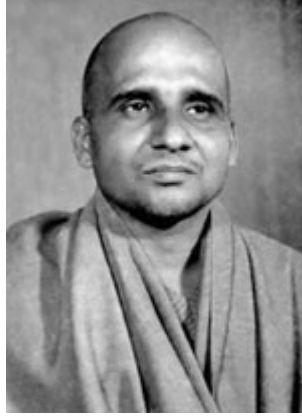




THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

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RECAPITULATION

Chapter I

THE ABSOLUTE AND THE UNIVERSE

The First Chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad commences with the description of a symbolic meditation, the famous Asvamedha sacrifice, renowned in the Vedas and the Brahmanas. The Asvamedha sacrifice is a liturgical performance, a ritual of the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, but the Upanishad converts every activity external into an internal contemplation. So the Asvamedha sacrifice is taken here as a symbol for cosmic meditation comparing the universe to a horse and the limbs and bodily structure of the horse to the various structural patterns of the universe; - how we can mentally perform the sacrifice and conceive sacrifice as, ultimately, a contemplation of the universal harmony of things rather than lay too much emphasis on the external performance of it by means of physical objects and oblations, etc. in a literal sacrifice. The Asvamedha sacrifice which is a visible performance from the point of view of the ritual of the *Mimamsa* and the Brahmana is the object of meditation, in the very beginning of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, occurring in the *Satapatha Brahmana*, the most important of the Brahmanas, belonging to the *Yajurveda*. There is a beautiful symbology provided to us for meditation on the whole universe as the sacrifice itself - a subject that is adumbrated in the *Purusha-Sukta* of the Veda and certain other hymns of the Veda where God's creation is regarded as a sacrifice on His part, a Self-alienation of God Himself, as it were, by which He has become 'the other'. This is the contemplation in the beginning of the Upanishad, the creative process envisaged as a great sacrifice on the part of God. The Upanishad has some resemblance to the *Purusha-Sukta*, and

what follows from the *Purusha-Sukta* and certain other Upanishads by way of deduction. The creative process is further elaborated in the Sections which come after the description of the contemplative Asvamedha sacrifice - how, originally, it appeared as if there was nothing, there was just non-being. This is a famous concept in philosophical parlance, that originally it was a non-being 'as it were'. The words 'as it were' are very important. It is not that something comes out of nothing. Nothing can come from nothing. It is not nothingness that 'was', it is rather an imperceptibility of things. The *Nasadiya Sukta* of the Veda is a famous precedent to this concept in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, even as the Asvamedha sacrifice contemplation is connected with the *Purusha-Sukta*. Originally, it was nothing in the sense of an imperceptibility of all things, because space, time and objectivity of things were all comprehended in the bosom of what are called the 'original waters', the 'cosmic waters', a symbology which is familiar to all religious and mystical doctrines.

There was, therefore, nothing visible, because nobody was there to see things. The seer and the seen were clubbed together into a single mass of content, which could not be described in any other way except that it was non-being. It was imperceptible not because it was really so, but because it was not an object of the perception of anyone. Neither was it an object of the perception of anyone nor was there any chance of its being perceived by anyone, on account of the absence of subjects, and therefore absence of objects. This supreme imperceptibility was the Supreme Being Himself, who revealed Himself as this creation, gradually, in grosser and grosser forms, in various degrees of manifestation, known to us these days, in philosophy, as *Ishvara*, *Hiranyagarbha*, *Virat*, and the diversity of experiences. He became the supreme seer and 'consumer' of everything, to use the word of the Upanishad. *Sarvasya atta bhavati* - God became the 'eater' of all things; the word 'eater' here means the 'consumer', the 'perceiver', the 'experiencer' and the 'being' of everything. He was the Subject of everything; there was no object before Him. As He was the experiencer of all things in an identity of Himself with all things, He could not be regarded as an individual subject, and the objects could not stand outside Him; hence He was in a position to convert everything into the Subject of experience in the sense of 'Identity of Being'. Therefore, the whole universe was like food for Himself. He is regarded as the Supreme Eater, in a symbolic language. And one who meditates thus, also becomes That, the Absolute Eater.

