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# Chapter 1

## Revelation

If we are to form a proper understanding of the meaning and scope of "Revelation," we do well to forget at once the implications of the term in the Mediterranean religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Strictly speaking, "revelation" is a misnomer, since ultimately there is no revealer. The Sanskrit term for it is *çruti*, literally "the hearing," which means an erudition acquired by listening to the instruction of a teacher. This instruction itself had been transmitted to the teacher through an uninterrupted series of teachers that stretches to the beginning of creation.

Revelation, therefore, is by no means God's word—because, paradoxically, if it were to derive from a divine person, its credibility would be impugned. It is held to be authorless, for if a person, human or divine, had authored it, it would be vulnerable to the defects inherent in such a person. It is axiomatic that revelation is infallible, and this infallibility can be defended only if it is authorless.

Then from where does it come? The answer is stark and simple: it is given with the world. For some of the Mīmāṁsā (or orthodox, exegetical) thinkers who have addressed themselves to this problem, the world is beginningless and the assumption of a creator is both problematic and unnecessary. And even if a beginning of the world is assumed, as in later Hindu thought when it is held that the universe goes through a pulsating rhythm of origination, existence, and dissolution, it is also held that at the dawn of a new world the revelation reappears to the vision of the seers, who once more begin the transmission.

Revelation, then, comes with the world, and it embodies the laws which regulate the well-being of both world and man. It lays down first and foremost what is our *dharma*, our duty. This duty is more precisely defined as a set of acts which either must be done continuously (*nitya*), or occasionally (*naimittika*), or to satisfy a specific wish (*kämya*).

While we would be inclined to look upon the Revelation as a more or less continuous series of historic texts, spanning close to a millen-

nium from ca. 1400 B.C.E. till 500 B.C.E., orthodoxy looks upon it as eternal and therefore simultaneous. Also, the Mīmāṁsā Exegetes laid down rather rigorous criteria for its authority. Orthodox consensus recognizes three fundamental means of knowledge, each of which has its own scope. Of these means (*pramäëas*), sensory perception (*pratyakña*) holds the first place, for it is through perception that the world is evident to us. Built upon perception is inference (*anumäna*), in which a present perception combines with a series of past perceptions to offer us a conclusion about a fact which is not perceptibly evident. While these two means of knowledge, perceiving and reasoning, tell us everything about the world that we wish to know, they cannot give us any knowledge about matters that are suprasensory. It is here that the force of Revelation comes in. Revelation, then, is authoritative *only* about matters to which neither perception nor inference gives us access; but then it is fully authoritative. This authority, as pointed out, is primarily concerned with one's duties. To give a contrastive example, the orthodox Exegetes would reject most of the Bible as Revelation: most of it they would classify as *itihäsa* or *puräëa*, "stories about things past," describing events which were accessible to perception and hence require only the authority of perception; but, for example, the chapters dealing with the Law in Deuteronomy would be considered Revelation in the true sense, since here rules are laid down and results are set forth which escape human perception and inference.

Led by this principle, the Exegetes classified Revelation under three basic rubrics, "injunction" (*vidhi* or *niyoga*, including prohibition or *niñedha*), "discussion" (*arthaväda*), and "spell" (*mantra*). Spells comprise the mass of formulae, metric or in prose, which were employed at the execution of the rites. Discussion comprises all the texts which describe, glorify, or condemn matters pertaining to rites. Injunction comprises all the statements, direct or indirect, which lay down that certain rites or acts must be done or must not be done.

The stock example is *svargakämo jyotiñöomena yajeta*, "he who wishes for heaven should sacrifice with the soma sacrifice." It is in such statements that the authority of Revelation finally resides. It enjoins an action (offering up a sacrifice), the nature of which escapes human invention, for a purpose (heaven) whose existence neither perception nor inference could have acknowledged, upon a person (the sacrificer) who stands qualified for this action on the basis of the injunction. Declarations which accompany the description of the sacrifice, e.g., "the sacrificial pole is the sun," while strict-

ly speaking untrue and carrying no authority, have a derivative authority insofar as they are subsidiary to and supportive of the injunction, and may be condemnatory or laudatory of facts connected with the rite laid down in the injunction (e.g., the sacrificial pole is compared to the sun in a laudatory fashion for its central function at the rite). The spells accompanying the festive celebration of the rite have their secondary, even tertiary, significance only within the context of the rite laid down in the injunction.

From the exegetical point of view, then, much of what is generally described as Revelation holds little authority. For example, the Four Vedas as we call them, the Veda of the hymns (*āk*), the formulae (*yajus*), the chants (*säma*), and the incantations (*atharva*), are almost entirely under the rubric of "spell." The large disquisitions of the Brāhmaṇas are almost entirely "discussion," except for the scattered injunctions in them; and the same largely holds for the third layer of texts, the Āraṇyakas. Generally speaking, Vedānta will go along with this view.

It is, however, with the last layer of text (the Vedānta or the Upaniṣads) that Exegetes and Vedāntins come to a parting of ways. For the Exegetes the Upaniṣads are in no way an exception to the rules that govern the Revelation as a whole. Nothing much is enjoined in them nor do they embody marked spells. In fact, they are fundamentally "discussion," specifically discussion of the self; and such discussion certainly has a place in the exegetical scheme of things, for this self is none other than the personal agent of the rites and this agent no doubt deserves as much discussion as, say, the sacrificial pole.

Basically therefore the Exegetes find the Revelation solely, and fully, authoritative when it lays down the Law on what actions have to be undertaken by what persons under what circumstances for which purposes. Vedānta accepts this, but only for that portion of Revelation which bears on ritual acts, the *karmakäëòa*. But to relegate the portion dealing with knowledge, the *jïänakäëòa*, to the same ritual context is unacceptable. It is taken for granted that *karmakäëòa* indeed defines the principle of authority in injunctions of acts to be done, but Vedānta declines on the one hand that the Upaniṣads embody an injunction (e.g., that Brahman or the self must be studied and known, or that the world must be dephenomenalized) and declines on the other hand that if the Upaniṣads bear on no injunction they have simply the limited authoritative standing of a

discussion. The consensus of the Vedānta is that in the Upaniṣads significant and authoritative statements are made concerning the nature of Brahman.

From the foregoing it will have become clear that very little of the Revelation literature preceding the Upaniṣads was of systematic interest to the Vedāntins. For example, Śaṁkara quotes less than twenty verses from the entire *Āgveda* in his commentary on the *Brahmasütras*, about fourteen lines from the largest Brāhmaṇa of them all, the *Çatapatha Brähmaëa*, but no less than thirty-four verses from the *Muëòaka Upaniñad*, a fairly minor and short Upaniṣad. This is not to say that Vedānta rejects the previous literature, but that it considers all the relevant wisdom of the Veda concerning these issues to have been embedded in the Upaniṣads.

## HYMN OF CREATION

### *Āgveda* X, 129

Among the hymns of the *Āgveda* that are clearly philosophical both in character and influence none is more important than the "Hymn of Creation." This hymn exhibits a clear monistic or non-dualistic concern, an account of creation that gives special attention to the role of desire, and a kind of skeptical or agnostic attitude concerning man's (and even god's) knowledge of creation. The following translation is from *Hymns From the Rig Veda*, translated by A. A. Macdonell, Heritage of India Series (Calcutta: Association Press, n.d.).

> Non-being then existed not nor being:
> There was no air, nor sky that is beyond it.
> What was concealed? Wherein? In whose protection?
> And was there deep unfathomable water?
>
> Death then existed not nor life immortal;
> Of neither night nor day was any token.
> By its inherent force the One breathed windless:
> No other thing than that beyond existed.
>
> Darkness there was at first by darkness hidden;
> Without distinctive marks, this all was water.

That which, becoming, by the void was covered,
That One by force of heat came into being.

Desire entered the One in the beginning:
It was the earliest seed, of thought the product.
The sages searching in their hearts with wisdom,
Found out the bond of being in non-being.

Their ray extended light across the darkness:
But was the One above or was it under?
Creative force was there, and fertile power:
Below was energy, above was impulse.

Who knows for certain? Who shall here declare it?
Whence was it born, and whence came this creation?
The gods were born after this world's creation:
Then who can know from whence it has arisen?

None knoweth whence creation has arisen;
And whether he has or has not produced it:
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
He only knows, or haply he may know not.

The authority of the statements of the Upaniṣads is final for Vedānta. But inevitably there are portions in the Upaniṣads that are more influential than others. This influence is of two kinds. One kind of influence is that exerted through the *Brahmasütras* which, when referring to an Upaniṣadic passage, makes it incumbent upon the commentator to interpret and accommodate the passage in his thinking. Perhaps the most quoted Upaniṣad in the Sūtras is the *Chändogya*. Another kind of influence is the predilection of a commentator for certain passages which for him express the final thoughts of the Upaniṣads.

The selection of Upaniṣadic texts which follows hereunder does not pretend to be exhaustive, either as far as their occurrence in the Sūtras goes, or in their appeal to the individual commentators. But they are all basic to the Vedānta as a whole.

## THE WISDOM OF THE EXISTENT

### *Chāndogya Upaniñad* VI

This text portion, which comprises the entire sixth chapter of the *Chāndogya Upaniñad*, is no doubt the most influential of the entire corpus of the Upaniṣads. It is presented in the form of an instruction by Uddālaka Āruṇi Gautama (nickname, patronymic, family name) to his son Śvetaketu, both of whom, we shall see, reappear in other important selections of the Upaniṣads. The significance of the present "wisdom" is threefold:

a. It lays down for Vedānta that creation is not *ex nihilo*, that the phenomenal world is produced out of a preexistent cause. This cause is the substantial or material cause (*upādāna*), which, by the example of the clay and its clay products (section 1), provides the authority for the tenet that the phenomenal world is non-different from its cause. Although the text does not use the term *brahman*, the Vedānta tradition is that the Existent (*sat*) referred to is no other than Brahman. The tenet implies the important doctrine of *satkāryavāda*, viz., that the product does not emerge as a completely new entity, but preexists in its substantial cause. This doctrine is common to both Sāṁkhya and Vedānta, but while the former treats the cause as the subtle unconscious *prakāti*, the material germ of the material cause which is totally different from the conscious order of selves (*puruña*), the latter understands the substantial cause to be identical with the principle of consciousness in the phenomenal world. Thus this text presents us with the basic problem of Vedānta, the relation between the plural, complex, changing phenomenal world and the Brahman in which it substantially subsists.

b. It teaches that "You are That," and thus, for Vedānta, lays down that there is an identity (however to be understood) between the Brahman and the individual self. This makes the text one of the "great statements" (*mahāväkya*) for Śaṁkara, who reads in it the ultimate denial of any difference between the consciousness of the individual self and the consciousness that is Brahman.

c. It is quoted several times in the *Brahmasütras*, which adduces its evidence in 1. 1. 5 ff. to prove that the universal cause is conscious and thus to disprove the assumption of an unconscious causal *prakāti* of the Sāṁkhyans, and in 2. 1. 14 to prove that the produced world is non-different from Brahman. Therefore all Vedāntins have to

confront themselves with this text while commenting on the Sūtras, and the commentaries on 2. 1. 14 will state their basic positions—whether this non-difference signifies a complete non-dualism (Śaṁkara), a difference-non-difference (Bhāskara), or a non-difference in a differentiated supreme (Rāmānuja).

