



Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

UNKNOWN

Musean Translation

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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Mouseia's complete machine-assisted Musean translation, made directly from Sanskrit and checked passage by passage against the Kāṇva text.

TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

THE WORK

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SOURCE

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GAPS AND UNCERTAINTIES

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Section 1

1



Om. Peace, peace, peace.

1.1.1 Dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse; the sun is its eye, the wind its breath, and its open mouth the fire common to all. The year is the body of the sacrificial horse. Heaven is its back, the midspace its belly, the earth its hoof; the directions are its flanks, the intermediate directions its ribs, the seasons its limbs, the months and half-months its joints, days and nights its feet, the stars its bones, the clouds its flesh. Sand is the food in its stomach; rivers are its bowels; mountains its liver and lungs; plants and trees its hair. The rising sun is its forequarters, the setting sun its hindquarters. When it yawns, lightning flashes; when it shakes itself, thunder rolls; when it urinates, rain falls. Its voice is speech itself.

1.1.2 Day arose in front of the horse as the Mahiman vessel; its birthplace is in the eastern sea. Night arose behind it as the Mahiman vessel; its birthplace is in the western sea. These two Mahiman vessels came into being on either side of the horse. As Haya it carried the gods, as Vajin the Gandharvas, as Arvan the Asuras, as Ashva human beings. The sea is its kin; the sea its birthplace.

Section 1

2



- 1.2.1 In the beginning there was nothing here at all. All this was enveloped by Death, by hunger, for hunger is death. He made a mind, thinking, “Let me have a self.” He moved about in worship. As he worshiped, waters came into being. “As I worshiped, water came to me,” he thought. This is why the worship-fire is called Arka. Joy comes to anyone who knows why the worship-fire is called Arka.
- 1.2.2 The waters are Arka. What lay like cream upon the waters became solid: it became the earth. Upon it he labored. From him, weary and heated, the essence of his radiance came forth: fire.
- 1.2.3 He divided himself threefold, with the sun as one third and the wind as one third. This breath, then, is divided threefold. The east is his head, and this direction and that his arms. The west is his tail, and this direction and that his thighs. South and north are his flanks; heaven his back, the midspace his belly, this earth his breast. He rests upon the waters. Wherever one who knows this goes, there one finds a firm resting place.

- 1.2.4 He desired, “Let a second self be born to me.” Through mind, Death—hunger—joined in union with speech. What was the seed became the year. Before that, there was no year. He carried it for as long as a year lasts. At the end of that time he brought it forth. When it was born, he opened his mouth to swallow it. It cried, “Bhan!” That became speech.
- 1.2.5 He considered, “If I consume this, I will make my food too little.” With that speech, with that self, he created all this, whatever exists: the Rig verses, the Yajus formulas, the Saman chants, the meters, sacrifices, people, and animals. Whatever he created, he resolved to eat. Because he eats everything, he is called Aditi. Whoever knows why Aditi is called Aditi becomes the eater of everything; everything becomes that person’s food.
- 1.2.6 He desired, “Let me sacrifice again with a greater sacrifice.” He labored; he kindled the heat of austerity. From him, weary and heated, glory and vigor went forth. The vital breaths are glory and vigor. When the vital breaths had gone forth, his body began to swell, but his mind remained within the body.
- 1.2.7 He desired, “Let this be fit for sacrifice; through it, let me have a self.” Then a horse came into being. Because what had swollen became fit for sacrifice, the rite is called Ashvamedha, the horse sacrifice. Whoever knows the horse in this way truly knows the horse sacrifice. He thought of it without restraining it. At the end of a year he offered it to himself; he assigned the other animals to the deities. Therefore they sacrifice the consecrated animal of Prajapati, dedicated to all the deities. The horse sacrifice is this sun that gives heat; the year is its body. This fire is Arka; these worlds are its bodies. These two are Arka and the horse sacrifice. Yet they become a single deity: Death alone. One who knows this conquers repeated death; death does not overtake that person. Death becomes that person’s own self. That person attains a full life and becomes one of these deities.

Section 1

3



- 1.3.1 Prajapati's children were of two kinds, gods and Asuras. Of these, the gods were fewer, the Asuras more numerous. They contended for these worlds. The gods said, "Come, let us overcome the Asuras in the sacrifice through the Udgitha chant."
- 1.3.2 They said to speech, "Sing the Udgitha for us." "Yes," speech said, and sang the Udgitha for them. Whatever enjoyment there is in speech, it sang for the gods; whatever good it speaks, it kept for itself. The Asuras realized, "With this singer they will overcome us." They rushed upon it and pierced it with evil. That evil is precisely this: the unbecoming things one says. That is the evil.
- 1.3.3 Then they said to the breath in the nose, "Sing the Udgitha for us." "Yes," the breath said, and sang the Udgitha for them. Whatever enjoyment there is in the breath, it sang for the gods; whatever good it smells, it kept for itself. The Asuras realized, "With this singer they will overcome us." They rushed upon it and pierced it with evil. That evil is precisely this: the unbecoming things one smells. That is the evil.

- 1.3.4 Then they said to sight, “Sing the Udgitha for us.” “Yes,” sight said, and sang the Udgitha for them. Whatever enjoyment there is in sight, it sang for the gods; whatever good it sees, it kept for itself. The Asuras realized, “With this singer they will overcome us.” They rushed upon it and pierced it with evil. That evil is precisely this: the unbecoming things one sees. That is the evil.
- 1.3.5 Then they said to hearing, “Sing the Udgitha for us.” “Yes,” hearing said, and sang the Udgitha for them. Whatever enjoyment there is in hearing, it sang for the gods; whatever good it hears, it kept for itself. The Asuras realized, “With this singer they will overcome us.” They rushed upon it and pierced it with evil. What is that evil? The unbecoming things one hears. That is the evil.
- 1.3.6 Then they said to mind, “Sing the Udgitha for us.” “Yes,” mind said, and sang the Udgitha for them. Whatever enjoyment there is in mind, it sang for the gods; whatever good it conceives, it kept for itself. The Asuras realized, “With this singer they will overcome us.” They rushed upon it and pierced it with evil. What is that evil? The unbecoming things one conceives. That is the evil. In this way they afflicted these deities with evils; in this way they pierced them with evil.
- 1.3.7 Then they said to this breath within the mouth, “Sing the Udgitha for us.” “Yes,” this breath said, and sang the Udgitha for them. The Asuras realized, “With this singer they will overcome us.” They rushed upon it and tried to pierce it with evil. But as a clod of earth shatters when it strikes a stone, they shattered and perished, scattered in every direction. Then the gods prospered, and the Asuras were defeated. Whoever knows this prospers in person, while the hostile rival who hates that person is defeated.
- 1.3.8 They said, “Where was the one who held us fast in this way?” “Here, within the mouth.” He is Ayasya Angirasa, for he is the essence of the limbs.
- 1.3.9 This deity is named Dur, the Distant, for death is far from it. Death is far from whoever knows this.

- 1.3.10 This deity struck away evil—death—from these deities and carried it to the farthest limits of these directions. There it laid down their evils. Therefore one should not go to those people or to the farthest limits, lest one meet with evil, with death.
- 1.3.11 Having struck away evil—death—from these deities, this deity carried them beyond death.
- 1.3.12 It carried speech across first. When speech was freed from death, it became fire. This fire shines beyond death, having passed beyond it.
- 1.3.13 Then it carried the breath in the nose across. When that breath was freed from death, it became wind. This wind blows beyond death, having passed beyond it.
- 1.3.14 Then it carried sight across. When sight was freed from death, it became the sun. That sun gives heat beyond death, having passed beyond it.
- 1.3.15 Then it carried hearing across. When hearing was freed from death, it became the directions. These directions are beyond death, having passed beyond it.
- 1.3.16 Then it carried mind across. When mind was freed from death, it became the moon. That moon shines beyond death, having passed beyond it. In just this way, this deity carries whoever knows this beyond death.
- 1.3.17 Then it sang food for itself to eat. Whatever food is eaten is eaten by this breath alone; in it the food comes to rest.
- 1.3.18 The gods said, “All this is only as much as the food there is, and you have sung it for yourself. Give us a share in this food.” “Then gather around me,” it said. “Yes,” they said, and settled all around it. Therefore, when one eats food through this breath, these faculties are satisfied by it. In just this way, the kin of one who knows this gather around that person, who becomes their supporter, their foremost member, their leader, an eater of food, their overlord. Anyone

who tries to rival such a knower among that person's own kin cannot support their dependents. But anyone who follows that person, or who wishes to support dependents by following that person, can indeed support them.

- 1.3.19 He is Ayasya Angirasa, for he is the essence of the limbs. Breath is the essence of the limbs. Breath is indeed the essence of the limbs. Therefore, whatever limb breath leaves withers away. It is indeed the essence of the limbs.
- 1.3.20 It is also Brihaspati. Speech is Brihati, and it is her lord; therefore it is Brihaspati.
- 1.3.21 It is also Brahmanaspati. Speech is the sacred formula, and it is her lord; therefore it is Brahmanaspati.
- 1.3.22 It is also the Saman chant. Speech is sa, and this breath is ama: that is why Saman is called Saman. It is also equal to a termite, equal to a mosquito, equal to an elephant, equal to these three worlds, equal to all this; therefore it is Saman, the equal. Whoever knows this Saman in this way attains union with Saman and shares its world.
- 1.3.23 It is also Udgitha. Breath is ut, for by breath all this is held up. Speech is githa, song. Ut and githa: that is Udgitha.
- 1.3.24 On this matter Brahmadatta Chaikitaneya said, while drinking King Soma, "Let this king make my head fall off if Ayasya Angirasa sang the Udgitha with anything other than this breath!" For with speech and breath he sang the Udgitha.
- 1.3.25 Whoever knows the wealth of this Saman comes to possess wealth. Its wealth is tone. Therefore someone intending to serve as a priest should seek a resonant tone of voice, and should perform the priestly office with a voice endowed with tone. Therefore at a sacrifice people wish to see someone with a resonant voice—and someone who has wealth. Whoever knows the wealth of Saman in this way comes to possess wealth.

- 1.3.26 Whoever knows the gold of this Saman comes to possess gold. Its gold is tone. Whoever knows the gold of Saman in this way comes to possess gold.
- 1.3.27 Whoever knows the resting place of this Saman finds a firm resting place. Its resting place is speech, for this breath rests upon speech as it is sung. Some, however, say, “Upon food.”
- 1.3.28 Now comes the ascent through the Pavamana chants. The Prastotri begins the Saman chant. When he begins, one should recite these words quietly:
“From the unreal lead me to the real.
From darkness lead me to light.
From death lead me to immortality.”
When one says, “From the unreal lead me to the real,” the unreal is death and the real is immortality. It means just this: “From death lead me to immortality; make me immortal.” When one says, “From darkness lead me to light,” darkness is death and light is immortality. It means just this: “From death lead me to immortality; make me immortal.” In “From death lead me to immortality,” nothing is concealed.
Then, in the other chants of praise, one should sing food for oneself to eat. Therefore, during those chants, one should choose a boon—whatever one desires. A Udgatri who knows this sings into being whatever he desires, for himself or for the sacrificer. This indeed wins a world. Whoever knows this Saman in this way has no fear of being left without a world.

Section 1

4



- 1.4.1 In the beginning this was the Self alone, in the form of a person. Looking around, he saw nothing other than himself. First he declared, “I am.” From this came the name “I.” Therefore even now, when someone is addressed, they first say, “It is I,” and then give whatever other name they have. Because before all this he burned up all evils, he is called Purusha, the person. Whoever knows this burns up anyone who wishes to stand before them.
- 1.4.2 He was afraid. Therefore one who is alone is afraid. Then he considered, “Since there is nothing other than me, what am I afraid of?” At that very thought, his fear departed. For what could he have feared? Fear comes from a second.
- 1.4.3 Yet he found no delight. Therefore one who is alone finds no delight. He desired a second. He was as large as a woman and a man in close embrace. He split this very self in two. From that arose husband and wife. “Therefore one’s own body is like half of a split pea,” Yajnavalkya used to say. Therefore this empty space is filled by a woman. He united with her. From that human beings were born.

- 1.4.4 She considered, “How can he unite with me after bringing me forth from himself? Come, let me hide.” She became a cow, and the other became a bull. He united with her. From that cattle were born. She became a mare, and the other a stallion; she became a female donkey, and the other a male donkey. He united with her. From that the single-hoofed animals were born. She became a she-goat, and the other a he-goat; she became a ewe, and the other a ram. He united with her. From that goats and sheep were born. In this very way he created everything that exists in pairs, down to the ants.
- 1.4.5 He knew, “I myself am creation, for I created all this.” From that he became creation. Whoever knows this comes to have a place in this creation of his.
- 1.4.6 Then he churned like this, and from his mouth as the womb and from his hands he created fire. Therefore both are hairless on the inside, for the womb is hairless within. When people say, “Sacrifice to this god; sacrifice to that god,” naming one god after another, each is only a distinct creation of his. For he himself is all the gods. Then whatever is moist here he created from his seed: that is Soma. All this is only so much: food and the eater of food. Soma is food, and fire is the eater of food. This is Brahman’s surpassing creation: he created gods superior to himself; mortal himself, he created immortals. Therefore it is a surpassing creation. Whoever knows this comes to have a place in this surpassing creation of his.
- 1.4.7 At that time this was undifferentiated. It was differentiated only by name and form: “This one has this name; this one has this form.” Even now this is differentiated only by name and form: “This one has this name; this one has this form.” This Self has entered here, to the very tips of the nails, as a razor lies in its case, or the all-sustaining fire in its nest. They do not see him, for he is incomplete in any single function. When breathing, he is called breath; when speaking, speech; when seeing, sight; when hearing, hearing; when thinking, mind. These are merely names for his activities. Whoever contemplates one or another of these does not know, for through any one of these he is incomplete. One should contemplate him only as the Self, for in the Self all these become

one. This Self is the track by which to discover all this, for through it one knows all this. Just as one finds something by following a track, so whoever knows this finds fame and renown.

1.4.8 This Self is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, and more inward than all. If someone says that something other than the Self is dear, and another says to that person, “You will lose what you hold dear,” it may indeed be so. One should contemplate the Self alone as dear. For one who contemplates the Self alone as dear, what is dear does not perish.

1.4.9 They ask, “Since people think that through knowledge of Brahman they will become all, what did Brahman know by which it became all?”

1.4.10 In the beginning this was Brahman. It knew only itself: “I am Brahman.” Therefore it became all. Whichever of the gods awakened to this became that; so too among the seers, and so too among human beings. Seeing this, the seer Vamadeva declared:

“I was Manu, and I was the sun.”

Even now, whoever knows in this way, “I am Brahman,” becomes all this. Not even the gods can prevent that person’s becoming so, for that person becomes their Self. But whoever contemplates another deity, thinking, “That one is one, and I am another,” does not know. Such a person is like an animal belonging to the gods. As many animals sustain a human being, so each person sustains the gods. Even when a single animal is taken away, it is unwelcome—how much more when many are taken! Therefore it is unwelcome to the gods that human beings should know this.

1.4.11 In the beginning this was Brahman alone. Being alone, it did not flourish. It brought forth beyond itself a superior form, ruling power: those ruling powers among the gods—Indra, Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrityu, and Ishana. Therefore nothing is higher than ruling power. Therefore at the royal consecration the Brahmin sits below the Kshatriya, bestowing that glory on ruling power alone. Yet Brahman, the priestly power, is the womb of ruling power.

Therefore, although a king attains supremacy, in the end he takes refuge in the priestly power as his own womb. Whoever harms it strikes at his own womb. He becomes worse, as one does after harming a superior.

1.4.12 Still it did not flourish. It created the common people: those kinds of gods who are named in groups—the Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, All-Gods, and Maruts.

1.4.13 Still it did not flourish. It created the Shudra class, Pushan. This earth is Pushan, for it nourishes all this, whatever exists.

1.4.14 Still it did not flourish. It brought forth beyond itself a superior form: right. Right is the ruling power of ruling power. Therefore nothing is higher than right. Through right a weaker person hopes to prevail over a stronger, as if through a king. This right is truth. Therefore, of someone speaking truth, people say, “He speaks what is right,” or of someone speaking what is right, “He speaks truth.” For these two are the same.

1.4.15 Thus there were priestly power, ruling power, the common people, and the Shudra. Among the gods, Brahman became priestly power through fire, and among human beings through the Brahmin; it became a Kshatriya through the Kshatriya, a Vaishya through the Vaishya, and a Shudra through the Shudra. Therefore among the gods people seek a world in fire, and among human beings in the Brahmin, for in these two forms Brahman appeared. Whoever leaves this world without having seen their own world finds no benefit in it, since it remains unknown, just as an unrecited Veda or a deed left undone brings no benefit. Even if someone without this knowledge performs a great and meritorious deed, in the end it wastes away. One should contemplate the Self alone as one’s world. The work of one who contemplates the Self alone as one’s world does not waste away, for from this very Self that person creates whatever they desire.

