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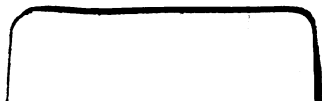
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The Upanishads

Paramananda
(Swami)

HARVARD
DIVINITY
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THE UPANISHADS

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1919

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**THIS VOLUME IS
REVERENTLY DEDICATED TO ALL SEEKERS
OF TRUTH AND LOVERS OF WISDOM**

So far as was consistent with a faithful rendering of the Sanskrit text, the Swami throughout his translation has sought to eliminate all that might seem obscure and confusing to the modern mind. While retaining in remarkable measure the rhythm and archaic force of the lines, he has tried not to sacrifice directness and simplicity of style. Where he has been obliged to use the Sanskrit term for lack of an exact English equivalent, he has invariably interpreted it by a familiar English word in brackets; and everything has been done to remove the sense of strangeness in order that the Occidental reader may not feel himself an alien in the new regions of thought opened to him.

Even more has the Swami striven to keep the letter subordinate to the spirit. Any Scripture is only secondarily an historical document. To treat it as an object of mere intellectual curiosity is to cheat the world of its deeper message. If mankind is to derive the highest benefit from a study of it, its appeal must be primarily to the spiritual consciousness; and one of the salient merits of the present translation lies

in this, that the translator approaches his task not only with the grave concern of the careful scholar, but also with the profound reverence and fervor of the true devotee.

EDITOR

BOSTON, March, 1919

Vedânta system) in its philosophical simplicity as the identity of God and the Soul, the *Brahman* and the *Âtman*, it will be found to possess a significance reaching far beyond the Upanishads, their time and country; nay, we claim for it an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind. . . . Whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, this principle will remain permanently unshaken and from it no deviation can possibly take place. If ever a general solution is reached of the great riddle . . . the key can only be found where alone the secret of nature lies open to us from within, that is to say, in our innermost self. It was here that for the first time the original thinkers of the Upanishads, to their immortal honor, found it. . . .”

The first introduction of the Upanishads to the Western world was through a translation into Persian made in the seventeenth century. More than a century later the distinguished French scholar, Anquetil Duperron, brought a copy of the manuscript from Persia to France and translated it into French and Latin, publishing only the

The first English translation was made by a learned Hindu, Râjâ Râm Mohun Roy (1775-1833). Since that time there have been various European translations—French, German, Italian and English. But a mere translation, however accurate and sympathetic, is not sufficient to make the Upanishads accessible to the Occidental mind. Professor Max Müller after a lifetime of arduous labor in this field frankly confesses: “Modern words are round, ancient words are square, and we may as well hope to solve the quadrature of the circle, as to express adequately the ancient thought of the Vedas in modern English.”

Without a commentary it is practically impossible to understand either the spirit or the meaning of the Upanishads. They were never designed as popular Scriptures. They grew up essentially as text books of God-knowledge and Self-knowledge, and like all text books they need interpretation. Being transmitted orally from teacher to disciple, the style was necessarily extremely condensed and in the form of aphorisms. The language also was often metaphorical and obscure. Yet if one has the perse-

verance to penetrate beneath these mere surface difficulties, one is repaid a hundred-fold; for these ancient Sacred Books contain the most precious gems of spiritual thought.

Every Upanishad begins with a Peace Chant (*Shânti-patha*) to create the proper atmosphere of purity and serenity. To study about God the whole nature must be prepared, so unitedly and with loving hearts teacher and disciples prayed to the Supreme Being for His grace and protection. It is not possible to comprehend the subtle problems of life unless the thought is tranquil and the energy concentrated. Until our mind is withdrawn from the varied distractions and agitations of worldly affairs, we cannot enter into the spirit of higher religious study. No study is of avail so long as our inner being is not attuned. We must hold a peaceful attitude towards all living things; and if it is lacking, we must strive fervently to cultivate it through suggestion by chanting or repeating some holy text. The same lesson is taught by Jesus the Christ when He says: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught

against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Bearing this lofty ideal of peace in our minds, let us try to make our hearts free from prejudice, doubt and intolerance, so that from these sacred writings we may draw in abundance inspiration, love and wisdom.

PARAMÂNANDA

ISA-UPANISHAD



ISA-UPANISHAD

PEACE CHANT

OM! That (the Invisible-Absolute) is whole; whole is this (the visible phenomenal); from the Invisible Whole comes forth the visible whole. Though the visible whole has come out from that Invisible Whole, yet the Whole remains unaltered.

OM! PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

THE indefinite term "That" is used in the Upanishads to designate the Invisible-Absolute, because no word or name can fully define It. A finite object, like a table or a tree, can be defined; but God, who is infinite and unbounded, cannot be expressed by finite language. Therefore the *Rishis* or Divine Seers, desirous not to limit the Unlimited, chose the indefinite term "That" to designate the Absolute.

In the light of true wisdom the phenomenal and the Absolute are inseparable. All existence is in the Absolute; and whatever exists, must exist in It; hence all manifestation is merely a modification of the One Supreme Whole, and neither increases nor diminishes It. The Whole therefore remains unaltered.

I

ALL this, whatsoever exists in the universe, should be covered by the Lord. Having renounced (the unreal), enjoy (the Real). Do not covet the wealth of any man.

WE cover all things with the Lord by perceiving the Divine Presence everywhere. When the consciousness is firmly fixed in God, the conception of diversity naturally drops away; because the One Cosmic Existence shines through all things. As we gain the light of wisdom, we cease to cling to the unrealities of this world, and we find all our joy in the realm of Reality.

