is defined as \textit{Chitta-vṛtti nirodhah}. The \textit{Sutras} mean by \textit{vṛtti} a “transformation”, and discover that the transformations of \textit{Chitta} are fivefold, divisible into painful (\textit{kliśta}) and non-painful (\textit{akliśta}). Sleep (\textit{nidrā}) is one of the five non-painful transformations. Of what is it a transformation? Of nothing. Therefore sleep (\textit{nidrā}) is “that transformation which has nothingness as its basis”, \textit{abhāva-pratyayālambanā vṛttir nidrā}. Although it seems as if sleep is a negation of transformation, yet, it is not the case that it is
not a transformation of Chitta. It is because sleep (nidrā) is a transformation that it differs, essentially, from samādhi. (In samādhi, the Yogi who “stops” consciously the vṛtti or transformations of citta, enters consciously into pure consciousness; therefore his awareness is never unaware, although, outwardly, samādhi seems like nidrā, sleep). Therefore it is necessary to return to the Māṇḍūkya to examine the distinction between sleep in which “transformation has nothingness as its basis” and samādhi in which the transformation of Chitta has altogether ceased. If so, is Chitta there as Chitta? Has it “merged” or is it “destroyed”?

The Māṇḍūkya says of suṣupti that it is ekībhūtah “become one”: there is in it an absence of duality. There are two ways in which the experience of “becoming one” is illustrated by Ramana Maharshi: (a) one is like the bucket in a well with a rope tied to it to be drawn out again; and, (b) the other is like the river that has joined and become the ocean never to be re-directed. The first is what Ramana Maharshi calls “merging” the mind, and the second is what he calls “destroying” the mind. Therefore Sleep is a “State”; for, just as the bucket can be drawn out, so the mind that is “merged” can re-appear. In suṣupti, the “mind” does not yet know its Source to “become one” with it. Therefore Indra said to Prajapatī, “Sir, in truth, this one does not know himself, ‘I am he’. I see no good in this”. Therefore along with its “innocence”, there is in suṣupti an “ignorance”. There is a significant difference between suṣupti and the sahajā-śamādhi of yogic consciousness: In suṣupti, mind is “merged”; in sahajā-śamādhi, “mind” is “destroyed” never to reappear. Therefore ātman is “realised” as Ramana Maharshi said with mṛta-manas “dead mind”: i.e. mind not merely “merged” but “destroyed”. In the sahajā-śamādhi of Yogic consciousness which is like sleep, the Yogi enters consciously into sat Being, enters consciously into the Source of Being and “becomes one” with it. Therefore from the stand-point of the sahajā-śamādhi of Yogic consciousness, which is jāgrat-suṣupti “waking-sleep”, all the three states,
Waking, Dream, and Sleep are, it seems, “appearances”.

But **sūṣupti** seems to prove one thing: viz. that both body and mind will be lost. It seems to prove that even if both are lost, consciousness which generally becomes manifest through them in the empirical condition is not lost. There is consciousness of body (and mind) in the Waking State; in Dream, consciousness of body is lost; in **sūṣupti**, consciousness of both is lost; there is neither consciousness of body nor mind. The **praṇa** of **sūṣupti** is a “desireless” consciousness, free from possession and free as it were from duality. The problem of self-realisation is how to realise this in the Waking State: How there can be a “desireless awareness” and a “desireless activity”. **Sūṣupti** is significant because it points to **That**, That into which mind manas is “merged” or “destroyed”. It points to **That** of which mind (manas) is still “innocent” and “ignorant”; therefore **sūṣupti** is not the “be all and the end all” of “desireless awareness”.