The text is presented in a new translation by J. A. B. van Buitenen. It differs in many instances from previous translations which, he believes, have been unduly influenced by the interpretation of Śaṁkara. For example in section 4, the repeated "fireness has departed from fire," "sunness has departed from sun," "moonness has departed from moon," "lightningness has departed from lightning" do not signify that there is in reality no fire, sun, moon, and lightning, but rather that these four entities, which previously had been considered irreducible principles, can be further analyzed into compounds of the Three Colors or Elements that Uddālaka sets up.

The interpretation of *vācārambhaëaṃ vikāro; nāmadhe-yaṃ ... satyam* (here rendered "creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*, namely ... ") is an old crux. The traditional explanation, which can be traced to Śaṁkara's, is that "any product is no more than a verbal handle, a name given to it, but that only the cause is real." Once more this explanation implies that the produced phenomenal world is not quite as real as its cause—the basic assumption of Śaṁkara. The interpretation here presented is that the process of creation (*vikāra*) proceeds by naming entities by speech (entities which are "names-and-forms"), and that the statement "the Name is *Satyam*" is best understood in context with similar speculations on the name *satyam*.

The Indian commentators generally break up the sentence as follows: *vācārambhaëaṃ vikāro nāmadheyam; ... satyam*, but differ widely on what is to be understood by *vācārambhaëaṃ*, and on the explanation of what is *satyam* "real" or "true."

Since a source book should avoid presenting sources in a controversial manner, the reader is urged to consult, e.g., Franklin Edgerton's translation in *Beginnings of Indian Philosophy*, Hume's in *Thirteen Principal Upaniñads*, Radhakrishnan's in *The Principal Upaniñads*, to quote the more accessible ones, for further reference.

1. There was Śvetaketu, the grandson of Aruṇa. His father said to him, "Śvetaketu, you must make your studies. Surely no one of our family, my son, lives like a mere Brahmin by birth alone, without having studied."

At the age of twelve he went to a teacher and after having studied all the Vedas, he returned at the age of twenty-four, haughty, proud of his learning and conceited.

His father said to him: "Śvetaketu, now that you are so haughty, proud of your learning and conceited, did you chance to ask for that Instruction by which the unrevealed becomes revealed, the unthought thought, the unknown known?"

"How does this Instruction go, sir?"

"Like this for example: by a single lump of clay everything is known that is made of clay. 'Creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*,' namely clay.

"Like this for instance: by one piece of copper ore everything is known that is made of copper. 'Creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*,' namely copper.

"Like this for instance: by one nail-cutter everything is known that is iron. 'Creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*,' namely iron."

"Certainly my honorable teachers did not know this. For if they had known, how could they have failed to tell me? Sir, you yourself must tell me!"

"So I will, my son," he said.

2. "The Existent was here in the beginning, my son, alone and without a second. On this there are some who say, 'The Nonexistent was here in the beginning, alone and without a second. From that Nonexistent sprang the Existent.'

"But how could it really be so, my son?" he said. "How could what exists spring from what does not exist? On the contrary, my son, the Existent was here in the beginning, alone and without a second.

"It willed, 'I may be much, let me multiply.' It brought forth Fire. The Fire willed, 'I may be much, let me multiply.' It brought forth Water. Hence wherever a person is hot or sweats, water springs in that spot from fire.

"The Water willed, 'I may be much, let me multiply.' It brought forth Food. Hence wherever it rains, food becomes plentiful: from water indeed spring food and eatables in that spot."

3. "Of these beings indeed there are three ways of being born: it is born from an egg, it is born from a live being, it is born from a plant.

"This same deity willed, 'Why, I will create separate names-and-forms by entering entirely into these three deities with the living soul.

"'I will make each one of them triple.' This deity created separate names-and-forms by entering entirely into these three deities with the living soul.

"Each of them he made triple. Now learn from me how these three deities each became triple."

4. "The red color of fire is the Color of Fire, the white that of Water, the black that of Food. Thus fireness has departed from fire. 'Creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*,' namely the Three Colors.

"The red color of the sun is the Color of Fire, the white that of Water, the black that of Food. Thus sunness has departed from the sun. 'Creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*,' namely the Three Colors.

"The red color of the moon is the Color of Fire, the white that of Water, the black that of Food. Thus moonness has departed from the moon. 'Creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*,' namely the Three Colors.

"The red color of lightning is the Color of Fire, the white that of Water, the black that of Food. Thus lightningness has departed from lightning. 'Creating is seizing with Speech, the Name is *Satyam*,' namely the Three Colors.

"As they knew this, the ancients of the great halls and of great learning said, 'Now no one can quote us anything that is unrevealed, unthought, unknown,' for they knew it by these Three Colors.

"If something was more or less red, they knew it for the Color of Fire; if it was more or less white, they knew it for the Color of Water; if it was more or less black, they knew it for the Color of Food.

"If something was not quite known, they knew it for a combination of these three deities. Now learn from me, my son, how these three deities each become triple on reaching the person."

5. "The food that is eaten is divided into three: the most solid element becomes excrement, the middle one flesh, the finest one mind.

"The water that is drunk is divided into three: the most solid element becomes urine, the middle one blood, the finest one breath.

"The fire that is consumed is divided into three: the most solid element becomes bone, the middle one marrow, the finest one speech.

"For the mind, my son, consists in Food, the breath consists in Water, the speech consists in Fire."

"Sir, instruct me further."

"So I will, my son," he said.

6. "The fineness of milk which is being churned rises upward, my son, and that becomes butter.

"In the same way, my son, the fineness of the food that is eaten rises upward, and that becomes the mind.

"The fineness of the water that is drunk rises upward, my son, and that becomes the breath.

"The fineness of the fire that is consumed rises upward, my son, and that becomes speech.

"For the mind, my son, consists in Food, the breath consists in Water, the speech consists in Fire."

"Sir, instruct me further."

"So I will, my son," he said.

7. "Man consists of sixteen parts, my son. Do not eat for fifteen days. Drink water as you please. The breath will not be destroyed if one drinks, as it consists in Water."

He did not eat for fifteen days. Then he came back to him. "What should I say, sir?"

"Lines from the *Ägveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Sämaveda*, my son."

"They do not come back to me, sir."

He said to him, "Just as of a big piled-up fire only one ember may be left, the size of a firefly, and the fire does not burn much thereafter with this ember, thus of your sixteen parts one part is left and with that you do not remember the Vedas. Eat. Afterwards you will learn from me."

He ate. Then he returned to him, and whatever Veda he asked, he responded completely. He said to him, "Just as one ember, the size of a firefly, that remains of a big piled-up fire will blaze up when it is stacked with straw and the fire will burn high thereafter with this ember, so, my son, one of your sixteen parts remained. It was stacked with food and it blazed forth, and with it you now remember the Vedas. For the mind consists in Food, my son, the breath in Water, speech in Fire." This he learnt from him, from him.

8. Uddälaka son of Aruṇa said to his son Śvetaketu, "Learn from me the doctrine of the sleep. When a man literally 'sleeps' [*svapiti*], then he has merged with Existent. He has 'entered the self' [*svamapétaù*], that is why they say that he 'sleeps.' For he has entered the self.

"Just as a bird which is tied to a string may fly hither and thither without finding a resting place elsewhere and perches on the stick to which it is tied, likewise the mind may fly hither and thither without

finding a resting place elsewhere and perches on the breath. For the breath is the perch of the mind, my son.

"Learn from me hunger and thirst. When a man literally 'hungers' [*açiçiñatï*], water conducts the food he eats. And just as we speak of a cow leader, a horse leader, a man leader, so we speak of water as 'food leader' [*açanäyä*, but first: hunger]. You must know a shoot has sprung up there, my son. This shoot will not lack a root.

"Where would this root be but in food? Thus indeed, my son, search by way of the food, which is a shoot, for the fire, its root. Search, my son, by way of the fire as a shoot, for the Existent, its root. All these creatures, my son, are rooted in the Existent, rest on the Existent, are based upon the Existent.

"And when a man literally 'thirsts' [*pipäsatï*], fire conducts the liquid which is drunk. Just as we speak of a cow leader, a horse leader, a man leader, we speak of fire as 'water leader' [*udanyä*, but first: thirst]. You must know that a shoot has sprung up there, my son. This shoot will not lack a root.

"Where would this root be but in water? Search, my son, by way of the water as the shoot, for the fire, its root. Search, my son, by way of the fire as the shoot, for the Existent, its root. All these creatures, my son, are rooted in the Existent, rest on the Existent, are based upon the Existent. It has been said before how these three deities each become triple on reaching man. Of this man when he dies, my son, the speech merges in the breath, the breath in the Fire, the Fire in the supreme deity. That indeed is the very fineness by which all this is ensouled, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

9. "Just as the bees prepare honey by collecting the juices of all manner of trees and bring the juice to one unity, and just as the juices no longer distinctly know that the one hails from this tree, the other from that one, likewise, my son, when all these creatures have merged with the Existent they do not know, realizing only that they have merged with the Existent.

"Whatever they are here on earth, tiger, lion, wolf, boar, worm, fly, gnat, or mosquito, they become that.

"It is this very fineness which ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

10. "The rivers of the east, my son, flow eastward, the rivers of the west flow westward. From ocean they merge into ocean, it becomes the same ocean. Just as they then no longer know that they are this river or that one, just so all these creatures, my son, know no more, realizing only when having come to the Existent that they have come to the Existent. Whatever they are here on earth, tiger, lion, wolf, boar, worm, fly, gnat or mosquito, they become that.

"It is this very fineness which ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

11. "If a man would strike this big tree at the root, my son, it would bleed but stay alive. If he struck it at the middle, it would bleed but stay alive. If he struck it at the top, it would bleed but stay alive. Being entirely permeated by the living soul, it stands there happily drinking its food.

"If this life leaves one branch, it withers. If it leaves another branch, it withers. If it leaves a third branch, it withers. If it leaves the whole tree, the whole tree withers. Know that it is in this same way, my son," he said, "that this very body dies when deserted by this life, but this life itself does not die.

"This is the very fineness which ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

12. "Bring me a banyan fruit."

"Here it is, sir."

"Split it."

"It is split, sir."

"What do you see inside it?"

"A number of rather fine seeds, sir."

"Well, split one of them."

"It is split, sir."

"What do you see inside it?"

"Nothing, sir."