1.4.16 Moreover, this self is a world for all beings. By making offerings and performing sacrifices, one is a world for the gods. By reciting the sacred texts, one is a world for the seers. By making offerings to the ancestors and desiring offspring, one is

a world for the ancestors. By giving people shelter and food, one is a world for human beings. By finding grass and water for animals, one is a world for animals. To the extent that wild creatures and birds, down to ants, live upon one's household, one is a world for them. Just as one desires the safety of one's own world, so all beings at all times desire the safety of one who knows this. This indeed has been known and examined.

1.4.17 In the beginning this was the self alone, just one. It desired, "Let me have a wife, so that I may have offspring. Let me have wealth, so that I may perform works." Desire extends this far; even wishing for it, one could find nothing beyond this. Therefore even now someone who is alone desires, "Let me have a wife, so that I may have offspring. Let me have wealth, so that I may perform works." As long as someone has not obtained even one of these, that person thinks themselves incomplete. Yet this is that person's completeness: mind is the self, speech the wife, breath the offspring. Sight is human wealth, for through sight one finds it. Hearing is divine wealth, for through hearing one hears it. The body itself is one's work, for with the body one performs work. This sacrifice is fivefold; the sacrificial animal is fivefold; the person is fivefold; all this, whatever exists, is fivefold. Whoever knows this attains all this.

Section 1

5



1.5.1 These are the verses:

“The father brought forth seven foods through understanding and austerity.
One of these he made common to all; two he allotted to the gods.
Three he made for himself; one he gave to the animals.
On that rests everything, whatever breathes and whatever does not.
Why are they not exhausted, though they are always being eaten?
Whoever knows this inexhaustibility eats food with the face.
That person goes to the gods and lives upon sustaining power.”

1.5.2 “The father brought forth seven foods through understanding and austerity”:
for through understanding and austerity the father brought them forth. “One
of these he made common to all”: this food that is eaten is what he made com-
mon to all. Whoever devotes himself to it does not turn away from evil, for it
is shared with others. “Two he allotted to the gods”: the offering poured into
the fire and the offering set out. Therefore people pour offerings into the fire
for the gods and set offerings out for them. Others say these are the new-moon
and full-moon sacrifices. Therefore one should not make a practice of sacrifices
for personal desires. “One he gave to the animals”: that is milk. For at first

human beings and animals alike live on milk. Therefore they first have a newborn child lick clarified butter, or put the child to the breast. And of a newborn calf they say, “It does not yet eat grass.”

“On that rests everything, whatever breathes and whatever does not”: for on milk rests all this, whatever breathes and whatever does not. People say, “By offering milk for a year, one conquers repeated death.” One should not understand it that way. On the very day a person who knows this makes the offering, that person conquers repeated death, for they give all food to the gods to eat.

“Why are they not exhausted, though they are always being eaten?”: the person is their inexhaustibility, for the person brings forth this food again and again. “Whoever knows this inexhaustibility”: the person is their inexhaustibility, for through understanding, through acts, the person brings forth this food again and again. If one did not do this, it would be exhausted. “Eats food with the face”: the face is the mouth; this means “with the mouth.” “That person goes to the gods and lives upon sustaining power”: this is praise.

1.5.3 “Three he made for himself”: mind, speech, and breath—these he made for himself. “My mind was elsewhere; I did not see.” “My mind was elsewhere; I did not hear.” For through mind alone one sees, through mind one hears. Desire, resolve, doubt, faith, lack of faith, steadfastness, lack of steadfastness, shame, understanding, fear—all this is mind alone. Therefore, even when touched from behind, one recognizes it through mind. Whatever sound there is, it is speech. For speech discloses the meaning; it is not itself disclosed. The inward breath, the downward breath, the diffused breath, the upward breath, the balancing breath, and breathing—all this is breath alone. This self consists of these: it consists of speech, consists of mind, consists of breath.

1.5.4 These are the three worlds. Speech is this world, mind the world of midspace, breath that world above.

1.5.5 These are the three Vedas. Speech is the Rigveda, mind the Yajurveda, breath the Samaveda.

- 1.5.6 These are the gods, ancestors, and human beings. Speech is the gods, mind the ancestors, breath human beings.
- 1.5.7 These are father, mother, and offspring. Mind is the father, speech the mother, breath the offspring.
- 1.5.8 These are what is known, what is to be known, and what is unknown. Whatever is known is a form of speech, for speech is known. Having become that, speech protects this person.
- 1.5.9 Whatever is to be known is a form of mind, for mind is to be known. Having become that, mind protects this person.
- 1.5.10 Whatever is unknown is a form of breath, for breath is unknown. Having become that, breath protects this person.
- 1.5.11 Earth is the body of this speech; this fire is its luminous form. As far as speech extends, so far does earth extend, and so far does this fire extend.
- 1.5.12 Heaven is the body of this mind; that sun is its luminous form. As far as mind extends, so far does heaven extend, and so far does that sun extend. The two joined in union. From that breath was born. It is Indra; it is without a rival. A rival is a second. Whoever knows this has no rival.
- 1.5.13 The waters are the body of this breath; that moon is its luminous form. As far as breath extends, so far do the waters extend, and so far does that moon extend. All these are equal; all are infinite. Whoever contemplates them as finite wins a finite world. But whoever contemplates them as infinite wins an infinite world.
- 1.5.14 This year is Prajapati, with sixteen parts. The nights are fifteen of his parts; his sixteenth part remains constant. Through the nights he waxes and wanes. On the night of the new moon, with that sixteenth part he enters all that bears breath, and in the morning he is born from it. Therefore on that night one should not cut short the life of anything that bears breath, even a lizard, out of reverence for this deity.

- 1.5.15 This person who knows in this way is that very year, Prajapati with sixteen parts. Wealth is fifteen of this person's parts; the self is the sixteenth. Through wealth this person waxes and wanes. This self is the hub; wealth is the rim. Therefore, even if someone suffers the loss of everything, if that person remains alive in themselves, people say, "Only the rim is gone."
- 1.5.16 There are indeed three worlds: the human world, the world of the ancestors, and the world of the gods. This human world is to be won through a son alone, by no other act; the world of the ancestors through ritual action; the world of the gods through knowledge. The world of the gods is the highest of worlds. Therefore they praise knowledge.
- 1.5.17 Now comes the handing over. When a man thinks he is about to depart, he says to his son, "You are sacred learning; you are sacrifice; you are the world." The son replies, "I am sacred learning; I am sacrifice; I am the world." Whatever has been recited is all united in the words "sacred learning." All sacrifices are united in the word "sacrifice." All worlds are united in the word "world." All this extends this far. "Being all this, let him sustain me from here." Therefore people say that a well-instructed son brings one a world. Therefore they instruct him. When a man who knows this departs from this world, he enters his son together with these very vital breaths. Whatever he has done amiss, his son frees him from it all; therefore he is called putra, son. Through his son alone he finds a firm resting place in this world. Then these divine, immortal vital powers enter him.
- 1.5.18 From earth and fire, divine speech enters him. This is the divine speech through which whatever one says comes to be.
- 1.5.19 From heaven and the sun, divine mind enters him. This is the divine mind through which one is joyful and does not grieve.
- 1.5.20 From the waters and the moon, divine breath enters him. This is the divine breath that, moving or not moving, neither falters nor suffers harm. A person who knows this becomes the Self of all beings. As this deity is, so is that person.

As all beings sustain this deity, so all beings sustain one who knows this. Whatever grief these creatures suffer stays with them. Only merit goes to that person, for evil does not reach the gods.

1.5.21 Now comes the examination of the observance. Prajapati created the faculties of action. Once created, they competed with one another. Speech resolved, “I will keep speaking”; sight, “I will keep seeing”; hearing, “I will keep hearing.” So too the other faculties, each according to its action. Death, becoming weariness, approached them. It overtook them; having overtaken them, death held them fast. Therefore speech grows weary, sight grows weary, hearing grows weary. But it did not overtake this one: the breath in the middle. They resolved to understand it: “This is indeed the best of us, which, moving or not moving, neither falters nor suffers harm. Come, let us all become a form of it.” They all became a form of this breath. Therefore they are called by its name, “breaths.” By the name of one who knows this people call the family into which that person is born. Whoever competes with such a knower withers away; withering away, in the end that person dies. So much concerning the self.

1.5.22 Now concerning the deities. Fire resolved, “I will keep blazing”; the sun, “I will keep giving heat”; the moon, “I will keep shining.” So too the other deities, each according to its nature. As the breath in the middle is among these vital breaths, so is wind among these deities. For the other deities set, but wind does not. Wind is the deity that never sets.

1.5.23 On this there is a verse:

“From where the sun rises,
And where it goes to rest.”

From breath it rises, and in breath it goes to rest.

“The gods made it their law:

It is the same today, and the same tomorrow.”

What these deities resolved upon then, they still do today. Therefore one should keep just one observance: one should breathe in and breathe out, thinking, “Let not evil—death—overtake me.” If one undertakes it, one should seek

to complete it. Through it one wins union with this deity and shares its world.

Section 1

6



- 1.6.1 All this is a triad: name, form, and action. Of these, speech is the Uktha hymn of names, for all names arise from it. It is their Saman chant, for it is equal to all names. It is their Brahman, for it sustains all names.
- 1.6.2 As for forms, sight is their Uktha hymn, for all forms arise from it. It is their Saman chant, for it is equal to all forms. It is their Brahman, for it sustains all forms.
- 1.6.3 As for actions, the body is their Uktha hymn, for all actions arise from it. It is their Saman chant, for it is equal to all actions. It is their Brahman, for it sustains all actions. These three are one: this self. Though one, this self is these three. This is the immortal, covered by the real. Breath is the immortal; name and form are the real. By these two this breath is covered.

Section 2

1



2.1.1 There was a learned man of the Gargya clan, the proud Balaki. He said to
Ajatashatru, king of Kashi, “I will tell you of Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “For that offer we give you a thousand cows. People keep
running to Janaka, crying, ‘Janaka! Janaka!’”

2.1.2 Gargya said, “The person there in the sun—this is the one I revere as
Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the one who
stands above all beings, their head and king.”

Whoever reveres him in this way stands above all beings as their head and king.

2.1.3 Gargya said, “The person there in the moon—this is the one I revere as
Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the great one,
clothed in white, King Soma.”

For whoever reveres him in this way, Soma is pressed and poured day after day.
His food does not run out.

2.1.4 Gargya said, “The person there in lightning—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the radiant one.”

Whoever reveres him in this way becomes radiant. His offspring become radiant.

2.1.5 Gargya said, “The person here in space—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the full, unmoving one.”

Whoever reveres him in this way is filled with offspring and livestock. His line does not die out from this world.

2.1.6 Gargya said, “The person here in the wind—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as Indra, the irresistible one, the unconquered army.”

Whoever reveres him in this way is victorious, never defeated, a conqueror of his enemies.

2.1.7 Gargya said, “The person here in fire—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the vanquisher.”

Whoever reveres him in this way becomes a vanquisher. His offspring become vanquishers.

2.1.8 Gargya said, “The person here in the waters—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the fitting one.”

Whoever reveres him in this way meets only with what is fitting, not with what is unfitting. And a child in his own likeness is born to him.

2.1.9 Gargya said, “The person here in a mirror—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the shining one.”

Whoever reveres him in this way becomes shining. His offspring become shining. And he outshines everyone he encounters.

2.1.10 Gargya said, “The sound that follows behind a person walking—this is what I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as life.”

Whoever reveres him in this way reaches the full span of life in this world. Breath does not leave him before his time.

2.1.11 Gargya said, “The person here in the directions—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as the companion who never leaves.”

Whoever reveres him in this way has a companion. His company is not severed from him.

2.1.12 Gargya said, “The person here who consists of shadow—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as death.”

Whoever reveres him in this way reaches the full span of life in this world. Death does not come to him before his time.

2.1.13 Gargya said, “The person here within oneself—this is the one I revere as Brahman.”

Ajatashatru said, “Do not speak to me of this one. I revere him as self-possessed.”

Whoever reveres him in this way becomes self-possessed. His offspring become self-possessed.

Then Gargya fell silent.

2.1.14 Ajatashatru said, “Is that all?”

“That is all.”

“With that much, it is not yet known.”

Gargya said, “Let me come to you as a pupil.”

2.1.15 Ajatashatru said, “It goes against the usual order for a brahmin to approach a warrior, thinking, ‘He will tell me of Brahman.’ Still, I will make you understand.”

He took him by the hand and stood up. The two came to a sleeping man. He addressed him by these names: “Great one, clothed in white! King Soma!” The man did not rise. He woke him by pressing him with his hand. Then the man rose.

2.1.16 Ajatashatru said, “When this person who consists of awareness was asleep just now, where was he then? From where has he come back?”

Gargya did not know.

2.1.17 Ajatashatru said, “When this person who consists of awareness was asleep just now, he gathered into himself, through his awareness, the awareness of these vital powers and lay in the space within the heart. When he gathers them in, the person is said to sleep. Then breath is held within; speech is held within; sight is held within; hearing is held within; mind is held within.

2.1.18 “When he moves about in dreams, those are his worlds. There he seems to become a great king, or a great brahmin; he seems to enter high and low conditions. As a great king might take his people with him and move at will through his own country, so he takes these vital powers with him and moves at will through his own body.

2.1.19 “Then, when he is sound asleep, when he is aware of nothing at all, he slips back through the channels called Hita, seventy-two thousand of them, which extend from the heart to the membrane surrounding it, and lies within that membrane. As a child, a great king, or a great brahmin might lie having reached the utmost bliss, so he lies then.

2.1.20 “As a spider comes forth along its thread, as tiny sparks fly out from a fire, so all vital powers, all worlds, all gods, all beings come forth from this Self. Its secret name is ‘the truth of truth.’ The vital powers are truth, and this is their truth.”

Section 2

2



2.2.1 Whoever knows the infant, together with his dwelling, his resting place, his post, and his tether, holds in check seven hostile rivals. This infant is the breath here at the center. This body is his dwelling; this head is his resting place; breath is his post, and food his tether.

2.2.2 These seven imperishable powers attend him. Through the red streaks in the eye, Rudra is joined to him. Through the water in the eye, Parjanya is joined to him; through the pupil, the sun; through the black part, fire; through the white part, Indra. Through the lower eyelid, earth is joined to him, and through the upper, heaven. The food of one who knows this does not run out.

2.2.3 On this there is a verse:

“A bowl with its mouth below and its base above: in it is laid glory of every form.

Seven seers sit at its rim, and speech, the eighth, communes with Brahman.”

“A bowl with its mouth below and its base above”—this is the head, for it is a bowl with its mouth below and its base above.

“In it is laid glory of every form”—the vital powers are glory of every form.

This speaks of the vital powers.

“Seven seers sit at its rim”—the vital powers are the seers. This speaks of the vital powers.

“And speech, the eighth, communes with Brahman”—for speech is the eighth and communes with Brahman.

2.2.4 These two ears are Gotama and Bharadvaja: this one is Gotama, this one Bharadvaja. These two eyes are Vishvamitra and Jamadagni: this one is Vishvamitra, this one Jamadagni. These two nostrils are Vasishtha and Kashyapa: this one is Vasishtha, this one Kashyapa. Speech is Atri, for through speech food is eaten. The name Atri is indeed ‘eater.’ Whoever knows this becomes the eater of everything; everything becomes his food.

Section 2

3



- 2.3.1 Brahman has two forms: the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the still and the moving, the immediate and the beyond.
- 2.3.2 The formed is everything other than wind and the space between earth and heaven. It is mortal. It is still. It is immediate. The essence of this formed, this mortal, this still, this immediate is the one who gives heat, for he is the essence of the immediate.
- 2.3.3 Now the formless: wind and the space between earth and heaven. This is immortal. This is moving. This is beyond. The essence of this formless, this immortal, this moving, this beyond is the person within that orb, for he is the essence of the beyond. So much for the gods.
- 2.3.4 Now concerning oneself. The formed is everything here other than breath and the space within oneself. It is mortal. It is still. It is immediate. The essence of this formed, this mortal, this still, this immediate is the eye, for it is the essence of the immediate.
- 2.3.5 Now the formless: breath and the space within oneself. This is immortal. This is moving. This is beyond. The essence of this formless, this immortal, this moving, this beyond is the person here in the right eye, for he is the essence of

the beyond.

2.3.6 The appearance of this person is like a saffron-colored cloth, like pale sheep's wool, like a crimson insect, like a flame of fire, like a white lotus, like a sudden flash of lightning. Whoever knows this has a splendor like a sudden flash of lightning.

Now, therefore, the teaching: "Not this, not this." For there is no designation beyond this "not this."

And his name is "the truth of truth." The vital powers are truth. He is their truth.

Section 2

4



- 2.4.1 “Maitreyi,” said Yajnavalkya, “my dear, I am about to leave this place. Come, let me make a settlement between you and Katyayani.”
- 2.4.2 Maitreyi said, “Sir, if this whole earth, filled with wealth, were mine, could I become immortal through it?”
- “No,” said Yajnavalkya. “Your life would be like the life of those who have ample means. But there is no hope of immortality through wealth.”
- 2.4.3 Maitreyi said, “What would I do with something that cannot make me immortal? Tell me only what you know, sir.”
- 2.4.4 Yajnavalkya said, “My dear, you have always been dear to me, and now you speak what is dear. Come, sit down. I will explain it to you. But as I explain, reflect deeply on what I say.”
- 2.4.5 He said, “My dear, a husband is dear not for the husband’s sake; a husband is dear for the sake of the Self.
- “My dear, a wife is dear not for the wife’s sake; a wife is dear for the sake of the Self.
- “My dear, sons are dear not for the sons’ sake; sons are dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear, wealth is dear not for wealth’s sake; wealth is dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear, priestly power is dear not for priestly power’s sake; priestly power is dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear, royal power is dear not for royal power’s sake; royal power is dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear, the worlds are dear not for the worlds’ sake; the worlds are dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear, the gods are dear not for the gods’ sake; the gods are dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear, beings are dear not for beings’ sake; beings are dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear, everything is dear not for the sake of everything; everything is dear for the sake of the Self.

