



Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

UNKNOWN

Plain English Translation

MOUSEIA



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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Mouseia's complete machine-assisted Plain English edition, translated independently 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

Pinned Wikisource Kāṇva transcription with recorded corrections. Provider numbering, including the gap at 3.9.28, is retained; source repairs, Sanskrit aids and machine-assisted editorial review are documented in the manifest.

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Section 1

1



Om. Peace, peace, peace.

1.1.1 Dawn is the head of the horse fit for sacrifice.

The sun is its eye, the wind its breath, and the fire shared by all people its open mouth. The year is the body of the sacrificial horse.

Heaven is its back, the space between heaven and earth its belly, and earth its footing. The directions are its sides, the directions between them its ribs, the seasons its limbs, the months and half-months its joints, days and nights its feet, the stars its bones, and clouds its flesh.

Sand is the food in its stomach, rivers its intestines, mountains its liver and lungs, and plants and trees its hair.

The rising sun is its front half, and the setting sun its rear half.

When it yawns, lightning flashes.

When it shakes itself, thunder sounds.

When it urinates, rain falls.

Its voice is speech itself.

1.1.2 Day arose in front of the horse as its greatness.

Its birthplace is the eastern sea.

Night arose behind it as its greatness.

Its birthplace is the western sea.

These two greatnesses came into being on either side of the horse.

As a steed it carried the gods; as a racer, the Gandharvas; as a runner, the

Asuras; and as a horse, human beings.

The sea is its relative. The sea is its birthplace.

Section 1

2



1.2.1 At first there was nothing here.
All this was covered by death, by hunger.
Hunger is death.
It formed a mind, thinking, “Let me have a self.”
It went about worshiping.
As it worshiped, water came into being.
“As I worshiped, water came to me,” it said.
This is why arka has its name: arch, worship, and ka, water.
Anyone who knows why arka has this name gains happiness.

1.2.2 Water is arka.
The thick layer on the water came together.
It became the earth.
Death exhausted itself on that earth.
As it grew tired and hot, the essence of its heat came out as fire.

1.2.3 It divided itself into three parts, with the sun as one third and the wind as another third.

This is the vital breath divided into three.

The east is its head, and the two directions beside it are its forelegs.

The west is its tail, and the two directions beside it are its thighs.

The south and north are its sides.

Heaven is its back, the space between heaven and earth its belly, and this earth its chest.

It rests on water.

Anyone who knows this finds a place to stand wherever they go.

1.2.4 It wanted a second self to be born to it.

Death, which is hunger, joined with speech through its mind.

The seed of that union became the year.

Before that, there was no year.

It carried the year for as long as a year lasts.

After that time, it brought the year forth.

When the year was born, it opened its mouth to swallow it.

The newborn cried, “Bhan!”

That became speech.

1.2.5 It thought, “If I consume this, I will make my food supply smaller.”

With that speech and that self, it created everything here: the Rig verses, the Yajus formulas, the Saman chants, the meters, sacrifices, people, and animals.

Whatever it created, it decided to eat.

It eats everything. This is why Aditi, the eater of all, has that name.

Anyone who knows why Aditi has this name becomes the eater of everything.

Everything becomes their food.

- 1.2.6 It wanted to sacrifice again with a greater sacrifice.
It worked hard.
It practiced intense austerity.
As it grew tired and hot, its glory and strength left it.
The vital breaths are glory and strength.
When the vital breaths left, the body began to swell.
Its mind remained in its body.
- 1.2.7 It wanted this body to be fit for sacrifice, thinking, “Through it, let me have a self.”
Then a horse came into being.
What had swollen, ashvat, became fit for sacrifice, medhya. This is why the horse sacrifice is called ashvamedha.
Anyone who knows the horse in this way knows the horse sacrifice.
It thought about the horse without keeping it confined.
After a year it sacrificed the horse to itself.
It assigned the other animals to the gods.
That is why people sacrifice a consecrated animal belonging to Prajapati as an offering to all the gods.
The one who shines up there is the horse sacrifice.
The year is its body.
This fire is arka.
These worlds are its bodies.
These two are arka and the horse sacrifice.
They become one god again: death itself.
A person who knows this conquers repeated death.
Death does not reach them.
Death becomes their self.
They live out their full lifespan.
They become one of these gods.

Section 1

3



- 1.3.1 Prajapati's children were of two kinds: gods and Asuras. The gods were the smaller group, and the Asuras the larger. They competed for these worlds. The gods said, "Come, let's overcome the Asuras through the Udgitha chant at the sacrifice."
- 1.3.2 They told speech, "Sing the chant for us." "Yes," speech said, and sang for them. It sang for the gods the enjoyment found in speech. But the good things it said, it kept for itself. The Asuras realized, "They will overcome us with this singer." They rushed at speech and pierced it with evil. That evil is the improper things that people say. That is the evil they put into speech.

- 1.3.3 Then they told the sense of smell, “Sing the chant for us.”
“Yes,” it said, and sang for them.
It sang for the gods the enjoyment found in smelling.
But the good things it smelled, it kept for itself.
The Asuras realized, “They will overcome us with this singer.”
They rushed at it and pierced it with evil.
That evil is the improper things that people smell.
That is the evil they put into it.
- 1.3.4 Then they told sight, “Sing the chant for us.”
“Yes,” sight said, and sang for them.
It sang for the gods the enjoyment found in seeing.
But the good things it saw, it kept for itself.
The Asuras realized, “They will overcome us with this singer.”
They rushed at sight and pierced it with evil.
That evil is the improper things that people see.
That is the evil they put into sight.
- 1.3.5 Then they told hearing, “Sing the chant for us.”
“Yes,” hearing said, and sang for them.
It sang for the gods the enjoyment found in hearing.
But the good things it heard, it kept for itself.
The Asuras realized, “They will overcome us with this singer.”
They rushed at hearing and pierced it with evil.
What was that evil?
The improper things that people hear.
That is the evil they put into hearing.
- 1.3.6 Then they told the mind, “Sing the chant for us.”
“Yes,” the mind said, and sang for them.
It sang for the gods the enjoyment found in thinking.
But the good things it thought, it kept for itself.
The Asuras realized, “They will overcome us with this singer.”
They rushed at the mind and pierced it with evil.
What was that evil?

The improper things that people think.
That is the evil they put into the mind.
In this way they infected these gods with evils.
In this way they pierced them with evil.

1.3.7 Then they told the breath in the mouth, “Sing the chant for us.”

“Yes,” this breath said, and sang for them.

The Asuras realized, “They will overcome us with this singer.”

They rushed at it and tried to pierce it with evil.

But they broke apart and scattered in all directions, like a clod of earth that
breaks apart when it strikes a rock.

Then the gods succeeded, and the Asuras were defeated.

Anyone who knows this succeeds, and the relative who hates them is defeated.

1.3.8 They said, “Where was the one who attached us to himself in this way?”

“Here, inside the mouth,” they answered.

He is Ayasya Angirasa: he is the essence, rasa, of the limbs, anga.

1.3.9 This god is called Dur, the distant one.

Death is far away from it.

Death stays far away from anyone who knows this.

1.3.10 This god drove evil, which is death, away from these gods and took it to the
ends of the directions.

There it put down their evils.

That is why a person should not go to those people or to the outer boundary,
thinking, “I must not come upon evil, which is death.”

1.3.11 After driving evil, which is death, away from these gods, this god carried them
beyond death.

1.3.12 First it carried speech across.

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 sense of smell across.

When it 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 shines 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 the mind across.
When the mind was freed from death, it became the moon.
That moon shines beyond death, having passed beyond it.
This god carries anyone who knows this beyond death in the same way.
- 1.3.17 Then it sang for its own supply of food.
Whatever food is eaten is eaten through this breath.
It finds its support here.
- 1.3.18 The gods said,
“Food is all there is.
You have sung it for yourself.
Give us a share in this food.”
“Then gather around me,” it said.
“Yes,” they said, and sat down all around it.
That is why these faculties are satisfied by the food a person eats through this
breath.
The relatives of anyone who knows this gather around them in the same way.
That person supports their relatives, becomes the best among them and
their leader, and has food to eat and authority.
Anyone who tries to rival a person with this knowledge among that person’s
relatives cannot support their own dependents.
But anyone who follows such a person, or wants to support dependents after
their example, can support them.

- 1.3.19 This is Ayasya Angirasa, because it is the essence of the limbs.
Breath is the essence of the limbs.
Breath really is the essence of the limbs.
That is why any limb dries up when breath leaves it.
Breath is the essence of the limbs.
- 1.3.20 It is also Brihaspati.
Speech is Brihati.
Breath is its lord, pati. That is why it is Brihaspati.
- 1.3.21 It is also Brahmanaspati.
Speech is brahman, sacred utterance.
Breath is its lord, pati. That is why it is Brahmanaspati.
- 1.3.22 It is also the Saman chant.
Speech is sa, and breath is ama. This is why saman has its name.
Also, it is equal, sama, in a termite, a mosquito, and an elephant; equal to these
three worlds, and equal to all this. That too is why it is saman.
Anyone who knows the Saman in this way becomes united with it and shares
its world.
- 1.3.23 It is also the Udgitha chant.
Breath is ut, up, because breath holds up everything here.
Speech is githa, song.
Ut and githa together
make Udgitha.
- 1.3.24 While drinking the Soma king, Brahmadatta Chaikitaneya once said,
“Let this king split my head if Ayasya Angirasa sang the chant with anything
other than this breath.”
For he sang with speech and breath.

- 1.3.25 Anyone who knows the wealth of this Saman gains wealth.
Its tone, svara, is its wealth, sva.
That is why someone about to serve as a priest should look for a good tone in
their voice.
They should perform their priestly duties with a voice that has that tone.
That is why people at a sacrifice want to see someone with a resonant voice.
They also want to see someone who has wealth.
Anyone who knows the wealth of this Saman gains wealth.
- 1.3.26 Anyone who knows the gold of this Saman gains gold.
Its tone is its gold.
Anyone who knows the gold of this Saman gains gold.
- 1.3.27 Anyone who knows the foundation of this Saman stands firmly.
Speech is its foundation.
For this breath rests on speech when it is sung.
Some say that it rests on food.
- 1.3.28 Now comes the ascent through the Pavamana chants.
The Prastotri priest begins the Saman.
When he begins, the sacrificer should quietly recite these words:
“Take me from the unreal to the real. Take me from darkness to light. Take me
from death to immortality.”
When he says, “Take me from the unreal to the real,”
the unreal is death, and the real is immortality. He is saying, “Take me from
death to immortality. Make me immortal.”
When he says, “Take me from darkness to light,”
darkness is death, and light is immortality. He is saying, “Take me from death
to immortality. Make me immortal.”
When he says, “Take me from death to immortality,”
there is nothing hidden in the meaning.
In the other chants, the singer should sing for his own supply of food.
That is why he should choose a blessing in those chants:
whatever he desires.

A Udgatri singer who knows this sings whatever he desires, either for himself or
for the person offering the sacrifice.

This wins a world.

Anyone who knows this Saman cannot be left without a world.

Section 1

4



- 1.4.1 At first all this was only the Self, shaped like a person.
Looking around, it saw nothing other than itself.
Its first words were, “I am.”
That is how it came to be called “I.”
That is why, even now, someone who is addressed first says, “It is I,” and then
gives whatever other name they have.
Because he burned away all evils before everything else—pura, before, and ush,
burn—he is called Purusha.
Anyone who knows this burns away whoever tries to come before them.
- 1.4.2 He was afraid. That is why someone alone feels afraid.
Then he thought, “There is nothing other than me. What am I afraid of?”
At that, his fear disappeared.
What could he have feared?
Fear comes from a second thing.

- 1.4.3 He felt no pleasure.
That is why someone alone feels no pleasure.
He wanted a second being.
He was as large as a woman and a man holding each other in a close embrace.
He divided this very self into two.
Then there were a husband and a wife.
That is why, as Yajñavalkya used to say, each of us is like one half of a split seed.
That is why this empty space is filled by a woman.
He had sex with her.
Human beings were born from that.
- 1.4.4 She thought, “How can he have sex with me when he produced me from himself?
I must hide.”
She became a cow, and he became a bull.
He had sex with her.
Cattle were born from that.
She became a mare, and he became a stallion.
She became a female donkey, and he became a male donkey.
He had sex with her.
Single-hoofed animals were born from that.
She became a female goat, and he became a male goat.
She became a ewe, and he became a ram.
He had sex with her.
Goats and sheep were born from that.
In this way he created every pair of creatures that exists, down to the ants.
- 1.4.5 He knew, “I am creation, because I created all this.”
So he became creation.
Anyone who knows this takes part in this creation of his.
- 1.4.6 Then he rubbed back and forth in this way.
From the mouth as the source, and from his hands, he created fire.
That is why both the inside of the mouth and the palms have no hair.
A womb has no hair inside.

When people say, “Sacrifice to this god; sacrifice to that god,” naming the gods one by one, each is an expression of this being.

He himself is all the gods.

He created everything moist here from his seed.

That is Soma.

Everything here amounts to these two: food and the eater of food.

Soma is food, and fire is the eater of food.

This was Brahman’s creation that surpassed himself.

He created gods greater than himself. Although he was mortal, he created immortals. That is why this creation surpassed him.

Anyone who knows this takes part in this creation of his that surpassed him.

1.4.7 At that time all this was undifferentiated.

It became differentiated by name and form: “This one has this name and this form.”

Even now it becomes differentiated by name and form: “This one has this name and this form.”

The Self has entered here right to the tips of the nails, as a razor is put in its case or fire in its holder.

People do not see it.

For it is incomplete when seen in this way. When breathing, it is called breath; when speaking, speech; when seeing, sight; when hearing, hearing; and when thinking, mind.

These are only names for its activities.

Anyone who worships just one of them does not know the Self.

In each one of these it is incomplete.

A person should worship it as the Self.

For in the Self all these become one.

This Self is the track by which all this can be found.

Through it, a person knows all this.

Just as someone finds something by following its tracks, anyone who knows this finds fame and praise.

1.4.8 This Self is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than anything else. It is closer within.

If someone tells a person who says that something other than the Self is dear,

“You will lose what you love,” that is likely to happen.

A person should worship the Self alone as what is dear.

Anyone who worships the Self alone as what is dear does not lose what they love to death.

1.4.9 People ask, “Human beings think that through knowledge of Brahman they will become everything.

What did Brahman know that made it become everything?”

1.4.10 At first all this was Brahman.

It knew only itself:

“I am Brahman.”

That is why it became everything.

Whichever of the gods woke up to this became Brahman.

The same was true of the seers.

The same was true of human beings.

Seeing this, the seer Vamadeva understood, “I was Manu, and I was the sun.”

Even now, anyone who knows, “I am Brahman,” becomes all this.

Not even the gods can prevent that person from becoming this, because that person becomes their Self.

But someone who worships another god, thinking, “He is one being and I am another,” does not know.

That person is like an animal belonging to the gods.

Just as many animals support a human being, each human being supports the gods.

Losing even one animal is unpleasant. What about losing many?

That is why the gods do not like human beings to know this.

- 1.4.11 At first all this was Brahman alone.
Being alone, it could not flourish.
It created a form that surpassed itself: ruling power, the ruling powers among
the gods—Indra, Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Death, and
Ishana.
That is why nothing is above ruling power.
That is why a Brahmin sits below a Kshatriya at the royal consecration.
He places that glory in ruling power.
But Brahman is the source of ruling power.
That is why, even when a king reaches the highest position, in the end he relies
on Brahman as his own source.
Anyone who harms a Brahmin strikes at their own source.
They become worse off, as someone does after harming a superior.
- 1.4.12 Still it could not flourish.
It created the common people:
the groups of gods called the Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, All-Gods, and Maruts.
- 1.4.13 Still it could not flourish.
It created the Shudra class as Pushan.
This earth is Pushan,
because it nourishes absolutely everything here.
- 1.4.14 Still it could not flourish.
It created a form that surpassed itself: right order, dharma.
Dharma is the ruling power over ruling power.
That is why nothing is above dharma.
Through dharma, a weaker person can hope to overcome a stronger one,
as though helped by a king.
This dharma is truth.
That is why people say of someone speaking the truth, “He speaks dharma.”
And of someone speaking dharma, they say, “He speaks the truth.”
These two are the same.