He said to him, "This very fineness that you no longer can make out, it is by virtue of this fineness that this banyan tree stands so big.

"Believe me, my son. It is this very fineness which ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

13. "Throw this salt in the water, and sit with me on the morrow." So he did. He said to him, "Well, bring me the salt that you threw in the water last night." He looked for it, but could not find it as it was dissolved.

"Well, taste the water on this side.—How does it taste?"

"Salty."

"Taste it in the middle.—How does it taste?"

"Salty."

"Taste it at the other end.—How does it taste?"

"Salty."

"Take a mouthful and sit with me." So he did.

"It is always the same."

He said to him, "You cannot make out what exists in it, yet it is there.

"It is this very fineness which ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

14. "Suppose they brought a man from the Gandhāra country, blindfolded, and let him loose in an uninhabited place beyond. The man, brought out and let loose with his blindfold on, would be turned around, to the east, north, west, and south.

"Then someone would take off his blindfold and tell him, 'Gandhāra is that way, go that way.' Being a wise man and clever, he would ask his way from village to village and thus reach Gandhāra. Thus in this world a man who has a teacher knows from him, 'So long will it take until I am free, then I shall reach it.'

"It is this very fineness which ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

15. "When a man is dying, his relatives crowd around him: 'Do you recognize me? Do you recognize me?' As long as his speech has not merged in his mind, his mind in his breath, his breath in Fire, and Fire in the supreme deity, he does recognize.

"But when his speech has merged in the mind, the mind in the breath, the breath in Fire, and Fire in the supreme deity, he no longer recognizes.

"It is this very fineness which ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

"Instruct me further, sir."

"So I will, my son," he said.

16. "They bring in a man with his hands tied, my son: 'He has stolen, he has committed a robbery. Heat the ax for him!' If he is the criminal, he will make himself untrue. His protests being untrue, and covering himself with untruth, he seizes the heated ax. He is burnt, and then killed.

"If he is not the criminal, he makes himself true by this very fact. His protests being true, and covering himself with truth, he seizes the heated ax. He is not burnt, and then set free.

"Just as he is not burnt—that ensouls all this world, it is the true one, it is the soul. *You are that*, Śvetaketu."

This he knew from him, from him.

## THE WISDOM OF THE FIVE FIRES

### *Chändogya Upaniñad* V, 3–10

This is another selection from the *Chändogya Upaniñad*, presenting Śvetaketu and his father Uddālaka Gautama in a different role. Here Śvetaketu, almost always the incompletely instructed pupil, complains to his father that he is unable to answer the riddles posed by a baron (*kñatriya*).

This text, along with one closely related in the *Bāhadäraëyaka Upaniñad*, presents the fullest account of the doctrine of transmigration, which on the whole is rather understated in the Upaniṣads. The views held by the Sūtras on the subject is based on the present account. The text is further remarkable in that it presents this doctrine as special knowledge of the *kñatriya* class. This has given rise to the hypothesis that there was a lively ambience of philosophy among the barons from which the brahmins were excluded. While this hypothesis is no doubt extreme, the question remains alive.

This and the following sections are new translations by J. A. B. van Buitenen unless otherwise indicated.

3. Śvetaketu, the grandson of Aruṇa, went to the assembly of the Pañcālas. Pravāhana Jaivali said to him, "Boy, has your father instructed you?"

"He has, sir."

"Then do you know where the creatures go from here?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know the bifurcation of the two paths, the Way of the Gods and the Way of the Ancestors?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know why the world beyond does not fill up?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know how the water in the fifth oblation becomes known as man?"

"Not at all, sir."

"Then how do you call yourself instructed? How could one call oneself instructed if he does not know the answers?"

Upset, he went back to his father. He said to him, "To be sure, your reverence told me, without having instructed me, that you had instructed me! Five questions did that accursed baron ask me, and I could not resolve a single one of them!"

He said, "The way you have stated them, my son, I do not know any one of them. If I had known the answers, why would I not have told you?"

So Gautama went to the king. The latter received him with honor on his arrival. The next morning he went up to sit in the audience hall. He said to him, "Reverend Gautama, ask a boon of human wealth."

He replied, "Keep your human wealth, king! Relate to me the discourse which you mentioned before the boy!"

The king was cornered. He ordered him, "Stay a while." He said, "This wisdom, as you state it to me, Gautama, has never before you gone to the brahmins. That is why the rule in all the worlds belongs to the baronage."

4. He said to him,

"The world beyond, Gautama, is a fire. Of it the sun is the kindling, the rays the smoke, the glow the day, the embers the moon, the sparks the constellations.

"In this fire the gods offer up faith; from the oblation springs King Soma."

5. "The monsoon, Gautama, is a fire. Of it the wind is the kindling, the cloud the smoke, the lightning the glow, the thunderbolt the embers, the hail stones the sparks.

"In this fire the gods offer up King Soma. From this oblation springs the rain."

6. "The earth, Gautama, is a fire. Of it the year is the kindling, space the smoke, night the glow, the compass points the embers, the intermediate points the sparks.

"In this fire the gods offer up the rain. From this oblation springs food."

7. "Man, Gautama, is a fire. Of him speech is the kindling, breath the smoke, the tongue the glow, the eye the embers, the ear the sparks.

"In this fire the gods offer up food. From this oblation springs the seed."

8. "Woman, Gautama, is a fire. Of her the womb is the kindling, the proposition the smoke, the vagina the glow, intercourse the embers, pleasure the sparks.

"In this fire the gods offer up the seed. From this oblation springs the child."

9. "Thus in the fifth oblation water becomes known as man. The embryo, enveloped by its membrane, lies inside for ten months, or however long, then it is born.

"Once born he lives for as long as he has life. When he has died his appointed death, people carry him from here to the fire, from which he had come forth and was born."

10. "They who know it thus and in the forest devote themselves to faith and austerity, they go into the fire's glow, from the glow to day, from day to the fortnight of waxing moon, and from that fortnight to the six months when the sun goes the northern course. From these months to the year, from the year to the sun, from the sun to the moon, from the moon to lightning. There is a person who is not human; he conducts them to Brahman. This is the Way of the Gods as described.

"Now those who in the village devote themselves to rites and charity, they go into the fire's smoke, from the smoke to night, from night to the other fortnight, from the other fortnight to the six months when the sun goes the southern course. They do not reach the year.

"From the months they go to the world of the ancestors, from that world to space, from space to the moon: he is the King Soma, it is the food of the gods, the gods eat it.

"There they stay out the remainder, then they return by the same way, namely to space, from space to wind. Having become wind, they become smoke. Having become smoke, they become mist.

"Having become mist, they become the cloud, and having become the cloud, they rain forth. They are born on earth as barley and rice, herbs and trees. From thence escape is indeed difficult. If a person eats that food and then ejaculates his semen, then one becomes once more.

"They who in this world have been of pleasant deeds, the expectation is that they attain to pleasant wombs, of a brahmin, or a baron, or a clansman. But if they have been of putrid deeds, the expectation is that they attain to putrid wombs, of a dog, or a swine, or an outcaste.

"But by neither of these paths go the lowly creatures that again and again come back. That is the third level, that of: Be Born! Die! Therefore the world beyond does not fill up. Hence one should watch out. There is this verse:

The thief of gold, the drinker of wine,
The corruptor of his teacher's bed, a brahmin-killer,
Those four fall, and so the fifth who consorts with them.

"If one does know these five fires, then one is not smeared with evil, even though consorting with them. Clean, pure, and of auspicious domain becomes he who knows it thus, who knows it thus."

## THE WISDOM OF THE FIVE SHEATHS

### *Taittiréya Upaniñad* II, 1–8

The present selection is important for all Vedāntins in several respects:

a. Its lapidary opening sentence "He who knows Brahman attains the most high" lays down that the primary pursuit of Vedānta must be the knowledge of Brahman.

b. It presents a definition of Brahman in the famous assertion *satyaṃ jïänam anantam brahma*, "Brahman is truth, knowledge, and endless."

c. It outlines, even though in primitive terms, a hierarchy of the person—five "sheaths" (*koça*) of increasing interiority.

d. And it declares, perhaps more emphatically than any other text, that the realization of the innermost self, which is tantamount to Brahman, is bliss.

1. OṂ! He who knows Brahman attains to the Most-High. On this there is the verse:

Brahman is truth, knowledge, and endless. He who knows what is hidden in the cave in the highest heaven partakes of all desires with the wise Brahman.

From this very self sprang space, from space the wind, from the wind the fire, from the fire water, from water the earth, from the earth the herbs, from the herbs food, from food man. Thus man indeed is made up of the sap of food. This is his head, this his right side, this his other side, this his trunk, this his tail, his foundation. On this there is the verse:

2. From food arise the creatures, whichsoever live on earth, and through food alone do they live, and to it they return in the end. Of all elements, food indeed is the best, hence it is called the best medicine. They forsooth attain to all food who contemplate on Brahman as food. From food are the creatures born, and once born they grow through food. It is eaten and eats the creatures, hence it is called food.

Other than this self consisting in the sap of food and within it is the self which consists of breath. It is filled by it. This has the shape of a person; it has the shape of a person according to the personal shape of the other. The *präëa* is its head, the *vyäna* its right side, the *apäna* its left side, space the trunk, earth its tail, its foundation. On this there is the verse:

3. After breath do the gods, men, and cattle breathe. For breath is the life of the creatures, hence it is called the all-life. To all-life go those who contemplate on Brahman as breath. For breath is the life of the creatures, hence it is called the all-life.

This self is embodied in the previous one. Other than this self consisting in breath and within it is the self consisting of mind. It is filled by it. This has the shape of a person: it is shaped like a person accord-

ing to the personal shape of the other. The *yajus* formula is its head, the *rk* verse the right side, the *säman* chant the other side, the instruction the trunk, the *atharva* hymns the tail, the foundation. On this there is the verse:

4. He who knows the Brahman which is bliss—from which both words and mind turn back without reaching it—he has no fear any more.

This self is embodied in the previous one. Other than this self consisting in mind and within it is the self consisting of knowledge. It is filled by it. This has the shape of a person: it is shaped according to the personal shape of the other. Faith is its head, order the right side, truth the other side, discipline the trunk, *mahas* the tail, the foundation. On this there is the verse:

5. Knowledge performs the sacrifice, and it performs the rites. All the gods contemplate on knowledge as the oldest Brahman. When one knows Brahman as knowledge and when one doest not become distracted from it, then, giving up the evils in the body, he attains to all desires.

This self is embodied in the previous one. Other than this self consisting in knowledge and within it is the self consisting in bliss. It is filled by it. This has the shape of a person; it is shaped according to the personal shape of the other. Happiness is its head, joy its right side, rapture its other side, bliss its trunk, Brahman its tail, its foundation. On this there is the verse:

6. Nonexistent becomes he when he knows Brahman as nonexistent. When he knows that Brahman exists, they know him by that to exist.