“My dear Maitreyi, the Self is to be seen, to be heard, to be reflected on, to be contemplated. My dear, through seeing, hearing, reflecting on, and understanding the Self, all this is known.

2.4.6 “Priestly power rejects anyone who knows priestly power as something apart from the Self.

“Royal power rejects anyone who knows royal power as something apart from the Self.

“The worlds reject anyone who knows the worlds as something apart from the Self.

“The gods reject anyone who knows the gods as something apart from the Self.

“Beings reject anyone who knows beings as something apart from the Self.

“Everything rejects anyone who knows everything as something apart from the Self.

“This priestly power, this royal power, these worlds, these gods, these beings, this whole—all are this Self.

2.4.7 “When a drum is struck, one cannot grasp its separate sounds. But by grasping the drum, or the striking of the drum, one grasps the sound.

- 2.4.8 “When a conch is blown, one cannot grasp its separate sounds. But by grasping the conch, or the blowing of the conch, one grasps the sound.
- 2.4.9 “When a lute is played, one cannot grasp its separate sounds. But by grasping the lute, or the playing of the lute, one grasps the sound.
- 2.4.10 “As separate streams of smoke issue from a fire laid with damp wood, so, my dear, the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvangiras, histories, ancient lore, branches of knowledge, Upanishads, verses, aphorisms, explications, and explanations are the outbreathing of this great being. All these are its outbreathing.
- 2.4.11 “As the ocean is the one meeting place of all waters,
so the skin is the one meeting place of all touches;
so the nostrils are the one meeting place of all smells;
so the tongue is the one meeting place of all tastes;
so the eye is the one meeting place of all forms;
so the ear is the one meeting place of all sounds;
so the mind is the one meeting place of all intentions;
so the heart is the one meeting place of all knowledge;
so the hands are the one meeting place of all actions;
so the sexual organ is the one meeting place of all pleasures;
so the anus is the one meeting place of all discharges;
so the feet are the one meeting place of all paths;
so speech is the one meeting place of all the Vedas.
- 2.4.12 “As a lump of salt thrown into water dissolves into the water itself and can no longer be taken out, yet wherever one draws from it, it is salty, so, my dear, this great being, endless, boundless, is nothing but a mass of awareness. Arising from these elements, it vanishes again with them. After passing away, there is no recognition: this, my dear, is what I say.” So spoke Yajnavalkya.
- 2.4.13 Maitreyi said, “Here you have bewildered me, sir, by saying, ‘After passing away, there is no recognition.’”
He said, “My dear, I am not saying anything bewildering. My dear, this is enough for understanding.

2.4.14 “Where there is duality, as it were, one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, one knows another. But where everything has become the Self, then by what would one smell whom? By what would one see whom? By what would one hear whom? By what would one speak to whom? By what would one think of whom? By what would one know whom? By what would one know that through which one knows all this? My dear, by what would one know the knower?”

Section 2

5



- 2.5.1 This earth is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this earth. The person in this earth, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, embodied, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.2 These waters are honey for all beings. All beings are honey for these waters. The person in these waters, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in the seed, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.3 This fire is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this fire. The person in this fire, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, consisting of speech, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.4 This wind is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this wind. The person in this wind, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself who is breath, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.

- 2.5.5 This sun is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this sun. The person in this sun, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in the eye, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.6 These directions are honey for all beings. All beings are honey for these directions. The person in these directions, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in hearing and its answering echo, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.7 This moon is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this moon. The person in this moon, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in the mind, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.8 This lightning is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this lightning. The person in this lightning, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in radiance, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.9 This thunder is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this thunder. The person in this thunder, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in sound and voice, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.10 This space is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this space. The person in this space, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in the space of the heart, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.11 This right order is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this right order. The person in this right order, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in right conduct, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.

- 2.5.12 This truth is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this truth. The person in this truth, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, present in truthfulness, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.13 This humankind is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this humankind. The person in this humankind, made of light and immortality, and the person within oneself, human, made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.14 This Self is honey for all beings. All beings are honey for this Self. The person in this Self, made of light and immortality, and this Self who is a person made of light and immortality—these are none other than this Self. This is the immortal; this is Brahman; this is all.
- 2.5.15 This Self is the lord of all, the king of all beings. As all the spokes are held together in the hub and rim of a chariot wheel, so all beings, all gods, all worlds, all vital powers, all these selves are held together in this Self.
- 2.5.16 This is the honey that Dadhyanch Atharvana taught the Ashvins. Seeing this, the seer declared:
 “For gain I reveal that mighty deed of yours, heroes, as thunder reveals the rain: how Dadhyanch Atharvana spoke the honey to you through the head of a horse.”
- 2.5.17 This is the honey that Dadhyanch Atharvana taught the Ashvins. Seeing this, the seer declared:
 “Ashvins, you fitted a horse’s head onto Dadhichi Atharvana.
 True to his word, he spoke the honey to you, wonder-workers—the secret of Tvashtar that was yours.”

2.5.18 This is the honey that Dadhyanch Atharvana taught the Ashvins. Seeing this, the seer declared:

“He made two-footed strongholds; he made four-footed strongholds.

Becoming a bird, the person entered those strongholds.”

This person is the dweller in every stronghold. Nothing is left uncovered by him. Nothing is left unenclosed by him.

2.5.19 This is the honey that Dadhyanch Atharvana taught the Ashvins. Seeing this, the seer declared:

“He became the likeness of each and every form; that form of his is for making him seen.

Through his powers Indra moves in many forms, for his bay horses are yoked in hundreds and tens.”

He is the bay horses; he is the ten, the thousands, the many, the infinite. This is Brahman, with nothing before it, nothing after it, nothing within it, nothing outside it. This Self is Brahman, the experiencer of all. Such is the teaching.

Section 2

6



2.6.1 Now the line of teachers.

Pautimashya learned from Gaupavana.

Gaupavana learned from Pautimashya.

Pautimashya learned from Gaupavana.

Gaupavana learned from Kaushika.

Kaushika learned from Kaundinya.

Kaundinya learned from Shandilya.

Shandilya learned from both Kaushika and Gautama.

Gautama received the teaching.

2.6.2 His teacher was Agniveshya.

Agniveshya learned from both Shandilya and Anabhimlata.

Anabhimlata learned from Anabhimlata.

Anabhimlata learned from Anabhimlata.

Anabhimlata learned from Gautama.

Gautama learned from Saitava and Prachinayogya.

Saitava and Prachinayogya learned from Parasharya.

Parasharya learned from Bharadvaja.

Bharadvaja learned from both Bharadvaja and Gautama.

Gautama learned from Bharadvaja.

Bharadvaja learned from Parasharya.
Parasharya learned from Vaijavapayana.
Vaijavapayana learned from Kaushikayani.
Kaushikayani received the teaching.

2.6.3

His teacher was Ghritakaushika.
Ghritakaushika learned from Parasharyayana.
Parasharyayana learned from Parasharya.
Parasharya learned from Jatukarnya.
Jatukarnya learned from both Asurayana and Yaska.
Asurayana learned from Traivani.
Traivani learned from Aupajandhani.
Aupajandhani learned from Asuri.
Asuri learned from Bharadvaja.
Bharadvaja learned from Atreya.
Atreya learned from Manti.
Manti learned from Gautama.
Gautama learned from Vatsya.
Vatsya learned from Shandilya.
Shandilya learned from Kaishorya Kapyā.
Kaishorya Kapyā learned from Kumaraharita.
Kumaraharita learned from Galava.
Galava learned from Vidarbhi Kaundinya.
Vidarbhi Kaundinya learned from Vatsanapat Babhrava.
Vatsanapat Babhrava learned from Pantha Saubhara.
Pantha Saubhara learned from Ayasya Angirasa.
Ayasya Angirasa learned from Abhuti Tvashtra.
Abhuti Tvashtra learned from Vishvarupa Tvashtra.
Vishvarupa Tvashtra learned from the Ashvins.
The Ashvins learned from Dadhichi Atharvana.
Dadhychan Atharvana learned from Atharvan Daiva.
Atharvan Daiva learned from Mrityu Pradhvamsana.
Mrityu Pradhvamsana learned from Pradhvamsana.

Pradhvamsana learned from Ekarshi.
Ekarshi learned from Viprachitti.
Viprachitti learned from Vyashti.
Vyashti learned from Sanaru.
Sanaru learned from Sanatana.
Sanatana learned from Sanaga.
Sanaga learned from Parameshthin.
Parameshthin learned from Brahma.
Brahman is self-born.
Homage to Brahman.

Section 3

1



3.1.1 Janaka of Videha offered a sacrifice with lavish gifts.
Brahmins from the Kurus and Panchalas had gathered there.
Janaka of Videha wished to discover which of these Brahmins was most deeply
versed in sacred learning.
He set apart a thousand cows.
Ten gold padas were bound to the horns of each cow.

3.1.2 He said to them, “Honored Brahmins, let the one among you who knows Brahman best drive these cows away.”

The Brahmins did not dare.

Then Yajnavalkya said to his own student, “My dear Samashravas, drive these away.”

He drove them away.

The Brahmins grew angry. “How can he declare himself the greatest knower of Brahman among us?”

Ashvala was Janaka of Videha’s Hotri priest.

He asked him, “Yajnavalkya, are you truly the greatest knower of Brahman among us?”

He replied, “We bow to the greatest knower of Brahman. We merely want the cows.”

From that moment the Hotri priest Ashvala resolved to question him.

3.1.3 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “all this is seized by death, all this is overcome by death. Through what does the sacrificer escape death’s grasp?”

“Through the Hotri priest, through fire, through speech.

Speech is the Hotri of the sacrifice.

This speech is this fire; it is the Hotri. It is release, it is release beyond release.”

3.1.4 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “all this is seized by day and night, all this is overcome by day and night. Through what does the sacrificer escape the grasp of day and night?”

“Through the Adhvaryu priest, through sight, through the sun.

Sight is the Adhvaryu of the sacrifice.

This sight is that sun.

It is the Adhvaryu. It is release, it is release beyond release.”

3.1.5 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “all this is seized by the waxing and waning fortnights,
all this is overcome by the waxing and waning fortnights. Through what
does the sacrificer escape their grasp?”

“Through the Udgatri priest, through wind, through breath.

Breath is the Udgatri of the sacrifice.

This breath is wind; it is the Udgatri.

It is release, it is release beyond release.”

3.1.6 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “this space between heaven and earth seems to offer
nothing to hold on to. By what ascent does the sacrificer ascend to the
heavenly world?”

“Through the Brahman priest, through mind, through the moon.

Mind is the Brahman of the sacrifice.

This mind is that moon; it is the Brahman. It is release, it is release beyond
release.” So much for the ways beyond bondage.

Now the attainments.

3.1.7 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “with how many Rig verses will the Hotri perform this
sacrifice today?”

“Three.”

“Which three?”

“The verse of invitation, the verse of offering, and the verse of praise as the
third.”

“What does he win through them?”

“Everything here that bears breath.”

3.1.8 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “how many kinds of offering will the Adhvaryu make in
this sacrifice today?”

“Three.”

“Which three?”

“Those that blaze up when offered, those that roar when offered, and those that
settle below when offered.”

“What does he win through them?”

“Through those that blaze up when offered, he wins the world of the gods,
for the world of the gods seems to blaze.

Through those that roar when offered, he wins the world of the ancestors,
for the world of the ancestors lies far away.

Through those that settle below when offered, he wins the human world,
for the human world seems to lie below.”

3.1.9 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “with how many gods does the Brahman guard the
sacrifice from the south today?”

“One.”

“Which one?”

“Mind alone.

Mind is infinite; the All-Gods are infinite.

Through it he wins an infinite world.”

3.1.10 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “how many verses will the Udgatri chant in this sacrifice
today?”

“Three.”

“Which three?”

“The verse of invitation, the verse of offering, and the verse of praise as the
third.”

“Which are these?”

“Those within the self.

The inward breath is the verse of invitation; the downward breath is the verse
of offering; the breath that spreads through the body is the verse of praise.”

“What does he win through them?”

“Through the verse of invitation he wins the earthly world; through the verse
of offering, the world between heaven and earth; through the verse of
praise, the heavenly world.”

Then the Hotri priest Ashvala fell silent.

Section 3

2



- 3.2.1 Then Artabhaga of the line of Jaratkaru questioned him.
“Yajnavalkya,” he said, “how many graspers are there, and how many overgraspers?”
“Eight graspers and eight overgraspers.”
“Which are these eight graspers and eight overgraspers?”
- 3.2.2 “Breath is a grasper.
It is seized by the overgrasper, scent,
for through breath one smells scents.
- 3.2.3 “Speech is a grasper.
It is seized by the overgrasper, name,
for through speech one utters names.
- 3.2.4 “The tongue is a grasper.
It is seized by the overgrasper, taste,
for through the tongue one knows tastes.
- 3.2.5 “Sight is a grasper.
It is seized by the overgrasper, form,
for through sight one sees forms.

3.2.6 “Hearing is a grasper.

It is seized by the overgrasper, sound,
for through hearing one hears sounds.

3.2.7 “Mind is a grasper.

It is seized by the overgrasper, desire,
for through the mind one forms desires.

3.2.8 “The hands are a grasper.

They are seized by the overgrasper, action,
for through the hands one performs actions.

3.2.9 “The skin is a grasper.

It is seized by the overgrasper, touch,
for through the skin one feels touches.
These are the eight graspers and eight overgraspers.”

3.2.10 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “all this is food for death. Which god has death for its food?”

“Fire is death, and fire is food for the waters.
One conquers repeated death.”

3.2.11 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “when this person dies, do the vital breaths rise out of him, or not?”

“No,” said Yajnavalkya.
“They gather together right here.
He swells,
he becomes bloated,
and lies dead, bloated.”

3.2.12 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “when this person dies, what does not leave him?”

“Name.
Name is infinite; the All-Gods are infinite.
Through it he wins an infinite world.”

3.2.13 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “when a dead person’s speech enters fire, breath the wind, sight the sun, mind the moon, hearing the directions, body the earth, self space, body hair the plants, head hair the trees, and blood and semen are laid in the waters—where is that person then?”

“Give me your hand, my dear Artabhaga.

We two alone will understand this; it is not for us to discuss among a crowd.”

They withdrew and conferred.

What they spoke of was action alone.

What they praised was action alone.

Through good action one becomes good; through evil action, evil.

Then Artabhaga of the line of Jaratkaru fell silent.

Section 3

3



3.3.1 Then Bhujyu Lahyayani questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “we wandered among the Madras as traveling students.

We came to the house of Patanchala Kapya.

He had a daughter who was possessed by a Gandharva.

We asked him, ‘Who are you?’

He replied, ‘Sudhanvan Angirasa.’

When we asked him about the boundaries of the worlds,

we said to him, ‘Where have the descendants of Parikshit gone?’

Where have the descendants of Parikshit gone?

That is what I ask you, Yajnavalkya.

Where have the descendants of Parikshit gone?”

3.3.2 He replied, “He surely told you:

“They have gone where those who offer the horse sacrifice go.”

“And where do those who offer the horse sacrifice go?”

“This world spans thirty-two days’ journey of the divine chariot.

Around it on every side stretches an earth twice its extent.

Around that earth on every side stretches an ocean twice its extent.

Between them is a space as narrow as a razor’s edge or the wing of a fly. Indra took the form of an eagle and delivered them to the wind.

The wind took them into itself and brought them where those who had offered the horse sacrifice were.

In this way he praised the wind alone. Thus wind is the individual; wind is the totality.

Whoever knows this conquers repeated death.”

Then Bhujyu Lahyayani fell silent.

Section 3

4



3.4.1 Then Ushasta Chakrayana questioned him.

“Yajnavalkya,” he said, “explain to me the Brahman that is immediate and direct, the Self within all.”

“This is your Self within all.

The one who breathes through your inward breath is your Self within all.

The one who draws down through your downward breath is your Self within all.

The one who pervades through your spreading breath is your Self within all.

The one who rises through your upward breath is your Self within all.

This is your Self within all.”

3.4.2 Ushasta Chakrayana said, “This describes it as someone might say, ‘That is a cow; that is a horse.’

Explain to me the very Brahman that is immediate and direct, the Self within all.”

“This is your Self within all.”

“Which one, Yajnavalkya, is within all?”

“You cannot see the seer of seeing.

You cannot hear the hearer of hearing.

You cannot think the thinker of thinking.

You cannot know the knower of knowing.
This is your Self within all.
Everything apart from this is afflicted.”
Then Ushasta Chakrayana fell silent.