This is how the Upanishad began. Then we are gradually taken to more subtle subjects and brought nearer to our own selves; from the distant, remote, cosmic creative process, we come nearer to our own selves and to more intelligible forms of manifestation as *Prana*, mind, senses, etc. It was necessary for the Upanishad to point out the distinction between the cosmic manifestations and the internal personal manifestations. The senses are internally operative, even as gods are externally operative. The gods are the superintending principles over the senses and the mind, etc., of the individuals. If the gods were not to perform their functions, the senses would not act; just as, if the electricity is not to flow from the power-house, the electric bulbs are not going to shine; - this is a very gross

example for you. The cosmic forces are responsible for the operation and action of all individual principles including the mind, the *Prana*, and the senses. But the individual is impotent, as he has lost all contact with the cosmic forces. He has no consciousness of even the existence of these divinities. When we look at things with our eyes, we never for a moment imagine our connection with the Sun, for instance. We are oblivious of the existence of these superintending principles and we are intent merely upon the immediate action of the senses in respect of the visible objects. Why is it that the individual has become so weak, so powerless, so much deprived of energy? This is the subject of the Sections that follow further on, in the form of a story, an analogy.

There was a war that took place between the *Asuras* and the *Devas*, the demons and the celestials. There was a battle going on and the *Asuras* wanted to overcome the *Devas*, the gods. The gods thought: "We shall contemplate the Supreme Being in the form of *Uktha* or *Omkara*, meditate and derive energy, and then overcome the *Asuras*." So they started this contemplation. How did they do it? They employed the various senses including the mind as means of contemplation - the eyes, the ears, the nose and the various senses, and finally the mind itself. When these meditations were attempted by the gods through these instruments of action, the senses and the mind, the *Asuras* came to know of this fact, and attacked them. So the symbology of the story is that you cannot contact Reality either with the senses or with the mind, because of the *Asura* attack. The *Asura* is the urge for separation, the impulse for externalisation, the desire of the senses to come in contact with objects, and a complete oblivion of the existence of divinities cosmically precedent to the internal manifestations in the body, and prior to our existence itself. The gods could not attempt this contemplation, they were not successful, because the *Asuras* attacked them in this way, from every side, but they succeeded when they employed not the senses or the ordinary mind for the purpose of this contemplation but the internal *Prana* which was in tune with the Cosmic *Prana*, which means to say that we become successful only in so far as we are in harmony with the Cosmic and we are defeated in so far as we are away from it. When speech, as the Upanishad tells us in this connection, was rid of the *Asuric* element in it, it ceased to be speech and became *Agni* or Fire, the Deity itself. Likewise, every sense-organ became the Deity, the '*Pindanda*' jumped into the '*Brahmanda*', the senses resumed their original conditions as gods, as they were once upon a time in the pristine position which they occupied in the *Virat*, prior to separation into individuality. The senses, when they are placed in proper position in the *Virat*-Consciousness, are called the gods; - they are themselves the gods. But when they are rid of the connection with *Virat*, they become ordinary senses running like slaves towards external objects. The Upanishad tells us, by way of this analogy, that it is no use trying to contact Reality through the senses or the mind; they have to be placed, first, in the context of cosmic universality. This is the meditation to be practised, which means to say that *Virat* is to be the Object of meditation. Whenever you contemplate an object located as a part of the Body of the *Virat*, then immediately it assumes a divine character, it ceases to be mortal and it assumes a grand beauty which is characteristic of divinity. This is how we have to meditate

really, and not merely look upon some object, as if it is outside. Even spiritual meditations should not be attempted by mere sensory activity or mental function. This is the great truth told us by this analogy of the *Asuras* and the *Devas* battling with each other and the gods attempting to overcome the *Asuras* by means of meditation.

Then we have, perhaps, the most central part of the Upanishad, which is the Fourth Section of the First Chapter, called the *Purushavidha Brahmana*, a very grand and eloquent exposition of the supreme heights that our ancient Masters reached in their meditations. By means of this *Purushavidha Brahmana*, the Upanishad gives us a complete description, not only of the nature of Reality, but also of the process of creation down to the lowest limits of manifestation. This is not only a subject for meditation but also for philosophical analysis and comparative study of various religious concepts.