The word "enjoy" is also interpreted by the great commentator Sankarâchârya as "protect," because knowledge of our true Self is the greatest protector and sustainer. If we do not have this knowledge, we cannot be happy; because nothing on this external plane of phenomena is permanent or dependable. He who is rich in the knowledge of the Self does not covet external power or possession.

II

IF one should desire to live in this world a hundred years, one should live performing *Karma* (righteous deeds). Thus thou mayest live; there is no other way. By doing this, *Karma* (the fruits of thy actions) will not defile thee.

VIII

HE (the Self) is all-encircling, resplendent, bodiless, spotless, without sinews, pure, untouched by sin, all-seeing, all-knowing, transcendent, self-existent; He has disposed all things duly for eternal years.

THIS text defines the real nature of the Self. When our mind is cleansed from the dross of matter, then alone can we behold the vast, radiant, subtle, ever-pure and spotless Self, the true basis of our existence.

IX

THEY enter into blind darkness who worship *Avidyâ* (ignorance and delusion); they fall, as it were, into greater darkness who worship *Vidyâ* (knowledge).

X

BY *Vidyâ* one end is attained; by *Avidyâ*, another. Thus we have heard from the wise men who taught this.

XI

HE who knows at the same time both *Vidyâ* and *Avidyâ*, crosses over death by *Avidyâ* and attains immortality through *Vidyâ*.

THOSE who follow or "worship" the path of selfishness and pleasure (*Avidyā*), without knowing anything higher, necessarily fall into darkness; but those who worship or cherish *Vidyā* (knowledge) for mere intellectual pride and satisfaction, fall into greater darkness, because the opportunity which they misuse is greater.

In the subsequent verses *Vidyā* and *Avidyā* are used in something the same sense as "faith" and "works" in the Christian Bible; neither alone can lead to the ultimate goal, but when taken together they carry one to the Highest. Work done with unselfish motive purifies the mind and enables man to perceive his undying nature. From this he gains inevitably a knowledge of God, because the Soul and God are one and inseparable; and when he knows himself to be one with the Supreme and Indestructible Whole, he realizes his immortality.

XII

THEY fall into blind darkness who worship the Unmanifested and they fall into greater darkness who worship the manifested.

XIII

BY the worship of the Unmanifested one end is attained; by the worship of the manifested, another. Thus we have heard from the wise men who taught us this.

THIS Upanishad is called *Isa-Vāsyā-Upanishad*, that which gives *Brahma-Vidyā* or knowledge of the All-pervading Deity. The dominant thought running through it is that we cannot enjoy life or realize true happiness unless we consciously "cover" all with the Omnipresent Lord. If we are not fully conscious of that which sustains our life, how can we live wisely and perform our duties? Whatever we see, movable or immovable, good or bad, it is all "That." We must not divide our conception of the universe; for in dividing it, we have only fragmentary knowledge and we thus limit ourselves.

He who sees all beings in his Self and his Self in all beings, he never suffers; because when he sees all creatures within his true Self, then jealousy, grief and hatred vanish. He alone can love. That All-pervading One is self-effulgent, birthless, deathless, pure, untainted by sin and sorrow. Knowing this, he becomes free from the bondage of matter and transcends death. Transcending death means realizing the difference between body and Soul and identifying oneself with the Soul. When we actually behold the undecaying Soul within us and realize our true nature, we no longer identify ourselves with the body which dies and we do not die with the body.

Self-knowledge has always been the theme of the Sages; and the Upanishads deal especially with the knowledge of the Self and also with the knowledge of God, because there is no difference between the Self and God. They are one and the same. That which comes out of the Infinite Whole must also be infinite; hence the Self is infinite. That is

KATHA-UPANISHAD

The *Katha-Upanishad* is probably the most widely known of all the *Upanishads*. It was early translated into Persian and through this rendering first made its way into Europe. Later Rājā Rām Mohun Roy brought out an English version. It has since appeared in various languages; and English, German and French writers are all agreed in pronouncing it one of the most perfect expressions of the religion and philosophy of the Vedas. Sir Edwin Arnold popularized it by his metrical rendering under the name of "*The Secret of Death*," and Ralph Waldo Emerson gives its story in brief at the close of his essay on "*Immortality*."

There is no consensus of opinion regarding the place of this *Upanishad* in Vedic literature. Some authorities declare it to belong to the *Yajur-Veda*, others to the *Sāma-Veda*, while a large number put it down as a part of the *Atharva-Veda*. The story is first suggested in the *Rig-Veda*; it is told more definitely in the *Yajur-Veda*; and in the *Katha-Upanishad* it appears fully elaborated and interwoven with the loftiest Vedic teaching. There is nothing, however, to indicate the special place of this final version, nor has any meaning been found for the name *Katha*.

The text presents a dialogue between an aspiring disciple, *Nachiketas*, and the Ruler of Death regarding the great *Hereafter*.



KATHA-UPANISHAD

PEACE CHANT

MAY He (the Supreme Being) protect us both, teacher and taught. May He be pleased with us. May we acquire strength. May our study bring us illumination. May there be no enmity among us.

OM! PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

Part First

I

VĀJASRAVA, being desirous of heavenly rewards (at the Viswajit sacrifice), made a gift of all that he possessed. He had a son by the name of Nachiketas.

II

WHEN the offerings were being distributed, faith (*Shraddhâ*) entered (the heart of) Nachiketas, who, though young, yet reflected:

the expression of a momentary outburst of anger; yet he believed that greater harm might befall his father, if his word was not kept. Therefore he sought to strengthen his father's resolution by reminding him of the transitory condition of life. He said:

VI

LOOK back to those who lived before and look to those who live now. Like grain the mortal decays and like grain again springs up (is reborn).

