THE PHILOSOPHY

OF

SAGE YAJNAVALKYA

A FREE RENDERING OF THE YAJNAVALKYA-KANDA

OF THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

AS EXPOUNDED IN THE ATMA PURANA

BY

Swami Brahmananda

A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

First Edition: 1972

eBook: 2010
PUBLISHERS’ NOTE

‘The Philosophy of Sage Yajnavalkya’ is a running commentary and exposition of an important section of the *Atma-Purana* written by the renowned saint and savant, Swami Sankarananda, the Guru of Swami Vidyaranya. In this new publication of a scarcely known treatise of this great author, rendered into English by Sri Swami Brahmamanandaji Maharaj, students of the Vedanta Philosophy will find a rich treat of logical disquisition and philosophical wisdom, culminating in the final ascertainment of the Truth of the Universal Atman as the Supreme Reality. This is a book which would be regarded by students as a very fitting text for daily sacred study,—Svadhyaya—and a guide in the higher meditations of the Spirit.

We pray to the Almighty that the ushering in of this small treatise will prove a blessing to spiritual seekers on the path of *Jnana-Yoga*.

Shivanandanagar,

11th September, 1972

(Sri Ganesa Chaturthi) THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
FOREWARDS

Homage unto the Supreme Being! Salutations unto Bhagavan Veda Vyasa, the great Father of our Spiritual Culture and the sacred Dharma. Adorations to sage Yajnavalkya, the grand seer of the Upanishadic era, who was the foremost and most illustrious expounder of Bharatavarsha's lofty Dharma and Spiritual Idealism. Prostrations to worshipful Swami Sivananda, our beloved Satguru, who was to us our visible God, our living and visible Veda Vyasa and was to us a veritable Yajnavalkya in our own life.

May the grace of the Supreme Lord and the blessings of Bhagavan Veda Vyasa, Sage Yajnavalkya and Satgurudev Swami Sivananda be upon the holy monk responsible for this present work in English, namely, our Gurubhai Sri Swami Brahmananda Sarasvati, a disciple of the holy Master Swami Sivananda and now a resident of Sivananda Ashram.

I congratulate Sri Swami Brahmananda for this selfless labour of his by which he has made available to the English knowing public, a portion of the rich contents of a rare and not-very-well-known work of a great teacher that contains the very quintessence of the Upanishads. This careful and pains-taking work of his is indeed a Jnana-Yajna and Loka-Seva. May innumerable people be benefited and helped by this work. I wish and pray the widest possible circulation to this worthy work.

May God bless the author, his work as well as its readers. May the author as well as each of you who reads this work attain the highest spiritual illumination, Supreme Peace and Divine Blessedness.

Sivanandashram,
31st August, 1972

Sri Krishna Janmashtami

—Swami Chidananda
The world of today is torn with tension and has lost its moorings. This is evident from the countless methods which it is trying to employ in its search for happiness, however, with no success in the end. The whole game of human effort seems to be a struggle without substantial achievement. For, when the object of one’s quest is achieved, the striving reaches its end. But from ages past, since the dawn of human history, mankind has been endeavouring to attain some objective, and this endeavour has not ceased even today, towards the fag-end of the twentieth century. It all appears, in the end, to be a sweating to no purpose. There is a general feeling of insecurity and dissatisfaction everywhere.

The reason is that the world has put the cart before the horse. There is a need for a right-about turn in the perspective of life and one’s attitude towards things. There seems to be something in man with which the world cannot cope and which surpasses in content the resources of the material world. This should account for the failure of the world in satisfying man’s needs. Man has been asking always for too much, which the world has not been able to supply. Yet, he has been depending for his sustenance on the world of objects and hoping to bring a satiety of is cravings by contacting objects and living in a world of stimuli to his sensations. Perishable though the world is, man has been expecting permanent happiness through sensory stimulation by means of the objects of the world. There is a deeper content holding together man and the world, which has been missed in the acts of human experience, and which answers the question, why man is unhappy.

The search for eternal happiness was vigorously undertaken by the sages of the Upanishads, whose records we have today with us as a treasure-house and legacy of wisdom which defies the vicissitudes of time. This timeless wisdom is embodies in the Upanishads which are the quintessential conclusion of the import of the Vedas. If the Vedas are the repository of transcendent knowledge in its comprehensiveness, the Upanishads represent the final outcome and substance of this knowledge. Indian Culture is essential Upanishadic culture. The Epics, Puranas and Smritis, which are an elaboration of India’s vast cultural lore, are ultimately rooted in the suggestions of the Vedas and the proclamations of the Upanishads. The Brihadaranyaka is held to be the most important of the extant Upanishads. Even here, chapters III and IV, known as the Yajnavalkya-Kanda, figure prominently as the loftiest reach of sagacity which the human mind has ever reached in history.

The sentences of the Upanishads are charged with pithiness of style, grandeur of language and magnificence of content. Every sentence,—sometimes even a phrase or a word,—holds within its bosom a world of meaning, and its significance cannot be understood without an adequate commentary or explanation. With this need of the student-world in view, the celebrated Swami Sankarananda, who is supposed to be a Guru of Swami Vidyaranya of the Panchadasi fame, wrote an extensive treatise of Sanskrit verses known as the Atma Purana, expounding the meaning of the major and some minor Upanishads. This work remained for a long time in the original Sanskrit alone, and later on it appeared in some vernacular translations. But it was never translated into English. Thus the great work remained beyond the reach of the modern educated man, especially outside India.
Revered Sri Swami Brahmanandaji and a few of his colleagues in the Ashram were carrying on a study group of the Atma Purana for the benefit of a small circle of Sannyasins interested in the higher knowledge of the Upanishads. One day, it so happened that I put a proposal to Sri Swami Brahmanandaji of the possibility of rendering into English at least the central portion of the most important of the Upanishads, from the Malayalam edition which they were following in this study circle. As an experimental attempt, I suggested the translation of the Yajnavalkya-Kanda of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, since it is the cream of Upanishadic teaching. Sri Swami Brahmanandaji readily agreed to do this noble service and he immediately launched upon this initial attempt of translating into English this particular portion of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as expounded in the Atma Purana. This English translation appeared in a series through the columns of the journal, 'The Divine Life', and it comes out now in a book-form for the benefit of Sadhakas in general.

Sri Swami Brahmanandaji is a very venerable elderly Sannyasin residing in the Headquarters-Ashram of the Divine Life Society and is one ably equipped to understand the true meaning hidden behind the Upanishadic sentences and the expositions of the great Swami Sankarananda. The English translation is not merely a free rendering of the original, but is suffused with the devotion, feeling and meditation of the revered translator himself. There is not the least doubt that eager students of the Vedanta and followers of the path of Jnana-Yoga will find this book a suitable guide in their daily life and a fitting text for Svadhyaya or sacred study as a necessary item in the programme of their spiritual practice.

Shivanandanagar,
10th August, 1972. —Swami Krishnananda
PREFACE

“Prostrations and adorations at the lotus feet of Satguru Bhagavan who is the Brahmic Bliss, the bestower of transcendental happiness, one without a second, an embodiment of Consciousness-Absolute, who transcends all pairs of opposites like good and bad, pleasure and pain, etc., who is comparable to the expansive limitless ether, who is realised through the indicative meaning of the great sentence of the Upanishad, Tat Tvam Asi, who is non-dual, eternal, free of all blemishes, non-moving, the witness of all the modifications of the intellect, beyond the six Bhavavikaras of existence, birth, growth, change, decay and death and who transcends the three Gunas of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas.”


It was during the last week of October 1968 that the ‘Seeker’ was directed by H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj to take up the work of translation of chapters VI, VI and VII of the Atma-Purana of Sri Swami Sankarananda Saraswati, which form a detailed commentary on the Upanishadic Mantras contained in the Yajnavalkya Kanda of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. It was the time when the Seeker was studying those particular chapters of the Atma Purana along with some senior monks in the Ashram. Being a notice in the literary field and being fully aware of the difficulties inherent in the work of translation of a Sanskrit scripture like the Atma-Purana, dealing with Advaita philosophy, into a foreign language like English, he was at first diffident to start the work. But, he came to realise quickly the hidden purpose behind the direction of the great Swamiji. He understood that the direction to translate this particular scripture was indirectly a guidance to him on the path of his Sadhana. For, the portion selected by Swamiji Maharaj is the crest-jewel of all the Upanishadic literature containing the cream of the Advaita Philosophy. Its translation requires intense concentration on those Upanishadic mantras continuously for a pretty long period, which becomes a kind of meditation on the Mantras themselves. Without missing the opportunity thus given to him by Swamiji Maharaj, the Seeker immediately plunged himself into the task, completed it as a part of his Sadhana, in about three months’ time, and submitted the manuscript for scrutiny, correction and approval. Among his multifarious duties, Swamiji Maharaj was kindly enough to find time to edit the whole manuscript, for which the Seeker expresses his heart-felt feelings of gratitude and thanks. It was then serialised in “The Divine Life” Journal. Now the Divine Life Society is publishing it in this book-form for the benefit of the spiritual seekers.

No one who is a seeker after the Supreme Truth can afford to be unfamiliar with the teachings of Sage Yajnavalkya contained in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Being the most prominent among the ten major Upanishads, all aspirants, especially those following the path of knowledge, would have knowledge of the whole Upanishad or at least the Yajnavalkya-Kanda comprising chapters III and IV of the Upanishad. But not many would have had the opportunity to study this part of the Upanishad in the form in which it is presented by Sri Swami Sankarananda Saraswati in his Atma-Purana. This might also be
one of the reasons which prompted Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj to select this particular portion of the scripture for translation by the ‘Seeker’.

Since there are no equivalents in English language for many of the Sanskrit terms used in the original, which stand for well defined philosophical concepts, the original Sanskrit words themselves have been used in some cases in the translation. Such Sanskrit words are printed either in italics, or in Roman type with the first letter in capital like proper nouns. An attempt has been made to give their meanings in English either as parenthesis or within brackets, wherever necessary. A few footnotes have also been given to explain some Sanskrit words, the meanings of which could not be printed in the body of the text without interrupting the continuity of the ideas. There may be differences of opinion regarding the appropriateness of the translation of some of the Sanskrit words. The seekers of Truth, to whom this book is mainly intended, being concerned only with the Truth and the means of its attainment, it is hoped would not allow themselves to get involved in controversies about the meanings of words which may be safely left to scholars and research students. Since a mechanical and literal rendering of the original verses would cause mutilation of the thoughts and ideas of the author and render the book unintelligible, the translation is, as stated in the introduction, a free one and it closely follows the commentary of Acharya Sankara on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, without deviating from the ideas of the author, the great scholar-saint, Sri Swami Sankarananda Saraswati.

In the original text, each chapter is a continuous whole, the verses from the first to the last running without any break. An attempt has been made in the translation to sectionalise each chapter under suitable headings. Each such section ahhs been again divided into sub-sections and the sub-headings have been incorporated in the contents.

A few verses in one or two portions of the text have been left out in the translation as it is considered they may not be of interest to the spiritual Sadhakas and may even be a little tiresome to them.

In spite of the best attempts on the part of all concerned in the publication of this book, beginning from the preparation of the manuscript, the various stages in the press, till its final release, errors here and there might have crept in. The readers who happen to detect them need not hesitate to communicate them to the translator or the publishers, so that they may be rectified if and when the second edition of the book is printed.

A superficial reader may find it difficult to understand the real import of many of the portions of this book, which are dispersed with enigmatic and pithy statements. He may also come across several apparently contradictory ideas. At times, during the course of reading, he may even feel repulsed by seemingly exaggerated descriptions and impossible results. But the seeker after Truth should not allow himself to be confused or dispirited on this account. He should not rest satisfied with a cursory reading. On the other hand, he should go through the book, again and again, with great concentration of mind and sincerity of purpose, till he is able to grasp the most subtle and mystical imports which are hidden behind the words of the great sage Yajnavalkya and the learned saint Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj. Even the initiates may find difficulty in this matter, not to speak of the neophytes in the line. Wherever doubt or difficulty arises, the reader would do well to
take resort to the original text of the Atma-Purana, and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad with its commentary by Acharya Sankara.

A short biographical article on Sage Yajnavalkya, as also a summary of the three chapters are given as appendices 1 and 2 in this book which, it is hoped, would be useful to the aspirants.

In the preparation of the manuscript for this free English rendering, the edition published about the year 1925 by Sri Korattu Narayana Menon of Vadavanoor, containing the original text of the first seven chapters of the Atma Purana in the Malayalam script and its Malayalam translation has been the mainstay for the ‘Seeker’. The ‘Seeker’ therefore acknowledges his indebtedness to him. He is also grateful to the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press and the Divine Life Society who are responsible for the printing and publication of this book.

Before closing this short preface, the seeker offers his prostrations to H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for their blessings which adorn these introductory pages of the book in the form of Forewords.

Sivanandashram

24th September 1972. —Swami Brahmananda
Sri Swami Brahmananda
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INTRODUCTION

Of the one hundred and eight important Upanishads, ten, viz., Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka are considered to be the more important, for which Sri Sankaracharya, the greatest exponent of the Advaita Philosophy, has written commentaries. Among these ten, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad occupies a very prominent place, not only due to its volume, but also because the ‘Brihat’—‘Brahman’, which constitutes its theme, is explained therein in a very lucid manner, better than in any of the other Upanishads. Another reason for its superiority is the fact that it reveals the true nature of the mystic experience of the Brahman-Atman-identity, and also gives a logical explanation of that great doctrine of Advaita through the employment of the dialectic modes of argumentation; and these are more salient in the third and fourth chapters, which have on that account become the crest jewels, as it were, of the whole Upanishadic literature. Sage Yajnavalkya is the chief figure in these two chapters, and hence they are called after his name as Muni-Kanda or Yajnavalkya-Kanda. He is seen as a stalwart dialectician in the royal court of Janaka, king of Videha. He establishes the highest philosophical truth of Advaita by defeating his opponents in argumentation who are all great philosophers well versed in the Vedic lore, and through his instructions to King Janaka and his own wife Maitreyi.

The Upanishads contain the highest idealism. They are also mystical, and to an uninitiated mind, too difficult even to have a correct intellectual grasp. To get oneself fixed in the Supreme Consciousness is a superhuman task indeed! The possibility of slipping away from it even after understanding it, is illustrated in the incident of King Janaka who, a highly intellectual personage and an adept in the various Upasanas, in spite of the warning given by the Sage Yajnavalkya to the contrary, forgot the instructions on the Atman given to him, due to the force of his Vasanas and Samskaras (subtle, latent impressions) which lay buried in the subconscious and unconscious levels of his mind and which externally manifested themselves in a Sattvic form as Vaisvanara Upasana, and in a Rajasic form as the administrative duties of a king. The sage had therefore to instruct him once again. This is related in the fourth chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

The futility of following the process of a purely logical reasoning, in understanding the Supreme Truth, is brought to high relief in the warning of the Sage Yajnavalkya given to Gargi, the most outstanding lady saint and seer in the court of Janaka. When she questions him, “By what is the world of Hiranyagarbha pervaded?” the sage admonishes here: “Do not, O Gargi, push your enquiry too far lest your head shall fall off; you are questioning about a deity that should not be reasoned about; do not, O Gargi, go too far.” (Br. Up. III-6).

The uphill task one has to face in following the dialectical method, even if supported by the scriptures, for imparting Brahma Vidya, is seen in the same episode of Gargi, when she puts her last two questions. The first one, viz., “By what, O Yajnavalkya, is that pervaded, which is above the heaven and below the heart, which is this heaven and earth as well as between them and what they say was, is and will be?” is sufficiently difficult to answer, the ‘unmanifested ether’ which is the answer to the questions being beyond the three periods of time. Much more difficult is to explain the “Immutable” (Brahman) by which the unmanifested ether is pervaded, the answer to the second question of Gargi, and hence it is impossible of any explanation in the usual sense of the term. Acharya Sankara in his...
commentary on this Mantra (III-8-vii) says that, if Yajnavalkya did not explain it for this reason, he would lay himself open to the charge of what is called in the system of logic, Apratipatti—non-comprehension,—and if on the other hand he tried to explain it, notwithstanding the fact that it could not be explained, he would be guilty of what is called Vipratipatti—a contradiction,—for the attempt to explain what cannot be explained is such a contradiction.

The third chapter of the Upanishad contains the Sage’s exposition of the highest truth in the replies furnished by him to the questions of his opponents—the eight great saints,—Asvala, Artabhaga, Bhuju, Ushasta, Kahola, Gargi, Uddalaka, and Vidagdha Sakalya. It begins with meditation for emancipation from bondage (death) in the form of ritualistic rites and time, the nature of which (bondage) consists in our attachment to the organs and their objects (grahas and atigrahams) due to our ignorance. That there is liberation from this relative existence of ends and means, and that Karmas or works have no access to it but only lead to endless transmigration, is next explained. This takes us on to the subject of ‘Self’ as a distinct entity, and renunciation as a means to attain it. Then follows a clear but succinct exposition of the nature of the ‘immediate and direct Self that is within all’, and the method of attaining it through a process of elimination of the external elements like earth, water, etc, one by one, in the order of their subtlety, the grossest earth coming first and the world of Hiranyagarbha coming as the last of the series. The Sutra and the Internal Ruler, the innermost entity of the world of Hiranyagarbha, and the Immutable who is never seen but is the witness, never heard but is the hearer, etc., are explained. After referring to the necessity of personal instruction and initiation, the chapter concludes with the description of Brahman, which is devoid of hunger, etc., unconditioned, immediate and direct, that is within all, and depicting it as the root of the tree of the universe and directly describing it—the Supreme Reality—as pure, unmodded Intelligence-Bliss. The most important portion in this chapter may be said to be that explaining the Brahmatattva in answer to the questions of Gargi.

The instructions contained in the fourth chapter are addressed to king Janaka. After a threadbare analysis of the three states of waking, dram and deep sleep, as also the state of death, Yajnavalkya points out to the king how the Atman as the Absolute-Existence-Consciousness-Bliss pervades throughout in all these states, like the thread in a garland of pearls, remaining unaffected by the phenomena, unbroken, non-dual, unconditioned, immanent and yet transcending all. In sub-section IV of this chapter, referring to a desireless man, Yajnavalkya says: “Of him, who is without desires, who is free from desires, the objects of whose desire have been attained, and to whom all objects of desire are but the Self, the organs do not depart. Being but Brahman, he is merged in Brahman” (IV-4-vi). Commenting on this passage, Acharya Sankara makes it clear that, in fact, there is no such distinction as liberation and bondage in the Self, for it is eternally the same; only the ignorance of the Jiva regarding it is removed by the knowledge arising from the teaching of the scriptures, and prior to the receiving of these teachings the effort to attain liberation is perfectly reasonable. The infinite nature of the Bliss of Brahman is brought out in the pithy statement, “On a particle of this Bliss other beings live”, contained in Mantra 32 of the 3rd sub-section of this chapter.
In the fifth sub-section, the sage imparts *Atma-Vidya* to his own wife Maitreyi. It is very interesting to note how he begins his instructions with reference to the mutual love between a husband and wife, and shows that all worldly love is due to that infinite love for the Atman. He further explains the universal nature of the Atman, how it remains eternal, non-dual and unchanged before creation of the world, during its continuance and also after dissolution, and gradually takes Maitreyi to the pinnacle of Advaitic realisation, when he says: “Because, where there is duality, as it were, one sees something,…….one knows something. But where, to the knower of Brahman, everything has become the Self, what should one see and through what……through what should one know, and through what should one know that, owing to which all this is known? This is the Self which has been described as ‘Not this-Not this’……., Through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the knower? So, you have the instruction, Maitreyi! This much indeed is Immortality, my dear” (Br. IV-5-xv). So saying, the Sage left. The whole range of the most difficult process of spiritual practice of an aspirant is pithily and cryptically put in this sub-section of the Upanishad, in the three words, “Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana”, i.e., hearing from one’s preceptor the true import of the scriptural texts dealing with the Atman-Brahman-identity, reflecting the *pros* and *cons* of what has thus been heard with the help of the arguments contained in the scriptures so as to fix that identity in the mind beyond the shadow of a doubt, and lastly deep meditation on that Supreme Truth. The Sage says: “When the Self, my dear, is realised by being heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon, all this is known” (IV-5-vi).

Sri Swami Sankarananda Saraswati is the author of the *Atma Purana* containing 11,111 verses in Sanskrit, in 18 chapters. He was a spiritual preceptor of Sri Swami Vidyaranya of the *Panchadasi* fame, and also the family preceptor of the kings of the Vijayanagar kingdom. The Atma Purana contains the essential teachings of 27 Upanishads. The two chapters, viz., the third and the fourth in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad are embodied in 2940 verses of Chapters V, VI and VII of the Atma Purana. The author has done a great service in rendering the Upanishadic teachings, which are generally couched in a difficult and mystic language, in the form of a Purana, in a language much easier to understand even by men of ordinary intellect. Several interesting anecdotes, innumerable similes and profuse illustrations have been dispersed throughout the work, which make the reading lively and amusing. In writing this work, the erudite Swamiji might have also in his mind the religious taboo in the matter of study of Vedic texts as such by those sections of people whose minds and intellects have not been developed to that extent as to correctly grasp the abstract truths. The author, out of his overflowing compassion, in presenting them in the form of a Purana, has made it easily accessible to all.

There does not appear to have been any English translation of the Atma Purana so far, although translations are there in the old Hindi, and some of the South Indian languages. Copies of the original text in Sanskrit are also not readily available now. These facts may justify the present English translation of a portion of the work (i.e., chapters VI, VI and VII) for publication in this journal. This is not a word-to-word translation but a free running translation, which tries to convey the truths contained in the original, to the readers of ‘The Divine Life’. It does not claim to be a piece of literary achievement nor take credit for a perfect translation. When even the best translation will only be a poor substitute for the original, this one which, it is feared, may not come up to the mark, may cause disappointment to a critical reader. May the shortcomings be overlooked and may this translation provide an incentive to the readers for a further study of the original text of the Atma Purana and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. This will ensure a full and proper understanding of the import of the scripture, which when supplemented by an earnest practice after initiation by one’s own spiritual preceptor, will free the sincere aspirant possessed of the Sadhana-Chatushtaya, from the thraldom of this phenomenal world, by the realisation of that stupendous Supreme Reality.
The Philosophy of

SAGE YAJNAVALKYA

IN THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD
CHAPTER I²
BRAHMA-VIDYA (KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN)—A DISCUSSION BETWEEN SAGE YAJNAVALKYA AND THE SAGES IN THE ASSEMBLY OF KING JANAKA

I. THE DISCIPLE’S PRAYER TO THE PRECEPTOR TO TEACH BRAHMA-VIDYA

The disciple, having heard with astonishment the preceptor’s preceding discourses (contained in the first four chapters of the Atma Purana dealing with the Aitareya and Kaushitaki Upanishads and the Madhu-Kanda of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad), saluted him and thinking of asking further questions on the subject, addressed him in the following words:

O Lord! Following the traditional method of imparting knowledge, you have explained to me the discourses of Aitareya and Kaushitaki³ on Self-knowledge (Atma-Jnana), containing several episodes. Through the conversation between Dadhyang-Atharvan and the Asvini Devas (the divine physicians of the celestial world), you have told me how Kaushitaki, afraid of the wrath of Indra, the chief of the celestials, refrained from the teaching of this knowledge to anyone. Incidentally, you have enumerated the lineage of preceptors and disciples of Brahma-Vidya, beginning from Brahma (the creator of the universe) and Aditya (Sun-god) and ending with Pautimashya. Besides, you have explained how Dadhyang-Atharvan, the teachers of the Madhukanda (the first two chapters of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) and the disciple of the great Daiva Atharva, taught Brahma-Vidya to Indra and the Asvini Devas, how Indra, misunderstanding his teachings, got irritated with the preceptor and tried to kill him, how the situation was cleverly managed by the Asvins by cutting the horse-head of the sage put on by him for the purpose, and how from that time there was none other than Yajnavalkya to teach Brahma-Vidya without fear from Indra. (The story goes that Indra, who misunderstood the instructions on Brahma-Vidya given to him by the Sage Dadhyang-Atharvan, had ordered that if he were to give such instructions to any one in future, his head would be cut off. So even before the sage began his instructions to the Asvins, they of superhuman powers, cut off his head and put the head of a horse and got the instructions through the horse-head. When Indra came and cut off the head, it was the horse-head that was severed. The Asvins replaced the original head of the Sage which they had kept safe and thus saved their preceptor. At the time of discussion the discourses between Ajatasatru (king of Kasi) and Gargya (also called Dripta Balaki), you have stated how Yajnavalkya learnt Brahma-Vidya from the Sun-god. O preceptor, kindly now tell me, to whom did Yajnavalkya impart Brahma-Vidya, what is its nature, and how it was imparted. I am anxious to hear all these from you.

Hearing these words of the disciple, the receptor was much pleased, and told him the following relevant Vedic episode on the subject.

² This corresponds to Chapter V in the original text of the Atma Purana.
³ Aitareya, Kaushitaki, Dadhyang-Atharvan, Pautimashya and Daiva Atharva are the names of Seers and Sages.