Section 3

5



3.5.1 Then Kahola Kaushitakeya questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “explain to me the very Brahman that is immediate and direct, the Self within all.”

“This is your Self within all.”

“Which one, Yajnavalkya, is within all?”

“The one who passes beyond hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, old age and death.

Knowing this Self, Brahmins rise above the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, and the desire for worlds, and live by begging.

For the desire for sons is the desire for wealth, and the desire for wealth is the desire for worlds.

Both of these are only desires.

Therefore a Brahmin, having gone beyond learning, should seek to live with a child’s simplicity.

Having gone beyond both a child’s simplicity and learning, let him become a sage.

Having gone beyond both silence and the absence of silence, let him become a Brahmin.

How does that Brahmin live? However he may live, he remains just such a one.

Everything apart from this is afflicted.”
Then Kahola Kaushitakeya fell silent.

Section 3

6



- 3.6.1 Then Gargi Vachaknavi questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” she said,
“if all this is woven, warp and weft, upon water, upon what is water woven,
warp and weft?”
“Upon wind, Gargi.”
“Upon what is wind woven, warp and weft?”
“Upon the worlds between heaven and earth, Gargi.”
“Upon what are the worlds between heaven and earth woven, warp and weft?”
“Upon the worlds of the Gandharvas, Gargi.”
“Upon what are the worlds of the Gandharvas woven, warp and weft?”
“Upon the worlds of the sun, Gargi.”
“Upon what are the worlds of the sun woven, warp and weft?”
“Upon the worlds of the moon, Gargi.”
“Upon what are the worlds of the moon woven, warp and weft?”
“Upon the worlds of the stars, Gargi.”
“Upon what are the worlds of the stars woven, warp and weft?”
“Upon the worlds of the gods, Gargi.”
“Upon what are the worlds of the gods woven, warp and weft?”
“Upon the worlds of Indra, Gargi.”
“Upon what are the worlds of Indra woven, warp and weft?”

“Upon the worlds of Prajapati, Gargi.”

“Upon what are the worlds of Prajapati woven, warp and weft?”

“Upon the worlds of Brahman, Gargi.”

“Upon what are the worlds of Brahman woven, warp and weft?”

He said, “Gargi, do not question beyond the limit,
or your head may fall off.

You are questioning beyond the limit of a god who must not be questioned
beyond the limit.

Gargi, do not question beyond the limit.”

Then Gargi Vachaknavi fell silent.

Section 3

7



3.7.1 Then Uddalaka Aruni questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said,
“we lived among the Madras in the house of Patanchala Kapyā, studying the
sacrifice.
He had a wife who was possessed by a Gandharva.
We asked him, ‘Who are you?’
He replied, ‘Kabandha Atharvana.’
He said to Patanchala Kapyā and the students of sacrifice, ‘Kapyā, do you know
the thread upon which this world, the world beyond, and all beings are
strung together?’
Patanchala Kapyā replied, ‘Sir, I do not know it.’
He said to Patanchala Kapyā and the students of sacrifice,
‘Kapyā, do you know the inner ruler who governs this world, the world
beyond, and all beings from within?’
Patanchala Kapyā replied, ‘Sir, I do not know him.’
He said to Patanchala Kapyā and the students of sacrifice,
‘Kapyā, whoever knows that thread and that inner ruler knows Brahman,
knows the worlds, knows the gods, knows the Vedas, knows the Self,
knows everything.’
That is what he told them.

I know this.

If you, Yajnavalkya, drive away the cows belonging to the knower of Brahman without knowing that thread and that inner ruler, your head will fall off.”

“Gautama, I do know that thread and that inner ruler.”

“Anyone can say, ‘I know, I know.’ Tell it as you know it.”

3.7.2 He said, “Wind, Gautama, is that thread.

Upon wind as their thread, Gautama, this world, the world beyond, and all beings are strung together.

That is why, Gautama, people say of a dead man, ‘His limbs have come apart.’

For wind is the thread upon which they are strung together.”

“Just so, Yajnavalkya.

Speak of the inner ruler.”

3.7.3 “He who dwells in earth, who is within earth, whom earth does not know, whose body is earth, who governs earth from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.

3.7.4 “He who dwells in the waters, who is within the waters, whom the waters do not know, whose body is the waters, who governs the waters from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.

3.7.5 “He who dwells in fire, who is within fire, whom fire does not know, whose body is fire, who governs fire from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.

3.7.6 “He who dwells in the space between heaven and earth, who is within that space, whom that space does not know, whose body is that space, who governs that space from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.

3.7.7 “He who dwells in wind, who is within wind, whom wind does not know, whose body is wind, who governs wind from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.

- 3.7.8 “He who dwells in heaven, who is within heaven, whom heaven does not know, whose body is heaven, who governs heaven from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.9 “He who dwells in the sun, who is within the sun, whom the sun does not know, whose body is the sun, who governs the sun from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.10 “He who dwells in the directions, who is within the directions, whom the directions do not know, whose body is the directions, who governs the directions from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.11 “He who dwells in the moon and stars, who is within the moon and stars, whom the moon and stars do not know, whose body is the moon and stars, who governs the moon and stars from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.12 “He who dwells in space, who is within space, whom space does not know, whose body is space, who governs space from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.13 “He who dwells in darkness, who is within darkness, whom darkness does not know, whose body is darkness, who governs darkness from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.14 “He who dwells in light, who is within light, whom light does not know, whose body is light, who governs light from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.15 “Now concerning beings.
He who dwells in all beings, who is within all beings, whom no being knows,
whose body is all beings, who governs all beings from within—this is your
Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
So much concerning beings.

- 3.7.16 “Now concerning the self. He who dwells in breath, who is within breath, whom breath does not know, whose body is breath, who governs breath from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.17 “He who dwells in speech, who is within speech, whom speech does not know, whose body is speech, who governs speech from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.18 “He who dwells in sight, who is within sight, whom sight does not know, whose body is sight, who governs sight from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.19 “He who dwells in hearing, who is within hearing, whom hearing does not know, whose body is hearing, who governs hearing from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.20 “He who dwells in mind, who is within mind, whom mind does not know, whose body is mind, who governs mind from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.21 “He who dwells in skin, who is within skin, whom skin does not know, whose body is skin, who governs skin from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.
- 3.7.22 “He who dwells in awareness, who is within awareness, whom awareness does not know, whose body is awareness, who governs awareness from within—this is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.

3.7.23 “He who dwells in semen, who is within semen, whom semen does not know,
whose body is semen, who governs semen from within—this is your Self,
the inner ruler, the immortal.

Unseen, he is the seer; unheard, the hearer; unthought, the thinker; unknown,
the knower.

There is no seer apart from him, no hearer apart from him, no thinker apart
from him, no knower apart from him.

This is your Self, the inner ruler, the immortal.

Everything apart from this is afflicted.”

Then Uddalaka Aruni fell silent.

Section 3

8



- 3.8.1 Then Vachaknavi said, “Honored Brahmins, I shall ask him two questions.
If he answers them,
none of you will ever defeat him in a debate on Brahman.”
“Ask, Gargi.”
- 3.8.2 She said, “Yajnavalkya, as a warrior’s son from Kashi or Videha might string his
unstrung bow, take in hand two arrows sharp enough to pierce an enemy,
and rise to confront him, so I have risen to confront you with two
questions.
Answer them for me.”
“Ask, Gargi.”
- 3.8.3 She said, “Yajnavalkya, what lies above heaven, what lies below earth, what lies
between this heaven and earth, and what people call past, present, and future—
upon what is it woven, warp and weft?”
- 3.8.4 He said, “Gargi, what lies above heaven, what lies below earth, what lies
between this heaven and earth, and what people call past, present, and future is
woven, warp and weft, upon space.”

- 3.8.5 She said, “I bow to you, Yajnavalkya, for answering this question of mine. Be ready for the other.”
“Ask, Gargi.”
- 3.8.6 She said, “Yajnavalkya, what lies above heaven, what lies below earth, what lies between this heaven and earth, and what people call past, present, and future—upon what is it woven, warp and weft?”
- 3.8.7 He said, “Gargi, what lies above heaven, what lies below earth, what lies between this heaven and earth, and what people call past, present, and future is woven, warp and weft, upon space alone.”
“And upon what is space woven, warp and weft?”
- 3.8.8 He said, “Gargi, this is what the Brahmins call the imperishable: neither coarse nor fine, neither short nor long, neither red nor moist, without shadow, without darkness, neither wind nor space, unattached, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without speech, without mind, without radiance, without breath, without mouth, without limbs, with neither an inside nor an outside.
It eats nothing,
and no one eats it.
- 3.8.9 “Under the rule of this imperishable, Gargi, sun and moon remain held in their places.
Under the rule of this imperishable, Gargi, heaven and earth remain held in their places.
Under the rule of this imperishable, Gargi, moments, measured intervals, days and nights, half-months, months, seasons, and years remain held in their places.
Under the rule of this imperishable, Gargi, some rivers flow east from the white mountains, others west, each following its direction.
Under the rule of this imperishable, Gargi, people praise those who give, the gods depend upon the sacrificer, and the ancestors upon the offering ladle.

3.8.10 “Gargi, whoever makes offerings, sacrifices, and practices austerity in this world for many thousands of years without knowing this imperishable gains only what has an end.

Gargi, whoever departs from this world without knowing this imperishable is pitiable.

But whoever departs from this world knowing this imperishable is a Brahmin.

3.8.11 “Gargi, this imperishable is unseen, yet sees; unheard, yet hears; unthought, yet thinks; unknown, yet knows.

There is no seer apart from it.

There is no hearer apart from it.

There is no thinker apart from it.

There is no knower apart from it.

Upon this imperishable, Gargi, space is woven, warp and weft.”

3.8.12 She said, “Honored Brahmins, count it a great thing if you can escape him by bowing.

None of you will ever defeat him in a debate on Brahman.”

Then Vachaknavi fell silent.

Section 3

9



3.9.1 Then Vidagdha Shakalya questioned him. “How many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?”

He answered according to the invocation, giving the number named in the invocation to the All-Gods:

“Three hundred and three, and three thousand and three.”

“Yes,” he said.

“But how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?”

“Thirty-three.”

“Yes,” he said.

“But how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?”

“Six.”

“Yes,” he said.

“But how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?”

“Three.”

“Yes,” he said.

“But how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?”

“Two.”

“Yes,” he said.

“But how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?”

“One and a half.”

“Yes,” he said.

“But how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?”

“One.”

“Yes,” he said.

“Which are those three hundred and three, and three thousand and three?”

3.9.2 He said, “These are only their manifestations of greatness.

There are only thirty-three gods.”

“Which are those thirty-three?”

“The eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, and the twelve Adityas make thirty-one.

Indra and Prajapati make the thirty-three.”

3.9.3 “Which are the Vasus?”

“Fire, earth, wind, the space between heaven and earth, the sun, heaven, the moon, and the stars: these are the Vasus.

All this wealth is laid within them; that is why they are called Vasus.”

3.9.4 “Which are the Rudras?”

“The ten vital powers in a person, with the self as the eleventh.

When they depart from this mortal body, they make people weep.

Because they make people weep, rud, they are called Rudras.”

3.9.5 “Which are the Adityas?”

“The twelve months of the year are the Adityas.

They pass, taking all this away.

Because they pass taking all this away, they are called Adityas.”

3.9.6 “Which is Indra, and which is Prajapati?”

“Thunder is Indra; sacrifice is Prajapati.”

“What is thunder?”

“The thunderbolt.”

“What is sacrifice?”

“The sacrificial animals.”

3.9.7 “Which are the six?”

“Fire, earth, wind, the space between heaven and earth, the sun, and heaven:
these are the six.

All this is these six.”

3.9.8 “Which are the three gods?”

“These three worlds,
for all these gods are within them.”

“Which are the two gods?”

“Food and breath.”

“Which is the one and a half?”

“The wind that blows here.”

3.9.9 “People ask: this wind blows as one alone.

How, then, is it one and a half?”

“Because all this flourishes within it, it is one and a half.”

“Which is the one god?”

“Breath.

It is Brahman, which they call ‘that.’”

3.9.10 “He whose dwelling is earth, whose world is fire, whose light is mind—whoever
knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be a knower,
Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is this embodied person.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“Immortality,” he said.

3.9.11 “He whose dwelling is desire, whose world is the heart, whose light is mind—
whoever knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be a
knower, Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is this person made of desire.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“Women,” he said.

3.9.12 “He whose dwelling is forms, whose world is sight, whose light is mind—
whoever knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be a
knower, Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is the person there in the sun.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“Truth,” he said.

3.9.13 “He whose dwelling is space, whose world is hearing, whose light is mind—
whoever knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be a
knower, Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is this person in hearing and its answering echo.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“The directions,” he said.

3.9.14 “He whose dwelling is darkness, whose world is the heart, whose light is mind
—whoever knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be
a knower, Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is this person made of shadow.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“Death,” he said.

3.9.15 “He whose dwelling is forms, whose world is the heart, whose light is mind—
whoever knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be a
knower, Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is this person in the mirror.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“Truth,” he said.

3.9.16 “He whose dwelling is water, whose world is the heart, whose light is mind—
whoever knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be a
knower, Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is this person in the waters.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“Varuna,” he said.

3.9.17 “He whose dwelling is semen, whose world is the heart, whose light is mind—
whoever knows that person, the final refuge of the whole self, would be a
knower, Yajnavalkya.”

“I know that person, the final refuge of the whole self, of whom you speak.

It is this person embodied in a son.

Now tell me, Shakalya: what is his god?”

“Prajapati,” he said.

3.9.18 “Shakalya,” said Yajnavalkya,
“have these Brahmins made you their coal-rake?”

3.9.19 “Yajnavalkya,” said Shakalya,
“what Brahman do you know, that you have outargued these Brahmins of the
Kurus and Panchalas?”

“I know the directions, with their gods and their foundations.”

“Since you know the directions, with their gods and their foundations—

3.9.20 “what is your god in this eastern direction?”

“The sun is my god.”

“Upon what does the sun rest?”

“Upon sight.”

“Upon what does sight rest?”

“Upon forms,

for through sight one sees forms.”

“Upon what do forms rest?”

“Upon the heart,” he said.

“For through the heart one knows forms.

Forms rest upon the heart.”

“Just so, Yajnavalkya.”

3.9.21 “What is your god in this southern direction?”

“Yama is my god.”

“Upon what does Yama rest?”

“Upon sacrifice.”

“Upon what does sacrifice rest?”

“Upon the priestly gift.”

“Upon what does the priestly gift rest?”

“Upon faith.

When one has faith, one gives the priestly gift.

The priestly gift rests upon faith.”

“Upon what does faith rest?”

“Upon the heart,” he said.

“For through the heart one has faith.

Faith rests upon the heart.”

“Just so, Yajnavalkya.”

3.9.22 “What is your god in this western direction?”

“Varuna is my god.”

“Upon what does Varuna rest?”

“Upon the waters.”

“Upon what do the waters rest?”

“Upon semen.”

“Upon what does semen rest?”

“Upon the heart.

That is why people say of a son born in his father’s likeness, ‘He seems to have slipped from his heart, to have been fashioned from his heart.’

Semen rests upon the heart.”

“Just so, Yajnavalkya.”

3.9.23 “What is your god in this northern direction?”

“Soma is my god.”

“Upon what does Soma rest?”

“Upon consecration.”

“Upon what does consecration rest?”

“Upon truth.

That is why people tell the consecrated man, ‘Speak the truth.’

Consecration rests upon truth.”

“Upon what does truth rest?”

“Upon the heart,” he said.

“For through the heart one knows truth.

Truth rests upon the heart.”

“Just so, Yajnavalkya.”

3.9.24 “What is your god in this fixed direction?”

“Fire is my god.”

“Upon what does fire rest?”

“Upon speech.”

“Upon what does speech rest?”

“Upon the heart.”

“Upon what does the heart rest?”

3.9.25 “You fool!” said Yajnavalkya.

“Do you imagine it to be anywhere apart from us?

If it were anywhere apart from us, dogs would eat this body or birds tear it apart.”

3.9.26 “Upon what do you and your body rest?”

“Upon the inward breath.”

“Upon what does the inward breath rest?”

“Upon the downward breath.”

“Upon what does the downward breath rest?”

“Upon the breath that spreads through the body.”

“Upon what does that spreading breath rest?”

“Upon the upward breath.”

“Upon what does the upward breath rest?”

“Upon the balancing breath.

This Self is ‘not this, not this.’

It cannot be grasped, for it is never grasped.

It does not decay, for it never decays.

It is unattached, for it does not become attached.

It is unbound; it is not troubled.

It is not injured.

These are the eight dwellings, the eight worlds, the eight gods, the eight persons.

I ask you about the person known through the Upanishads, who has drawn out those persons, gathered them back, and passed beyond them.

If you do not explain him to me, your head will fall off.”

Shakalya did not know him.

His head fell off.

Thieves even carried away his bones, mistaking them for something else.

3.9.27 Then he said, “Honored Brahmins, let whichever of you wishes question me.

Or all of you may question me.

Or I shall question whichever of you wishes, or all of you.”

The Brahmins did not dare.

3.9.29 He questioned them with these verses:

“As is a tree, a lord of the forest, so indeed is a person.

His hairs are its leaves; his outer skin is its bark.

