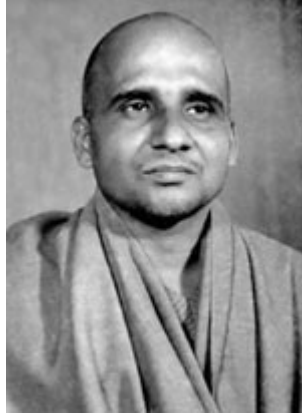




THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

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DISCOURSE-13 (22 FEBRUARY 1977)

CHAPTER I

Fourth Brahmana (contd.)

The worlds of different beings are different forms of a single manifestation which is the form of Isvara, and therefore, the ultimate aim, which is the union of consciousness with that Supreme Being, naturally implies a gradual establishment of harmony between oneself and these different levels of manifestation called the worlds of beings. Previously, we noted the necessity of five types of adjustment that one has to make – with the celestials, the ancestors, the human beings, the sages of yore and with the sub-human creatures – all which is a preparation for the higher adjustment that is required of us, namely, approximation of our being with the Supreme.

The extent to which we are successful in this harmonious adjustment of ourselves with the world outside will determine the extent of our success in life. The Upanishad would tell us that most of our troubles in life are due to maladjustment with the worlds that do not belong to us. We have a very constricted vision of value. For instance, we cannot think of any value that is other than human. Neither do we know what is above the human, nor do we know what is below the human. But the comprehensiveness of God's manifestation is such that it is not partially favourable merely to humans. Thus it is that the Upanishad makes out the need for our adjustment with everything that is real, and not merely favourable to human sentiment. If the adjustment is effective and properly done in all its various degrees of density, protection comes from every level of being. We are protected by human beings, no doubt, if we are friendly with humans. But what about the non-human principles in life with

which we are not friendly? They can create difficulties which cannot be met by human forces.

Our problems are not human problems merely. They are very deep, and connected to various factors not visible to the human eye. Hence, it is futile on the part of a human being to imagine that concern merely with the human level is enough to avoid all problems of life. Life is not merely human. It is something different and something more, and this aspect is not visible to us inasmuch as we are tied down to the human way of thinking. We cannot think as a snake thinks, or a monkey thinks; feel as a tree would feel, or react as a celestial being would react. All these are impossible for us generally. But merely because it seems to be impossible does not mean that it does not exist. Even an atom can react, not merely a human being. So, it is necessary to make an all-round adjustment of personality, then only there is protection coming to us from every side. The Upanishad tells us that we shall be taken care of even by the smallest of creatures, as they take care of themselves. As one loves one's own self more than anything else, so would the affection be extended to you by that with which you are friendly, in a manner which is acceptable to the Selfhood of Reality.

Yatha ha vai svaya lokayaristim icchet, evam haivam vide (sarvada) sarvani bhutany-aristim icchanti: Every creature will bless you and wish you goodwill, prosperity and protection. Vibrations of protection, security and fulfilment proceed from every quarter in the direction of that person who extends a similar attitude towards the atmosphere that is around him and this atmosphere is what we call the world of beings. The world of beings, it has to be mentioned again, is every level of being, right from the material, what we call the inanimate, upto the topmost immaculate Consciousness. No level can be regarded as bereft of the Reality of God. Therefore, it is incumbent on the part of anyone who wishes for true success in life, to be in harmony with everything and all things, without projecting forth the excessive egoism that human beings alone are the total reality. Even those who are not human, will extend to you a helping hand and provide you with all security and protection, and love you and behave with you with that very same affection that is generally extended to the Self of a person if you are in harmony with them. Even an ant loves its own self immensely. What love you have towards yourself, even the smallest of creatures has towards itself. That feeling which it has towards itself will be communicated to you, so that you become a friend of all beings – *Sarvabhuta-hite-ratah*. Then it is that security comes from all sides, otherwise, whatever be the security human beings can provide, Nature can be in a state of wrath and human beings can do nothing before it. *Tat va etat veditam mimamsitam:* Hereto we have described what should be done by a person who is after his own welfare in the true sense of the term.

17. atmaivedam agra asit, eka eva; so'kamayata, jaya me syat atha prajayeya; atha vittam me syad, atha karma kurviyeti. etavan vai kamah, necchams-ca na ato bhuyo vindet tasmad-apyetarhy-ekaki kamayate, jaya me syat, atha prajayeya, atha vittam me syad atha karma kurviyeti. sa yavad apy-

etesam ekaikam na prapnoti, a-krtsna eva tavan-manyate. tasyo krtsnata: mana evasya atma, vag jaya, pranah praja, caksur manusam vittam caksusa hi tadvindate, srotram daivam, srotrena hi tac-chnoti atmaivasya karma, atmana hi karma karoti. sa esa pankto yajnah, pahktah pasuh, panktah purusah, panktam idam sarvam yad-idam kim ca. tad-idam sarvam apnoti, ya evam veda.

Atmaivedam agra asit, eka eva; so'kamayata, jaya me syat atha prajayeya; atha vittam me syad, atha karma kurviyeti. etavan vai kamah, necchams-ca na ato bhuyo vindet tasmad-apyetarhy-ekaki kamayate, jaya me syat, atha prajayeya, atha vittam me syad atha karma kurviyeti: Now the Upanishad turns its attention upon another factor which is equally important in spiritual life, and every kind of life – the attitude that we should have towards desires – because the wish, or longing, which characterises a mind, is important enough, in any form, or any of its intensities, to have a say in the matter of one's progress on the path to perfection. We have very little understanding of what desire is, and it is not possible to understand it because it is a part of our nature. Just as we cannot understand our own selves, anything that is inseparable from our selves cannot be understood properly. The attitude which one should have towards a desire is the same, for all practical purposes, which a physician may have in respect of a patient. How does a physician treat a patient? That would be the attitude which a healthy person would have towards desires. The desires are multifarious. They are projections of the mind in the direction of various types of satisfaction; and these impulses in the mind arise on account of the urge of the Cosmic Being Himself, as the Upanishad made out, towards diversification in various ways. That desire is a desire to exhaust itself, ultimately, for fulfilment of the purpose of a return to its source. It has a spiritual connotation, ultimately. It is an urge that is projected forth, by the Supreme Cause, until it reaches the lowest form of it, in the greatest variety of manifestation and multiplicity, till the point is reached where it turns back to the source which is the process of ascent of the individual to the Absolute.