This self is embodied in the previous one. Next then arise the further questions: Does anyone who does not possess the knowledge go to yonder world after his death? Or does the wise man attain to yonder world after his death?

He willed, "Let me be much, I will procreate." He performed austerities. Having performed austerities he created all this, whatever is here. Having created it he entered into it, and having entered into it, he became both the Existent and the Yon [*say-tyat*], the spoken and the unspoken, the abode and the non-abode, knowledge and ignorance, truth and falsehood, he became *Satyam*, whatever there

is. That is why they call him *Satyam*. On this there is the verse:

7. In the beginning the Nonexistent was here, from it was born the existent. It made itself into a self, that is why it is called well-made. That which is well-made is the sap. For upon attaining to this sap one becomes blissful. For who would breathe in and breathe out if there were no bliss in his space? That indeed makes blissful. For when one finds security, foundation in this invisible, impersonal, unspoken non-abode, then he has become fearless. When he makes in it a differentiation, then he becomes fearful. But it is a terror to the wise man who does not think. On this there is the verse:

8. For fear of it blows the wind, from fear of it rises the sun, from fear of it run Agni and Indra, and Death as the fifth.

## THE WISDOM OF THE ATTAINMENT OF BRAHMAN

### *Kaöha Upaniñad*

The *Kaöha Upaniñad* tells the story of Naciketas, a student who is initiated into traditional Upaniṣadic wisdom regarding the nature of reality. Naciketas offers to be sacrificed by his father who is giving away all his possessions. He is sent to Yama, the god of death, who tests Naciketas for his qualifications to seek wisdom and eventually leads him on a gradual path to enlightenment.

While apparently including both theistic and non-theistic (strictly Advaitic) perspectives, the text emphasizes the need for moral understanding and achievement in order to attain enlightenment; expounds the doctrine of *karma* and rebirth; presents an analysis of the self in its empirical dimensions and eternal form; and sets forth a state of bliss to be had through an intense concentration of consciousness and, finally, a surpassing state of joy and liberation.

The text, given here in its entirety, is a translation of Patrick Olivelle, *The Early Upanishads* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Vallī 1

1. Usan, the son of Vajasravas, once gave away all his possessions. He had a son named Naciketas.

2. Young as he was, faith took hold of him while the cows were

being led away, and he reflected:

3. "They've drunk all their water, eaten all their fodder,
They have been milked dry, they are totally barren—
'Joyless' are those worlds called,
to which a man goes who gives them as gifts."

4. So he asked his father: "Father, to whom will you give me?" He repeated it for a second time, and again for a third time. His father yelled at him: "I'll give you to Death!"

(Naciketas reflects)

5. I go as the very first of many
I go as the middlemost of many.
What's it that Yama must do,
That he will do with me today?

(A Voice)

6. Look ahead! See how they have gone
those who have gone before us!
Look back! So they will go,
those who will come after us.
A mortal man ripens like grain,
And like grain he is born again.

7. A Brahmin guest enters a house
as the fire in all men.
Bring water, O Vaivasvata,
that is how they appease him.

8. Hopes and expectations, fellowship and goodwill,
Children and livestock, rites and gifts—
all these a Brahmin wrests from the foolish man,
in whose house he resides without any food.

(Death)

9. Three nights, O Brahmin, you stayed in my house,
a guest worthy of homage, without any food;
Three wishes, therefore, deign to make in return.
So homage to you, O Brahmin!

And may I fare well!
(Naciketas)

10. That with his temper cooled, his anger subdued,
Gautama, O Death, be to me well disposed.
That he greet me with joy, when by you I'm dismissed—
this is the first of my three wishes.
(Death)

11. He'll be affable in the future, just as before;
Auddālaka Āruni, I have dismissed you.
He'll have restful nights, his anger subdued,
Seeing you released from the jaws of Death.

(Naciketas)

12. In the world of heaven there is no fear;
there one has no fear of old age or you.
Transcending both these—both hunger and thirst
beyond all sorrows, one rejoices in heaven.

13. You, O Death are studying,
the fire altar that leads to heaven;
Explain that to me, a man who has faith;
People who are in heaven enjoy the immortal state—
It is this I choose with my second wish.

(Death)

14. I shall explain to you—
and heed this teaching of mine, O Naciketas,
you who understands the fire altar that leads
to heaven, to the attainment of an endless world,
and is its very foundation.
Know that it lies hidden, in the Cave of the heart.

(Narrator)

15. He described to him that fire altar—the beginning of the world

What type the bricks, how many; and how they are to be laid;
and he repeated it exactly as described.
Delighted at him, then, Death said to him again;

(Death)

16. Well-pleased, the large-hearted one said to him
Here I grant you another wish today.
This fire-altar will bear your very name.
Take also this glittering disk of gold.

17. This is a three-Naciketa man—
Uniting with the three, performing the triple rite,
he crosses over birth and death.
Perceiving the *Brahman* that is being born,
as the god who is to be adored,
recognizing this disk of gold to be that,
he attains unending peace.

18. This is a three-Naciketa man—
Knowing these three, and, with that knowledge,
Piling the altar of Naciketas,
he shoves aside the fetters of death before him,
passes beyond sorrow,
and rejoices in heaven.

19. This, Naciketas, is your fire that leads to heaven,
which you chose with your second wish,
People will proclaim this your very own fire.
Choose your third wish, O Naciketas.

(Naciketas)

20. There is this doubt about a man who is dead.
"He exists," say some, others, "He exists not."
I want to know this, so please teach me.
This is the third of my wishes.

(Death)

21. As to this even the gods of old had doubts,

for it's hard to understand, it's a subtle doctrine.
Make, Naciketas, another wish.
Do not press me! Release me from this.

(Naciketas)

22. As to this, we're told, even the gods had doubts,
and you say, O Death, it's hard to understand.
But another like you I can't find to explain it;
and there is no other wish that is equal to it.
(Death)

23. Choose sons and grandsons who'd live a hundred years!
Plenty of livestock and elephants, horses and gold!
Choose as your domain a wide expanse of earth!
And you yourself live as many autumns as you wish!

24. And if you would think this an equal wish—
You may choose wealth together with a long life;
Achieve prominence, Naciketas, in this wide world;
And I will make you enjoy your desires at will.

25. You may ask freely for all those desires,
hard to obtain in this mortal world;
Look at these lovely girls, with chariots and lutes,
girls of this sort are unobtainable by men—
I'll give them to you; you'll have them wait on you;
But about death don't ask me, Naciketas.

(Naciketas)

26. Since the passing days of a mortal, O Death,
sap here the energy of all the senses;
And even a full life is but a trifle;
So keep your horses, your songs and dances!

27. With wealth you cannot make a man content;
Will we get to keep wealth, when we have seen you?
And we get to live only as long as you allow!
So, this alone is the wish that I'd like to choose.

28. What mortal man with insight,

who has met those that do not die or grow old,
himself growing old in this wretched and lowly place,
looking at it's beauties, it's pleasures and joys,
would delight in a long life?

29. The point on which they have great doubts—
what happens at that great transit—
tell me that, O Death!
This is my wish, probing the mystery deep,
Naciketas wishes for nothing
other than that.

Vallī 2

(Death)

1. The good is one thing, the gratifying is another;
their goals are different, both bind a man.
Good things await him who picks the good;
By choosing the gratifying, one misses one's goal.

2. Both the good and the gratifying
present themselves to a man;
The wise assess them, note their difference;
And choose the good over the gratifying;
But the fool chooses the gratifying
rather than what is beneficial.

3. You have looked at and rejected, Naciketas,
things people desire, lovely and lovely to look at;
This disk of gold, where many a man founders,
You have not accepted as a thing of wealth.

4. Far apart and widely different are these two:
Ignorance and what's known as knowledge.
I take Naciketas as one yearning for knowledge;
The many desires do not confound you.

5. Wallowing in ignorance, but calling themselves wise,

Thinking themselves learned the fools go around,
staggering about like a group of blind men,
led by a blind man who is himself blind.

6. This transit lies hidden from a careless fool,
who is deluded by the delusion of wealth.
Thinking "This is the world; there is no other,"
he falls into my power again and again.

7. Many do not get to hear of that transit;
and even when they hear,
many don't comprehend it.
Rare is the man who teaches it,
Lucky is the man who grasps it;
Rare is the man who knows it,
Lucky is the man who is taught it.

8. Though one may think a lot, it is difficult to grasp,
when it is taught by an inferior man.
Yet one cannot gain access to it,
unless someone teaches it.
For it is smaller than the size of the atom,
a thing beyond the realm of reason.

9. One can't grasp this notion by argumentation;
Yet it's easy to grasp when taught by another.
You're truly steadfast dear boy,
you have grasped it!
Would that we have, Naciketas,
One like you to question us.

(Naciketas)

10. What you call a treasure, I know to be transient;
for by fleeting things one cannot attain the perennial.
Therefore I have built the fire altar of Naciketas,
and by things eternal I have gained the eternal.

(Death)

11. Satisfying desires is the foundation of the world;

Uninterrupted rites bring ultimate security;
Great and widespread praise is the foundation—
these you have seen, wise Naciketas,
and having seen, firmly rejected.

12. The primeval one who is hard to perceive,
wrapped in mystery hidden in the cave,
residing within the impenetrable depth—
Regarding him as god, an insight
gained by inner contemplation,
both sorrow and joy the wise abandon.

13. When a mortal has heard it, understood it;
when he has drawn it out;
and grasped this subtle point of doctrine,
he rejoices, for he has found
something in which he could rejoice.
To him I consider my house
to be open, Naciketas.

(Naciketas?)

14. Tell me what you see as
Different from the right doctrine and from the wrong;
Different from what's done here and what's left undone;
Different from what has been and what's yet to be.

(Death?)

15. The word that all the Vedas disclose;
The word that all the austerities proclaim;
Seeking which people live student lives;
That word now I will tell you in brief—
It is OM!

16. For this alone is the syllable that's *Brahman*!
For this alone is the syllable that is supreme!
When, indeed, one knows this syllable,
He obtains his every wish.

17. This is the support that's best!

This is the supreme support!
And when one knows this support,
he rejoices in *Brahman*'s world.

(Death)

18. The wise one—
he is not born, he does not die;
he has not come from anywhere;
He is the unborn and eternal, primeval and everlasting.
And he is not killed, when the body is killed.

(The dialogue between Naciketas and Death appears to end here.)

19. If the killer thinks that he kills;
If the killed thinks that he is killed;
Both of them fail to understand.
He neither kills, nor is he killed.

20. Finer than the finest, larger than the largest,
is the self (*Ätman*) that lies here hidden
in the heart of a living being.
Without desires and free from sorrow,
a man perceives by the creator's grace
the grandeur of the self.

21. Sitting down, he roams afar.
Lying down, he goes everywhere.
The god ceaselessly exulting—
Who, besides me, is able to know?