ALL things perish, Truth alone remains. Why then fear to sacrifice me also? Thus Nachiketas convinced his father that he should remain true to his word and send him to Yama, the Ruler of Death. Then Nachiketas went to the abode of Death, but Yama was absent and the boy waited without food or drink for three days. On Yama's return one of his household said to him:

VII

LIKE fire a *Brâhmana* guest enters into houses. That fire is quenched by an offering. (Therefore) O Vaivaswata, bring water.

VIII

THE foolish man in whose house a *Brâhmana* guest remains without food, all his hopes and expectations, all the merit

gained by his association with the holy, by his good words and deeds, all his sons and cattle, are destroyed.

ACCORDING to the ancient Vedic ideal a guest is the representative of God and should be received with due reverence and honor. Especially is this the case with a *Brāhmana* or a *Sannyāsin* whose life is wholly consecrated to God. Any one who fails to give proper care to a holy guest brings misfortune on himself and his household. When Yama returned, therefore, one of the members of his household anxiously informed him of Nachiketas' presence and begged him to bring water to wash his feet, this being always the first service to an arriving guest.

IX

YAMA said: O Brāhmana! Revered guest! My salutations to thee. As thou hast remained three nights in my house without food, therefore choose three boons, O Brāhmana.

X

NACHIKETAS said: May Gautama, my father, be free from anxious thought (about me). May he lose all anger (towards me) and be pacified in heart. May he know and welcome me when I am sent back by thee. This, O Death, is the first of the three boons I choose.

XIV

YAMA replied: I know well that fire which leads to the realm of heaven. I shall tell it to thee. Listen to me. Know, O Nachiketas, that this is the means of attaining endless worlds and their support. It is hidden in the heart of all beings.

XV

YAMA then told him that fire-sacrifice, the beginning of all the worlds; what bricks, how many and how laid for the altar. Nachiketas repeated all as it was told to him. Then Death, being pleased with him, again said:

XVI

THE great-souled Yama, being well pleased, said to him (Nachiketas): I give thee now another boon. This fire (sacrifice) shall be named after thee. Take also this garland of many colors.

XVII

HE who performs this Nachiketa fire-sacrifice three times, being united with the three (mother, father and teacher),

and who fulfills the three-fold duty (study of the Vedas, sacrifice and alms-giving) crosses over birth and death. Knowing this worshipful shining fire, born of Brahman, and realizing Him, he attains eternal peace.

XVIII

HE who knows the three-fold Nachiketa fire and performs the Nachiketa fire-sacrifice with three-fold knowledge, having cast off the fetters of death and being beyond grief, he rejoices in the realm of heaven.

XIX

O NACHIKETAS, this is thy fire that leads to heaven, which thou hast chosen as thy second boon. People will call this fire after thy name. Ask the third boon, Nachiketas.

FIRE is regarded as "the foundation of all the worlds," because it is the revealer of creation. If there were no fire or light, no manifested form would be visible. We read in the Semitic Scriptures, "In the beginning the Lord said, 'Let there be light.'" Therefore, that which stands in the external universe as one of the purest symbols of the Divine, also dwells in subtle form in the heart of every

living being as the vital energy, the life-force or cause of existence.

Yama now tells Nachiketas how, by performing sacrifice with the three-fold knowledge, he may transcend grief and death and reach heaven. The three-fold knowledge referred to is regarding the preparation of the altar and fire. Nachiketas being eager to learn, listened with whole-hearted attention and was able to repeat all that was told him. This so pleased Yama that he granted him the extra boon of naming the fire-sacrifice after him and gave him a garland set with precious stones.

Verses XVI-XVIII are regarded by many as an interpolation, which would account for certain obscurities and repetitions in them.

XX

NACHIKETAS said: There is this doubt regarding what becomes of a man after death. Some say he exists, others that he does not exist. This knowledge I desire, being instructed by thee. Of the boons this is the third boon.

XXI

YAMA replied: Even the Devas (Bright Ones) of old doubted regarding this. It is not easy to know; subtle indeed is this subject. O Nachiketas, choose another boon. Do not press me. Ask not this boon of me.

XXII

NACHIKETAS said: O Death, thou sayest that even the Devas had doubts about this, and that it is not easy to know. Another teacher like unto thee is not to be found. Therefore no other boon can be equal to this one.

XXIII

YAMA said: Ask for sons and grandsons who shall live a hundred years, many cattle, elephants, gold and horses. Ask for lands of vast extent and live thyself as many autumns as thou desirest.

XXIV

IF thou thinkest of any other boon equal to this, ask for wealth and long life; be ruler over the wide earth. O Nachiketas, I shall make thee enjoyer of all desires.

XXV

WHATSOEVER objects of desire are difficult to obtain in the realm of mortals, ask them all as thou desirest; these lovely maidens with their chariots and

XXVIII

WHAT man dwelling on the decaying mortal plane, having approached the undecaying immortal one, and having reflected upon the nature of enjoyment through beauty and sense pleasure, would delight in long life?

XXIX

O DEATH, that regarding which there is doubt, of the great Hereafter, tell us. Nachiketas asks for no other boon than that which penetrates this hidden secret.

IV

WIDE apart are these two, — ignorance and what is known as wisdom, leading in opposite directions. I believe Nachiketas to be one who longs for wisdom, since many tempting objects have not turned thee aside.