Here, the Upanishad tells us that desires are many. They are broadly classified as three primary urges – the desire for progeny, the desire for wealth and the desire for renown. These are the major desires of the human being. So, it is stated here in the Upanishad, that the one wish, as it were, is to fulfil itself in three forms. To multiply itself in the form in which it is at a particular time, that is called the desire for progeny. It is present in every level of creation, in every species, and in all the planes of existence, right from the celestial down to the lowermost. It functions in various ways, but its structure or pattern is the same. It is a desire, a wish, an urge, to perpetuate existence which is eternal and indestructible. And, the desire, which is called the desire for wealth here, is actually not a desire for money or physical amenities, but every comfort which is required for the maintenance of the physical body. That is called desire for wealth. These desires are purely psychological in their nature; they have very little connection with the actual existence of physical counterparts, though these counterparts (which are the physical objects) act as agents in the satisfaction of

these impulses. The desire for wealth is actually desire for material comfort. It is not desire for mere luxury, but it is a need that is felt for the maintenance of the body itself. We should not mistake need for luxury, and vice-versa. The body is not asking for luxury. It asks for certain primary needs. These needs are what are called the securities it asks for in the form of material comfort. That is summed up in the term, wealth. The maintenance of the body into which one is born, in a particular species, is the aim or objective of this impulse of the mind to have physical or material comfort – *Artha* – as they call it in Sanskrit language. The maintenance of this form, in a particular species, for a protracted period of time, requires a further activity and adjustment of itself, which is the desire for progeny. But it is not merely the body that is required to be attended to. There is something else in us in addition to the body. We do not ask merely for physical comfort. We also ask for psychological comfort. It is not enough if a person is physically well-maintained while being psychologically ill-treated. You know it very well. So, there is a need also for a psychological security, in addition to physical security. That necessity felt by the human mind, in the form of the ego, to maintain itself in its own secure form, is what is called the desire for renown. So, these are the primary desires, and no one can have more than these three desires, says the Upanishad. Even if you wish, you cannot have more than these three. Everything is comprehended within these three only. So, one wishes to have these fulfilments for the purpose mentioned, and they have to be properly dealt with, with the intention of sublimation for the higher cause in a very intelligent manner.

Sa yavad-apy-etesam ekaikam na prapnoti, akrtsna eva tavan-manyate: Even if one of these wishes is not fulfilled, one regards oneself as incomplete and unhappy. All these three press themselves forward for fulfilment in equal measure and intensity. And even if one of them is neglected, that would make you miserable. So, one regards oneself as incomplete, inadequate and unhappy if even one of them has not been properly attended to – *akrtsna eva tavan-manyate*.

Tasyo krtsnata: mana evasya atma, vag jaya, pranah praja, caksur manusam vittam caksusa hi tad vindate, srotram daivam etc.: Now, the Upanishad tells us that by a method of contemplation, these impulses can be converted into a sort of spiritual energy, that is, the bringing of the objects of these desires into a relationship with the impulses connected with them, in such a manner that they are perpetually with the subject impulse. It is the feeling that the object is disconnected from the impulse which causes the feeling of dissatisfaction and incompleteness in oneself. So, the contemplation that is prescribed here for the purpose of removing this feeling of incompleteness, is that the mind should be regarded as the source of all impulses. And knowledge which is symbolized here in this Mantra by the word ‘speech’ is imagined as the ‘consort’ of the mind which is equivalent to consciousness and the Prana or the impulse for action is considered to be the progeny. A proper harmonious adjustment between these three inner faculties, the mind and the speech and the Prana, symbolized by knowledge and action rooted in one’s own consciousness, may be regarded as a remedy for the uncontrollable onrush of desires. The eyes

and the ears are mentioned here as instruments of visible and invisible forms of wealth, which means to say that name and form constitute everything that one actually asks for, and needs. The ear and the eye stand for name and form; sound and colour. It is these two things that actually draw our attention in various fields of life – the form that we perceive and the name that we attach to this form. So, these two aspects of life, namely, name and form, are also symbolically attached to the ear and the eye, in addition to the faculties of mind, speech and Prana, so that these five aspects of the human being, five faculties, you may say, represent the avenues of every kind of action; the processes of the manifestation of every kind of desire. If they can be integrated in such a way that they do not war among themselves, as if they are independent and have independent objects of their own, if this integration could be effected in contemplation, then all things come in an instantaneous manner instead of successively.

Srotrena hi tac chrnoti atmaivasya karma, atmana hi karma karoti. sa esa pankto yajnah, pahktah pasuh, panktah purusah, panktam idam sarvam yad-idam kim ca. tad-idam sarvam apnoti, ya evam veda: One who knows the rootedness of diversity in Singleness of Being, in all its five-fold manifestations – mind, speech, Prana, eye and ear – such a person, who has the capacity to integrate consciousness in all these ways, acquires the fruits of these five-fold actions at one stroke. It is a difficult meditation because it is hard to instruct the mind that even its desires, normally regarded as secular, cannot be fulfilled if the spiritual element is absent. Even the secular desires cannot be fulfilled if the spiritual principle is absent. This, the mind cannot understand. All desires, whatever may be, become capable of fulfilment only if there is the activity of the principle of unity with the self behind them. How can the subject, which is the desiring element, come in contact with the object that is ‘outside’, unless there is a principle of unity between the two? No desire can be fulfilled if the principle of unity, which is the Spirit, is absent in things. So, it would be a futile effort on the part of any individual, or any desiring mind, to ask for things merely on the basis of the philosophy of diversity, ignoring the principle of unity. The more you are able to contemplate unity, the more is your capacity to fulfil desires, because every desire is one or other form of the principle of unity itself, asserting in one way or the other, through space and time. Desires are, really speaking, urges of unity which appear to be diverse. Thus we see that desire has a two-fold nature – the unifying and the diversifying – the unifying nature asking for unity of the desiring principle with the object of desire, and the diversifying nature asking for a separation of the object and oneself.

Fifth Brahmana

PRAJAPATIS PRODUCTION OF THE WORLD, AS FOOD FOR HIMSELF

Now, this object of desire, in the language of the Upanishad, is generally called ‘food’. It is a peculiar term used in Upanishads only. ‘*Anna*’ is the word that is

used in the Upanishad. *Anna* means food, or a diet of the senses. So, the diet of the senses is the object of desire. All objects of desire are the food of the senses and the mind. The whole world of manifestation may be regarded as the food of consciousness. All that is material is a food for the spiritual contemplating principle. Prakriti is the 'food' of Purusha, you may say. Now, what is this food? What is an object, and how many kinds of objects are there towards which the desire moves? This is a subject that is taken up subsequently in the following section.