3.9.30 “From his skin blood flows, as sap from a tree’s skin when torn.

So from a wounded person it flows, as sap from a wounded tree.

3.9.31 “His flesh is its chips of wood; his sinews are its firm inner bark.

His bones within are its timber; his marrow is made like its pith.

3.9.32 “A tree, when cut, grows again, renewed from its root.

From what root does a mortal grow again, when cut down by death?

3.9.33 “Do not say, ‘From semen,’ for semen comes from the living.

A tree, like a plant grown from seed, can plainly spring up again after death.

3.9.34 “If they tore a tree out by its root, it would not grow again.

From what root does a mortal grow again, when cut down by death?

3.9.35 “Once born, he is not born again. Who could beget him anew?

3.9.36 “Brahman is awareness and bliss, the gift for the giver, the final refuge of the one who stands firm and knows it.”

Section 4

1



- 4.1.1 Janaka of Videha was seated.
Then Yajnavalkya came to him.
He said to him, “Yajnavalkya, what has brought you here—a desire for cattle, or
for subtle questions?”
“Both, Your Majesty,” he replied.
- 4.1.2 “Let us hear what anyone has told you.”
“Jitvan Shailini told me, ‘Speech is Brahman.’”
“As someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher should speak, so
Shailini spoke when he said, ‘Speech is Brahman.’
For what could someone without speech have?
But did he tell you its dwelling and its foundation?”
“He did not tell me.”
“Then this has only one foot, Your Majesty.”
“Tell us yourself, Yajnavalkya.”
“Speech itself is its dwelling; space is its foundation. One should contemplate it
as understanding.”
“What is this understanding, Yajnavalkya?”
“Speech itself, Your Majesty,” he said.
“Through speech, Your Majesty, a kinsman is recognized.

The Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, the Atharvangiras, history, ancient lore, the sciences, the Upanishads, verses, aphorisms, explanations, commentaries, sacrifices, offerings, food given, drink given, this world, the other world, and all beings are known through speech alone, Your Majesty.

Speech, Your Majesty, is the highest Brahman.

Speech does not desert the one who knows this and contemplates it.

All beings stream toward him.

Becoming a god, he reaches the gods.”

Janaka of Videha said, “I give you a thousand cows, with a bull as large as an elephant.”

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept anything without fully instructing.”

4.1.3 “Let us hear whatever anyone has told you.”

“Udanka Shaulbayana told me,

‘Breath is Brahman.’”

“As someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher should speak, so Shaulbayana spoke when he said, ‘Breath is Brahman.’

For what could someone without breath have?

But did he tell you its dwelling and its foundation?”

“He did not tell me.”

“Then this has only one foot, Your Majesty.”

“Tell us yourself, Yajnavalkya.”

“Breath itself is its dwelling; space is its foundation.

One should contemplate it as what is dear.”

“What is this dearness, Yajnavalkya?”

“Breath itself, Your Majesty,” he said.

“For the sake of his breath, Your Majesty, a man serves as priest for someone he should not sacrifice for.

He accepts a gift from someone whose gifts should not be accepted.

Even when there is danger of death in the direction he travels, it is for the sake of his breath that he goes, Your Majesty.

Breath, Your Majesty, is the highest Brahman.

Breath does not desert the one who knows this and contemplates it.

All beings stream toward him.

Becoming a god, he reaches the gods.”

Janaka of Videha said, “I give you a thousand cows, with a bull as large as an elephant.”

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept anything without fully instructing.”

4.1.4 “Let us hear whatever anyone has told you.”

“Barku Varshna told me,

‘Sight is Brahman.’”

“As someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher should speak, so

Varshna spoke when he said, ‘Sight is Brahman.’

For what could someone without sight have?

But did he tell you its dwelling and its foundation?”

“He did not tell me.”

“Then this has only one foot, Your Majesty.”

“Tell us yourself, Yajnavalkya.”

“Sight itself is its dwelling; space is its foundation.

One should contemplate it as truth.”

“What is this truth, Yajnavalkya?”

“Sight itself, Your Majesty,” he said.

“When someone has seen something, Your Majesty, people ask him, ‘Did you see it?’

He says, ‘I saw it,’ and that is true.

Sight, Your Majesty, is the highest Brahman.

Sight does not desert the one who knows this and contemplates it.

All beings stream toward him.

Becoming a god, he reaches the gods.”

Janaka of Videha said, “I give you a thousand cows, with a bull as large as an elephant.”

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept anything without fully instructing.”

4.1.5 “Let us hear whatever anyone has told you.”

“Gardabhipita Bharadvaja told me,

‘Hearing is Brahman.’”

“As someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher should speak, so

Bharadvaja spoke when he said, ‘Hearing is Brahman.’

For what could someone without hearing have?

But did he tell you its dwelling and its foundation?”

“He did not tell me.”

“Then this has only one foot, Your Majesty.”

“Tell us yourself, Yajnavalkya.”

“Hearing itself is its dwelling; space is its foundation. One should contemplate it as the boundless.”

“What is this boundlessness, Yajnavalkya?”

“The directions themselves, Your Majesty,” he said.

“Whatever direction someone travels in, Your Majesty, he never reaches its end.

For the directions are boundless.

The directions, Your Majesty, are hearing.

Hearing, Your Majesty, is the highest Brahman.

Hearing does not desert the one who knows this and contemplates it.

All beings stream toward him.

Becoming a god, he reaches the gods.”

Janaka of Videha said, “I give you a thousand cows, with a bull as large as an elephant.”

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept anything without fully instructing.”

4.1.6 “Let us hear whatever anyone has told you.”

“Satyakama Jabala told me, ‘Mind is Brahman.’”

“As someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher should speak, so Jabala spoke when he said, ‘Mind is Brahman.’

For what could someone without mind have?

But did he tell you its dwelling and its foundation?”

“He did not tell me.”

“Then this has only one foot, Your Majesty.”

“Tell us yourself, Yajnavalkya.”

“Mind itself is its dwelling; space is its foundation. One should contemplate it as joy.”

“What is this joy, Yajnavalkya?”

“Mind itself, Your Majesty,” he said. “With his mind, Your Majesty, a man desires a woman; a son resembling him is born from her.

That is joy.

Mind, Your Majesty, is the highest Brahman.

Mind does not desert the one who knows this and contemplates it.

All beings stream toward him.

Becoming a god, he reaches the gods.”

Janaka of Videha said, “I give you a thousand cows, with a bull as large as an elephant.”

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept anything without fully instructing.”

4.1.7 “Let us hear whatever anyone has told you.”

“Vidagdha Shakalya told me,

‘The heart is Brahman.’”

“As someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher should speak, so Shakalya spoke when he said, ‘The heart is Brahman.’

For what could someone without a heart have?

But did he tell you its dwelling and its foundation?”

“He did not tell me.”

“Then this has only one foot, Your Majesty.”

“Tell us yourself, Yajnavalkya.”

“The heart itself is its dwelling; space is its foundation.

One should contemplate it as stability.”

“What is this stability, Yajnavalkya?”

“The heart itself, Your Majesty,” he said.

“The heart, Your Majesty, is the dwelling of all beings.

The heart, Your Majesty, is the foundation of all beings.

For in the heart, Your Majesty, all beings are firmly established.

The heart, Your Majesty, is the highest Brahman.

The heart does not desert the one who knows this and contemplates it.

All beings stream toward him.

Becoming a god, he reaches the gods.”

Janaka of Videha said, “I give you a thousand cows, with a bull as large as an elephant.”

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept anything without fully instructing.”

Section 4

2



4.2.1 Janaka of Videha came down from his seat and said, “Homage to you,
Yajnavalkya.

Teach me.”

He said, “Your Majesty, just as someone setting out on a long journey would
equip himself with a chariot or a boat, so you have equipped yourself with
these secret teachings.

You are eminent and wealthy, have studied the Vedas, and have heard the secret
teachings. When you are released from here, where will you go?”

“Venerable sir, I do not know where I will go.”

“Then I will tell you where you will go.”

“Please tell me, venerable sir.”

4.2.2 “This person in the right eye is called Indha.

Though his name is Indha, people call him Indra, speaking indirectly.

For the gods seem to love what is indirect and to dislike what is direct.

4.2.3 “Now this human form in the left eye is his wife, Viraj.

Their meeting place is the space within the heart.

Their food is the lump of blood within the heart.

Their covering is the netlike tissue within the heart.

Their path of passage is the channel that rises upward from the heart.

Like a hair split a thousand times are the channels called Hita, which lie within the heart.

Through these what flows to nourish him flows.

So he has, as it were, more finely sifted food than this bodily self.

4.2.4 “His eastern direction is the breaths that move eastward.

His southern direction is the breaths that move southward.

His western direction is the breaths that move westward.

His northern direction is the breaths that move northward.

His upper direction is the breaths that move upward.

His lower direction is the breaths that move downward.

All the directions are all the breaths.

This Self is ‘not this, not this.’

It cannot be grasped, for it is not grasped.

It cannot decay, for it does not decay.

It is unattached, for it does not attach itself.

It is unfettered; it does not suffer.

It comes to no harm.

Janaka, you have indeed reached freedom from fear,” said Yajnavalkya.

Janaka of Videha said, “May freedom from fear come to you, Yajnavalkya, since you, venerable sir, have made freedom from fear known to us.

Homage to you.

Here are the people of Videha, and here am I, at your service.”

Section 4

3



- 4.3.1 Yajnavalkya went to Janaka of Videha,
intending not to speak with him.
But when Janaka of Videha and Yajnavalkya had discussed the fire offering
together,
Yajnavalkya had granted him a boon.
He had chosen the freedom to ask any question he wished.
Yajnavalkya had granted it to him.
So the king was the first to question him.
- 4.3.2 “Yajnavalkya, what light does this person have?”
“The light of the sun, Your Majesty,” he said.
“By the sun’s light he sits, goes about, does his work, and returns.”
“That is so, Yajnavalkya.”
- 4.3.3 “When the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, what light does this person have?”
“The moon becomes his light.
By the moon’s light he sits, goes about, does his work, and returns.”
“That is so, Yajnavalkya.”

4.3.4 “When the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, what light does this person have?”

“Fire becomes his light.

By fire’s light he sits, goes about, does his work, and returns.”

“That is so, Yajnavalkya.”

4.3.5 “When the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, what light does this person have?”

“Speech becomes his light.

By the light of speech he sits, goes about, does his work, and returns.

That is why, Your Majesty, even where one cannot distinguish one’s own hand, one makes one’s way toward the place from which a voice sounds.”

“That is so, Yajnavalkya.”

4.3.6 “When the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, and speech has fallen silent, what light does this person have?”

“The Self becomes his light.

By the light of the Self he sits, goes about, does his work, and returns.”

4.3.7 “Which is the Self?”

“This person made of awareness among the vital powers, the light within the heart.

Remaining the same, he travels through both worlds; he seems to think, seems to move.

For, becoming a dreamer, he passes beyond this world, beyond the forms of death.

4.3.8 “When this person is born and takes on a body, he becomes joined to evils.

When he departs, dying, he leaves those evils behind.

4.3.9 “This person has just two stations:

this one, and the station in the other world.

A third, the station of dreams, lies at their meeting place.

Standing in that meeting place, he sees both stations—this one and the station
in the other world.

Whatever approach he has to the station in the other world,

he takes that approach and sees both its evils and its joys.

When he sleeps, he takes material from this all-containing world, breaks it apart
himself, and builds it himself, and dreams by his own radiance, by his own
light.

Here this person becomes his own light.

4.3.10 “There are no chariots there, no teams for chariots, no roads.

Then he creates chariots, teams for chariots, and roads.

There are no joys there, no delights, no great delights.

Then he creates joys, delights, and great delights.

There are no pools there, no lotus ponds, no rivers.

Then he creates pools, lotus ponds, and rivers.

For he is the maker.

4.3.11 “On this there are these verses:

‘Striking down the bodily self in sleep, unsleeping, he looks upon those asleep.

Taking the radiance, he returns to his station—the golden person, the solitary
swan.

4.3.12 “Guarding with breath the nest below, the deathless one wanders outside the
nest.

Deathless, he goes wherever he wishes—the golden person, the solitary swan.

4.3.13 “Moving high and low in the realm of dreams, the radiant one makes many
forms:

as if delighting with women, as if laughing, or even seeing fearful things.

- 4.3.14 “People see his pleasure ground; no one sees him.’
 They say, ‘Do not wake him suddenly.’
 For a person to whom he does not return is hard to heal.
 But they also say, ‘This is simply his waking realm.’
 For what he sees awake, he sees asleep.
 Here this person becomes his own light.”
 “I give you a thousand, venerable sir.
 Tell me more, beyond this, toward liberation.”
- 4.3.15 “After delighting and wandering in this serenity, and simply seeing good and evil, he hurries back by the way he came to his place of origin—to the dream state.
 Whatever he sees there does not follow him.
 For this person is unattached.”
 “That is so, Yajnavalkya.
 I give you a thousand, venerable sir.
 Tell me more, beyond this, toward liberation alone.”
- 4.3.16 “After delighting and wandering in this dream state, and simply seeing good and evil, he hurries back by the way he came to his place of origin—to the waking state.
 Whatever he sees there does not follow him.
 For this person is unattached.”
 “That is so, Yajnavalkya.
 I give you a thousand, venerable sir.
 Tell me more, beyond this, toward liberation alone.”
- 4.3.17 “After delighting and wandering in this waking state, and simply seeing good and evil, he hurries back by the way he came to his place of origin—to the realm of dreams.
- 4.3.18 “As a great fish travels along both banks, the nearer and the farther,
 so this person travels through both these realms, the realm of dreams and the realm of waking.

4.3.19 “As a hawk or an eagle, tired after flying about in the sky, folds its wings and settles down to rest,

so this person hastens toward that state
where, asleep, he desires no desire and dreams no dream.

4.3.20 “His channels called Hita are as fine as a hair split a thousand times.
They are filled with white, blue, brown, green, and red.

When it seems that people are killing him or overpowering him, that an
elephant is chasing him, or that he is falling into a pit,
he imagines there, through ignorance, the very terrors he sees when awake.
But when, like a god or a king, he thinks, ‘I alone am all this,’
that is his highest world.

4.3.21 “This is his form beyond desire, free of evil and free of fear.

As a man embraced by a beloved woman knows nothing outside or inside,
so this person, embraced by the knowing Self, knows nothing outside or inside.
This is his form in which desire is fulfilled, in which the Self is his desire, in
which there is no desire, and which lies beyond sorrow.

4.3.22 “Here a father is no father, a mother no mother, worlds no worlds, gods no
gods, Vedas no Vedas.

Here a thief is no thief, a murderer no murderer, a Chandala no Chandala, a
Paulkasa no Paulkasa, a wandering ascetic no wandering ascetic, a
practitioner of austerities no practitioner of austerities.

He is not followed by good; he is not followed by evil.

For then he has crossed beyond all the sorrows of the heart.

4.3.23 “When he does not see, he is indeed seeing, though he does not see.

For the seer’s seeing cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.

But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, that he might
see.

4.3.24 “When he does not smell, he is indeed smelling, though he does not smell.

For the smeller’s smelling cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.

But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, that he might
smell.

- 4.3.25 “When he does not taste, he is indeed tasting, though he does not taste.
For the taster’s tasting cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.
But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, that he might taste.
- 4.3.26 “When he does not speak, he is indeed speaking, though he does not speak.
For the speaker’s speaking cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.
But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, of which he might speak.
- 4.3.27 “When he does not hear, he is indeed hearing, though he does not hear.
For the hearer’s hearing cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.
But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, that he might hear.
- 4.3.28 “When he does not think, he is indeed thinking, though he does not think.
For the thinker’s thinking cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.
But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, that he might think of.
- 4.3.29 “When he does not touch, he is indeed touching, though he does not touch.
For the toucher’s touching cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.
But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, that he might touch.
- 4.3.30 “When he does not know, he is indeed knowing, though he does not know.
For the knower’s knowing cannot be lost, since it is imperishable.
But there is no second thing there, other and separate from him, that he might know.
- 4.3.31 “Where there seems to be something other, one might see another, smell another, taste another, speak of another, hear another, think of another, touch another, know another.

4.3.32 “He becomes one sea, a seer without a second.

This is the world of Brahman, Your Majesty.”

So Yajnavalkya instructed him.

“This is his highest goal.

This is his highest wealth.

This is his highest world.

This is his highest bliss.

Other beings live on just a measure of this very bliss.

4.3.33 “A human being who is successful and prosperous, a ruler over others, most richly endowed with every human enjoyment—his is the highest human bliss.

A hundred such measures of human bliss make one measure of bliss for the ancestors who have won their world.

A hundred such measures of bliss for the ancestors who have won their world make one measure of bliss in the world of the Gandharvas.

A hundred such measures of bliss in the world of the Gandharvas make one measure of bliss for the gods of action, who attain divinity through their actions.

A hundred such measures of bliss for the gods of action make one measure of bliss for the gods by birth,
and for one who knows the sacred lore, is free from crookedness, and is unstruck by desire.

A hundred such measures of bliss for the gods by birth make one measure of bliss in the world of Prajapati,
and for one who knows the sacred lore, is free from crookedness, and is unstruck by desire.