WITH this second part, the Ruler of Death begins his instructions regarding the great Hereafter. There are two paths, — one leading Godward, the other leading to worldly pleasure. He who follows one inevitably goes away from the other; because, like light and darkness, they conflict. One leads to the imperishable spiritual realm; the other to the perishable physical realm. Both confront a man at every step of life. The discerning man, distinguishing between the two, chooses the Real and Eternal, and he alone attains the highest; while the ignorant man, preferring that which brings him immediate and tangible results, misses the true purpose of his existence. Although Yama put before Nachiketas many temptations to test his sincerity and earnestness, he, judging them at their real value, refused them all, saying: "I have come from the mortal realm, shall I ask for what is mortal? I desire only that which is eternal." Then Death said to him: "I now see that thou art a sincere desirer of Truth. I offered thee vast wealth, long life and every form of pleasure which tempts and deludes men; but thou hast proved thy worthiness by rejecting them all."

V

FOOLS dwelling in ignorance, yet imagining themselves wise and learned, go round and round in crooked ways, like the blind led by the blind.

VI

THE Hereafter never rises before the thoughtless child (the ignorant), deluded by the glamour of wealth. "This world alone is, there is none other": thinking thus, he falls under my sway again and again.

THERE are many in the world, who, puffed up with intellectual conceit, believe that they are capable of guiding others. But although they may possess a certain amount of worldly wisdom, they are devoid of deeper understanding; therefore all that they say merely increases doubt and confusion in the minds of those who hear them. Hence they are likened to blind men leading the blind.

The Hereafter does not shine before those who are lacking in the power of discrimination and are easily carried away therefore by the charm of fleeting objects. As children are tempted by toys, so they are tempted by pleasure, power, name and fame. To them these seem the only realities. Being thus attached to perishable things, they come many times under the dominion of death. There is one part of us which must die; there is

another part which never dies. When a man can identify himself with his undying nature, which is one with God, then he overcomes death.

VII

HE about whom many are not even able to hear, whom many cannot comprehend even after hearing: wonderful is the teacher, wonderful is he who can receive when taught by an able teacher.

THROUGHOUT the Vedic Scriptures it is declared that no one can impart spiritual knowledge unless he has realization. What is meant by realization? It means knowledge based on direct perception. In India often the best teachers have no learning, but their character is so shining that every one learns merely by coming in contact with them. In one of the Scriptures we read: Under a banyan tree sat a youthful teacher and beside him an aged disciple. The mind of the disciple was full of doubts and questions, but although the teacher continued silent, gradually every doubt vanished from the disciple's mind. This signifies that the conveying of spiritual teaching does not depend upon words only. It is the life, the illumination, which counts. Such God-enlightened men, however, cannot easily be found; but even with such a teacher, the knowledge of the Self cannot be gained unless the heart of the disciple is open and ready for the Truth. Hence Yama says both teacher and taught must be wonderful.

X

I KNOW that (earthly) treasure is transitory, for the eternal can never be attained by things which are non-eternal. Hence the Nachiketa fire (sacrifice) has been performed by me with perishable things and yet I have attained the eternal.

XI

O NACHIKETAS, thou hast seen the fulfilment of all desires, the basis of the universe, the endless fruit of sacrificial rites, the other shore where there is no fear, that which is praiseworthy, the great and wide support; yet, being wise, thou hast rejected all with firm resolve.

THE teacher, saying that the imperishable cannot be attained by the perishable, shows that no amount of observance of rituals and ceremonies can earn the imperishable and eternal. Although the Nachiketa fire-sacrifice may bring results which seem eternal to mortals because of their long duration, yet they too must come to an end; therefore this sacrifice cannot lead to the final goal. Yama praises Nachiketas because, when all heavenly and earthly pleasures, as well as knowledge of all realms and their enjoyments were offered him, yet he cast them aside and remained firm in his desire for Truth alone.

XII

THE wise, who by means of the highest meditation on the Self knows the Ancient One, difficult to perceive, seated in the innermost recess, hidden in the cave of the heart, dwelling in the depth of inner being, (he who knows that One) as God, is liberated from the fetters of joy and sorrow.

XIII

A MORTAL, having heard and fully grasped this, and having realized through discrimination the subtle Self, rejoices, because he has obtained that which is the source of all joy. I think the abode (of Truth) is open to Nachiketas.

THE Scriptures give three stages in all spiritual attainment. The aspirant must first hear about the Truth from an enlightened teacher; next he must reflect upon what he has heard; then by constant practice of discrimination and meditation he realizes it; and with realization comes the fulfilment of every desire, because it unites him with the source of all. Having beheld this, a man learns that all sense pleasures are but fragmentary reflections of that one supreme joy, which can be found in the true Self alone. Yama assures Nachiketas that there is no doubt of his realizing the Truth, because he has shown the highest discrimination as well as fixity of purpose.

XIV

NACHIKETAS said: That which thou seest, which is neither virtue nor vice, neither cause nor effect, neither past nor future (but beyond these), tell me That.

XV

YAMA replied: That goal which all the Vedas glorify, which all austerities proclaim, desiring which (people) practise *Brahmacharya* (a life of continence and service), that goal I tell thee briefly — it is *Aum*.

WHAT name can man give to God? How can the Infinite be bound by any finite word? All that language can express must be finite, since it is itself finite. Yet it is very difficult for mortals to think or speak of anything without calling it by a definite name. Knowing this, the Sages gave to the Supreme the name A-U-M, which stands as the root of all language. The first letter "A" is the mother-sound, being the natural sound uttered by every creature when the throat is opened, and no sound can be made without opening the throat. The last letter "M," spoken by closing the lips, terminates all articulation. As one carries the sound from the throat to the lips, it passes through the sound "U." These three sounds therefore cover the whole field of possible articulate sound. Their combination is called the *Akshara* or the imperishable word, the Sound-Brahman or the Word-

YAMA, having first described what the *Ātman* is, now tells us how to attain It. A man must try to subdue his lower nature and gain control over the body and senses. He must conquer the impure selfish desires which now disturb the serenity of his mind, that it may grow calm and peaceful. In other words, he must live the life and develop all spiritual qualities in order to perceive the *Ātman*.