The Supreme Being created food for the Spirit, which is this vast world of creation. Anything that you cognize; anything that you perceive; anything that you can sense and think through the mind, is the food thereof. The object placed in any context whatsoever, whether it is an object of the senses or of the mind, is in the position of a food that is grasped by the subject. That food is of various kinds. What these are, the Upanishad answers in the following section.

1. yat saptannani medhaya tapasa ajanayat pita, ekam asya sadharanam, dve devan abhajayat; triny atmane'akuruta, pasubhya ekam prayacchat. tasmin sarvam pratisthitam, yac ca praniti ya ca na. kasmāt tani na ksiyante adyamanani sarvada? yo vaitam aksitim veda, so'annam atti pratikena; sa devan apigacchati, sa urjam upajivati. iti slokah.

Yat saptannani medhaya tapasa ajanayat pita: The Supreme Father created food, when He manifested Himself as this universe. The spirit, contemplating the Cosmos, is actually consciousness contemplating its own food. What are these? There are seven kinds of food, says the Upanishad. The seven objects of satisfaction are the seven types of food manifested in the process of creation. One food is the common food of all – *Ekam asya sadhdranam*. *Dve devan abhajayat:* Two foods were allotted for the celestials, or the gods. *Triny atmane'kuruta:* Three foods were appropriated to one's own self. *Pasubhya ekam:* One food was kept aside for the animals. So, you have got seven types of food. What are these, will be mentioned later on. *Tasmin sarvam pratisthitam:* Everything is rooted in this seven-fold form of food. *Yat ca praniti yat ca na:* Whether one is animate or otherwise, everthing can be said to be dependent on the existence of these types of food. *Kasmāt tani na ksiyante adyamanani servada? Yo vaitam aksitim veda, so'annam atti pratikena:* People consume food of various types endlessly, for ages, over centuries, and yet, the food is not exhausted. Why is it so, is the question of the Upanishad. How is it that food is not exhausted? You go on eating it for centuries; it will not be exhausted. If anyone knows the reason why food is not exhausted in spite of its being consumed endlessly, such a person is provided with immeasurable food. *Sa annam atti pratikena; sa devan apigacchati:* He goes to the gods and partakes of the immortality, or ambrosia of the gods. *Sa urjam upajivati. iti slokah:* He rejoices in the nectarine realm of the celestials. This is the thesis, mentioned in an outline, in the first Mantra of this section, whose meaning is explained in greater detail in the following section.

What is this seven-fold food that you mention, and how is it connected with the consumers or eaters of food?

2. yat saptannani medhaya tapasa janayat pita'iti medhaya hi tapasa janayat pita. 'ekam asya sadharanam'iti, idam evasya tat sadharanam annam, yad-idam adyate, sa ya etad upaste na sa papmano vyavartate, misram hy etat. dve devan abhajayat iti, hutam ca prahutam ca; tasmad devebhyo, juhvati ca pra ca juhvati atho ahuh, darsapurnamasav iti; tasmannehi-ya jukah syat. pasubhya ekam prayacchat iti. tat payah, payo hy evagre manusyas ca pasavas copajivanti, tasmad kumaram jatam ghrtam vai vagre pratilohayanti, stanam vanudhapayanti: atha vatsam jatam ahuh, atrnada iti; tasmin sarvam pratisthitam yac-ca praniti ya-ca na iti, payasi hidam sarvam pratisthitam, yac-ca praniti yacca na . tad-yad-idam ahuh samvatsaram payasa juhvad-apa punarmrtyum jayati, na tatha vidyat. yad-ahar eva juhoti, tad-aham punarmrtyum, apajayaty evam vidvan; sarvam hi devebhyo'annadyam prayacchati . kasmad tani na ksiyante adyamanani sarvada iti; puruso va aksitih sa hidam annam punah punarjanayate. yo vai tam aksitim veda iti, puruso va aksitih sa hidam annam dhiya dhiya janayate karmabhih, yaddhaitan-na kuryat ksiyeta ha. so'annam atti pratikena iti, mukham pratikam, mukhenety etat. sa devan apigacchati, sa urjam upajivati iti prasamsa.

Yat saptannani medhaya tapasa janayat pita'iti medhaya hi tapasajanayat pita: It is by contemplation of consciousness that food is created. It has got a tremendous meaning. Many of the statements of the Upanishad are difficult to understand. They have not got the usual open meaning which comes out of a study of the passage in a grammatical manner merely. They are highly symbolic and deeply hidden in their significance. The food that you can think of, is an object of consciousness. This is what the Upanishad tells in this enigmatic passage. The Supreme Being Himself, by the act of Tapas or Will, projected this universe of food. Food becomes an effect of the activity or the austerity of consciousness, in the sense that it requires some sort of an effort on the part of consciousness to project an externality to itself. There is nothing external to consciousness, really speaking. It is everything. It is all. But, to make it possible for It to contemplate an object external to Itself, It requires an austerity on Its part. So, sometimes we are told in the Upanishads that the creation of God is an austerity on the part of God, because there is no creation outside God. He has to contemplate in a particular manner, in order that He may appear as creation. It is He that appears as this vast universe of objectivity. In order that the Supreme Subject, God, may appear as the object which is the universe, the Consciousness which is the Supreme Subject has to perform a Tapas of contemplation, as it were, in order that It may become alien to Itself, an 'another' to its own Self. So, the Supreme Father contemplated, by means of a tremendous austerity, the universe which we behold in front of us as the food of all creatures – *medhaya hi tapasa janayat pita*.

Ekam asya sadhdranam'iti, idam evasya tat sadharanam annam, yad-idam adyate: Well; first of all we are told that there is one type of food which is common to all – the ordinary food that you take, the meal that you consume. Everyday you take meals. You have breakfast; you have lunch; you have dinner – all these come under what is called the common food of people. This is the first food, and everyone requires this kind of food, human, sub-human, etc.

