



Kaushitaki Upanishad

UNKNOWN

Plain English Translation

MOUSEIA



Kaushitaki Upanishad



UNKNOWN

Plain English Translation

Translated by Michael Berardi

MOUSEIA

THIS EDITION

Independent machine-assisted translation from Sanskrit. Source transcription by Sanskrit Wikisource contributors, CC BY-SA 4.0.

TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

THE WORK

Written c. 1st millennium BCE · Upanishad

SOURCE

Original text from sa.wikisource.org.

GAPS AND UNCERTAINTIES

Follows the received Kaushitaki-Brahmana text in Sanskrit Wikisource revision 155878, which identifies no printed edition, editor, manuscript, or finer subrecension. Original readings remain unchanged; source-language review documents contextual English decisions for irregular readings. Sanskrit Wikisource contributors, CC BY-SA 4.0; ancient underlying work public domain.

Mouseia · mouseia.org

Edition dated 26 October 2026

Contents



Adhyaya 1	1
Adhyaya 2	5
Adhyaya 3	12
Adhyaya 4	17

Adhyaya 1



Om. May my speech be based in my mind. May my mind be based in my speech. Make yourself clearly known to me. Be the two supports of my knowledge of the Veda. May what I have heard stay with me.

Through this study I join day and night. I will say what is right. I will say what is true. May that protect me. May it protect the teacher. Protect me; protect the teacher.

Om. Peace, peace, peace.

¹ Chitra Gargyayani was preparing to offer a sacrifice. He chose Aruni as his priest. Aruni sent his son Shvetaketu, telling him, “Perform the sacrifice.” When Shvetaketu was seated, Chitra asked him, “Son of Gautama, is there a hidden place in the world where you will put me? Or is there another place? Will you put me in its world with knowledge of it?”

Shvetaketu said, “I don’t know this. Let me ask my teacher.” He went to his father and asked, “He asked me this question. What answer should I give?”

His father said, “I don’t know this either. We study our lesson in the assembly and take away what others give us. Come, let’s both go.” Carrying firewood, he approached Chitra Gargyayani and said, “Let me become your student.”

Chitra told him, “Gautama, you deserve knowledge of Brahman, since you have come to me. Come, I’ll teach you.”

- ² He said, “Everyone who leaves this world goes to the moon. Their breaths fill it during the first half of the month. During the second half it does not bring them to birth. The moon is the entrance to the heavenly world. When someone answers it, it lets that person pass. But when someone answers it, it rains that person down here as rain. Here that person is born again as a worm, a flying insect, a bird, a tiger, a lion, a fish, a kind of snake, a human, or someone in another of these states, according to what they have done and what they know. “When someone arrives, it asks, ‘Who are you?’ The answer should be: ‘From the discerning one, the seasons brought seed, from the fifteenfold one that was born, from the dwelling of the ancestors. Send me as that seed into a man who will father me. Through the man who fathers me I was placed in a mother. I am born and born again as the twelvefold or thirteenfold month, joined to the twelvefold or thirteenfold father. I know that. Mortal seasons, take hold of me as that. Through this truth, through this discipline, I am a season; I belong to the seasons. Who are you? I am you.’ It lets that person pass.”
- ³ He reaches the gods’ path and comes to the world of Agni, the world of Vayu, the world of Varuna, the world of Aditya, the world of Indra, the world of Prajapati, and the world of Brahman. In this world of Brahman are Lake Ara; the moment Anveshtiha; the river Viraja; the tree Ilya; the meeting place Salajya; the dwelling Aparajita; Indra and Prajapati, the gatekeepers; the hall Vibhupramita; the throne Vichakshana; and the couch Amitaujas. There are Priya, belonging to the mind, and Pratirupa, belonging to the eye, who weave flowers and the worlds; the apsarases Amba and Ambayavi; and the rivers called Ambaya. Someone who knows this comes there. Brahman says, “Run to meet him with my glory. He has reached the river Vijaya, which has no aging. He will not grow old.”
- ⁴ Five hundred apsarases run to meet him: a hundred holding powder, a hundred holding fruit, a hundred holding eye ointment, and a hundred holding garlands. They dress him in Brahman’s ornaments. Dressed in Brahman’s ornaments, knowing Brahman, he goes toward Brahman itself. He comes to Lake Ara and crosses it by mind. Those who know only what is immediately before