1.4.15 These, then, are the priestly class, the ruling class, the common people, and the Shudra.

Brahman became the priestly power among the gods through fire, and the Brahmin among human beings; through the Kshatriya, it became a Kshatriya; through the Vaishya, a Vaishya; and through the Shudra, a Shudra.

That is why people look for a world through fire among the gods and through a Brahmin among human beings.

Brahman took these two forms.

Anyone who leaves this world without having seen their own world gains no benefit from it while it remains unknown, just as they gain none from a Veda they have not recited or a deed they have not done.

Even if someone without this knowledge does a great and meritorious deed, in the end its benefit runs out.

A person should worship the Self as their world.

For anyone who worships the Self as their world, the benefit of their deeds does not run out.

From this Self they create whatever they desire.

1.4.16 This self is also a world for all beings.

By making offerings into the fire and performing sacrifices, a person is a world for the gods.

By reciting the Veda, they are a world for the seers.

By making offerings to the ancestors and wanting children, they are a world for the ancestors.

By giving human beings a place to stay and food to eat, they are a world for human beings.

By finding grass and water for animals, they are a world for animals.

By supporting wild animals, birds, and creatures down to the ants in their home, they are a world for those creatures.

Just as a person wants their own world to remain unharmed, all beings always want someone with this knowledge to remain unharmed.

This is known and has been carefully considered.

1.4.17 At first all this was the self alone.

It desired, "Let me have a wife, so I can have children.

Let me have wealth, so I can perform deeds."

This is the whole extent of desire.

Even someone who wishes for more cannot find anything beyond it.

That is why, even now, a person alone desires, "Let me have a wife, so I can have children. Let me have wealth, so I can perform deeds."

As long as a person has not obtained each of these, they think they are incomplete.

But here is their completeness:

the mind is their self;

speech is their wife;

breath is their child;

sight is their human wealth,

because they find that wealth through sight;

hearing is their divine wealth,

because they hear about it through hearing;

the body is their action,

because they act through the body.

This sacrifice has five parts.

The sacrificial animal has five parts.

A person has five parts.

Absolutely everything here has five parts.

Anyone who knows this obtains all of it.

Section 1

5



1.5.1 The father produced seven kinds of food through understanding and austerity.
He made one common to everyone and assigned two to the gods.
He made three for himself and gave one to the animals.
Everything rests on that food, both what breathes and what does not.
Why do these foods never run out, although they are always being eaten?
Anyone who knows what keeps them from running out eats food with their
mouth.
They reach the gods and live on strength.
These are the verses.

1.5.2 “The father produced seven kinds of food through understanding and
austerity.”
The father did produce them through understanding and austerity. “He made
one common to everyone.”
That common food is the food people eat here.
Anyone who worships this food does not escape evil,
because it is shared.
“He assigned two to the gods.”
These are offerings made into the fire and offerings placed outside it.
That is why people make both kinds of offering to the gods.

Others say these are the new-moon and full-moon sacrifices.

That is why one should not sacrifice for personal gain.

“He gave one to the animals.”

That is milk.

Both human beings and animals live on milk at first.

That is why they first give a newborn child clarified butter to lick, or put the child to the breast.

And they say of a newborn calf, “It does not eat grass.”

“Everything rests on that food, both what breathes and what does not.”

Everything does rest on milk, both what breathes and what does not.

People say, “By offering milk for a year, a person conquers repeated death.”

One should not understand it that way.

Anyone who knows this conquers repeated death on the very day they make the offering,

because they give the gods all food to eat.

“Why do these foods never run out, although they are always being eaten?”

The person is what keeps them from running out.

For the person produces this food again and again.

“Anyone who knows what keeps them from running out.”

The person is what keeps them from running out.

For the person produces this food through one act of understanding after another, and through actions.

If they did not do this, it would run out.

“Eats food with their mouth.”

Pratika means the mouth; this says, “with the mouth.”

“They reach the gods and live on strength” is praise.

1.5.3 “He made three for himself.”

He made mind, speech, and breath for himself.

“My mind was elsewhere, so I did not see.” “My mind was elsewhere, so I did not hear.” It is through the mind that a person sees and hears.

Desire, intention, doubt, faith, lack of faith, resolve, lack of resolve, shame, understanding, and fear—all these are the mind.

That is why a person recognizes through the mind even a touch from behind.

Whatever sound there is, it is speech.

Speech reveals a meaning; it does not reveal itself.

Inward breath, downward breath, the breath that spreads through the body, upward breath, balancing breath, and breathing in general—all these are breath.

This self is made of these:

speech, mind, and breath.

1.5.4 These are the three worlds.

Speech is this world, mind is the world between heaven and earth, and breath is the world up there.

1.5.5 These are the three Vedas.

Speech is the Rigveda, mind the Yajurveda, and breath the Samaveda.

1.5.6 These are the gods, ancestors, and human beings.

Speech is the gods, mind the ancestors, and breath human beings.

1.5.7 These are the father, mother, and child.

Mind is the father, speech the mother, and breath the child.

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,

because speech is known.

Speech becomes that and protects the person who knows this.

1.5.9 Whatever is to be known is a form of mind,

because mind is what is to be known.

Mind becomes that and protects the person who knows this.

- 1.5.10 Whatever is unknown is a form of breath,
because breath is unknown.
Breath becomes that and protects the person who knows this.
- 1.5.11 The earth is the body of this speech.
This fire is its form as light.
Speech, earth, and this fire all extend equally far.
- 1.5.12 Heaven is the body of this mind.
That sun is its form as light.
Mind, heaven, and that sun all extend equally far.
These two joined in sexual union.
Breath was born from them.
It is Indra.
It has no rival.
A second being is a rival.
Anyone who knows this has no rival.
- 1.5.13 Water is the body of this breath.
That moon is its form as light.
Breath, water, and that moon all extend equally far.
All these are equal, and all are infinite.
Anyone who worships them as limited wins a limited world.
Anyone who worships them as infinite wins an infinite world.
- 1.5.14 This year is Prajapati, who has sixteen parts.
The nights are fifteen of his parts.
His sixteenth part remains fixed.
Through the nights he grows full and then diminishes.
On the night of the new moon he enters every living thing through this
sixteenth part, and is born from it in the morning.
That is why, on this night, a person should not cut off the life of any living
thing, even a lizard, out of respect for this god.

- 1.5.15 This year, Prajapati with sixteen parts, is the person who knows this.
Their wealth is fifteen of their parts.
Their own self is the sixteenth part.
Through wealth they grow full and then diminish.
This self is the hub,
and wealth is the rim.
That is why, even if someone loses all their property, people say, “Only the rim
is gone,” provided the person is still alive.
- 1.5.16 There are three worlds: the human world, the world of the ancestors, and the
world of the gods.
The human world can be won only through a son, not through any other
action.
The world of the ancestors is won through action.
The world of the gods is won through knowledge.
The world of the gods is the best of the worlds.
That is why people praise knowledge.
- 1.5.17 Now comes the handing over.
When a man thinks he is about to die, he tells his son, “You are the sacred
knowledge. You are the sacrifice. You are the world.”
The son answers, “I am the sacred knowledge. I am the sacrifice. I am the
world.”
Whatever has been recited is brought together in the one term “sacred
knowledge.”
All sacrifices are brought together in the one term “sacrifice.”
All worlds are brought together in the one term “world.”
This is everything there is.
The father thinks, “Let him become all this and support me from here.”
That is why people say that a son who has been taught provides a world.
That is why they teach him.
When someone who knows this leaves this world, he enters his son together
with these vital breaths.

If anything he did was left incomplete, his son frees him from all of it. That is why he is called putra, son.

Through his son he remains established in this world.

Then these immortal divine vital powers enter him.

1.5.18 Divine speech enters him from the earth and fire.

This is the divine speech through which whatever he says comes true.

1.5.19 Divine mind enters him from heaven and the sun.

This is the divine mind through which he is always happy and does not grieve.

1.5.20 Divine breath enters him from the waters and the moon.

This is the divine breath that is neither troubled nor injured, whether moving or still.

Anyone who knows this becomes the self of all beings.

They become like this god.

Just as all beings protect this god, all beings protect anyone who knows this.

Whatever grief these creatures suffer stays with them.

Only good reaches that person.

Evil does not reach the gods.

1.5.21 Now comes a discussion of the vow.

Prajapati created the activities of the senses.

Once created, they competed with each other.

Speech resolved, "I will keep speaking."

Sight resolved, "I will keep seeing."

Hearing resolved, "I will keep hearing."

The other faculties did the same, each according to its activity.

Death took the form of exhaustion and seized them.

It caught them.

Once it had caught them, death held them captive.

That is why speech gets tired.

Sight gets tired.

Hearing gets tired.

But death does not catch the breath in the middle of the body.

They decided to recognize it:

“The best of us is this one that is neither troubled nor injured, whether moving or still.

Come, let us all take its form.”

They all took its form.

That is why they are all called breaths, after this breath.

A family comes to be known by the person in it who knows this.

Anyone who competes with a person who knows this dries up.

Having dried up, in the end they die. This is the account concerning the individual self.

1.5.22 Now the account concerning the gods.

Fire resolved, “I will keep burning.”

The sun resolved, “I will keep giving heat.”

The moon resolved, “I will keep shining.”

The other gods did the same, each according to its divine function.

What the central breath is among these vital powers, wind is among these gods.

For the other gods set, but wind does not.

Wind is the god that never sets.

1.5.23 There is this verse:

“From which the sun rises, and into which it sets.”

It rises from breath and sets in breath.

“The gods made it their rule. It is the same today and tomorrow.”

What these gods resolved on then, they still do today.

That is why a person should observe just one vow: to breathe in and breathe out,

thinking, “Evil, which is death, must not catch me.”

If they undertake this vow, they should try to carry it through. Through it they gain union with this god and share its world.

Section 1

6



1.6.1 All this is a set of three: name, form, and action.

Speech is the Uktha hymn of names,

because all names arise from it.

It is their Saman chant,

because it is equal to all names.

It is their brahman,

because it supports all names.

1.6.2 Sight is the Uktha hymn of forms,

because all forms arise from it.

It is their Saman chant,

because it is equal to all forms.

It is their brahman,

because it supports all forms.

1.6.3 The body is the Uktha hymn of actions,

because all actions arise from it.

It is their Saman chant,

because it is equal to all actions.

It is their brahman,

because it supports all actions.

Although these are three, they are one: this self.

Although the self is one, it is these three.

This immortal thing is covered by truth.

Breath is the immortal thing.

Name and form are truth.

They cover this breath.

Section 2

1



- 2.1.1 Proud Balaki Gargya was learned in the Vedas. He said to Ajatashatru, the king of Kashi, “Let me tell you about Brahman.” Ajatashatru said, “For those words we give you a thousand cows. People keep rushing to Janaka, saying, ‘Janaka! Janaka!’”
- 2.1.2 Gargya said, “I worship the person in the sun as Brahman.” Ajatashatru said, “No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the one who stands above all beings, their head and king.” Whoever worships him this way stands above all beings as their head and king.
- 2.1.3 Gargya said, “I worship the person in the moon as Brahman.” Ajatashatru said, “No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the great one dressed in white, King Soma.” Whoever worships him this way has soma pressed and poured out for him every day. His food does not run out.
- 2.1.4 Gargya said, “I worship the person in lightning as Brahman.” Ajatashatru said, “No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the brilliant one.” Whoever worships him this way becomes brilliant. His offspring become brilliant.

- 2.1.5 Gargya said, "I worship the person in space as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as full and unmoving." Whoever worships him this way becomes filled with offspring and livestock. His line of descendants does not die out in this world.
- 2.1.6 Gargya said, "I worship the person in the wind as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as Indra, the irresistible one, the undefeated army." Whoever worships him this way becomes a conqueror who cannot be conquered, victorious over enemies.
- 2.1.7 Gargya said, "I worship the person in fire as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the one who overcomes." Whoever worships him this way becomes someone who overcomes. His offspring become people who overcome.
- 2.1.8 Gargya said, "I worship the person in water as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the fitting one." Whoever worships him this way encounters only what is fitting, not what is unfitting. And someone like him is born from him.
- 2.1.9 Gargya said, "I worship the person in a mirror as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the shining one." Whoever worships him this way becomes someone who shines. His offspring shine. And he outshines everyone he meets.
- 2.1.10 Gargya said, "I worship the sound that follows a person walking as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about it that way. I worship it as life." Whoever worships it this way reaches his full lifespan in this world. His breath does not leave him before his time.
- 2.1.11 Gargya said, "I worship the person in the directions as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the companion who never leaves." Whoever worships him this way has a companion. His company does not break away from him.

- 2.1.12 Gargya said, "I worship the person made of shadow as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as death." Whoever worships him this way reaches his full lifespan in this world. Death does not come to him before his time.
- 2.1.13 Gargya said, "I worship the person in oneself as Brahman." Ajatashatru said, "No, do not speak to me about him that way. I worship him as the self-possessed one." Whoever worships him this way becomes self-possessed. His offspring become self-possessed. Then Gargya fell silent.
- 2.1.14 Ajatashatru said, "Is that all?"
"Yes, that is all."
"That much does not make Brahman known."
Gargya said, "Let me come to you as a student."
- 2.1.15 Ajatashatru said, "It goes against the usual order for a Brahmin to approach a member of the warrior class, thinking, 'He will tell me about Brahman.' Still, I will make you understand." Taking him by the hand, he stood up. They came to a sleeping man. He addressed him by these names: "Great one! Dressed in white! Soma! King!" The man did not get up. He woke him by pressing him with his hand, and the man got up.
- 2.1.16 Ajatashatru said, "When this person consisting of awareness was asleep just now, where was he? Where did he come back from?" Gargya did not know the answer.
- 2.1.17 Ajatashatru said, "When this person consisting of awareness was asleep just now, he had taken up the awareness of these faculties through his own awareness and was lying in the space within the heart. When he takes them in, the person is said to sleep. Then the breath is taken in, speech is taken in, sight is taken in, hearing is taken in, and the mind is taken in.
- 2.1.18 "When he moves about in dreams, those are his worlds. There he becomes, as it were, a great king or a great Brahmin. He seems to reach high places and low. Just as a great king takes his subjects with him and moves around his own coun-

try as he likes, so this person takes these faculties with him and moves around his own body as he likes.

2.1.19 “But when he is sound asleep and is aware of nothing at all, he travels back through the seventy-two thousand channels called Hita, which run from the heart to the membrane around it, and lies in that membrane. Just as a child, a great king, or a great Brahmin might lie down after reaching the height of happiness, so he lies there.

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

Section 2

2



2.2.1 Whoever knows the calf together with its home, its special resting place, its post, and its tether holds back seven enemies who hate him. This calf is the breath here in the middle. This body is its home, this head is its special resting place, breath is its post, and food is its tether.

2.2.2 These seven imperishable powers attend it. Through the red lines in the eye, Rudra is connected with it. Through the water in the eye, Parjanya is connected with it. Through the pupil, the sun is connected with it. Through the black part, fire is connected with it. Through the white part, Indra is connected with it. Through the lower eyelid, the earth is connected with it; through the upper eyelid, the sky. The food of anyone who knows this does not run out.

2.2.3 There is this verse about it:

“A bowl has its opening below and its base above.

Glory in every form is placed within it.

Seven seers sit at its rim,

And speech, the eighth, communicates with Brahman.”

“A bowl has its opening below and its base above”: this is the head. It is a bowl with its opening below and its base above.

“Glory in every form is placed within it”: the faculties are glory in every form.

This refers to the faculties.

“Seven seers sit at its rim”: the faculties are the seers. This refers to the faculties.

“And speech, the eighth, communicates with Brahman”: speech is indeed the eighth, and it communicates with Brahman.

2.2.4 These two ears are Gotama and Bharadvaja. This one is Gotama, and this one is Bharadvaja. These two eyes are Vishvamitra and Jamadagni. This one is Vishvamitra, and this one is Jamadagni. These two nostrils are Vasishtha and Kashyapa. This one is Vasishtha, and this one is Kashyapa. Speech is Atri, because food is eaten through speech. The name Atri really means “eater.” Whoever knows this becomes the eater of everything. Everything becomes food for him.