6. **Turiya, The Fourth**

Waking, Dream, and Sleep constitute a serial order in which one “state” of consciousness succeeds the other. This is the Stream of Consciousness. Now, **That** which distinguishes between them distinguishes itself from them as their Observer. Therefore **That** which distinguishes itself from them is not a “Fourth” but what is **other than** the three. And **It** is **not** a “state” of consciousness. This is **Turiya** metaphorically called the Fourth. **Turiya** is the Transcendental Ground of the three ‘states’. To take an illustration from Kant’s **Critique of Pure Reason**, the Transcendental Ground of the three synthetic **Acts**—the Synthesis of Apprehension, Reproduction, and Recognition—is **not** an Act but a Unity of consciousness, the Transcendental Unity of Apperception, the Unity of the “I think” that accompanies all the synthetic Acts. The **Turiya** is what is **prior** to all the three as their Ground. It is not a ‘state’ of consciousness that comes and goes
like the other three. All the three states are in it; it is not in them; nor is it a resultant of all them. The transcendental Ground that is the Turiya is expressed, firstly, in negative terms: ‘not outer-consciousness’, ‘not inner-consciousness’, ‘nor a mere homogenous mass of consciousness’, ‘nor all the three’, ‘nor non-consciousness’. Then, in positive terms: “This is the Lord of all; this is the Knower of all; this is the inner controller; this is the source of all; this is the beginning and the end of things”. (Although this verse follows the verse on susupti and seems to refer to it, yet, it is, in reality, a statement about the “Fourth”, the Turiya). The Katha states the paradox involved thus: “That which is awake in those that are asleep”, esa suptesu jāgarti. This means that it is not a consciousness that is awake now and asleep now but what never is asleep, which means that it is ever awake. As it does not merely come and go like the three ‘states’ of consciousness, it is what is pre-existent; and what is pre-existent survives the death of the body. Now, that which neither arises nor passes away is Being. The Turiya is Being and Consciousness of Being and their unity, the “I am”; (a) The “I am” is affirmed in its denial; and, (b) the “I am” is not inferred from the “I think” as in Descartes Cogito: “I think, therefore, I am”. Therefore there is no “therefore” in the “I am”.

The Māndūkya says of the Turiya that it is “that into which the world is resolved”, prapancopaśamam. Now, “That into which the world is resolved” is That which was: That which was before the world was. And so the Aitareyā says: ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsit, na anyat kincana misat: “In the beginning was ātman, (and) one only; nothing else whatever winked”. This means that ātman “was” in a “timeless” or dateless sense of “was”; therefore ātman “never was not”. Who is the Observer or Witness of what was except He that also was in the same “timeless” sense of was? Therefore there are two ways in which Being is affirmed in the Upaniṣads: (a) in the present, “timeless” sense “I am” aham as in the Taittirīya; and (b) in the “timeless” past
tense “ātman was” as in the Aitāreya.

Now, this ātman is brahman, ayam ātmā brahma. It is symbolised as the Aum. But nothing can be “said” about it. But the Māṇḍūkya “shows” it; (for, what cannot be “said” can be “shown”) or, denotes it as the Peaceful (śāntam), the Good (śivam), and the Non-dual (advaitam). Is the non-dual known? Yes; it is known by him that says, ‘he knows not’; not by him that says, ‘he knows’; yasya amatam tasya matam, matam yasya na veda sah.

Epilogue

It is the Māṇḍūkya that seems to reveal the co-existence and the convergence of the subtlety of the analytic and dialectic that “moves in the secret” in the Upaniṣads. Towards what do they converge? Using a demonstrative symbol as the Upaniṣads do, we may say they converge towards That which the three states of consciousness reveal: That which is “there” tatra (to use another demonstrative symbol from the Upaniṣads) “Where the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind”; That which is when the transformations of the “thinking principle” Chitta stops. If Yoga is defined in the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali as Yogas chittavṛtti nirodah, “Yoga is the destruction of the transformations of the thinking principle Chitta”, then the question which arises is: “By what” (to use Yajnavalkya’s phrase) is the destruction of Chitta the “thinking principle” possible? By That by which Yoga is possible towards which Yoga is self-directed. The Upaniṣads are therefore, it seems, the ground of Yoga.
CONCLUDING EPILOGUE

Among the symbols of the Upaniṣads, there is an inclusive symbol comprehensive at the same time of many significant things: A symbol by which Creation is signified; by which the purpose of Creation is realised; by which is signified the reciprocal relation, as it were, between heaven and earth; by which the divine is brought down to the earth and man raised to heaven; by which human life and all that man desires, knows, and does is sanctified and made pure and holy; and by which he is lifted up beyond the reach of death: This symbol is yajña “sacrifice”.

But no symbol is universal in the Upaniṣads even if it refers to many things unless it comprehends its own self-transcendence. Therefore there is in the Upaniṣads a “sacrifice greater than sacrifice”, yajñena bhūya yajeyeti (Br. Up. I. 2.6.). The sacrifice greater than sacrifice is like “the truth of truth”, satyasya satyam, like aksara “higher than the highest”, aksarāt parataḥ parah, like the negation of negation, neti, neti.

The “sacrifice greater than sacrifice” is tapas, “austerity”. Without tapas there is in the Upaniṣads, neither Creation, nor knowledge about man of his Being, nor the yoga of self-realisation, nor mokṣa or liberation from bondage. Therefore through the symbol tapas which is yajña “greater than” yajña, all the Upaniṣads together offer as it were a KEY to the unfathomed Mystery and creative power of Being.
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