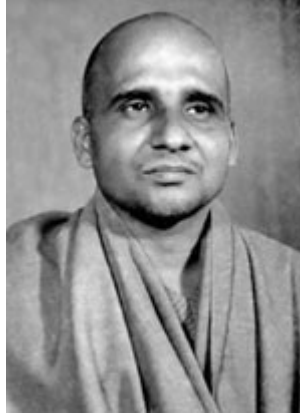




THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

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CHAPTER IV

First Brahmana (contd)

7. yad eva kas cid abravat, tat srnavameti. abravim me vidagdha sakalyah, hrdayam vai brahmeti, yatha matrman pitrman acaryavan bruyat, tatha tat 'sakalyo'bravit, hrdayam vai brahmeti, ahrdayasya hi kim syad iti. abravat tu te tasyayatanam pratistham. na me'bravid iti. eka-pad va, etat, samrad, iti. sa vai no bruhi, yajnavalkya. hrdayam evayatanam, akasah pratistha, sthitir ity enad upasita. ka sthitita, yajnavalkya. hrdayam eva samrad, iti hovaca, hrdayam vai, samrat, sarvesam bhutanamayatanam, hrdayam vai, samrat, sarvesam bhutanam pratistha, hrdaye hy eva, samrat, sarvani bhutani pratisthitani bhavanti. hrdayam vai, samrat, paramam brahma. nainam hrdayam jahati, sarvany enam bhutany abhiksaranti, devo bhutva devan apyeti, ya evam vidvan etad upaste. hasty rsabham sahasram dadami, iti hovaca janako vaidehah. sa hovaca yajnavalkyah, pita me'manyata nananusisya hareteti.

Yad eva kas cid abravat, tat srnavameti abravim me vidagdha, sakalyah, hrdayam vai brahmeti: Now Janaka says: "The heart is Brahman. This is what I learnt from my teacher Vidagdha Sakalya." "But you are making the very same mistake," says Yajnavalkya. "You are regarding this heart as the symbol of Brahman tentatively. Has your teacher described to you the various aspects of this meditation? What is the heart, what is its essence, what is its support, what is its deity?" Janaka as before says: "I do not know anything about these things. I am simply aware that there is such a thing called the heart, and the heart has been told to me as a symbol of Brahman on which I can contemplate."

There are many among us, too, who have been told by certain Gurus, for instance, that the heart can be regarded as the centre of contemplation. It is very difficult to understand what the heart is. It has many meanings. Some regard it as the lotus of psychological imagination. Some consider that it is a centre of radiance of the soul which is supposed to be in the centre of the heart. Some others regard the heart as identical with the fleshy organ of our physical body, and contemplate on the functions of the heart, the beats of the heart etc. There are others who think that the heart does not mean anything physical but that it is psychological; that it is the centre of thinking, and that where the thought is, there the heart also is. So, to find out where the heart is, you must find out where the mind is. This is an interesting definition, of course, 'where my mind is, there my heart is'. It is true to a large extent. But it has another aspect which has also to be considered. The mind is not always at the same place. It is where its object of desire is. Whatever it asks for and whatever it thinks deeply, whatever it needs, that is the determining factor of the function of the mind. So, where your desire is, there your heart also is. But this is only so far as the waking condition is concerned. The object of desire grossly manifests itself in the waking state, and so the mind of the individual moves towards that gross object. Thus the heart may be said to be 'in' something, in some object e.g., the mother's heart is in the child; the rich man's heart is in the wealth, and so on which means to say that the mind is there and therefore the feeling also is there. So we identify feeling with the heart and the heart with the feeling. But this is the activity of the heart in the waking state, and the waking state cannot be regarded as our natural state. This is the subject that we are going to study in detail. The waking condition which we regard as the total reality is not the total reality. It is a fractional reality. The so-called world of waking existence which we consider as the only reality possible is the least possible reality. In fact, the reverse is the truth.