Section 2

3



- 2.3.1 Brahman has two forms: the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the stationary and the moving, the definite and the indefinite.
- 2.3.2 The formed is everything other than air and the space between heaven and earth. It is mortal. It is stationary. It is definite. The essence of this formed, mortal, stationary, definite reality is the sun that gives heat. It is the essence of the definite.
- 2.3.3 The formless is air and the space between heaven and earth. It is immortal. It is moving. It is indefinite. The essence of this formless, immortal, moving, indefinite reality is the person in the sun's disk. He is the essence of the indefinite. That is how it is with the gods.
- 2.3.4 Now for the individual. The formed is everything here other than breath and the space within oneself. It is mortal. It is stationary. It is definite. The essence of this formed, mortal, stationary, definite reality is the eye. It is the essence of the definite.
- 2.3.5 The formless is breath and the space within oneself. It is immortal. It is moving. It is indefinite. The essence of this formless, immortal, moving, indefinite reality is the person in the right eye. He is the essence of the indefinite.

2.3.6 This person's appearance is like deep yellow cloth, like white wool, like a small red insect, like a flame, like a white lotus, like a sudden flash of lightning. Whoever knows this has splendor like a sudden flash of lightning. Now this is the instruction: "Not this, not this." There is no other, higher description than "not this." His name is "the truth of truth." The breaths are truth, and he is their truth.

Section 2

4



2.4.1 “Maitreyi,” Yajnavalkya said, “my dear, I am about to leave this way of life. Let me settle matters between you and Katyayani.”

2.4.2 Maitreyi said, “Sir, if I owned this whole earth filled with wealth, would that make me immortal?”

“No,” Yajnavalkya said. “Your life would be like the lives of people with plenty of possessions. But wealth offers no hope of immortality.”

2.4.3 Maitreyi said, “What would I do with something that cannot make me immortal? Tell me just what you know, sir.”

2.4.4 Yajnavalkya said, “My dear, you have been dear to me, and now you say something dear to me. Come, sit down. I will explain it to you. As I explain, think carefully about what I say.”

2.4.5 He said, “My dear, a husband is loved not for the husband’s sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“A wife is loved not for the wife’s sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“Sons are loved not for the sons’ sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“Wealth is loved not for wealth’s sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“Priestly power is loved not for priestly power’s sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“Ruling power is loved not for ruling power’s sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“The worlds are loved not for the worlds’ sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“The gods are loved not for the gods’ sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“Beings are loved not for the beings’ sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“Everything is loved not for everything’s sake, but for the sake of the Self.

“My dear Maitreyi, it is the Self that must be seen, heard about, thought about, and deeply contemplated. Through seeing, hearing about, thinking about, 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. Ruling power rejects anyone who knows ruling 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 ruling power, these worlds, these gods, these beings, this everything—all are this Self.

2.4.7 “When a drum is being struck, you cannot grasp its sounds apart from it. But by grasping the drum or the striking of the drum, you grasp the sound.

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

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

2.4.10 “Just as separate streams of smoke come out of a fire lit with damp fuel, my dear, so the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, the Atharvangiras, historical accounts, ancient lore, sciences, Upanishads, verses, aphorisms, supplementary explanations, and explanations are the breath of this great being. All these are its breath.

2.4.11 “As the ocean is the single meeting place of all waters, so the skin is the single meeting place of all touches. The nostrils are the single meeting place of all smells. The tongue is the single meeting place of all tastes. The eye is the single meeting place of all visible forms. The ear is the single meeting place of all sounds. The mind is the single meeting place of all intentions. The heart is the single meeting place of all kinds of knowledge. The hands are the single meeting place of all actions. The sexual organ is the single meeting place of all pleasures. The anus is the single meeting place of all discharges. The feet are the single meeting place of all journeys. Speech is the single meeting place of all the Vedas.

2.4.12 “A lump of salt thrown into water dissolves in the water. There is no way to pick it out again, but wherever you take some water, it is salty. In the same way, my dear, this great being is endless and boundless, nothing but a mass of awareness. Arising from these elements, it disappears with them. After death there is no recognition: that is what I am telling you, my dear.” That was what Yajnavalkya said.

2.4.13 Maitreyi said, “Sir, you have confused me right here, by saying that after death there is no recognition.”

He said, “My dear, I am not saying something confusing. This is enough for understanding.

2.4.14 “Where there is something like duality, one smells another, one sees another, one hears another, one speaks to another, one thinks of another, and one knows another. But when everything has become one’s own Self, what could one smell, and with what? What could one see, and with what? What could one hear, and with what? What could one speak to, and with what? What could one think of, and with what? What could one know, and with what? By what could one know that through which one knows all this? My dear, by what could one know the knower?”

Section 2

5



- 2.5.1 This earth is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this earth. The radiant, immortal person in this earth and the radiant, immortal person in the individual body are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.2 These waters are honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for these waters. The radiant, immortal person in these waters and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's semen are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.3 This fire is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this fire. The radiant, immortal person in this fire and the radiant, immortal person consisting of speech in the individual are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.4 This wind is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this wind. The radiant, immortal person in this wind and the radiant, immortal person who is breath in the individual are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.

- 2.5.5 This sun is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this sun. The radiant, immortal person in this sun and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's eye are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.6 These directions are honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for these directions. The radiant, immortal person in these directions and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's hearing and its echo are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.7 This moon is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this moon. The radiant, immortal person in this moon and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's mind are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.8 This lightning is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this lightning. The radiant, immortal person in this lightning and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's light are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.9 This thunder is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this thunder. The radiant, immortal person in this thunder and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's sound and voice are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.10 This space is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this space. The radiant, immortal person in this space and the radiant, immortal person who is the space in the individual's heart are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.11 This right conduct is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this right conduct. The radiant, immortal person in this right conduct and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's right conduct are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.

- 2.5.12 This truth is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this truth. The radiant, immortal person in this truth and the radiant, immortal person in the individual's truth are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.13 This human race is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this human race. The radiant, immortal person in this human race and the radiant, immortal person in the individual human are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.14 This Self is honey for all beings, and all beings are honey for this Self. The radiant, immortal person in this Self and this radiant, immortal Self are this very Self. This is the immortal. This is Brahman. This is everything.
- 2.5.15 This Self is the ruler of all, the king of all beings. Just as all the spokes are fixed in a chariot's hub and rim, so all beings, all gods, all worlds, all breaths, and all these selves are fixed in this Self.
- 2.5.16 This is the honey that Dadhyanch Atharvana taught the Ashvins. Seeing this,
the seer said:
"Men, to win a reward, I make your mighty deed known,
As thunder makes rain known:
How Dadhyanch Atharvana told you the honey
When he spoke with a horse's head."
- 2.5.17 This is the honey that Dadhyanch Atharvana taught the Ashvins. Seeing this,
the seer said:
"Ashvins, you fitted a horse's head
Onto Dadhichi Atharvana.
Keeping his word, he told you the honey,
Tvashtar's secret kept for you, you wonder-workers."

- 2.5.18 This is the honey that Dadhyanch Atharvana taught the Ashvins. Seeing this,
the seer said:
“He made two-footed fortresses;
He made four-footed fortresses.
First he became a bird;
The person entered the fortresses.”
This person lies in the fortresses, in all the fortresses. 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 said:
“He became a matching form for every form;
That form of his is for making him known.
Through his powers, Indra appears in many forms,
For his bay horses are yoked in hundreds and tens.”
He himself is the bay horses. He himself is the ten, the thousands, the many,
and the infinite. This Brahman has nothing before it, nothing after it,
nothing inside it, and nothing outside it. This Self is Brahman,
experiencing everything. This is the teaching.

Section 2

6



2.6.1 Now the line of teachers:

Pautimashya received the teaching from Gaupavana.
Gaupavana received the teaching from Pautimashya.
Pautimashya received the teaching from Gaupavana.
Gaupavana received the teaching from Kaushika.
Kaushika received the teaching from Kaundinya.
Kaundinya received the teaching from Shandilya.
Shandilya received the teaching from both Kaushika and Gautama.

2.6.2 Gautama received the teaching from Agniveshya.

Agniveshya received the teaching from both Shandilya and Anabhimlata.
Anabhimlata received the teaching from Anabhimlata.
Anabhimlata received the teaching from Anabhimlata.
Anabhimlata received the teaching from Gautama.
Gautama received the teaching from Saitava and Prachinayogya.
Saitava and Prachinayogya received the teaching from Parasharya.
Parasharya received the teaching from Bharadvaja.
Bharadvaja received the teaching from both Bharadvaja and Gautama.
Gautama received the teaching from Bharadvaja.
Bharadvaja received the teaching from Parasharya.

Parasharya received the teaching from Vaijavapayana.

Vaijavapayana received the teaching from Kaushikayani.

2.6.3 Kaushikayani received the teaching from Ghritakaushika.

Ghritakaushika received the teaching from Parasharyayana.

Parasharyayana received the teaching from Parasharya.

Parasharya received the teaching from Jatukarnya.

Jatukarnya received the teaching from both Asurayana and Yaska.

Asurayana received the teaching from Traivani.

Traivani received the teaching from Aupajandhani.

Aupajandhani received the teaching from Asuri.

Asuri received the teaching from Bharadvaja.

Bharadvaja received the teaching from Atreya.

Atreya received the teaching from Manti.

Manti received the teaching from Gautama.

Gautama received the teaching from Vatsya.

Vatsya received the teaching from Shandilya.

Shandilya received the teaching from Kaishorya Kapya.

Kaishorya Kapya received the teaching from Kumaraharita.

Kumaraharita received the teaching from Galava.

Galava received the teaching from Vidarbhi Kaundinya.

Vidarbhi Kaundinya received the teaching from Vatsanapat Babhrava.

Vatsanapat Babhrava received the teaching from Pantha Saubhara.

Pantha Saubhara received the teaching from Ayasya Angirasa.

Ayasya Angirasa received the teaching from Abhuti Tvashtra.

Abhuti Tvashtra received the teaching from Vishvarupa Tvashtra.

Vishvarupa Tvashtra received the teaching from the Ashvins.

The Ashvins received the teaching from Dadhichi Atharvana.

Dadhyanth Atharvana received the teaching from Atharvan Daiva.

Atharvan Daiva received the teaching from Mrityu Pradhvamsana.

Mrityu Pradhvamsana received the teaching from Pradhvamsana.

Pradhvamsana received the teaching from Ekarshi.

Ekarshi received the teaching from Viprachitti.

Viprachitti received the teaching from Vyashti.

Vyashti received the teaching from Sanaru.

Sanaru received the teaching from Sanatana.

Sanatana received the teaching from Sanaga.

Sanaga received the teaching from Parameshthin.

Parameshthin received the teaching from Brahma.

Brahman is self-existent.

Homage to Brahman.

Section 3

1



- 3.1.1 Janaka of Videha held a sacrifice with rich gifts for the priests. Brahmins from Kuru and Panchala gathered there. Janaka of Videha wanted to find out which of these Brahmins was the most learned. He penned up a thousand cows. Ten quarter-coins were tied to the horns of each cow.
- 3.1.2 He said to them, “Honored Brahmins, whoever among you knows Brahman best may drive these cows away.” The Brahmins did not dare. Then Yajnavalkya said to his own student, “Dear Samashravas, drive them away.” He drove them away. The Brahmins grew angry. “How can he claim to know Brahman best among us?” Now Ashvala was Janaka of Videha’s reciting priest. He asked him, “Yajnavalkya, do you really know Brahman best among us?” He replied, “We bow to the one who knows Brahman best. We only want the cows.” At that, Ashvala, the reciting priest, began to question him.
- 3.1.3 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “everything here is held by death. Everything is overcome by death. How does the person offering the sacrifice escape death’s hold?”
“Through the reciting priest, through fire, through speech. Speech is the sacrifice’s reciting priest. This speech is fire. It is the reciting priest. It is release. It is complete release.”

3.1.4 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “everything here is held by day and night. Everything is overcome by day and night. How does the person offering the sacrifice escape the hold of day and night?”

“Through the priest who performs the ritual, through sight, through the sun. Sight is the sacrifice’s ritual priest. This sight is the sun up there. It is the ritual priest. It is release. It is complete release.”

3.1.5 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “everything here is held by the waxing and waning halves of the month. Everything is overcome by the waxing and waning halves of the month. How does the person offering the sacrifice escape their hold?”

“Through the chanting priest, through wind, through breath. Breath is the sacrifice’s chanting priest. This breath is wind. It is the chanting priest. It is release. It is complete release.”

3.1.6 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “this space between earth and heaven seems to offer nothing to stand on. By what means of ascent does the person offering the sacrifice climb to the heavenly world?”

“Through the supervising priest, through the mind, through the moon. The mind is the sacrifice’s supervising priest. This mind is the moon up there. It is the supervising priest. It is release. It is complete release.”

These are the ways to complete release. Now come the correspondences.

3.1.7 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “how many verses will the reciting priest use in this sacrifice today?”

“Three.”

“Which three?”

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

“What does he win through them?”

“Everything here that bears breath.”

3.1.8 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “how many offerings will the ritual priest make in this sacrifice today?”

“Three.”

“Which three?”

“Those that blaze up when offered, those that make a loud noise when offered, and those that sink down when offered.”

“What does he win through them?”

“Through those that blaze up when offered, he wins the world of the gods. The world of the gods seems to shine. Through those that make a loud noise when offered, he wins the world of the ancestors. The world of the ancestors is far beyond. Through those that sink down when offered, he wins the human world. The human world seems to lie below.”

3.1.9 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “with how many deities will the supervising priest guard this sacrifice from the south today?”

“One.”

“Which one?”

“The mind. The mind has no limit, and all the gods have no limit. Through it he wins a world without limits.”

3.1.10 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “how many chants will the chanting priest sing in this sacrifice today?”

“Three.”

“Which three?”

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

“Which are they?”

“Those within a person. The breath moving in is the invitation verse. The breath moving out is the offering verse. The breath spreading through the body is the praise verse.”

“What does he win through them?”

“With the invitation verse he wins the world of earth. With the offering verse he wins the world between earth and heaven. With the praise verse he wins the world of heaven.”

Then Ashvala, the reciting priest, stopped questioning him.

Section 3

2



- 3.2.1 Then Artabhaga, a descendant of Jaratkaru, questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “how many things grasp, and how many things overpower them?”
“Eight things grasp, and eight things overpower them.”
“What are these eight things that grasp and these eight things that overpower them?”
- 3.2.2 “Breath grasps. Odor overpowers it and holds it. For a person smells odors through breath.
- 3.2.3 “Speech grasps. Names overpower it and hold it. For a person speaks names through speech.
- 3.2.4 “The tongue grasps. Taste overpowers it and holds it. For a person knows tastes through the tongue.
- 3.2.5 “Sight grasps. Visible form overpowers it and holds it. For a person sees forms through sight.
- 3.2.6 “Hearing grasps. Sound overpowers it and holds it. For a person hears sounds through hearing.
- 3.2.7 “The mind grasps. Desire overpowers it and holds it. For a person desires desired things through the mind.

- 3.2.8 “The hands grasp. Action overpowers them and holds them. For a person acts through the hands.
- 3.2.9 “The skin grasps. Touch overpowers it and holds it. For a person feels touches through the skin. These are the eight things that grasp and the eight things that overpower them.”
- 3.2.10 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “everything here is food for death. What deity has death as its food?”
“Fire is death. It is food for water. One overcomes repeated death.”
- 3.2.11 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “when this person dies, do the breaths leave him or not?”
“No,” said Yajnavalkya. “They gather together right here. He swells. He bloats. He lies dead and bloated.”
- 3.2.12 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “when this person dies, what does not leave him?”
“His name. Names have no limit, and all the gods have no limit. Through that he wins a world without limits.”
- 3.2.13 “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “when this person dies, his speech goes into fire, his breath into wind, his sight into the sun, his mind into the moon, his hearing into the directions, his body into earth, and his self into space. His body hair goes into plants and his head hair into trees. His blood and semen are placed in water. Where is that person then?”
“Give me your hand, dear Artabhaga. We two will find this out by ourselves. This is not for us to discuss in public.”
The two went aside and talked. What they spoke about was action. What they praised was action. A person becomes good through good action and bad through bad action.
Then Artabhaga, the descendant of Jaratkaru, stopped questioning him.