The *Purushavidha Brahmana* of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is a classical exposition of the famous *Purusha-Sukta* of the Veda. The very beginning of this section proclaims that there was One Being at the origin of things and It is the Cause for the Primal Will to create. So the 'Will-to-create' is the expression of the Universal Being whose identity with this Will is of an inscrutable nature. Neither can we say that it is identical, nor can we say that it is different. In order to explain the relationship of the creative process and the created individuals with the Supreme Cause, the doctrine of creation is enunciated in the cosmological hymns of the Veda as well as in this section of the Upanishad. The characteristic of the Supreme Being is said to be an eternal 'I' or the Consciousness 'I-Am-That-I-Am', 'I-Am-What-I-Am', or, merely, 'I-Am', or, even the word 'Am' is redundant; there is just 'I', the Absolute. This was the Primary Status of Being.

In order to make us understand our connection as individuals with this Universal 'I', the Upanishad explains how the One tended to become the many in the form of space, time and objects. This is the story of the Fourth Section of the First Chapter - the *Purushavidha Brahmana*. The One does not suddenly become the multitude. According to the Upanishad, the One becomes two. There is a split of feeling or experience, as it were, which alienates the Self into the subject and the object. It is a peculiar state of consciousness where oneself becomes the object one's own self. The Absolute is neither the subject nor the object, because these appellations, subjectivity and objectivity, do not apply to a state where Consciousness is not thus divided into two self-alienated aspects. The Supreme, somehow, becomes Its own Object. This is what we call the state of *Ishvara*, the condition described at the very beginning of this Brahmana of the Upanishad. It is the Universal Tendency to objectivate that is called *Ishvara*. The objectification has not yet taken place; there is a potentiality of manifestation, as there is a hidden presence of the vast banyan tree in a little seed of the tree. So was this universe contained in the Seed of the Will of the Absolute. The Seed was the cosmic repository of every manifestation that was to take place subsequently. There was, thus, the beginning of a cosmic subject-object consciousness inseparable one from the other. Now, this split becomes more and more

accentuated as time passes, so that there is a greater and greater intensity and density of this feeling to isolate one self from oneself, into the object of one's own perception and experience. It is oneself experiencing oneself - the subject deliberately condescending to become an object of its own self for purpose of a peculiar kind of joyous experience, which the scriptures describe as *Lila*, or play of God. What else can be the explanation for that tendency in one's consciousness where one begins to will the objectivity of one's own Universal Subjectivity? This is apparently a logical contradiction, but the whole of creation is nothing but that; it is a logical contradiction, indeed; logically it has no meaning, and it cannot be deduced; but, yet, it is there. The relationship between the individual and the Absolute is not logically inferrable from any kind of premise, it cannot be deduced from any kind of assumption, nor can we argue it out by any kind of inductive process. But we have to take things as they are. The whole purpose of the story of creation, given in this section of the Upanishad, is to help individuals to return to the Absolute, enable the purpose of the practice of *Sadhana*. It is not an explanation in the sense of a historical or chronological event that took place in some early periods of time but a practical suggestion given to individuals as to how they can re-unite themselves with That from which they have been alienated in consciousness.

There is, therefore, a split of the One into two and the two becomes a multitude with the same creative urge continuing in every part of the manifested individualities; that means to say, there is a tendency to go down and down into greater and greater forms of objectivity. From the causal condition there is a descent into the subtle state and from the subtle there is a descent further into the grosser condition, which we call the five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether, and everything that is constituted of these five elements. Thus, we have a cosmic integration with an implied multiplicity or, the other way round, there is a cosmic multiplicity with an implied integration or unity hidden behind it. This is the universe, in its apparent form. The Upanishad tells us that the manifestation was twofold and then it was threefold and then it was multiple. It was twofold in the sense that the Subject became the Object and the whole universe was Its own Body which it opposed to its own consciousness as that on which it contemplated as 'I-am-I'. Then the consciousness of threefold creation came into being; the threefold creation being called, in the language of the Upanishad, the *Adhibhuta*, or the physical, external universe; *Adhyatma*, or the internal individual perceivers; and the *Adhidaiva*, or the connecting link between these two. The transcendent spiritual presence which connects the subject of perception with the object of perception is the *Adhidaiva*. There is a peculiar principle which operates between the seer and the seen, on account of which this seeing becomes possible, but that transcendent element in the process of perception and external experience is always invisible to the normal ways of consciousness.