XXV

WHO then can know where is this mighty Self? He (that Self) to whom the *Brāhmanas* and *Kshatriyas* are but food and death itself a condiment.

THIS text proclaims the glory and majesty of the Supreme. The *Brāhmanas* stand for spiritual strength, the *Kshatriyas* for physical strength, yet both are overpowered by His mightiness. Life and death alike are food for Him. As the light of the great sun swallows up all the lesser lights of the universe, similarly all worlds are lost in the effulgence of the Eternal Omnipresent Being.

Part Third

I

THERE are two who enjoy the fruits of their good deeds in the world, having entered into the cave of the heart, seated (there) on the highest summit. The knowers of Brahman call them shadow and light. So also (they are called) by householders who perform five fire-sacrifices or three Nachiketa fire-sacrifices.

HERE the two signify the Higher Self and the lower self, dwelling in the innermost cave of the heart. The Seers of Truth, as well as householders who follow the path of rituals and outer forms with the hope of enjoying the fruits of their good deeds, both proclaim that the Higher Self is like a light and the lower self like a shadow. When the Truth shines clearly in the heart of the knower, then he surmounts the apparent duality of his nature and becomes convinced that there is but One, and that all outer manifestations are nothing but reflections or projections of that One.

II

MAY we be able to learn that Nachiketa fire-sacrifice, which is a bridge for those who perform sacrifice. May we also know the One, who is the highest im-

perishable Brahman for those who desire to cross over to the other shore which is beyond fear.

THE significance of this text is: May we acquire the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, in both manifested and unmanifested form. He is manifested as the Lord of sacrifice for those who follow the path of ritual. He is the unmanifested, eternal, universal Supreme Being for those who follow the path of wisdom. The "other shore," being the realm of immortality, is said to be beyond fear; because disease, death, and all that which mortals fear, cease to exist there. It is believed by many that these two opening verses were a later interpolation.

III

KNOW the *Âtman* (Self) as the lord of the chariot, and the body as the chariot. Know also the intellect to be the driver and mind the reins.

IV

THE senses are called the horses; the sense objects are the roads; when the *Âtman* is united with body, senses and mind, then the wise call Him the enjoyer.

IN the third chapter Yama defines what part of our being dies and what part is deathless, what is mortal and what is immortal. But the *Âtman*, the Higher Self, is so entirely beyond human conception that it is impossible to give a

THE man whose intellect is not discriminative and who fails to distinguish right from wrong, the real from the unreal, is carried away by his sense passions and desires, just as a driver is carried away by vicious horses over which he has lost control. But he who clearly distinguishes what is good from what is merely pleasant, and controls all his out-going forces from running after apparent momentary pleasures, his senses obey and serve him as good horses obey their driver.

VII

HE who does not possess discrimination, whose mind is uncontrolled and always impure, he does not reach that goal, but falls again into *Samsâra* (realm of birth and death).

VIII

BUT he who possesses right discrimination, whose mind is under control and always pure, he reaches that goal, from which he is not born again.

IX

THE man who has a discriminative intellect for the driver, and a controlled mind for the reins, reaches the end of the journey, the highest place of Vishnu (the All-pervading and Unchangeable One).

cannot influence the senses. Over the mind the determinative faculty exercises power; this determinative faculty is governed by the individual Self; beyond this Self is the undifferentiated creative energy known as *Avyaktam*; and above this is the *Purusha* or Supreme Self. Than this there is nothing higher. That is the goal, the Highest Abode of Peace and Bliss.

XII

THIS *Âtman* (Self), hidden in all beings, does not shine forth; but It is seen by subtle seers through keen and subtle understanding.

IF It dwells in all living beings, why do we not see It? Because the ordinary man's vision is too dull and distracted. It is visible to those alone whose intellect has been purified by constant thought on the Supreme, and whose sight therefore has become refined and sharpened. This keenness of vision comes only when all our forces have been made one-pointed through steadfast practice of concentration and meditation.

XIII

A WISE man should control speech by mind, mind by intellect, intellect by the great *Âtman*, and that by the Peaceful One (the *Paramâtman* or Supreme Self).

HERE Yama gives the practical method to be followed if one wishes to realize the Supreme. The word "speech" stands for all the senses. First, therefore, a man must control his outgoing senses by the mind. Then the mind must be brought under the control of the discriminative faculty; that is, it must be withdrawn from all sense-objects and cease to waste its energies on non-essential things. The discriminative faculty in turn must be controlled by the higher individual intelligence and this must be governed wholly by the Supreme Intelligence.

XIV

ARISE! AWAKE! Having reached the Great Ones (illumined Teachers), gain understanding. The path is as sharp as a razor, impassable and difficult to travel, so the wise declare.

THIS is the eternal call of the wise: Awake from the slumber of ignorance! Arise and seek out those who know the Truth, because only those who have direct vision of Truth are capable of teaching It. Invoke their blessing with a humble spirit and seek to be instructed by them. The path is very difficult to tread. No thoughtless or lethargic person can safely travel on it. One must be strong, wakeful and persevering.

XV

KNOWING That which is soundless, touchless, formless, undecaying; also tasteless, odorless, and eternal; beginningless,

XVII

HE who with devotion recites this highest secret of immortality before an assembly of *Brâhmanas* (pious men) or at the time of *Shrâddha* (funeral ceremonies), gains everlasting reward, he gains everlasting reward.