Section 3

3



3.3.1 Then Bhujyu Lahyayani questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “we were traveling students wandering among the Madras. 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 said, ‘Sudhanvan, a descendant of Angiras.’ As we asked him about the limits of the worlds, we said to him, ‘Where did the descendants of Parikshit go?’ Where did the descendants of Parikshit go? That is what I ask you, Yajnavalkya. Where did the descendants of Parikshit go?”

3.3.2 He said, “He must have said, ‘They went where those who offer the horse sacrifice go.’”

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

“This world extends as far as a divine chariot travels in thirty-two days. Earth surrounds it, extending twice as far. The ocean surrounds that earth, extending twice as far. The space between is as thin as a razor’s edge or a fly’s wing. Indra became an eagle and handed them over to the wind. The wind placed them in itself and took them where those who offer the horse sacrifice had gone.”

In this way he praised the wind. So the wind is the separate individual, and the wind is the whole. Whoever knows this overcomes repeated death.

Then Bhujyu Lahyayani stopped questioning him.

Section 3

4



3.4.1 Then Ushasta Chakrayana questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “explain to me the Brahman that is directly present, not hidden from us—the Self within everything.”

“It is your Self, which is within everything. The one who breathes in through the in-breath is your Self, which is within everything. The one who breathes out through the out-breath is your Self, which is within everything. The one who breathes throughout the body through the spreading breath is your Self, which is within everything. The one who breathes upward through the rising breath is your Self, which is within everything. This is your Self, which is within everything.”

3.4.2 Ushasta Chakrayana said, “That is just pointing something out, as someone might say, ‘That is a cow; that is a horse.’ Explain to me the Brahman that is directly present, not hidden from us—the Self within everything.”

“It is your Self, which is within everything.”

“Yajnavalkya, which is within everything?”

“You cannot see the one who sees through sight. You cannot hear the one who hears through hearing. You cannot think of the one who thinks through thought. You cannot know the one who knows through knowledge. This is your Self, which is within everything. Anything other than this is subject to suffering.”

Then Ushasta Chakrayana stopped questioning him.

Section 3

5



3.5.1 Then Kahola Kaushitakeya questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “explain to me the Brahman that is directly present, not hidden from us—the Self within everything.”

“It is your Self, which is within everything.”

“Yajnavalkya, which is within everything?”

“The one that goes beyond hunger and thirst, grief and confusion, old age and death. Knowing this Self, Brahmins give up the desire for children, the desire for wealth, and the desire for worlds. They then live by begging. The desire for children is the desire for wealth, and the desire for wealth is the desire for worlds. Both are only desires. So a Brahmin should finish with scholarship and seek to live with a child’s simplicity. After finishing with both a child’s simplicity and scholarship, he becomes a sage. After finishing with both silence and its opposite, he becomes a Brahmin. How should that Brahmin live? However he lives, he remains just that. Anything other than this is subject to suffering.”

Then Kahola Kaushitakeya stopped questioning him.

Section 3

6



3.6.1 Then Gargi Vachaknavi questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” she said, “all this is woven lengthwise and crosswise in water. In what is water woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In wind, Gargi.”

“In what is wind woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds between earth and heaven, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds between earth and heaven woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of the Gandharvas, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of the Gandharvas woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of the sun, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of the sun woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of the moon, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of the moon woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of the stars, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of the stars woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of the gods, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of the gods woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of Indra, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of Indra woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of Prajapati, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of Prajapati woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

“In the worlds of Brahman, Gargi.”

“In what are the worlds of Brahman woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

He said, “Gargi, do not question too far, or your head may fall off. You are questioning too far about a deity that must not be questioned too far.

Gargi, do not question too far.”

Then Gargi Vachaknavi stopped questioning him.

Section 3

7



3.7.1 Then Uddalaka Aruni questioned him. “Yajnavalkya,” he said, “we were staying among the Madras, in the house of Patanchala Kapyā, studying sacrifice. His wife was possessed by a Gandharva. We asked him, ‘Who are you?’ He said, ‘Kabandha, a descendant of Atharvan.’ He said to Patanchala Kapyā and the students of sacrifice, ‘Kapyā, do you know the thread on which this world, the other world, and all beings are strung together?’ Patanchala Kapyā said, ‘Sir, I do not know it.’ He said to Patanchala Kapyā and the students of sacrifice, ‘Kapyā, do you know the ruler within, who rules this world, the other world, and all beings from within?’ Patanchala Kapyā said, ‘Sir, I do not know him.’ He said to Patanchala Kapyā and the students of sacrifice, ‘Kapyā, whoever knows that thread and that ruler within knows Brahman. He knows the worlds, the gods, the Vedas, the Self, and everything.’ That is what he told them. I know this. Yajnavalkya, if you drive away the cows awarded for knowing Brahman without knowing that thread and that ruler within, your head will fall off.”

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

“Anyone could say, ‘I know, I know.’ Tell us what you know.”

- 3.7.2 He said, “Gautama, wind is that thread. On wind as a thread, Gautama, this world, the other world, and all beings are strung together. That is why, Gautama, people say of someone who has died, ‘His limbs have come apart.’ For they are strung together on wind as a thread, Gautama.”
“That is just so, Yajnavalkya. Tell us about the ruler within.”
- 3.7.3 “He lives in earth and is within it. Earth does not know him. Earth is his body. He rules earth from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.4 “He lives in water and is within it. Water does not know him. Water is his body. He rules water from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.5 “He lives in fire and is within it. Fire does not know him. Fire is his body. He rules fire from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.6 “He lives in the space between earth and heaven and is within it. The space between earth and heaven does not know him. The space between earth and heaven is his body. He rules the space between earth and heaven from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.7 “He lives in wind and is within it. Wind does not know him. Wind is his body. He rules wind from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.8 “He lives in heaven and is within it. Heaven does not know him. Heaven is his body. He rules heaven from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.9 “He lives in the sun and is within it. The sun does not know him. The sun is his body. He rules the sun from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.10 “He lives in the directions and is within them. The directions do not know him. The directions are his body. He rules the directions from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.

- 3.7.11 “He lives in the moon and stars and is within them. The moon and stars do not know him. The moon and stars are his body. He rules the moon and stars from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.12 “He lives in space and is within it. Space does not know him. Space is his body. He rules space from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.13 “He lives in darkness and is within it. Darkness does not know him. Darkness is his body. He rules darkness from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.14 “He lives in light and is within it. Light does not know him. Light is his body. He rules light from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.15 “Now about beings.
He lives in all beings and is within them. None of these beings know him. All beings are his body. He rules all beings from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
That is about beings.
- 3.7.16 “Now about the person. He lives in breath and is within it. Breath does not know him. Breath is his body. He rules breath from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.17 “He lives in speech and is within it. Speech does not know him. Speech is his body. He rules speech from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.18 “He lives in sight and is within it. Sight does not know him. Sight is his body. He rules sight from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.
- 3.7.19 “He lives in hearing and is within it. Hearing does not know him. Hearing is his body. He rules hearing from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.

3.7.20 “He lives in the mind and is within it. The mind does not know him. The mind is his body. He rules the mind from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.

3.7.21 “He lives in the skin and is within it. The skin does not know him. The skin is his body. He rules the skin from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.

3.7.22 “He lives in understanding and is within it. Understanding does not know him. Understanding is his body. He rules understanding from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.

3.7.23 “He lives in semen and is within it. Semen does not know him. Semen is his body. He rules semen from within. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die.

He is not seen, but he sees. He is not heard, but he hears. He is not thought of, but he thinks. He is not known, but he knows. There is no other who sees. There is no other who hears. There is no other who thinks. There is no other who knows. He is your Self, the ruler within, who does not die. Anything other than this is subject to suffering.”

Then Uddalaka Aruni stopped questioning him.

Section 3

8



3.8.1 Then Vachaknavi said, “Honored Brahmins, I will ask him two questions. If he answers them for me, none of you will ever defeat him in a debate about Brahman.”

“Ask, Gargi.”

3.8.2 She said, “Yajnavalkya, a warrior’s son from Kashi or Videha might string an unstrung bow, take two arrows that can pierce his enemies, and stand before an opponent. Just like that, I have come before you with two questions. Answer them for me.”

“Ask, Gargi.”

3.8.3 She said, “Yajnavalkya, what is above heaven, what is below earth, what is between this heaven and earth, and what people call the past, present, and future—in what is all that woven lengthwise and crosswise?”

3.8.4 He said, “Gargi, what is above heaven, what is below earth, what is between this heaven and earth, and what people call the past, present, and future—all that is woven lengthwise and crosswise in space.”

3.8.5 She said, “I bow to you, Yajnavalkya, for answering this question for me. Prepare yourself for the other.”

“Ask, Gargi.”

- 3.8.6 She said, “Yajnavalkya, what is above heaven, what is below earth, what is between this heaven and earth, and what people call the past, present, and future—in what is all that woven lengthwise and crosswise?”
- 3.8.7 He said, “Gargi, what is above heaven, what is below earth, what is between this heaven and earth, and what people call the past, present, and future—all that is woven lengthwise and crosswise in space itself.”
“Then in what is space woven lengthwise and crosswise?”
- 3.8.8 He said, “Gargi, this is what Brahmins call the imperishable. It is not thick or thin, short or long, red or oily. It has no shadow and no darkness, no air and no space. It is not attached to anything. It has no taste or smell, no eyes or ears, no speech or mind, no radiance or breath, no mouth or limbs, no inside or outside. It eats nothing, and nothing eats it.
- 3.8.9 “Gargi, under the rule of this imperishable, the sun and moon are held apart in their places. Gargi, under the rule of this imperishable, heaven and earth are held apart in their places. Gargi, under the rule of this imperishable, moments, spans of time, days and nights, half-months, months, seasons, and years remain in their places. Gargi, under the rule of this imperishable, some rivers flow east from the white mountains, others west, each following its own direction. Gargi, under the rule of this imperishable, people praise those who give. The gods depend on the person offering sacrifice, and the ancestors depend on the offering ladle.
- 3.8.10 “Whoever makes offerings, performs sacrifices, and practices strict discipline in this world for many thousands of years without knowing this imperishable, Gargi, gains only something that comes to an end. Whoever leaves this world without knowing this imperishable, Gargi, is to be pitied. But whoever leaves this world knowing this imperishable, Gargi, is a Brahmin.
- 3.8.11 “Gargi, this imperishable is not seen, but it sees. It is not heard, but it hears. It is not thought of, but it thinks. It is not known, but it knows. There is nothing else that sees. There is nothing else that hears. There is nothing else that thinks.

There is nothing else that knows. Gargi, it is in this imperishable that space is woven lengthwise and crosswise.”

3.8.12 She said, “Honored Brahmins, count yourselves fortunate if you get away from him by bowing. None of you will ever defeat him in a debate about Brahman.”

Then Vachaknavi stopped questioning him.

Section 3

9



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

He answered with the number given in the invocation to All the 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. “Who are those three hundred and three, and three thousand and three?”

- 3.9.2 He said, “Those are only displays of their power. There are just thirty-three gods.”
“Who are those thirty-three?”
“The eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, and the twelve Adityas make thirty-one. Indra and Prajapati make thirty-three.”
- 3.9.3 “Who are the Vasus?”
“Fire, earth, wind, the space between earth and heaven, the sun, moon, and the stars are the Vasus. All this wealth is stored in them. That is why they are called Vasus.”
- 3.9.4 “Who are the Rudras?”
“The ten breaths in a person, with the self as the eleventh. When they leave this mortal body, they make people cry. Because they make people cry, they are called Rudras.”
- 3.9.5 “Who are the Adityas?”
“The twelve months of the year are the Adityas. They go along taking all this away. Because they go along 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 earth and heaven, the sun, and moon are the six. These six make up everything here.”
- 3.9.8 “Which are those three gods?”
“These three worlds. All these gods are in them.”
“Which are those two gods?”
“Food and breath.”
“Which is the one and a half?”
“The wind that blows here.”

- 3.9.9 “People say, ‘This wind seems to blow as just one. How is it one and a half?’”
 “Because all this has prospered in it, it is called one and a half.”
 “Which is the one god?”
 “Breath. It is Brahman, which people call ‘That.’”
- 3.9.10 “Earth is his home. Fire is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”
 “I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is this person in the body. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
 “Immortality,” he said.
- 3.9.11 “Desire is his home. The heart is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”
 “I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is this person made of desire. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
 “Women,” he said.
- 3.9.12 “Visible forms are his home. Sight is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”
 “I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is that person in the sun. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
 “Truth,” he said.
- 3.9.13 “Space is his home. Hearing is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”
 “I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is this person heard in the ear and in an answering echo. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
 “The directions,” he said.

3.9.14 “Darkness is his home. The heart is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”

“I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is this person made of shadow. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
“Death,” he said.

3.9.15 “Visible forms are his home. The heart is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”

“I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is this person in the mirror. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
“Truth,” he said.

3.9.16 “Water is his home. The heart is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”

“I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is this person in water. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
“Varuna,” he said.

3.9.17 “Semen is his home. The heart is his world. The mind is his light. Whoever knows that person, the final resting place of the whole self, truly knows, Yajnavalkya.”

“I do know the person you speak of, the final resting place of the whole self. He is this person in the form of a son. But tell me, Shakalya, what is his deity?”
“Prajapati,” he said.

3.9.18 Yajnavalkya said, “Shakalya, have these Brahmins made you their tongs for pulling out hot coals?”

3.9.19 Shakalya said, “Yajnavalkya, what Brahman do you know, that you have defeated these Brahmins of Kuru and Panchala in debate?”

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

3.9.20 “What deity do you have in this eastern direction?”

“My deity is the sun.”

“What supports the sun?”

“Sight.”

“What supports sight?”

“Visible forms. For a person sees forms through sight.”

“What supports visible forms?”

“The heart,” he said. “For a person knows forms through the heart. Visible forms rest on the heart.”

“That is just so, Yajnavalkya.”

3.9.21 “What deity do you have in this southern direction?”

“My deity is Yama.”

“What supports Yama?”

“Sacrifice.”

“What supports sacrifice?”

“The gift to the priests.”

“What supports the gift to the priests?”

“Faith. For only when a person has faith does he give a gift to the priests. The gift to the priests rests on faith.”

“What supports faith?”

“The heart,” he said. “For it is through the heart that a person has faith. Faith rests on the heart.”

“That is just so, Yajnavalkya.”

- 3.9.22 “What deity do you have in this western direction?”
 “My deity is Varuna.”
 “What supports Varuna?”
 “Water.”
 “What supports water?”
 “Semen.”
 “What supports semen?”
 “The heart. That is why, when a child is born who looks like his father, people say, ‘He seems to have slipped out of his heart. He seems to have been made from his heart.’ For semen rests on the heart.”
 “That is just so, Yajnavalkya.”
- 3.9.23 “What deity do you have in this northern direction?”
 “My deity is Soma.”
 “What supports Soma?”
 “Initiation into the sacrifice.”
 “What supports initiation?”
 “Truth. That is why people tell someone who has been initiated, ‘Speak the truth.’ For initiation rests on truth.”
 “What supports truth?”
 “The heart,” he said. “For a person knows truth through the heart. Truth rests on the heart.”
 “That is just so, Yajnavalkya.”
- 3.9.24 “What deity do you have in this fixed direction?”
 “My deity is fire.”
 “What supports fire?”
 “Speech.”
 “What supports speech?”
 “The heart.”
 “What supports the heart?”
- 3.9.25 “You fool!” said Yajnavalkya. “You think it is somewhere outside us! If it were outside us, dogs would eat this body, or birds would tear it apart.”

3.9.26 “What supports you and your body?”

“The in-breath.”

“What supports the in-breath?”

“The out-breath.”

“What supports the out-breath?”

“The breath that spreads through the body.”

“What supports the breath that spreads through the body?”

“The breath that rises upward.”

“What supports the breath that rises upward?”

“The breath that moves evenly. This Self is ‘not this, not this.’ It cannot be grasped, because it is not grasped. It cannot decay, because it does not decay. It is not attached, because it does not attach itself. It is not bound. It does not suffer. It is not harmed.