Inasmuch as this food is a common property of all, it should not be appropriated. This is a caution administered here in this context – *sa ya etad upaste na sa papmano vyavartate*. Very difficult to understand is this small sentence here. One who arrogates to oneself wholly, the food that is intended for all, cannot be freed from the sin of appropriation. It means to say that the food, which is the common property of all, has to be proportionately distributed among the consumers of food, and cannot be exceptually appropriated by anyone. Hoarding is prohibited. No one can hoard food-stuff. Everyone can partake of food to the extent it is necessary for the maintenance of each. To keep for oneself what is in excess of one's need, is prohibited, and the Upanishad tells us that one who commits that mistake cannot be free from the sin of appropriation. There will be retaliation from the sources who have been deprived of the food which really belongs to them, and retaliation may come in any form. One cannot be a proprietor of anything in this world. One can only be, what in modern terms we may say, a trustee of an object, not an owner. You cannot own anything. You have not produced anything. So, how can you own anything? So, it is wrong on the part of anyone to say, 'this is my property'. You have not manufactured it; you have not created it; you have not brought it with you. So, how can you call it yours? It is entrusted to your care for certain purposes, just as a property in a Trust is entrusted to the care of certain responsible persons. They do not own it as they may own their personal assets. But, they are protectors thereof for certain aims which transcend their own individual personalities. So, it is said in a very intelligent manner that everyone has the freedom to partake of this general food that God has created for all, but no one has the right to appropriate this food for oneself. Otherwise, there is the sin accruing of appropriation, and the result of this appropriation would be some kind of suffering in this world or in the other world, because as the previous section has mentioned, you would be interfering with the lives of other creatures by depriving them of their needs, on account of the greed by which you hold things which are not necessary for you.

Misram hyetat. 'dva devan abhajayat' iti, hutam ca prahutam ca; tasmad-devebhyo juhvati ca pra ca juhvati, atho ahuh, darsapurnamasdv iti: You have also to consider two other aspects of food which are allotted to the celestials, apart from the common food of the human and the sub-human creatures. These foods for the gods are the oblations offered in the sacrifices. There are two important oblations, Darsha and Purnamasha, according to ancient tradition. These are offered on the fullmoon and the newmoon day, and the manner in which they are offered, by the recitation of Mantras and contemplation accompanying them, determine the effect produced by these sacrifices. They are the food for the gods. They are sustained by these contemplations. Anything that

sustains is a food. As the oblations offered during Darsha and Purnamasha sacrifices sustain and satisfy the gods, they are called the food of the gods.

Tasman-nesti-yajukah syat: Therefore, do not perform any sacrifice for selfish purposes, says the Upanishad. May it be a sacrifice, really speaking. It is not an oblation of a food or a charity made with an ulterior motive of personal satisfaction or gain. It is a charity, it is an offering, it is a sacrifice which has a purpose beyond itself. Then only it becomes divine. Then only it becomes an act of virtue.

Pasubhya ekam prayacchat iti: There is one food which is allocated to the animals, and that is the milk of animals. Here, the milk of animals includes the milk of human mothers, also. *Tat payah, payo hyevagre manussyas-ca pasavas-copajivanti:* Milk is the animal food of creatures. This is one kind of food which sustains beings. *Tasmat kumaram jatam ghrtam vai vagre pratilehayanti, stanam vanudhdpayanti: atha vatsam jatam ahuh atrnada iti:* You know very well, says the Upanishad, that milk sustains people right from childhood onwards, even upto adult age and old age, and even a calf of a cow is maintained by the milk of the cow. By milk, is meant the essence of the articles of diet.

Tasmin sarvam pratisthitam yac-ca praniti ya ca na iti, payasi hidam sarvam pratisthitam, ya ca praniti yac ca na. tad-yad-idam ahuh samvatsaram payasa juhvad-apa punarmrtyum jayaiti, na tatha vidyat: There are some people who imagine that offering ghee and milk etc. into the sacred fire can free them for rebirth, make them immortal. It is not true, says the Upanishad. You cannot become immortal merely by offering these articles of diet into the holy fire, because it is the *knowledge* that is connected with the production of this food which is the cause of the future prosperity of an individual, not the literal interpretation of it as an object which is purely physical and material in nature. Though every article of diet, every food-stuff is conceived as if it is an outside object unconnected with oneself, it has a spiritual connection with oneself. It is ultimately a cosmic stuff that we are consuming, not merely an individual object of food. A person who is bereft of knowledge of this cosmical significance of the consumption of food cannot be freed from mortality. So, it would not be proper on the part of people to believe, traditionally and literally, the saying that offering in holy fires, materially construed, can bring immortality.

The contemplation of the connection of the object, which is the food, with the subject who is the consumer, is the source of that particular event which can bring about the immortality of the soul. In certain other Upanishads, such as the Chhandogya, we have more detailed descriptions of this type of meditation, where all objects are taken together as a single object of contemplation – e.g., the Vaisvanara-Vidya (we are not concerned with that subject here.)

So, the Upanishad tells us that immortality is not the fruit of any kind of physical action on the part of a person, not even the result of an oblation,

materially offered into the sacred fire, but the result of a knowledge which is far superior.

Kasmat tani na ksiyante: Now the question, why food-stuff is not exhausted, is answered. It cannot be exhausted because the desire of the human mind or any mind, for the matter of that, is inexhaustible. As long as a desire is present, its object also will be present. You cannot exhaust the object of your desire as long as the desire itself is not exhausted. The presence of an object of desire is implied in the presence of the desire itself. So, as long as there is an inexhaustible reservoir of desire in people, there would be an inexhaustible reservoir of supply also. So, no food in this world can be exhausted as long as there is a need for food. When the need is there, fulfilment has to be there, in one form or the other. It is the presence of desire, or longing, or requirement, that is the cause of the presence of the counterparts of these requirements in the form of objects of desire, or food-stuffs etc. *Adyamanani sarvada iti, puruso va aksitih:* The individual person is an inexhaustible source of desire, and therefore the universe of objects will not be exhausted for that person with such desires.

Sa hidam annam punah punar janayate: Again and again you create the objects of desire by the intensification of your desires. *Yo vai tam aksitim veda iti, puruso va aksitih sa hidam annam dhiya dhiya janayate karmabhih:* By your actions you create circumstances for fulfilment of desires; and actions are nothing but manifestation of desires in the other world. It is desire operating in the form of action, and action is the movement of desire, in one way or the other, towards this object of fulfilment. So, by actions which are propelled by desire, the objects of desire are sustained. One who knows this truth will not be bound by the sting of desires – *sa hidam annam dhiya dhiya janayate karmabhih.*

Yaddhaitat na kuryat ksiyeta ha: If the desire is not to be propelled in this manner, the objects would exhaust themselves. In other words, if desire is to be absent, the world itself would become absent. The world in front of you exists because of your desires. If the desires of all created beings get absorbed into their own sources, the universe will vanish in one second. It cannot exist. So, if the desires are not present, there will be no objects of desire and the world would have immediately extinguished itself – *ksiyeta ha.*

So'annam atti pratikena iti, mukham pratikam, mukhenetyetat. Sa devan apigacchati, sa urjam upajivati iti prasamsa: This whole passage is a very complicated structure, the meaning of which is manifold. It has an outward literal meaning which is called the Adhibhautika meaning; it has an individualistic meaning which is called the Adhyatmika meaning; and it has a spiritual meaning which is called the Adhidaivika meaning. As a matter of fact, every passage in the Veda and the Upanishad has a three-fold meaning. So, I have tried to give you all the three aspects of the meaning of this passage – all of which point ultimately to the fact that a desire is not an unspiritual activity of the mind, when its meaning is properly understood and its purposes are directed towards the Supreme Fulfilment which is its aim. But it becomes a binding factor if its meaning is not

understood, and if one merely hangs on to the literal meaning of desire, without knowing its spiritual implication.