Part Fourth

I

THE Self-existent created the senses out-going; for this reason man sees the external, but not the inner *Âtman* (Self). Some wise man, however, desiring immortality, with eyes turned away (from the external) sees the *Âtman* within.

IN the last chapter the Ruler of Death instructed Nachiketas regarding the nature and glory of the Self. Now he shows the reason why the Self is not seen by the majority. It is because man's mind is constantly drawn outward through the channels of his senses, and this prevents his seeing the inner Self (*Pratyagâtman*); but now and then a seeker, wiser than others, goes within and attains the vision of the undying Self.

II

CHILDREN (the ignorant) pursue external pleasures; (thus) they fall into the wide-spread snare of death. But the wise, knowing the nature of immortality, do not seek the permanent among fleeting things.

knowledge or perception independent of the Self. Wise men, aware of this, identify themselves with their Higher Self and thus transcend the realm of grief.

V

HE who knows this *Âtman*, the honey-eater (perceiver and enjoyer of objects), ever near, as the lord of the past and future, fears no more. This verily is That.

VI

HE who sees Him seated in the five elements, born of *Tapas* (fire of Brahman), born before water; who, having entered the cave of the heart, abides therein — this verily is That.

THIS verse indicates that He, the Great Self, is the cause of all created objects. According to the Vedas, His first manifestation was Brahmā, the Personal God or Creator, born of the fire of wisdom. He existed before the evolution of the five elements — earth, water, fire, air and ether; hence He was “born before water.” He is the Self dwelling in the hearts of all creatures.

VII

HE who knows Aditi, who rises with Prâna (the Life Principle), existent in all the Devas; who, having entered into the

heart, abides there; and who was born from the elements — this verily is That.

THIS verse is somewhat obscure and seems like an interpolated amplification of the preceding verse.

VIII

THE all-seeing fire which exists hidden in the two sticks, as the foetus is well-guarded in the womb by the mother, (that fire) is to be worshipped day after day by wakeful seekers (after wisdom), as well as by sacrificers. This verily is That.

FIRE is called all-seeing because its light makes everything visible. In Vedic sacrifices the altar fire was always kindled by rubbing together two sticks of a special kind of wood called *Arani*. Because fire was regarded as one of the most perfect symbols of Divine wisdom, it was to be worshipped by all seekers after Truth, whether they followed the path of meditation or the path of rituals.

IX

FROM whence the sun rises, and whither it goes at setting, upon That all the Devas depend. No one goes beyond That. This verily is That.

(he who knows Him) fears no more. This verily is That.

THE seat of the *Purusha* is said to be the heart, hence It “resides in the middle of the body.” Although It is limitless and all-pervading, yet in relation to Its abiding-place It is represented as limited in extension, “the size of a thumb.” This refers really to the heart, which in shape may be likened to a thumb. As light is everywhere, yet we see it focused in a lamp and believe it to be there only; similarly, although the life-current flows everywhere in the body, the heart is regarded as peculiarly its seat.

XIII

THAT *Purusha*, of the size of a thumb, is like a light without smoke, lord of the past and the future. He is the same today and tomorrow. This verily is That.

IN this verse the teacher defines the effulgent nature of the Soul, whose light is pure like a flame without smoke. He also answers the question put by Nachiketas as to what happens after death, by declaring that no real change takes place, because the Soul is ever the same.

XIV

AS rain water, (falling) on the mountain top, runs down over the rocks on all sides; similarly, he who sees difference

than man. He dwells in sacrifice. He dwells in the ether. He is (all that is) born in water, (all that) is born in earth, (all that) is born in sacrifice, (all that) is born on mountains. He is the True and the Great.

III

HE it is who sends the (in-coming) *Prâna* (life-breath) upward and throws the (out-going) breath downward. Him all the senses worship, the adorable *Âtman*, seated in the centre (the heart).

IV

WHEN this *Âtman*, which is seated in the body, goes out (from the body), what remains then? This verily is That.

V

NO mortal lives by the in-coming breath (*Prâna*) or by the out-going breath (*Apâna*), but he lives by another on which these two depend.

VI

O GAUTAMA (Nachiketas), I shall declare unto thee the secret of the eternal Brahman and what happens to the Self after death.

VII

SOME *Jivas* (individual Souls) enter wombs to be embodied; others go into immovable forms, according to their deeds and knowledge.

THIS text shows the application of the law of cause and effect to all forms of life. The thoughts and actions of the present life determine the future birth and environment.

VIII

THE Being who remains awake while all sleep, who grants all desires, That is pure, That is Brahman, That alone is said to be immortal. On That all the worlds rest. None goes beyond That. This verily is That.

IX

AS fire, though one, having entered the world, becomes various according to what it burns, so does the *Âtman* (Self)

within all living beings, though one, become various according to what it enters. It also exists outside.

X

AS air, though one, having entered the world, becomes various according to what it enters, so does the *Âtman* within all living beings; though one, become various according to what it enters. It also exists outside.

BY using these similies of fire and air, the teacher tries to show Nachiketas the subtle quality of the great Self, who, although one and formless like air and fire, yet assumes different shapes according to the form in which It dwells. But, being all-pervading and unlimited, It cannot be confined to these forms; therefore it is said that It also exists outside all forms.

XI

AS the sun, the eye of the whole world, is not defiled by external impurities seen by the eyes, thus the one inner Self of all living beings is not defiled by the misery of the world, being outside it.

THE sun is called the eye of the world because it reveals all objects. As the sun may shine on the most impure object, yet remain uncontaminated by it, so the

XV

THE sun does not shine there, nor the moon, nor the stars; nor do these lightnings shine there, much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all is lighted.