them sink when they reach it. He comes to the moments called Yeshtiha, and they run away from him. He comes to the river Viraja and crosses it by mind alone. There he shakes off his good and bad deeds. His dear relatives receive his good deeds; those he does not like receive his bad deeds. Just as someone driving a chariot looks down at its wheels, he looks at day and night, at good and bad deeds, and at all pairs of opposites. Free of good deeds and free of bad deeds, knowing Brahman, he goes toward Brahman itself.

- 5 He comes to the tree Ilya, and Brahman's fragrance enters him. He comes to the meeting place Salajya, and Brahman's flavor enters him. He comes to the dwelling Aparajita, and Brahman's brightness enters him. He reaches the gatekeepers, Indra and Prajapati, and they run away from him. He comes to Vibhupramita, and Brahman's glory enters him.

He comes to the throne Vichakshana. Its front legs are the Brihat and Rathantara chants; its back legs are Shyaita and Naudhasa. Vairupa and Vairaja run lengthwise; Shakvara and Raivata run across. It is awareness, because through awareness one sees clearly.

He comes to the couch Amitaujas. It is breath. Its front legs are the past and the future; its back legs are Shri and Ira. Brihat and Rathantara run lengthwise; Bhadra and Yajnayajniya form the head end. Rig verses and Saman chants are its lengthwise threads; Yajus formulas are its crosswise threads. Soma shoots form its covering. The Udgitha chant is its bolster; Shri is its pillow. Brahman sits on it. Someone who knows this climbs onto it, foot first. Brahman asks him, "Who are you?" He should answer:

- 6 "I am a season; I belong to the seasons. I was born from space as my womb. I am the consort of the year, which has become brightness, which has come into being, which has become the Self. You are the Self. What you are, I am."

Brahman asks him, "Who am I?" He should say, "Truth." "What is this truth?" "What is other than the gods and the breaths is 'sat.' The gods and the breaths are 'tyam.' This is expressed by the word 'satyam,' truth. That is the whole of this. You are all this." That is what he tells him.

A Rig verse says this:

“His belly is Yajus; his head is Saman. His form is Rig, and he does not decay. He must be known as Brahman, the great seer made of Brahman.”

Brahman asks him, “How do you grasp my masculine names?” He should answer, “Through breath.” “How do you grasp feminine names?” “Through speech.” “How do you grasp neuter names?” “Through mind.” “How do you grasp smells?” He should answer, “Through the nose.” “How do you grasp shapes?” “Through the eye.” “How do you grasp sounds?” “Through the ear.” “How do you grasp the flavors of food?” “Through the tongue.” “How do you grasp actions?” “Through the hands.” “How do you grasp pleasure and pain?” “Through the body.” “How do you grasp enjoyment, sexual pleasure, and Prajapati?” “Through the sexual organ.” “How do you grasp movements?” “Through the feet.” “How do you grasp thoughts, what is to be known, and desires?” He should answer, “Through awareness.”

Brahman tells him, “The waters are indeed that world of mine; this world is yours.” Whatever victory Brahman has, whatever reach Brahman has, someone who knows this wins that victory and reaches that reach—someone who knows this.