Yajnavalkya takes the mind of Janaka gradually from his obsession with the objects of sense in the waking state, to the dream and the deep sleep levels until he takes him to the Absolute, which transcends all these three states. The heart, no doubt, may be in the objects in the waking state, and we may regard the presence of the heart as the presence of the mind. But, we will be told that the mind withdraws itself into its natural abode as and when the influence of objects is diminished, or decreased by various factors. The objects of sense grip us in the waking state. We are under the thumb of the objects of sense in the waking condition. But in dream, the objects of sense do not act upon our mind in such a manner. We do not perceive the objects in the dreaming state; we have only a memory of these objects. The remembrance of objects of sense in the waking state haunts our mind in the dreaming condition, and we begin to psychologically contemplate the very same objects which we either desired or saw in the waking condition. But in sleep, what happens? The belief of the Upanishad and most of the teachers of Yoga is that it is in deep sleep only that the heart absorbs the mind and the mind goes back to its abode which is the heart. It is only in the sleeping condition that the mind finds its true abode. In the other two states of waking and dream, it is in a false atmosphere. It is in a foreign land, as it were, in the

waking and the dreaming conditions. Its own native house is not the waking or dreaming state, but the state of sleep. So, in its nativity, which is the sleep state, the mind goes to a location in the personality which has a psychological counterpart connected with the physical heart's location. From the brain, which is the centre of activity in the waking state, the mind descends to the throat in dream, and goes to the heart in deep sleep. In the waking state, our brain is active. But in dream it is not active; only feelings are active, instincts are active, desires are active at that time. The logical will and the argumentative reason do not work in the dreaming condition. So, the personality is withdrawn in the dreaming state. It becomes translucent. But it is totally lost in sleep. In sleep your personality goes completely, and you become impersonal. There is however a seed of personality potentially present even in sleep, on account of which you wake up the next morning. For all practical purposes your personality is wiped off, and so it is that you are very happy in sleep, indicating thereby that impersonality is the source of happiness, that personality is the source of sorrow. The more you are personal, the more you are griefstricken. The more you become impersonal, the more you become happy.

“In the state of deep sleep, the mind goes to the heart. And the heart, I contemplate as the symbol of Brahman,” says Janaka. But he cannot answer the queries of Yajnavalkya as to whether he knows the deity, the abode and the support for the heart as Brahman. He does not know - *pratistham evayatanam pratistham na me' bravid iti. Eka-pad va, etat samrad*: “This heart that you are contemplating as Brahman is only one-fourth of Brahman,” says Yajnavalkya. “It is not the entire Brahman because there are three other aspects which you have completely ignored.” Now what are those? *Sa vai no bruhi, yajnavalkya. hrdayam evayatanam, akasah pratistha, sthitir iti enad upasita. ka sthitata, yajnavalkya. hrdayam eva samrad, iti hovaca, hrdayam vai, samrat, sarvesam bhutanam ayatanam, hrdayam vai, samrat sarvesdm bhutanam pratistha, hrdaye hy eva, samrat, sarvani bhutani pratisthitani bhavanti. hrdayam vai, samrat, paramam brahma. nainam hrdayam jahati, sarvany enam bhutany abhiksaranti, devo bhutva devan apyeti, ya evam vidvan etad upadste. hasty rsabham sahasram dadami, iti hovaca janako vaidehah. sa hovaca yajnavalkyah, pita me'manyata nananusisya hareteti*: Yajnavalkya says: “The heart that you are thinking of in your mind as a symbol of meditation is the outer form. The inner essence is different. The heart is controlled by the unmanifested ether. The unmanifested ether, identifiable with *Ishvara* or *Hiranyagarbha* or, you may even say, *Mula-Prakriti*, the cosmic substance in which everything is woven like warp and woof, in whose bosom you can find the seeds of all later manifestations, that is the abode (*Ayatanam*), and it is the support. This has to be contemplated as *Sthiti*, or stability. Its deity is *Brahma*, the Supreme Being Himself. The heart is to be contemplated upon as stability,” says Yajnavalkya, “because where the heart is not, stability also is not.” Where your feeling is, there your personality is fixed. This is a matter which does not require much explanation, because you know very well that where the heart is present, there your total being is present, because your heart and your being are identical, by

which what we mean is that your personality is identical with your deepest feelings. Feeling is deeper than the other faculties of the psychological organ. Inasmuch as its presence is equivalent to the stability of the personality, Yajnavalkya points out that the heart may be contemplated upon as stability. So, *Brahma* is the deity; *Hridaya*, or the heart, as we think of it, is the form; *Akasa*, or the cosmic ether is the abode; and stability is its support.