We do not continue from the previous topic. There is a change in the subject from the point that was discussed in the previous chapter, and it leads to certain discussions on mystical contemplations, which we shall not take up at present so as to keep up the continuity of the subject. So we shall proceed onwards with the fourth section of the second chapter which is known as the Maitreyi Brahmana. This is one of the most important sections in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad. It may even be regarded as the topmost discussion that we have in the Upanishad, comparable only with the profundity of thought expressed in the fourth section of the first chapter which we have studied already.

CHAPTER II

Fourth Brahmana

THE CONVERSATION OF YAJNAVALKYA AND MAITREYI ON THE ABSOLUTE SELF

The present section is a narration of the conversation that appears to have taken place in ancient times between the Sage Yajnavalkya and his consort Maitreyi.

1. maitreyi iti hovaca yajnavalkya uddyasyan va are'aham asmat
sthanadasmi; hanta te'anaya katyayanyantam karavani iti.

Maitreyi, iti hovaca yajnavalkyah: The great Master Yajnavalkya speaks to Maitreyi: *Uddyasyan va are'aham asmat sthanad asmi; hanta, te'anaya katyayanyantam karavani iti:* "I am going to retire from the life of a householder and enter into the fourth order of life, and therefore am now intending to arrange the division of property between you and Katyayani before taking to the final stage of life, the life of renunciation." This is the expression of Sage Yajnavalkya to his consort Maitreyi. "Between Maitreyi and Katyayani, two consorts, I shall make the division of property."

When the idea of property arose, immediately it appeared to have stirred up a brain wave in the mind of the wise Maitreyi. She queries; you speak of entering the fourth order of life, embracing a new perspective of living, altogether, and therefore you propose to divide the property between the two of us here, so that we may be comfortable and happy. Is it possible for us to be happy - ultimately, through property? Is it possible to be perpetually happy by possession of material comfort and property?" This is Maitreyi's question.

The intention of Yajnavalkya to leave secular property to his consorts, naturally means that he proposes to leave them in a state of satisfaction and immense comfort. But is this practicable? Can we be eternally happy, unbrokenly satisfied? Can there be a cessation of our happiness at any time? The question simply put is: Is it possible to give immortality through wealth?

2. Sa hovaca maitreyi, yan nu ma iyam bhagoh, sarva prthivi vittena purna syat katham tenamrta syam iti. na iti hovaca yajnavalkyah; yathaivopakaranavatam jivitam, tathaiva te jivitam syad amrtatvasya tu nasasti vitteneti.

Sa hovaca maitreyi, yan nu ma iyam, bhagoh, sarva prthivi vittena purna syat, katham tenamrta syam iti: “If I am the owner of the entire earth, the wealth of the whole world is mine, will I be perpetually happy, or will there be some other factor which will intrude upon my happiness in spite of my possession of the values of the entire world?” This is the question. *Na, iti hovaca yajnavalkyah:* No; replies Yajnavalkya. You cannot be happy. You will be very comfortable, as is the case with people who own a lot of wealth, but you would be in the same state in other respects, as is the condition of well-placed people in society. Immortality is not possible through possessions. It is a different status, altogether, which has no connection with any kind of relativistic association. *Amrtatvasya tu asha asti vitteneti:* “There is no hope of immortality through wealth.”

3. Sa hovaca maitreyi, yena aham namrta syam, kim aham tena kuryam, yad eva bhagavan veda tad-eva me bruhati.

“Then, what is the good of all this? If one day, death is to swallow me up, and transiency is to overwhelm me, impermanence of the world is to threaten us, and if everything is to be insecure at the very start; if all that you regard as worthwhile is after all going to be a phantom; because it is not going to assure us as to how long it can be possessed, how it may not be taken away from us and at what time we shall be dispossessed of all the status that we have in life; if this is the uncertainty of all existence, what good can accrue to me from this that you are bestowing upon me, as if it is a great value?” *Sa hovaca maitreyi, yena aham na amrta syam kim aham tena kuryam:* “What am I to do with that thing which is not going to make me perpetually happy, immortal, satisfied?” *Yad-eva bhagavan veda tad-eva me bruhati:* “Whatever you know in this context, O Lord, tell me that. Let me be cured of this illness of doubting in my mind, so that I may know what it is that I have to engage myself in if I am to be eternally happy; so that there can be no fear from any source. Is it a possibility? If it is a possibility, what is the method that I have to adopt in the acquisition of this Supreme final satisfaction?” Very wonderful question! Yajnavalkya was highly pleased with this query. “I never expected that you will put this question to me when I am leaving you immense property, bestowing upon you a lot of wealth.”

4. Sa hovaca yajnavalkyah, priya bata are nah sati priyam bhasase; ehi, assva, vyakhyasyami te; vyacaksanasya tu me nididhyasasva iti.

Sa hovaca yajnavalkyah, priya bata are nah sati priyam bhasase; ehi assva: So, now I shall speak to you, the secret of all these things. *Vyakhyasyami te; vyacaksan asya tu me nididhyasasva iti :* Listen to me with rapt attention. I shall tell you the secret of this great problem that you have posed before me; the question that you have put; the difficulty in the ascent on the part of people to become permanently happy, which is not possible by possession of wealth.”

Now, the whole subject is a discourse on the relationship that obtains between eternity and temporality. What you call immortality, is the life eternal; and that which is temporal, is what we see with our eyes. Wealth is a general term which signifies any kind of value, any possession. It may be a physical possession; it may be a psychological condition; or it may be a social status - all these come under wealth, because anything that gives you comfort, physical and social, can be regarded as a property. This is what is known as temporal value. It is temporal because it is in the context of the time-process. That which is temporal is that which is conditioned by time. The time process is involved in the possession of values that are called temporal. So, time has a say in the matter of our possessions. We cannot completely defy the law of time and take hold of possessions, that we regard as ours. Time is an inscrutable force which is a peculiar arrangement of things in the world. That arrangement is known as temporality.