Adhyaya 2



- ¹ Kaushitaki used to say, “Breath is Brahman.” Mind is the messenger of this breath that is Brahman. Speech serves it, sight is its body, and hearing brings it reports. All these deities bring offerings to this breath that is Brahman without being asked. In the same way, all beings bring offerings, without being asked, to someone who knows this. Its secret teaching is: “Do not ask.” For example, after begging in a village and receiving nothing, he should sit down, thinking, “I will not eat anything given from here.” The very people who turned him away before then invite him, saying, “We will give to you.” This is what happens to someone who asks. But people from elsewhere also invite him, saying, “We will give to you.”
- ² Paingya used to say, “Breath is Brahman.” Speech secures sight beyond itself; sight secures hearing beyond itself; hearing secures mind beyond itself; mind secures breath beyond itself. All these deities bring offerings to this breath that is Brahman without being asked. In the same way, all beings bring offerings, without being asked, to someone who knows this. Its secret teaching is: “Do not ask.” For example, after begging in a village and receiving nothing, he should sit down, thinking, “I will not eat anything given from here.” The very people who turned him away before then invite him, saying, “We will give to you.” This is what happens to someone who has been asked. But people from elsewhere also invite him, saying, “We will give to you.”

- ³ Now, the way to obtain a particular possession. When someone has a particular possession in mind, he should prepare a fire at the full moon, at the new moon, or during the bright half of the month under a favorable lunar constellation. He should sweep around it, spread grass around it, sprinkle water around it, and bend his right knee forward. With a small offering ladle, a cup, or a metal bowl, he offers these offerings of clarified butter: “The deity named Speech obtains things. May it obtain this for me from that person. Hail to it! The deity named Breath obtains things. May it obtain this for me from that person. Hail to it! The deity named Sight obtains things. May it obtain this for me from that person. Hail to it! The deity named Hearing obtains things. May it obtain this for me from that person. Hail to it! The deity named Mind obtains things. May it obtain this for me from that person. Hail to it! The deity named Awareness obtains things. May it obtain this for me from that person. Hail to it!” Then he should inhale the smell of the smoke, rub his limbs with the remaining clarified butter, and go forward without speaking. He should state what he wants or send a messenger. He will obtain it.
- ⁴ Now, the divine way to make someone think of you. If a man wants to be dear to a man or a woman, he should prepare a fire on one of those same festival occasions. Following the same procedure, he offers these offerings of clarified butter: “So-and-so, I offer speech into myself. Hail! So-and-so, I offer your sight into myself. Hail! So-and-so, I offer your hearing into myself. Hail! So-and-so, I offer your mind into myself. Hail! So-and-so, I offer your awareness into myself. Hail!” Then he should inhale the smell of the smoke, rub his limbs with the remaining clarified butter, and go forward without speaking. He should try to make contact with that person, or stand upwind, talking. He becomes dear to that person, and they think of him.
- ⁵ Now, Pratardana’s evening food-offering, which they also call the internal fire offering. While a person is speaking, he cannot breathe. At that time he offers breath into speech. While a person is breathing, he cannot speak. At that time he offers speech into breath. These are two endless, immortal offerings. Awake

or asleep, he offers them continually, without a break. Other offerings have an end, because they consist of ritual actions. Knowing this, the learned people of earlier times did not perform the fire offering.

- ⁶ Shushkabhringara used to say, “The recitation is Brahman.” One should meditate on it as a Rig verse. All beings honor such a person as the best. One should meditate on it as a Yajur formula. All beings join themselves to such a person so that he may be the best. One should meditate on it as a Saman chant. All beings bow to such a person as the best. One should meditate on it as prosperity. One should meditate on it as fame. One should meditate on it as brilliance. Just as this is the most prosperous, most famous, and most brilliant of the recitations, so someone who knows this becomes the most prosperous, most famous, and most brilliant of all beings. The Adhvaryu priest prepares this body, made of bricks and ritual action. Into it he weaves what is made of Yajur formulas. Into what is made of Yajur formulas, the Hotri priest weaves what is made of Rig verses. Into what is made of Rig verses, the Udgatri priest weaves what is made of Saman chants. This is the Self of the whole threefold sacred knowledge. This is also his own Self. Someone who knows this has this as his Self.
- ⁷ Now, there are three acts of worship taught by Sarvajit Kaushitaki. Wearing the sacred thread over his left shoulder, sipping water, and pouring water from a vessel three times, a man should face the rising sun and say, “You are the remover. Remove my wrongdoing.” Following the same procedure, he should face the sun at midday and say, “You are the upward remover. Remove my wrongdoing.” Following the same procedure, he should face the setting sun and say, “You are the complete remover. Completely remove my wrongdoing.” This removes the wrong he does during the day and night.
- ⁸ Each month, at the new moon, he should face the moon when it is visible in the west. Following the same procedure, and using two green blades of grass, he directs these words toward it: “Through your well-bounded heart that rests in the moon and rules immortality, may I not weep over harm to my grandchildren.” His children do not die before him. This is for someone who already has

