



THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

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King Ajatasatru answers his own question as to the nature of that condition which is responsible for one's falling into sleep and also for one's rising up from that state. The state of sleep is a tendency to universality which is not recognized by the individual set-up of the personality because of the intense connections the mind has with the body and the various forms connected with the body. It is a state of universal dissolution, as it were, though, actually, the dissolution does not take place. There is a pull exerted on the person from different corners or aspects or parts of reality, we may say, so that, that becomes an irresistible state. It is not that something ordinary or well-known happens in sleep; it is something uncanny, weird and super-sensible that take place there. Every part of the make-up of the personality is pulled in different directions. By what? is the question. By Reality itself. Various answers have been given as to why one falls asleep at all. Why is there a tendency to sleep? There are those who think it is due to the fatigue of the senses and the exhaustion of the mind in pursuit of happiness. The whole of the day is spent by the mind and the senses in pursuit of pleasure, satisfaction to the ego and the senses. But this satisfaction does not come from the source from where it is expected. The reason is very simple. All the pleasures of life are born of contact of the senses and the mind with corresponding objects, but there is no such thing as a real contact of one thing with another thing in this world. Contacts are impossible because of the independence asserted by all things. Everything has an independent state of its own. That is called the ego; that is called the personality; that is called the differentia of an object or the individuality of a thing. Even an atom asserts itself; it cannot merge with another atom. There is a kind of self-affirmation manifested in various ways by all beings, due to which a real union of things is not possible by a mere sensory contact or even psychological coming-together. On account of this difficulty, the pleasures of sense and of the mind become a mere phantasm. They are only a make-

shift, a kind of show, but really the thing expected does not come forth from that source. So, there is an exhaustion, a fatigue at the end of the day, and then the mind goes back to that source from where it has come originally and to which it really belongs. The examples given in the Upanishads are some such things as these.

Just as a bird goes about hunting for its prey throughout the day, in the sky, searches for its grub, wanders about throughout the corners of the earth, gets exhausted and goes back to its nest at night, and sleeps there, so is this personality of ours an inscrutable something. We do not know whether to call it a soul, or a mind, or an ego, or a personality, or what. Some mix-up and a mixture of everything is there which we call the individual. It returns to its source for the sake of refreshing itself from the exhaustion to which it has been subjected by the search for happiness in the outer world. Other people are of opinion that it is the Reality that pulls the individual back to itself, in sleep. Whether one is aware of this state or not is a different matter, but the pull is there. It is like a blindfolded person forcibly taken to the throne of an emperor and placed there. Yes; he is on the throne, no doubt, but he is blindfolded and knows not what is happening. A force is exerted which is super-individualistic, and that is practically identical with the Absolute state of things from which the whole universe arises. This is what seems to be the doctrine of King Ajatasatru in respect of the source of sleep, and the cause of sleep.

20. sa yathornanabhis tantunocaret, yathagneh ksudra visphulinga
vyuccaranti, evam evasmad atmanah sarve pranah, sarve lokah, sarve
devah. sarvani bhutani vyuccaranti: tasyopanisat, satyasya satyam iti
prana vai satyam, tesam esa satyam.

Just as a spider vomits out web from its own mouth and then moves about through the very structure it has projected out of its mouth, just as sparks of fire jet forth from a flaming conflagration, something like this is the analogy of creation. The universe is manifested in this manner, as it were, if at all you wish to have a comparison. No comparison can be apt in this matter, of course, as is well-known. The example that the creative process is something like the spider ejecting web is to point out that the material of the universe comes from the cause itself. The cause is not merely an instrumental one, but it is also the material cause. The substance of the world is of the nature of its cause, just as the substance of the thread that comes from the mouth of the spider is the substance of the spider itself. It does not come from somewhere else. The spider does not manufacture the threads as a potter manufactures pots out of clay which comes from somewhere, or as a carpenter makes a table, or a chair, out of wood that comes from outside. Not so. It is from the very Being which is the cause, that the substance of the universe comes. This point is apparently made out by the analogy of the creative process being something like the spider manufacturing threads out of its own body. The other analogy that it is something like sparks of fire coming out of flames is to show the similarity in essence of the effect with the

cause. The effect is not essentially dissimilar, in character, to the cause, just as the spark is not dissimilar in essence, from its cause, which is fire. Ultimately, everything, even the meanest and the lowest of creation, is qualitatively identical with the Supreme Cause. In this way, creation is effected by the Absolute, which is the Supreme Reality. From the Supreme Self everything proceeds. All the energies and all the senses (*Prana*), everything that we call mentation, understanding, or intellection; all these worlds (*Loka*), the various realms of being; all the celestials (*Deva*), the angels in paradise; all the planes of existence, everything created, whatever is called a created being (*bhutanî*); - all these are emanations from the Absolute Self. That appears as all this multiplicity.