The arrangement of things is such, in the temporal realm, that things cannot be possessed by anyone. The idea of possession is a peculiar notion in the mind. You know very well, how false the idea of possession is. You cannot possess anything except in thought. So, what we call ownership of property, is a condition of the mind. I can give you a very small gross example: There is a large expanse of land, a vast field which is agricultural in itself. Today you say, it is owned by ‘A’, and tomorrow it is owned by ‘B’, by transfer of property.

Now, what do you mean by this transfer of property? It has never been transferred. It is there in its own place. It has been transferred in the ideas of people. One person called ‘A’ imagined that it was his, yesterday, and today, another called ‘B’ thinks in his mind that it is his. Now both ideas, whether it is the idea of ‘A’ or the idea of ‘B’, are peculiar, inscrutable conditions which cannot be easily associated with the physical existence of the property known as land. There is no vital connection between the thought of the person and the landed property. There is only an imaginary connection. But, the social arrangement of the idea of ownership is such that it appears to be well-placed. There is an agreement among people that certain ideas should be accepted as logically valid. That is called temporal law. Man-made law is temporal law, and it is valid as long as people who are concerned with it, agree that it is valid. But if it is not agreed upon, then the validity of that principle ceases. So, when the acceptance on the part of minds of people, in respect of a principle called ownership, ceases, then

the ownership also ceases. For example, there is no ownership in a jungle. The beasts do not possess any property; animals have no idea of ownership; they go anywhere at any time; today the animal is in one place, tomorrow it is in another place. And we, too, live in a similar manner. We are in one place today, and tomorrow in another place. The difference is, we think in a particular manner, whereas animals think not in that manner.

The whole question of ownership, or psychologically put - like or dislike, is a condition of the mind which is an arrangement of psychological values, agreed upon by a group of people who have decided that this should be the state of affairs. So, you can imagine how artificial is the idea of ownership. Nobody can own anything unless it is agreed upon by the concerned people that this idea be accepted. If the idea is not accepted, then the ownership goes, because you cannot swallow the land, or eat the property. It is there physically existent, as something not mechanically related to you, but psychologically a phantom of your mind. This being the case, how can that bring you permanent satisfaction? If a thing can be permanently possessed, you cannot be dispossessed of it. The very fact that one can be dispossessed of a property shows that permanent acquisition is not possible. It is conditionally connected with you in a psychological manner, and unconditionally, it cannot be connected. And, what you call permanent happiness is unconditional existence independent of temporal relationship. That unconditional existence is not possible, if it is an effect of a conditional arrangement.

So, eternity that is aspired after, which is what we know as immortality, is something trans-empirical, and not conditioned by the process of time, and it has nothing to do with the ownership of property. You may possess or you may not possess, it is absolutely immaterial as far as the question of immortality is concerned. Because immortality is not dependent upon connection of values external. It is a state of being as such. In order to inculcate the meaning of this great passage, Yajnavalkya tells us:

5. sa hovaca: na va are patyuh kamaya patih priyo bhavati, atmanas-tu kamaya patih priyo bhavati; na va are jayayai kamaya jaya priya bhavati, atmanas-tu kamaya jaya priya bhavati; na va are putranarn kamaya putrah priya bhavanti, atmanas-tu kamaya putrah priya bhavanti na va are vittasya kamaya vittam priyam bhavati, atmanas-tu kamaya vittam priyam bhavati; na va are brahmanah kamaya brahma priyam bhavati, atmanas-tu kamaya brahma priyam bhavati; na va are ksatrasya kamaya ksatram priyam bhavati; atmanas-tu kamaya ksatram priyam bhavati; na va are lokanam kamaya lokah priya bhavanti, atmanas-tu kamaya lokah priya bhavanti; na va are devanam kamaya devah priya bhavanti, atmanas-tu kamaya devah priya bhavanti; na va are bhutanam kamaya bhutani priyani bhavanti, atmanas-tu kamaya bhutani priyani bhavanti; na va are sarvasya kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati, atmanas-tu kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati; atma va are drastavyah srotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyo;

maitreyi atmano va are darsanena sravanena matya vijnanenedam sarvam veditam.

Sa hovaca: na va are patyuh kamaya patih priyo bhavati, atmanas tu kamaya patih priyo bhavati, etc.: This is a very long passage, all of which brings out the point that the connection which a mind has with any particular object is inscrutable, if it is taken literally. It has an esoteric, deep, profound significance. A mind cannot be really connected with an object, if the object is externally placed outside the mind, because the mind and the object are dissimilar in their character. The object is physical; the mind is psychological. The mind is internal; the object is external. The mind is psychological and the object is physical. A connection between these two is unthinkable, and so all affections of the mind, positive or negative, are certain internal operations that occur within the mind and bear no real, vital relation to objects outside. But, why does it appear that they have some connection if the connection is not really there? Why do we appear to be happy in our mind when certain objects are possessed; desirable things are owned by us - as we think - in our minds? What is the meaning of owning, possessing, enjoying, loving etc.? What is the actual significance of this idea in the mind? Why is it that suddenly there is a surge of happiness in the mind when one feels there is a possession of desirable value? "This happiness arises on account of a confusion in the mind." This is what the Sage Yajnavalkya will tell us.

This is a happiness which is, tentatively, the outcome of a transformation that takes place in the mind, on account of an imagined connection of the mind with the object that is desired for and possessed. The happiness is not the condition of the object that is possessed. It is a condition of the mind. But, that condition which is the prerequisite of the condition of happiness is made possible by a new notion that arises in the mind in respect of the object, which is a very intricate psychological point. Why does such an idea arise in the mind? Why is it that you regard certain objects as lovable and others as otherwise? What is it that makes a particular object desirable, and acceptable, and valuable, and capable of becoming instrumental in creating this satisfaction in the mind? That is a very great secret. How is it possible that a particular, imaginary connection of the mind with an externally placed object can become the source of happiness within? This happens on account of the presence of something else which the mind cannot cognize, and as long as the presence of this particular something is not recognized, there would be sorrow as an outcome, eventually or immediately, as a result of this external relationship. There is a notion in the minds of people that happiness arises on account of the contact of the mind with desirable objects. That this is not true, is a great point that is made out here. Happiness does not merely arise on account of the contact of the mind with an object which is desirable. For this purpose another question may have to be answered. We shall leave aside, for the time being, the question as to how a desirable object becomes instrumental in creating satisfaction in the mind. Why does an object appear desirable at all, is the primary question. Then only comes the question as to how it becomes instrumental in creating happiness.