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2. SAGE YAJNAVALKYA’S PENANCE AND HIS FAME

Once upon a time, the Sage Yajnavalkya did severe penance and propitiated the deity presiding over the Sun, who is of golden efulgence, and who is manifesting himself as name, form and action in this world. He is also the deity presiding over the eyes in living beings, and he is the ruler over all the three worlds—the terrestrial, the mid-etheral and the celestial. Residing in their very selves, he fulfils the desires of the people in all these three worlds. He has been eulogised in the Vedas, which have emerged out from him without any effort, like breath coming out of the nostrils. He shines in the form of Rig-Veda in the forenoon, Yajur-Veda in the noon, and Sama and Atharva Vedas in the evening. He manifest himself also as the fruits of the Karmas done by the Jivas (living beings), and he is also the dispenser of those fruits. It is he who causes rain which is the source of all life in this world. He is the very life of all beings. This deity resides in the hearts of beings—moving and non-moving,—from Brahma down to the clump of grass. He is the Universal Preceptor seated in the heart of the Sun. He is shining in Taijasa (Jiva in subtle state in dream) in the individual aspect, and as Hiranyagarbha (cosmic intelligence or subtle body, also called Brahma) in his universal aspect. This great deity, pleased with the penance of Yajnavalkya, imparted to him the knowledge of all the four Vedas. After thus equipping himself with the Supreme Knowledge, Sage Yajnavalkya entered the householder’s order and accepted as his disciples all those who approached him for the study of the Vedas. His line of disciples was fourfold for the four Vedas. Among those disciples he shone like the sun among the planets in the heavens. The fame of this great sage spread like wild fire throughout the three worlds, and it created a stir, as it were, among all the learned people. Some of them remained indifferent, but some others like Janaka, the king of Mithila, (the old capital city of Videha,—a country lying to north-east of Magadha, its present name being Janakpur in Nepal) due to the fructification of their past meritorious deeds, had the good fortune to come in contact with the sage and be benefited by him. Many others, out of jealousy, disliked and hated him and showered words of rebuke and censure on him. Jealousy can have no place in men of true learning.

These envious people used to say: “This Yajnavalkya boasts himself that he got all his Vedic knowledge directly from the Sun. The Sun, who is said to be his preceptor, is not a worldly being. He has no mouth to speak and as such, how can he teach his disciple? If it were a fact that he learnt the Vedas, as some say, sitting in the chariot of the Sun, which is pure resplendent light, then why not one study them sitting near a blazing fire? If the dazzling Sun can teach the Vedas, the burning fire also must be able to teach them. Some others say that he propitiated the deity presiding over the Sun, who took a human form and taught him the Vedas. In that case, the Sun becomes a mortal like any one of us. What difference can there be between him and us,—human beings? Therefore, to say that he learnt the Vedas from the Sun directly is only blasphemy. He has altered the form and accents of letters and words in the original Vedas, and presenting them in a new form, he is befooling

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4 I may be seen from the description of the deity that follows, that the Atman-Brahman itself is figuratively represented as the Sun-god, who is called Lord Narayana in the Mandala-Brahmanopanishad.
all of us. His so-called Vedas do not conform to the old Vedic tradition, and they are quite different from those which we have studied under our preceptors. They are nothing more than a dialogue in a drama, and he chants them by moving his hands like an actor. His chanting of the Yajurveda is quite against all the rules of Vedic pronunciation. When he has forgotten even the Yajurveda which he has previously studied under a preceptor, how can he profess himself as a knower of all the four Vedas?

In spite of all their attempts to bring infamy on Yajnavalkya by such false and malicious statements, they could not succeed. The intelligent sage was able to guess for himself the opinion held by a section of the people about him, which was subsequently confirmed by directly hearing from some of them. Yet being a Brahma-Jnanin, he was unaffected. Clouds in the rainy season only rain, and do not thunder. Even so, Yajnavalkya, the great Seer and Sage, did not utter a single word against those people, but calmly continued his Vedic chantings with full understanding of their import and meaning.

3. KING JANAKA CONDUCTS A SACRIFICE—YAJNAVALKYA TAKES AWAY THE PRIZE

When King Janaka heard about Yajnavalkya, a desire arose in his mind to meet this great Sage in person and get his blessings. But his own preceptors like Asvala, the Rig-Veda teacher, and other savants of the royal court, created obstacles on the way. The king was therefore forced to resort to an indirect means to achieve his desire. He ordered one of his attendants to summon all the learned men in the kingdom. Messengers were accordingly sent to different parts of the country. Several men, well versed in all the Vedas, along with their disciples, were brought to the royal assembly. Sage Yajnavalkya was one of those who came from Kuru and Panchala countries.

In that great assembly of Vedic scholars, there was a continuous chanting of all the four Vedas, which had a mellifluous and soul-elevating effect on the audience. Among the many scholars present, the most important were Asvala, one of the preceptors of the king, Arthabhaga, the son of Jaratkaru; Bhujyu, the son of Lahya; Ushasta, the son of Chakrayana; Kahola, the son of Kaushitaka; the great Brahmavadini Gargi, and Uddalaka, the son of Aruna. Besides these, Vidagdha, otherwise called Sakalya, had also come to the court. He was of an egoistic nature and fond of dialecticism. Being deluded in mind due to his past sins, he disliked and hated Yajnavalkya for no ostensible reasons.

The king rose from his throne, and bowing to his preceptors and the other learned men assembled there, said: “O revered men in the assembly! I propose to conduct a sacrifice with profuse gifts. With your permission, I shall proclaim this fact throughout my country.”

The sacrifice began with all pomp and paraphernalia. The king entered the august assemblage of those great and learned men and, desiring to know who among them was the most erudite and possessed of the Supreme Knowledge, remained in a meditative mood for a few moments. The train of thoughts that passed through his mind in those few moments was a follows:

5 The old names of that part of the country now situated near modern Delhi and the region which lies between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna.
"The scholars assembled here are all learned in the scriptures, and their disciples also seem to be equally well learned. I wish to know who is the greatest among them. How is this to be done? If I were to ask anyone directly, he might not give me the correct answer, for if he hates anyone, he will only censure him, even if the latter be Brihaspati, the preceptor of the celestials in the heavens, or the self-created Brahma himself; and on the other hand, if he likes a person, he would praise him to the skies, though he be an illiterate cowherd. Leaving aside these two, suppose I seek the advice of an impartial person, he may perhaps have nothing to say about anyone. Why not I, therefore, approach each one of these assembled here and get first-hand information about their scholarship and attainments and then come to a final conclusion? Even here, I am afraid I cannot come to a correct decision, for no one will say anything about one’s own shortcomings. All feel ashamed to admit their own ignorance. Some of these sages may resent such a direct enquiry, and may even curse me. So let me create a situation in which these men may themselves get involved into a debate. But here, again, I have to think twice before I act, for, if they come to know of my motive, they may mistake me for a mischief-monger, and the fire of their wrath might destroy me. They should therefore be made to enter into a controversy of their own accord. I must somehow create a suitable situation.

"Wealth entices the minds of even great and learned men. What to speak of the condition of ordinary men, in whom it acts as the chief cause of desire, passion, anger, greed and delusion! The passion for sex does not seem to trouble so much a man who is starving for days together, due to dire poverty, for his sole attention is in getting something to eat. When he sits before a meal, his mind is completely absorbed in gulping the food served by his wife, so much so, he does not even care to look at her face. A women, when she sees her destitute husband, abhors him like a stinking corpse. Due to the extreme pains of penury, even faithful wives sometimes unwittingly wish the death of their own husbands. Some are of the view that poverty serves as a testing stone for virtue in man, and that it often makes him virtuous. He is afraid of the government and the society around him in this world, and of the god of death in the next. He controls his anger for fear of punishment. He realises that his present sufferings are due to his past sins and therefore refrains from committing further sins. One’s own mother, wife, sons and others shun a penniless man as a great sinner. His words do not carry any weight with them. Such a man, though devoid of any scriptural learning, generally leads a moral and chaste life. If he happens to be a man of discrimination versed in the scriptural lore also, he will certainly be of an exemplary character. If a poor man were to go on begging, he will not get even food sufficient to appease his hunger, and how can he then think of getting other necessities of life for the comfort of his body! Even a man of good culture and spiritual understanding, with an introverted mind, is sometimes afflicted with desire and anger when he has to deal with money. One can easily imagine the condition of a worldly man whose mind is always extroverted and who is sunk in this world of senses and engaged in financial dealings day in and day out. A wealthy man of non-discrimination in this world is often deluded by a sense of false egoism and, as a result, he does not care for anyone—let him be his own spiritual preceptor or the king or even God himself. He engages himself in acts quite against the canons of morality and social laws. He, therefore, suffers both in this world and the next. People speak very low of him, and in a short span of time he loses his good name and fame. Greed consumes him like forest fire. However much he may possess, he desires to
possess still more. If the whole of this earth with all its affluence were to be given to him, he will not be satisfied, for he then will yearn to possess the heavens. Due to his insatiable passion and greed, he runs after others’ wives and riches. He always speaks ill of others. There is none in this world who is in a more wretched condition than such a wealthy man if non-discrimination. On account of infatuation, he is unable to distinguish between good and bad, with the result that, in the end, he hates himself as well as others who wish well for him and creates trouble even to his own parents, children and the learned in the land, through his thoughts, words and deeds.

“Through presents people are won over. I shall give huge wealth as a reward to the most erudite among these Vedic scholars who can take it after establishing his erudition before this assembly. This will create an occasion for these men to enter into a debate even without my specific asking. Thereby I shall not incur any sin, for this procedure has the sanction of the scriptures. It is only in the fitness of things for a king to ascertain the best scholar in his assembly. Such a learned man who gets the prize also will not incur any sin in accepting the wealth since he is not likely to misuse it. I am sure that Yajnavalkya who has done meritorious deeds and who is the disciple of the Sun-god, will come out victorious in the debate. I see him as a great sage free from desire, anger, greed, delusion and egoism. He will never make use of this wealth for his selfish ends. It appears from his looks that he has also a liking for me. The other men in the assembly are even now very busy in getting ready for the debate. Some of them are making fun of him. But he does not seem to care to listen to any of them. He is remaining unmoved without uttering even a word against them.”

In this manner, the king thought within his mind all the pros and cons of his proposal and finally came to a decision. One thousand of the best young milch cows like the divine Kamadhenu (the celestial wish-yielding cow) with forty thousand Nishkas tied to their horns, twenty in each horn, were confined in a pen, and the king announced that he who was the greatest Brahmin-Jnanin in the assembly was permitted to drive them home.

Hearing this, all those in that great assemblage remained quiet with their heads bowed down, and silence prevailed for a time. No one seemed to be confident about his superiority over the others. Surveying the situation quickly, Yajnavalkya turned to one of his devoted and smart Samaveda disciples and said: “O my dear disciple, please lead all these cows to my home, proclaiming on the way that Yajnavalkya, the great Brahma-Jnanin in this royal court, is taking the cows.” The obedient disciple promptly carried out his preceptor’s orders.

This action of Yajnavalkya created strong resentment in all the sages who had assembled there from various parts of the country and who were not very happy over the incident, though king Janaka was very glad at this turn of events. Yajnavalkya’s act was thus the cause of both happiness and unhappiness at the same time, happiness to the king and unhappiness to those in the assembly. The feelings of pleasure and pain are not natural in men. They are mere thoughts created by the mind with regard to objects of like and dislike.

6 The name of a golden coin current in those days
There is not real cause for these likes and dislikes. While a thick forest where there is no living being is a source of happiness to an ascetic, it causes fear and unhappiness to a worldly-minded man. Those learned men present in the assembly could not control their anger and their very seats shook under them. Their hairs stood on end. Their faces reflected their perplexed mental condition. Due to intense anger some of them were seen biting their lips. Some of them laughed hysterically and some others shouted. A few, boiling with indignation, behaved like insane men. Just like a boisterous sea on a full moon day, the whole assembly swelled as it were, and was thrown into disorder and confusion. Some of them were heard shouting at the top of their voice: “This Yajnavalkya has brought dishonour and shame to our families and our revered preceptors. Our lives have been rendered practically futile. He has ridiculed all of us in this open assembly. Our Vedic lore itself has been censured and discredited by his action.”

4. ASVALA’S QUESTIONS AND YAJNAVALKYA’S ANSWERS—EMANCIPATION FROM DEATH IN THE FORM OF RITUALISTIC RITES AND TIME

At this stage, Asvala, with a throat choked with anger, stood up and addressed Yajnavalkya thus:

“O Vajasaneyaka! You are a man of wicked conduct, and you have not properly served a preceptor. All the other saints and sages in this assembly are as great as Brahma himself. Egoism, greed and similar qualities cannot be found in us who are proficient in the sacred scriptures and who always abide in peace. We are adepts in various Upasanas (worship and meditation). You who are the lowest among the low, want to become great all of a sudden. You are greedy and egoistic. If there were no such things as modesty and shame in this world, who will not pretend to be a learned man! It is due to excessive hankering after wealth that you have assumed yourself as the greatest Brahma-Jnanin among those assembled here. You are like one who treads over a poisonous cobra. Can anyone who is not equal in Yoga to Lord Paramesvara (the god of destruction who swallowed the poison that emerged out of the churning of the milky ocean) drink a deadly poison? Will anyone dare to carry home burning fuel in his hand? Who, except yourself, will cause displeasure to these great sages and ascetics? Even one among them can reduce the whole world in to ashes in his fire of fury, by his power of penance. You can now imagine your fate, when all of them together have turned against you.”

Just as a big mountain remains unaffected by rain of hailstones, these words of Asvala, which struck the ears of Yajnavalkya like sharp arrows, did not perturb him at all. He said with a smile: “O Asvala, my salutations to each one of the Brahma-Jnanins in this great assembly. I took the cows home because of my desire to possess them. You should not pick up a quarrel with me without sufficient cause. O great sage, the king has given the cows and I have taken only what he has given. I am unable to understand the cause of your resentment in a matter in which you have no direct concern. In case there are others in the assembly desirous of wealth like me, there is no objection for them, or for that matter, even

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7 This is another name of Yajnavalkya.
for you, to receive it from the king, if he is prepared to give. May the king have sufficient resources to satisfy the desires of all of you!"

These insinuating words of Yajnavalkya only helped to fan the flame of Asvala’s fury. With redoubled indignation, he started his arguments with Yajnavalkya. Asvala started with eight questions, of which the first four related to ‘Atimoksha’ and the remaining four to ‘Sampad’. By realising the identity between the organs in the body, like the organ of speech, etc., with their presiding deities such as the god of fire, etc., one attains freedom, but this freedom is not the final liberation. This limited freedom is referred to as ‘Atimoksha’ here. In the ceremony wherein the departed ancestors are propitiated, the food offered is identified with divine nectar, and the person fed, with Lord Vishnu (the preservative aspect of Brahman). By such meditation based on resemblance, one leaves off his individual and separate nature, and identifies himself with the universal counterpart. Such attainment is referred to as ‘Sampad’ in this context.

The first four questions were:

1. All Karmas done with the Ritviks (priests who officiate at a sacrifice,—the four chief Ritviks are called Hota, Adhvaryu, Udgata and Brahma) and the required accessories, are swayed by death in the form of limitation by ritualistic actions. One can be liberated from this limitation only by knowledge. What is that knowledge?

2. and 3. All objects are limited by ‘Time’ in the form of (a) days and nights and (b) dark and bright fortnights. How does one overcome death in the form of this limitation?

4. With what support does the sacrificer, after leaving his body, move in the supportless space?

Sage Yajnavalkya answered the four questions seriatim:

1. Knowledge of the identity among the organ of speech, fire-god,—its presiding deity,—and the ‘Hota’ (Rik-Veda priest) will free the sacrificer from death in the form of limitation by ritualistic actions.

2. The knowledge of identity among the eyes, sun-god,—their presiding deity,—and the ‘Adhvaryu’ (Yajur-Veda priest) will annihilate the limitation by ‘Time’ in the form of days and nights.

3. The knowledge of the identity among the Prana (life force), the wind-god,—its presiding deity,—and the ‘Udgata’ (Sama-Veda priest) destroys the limitation by ‘Time’ in the form of the dark and bright fortnights.

4. The knowledge of the identity among the mind, the moon-god,—its presiding deity,—and Brahma (the priest who is versed in the three Vedas), will help the sacrificer to move in the supportless space, i.e., attain the world of Hiranyagarbha (cosmic intelligence, or the subtle cosmic being).

To the other four questions relating to ‘Sampad’, Yajnavalkya gave his answers, thus: “Karmas done by the four Ritviks, along with the fruits of these karmas, form the ‘Sampad’. If the Hota has the vision that the three Riks (verses of the Rik-Veda) called ‘Yajya’, ‘Anuvakya’ and ‘Sasya’, are the three worlds,—those of the celestials, the manes and the human beings,—he will attain the overlordship of the three worlds. Similarly, the Adhvaryu
will reach those worlds if he has the knowledge that the three flames of the fire (the flame that goes upwards, that which makes a noise and that which goes downwards) in which the offerings are made in the sacrifice, are identical with the three worlds. When the Udgata identifies the Prana, Apana and Vyana (the breath that moves up, that which moves down and which is the cause of the circulation of blood) with the three Riks mentioned above, he attains the three worlds. If Brahma, whose function is meditation, meditates on the Visvedevas identifying them with the endless modifications rising in his mind, he attains liberation, i.e., the world of Hiranyagarbha. Since the sacrificer has engaged the Ritviks to officiate in the sacrifice on his behalf, by giving of liberal gifts, the fruits accruing out of the sacrifice done, go to him alone.

5. ARTABHAGA’S QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS—DELIVERANCE FROM SENSE-ORGANS AND THEIR OBJECTS

When all the eight questions were thus answered, Asvala realised that his opponent was too deep for him and dared not ask further questions. He felt ashamed in his defeat and look at Artabhaga, another great and learned sage in the assembly, again and again. Artabhaga who was the sun of the famous Rishi, Jaratkaru, took the clue and put a few questions to Yajnavalkya. The questions were too tough for men of weak intellect and poor learning.

The first question was about the number of ‘Grahas’ and ‘Atigrahas’. Yajnavalkya replied that they are each eight in number. The next question was, ‘what are they’, and the sage replied that according to the wise, nose, organ of speech, palate, eye ear, mind, hand and skin are the ‘Grahas’ and smell, name (whatever is uttered by speech), taste, form or colour, sound, desire, work and touch are the ‘Atigrahas’. Here, Grahas mean the organs of sense and action and ‘Atigrahas’ mean the objects corresponding to these organs. Sharks in the ocean swallow the creatures that happen to fall into the waters, and they in their turn are devoured by still bigger animals. Similarly, those who have fallen into this ocean of the phenomenal world have become a prey to these organs which, in their turn, are under the sway of their corresponding objects. Like a rat under the claws of a cat, man is under the grip of these organs, and as the fish are caught in the angler’s net, these organs fall a victim to their corresponding objects. Just as a man possessed by an evil spirit loses his power of discrimination, man who is under the sway of his senses loses his power of understanding, and knows not what is good and what is bad. These organs are attached to their objects and both together bind man to this sense-world.

Though usually, the organs and their objects are said to be each eleven in number, they are stated here by the Sage as only eight. Evidently, he might be of the view that the remaining three, not specifically enumerated by him, viz., the genitals, the anus and the feet, with their objects of pleasure, excretion and movement respectively, come under the two organs, the skin and the hands along with their objects of touch and work, included among the eight. The genitals and the sex-pleasure could be considered as connected with the skin and touch which pervade the whole body. Similarly, the anus and the feet, with their objects of excretion and movement, can come under the hands and work since all the three organs are said to be connected by the same Nadis (subtle nerves). Artabhaga again addressed that omniscient Sage.
Artabhaga: O Yajnavalkya, all this manifested universe is said to be food of that all-consuming god death in the form of organs and their objects. Which is that deity for whom this god of death becomes the food?

Yajnavalkya: It is the death of death which devours all the organs and their objects, even as water is seen to consume fire, which consumes everything in this world.

Artabhaga: O great Sage, when a knower of Brahman leaves his body, do his Pranas go up, as in the case of ordinary men, or not? If the Pranas go up, he has to be included among the ignorant, and if they do not, no death can occur to him. How would you solve this riddle?

Yajnavalkya: At the expiry of the Prarabdha Karma (that portion of the past Karmas which determines one's present life) of the knower of Brahman, his pranas merge inside his body and do not go anywhere. Therefore, he does not take another body like ordinary ignorant men. Since there are no Pranas, his body dies and it is seen to swell up like a kettledrum, which does not happen when one is alive. The Vedas also say that the Pranas of a knower of Brahman do not leave his body, for, if they do, he has necessarily to take up another birth in some other body and he cannot then be said to be a liberated man.

Artabhaga: When a knower of Brahman cast off his mortal coil, does he completely leave off this world of duality, or not?

Yajnavalkya: The conception of the common man is that he leaves behind name alone. Although the liberated man is completely free from duality in the shape of name, form and action, the people in this world continued to speak about him even after the fall of his body, as in the case of Sage Vamadeva and others whose names are spoken of even this day. It is because of this custom. I said that the knower of Brahman leaves behind the name alone, and not because he himself has any attachment to the name. To the worldly-minded, this name which does not seem to leave off even a liberated man, has no end and is, as though, immortal. If one meditates on this name as non-different from the infinite Visvedevas, he attains infinity.

Artabhaga: In the case of an ignorant man, at the time of his death, the organ of speech, Prana, eyes, ears, mind, body, the ether inside the heart, hairs on the body, those on the head, blood and semen get merged, as it were, in fire, air, sun, directions, moon, earth, universal ether, herbs, trees, and water, respectively, which are their universal counterparts (water is the counterpart of both blood and semen). If all the effects thus dissolve themselves in their respective causes, how does this man take another body, and what is his support?

Yajnavalkya: O Artabhaga, decorum does not permit me to answer this question in this open assembly. Let us therefore have a personal talk about this matter.

So saying, the Sage took him by the arms to a secluded place and gave him the following answer:

Yajnavalkya: O Artabhaga, even as a boy or an illiterate knows that a worldly man, after death, takes another body according to his past Karmas, the question is too silly to deserve an answer in public. Hence it is that I took you to this seclusion. (Acharya Sankara is of the view that exponents of different schools of philosophy have advanced different things such as chance, work, time, nature, destiny, simple consciousness and void, as the support in

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question, that the question being therefore open to dispute, the truth cannot be ascertained through the usual method of arguing and defeating the opponent, and hence it had to be decided between the two sages themselves outside the assembly—vide his commentary on Mantra III-2-xiii).

Continuing the discussion, Sage Yajnavalkya said: O Artabhaga, when one dies, the results of his past Karmas, both meritorious and sinful, do not leave him. these Karmas are the cause of his happiness and misery in this world when he is alive and in the next world after death. A sinner is thrown into hell, a virtuous man attains the heaven and one whose Karmas were of a mixed nature, takes a suitable human body in this world, to experience their fruits of pleasure and pain. Truly speaking, the Atman is not affected in any manner by any of the Karmas. But the Jiva, under the law of Karma, has to take future births in accordance with the nature of his past Karmas. If a man, by Karmas done through thought, word and body, becomes the cause of the happiness or misery of another living being, he has perforce to read the fruits thereof at some time or other. There is no doubt about it. Whatever be the place, time or cause of these actions, the doer has to experience their results subsequently, exactly in the same measure and similar conditions, in this birth or future birth. Seeds down on a fertile soul give good yield when there are sufficient rain and other favourable conditions. Even so, the good and bad karmas of a man yield their results in proper time and under suitable circumstances. Just as from a minute seed grows a huge banyan tree with its branches spreading out in all directions, out of the subtle impressions of the Karmas come out all happiness and misery in their gross forms. Therefore, Karmas are the support and they cause the repeated taking up of a body in the case of the ignorant man.

At the end of this personal discussion, Artabhaga and Yajnavalkya both congratulated each other and returned to the assembly. The former, casting a significant look at Bhujyu, the son of Lahya, withdrew from further questioning, as he found it impossible to dislodge Yajnavalkya.

6. QUESTIONS OF BHUJYU AND THE ANSWERS THERETO—RESULTS OF KARMAS ARE WITHIN THE RANGE OF THE RELATIVE PHENOMENA

Bhujyu, taking the hint, turned to Yajnavalkya, and with the ulterior motive of confounding the opponent, said:

O Yajnavalkya, in those days when I was studying the Vedas under my preceptor, Patanjala, belonging to the Kapya family, in the country of Madra, I had occasion to witness a strange incident in the preceptor’s house. His daughter happened to be possessed by a Gandharva. (Gandharva usually means a celestial musician. Here, Sri Sankaracharya says this word may refer to the god of fire worshipped in the house because of the special knowledge revealed by him). On asking him who he was, I understood that he was one Sudhanva, born in the Angiras family. We who were present there questioned him about the limit of the worlds attained through the performance of Karmas. He replied that the place where Parikshitbas

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8 The individual soul in the state of non-realisation of its identity with Brahman.
live is the limit of these worlds. On being further questioned about the world of the Parikshitas, the Gandharva gave us the correct answer. O Sage, you please now tell me all about that world described by the Gandharva. What is the extent of the other worlds? Who are the Parikshitas living there?  