Janaka says: “I am very much pleased that you have enlightened me in regard to my contemplation on the heart. I give you a reward in the form of a bull as big as an elephant and one thousands cows.” Yajnavalkya refuses to accept the gift, again, saying “I have not instructed you fully, and my father has told me that nobody should accept gifts from disciples unless they are instructed fully.”

The first Brahmana comes to a conclusion here.

Second Brahmana

CONCERNING THE SOUL

1. *janako ha vaidehah kurcad upavasarpann uvaca: namas te'stu yajnavalkya, anu ma sadhiti. sa hovaca: yatha vai, samrat, mahantam adhvanam esyan ratham va navam va samadadita, evam evaitabhir upanisadbhih samahitatmasi, evam brndaraka adhyah sannadhita-veda ukta-upanisatkah, ito vimucyama nah kva gamisyasiti. naham tad, bhagavan, veda, yatra gamisyamiti; atha vai te'ham tad vaksyami, yatra gamisyasiti, bravitu, bhagavan, iti.*

Janako ha vaidehah kurcad upavasarpann uvaca: namas te'stu yajnavalkya: Now, another occasion is mentioned here when Janaka was seated on his gorgeous seat. Yajnavalkya comes, and the King gets up from his seat, offers his homage and requests the great Master to instruct him. The King seeks illumination. *Namas te'stu yajnavalkya:* “Salutations to you sage Yajnavalkya. *Anu ma sadhiti:* Please advise me, instruct me, teach me, give me lessons.” *Sa hovaca: yatha vai, samrat, mahantam adhvanam esyan ratham va navam va samadadita, evam evaitabhir upanisadbhih samahitatmasi, evam brndaraka adhyah sannadhita-veda ukta-upanisatkah, ito vimucyama nah kva gamisyasiti:* Yajnavalkya says: “Your Highness, you want me to give you instructions, to teach you, to provide you with lessons. You are indeed a great person. You are a king; you are an emperor. And just as a person who is to go on a pilgrimage, or a tour, prepares himself very well with all the equipment necessary, so that he may be safe in the journey; likewise Your Highness has equipped yourself with the knowledge of the Vedas and the wisdom of the Upanishads. Having studied them all very well, you have become a very honoured person in this country. You are a very rich person; you are the richest person in the whole country because you are a king and you are respected as such. But I ask

you one question. Being so honoured and respected in this whole land of yours, being so rich and well-placed in society, having learnt so much of the Vedas and the Upanishads, do you know what will happen to you after you leave this body? Do you know where you will go?" This, Janaka did not know. "Where will I go after I leave this body?" "If you do not know this what is the use of your wealth, what is the use of your learning, what is the use of your kingship, what is the benefit you gain with the honour that you have from society? People may respect you, honour you, keep you on a high pedestal, but if you die the next moment, what happens to you? You do not know this. What then is the good of all this knowledge?" *Kva gamisyasiti naham tad bhagavan, veda:* "Master! I do not know; I cannot answer this question. You please tell me. This is a very serious matter indeed. What will happen to me after death? I do not know? Please tell me, give me this secret knowledge as to what happens to an individual when he casts off the body" - *naham tad, bhagavan, veda, yatra gamisyamiti. Atha vai te' ham tad vaksyami, yatra gamisyasiti, bravitu, bhagavan iti:* Yajnavalkya says: "Well, I shall tell you." "Please tell me," requests Janaka.

Now starts a series of studies in this Upanishad which is of great importance from the point of view of the analysis of the self. It has some connection with the theme of the Mandukya Upanishad, but it is dealt with in a different manner altogether, not in the way in which the Mandukya Upanishad treats of the subject. We cannot understand what will happen to us in the future or after we die, unless we know what we are at present, because our future is connected with our present, just as our present is connected with the past. What is the state in which we are in at this moment? What is our condition? If this is clear to us, it may also be possible to have an idea as to what will happen to us in the future. But we have, unfortunately, a very very wrong notion about ourselves, even in the present moment. It is obvious because of the fact that we consider that we are social entities, men and women, coming from various countries, living in various lands, nationals of various places, with physical needs, social requirements and desire for comforts, all based on an erroneous concept of what we are. If we live a socially acceptable well-placed life, that would be a worthwhile life indeed, we believe. Is this our definition of a good life? If so, it is a thorough misrepresentation of facts. The seeming fact that we are individuals is only a phenomenon. It cannot be regarded really as a fact. It is not a fact as such. Our individuality, our personality, our desires and our relationship with people and things - all these are certain conditions through which we are passing temporarily. They are only certain circumstances that have come upon us in the passage of time due to certain associations and various factors which lie mostly beyond the ken of our understanding. Even the existence of our personality, this body of ours, is something very inscrutable. It is positioned by the operation of various forces. To give you only a very gross example, without going deep into philosophical themes, you know very well how much we are influenced by the movement of the planets around the sun, a fact which is physically demonstrable, yet a fact which does not come before the vision of any individual. We do not how much we depend on the movement of the earth round the sun. Suppose the earth