The desirability of the object is, again, a condition of the mind. It is a perception of the mind in the contour of the object, of certain characters which are necessitated by the mind. The mind is a pattern of consciousness. You may call it a focussed form of consciousness, a shape taken by consciousness, something like the shape the waters of the ocean may take in the surge of the waves. A particular arrangement of consciousness in space and time may be said to be a mind, whether it is a human mind or otherwise. This particular arrangement of consciousness is naturally finite. Every particularised shape or form is finite, merely because of the fact that it is so particularised. The particularisation of the mind is the isolation of that character of the mind from other characters which are equally existent elsewhere in other objects. When I say there is, such a thing called 'red', it means there can be other things which are not 'red'. So, a particular state of mind becomes finite in its nature on account of other such conditions or different conditions being made possible. So, the finitude of the mind becomes a source of restlessness to the mind. Every restlessness is psychological and is due to a finitude felt in the mind. But this finitude brings about a limitation that is imposed upon itself by the factor that is finitude itself. You want to overstep the limit of the boundaries that are set upon you. So, the mind tries to jump over its own skin, as it were, in trying to grab objects which it imagines to have the characteristics which are the counterparts of what it feels it has lost. The finitude of the mind, it is felt, can be made good by the characters that the mind imagines to be existing in the objects that are desirable. It imagines, for certain reasons, that a particular object, or a particular group of objects, or a certain set of circumstances are made in such a way that they have characters which are exactly the complement, or supplement, or the counterpart, or the correlative of its own finitude. Or, you may say, it is something like a square rod beholding a square hole in its presence, of a similar shape. If the square rod sees a round hole, there cannot be attraction. If the round rod sees a round hole, there can be attraction. There should be a counterpart of values for attraction to arise. One finitude should be believed capable of being made good by another finitude, and then there is attraction.

The world is made in such a way that there are infinite varieties of finitude. And one set of values, which go to make up the finitude of a particular mind, becomes the source of summoning the opposite of these values which are imagined to exist in another finitude, say, an object. So the world is said to be relative in the sense that everything is related to everything else. Unless a particular finite situation is related to another particular finite situation, which is going to be the complementary aspect of it, there cannot be a sense of fullness. The sense of fullness is the source of satisfaction. Satisfaction and sense of fullness are identical. When you feel incomplete in yourself, you are unhappy; when you feel complete, you are happy. The feeling of incompleteness arises on account of the notion that something is lacking in you. The sense of lack of something arises because there is a sudden emergence of certain notions in the mind, in respect of values, of which it becomes conscious. And so, it cannot be that a particular person will be feeling the same sense of finitude at all times. It does not mean that you will be wanting the same thing throughout your life. The

idea of finitude goes on changing as you rise in the process of evolution. As the mind gets transformed gradually, day by day, stage by stage, in the process of evolution, the requirements of the mind also change, and this is why every day you desire different objects, not the same object. You cannot have one particular thing today and be happy forever. That is not possible, because the mind cannot rest in one condition. It cannot rest because there is evolution. There is physical evolution and psychological evolution. Both are taking place simultaneously. So, this perception of a counterpart of the finitude of a mind in a given condition is caused by the desirability of an object felt by the mind. Then what happens? Immediately the mind says, 'Here is the source of my fulfilment', and wishes to come in contact with it as soon as possible so that it may become a part of its being.

The desire of the mind for a particular desirable object is a desire to get united with that object in its being. So, the idea of possession is something very strong, indeed. It is actually a desire to get united with the object, so that you become physically, psychologically whole in being, and not merely in an external relation. This condition is, however, not possible as you cannot enter into the being of any object. Therefore, there is not such satisfaction even after the fulfilment of a desire. No desire can be fulfilled eternally, whatever be the effort that you put forth, because it is not possible for you to enter into the being of that object. The intention is good, but it is impracticable. Nobody can enter into the existence of an object because the object is externally placed in space and time. So, it is a futile attempt on the part of the mind to enter into any object. Then there is a struggle on the part of the mind to possess the object; become the object; make it a part of its being by assimilation of its being into its own. However it is a fruitless attempt because the operation of space and time will prevent the entry of one into the other. That is why this world is a sorrow, and it shall be a sorrow. There shall be a perpetual effort on the part of people to grab objects and try to enjoy them. But they cannot enjoy them. There can only be a mere appearance of enjoyment, not real enjoyment.

The love that you feel in respect of an object is in fact the love that you feel towards that which is called perfection and completeness. It is not really a love for the object. You have thoroughly misunderstood the whole point, even when you are clinging to a particular object as if it is the source of satisfaction. The mind does not want an object; it wants completeness of being. That is what it is searching for. Thus, when there is a promise of the fulfilment that it seeks, through the perception of an object that appears to be its counterpart, there is a sudden feeling that fullness is going to come, and there is a satisfaction even on the perception of that object; and there is an apparent satisfaction, just by the imagined possession of it together with the yearning for actual possession. So, what is it that you are asking for? You are not asking for any object or thing; you are asking for a condition of completeness in your being. So, my dear friend, says Yajnavalkya, nobody is dear. No object can be regarded as lovable or desirable. It is something else that you love and are asking for, but by a notion that is completely misconstrued, you believe that the object is loved.

So, what you love is a completeness of being which is reflected in the condition felt to exist between yourself and the object concerned. You must mark this point. *What you love is only the condition that you imagine to be present in the state of the possession of the object.* But that state can never be reached, for the reason already mentioned. So, nothing is dear in this world. What is dear is the condition which you intend to create, or project in your own being by an imagined contact with the object. So, not one person is dear in this world, but what is dear is that condition which is imagined to be present after the possession of that object or that relationship.

Now, what are these objects? Every blessed thing. Yajnavalkya goes on with his exposition to Maitreyi: Neither the husband is dear to the wife, nor the wife is dear to the husband. What is dear is a condition which they try to bring about in their mind by that relation. That condition is always missed, and so the happiness expected never comes.

After enumerating many things that are usually conceived as dear and desirable in this world, but which are actually not the source of real satisfaction to a person, Yajnavalkya says, nothing external can give you happiness, because it is not the thing alone that is the source of happiness but something else which is always missing due to a confusion of thought - *na va are sarvasya kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati*. *Atmanas-tu kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati*: For the desire of the Infinite, which is the Self, everything appears to be desirable. Here, the word Atman is to be understood in the sense of the Totality of Being. It is the Selfhood of all beings, a great subject which we have studied in detail in the fourth section of the first chapter. For the sake of this Supreme Absolute, which is the Self of all things, you are unknowingly asking for 'things'. You have missed the point in asking for the things of the world. So it is a wild-goose chase from birth to death, nothing coming forth, ultimately. You come to this world crying, and you go crying, because you have missed the whole point in the tremendous effort that you have put forth throughout your life, entirely for nothing - *atmanas-tu kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati*.