Tasyopanisat satyasya satyam iti: The secret is that it is the Reality of reality. The whole of creation may be a kind of reality, no doubt, so far as it is being experienced by us, but the Absolute is the Reality behind this reality. *Prana vai satyam, tesam esa satyam*: Individual souls are realities, no doubt, but the Supreme Being is the Reality behind these souls, also. The individual structure, the soul, the *Jiva* constituted of the senses and the mind, etc., is a relative reality, but this Ultimate cause is the Absolute Reality. It is absolutely real because it does not change itself, and is not subject to transcendence. It is not limited by the process of time; it is not conditioned by space; it is not finitised by objects, and, therefore, it is absolutely real. In all the three periods of time, it is the same, and every point of space contains it entirely. Therefore, it is absolutely real (*satyasya satyam*), while everything else is empirically real. All things have a utilitarian value, a practical or temporary significance, not an absolute meaning.

Thus, Ajatasatru gives a comprehensive answer to the questions he posed before Balaki, the learned person, by a refutation of all the notions of reality held by the latter; and with the declaration that the Self is the Ultimate Reality, from which everything proceeds in various ways, the conversation is concluded. But the subject of the discourse is continued by the Upanishad, though without a direct connection with this conversation.

Second Brahmana

THE VITAL FORCE EMBODIED IN A PERSON

The Universal Being manifests itself in various ways, as has been mentioned, and one of the forms in which it is manifest is the Cosmic *Prana*, the universal energy which functions not only in organic beings, but also in inorganic objects. The tendency to life, the urge for self-perpetuation, is an indication of the operation of the *Prana* in everything. There is an effort exerted by everyone and everything in this world to exist. There is an incessant struggle for existence. This attempt to exist somehow, to live and to perpetuate oneself, is the action of the *Prana* in all created entities. This *Prana* is universal; it is everywhere. What we call cosmic energy is ultimately identifiable with the creative principle,

Hiranyagarbha. It is universally present, and is equally spread out in everything. Life and non-life are only the manifestation or non-manifestation of it, or the higher degree or the lower degree of manifestation of it, but not the absence of it. *Prana* is not absent even in so-called inorganic things. The vibratory activity that we discover even in lifeless matter is the action of *Prana*. The gravitational pull exerted by objects, though they are inanimate, is the work of *Prana*. The cohesive force that we discover in chemical elements, or physical objects, any kind of attraction, pull, whether it is organic, inorganic or even psychological, all this is the work of the universal *Prana*. It exists in everyone. In the human individual, particularly, it is markedly manifest. The subject of the following discourse is the nature of this *Prana* as manifest in the human individual.

1. Yo ha vai sisum sa-adhanam sa-praty-adhanam sasthanam sa-damam veda, sapta, ha dvisato bhratrvyan avarunaddhi: ayam vava sisur yo yam madhyamah pranah tasyaidam evadham, idam pratyadhanam, pranah sthuna, annam dama.

Here is a purely mystical approach of the Upanishad to the subject. Its importance is more occult and practical rather than philosophical, or metaphysical. It is, especially, a method of meditation. The *Prana* in the individual is said to be something like a baby calf, a new-born child, which has been tied to this body as a calf is tied to a peg, with a rope. The Upanishad says that one should know what this calf is, what its support is, what its ultimate anchor is, what the peg is to which it is tied, and what the rope is with which it is tethered. One who knows this secret destroys all opposition in the world, and particularly the seven opponents of man. This is the actual intent of this passage. The meaning, however, is unclear. One cannot make out what the Upanishad is saying. But if you go deep into it, the intention becomes perspicuous.