Yajnavalkya: O Learned Sage, these matters are kept secret even among the Celestials. Further, you have already known them from the Gandharva. Why do you want to hear them again from me and that in this open assembly? Anyhow, since you have questioned me, I shall give a succinct answer. The Parikshitas referred to by you live in the world attainable by those who perform horse sacrifices along with meditation on the deity.

Bhujyu: Which is the world attained by one who performs the horse sacrifice?

Yajnavalkya was at first reluctant to reply to this question, for it was considered a sin to divulge such secret and mystic knowledge to the public. But after making himself sure that in this case Bhujyu alone will incur the sin, because he was the cause of the sinful act, he commenced a detailed description of the dimension of the cosmic orb.

Yajnavalkya: Those who are the rulers of this ocean-bound earth, with all its inexhaustible wealth, are called Parikshitas. It is said that this continent of Jambu extends to a hundred thousand Yojanas. The salt water ocean which surrounds it is of an equal extent. The next is Plaksha continent which is twice as vast as Jambu and the ocean surrounding it is also of an equal extent. Similarly, there are five other continents with their oceans which are each double in extent of that of the immediately preceding ones. Know that beyond these seven continents there is earth, with ocean of pure water around it, which is as extensive as all the seven continents and their oceans put together. The unscaleable Lokaloka mountain encircles all these worlds. Inside this the sun shines always with the distinction of day and night. It is said that the sun circles around the mountain called Manasottara in the centre of the Lokaloka and his rays reach those worlds which are thirty-two times as extensive as the space covered by the sun in a day and night. The wise say that the results of the Karma done are experienced in this world called Bhu-Loka. All round this altar of Bhu-Loka, there is earth covering it like a wall, as it were, twice in extent called Ghanoda ocean, there are two cosmic shells, one of silvery and the other of golden lustre. The passage between these two shells leading behind the cosmos, the body of Virat, is most subtle like the edge of a razor or the wing of a fly.

O Bhujyu, the Parikshitas, about whom you asked me, are those who have performed horse sacrifices combining meditation with it. Those who meditate on the god of fire on the form of a horse and on Hiranyagarbha, are also called Parikshitas. After the fall of their bodies, they go as far as the Ghanoda, with the help of those deities and of the power they have obtained through meditation. Indra, the chief of the celestials, himself finds it hard to pass

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9 The language used in the following portions is mystical, as is the case with several other portions of the Upanishads. Here, they represent figuratively the progressive stages the aspirant passes through in spiritual evolution.

10 One Yojana is said to be equivalent to about thirteen or fourteen kilometres.
through this most subtle path. (It is said that Indra here refers to the god of fire in the form of the Virat, the presiding deity of the horse sacrifice). You can very well imagine the difficulty of the other celestials on this side of the Ghanoda to get out of the cosmic phenomena. Indra, manifesting himself as the Virat, assumes the form of a bird, leads those Parikshitas through space, beyond Ghanoda, and returns after entrusting them to the deity presiding over fire. This deity endows them with very subtle bodies which merge in him, leads them through that subtle path and takes them out of the cosmic egg. Here is the world attained by those who perform horse sacrifices combining meditation along with it, and by the worshippers of the god of fire and Hiranyagarbha.

7. USHASTA’S QUESTIONS AND THE ANSWERS THERETO—THE INNERMOST ATMAN AS A DISTINCT ENTITY—EXPLAINED

Bhujyu, astonished at these answers of Yajnavalkya, could not question him further. He therefore resumed his seat. Seeing the defeat met with by Bhujyu, Ushasta, son of Chakra, who was sitting by his side, now addressed Yajnavalkya.

Ushasta: Brahman, being self-luminous, is direct, immediate and without attributes. It is more immediate than any object, for all objects, like a jar or a pot, are illumined by conscious mental Vrittis, while It is self-luminous. Scriptures say that Brahman is the same as the Atman—the innermost entity in all beings. How can this Atman be separate from the aggregate of body organs, etc.? Please convince me about it and establish your superior knowledge.

Yajnavalkya explained the distinction between Atman and not-Atman. Not being satisfied with the explanation, Ushasta again asked: “Which is the Atman referred to by you?”

Yajnavalkya: He who, remaining in your heart, controls the Prana, Apana, Udana and Vyana and directs their functions, like a stage manager in a drama, is the Atman who is quite distinct from the aggregate of the body, etc. Just as a boy, who controls the movements of a monkey tied to a rope, is different from the monkey, so also the Atman who directs the Pranas, organs, etc., is quite distinct from them.

Ushasta: O Yajnavalkya, this explanation also is not clear to me. As one catching hold of the horns of a cow would say, ‘this is a cow’, and touching a horse with his hand would say, ‘this is a horse’, please show me the Atman clearly. I asked you how the Atman can be distinct from the aggregate of the body, etc., and you tell me in reply that the Atman directs the Pranas. This is not an answer to the point. The function of direction of and control over the body, organs, Pranas, etc., mentioned by you, cannot inhere in the Atman which is one, indivisible and changeless. In actual experience also, it is seen that the body, senses, mind, etc., are engaged in all activities. Your answer is therefore completely irrelevant, like that of a man describing a horse when questioned about a cow.

Yajnavalkya: (With a smile) You wanted me to tell you about the Atman which is distinct from this aggregate of body, organs, etc. You have understood, through your intellect, that the Atman which is immediate is your Self and my Self.

Ushasta: Among the intellect and other things, which is that Atman?

Yajnavalkya: Though I have explained the Atman, you do not understand fully, because your mind is extroverted. The Atman perceives, through the intellect, the external universe
constituted of the five elements. The intellect which illumines everything, is illumined by the Atman alone. Please tell me, with what can you perceive the Atman which is the witness of the intellect, and which illumines the intellect? The pot, seen with the eyes, cannot see the eyes with which it is seen. Similarly, the Atman, which is the knower of all the modifications of the intellect, cannot be known by the intellect. The intellect can never illumine the Atman which illumines both the external and internal organs and their actions. The Atman, which is the innermost core in all creatures, is thus distinct from the aggregate of the body, organs, etc., and is immortal. The body, organs, intellect, etc., being inert by themselves, are subject to birth and death like any other object, and are distinct from the Atman.

8. KAHOLA’S QUESTIONS AND THE ANSWERS THEREETO—KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF AND RENUNCIAITION

Ushasta, who was intelligent, understood that Yajnavalkya was too wise for him, and therefore stopped further questioning. It was now the turn of Kahola who was seated next to Ushasta. Continuing the trend of the argument of his predecessor, he asked:

O Yajnavalkya, please tell me how the Atman can be the same as Brahman, in view of the fact that while Atman is possessed of the six kinds of evils, viz., hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, decay and death, Brahman is free from them. How can there be identity between two clearly distinct entities?

Yajnavalkya: Hunger and thirst belong to the Prana, grief and delusion to the mind, and decay and death to the body. None of them belongs to the Atman. The Vedic scholars therefore declare that the Atman is the same as Brahman. The worldly thoughts which arise in the mind of a knower of the Atman, due to traces of ignorance left in him, do not cause bondage to him. How can there be any kind of limitations in the Atman which is one with Brahman? Vamadeva and other sages who realised the Atman as the spotless witness of the intellect, transcendental and non-different from Brahman, leaving off the three Eshanas—Putraishana, Vittaishana and Lokaishana—renounced the world. These are the three desires according to the wise. All that which is a source of pleasure in this world, comes under wealth. To a father, the son is a form of wealth, like properties, animals and the like, for the son contributes to the father’s happiness. There are, therefore, only two kinds of desire, viz., desire for wealth and desire for worlds.

The Sage continued: O Kahola, the desire for happiness is inborn in all creatures. Real unbroken happiness can be had only in the Atman which is absolute Bliss. All objects in this world which appear to give happiness, are only sources of pain in the end. The mother is a source of happiness to the child when she feeds it with her milk and bestows on it her love and attention. The same mother, when she is angry, turns into the cause of pain. Her death, similarly, contributes to the unhappiness of the children. To a worldly man, separation from dear relatives, through the loss of the mother in childhood, the wife in the prime of life, and other dear friends, is a source of pain.

\[11\] Putraishana is the desire to beget progeny, Vittaishana is the desire for material wealth, and Lokaishana is the longing for this world and the heavenly world.
youth and the son in old age, is like a thunderbolt and causes as much pain and misery as those experienced by one entering into a blazing fire, or cutting his own limbs one by one, or being pierced by a pointed spear, or being hurled down from a mountain top. Separation always follows union. The all-consuming time causes separation even in the most strongly united. Contact with persons whom one dislikes, also is a source of pain. Inert objects as well are found to cause misery like living beings through their contact or separation as the case may be. Thus, contact with persons, objects and circumstances disliked, and separation from those liked, are the two causes of pain in this world. This pain consumes the beings, like fire consuming flies caught in it. That the sons, friends, relations and even one’s own body are often sources of pain is a matter of experience for all. Most of the actions one does in this world may be either to help one’s friends and relations or create trouble to those whom one dislikes. Such a person, when confronted with defeat in his attempts, feels miserable due to disappointment. The cause for disappointment may be either physical or psychological and may lie in oneself or it may be attributed to other persons like his enemies or even friends and relatives. In a man of desires, any failure to fulfil any one of his desires is a source of pain. Even in the case of super-human beings like the celestial ones, the sons, other near and dear ones and their own bodies and organs are not always under their control. It seems that their very nature is to cause pain to embodied beings.

The truth is that the external objects are not the cause of pleasure and pain in this world. The same object which is pleasurable to one person, is painful to another. To the same person an object which gives pleasure at one time, becomes a source of pain at another time, and vice versa. This deceptive nature of objects is a matter of daily experience, but still the fact that the source of that pleasure is not the object itself is not realised. Happiness is the nature of the Atman and cannot, therefore, come from any of the objects. All sense-pleasures, which have a beginning, will surely have an end, and that in pain. Anything that has a beginning and an end, is different from the eternal Atman, and everything that is different from Atman can only be of a painful nature. Happiness enjoyed by one becomes the cause of pain to his enemy, and vice versa, misery of one is the source of happiness to his enemy. Thus happiness itself becomes pain, and pain becomes happiness. Does this not prove the unreality of the experience of pleasure and pain! When a man enjoys a sense-object, what really happens is that his desire for that particular object ceases, because he has obtained that object. The mind which has so long been longing for that object, being now in possession of the object, leaves off that desire, and the next desire is yet to arise. In that split fraction of a second, the mind, being completely desireless, merges, as it were, in the causal body, the Anandamaya Kosa, which is the innermost sheath and is nearest to the Atman. A ray of the happiness of the Atman gets reflected in that desireless mind. But, the next moment, the mind rises up again with the next desire and the reflection is withdrawn to its source. As the sky is feebly illumined by the stars in a moonless night, the happiness that appears to come from the objects is only a reflection of an infinitesimal portion of the Bliss of the Atman in a desireless mind.

The pain experienced is proportional to the capacity of the organs to enjoy their respective objects. A child or a boy whose organs are not well developed does not experience pain so much as an adult in whom all the organs are in their full vigour. Therefore, all discriminative man should try to be childlike by keeping his organs well under control and
should not allow them to run amuck, through a proper understanding of the real nature of
the objects of his world. By a process of analysis and synthesis, one well versed in
the imports of the Vedic texts, arrives at the conclusion that all desires are womb of pain, and
through initiation from a spiritual preceptor, he understands the ephemeral nature of the
mortal body. He, therefore, renounces desire for the fleeting sense-objects and frees
himself from wrong identification with his body. Thereby, he gets an insight into the true
nature of the Atman, and thereafter remains in the supreme consciousness through
profound and deep meditation. When the activity of all the organs is controlled and when
one is freed from likes and dislikes, he is said to be in a state of Balya. (Balya literally means
childhood. Here, it means strength got by the total elimination of the vision of objects
through the knowledge of the Self. Acharya Sankara, explaining this word Balya in his
commentary on the Brahma Sutras, says that it means that a spiritual aspirant should
behave like a child without parading his wisdom, learning, virtues, etc., (vide III-4-50). One
who, by a process of ratiocination, becomes convinced of the identity of Brahman and the
Atman which is the essence of the teachings of the Upanishads, is said to possess Panditya
or erudition. This has to be preceded by Sravana or hearing the Truth from the preceptor,
and Manana or thinking over its meaning. Keeping the mind on the one thought of
Brahman in deep meditation, is refereed to as Mauna or silence. He who knows that his Self
is beyond the reach of speech and mind, non-dual, self-luminous, fearless and blissful, and
who meditates on the Self without interruption, alone understands the real meanings of the
three terms, Balya, Panditya and Mauna, mentioned above. A seeker after Truth cannot
have realisation of Brahman without these three. The final fruit of these is attainment of
Brahman. He who has attained Brahman, which is devoid of name and form, beyond the
triads of knower, known and knowledge and the like, self-luminous and blissful, is the real
Brahmana. Brahman is not attainable by any other means. O Kahola! Can you point out one
instance where a man, who is a slave to desire, anger and other passions and attached to
the senses, who is without initiation from a preceptor and who has not practised reflection
and meditation, has realised Brahman? Just as consuming food is the only means of
satisfying hunger, the above said Balya, Panditya and Mauna are the best and the only
means to attain the knowledge of Brahman which is the non-dual Reality. Everything else,
but this Brahman, is perishable.

THROUGH LOGICAL REASONING NOT POSSIBLE

At this stage, Kahola, casting a significant look at Gargi who was sitting in front of him,
resumed his seat. Gargi, who was the daughter of Vachaknu, was a very intelligent woman
and an adept in the science of logic. Depending solely on inference (one of the four means
of knowledge according to logic, the other three being direct perception, analogy and the
Vedas) based on the five-membered syllogism consisting of vow, cause, example, application and conclusion, she addressed Yajnavalkya.

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12 Swami Vidyaranya in his Jivanmukti Viveka states that the three words Panditya, Balya and Mauna here stand for Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana, respectively.
Gargi: Cloth is the effect of threads which, as the cause, pervade the cloth as warp and woof, both inside and outside. The cosmic egg is the effect of water, which, as the cause, pervades the whole of the effect, including the movables and the immovables in the universe, both inside and outside. This water is the effect of some other cause which similarly pervades the whole of the effect. Please state what that cause is.

Yajnavalkya: The cause of water is air.

Though according to the Upanishads, fire is stated to be the cause of water, it is not clearly perceptible like the other elements except in the presence of fuel constituted of earth or water. The existence of fire in the absence of fuel is known only through scriptures. Hence it is that fire is left out and air is stated to be the cause of water.

Gargi: What is the substratum for air? What is the substratum for the sky? Similarly, what is the substratum for each of the worlds of the Gandharvas, the sun, the moon, the stars, the gods, Indra and Prajapati?

Yajnavalkya: Sky is the substratum for air, the world of Gandharvas is the substratum for the sky, and similarly, each subsequent one in the above order forms the substratum for the immediately preceding one. Beginning from the world of the Gandharvas, the succeeding worlds, up to that of Indra, are the effects of more and more subtle elements, taking them in the inverse order. They are more and more gross as they come down from the world of Indra down to that of the Gandharvas. Here, Indra refers to Virat, God in the form of the manifested gross universe, who identifies himself with all the worlds. The whole cosmos is contained in him. Hiranyakarshana, who is subtler than Virat, is referred to as Prajapati, and he is the support for the Virat. The support for Hiranyakarshana is Mula Prakriti, the primeval nescience.

This Mula Prakriti is known by various other names like Maya or the illusive power of Brahman, Ajnana or ignorance in the individual, Avyakrta or the unmanifested, Sarva Karana or the cause of all causes, etc. This is that which manifests itself as the ‘many’ and the ‘one’ in the forms of Vyayasti and Samashti respectively. This is also referred to as Brahma-Loka in this context and its presiding deity is called the Antaryamin. This cause of all causes rests in the Atman which cannot be known through logic.

Gargi, obsessed by a desire for logical argumentation, unwittingly asked: “What is that which pervades, as warp and woof, this Brahma-Loka as its cause?

Yajnavalkya: O Gargi, you should not transgress the limits of Vedic etiquette and ask such questions about the transcendental Truth. It is ignorance to ask logical questions on transcendental matters which do not come within the four walls of logical and which can be known only through scriptures and personal instruction from the preceptor. No one can know the cause of or support for the Avyakrta through the means of inference. If you persist in your question due to your ignorance and the desire to know this logically, your head will fall off. One should not infer that the Pasupatastra, the divine missile of Arjuna invoked through mystical formula, is the same as an ordinary shaft. If one wrongly comes to such a conclusion through ignorance, that divine missile is sure to destroy him. Similarly, when the imprecatory Mantras of the Atharva Veda reside in the heart of one who has meditated upon them, if a man insults them by saying that they are a mere combination of
letters in the alphabet like other words, he will certainly meet with destruction. O Gargi! If you similarly insult the great Deity of deities, you will have to meet with a similar fate.

Gargi was taken aback when she heard these words of Yajnavalkya. For a moment, she did not know what to do. Regaining her mental poise quickly, she went near Uddalaka, the son of Aruna, took her seat next to him and kept silent.

10. QUESTIONS PUT BY UDDALAKA AND THE ANSWERS THERETO—SUTRATMAN AND ANTARYAMIN

Uddalaka was much infuriated and excited over what has happened in the assembly. His question was about the secret knowledge which he learnt from a Gandharva.

Uddalaka: O Yajnavalkya, some time back, we, as students, were studying the sacrificial portions of the Vedas under our preceptor, Maharshi Patanjala, in the country of Madra. One day, the wife of that Maharshi happened to be possessed by a Gandharva. We, along with our preceptor, questioned that Gandharva about his identity. He replied that he was the world-renowned Gandharva by name Kabandha of the Atharva family, and that he had entered into the body of that lady with the idea of helping our preceptor and his students. The Gandharva then asked our preceptor whether he was aware of the Sutra (literally meaning a string) with which all the beings in this world and the next, and those which support them, are tied together. Our preceptor said that he did not know that Sutra. The Gandharva again asked him whether he knew the Lord who is the Antaryamin, the Inner Ruler. To this question also, our preceptor pleaded ignorance. Hearing this, the Gandharva, full of compassion for our preceptor, said: “O Kapya (the family name of Patanjala)! He who knows the Sutra and the Antaryamin referred to by me, certainly knows about the whole phenomenal world. He knows Brahma, the Lord of creation, all the worlds, the celestials, the Vedas, the beings, the five elements, his own Atman, and in short, everything that one should know here. There is no doubt about it.” Saying thus, the Gandharva initiated our preceptor, who became his disciple, into the knowledge of the Sutratman and Antaryamin. I possess this secret knowledge. O Yajnavalkya! If you do not know the Sutratman and the Antaryamin, you are certainly ignorant, and have therefore committed a sin in appropriating the gift of the cows. Your head will therefore be severed from the body.

Yajnavalkya: I know the Sutratman and Antaryamin, about whom you have heard from the Gandharva.

Uddalaka was enraged at this curt reply and said: Like a fool you growl and say, ‘I know, I know’, for every question put to you, but do not furnish complete answers. I, therefore, presume that you do not know anything about them. A man who really knows does not give such abrupt answers. If you really know, please tell me.

Yajnavalkya: The Sutra about which you asked is Vayu (Air). All beings in the two worlds, here and hereafter, together with the worlds, are pervaded by Vayu, like thread in a cloth. In the body, it acts like a string forming knots, and when it leaves the body, wise people, seeing the dead body, say that the knots in the various limbs have been loosened, and the limbs have been severed from their stalk, (Vayu, which literally means Air, is used in a specific sense here. It is said to be the subtle entity which supports the universe like the ether, which is the material of the subtle body with its seventeen constituents, viz., the five subtle elements, the ten organs, the Prana and the mind in which the past actions and
impressions of creatures inhere, and the external forms of which, like the waves of an ocean, are the forty-nine Maruts. That principle of Vayu is called the Sutra.)

Uddalaka: It is so. I accept your answer. Now please tell me all about the Atman who is the Antaryamin.

Yajnavalkya: The Supreme Being resides as the Antaryamin in the earth, water, fire, air, ether, heaven, sun, directions, moon, stars, sky, darkness, and light, as their presiding deity. In the same way, he resides as the ultimate spirit in all the living and non-living beings. As the individual self, he resides in the Prana, speech, eyes, ears, mind, skin, intellect and semen. As a dweller inside a house is not the house, but is different from it, this Lord, as the Antaryamin residing in the above twenty-one entities, remains distinct from them. All these twenty-one entities themselves are not aware of this Lord, although he is always residing in them as their Inner Ruler. They form the body of this Lord. Like a king entrusting his ministers with different items of work to be carried out by them, this Lord has allotted separate duties for all. O Uddalaka! This is the Atman, the Antaryamin about whom you wanted to know. This Atman is always free from the six evils, viz., hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, decay and death.

Yajnavalkya thereafter, taking the above mentioned twenty-one entities one by one, explained at great length the nature of the Self, the Inner Ruler, twenty-one times. That was followed by a clear exposition on the Atman by a complete elimination of all that is not-Atman following the doctrine of ‘Neti-Neti’ (’Not this-Not This’). Yajnavalkya further continued.

Yajnavalkya: Even the wise cannot see this Lord with their eyes, nor hear him with their ears, nor think about him with their mind, nor know him with their intellect. He is the seer of seeing, the hearer of hearing, the thinker of thinking and the knower of knowing. He knows the actions of all organs, but the organs themselves do not know him. There is no seer, hearer, thinker or knower other than He. O Uddalaka, this Inner Ruler is your own Self. There is no Self other than He. All things outside him, being inert, are liable to destruction.

11. GARGI QUESTIONS A SECOND TIME—THE SAGE ANSWER—BRAHMAN UNCONDITIONED, IMMEDIATE AND IMMANENT

Having heard these sublime facts from that great Sage, Uddalaka stopped further questioning; but Gargi once again rose from her seat and addressed the assembly, thus:

Gargi: O learned men, all of you assembled here are great scholars in Vedic lore and fit to be worshipped. Please listen to what I have to say now. I am thinking of putting two more questions to this great Seer, Yajnavalkya, which are most difficult to answer. If the noble-minded Sage condescends to furnish proper answers to them, then we can rest assured that none of us in this assembly can win a victory over him. Can a fire-fly or a star stand before the effulgent sun? In case he gives proper answers to my two questions, no one amongst you will be able to defeat him. Kindly now permit me to put the two questions.

She prayed for such a previous permission, for she remembered the warning given by the Sage on the earlier occasion, and was afraid of his curse. After obtaining their approval, she interrogated the Sage and said:
Gargi: I am the daughter of the world-renowned Vachaknu, and as you all know, my name is Gargi. In this world, women are generally more intelligent than men. In them,—courage, bravery, attachment and anger are also seen manifesting themselves in a greater degree. I am the leader among such women. O revered Sage, I see the whole world devoid of manliness. I am neither a man nor a woman nor a eunuch. One who does not know the unchangeable Self residing in one’s heart, which is self-effulgent and blissful, is to be considered as a eunuch, though he may possess a male body. A man devoid of the knowledge of the Self is worse than a woman. Though I have a corpulent bosom, I am not a woman, for a woman has another master, the husband who is different from her. A man who is ignorant of the Self considers God as his master different from and outside him. Having a master different from one’s own Self is therefore an attribute both to a woman and an ignorant man. I am a knower of the Supreme non-dual Self, and I have therefore no master outside me and that is why I say I am not a woman. An ignorant man, who is a slave to passions like sex, desire and anger, is as good as a sister of ill-fame, for both are serving the demon of passion. Both of them also carry the foetus in their womb. The man carries it in the form of semen which is the seventh constituent element in the body (the other six being chyle, blood, flesh, fat, bone and marrow), which is subsequently transferred to the woman. Unlike the ordinary woman, I am free from all passions and the pairs of opposites like virtue and vice, pleasure and pain, likes and dislikes, etc. I, having a womanly physique in the prime of youth, am now standing amongst you, some of whom are young and yet I am not in the least affected by desire. Not only that, as in seclusion, I remain nude before all of you. Some of these men, though learned, but not free from desire are afraid of even looking at me, lest their passion be roused. I can, not only look at all of you, but also have even close contact with you, without being affected in the least. The word Stri (woman) is derived from the root word Styayati, and as such, one who possesses the characteristics conveyed by the meaning of that root word alone, deserves to be called a woman. The learned say that this root word has two meanings: Sabda (sound) and Samghata (mixture). It is according to the second meaning that a woman is known by the term Stri, for she effects a mixture of the sperm in man with the ovum in her. I do not deserve to be called a woman in this sense. The wise are of the view that the combination of words in such sentences as ‘this is my husband’, ‘this is my son’, ‘this is my daughter’, ‘these are wealth and grains in my house’, ‘I am a barren woman’, ‘I am a family woman’, etc., can come under the meaning of the root word, viz., Sabda-Samghata. In the absence of the knowledge of the Self due to the influence of the demoness of Maya, all those to whom this meaning of root word applies, are real women. I do not come under them. O learned Seer, let one be a man or a woman according to the formation of the gross body. One who is established in the Self is a Purusha, virile. In such a Purusha, the difference in the structure of the physical body need not be taken in to consideration. In a drama, a man assumes the part of a beautiful woman and men are enchanted. The same actor, at another time, assumes the part of a fair youth and delights the women in the audience. In the same manner, it is the one Lord, the blissful Self of all who assumes of his own will, the bodies of men and women. As in a dream, the dreamer sees different men, women, elephants and horses, within his own self, exactly in the same manner, it is within the Self that one sees all these varieties of objects during the waking state also. The cause for the experience of variety during the two states of waking and dream, is Maya. Therefore, know me who am in this form of a woman, as the all-knowing Self and not as a mere woman. O revered Sage, you have won a victory over the
learned men assembled here by your all-knowing wisdom. I have now come prepared to aim two powerful arrows at you in the form of two questions from my bow of speech. Therefore, stand firm and answer them, or accept defeat. You must have heard how Pratardana, son of king Divodasa, went alone for a war against Indra, and how this Janaka, the most powerful king of Videha, stood firm with his drawn bow before his enemies. Like them, I am now standing before you fully prepared for a touch fight. If you know the answers, you can tell them, or you will have to surrender.