a son. Someone who has no son should recite these three Rig verses: “Grow full; may it unite with you,” “May your milks come together; may your strengths come together,” and “The stalk that the Adityas cause to grow full.” Then he says, “Do not grow full at the cost of our breath, children, or cattle. Grow full at the cost of the breath, children, and cattle of anyone who hates us and anyone we hate. I turn with the gods’ course.” He makes his right arm follow the sun’s course, turning it around.

⁹ At the full moon, he should face the moon when it is visible in the east. Following the same procedure, he says, “You are King Soma, who sees clearly. You have five mouths. You are Prajapati. The brahmin is one of your mouths. With that mouth you eat kings. With that mouth make me an eater of food. The king is one of your mouths. With that mouth you eat the common people. With that very mouth make me an eater of food. The falcon is one of your mouths. With that mouth you eat birds. With that mouth make me an eater of food. Fire is one of your mouths. With that mouth you eat this world. With that mouth make me an eater of food. In you is a fifth mouth. With that mouth you eat all beings. With that mouth make me an eater of food. Do not wane at the cost of our breath, children, or cattle. Wane at the cost of the breath, children, and cattle of anyone who hates us and anyone we hate. I turn with the gods’ course.” He turns his right arm around, following the sun’s course.

¹⁰ When lying down, he should touch his wife’s heart and say, “What is placed in your well-bounded heart, inside Prajapati—I think I know it. Through it, may I not weep over harm to my grandchildren.” His children do not die before him.

¹¹ When he is about to go away, he should stroke his son’s head: “You come from every limb. You are born from the heart. You are the Self, son; you have protected me. Live a hundred autumns, so-and-so.” He says his son’s name. “Be a stone. Be an axe. Be gold that cannot be harmed. You are brilliance under the name of son. Live a hundred autumns, so-and-so.” He says his son’s name.

“With the embrace with which Prajapati embraced his children to keep them safe, I embrace you, so-and-so.” He says his son’s name. Then he murmurs into the boy’s right ear, “Generous one, rich in Soma juice, give to him,” and into his left, “Indra, give him the best riches.” Then: “Do not be cut off. Do not be hurt. Live out a life of a hundred autumns, son. With your name I smell your head, so-and-so.” He should smell the crown of his head three times. Saying, “I hum toward you with the humming sound of cows,” he should hum toward the crown of his head three times.

- 12 Now, the dying away of the gods. This Brahman shines when fire burns. It dies when fire does not burn. Its light goes to the sun, and its breath to the wind. This Brahman shines when the sun is visible. It dies when the sun is not visible. Its light goes to the moon, and its breath to the wind. This Brahman shines when the moon is visible. It dies when the moon is not visible. Its light goes to lightning, and its breath to the wind. This Brahman shines when lightning flashes. It dies when lightning does not flash. Its light goes to the wind, and its breath to the wind. All these deities enter the wind. Though dead in the wind, they do not perish. From it they rise again. That is how it is with the gods. Now, how it is within a person.
- 13 This Brahman shines when a person speaks with speech. It dies when he does not speak. Its light goes to sight, and its breath to breath. This Brahman shines when he sees with sight. It dies when he does not see. Its light goes to hearing, and its breath to breath. This Brahman shines when he hears with hearing. It dies when he does not hear. Its light goes to mind, and its breath to breath. This Brahman shines when he thinks with mind. It dies when he does not think. Its light goes to breath, and its breath to breath. All these deities enter breath. Though dead in breath, they do not perish. From it they rise again. If the two mountains, the southern one and the northern one, were to roll toward someone who knows this, trying to crush him, they would not crush him. But everyone who hates him and everyone he himself hates dies around him.