VII

HIGHER than the senses is the mind, higher than the mind is the intellect, higher than the intellect is the great *Âtman*, higher than the *Âtman* is the Unmanifested.

VIII

BEYOND the Unmanifested is the all-pervading and imperceptible Being (*Purusha*). By knowing Him, the mortal is liberated and attains immortality.

THIS division of the individual into senses, mind, intellect, self-consciousness, undifferentiated creative energy and the Absolute Self is explained in the commentary of verse XI, Part Third.

IX

HIS form is not to be seen. No one can see Him with the eye. He is perceived by the heart, by the intellect and by the mind. They who know this become immortal.

THE Supreme, being formless, cannot be discerned by the senses; hence all knowledge of Him must be acquired by the subtler faculties of heart, intellect and mind, which are developed only through the purifying practice of meditation.

XII

HE cannot be attained by speech, by mind, or by the eye. How can That be realized except by him who says "He is"?

XIII

HE should be realized as "He is" and also as the reality of both (visible and invisible). He who knows Him as "He is," to him alone His real nature is revealed.

THIS supersensuous vision cannot be gained through man's ordinary faculties. By mind, eye, or speech the manifested attributes of the Divine can be apprehended; but only one who has acquired the supersensuous sight can directly perceive God's existence and declare definitely that "He is," that He alone exists in both the visible and the invisible world.

XIV

WHEN all desires dwelling in the heart cease, then the mortal becomes immortal and attains Brahman here.

XV

WHEN all the ties of the heart are cut asunder here, then the mortal becomes immortal. Such is the teaching.

often likened to a lotus-bud which is similar to a thumb in size and shape. Through the process of steadfast discrimination, one should learn to differentiate the Soul from the body, just as one separates the pith from a reed.

XVIII

THUS Nachiketas, having acquired this wisdom taught by the Ruler of Death, together with all the rules of Yoga, became free from impurity and death and attained Brahman (the Supreme). So also will it be with another who likewise knows the nature of the Self.

PEACE CHANT

MAY He (the Supreme Being) protect us both. May He be pleased with us. May we acquire strength. May our study bring us illumination. May there be no enmity among us.

OM! PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

Here ends this Upanishad

KENA-UPANISHAD

Like the Iśāvāsya, this Upanishad derives its name from the opening word of the text, Kena-ishitam, "by whom directed." It is also known as the Talavakāra-Upanishad because of its place as a chapter in the Talavakāra-Bṛāhmana of the Sāma-Veda.

Among the Upanishads it is one of the most analytical and metaphysical, its purpose being to lead the mind from the gross to the subtle, from effect to cause. By a series of profound questions and answers, it seeks to locate the source of man's being; and to expand his self-consciousness until it has become identical with God-Consciousness.



KENA-UPANISHAD

PEACE CHANT

MAY my limbs, speech, *Prâna* (life-force), sight, hearing, strength and all my senses, gain in vigor. All is the Brahman (Supreme Lord) of the Upanishads. May I never deny the Brahman. May the Brahman never deny me. May there be no denial of the Brahman. May there be no separation from the Brahman. May all the virtues declared in the sacred Upanishads be manifest in me, who am devoted to the *Âtman* (Higher Self). May they be manifest in me.

OM! PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

Part First

I

BY whom commanded and directed does the mind go towards its objects? Com-manded by whom does the life-force, the first (cause), move? At whose will do men utter speech? What power directs the eye and the ear?

THUS the disciple approached the Master and inquired concerning the cause of life and human activity. Having a sincere longing for Truth he desired to know who really sees and hears, who actuates the apparent physical man. He perceived all about him the phenomenal world, the existence of which he could prove by his senses; but he sought to know the invisible causal world, of which he was now only vaguely conscious. Is mind all-pervading and all-powerful, or is it impelled by some other force, he asked. Who sends forth the vital energy, without which nothing can exist? The teacher replies:

II

IT is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of the speech, the life of the life, the eye of the eye. The wise, freed (from the senses and from mortal desires), after leaving this world, become immortal.

AN ordinary man hears, sees, thinks, but he is satisfied to know only as much as can be known through the senses; he does not analyze and try to find that which stands behind the ear or eye or mind. He is completely identified with his external nature. His conception does not go beyond the little circle of his bodily life, which concerns the outer man only. He has no consciousness of that which enables his senses and organs to perform their tasks.

There is a vast difference between the manifested form and That which is manifested through the form. When we know That, we shall not die with the body. One who clings to the senses and to things that are ephemeral, must die many deaths; but that man who knows the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, having severed himself from his physical nature, becomes immortal. Immortality is attained when man transcends his apparent nature and finds that subtle, eternal and inexhaustible essence which is within him.

III

THERE the eye does not go, nor speech, nor mind. We do not know That; we do not understand how It can be taught. It is distinct from the known and also It is beyond the unknown. Thus we have heard from the ancient (teachers) who told us about It.

THESE physical eyes are unable to perceive that subtle essence. Nor can it be expressed by finite language or known by finite intelligence, because it is

and speech?" In the last portion of the text, the teacher draws an impressive contrast between the attitude of the wise man who knows, but thinks he does not know; and that of the ignorant who does not know, but thinks he knows.

IV

IT (Brahman) is known, when It is known in every state of consciousness. (Through such knowledge) one attains immortality. By attaining this Self, man gains strength; and by Self-knowledge immortality is attained.