A hundred such measures of bliss in the world of Prajapati make one measure of bliss in the world of Brahman,
and for one who knows the sacred lore, is free from crookedness, and is unstruck by desire.

This, indeed, is the highest bliss.

This is the world of Brahman, Your Majesty,”

said Yajñavalkya.

“I give you a thousand, venerable sir.

Tell me more, beyond this, toward liberation alone.”

At this Yajñavalkya became afraid: “This discerning king has driven me out of
all my defenses.”

4.3.34 “After delighting and wandering in this realm of dreams, and simply seeing
good and evil, he hurries back by the way he came to his place of origin—to the
waking state.

4.3.35 “As a heavily loaded cart moves along creaking, so this bodily self, mounted by
the knowing Self, moves along groaning
when a person begins to gasp for breath.

4.3.36 “When he grows weak—whether through old age or through illness he
dwindles away—
as a mango, an udumbara fig, or a peepal fig is freed from its stem,
so this person is freed from these limbs and hurries back by the way he came to
his place of origin—to life itself.

4.3.37 “As armed officials, magistrates, charioteers, and village headmen prepare food,
drink, and lodgings for a king who is coming, saying, ‘Here he comes! Here
he approaches!’
so all beings prepare for one who knows this, saying, ‘Here Brahman comes!’
Here it approaches!’

4.3.38 “As armed officials, magistrates, charioteers, and village headmen gather around
a king who is about to depart,
so all the vital powers gather around this self at the final hour,
when a person begins to gasp for breath.”

Section 4

4



4.4.1 “When this self becomes weak and falls into what seems like bewilderment,
these vital powers gather around him.

Gathering up these portions of radiance, he descends into the heart.

When the person in the eye turns away,

he no longer knows forms.

4.4.2 “‘He is becoming one; he does not see,’ people say.

‘He is becoming one; he does not smell,’ people say.

‘He is becoming one; he does not taste,’ people say.

‘He is becoming one; he does not speak,’ people say.

‘He is becoming one; he does not hear,’ people say.

‘He is becoming one; he does not think,’ people say.

‘He is becoming one; he does not touch,’ people say.

‘He is becoming one; he does not know,’ people say.

The tip of his heart lights up.

By that light this self departs,

through the eye, through the crown of the head, or through other parts of the
body.

As he departs, breath departs after him.

As breath departs, all the vital powers depart after it.

He is accompanied by awareness.

He passes into what he is aware of.

Knowledge and action take hold of him, together with his earlier experience.

4.4.3 “As a caterpillar, reaching the end of a blade of grass, takes hold of another
foothold and draws itself over,
so this self, striking down this body and rendering it insensible, takes hold of
another foothold and draws himself over.

4.4.4 “As a goldsmith takes a piece of gold and works it into another, newer, more
beautiful form,
so this self, striking down this body and rendering it insensible, makes another,
newer, more beautiful form:
a form of the ancestors, of a Gandharva, of a god, of Prajapati, of Brahma, or of
some other being.

4.4.5 “This Self is Brahman: made of awareness, made of mind, made of breath,
made of sight, made of hearing, made of earth, made of water, made of air,
made of space, made of radiance, made of what is without radiance, made
of desire, made of freedom from desire, made of anger, made of freedom
from anger, made of right, made of wrong, made of everything.

Thus people say, ‘Made of this, made of that.’

As he acts, as he conducts himself, so he becomes.

One who does good becomes good.

One who does evil becomes evil.

He becomes virtuous through virtuous action, evil through evil action.

But people also say:

‘This person is made of desire alone.’

As his desire is, so is his resolve.

As his resolve is, so is the action he performs.

Whatever action he performs, that he attains.

4.4.6 “On this there is this verse:

‘Attached, he goes with his action to that very place to which his mind, his
mark, clings.

Reaching the end of whatever action he does here,
he returns from that world to this world, to act again.’

So it is for one who desires.

But one who does not desire—who is without desire, free from desire, whose
desire is fulfilled, whose desire is the Self—his vital powers do not depart.
Being Brahman, he reaches Brahman.

4.4.7 “On this there is this verse:

‘When all the desires lodged in his heart are released,
then the mortal becomes deathless; here he attains Brahman.’

As a snake’s sloughed skin might lie on an anthill, dead and cast away,
so this body lies.

But this bodiless, deathless breath is Brahman alone, is radiance alone.”

Janaka of Videha said, “I give you a thousand, venerable sir.”

4.4.8 On this there are these verses:

“The narrow, ancient path stretches out; it has reached me, and I myself have
found it.

By it the steadfast who know Brahman go up from here to the heavenly world,
released.

4.4.9 “On it they speak of white and blue, of brown, green, and red.

This is the path found through Brahman; along it goes the knower of
Brahman, the doer of good, the radiant one.

4.4.10 “Into blind darkness enter those who devote themselves to ignorance;
into still greater darkness, it seems, those who delight in knowledge.

4.4.11 “Joyless are those worlds called, shrouded in blind darkness.

Those without knowledge, those unawakened people, go to them after death.

4.4.12 “If a person were to know the Self, saying, ‘I am this,’

wishing for what, for whose desire, would he suffer along with the body?

- 4.4.13 “Whoever has found and awakened to the Self that has entered this body’s tangled depths—
he is the maker of the universe, for he is the maker of all; the world is his, and he himself is the world.
- 4.4.14 “While we are still here, we know it; if we have not known it, great is the loss. Those who know it become deathless; the others go only to suffering.
- 4.4.15 “When one sees this Self directly, the radiant one,
the lord of what has been and what will be, one no longer shrinks away.
- 4.4.16 “Below it the year revolves with its days.
The gods contemplate it as the light of lights, as deathless life.
- 4.4.17 “In it the five peoples, and space, are established.
Knowing it, I, deathless, recognize that alone as the Self, as deathless Brahman.
- 4.4.18 “Those who know the breath of breath, the sight of sight, the hearing of hearing, and the mind of mind—
they have recognized the ancient, primal Brahman.
- 4.4.19 “Through the mind alone it is to be seen; here there is no multiplicity at all. From death to death goes the one who sees here what seems to be multiplicity.
- 4.4.20 “As one alone it is to be seen, this immeasurable, enduring reality.
Stainless, beyond space, unborn is the Self, great and enduring.
- 4.4.21 “Knowing that alone, a steadfast Brahmin should cultivate understanding. He should not dwell on many words, for that only exhausts speech.”
- 4.4.22 “This is the great, unborn Self, this one made of awareness among the vital powers.
It lies in the space within the heart.
It controls all.
It is lord of all.
It is ruler of all.
It does not become greater through good action,
nor smaller through bad action.
It is the lord of all.
It is the ruler of beings.
It is the guardian of beings.

It is the embankment that holds these worlds apart, keeping them from
 running together.
 Brahmins seek to know it through recitation of the Vedas, through celibacy,
 through sacrifice, through giving, through the austerity of fasting.
 Knowing this alone, one becomes a sage.
 Desiring this alone as their world, wanderers leave home.
 Knowing this, the people of old
 did not desire offspring:
 ‘What shall we do with offspring, when ours is this Self, this world?’
 Rising above the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, and the desire for worlds,
 they lived by begging.
 For the desire for sons is the desire for wealth,
 and the desire for wealth is the desire for worlds: both are only desires.
 This Self is ‘not this, not this.’ It cannot be grasped, for it is not grasped.
 It cannot decay, for it does not decay.
 It is unattached, for it does not attach itself.
 It is unfettered; it does not suffer or come to harm.
 ‘I did evil because of this’; ‘I did good because of this’—it passes beyond both,
 beyond both of these,
 the good and the bad.
 What has been done and what has been left undone do not torment it.
 4.4.23 “This has been expressed in a verse:
 ‘This is the enduring greatness of the Brahmin: it neither grows through action
 nor becomes smaller.
 One should know its track. Knowing it, one is not stained by evil action.’
 Therefore one who knows this, becoming peaceful, self-controlled, withdrawn,
 enduring, and collected, sees the Self in the self alone.
 He sees everything as the Self.
 Evil does not overcome him.
 He overcomes all evil.
 Evil does not torment him.
 He burns away all evil.

He becomes a Brahmin free of evil, free of stain, free of doubt.

This is the world of Brahman, Your Majesty.

You have been brought to it,” said Yajnavalkya.

“I give you the people of Videha, and myself along with them, as your slaves.”

4.4.24 This is the great, unborn Self, the eater of food, the giver of wealth.

One who knows this finds wealth.

4.4.25 This is the great, unborn Self, unaging, undying, deathless, fearless—Brahman.

Brahman is freedom from fear.

One who knows this becomes Brahman, free from fear.

Section 4

5



- 4.5.1 Yajnavalkya had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani.
Of the two, Maitreyi discoursed on Brahman.
Katyayani, at that time, had only the understanding of a woman.
Now Yajnavalkya was preparing to take up a different way of life.
- 4.5.2 “Maitreyi,” said Yajnavalkya,
“my dear, I am about to leave this place and become a wanderer.
Come, let me make a settlement between you and Katyayani.”
- 4.5.3 Maitreyi said,
“Venerable sir, if this whole earth, filled with wealth, were mine, would I
become deathless through it, or not?”
“No,” said Yajnavalkya.
“As is the life of those who have abundant means,
so your life would be.
But there is no hope of deathlessness through wealth.”
- 4.5.4 Maitreyi said,
“What would I do with something that could not make me deathless?
Tell me only what you yourself know, venerable sir.”

4.5.5 Yajnavalkya said,

“Dear to us you have always been, and now you have increased that dearness.
Come, then.

I will explain this to you.

But as I explain, reflect deeply on what I say.”

4.5.6 He said:

“It is not for the husband’s sake, my dear, that a husband is dear, but for the
Self’s sake that a husband is dear.

It is not for the wife’s sake, my dear, that a wife is dear, but for the Self’s sake
that a wife is dear.

It is not for the sons’ sake, my dear, that sons are dear, but for the Self’s sake
that sons are dear.

It is not for wealth’s sake, my dear, that wealth is dear, but for the Self’s sake
that wealth is dear.

It is not for the cattle’s sake, my dear, that cattle are dear, but for the Self’s sake
that cattle are dear.

It is not for the Brahmin order’s sake, my dear, that the Brahmin order is dear,
but for the Self’s sake that the Brahmin order is dear.

It is not for the royal order’s sake, my dear, that the royal order is dear, but for
the Self’s sake that the royal order is dear.

It is not for the worlds’ sake, my dear, that the worlds are dear, but for the Self’s
sake that the worlds are dear.

It is not for the gods’ sake, my dear, that the gods are dear, but for the Self’s
sake that the gods are dear.

It is not for the Vedas’ sake, my dear, that the Vedas are dear, but for the Self’s
sake that the Vedas are dear.

It is not for beings’ sake, my dear, that beings are dear, but for the Self’s sake
that beings are dear.

It is not for the sake of everything, my dear, that everything is dear, but for the
Self’s sake that everything is dear.

It is the Self, my dear Maitreyi, that must be seen, heard, thought about, and
deeply contemplated.

When the Self has been seen, heard, thought about, and known, my dear, all this is known.

4.5.7 “The Brahmin order rejects whoever knows the Brahmin order as something apart from the Self.

The royal order rejects whoever knows the royal order as something apart from the Self.

The worlds reject whoever knows the worlds as something apart from the Self.

The gods reject whoever knows the gods as something apart from the Self.

The Vedas reject whoever knows the Vedas as something apart from the Self.

Beings reject whoever knows beings as something apart from the Self.

Everything rejects whoever knows everything as something apart from the Self.

This Brahmin order, this royal order, these worlds, these gods, these Vedas, these beings, this everything—all are this Self.

4.5.8 “When a drum is being beaten, one cannot grasp its sounds apart from it. But by grasping the drum, or the beating of the drum, its sound is grasped.

4.5.9 “When a conch is being blown, one cannot grasp its sounds apart from it. But by grasping the conch, or the blowing of the conch, its sound is grasped.

4.5.10 “When a lute is being played, one cannot grasp its sounds apart from it. But by grasping the lute, or the playing of the lute, its sound is grasped.

4.5.11 “As separate clouds of smoke issue from a fire laid with damp wood, so, my dear, all this is the outbreathing of this great Being: the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, the Atharvangiras, history, ancient lore, the sciences, the Upanishads, verses, aphorisms, explanations, commentaries, sacrifices, offerings, food given, drink given, this world, the other world, and all beings.

All these are its outbreathings alone.

4.5.12 “As the ocean is the one meeting place of all waters,
so the skin is the one meeting place of all touches.
So the nostrils are the one meeting place of all smells.
So the tongue is the one meeting place of all tastes.
So the eye is the one meeting place of all forms.
So the ear is the one meeting place of all sounds.

So the mind is the one meeting place of all intentions.
So the heart is the one meeting place of all kinds of knowledge.
So the hands are the one meeting place of all actions.
So the genitals are the one meeting place of all pleasures.
So the anus is the one meeting place of all discharges.
So the feet are the one meeting place of all journeys.
So speech is the one meeting place of all the Vedas.

4.5.13 “As a solid lump of salt has neither inside nor outside, but is entirely a solid mass of taste,
so, my dear, this Self has neither inside nor outside, but is entirely a solid mass of awareness.

Arising from these elements, it dissolves back into them.
After death there is no recognition, my dear: that is what I say.”
So said Yajnavalkya.

4.5.14 Maitreyi said,
“Here you have brought me, venerable sir, into complete bewilderment.
I do not understand this at all.”
He said, “My dear, I am not saying anything bewildering.
This Self is imperishable, my dear; its nature cannot be cut off.

4.5.15 “For where there seems to be duality, there one sees another, there one smells another, there one tastes another, there one speaks to another, there one hears another, there one thinks of another, there one touches another, there one knows another.

But when everything has become the Self for a person, then with what would one see whom? With what would one smell whom? With what would one taste whom? With what would one speak to whom? With what would one hear whom? With what would one think of whom? With what would one touch whom? With what would one know whom?

With what would one know that by which one knows all this?

This Self is ‘not this, not this.’

It cannot be grasped, for it is not grasped.

It cannot decay, for it does not decay.

It is unattached, for it does not attach itself.

It is unfettered; it does not suffer or come to harm.

With what, my dear, would one know the knower? Maitreyi, you have now received the teaching.

This, my dear, is the full extent of deathlessness.” Having said this, Yajnavalkya departed.

Section 4

6



- 4.6.1 Now the lineage.
Pautimashya learned from Gaupavana.
Gaupavana learned from Pautimashya.
Pautimashya learned from Gaupavana.
Gaupavana learned from Kaushika.
Kaushika learned from Kaundinya.
Kaundinya learned from Shandilya.
Shandilya learned from Kaushika and Gautama.
- 4.6.2 Gautama learned from Agniveshya.
Agniveshya learned from Gargya.
Gargya learned from Gargya.
Gargya learned from Gautama.
Gautama learned from Saitava.
Saitava learned from Parasharyayana.
Parasharyayana learned from Gargyayana.
Gargyayana learned from Uddalakayana.
Uddalakayana learned from Jabalayana.
Jabalayana learned from Madhyandinayana.
Madhyandinayana learned from Saukarayana.

Saukarayana learned from Kashayana.

Kashayana learned from Sayakayana.

Sayakayana learned from Kaushikayani.

4.6.3 Kaushikayani learned from Ghritakaushika.

Ghritakaushika learned from Parasharya.

Parasharya learned from Parasharya.

Parasharya learned from Jatukarnya.

Jatukarnya learned from Asurayana and Yaska.

Asurayana learned from Traivani.

Traivani learned from Aupajandhani.

Aupajandhani learned from Asuri.

Asuri learned from Bharadvaja.

Bharadvaja learned from Atreya.

Atreya learned from Manti.

Manti learned from Gautama.

Gautama learned from Gautama.

Gautama learned from Vatsya.

Vatsya learned from Shandilya.

Shandilya learned from Kaishorya Kapyā.

Kaishorya Kapyā learned from Kumaraharita.

Kumaraharita learned from Galava.

Galava learned from Vidarbhi Kaundinya.

Vidarbhi Kaundinya learned from Vatsanapat Babhrava.

Vatsanapat Babhrava learned from Pantha Saubhara.

Pantha Saubhara learned from Ayasya Angirasa.

Ayasya Angirasa learned from Abhuti Tvashtra.

Abhuti Tvashtra learned from Vishvarupa Tvashtra.

Vishvarupa Tvashtra learned from the Ashvins.

The Ashvins learned from Dadhyanch Atharvana.

Dadhyanch Atharvana learned from Atharvan Daiva.

Atharvan Daiva learned from Mrityu Pradhvamsana.

Mrityu Pradhvamsana learned from Pradhvamsana.

Pradhvamsana learned from Ekarshi.
Ekarshi learned from Viprachitti.
Viprachitti learned from Vyashti.
Vyashti learned from Sanaru.
Sanaru learned from Sanatana.
Sanatana learned from Sanaga.
Sanaga learned from Parameshthin.
Parameshthin learned from Brahma.
Brahman is self-born.
Homage to Brahman.

Section 5

1



5.1.1 That is fullness; this is fullness. From fullness, fullness rises.
Take fullness from fullness: fullness alone remains.
Space is Brahman.
Space is ancient.
Space is filled with air.
So the son of Kauravyayani used to say.
The Brahmins know this as the Veda.
Through it one knows what must be known.