Yajnavalkya, accepting the challenge, permitted her to put the questions. She, now following the traditional method, based her questions on the Vedas, and not on logic as on the previous occasion.

Gargi: What is the substratum for the Sutratman in the form of the whole cosmos, consisting of the three worlds, above the sky, below the earth, and in between them, during all the three periods of time, past, present and future, described as Brahma-Loka in the Vedas, which is distinct from him?

Yajnavalkya: The substratum for the Sutratman is that which has the veiling and projecting powers. All the effects in the form of the projecting power, are contained in the veiling power. O Gargi, the Sutratman, as the effect, rests on this cause which is the well-known Unmanifested Ether.

Gargi now saluted the Sage and prayed for the answer to her next question also. With his permission, she put the first question once again, and the Sage repeated the same answer by way of confirmation of what has already been stated by him before. She continued:

Gargi: O Yajnavalkya, a house is supported by pillars and walls. Does the Sutratman, similarly, rest on the Unmanifested Ether and another support?

Yajnavalkya: It does not rest on two supports, but only on the one support which is the Unmanifested Ether. It is like the clouds resting on the sky which is their only support.

Gargi: What pervades this Unmanifested Ether as warp and woof?

Yajnavalkya: The knowers of Brahman say that the Unmanifested Ether is pervaded by the Akshara, the Immutable, the Supreme Self which is the witness of the intellect in all beings. Being the witness of the intellect, it is experienced and directly cognised by all. this Akshara in the form of the Self is blissful, eternal, indestructible and all-pervading. This Akshara is not gross like an earthen pot, for example. It cannot be said to be subtle also. The pot is considered gross when compared to an object subtler than it, and the same pot becomes subtler in relation to grosser objects. The Akshara is not like the pot. It is neither tall like a palm tree, nor short like a clump of grass. It is neither red like fire, nor back like the earth or the shadow, nor dark like the colour of the Tamala tree, or the night which obstructs the eye-sight. Being devoid of movement and space, it is distinct from air and ether. It is not of the form of light and brilliancy. It has no form at all, and is always unattached to everything in this universe. It is neither the water nor the earth element, for It has neither liquidity nor smell which are their properties. It is not the intellect which, like a light, illumines the organs of sense, their actions and the mind. It is not the egoism or the sub-conscious mind. Neither is it the Prana which is the power behind all actions, nor is It the subtle body. Avidya, which is the cause of differentiation due to the superimposition of limiting adjuncts.
on this non-dual, indivisible Akshara, also cannot be said to be this Akshara. Avidya can limit only the Jiva and not the Akshara. There is no distinction like outside and inside in It which is the eternal witness. This Supreme Self does not become either the doer or the enjoyer. The entire phenomenal world which comes under the relation of cause and effect, is superimposed on this Akshara, like a city in the clouds, darkness in light, and a snake in a garland.

O, Gargi, it is under the mighty rule of this Immutable Universal Self that the sun and the moon are held in their positions and have become sources of light to this world. Like a boy wearing two pieces of cloth, this Akshara supports this earth and sky, which in their turn, support all beings. Time which appears dreadful and cruel, being the destroyer of everything phenomenal, is also under the sovereignty of the Akshara. Under the command of this Akshara, the several rivers flow in different directions from the Himalayas and other mountains. On account of the faith in Its commands, people offer oblations in the fire to propitiate the gods, libations in water to please the departed ancestors, and gifts and charities to satisfy men. In short, O Gargi, the entire universe is functioning under this Akshara which is the support for the Unmanifested Ether. All meritorious deeds like sacrifices, offering of oblations in the sacred fire, and penance done for a number of years, by men without the knowledge of this Akshara, will yield only ephemeral fruits. He who leaves this world without realising It even while in this body, incurs the greatest loss, and there is none so miserable as such a man, for he shall be reduced to the most pitiable condition, like a stinking street dog. He who realises It before the fall of his body, alone can be said to be a knower of Brahman and one who has accomplished the acme of life. O Gargi, I have already explained at length, when answering the question of Kahola, that the means of knowing this Akshara is to free oneself from all desires and resort to Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana, tersely expressed by the terms Balya, Panditya and Mauna. I do not therefore propose to repeat them now.

The end, viz., attainment of the Universal Self or God-realisation, being always connected with its means, the exposition of the former is the exposition of the latter also. Yajnavalkya explained both the final goal and the means thereto to Gargi, as he did to Kahola. In the reply to the second question, the Atman explained to Kahola under the term, Antaryamin, was the subject of discussion under the name, Akshara. Yajnavalkya continued.

Yajnavalkya: O Gargi, He who is the witness of the whole universe is not seen by any of the objects seen. Atman is not different from this Akshara who is the Lord of the universe, as a pitcher is not different from a pot. The Unmanifested Ether, manifesting itself as the veiling and projecting powers, always rests on this Akshara and is the cause of all the gross and subtle worlds.

Hearing this highly instruction and ambrosia-like words of Yajnavalkya, Gargi shed tears of joy. Her hairs stood on end due to spiritual exhilaration. Her mind became crystal-clear, and she was in a state of ecstasy for a moment. She then stood up and addressed that august assembly.

Gargi: O great men of learning, please listen to the few words which I speak to you now from my heart free from prejudice. I have seen many persons in this world. Some of them, though fair in complexion, are in no way better than insentient objects due to
preponderance of inertia in them. Some others are scholars who carry a heavy load of information in their heads like trees having innumerable heavy branches. A few others are great orators but their words carry no real sense. Some have very beautiful eyes comparable to the petals of a lotus flower but they are worse than blind men. Some put on an attractive apparel but meet with miserable failure when they are face to face with trying circumstances. There are many who at first sight attract you, but when you move with them a little closer, they are found to be a source of worry and pain due to their vicious character. These people have to be shunned like unwholesome food. A few are like ferocious tigers always waiting for opportunities to pounce upon others. There are some men who are always unsteady like monkeys, for their ignorance acts like an intoxicant and clouds their intellect. Many are found under the grip of passion and anger. Among those in the last group come the men of mere book-learning. Most men in the so-called higher strata of society suffer because they have become slaves to their internal enemies of desire, anger and other passions. They suffer in the waking as well as dream states, for their intellect is covered by the thick veil of ignorance. A knowledge of the literal meaning of the scriptures possessed by some, cannot remove the veil of ignorance completely to enable them to realise the Atman. Their intellect, of course, becomes very comprehensive by the study of grammar, Purva Mimamsa (one of the six systems of Indian philosophy dealing with the ritualistic portions of the Vedas), Nyaya (logic) Dharma Sastras (jurisprudence) and other subjects, but it is still unable to grasp, in a similar manner, the truths of the Vedanta philosophy.

In the case of a few who have some book-knowledge about the Atman, they do not have a full grasp of the subject. Even complete intellectual grasp does not serve the purpose of annihilating the ignorance due to the presence of egoism and such other subtle obstacles. The knowledge of those in whom the passions of desire, anger, etc., have not been fried in the fire of discrimination, cannot bring the fruit of eternal cessation of pain. This prison of mundane life rests on the central pillar of egoism, and desire, anger, etc., serve as corner pillars. As long as the central pillar is strong, no harm can come to the superstructure. Similarly, there is no end to phenomenal existence so long as there is a grace of egoism. I do not see any living being devoid of this egoistic feeling. I have seen people who have controlled their passion to some extent but one in whom there is no vestige of egoism could not be found anywhere in this world. Many have known from the scriptures, logic and experience that passions, like desire and others, are their foes, but few seem to consider egoism as a similar enemy. It is due to this egoism that men in this world are not able to get happiness unmixed with misery. In a moment, one becomes almost made due to the force of self-conceit. When he is caught up in this self-arrogating principle of ‘I’, he disregards his parents, relations, friends, men of wisdom and even God. Such a man sometimes treats with contempt even the king who is to be feared like a cobra and he is beset with miseries and pains which finally end in his own destruction. It does not stop with that, for even after death he suffers misery in the Raurava hell (one of the several hells mentioned in Indian mythology).

O learned men assembled here, this Sage Yajnavalkya is completely free from egoism. In its absence, how can desire, anger and other passions, which are only its off-shoots, remain in him! The only person who really deserves to be called Purusha (man) is Yajnavalkya to whom there is no equal in the three worlds. Through my knowledge of the scriptures and
inner experience, I am able to know that he has attained direct realisation of Brahman. In this world, there is no true knower of Brahman other than this Yajnavalkya. The scripture says that Brahman is not perceptible to the gross organs. Yet I see with my eyes this great Sage standing before me as verily Brahman. By realising Brahman he has become Brahman itself. There is no doubt about it. He is called by the names of Yajnavalkya and Vajasaneyaka only for worldly transactions. Those fortunate parents of his, being the cause of the birth of his body, are blessed indeed. O honoured men, this king, myself and the whole assembly, have become blessed by his mere presence here. None equal to him has ever been born. There is none in the present and there will be none in the future. He is cool like sandal paste and pure like the milky ocean. Please do not try to incite and churn this milky ocean by drawing him again into a controversy. It will only result in the emergence of the Kalakuta poison\textsuperscript{13} and the Kalagni fire from him, which will destroy the whole world. You should not become the cause of such a catastrophe. I would, therefore, entreat all of you to leave off your egoism and offer salutations at the holy feet of this Sage. It is due to our ignorance that we entered into a debate with him. Any further controversy with him would be most unwise and uncalled for and result in our grief. Any more questioning would be as sinful as spurning him with our feet. The only expiation for the sin we have already incurred in arguing with him so far, is to fall at his feet. There is no other means of escape. To bow our heads before this great Seer and admit our defeat, will be for our future good, here and hereafter. No one on this earth can ever defeat Yajnavalkya who has realised Brahman. Even the gods in the heaven cannot rise equal to him.

12. VIDAGDHA SAKALYA’S JEALOUSY AGAINST YAJNAVALKYA

Gargi now resumed her seat. The whole assembly drank deep the sweet nectarine words of Gargi eulogising Yajnavalkya. Some in that gathering fell at the feet of the Sage, and some others offered their salutations mentally. A few openly expressed in so many words their feelings of reverence and respect. The only person in the whole assembly who refused to yield was Vidagdha, son of Sakala. Due to his ill fate, his mind was complete deluded. The family priest, who is generally proficient in the science of astrology, evidently knew even at the time of naming the child that in his adolescence he was to pick up a quarrel with a great sage and be consumed in the fire of that sage’s anger. Hence it was that the child was named Vidagdha, meaning one to be consumed by fire. The parents were happy and satisfied with this name because to them the word signified ‘a learned person’ which is its well-known accepted meaning. Thus, the assigning of this name seems to have been done with a foresight of what was to happen in the future.

Gargi’s words only augmented Vidagdha’s spite and hatred against Yajnavalkya, like the milk given to a cobra increasing its poison. Even from the time he came to know of the Sage’s discipleship under the sun-god, the fire of jealousy had been ignited in his mind and now it is in full blaze. When people used to say that Yajnavalkya had learned the Sukla Yajurveda (one of the two branches of the Yajurveda, the other being Krishna Yajurveda)

\textsuperscript{13} The dreadful poison that emerged out of the milky ocean when it was churned by the celestials and the demons, and the fire at the time of the great deluge.
from the sun-god, he used to make fun of them by saying: "Yes, Yajnavalkya has also learnt Rakta Atharva Veda from the moon-god." It had become a regular habit with him to ridicule and insult the wise Sage. He even considered that to enter into a discussion with the Sage was below his dignity. He would appear that emulation and rivalry against the Sage were inborn in him, like those between Karna and Arjuna, and Namuchi and Indra. He was enraged when he saw Yajnavalkya taking the cows home. The smile which he put on to hide his feelings revealed more or less the then state of his mind. A train of thoughts was passing through his agitated mind. Some of his thoughts were as follows:

“It is a wonder how this Yajnavalkya dared to take the cows. He has once succeeded in his mischievous and false propaganda that he has learnt all the Vedas directly from the sun-god. I am not surprised that he has now a second time done a similar daring act before this assembly. I think that his life in this world is nearing its end. If he wants to continue to live, let him live as one disgraced by this whole assembly. But it is certain that he cannot live as a respectable man any longer. Deluded by his sins, he is not able to understand the real worth of these learned men assembled here. I am sure that he is not fit to face even a boy amongst us. How can he then stand before all these great Vedic scholars!”

On account of his pride and egoism Vidagdha kept quiet for some time without speaking a word. Seeing Yajnavalkya’s triumph over a number of sages in the assembly, some of whom were in no way inferior to Brahma in Vedic knowledge, and Gargi herself falling at his feet, he could not bear the situation any longer. His eyes turned blood red and eyebrows quivered. Like an enraged serpent hissing, he took long gasps again and again. As a man who has lost his only son would reproach the Almighty God, he mentally abused Sage Yajnavalkya and Gargi:

“The time has come when we can no more rely on the strength of the Vedic lore, family tradition and the efficacy of Mantras (sacred formulae). Destiny seems to overpower all of them. The old proverbial saying that one can overrun time which destroys one and all, has become very true. This evil-minded Yajnavalkya has scored a victory over all these men assembled here, like an atheist winning applause among a set of young boys who have not undergone any regular course of study under a proper preceptor. I am astonished at his victory. What is to happen will certainly happen. No one can prevent it by any means. What comparison is there between this poor Yajnavalkya and the great saints in the assembly! The present situation has arisen only to bring fame and honour to me. If I now make use of it properly, and win a victory over Yajnavalkya who has defeated the whole assembly, it would be equivalent to my victory over all the learned in the land and my reputation would be very much enhanced.

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14 Karna and Arjuna: The enmity between the two is related in the Mahabharata epic. Namuchi was a demon among the Asuras who strongly resisted and captured Indra. He offered to let Indra go provided the latter promises not to kill him either during day or night with anything which was either dry or wet. Indra promised to do so and was let off. Later Indra cut off Namuchi’s head at twilight which is neither day nor night and with foam which is neither wet nor dry.
“This young lady Gargi, like a wanton woman, is going after strong and well-built men. All men in this gathering are of good conduct. They do not even look at this naked woman. How can there be any desire in them? Many of them are aged with long beard, matted locks and a famished body reduced to a skeleton by their asceticism. Yajnavalkya is fair in complexion, robust and lustful. He casts evil looks, now and then, on her face. I have been noticing this all along. From the moment he entered this hall, his sole attention has been on the king and on this lady. The others in the assembly who are learned and disciplined and who have great devotion to their preceptors, have their eyes fixed on the tip of their nose. This Yajnavalkya has come here not to display his Vedic knowledge but to earn wealth and flirt with women. A woman like Gargi can be known only by a man of her type, and she alone can find out those men of her category. Birds of the same feather flock together. A fish moving inside the water can be known only by another fish in the same water. Gargi is a woman who has forsaken her husband, son, brother, uncle, father-in-law and women of good conduct, even from her early days. A woman of noble family does not get out of her husband’s house. This Gargi is wandering here and there aimlessly in search of lewd company. In this Treta Yuga, there are no wicked men as in Kali Yuga. There is none who does not follow the conduct and rules of the fourfold social divisions and the four orders of life. Those householders desirous of progeny approach only their own legally wedded partners at the proper time. They have no desire for enjoyment with others of the opposite sex. When this is the case with householders, it goes without saying that those in the other three orders lead a celibate life and abstain from everything connected with sex. In this Yuga, even those in the lowest social order do not approach anyone other than their own wedded partners, not to say anything about those in the other three higher orders. The celestials and others do not even dream of sex connections with human beings. The animals do not approach them being not one among them. This woman, on the other hand, always comes and stands before men. Yajnavalkya is a sinner like a man born in Kali Yuga. He is strong in body, with well-formed limbs, and he looks like an actor in a drama. This lowly woman, finding out a man suitable to her in this dishonourable Yajnavalkya, is trying to take him to seclusion by this false propaganda that he is a knower of Brahman. She pays homage to him. She showers encomium on him. Her words have crated confusion in the mind of even the king who is the foremost among the virtuous and the intelligent, and he too has prostrated himself at the feet of Yajnavalkya.”

Bound by the noose of the god of death, Sakalya was entertaining such disrespectful and demeaning thoughts about Gargi and Yajnavalkya who were always in the Brahmic consciousness. Unable to control himself any longer, he began openly to attack Yajnavalkya with vile words, like a fly rushing towards fire. Prompted by the uncontrollable desire to win victory over the Sage, he put a volley of questions and Yajnavalkya furnished answers to all of them.

15 There are four Yugas, viz., Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali, the durations of which are 1,728,000; 1,296,000; 864,000 and 432,000 years respectively.

16 The four social divisions are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra and the four orders of life are Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprasta and Sannyasa.
12. VIDAGDHA’S QUESTIONS AND THE SAGE’S ANSWERS THERETO—THE IMMEDIACY AND DIRECTNESS OF BRAHMAN BY REFERENCE TO DIFFERENT GODS WHO ARE RULED BY IT

Vidagdha: What is the number of gods for the Vaisvanara ritual?

Yajnavalkya: According to the scriptures, three hundred and three, and three thousand and three gods are there (i.e., 3306). The smaller numbers of the very gods are thirty-three, six, three, two, one and a half and one. All are the manifestations of the one God, the Prana which is Hiranyakagarbha and also Brahman referred to as Tyat (That). Thus, the gods are one and many. The finite number of gods is included in the limited number mentioned in the Nivid (a group of verses giving the number of the gods, which are recited in the eulogistic hymn on the Visvedevas). The larger number constitutes only the glory of the lesser.

Vidagdha: What is the number of abodes of the Antaryamin?

Yajnavalkya: The abodes are eight in number, and they are earth, desire, form, ether, darkness, form, water and semen.

Having furnished the above answers, Yajnavalkya address Sakalya, who was then like a frog, caught in the mouth of the serpent of all-devouring time, as follows:

O Sakalya, none of your ancestors hated any one without sufficient cause. Learned persons and, for that matter, even ordinary men do not hate others for no reason. Why are you entertaining bitter enmity towards me? Your persistent aversion and ill-will against the wise will only result in your destruction, which is very near. Please take care to prevent such a catastrophe. My parents and my sons are very kind to me. Similarly, all those who are near and dear to you, may have great affection and consideration for you. Do not therefore conduct yourself as to bring sudden and unexpected misery to those people. If you show any more disrespect to the knowledge of Brahman which I have received from the Sun-god, its effulgence will scorch you instantaneously. When I was about to return from my preceptor, the Sun-god, after completing my course of studies, he said, “O Yajnavalkya, my disciple, if any one were to slight and disregard this knowledge which I have now imparted to you, I shall then and there turn him into ashes. There need be no doubt that it.” Hearing this, I, with the welfare of the whole world in my mind, prayed to him several times not to be so hard on the ignorant. Granting my prayer, he slightly modified his original decision and said: “I shall pardon one, nineteen times. On the twentieth occasion, if he repeats the same sin, I, residing in your organ of speech, will pronounce a curse and his head will immediately fall off.” Thereafter, I was not bold enough to pray for further clemency, and I returned. It is not, therefore, safe for you to insult me any more. Your past sins obstruct your mental vision and you are not able to know the power and glory of my preceptor. You are verily having a very bad time. Remembering the words of my preceptor, I feel great anxiety about you. I know that you are a sinner. Still, I never hate you, for this ‘I’ is residing not only in me, but also in you and in every movable and immovable object in this world. This whole phenomenal world, with a beginning and an end, is nothing but the Self. The ‘I’ is the cause of the projection of the apparent duality in the form of this universe. Pain and misery are never in ‘Me’. The ‘I’ is not affected either by the continuance of this body or by its fall. Just as the universal ether remains as one only

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without change, either by the destruction or existence of a pot, the ‘I’, who is non-dual, does not change with the body which lives and dies. The ‘I’ does not cause death to any living being and nothing can cause death to this ‘I’. O Sakalya, the little knowledge you possess, like that of a worm, is covered by the thick veil of ignorance, and therefore you consider me as one among the sinners of the world. Your people should not have the occasion to grieve at your destruction in the fire of your own sins. Let not that situation arise where your beloved wife, widowed, leaving off her beautiful ornaments in the body, with a dejected countenance, mourn your death before all your relations. Let not your friends, relations, sons and others be drowned in the ocean of grief. Let not your enemies get a chance to rejoice in your misfortune. You should not become a ghost and go to the city of death suffering the pangs of hunger and thirst. O pitiable man, you should not have occasion to join the company of the departed souls who live on the offerings given by men here and drink the water offered with sesame seeds. You should not cause this fair and delicate body of ours to become the food for fire or the dogs. You should not leave this world and go alone leaving all your disciples behind you. You should somehow see that the great tree of jealousy, hatred and malice against the virtuous, which you have nurtured for long, does not yield its poisonous fruit. Let not your ashes be polluted by the Chandalas.

Like a fly falling into the burning fire, do not fall a victim in the blazing fire of anger of my preceptor. Men who roast grains use a long ladle to avoid their hands being burnt. Some men here seem to have instigated you to argue with me at this stage and you do not realise that they consider you as a ladle, my preceptor as the blazing fire, me as the fuel, this assembly as the vessel placed on the hearth and themselves as the roasters.

These words of warning had little effect on Vidagdha, already caught in the noose of Death. He was enraged all the more. A man in his death-bed dislikes his own doctor who wishes well for him. A king, when his stars are unfavourable, rejects the advice of his wise ministers. The man on whom fortune frowns offends the king. A sinner insults his preceptor. Similarly, Vidagdha again started insulting Yajnavalkya who, even then, wished only his welfare. Vidagdha thought within himself:

“This dull-witted Yajnavalkya seems to think that I am a child, and he wants to threaten me. He does not know that I am all-knowing and fearless. He speaks to me as one would speak to the ignorant village folk, illiterate cowherds and uneducated women. If the sun could burn me for my hostility towards Yajnavalkya, why did it not do so before when I insulted him on a number of occasions? This is not the first time I am insulting him. Whether the sun, being an inert body, could do anything against me, is itself doubtful. What is ordinarily called a deity exists only in name. There cannot be a corresponding objective reality outside the name and its connotation. Even granting that there is a physical entity called a deity, it cannot do anything in this world except according to the law of Karma. What is the position of a lustful man like Yajnavalkya when compared to the all-effulgent sun in the heavens! No one can believe their relationship as disciple and preceptor.”

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17 Those in the lowest rung of the society, born of men of the lower social order and women of the highest order.
Infuriated with these thoughts, he rudely addressed Yajnavalkya:

Vidagdha: You have defeated many a learned and wise man in the Kuru and Panchala countries. You have misappropriated the wealthy which legitimately belonged to these learned men here. You have been a sinner in your past lives also, and as a result, you will be born in your next birth as a *Brahma-Rakshasa* (the ghost of a Brahmana) and wander in dreary forests. O Yajnavalkya, if you know anything about Brahma, please tell me now.

Yajnavalkya, who had realised his Atman as the Atman in all beings, revealing his supreme knowledge said, “I know all the directions with their presiding deities.”

Vidagdha: Then please tell me about the deities presiding over the directions and also the support for the organs and their objects.

Yajnavalkya: ‘I’, the Atman is presiding over the five directions, east, south, west, north and above as their deities, the Sun, Yama (god of death), Varuna (god of the oceans), Moon and Fire. For the eastern direction, the sun, eye, colour and mind form the supports, each successive entity being the support for the just preceding one. For the southern direction, Yama, Sacrifice, remuneration to priests, faith and heart similarly form the successive supports. For the west, Varuna, water, semen, and heart are the supports. For the north, the moon, initiation, truth, and heart are the supports, and lastly for the above, fire, speech and heart form the successive supports. Even as the ocean is the cause and support for all the waters, the heart is the cause and support for all the organs, their objects and the presiding deities.