So, there is a threefold creation - the creation of the outer world or the physical universe; the individual experience, or *Jivas*, or souls; and the gods, the celestials, the divinities who are the *Adhidaivas* presiding over everything that is external or internal. This is the threefold creation. Immediately, the Upanishad

asserts that none of these celestials is complete in itself. No part in creation can reflect the total Absolute. Yet, the whole Absolute is present in every part. This is, again, a quandary for us to contemplate. The entire completeness of the Supreme Being is present potentially in every atom of creation, and yet no atom, no part, no individual, no human being, no god, no celestial, nothing created ever, can be a vehicle for the Total Reality. The finitude of any particular manifestation is a hindrance to the reflection of the Total in it. To regard a finite object as complete in itself would be just ignorance. Here we have a corresponding enlightenment, a ray of light, thrown upon the subject in the Bhagavad-Gita, in its eighteenth chapter, where we are told that it is the lowest kind of knowledge to consider any finite object as a Total Reality in itself. The whole of truth or reality is not contained in any object, but the ignorance of the individual is so profound that every perception mistakes a finite object for the Total Reality. That is why there is a connection established between a particular percipient and a corresponding object under stresses of emotion, for instance, where the object is taken for the Total Reality. Whenever one gets engrossed in any particular object or a group of objects, there is a mistaken notion of the apparent presence of the Total in particulars, which is not true, says the Bhagavad-Gita. To regard one's own family as everything, to regard one's own group as everything, to regard one's own community or even nation, even mankind as a whole, as everything, is a finitude of perception, because nothing that we regard as complete is really complete. The whole of reality cannot be manifest in anything that is finite, in space or time. This is to the credit of our wisdom which always takes finitudes as infinitudes. A higher knowledge is that which recognises an interconnectedness of finitudes amongst themselves. This, again, is a proclamation in the Bhagavad-Gita itself. Where we consider one finite object as everything and cling to it as if it is all - this is the worst kind of knowledge. This happens on account of an obsession of consciousness in respect of a particular object due to the capacity of the object to invoke certain sentiments in the person at a given moment of time. But in higher moments of reflection one begins to realise the interdependence of objects, that no finite object is complete in itself, that completeness lies in an interconnection of one thing with another, so that there comes about the philosophy of collaboration, cooperation, sociable and amicable relationship among beings. But this, too, is not the highest knowledge. It is not true that finite objects are complete in themselves; it is also not true that they are merely interconnected and therefore one is hanging on the other. All this is only a tentative concession to our vision of the Supreme Being as reflected in space and time. But what it is when it is not conditioned in space and time, that is the Reality. It is neither interconnected nor related; it has no internal variety and it has no external relationship. This is emphasised further on in the passages of this Brahman of the Upanishad.

THE ABSOLUTE AND THE UNIVERSE

All this creation is the manifestation of the One Supreme Being; nevertheless, not one particular object can be taken as the 'All'. Why? Because, the Supreme Being is the 'I', or the Centre, of Consciousness, known as Selfhood, in every particular object. It cannot be regarded as an object because the Self is not an object. The term Self, or *Atman*, signifies a peculiar awareness in us which defies any kind of externalisation. The 'I'-ness in me, or the 'Selfhood' in me is of such a nature that it cannot be set aside or set apart or isolated from my own self. I myself cannot become my own object. It is impossible for me to segregate myself into another, as other than what I really am in my own experience. But this is what one actually does in respect of other people and other objects and other things in creation. If everything is an 'I' from the point of view of everyone, it would be unbecoming on the part of any particular individual to regard other such centres as external objects of perception or mere tools for the satisfaction of one self. Unfortunately, each person regards every other person, and each thing holds every other thing, as an object outside. This situation where there is a universal objectivity alone and nothing of the Self in anything, is called *Samsara* or bondage, the world of thralldom. But everything is a Self in itself from its own point of view. So if the point of view of the Selfhood of every object could be contemplated in one's own mind, there would be an awareness suddenly awakened in oneself of the Universal Selfhood of things. So at one moment of time we can have two types of awareness, as we would like to have them. It can be an awareness of Universal Selfhood or it can be an awareness of utter objectivity, fear and sorrow. We can be at once in hell or we can be at once in heaven, as we would like. The consciousness of the Selfhood or the *Atman* nature of everything is called liberation, which is true, because everything is a Self in itself; but everything is an object also from another point of view, the standpoint self-aberration. So, to have an emphasis made on the object-aspect of creation would be to find oneself in *Samsara* or bondage. One and the same thing is bondage as well as liberation. At one point you can see both heaven and hell. The earth and the heaven are both in one place, cross-sectioned, so that the Absolute and the relative are a single focus of experience. This is a great truth that is revealed to us in very precise passages of this section of the Upanishad.