Atma va are drastavyah srotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyo: O, Maitreyi, it is the Atman that is to be beheld; it is the Atman that is to be known; it is the Atman that is to be searched for; it is the Atman which is to be heard about; it is the Atman which is to be thought in the mind; it is the Atman which is to be meditated upon. There is nothing else worthwhile thinking, nothing else worthwhile possessing, because nothing worthwhile exists, other than This.

Maitreyi atmano va are darsanena sravanena matya vijndnedam sarvam viditam: If you can grasp the significance of what this Atman is, you have known everything; and then, you have possessed everything; you have become all things. There is nothing left to desire afterwards. And if this is not to be achieved, what is going to be your fate? Suppose you do not have this knowledge, everything shall leave you one day or the other. Today this goes, tomorrow that goes; and the history of humanity has told us repeatedly that you cannot lay trust upon

anything. You have seen things coming and things going; today it is there, tomorrow it is not there. You cannot know what will happen tomorrow, and what will be the status and state of things at any moment of time. Everything shall desert a person if he is bereft of this knowledge. Because they are not a part of his being, how can they be with him always? That which is not 'you' cannot be possessed by you. That which is not 'you' really, cannot be a property of yours. That which is not 'you' cannot be with you always. Therefore it shall leave you. But why do you cry if anything goes away, and there is bereavement, loss etc.? It is quite natural to lose them; it is exactly as things ought to be. Things which are outside you do not belong to you, therefore it is no use crying over them. What is the difficulty, what is the problem, and why are you worrying about it? If they become 'you' they cannot leave you, because you cannot be dispossessed of yourself. You are dispossessed of only those things which are not yours. This point, you must understand.

6. brahma tam paradat yo'anyatratmano brahma veda. ksatram tam paradat yo'anyatratmanah ksatram veda. lokas-tam paradur yo'anyatratmano lokan veda. devastam paradur ya'anyatratmano devan veda. bhutani tam paradur yo'anyatratmano bhutani veda, sarvam tam paradad yo'anyatratmano sarvam veda. idam brahma, idam ksatram, ime lokah, ime devah, imam bhutani, idam sarvam yad ayam atma.

Finally the Upanishad says; *sarvam tam paradat yo'anyatratmano sarvam veda*: Everything shall leave you if you regard anything as other than you. It is a metaphysical point, a psychological theme, and a practical truth. You cannot forget this. Anything that is outside you cannot belong to you and cannot satisfy you, and it will leave you. So, it shall bring you sorrow. It is a point which is eternally true. All things shall desert you, one day or the other. Even those things which you regard as dearest and nearest, most desirable and valuable, shall desert you and leave you bringing sorrow, because they do not belong to you.

Yo'anyatratmano sarvam veda, idam brahma, idam ksatram, ime lokah, ime devah, imani bhutani, idam sarvam, yad ayam atma: So, Maitreyi, says Yajnavalkya; it is the Atman that appears as all these things. This is the point that is never grasped by the mind which looks upon objects as independent entities. The Atman is the one Reality that masquerades in various forms and names, but this point is not understood. The mind that is finite, located and lodged in the body, does not understand the fact that finite objects that are outside are only appearances of a single indivisible Reality. So, the finite tries to cling to the finite, not knowing this fact of infinitude that is at the background of these finite forms. If this infinitude that is at the base of these finite forms is to be understood, realized and made part of one's own being, then the realization accrues: This Atman is all - *idam sarvam, yad ayam atma*.

7. sa yatha dundubher hanyamanasya na bahyan sabdan saknuyad grahanaya, dundubhes-tu grahanena dundubhyaghatasya va sabdo grhitah.

8. sa yatha sankhasya dhmayamanasya na bahyan sabdan saknuyad grahanaya, sankhasya tu grahanena sankha-dhmasya va sabdo grhitah.
9. sa yatha vinayai vadyarnanayai na bahyan sabdan sacknuyad grahanaya, vinayai tu grahanena vina-vadasya va sabdo grhitah.

By these three illustrations, sage Yajnavalkya tells us that the effect cannot be known unless the cause is known, because the effect is a manifestation of the cause in some proportion. You cannot understand the nature of any object in this world unless you know wherefrom it has come. But you try to understand the why and wherefore of things by merely beholding them with the eyes. Whatever be the extent of your observation in the best laboratory conceivable in the world, you cannot understand things, because whatever is observed through even the subtlest instrument, even the best microscope etc., is an effect, not a cause. It is a product of certain circumstances. The conditions that have been responsible for the effectuation of these forms that you are observing are transcendent, and therefore they are invisible. Unless the cause behind the form that is visible is perceived, the form cannot be really known. If you are intent upon knowing the nature of any object, you must know its relation to something else. And that something else is connected to another thing, and so on and so on, until you will be surprised to realize that everything is connected to everything else in such a way that nothing can be known unless everything is known. So, it is not possible to have complete knowledge of any finite object unless the Infinite itself is known. You cannot know the structure of even a sand particle in the beach unless the whole cosmos is known ultimately, because it has got infinite relationships to various types of atmosphere of which it is a product. So it will take you upto the limit of the Infinite if you try to understand the inner, inscrutable majesty of even a grain of sand.

To understand this, the great Master Yajnavalkya gives us three illustrations. Just as the sound that is made by a percussion instrument cannot be properly identified if the instrument itself is far away and not visible to the eyes, but whose sound is heard by you from a distance, unless you catch the source thereof; just as you cannot identify the rhythm produced by the blowing of a conch unless you have the capacity to grasp the totality of the sound by actually perceiving the conch that is being blown at any particular time; just as you cannot understand the symphony produced by a Vina or a stringed instrument, for instance, merely by hearing one note unless you are able to connect all the notes in a harmonious symphony, so is the case with all these things in this world. You cannot know anything. They are each like one note in the symphony or the music of the universe. How can you know the beauty of the music by merely hearing one note? That note is connected to many other notes. And when every note is harmoniously related to all other notes to which it is related, and all the notes are grasped at one stroke in one single harmonious symphony, that becomes music; it is beautiful. But if only a twang is heard or one tick is heard, it makes no sense; it is not music. Likewise with any object in this world. It is one twang, one tick, one sound which is really connected to a vast arena or gamut of a symphony that

is universally expansive. Unless that total expanse or continuity is grasped by the mind at one stroke, which means to say that unless the infinite Being behind the finite objects is grasped by the consciousness, no finite object can be known fully, nothing can be understood perfectly. Therefore, nothing can give you satisfaction. There is no hope of immortality through any possession in this world, is the conclusion of Sage Yajnavalkya.