- ¹⁴ Now, gaining the highest good. All the deities were arguing, each saying, "I am better." They left this body, and it lay there like a piece of wood. Speech entered it. It spoke with speech but still lay there. Sight entered it. It spoke with speech and saw with sight but still lay there. Hearing entered it. It spoke with speech, saw with sight, and heard with hearing but still lay there. Mind entered it. It spoke with speech, saw with sight, heard with hearing, and thought with mind but still lay there. Breath entered it. At once it stood up. The gods recognized that the highest good was in breath. They united with breath, the Self that is awareness, and together with all these faculties left this world. With wind as their support and space as their Self, they went to heaven. In the same way, someone who knows this unites with breath, the Self of all beings that is awareness, and together with all these faculties leaves this body. With wind as his support and space as his Self, he does not go to heaven. He becomes that in which these gods are. On reaching it, he becomes immortal, as the gods are immortal.
- ¹⁵ Now, what they call the transfer from father to son. A father who intends to depart calls his son. He spreads fresh grass through the house, prepares a fire, and sets a water jar with a cup nearby. He covers himself with an unworn cloth and lies down. His son comes and lies on top of him, touching his own organs to his father's organs. Or he may simply sit facing him. Then the father hands these things over to him. The father says, "Let me place my speech in you." The son says, "I place your speech in me." The father says, "Let me place my breath in you." The son says, "I place your breath in me." The father says, "Let me place my sight in you." The son says, "I place your sight in me." The father says, "Let me place my hearing in you." The son says, "I place your hearing in me." The father says, "Let me place my mind in you." The son says, "I place your mind in me." The father says, "Let me place the flavors of my food in you." The son says, "I place the flavors of your food in me." The father says, "Let me place my actions in you." The son says, "I place your actions in me." The father says, "Let me place my pleasure and pain in you." The son says, "I place your pleasure and pain in me." The father says, "Let me place my joy, sexual pleasure, and procreation in you." The son says, "I place your joy, sexual pleasure, and

procreation in me.” The father says, “Let me place my movements in you.” The son says, “I place your movements in me.” The father says, “Let me place my thoughts, what is to be known, and my desires in you.” The son says, “I place your thoughts, what is to be known, and your desires in me.” Then the son goes around to the right and goes out toward the northeast. The father calls after him, “May honor, the brilliance of sacred knowledge, food to eat, and a good name come to you.” The son looks back over his left shoulder, putting his hand between them or covering himself with the end of his cloth, and says, “May you reach the heavenly worlds and obtain what you desire.” If the father is healthy, he should live under his son’s authority or leave home to wander. But if he dies, he must be given his final rites in whatever way his son performs them. He must be given his final rites in that way.

Adhyaya 3



¹ Through fighting and courage, Pratardana, the son of Divodasa, reached Indra's favorite home. Indra told him, "Pratardana, let me grant you a gift."

Pratardana said, "Choose for me yourself. Choose what you think is most helpful to a human being."

Indra told him, "The person giving a gift does not choose it for the person receiving it. Choose for yourself."