The Upanishad continues, while it goes on explaining this process of creation, telling us that all the principles of creation in various degrees of manifestation are the one Reality itself. Whether it is in the form of gas, as hydrogen and oxygen, or it solidifies itself into what we call water, or it becomes ice, it makes no difference - it is one and the same thing that appears in all this threefold manifestation. Likewise, the causal, the subtle and the gross appearances are nothing but the appearances of *Brahman* in space and in time, by means of causal connection. There was an Awareness, says the Upanishad, at once generated at this stage of creation when Consciousness rose to its status and identified itself with all the multiplicity of creation and knew 'I-am-I'. This Consciousness of 'I-am-I', in spite of the multiplicity of objects, is called *Virat*; this is *Hiranyagarbha*; this is *Ishvara*; this is what we call God, or the Creative Principle. The Upanishad tells

us, by way of caution, that we cannot succeed in our endeavours in this world if we make a mistake in our attitude towards things. What should be our attitude towards anything in this world? The attitude that befits that particular thing! It should not be contrary to the essential nature of that object. If we put on an attitude towards any person or thing, which is not becoming of the essential nature of that person or object, we shall not succeed in our attempt in coming in contact with it, or utilising it, or achieving success of any kind in respect of a relationship with it. What is the essential nature of any object, or any person, or anything, for the matter of that? Again, to come to the same point, Selfhood is the nature of things. And what is Selfhood? This, again, is a hard thing for the mind to grasp. The Selfhood-concept is a universal one, in the sense that it cannot be external. The Self cannot be manifold; It can only be one, because the Selfhood of Consciousness is asserted by every individual. There is none who has no Selfhood in himself, in herself or itself; so there can be only a totality of selves, all merging one with the other, as rivers merge in the ocean. And as we have not many rivers in the ocean, there cannot be many selves, too, in this Consciousness. There is one mass of Being, as we have in the ocean a mass of waters, where one does not know which river is where. Likewise, one cannot cognise the distinction of one Self from another, which is a mass of awareness, which is the Total Being, the Absolute. The Self can only be one. If that is the case, how can there be many selves? There is an illusion in our way, and we are not seeing things properly. When we consider any person or object as external to ourselves and put on a utilitarian attitude towards that external something, we are untrue to the nature of that particular thing, whatever that object be. Then, the Upanishad says, '*Sarvam tam paradat*', everything shall flee away from us, when we regard anything as non-Self. There cannot be success in any walk of life where objects are regarded as nonselves, where we have a suspicious attitude towards things, when we dub an object as not what it really is but as what it is not. No object is an object in or to itself; it is a Self by itself, from its point of view. So to call it from another's point of view as an object and to treat it as such would be to be untrue to the salt of its nature, and so it shall flee away from such a cogniser. All failures in life, whatever they be, are, thus, the outcome of an erroneous attitude of consciousness towards the external environment. This is another great truth proclaimed in this Upanishad.

Then the Upanishad goes further into the description of the classification of society into what we call the *Varnas*, in Sanskrit language, which represent the grouping of characters in human society in accordance with their knowledge and capacity, for the purpose of coming together in a harmonious mould, for the purpose of the achievement of a single goal. The whole of society, by which we do not mean merely the human society but the entire creation, is a manifestation in a multiple form, intended for a higher purpose, namely, Self-realisation. The intention of the universe is God-consciousness or Self-knowledge. This urge of the universe towards the All-Self is what we call evolution. From every stage there is an upward urge towards the Self-realisation of oneself in the Universal. So, whatever the stage of a particular manifested being be, whether it is human or subhuman or superhuman, from that particular stage there is an urge to go

upward, vertically, as it were, towards a greater harmony and experience of integrality. This is what we know in science, today, as evolution. This is what we also call aspiration; this is what is called the moral urge; and this is what we call desire, in general. This is the pull of universal gravitation. All the groups of individuals have to work together from the point of view of their own species at least, for the purpose of their ultimate good. The four '*Varnas*' mentioned are the four capacities of individuals - the spiritual, the political or the administrative, the economic, and the working groups.