22. When he perceives this immense, all-pervading self,
as bodiless within bodies,
as stable within unstable beings—
A wise man ceases to grieve.

23. This self cannot be grasped,
by teachings or by intelligence,
or even by great learning.
Only the man he chooses can grasp him,
Whose body this self chooses as his own.

24. Not a man who has not quit his evil ways;
Nor a man who is not calm or composed;
Nor even a man who is without a tranquil mind;
Could ever secure it by his mere wit.

25. For whom the Brahmin and the Kshatriya
are both like a dish of boiled rice;
and death is like the sprinkled sauce;
Who truly knows where he is?

Vallī 3

1. Knowers of *Brahman*, men with five fires,
and with the three fire-altars of Naciketas,
They call these two "Shadow" and "Light,"
The two who have entered—
the one into the cave of the heart,
the other into the highest region beyond,
both drinking the truth
in the world of rites rightly performed.

2. May we master the fire-altar of Naciketas, a dike
for those who have sacrificed;
the imperishable, the highest *Brahman*,
the farthest shore
for those who wish to cross the danger.

3. Know the self as a rider in a chariot,
and the body, as simply the chariot.
Know the intellect as the charioteer,
and the mind, as simply the reins.

4. The senses, they say, are the horses,
and sense objects are the paths around them;
He who is linked to the body (*Ätman*), senses, and mind,
the wise proclaim as the one who enjoys.

5. When a man lacks understanding,

and his mind is never controlled;
His senses do not obey him,
as bad horses, a charioteer.

6. But when a man has understanding,
and his mind is ever controlled;
His senses do obey him,
as good horses, a charioteer.

7. When a man lacks understanding,
is unmindful and always impure;
He does not reach that final step,
but gets on the round of rebirth.

8. But when a man has understanding,
is mindful and always pure;
He does reach that final step,
from which he is not reborn again.

9. When a man's mind is his reins,
intellect, his charioteer;
He reaches the end of the road,
That highest step of Vishnu.

10. Higher than the senses are their objects;
Higher than sense objects is the mind;
Higher than the mind is the intellect;
Higher than the intellect is the immense self;

11. Higher than the immense self is the unmanifest;
Higher than the unmanifest is the person;
Higher than the person there's nothing at all.
That is the goal, that's the highest state.

12. Hidden in all the beings,
this self is not visibly displayed.
Yet, people of keen vision see him,
with eminent and sharp minds.

13. A wise man should curb his speech and mind,
control them within the intelligent self;
He should control intelligence within the immense self,

and the latter, within the tranquil self.
14. Arise! Awake! Pay attention,
when you've obtained your wishes!
A razor's sharp edge is hard to cross—
that, poets say, is the difficulty of the path.

15. It has no sound or touch,
no appearance, taste, or smell;
It is without beginning or end,
undecaying and eternal;
When a man perceives it,
fixed and beyond the immense,
He is freed from the jaws of death.

16. The wise man who hears or tells
the tale of Naciketas,
an ancient tale told by Death,
will rejoice in *Brahman*'s world.

17. If a man, pure and devout, proclaims this great secret
in a gathering of Brahmins,
or during a meal for the dead,
it will lead him to eternal life!

Vallī 4

1. The self-existent One pierced the apertures outward,
Therefore, one looks out, and not into oneself.
A certain wise man in search of immortality,
turned his sight inward and saw the self within.

2. Fools pursue outward desires,
and enter the trap of death spread wide.
But the wise know what constitutes the immortal,
and in unstable things here do not seek the stable.

3. Appearance and taste, smell and sounds,
touches and sexual acts—
That by which one experiences these,
by the same one understands—
what then is here left behind?

So, indeed, is that!
4. That by which one perceives both
the states of sleep and of being awake;
Knowing that it's the immense, all-pervading self,
a wise man does not grieve.

5. When a man perceives close at hand
this living, honey-eating self,
The lord of what was and what will be—
it does not seek to hide from him.
So, indeed, is that!

6. He who was born before heat,
who before the waters was born,
who has seen through living beings—
Entering the cave of the heart,
(one sees) him abiding there.
So, indeed, is that!

7. She who comes into being with breath,
Aditi, who embodies divinity,
who was born through living beings—
Entering the cave of the heart,
(one sees) her abiding there.
So, indeed, is that!

8. Jātavedas is hidden within the two fire-drills,
fostered, as a fetus by women with child;
With offering should men as they awake,
Worship the fire each and every day.
So, indeed, is that!

9. From which the sun rises,
and into which it sets;
In it are fixed all the gods;
beyond it no one can ever pass.
So, indeed, is that!

10. Whatever is down here, the same is over there;
and what is over there is replicated down here.
From death to death he goes, who sees

Here any kind of diversity.
11. With your mind alone you must understand it—
there is here no diversity at all!
From death to death he goes, who sees
here any kind of diversity.

12. A person the size of a thumb
resides within the body (*Ätman*);
The lord of what was and what will be—
From him he does not hide himself.
So, indeed, is that!

13. The person the size of a thumb
is like a fire free of smoke;
The lord of what was and what will be;
the same today and tomorrow.
So, indeed, is that!

14. As the rain that falls on rugged terrain,
runs hither and thither along the mountain slopes;
So a man who regards the laws as distinct,
runs hither and thither after those very laws.

15. As pure water poured into pure water
becomes the very same;
So does the self of a discerning sage
become, O Gautama.

Vallī 5

1. The unborn one, free of crooked thoughts,
has a fort with eleven gates;
One who attends to it will not grieve,
but, freed from it, he will be set free.
So, indeed, is that!

2. The goose seated in the light, the Vasu seated in the sky;
The Hotr seated at the altar, the guest seated in the house;
Seated in men, seated in the wide expanse,
Seated in the truth, seated in heaven;
Born from the water, born from cows,
Born from the truth, born from rocks;

The great truth!
3. The out-breath he conducts upward,
the in-breath he drives backward;
All the gods worship him,
the Dwarf seated in the middle.

4. When this embodied self dwelling in the body
comes unglued and is freed from the body—
what then is here left behind?
So, indeed, is that!

5. Not by the out-breath, not by the in-breath,
does any mortal live;
By another do people live, on which those two depend.

6. Come, I'll tell you this secret and eternal
formulation of truth (*Brahman*);
And what happens to the self (*Ätman*), Gautama,
when it encounters death.

7. Some enter a womb by which
an embodied self obtains a body,
Others pass into a stationary thing—
according to what they have done,
according to what they have learned.

8. This person, creating every desire,
who lies awake within those who sleep;
That alone is the Pure! That is *Brahman*!
That alone is called the Immortal!
On it all the worlds rest;
beyond it no one can ever pass.
So, indeed, is that!

9. As the single fire, entering living beings,
adapts its appearance to match that of each;
So the single self within every being,
Adapts its appearance to match that of each;
yet remains quite distinct.

10. As the single wind, entering living beings,

adapts its appearance to match that of each;
So the single self within every being,
Adapts its appearance to match that of each,
yet remains quite distinct.

11. As the sun, the eye of the whole world,
is not stained by visual faults external to it;
So the single self within every being,
Is not stained by the suffering of the world,
Being quite distinct from it.

12. The one controller, the self within every being,
who makes manifold his single appearance;
The wise who perceive him as abiding within themselves,
they alone, not others, enjoy eternal happiness.

13. The changeless, among the changing,
the intelligent, among intelligent beings,
the one, who dispenses desires among the many;
The wise who perceive him within themselves;
they alone, not others, enjoy unending peace.

14. "This is that"—so they think, although
the highest bliss can't be described.
But how should I perceive it?
Does it shine?
Or does it radiate?

15. There the sun does not shine,
nor the moon and stars;
There lightning does not shine,
Of this common fire need we speak!
Him alone, as he shines, do all things reflect;
This whole world radiates with his light.

Vallī 6

1. Its roots above, its branches below,
this is the eternal banyan tree.
That alone is the Bright! That is *Brahman*!
That alone is called the Immortal!
On it all the worlds rest;

Beyond it no one can ever pass.
So, indeed, is that!

2. All that is here, whatever that lives,
having arisen, moves within the breath;
Great is the fear, the bolt is raised up;
Those who know it become immortal.

3. The fear of it makes the fire burn;
The fear of it makes the sun shine;
The fear of it makes them run—
Indra and Wind,
And Death, the fifth.

4. If one were able to realize it here,
before his body dissolves;
It will serve him to obtain a body
within the created worlds.

5. As in a mirror, so in the body (*Ätman*);
As in a dream, so in the fathers' world;
As in water a thing becomes somewhat visible,
so in the Gandharva world;
Somewhat as in shadows and light,
so in *Brahman*'s world.

6. The separate nature of the senses;
Their rise and fall as they come
Separately into being—
when a wise man knows this,
he does not grieve.

7. Higher than the senses is the mind;
Higher than the mind is the essence;
Higher than the essence is the immense self;
Higher than the immense is the unmanifest.

8. Higher than the unmanifest is the person,
pervading all and without any marks.
Knowing him, a man is freed,
and attains immortality.

9. His appearance is beyond the range of sight;
no one can see him with his sight;
With the heart, with insight, with thought,
has he been contemplated—
Those who know this become immortal.

10. When the five perceptions are stilled,
together with the mind,
And not even reason bestirs itself;
They call it the highest state.
11. When senses are firmly reined in,
that is Yoga, so people think.
From distractions a man is then free,
for Yoga is the coming-into-being,
as well as the ceasing-to-be.

12. Not by speech, not by the mind,
not by sight can he be grasped.
How else can that be perceived,
other than by saying "He is!"

13. In just two ways can he be perceived:
by saying that "He is,"
by affirming he's the real.
To one who perceives him as "He is,"
it becomes clear that he is real.

14. When they are all banished,
those desires lurking in one's heart;
Then a mortal becomes immortal,
and attains *Brahman* in this world.

15. When the knots are all cut,
that bind one's heart on earth;
Then a mortal becomes immortal—
For such is the teaching.

16. One hundred and one, the veins of the heart.
One of them runs up to the crown of the head.
Going up by it, he reaches the immortal.
The rest, in their ascent, spread out in all directions.

17. A person the size of a thumb in the body (*Ätman*),
always resides within the hearts of men;
One should draw him out of the body with determination,
like a reed from the grass sheathe;
One should know him
as immortal and bright.
One should know him
as immortal and bright.

18. Then, after Naciketas received this body of knowledge,
and the entire set of yogic rules taught by Death,
He attained *Brahman*; he became free from aging and death;
so will others who know this teaching about the self.

## THE WISDOM OF IMMORTALITY

### *Bähadäraëyaka Upaniñad* II, 4, 5

This Upanishadic passage consists of a dialogue between Yājñavalkya, who is the principal teacher in the *Bähadäraëyaka Upaniñad*, and his wife Maitreyī. Yājñavalkya "is about to depart this place" and instructs Maitreyī on the nature of the eternal *Ätman*. The text given here is a translation of Patrick Olivelle from *The Early Upanishads*.