WE have learned from the previous text that the Brahman is unknown to those whose knowledge is limited to sense experience; but He is not unknown to those whose purified intelligence perceives Him as the basis of all states of consciousness and the essence of all things. By this higher knowledge a man attains immortality, because he knows that although his body may decay and die, the subtle essence of his being remains untouched. Such an one also acquires unlimited strength, because he identifies himself with the ultimate Source. The strength which comes from one's own muscle and brain or from one's individual power must be limited and mortal and therefore cannot lift one beyond death; but through the strength which *Ātma-gñāna* or Self-knowledge gives, immortality is reached. Whenever knowledge is based on direct perception of this undying essence, one transcends all fear of death and becomes immortal.

V

IF one knows It here, that is Truth; if one knows It not here, then great is his loss. The wise seeing the same Self in all beings, being liberated from this world, become immortal.

III

THEY said to Fire: "O Jâtaveda (All-knowing)! Find out what mysterious spirit this is." He said: "Yes."

IV

HE ran towards it and He (Brahman) said to him: "Who art thou?" "I am Agni, I am Jâtaveda," he (the Fire-god) replied.

V

BRAHMAN asked: "What power resides in thee?" Agni replied: "I can burn up all whatsoever exists on earth."

VI

BRAHMAN placed a straw before him and said: "Burn this." He (Agni) rushed towards it with all speed, but was not able to burn it. So he returned from there and said (to the Devas): "I was not able to find out what this great mystery is."

VII

THEN they said to Vâyu (the Air-god):
“Vâyu! Find out what this mystery
is.” He said: “Yes.”

VIII

HE ran towards it and He (Brahman)
said to him: “Who art thou?” “I
am Vâyu, I am Mâtarisva (traveller of
Heaven),” he (Vâyu) said.

IX

THEN the Brahman said: “What power
is in thee?” Vâyu replied: “I can
blow away all whatsoever exists on earth.”

X

BRAHMAN placed a straw before him
and said: “Blow this away.” He
(Vâyu) rushed towards it with all speed, but
was not able to blow it away. So he returned
from there and said (to the Devas): “I was
not able to find out what this great mystery
is.”

XI

THEN they said to Indra: "O Maghavan (Worshipful One)! Find out what this mystery is." He said: "Yes"; and ran towards it, but it disappeared before him.

XII

THEN he saw in that very space a woman, beautifully adorned, Umâ of golden hue, daughter of Haimavat (Himâlaya). He asked: "What is this great mystery?"

HERE we see how the Absolute assumes concrete form to give knowledge of Himself to the earnest seeker. Brahman, the impenetrable mystery, disappeared and in His place appeared a personal form to represent Him. This is a subtle way of showing the difference between the Absolute and the personal aspects of Deity. The Absolute is declared to be unknowable and unthinkable, but He assumes deified personal aspects to make Himself known to His devotees. Thus Umâ, daughter of the Himâlaya, represents that personal aspect as the offspring of the Infinite Being; while the Himâlaya stands as the symbol of the Eternal, Unchangeable One.

Part Fourth

I

SHE (Umâ) said: "It is Brahman. It is through the victory of Brahman that ye are victorious." Then from her words, he (Indra) knew that it (that mysterious form) was Brahman.

UMÂ replied to Indra, "It is to Brahman that you owe your victory. It is through His power that you live and act. He is the agent and you are all only instruments in His hands. Therefore your idea that 'This victory is ours, this glory is ours,' is based on ignorance." At once Indra saw their mistake. The Devas, being puffed up with vanity, had thought they themselves had achieved the victory, whereas it was Brahman; for not even a blade of grass can move without His command.

II

THEREFORE these Devas, — Agni, Vâyu and Indra — excel other Devas, because they came nearer to Brahman. It was they who first knew this spirit as Brahman.

THIS Upanishad is called Kena, because it begins with the inquiry: "By whom" (*Kena*) willed or directed does the mind go towards its object? From whom comes life? What enables man to speak, to hear and see? And the teacher in reply gives him the definition of Brahman, the Source and Basis of existence. The spirit of the Upanishads is always to show that no matter where we look or what we see or feel in the visible world, it all proceeds from one Source.

The prevailing note of all Vedic teaching is this: One tremendous Whole becoming the world, and again the world merging in that Whole. It also strives in various ways to define that Source, knowing which all else is known and without which no knowledge can be well established. So here the teacher replies: That which is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, that is the inexhaustible river of being which flows on eternally; while bubbles of creation rise on the surface, live for a time, then burst.

The teacher, however, warns the disciple that this eye, ear, mind, can never perceive It; for It is that which illumines speech and mind, which enables eye and ear and all sense-faculties to perform their tasks. "It is distinct from the known and also It is beyond the unknown." He who thinks he knows It, knows It not; because It is never known by those who believe that It can be grasped by the intellect or by the senses; but It can be known by him who knows It as the basis of all consciousness.

The knower of Truth says, "I know It not," because he realizes the unbounded, infinite nature of the Supreme. "Thou art this (the visible), Thou art That (the invisible), and Thou art all that is beyond," he declares. The ordinary idea of knowledge is that which is based on sense-

preceptions; but the knowledge of an illumined Sage is not confined to his senses. He has all the knowledge that comes from the senses and all that comes from Spirit.

The special purpose of this Upanishad is to give us the knowledge of the Real, that we may not come under the dominion of the ego by identifying ourselves with our body, mind and senses. Mortals become mortals because they fall under the sway of ego and depend on their own limited physical and mental strength. The lesson of the parable of the Devas and Brahman is that there is no real power, no real doer except God. He is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear; and eyes, ears, and all our faculties have no power independent of Him. When we thus realize Him as the underlying Reality of our being, we transcend death and become immortal.

OM! PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