“There are these eight homes, eight worlds, eight gods, and eight persons. I ask you about the person of the secret teaching, who has drawn out those persons, drawn them back in, and gone beyond them. If you do not explain him to me, your head will fall off.”

Shakalya did not know him. His head fell off. Robbers even carried away his bones, mistaking them for something else.

3.9.27 Then he said, “Honored Brahmins, any of you who wants to may question me. Or all of you may question me. I will question whichever of you wants it, or I will question all of you.”

The Brahmins did not dare.

3.9.29 He questioned them with these verses:

“A person really is like a tree, a tree of the forest.

His body hair is its leaves; his skin is its outer bark.

3.9.30 “His blood flows from his skin, as sap flows from a tree’s bark.

That is why it comes out when he is cut, as sap comes out when a tree is struck.

3.9.31 “His flesh is like its wood chips; his tough sinews are like its inner bark.

His bones are its wood inside; his marrow is compared to its pith.

3.9.32 “When a tree is cut down, it grows back from its root, fresher than before.

When a mortal is cut down by death, from what root does he grow back?

3.9.33 “Do not say, ‘From semen.’ That comes from someone alive.

A tree can clearly grow again after death, like a plant sprouting from seed.

3.9.34 “If a tree were pulled up with its root, it would not grow back.

When a mortal is cut down by death, from what root does he grow back?

3.9.35 “Once born, he is not born again. Who could give birth to him again?

3.9.36 “Brahman is knowledge and joy—a gift for a person who gives, the final resting
place

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 asked, “Yajnavalkya, why have you come? Do you want cattle, or subtle discussions?”
“Both, Your Majesty,” he said.
- 4.1.2 “Let us hear what anyone has told you.”
“Jitvan Shailini told me, ‘Speech is Brahman.’”
“Shailini spoke as someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher would speak: ‘Speech is Brahman.’
For what could someone who could not speak have?
But did he tell you its dwelling place and its foundation?”
“He did not.”
“Then that is only one quarter, Your Majesty.”
“Please tell us, Yajnavalkya.”
“Speech is its dwelling place, and space its foundation. A person should worship it as understanding.”
“What does understanding mean here, Yajnavalkya?”
“Speech itself, Your Majesty,” he said.
“Through speech a person recognizes a relative, Your Majesty.

Through speech, Your Majesty, people come to know the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvangiras, histories, ancient lore, branches of knowledge, Upanishads, verses, aphorisms, detailed explanations, explanations, sacrifices, offerings, food and drink, this world, the world beyond, and all beings.

Speech is the highest Brahman, Your Majesty.

Speech does not leave a person who knows this.

All beings flow toward that person.

They become a god and reach the gods.

This happens to anyone who knows this and worships in this way.”

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

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept a gift without teaching.”

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

“Udanka Shaulbayana told me,

‘Breath is Brahman.’”

“Shaulbayana spoke as someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher would speak: ‘Breath is Brahman.’

For what could someone who could not breathe have?

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

“He did not.”

“Then that is only one quarter, Your Majesty.”

“Please tell us, Yajnavalkya.”

“Breath is its dwelling place, and space its foundation.

A person should worship it as what is dear.”

“What does being dear mean here, Yajnavalkya?”

“Breath itself, Your Majesty,” he said.

“For the sake of breath, Your Majesty, a person performs a sacrifice for someone for whom they should not perform it.

They accept a gift from someone from whom they should not accept it.

Even when there is a risk of being killed in the direction they go, they go for the sake of breath, Your Majesty.

Breath is the highest Brahman, Your Majesty.

Breath does not leave a person who knows this.

All beings flow toward that person.

They become a god and reach the gods.

This happens to anyone who knows this and worships in this way.”

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

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept a gift without teaching.”

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

“Barku Varshna told me,

‘Sight is Brahman.’”

“Varshna spoke as someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher would speak: ‘Sight is Brahman.’

For what could someone who could not see have?

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

“He did not.”

“Then that is only one quarter, Your Majesty.”

“Please tell us, Yajnavalkya.”

“Sight is its dwelling place, and space its foundation.

A person should worship it as truth.”

“What does truth mean here, Yajnavalkya?”

“Sight itself, Your Majesty,” he said.

“When people ask someone who sees with their eyes, ‘Did you see it?’ and that person says, ‘I saw it,’ that is true.

Sight is the highest Brahman, Your Majesty.

Sight does not leave a person who knows this.

All beings flow toward that person.

They become a god and reach the gods.

This happens to anyone who knows this and worships in this way.”

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

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept a gift without teaching.”

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

“Gardabhivipita Bharadvaja told me,
‘Hearing is Brahman.’”

“Bharadvaja spoke as someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher
would speak: ‘Hearing is Brahman.’

For what could someone who could not hear have?

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

“He did not.”

“Then that is only one quarter, Your Majesty.”

“Please tell us, Yajnavalkya.”

“Hearing is its dwelling place, and space its foundation. A person should
worship it as infinity.”

“What does infinity mean here, Yajnavalkya?”

“The directions, Your Majesty,” he said.

“Whatever direction a person goes in, Your Majesty, they never reach its end.

For the directions have no end.

The directions are hearing, Your Majesty.

Hearing is the highest Brahman, Your Majesty.

Hearing does not leave a person who knows this.

All beings flow toward that person.

They become a god and reach the gods.

This happens to anyone who knows this and worships in this way.”

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

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept a gift without teaching.”

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

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

“Jabala spoke as someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher would speak: ‘Mind is Brahman.’

For what could someone without a mind have?

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

“He did not.”

“Then that is only one quarter, Your Majesty.”

“Please tell us, Yajnavalkya.”

“Mind is its dwelling place, and space its foundation. A person should worship it as joy.”

“What does joy mean here, Yajnavalkya?”

“Mind itself, Your Majesty,” he said. “Through the mind, Your Majesty, a man desires a woman. A son in his likeness is born to her.

That is joy.

Mind is the highest Brahman, Your Majesty.

Mind does not leave a person who knows this.

All beings flow toward that person.

They become a god and reach the gods.

This happens to anyone who knows this and worships in this way.”

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

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept a gift without teaching.”

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

“Vidagdha Shakalya told me,

‘The heart is Brahman.’”

“Shakalya spoke as someone taught by a mother, a father, and a teacher would speak: ‘The heart is Brahman.’

For what could someone without a heart have?

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

“He did not.”

“Then that is only one quarter, Your Majesty.”

“Please tell us, Yajnavalkya.”

“The heart is its dwelling place, and space its foundation.

A person should worship it as stability.”

“What does stability mean here, Yajnavalkya?”

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

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

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

All beings rest in the heart, Your Majesty.

The heart is the highest Brahman, Your Majesty.

The heart does not leave a person who knows this.

All beings flow toward that person.

They become a god and reach the gods.

This happens to anyone who knows this and worships in this way.”

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

Yajnavalkya said, “My father held that one should not accept a gift without teaching.”

Section 4

2



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

Please teach me.”

He said, “Your Majesty, just as someone about to make a long journey would
get a chariot or a boat ready, you have prepared yourself through these
secret teachings.

You are eminent and wealthy, have studied the Vedas, and have been taught the
Upanishads. Where will you go when you are released from here?”

“Sir, I do not know where I will go.”

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

“Please tell me, sir.”

4.2.2 The person in the right eye is named Indha.

Although his name is Indha, people call him Indra, using an indirect name.

For the gods seem to like indirect names and dislike direct ones.

4.2.3 The person-shaped figure in the left eye is his wife, Viraj.
Their meeting place is the space inside the heart.
Their food is the lump of blood inside the heart.
Their covering is the netlike structure inside the heart.
Their passage for moving about is the channel that goes upward from the heart.
The channels called Hita are set within the heart, each as fine as a hair split into
a thousand parts.

Through them this flowing nourishment flows.
That is why this person seems to have finer food than the bodily self.

4.2.4 His eastern direction is the breaths that go east.
His southern direction is the breaths that go south.
His western direction is the breaths that go west.
His northern direction is the breaths that go north.
His upper direction is the breaths that go up.
His lower direction is the breaths that go down.
All directions are all the breaths.

This Self is “not this, not this.”
It cannot be grasped, because it is never grasped.
It does not decay, because it never decays.
It is unattached, because it does not become attached.
It is unbound. It is not troubled.
It is not injured.

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

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

I bow to you.

These people of Videha are yours, and so am I.”

Section 4

3



- 4.3.1 Yajnavalkya went to Janaka of Videha.
He thought, “I will not speak with him.”
But Janaka of Videha and Yajnavalkya had once discussed the Agnihotra offering together.
Yajnavalkya had granted him a blessing.
He had chosen the right to ask whatever questions he wanted.
Yajnavalkya had granted it.
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.
“With the sun as their light, they sit, go about, do their work, and return.”
“That is right, Yajnavalkya.”
- 4.3.3 “When the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, what light does this person have?”
“The moon becomes their light.
With the moon as their light, they sit, go about, do their work, and return.”
“That is right, Yajnavalkya.”

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

“Fire becomes their light.

With fire as their light, they sit, go about, do their work, and return.”

“That is right, Yajnavalkya.”

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

“Speech becomes their light.

With speech as their light, they sit, go about, do their work, and return.

That is why, Your Majesty, even where someone cannot make out their own hand, they go toward the place where a voice is heard.”

“That is right, Yajnavalkya.”

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

“The Self becomes their light.

With the Self as their light, they sit, go about, do their work, and return.”

4.3.7 “Which is the Self?”

“The person made of awareness among the vital powers, the light inside the heart.

Remaining the same, this person moves through both worlds. They seem to think and seem to move about.

In dreams, they pass beyond this world, the forms of death.

4.3.8 “When this person is born and enters a body, they become connected with evils.

When they leave it and die, they leave the evils behind.

4.3.9 “This person has two places:
this place and the place in the other world.
The third is the place of dreams, at their meeting point.
Standing at this meeting point, they see both places, this one and the place in
the other world.

Whatever access they have to the place in the other world,
they take that route and see both evils and joys.

When they fall asleep, they take material from this world that contains
everything, take it apart themselves, build it up themselves, and sleep by
their own brightness, their own light.

Here this person becomes their own light.

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

But they create chariots, teams for chariots, and roads.

There are no joys, pleasures, or delights there.

But they create joys, pleasures, and delights.

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

But they create pools, lotus ponds, and rivers.

For they are the maker.

4.3.11 “There are these verses:

‘After putting the body to sleep, the one who does not sleep looks on those
who sleep.

Taking his light, he returns to his place: the golden person, the lone swan.

4.3.12 “Guarding the lower nest with breath, the immortal one moves outside the
nest.

The immortal one goes wherever he wishes: the golden person, the lone swan.

4.3.13 “Moving up and down within dreams, the god creates many forms,
as though enjoying himself with women, laughing, or seeing frightening things.

- 4.3.14 “People see his playground, but no one sees him.”
 “People say that one should not wake him suddenly.
 For someone whom this person does not return to is hard to heal.
 Others say this is only his waking state,
 because the things he sees awake are the things he sees asleep.
 Here this person becomes their own light.”
 “Sir, I give you a thousand cows.
 Tell me more about liberation.”
- 4.3.15 “After enjoying themselves and moving about in this state of calm, after merely
 seeing good and evil, this person runs back along the same route to the
 same place, to dreaming.
 Whatever they see there does not follow them.
 For this person is unattached.”
 “That is right, Yajnavalkya.
 Sir, I give you a thousand cows.
 Tell me more about liberation.”
- 4.3.16 “After enjoying themselves and moving about in this dream, after merely seeing
 good and evil, this person runs back along the same route to the same
 place, to waking.
 Whatever they see there does not follow them.
 For this person is unattached.”
 “That is right, Yajnavalkya.
 Sir, I give you a thousand cows.
 Tell me more about liberation.”
- 4.3.17 “After enjoying themselves and moving about in this waking state, after merely
 seeing good and evil, this person runs back along the same route to the same
 place, to dreaming.
- 4.3.18 “As a great fish moves between the two banks of a river, this one and the other,
 this person moves between these two states, dreaming and waking.

- 4.3.19 “As a hawk or an eagle grows tired after flying about in the sky, folds its wings,
and heads for its resting place,
this person runs toward that state
where, asleep, they desire nothing and see no dream.
- 4.3.20 “These channels called Hita are as fine as a hair split into a thousand parts.
They are filled with white, blue, tawny, green, and red fluid.
When people seem to kill or overpower this person, when an elephant seems to
chase them, or they seem to fall into a pit,
they imagine through ignorance the same frightening things they see while
awake.
But when they think, ‘I am like a god, like a king; I myself am all this,’
that is their highest world.
- 4.3.21 “This is their form beyond desire, free from evil and fear.
As a man held close by a woman he loves knows nothing outside or inside,
this person, held close by the knowing Self, knows nothing outside or inside.
This is their form in which all desires are fulfilled, in which the Self is their
desire, in which there is no desire. It is beyond sorrow.
- 4.3.22 “Here a father is no father, a mother no mother, worlds no worlds, gods no
gods, and Vedas no Vedas.
Here a thief is no thief, a murderer no murderer, a Chandala no Chandala, a
Paulkasa no Paulkasa, a renunciant no renunciant, and an ascetic no
ascetic.
Good does not follow this person, and evil does not follow them.
For then they have crossed beyond all the sorrows of the heart.
- 4.3.23 “When they do not see, they are still seeing, although they do not see.
The seer’s seeing cannot be lost, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could
see.
- 4.3.24 “When they do not smell, they are still smelling, although they do not smell.
The smeller’s smelling cannot be lost, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could
smell.

- 4.3.25 “When they do not taste, they are still tasting, although they do not taste.
The taster’s tasting cannot be lost, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could taste.
- 4.3.26 “When they do not speak, they are still speaking, although they do not speak.
The speaker’s speaking cannot be lost, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could speak of.
- 4.3.27 “When they do not hear, they are still hearing, although they do not hear.
The hearer’s hearing cannot be lost, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could hear.
- 4.3.28 “When they do not think, they are still thinking, although they do not think.
The thinker’s thinking cannot be lost, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could think of.
- 4.3.29 “When they do not touch, they are still touching, although they do not touch.
The one who touches cannot lose the power of touch, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could touch.
- 4.3.30 “When they do not know, they are still knowing, although they do not know.
The knower’s knowing cannot be lost, because it cannot be destroyed.
But there is no second thing, separate and distinct from them, that they could know.
- 4.3.31 “Where there seems to be something else, one may see something else, smell something else, taste something else, speak of something else, hear something else, think of something else, touch something else, or know something else.

4.3.32 “The seer becomes water: one, without a second.

This is the world of Brahman, Your Majesty.”

Yajnavalkya taught him in this way.

“This is this person’s highest goal.

This is their highest success.

This is their highest world.

This is their highest joy.

Other beings live on just a portion of this joy.

4.3.33 “Someone who is successful and wealthy among human beings, who rules others, and who has the fullest supply of all human pleasures has the highest human joy.

A hundred human joys make one joy of the ancestors who have won their worlds.

A hundred joys of the ancestors who have won their worlds make one joy in the world of the Gandharvas.

A hundred joys in the world of the Gandharvas make one joy of the gods who became gods through their actions.

A hundred joys of those gods make one joy of the gods by birth, and of a Vedic scholar who is blameless and not struck down by desire.

A hundred joys of the gods by birth make one joy in the world of Prajapati, and of a Vedic scholar who is blameless and not struck down by desire.

A hundred joys in the world of Prajapati make one joy in the world of Brahman,

and of a Vedic scholar who is blameless and not struck down by desire.

This is the highest joy.

This is the world of Brahman, Your Majesty.”

That is what Yajnavalkya said.

“Sir, I give you a thousand cows.

Tell me more about liberation.”

At this Yajnavalkya became afraid: “This intelligent king has blocked every way out for me.”