4. "Maitreyī!" Yājñavalkya once said, "Look—I am about to depart from this place. So come, let me make a settlement between you and Kātyāyani."

Maitreyī asked in reply: "If I were to possess the entire world filled with wealth, sir, would it make me immortal?" "No," said Yājñavalkya, "it will only permit you to live the life of a wealthy person. Through wealth one cannot expect immortality."

"What is the point in getting something that will not make me immortal?" retorted Maitreyī. "Tell me instead, sir, all that you know."

Yājñavalkya said in reply: "You have always been very dear to me, and now you speak something very dear to me! Come and sit down. I will explain it to you. But while I am explaining, try to concentrate." Then he spoke:

"One holds a husband dear, you see, not out of love for the hus-

band; rather, it is out of love for oneself (*Ätman*) that one holds a husband dear. One holds a wife dear not out of love for the wife; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds a wife dear. One holds children dear not out of love for the children; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds children dear. One holds wealth dear not out of love for wealth; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds wealth dear. One holds the priestly power dear not out of love for priestly power; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds the priestly power dear. One holds the royal power dear not out of love for the royal power; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds the royal power dear. One holds the worlds dear not out of love for the worlds; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds the worlds dear. One holds the gods dear not out of love for the gods; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds the gods dear. One holds beings dear not out of love for beings; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds beings dear. One holds the Whole dear not out of love for the Whole; rather, it is out of love for oneself that one holds the Whole dear.

"You see, Maitreyī—it is one's self (*Ätman*) which one should see and hear, and on which one should reflect and concentrate. For by seeing and hearing one's self, and by reflecting and concentrating on one's self, one gains the knowledge of this whole world.

"May the priestly power forsake anyone who considers the priestly power to reside in something other than his self (*Ätman*). May the royal power forsake anyone who considers the royal power to reside in something other than his self. May the gods forsake anyone who considers the gods to reside in something other than his self. May beings forsake anyone who considers beings to reside in something other than his self. May the Whole forsake anyone who considers the Whole to reside in something other than his self.

"All these—the priestly power, the royal power, worlds, gods, beings, the Whole—all that is nothing but this self.

"It is like this. When a drum is being beaten, you cannot catch the external sounds; you catch them only by getting hold of the drum or the man beating that drum. Or when a conch is being blown, you cannot catch the external sounds; you catch them only by getting hold of the conch or the man blowing that conch. Or when a lute is being played, you cannot catch the external sounds; you catch them only by getting hold of the lute or the man playing that lute.

"It is like this. As the ocean is the point of convergence of all

waters, so the skin is the point of convergence of all sensations of touch; the nostrils, of all odors; the tongue, of all tastes; sight, of all visible appearances; hearing, of all sounds; the mind, of all thoughts; the heart, of all sciences; the hands, of all activities; the sexual organ, of all pleasures; the anus, of all excretions; the feet, of all travels; and speech, of all Vedas.

"It is like this. When a chunk of salt is thrown in water, it dissolves into that very water, and it cannot be picked up in any way. Yet, from whichever place one may take a sip, the salt is there! In the same way this Immense Being has no limit or boundary and is a single mass of perception. It arises out of and together with these beings and disappears after them—so I say, after death there is no awareness."

After Yājñavalkya said this, Maitreyī exclaimed: "Now, sir, you have totally confused me by saying, 'after death there is no awareness.'" He replied:

"Look, I haven't said anything confusing; this body, you see, has the capacity to perceive. For when there is a duality of some kind, then the one can smell the other, the one can hear the other, the one can greet the other, the one can think of the other, and the one can perceive the other. When, however, the Whole has become one's very self (*Ätman*), then who is there for one to smell and by what means? Who is there for one to see and by what means? Who is there for one to hear and by what means? Who is there for one to greet and by what means? Who is there for one to think of and by what means? Who is there for one to perceive and by what means?

"By what means can one perceive him by means of whom one perceives this whole world? Look—by what means can one perceive the perceiver?"

5. This earth is the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of this earth. The radiant and immortal person in the earth and, in the case of the body (*Ätman*), the radiant and immortal person residing in the physical body—they are both one's self (*Ätman*). It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

These waters are the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of these waters. The radiant and immortal person in the waters and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person residing in semen—they are both one's self. It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

This fire is the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of

this fire. The radiant and immortal person in the fire and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person residing in speech—they are both one's self. It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

This wind is the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of this wind. The radiant and immortal person in the wind and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person residing in breath—they are both one's self. It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

This sun is the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of this sun. The radiant and immortal person in the sun and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person residing in sight—they are both one's self. It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

These quarters are the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of these quarters. The radiant and immortal person in the quarters and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person residing in hearing—they are both one's self. It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

This moon is the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of this moon. The radiant and immortal person in the moon, and in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person residing in the mind—they are both one's self. It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

This lightning is the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of this lightning. The radiant and immortal person in lightning and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person full of radiance—they are both one's self. It is the immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

This thunder is the honey of all beings, and all beings are the honey of this thunder. The radiant and immortal person in thunder and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person connected with sound and tone—they are both one's self. It is immortal; it is *Brahman*; it is the Whole.

## THE WISDOM OF THE INNER RULER

### *Bāhadäraëyaka Upaniñad* III, 7

This Upaniṣadic passage is a favorite of Rāmānuja. It once more

introduces Uddālaka Gautama, now as challenger of Yājñavalkya who is the principal teacher in the *Bāhadäraëyaka Upaniñad* as Uddālaka is in the *Chändogya.* The following selections from the *Bāhadäraëyaka* are reprinted by permission of the publishers from Franklin Edgerton, *The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), Copyright, 1965, by George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Some of the translator's parenthetical additions to the text have been omitted.

Then Uddālaka son of Aruṇa questioned him. Yājñavalkya, said he, we were dwelling among the Madras, studying the sacrifice in the house of Patañcala son of Kapi. His wife was possessed of a gandharva (spirit). We asked him: Who are you? He said: Kavandha of the Atharvan family.

He said unto Patañcala son of Kapi and the students of the sacrifice:

Do you know, pray, son of Kapi, that thread on which this world and the world beyond and all creatures are strung together?—Patañcala son of Kapi said: I do not know it, reverend sir.

He said unto Patañcala son of Kapi and the students of the sacrifice:

Do you know, pray, son of Kapi, that inner controller which controls this world and the world beyond and all creatures within—Patañcala son of Kapi said: I do not know it, reverend sir.

He said unto Patañcala son of Kapi and the students of the sacrifice:

Verily, son of Kapi, whosoever knows that thread and that inner controller, he knows Brahman, he knows the worlds, he knows the gods, he knows the Vedas, he knows the sacrifice, he knows creatures, he knows the Self, he knows everything.—Thus he spoke unto them. This I know. If you, Yājñavalkya, without knowing that thread and that inner controller, are driving away the brahmans' cows, your head shall fall off!

I know, verily, that thread, Gautama, and that inner controller.—Anyone whatsoever might say "I know, I know." Say, how you know it!

Wind, verily, Gautama, is that thread. By wind, verily, Gautama, as by a thread, this world and the world beyond and all creatures are strung together. Therefore, verily, Gautama, they say of a man that is dead, that his limbs have fallen apart. For by the wind, Gautama, as

a thread, they are strung together.—That is just so, Yājñavalkya. Say (what) the inner controller (is).

That which rests in the earth, and is distinct from the earth, which the earth knows not, of which the earth is the body, which controls the earth within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller.

That which rests in water, and is distinct from water, which water knows not, of which water is the body, which controls water within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller.

That which rests in fire, and is distinct from fire, which fire knows not, of which fire is the body, which controls fire within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller.... So far with respect to the (cosmic) potencies. Now with respect to the worlds.

That which rests in all the worlds, and is distinct from all the worlds, which all the worlds know not, of which all the worlds are the body, which controls all the worlds within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller. So far, again, with respect to the worlds. Now with respect to the Vedas.

That which rests in all the Vedas, and is distinct from all the Vedas, which all the Vedas know not, of which all the Vedas are the body, which controls all the Vedas within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller. So far, again, with respect to the Vedas. Now with respect to sacrifices.

That which rests in all sacrifices, and is distinct from all sacrifices, which all sacrifices know not, of which all sacrifices are the body, which controls all sacrifices within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller. So far, again, with regard to sacrifices. Now with regard to creatures.

That which rests in all creatures, and is distinct from all creatures, which all creatures know not, of which all creatures are the body, which controls all creatures within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller. So far, again, with regard to creatures. Now with regard to the (individual) self.

That which rests in the breath, and is distinct from the breath, which the breath knows not, of which the breath is the body, which controls the breath within, that is thy Self, the immortal inner controller.

The Unseen Seer; the Unheard Hearer; the Unthought Thinker; the Unknown Knower. There is no other Seer; there is no other Hearer; there is no other Thinker; there is no other Knower. This is thy Self,

the immortal inner controller. Whatever is other than this is evil.—Then Uddālaka son of Aruṇa subsided.

## THE WISDOM OF THE IMPERISHABLE

### *Bāhadäraëyaka Upaniñad* III, 8

This selection from the *Bāhadäraëyaka Upaniñad* is of great importance to Śaṁkara in that it appears to give scriptural authority to the postulate of a completely undifferentiated supreme being, of which nothing phenomenal can be predicated. The text eases into the following one (IV, 2) in which King Janaka of Videha, a patron of Yājñavalkya and himself a royal seer, interrogates the brahmin. It culminates in the famous description of Brahman as "Not, Not" (*neti neti*), perhaps the most succinct statement of the unqualified supreme as held by Śaṁkara.

Then (Gārgī) the daughter of Vacaknu said: Reverend Brahmans, look now! I will ask this Yājñavalkya two questions. If he solves them for me, of a certainty not one of you could overcome him in a *brahmodya* (theological debate). If he does not solve them for me, his head will fall off.—Ask, Gārgī! he said.

Said she: Verily I, Yājñavalkya—as a chief's son of Kāśī or Videha would string his unstrung bow and take in his hand two arrows to smite his enemies and stand forth (to combat)—just so I stand forth against you with two questions. Answer me them!—Ask, Gārgī, he said.

Said she: That which, Yājñavalkya, is above the heaven, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth here, that which they call past and present and future; on what is this strung and threaded?

Said he: That which, Gārgī, is above the heaven, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth here, that which they call past and present and future; on the ether that is strung and threaded.

Said she: Homage be yours, Yājñavalkya! For you have solved me this (question). Prepare yourself for the other.—Ask, Gārgī! he said.

Said she: That which, Yājñavalkya, is above the heaven, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth here, that which they call past and present and future; on what, I repeat, is this strung and threaded?

Said he: That which, Gārgī, is above the heaven, that which is

beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth here, that which they call past and present and future; on the ether, I repeat, that is strung and threaded.—But on what, say, is the ether strung and threaded?