The Upanishad compares the *Prana* to the calf, and the subtle body in which it is lodged, which it pervades, and of which it is the life, as its abode. The physical body which it permeates by means of the subtle body is its support. The energy of the whole system which maintains it is the peg to which it is tied by means of attachment to the body. The food that one consumes, by which energy is generated, is the rope by which it is tied to the peg. If this is known, the connection of the *Prana* with the various parts of the body also is known. What the Upanishad intends to tell us is that the entire structure of the body and the personality, whether subtle or physical, is a manifestation of the *Prana* only. What is worthwhile in us is the *Prana* working. If this secret is known, we would be able to realise the integrated nature of our personalities, rather than their complex nature, as if they are made of bits of reality. Even the different sense-organs function only due to the operation of this *Prana*. The seven inimical brethren mentioned in this passage are the urges of the personality manifested through the two eyes, the two nostrils, the two ears and the mouth. There is an impulse to see through the two eyes, to hear through the two ears, to smell through the two nostrils, and to speak and to taste through the tongue in the

mouth. These instincts tie us down to this world. Our desires are grossly manifest through the senses. The desire to see, the desire to hear, the desire to smell and the desire to speak and the desire to taste - these are our enemies. They are called the inimical brethren; they are brothers-in-law, as it were; they are in us, related to us, inseparable from us, but yet, opposed to us. They are what politicians sometimes call fifth-columnists. They exist as your own friends, apparently related to you, as inseparable from you, but they work against you. These are the forces mentioned, the urges, the desires, the longings, or the appetites of the individual expressed through the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and speaking. If the secret of the integration of the *Prana* by means of its pervasive character through the entire body is realised, one would also know the reason behind these urges. It is the *Prana* seeking expression, so that it may become one with the cosmic source from where it has come. If the reason behind this expression is known, the urges are automatically subdued. If the reason is not known, the urges gain an upper hand. Many of the desires in the individual are uncontrollable on account of the absence of the knowledge of the cause of their manifestation - why they arise at all. If the reason is known, a knowledge of their expression is gained, they get controlled. So, the Upanishad says that one who knows this secret of the *Prana* which is lodged in the subtle body and the gross body, as a single force pervading the entire personality, overcomes these inimical urges - *sapta ha dvisato bhratryam avarunaddhi*.

This central creative energy in us is called *Madhyama Prana*, by the Upanishad. This is the *Sisu*, the child. It is compared to the calf or the child because it cannot go out as it likes, just as a calf that is tied with a rope to a peg cannot go out here and there, as it likes. It can move within a certain ambit, to the extent of the length of the rope but beyond it, it cannot go. The senses can move towards the objects outside; the *Prana* cannot go, though it impels them to act. So, it is something that is struggling inside the body itself. On account this tendency of the *Prana* to work within, as if it is a child tied to this body, the comparison is made of it with a calf, or a little baby. The subtle body and the physical body are the support and the abode of this *Prana*. It moves within these circles. It is bound with the rope of food. The food that we eat is not necessarily the physical food that is consumed through the mouth, but any kind of intake of the personality through any of the sense-organs by which one is maintained. The support and the maintenance of the whole individual through the activity of the senses is the food by which the individual is tied to this world, and that is therefore the rope which binds the individual to earthly existence.

2. tam etah saptaksitaya upatisthante. tad ya ima aksan lohinyo rajayah, tabhir enam rudro' nvayattah atha ya aksann apas tabhah parjanya; ya kaninaka, taya adityah; yat krsnam, tena agnih; yat suklam, tena indrah; adharayainam vartanya prthivy anvayatta; dyaur uttaraya; nasyannam ksiyate ya evam veda.

This *Prana* is manifest through the sense-organs. It is actively manifest through the senses particularly because of their desire for objects. One of the senses through which it is predominantly active is the organ of sight. The eyes are supposed to be indicative, to some extent, of the entire personality of the individual. There are certain physicians who can diagnose the disease of a person merely by looking at the eyes. The iris of the eye is an indication of what the entire system is. There are others who can study the entire personality by looking at the soles of the feet. And there are occult teachers who tell us that the *Cakras*, or plexuses, studied in the *Kundalini-Yoga* system, are within the skull only; they are inside the head of a person, and not in the trunk of the body as usually held. The idea is that the whole system above the neck is regarded as a centre for the operation of the other activities as if it is the main switchboard for the entire activity of the total personality. Everything that is in us is microscopically and subtly present in the head. Here a special mention is being made of the action of the eye as the abode of the gods. How it is the abode of the gods is stated further.

