



Kena 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, made independently and directly from the Sanskrit and reviewed against it, covering four sections and all 35 source-numbered verses with the opening and closing invocation. Sanskrit Wikisource contributors' transcription, revision 407400, CC BY-SA 4.0; the underlying ancient text is public domain.

TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

THE WORK

Written c. 1st millennium BCE · Upanishad

SOURCE

Original text from sa.wikisource.org.

GAPS AND UNCERTAINTIES

Received Sanskrit Wikisource text at revision 407400; no printed base edition identified on the page. Its first section numbers nine passages, giving 35 in all. Editorial footnote and commentary/navigation excluded; pluta vowel notation retained in Original.

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Section 1

Om. May my limbs grow strong—speech, breath, sight,
hearing, and strength, and all the senses.
Everything is Brahman as taught in the Upanishads.
May I not reject Brahman; may Brahman not
reject me. Let there be no rejection; let there be no rejection of me.
As one devoted to that Self, may the virtues
taught in the Upanishads live in me; may they live in me.
Om. Peace, peace, peace.

- ¹ Om. At whose wish and urging does the mind move?
Who directs the chief breath to go forward?
At whose wish do people speak these words?
What god directs the eye and the ear?
- ² It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech;
it is the breath of breath and the eye of the eye.
The wise let go of these, leave this world, and become immortal.
- ³ The eye does not reach it, nor does speech, nor the mind.
We do not know, we do not understand how anyone could teach this.
- ⁴ It is different from what is known, and beyond what is unknown.
So we have heard from those before us who explained it to us.
- ⁵ What speech cannot express, but by which speech is expressed—
know that alone to be Brahman, not the thing people worship here.
- ⁶ What the mind cannot think, but by which, they say, the mind is understood—
know that alone to be Brahman, not the thing people worship here.
- ⁷ What the eye cannot see, but by which the eyes see—
know that alone to be Brahman, not the thing people worship here.
- ⁸ What you do not hear with your ears, but which lets the ear hear—
know that alone to be Brahman, not the thing people worship here.

- ⁹ What breath does not breathe, but by which breath is moved—
know that alone to be Brahman, not the thing people worship here.

Section 2

- ¹ “If you think, ‘I know it well,’ then only a little
of Brahman’s form is surely known to you—
what it is in you and what it is among the gods. So now
you must look into it further.” “I think I know it.”
- ² “I do not think I know it well; nor do I not know it. I do know it.
Whoever among us knows that knows it—not that they do not know it; they
do know it.”
- ³ Those who do not think they understand it understand it; those who think
they understand it do not know it.
It is unknown to those who know, and known to those who do not know.
- ⁴ It is understood when known in every act of awareness, for one finds
immortality.
Through the Self one finds strength; through knowledge one finds
immortality.
- ⁵ If you know it here, then there is truth.
If you do not know it here, the loss is great.
The wise recognize it in each and every being;
they leave this world and become immortal.

Section 3

- ¹ Brahman won a victory for the gods. In that victory of Brahman,
the gods took pride.

- 2 They thought, "This victory is ours alone; this greatness is ours alone."
Brahman knew their thought and appeared before them. They did not know what this mysterious being was.
- 3 They said to Agni, "Jatavedas, find out what this mysterious being is." "Yes," he said.
- 4 He hurried up to it. It asked him, "Who are you?" "I am Agni," he said. "I am Jatavedas."
- 5 "What power do you have?" "I could burn all that is here on earth."
- 6 It set a blade of grass before him. "Burn this."
He rushed at it with all his speed, but could not burn it. From there he went straight back. "I could not find out what this mysterious being is."
- 7 Then they said to Vayu, "Vayu, find out what this mysterious being is." "Yes," he said.
- 8 He hurried up to it. It asked him, "Who are you?" "I am Vayu," he said. "I am Matarishvan."
- 9 "What power do you have?" "I could carry away everything here on earth."
- 10 It set a blade of grass before him. "Carry this away."
He rushed at it with all his speed, but could not carry it away.
From there he went straight back. "I could not find out what this mysterious being is."
- 11 Then they said to Indra, "Maghavan, find out what this mysterious being is."
"Yes," he said.
He hurried up to it, but it disappeared from him.
- 12 In that very space he came upon a woman of great beauty, Uma Haimavati. He asked her, "What is this mysterious being?"

Section 4

- ¹ She said, “It was Brahman. It is in Brahman’s victory that you take pride.”
Only then did he know that it was Brahman.
- ² That is why these gods seem to surpass the other gods—Agni, Vayu, and Indra.
They
came nearest to it and were the first to know that it was Brahman.
- ³ That is why Indra seems to surpass the other gods:
he came nearest to it and was the first to know that it was Brahman.
- ⁴ This is the teaching about it: it is like a flash of lightning, like the blink of an
eye.
That is in terms of the gods.
- ⁵ Now in terms of the Self: the mind seems to reach it, and through the mind
one remembers it again and again, forming a thought of it.
- ⁶ It is called Tadvanam, “the Beloved.” It should be worshiped as “the Beloved.”
Whoever knows it this way—
all beings long for that person.
- ⁷ “Sir, tell me the secret teaching.” “The secret teaching has been told to you; it is
Brahman’s
secret teaching that we have told you.”
- ⁸ Discipline, self-control, and action are its foundation. The Vedas are all its
limbs.
Truth is its home.
- ⁹ Whoever knows this in this way casts off evil and, in the boundless heavenly
world that is highest, stands firm—stands firm.

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