- 4.3.34 “After enjoying themselves and moving about in this dream state, after merely seeing good and evil, this person runs back along the same route to the same place, to waking.
- 4.3.35 “As a heavily loaded cart moves along creaking, this embodied self moves along creaking, ridden by the knowing Self, when the person begins to breathe upward.
- 4.3.36 “When someone becomes weak, through old age or illness, just as a mango, an udumbara fig, or a peepal fig comes free of its stem, this person comes free of these limbs and runs back along the same route to the same place, to breath itself.
- 4.3.37 “As guards, officials, charioteers, and village heads prepare food, drink, and lodging for an approaching king, saying, ‘He is coming! He is arriving!’ all beings prepare for someone who knows this, saying, ‘Brahman is coming! It is arriving!’
- 4.3.38 “As guards, officials, charioteers, and village heads gather around a king who is about to leave, all the vital powers gather around this self at the end of life, when the person begins to breathe upward.”

Section 4

4



4.4.1 When this self becomes weak and seems to become confused,
these vital powers gather around it.
Taking these particles of light into itself, it goes down into the heart.
When the person in the eye turns away,
the dying person no longer recognizes forms.

4.4.2 People say, “He has become one; he does not see.”
They say, “He has become one; he does not smell.”
They say, “He has become one; he does not taste.”
They say, “He has become one; he does not speak.”
They say, “He has become one; he does not hear.”
They say, “He has become one; he does not think.”
They say, “He has become one; he does not touch.”
They say, “He has become one; he does not know.”
The tip of his heart lights up.
By that light this self leaves,
through the eye, the top of the head, or another part of the body.
As it leaves, breath follows it.
As breath leaves, all the vital powers follow it.
The self has awareness.

It moves on with that awareness.

Knowledge, action, and previous experience take hold of it.

- 4.4.3 As a caterpillar reaches the end of a blade of grass, takes hold of another support, and draws itself together, this self puts the body aside, leaves it without awareness, takes hold of another support, and draws itself together.

- 4.4.4 As a goldsmith takes a piece of gold and makes another, newer and finer form, this self puts the body aside, leaves it without awareness, and makes another, newer and finer form:

that of an ancestor, a Gandharva, a god, Prajapati, Brahma, or another being.

- 4.4.5 This self is Brahman: made of awareness, mind, breath, sight, hearing, earth, water, wind, space, light and the absence of light, desire and the absence of desire, anger and the absence of anger, right and wrong—made of everything.

This is what is meant by saying, “Made of this, made of that.”

A person becomes according to how they act and behave.

Someone who does good becomes good.

Someone who does evil becomes evil.

Through good action a person becomes good; through evil action, evil.

People also say,

“This person is made of desire.”

As their desire is, so is their intention.

As their intention is, so is the action they do.

Whatever action they do, they reach its result.

4.4.6 There is this verse:

“Attached, he goes with his deeds to the very place where his mind, his identifying sign, is fixed.

After reaching the end of the result of whatever action he does here, he returns from that world to this world, to act again.”

This is what happens to someone who desires.

But someone who does not desire, who is without desire, free from desire, whose desires are fulfilled, whose desire is the Self—their vital breaths do not leave.

Being Brahman, that person reaches Brahman.

4.4.7 There is this verse:

“When all the desires lodged in the heart are released, then the mortal becomes immortal and reaches Brahman here.”

As a snake’s dead skin lies discarded on an anthill, this body lies.

But this bodiless, immortal breath is Brahman itself, light itself.

“Sir, I give you a thousand cows,” said Janaka of Videha.

4.4.8 There are these verses:

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

By it the wise who know Brahman go upward from here to the heavenly world, set free.

4.4.9 “On that path they speak of white and blue, tawny, green, and red.

This path has been found through Brahman. By it goes the knower of Brahman, the doer of good, the radiant one.

4.4.10 “Those who worship ignorance enter blind darkness.

Those who delight in knowledge enter what seems even greater darkness.

4.4.11 “Those worlds called Joyless are covered in blind darkness.

People who do not know and do not understand go to them after death.

4.4.12 “If a person knew the Self, saying, ‘I am this,’

what would they want, and for whose desire would they suffer along with the body?

- 4.4.13 “Someone who has found and fully understood the Self that has entered this dense body
is the maker of the universe, the maker of everything. The world is theirs; they are the world itself.
- 4.4.14 “While still here, we know that. If we fail to know it, the loss is great.
Those who know it become immortal. The others go only to suffering.
- 4.4.15 “When someone clearly sees this Self, the god,
the ruler of what has been and what will be, they no longer shrink away.
- 4.4.16 “Beneath it the year turns with its days.
The gods worship that light of lights as immortal life.
- 4.4.17 “The five peoples, and space, rest in it.
I regard that as the Self. Knowing Brahman, the immortal, I become immortal.
- 4.4.18 “Those who know the breath of breath, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear,
and the mind of the mind
have understood Brahman, the ancient, the first.
- 4.4.19 “It must be seen through the mind alone. There is no difference at all here.
Anyone who sees what seems to be difference here goes from death to death.
- 4.4.20 “It must be seen as one alone: this immeasurable, unchanging reality.
The Self is without stain, beyond space, unborn, great, and unchanging.
- 4.4.21 “A wise Brahmin, having known it, should make that alone the basis of
understanding.
They should not dwell on many words, for that only tires speech.”
- 4.4.22 This great, unborn Self is the one made of awareness among the vital powers.
It lies in the space inside the heart.
It controls everything.
It is the lord of everything.
It is the ruler of everything.
It does not become greater through good action
or 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 bridge that holds these worlds apart so that they do not run together.
Brahmins seek to know it through reciting the Veda, celibacy, sacrifice, giving,
and the austerity of fasting.

By knowing it alone, a person becomes a sage.

Those who wander away from home wander out seeking it as their world.

Knowing this, learned people in earlier times did not desire children.

“What would we do with children, when this Self is our world?” they said.

They rose above the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, and the desire for
worlds, and 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, because it is never
grasped.

It does not decay, because it never decays.

It is unattached, because it does not become attached.

It is unbound. It is neither troubled nor injured.

It crosses beyond both “I did evil” and “I did good,”

beyond both of these,

the good and the bad.

Things done and things left undone do not torment it.

4.4.23 This is expressed in a Rig verse:

“This is the lasting greatness of a Brahmin. It does not grow through action or
become smaller.

A person should know its path. Knowing it, they are not stained by evil
action.”

So someone who knows this becomes calm, controlled, withdrawn, patient,
and focused, and sees the Self within the self.

They see everything as the Self.

Evil does not cross over them.

They cross over all evil.

Evil does not burn them.

They burn all evil.

They become a Brahmin without evil, without stain, and without doubt.

“This is the world of Brahman, Your Majesty.

You have been brought to it,” said Yajnavalkya.

“Sir, I give you the people of Videha, and myself too, to serve you.”

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

Anyone who knows this finds wealth.

4.4.25 This great, unborn Self is free from aging, deathless, immortal, fearless:

Brahman.

Brahman is freedom from fear.

Anyone who knows this becomes fearless Brahman.

Section 4

5



- 4.5.1 Yajnavalkya had two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani.
Maitreyi was versed in discussions about Brahman.
At that time Katyayani had only a woman's understanding.
Yajnavalkya was about to begin a different way of life.
- 4.5.2 "Maitreyi," said Yajnavalkya,
"my dear, I am about to leave this place and go wandering.
Let me make a settlement between you and Katyayani."
- 4.5.3 Maitreyi said,
"Sir, if I owned this whole earth, filled with wealth, would that make me
immortal or not?"
"No," said Yajnavalkya.
"Your life would be like that of people with plenty of possessions.
But wealth offers no hope of immortality."
- 4.5.4 Maitreyi said,
"What would I do with something that will not make me immortal?
Tell me just what you know, sir."

4.5.5 Yajnavalkya said,

“You were dear to me already; what you have said makes you even dearer.

Come, then.

I will explain this to you.

As I explain, think carefully about what I say.”

4.5.6 He said,

“You do not love a husband for the husband’s sake, my dear. You love a husband for the Self’s sake.

You do not love a wife for the wife’s sake, my dear. You love a wife for the Self’s sake.

You do not love sons for the sons’ sake, my dear. You love sons for the Self’s sake.

You do not love wealth for wealth’s sake, my dear. You love wealth for the Self’s sake.

You do not love livestock for the livestock’s sake, my dear. You love livestock for the Self’s sake.

You do not love priestly power for priestly power’s sake, my dear. You love priestly power for the Self’s sake.

You do not love ruling power for ruling power’s sake, my dear. You love ruling power for the Self’s sake.

You do not love worlds for the worlds’ sake, my dear. You love worlds for the Self’s sake.

You do not love gods for the gods’ sake, my dear. You love gods for the Self’s sake.

You do not love the Vedas for the Vedas’ sake, my dear. You love the Vedas for the Self’s sake.

You do not love beings for the beings’ sake, my dear. You love beings for the Self’s sake.

You do not love everything for everything’s sake, my dear. You love everything for the Self’s sake.

Maitreyi, my dear, the Self must be seen, heard, thought about, and deeply considered.

When the Self has been seen, heard, thought about, and understood,
everything here is known.

4.5.7 “Priestly power turns away from anyone who knows it as separate from the Self.

Ruling power turns away from anyone who knows it as separate from the Self.
The worlds turn away from anyone who knows them as separate from the Self.
The gods turn away from anyone who knows them as separate from the Self.
The Vedas turn away from anyone who knows them as separate from the Self.
Beings turn away from anyone who knows them as separate from the Self.
Everything turns away from anyone who knows it as separate from the Self.
This priestly power, this ruling power, these worlds, these gods, these Vedas,
these beings, and everything here are this Self.

4.5.8 “When someone strikes a drum, you cannot take hold of the sounds that come out of it.

But by grasping the drum or the drumming, you grasp the sound.

4.5.9 “When someone blows a conch, you cannot take hold of the sounds that come out of it.

But by grasping the conch or the blowing of it, you grasp the sound.

4.5.10 “When someone plays a lute, you cannot take hold of the sounds that come out of it.

But by grasping the lute or the playing of it, you grasp the sound.

4.5.11 “As separate streams of smoke come from a fire lit with damp wood, my dear, all these are the breath of this great being: the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvangiras, histories, ancient lore, branches of knowledge, Upanishads, verses, aphorisms, detailed explanations, explanations, sacrifices, offerings, food and drink, this world, the world beyond, and all beings.

All these are its breaths.

4.5.12 “As all waters have their one destination in the sea,
all touches have their one destination in the skin;
all smells have their one destination in the nostrils;
all tastes have their one destination in the tongue;

all forms have their one destination in sight;
all sounds have their one destination in hearing;
all intentions have their one destination in mind;
all branches of knowledge have their one destination in the heart;
all actions have their one destination in the hands;
all pleasures have their one destination in the sexual organ;
all discharges have their one destination in the anus;
all paths have their one destination in the feet;
and all Vedas have their one destination in speech.

4.5.13 “A lump of salt has no separate inside or outside. It is entirely a mass of taste.
In the same way, my dear, this Self has no separate inside or outside. It is
entirely a mass of understanding.

It arises from these elements and passes away with them.

My dear, I say that after death there is no recognition.”

That is what Yajnavalkya said.

4.5.14 Maitreyi said,

“Sir, here you have brought me to complete confusion.

I do not understand this Self.”

He said, “My dear, I am not saying anything confusing.

This Self cannot be destroyed. Its nature is not to be cut off.

4.5.15 “Where there seems to be a second thing, one person sees another, smells
another, tastes another, speaks to another, hears another, thinks of
another, touches another, and knows another.

But when everything has become the Self for a person, through what would
they see whom? Through what would they smell whom? Through what
would they taste whom? Through what would they speak to whom?
Through what would they hear whom? Through what would they think
of whom? Through what would they touch whom? Through what would
they know whom?

Through what could they know that by which they know everything here?

This Self is ‘not this, not this.’

It cannot be grasped, because it is never grasped.

It does not decay, because it never decays.

It is unattached, because it does not become attached.

It is unbound. It is neither troubled nor injured.

My dear, through what could a person know the knower? Maitreyi, you have
received the teaching.

My dear, this is the whole of immortality.”

After saying this, Yajnavalkya left.

Section 4

6



4.6.1 Now the line of teachers.

Pautimashya received the teaching from Gaupavana.

Gaupavana received it from Pautimashya.

Pautimashya received it from Gaupavana.

Gaupavana received it from Kaushika.

Kaushika received it from Kaundinya.

Kaundinya received it from Shandilya.

Shandilya received it from Kaushika and Gautama.

Gautama

4.6.2 received it from Agniveshya.

Agniveshya received it from Gargya.

Gargya received it from Gargya.

Gargya received it from Gautama.

Gautama received it from Saitava.

Saitava received it from Parasharyayana.

Parasharyayana received it from Gargyayana.

Gargyayana received it from Uddalakayana.

Uddalakayana received it from Jabalayana.

Jabalayana received it from Madhyandinayana.

Madhyandinayana received it from Saukarayana.

Saukarayana received it from Kashayana.

Kashayana received it from Sayakayana.

Sayakayana received it from Kaushikayani.

Kaushikayani

4.6.3 received it from Ghritakaushika.

Ghritakaushika received it from Parasharya.

Parasharya received it from Parasharya.

Parasharya received it from Jatukarnya.

Jatukarnya received it from Asurayana and Yaska.

Asurayana received it from Traivani.

Traivani received it from Aupajandhani.

Aupajandhani received it from Asuri.

Asuri received it from Bharadvaja.

Bharadvaja received it from Atreya.

Atreya received it from Manti.

Manti received it from Gautama.

Gautama received it from Gautama.

Gautama received it from Vatsya.

Vatsya received it from Shandilya.

Shandilya received it from Kaishorya Kapya.

Kaishorya Kapya received it from Kumaraharita.

Kumaraharita received it from Galava.

Galava received it from Vidarbhi Kaundinya.

Vidarbhi Kaundinya received it from Vatsanapat Babhrava.

Vatsanapat Babhrava received it from Pantha Saubhara.

Pantha Saubhara received it from Ayasya Angirasa.

Ayasya Angirasa received it from Abhuti Tvashtra.

Abhuti Tvashtra received it from Vishvarupa Tvashtra.

Vishvarupa Tvashtra received it from the Ashvins.

The Ashvins received it from Dadhichi Atharvana.

Dadhyanth Atharvana received it from Atharvan Daiva.

Atharvan Daiva received it from Mrityu Pradhvamsana.

Mrityu Pradhvamsana received it from Pradhvamsana.

Pradhvamsana received it from Ekarshi.

Ekarshi received it from Viprachitti.

Viprachitti received it from Vyashti.

Vyashti received it from Sanaru.

Sanaru received it from Sanatana.

Sanatana received it from Sanaga.

Sanaga received it from Parameshthin.

Parameshthin received it from Brahma.

Brahman is self-born.

Homage to Brahman.

Section 5

1



5.1.1 That is whole. This is whole. What is whole comes from what is whole.
When the whole is taken from the whole, the whole remains.
Space is Brahman.
Space is ancient.
Space is full of air.
That is what the son of Kauravyayani used to say.
The Brahmins know this Veda.
Through it a person knows what must be known.

Section 5

2



5.2.1 Three kinds of children of Prajapati lived as celibate students with their father
Prajapati:

gods, human beings, and Asuras.

After living as students, the gods said, “Please teach us.”

He told them the syllable “Da.”

“Have you understood?” he asked.

“We have understood,” they said.

“You told us, ‘Control yourselves,’ damyata.”

“Yes,” he said. “You have understood.”

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

He told them the same syllable, “Da.”

“Have you understood?” he asked.

“We have understood,” they said.

“You told us, ‘Give,’ datta.”

“Yes,” he said. “You have understood.”

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

He told them the same syllable, “Da.”

“Have you understood?” he asked.

“We have understood,” they said.

“You told us, ‘Be compassionate,’ dayadhvam.”

“Yes,” he said. “You have understood.”

The divine voice of thunder keeps repeating this: “Da, da, da.”

“Control yourselves. Give. Be compassionate.”

A person should learn these three: self-control, generosity, and compassion.

Section 5

3



5.3.1 This heart is Prajapati.

It is Brahman.

It is everything.

The word hridayam, heart, has three syllables.

Hri is one syllable.

Relatives and others bring gifts to anyone who knows this.

Da is one syllable.

Relatives and others give to anyone who knows this.

Yam is one syllable.

Anyone who knows this goes to the heavenly world.