Pratardana said, "Then I have no gift at all." But Indra did not move away from truth, because Indra is truth. He said, "Know me. That is what I think is most helpful to a human being: knowing me. I killed Tvashtar's three-headed son. I handed the ascetics over to the wolves with their faces down. I broke many agreements and destroyed the people of Prahlada in heaven, the descendants of Puloma in the space between heaven and earth, and the Kalakhanjas on earth. Not even a hair of mine was harmed by that. When someone knows me, no deed diminishes that person's world: not killing a mother, not killing a father, not theft, not killing an unborn child. No evil from a deed he has done darkens his face."

² He said, "I am breath, the Self that is aware. Worship me as life and immortality. Life is breath; breath is life. Breath is also immortality. As long as breath stays in this body, there is life. Through breath one gains immortality in the

other world; through awareness one's purposes become true. Someone who worships me as life and immortality lives out their full life in this world and gains immortality and freedom from decay in the heavenly world.

"Some say that the vital faculties become one. No one could at the same instant make a name known through speech, a shape through the eye, a sound through the ear, and a thought through mind. The vital faculties become one. One at a time, each of them makes all these things known. When speech speaks, all the vital faculties speak with it. When the eye sees, all the vital faculties see with it. When the ear hears, all the vital faculties hear with it. When mind thinks, all the vital faculties think with it. When breath breathes, all the vital faculties breathe with it."

"That is certainly how it is," Indra said. "Yet there is a highest power that takes up the vital faculties."

- 3 A person lives without speech: we see people who cannot speak. A person lives without sight: we see blind people. A person lives without hearing: we see deaf people. A person lives without mind: we see young children. A person lives with an arm cut off; a person lives with a thigh cut off. We see this happen. But breath, the Self that is aware, takes hold of this body and makes it stand up. So this alone should be worshiped. Breath is awareness, and awareness is breath. These two live together in this body and leave it together.

Here is how to see this; here is how to recognize it. When someone is asleep and has no dreams, that person becomes one in breath. Speech enters breath with all names; the eye enters it with all shapes; the ear enters it with all sounds; mind enters it with all thoughts. When the person wakes up, the vital faculties leave this Self for their own places, like sparks from a burning fire flying out in every direction. From the vital faculties come the gods, and from the gods come the worlds.

Here is the proof of this; here is how to recognize it. When someone is ill and dying, does not fall into weakness and does not become confused, people say, "His consciousness has gone out. He does not hear or see. He speaks with his voice; he does not think." Then that person becomes one in breath. Speech

enters breath with all names; the eye enters it with all shapes; the ear enters it with all sounds; mind enters it with all thoughts. When the person wakes up, the vital faculties leave this Self for their own places, like sparks flying out from a burning fire. From the vital faculties come the gods, and from the gods come the worlds.

⁴ When he leaves this body, he leaves with all these faculties. Speech releases all names to him; through speech he grasps all names. Breath releases all smells to him; through breath he grasps all smells. The eye releases all shapes to him; through the eye he grasps all shapes. The ear releases all sounds to him; through the ear he grasps all sounds. Mind releases all thoughts to him; through mind he grasps all thoughts. This is the grasping of everything in breath. Breath is awareness, and awareness is breath. These two live together in this body and leave it together. Now we will explain how all beings become one for this awareness.

⁵ Speech is one branch extended from awareness. Name is the element of being set opposite it. The nose is one branch extended from awareness. Smell is the element of being set opposite it. The eye is one branch extended from awareness. Shape is the element of being set opposite it. The ear is one branch extended from awareness. Sound is the element of being set opposite it. The tongue is one branch extended from awareness. The flavor of food is the element of being set opposite it. The hands are one branch extended from awareness. Action is the element of being set opposite them. The body is one branch extended from awareness. Pleasure and pain are the element of being set opposite it. The sexual organ is one branch extended from awareness. Enjoyment, sexual pleasure, and reproduction are the element of being set opposite it. The feet are one branch extended from awareness. Movement is the element of being set opposite them. Awareness is one branch extended from this awareness. Thoughts, what is to be known, and desires are the element of being set opposite it.