A landscape painted on a wall rests on the painting. The painting rests on the several colours used like green, blue, etc. These colours rest on the pigments. But all of them finally rest on the wall which therefore forms the support of the landscape. In the same way, on the Supreme Self with the limiting adjunct of the heart rests the whole phenomenal world with all its objects, either directly or indirectly. If earth is smeared on the painted wall, the landscape painted thereon would be erased. Even so, by smearing the earth of the knowledge of Brahman, the picture of the phenomenal world in the heart is erased. The uneven and rough painting rests on the even and smooth wall. So also, the heterogeneous universe rests on the homogenous heart. Just as the picture on the wall is painted with different colours, the phenomenal world is created in the heart with the multitudinous modifications of the mind rising out of ignorance. As a painter paints pictures on a wall, the intellect goes on creating the world in the heart always. The stencils made of wood or metal facilitate painting. Similarly, the subtle desires and impressions on the mind facilitate the projection of the picture of the world. When earth is smeared again and again over the wall, even the traces of the picture are obliterated. Even so, the phenomenal world will be completely wiped off the heart by constant meditation on Brahman. As a magician through his magic projects large armies on the sky, the intellect creates the appearance of this world in the heart. When the magician goes to sleep or passes away, the armies also vanish. So also, when the intellect merges itself in its cause, or when it rests on the Atman, all the worlds disappear from the heart. The appearances projected by the magician are nothing but himself in all the three periods of time. So also, the worlds that appear in the heart are nothing but the intellect in the past, present and future. There can be no darkness in a clear sky seen through defectless eyes. Even so, in a heart cleansed by the knowledge of the
Atman, the intellect and its cause cannot be seen. Just as a hare’s horn, which is really non-existent, creates it knowledge by its mere name (which is only a sound) the intellect with its cause and effects, though really non-existent, causes objective knowledge. Some creatures hearing the sound of a cobra get frightened and die due to the poison of fear, although there is no cobra. Similarly, though the cause of the intellect, body, etc. Is really non-existent, men experience this phenomenal existence with its pleasure, pain and repeated births and deaths due to attachment to it. As a dreaming man himself becomes the several objects witnessed by him in the dream due to delusion, the Atman itself appears as this objective world. A blind man, even if he touches a treasure with his hand, cannot know that it is a treasure. Even so, O Vidgadh, people like you do not realise the Atman residing in the heart. I have now told you that the heart is the support for the painting of the illusion of this transmigratory world perceived on account of ignorance. If you have any further questions to ask, please let me know.

The dull-witted Vidgadh did not stop his questioning. Like a frog inviting the serpent, he further interrogated Yajnavalkya. Yajnavalkya, the most compassionate, was much grieved at this and thought within himself.

"Alas! His end is nearing. The sun-god with his eyes red due to anger, is descending from the heavens. He who is in the form of the three Vedas, would, in a short time, come down and be seated in my organ of speech which would then be completely under his control, and a curse would be pronounced which would instantaneously reduce Vidgadha to ashes."

Yajnavalkya, who was an embodiment of mercy, still hoped that such a thing would not happen. Vidgadh, whose end was not far off, lost all discrimination and started further questioning.

Vidgadh: What is the support for the heart holding the painting of this phenomenal world?

Yajnavalkya, in furnishing the reply to this question, addressed Vidgadh as Ahallika. This word means a ghost which is invisible during day time but makes itself visible during night. The word also means one who is unable to grasp the meaning of terms which are as clear as day light, or one who has no heart. Sakalya had not understood the proper meaning of the word heart. If he had a heart, he would not have raised further questions after hearing all the foregoing exposition. That his doubts were still not cleared showed that he was heartless. On the fall of his body, the fleshy heart therein would become the food for dogs. He knows only about this physical heart and not the Supreme Atman signified by the word heart. This was another reason why he was considered heartless. The sun who causes the days by his rising was about to destroy him. Due to this reason also, the name Ahallika with which the Sage addressed him now, suited him very well. Popularly, this term means ‘You idiot’.

Yajnavalkya: Ahallika! The ‘I’ is the support for the heart which supports the painting of this phenomenal world. The subtle body cannot exist without the gross body, and vice versa, the gross body cannot exist without the subtle body. When the gross body separates itself from the subtle body, the former, along with the fleshy heart which alone you have understood by the term heart, is eaten away by dogs or torn into pieces by birds of prey from all sides. Therefore, the subtle body, which is included in the term ‘I’, is the support for the gross body with the heart.
Vidagdha, of deluded intellect, without understanding the real significance of the term heart, which is the Supreme Atman, again asked:

Vidagdha: Where do the mutually dependent subtle and gross bodies rest?
Yajnavalkya: They rest on the Prana.
Vidagdha: On what does the Prana rest?
Yajnavalkya: It rests on the Apana.
Vidagdha: On what does the Apana rest?
Yajnavalkya: Apana rests on Vyana.
Vidagdha: What is the support for Vyana?
Yajnavalkya: It is Udana.
Vidagdha: What is the support for Udana?
Yajnavalkya: Udana is supported on Samana.

By the term heart, Yajnavalkya meant the Supreme Atman which resides in the hearts of all creatures. But Vidagdha understood the fleshy internal organ called by that name. When the Sage, in replying to the question regarding the support for the heart said the ‘I’ is the support for the heart, by the term ‘I’ he referred to its indicative meaning, viz., the Atman which is not an object to be known by the intellect. But Vidagdha took the term to mean the subtle body. It is in consonance with this meaning that the sage also used the term ‘I’ in the subsequent portion of his reply. By the terms Prana, Apana, etc., the Sage meant the Supreme Atman with the limiting adjunct of Maya which enlivens them. The wise say that the root word ‘An’ contained in Prana, Apana, etc., means ‘to move’. The movement in all living beings is caused by the Atman which is Prajna or consciousness. Hence, the words Prana, Apana, etc., indicate only the Atman. The vital force either moves upwards or downwards, or pervades the body, or ascends and helps the Jiva to pass out of the body at the time of death, or remains equanimous assimilating the food and drink. In accordance with these five different functions, five different terms such as Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana are used. Sakalya, deprived of his understanding due to his impending death, took these words to mean the movement of air, and therefore asked again and again about their supports. The Samana that was mentioned in the end was taken by him to signify the air which is the support for all living beings. What Yajnavalkya meant by that term was the supreme blissful Atman which shines as the witness of the existence and non-existence of the limiting adjuncts and which alone is left after all the limiting adjuncts like the gross body, subtle body, etc., are negated by the process of ‘Neti-Neti’ (‘Not this-Not this’). Yajnavalkya continued further and said:

“In the state of ignorance, the Supreme Atman appears through the limiting adjuncts as though objectified to the fluctuating intellect. But when, by meditation and reflection through the ‘Neti-Neti’ doctrine, all the limiting adjuncts are negated, the Atman is realised
as the non-dual Reality, beyond being and non-being and free from the three kinds of difference, viz., Sajatiya, Vijatiya and Svagata-Bhedas. As the Atman cannot be grasped by the intellect and other organs, It is not known by any living being. Like a cloth becoming tattered by lapse of time, It does not become old due to age. Like the space which remains unattached to moisture and other impurities in it, the Atman remains unattached with the limiting adjuncts of intellect, etc. As this Atman never becomes bound, It is not subject to pain. It is beyond death and cannot be injured or blemished in any manner."

The Sun-god knew that the ignorant Sakalya had not understood the Atman and that it was useless for him to argue with Yajnavalkya who was a knower of Brahman, and was waiting for the proper time. He now manifested himself in the speech of Yajnavalkya who addressed Sakalya thus:

Yajnavalkya: The abodes of the Purusha are eight in number. They are earth, desire, form (in general), ether, darkness, form (in particular), water and semen. The eight worlds are fire, heart, eye, ear, heart, eye, heart and heart. The deities, eight in number, are nectar, woman, truth, directions, death, Prana, Varuna and Prajapati. The eight Purushas are the being identified with desire, the being in the sun, the beings identified with the echo, the ear, and shadow, the beings reflected in the mirror and in water, and the being identified with the son, Isvara, as the cause of the universe, pervades in all these eight abodes, eight worlds, eight deities and eight Purushas, like thread in a cloth and holds them and controls them. At the time of the final dissolution, each of the directions, etc, gets merged in its respective cause, in the inverse order of creation, and finally in Himself, and remains as one homogenous entity. Just as a cloth, which is the effect of threads, loses its form and is reduced to threads, its cause, the Supreme Lord, during dissolution reduces the universe to its causal state. Space, when limited by a jar, seems to have the difference of exterior and interior, but when the jar is broken, the space remains as one only. Even so, the Supreme Lord creates, preserves and destroys the worlds, and transcending them remains as the one final cause. As the Self of every being and non-being in this world, He permeates both inside and outside equally. This Supreme Purusha is known only through the Upanishads.

O Vidagdha, I have answered several questions put by you. I now ask you one question: Who is this Purusha? You must answer me. If you do not properly answer this question of mine before this assembly now, I pronounce the curse that your head shall fall off. You know, now it is the most inauspicious time, being the night of the new moon day, in the dark fortnight, in Dakshinayana (six months of the year when the sun moves towards the south). Even your bones and ashes shall not reach home, for they shall be taken away by robbers on the way.

The Sun-god who is the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction, pronounced this curse residing in the organ of speech of Yajnavalkya. The ignorant Sakalya, who was devoid of the knowledge of the Atman, could not answer the question. He remained silent, for his speech had then merged in his mind. In that august assembly with thousands of

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18 Sajatiya-Bheda is difference within the same species, Vijatiya-Bheda is the difference among different species and Svagata-Bheda is intrinsic difference.
people, held in the heart of the capital city of Mithila, Sakalya’s head was seen separated from his body, like that of Namuchi cut off by Indra with his thunderbolt.

Alas! Alas! Such sounds reverberated from all directions. There was great excitement in the assembly. Seeing the corpse lying on the floor with the head separated from the body, his disciples and relatives wept profusely. All men, women and children assembled there censured him. Some of them said:

“The fruit of the poisonous tree of jealousy and hatred against the learned, nurtured by Sakalya, has been reaped by him without much delay. Excepting for this only bad trait in his character, he was a very good and learned scholar. Fire remaining single destroys everything. Even so, the fire of enmity against the virtuous, alone has destroyed him in a moment. No one would presume that the whole ocean would get dried up. We never thought that his end would be brought about by a sage’s curse. When such a great and learned man as Sakalya has been reduced to this condition, what cannot happen to others through similar sinful actions! The scriptural statement that one who knows Brahman becomes Brahman himself, has come true. Who else other than the Supreme Brahman can destroy Sakalya in this manner! The declaration of the Vedas that a knower of Brahman is the Atman of all beings, has been proved before our very eyes, for when Yajnavalkya’s opponent is destroyed, we all have a feeling of relief as though our own enemy has been done away with. This great Sage, beyond doubt, is the Atman who is within all of us. The result of the sin due to the killing of a pious person accrues only in future births. But the sin of insulting a knower of Brahman is seen to yield its bitter fruit even in this birth and it would pursue him in future births also. Sakalya is a typical example for this. His physical body, which was occupying honoured seats and lying on soft sofas, now rolls on the dusty floor like that of a ghost or a lunatic, and his subtle body is on its way to hell, for due to the curse, he has left his mortal coil at a very inauspicious time, on a new moon night in Dakshinayana. Alas! Look at the ignorance of this evil-minded Sakalya. It is really pitiable. For no reason did he entertain animosity against Yajnavalkya. He has now thrown all his relations and friends into the ocean of grief, his own soul into hell, his wife among the widows, his body on the dust of the earth, and the results of his past meritorious Karmas into the fire of sin. The submarine fire of hatred against the wise is sure to destroy the best worlds attained even by men of virtuous actions, however great they may be.”

All those assembled there joined with Gargi and the king in honouring and praising Yajnavalkya. The funeral was conducted devoid of the usual religious rites. The disciples of Sakalya collected his bones and ashes, packed them in a white silken cloth, and with due honour and respect, started homeward. On the way, robbers waylaid them and snatched away the silken package mistaking it to be a treasure under transport from the king. Some of the disciples were killed in the struggle that ensued, and the others had a narrow escape. Thus, every word of the curse of that great Sage was fulfilled.


When the assembly had calmed down after the first excitement and agitation caused by the fall of Sakalya’s head, Yajnavalkya rose and addressed the assembly:
“O venerable men, you who have come from different parts of the country, are all learned in the Vedic lore and deserve my respect and reverence. Kindly listen to what I have to say now. Whoever amongst you wants to interrogate me further may do so freely. If you wish to be questioned by me, I am agreeable to that also. Some of you individually or together, or all of you together, can put questions, or I shall ask a few questions to be answered by any of you.”

None among the scholars in that majestic assembly dared to ask further questions to Yajnavalkya. All of them kept silent. Yajnavalkya then, of his own accord, raised a question based on the several Mantras in the Vedic Mantras. All the men in the assembly were knowers of the Vedic Mantras and Yajnavalkya was foremost among them.

Yajnavalkya: This human body can be compared to a tree in the forest. In the place of the leaves of the tree, there are hairs on the body. The skin in the body is similar to the outer bark of the tree. As blood flows out of the human body when it is wounded, so flows sap out of the tree when it is cut. Like the thin, white inner layer of skin and tendons in the body, there is a corresponding inner layer beneath the bark. When the skin is cut, both blood and the white membrane are seen. When the tree is felled by an axe and cut into pieces, each piece of wood resembles a piece of flesh cut from the body. As there are fibres in the tree, there are nerves inside the body. In the head and other parts, one can see a complex structure of subtle nerves. The bones in the human body correspond to the hard central portion of the stem of the tree. In the place of the marrow, there is the pith inside the tree. O reverent men, I am thus proving the resemblance of the body to the tree. If there are differences, according to your learned opinion, please enumerate them. I see, however, one important difference which I shall point out here. When a tree is cut down, a new one grows from the roots, but once we cut the body into pieces, no fresh body is seen to grow from anywhere. If you say that a new body comes out of the root in the form of semen, it is not a relevant statement, for semen is produced only when there is life in the body, and I am asking about the body which has been felled. Similar to the root in a tree, what serves as the root for a fresh body? If you consider that the body comes out of seed like a fig tree, what is that seed? As a tree has its cause in its root and seed, there must be a cause for the body of man. Without a cause, man cannot get a new body after death. The view of the followers of the materialistic philosophy, that a thing once born is not born again, is not correct, for the Adrishta, the unseen principle, is left out. This defect can be cured if the views of those who believe in the existence of God are accepted, according to whom, one who is born once, alone is born again. There could be no relationship between the horns of man, which are non-existent in all the three periods of time,—past, present and future,—and the unseen principle whose very nature is existence. Therefore, O wise men, we have to accept the theory of reincarnation and the unseen principle which is its cause, if we are to have a satisfactory answer. This unseen principle and the body are interdependent. One does not exist without the others. O most learned men, the unseen principle and the body are in the forms of cause-and-effect-relationship is without beginning. If you were to decide on these lines, you are far from the truth, for in the above analogy of the seed and the sprout, there is a third factor, viz., the earth. Just as the seed and the sprout are dependent on the earth, what is that on which the body and the unseen principle depend? What I am asking you is about this first cause, the cause of all causes. Like the earth in the case of the seed and sprout, who acts as the cause of the unseen principle and this body?
No one in that assembly could answer this question. All of them were thus defeated. Yajnavalkya himself then gave the answer.

Yajnavalkya: That cause, about whom I asked, is He who illumines this inert universe, gross and subtle, who is distinct from pain, who is in the form of Bliss, who is the dispenser of the fruits of actions, who is responsible for all actions, and who supports all the worlds and keeps them within their limits. When the roots are destroyed in a tree, its seed acts as the cause of a new tree. Similarly, when the gross body dies, the subtle body becomes the cause for the next gross body. When the seed also gets destroyed, the earth still remains. So also, when the subtle body merges into deep sleep, ignorance still remains. The seed contains within it an unseen principle by which that particular tree alone, with its peculiar characteristics, sprouts out of it. Even so, we have to accept the unseen causal body as the cause for the subtle body to manifest itself as the gross body. As there is a subtle principle inside the seed which causes it to sprout and grow, so there are the subtle impressions that lie merged in the ignorance which forms the cause for the subtle body.

Just as the earth rests in space, this ignorance rests in the Vijnana Atman, the intellectual Self. Objects with form exist in space which is without form. Even so, ignorance exists in the Vijnana Atman. Like the poor depending on the rich, ignorance which is of the nature of pain, rests on the Atman which is Bliss itself.

Happiness cannot be separated from knowledge, for without the knowledge of happiness, there can be no experience of happiness. The case of pain is, however, different. There is no evidence to prove the existence of pain. On the other hand, for the existence of happiness, scriptures are there as proof. Though in one view, happiness and pain are similar, there is this difference. All like happiness, but hate pain. They wish that they should always be happy and that pain should not come to them at all. The happiness about which one says, 'I should enjoy', is liked by him and it is his own. That which he hates, viz., pain, is disliked by him and it is distinct from him. When even the happiness which is liked so much by all becomes painful when it is enjoyed by one's enemy, what to speak of pain which is always disliked by all! Though people commonly say 'my enemy', 'my pain', etc., no one ever desires a relationship with them. The happiness being Atman itself, it is not possible to use any inflection of noun or pronoun to differentiate it from one's Self. When one says 'my happiness' using the sixth case ending, one creates an artificial relationship between oneself and happiness, when there is really no such relationship, for both 'I' and 'happiness' are identical. When a man says 'I help myself', it would seem that 'I' and 'myself' are two distinct entities while in fact they refer to only one entity. So also, when 'I' and 'Bliss' itself, to say 'my Bliss' would be attempting to separate the inseparables. The relationship between the Atman and Bliss is eternal and one of identity. If it were not so, one's own Atman would sometime turn against oneself. But nowhere, at no time, has one's Atman become one's enemy. When the relationship is eternal, it cannot be any other than one of identity. By the doctrine of 'Neti-Neti' (not this, not this) the Vedas have eliminated completely all kinds of relationships in the Atman.

Like Bliss, pure Knowledge also is not distinct from the Atman. If it were separate, it would also be inert like the objective knowledge of the intellect. Inert objects like a jar, for example, always depend on something outside them even for their existence. Anything that
is dependent on another can only be different from Knowledge-Absolute. Therefore, that Absolute Knowledge is self-luminous has to be accepted.

This Atman which is thus Knowledge-Absolute and Bliss-Absolute is known by the term Brahman. It is with a view to establishing the unreality of all the objects superimposed on the Atman that the term Brahman has been used. As heterogeneity in the form of ears, nose, etc., has been superimposed on the homogeneous ether inside the body, ignorance with all its concomitant evils has been superimposed on the non-dual Brahman. There is no difference between the objects created in the sky by a magician and the sky in which they are seen. So also, there is no difference between the limiting adjuncts superimposed on Brahman and Brahman.

This pure Brahman which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute, does not become the cause of anything. But, Brahman with Maya, which is the illusory power of Brahman superimposed on It, becomes the omniscient, omnipotent ultimate cause of the universe. The Vedas have stated Brahman as the dispenser of the fruits of actions, by which what we have to understand is that Isvara, Brahman with the limiting adjunct of Maya, is the bestower of the fruits of actions as well as the cause of this universe.

Here, there is another difficulty. Maya cannot even exist without the support of Consciousness. Then, how can Maya, which is in the form of veiling and projecting powers, be said to be the cause of this universe? To get over this difficulty, the Vedas state that Brahman, which is the support of the whole universe, is also its cause. This does not mean that Pure Brahman is the support for Maya alone, for It is the support for the liberated sages also who are beyond Maya. A fully qualified aspirant who has realised Brahman, revealing his Brahman-hood, always shines in the consciousness ‘I am Brahman’. To such a person, pure Brahman alone is the support.

14. THE PRECEPTOR CONCLUDES HIS INSTRUCTIONS

The preceptor continued: O my dear disciple, the learned men in the assembly who were questioned by Yajnavalkya about the cause of this universe, did not know that cause as Brahman in the form of Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute, the dispenser of the fruits of actions and the Self of the knower of Brahman. Qualified aspirants realise Brahman through reflection on the Vedic texts. In this way, the Sage Yajnavalkya, also called Vajasneyaka, the most venerable, the foremost among the intelligent and the learned, and the disciple of the Sun-god, came out victorious defeating all the learned men on the face of this earth. The incident about the cows was only a pretext for imparting the knowledge of Brahman. During the discussions, the Sage caused the death of Vidagdha who always hated and disliked the knowers of Brahman. The Sage also imparted to Janaka, the king of Mithila who was the foremost among the seekers after Truth, Brahma-Vidya about which several questions were discussed in the assembly, and which he learnt directly from the Sun-god.
CHAPTER II

INSTRUCTIONS TO KING JANAKA ON BRAHMA-VIDYA

1. THE DISCIPLE PRAYS FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE PRECEPTOR

In the manner stated in the preceding chapters (Nos. I to V of the Atma Purana), the disciple heard from the preceptor several anecdotes dealing with the knowledge of the Atman. He again addressed the preceptor.

Disciple: O Lord, following the traditional method, you have instructed me in the knowledge of the Atman, through several legends. You have narrated to me how Sages Aitareya and Kaushitaki and the Sun-god imparted this knowledge to their disciples, the method adopted by the sages for imparting the knowledge, the discourses between Indra and Pradardana, Ajatasatru, and Gargya, the story of Dadhyangatharvan, the dialogues between Yajnavalkya and the learned sages in king Janaka’s assembly, and many other useful informations. I now desire to hear from your revered self how Sage Yajnavalkya instructed king Janaka in Brahma Vidya—the Knowledge of Brahman. Be gracious enough to tell me all about it.”

Hearing this, the preceptor with great love and affection, said to the disciple:

Preceptor: O disciple, please listen attentively. I shall instruct you in that Supreme Knowledge imparted by the wise Yajnavalkya to his disciple Janaka.

2. KING JANAKA WELCOMES YAJNAVALKYA

After the incident of Sakalya, there was no necessity for Yajnavalkya to continue his arguments any further, for he had won victory over all the learned men in the assembly. The assembly adjourned for the day. On the next morning, with the rising of the sun, sweet music sung by the bards reverberated in the atmosphere of the king’s palace, and women of heavenly beauty performed Nirajana. The king, rising up from his bed and finishing his morning duties, received the blessings of the elders and priests, and entered the court hall with all pomp and splendour, amongst the playing of several musical instruments. The king’s court, decorated with costly gems, resembled the court of Indra in the heavens. The rays of the reflected light emanating therefrom illumined all the ten directions. Entering the court, the king seated himself comfortably on the royal throne, surrounded by several savants.

The great Sage Yajnavalkya, the disciple of the Sun-god, worshipped his preceptor with the Gayatri Mantra, performed his usual morning oblations and came to the king’s court, followed by his disciples. Seeing the Sage, the king got down from his throne, and paid his obeisance in the customary way with water, flowers and the like, and offered him a specially decorated cushion seat.

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19 This corresponds to Chapter VI in the original Text of the Atma Purana.
20 A religious rite done with chanting of Mantras on auspicious occasions—waving of lights.
21 A mystic formula for propitiating the Gayatri deity representing Pure Awareness.
After saluting the Sage, with his permission, the king and the assembly took their seats. With great humility, the king again bowed before the honoured guest and addressed him in the traditional way.

King: O Revered Sage, the wise are verily the visible gods on earth. They have the power to create, preserve and destroy all the worlds, like the Supreme God. They have equal vision over all creatures and control over their own minds and organs. They are without desire and jealousy, and they move about in this world showering their blessings equally on all. Such great men, when they move from place to place on some pretext or other, have only the desire for the welfare of the world. Some have, in their itinerary, the object of establishing the Truth through discussion and argument with others. O great Sage, such godly persons visit palaces with the only purpose of extricating the kings from the ocean of this mundane life in which they are usually drowned. Your revered self is the disciple of the Sun-god and has realised the Sat-chidananda Atman—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. You are free from the three kinds of desires, viz., those for progeny, wealth and worlds. O friend of the distressed, you have come here with the only purpose of saving me from the quagmire of this transmigratory life. I presume that you have no other object in this visit.