Seven indestructible powers wait upon this *Prana*. The seven gods are the seven powers. Seven super-human energies are guarding this *Prana* that is lodged in the individual. They take care of it - *tam etah saptaksitaya upatisthante*. What are these seven energies? *Ya ima aksan lohinyo rajayah, tabhir enam rudro'-nvayattah*: The red streaks in the eye are the passage of the action of *Rudra*. This divinity is supposed to be presiding over, superintending over or acting upon, or lodged in that particular psychic manifestation in the eyes which is visible outside as the red streaks. *Atha ya aksann apas tabhah parjanya*: The liquid portion that is visible in the eyes, presided over by *Parjanya*, *Varuna*, as the deity. *Ya kaninaka, taya adityah*: The pupil of the eye is presided over by *Aditya* (Sun). *Yat krsnam, tena agnih*: The black spot in the eye is presided over by *Agni* (Fire). *Yat suklam, tena indrah; adharayainam vartanya prthivy anvayatta; dyaur uttaraya*: What is white in the eye is presided over by *Indra*. The lower eye-lid is presided over by the principle of *Prithivi* (earth), which pulls it down. The upper eye-lid is presided over by *Dyaus*, the atmospheric region. All these are the food, as it were, of the *Prana*, food because they wait upon it for their own sustenance. They protect it as long as it is inside the body. The cosmic divinities are minutely present as hidden forces even in this little organ of the eye. One who knows this is filled with abundance of every kind. *Nasyannam ksiyate ya evam veda*: One who knows the secret, as to how the divinities themselves are waiting upon the individual in this manner, draws all sustenance from everything in this world, and everything waits upon this individual. The quarters of the world, the deities of the heaven, the divinities that preside over the different manifestations in creation, perpetually take care of such a person. It is on account of the action of these divinities that this body is existing at all. The cementing force, as we may call it, which keeps the various parts of the bodily personality intact, is the divinity that is presiding over us. It is God that is working through us, finally. One who knows this in deep meditation, one who realises this secret in one's life, does not lack anything. Everything comes to that person automatically, as a food and support.

3. tad esa sloko bhavati: arvag-bilas camasa urdhva-budhnah, tasmin yaso nihitam visva-rupam: tasyasata rsayah sapta-tire, vag astami brahmana samvidana iti. arvag-bilas camasa urdhva-budhnah' itidam tac chirah, esa hy arvagbilas camasa urdhva-budhnah, tasm yaso nihitam visvarupam iti, prana vai yaso nihitam visva-rupam, pranam etad aha. tasyasata, rsayah sapta-tire' iti, prana va rsayah pranam etad aha. vag astami brahmana samvidana' iti, vag astami brahmanas samvitte.

There is a saying in this connection, an old maxim quoted by the Upanishad, a mystical comparison of the head of the individual to the abode of divinities, for the purpose of meditation. This passage describes a bowl whose mouth is below and which is bulging on the top. The rotundity of this bowl is on the top; its opening is at the bottom. In this is hidden immense magnificence (*yaso visvarupam*). All the glory of the heavens is hidden within this bowl. The seven great sages also have their abode inside this. Not only the seven sages, the powers in us, including speech, the eighth, which is an embodiment of Vedic knowledge are this little cup whose building part is on the top, whose mouth is below. This is a mystical passage as the one we have already studied just prior to it. The Upanishad itself tells us what is this mystery, what are the seven sages and what is this bulging cup, etc.