Section 5

2



5.2.1 Prajapati's three kinds of children—the gods, human beings, and Asuras—lived as students in chastity with Prajapati, their father. When they had completed their studentship, the gods said, "Please teach us."

He spoke this syllable to them: "Da."

"Have you understood?"

"We have understood," they said. "You told us, 'Restrain yourselves.'"

"Yes," he said, "you have understood."

5.2.2 Then the human beings said to him, "Please teach us."

He spoke the very same syllable to them: "Da."

"Have you understood?"

"We have understood," they said. "You told us, 'Give.'"

"Yes," he said, "you have understood."

5.2.3 Then the Asuras said to him, "Please teach us."

He spoke the very same syllable to them: "Da."

"Have you understood?"

"We have understood," they said. "You told us, 'Be compassionate.'"

"Yes," he said, "you have understood."

That same teaching is echoed by this divine voice, the thunder: “Da, da, da—
restrain yourselves, give, be compassionate.”

These three things one should learn: self-restraint, generosity, compassion.

Section 5

3



5.3.1 This heart is Prajapati. It is Brahman. It is everything. The word for it, hridayam, has three syllables. Hri is one syllable: one's own people and others bring offerings to whoever knows this. Da is one syllable: one's own people and others give to whoever knows this. Yam is one syllable: whoever knows this goes to the heavenly world.

Section 5

4



5.4.1 That was this very thing: truth alone. Whoever knows this great, wondrous being, the firstborn, as truth, as Brahman, conquers these worlds; his opponent will surely be conquered—whoever knows this great, wondrous being, the firstborn, as truth, as Brahman. For Brahman is truth indeed.

Section 5

5



- 5.5.1 In the beginning, all this was water alone. Those waters brought forth truth; truth is Brahman; Brahman brought forth Prajapati; Prajapati brought forth the gods. Those gods worship truth alone. Its name, satiyam, has three syllables: sa is one syllable, ti is one syllable, yam is one syllable. The first and last syllables are truth; in the middle is falsehood. This falsehood is held on both sides by truth, and so it becomes truth through and through. Falsehood does not harm one who knows this.
- 5.5.2 That truth is the sun over there. The person in that disk and the person here in the right eye rest in one another. Through his rays, the one rests in this one; through the vital breaths, this one rests in the other. When a person is about to leave the body, he sees that disk clear of rays. Those rays no longer come toward him.
- 5.5.3 For the person in that disk, Bhuh is the head: one head, one syllable. Bhuvah is the arms: two arms, two syllables. Suvar is the supporting feet: two supports, two syllables. His secret name is Ahar, “Day.” Whoever knows this strikes down evil and leaves it behind.

5.5.4 For the person here in the right eye, Bhuh is the head: one head, one syllable. Bhuvah is the arms: two arms, two syllables. Suvar is the supporting feet: two supports, two syllables. His secret name is Aham, "I." Whoever knows this strikes down evil and leaves it behind.

Section 5

6



5.6.1 This person is made of mind, with light for his true being. There within the heart he is like a grain of rice or barley. He is lord of all, sovereign over all; he governs everything here, whatever there is.

Section 5

7



5.7.1 They say, “Lightning is Brahman.” Lightning, vidyut, takes its name from cleaving. Whoever knows that lightning is Brahman is cleaved free of evil. For lightning is Brahman indeed.

Section 5

8



5.8.1 One should worship speech as a milk cow. She has four teats: the calls “Svaha,” “Vashat,” “Hanta,” and “Svadha.” The gods live on two of her teats, the calls “Svaha” and “Vashat”; human beings on “Hanta”; the ancestors on “Svadha.” Breath is her bull; mind is her calf.

Section 5

9



5.9.1 This fire within a person is Vaishvanara. It cooks the food that is eaten. Its sound is the sound one hears on closing both ears. When a person is about to leave the body, he no longer hears that sound.

Section 5

10



5.10.1 When a person departs from this world, he comes to the wind. There the wind opens for him a passage like the hub-hole of a chariot wheel. Through it he climbs upward. He comes to the sun. There the sun opens for him a passage like the opening of a lambara drum. Through it he climbs upward. He comes to the moon. There the moon opens for him a passage like the opening of a kettledrum. Through it he climbs upward. He comes to a world without sorrow, without cold. There he dwells for unending years.

Section 5

11



5.11.1 The suffering of someone stricken with illness is the highest austerity. Whoever knows this wins the highest world.

When a dead person is carried into the forest, that is the highest austerity. Whoever knows this wins the highest world.

When a dead person is laid upon the fire, that is the highest austerity. Whoever knows this wins the highest world.

Section 5

12



5.12.1 Some say, “Food is Brahman.” It is not so: without breath, food rots. Some say, “Breath is Brahman.” It is not so: without food, breath withers. Only when these two deities become one do they reach the highest state.

Pratrida once said to his father, “What good could I do for someone who knows this? What harm could I do him?”

His father replied with a gesture of his hand, “No, Pratrida. Who, then, reaches the highest state by becoming one with these two?”

He told him this: “Vi—food is vi, for all these beings enter into food. Ram—breath is ram, for all these beings delight in breath.”

All beings enter into the one who knows this; all beings delight in him.

Section 5

13



- 5.13.1 The hymn of praise, uktha. Breath is the hymn of praise, for breath raises up all this. From the one who knows it rises a heroic son who knows the hymn of praise. Whoever knows this wins union with the hymn of praise and a place in its world.
- 5.13.2 The sacrificial formula, yajus. Breath is the sacrificial formula, for in breath all these beings are joined. All beings join themselves to the one who knows this, to establish his supremacy. Whoever knows this wins union with the sacrificial formula and a place in its world.
- 5.13.3 The chant, saman. Breath is the chant, for in breath all these beings come together. All beings come together in harmony for the one who knows this, to establish his supremacy. Whoever knows this wins union with the chant and a place in its world.
- 5.13.4 Sovereign power, kshatra. Breath is sovereign power. Breath is indeed sovereign power: it protects a person from injury. He attains sovereign power that needs no protection. Whoever knows this wins union with sovereign power and a place in its world.

Section 5

14



5.14.1 The words *bhumir antariksham dyauh*—“earth, midair, heaven”—have eight syllables. One foot of *Gayatri* has eight syllables. This is that foot of hers. Whoever knows this foot of hers in this way wins all that lies within these three worlds.

5.14.2 The words *richo yajumshi samani*—“verses, sacrificial formulas, chants”—have eight syllables. One foot of *Gayatri* has eight syllables. This is that foot of hers. Whoever knows this foot of hers in this way wins the full extent of this three-fold knowledge.

5.14.3 The words *prano apano vyana*—“the inward breath, the downward breath, the diffused breath”—have eight syllables. One foot of *Gayatri* has eight syllables. This is that foot of hers. Whoever knows this foot of hers in this way wins all that breathes here.

Now her fourth foot, the visible one beyond the world, is the one that shines up there. What is fourth is called *turiya*. It is called the visible foot because it is, as it were, seen. It is called “beyond the world” because it shines above and above this whole expanse. Whoever knows this foot of hers in this way shines just so with splendor and renown.

5.14.4 This Gayatri rests upon that fourth foot, the visible one beyond the world. That foot rests upon truth. The eye is truth. The eye is indeed truth. So if two people now came disputing, one saying, “I saw it,” and the other, “I heard it,” we would trust the one who said, “I saw it.”

That truth rests upon strength. Breath is strength. Truth rests upon breath. That is why people say, “Strength is mightier than truth.” In this way Gayatri rests within oneself.

She protected the *gayas*. The vital breaths are the *gayas*: she protected the vital breaths. Because she protected the *gayas*, her name is Gayatri. She is that very Savitri which a teacher recites to a pupil. She protects the vital breaths of the one to whom he recites her.

5.14.5 Some recite this Savitri in the Anushtubh meter, saying, “Speech is Anushtubh; in this way we teach speech.” One should not do so. One should recite the Savitri in the Gayatri meter alone. Even if someone who knows this accepts what seems a great deal in gifts, it does not equal even one foot of Gayatri.

5.14.6 If he were to accept these three worlds in their fullness, he would gain the equivalent of her first foot. If he were to accept as much as the full extent of this threefold knowledge, he would gain the equivalent of her second foot. If he were to accept as much as all that breathes here, he would gain the equivalent of her third foot. But her fourth foot, the visible one beyond the world, the one that shines up there, cannot be gained by anything at all. How could anyone accept that much in gifts?

5.14.7 This is the prayer addressed to her:

“Gayatri, you have one foot, two feet, three feet, four feet.

You are without feet,

for you cannot be reached.

Homage to your fourth foot, the visible one beyond the world.”

Concerning someone he hates, he may add, “May that person not attain that,” or, “May this desire not be fulfilled for him.” That desire is not fulfilled for the person against whom he addresses her in this way. Or he may say, “May I attain

that.”

5.14.8 This is what Janaka of Videha said to Budila Ashvatarashvi: “You said you knew Gayatri. How, then, have you become an elephant, carrying loads?”

“Your Majesty, I did not know her mouth,” he replied.

Fire alone is her mouth. Even if a great deal is laid upon the fire, it burns it all.

In just this way, even if one who knows this does much evil, he devours it all and becomes clean, purified, ageless, immortal.

Section 5

15



5.15.1 Truth's face is hidden by a golden bowl.
Uncover it, Pushan, so that one devoted to truth may see.
Pushan, lone seer, Yama, Sun, son of Prajapati, draw back your rays; gather in
your radiance.
I see that loveliest form of yours. That person there—I am he.
Let this breath pass into the deathless wind; let this body end in ashes.
Om. Will, remember; remember what was done. Will, remember; remember
what was done.
Agni, lead us by a good path to prosperity, god who knows every way.
Keep crooked sin far from us. To you may we offer our fullest words of
homage.

Section 6

1



- 6.1.1 Whoever knows the eldest and the best becomes the eldest and the best among his own people. Breath is the eldest and the best. Whoever knows this becomes the eldest and the best among his own people, and among any others whose foremost member he wishes to be.
- 6.1.2 Whoever knows the most excellent becomes the most excellent among his own people. Speech is the most excellent. Whoever knows this becomes the most excellent among his own people, and among any others whose foremost member he wishes to be.
- 6.1.3 Whoever knows the firm foundation stands firm on level ground and stands firm on rough ground. The eye is the firm foundation, for by the eye one stands firm on level ground and on rough ground. Whoever knows this stands firm on level ground and stands firm on rough ground.
- 6.1.4 Whoever knows attainment attains whatever he desires. The ear is attainment, for in the ear all these Vedas come together. Whoever knows this attains whatever he desires.

- 6.1.5 Whoever knows the dwelling place becomes a dwelling place for his own people, a dwelling place for others. The mind is the dwelling place. Whoever knows this becomes a dwelling place for his own people, a dwelling place for others.
- 6.1.6 Whoever knows generation increases through offspring and livestock. Semen is generation. Whoever knows this increases through offspring and livestock.
- 6.1.7 These vital powers, disputing which of them was best, went to Brahma. They said to him, "Which of us is the most excellent?" He told them, "The one whose departure leaves this body worse off is the most excellent among you."
- 6.1.8 Speech departed. After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, "How were you able to live without me?" They said, "As the mute live without speaking through speech: breathing through breath, seeing through the eye, hearing through the ear, knowing through the mind, and reproducing through semen. That is how we lived." Speech entered again.
- 6.1.9 The eye departed. After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, "How were you able to live without me?" They said, "As the blind live without seeing through the eye: breathing through breath, speaking through speech, hearing through the ear, knowing through the mind, and reproducing through semen. That is how we lived." The eye entered again.
- 6.1.10 The ear departed. After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, "How were you able to live without me?" They said, "As the deaf live without hearing through the ear: breathing through breath, speaking through speech, seeing through the eye, knowing through the mind, and reproducing through semen. That is how we lived." The ear entered again.
- 6.1.11 The mind departed. After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, "How were you able to live without me?" They said, "As the witless live without knowing through the mind: breathing through breath, speaking through speech, seeing through the eye, hearing through the ear, and reproducing through semen. That is how we lived." The mind entered again.

6.1.12 Semen departed. After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, “How were you able to live without me?” They said, “As the impotent live without reproducing through semen: breathing through breath, speaking through speech, seeing through the eye, hearing through the ear, and knowing through the mind. That is how we lived.” Semen entered again.

6.1.13 Then breath was about to depart. As a great, fine Sindhu horse might wrench out the pegs to which its feet are tethered, so it wrenched these vital powers from their places. They said, “Lord, do not depart! We will not be able to live without you.”

“Then pay me tribute.”

“So be it.”

6.1.14 Speech said, “Whatever excellence is mine, that excellence is yours.” The eye said, “Whatever firm foundation I am, that firm foundation is yours.” The ear said, “Whatever attainment I am, that attainment is yours.” The mind said, “Whatever dwelling place I am, that dwelling place is yours.” Semen said, “Whatever generation I am, that generation is yours.”

“Then what is my food, and what is my clothing?”

“Whatever food there is, down to that of dogs, worms, insects, and flying creatures, is your food. Water is your clothing.”

For one who knows the food of breath in this way, nothing he eats is nonfood, and nothing he accepts is nonfood. Knowing this, those learned in the Vedas sip water before eating and sip water after eating. They believe that by doing this they clothe this very breath, leaving it no longer naked.

Section 6

2



6.2.1 Shvetaketu, the son of Aruni, came to the assembly of the Panchalas. He approached Pravahana, the son of Jivala, as attendants waited on him. Seeing him, Pravahana called out, “Young man!”

“Sir!” he answered.

“Have you been instructed by your father?”

“Yes,” he said.

6.2.2 “Do you know how these creatures, when they depart, go their separate ways?”

“No,” he said.

“And do you know how they return to this world?”

“No,” he said again.

“And do you know how that world never fills up, though so many depart for it again and again?”

“No,” he said again.

“And do you know at which offering, once it has been offered, the waters take on a human voice, rise up, and speak?”

“No,” he said again.

“And do you know the entrance to the path of the gods or to the path of the ancestors—what people do to enter the path of the gods or the path of the ancestors? For we have heard the seer’s words:

“I have heard of two paths, that of the ancestors
and that of the gods and mortals.

Along them goes all this that moves,
all that lies between the father and the mother.”

“I do not know a single one of these things,” he said.

6.2.3 Then the king invited him to stay. Disregarding the invitation, the young man hurried away. He came to his father and said, “So this is what you meant when you once told me that I had been instructed!”

“What is it, my clever boy?”

“That fellow of royal blood asked me five questions, and I do not know the answer to a single one.”

“What were they?”

“These,” he said, and repeated their opening words.

6.2.4 His father said, “My child, you must understand this about me: whatever I know, I have told you—all of it. But come, let us go there. We will approach him and live as students.”

“You go yourself.”

So Gautama went to the place where Pravahana, the son of Jivala, was. The king had a seat brought for him and water brought in. Then he made him the offering due a guest. He said, “We offer the honored Gautama a boon.”

6.2.5 Gautama said, “That boon has been promised me. Tell me the words you spoke in the young man’s presence.”

6.2.6 The king said, “That belongs among the divine boons, Gautama. Choose one of the human ones.”

6.2.7 Gautama said, “It is well known that I have a store of gold, cattle and horses, slave women, blankets, and clothing. Do not be ungenerous to us in what is abundant, boundless, without end.”

“Then, Gautama, you must seek it in the proper way.”

“I approach you as a pupil.”

In earlier times, a spoken declaration alone was how people became pupils. With this declaration of discipleship, he stayed.

6.2.8 The king said, “May neither you nor your forefathers hold it against us, Gautama, that before now this knowledge has never dwelt in any Brahmin. But I will tell it to you. Who could refuse you when you speak in this way?

6.2.9 “That world is a fire, Gautama. The sun is its fuel, the rays its smoke, the day its flame, the directions its coals, and the intermediate directions its sparks. Into this fire the gods offer faith. From that offering King Soma comes into being.

6.2.10 “Parjanya is a fire, Gautama. The year is his fuel, the clouds his smoke, lightning his flame, the thunderbolt his coals, and the rumblings of thunder his sparks. Into this fire the gods offer King Soma. From that offering rain comes into being.

6.2.11 “This world is a fire, Gautama. The earth is its fuel, fire its smoke, night its flame, the moon its coals, and the stars its sparks. Into this fire the gods offer rain. From that offering food comes into being.

6.2.12 “A man is a fire, Gautama. His open mouth is his fuel, breath his smoke, speech his flame, the eye his coals, and the ear his sparks. Into this fire the gods offer food. From that offering semen comes into being.