3. JANAKA’S DISPASSION AND HIS PRAYER TO BE INSTRUCTED ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ATMAN

Continuing, king Janaka said: Identifying myself with this despised and foul-smelling body, I am leading almost an animal life. My condition is in no way different from that of a diseased dog but without a tail. With a piece of dry bone in its mouth, it fights with its companions and brings endless suffering to itself. O Sage, considering myself as this body, and desirous of possessing this country which I call mine, I have become a storehouse of pain and misery without even a trace of happiness. I appease my hunger by consuming living beings, moving and non-moving, like a cruel cannibal. Just as ghosts and evil spirits resort to decayed and putrefied corpses in the cemeteries, I take recourse to a woman’s body, which is in no way better than a corpse when the desire for sex is aroused. Like the demons who cut the human body into pieces, I cut the sandal-wood into pieces, make a paste of them and smear it on this foul-odoured body of mine. In my hunting expeditions, I kill the poor innocent animals living on green grass and pure water, like the demons slaying the peaceful ascetics doing penance in the forest. Just as oil is squeezed out of sesame seeds in a mill. I mercilessly extract money from my poor subjects. Like an insurable disease in the body, I have become a permanent source of pain to my horses, camels, elephants and men who carry me in a palanquin. Like a crow perching on the top of a house and cawing aloud, I, sitting on a raised seat, babble incessantly to the distress of the audience. O revered Sage, I am guarding all this wealth of my country like a cobra guarding a treasure. Like a village hog with its innumerable young ones revelling in filth, I am living with great attachment to my family. O great Sage, how miserable I feel when I think on these lines. I fully deserve our mercy. Kindly save me from the trident of this transmigratory existence with its triple paints,—Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhidaivika,22 into which I have entangled myself

22 Pains caused by oneself, those caused by other beings, and those caused by heavenly factors.
due to ignorance. O revered Sage, under what pretext has your revered self visited me now? Is it the acceptance of the gift of cows before this assembly, or is it to establish the Supreme Truth through dialectics?

4. YAJNAVALKYA STARTS HIS EXPOSITION ON ATMA JNANA—MEDITATION ON THE FOUR FEET OF BRAHMAN

Yajnavalkya: O emperor of the world, I have come here with both these objects in my mind. Please, now, let me know whether you have been initiated before by anyone. I would like to know that first. If it is not a secret, you can tell me.

King: O revered Sage, how can I keep any secret in your holy presence! I shall tell you everything. Several saints have initiated me in the knowledge of Brahman differently. Jitvan, son of Silina; Sage Udanka, son of Sulba; Saint Barku who is the son of Vrishna; the ascetic by name Gardabhivipita belonging to the Bharadvaja family; Sage Satyakama, son of Jabala, and the recently deceased Vidagdha Sakalya are my six preceptors. These sages have taught me meditation on the presiding deities of the organs of speech, smell, sight, hearing, the mind and the heart, as manifestations of Brahman.

Yajnavalkya, hearing this, spoke highly of the meditations taught by those sages. These meditations are quite all right as far as they go, but they are not complete by themselves. He pointed out this defect, so that the king might not rest satisfied with them thinking that he had known all that had to be known. The Sage further said:

Yajnavalkya: O king, the presiding deities of the organs of speech, smell, etc., being only one Pada (foot) or partial manifestation of that Supreme Being, meditation on them as such would not lead you to the final goal. I shall now, therefore, instruct you on the three remaining Padas, left out by those Sages. Please listen attentively.

The presiding deities of these organs, viz., Fire, Air, Sun, Directions, Moon and Brahma, form the first Pada, the organs which are their abodes form the second Pada, the all-supporting cause referred to in the Vedas as Akasa, the undifferentiated, is the third Pada and the secret knowledge of the six entities, viz., intelligence, dearness, truth, infinity, bliss and stability, the four Pada. By meditation on the first Pada, one reaches Hiranyagarbha; by meditation on the second Pada, Virat; on the third, Isvara; and on the fourth, the Turiya Atman. This is the result of the meditation on the four Padas which are the manifestations of the Saguna (qualified) Brahman. O king, meditation and worship on these four Padas will result in the attainment of the final goal.

King: O revered Sage, I offer you as a present a bull as big as an elephant, along with a thousand young milch cows.

The king repeated this offer each time when the Sage instructed him on meditation on each of the presiding deities of the six organs with its remaining three Padas. Yajnavalkya did not accept the gift but replied that his father had forbidden him from receiving gifts from those who have not achieved the supreme satisfaction of having accomplished the acme of
human birth, and therefore could not accept his offer then. He repeated the very same answer all the six times. Finding the Sage unceremonious and also prepared to instruct him further, the king descended from this throne, and standing on the floor saluted the Sage, prostrated himself at his feet, and address him again.

King: O revered Yajnavalkya, I offer my salutations again, to you. Kindly accept me as your disciple and instruct me further. How am I to get over this phenomenal existence? I have been caught up in the forest of this mundane life. This forest is full of deep abysses in the form of sex. It is inhabited by the cobras of passions, wolves in the shape of sense-organs, and lions in the form of egoism which make all directions shiver with their thunderous roar. The trees and herbs in this forest are the umpteen mental modifications which are being burnt by the fire-missile of anger. In this forest, the god of death is the hunter who moves about with his hound in the form of mind, destroying all its inhabitants. Time serves as his bow, and his arrows are the innumerable diseases. O god among the Sages, before the fatal arrow already discharged by this hunter strikes me, kindly instruct me on the means of final escape from this forest. Please do not tarry even for a moment.

Yajnavalkya, who was an embodiment of compassion, was greatly moved by these words of the king. Finding that the king was qualified fully for receiving the Supreme Knowledge, the Sage addressed him thus:

5. KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOAL—ESSENTIAL BEFORE GOING INTO THE MEANS OF ATTAINING IT

Yajnavalkya: O king, you are asking me about the means of attaining the goal, but before knowing clearly the goal which you want to reach, it is not possible to instruct you on the means. Persons who go to distant places first make sure of their destination. Then they select the most suitable route, and provide themselves with the necessary equipment for the journey. If it is land route, they employ chariots. In case they have to travel through water, they make use of boats. In a like manner, if you tell me your destination, I shall instruct you on the secret means of attaining it. Intelligence, dearness, truth, infinity, bliss and stability (Prajna, Priya, Satya, Ananta, Ananda, Sthiti) are the names of Brahman, and they serve as vehicles, like the chariot or the boat, to take you to the goal. If you become possessed of this equipment, you will become wise and will have the knowledge of the import of all the Vedas. Please, therefore, state where you want to go after the fall of this body. After knowing that destination, I shall instruct you on the means of reaching it. A man says, ‘this road leads to foreign lands; that road goes to Kosala state; the other one goes to the Anarta country, and this particular path takes one to the Trigarta states.” One who has no definite idea of the destination cannot become wiser in any way by hearing about these different roads to different places. Explaining the routes before knowing the destination is as good as not explaining them at all. O kind, my instructions to you should not go in vain. Therefore, tell me your destination first.

King: O Lord, I do not know the supreme goal either of myself or of others. An old and blind man who loses his way in a forest in a foreign land, suffers great agony due to hunger and thirst, loses all sense and memory power, and forgets the whereabouts of even his own village. He meets one who is kind and who knows the locality well, and through him comes to know his village and the way to reach it. O Brahman, my position is similar to that of
such a blind man, and I want to know from you both the goal and the means to reach it. I do not know from where I have come. I neither know anything about my past, nor present, nor future. I do not know who I am. I do not know where I have to go after death. I am experiencing pain and pleasure, but I am ignorant of their cause. I do not know how I got myself entangled in the meshes of the sense-objects. I now I have been experiencing misery from my childhood. But I am completely ignorant of the agent of suffering and the nature of misery. A fly caught in fire somehow escapes death and flies about with acute burning pain due to which it knows neither itself nor the cause of the pain, nor anything else. To it, misery itself appears as having assumed a solid physical form. I am in a similar condition. I am not aware of anything in this phenomenal world except misery. O Sage, how can one who is in such a deplorable condition have any idea of the final goal of life! Had I known the goal, I would have known the means also. When I asked you about the means, I meant both the means and the end. Who is it that leaves the body when it falls? How does he leave it? What results he attains thereafter? All these cannot be known through the sense-organs, and no one therefore knows anything about them. Therefore, I have approached you, the disciple of the great Sun-god, who are wise and who know everything relating to this world and the next.

Yajnavalkya: O king, I shall instruct you about the goal to be reached and the means therefore. Do not entertain the least fear. Let me first tell you why I asked you about the goal.

In this world people who put questions are of two kinds. Those who do not know put questions because of their ignorance. Those who know also ask questions to verify and make sure whether what they have known is correct. There is a further sub-division of these two classes of people. The ignorant may ask either because of doubt or of their incorrect knowledge. Those who know may question either to test others or to exhibit their own scholarship. The wise always instruct about the means only to those who are sure of their goal and not to others. O wise king, to those who are in doubt, preceptors who are kind and wise do instruct both the goal and the means. Therefore, O king, now leave off all fears and listen to my instructions.

The king, after praying to the Sage once again, seated himself conveniently. Yajnavalkya started his exposition on the Atman about which he had been instructed by the Sun-god, along with the means to attain It.

6. THE ATMAN IN THE WAKING, DREAM AND DEEP SLEEP STATES

Yajnavalkya: When the individual Soul experiences the gross sense-objects, it is in the waking state. This individual Soul becomes twofold in this state, viz., the subject and the object. The Atman with the limiting adjunct of Maya created this universe constituted of the five elements and cast its looks on it and thus illumined it. Therefore, it is known as Indha and also Indra. The whole universe shines due to Its light. He who illumines all the moveables and immovables is not illumined by the sun, moon and fire. The outer organs of sense and action, and the internal organ, viz., the mind, do not know Him. How can such a one be known through words! He who illumines everything cannot himself be non-effulgent. Therefore, the wise call Him the Self-Effulgent. The self-effulgent Atman of the nature of pure consciousness is the Indha referred to in the Vedas. The celestials call this
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Supreme God by the indirect name Indra, though His real name is Indha, meaning self-effulgent. People in whom the quality of Sattva—purity or goodness—predominates, do not generally address their parents, preceptors, masters and others deserving respect and honour by their direct names. So also women of noble families do not utter the direct names of their husbands. Such Sattvic people do not like others using the direct names of revered persons, who themselves also do not like to be referred to by their direct names. Whenever necessity arises to refer to the father, preceptor and others, some indirect name is alone used. Among the Sattvic, the presiding deities like fire, etc., are the foremost, and they refer to the Atman the direct name of which is Indha, by its indirect name of Indra.

In the waking state, this Supreme Person called Indra, with all the sense-organs under his control, resides in the right eye. Indra, the chief among the celestials in the heavens, residing in his mansion called Vaijayanta, enjoys various objects offered by the celestials. Even so, this Atman residing in the mansion of the right eye experiences the objects supplied by the presiding deities of the several organs in the body. In the heavens, Indrani, the wife of Indra, resides in another palace enjoying all pleasures like Indra. Similarly, the spouse of Indra, the Atman who is the Lord of the universe, resides in the left eye and manifests herself along with her husband as this differentiated universe during the waking state, and is therefore known as Viraj by the wise. The term Viraj also refers to a metre containing ten letters. In this sense also, this Indrani can be called Viraj, as she manifests herself in the external ten organs and enjoys, like the Atman, all the corresponding ten objects.

In all those possessing eyes, this Indra, with Indrani, resides in the organ of sight in the waking state as non-different from them, and yet due to delusion, He seems as though separate from them. O king, the state in which you, as the king, enjoy all kinds of gross sense objects, is called the waking state. It is you yourself assuming the bodies of men and women who have become the enjoyer and the enjoyed. You who are the Atman reside in each of the innumerable bodies as the experiencer and the experienced. In the forms of fire and moon, the enjoyer and the enjoyed, you administer this universe.

That which serves as a secluded mansion for Indra and Indrani to live together as husband and wife, is the ether within the heart known by the name of Isvara in the Vedas. Those who are well verse in the Vedas opine that this heart-ether itself is the seat of deep sleep. The reddish fleshy organ called heart, like the pericarp of a lotus flower, serves as food for Indra and Indrani. One should meditate on that subtle network of intertwining nerves resembling the lotus filaments surrounding the heart, as the wrap for this Indra and Indrani.

The royal road for this divine couple to travel is that subtle nerve called Sushumna, which, starting from the heart and going upto the crown of the head, leads to Brahmaloaka. Coming out of the body through this Sushumna and going through the northern path of fire, light, etc., one reaches the world of Brahma. Besides the Sushumna, there are several thousands of branch nerves, each one of which is as subtle as a hair split into a thousand parts. This Indra reaches the eyes within the body through these branch nerves. O king, when Indra with Indrani travelling through the Sushumna or any of the other nerves, reaches the heart, there comes the state of deep sleep. Without reaching the heart when they reside in the centre of the nerves, dream state intervenes. The Vedas say that in the deep sleep state, the
individual soul experiences the most subtle food. Truly speaking, in that state, It being devoid of agentship and enjoyership, cannot be said to experience any object, but since the individuality is still there in the most subtle form, they have been superimposed. In the dream state, being in the centre of the nerves containing the subtle essence of the food consumed in the waking state, the individual soul, in the form of intelligence, and called by the name of Taijasa, enjoys objects which are grosser when compared to those in the deep sleep state, but subtler when compared to those in the waking state. Thus in the waking state, the Atman manifesting itself as the deity residing in the right eye, enjoys gross objects. In the dream state, entering into the subtle nerves, he enjoys subtle objects created by the mind. In the deep sleep state, this Indra, with Indrani his spouse identifying himself with the ether in the heart, experiences bliss.

Though the truth is that the Atman, which is self-effulgent, and which manifests itself as pure bliss, does not really have any enjoyment, it is figuratively said that it experiences bliss in deep sleep as there is no experience of pain in that state. When it is said that the fleshy heart becomes the food for this deity in that state, it is also not to be taken in the literal sense, like one taking a meal in the waking state. The object of the Vedas in the presentation of this metaphor here is to make the mind, which has become too restless due to the attachment to the external sense objects, turn inward. How can the individual soul in deep sleep become an experiencer? In that state it has no objective knowledge at all. Just as the enjoyment of bliss is attributed to the Atman only figuratively, so this experiencership or agency also is to be understood only in a figurative sense. There is no particular knowledge in deep sleep. Due to delusion, one does not know even the existence of oneself. The Blissful Atman, which is really a non-enjoyer, is only imagined as enjoying bliss.

The Pranas for the Atman are the ten directions like east, west, etc., even as these directions are said to be the Pranas of Indra in the heavens, the ruler of the directions, on account of their being very dear to him like the Pranas. But there is one difference. The Atman is identical with the Pranas and the directions. It, being the cause of the whole universe, becomes identical with the cosmic directions and the individual Pranas, both of which are only Its manifestations. On the other hand, the relationship between the celestial Indra and the directions is only due to the former's individual egoism. Isvara, who is the cause of all causes, is the cause of the four classes of living creatures—those born of the womb, egg, sweat, and earth,—all the gross and subtle worlds make up of the five elements, the directions, time, etc. The cause or support for the clouds that appear in space, is the space which is different from the clouds. Even so, for this universe which appears in the Atman, the Atman residing in the ether of the heart and which is quite distinct from the universe, is the cause. This Atman, with the name of Indra, residing in the heart-ether and manifesting itself as the directions, Pranas, etc., is the Supreme Goal.

O king, it is about this Atman that I questioned you earlier. It manifests itself as yourself, myself and other creatures. As the one homogeneous space appears to be divided by the several objects, so this Atman which is non-dual seems to be divided by the bodies and other limiting adjuncts. You who are afraid of this terrible phenomenal existence should know this Atman. As the Atman is the nearest to the one who seeks It, knowing It is the royal path to attain It. There is no other means than the knowledge of the Atman to attain the Atman.
7. THE ATMAN IS BEYOND ALL PROOFS

Yajnavalkya, continuing the instructions, said:

O king, I have resorted to a figure of speech in my exposition, because the Atman is beyond the reach of the mind and speech and cannot therefore be explained directly in words, nor understood as you understand other matters. You should not understand It either as an agent or doer or enjoyer, but as free from all kinds of relationships which are only its limiting adjuncts. The Atman which is distinct from being and non-being, is neither being nor non-being. Hence, It cannot be known as you know an object. Space is neither the existence of clouds nor their non-existence. Even so, this Atman is neither this universe nor its negation. In the rope-snake analogy, when one comes to know the real rope, both the superimposed snake and its cause, viz., delusion, get merged themselves in the rope. So also with the dawn of the knowledge of the Atman, this universe, both in its manifested and unmanifested forms along with the ignorance which is its cause, dissolves itself in the Atman. O king, this Atman can be known neither by the external nor the internal organs, for it is not an object of cognition by them. Those objects of this world which are cognisable by the senses, the instruments of knowledge, alone can be subjected to the Pramanas or proofs of knowledge, like direct perception, inference, comparison, verbal testimony, presumption and non-apprehension. The Atman, being not perceptible to the senses, cannot be established by any of these proofs. Objects not perceivable through the senses are known only through the intellect. Otherwise, how can one know that a thing is not perceptible to the senses?

Proof of knowledge (Pramana) and not-proof (Apramana) depend on the subject or knower (Pramata). Similarly valid knowledge (Prama) with its object (Vishaya), like a jar for example, and the result (Phala), viz., the destruction of the veil of ignorance, as also incorrect knowledge (Aprama) with its corresponding object and result, depend upon the witnessing knower. When proof and not-proof attempt to illumine the witness, they meet with frustration. They, being objects to the witness who is the subject, cannot illumine the witness. Valid knowledge and incorrect knowledge, which are the results of proof and not-proof respectively, also become objects like proof and not-proof. The view of the logicians that the four pairs, viz., proof and not-proof, valid knowledge and incorrect knowledge, object of valid knowledge and that of incorrect knowledge, and the result of valid knowledge and the result of incorrect knowledge, are quite distinct from one another, seems to be a rash and hasty conclusion. The set of four, viz., proof, valid knowledge and incorrect knowledge, object of knowledge and result, and similarly the other set of four, viz., not-proof, incorrect knowledge, its object and result, being only objects in relation to the witness, it is irrelevant to go into the question of proof, etc., for those which are quite distinct from one another. If it is said that not-proof is established through proof, then the validity of proof becomes questionable. If proof which proves the not-proof is also to be considered as valid proof, the very distinction between proof and not-proof loses its ground. That which is proof in one case is not-proof in another. The eye which is proof for forms and colours becomes not-proof when sound is considered. Thus the very conception or proof and not-proof defeats itself. If not-proof is considered as the object of proof, then the validity of proof is destroyed as in the knowledge of the rope-snake, and not-proof also becomes valid proof.
In a similar manner, one should know that the above defects pointed out in regard to proof exist in valid knowledge and incorrect knowledge also. While proof, etc., only create differences, there is no difference in the result which illumines the object by destroying the veil of ignorance. When proof and other factors which produce differences in objects could not themselves be established, how can the differences in the objects produced by them be said to exist? The existence of an object is known by its valid knowledge. Otherwise, incorrect knowledge would also prove the existence of an object. Objects which exist through valid knowledge cannot be said to exist through incorrect knowledge. If it were so, then one should perceive the rope-snake when one is not under delusion.

Does proof become proof by itself or due to its nature of illumining the object. If it is the latter, the mutually dependent object and proof cannot be established, for if there should be two interdependent factors, the existence of a third one has necessarily to be presumed. In that case, besides the defect of mutual dependence, there would be the logical fallacies of absence of finality and arguing in a circle. In the former case, i.e., if proof is self proved, the question arises why that self-proved proof cannot apply to non-proof also. If it is argued that not-proof is established through another factor which nullifies the defects pointed out, then that another factor has to be accepted as proof. This proof also can become a not-proof by a similar another factor. This would lead us to a state where one has to conclude that there are no proofs at all anywhere. If the non-perception of the defects is said to be the proof, then the defects, such as absence of finality, etc., will again creep in. To avoid these series of defects, if not-proof is accepted, the existence of objects would have no proof. Therefore, in the view of those who do not accept the self-effulgent Atman, there can be no proof for the existence of objects. Then how can there be, in their case, a proof for the proof and knowledge? If all are considered as objects of valid knowledge, how can there be the four separate factors, viz., proof, valid knowledge, etc.? If existence of knowledge, proof and result are established through proof, all of them become objects and cannot therefore be said to be the four different factors of knowledge, which they are. In the absence of these four factors, their functions also would cease to exist. Therefore, we conclude that they are only imaginary like the city in the clouds. Things imagined have no real existence and sentience of their own. This is a well-known fact. Proof, knowledge, etc., which have no real existence, have been accepted by logicians and others merely due to their egoism.

Through defective perception, if an object different from what is really existent is seen, then the former cannot be said to be a real one. The manliness seen in a woman who has assumed the part of a man in a drama cannot have any reality. Defective or distorted cognition is called Buddhi or intellect. This intellect cannot cognise the reality behind the object. No one considers the rope-snake perceived by the intellect as a real snake. In the absence of the knowledge of the reality, we perceive many objects like the rope-snake. So, there seems to be no necessity of any proof for all empirical dealings.

Nothing becomes the object of proof for the Vedas. All other than the Atman are inert and unreal and therefore do not come within the purview of the Vedas. The Atman, being self-luminous, also does not need the proof of the Vedas for its existence. The Vedas, however, first superimpose on the Atman, creation, preservation and destruction of the universe in its gross and subtle forms, and then negate them. The aim of the Vedas is to destroy the veil over the Atman and create the Atmakara-Vritti, a continuous flow of the thought of the
Atman alone, to the exclusion of all other thoughts. This is what is meant by saying that the Atman is to be known through the Vedas. The existence of the self-effulgent Atman is established without resorting to any proof. Nowhere can any external proof establish the existence of the Atman.

All distinctions like proof, knowledge, etc., are dependent on the knower. The knowledge ‘I know’ cannot exist without the knower. If the opponent says that this knower shines as the object of the knowledge of ‘I’, we ask him, ‘does he shine by his own light or by another light?’ If it is the latter, the knowledge ‘I know him’ alone can arise and not ‘I know me’. One cannot be the Atman of another. If it is said, ‘I shine due to my own light’, then there would be the defect of ‘I’ becoming the object of ‘my knowledge’. Therefore, both the views stand refuted. The logicians may argue that the Atman which is inert, uniting with the mind and deriving the ability to know, knows the Atman. If this is accepted, an inert jar, for example, also uniting with the mind, must be able to know the Atman. According to their view, the Atman is inert and so there cannot be any difference between the Atman and a jar. If it is argued that a jar, being with form and limited, is different from the Atman which is without form and unlimited, then the opponent has to accept that there is no difference between the Atman and space which is without form and unlimited but inert. It may also be argued that the Atman becomes the knower, because of its connection with the body. This is also not acceptable, for the space, which is all-pervading like the Atman, has connection with the body and still does not become the knower. In this manner, if one were to consider the Atman as inert, contradictions would arise in its relationship with other objects such as ‘I’ and ‘mine’, ‘enjoyer’ and ‘enjoyed’ and the like. Suppose the opponent says that the consciousness in the Atman results from its contact with the mind and causes doership and enjoyership in it, then he would be forced to accept doership and enjoyership in objects like a pot, etc. The opponent now argues that that which is seen in one particular case should not be generalised and applied to other cases, and asks: ‘Why not the existence of doership and enjoyership be posited in the Atman, and their absence in other objects?’ This argument cannot hold water, for we would put him the question: ‘What is consciousness itself according to your view? Is it the Atman’s own form (Svarupa) or is it the Atman’s nature (Dharma)?’ The former view comes under our school of Advaita Philosophy and therefore he cannot resort to it. In the latter case, though according to his view, the nature (Dharma), which is different from its substratum (Dharmi), has consciousness, it cannot illumine the substratum. A father cannot become erudite with the learning possessed by his son. The opponent must first prove the nature of his philosophy which he wants to establish and through which he wants to win a victory over others. Supposing his school of thought is accepted, let us see what happens. When there is no Atman, what is the substratum of his philosophical system, and how can that system itself exist? If it is presumed that the Atman is self-luminous or shines by outside light, in both cases his system does not serve any purpose. If the Atman were to be considered inert and different from the system, there are again the above-mentioned defects. If the Atman is considered sentient, then no light different from the Atman is necessary.

If he says that his system is the proof for the consciousness of the Atman, we tell him that his system itself has already been proved to be non-existent, and therefore how can he establish his view through a non-existent system? If he were to say that his system, having become the proof, also becomes the means of knowledge, then that which is the cause of
knowledge, like a light, has to be accepted as proof. In that case, to know the knowledge resulting from that proof, another proof has to be posited. This will go on ad infinitum, and there will be the defect of absence of finality again. Suppose he says that the system itself becomes the ‘proof’ and the ‘proved’. He has then to answer how it can happen. Let us consider whether it is luminous or inert. If it is inert, it is as good as a jar and cannot therefore have the status of proof. If it is luminous, the question arises whether the luminosity is caused by itself or by outside agency. In the latter case, the defect of absence of finality will again come in. In the former case, one and the same entity cannot be the ‘subject’ and ‘object’ according to him, and also other schools of thought. When it is taken as luminous, let us enquire into the nature of the luminosity. Is it self-luminous like a fire-fly which shines but does not illumine others, or is it like the sun illuminating all? In the former case, it cannot illumine other objects. In the latter alternative, when knowledge of one object arises, the knowledge of all objects should arise simultaneously. Thus, when the validity of proof itself is not established, it is clear that the Atman cannot be proved through that unestablished proof.