Said he: This verily, Gārgī, is what brahmans refer to as the Imperishable. It is not coarse, not fine; not short, not long; without blood, without fat; without shadow, without darkness; without wind, without ether; without contact, without touch, without smell, without taste, without sight, without hearing, without speech, without thought-organ, without heat; without breath, without mouth; without name, without family; ageless, deathless, fearless, immortal; without dust, without sound; not opened, not closed; without first, without last; without inside, without outside; it consumes no one, no one consumes it.

In the control of this Imperishable, Gārgī, heaven and earth stand severally fixed. In the control of this Imperishable, Gārgī, sun and moon stand severally fixed. In the control of this Imperishable, Gārgī, days and nights, half-months, months, seasons, and years stand severally fixed. In the control of this Imperishable, Gārgī, some rivers flow eastward from the white mountains, others westward, and in whatsoever direction they each may flow. In the control of this Imperishable, Gārgī, men praise the generous giver, the gods are dependent on the sacrifice-patron, and the departed ancestors on the spoon-offering.

Whosoever without knowing this Imperishable, Gārgī, sacrifices, gives gifts, or practices austerities for even many thousands of years, for him that (heavenly) world (which he gains) is only finite. Whosoever without knowing this Imperishable, Gārgī, passes away from this world, he is wretched. But he who knowing this Imperishable, Gārgī, passes away from this world, he is a (true) Brāhmaṇa.

It is just this Imperishable, Gārgī, which is the unseen seeing one, the unheard hearing one, the unthought thinking one, the unknown knowing one. There is nothing else that sees; there is nothing else that hears; there is nothing else that thinks; there is nothing else that knows. It is even this Imperishable, Gārgī, whereon the ether is strung and threaded.

Said she: Reverend Brahmans! Think it a great enough thing, if you can get free of him with a rendering of homage! Of a certainty not one of you will ever overcome him in a *brahmodya* (theological

debate).—Then Gārgī the daughter of Vacaknu subsided.

## "NOT, NOT"

*Bāhadäraëyaka Upaniñad* IV, 2, 3, 4

2. Then Janaka of Videha descended humbly from his seat and said:

Homage to you, Yājñavalkya! Instruct me! Said he: As, O king, one about to go on a long journey would provide himself with a car or a boat, so your Self is fitted out with these mystic doctrines. Being so eminent and rich, after you have studied the Vedas and heard the mystic doctrines recited, where will you go when you are released from this world?—I do not know, reverend sir, where I shall go.—Then I will tell you this, where you will go.—Speak, reverend sir!

He said: This person in the right eye is called Indha (the kindler). He, who is Indha, is called Indra, cryptically as it were; for the gods may be said to love the cryptic and dislike the obvious.

Now this that has the form of a person in the left eye is his consort, Virāj ("queen" or "majesty"). The concert of these two is this space within the heart. Their food is this mass of blood within the heart. Their covering is this net-like thing within the heart. Their path, which is traversable, is this channel which goes upward from the heart.

He (the Self, union of Indha and Virāj) has these channels called *Hitä*, (as fine) as a hair split in a thousand parts. By these flows in to him (the food) that flows in. Therefore he has, so to say, more delicate food than this corporeal Self.

Of this same person, the eastern (-going) vital powers are the eastern quarter, the southern (-going) vital powers are the southern quarter, the western (-going) vital powers are the western quarter, the northern (-going) vital powers are the northern quarter, the upward (-going) vital powers are the zenith, the downward (-going) vital powers are the nadir; all his vital powers are all the quarters.

This is the Self that is (described as) "not, not." It is ungraspable, for it is not grasped; it is indestructible, for it is not destroyed. It has not attachment and is unfastened; it is not attached, and (yet) is not unsteady. You have truly attained freedom from danger, Janaka! said Yājñavalkya.—Said Janaka of Videha: Homage to you, Yājñavalkya! May freedom from danger come to you, inasmuch as you, reverend sir, announce freedom from danger for me. Here are the Videhas, and

here am I (as your servants).

3. Yājñavalkya approached Janaka of Videha, thinking: I will converse with him. Now when Janaka of Videha and Yājñavalkya had conversed together at an Agnihotra sacrifice, Yājñavalkya had given him a wish. The wish which he chose was just to ask any desired question. And he had granted this (wish) to him. Therefore the king himself spoke first to him.

Yājñavalkya, what serves as light to man here?—The sun, O king, said he. It is by the light of the sun that he sits down, walks about, does his work, and returns home.—Just so it is, Yājñavalkya.

When the sun has set, Yājñavalkya, what serves as light, I repeat, to man here?—The moon, O king, said he. It is by the light of the moon that he sits down, walks about, does his work, and returns home.—Just so it is, Yājñavalkya.

When the sun has set, Yājñavalkya, and the moon has set, what serves as light, I repeat, to man here?—The fire, O king, said he. It is by the light of the fire that he sits down, walks about, does his work, and returns home.—Just so it is, Yājñavalkya.

When the sun has set, Yājñavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire is extinguished, what serves as light, I repeat, to man here?—Speech, O king, said he. It is by the light of speech that he sits down, walks about, does his work, and returns home. Therefore it is, O king, that when even his own hand cannot be made out, then wherever Speech is uttered, one goes towards that.—Just so it is, Yājñavalkya.

When the sun has set, Yājñavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire is extinguished, and speech has ceased, what serves as light, I repeat, to man here?—The Self, O king, said he. For it is by the light of the Self that he sits down, walks about, does his work, and returns home.

What is the Self?—It is that Spirit (*puruña*), consisting of intelligence, the inner light within the vital powers, within the heart. Being common (to the two worlds), it traverses both worlds, and seems to think (in the other, intellectual world), and seems to move about (in this world). Becoming a dream, endowed with intelligence (characteristic of the other world), it transcends this world.

This same Spirit, upon being born and attaining a body, is conjoined to evils; passing forth, dying, it abandons evils, the forms of death.

Now of this same Spirit there are (primarily) just two states; this one, and the other-world state. There is a third, a twilight state, the state of dream. When he is in this twilight state, he sees both states, this one, and the other-world state.

Now as this (dream-state) is an approach to the other-world state, entering on this approach, he sees both the evils (of this world's state) and the joys (of the other world's state). When this (Spirit) dreams, he takes material from this world with all its contents, and cutting it down himself, building it up himself, by his own radiance, by his own light, he dreams. Under these circumstances his own self serves as light to man (Spirit, *puruña*) here.

There are no wagons there (i.e. in the sleeping state), no teams, no roads; on the contrary he creates for himself wagons, teams, and roads. There are no joys, delights, and happinesses there; on the contrary he creates for himself joys, delights and happinesses. There are no pools, rivers and lakes there; on the contrary he creates for himself pools, rivers and lakes. For he is the Creator.

On this subject also there are these verses:

Subduing the bodily (state; or self?) with sleep—not sleeping, he gazes intently on those that are asleep. Assuming brightness, he comes back again to his (waking) state—the golden, Single Swan of the Spirit.

Protecting by the life-breath his other nest, roaming immortal outside of the nest, he wanders, immortal, wherever he wills—the golden Single Swan of the Spirit.

Wandering manifoldly in the state of dream, he makes for himself many forms, the God; now apparently indulging in pleasures with women (and so) laughing; now again apparently seeing terrors.

They see his pleasure-garden; *himself* no one sees. Therefore they say, Let one not waken one that is stretched out (in sleep); hard to cure is he to whom this (Spirit) does not return.

On this subject, moreover, they say: This (dream condition) is just (the same as) the waking condition of him. For the same things that one sees when he is awake, even these (he sees) when dreaming. Under these circumstances this man (Spirit) serves for himself as light.—Just so it is, Yājñavalkya. I now give your reverence a thousand (cows). From henceforth speak (on that which leads) unto salvation.

When, in this condition of dream, this (Spirit) has indulged in pleasures, has roamed about, only after he has seen the good

(beyond) and the evil (here), according to his way of procedure (his "rule," particular course of action), according to his origin (i.e. to the particular body which he left), he runs back precisely to the waking condition. And whatever he sees there (in dream), it does not follow after him; for nothing clings to this Spirit.—Just so it is, Yājñavalkya. I now give your reverence a thousand (cows). From henceforth speak (on that which leads) unto salvation.

Just as a great fish follows along both banks, the nearer and the farther (alternately); even so this Spirit follows along both states, the dream state, and the waking state.

Just as in the ether here, an eagle, or a falcon, after flying about in various places, being weary, folds its wings and settles down precisely on its nest; just so this Spirit makes for that state in which, asleep, he desires no desire, sees no dream (i.e. the state of deep, dreamless sleep).

He has these channels called *Hitä*, as fine as a hair split in a thousand parts, and they are full of white, blue, yellow, green and red. Now whenever (in a dream, as previously described; this resumé of dream-state prepares for the contrast with deep sleep) he seems to be smitten, or overpowered, or an elephant seems to cut him to pieces, or he seems to fall into a pit; whatever he looks upon as a terror when awake, even that in this state (of dream) he looks upon as a terror, through ignorance. On the other hand, (the state) in which (one is) like a king, like a god, one thinks "I myself am this whole universe" (this describes the closest possible approach, in empiric waking life, to the author's notion of the state of deep sleep)—this (state of deep sleep) is his highest heaven.

Now when, asleep, he desires no desire and sees no dream, even this is his form (aspect, practically "state") that desires (only) the Self, that has attained desires, that has no desires. Just as a man who is embraced by a beloved woman knows nothing outer or inner, even so this bodily Self (*Ätman*), when it is embraced by the Self consisting-of-intelligence, knows neither outer nor inner.

Even this is his form that is beyond desire, that has sloughed off evil, that knows no fear, that is free from sorrow. In this state father is no father, mother no mother, worlds no worlds, gods no gods, Vedas no Vedas, sacrifices no sacrifices (to him): in this state a thief is no thief, a procurer of abortion no procurer of abortion, a Paulkasa no Paulkasa, a Cāṇḍāla no Cāṇḍāla, a mendicant no mendicant, an ascetic no ascetic. He is unaffected by good, unaffected by evil; for then he has transcended all sorrows of the heart.

If, then, he does not see—though seeing (having the power of sight), he sees no object of sight. For there cannot be any separation of the seer from sight, since it (or he?) is indestructible. But there is not, then, any second thing, other and separate from him, which he might see.

He is (like) water (?), the One Seer, with no second. This is realized, the Heaven of the Brahman, O king!—Thus he said to him.—This is his highest attainment, this is his highest heaven, this is his highest joy; it is just this joy, on a small portion of which other creatures live.

Now this (joy) of men which is perfect and prosperous, which is overlord of other (joys), and most richly endowed with all human desires;—this is the highest joy of men.

But a hundred joys of men are one joy of the ancestors ("Fathers," Manes) who have won heaven.