- ⁶ Using awareness to take up speech, one grasps all chants through speech. Using awareness to take up breath, one grasps all smells through breath. Using awareness to take up the eye, one grasps all shapes through the eye. Using awareness to take up the ear, one grasps all sounds through the ear. Using awareness to take up the tongue, one grasps all the flavors of food through the tongue. Using awareness to take up the hands, one grasps all actions through the hands. Using awareness to take up the body, one grasps pleasure and pain through the body. Using awareness to take up the sexual organ, one grasps enjoyment, sexual pleasure, and awareness through the sexual organ. Using awareness to take up the feet, one grasps all movements through the feet. Using awareness itself to take up thought, one grasps thoughts, what is to be known, and desires through awareness itself.
- ⁷ Without awareness, speech would not make any name known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that name.” Without awareness, breath would not make any smell known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that smell.” Without awareness, the eye would not make any shape known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that shape.” Without awareness, the ear would not make any sound known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that sound.” Without awareness, the tongue would not make any flavor of food known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that flavor of food.” Without awareness, the hands would not make any action known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that action.” Without awareness, the body would not make any pleasure or pain known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that pleasure or pain.” Without awareness, the sexual organ would not make any enjoyment, sexual pleasure, or reproduction known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that enjoyment, sexual pleasure, or reproduction.” Without awareness, the feet would not make any move-

ment known. Someone says, “My mind was somewhere else. I did not recognize that movement.” Without awareness, no thought would succeed, and nothing that is to be known would be known.

- ⁸ Do not try to understand speech; know the speaker. Do not try to understand smell; know the one who smells. Do not try to understand shape; know the one who knows shapes. Do not try to understand sound; know the listener. Do not try to understand the flavor of food; know the one who knows its flavor. Do not try to understand action; know the doer. Do not try to understand pleasure and pain; know the one who knows pleasure and pain. Do not try to understand enjoyment, sexual pleasure, or reproduction; know the one who knows enjoyment, sexual pleasure, and reproduction. Do not try to understand movement; know the one who moves. Do not try to understand mind; know the thinker. These are the ten elements of being in relation to awareness, and the ten elements of awareness in relation to being. Without the elements of being there would be no elements of awareness; without the elements of awareness there would be no elements of being.
- ⁹ No form could exist on either side alone. Nor are these separate things. A chariot’s rim is fixed to its spokes, and its spokes are fixed to its hub. In the same way, these elements of being are fixed to the elements of awareness, and the elements of awareness are fixed to breath. This breath is the Self that is aware: it is happiness, it does not grow old, and it does not die. Good action does not make it greater; bad action does not make it less. It makes the person it wishes to raise up from these worlds do good. It makes the person it wishes to lead downward do bad. It guards the world. It rules the world. It is the lord of all. Know that it is my Self. Know that it is my Self.

Adhyaya 4



- ¹ Balaki Gargya was a learned man with wide connections. He had lived among the Ushinaras, the Matsyas, the Kurus and Panchalas, and the Kashis and Videhas. He came to Ajatashatru, the king of Kashi, and said, “Let me tell you about Brahman.”

Ajatashatru told him, “For those words alone, we give you a thousand. People really do flock to Janaka, calling out, ‘Janaka! Janaka!’”

- ² Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in the sun.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as the great one dressed in white, standing above all, the head of all beings. Anyone who meditates on him this way stands above all and becomes the head of all beings.”

- ³ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in the moon.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as King Soma, the Self of food. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes the Self of food.”

- ⁴ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in lightning.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as the Self of brilliance. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes the Self of brilliance.”

⁵ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in thunder.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as the Self of sound. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes the Self of sound.”

⁶ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in space.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as Brahman, complete and never passing away. Anyone who meditates on him this way has an abundance of children and livestock. Neither he nor his children pass away before their time.”

⁷ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in the wind.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as Indra Vaikuntha, the undefeated army. Anyone who meditates on him this way is victorious, never defeated, and conquers others.”

⁸ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in fire.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as the one who overpowers others. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes someone who overpowers others.”