6.2.13 “A woman is a fire, Gautama. Her sexual organ is her fuel, the hairs her smoke, the vagina her flame, what is done within her the coals, and the pleasures her sparks. Into this fire the gods offer semen. From that offering a person comes into being. He lives as long as he lives. Then, when he dies,

- 6.2.14 “They carry him to the fire. For him, fire itself becomes the fire, fuel the fuel, smoke the smoke, flame the flame, coals the coals, and sparks the sparks. Into this fire the gods offer the person. From that offering a person of shining radiance comes into being.
- 6.2.15 “Those who know this, and those who in the wilderness worship faith and truth, enter the flame; from the flame, the day; from the day, the waxing half of the month; from the waxing half of the month, the six months when the sun travels north; from those months, the world of the gods; from the world of the gods, the sun; from the sun, the region of lightning. A being born of mind comes to those who have reached the lightning and leads them to the worlds of Brahman. In those worlds of Brahman they dwell through ages upon far-reaching ages. For them there is no return.
- 6.2.16 “But those who win worlds through sacrifice, giving, and austerity enter the smoke; from the smoke, the night; from the night, the waning half of the month; from the waning half of the month, the six months when the sun travels south; from those months, the world of the ancestors; from the world of the ancestors, the moon. Reaching the moon, they become food. There the gods consume them as they consume King Soma, saying, ‘Swell full; dwindle away.’ When that comes to an end for them, they pass into this very space; from space into wind; from wind into rain; from rain into the earth. Reaching the earth, they become food. They are offered again into the fire that is man, then born in the fire that is woman. Rising again toward the worlds, they circle round in just this way. But those who know neither of these two paths become worms, flying insects, and these biting creatures.”

Section 6

3



6.3.1 If someone wishes, “May I attain greatness,” he should observe the vows of the preparatory rite for twelve days. Then, on an auspicious day in the waxing half of the month during the sun’s northward course, he gathers every kind of herb and fruit in a bowl or cup of udumbara fig wood, sweeps and smears the ground, lays the fire, spreads the sacred grass around it, and prepares the clarified butter according to the rite. Under a male-named lunar mansion, he mixes the mash and offers:

“Whatever gods within you, Jatavedas,
turn aside and strike down a person’s desires,
to them I offer their allotted share.
Satisfied, may they satisfy me with every desire. Svaha!
“You who lie across the way,
saying, ‘I am the one who holds apart,’
I worship you with a stream of butter,
so that you may bring fulfillment. Svaha!”

6.3.2 Saying, “To the eldest, svaha! To the best, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To breath, svaha! To the most excellent, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To speech, svaha! To the firm foundation, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To the eye, svaha! To attainment, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To the ear, svaha! To the dwelling place, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To the mind, svaha! To generation, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To semen, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

6.3.3 Saying, “To Agni, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To Soma, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “Earth, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “Midair, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “Heaven, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “Earth, midair, heaven, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To priestly power, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To royal power, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To what has been, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To what will be, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To the universe, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To all, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

Saying, “To Prajapati, svaha!” he offers into the fire and pours the remainder into the mash.

6.3.4 Then he touches it:

“You are the whirling.

You are the blazing.

You are the full.

You are the steadfast.

You are the gathering of all in one.

You are the uttered hum.

You are the hum being uttered.

You are the high chant.

You are the high chant being sung.

You are the call to listen.

You are the answering call.

You are the blaze in the moist.

You are the far-reaching.

You are the mighty.

You are food.

You are light.

You are the closing chant.

You are the gathering into one.”

6.3.5 Then he lifts it up:

“You are Ama; Ama indeed is your greatness.

For he is king, ruler, overlord.

May he, the king and ruler, make me an overlord.”

6.3.6 Then he drinks from it:

“That which is worthy of our choice, Savitar’s—
Sweetly the winds blow for one who follows truth;
sweetly the rivers flow.
May the herbs be sweet for us.
Earth, svaha!
“—the god’s radiance, we meditate upon—
Sweet be night and dawn,
sweet the earthly realm;
sweet be heaven, our father, for us.
Midair, svaha!
“—may he quicken our thoughts.
Sweet be the tree for us;
sweet be the sun;
sweet be the cows for us.
Heaven, svaha!”

Then he recites the whole verse to Savitar and all the verses of sweetness, and says, “May I myself become all this. Earth, midair, heaven, svaha!” He drinks the last of it, washes his hands, and lies down west of the fire with his head toward the east. In the morning he pays homage to the sun: “You are the one lotus of the directions. May I be the one lotus among human beings.” Returning by the way he came, he sits west of the fire and quietly recites the lineage.

6.3.7 After teaching this to his pupil Yajnavalkya Vajasaneya, Uddalaka Aruni said, “Even if someone poured this over a dry stump, branches would spring from it and leaves would grow.”

6.3.8 After teaching this very rite to his pupil Madhuka Paingya, Yajnavalkya Vajasaneya said, “Even if someone poured this over a dry stump, branches would spring from it and leaves would grow.”

- 6.3.9 After teaching this very rite to his pupil Chula Bhagavitti, Madhuka Paingya said, “Even if someone poured this over a dry stump, branches would spring from it and leaves would grow.”
- 6.3.10 After teaching this very rite to his pupil Janaki Ayasthuna, Chula Bhagavitti said, “Even if someone poured this over a dry stump, branches would spring from it and leaves would grow.”
- 6.3.11 After teaching this very rite to his pupil Satyakama Jabala, Janaki Ayasthuna said, “Even if someone poured this over a dry stump, branches would spring from it and leaves would grow.”
- 6.3.12 After teaching this very rite to his pupils, Satyakama Jabala said, “Even if someone poured this over a dry stump, branches would spring from it and leaves would grow.” One should not teach it to anyone who is neither a son nor a pupil.
- 6.3.13 Four kinds of things are made of udumbara fig wood: the ladle is of udumbara fig wood, the cup is of udumbara fig wood, the fuel is of udumbara fig wood, and the two mixing sticks are of udumbara fig wood. There are ten cultivated grains: rice and barley, sesame and black gram, anu millet and priyangu millet, wheat and lentils, khalva and khalakula. He grinds them and moistens them with curds, honey, and clarified butter. He makes the offerings with clarified butter.

Section 6

4



- 6.4.1 The earth is the essence of these beings; water, the essence of the earth; herbs, the essence of water; flowers, the essence of herbs; fruits, the essence of flowers; a man, the essence of fruits; semen, the essence of a man.
- 6.4.2 Prajapati considered, “Come, let me prepare a resting place for this.” He created a woman. Having created her, he worshiped her below. Therefore one should worship a woman below. He raised up from his own body this pressing stone, thrusting forward, and with it joined himself to her.
- 6.4.3 Her sexual organ is the altar; the hairs are the sacrificial grass; the skin is the two pressing boards. In the middle, the kindled fire; the two testicles. Whoever practices sexual intercourse knowing this wins a world as great as the world won by one who offers the Vajapeya sacrifice. He takes for himself the merit of these women. But when someone practices sexual intercourse without knowing this, the women take his merit for themselves.
- 6.4.4 Knowing this, Uddalaka Aruni said it; knowing this, Naka Maudgalya said it; knowing this, Kumaraharita said it: “Many mortals of Brahmin descent leave this world stripped of vigor and merit—those who practice sexual intercourse without knowing this.” Much semen is spilled, whether one is asleep or awake.

- 6.4.5 He should touch it and utter this over it:
“Whatever semen of mine has spilled on the earth today,
whatever has flowed into the herbs or into water,
I take that semen back.
May vigor return to me, radiance return, good fortune return.
May Agni and the hearth fires be restored to their proper places.”
Then, taking it with his ring finger and thumb, he should rub it between his
breasts or between his eyebrows.
- 6.4.6 If he sees himself in water, he should address it: “In me be radiance, vigor, glory,
wealth, and merit.” A woman whose clothing is stained by menstruation is the
very splendor of women. Therefore he should approach a woman in that
stained clothing, radiant with glory, and address her.
- 6.4.7 If she will not yield to him, he may try to bribe her. If she still will not yield to
him, he may strike her with a stick or his hand and force himself on her, saying,
“With vigor and glory I take your glory from you.” She becomes inglorious.
- 6.4.8 But if she yields to him, he says, “With vigor and glory I place glory in you.”
They both become glorious.
- 6.4.9 If he wishes, “May she desire me,” he should place his penis in her, join his
mouth to hers, touch her sexual organ, and quietly recite:
“You arise from limb after limb;
you are born from the heart.
You are the sap of the limbs.
Make this woman, this one here, wild with desire for me,
as though pierced by a poisoned arrow.”
- 6.4.10 If he wishes, “May she not conceive,” he should place his penis in her, join his
mouth to hers, breathe out toward her, and then draw breath in, saying, “With
vigor and semen I take your semen from you.” She becomes without seed.

- 6.4.11 But if he wishes, “May she conceive,” he should place his penis in her, join his mouth to hers, draw breath in, and then breathe out toward her, saying, “With vigor and semen I place semen in you.” She becomes pregnant.
- 6.4.12 If a man’s wife has a lover and he hates that man, he should lay a fire in an unbaked clay vessel, spread reed grass with its tips reversed, and offer into the fire these reed tips, reversed and smeared with clarified butter:
 “You have offered into my kindled fire.
 I take your inward and downward breaths from you, so-and-so.
 “You have offered into my kindled fire.
 I take your children and livestock from you, so-and-so.
 “You have offered into my kindled fire.
 I take your sacrifices and good deeds from you, so-and-so.
 “You have offered into my kindled fire.
 I take your hopes and prospects from you, so-and-so.”
 The man whom a Brahmin who knows this curses in this way leaves this world stripped of vigor and merit. Therefore one should not seek intercourse with the wife of a man learned in the Vedas who knows this, for one who knows this becomes an enemy indeed.
- 6.4.13 When a man’s wife begins to menstruate, she should not drink from a bronze bowl for three days. She should wear an unwashed garment, and no Shudra man or woman should touch her. At the end of three nights, after she has bathed, he should have her pound rice.
- 6.4.14 If he wishes, “May a fair-skinned son be born to me; may he recite one Veda and live out his full span of life,” they should have rice cooked in milk and eat it with clarified butter. They will be able to beget such a son.
- 6.4.15 If he wishes, “May a tawny son with brown eyes be born to me; may he recite two Vedas and live out his full span of life,” they should have rice cooked with curds and eat it with clarified butter. They will be able to beget such a son.

- 6.4.16 If he wishes, “May a dark son with red eyes be born to me; may he recite three Vedas and live out his full span of life,” they should have rice cooked in water and eat it with clarified butter. They will be able to beget such a son.
- 6.4.17 If he wishes, “May a learned daughter be born to me, and may she live out her full span of life,” they should have rice cooked with sesame and eat it with clarified butter. They will be able to beget such a daughter.
- 6.4.18 If he wishes, “May a learned and renowned son be born to me, one who enters assemblies and speaks words people long to hear; may he recite all the Vedas and live out his full span of life,” they should have rice cooked with meat and eat it with clarified butter. They will be able to beget such a son. The meat should be that of a young bull or a mature bull.
- 6.4.19 Then, early in the morning, after preparing the cooked-rice offering and clarified butter according to the rite, he offers a portion of the cooked rice: “To Agni, svaha! To Anumati, svaha! To the god Savitar, whose impulse is true, svaha!” Having offered, he takes out some and eats it. After eating, he gives some to his wife. He washes his hands, fills a vessel with water, and sprinkles her three times with it:
 “Rise up from here, Vishvasu;
 seek another young woman.
 Unite the wife with her husband.”
- 6.4.20 Then he approaches her: “I am Ama; you are Sa. You are Sa; I am Ama. I am the Saman chant; you are the Rig verse. I am heaven; you are earth. Come, let us join together; let us place seed together, to gain a male child, a son.”
- 6.4.21 Then he parts her thighs: “Part, heaven and earth.” Placing his penis in her and joining his mouth to hers, he strokes her three times in the direction of the hair:

“May Vishnu prepare the womb;
may Tvashtar shape the forms.
May Prajapati pour in the seed;
may Dhatar place an embryo in you.
Place an embryo, Sinivali;
place an embryo, Prithushtuka.
May the two divine Ashvins, lotus-garlanded,
place an embryo in you.

6.4.22 “Golden are the two fire sticks
with which the Ashvins churn.
We call that embryo to you,
to be delivered in the tenth month.
As the earth bears fire within her,
as heaven is pregnant with Indra,
as wind is the embryo of the directions,
so I place an embryo in you, so-and-so.”

6.4.23 When she is about to give birth, he sprinkles her with water:
“As the wind stirs a lotus pond
on every side,
so may your embryo stir
and descend together with the afterbirth.
This enclosure of Indra has been made
with a bolt and a surrounding cover.
Indra, burst it open,
bringing the child and the afterbirth together.”

6.4.24 When the child is born, he lays a fire, places the child in his lap, mixes clarified
butter with curds in a metal bowl, and offers a portion of the mixture:
“May I nourish a thousand through this child,
prospering in my own house.
May his line never be broken,
in offspring or in livestock. Svaha!

“The vital powers in me I offer into you
with my mind. Svaha!

“Whatever excess I made in this rite,
whatever I left lacking here,
may Agni, maker of good offerings, knowing it,
make it well offered, well sacrificed for us. Svaha!”

6.4.25 Then, putting his mouth to the child’s right ear, he says three times, “Speech! Speech!” Then he mixes curds, honey, and clarified butter and feeds it to him with a piece of uncovered gold: “I place earth in you. I place midair in you. I place heaven in you. Earth, midair, heaven—I place all in you.”

6.4.26 Then he gives him a name: “You are Veda.” This becomes his secret name.

6.4.27 Then he gives him to his mother and offers him her breast:
“That breast of yours, resting, bringing joy,
holding treasures, finding wealth, generous in giving,
with which you nourish all precious things—
Sarasvati, offer it here for him to suck.”

6.4.28 Then he addresses the mother: “You are Ila, daughter of Mitra and Varuna. Heroic woman, you have borne a hero. Be the mother of heroes, you who have made us fathers of heroes.”
Of such a son they say, “You have surpassed your father! You have surpassed your grandfather! He has reached the furthest height of splendor, glory, and the radiance of sacred learning!” So they speak of the son born to a Brahmin who knows this.

Section 6

5



6.5.1 Now the lineage.

The son of Pautimashi learned from the son of Katyayani.

The son of Katyayani learned from the son of Gautami.

The son of Gautami learned from the son of Bharadvaji.

The son of Bharadvaji learned from the son of Parashari.

The son of Parashari learned from the son of Aupasvasti.

The son of Aupasvasti learned from the son of Parashari.

The son of Parashari learned from the son of Katyayani.

The son of Katyayani learned from the son of Kaushiki.

The son of Kaushiki learned from the son of Alambi and the son of
Vaiyaghrapadi.

The son of Vaiyaghrapadi learned from the son of Kanvi and the son of Kapi.

The son of Kapi learned

6.5.2 from the son of Atreyi.

The son of Atreyi learned from the son of Gautami.

The son of Gautami learned from the son of Bharadvaji.

The son of Bharadvaji learned from the son of Parashari.

The son of Parashari learned from the son of Vatsi.

The son of Vatsi learned from the son of Parashari.

The son of Parashari learned from the son of Varkaruni.
The son of Varkaruni learned from the son of Varkaruni.
The son of Varkaruni learned from the son of Artabhagi.
The son of Artabhagi learned from the son of Shaungi.
The son of Shaungi learned from the son of Sankriti.
The son of Sankriti learned from the son of Alambayani.
The son of Alambayani learned from the son of Alambi.
The son of Alambi learned from the son of Jayanti.
The son of Jayanti learned from the son of Mandukayani.
The son of Mandukayani learned from the son of Manduki.
The son of Manduki learned from the son of Shandili.
The son of Shandili learned from the son of Rathitari.
The son of Rathitari learned from the son of Bhaluki.
The son of Bhaluki learned from the two sons of Kraunchiki.
The two sons of Kraunchiki learned from the son of Vaidabhriti.
The son of Vaidabhriti learned from the son of Karshakeyi.
The son of Karshakeyi learned from the son of Prachinayogi.
The son of Prachinayogi learned from the son of Sanjivi.
The son of Sanjivi learned from the son of Prashni, who lived with Asuri.
The son of Prashni learned from Asurayana.
Asurayana learned from Asuri.
Asuri learned

6.5.3 from Yajnavalkya.

Yajnavalkya learned from Uddalaka Aruni.
Uddalaka Aruni learned from Aruna.
Aruna learned from Upaveshi.
Upaveshi learned from Kushri.
Kushri learned from Vajashravas.
Vajashravas learned from Jihvavan Badhyoga.
Jihvavan Badhyoga learned from Asita Varshagana.
Asita Varshagana learned from Harita Kashyapa.
Harita Kashyapa learned from Shilpa Kashyapa.

Shilpa Kashyapa learned from Kashyapa Naidhruvi.

Kashyapa Naidhruvi learned from Speech.

Speech learned from Ambhini.

Ambhini learned from Aditya.

From Aditya come these white Yajur formulas, proclaimed by Yajnavalkya Vajasaneya.

6.5.4 The lineage is the same as far as the son of Sanjivi.

The son of Sanjivi learned from Mandukayani.

Mandukayani learned from Mandavya.

Mandavya learned from Kautsa.

Kautsa learned from Mahitthi.

Mahitthi learned from Vamakakshayana.

Vamakakshayana learned from Shandilya.

Shandilya learned from Vatsya.

Vatsya learned from Kushri.

Kushri learned from Yajnavachas Rajastambayana.

Yajnavachas Rajastambayana learned from Tura Kavasheya.

Tura Kavasheya learned from Prajapati.

Prajapati learned from Brahman.

Brahman is self-born.

Homage to Brahman.