The social groups are really not connected one with the other; they are individuals, of course. How can anyone bring individuals into a harmony or a united formation? How can you ask many people to think singly? This is not possible, obviously. So, the Upanishad tells us that God created what is called '*Dharma*'. The law of integration is called *Dharma*; the law that binds multiplicity together in a harmony is *Dharma*; any cohesive force is *Dharma*; else there would be a split of parts into fragments which flee away hither and thither, without any connection among themselves. The parts of creation would apparently have no connection among themselves if *Dharma* were not to be there as a strong cementing force. We know there is always a tendency of things to meet together, to come together and unite themselves in some form or the other, for the purpose of a higher achievement. This tendency is present physically, vitally, subtly, grossly, socially, intellectually, ethically, spiritually, or whatever the way be - this uniting Law is called *Dharma*. *Dharma* simply means the law of the Righteousness of the Absolute, and this Law operates in every realm of creation, even the lowest form of sub-atomic structures. Here, too, is the cohesive force working, bringing particles together into a single formation called atoms, molecules, etc. In higher forms of life it is organically visible as the living body, and then there is the social group etc., all which are indications of the fact that the Supreme *Brahman*, the Absolute, is operating as an integrating Law, or *Dharma*, in and through all these manifested varieties, which apparently are disconnected from one another. Thus, there is the creation of the groups of individuals, and the Law of *Dharma*, at the same time manifested, to bring them together into a harmony. So, the whole creation is complete in itself. It is a perfect constitution which is laid down with all details, right from the top to the bottom, for all times.

Then, there is a set of suggestions given by the Upanishad from the practical point of view. All activity in the world is ultimately futile, if one condition is not fulfilled. We are not going to succeed in any attempt of ours in this world, we are going to be a miserable failure, whatever be our enterprise - you may be a great philanthropist, you may be a loving social worker, you may have big ambitions in life to do great things and magnificent things - all these efforts will go to dust and one will go repenting, achieving nothing of the nature of success in this world, if one essential point is missed. What is that? The *Dharma*, or the Law of Unity which is present as the Selfhood of all things, the *Atman*-nature in things, even in the midst of all this apparent variety of activity and experience.

Every activity becomes divine, provided the element of *Atman* is impregnated into it. Every activity becomes futile, if the *Atman* is divested of it. Every body is alive, if the soul is present in it; every body is a corpse, if the soul is out of it. Thus, the Upanishad very precisely tells us here, again, that we should not weep and cry if we do not succeed in life, for it is our mistake. We have an unspiritual attitude towards things, and this is the cause of our failures in life. We fail at home, we fail in our personal works, we fail in society, we fail even in our higher ambitions, all because of this small, big fault in approach. Where God is absent, nothing can be a success. Where God is present, everything shall be a success. This is the essence of this practical suggestion given by the Upanishad. When we forget God, we shall be in the throes of misery at that very moment, and when we are in the presence of God, when we are able to practise the presence of God, when our consciousness is tuned to universality, then, whatever we touch would become gold, and any enterprise of ours is bound to be a success, whichever be the direction we take. Success will be in our hands and failure will be unknown, if the *Atman* is our guide, if the Absolute is at the beck and call of our personal experience; otherwise, we are not going to succeed; everything shall be dust and ashes.