But a hundred joys of the ancestors who have won heaven are one joy in the Gandharva heaven.

But a hundred joys in the Gandharva heaven are one joy of the karma-gods, who have attained unto godhood by karma (i.e. by ritual works).

But a hundred joys of the karma-gods are one joy of the gods from birth [and of one who is a scholar in the Veda, free from guile, and not affected by desire].

But a hundred joys of the gods from birth are one joy in the Heaven of Prajāpati [and of one who is a scholar in the Veda, free from guile, and not affected by desire].

But a hundred joys in the Heaven of Prajāpati are one joy in the Heaven of Brahman [and of one who is a scholar in the Veda, free from guile, and not affected by desire]. This is the Heaven of Brahman, O king!—Thus he instructed him.—This is immortality (or: nectar)! I now give your reverence a thousand (cows). From henceforth speak (on that which leads) unto salvation.—

When, in this condition of peace, this (Spirit) has indulged in pleasure, has roamed about, has seen good and evil, according to his way of procedure (as above) according to his origin (as above) he returns again to the waking condition. And whatever he sees there (in deep sleep), it does not follow after him; for nothing clings to this Spirit.—Just so it is, Yājñavalkya. I now give your reverence a thousand (cows). From henceforth speak (on that which leads) unto salvation.—

Then Yājñavalkya became afraid (thinking): The king is clever; he has driven me out of all my conclusions.—(He continued): When one wastes away (literally "goes to thinness"), it is on account of either old age or afflicting (disease) that he wastes away. Just as a mango or fig or peepal fruit is released from its stem, even so this corporeal Self is released from these members and returns according to its way of procedure, according to its origin (as above)—namely, to nothing but the (life-) breath.

Now just as a wagon when it is completely loaded starts out creaking, just so this corporeal Self, when the Intelligent Self has mounted upon it, starts out creaking.

Now just as when a king arrives his nobles, responsible heirs, marshals, and chief men of the towns prepare for him with food, drink, and lodging, saying: Here he comes, here he arrives!—just so all the elements (of the body, viz. the vital powers or sense-faculties and their material objects) prepare for him who has this knowledge, saying: Here (at the time of approaching death) comes the Brahman, here he arrives!

Now just as when a king intends to set out on a journey his nobles, responsible heirs, marshals and chief men of the towns gather together unto him, just so all the vital powers (*präëäù*) gather together unto this Self at the time of death, when he is on the point of breathing forth (his life) upward.

4. Now when this corporeal Self becomes weak and enters a state of seeming insensibility, then these vital powers (*präëäù*; here the various organic functions) gather together unto it. It takes unto itself those particles of radiance and departs into the Heart.

Now when this Spirit (*puruña*) of the Eye, leaving (the eye), turns away from it (to the Bodily Self in the heart), then he (the dying man) becomes incapable of distinguishing forms. He is unified: and they say, he cannot see. He is unified, and they say, he cannot smell. He is unified, and they say, he cannot taste. He is unified, and they say, he cannot speak. He is unified, and they say, he cannot hear. He is unified, and they say, he cannot think. He is unified, and they say, he cannot touch. He is unified, and they say, he cannot understand.

Now the tip of this heart becomes illuminated (by the "particles of radiance"). By this light this Self (*Ätman*) departs, either from the eye, or from the head, or from other parts of the body. When it departs the life (-breath; *präëa*) departs along with it; and when the life (-breath)

departs all the vital powers (of the several organs, which have previously been united with it, in the state of coma; the word used is *präëäù*) depart along with it. It is simply consciousness (*saàjïäna*, which must mean or include the *präëa* and the several *präëa*s) that follows along with it; this same (Self) becomes knowing, endowed with intelligence (*vijïäna*). His knowledge and (past) deeds and memory ("knowledge of the past") take hold of him.

Then just as a grass leech, when it comes to the end of a blade of grass, gathers itself up together (to go over to something else), even so this Spirit, when it has rid itself of this body and cast off ignorance gathers itself up together (to go over to another body).

Just as an embroiderer takes off a part from an embroidered garment and weaves for himself another, newer and more beautiful, pattern, even so this Spirit, when it has rid itself of this body and cast off ignorance, weaves for itself another newer form—either of a departed spirit (*pitar*) or of a gandharva or of (an inhabitant of) Brahma ('s world) or of (an inhabitant of) Prajāpati ('s world) or of a god or of a man or from other creatures.

Now this Self (*Ätman*), verily, is Brahman. It is composed of intelligence, thought, speech, life (vital power or breath), sight, hearing, ether, wind, heat (fire), water, earth, anger and non-anger, joy and non-joy, right and non-right; it is composed of everything (i.e. contains everything within itself, because it is identical with the Brahman or Soul of the universe). Now whenever it is composed of this thing or of that thing,—however it acts, however it operates, so it becomes (in the next life). Acting well it becomes good; acting ill it becomes evil. As a result of right action it becomes what is good; as a result of evil action it becomes what is evil.

Now in this connection they say: This Spirit (man, *puruña*) consists simply of desire. As is his desire, so is his resolve; as is his resolve, so is the deed he does; as is the deed he does, so is that which he attains unto.

So there is this verse:

That upon which his characteristic mark (tag, namely) his thought, is intent—being just that, man goes unto that along with deeds. Having come to the end of (the effects of) that action, of all whatsoever he does in *this* world, he returns again from that world (beyond) unto this world, unto action.

So far one who is desirous. Now one who no longer desires. He who is desireless, who is without desire, who desires (only) the Self, who has attained his desires—from him the vital powers (of the

body) do not mount upward; they are collected together right in him. Being just the Brahman, unto the Brahman he (the Soul) arrives.

Now on this there is this verse:

When all desires are expelled, which lurk within his heart, then a mortal becomes immortal; he attains the Brahman here (in this world).

Just as the slough of a snake lies dead, thrown down upon an ant-hill, even so this body lies (dead). Then this boneless, bodiless, intelligent Self (*Ätman*) *is* just the Brahman—*is* just Heaven, O king! Thus said Yājñavalkya.—I now give your reverence a thousand (cows)! Thus said Janaka of Videha.

Now in this connection there are these verses:

Narrow is the way—penetrating (Kāṇva text "extended"), ancient; it has reached unto me, by me likewise has it been discovered; by this way the wise knowers of the Brahman, rising upward, arrive at the heavenly world, released from this world.

Therein, they say, is white and blue, yellow, green, and red (fluid); this way was discovered, verily, by the Brahman; on it travels the Brahman-knower, the radiant, and the doer of right.

Into blind darkness enter they who are devoted to not-coming-into-being (who believe in no rebirth); into what seems even greater darkness than that, those who take delight in coming-into-being (who crave rebirth, further existence).

Those worlds are called the demons' worlds; they are enveloped in blind darkness. Ignorant, foolish folk enter into them after death.

Being just that, even that we become; dire disaster comes to him who knows it not! Those who know it become immortal; on the other hand the others attain naught but suffering.

If a man should well understand the Self, saying "I am it"—seeking after what, for desire of what, should he pursue (Kāṇva, crave after, be troubled about) the body?

He who has found and awakened his Self, that is entered into this thicket of a bodily mold (impenetrable bodily complex), he is the All-creator; for he is the Maker of everything. Heaven is his; nay rather, he *is* Heaven outright!

When one looks upon this, the Self, directly as God, the Lord of past and future, then he shall not falter.

That Self, in which the five-fold creatures and the ether have their foundation, even that I, intelligent and immortal, hold for the immortal Brahman.

On this side of whom the year revolves with the days, that the gods worship as the light of lights—yes, as life, as immortality.

The life (-power) of life (-power), the eye of the eye likewise, and the ear of the ear, the food of food, the mind of mind—those who know this, they have understood the Brahman, the ancient, the primal.

By the mind alone must it be understood, that there is nothing manifold in this world. Death after death attains he who thinks he sees manifoldness in this world.

That imperishable, constant one must be perceived only with the mind; (it is) the unborn, great, constant Self, free from impurity, higher than the ether.

A man of insight, a brāhmaṇa, by understanding this (Self) should make knowledge for himself. Let him not muse on many words; for that is only wearing out the voice.

Now it is this Self that is the controller of all, the lord of all, the sovereign of all; it governs all this universe, whatever is at all. It becomes not greater by good deed, nor less by evil deed. It is overlord of creatures; it is the lord of the world(s); it is the guardian of the world(s); it is the dyke that holds apart these worlds, lest they should crash together (i.e. it keeps the world order from falling into chaos).

This it is which they seek to know through repetition of the Vedas, through celibate life, through asceticism, through faith, through sacrifice, and through fasting. When one knows this he becomes a Muni (silent sage). This it is which wandering ascetics seek as their heavenly world when they wander forth as ascetics.

Therefore those brāhmaṇas of old, learned and wise, desired no offspring, thinking: What shall we do with offspring, we who possess this Self, this (equivalent of the) Heavenly World (which is the traditional object of begetting sons)?—Abandoning both the desire for sons and the desire for possessions and the desire for heaven, they wandered forth a-begging. For the desire for sons is the same as the desire for possessions, and the desire for possessions is the same as the desire for heaven; for both are nothing but desires.

This Self is (simply described as) "Not, not." It is ungraspable, for it is not grasped. It is indestructible, for it is not destroyed. It has no attachment, and is unfastened; it is not attached, and (yet) is not unsteady. For it, immortal, passes beyond both these two states (in which one thinks) "For this reason I have done evil," "For this reason

I have done good." It is not disturbed by good or evil things that are done or left undone; its heaven is not lost by any deed.

This is meant by this verse:

This is the constant greatness of the brāhmaṇa (knower of Brahman); he increases not nor becomes less by deed. This (greatness) it is, the basis of which one should seek to find; having found it, one is not stained by evil deed.

Therefore one who knows this, becoming pacified, controlled, at peace, patient, full of faith, should see the Self in the Self alone. He looks upon everyone as it. Everyone comes to be his Self; he becomes the Self of everyone. He passes over all evil; evil does not pass over him. He subdues all evil; evil does not subdue him. He is free from evil, free from age (Kāṇva, from impurity), free from hunger (Kāṇva, from doubt), free from thirst (Kāṇva omits), a brāhmaṇa, who so has this knowledge.

This verily is that great unborn Self, the eater of (sacrificial) food, the giver of wealth (i.e. who has the functions of the Vedic gods). Whosoever knows thus this great unborn Self, the eater of food, the giver of wealth, he finds wealth.

This is that great unborn Self, ageless, deathless, fearless, immortal—the Brahman. You have attained fearlessness, O Janaka! Thus spoke Yājñavalkya.—I now give unto your reverence the Videhas, and myself too along with them, in servitude.—This is that great unborn Self, ageless, deathless, fearless, immortal, the Brahman. The Brahman, in sooth, is fearlessness; fearlessness surely he becomes, he becomes Brahman, who has such knowledge.

"Revelation"

Features in

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