This head of ours, in this body, is the bowl, the cup. Its round part is on the top; its mouth is at the bottom. We know very well what this means. *Tasmin yaso nihitam visvarupam iti, prana vai yaso nihitam visvarupam, pranam etad aha:* Inside this skull, inside this head, is all the energy of the universe. Here is the force of all creation in the form of understanding, thinking and sensation. Whatever value we have in us is due to the understanding that we exercise, the way in which the senses act and the manner in which the mind thinks, etc. All this is the action that is taking place within the head only. So, it is the glory of the individual; it is all glory, indeed. The entire magnificence of creation, in a sense, is present within the head of man. Here, the seven sages of yore, also, have their abode. The sages were masters who plumbed the depths of being, realised the cosmic reality, and were acclaimed as the seven great adepts in all creation. These sages are mentioned here. And the Upanishad says that they are not far away; they are not living in the forest; they are not in the higher regions in space and time; they are not in *Mahar-Loka, Jana-Loka, Tapo-Loka, or Satya-Loka*, as the Puranas may tell us, as if they are far off somewhere. No; they are inside this head; they are within us. Where they are, will be mentioned. The different sense functions themselves are the working of these sages. And the speech in us is capable of manifesting the Vedas as knowledge. This is connected with the highest wisdom because the energy of the *Prana* that is manifest through speech is capable of the highest expression for which it is competent, and the loftiest expression of speech is the recitation of the Vedas. Every other woe every other chant, any other speech, is secondary it.

4. imav eva gotama-bharadvajau, ayam eva gotamah, ayam bharadvajah;
imav eva visvamitra-jamadagni, ayam eva visvamitrah, ayam jamadagnih;
imav eva vasistha-kasyapau, ayam eva vasisthah, ayam kasyapah; vag
evatrih, vaca hy annam adyate, attir ha vai namaitad yadatriri iti;
sarvasyatta bhavati, sarvam asyannam bhavati, ya evam veda.

The great sages, Gotama and Bharadvaja, two of the seven masters, are seated in the two ears the person. Inside the right ear is Gotama, and in the left ear is Bharadvaja. So, if you want to contact these sages, you can contact them through the ears themselves by concentration on the divinities of these ears. This right ear is the abode of Gotama, and the left ear is the abode of sage Bharadvaja. The sage Visvamitra and Jamadagni, two others out of seven, are also here in us. You can invoke them if you want, within your own personality. They are inside the two apertures of sight. In the right eye we have Visvamitra's abode; in the left eye there is the abode of Jamadagni. This right eye itself is Visvamitra; the left eye is Jamadagni. The sages Vasistha and Kasyapa also are inside us. The right nostril is the abode of Vasistha; the left nostril is the site of Kasyapa. So, I have mentioned to you, says the Upanishad, you need not go in search of Vasistha or Kasyapa somewhere. They are here in the right nostril and the left nostril. By contemplation you may invoke them. The sage Atri, who is the seventh, is the tongue. As a matter of fact the Upanishad says, the word Atri has come from the word *Atti*, to eat, to consume, to take, to swallow, which is done by the organ of the tongue. So, *Atti* has become *Atri*. The seventh sage is Atri; he is in the tongue. So, he can be invoked through this particular organ - *vaca hy annam adyate attir ha vai namaitad yad atriri iti; sarvasyatta bhavati; sarvam asyannam bhavati, ya evam veda*. One who knows this secret of the presence of cosmic energies, such as the sages and the wisdom of all the Vedas as present in one's own being, becomes an embodiment of all the powers of the sages, and of the wisdom of the Vedas.

The strength that the ancient masters had through practice of penance can be invoked in our own self by similar meditations, because all the secrets of the cosmos are hiddenly deposited, as it were, in our own internal personality. They do not manifest themselves ordinarily because our individuality has taken possession of us. We have not yet become catholic enough to embrace, within our personality, the different forces which work outside the body, though it is true that even the existence and the function of this body is due to the operation of these forces. Even the physical body cannot exist if the five elements do not cooperate. Little portions of the five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether - have been put together into the formation of this body, and they are held together in union by a force that is inside. If this cementing element in is withdrawn, the components of the body go back to their sources. But this is not the whole story. Everything in us, inside the physical body, the subtle body, and what is in the mind, what is in the intellect and everything inside us - all this, also, is finally controlled by higher forces. The various realms of being, the different planes, the various degrees manifestation of reality, are all located, in one way or other, in

our own body. So, it is rightly said th this body of ours is the *Pindanda*, and the whole universe is *Brahmanda*. It is called *Pindanda*, because it is a small universe, while the outer one is the larger universe in comparison with it. Whatever is outside in the larger universe is also within the small universe. It is a universe by itself. The sun and the moon and the thunder and the clouds and the rain and the wind that blows, and everything that we see outside in space is also in the inside space, says the *Chhandogya Upanisad*. Thus, here is a meditation to commingle the inward personality with the outer cosmos, so that the powers of the universe get realised in one's own being in meditation.