There are three personal desires in the individual, or we may say, there are three urges in the individual, which are three types of expression of the very same Absolute. The Upanishad tells us that we cannot be completely closing our eyes to these desires in the individual. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is a very complete scripture; it touches every point of psychology and spiritual aspiration. What we call desires and call bondages in life are the blind movements of the same spiritual force. It is God Himself walking, as it were, closing His eyes - that is called a desire; and we cannot call it undivine merely because it has closed its eyes. It becomes undivine only when it has lost the awareness of its purpose. The movements of the human nature in the form of desires, called *Eshanas*, or the primal urges of the personality, are the gropings of the very same cosmic force, attempting to unite itself with every blessed thing in creation, searching for the Selfhood in things. These are the functions of hunger, sex and renown. Even if one ignores only one of them, there is a sense of incompleteness of being. But, their activity is of a painful nature; it does not lead to success ultimately; it throws the individual into sorrow finally, because its well-intentioned activities or movements are blindly directed. It is an unawakened urge of the Universal, and these are the blind forces of Nature; they are also the Absolute Law working, only they are not conscious of themselves. The Upanishad tells us that it is up to us to render them conscious, awaken them to the awareness of their own purpose, when desires shall become directives of the soul on the path to liberation. The Self is the true world of all living beings. By *Yajna* or sacrifice, study of sacred lore, offering of libations, providing boarding and lodging, giving grass and water and the like, tending and non-interfering with domestic animals, birds, etc., even up to such creatures as ants in one's house, the knower of the Self recognises the Reality of the gods, sages (*Rishis*), ancestors (manes), human beings, animals, etc., respectively, and becomes one with all existence, evoking the love of all beings as they would love their own Self. This is, in essence, the doctrine of

creation, as well as of the return of the soul to God, or *Brahman*, as expounded in the Fourth Section of the First Chapter of the Upanishad.

The subject of the object of consciousness, is again continued in the further passage by way of description of what the Upanishad calls 'the food of the soul'. We are told that there are seven kinds of food which God has created for the satisfaction of the individuals. The ordinary food that we eat every day, is one kind of food. The milk that comes out from the breast of the mother, is another kind of food, natural to children, whether they are human or otherwise. The sacrifices offered to the gods or the divinities called *Darsha* and *Purnamasa*, the offerings that we make to gods especially during the new moon and the full moon occasions, are two other kinds of food that sustains the gods, because that is the way we establish a connection between ourselves and the celestials. There is then a threefold food which is psychological in nature, called in the Upanishadic language as speech, mind and *Prana*. These are the internal apparatus of the individual to come in contact with things outside and therefore they are called the instruments of food. By means of entanglement in this sevenfold food, the subject-individual gets caught up in the object-atmosphere. The objects catch hold of the subjects by attracting them towards themselves and making the subjects depend on them. Anything on which you depend is the food of yours, and all these seven things are mentioned as things on which individuals depend for their sustenance. The internal or psychological foods - speech, mind and *Prana* - are further described in their cosmical connotation, and we are told that we are supposed to spiritualise these external forms of manifestation called the foods, and when we spiritualise them, they become universal in their nature. An object when it becomes universal ceases to be an object; it is particularised, and so it looks like an object. The Upanishad proffers certain meditations, or *Upasanas*, according to which these seven kinds of food, especially the speech, mind and *Prana*, get cosmically enlarged in their magnitude and become part-and-parcel of *Hiranyagarbha-Prana*.

Anything can become a passage to God, provided it gets universalised in meditation. We are told that, individually, no sense-organ can be an instrument or help in our contacting God. Neither the senses nor the mind can be an aid, but they become aids when they are universalised, when they are united back to their original sources, namely, the Deities presiding over them. If the senses and the mind act individually, as if they are disconnected from their sources, the divinities, then they cannot succeed in their attempts. When they are connected back to their divinities, they become cosmical in their nature, they become part of *Virat*, they gain their status in the cosmos instead of being located merely in the individual bodies. This is one kind of meditation whereby the individual limbs get transferred to their respective locations in the Cosmic Body.

Name, form and action are what this world is. The world consists of nothing but name, form and activity. These, when they are externalised, particularised or finitised, become sources of bondage. Again, the Upanishad goes to the technique of universalising name, form and activity. Then they become the name, form and

action of *Hiranyagarbha-Prana*. This is a meditation which, we may say, is the basis for the *Karma-Yoga* doctrine, according to which every action is supposed to be divinity manifest, and a means to liberation of the soul, provided, of course, names, forms and actions get universalised in the meditation which is to be the background of one's activities in the world. As the Bhagavad-Gita tells us, *Karma* should be based on *Buddhi* (Understanding) or *Jnana* (Knowledge). With this, the First Chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is concluded.