Section 5

4



5.4.1 That was precisely this:
truth.

Anyone who knows this great, awe-inspiring being, the firstborn, as “Truth is Brahman” conquers these worlds, and their opponent is conquered. This happens to anyone who knows this great, awe-inspiring being, the firstborn, as “Truth is Brahman.”

For Brahman is truth.

Section 5

5



5.5.1 At first all this was water.

The waters produced truth.

Truth is Brahman.

Brahman produced Prajapati.

Prajapati produced the gods.

Those gods worship truth alone.

It has three syllables: sa-ti-yam. Sa is one syllable,

ti is one syllable,

and yam is one syllable.

The first and last syllables are truth. In the middle is untruth.

This untruth is held on both sides by truth.

So it is filled with truth.

Untruth does not harm anyone who knows this.

5.5.2 That truth is the sun up there.

The person in that disk and the person in the right eye rest on each other.

The one in the sun rests on the one in the eye through the sun's rays. The one
in the eye rests on the one in the sun through the vital breaths.

When someone is about to leave the body, they see this disk as clear.

These rays no longer come toward them.

- 5.5.3 The person in this disk has bhur as his head.
There is one head and one syllable.
Bhuvah is his arms.
There are two arms and two syllables.
Suvar is his support.
There are two supporting feet and two syllables.
His secret name is ahar, day.
Anyone who knows this destroys evil and leaves it behind.
- 5.5.4 The person in the right eye has bhur as his head.
There is one head and one syllable.
Bhuvah is his arms.
There are two arms and two syllables.
Suvar is his support.
There are two supporting feet and two syllables.
His secret name is aham, I.
Anyone who knows this destroys evil and leaves it behind.

Section 5

6



- 5.6.1 This person is made of mind. His reality is light.
He is inside the heart, like a grain of rice or barley.
He is the lord of everything, the ruler of everything. He governs absolutely
everything here.

Section 5

7



- 5.7.1 People say, “Lightning is Brahman.”
Lightning, vidyut, gets its name from splitting, vidana.
It cuts free from evil anyone who knows, “Lightning is Brahman.”
For lightning is Brahman.

Section 5

8



- 5.8.1 A person 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:
svaha and vashat.
Human beings live on hanta,
and the ancestors on svadha.
Breath is her bull, and mind is her calf.

Section 5

9



5.9.1 This fire within a person is Vaishvanara, the fire shared by everyone.
Through it, food is digested:
the food that is eaten here.
It makes this sound:
the sound a person hears when they close their ears.
When someone is about to leave the body, they no longer hear this sound.

Section 5

10



5.10.1 When a person leaves this world, they reach the wind.
The wind opens a space for them like the hole in a chariot wheel.
They go up through it.
They reach the sun.
The sun opens a space for them
like the opening in a lambara drum.
They go up through it.
They reach the moon.
The moon opens a space for them
like the opening in a kettledrum.
They go up through it.
They reach a world without sorrow or cold.
They live there for endless years.

Section 5

11



- 5.11.1 When a sick person suffers heat, this is the highest austerity.
Anyone who knows this wins the highest world.
When people take a dead person to the wilderness, this is the highest austerity.
Anyone who knows this wins the highest world.
When people place a dead person on the fire, this is the highest austerity.
Anyone who knows this wins the highest world.

Section 5

12



5.12.1 Some say, “Food is Brahman.”
That is not so.
Food rots without breath.
Some say, “Breath is Brahman.”
That is not so.
Breath dries up without food.
These two gods reach the highest state by becoming one.
Pratrida once said to his father,
“What good could I do for someone who knows this? What harm could I do to
him?”
His father signaled with his hand, “No, Pratrida!
Who can reach the highest state by becoming one with these two?”
He told him this: “Vi.”
Food is vi,
because all these beings have entered, vishta, into food.
“Ram.”
Breath is ram,
because all these beings take pleasure, ram, in breath.
All beings enter anyone who knows this.

All beings take pleasure in that person.

Section 5

13



5.13.1 The Uktha hymn.

Breath is the Uktha hymn,
because breath makes everything rise.
From someone who knows this, a heroic son who knows the Uktha arises.
Anyone who knows this gains union with the Uktha and shares its world.

5.13.2 The Yajus formula.

Breath is the Yajus,
because all these beings are joined, yuj, in breath.
All beings join with anyone who knows this to give them the highest position.
Anyone who knows this gains union with the Yajus and shares its world.

5.13.3 The Saman chant.

Breath is the Saman,
because all these beings come together in breath.
All beings come together to secure the highest position for anyone who knows
this.
Anyone who knows this gains union with the Saman and shares its world.

5.13.4 Ruling power.

Breath is ruling power.

Breath is indeed ruling power.

Breath protects a person from injury.

That person gains ruling power that needs no protection.

Anyone who knows this gains union with ruling power and shares its world.

Section 5

14



5.14.1 Bhumir antariksham dyauh—earth, the space between heaven and earth, and
heaven—has eight syllables.

One line of the Gayatri has eight syllables.

This is that line of the Gayatri.

Anyone who knows this line in this way wins everything in these three worlds.

5.14.2 Richo yajumshi samani—Rig verses, Yajus formulas, and Saman chants—has
eight syllables.

One line of the Gayatri has eight syllables.

This is that line of the Gayatri.

Anyone who knows this line in this way wins all that is covered by this
threefold knowledge.

5.14.3 Prano apano vyanah—inward breath, downward breath, and the breath that spreads through the body—has eight syllables.

One line of the Gayatri has eight syllables.

This is that line of the Gayatri.

Anyone who knows this line in this way wins everything that breathes.

Its fourth, visible line, beyond the world, is the one who shines up there.

What is fourth is called turiya, the fourth.

It is called the visible line because this one can be seen.

It is called “beyond the world” because it shines high above the whole world.

Anyone who knows this line in this way shines with prosperity and glory.

5.14.4 This Gayatri rests on that fourth, visible line beyond the world.

That line rests on truth.

Sight is truth.

Sight really is truth.

That is why, if two people came now disputing, one saying, “I saw it,” and the other, “I heard it,”

we would believe the one who said,

“I saw it.”

That truth rests on strength.

Breath is strength.

So it rests on breath.

That is why people say that strength is more powerful than truth.

In this way the Gayatri rests within the individual self.

It protected the gayas.

The vital breaths are the gayas.

So it protected the vital breaths.

Because it protected, trai, the gayas, it is called Gayatri.

The Savitri verse that a teacher recites to a student is this Gayatri.

It protects the vital breaths of the person to whom the teacher recites it.

- 5.14.5 Some recite this Savitri in the Anushtubh meter.
 They say, "Speech is Anushtubh.
 We are reciting speech."
 A teacher should not do that.
 They should recite the Savitri in the Gayatri meter.
 Even if someone who knows this accepts what seems a great deal in gifts, it does
 not equal even one line of the Gayatri.
- 5.14.6 If someone accepted these three worlds in their entirety, that would equal its
 first line.
 If someone accepted everything covered by this threefold knowledge, that
 would equal its second line.
 If someone accepted everything that breathes, that would equal its third line.
 But its fourth, visible line beyond the world is the one who shines up there.
 It cannot be obtained through anything.
 How could anyone accept that much in gifts?
- 5.14.7 This is the prayer addressed to it:
 "Gayatri, you have one foot, two feet, three feet, four feet.
 You have no feet,
 because you cannot be reached.
 I bow to your fourth, visible foot beyond the world."
 A person may add, "May that man not obtain that," about someone they hate,
 or, "May that desire of his not succeed."
 That desire does not succeed for the person against whom this prayer is
 addressed.
 Or the person may add, "May I obtain that."

5.14.8 Janaka of Videha once said to Budila Ashvatarashvi, “You said you knew the Gayatri.

Then how is it that you have become an elephant and carry loads?”

He answered, “Your Majesty, I did not know its mouth.”

Fire is its mouth.

Even if people put what seems a great deal into a fire, it burns all of it.

In the same way, even if someone who knows this does what seems a great deal of evil, they consume it all and become clean, purified, free from aging, and immortal.

Section 5

15



5.15.1 A golden bowl covers the face of truth.
Pushan, uncover it so that I, devoted to truth, may see.
Pushan, lone seer, Yama, Sun, child of Prajapati, draw back your rays. Gather in
your light.
Let me see your most beautiful form. I am that person who is there.
Let the breath go to the immortal wind, and let this body end in ashes.
Om. Will, remember. Remember what was done. Will, remember. Remember
what was done.
Agni, guide us by a good path to prosperity. God, you know all the ways.
Keep crooked wrongdoing away from us. We offer you our fullest words of
homage.

Section 6

1



6.1.1 Anyone who knows the oldest and the best becomes the oldest and the best among their own people.

Breath is the oldest and the best.

Anyone who knows this becomes the oldest and the best among their own people,

and among whatever people they wish to hold that position.

6.1.2 Anyone who knows the most prosperous becomes the most prosperous among their own people.

Speech is the most prosperous.

Anyone who knows this becomes the most prosperous among their own people,

and among whatever people they wish to hold that position.

6.1.3 Anyone who knows the foundation stands firmly on level ground and stands firmly on difficult ground.

Sight is the foundation.

Through sight a person stands firmly on both level and difficult ground.

Anyone who knows this stands firmly on level ground and stands firmly on difficult ground.

- 6.1.4 Anyone who knows success succeeds in obtaining whatever they desire.
Hearing is success,
because all these Vedas come together in hearing.
Anyone who knows this succeeds in obtaining whatever they desire.
- 6.1.5 Anyone who knows the dwelling place becomes a dwelling place for their own
people and a dwelling place for others.
Mind is the dwelling place.
Anyone who knows this becomes a dwelling place for their own people and a
dwelling place for others.
- 6.1.6 Anyone who knows reproduction has children and livestock.
Semen is reproduction.
Anyone who knows this has children and livestock.
- 6.1.7 These vital powers went to Brahma, arguing over which of them was best.
They asked, “Which of us is the most prosperous?”
Brahma told them, “Whichever of you makes this body worse off by leaving it is
the most prosperous.”
- 6.1.8 Speech left.
After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, “How were you able to live
without me?”
They answered, “We lived like people unable to speak: without speaking
through speech, but breathing through breath, seeing through sight,
hearing through hearing, knowing through mind, and reproducing
through semen.”
Speech went back in.
- 6.1.9 Sight left.
After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, “How were you able to live
without me?”
They answered, “We lived like blind people: without seeing through sight, but
breathing through breath, speaking through speech, hearing through
hearing, knowing through mind, and reproducing through semen.”
Sight went back in.

6.1.10 Hearing left.

After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, “How were you able to live without me?”

They answered, “We lived like deaf people: without hearing through hearing, but breathing through breath, speaking through speech, seeing through sight, knowing through mind, and reproducing through semen.”

Hearing went back in.

6.1.11 Mind left.

After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, “How were you able to live without me?”

They answered, “We lived like people without understanding: without knowing through mind, but breathing through breath, speaking through speech, seeing through sight, hearing through hearing, and reproducing through semen.”

Mind went back in.

6.1.12 Semen left.

After staying away for a year, it returned and asked, “How were you able to live without me?”

They answered, “We lived like impotent men: without reproducing through semen, but breathing through breath, speaking through speech, seeing through sight, hearing through hearing, and knowing through mind.”

Semen went back in.

6.1.13 Then breath was about to leave. As a great, fine horse from Sindhu might pull out the stakes to which its feet are tied, breath pulled up these vital powers.

They said, “Please do not leave.

We will not be able to live without you.”

“Then pay me tribute,” it said.

“Yes,” they agreed.

6.1.14 Speech said, “The prosperity that makes me most prosperous is yours.”

Sight said, “The foundation that I am is yours.”

Hearing said, “The success that I am is yours.”

Mind said, “The dwelling place that I am is yours.”

Semen said, “The reproduction that I am is yours.”

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

“Whatever there is, down to what dogs, worms, insects, and moths eat, is your food.

Water is your clothing.”

Anyone who knows the food of this breath in this way neither eats nor accepts anything that is not food.

Knowing this, Vedic scholars sip water before eating and sip water after eating. They think that in doing so they are keeping this breath clothed.

Section 6

2



6.2.1 Shvetaketu, a descendant of Aruna, came to the assembly of the Panchalas. He approached Pravahana Jaivali, who was having attendants wait on him. Seeing him, the king said, “Young man!”

“Sir!” he answered.

“Have you been taught by your father?”

“Yes,” he said.

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

“No,” he said.

“Do you know how they return to this world?”

“No,” he said again.

“Do you know why that world never fills up, although so many go there again and again?”

“No,” he said again.

“Do you know at which offering the waters, after being offered, rise up with a human voice and speak?”

“No,” he said again.

“Do you know the way into the path of the gods and the path of the ancestors?”

What do people do to enter the path of the gods or the path of the ancestors?

We have heard these words of the seer:

‘I have heard of two paths: those of the ancestors, of the gods, and of mortals. Along these goes everything that moves, whatever is between the father and the mother.’”

“I do not know even one of these things,” Shvetaketu said.

6.2.3 Then the king invited him to stay.

Disregarding the invitation, the young man ran away.

He came to his father

and said, “You told us before that we had been fully taught!”

“How so, my intelligent son?”

“That fellow from the ruling class asked me five questions.

I do not know the answer to even one.”

“What were they?”

He repeated the opening words of the questions.

6.2.4 His father said, “My child, you should know this about me: whatever I know, I have told you all of it.

But let us go there.

We will return and live as students.”

“You go yourself,” Shvetaketu said.

So Gautama went to where Pravahana Jaivali was.

The king had a seat brought for him and had water brought.

Then he gave him an offering of welcome.

He said, “We grant the honored Gautama a blessing of his choice.”

6.2.5 Gautama said, “You have promised me this blessing.

Tell me what you said in the young man’s presence.”

6.2.6 The king said, “Gautama, that belongs among divine blessings.

Ask for a human one.”

6.2.7 Gautama said, “It is well known that we already have gold, cattle, horses, female slaves, cloaks, and clothing.

Please do not be ungenerous to us with what is abundant, infinite, and without limit.”

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

“I come to you as a student.”

In earlier times, people became students simply by saying this.

He stayed there after declaring himself a student.

6.2.8 The king said, “Do not take offense at us, Gautama, nor should your ancestors.

Before this, this knowledge had never lived in any Brahmin.

I will tell it to you.

For who could refuse someone who speaks in this way?”

6.2.9 “That world is a fire, Gautama.

The sun is its fuel.

The rays are its smoke.

Day is its flame.

The directions are its coals.

The directions between them are its sparks.

Into this fire the gods offer faith.

From this offering King Soma comes into being.

6.2.10 “Parjanya is a fire, Gautama.

The year is its fuel.

Clouds are its smoke.

Lightning is its flame.

Thunderbolts are its coals.

Thunderclaps are its sparks.

Into this fire the gods offer King Soma.

From this offering rain comes into being.

- 6.2.11 “This world is a fire, Gautama.
The earth is its fuel.
Fire is its smoke.
Night is its flame.
The moon is its coals.
The stars are its sparks.
Into this fire the gods offer rain.
From this offering food comes into being.
- 6.2.12 “A man is a fire, Gautama.
His open mouth is its fuel.
Breath is its smoke.
Speech is its flame.
Sight is its coals.
Hearing is its sparks.
Into this fire the gods offer food.
From this offering semen comes into being.
- 6.2.13 “A woman is a fire, Gautama.
Her sexual organ is its fuel.
Her hair is its smoke.
Her vagina is its flame.
Penetration is its coals.
Pleasures are its sparks.
Into this fire the gods offer semen.
From this offering a person comes into being.
That person lives as long as they live.
Then, when they die,

6.2.14 “people take them to the fire.

Here fire itself is the fire,

fuel is the fuel,

smoke is the smoke,

flame is the flame,

coals are the coals,

and sparks are the sparks.

Into this fire the gods offer the person.

From this offering a person with a shining appearance comes into being.

6.2.15 “Those who know this, and those in the wilderness who worship faith and truth, reach the flame.

From the flame they reach the day;

from the day, the fortnight of the waxing moon;

from that fortnight, the six months when the sun travels north;

from those months, the world of the gods;

from the world of the gods, the sun;

and from the sun, lightning.