moves in the opposite direction from tomorrow, you can imagine what difference it will make to our life. The various other planets which move around the sun also have a tremendous influence upon us. Not merely astronomers of ancient times, but even modern scientists have come to the conclusion that even our physical personality, this bodily individuality can be regarded as nothing but a condensation of cosmic stuff which has been projected by the forces of Nature, and which emanated from the inter-stellar space, and that the body can be reduced to an ethereal substance, so that it loses its substantiality and solidity, a concept to which we cling so much. This is a finding of modern physics, corroborating ancient astronomical discoveries, so that it is just stupidity on our part to imagine that even this physical body is independent and can stand on its own legs. It cannot. It has been controlled over the eons by the movement of planets, and not merely that, ultimately it is only constituted of a small amount of nebular energies that have combined in a particular shape, or form, for certain purposes under certain conditions. So our concept of ourselves, our concept of body and individuality and personality, our notion of society, our notion of the aim of life itself is topsy-turvy. Everything is upside down. Under these conditions of ignorance, how is it possible for any one of us to know what will happen to us after death? That was the condition of Janaka, and that is the state of the mind of most of us.

Yajnavalkya takes the mind of Janaka gradually, stage by stage, to analysis of the waking state, then going deeper into the implications of human experience.

2. indho ha vai namaisa yo'yam daksine'ksan purusah: tam va etam indham santam indra ity acaksate paroksenaiva, paroksa-priya iva hi devah, pratyaksa-dvisah.

Indho ha vai namaisa yo'yam daksine'ksan purusah: It is the belief of the ancient Masters that in the waking state our self is concentrated in the eye, may be because of the reason that our mind predominantly acts through the eyes in this state. It is also opined by the Upanishads that the right eye is predominantly active, something which has not been understood properly by people. The activity of the right eye is supposed to be a little more emphasised and a greater stress is laid upon the right eye than on the left one. The left one also will be mentioned subsequently, but presently for the purpose of explaining the collaborative action of the right eye and the left eye, the Upanishads mention that the self is pointedly manifest in the right eye in the waking state, and we call him *Indha*. The Upanishads call this Purusha, this self which is active in the right eye in the waking state, as *Indha*, meaning illumined or illuminating, or lustrous. Why is this self in the eye called *Indha*, or radiant, or lustrous? Firstly, the reason may be that the self does not directly operate through the eye. It operates through the mind only, and the mind acts through the senses in respect of objects outside. There is a series maintained, as it were, in the activity of the personality in connection with the objects outside. The deepest, innermost propelling energy is the self, or the Atman of course. It gets entangled, connected with the personality

and then becomes the individual soul, Jiva. This Jiva-consciousness is the basis for the activity of the mind, and the mind, borrowing the consciousness of the Atman through the manifested form of it as *Jiva*, acts through the sense-organs, particularly the eye in the waking state, because it is the eye that is mostly active in the waking condition, as we all very well know. It is very eager to contact objects, very enthusiastic always. It is very curious to see various things, to find out what are the objects which it can desire and obtain, and because of the enthusiasm that is charged through the eye, it is supposed to be illumined with the activity of desire. For that reason also, it can be called *Indha*. The other reason is that the presence of an object outside is necessary for the activity of the senses. If the objects do not exist, the senses cannot act. The light of the senses, particularly of the eye, depends upon the connection of the eye with the object, and so it is lustrous, or radiant on account of the presence of the object in front of it, the proximity of its corresponding object. So this *Purusha* in the right eye, the self manifest in the right eye is called *Indha*, which means radiant.

Daksine'ksan purusah: tam va etam indham santam indra ity acaksate paroksenaiva, paroksapriya iva hi devah, pratyaksa-dvisah: This *Indha* is called *Indra* by a change of accent. The Upanishad says that “gods do not like to be called directly by their names.” No respectable person likes to be called by his or her own name. So it is said that the celestials do not like to be directly accosted by their own personal names. They dislike immediacy of approach. They always like indirect approach, may be because of their impersonality. They do not like any personal approach directly. Therefore, *Indha*, who is radiant, is designated as *Indra*.