O king, please listen. The Atman cannot be an object of knowledge to the sense-organs. One becomes conscious of an object when there is contact between the object and the sense-organs, and not of its own accord. How does one become conscious of the fact that this Atman is both the doer and the enjoyer. By mere contact with the eyes, such a knowledge cannot arise. If one says it does, then we have to accept that it arises inside the body. In that case, Consciousness has to be localised inside the body, which would come to acceptance by force of the materialist philosophy of Brihaspati (the preceptor of the celestials), according to which the body is the Atman. Thus the direct perception arising from the sense-organs has no real stand, and all other proofs like inference, etc., which depend on the former, also fall flat.

8. THE ATMAN IS UNATTACHED AND ETERNAL

‘Although other proofs to establish doership, enjoyership, etc., in the Atman do not serve their purpose, the Vedas say that this Atman becomes the seer, the hearer, etc., and hence we have to accept it.’ If one were to say so, he is again wrong, for the same Vedas which have been taken as proof have said in other places that the Atman is not the seer, hearer, etc., and have thus refuted the doership and enjoyership of the Atman. Therefore, proofs like direct perception, inference, etc., cannot be applied in the case of the Atman. It is because of this reason that the Vedas, like a compassionate mother, wishing the welfare of all, have pointed out that It is unknowable. The Vedas also state that the Atman, manifesting itself as all this universe, does neither decrease nor decay but remains unchanged. In this world, decay and destruction are found in objects like a pot, a cloth, etc., which are limited, with parts and with form. How can the unlimited Atman decay when It has no form and no parts! Two objects remaining in contact suffer in course of time due to the contact. Cold water remaining in contact with fire becomes hot. Unattached objects are not affected in a like manner. The pure space is not contaminated by contact with the clouds. Logicians say that only finite objects with form will have contact. How can the infinite and formless Atman have any contact or attachment!

Contact is of two kinds: (1) Pratyasatti, and (2) Samyoga and the like. By the first one, an object which remains in contact with another object for some time retains the form of the
latter, as water in contact with fire retaining heat. In the second case also, it is more or less the same. There is not much difference between the two. These two kinds of contacts with their effects cannot adhere in the Atman as it is beyond the three kinds of differences, viz., intrinsic difference, difference within the same species and that among different species. Objects with attachment get themselves bound by that attachment. An effect is destroyed by its separation from its cause. The destruction may be gradual and slow sometimes, and at other times it may happen all of a sudden. According to the logicians, there may be several causes for producing an effect. In the Sankhya philosophy, it is said that effects are produced due to transformation. Under both the schools, an effect gets destroyed due to either separation from, or destruction of its cause.

The Atman, being without attachment, does not get itself bound by anything. For the same reason, It is not destroyed on any account. It has no distinct qualities. It does not become an object for the mind and speech. O king, to you, a seeker after Truth, the supreme goal to be reached is this Atman. If you realise this Atman, you become the Universal Being. O foremost among kings, do not be afraid of the trident of this phenomenal existence and the cycle of births and deaths. You have known the Lord who is the Atman of all beings, as your own Atman. Attainment of the Atman through knowledge is not like going from one place and reaching another. The knowledge of the identity of one’s own Atman with the Atman in all, obtained through meditation on the meaning of the Mahavakyas,—the great sentences of the Upanishads—, is figuratively called attainment of the Atman.

O king, fear in all beings is caused by the perception of the existence of a second entity besides oneself. The knowledge of the existence of a real second entity cannot co-exist by any means with the knowledge of the Atman, for knowledge of the Atman cannot be attained as long as there is the consciousness of a real second entity separate from the Self. No creature can have in the Atman an unfavourable or adverse knowledge which is the cause of fear. In the absence of such knowledge, how can fear arise? Therefore, O king, you yourself who are free from all kinds of distractions, become Brahman in the form of Knowledge, Bliss and Fearlessness. Yourself, myself and all creatures, nay, the whole universe consisting of the gross and subtle worlds, are verily that Brahman, and nothing else. The city of clouds that appears in the sky is nothing other than the sky. Even so, this universe seen in the Atman, is not different from the Atman. Just as the appearance of the city of clouds is due to illusion, the universe also appears to exist in the Atman due to ignorance. The city of clouds is really non-existent in the past, present and future. Even so, this universe, which seems to exist in the Atman, is in fact non-existent in all the three periods of time. O king, due to delusion, men perceive the city of clouds as gross, subtle, sentient and non-sentient. Similarly, men of deluded intellect see in the Atman this universe with the distinction of Atman and not-Atman. A dreaming man, though alone, himself becomes many in dream. Even so, the Atman, although non-dual without a second,

23 These sentences are generally said to be four in number. They are ‘Prajnanam Brahma’ in the Aitareya Up. of the Rig-Veda; ‘Aham Brahmasmi’ in the Brihadaranyaka Up. of the Yajur Veda ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ in the Chhandogya Up. of the Sama Veda, and ‘Ayam Atma Brahma’ in the Mandukya Up. of the Atharva Veda. There are other similar sentences also.
becomes this universe of space, time, etc. Just as a man who wakes up from dream does not see the dream world, one who attains the knowledge of the Atman and thus really wakes up to the Turiya state, does not perceive this phenomenal world as such.

9. THE KING OFFERS HIMSELF AND HIS COUNTRY AS GIFT TO THE SAGE.

When the king heard these instructions from the wise Yajnavalkya, the thought of giving the Sage a reward arose in his mind as on previous occasions, but this time he could not pitch upon a suitable one. He considered that even if he were to give himself, along with his wife, children, the whole State of Videha and his army, it would not be a fitting requital to the Sage for the Knowledge of Brahman which he has received from him. The knowers of the Vedas have stated that even if one were to give this whole earth, with all its wealth, to one’s preceptor who imparts the Knowledge of Brahman, it would not be too much, for this Knowledge is difficult of attainment by the practice of Brahmacharya and other spiritual disciplines even in several crores of births. In all the three worlds, there is no gain greater than the Knowledge of the Atman. To a preceptor who has gifted the Knowledge, any kind of material wealth in this world would only be too trivial, as everything material comes under the realm of not-Atman which can never be equated with the Atman. Even the three worlds obtained through a victory over Indra and the celestials would only be a too insignificant reward to the preceptor of the Knowledge of Brahman. Thinking in this manner, the King said to Yajnavalkya:

King: O revered Sage, the Sun-god who is your preceptor, and the very life of all creatures in this world, destroys darkness and bestows the power of sight to the eyes. To such an incomparable benefactor, what we give as a gift is only a small lighted lamp, hoping that it would be a suitable return for his services, because we know that nothing in this world would be a fit present for all the benefit he is bestowing on us; and the most effulgent Sun-god, on his part, is quite pleased with this gift. You are the disciple of that Sun-god, and therefore you are equal to him. To you, my revered preceptor, who are above all desires and who have imparted the Knowledge of Brahman to me, I do not find anything in this world sufficiently precious and valuable to present you with in return. You have instructed me that by negating the universe in its three forms, viz., gross, subtle and causal, there remains only that non-dual Brahman. May that Brahman reside in you always! The Lord manifesting himself as Time has created the noose of passions like desire, anger, etc., with the strings of ignorance to catch all beings like birds. You have extricated me from that noose. To such a compassionate one as your revered self, what can I give in return! Myself, with my whole country that goes by the name of Videha, all the subjects in it who are under my rule, my capital city of Mithila, as also my wife and children, O sage, become your most obedient servants. You are verily Brahman itself and have assumed the form of my preceptor. I cannot even say I have gifted my whole country, for the scriptures declare that the preceptor who has imparted to his disciple the Knowledge of Brahman is equal to his father, and the father is the real owner of his son’s possessions. The son has no right on the

24 This has reference evidently to the custom prevalent in the worship of Sun-god, to present a metal ghee lamp lighted to a pious person personified as the Sun-god.
father’s wealth during the latter’s lifetime. Hence, I do not see anything here as my own which I can make a gift of. Everything is yours, O Brahman! I cannot take even my meal without your permission. When such is my condition, how can I say that I am making a gift of this country, its wealth, etc.! I prostrate myself at the holy feet of my preceptor, the disciple of the Sun-god, the foremost among the sages, a knower of Brahman, the Supreme Atman itself which as assumed the name and form of Yajnavalkya.

Yajnavalkya, the lord among the saints, was much pleased at these most appropriate remarks of the king. He accepted his obeisance and homage and said:

Yajnavalkya: O great king, all these countries, your own person and everything else that you have offered to me are certainly mine. But you have yet to give me another gift. You are attached to the meditation and worship of Vaisvanara and also engaged in the administration of the State. Therefore, as time passes, there is the chance of your forgetting what I have taught you. Please be careful, and see that it does not happen. This would be a fitting present to me. I do not want any other present from you. Let the whole country, which has become mine, remain with you yourself, and you may continue to rule over it, as my servant. I am now leaving and shall be coming again shortly.

10. YAJNAVALKYA GRANTS THE BOON OF KAMA-PRASNA

Yajnavalkya returned home, although the king and his men entreated him not to leave them so soon. After his departure, Janaka resumed his routine works. Being a conscientious king, most of his time had to be engaged in the administration of the country. What little time remained, he utilised in meditation and worship of Vaisvanara, who was his favourite (Ishta) deity. Days passed and, as foreseen by Yajnavalkya, the king forgot all about the knowledge of the Atman received from the Sage. The Sage came to know of this condition of the king through several persons and by his Yogic powers, and therefore decided to go to Mithila. Before starting, he resolved in his mind that this time he would not talk on any subject other than Brahma Vidya, about which he has instructed the king once. He went to Mithila and met the king who was then holding a discussion with the learned men of his court. In the course of the discussion, some of those present there raised the subject of Vaisvanara worship. As the king was an adept on that subject, he told them that he knew completely the meditation and worship of that deity to whom offering of oblations is done both morning and evening, and which yields the primary result of Brahma-Loka in addition to several secondary results. He challenged those present in the gathering to put him any question on this subject. He himself put several questions to be answered by those who knew this meditation.

None in that assembly was either able to answer the king’s questions or question the king. When everyone kept silent, Yajnavalkya, revoking his earlier resolve not to speak on such subject, entered into a discussion with the king on the meditation and worship of Vaisvanara. He now questioned on several details of the worship and the king furnished full answers to all of them. The Sage was very much pleased with the king’s complete grasp of subject and offered him a boon. Hearing this offer of the Sage, the king thought within himself:

“This great Sage instructed me before on the Knowledge of the Atman. Due to the feeble nature of my mind and my defective intellect, I have now forgotten it. I have thus
committed a great offence against the Sage, which cannot be easily mitigated. Fortunately, an opportunity has now arisen to save me. I am in possession of all wealth and proficient in several meditations. The Knowledge of the Atman, which I once learnt from the Sage, but now forgotten, can be learnt once again through a number of questions.”

The intelligent king then asked for the boon of Kama-Prasna which would give him the freedom to ask any number of questions as he liked, without any restriction whatsoever. The Sage, who had already decided to grant the boon, gave his assent. This second visit of Yajnavalkya to the king was with the only purpose of instructing the latter once again on the Knowledge of the Atman, and there was no other thought in the Sage’s mind. The king was very much satisfied at the granting of the boon. The king had the fear that if his questions were to become irrelevant or out-of-place, they might ignite the fire of anger in the Sage, although the Sage was by himself most compassionate and tender-hearted, and that he (the king) might have to meet with Sakalya’s fate. Now that he had got the boon, all such fears vanished, and he started his questions with a feeling of complete freedom.

11. THE WAKING AND DREAM STATES

King: O Sage, what serves as light for a man in his waking state, during daytime, to illumine the various objects?

Yajnavalkya, considering the implications contained in the question, gave the following reply:

Yajnavalkya: The sun serves as the light.

King: When the sun, which is the life of the universe sets, what serves as the light?

Yajnavalkya: The moon serves as the light.

King: When the moon also sets, what is the light?

Yajnavalkya: The fire.

King: When the fire also is extinguished, what serves as the light?

Yajnavalkya: It is the speech.

He further explained how, among the four illuminants, viz., the sun, moon, fire and speech, in the absence of each of the preceding ones, each of the succeeding ones becomes the course of light. With the light of any one of the first three, people in this world find out convenient places of habitation free from pests like serpents, live there happily move about in the houses and agricultural places with a feeling of safety, perform Karmas which are useful in this world and the next, and in the evenings return home from the fields and other places. In pitch darkness, one cannot see even one’s own hands. At such times, transactions are done with the help of speech. Only after hearing from another that a particular place is habitable, one occupies it. Similarly, before starting a journey on a dark night when there is neither sun nor the moon nor fire, one makes sure, through another’s words, that the places and the roads are free from danger. Therefore, Yajnavalkya included speech as the fourth source of light in the absence of the other three. In the scriptures also, speech has been included among the lights like the sun, fire, etc. Thus, Yajnavalkya explained how the sun and the other three are the sources of light in the waking state, and the king nodded.
acceptance. After questioning about the source of light in the waking state, the king questioned about the source of light in the dream state.

King: O god among the Sages, in the dream state, when speech also dissolves, what is the light available for the dreaming person?

Yajnavalkya: O king, when a man is awake, he seeks with his eyes; but in dream, the eyes are not there. So is the case with the other organs of sense and action. The mind is inert, being a product of ignorance. Just as in the waking state the eyes require the help of the light of the sun or moon, etc., to see the objects, so in the dream state the mind requires the light of the Atman which is within the body but different from it, to create and illumine the objects of the dream world. As in the case of pots, jars, etc., made of clay, the clay alone is real, and the names and forms are unreal, being only a modification of speech, so in the case of the dream objects, the Atman, which is pure consciousness, alone shines due to its own light, and also illumines the mind which assumes the forms of the objects and their concepts. In fact, the Atman is the source of light in the waking state also, but people, due to ignorance, generally say that the sun, moon, etc., are the illuminants. These illuminants get their light only from the Atman which is self-effulgent. When all external sources of light are absent in dream, a light extraneous to the body and organs serves the purpose of light. This is the Atman referred to by me as ‘Indha’ on a previous occasion. He is called ‘Indha’ here in the dreaming state because He shines as the witness of the inert mind. The Atman remains self-effulgent in the dream state. As in the waking state, one moves about in the dream state, does Karmas relating to this world and the next, goes to the fields and returns. The self-luminous Atman illumines the several modifications of the mind in the dream state. Like Isvara, the Creator, It creates in dream the sun, moon, fire and speech. Besides these which illumine other objects, It creates those objects which are illumined, like chariots, horses, etc. It also creates the organs such as eyes, ears and the like, the great elements such as ether, air, etc., as also time, space, directions and countries. Not only these, It creates movables and immovables, beings in the higher and the lower species, oceans, rivers, islands, mountains like the Meru25, Adisesha26 with the seven expansive nether worlds, the seven worlds above with their ruler Brahma, the great rulers of the eight directions, viz., Indra, Fire, Death, Nirirti, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Siva, Vishnu and other divinities. In short, the whole universe in its gross and subtle forms, perceptible directly or indirectly, is created in the dream state by the Atman which remains alone devoid of the organs and their objects.

Some doubt the veracity of the Vedic assertion: ‘I am Brahman’. Such people would do well to observe and reflect deeply over the nature of the dream state, when all their doubts would be cleared, and complete faith will dawn in them. In dream, even insignificant creatures, through ignorance, do the work of creation of the dream world of variety, like Brahma, the creator of this universe. The world thus created is also preserve and dissolved

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25 The mountain round which all the planets are supposed to revolve, according to the Puranas.
26 The celebrated serpent with one thousands hoods and represented as forming the couch of Vishnu or as supporting the entire universe on its head.
in the Atman itself. As from a blazing fire myriads of sparks shoot out, so from this non-dual Atman come out several creatures during the state of dream. Isvara, the ultimate cause of everything, holds the worlds in his womb. The whole universe remains merged without the distinction of name and form in the unmanifested Isvara. He first creates Hiranyagarbha, the Cosmic Mind, and names and forms manifest themselves. One who is dreaming ahs the mind as his instrument. The Atman creates the whole dream world through this mind which is illuminated by It. The cause for the difference perceived between the Atman and Brahman is the group of gross, subtle and causal bodies. The apparent ahs the mind as his instrument. The Atman creates the whole dream world through this mind which is illuminated by It. The cause for the difference perceived between the Atman and Brahman is the group of gross, subtle and causal bodies. The apparent differentiation in space is caused by objects like a pot, a house, etc. Space is present inside the objects as well as outside them, and no differentiation is actually created in it by the presence of the objects. Differentiation exists only in the objects. Even so, there is no differentiation in the Svarupa of Brahman. All differentiations are only in the gross and subtle bodies. The position of the subtle body of the creatures, which is said to be the mind alone, is like that of Hiranyagarbha in relation to Isvara. As Isvara weaves the cloth of this universe with the threads of Hiranyagarbha, so the dreaming Purusha waves the cloth of the dream world with the threads of the mind. As sparks come out of the burning fire, individual minds come out of the Cosmic Mind. Hiranyagarbha is also called Sutratman. The sparks also illumine and burn like their source, the fire. Even so, the individual minds create, preserve and destroy the dream worlds, like the Cosmic Mind which creates, preserves and destroys this universe in the waking state. As the sparks resemble fire, so the individual minds resemble the Cosmic Mind. Fire in its universal unmanifested form is not different, in a big conflagration, from that in the sparks coming out of it. The apparent difference seen in its manifested state is due to the difference in the fuel. Even so, there is no difference between the Cosmic Mind and the individual minds in their own natures. The difference perceived is due to the limiting adjunct of Virat in the Cosmic Mind and the gross bodies in the individual minds. As the Cosmic Mind forms the wall on which the picture of this universe is painted, the individual mind of each being forms the wall for the painting of the phenomena which it perceives. Isvara, with the limiting adjunct of the unmanifest, cannot be illumined by Maya and its effects, but he illumines the Sutratman and the Virat constituted of the five great elements. Similarly, ignorance and the internal organs are incapable of illuminating the Witness of the Jiva with the limiting adjunct of the individual intellect, but the Witness illumines the individual gross and subtle bodies. As in the absence of the fuel, fire merges itself in its unmanifested aspect, the minds of those who meditate and worship Hiranyagarbha till the results thereof fructify, leave off their individual limited nature, attain the form of the Deity, and merge themselves in Him. When the fire is covered by ashes, it loses its power to illumine and heat other objects, and when the ashes are removed, it regains its power as before. Even so, when the mind with its subtle impressions merges itself in deep sleep and death, it loses its power of creation, preservation and destruction, but resumes this power during the dream and waking states when the impressions sprout again. In case the fuel is burnt out, turned into ashes and completely destroyed, the fire cannot be rekindled by fanning or other similar processes. Even so, when the ignorance in a person is completely destroyed by the Knowledge of Brahman, that liberated one does not take another birth like other ignorant men. As in a summer night, though fire devoid of any fuel does not illumine but is seen to emit heat, so the Atman in the dream state devoid of all organs, creates, by itself, the subtle dream world which is in the form of existence and non-existence. In winter, fire depending on fuel is able to remove
cold and warm up those who sit near it. Even so, the Atman in the waking state, resorting to
the gross body, creates this gross world with the help of space and time.

Just as the mind in the dream state becomes the dream world which is existent as well as
non-existent, the same mind in the waking state becomes this gross phenomenal universe.
There is no doubt about it. In dream, if the mind does not transform itself into the several
dream objects, no dream world would be seen. The same is the case in the waking state, for
when the mind is inhibited, there is no experience of the universe. All embodied beings
experience love and hatred, friendship and enmity and similar other pairs of opposites in
dream merely due to their imagination. In the waking state also, in the absence of gross
sense objects, such mental modifications are created by mere imagination. This sense
world is perceived as the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain both in the waking
and dream states. The objects of the dream world are unable to cause pleasure or pain in
the waking state, and vice versa, those in the waking state cannot create either happiness
or misery in the dream state. That the appearance of the world is the cause of pleasure and
pain is common to both the waking and dream states. That the conditions of one state are
completely changed in the other state is also applicable to both the states. The same object
which is supposed to give pleasure at one time becomes the source of pain at another time
in the waking state. In dream also, such experiences are not uncommon. The combination
of the sperm and ovum is the cause of the physical body in the waking state, and it is the
same in the dream state also. If it is said that the dream cause is unreal, the waking cause
also can be said to be unreal in view of the Upanishadic declaration; “Dear boy, through a
single clod of clay, all that is made of clay would be known, for all modification is but name
based upon words and is therefore unreal, and the clay alone is real.” The relationship with
one’s parents, sons and brothers seen in the dream state is exactly similar to that in the
waking state. Therefore, there is no reason to think that there is any difference between the
two states.

The Sage, continuing his instructions, said:

O king, verily the mind is therefore the cause of this universe of being and non-being
(Sadasat), both in the dreaming and waking states. It is the very same mind which creates
differentiation between the Jiva and Isvara, by which all are deluded. The mind alone is
therefore the cause of bondage and liberation in man. It acts as the cause of bondage when
it veils the Atman, as it were, due to which the variegated universe is projected resulting in
the three kinds of pain, viz., Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhidaivika. When it realises
the self-effulgent and blissful Atman, it becomes the cause of liberation. There is experience
of neither any differentiation, nor the pains of bondage, nor the bliss of liberation in the
non-dual Atman, which is always in the form of bliss, and which is the witness of all the
psychoses. All the differentiations created by the mind reside in the mid alone. As a monkey
which runs and jumps hither and thither eventually brings about its own destruction, the
ever-vacillating mind brings about transmigration to itself. The fish which lives in deep
waters without any fear, lured by the bait becomes a prey to the angler, bringing to itself
misery and death. Even so, the mind which resides by itself fearlessly in the ocean of bliss
of the Atman, comes out attracted by the sense-objects and becomes a prey to endless fear.
Just as a restless monkey tied to a post by a number of ropes suffers pain by running here
and there, the mind tied by the ten organs of knowledge and action always runs to the
sense-objects and suffers intense pain in this world of never-ending transmigration. As a pigeon flying high in the sky, at the sight of its mate on the earth below sweeps down in a moment, the mind residing in the Atman comes out and enters the phenomenal world the moment it perceives the phantasm of sense-objects. As a cow tethered to a post moves from one marshy place to another equally marshy, the mind, bound by the rope of Karmas, loses its freedom and always enters the world of sense-objects full of pain and misery. The god of death always roams about on this earth in the form of change and destruction without any perceptible cause. So also the mind, for no reason, runs after external sense-objects. A charioteer with unruly horses is dragged down into wayside ditches and meets with destruction of himself along with the chariot and the horses. Even so, man, in the chariot of this body, with the turbulent senses as the horses, identified himself with the mind and senses and gets himself entangled in the cycles of births and deaths. A boy makes his face dirty and see the dirt as though it is on the clear mirror in front of him. In the same manner, the mind which is itself the cause for all its ramifications, perceives them as though they are in the pure self-effulgent Atman. As things of sour taste, by their mere presence near a man, make his mouth secrete saliva and stimulate the mind, so the self-luminous ever-blissful Atman causes agitation in the mind by its mere presence. As the Atman creates innumerable different minds in the dream state, so the mind, which is the cause of the dream, also does the work of creation.

When the world is devoid of all seeds, the earth itself becomes the cause of the seeds. So also the Atman, which is mindless, becomes the cause of the mind when it is devoid of its own knowledge. Just as a clear sky which is distinct from the clouds is the cause of the appearance and disappearance of the clouds, the great Isvara, who is distinct from the phenomenal world consisting of the mind and its effects, becomes the cause of the universe due to the limiting adjunct of Maya. A king due to some reason forgets his status as the king and becomes a beggar, and a beggar by some accident becomes a king. Similarly, the Atman which is non-dual, blissful Brahman, due to the ignorance of its own nature becomes the universe of being and non-being. In dream, the Atman, which is really free from birth and death, appears to experience both. The same is the case in the waking state also where the Atman appears to undergo birth and death. As in the waking condition, objects like a pot, cloth, etc., that are seen do not illumine the seer, so in dream the mind, which has assumed the forms of all the objects seen there, does not illumine the Atman which is the Seer. When the Vedas say that the mind is light, it is not in the sense that it can illumine the Atman, but that it illumines all objects other than the Atman. As the eyes help one to see objects, the mind helps to get the knowledge of the universe with form and without form, and hence it is called light in some contexts. It is through the organs of knowledge that all gross and subtle objects are known, and those which cannot be perceived by the organs are cognised by the mind. The Atman illumines the mind and all its modifications. When the Atman illumines even the ignorance which resides in It, which is said to be the cause of the mind, and which is devoid of name and form, it goes without saying that It illumines the mind which is the effect of ignorance. The stars, gems and other similar objects in the form of Sat-Asat (existence cum non-existence) which are inert like the organs and the mind, have to be illumined like a pot by another light. It is the consciousness of the Atman that illumines all of them.
Excepting the materialistic school of Charvakas, the disciples of Brihaspati,—the preceptor of the celestials—all other philosophical schools agree that the organs and their objects which act as the instruments and cause of perception, and which are distinct from Consciousness, are insentient. What is the nature of Consciousness (Bodha)? If consciousness of objects like a pot self-luminous, how can there be difference in the consciousness of one object and that of another? If difference exists in the self-luminous consciousness, is that difference cognised or not? If cognised, does that cognition related only to mere existence of a difference, or does it relate to particulars like ‘this is the difference between the consciousness of this object and that of another’? If mere existence alone is cognised, the consciousness of that cognition cannot have any relation with that cognition, and such a cognition could not be of the right type. If one cognises that space is different from space, that cognition alone cannot create any difference in space. On the other hand, if the cognition is that of difference with particulars, then consciousness would lose its self-luminous character. In case it is argued that the difference in consciousness is cognised by me, it would be similar to the cognition of differences between two or more gross objects like a pot, cloth, etc., and consciousness would then become illumined by an external light. This would, again, adversely affect the self-luminous nature of consciousness, for difference can never exist in the self-luminous consciousness. Suppose that difference exists uncognised. Then the difference is not established. If one were to aver the existence of objects which are not known, how can there be non-existence of man’s horn! In case one asserts that there is cognition of difference in the cognised, and at the same time it is self-luminous, his assertion cannot be accepted, for objects with such contrary characteristics are not found in this world. If sun and moon are considered self-luminous, the relationship of illuminator and illumined (Graha-Grahaka bhava) between them cannot exist. There is no necessity to illumine an object which is self-luminous. If it is presumed that consciousness if self-luminous, yet with difference, and illuminating one another, i.e., consciousness of one object illumining that of another, its self-luminosity cannot be established. If that has to be established, then the difference which causes the relationship of illuminator and illumined has also to be accepted, as in the case of a pot and other objects,—in which case, consciousness would come under objects illumined by an external agency. Besides, the very idea that self-luminosity is illumined by self-luminous cognition itself is illogical on the very face of it. Similar objects do not have the relationship of illuminator and illumined, as in the case of a fire-fly and a lamp.