A person made of mind comes to those who have reached lightning and takes them to the worlds of Brahman.

They live in those worlds of Brahman for the farthest reaches of time.

They do not return.

6.2.16 “Those who win worlds through sacrifice, giving, and austerity reach smoke.

From smoke they reach the night;

from the night, the fortnight of the waning moon;

from that fortnight, the six months when the sun travels south;

from those months, the world of the ancestors;

and from the world of the ancestors, the moon.

When they reach the moon, they become food.

There the gods consume them, as they consume King Soma, saying, ‘Grow full. Diminish.’

When that comes to an end for them, they pass into this space.

From space they enter wind;

from wind, rain;
from rain, the earth.
When they reach the earth, they become food.
They are offered again into the fire that is a man, and then are born in the fire
that is a woman.
In this way they keep going around, rising again into the worlds.
Those who do not know either of these paths become insects, moths, and
biting creatures.”

Section 6

3



6.3.1 Someone who desires, “Let me reach greatness,” should observe the Upasad vow for twelve days. Then, on an auspicious day in the fortnight of the waxing moon while the sun travels north, they should gather all kinds of plants and fruits in a bowl or cup made from udumbara wood, sweep and plaster the ground, build a fire, spread grass around it, prepare clarified butter in the prescribed way, and mix the mash under a constellation with a male name. They then make offerings:

“Jatavedas, to all the gods within you who turn aside and destroy a person’s desires,

I offer their allotted share. Satisfied, may they satisfy all my desires. Svaha.

You who lie across the way, saying, ‘I am the one who holds things back,’

I worship you with a stream of clarified butter so that you bring success. Svaha.”

- 6.3.2 They offer into the fire, saying, “To the oldest, svaha. To the best, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To breath, svaha. To the most prosperous, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To speech, svaha. To the foundation, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To sight, svaha. To success, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To hearing, svaha. To the dwelling place, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To mind, svaha. To reproduction, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To semen, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- 6.3.3 They offer into the fire, saying, “To Agni, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To Soma, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “Earth, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “The space between heaven and earth, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “Heaven, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “Earth, the space between heaven and earth, heaven, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To priestly power, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To ruling power, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.
- They offer into the fire, saying, “To what has been, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.

They offer into the fire, saying, “To what will be, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.

They offer into the fire, saying, “To the universe, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.

They offer into the fire, saying, “To everything, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.

They offer into the fire, saying, “To Prajapati, svaha,” and pour the leftover butter into the mash.

6.3.4 Then they touch the mash, saying, “You are moving.

You are burning.

You are full.

You are firm.

You are the meeting place of all.

You are the sound ‘Him’ that has been made.

You are that sound being made.

You are the Udgitha chant.

You are the Udgitha being sung.

You are the call to listen.

You are the answering call.

You are the fire blazing in the wet.

You are all-pervading.

You are powerful.

You are food.

You are light.

You are the closing chant.

You are the gathering of everything.”

6.3.5 Then they lift it up, saying, “You are Ama, for your greatness is Ama.

He is the king, the ruler, the lord.

May he, the king and ruler, make me a lord.”

6.3.6 Then they sip it:

“That of Savitar which is worth choosing—

The winds blow sweetness for the one who follows the right order. The rivers
pour sweetness.

Let the plants be sweet for us.

Earth, svaha.

We meditate on the god's radiance.

Let night and dawn be sweet, and the dust of earth be sweet.

Let heaven, our father, be sweet for us.

The space between heaven and earth, svaha.

May he inspire our thoughts.

Let the tree be sweet for us, and the sun be sweet.

Let the cows be sweet for us.

Heaven, svaha."

Then they recite the whole Savitri

and all the verses about sweetness, saying, "May I become all this. Earth, the
space between heaven and earth, heaven, svaha." After sipping the last of it
and washing their hands, they lie down west of the fire with their head
toward the east.

In the morning they address the sun:

"You are the one lotus of the directions.

May I be the one lotus among human beings."

They return by the way they came, sit west of the fire, and quietly recite the line
of teachers.

6.3.7 Uddalaka Aruni taught this to his student Yajnavalkya Vajasaneja and said,
"Even if someone poured this on a dry stump, branches would grow and leaves
would sprout."

6.3.8 Yajnavalkya Vajasaneja taught this to his student Madhuka Paingya and said,
"Even if someone poured this on a dry stump, branches would grow and leaves
would sprout."

- 6.3.9 Madhuka Paingya taught this to his student Chula Bhagavitti and said, “Even if someone poured this on a dry stump, branches would grow and leaves would sprout.”
- 6.3.10 Chula Bhagavitti taught this to his student Janaki Ayasthuna and said, “Even if someone poured this on a dry stump, branches would grow and leaves would sprout.”
- 6.3.11 Janaki Ayasthuna taught this to his student Satyakama Jabala and said, “Even if someone poured this on a dry stump, branches would grow and leaves would sprout.”
- 6.3.12 Satyakama Jabala taught this to his students and said, “Even if someone poured this on a dry stump, branches would grow and leaves would sprout.”
A person should not teach this to anyone who is neither their son nor their student.
- 6.3.13 Four kinds of items are made of udumbara wood:
the offering spoon, the cup, the firewood, and the two mixing sticks.
There are ten cultivated grains:
rice, barley, sesame, black gram, anu millet, priyangu millet, wheat, lentils,
khalva, and khalakula.
They grind these and moisten them with yogurt, honey, and clarified butter.
They make offerings of clarified butter.

Section 6

4



- 6.4.1 The earth is the essence of these beings.
Water is the essence of the earth.
Plants are the essence of water.
Flowers are the essence of plants.
Fruits are the essence of flowers.
A man is the essence of fruits.
Semen is the essence of a man.
- 6.4.2 Prajapati thought, “I must provide a place for this,” and created a woman.
Having created her, he had sex with her below.
That is why a person should approach a woman below.
He raised this forward-pointing pressing stone from his own body
and joined with her through it.

- 6.4.3 Her sexual organ is the altar.
 Her hair is the sacrificial grass.
 Her skin is the pair of pressing boards.
 The fire is kindled in the middle; there are the two testicles.
 The world gained by a man who performs the Vajapeya sacrifice is also gained
 by him
 when he has sex with this knowledge. He takes the merit of these women.
 But when a man has sex without this knowledge, the women take his merit.
- 6.4.4 Knowing this, Uddalaka Aruni used to say this.
 Knowing this, Naka Maudgalya used to say this.
 Knowing this, Kumaraharita used to say, “Many mortal men from Brahmin
 families leave this world without strength or merit because they have sex
 without knowing this.”
 A great deal of semen may be spilled while a man is asleep or awake.
- 6.4.5 He should touch it and recite over it: “Whatever semen of mine has spilled
 onto the earth today, or has gone into plants or water,
 I now take that semen back.
 Let strength return to me, and heat, and good fortune.
 Let the fires and their seats be put back in their proper places.”
 He should take it with his ring finger and thumb and rub it between his breasts
 or between his eyebrows.
- 6.4.6 If he sees his reflection in water, he should recite over it: “Let heat, strength,
 glory, wealth, and merit be in me.”
 A woman with menstrual stains on her clothes is the beauty of women.
 So he should approach a woman in stained clothes who has that beauty, and
 invite her.
- 6.4.7 If she will not give herself to him, he may try to bribe her.
 If she still will not give herself to him, he should strike her with a stick or his
 hand and force himself on her,
 saying, “With my strength and glory, I take your glory away.”
 She becomes without glory.

- 6.4.8 If she gives herself to him, he should say, “With my strength and glory, I give you glory.”
Both become glorious.
- 6.4.9 If he wants a woman to desire him, he should put his organ into her, join his mouth to hers, touch her sexual organ, and quietly recite:
“You come from limb after limb. You are born from the heart.
You are the essence of the limbs. Drive this woman into longing for me, as though she had been struck by a poisoned arrow.”
- 6.4.10 If he wants her not to conceive, he should put his organ into her, join his mouth to hers, breathe out, and then breathe in,
saying, “With my strength and semen, I take your semen away.”
She becomes without seed.
- 6.4.11 If he wants her to conceive, he should put his organ into her, join his mouth to hers, breathe in, and then breathe out,
saying, “With my strength and semen, I place semen in you.”
She becomes pregnant.
- 6.4.12 If his wife has a lover whom he hates, he should build a fire in an unbaked clay vessel, spread reed grass with its tips turned backward, and offer into it reed tips smeared with clarified butter, also turned backward:
“You have offered into my kindled fire.
I take your inward and downward breaths away, so-and-so.
You have offered into my kindled fire.
I take your children and livestock away, so-and-so.
You have offered into my kindled fire.
I take the benefit of your sacrifices and good deeds away, so-and-so.
You have offered into my kindled fire.
I take your hopes and expectations away, so-and-so.”
Anyone whom a Brahmin with this knowledge curses leaves this world without strength or merit.
That is why a person should not want to have sex with the wife of a Vedic scholar who knows this.
For someone with this knowledge becomes an enemy.

6.4.13 When his wife begins to menstruate, she should not drink from a metal vessel for three days.

She should wear new clothes.

A man or woman of the Shudra class should not touch her.

At the end of the three nights, she should bathe; then he should have her pound rice.

6.4.14 If someone desires, “Let a fair-skinned son be born to me, who will recite one Veda and live out his full lifespan,” the couple should have rice cooked with milk and eat it with clarified butter.

They can produce such a child.

6.4.15 If someone desires, “Let a tawny son with brown eyes be born to me, who will recite two Vedas and live out his full lifespan,” the couple should have rice cooked with yogurt and eat it with clarified butter.

They can produce such a child.

6.4.16 If someone desires, “Let a dark son with red eyes be born to me, who will recite three Vedas and live out his full lifespan,” the couple should have rice cooked with water and eat it with clarified butter.

They can produce such a child.

6.4.17 If someone desires, “Let a learned daughter be born to me, who will live out her full lifespan,” the couple should have rice cooked with sesame and eat it with clarified butter.

They can produce such a child.

6.4.18 If someone desires, “Let a learned and renowned son be born to me, who will attend assemblies, speak words that people want to hear, recite all the Vedas, and live out his full lifespan,” the couple should have rice cooked with meat and eat it with clarified butter.

They can produce such a child.

The meat should be from a young bull or a grown bull.

6.4.19 Early in the morning, he should prepare the cooked-rice offering and clarified butter in the prescribed way and make offerings from the rice, saying, “To Agni, svaha. To Anumati, svaha. To the god Savitar, who brings things forth without fail, svaha.”

After making the offerings, he should take out some rice and eat it.

After eating, he should give some to her.

He should wash his hands, fill a vessel with water, and sprinkle her three times with it, saying:

“Rise from here, Vishvasu. Seek another young woman.

Unite the wife with her husband.”

6.4.20 Then he approaches her, saying, “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 and place our seed together to obtain a male child.”

6.4.21 Then he parts her thighs, saying, “Heaven and earth, open apart.”

He puts his organ into her, joins his mouth to hers, and strokes her three times in the direction of her hair:

“Let Vishnu prepare the womb. Let Tvashtar shape the forms.

Let Prajapati pour the seed. Let Dhatar place a child in your womb.

Place a child in the womb, Sinivali. Place a child in the womb, Prithushtuka.

Let the two gods, the Ashvins with lotus garlands, place a child in your womb.

6.4.22 “The two golden fire sticks with which the Ashvins churned—

We call that child into your womb, to be born in the tenth month.

As the earth carries fire in its womb, as heaven is pregnant with Indra,

as wind is the child in the womb of the directions, so I place a child in your womb, so-and-so.”

- 6.4.23 When she is about to give birth, he sprinkles her with water:
 “As wind stirs a lotus pond on every side,
 so let the child in your womb move and come down with the afterbirth.
 This enclosure has been made for Indra, with a bar and a surrounding cover.
 Indra, break it open and let the child and its coverings come out together.”
- 6.4.24 When the child is born, he builds a fire, puts the child on his lap, mixes clarified
 butter and yogurt in a metal vessel, and offers portions of this mixture:
 “Growing in my own home, may I nourish a thousand through this child.
 Let his line not be cut off, in children or livestock. Svaha.
 With my mind I offer the vital breaths that are in me into you. Svaha.
 Whatever I did too much of in this rite, or whatever I did too little of,
 let Agni, the maker of good offerings, knowing it, make our sacrifice good and
 our offering well offered. Svaha.”
- 6.4.25 Then he puts his mouth to the child’s right ear and says, “Speech, speech,”
 three times.
 Then he mixes yogurt, honey, and clarified butter and feeds the child with gold,
 with nothing between the gold and the food,
 saying, “I place earth in you. I place the space between heaven and earth in you.
 I place heaven in you. I place earth, the space between heaven and earth,
 heaven—everything—in you.”
- 6.4.26 Then he gives the child a name, saying, “You are Veda.”
 This becomes the child’s secret name.
- 6.4.27 Then he gives the child to the mother and offers her breast, saying, “Your breast
 that rests and brings joy, that holds treasures, finds wealth, and gives
 generously—
 Sarasvati, with that breast you nourish all precious things. Make it available
 here for the child to suck.”

6.4.28 Then he recites over the child's mother: "You are Ila, daughter of Mitra and
Varuna. Brave woman, you have given birth to a hero.
May you have heroic sons, you who have given us heroic sons."
People say of a son born to a Brahmin who knows this, "You have surpassed
your father!
You have surpassed your grandfather!
You have reached the highest point in prosperity, glory, and the radiance of
sacred knowledge."
This is what they say when a son is born to a Brahmin who knows this.

Section 6

5



6.5.1 Now the line of teachers.

The son of Pautimashi received the teaching from the son of Katyayani.
The son of Katyayani received the teaching from the son of Gautami.
The son of Gautami received the teaching from the son of Bharadvaji.
The son of Bharadvaji received the teaching from the son of Parashari.
The son of Parashari received the teaching from the son of Aupasvasti.
The son of Aupasvasti received the teaching from the son of Parashari.
The son of Parashari received the teaching from the son of Katyayani.
The son of Katyayani received the teaching from the son of Kaushiki.
The son of Kaushiki received the teaching from the son of Alambi and the son
of Vaiyaghrapadi.
The son of Vaiyaghrapadi received the teaching from the son of Kanvi and the
son of Kapi.

The son of Kapi

6.5.2 received the teaching from the son of Atreyi.

The son of Atreyi received the teaching from the son of Gautami.
The son of Gautami received the teaching from the son of Bharadvaji.
The son of Bharadvaji received the teaching from the son of Parashari.
The son of Parashari received the teaching from the son of Vatsi.

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

The son of Prashni received the teaching from Asurayana.

Asurayana received the teaching from Asuri.

Asuri

6.5.3 received the teaching from Yajnavalkya.

Yajnavalkya received the teaching from Uddalaka.

Uddalaka received the teaching from Aruna.

Aruna received the teaching from Upaveshi.

Upaveshi received the teaching from Kushri.

Kushri received the teaching from Vajashravas.

Vajashravas received the teaching from Jihvavan Badhyoga.

Jihvavan Badhyoga received the teaching from Asita Varshagana.

Asita Varshagana received the teaching from Harita Kashyapa.
Harita Kashyapa received the teaching from Shilpa Kashyapa.
Shilpa Kashyapa received the teaching from Kashyapa Naidhruvi.
Kashyapa Naidhruvi received the teaching from Speech.
Speech received the teaching from Ambhini.
Ambhini received the teaching from the sun.
These pure Yajus formulas, received from the sun, are taught by Yajnavalkya
Vajasaneya.

6.5.4 The line is the same down to the son of Sanjivi.
The son of Sanjivi received the teaching from Mandukayani.
Mandukayani received the teaching from Mandavya.
Mandavya received the teaching from Kautsa.
Kautsa received the teaching from Mahitthi.
Mahitthi received the teaching from Vamakakshayana.
Vamakakshayana received the teaching from Shandilya.
Shandilya received the teaching from Vatsya.
Vatsya received the teaching from Kushri.
Kushri received the teaching from Yajnavachas Rajastambayana.
Yajnavachas Rajastambayana received the teaching from Tura Kavasheya.
Tura Kavasheya received the teaching from Prajapati.
Prajapati received the teaching from Brahman.
Brahman is self-born.
Homage to Brahman.