3. athaitad vame'ksani purusa-rupam, esasya patni virat, tayor esa samstavo ya eso'ntar-hrdaya akasah, athainayor etad annam ya eso'ntarhrdaye lohita-pindah, athainayor etad pravaranam yad etad antar-hrdaye jalakam iva; athainayor esa srutih samcarani yaisa hrdayad urdhva nady uccarati. yatha kesah sahasradha bhinnah evam asyaita hita nama nadyo'ntar-hrdaye pratisthita bhavanti; etabhir va etad asravat asravati; tasmad esa praviviktaharatara ivaiva bhavaty asmac carirad atmanah.

In the left eye also, the same activity is taking place. The right eye and the left eye join together, in a single activity of perception. And symbolically, the functions of the right eye and the left eye are regarded as something which can be compared with the joint activity in a family of husband and wife. They join together in a single focus of attention. Likewise, the principle in the right eye and the left eye join together in activity of perception, and the a Upanished says that they are like symbols of *Virat* and His *Shakti*. The *Virat* and His Force are manifest in the right eye and the left eye, respectively. *Athaitad vame' ksani purusa-rupam, esasya patni virat, tayor esa samstavo ya eso'ntar-hrdaya akasah:* The propulsion for the activity of this two-fold consciousness, *Virat* and His *Shakti*, manifest through the right eye and the left eye, comes from the heart. It is the heart that is the root of this perception, and so, when the activity of

perception is withdrawn, the mental sensation goes back to its abode, its own source. The mind returns to its source. The mind it is that is active through the right eye and the left eye in the waking state, and when that activity ceases for any reason whatsoever, the mind goes back to its source. So this joint activity of the right eye and the left eye gets absorbed into the heart, in the ether of the heart - *hrdaye akasah*.

Athainayor etad annam: When the mind withdraws itself into the heart, it does not require any other external food to maintain itself. That means to say, it does not stand in need of objects of sense. In the waking state it needs objects outside and it cannot exist without them. But in the internal state where it gets withdrawn, after the waking condition is over, it does not stand in need of any external food. When you are dreaming or you are asleep, you do not require the support of anything outside. You can stand by your own self, internally, by some energy that is in your self.

Ya eso'ntar-hrdaye lohita-pindah, athainayor etat pravaranam yad etad antar-hrdaye jalakam iva; athainayor esa srtih samcarant yaisa hrdayad urdhva nady uccarati: The Upanishad, here, tells us some intricate physiology or anatomy of the heart. In the heart there is a space, as it were, which we call the ether of the heart, into which the mind withdraws itself when it is fatigued of external activity of the waking condition. This fleshy substance that we call the heart is constituted of various parts. It has a parietal, and that parietal of the heart may be regarded as the enclosure, the abode for the mind to lie down in peace and restfulness. And inside this heart there is a network of nerves, or nerve currents. This network is the passage for the movement of the mind inside the heart for the fulfilment of its own wishes during the dream state through dream-images, wishes which it could not fulfil in the waking state for certain reasons. In this passage the nature of a nerve current is described in the following manner. *Yatha kesah sahasradha bhinnah evam asyaita hita nama nadyo'ntar-hrdaye pratisthita*: Suppose there is a hair of the head, a very thin hair and suppose you divide this hair into a thousand parts, lengthwise. What would be the thinness of that fraction of the hair? The hair itself is so thin; you can hardly see it. One-thousandth part of that hair is, perhaps, the comparative thickness of this nerve which is in the heart, through which the mind is moving. So subtle is that nerve. And these nerves in the heart, through which the mind moves in dream, are called *Hitas* - *hita nama nady*. They are very conducive to the mind. So they are called *Hitas*. *Antar-hrdaye pratisthita bhavanti; etabhir va etad asravat asravati; tasmad esa praviviktaharatara ivaiva bhavaty asmac carirad atmanah*: In this condition of the location of the mind in the nerves or the *Hitas* inside the heart in the dreaming state, there is no need for any physical food. You enjoy ethereal food in the state of dream, and you are as happy in dream as you are in waking, though you have nothing physical to contact.