⁹ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in the waters.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as the Self in its name. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes the Self in its name.”

That is the teaching about the gods. Now comes the teaching about oneself.

¹⁰ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in a mirror.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as a likeness. Anyone who meditates on him this way has a child born in his likeness, not a child unlike him.”

¹¹ Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in an echo.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as a companion who never leaves. Anyone who meditates on him this way gains from a companion and has a companion.”

- 12 Balaki said, “I meditate on the sound that follows a person.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as life. For anyone who meditates on him this way, neither he nor his children lose consciousness before their time.”

- 13 Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in a shadow.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as death. For anyone who meditates on him this way, neither he nor his children die before their time.”

- 14 Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in the body.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as Prajapati. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes fruitful in children and livestock.”

- 15 Balaki said, “I meditate on the aware Self through which a person has dreams while asleep.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as King Yama. All this yields to the supremacy of anyone who meditates on him this way.”

- 16 Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in the right eye.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as the Self of name, the Self of fire, and the Self of light. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes the Self of all these.”

- 17 Balaki said, “I meditate on the person in the left eye.”

Ajatashatru told him, “Don’t discuss him with me on those terms. I meditate on him as the Self of truth, the Self of lightning, and the Self of brilliance. Anyone who meditates on him this way becomes the Self of all these.”

18 Then Balaki fell silent. Ajatashatru asked him, “Is that all, Balaki?”

“That’s all,” Balaki replied.

Ajatashatru told him, “Then you were wrong to tell me, ‘Let me tell you about Brahman.’ Balaki, the one who makes these persons, the one whose work this is—he is the one to be known.”

Then Balaki came back with firewood in his hand and said, “Let me become your student.”

Ajatashatru told him, “It would go against the proper order for a member of the warrior class to initiate a brahmin as a student. Come, I will simply help you understand.”

He took him by the hand and went out. They came to a sleeping man. Ajatashatru called to him, “Great one dressed in white! King Soma!” But the man just lay there silently. Then Ajatashatru prodded him with a staff, and he got up at once.

Ajatashatru asked Balaki, “Where in the world was this person sleeping just now? Where was he then? Where has he come from?”

Balaki did not know.

19 Ajatashatru told him, “Balaki, this is where this person was sleeping, where he was then, and where he has come from. The heart has channels called Hita that extend from the heart to the membrane around it. They are as thin as a hair split into a thousand parts. They consist of fine matter that is golden brown, white, black, yellow, and red. He is in these channels at that time. When he is asleep and sees no dream at all, he becomes one with this breath alone. Then speech enters him along with all names. The eye enters him along with all forms. The ear enters him along with all sounds. The mind enters him along with everything it has thought about.

“When he wakes up, the breaths spread out from this Self to their own places, just as sparks from a blazing fire would scatter in every direction. From the breaths come the gods; from the gods come the worlds. Just as a razor is tucked into its case, or the fire that sustains everything into its nest, this aware Self has entered this body as its very self, right to the hairs and nails.

20 “These selves stay with that Self as a leader’s people stay with him. Just as a person enjoys being with the best of his own people, or a leader’s people enjoy their leader, this aware Self has experiences through these selves. These selves likewise experience that Self.

“As long as Indra did not know this Self, the Asuras overpowered him. When he came to know it, he killed and defeated the Asuras and attained supremacy, self-rule, and sovereignty over all the gods. In just this way, someone who knows this drives away all evils and attains supremacy, self-rule, and sovereignty over all beings—anyone who knows this, anyone who knows this.”

Om. May my speech be based in my mind. May my mind be based in my speech. Make yourself clearly known to me. Be the two supports of my knowledge of the Veda. May what I have heard stay with me.

Through this study I join day and night. I will say what is right. I will say what is true. May that protect me. May it protect the teacher. Protect me; protect the teacher.

Om. Peace, peace, peace.

Here ends the Kaushitaki-Brahmana Upanishad.