When Consciousness is accepted as free from differentiation, it would assume the form of happiness. Pain is not experienced by men during deep sleep as there is no differentiation in that state. If Consciousness were not self-luminous, there could not have been the experience of happiness in deep sleep. But actually, every one experiences happiness in that state. Therefore, Consciousness is self-luminous.

Absence of pain also is without differentiation. How can Consciousness, which is without differentiation, illumine absence of pain with differentiation! In this world, non-existence is not considered as different from existence. The learned consider the existence of a pot, as the non-existence of all objects other than the pot. If this is the case, the opponents of the Advaita Philosophy may doubt whether the whole universe would not come under non-existence. Let it be so; the Advaitins have no objection, for they do not lose anything by it.
Non-existence of an object does not exist as a second object distinct from the nature of the object itself. If the non-existence of other objects inherent in a particular object is different from the nature of that object, there would arise the contingency of accepting the non-existence of everything. This is no defect, in this context, for what the opponent calls the negation of all objects is, in the view of the Advaitin, the non-dual Brahmin itself. Those who are versed in the scriptures hold the view that only that which is identified with the term Asti (existence) is to be considered as an object. That which is the object of the meaning of the word ‘existence’ can alone be an object. Even the content of the meaning of a word, say ‘tree’, does not come under non-existence. Then, how can the word ‘Asti’ become non-existence! If the word ‘non-existence’ ahs been used anywhere in respect of space, it refers only to its subtlety, and not its complete non-existence. How can space become completely non-existence when there is a cause for it which identifies itself with space? Therefore, non-existence means negation of other objects and not absence of existence. In the Advaitic view, the non-existence of the snake superimposed on a garland, is in the garland. Even so, the non-existence of the insentient universe superimposed on the Atman is of the very nature of the Atman itself. Therefore, one has to come to the conclusion that the non-existence of pain is the blissful Atman alone. The self-effulgent, blissful Consciousness is undifferentiated, and is stated to be the Atman itself, as both are identical.

When Consciousness is thus homogeneous and undifferentiated, how can there be difference among the objects known by it? Consciousness alone is the cause for the appearance of illusory objects like a pot, jar, etc., that are cognised in the state of ignorance. In the absence of differentiation in the cause, there cannot be any differentiation in the effects also. No one who is conversant in the scriptures has accepted difference in Consciousness which has assumed the form of a pot, jar, etc. The difference in objects is caused by the difference in Consciousness due to Viseshana-Visheshya-Bhava, i.e., the relation between the imports of two words qualifying each other, e.g., ‘ten-pots’, ‘white pot’, ‘Chitra goes’, ‘one who holds the stick is a man’, ‘this fair man is the son of my friend’. When difference in the Consciousness is caused by the relationship as in the above cases, there comes the difference in the objects also. On the other hand, when Consciousness is non-different, no difference is caused in the objects. The reason for difference in the objects, according to the difference in the consciousness, is that in a sentence with ‘qualified’ and ‘qualified’, the intellect does not grasp the ‘qualified’ without knowing the ‘qualified’. It should, therefore, be known that the difference in the objects is the result of the difference in the consciousness of quality. The view of the Advaitins is that after cognising the three, viz., qualified, qualified and their relation, through three mental Vrittis, the three cognitions become one consciousness. The three different cognitions are three modifications of the mind, and the single consciousness is the resultant consciousness in those Vrittis. According to this view, there is no objection in accepting both difference and non-difference in consciousness. In this manner, due to the difference in the consciousness with the limiting adjunct of psychosis alone, difference is perceived in the objects. In fact, difference is created in consciousness only by the limiting adjunct of psychosis and consciousness by itself is free from differentiation. Even this difference due to the limiting adjuncts is annihilated by knowledge. Therefore, this difference cannot be said to be inherent in the objects. If, due to the difference in the objects, the consciousness which
cognises them is also different and not self-luminous, then one has to accept the existence
of a homogeneous Atman which is self-luminous and the witness of all the different
consciousness.

It is based on this conclusion, that sage Yajnavalkya said that that which is effulgent in the
dream state is the Atman itself which deserves to be called Effulgence because It illumines
even the sun who illumines the whole world. When the light of sun, moon, fire and speech
is extinguished, the effulgence of the Atman still shines.

Hearing the above instructions, Janaka questioned the sage:

Janaka: O Brahman, among the body, organs, etc., which do you call the Atman?

Yajnavalkya: He who is the content of the word Atman and of the consciousness conveyed
by that word, and yet distinct from the word and its consciousness, is the well-known
Atman in all creatures who is also called the Purusha (Supreme Person). The body, organs,
etc., which are insentient like a pot, cannot be the Atman. O king, you need not go far to
know this Atman. When you are hearing these answers of mine to your questions, he who
is residing with you, as though a witness, is the very same Atman who is the witness of all
mental modifications in all creatures. Like fire pervading without any distinction different
pieces of iron, this Atman resides without any distinction in the different modifications of
the mind. As the fire pervading a metal piece is seen to assume the shape of the metal, so
also the Atman residing in the intellect assumes the form of the intellect, and is then known
by the name of the Intellectual Self. The objective knowledge in the form of mental Vrittis,
is by itself insentient. By the mere presence of the Atman, the knowledge assumes
consciousness. Pieces of metal, which are by themselves devoid of light and heat, identified
with fire become luminous and hot. Even so, the mental Vrittis identified with the Atman
illumine the objects. These Vrittis have difference such as proof, not-proof and the like, and
cause apparent differentiation in the pure homogeneous Consciousness. The mental
modifications illumine the whole gross and subtle universe through the light of the Atman.
Just as fire identified with metal illumines and heats other objects, this Atman identified
with the internal mental modifications becomes the Intellectual Self, the substratum for all
objective consciousness. Becoming one with the Pranks and the organs of knowledge and
action. It becomes the cause of their activities. People versed in the Vedas therefore say
that It resides in the Pranks. The all-pervading space is said to reside in pots and other
objects, and the wind which moves the trees is said to reside in the trees. Even so, this
Atman which is the Supreme Purusha, is said to reside in the Pranks. Though the Atman is
omnipresent, It is said to reside particularly in the heart, for all creatures experience the
presence of consciousness in their hearts. Although the experience of pleasure and pain is
throughout the body from head to foot, they are known from the consciousness arising
from the heart. The sun’s rays are all-pervasive, but they shine differently on a pot, a
diamond and a sun-stone. Though the light of the sun is reflected by the pot, its reflection is
not perceptible. Similarly, though the Atman resides outside the body also, It is not
cognised there. In a diamond, though the light reflected is perceptible, the heat is not felt.
Even so, inside the body, pleasure and pain are cognised, but not their knowledge. As in the
sun-stone, both the light and heat of the rays of the sun are perceptible, so in the heart,
pleasure and pain, along with their knowledge, are cognised. As the lotus of the heart is the
support for all the external organs, it is the support for the internal organ also which holds
the painting of the universe. The Lord, as the blissful Self, attains the deep sleep state in the heart-lotus and remains without any distraction. Those qualified aspirants who are adepts in spiritual practices like celibacy, non-injury, etc., and who are following the path of Rajayoga with the eights limbs of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, realise the Atman in the lotus of their heart through initiation from their preceptor and contemplation over the scriptural truth. It is through the light of the heart, known as Vijnana, that the particular Nadis shine in those who are nearing their end, and who are to attain either the world of Brahma or the manes or insects and worms. Just as the sun’s rays, though all-pervasive, are said to reside in the orb of the sun, this Atman, which is omnipresent, is spoken of as residing in the heart. This blissful Atman, who is also the Supreme Person, is the internal effulgence. That which illumines objects like a pot is called light. Objects like a pot, for example, which are the ‘illumined’, are never given the appellation ‘light’, as they do not illumine other objects. The Atman which illumines both the above two classes of objects, viz., those which illumine other objects and those which do not, and which remains distinct from them, is called the Supreme Light by the Vedas. All objects other than the Atman are illumined by the light of the sun which is outside the body. The Supreme light of the Atman inside the body, which is the cause of all causes, illumines everything non-different from it. Therefore, It is called the Internal Effulgence. To illumine everything in this manner, the Atman requires no other light, and hence It is called Self-Effulgence. As It fills this universe of movables and immovables with its effulgence, It is called Purusha, which means ‘that which fills’. As a bird builds its nest and lies in it, this Atman, having created the innumerable cities in the form in animate and inanimate objects in this universe, rests in them. Hence, It is known by the term Purusha which also means ‘one who lies in a city’. This one Purusha himself experiences pleasure and pain both in the waking and dream states without undergoing any change in himself. It is He himself who attains this world and other worlds according to the nature of the Karmas. He himself, bound as it were, by ropes in the form of good and evil Karmas, takes birth after birth, assumes several bodies one after another, and leaving them, seems to die again and again. Thus, as if deluded, He goes round and round like a Persian wheel.

Sage Yajnavalkya continued: In fact, O king, the Purusha, who is infinite, does not assume any body. Neither does He take any birth nor undergo death. He has no going and coming. He is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. He is quite distinct from all modifications. Though He is such a non-dual entity free of all objectivity and subjectivity, when identified with the internal organ, He appears to be subjected to the influence of Karmas and their fruits due to the primeval ignorance. The space by itself is not hot, but through its contact with hot water, it also is sure to become hot. Even so, this Atman, which is in reality the Supreme Isvara and is free from doership and enjoyership, identifies itself with the intellect, becomes a doer and enjoyer, performs several karmas and enjoys their fruits. As a lover closely follows the movements of his beloved, the Atman follows the modifications of the intellect. When the mind meditates, the Atman seems to meditate, and when the mind moves, the Atman seems to move. The Atman identified with the intellect becomes the dreamer and perceives the various dream objects created by It, which are comparable to the sceneries projected by a conjurer. From the dream world, It comes to the waking world with the gross body, the organs and their objects, which is the effect of ignorance, desire and action. This waking world also is transient like a bubble in water, and is the cause of
various kinds of pains and miseries. Like a king who crosses a deep river through a boat, the Atman crosses this waking state and passes on to the dream state. When those karmas which are the cause of the dream experiences are exhausted, and when those particular Karmas which are responsible for the enjoyments in the succeeding waking state fructify, the Atman again enters the gross body from the dream state and identifies itself with it. This can be compared to birth from the womb. Due to the fructification of the results of Karmas, the Atman with the feelings of I-ness and mine-ness in the physical body identifies itself with the pleasures and pains which are the results of Karmas. To a man who has awakened from a dream, the miseries in the waking state are directly perceptible to his senses, and as such, they require no lengthy description. So long as the Atman does not leave its egoism in the gross body, does it experience pains. When there is no egoism, as at the time of deep sleep or death, it separates itself from the sins and their fruits of pain. A man living in adverse conditions in a particular locality, due to attachment to that place, has always some cause or other for suffering which ceases to trouble him only when he leaves that place. Even so, the Atman living in this body, due to delusion, has several causes for grief and misery, and they leave it only when it leaves the body.

This world are the next are the two abodes for the Atman which goes on assuming and rejecting bodies after bodies. O king, some consider the dream state, which is at the junction of the two abodes, as the third one. Dream cannot be considered as belonging to this world, for the physical body of the waking state is as good as dead in that state. The person does not even remember the existence of the body lying on the bed. Neither can the dream state be said to belong to the next world, for the Atman does not completely leave off its physical body. When some pain is inflicted on the body in that state, it is seen to react, which indicates the presence of the ego. The conclusion is that in dream, the ego has left, and yet it is here. It is therefore said to be at the junction of the two worlds, this one and the next. When the sun has set and the stars have not yet appeared in the sky, there is the conjunction of day and night called Sandhya which means twilight, union or junction. That which comes out in Sandhya is named Sandhyam and hence the dream state which appears in the junction of the two worlds is termed Sandhyam.

Residing in this world known as Sandhyam, the Atman experiences hosts of objects in both the worlds. The Atman remaining in the body witnesses during the dream state those It has experienced in this life and also those in its previous incarnations. Sometimes those It has to experience in future births are also seen in dream. One who is seated on the doorway of a house can see things both inside and outside the house. Even so, the Atman residing at the junction of the two worlds perceives objects in both the worlds. As when a king going on a foreign tour takes his retinue with him, so does the Atman leaving this world and the physical body and going to the dream world, known as Sandhyam, take the sense objects of this gross world along with the organs to witness the two worlds. As a boy makes several toys with clay, plays with them for a while and throws them off thereafter, the Atman, through its self-effulgent consciousness, sports, as it were, creating the dream objects, witnesses them for a time, and destroys them. It is this Atman at play which was referred to on a previous occasion as Self-Effulgence, for in dream there is no light other than the Atman. As inert clay serves as the cause for the playthings of the boy, the inert mind becomes the cause of dream witnessed by the Atman. The boy sees before him clay which has taken the form of toys. Even so, the Atman sees the mind which has assumed the forms
of the various dream objects. Neither ignorance nor the mind can illumine anything at a time. The ignorance and the mind become the ‘seen’, like a jar and other objects, to the Atman which is the ‘Seer’ in the dream state. Neither the organs nor the illuminants such as the sun, moon, fire and speech of the waking state are present in dream. In the waking state, all experience the absence of their minds some time or the other. One says: ‘my mind was not here and hence I do not hear you’. This proves that the mind also comes under objects seen.

The mind has not been accepted as sentient by any school of thought. If anyone were to say that it is sentient, it must either be the Atman or something other than the Atman. If it is not the not-Atman, the question ‘why do all other objects which are not-Atman also not become sentient?’ would arise. In case the mind and all objects were sentient, the mind could not serve any useful purpose. There is no proof to say that everything here is sentient. That everything is the Atman has the authority of the Vedas which do not permit the inclusion of all objects under ‘sentient’. The Vedas enjoin the existence of universality, individuality and Consciousness. The meaning of the Vedic assertion ‘the whole universe is Brahman’ is different from the meaning of the statement, ‘all these movable and immovable are sentient’. The idea contained in the statement ‘the Atman exists’ is something different from that in the above two statements. The declaration ‘the Atman, which is Consciousness is the Supreme Brahman’ conveys a still different idea. If, by identification with sentience, everything can become sentient, why not they become inert by identification with insentience! When the rule is the same in both cases, what is the reason for difference in one case alone? Where a statement in the Vedas goes against what is ascertained through direct perception, the former should not be interpreted literally. Otherwise, anomalies would arise as in the Vedic sentences, ‘the sacrificial post is the sun’ and ‘the sacrificer is the couch of grass’. The injunctions in the Vedas are always meant for the benefit of humanity, for it is the very nature of the Vedas to bestow the supreme good as against the pleasurable. Man can by no means attain any of the Purusharthas through the knowledge that the Atman is insentient and the not-Atman is sentient. How can the Vedas, which are of divine origin, then give an injunction to the above effect! Further, the instructions in the Vedas can neither become meaningless statements. Anything not conducive to any one or more of the Purusharthas cannot be said to have any purposeful meaning. It is because the Purusharthas are revealed through the Vedas that the latter are known by the term Vedas. The etymological meaning of the word Veda is knowledge, derived from its root word ‘Vid’ meaning ‘to know’. The Vedas induce and inspired man towards the attainment of Supreme Knowledge.

In the world, primary impulse (Prerakatva) depends on utility (Prayojya). In a hungry person, the impulse for taking food is said to be primary as he desires very much to eat. Any impulse in the absence of desire can only be secondary. The urge from the god of death for a man’s final departure from this world cannot be said to be primary, as man does not

27 Principle aims in human life which are four in number, viz., righteousness (Dharma), wealth (Artha), fulfilment of desires (Kama), and liberation (Moksha).
desire his death. Man has desire only for the four Purusharthas and not for anything else. The essence of all the four Purusharthas is happiness, and the urge for it is primary. The means for attaining happiness is only secondary, as the desire for it also is secondary. Insentience in the Atman and sentience in the not-Atman do not become happiness by themselves or the means thereof to anyone at any time. The sentiency in the not-Atman could not help man to attain any of the Purusharthas and, as such, does not deserve any serious consideration. The instructions of the Vedas to humanity, which are like a father’s advice to his children, can neither be inductive nor directive in such a purposeless matter. Therefore, the Vedas, the foremost among all proofs in this world, have described the Atman as self-illuminating and non-dual. Those who follow the injunctions of the Vedas do get the result in the form of realisation of the Atman. Those who go on arguing against them, and are attached to the duality in the form of the phenomenal universe, cannot attain the Atman even in several births.

One may ask, what then is the meaning of the Vedic declaration: ‘the whole universe is the Atman itself’? The answer is that the Veda, like a compassionate mother with the ultimate object of leading the intellect of the spiritual aspirant into that highest realm of non-duality, as a first step instructs in the merger of the universe. A snake seen in a rope due to delusion is really the rope alone. Even so, the Veda instructs that the universe seen in the Atman due to nescience is, in fact, the Atman itself.

No valid argument can be advanced by anyone to infer the sentient nature of the universe alleged by ignorant people. On the other hand, its insentient or inert nature, established through inference, is supported by direct perception also. The Upanishads have not even the least intention to say that the sentient nature of the universe is directly perceptible. None of the sages and saints has had till now any experience through direct perception of the sentiency of the universe. Others also cannot have such an experience, for their direct perception cannot go against that of the sages. If it is said that they have other proofs to establish their view, why are those proofs not available to the sages? When the flow of Prana, the vital energy which is uniform in all men, were to take a different course in some, it can only be a marvellous and exceptional act of God. To say that an object is perceptible to some but not to others is not consistent with the very nature of the object. Such a serious defect of going against one’s own nature has to be rectified. In the attempt to establish the sentiency of the mind, one is therefore surely to meet with endless miseries only caused by the opposing army of insentient objects in the universe which are in the same category as the mind.

If the mind were sentient, as the opponent alleges, it can only be either limited or all-pervasive. In the former case, it becomes one of the myriads of objects which are the effects of the five non-sentient elements. It is not sensible to say that an effect of an insentient cause is sentient. On the other hand, if the mind were to be taken as all-pervasive, it would be free from the limitations by space, time and object and become the self-effulgent Atman of the nature of Consciousness and Bliss. Then what remains to be considered is only about the appellation ‘mind’ given to it. What is usually termed as ‘mind’ is that principle which is the cause of all thoughts and imaginations in all the three worlds, which has come out of the Sattvic (pure) part of all the subtle elements put together. The opponent has used the term ‘mind’ not in this sense, but in the sense of the Atman. No argument would e raised
about a mere ‘name’ by anyone, at any time. That which the sages call the Atman is termed as mind by him. On that Supreme Entity which is self-effulgent and beyond the reach of speech and mind, and which is of the nature of Pure Consciousness, the wise knowers have superimposed names such as Atman, Brahman and the like. Similarly, the opponent has also imagined the name ‘mind’ for the Atman. Whatever be the arguments, in the end it has to be accepted that the Atman is Self-Effulgence. As the illumining nature of the Atman and the non-illumining nature of all things other than the Atman are both clear, the Atman, which is the Purusha, is certainly self-effulgent.

The self-effulgent Consciousness is never distinct from the Atman. If it were distinct, It would become limited due to that reason, and when limitation is introduced, It would come under the not-Atman. Therefore, Consciousness and Atman are not different. Due to this non-difference also, the Atman has to be accepted as self-effulgent. In this manner, through logic alone, has it been established beyond any doubt that the Atman is self-effulgent.

By a consideration of this matter through the process of Anvaya and Vyatireka (co-presence and co-absence—synthesis and analysis) it can be known that the self-effulgency of the Atman is more evident in the dream state than in the waking state. It is commonly said that burning fire is self-luminous, while fire that lies merged in wood or hidden under the ashes is not. Even so, the Atman in dream is said to be self-effulgent. In fact, that which is known as Brahman, which is unmanifested and devoid of name and form and which is the cause of this universe, is itself the self-effulgent Atman in all bodies. Just as Brahman is the cause for the creation of all this phenomenal world of existence and non-existence, so is this Atman the cause of the creation, perception and dissolution of the dream world in all creatures.

Golden chariots with flag posts as high as the sky, multi-coloured and attractive flags and festoons, thunderous sounds and several wonderful musical instruments, yoked with beautifully harnessed horses with the speed of wind, looking as if ready to gallop in the air,—being ashamed to remain on the ground, and splitting the earth into two with their hoofs, and the decorated roads made cool by the sprinkling of scandal water, seen in dream, do not really exist. The shops on both sides of the roads adorned with Purna Kumbhas (jars filled with water offered in honour of great personages, with chanting of Mantras), the illuminations and the paintings also do not, in fact, exist there. Neither do the women of heavenly beauty with ornaments of gold and diamonds, holding in their hands golden vessels containing curd and fried grains, exist in dream. The happiness that is enjoyed through sentient and insentient objects in dream is not real. That happiness one derives in the waking state from the meeting of one’s beloved and from the gain of the much-longed-for delicious dishes and dresses, does not exist really and permanently in dream. Similarly, the pleasure derived from contact with the objects desired and separation of objects hated in dream, is not the same as that experienced in the waking. The happiness enjoyed by the birth of a son to an issueless person in the waking state is absent in dream. Neither the tanks and lakes, nor the palaces, houses, courtyards, mountains forests, rivers and oceans, the different worlds with their guardians, the directions, the five elements, the four kinds of creatures, the cosmic egg with its interior and exterior, nay, nothing that exists in dream can become as real as in the waking state. In the dream state, there is nothing except the mind. Just as the unmanifested Isvara is the doer in the waking state, the
self-effulgent Atman itself is the subjective doer and enjoyer in dream. The Atman, which is the creator of the dream word, paints, as though in the wall of the mind, different pictures like chariots and others with the help of ignorance. The Atman, which is in fact free from the limiting adjuncts of space, time and others, and which is without attributes, becomes the doer in dream. How can It create the world without the help of Maya! Just as Isvara first creates space and time and then the whole universe, so the Jiva also creates the dream world. In the Brahmana portion of the Vedas, the Atman has been referred to as the creator of the dream world in the dream state. Similarly, the Mantra portions also state that the Atman itself is the doer in all bodies. This Purusha, leaving aside the aggregate of the organs relating to the gross body, and without going to the deep sleep state,—remaining self-effulgent, illumines in the dream state all the mind-created objects with their causes.

None of these objects illumines Him. Assuming its own self-effulgent nature, referred to as Sukram in the Vedas, the Atman leaves off the dream world which is foreign to It and attains the waking condition. It again goes to the dream state, referred to as Sandhyam before. The Purusha, who is effulgence itself, remains all the while illumined by his own effulgence. Remaining as one all through like a playish boy, He sports, as it were, throughout the day and night, assuming each of the successive states of waking, dream and deep sleep, leaving off the preceding one. It is He who fills the bodies of creatures,—both moving and non-moving—with the essence of the food and drink consumed by them during the day and night. Knowers of the Vedas call the bodies of creatures as Puris (cities). As the Atman lies in these Puris, He is called Purusha. As the same Purusha himself leaves each state and assumes the succeeding one, He is referred to as Ekahamsa in the Vedas. When this Purusha or Ekahamsa enters the dream state, he keeps the Prana (vital force) in the gross body of the waking state and takes with him the organs, mind, etc., but in death, he takes the vital force also along with Him. Leaving the egoism in the gross body, He witnesses the dream. In fact, He is distinct from the characteristics of the body like birth, death and others. The self-effulgent Purusha freely moves about in the dream state through the Nadis inside the body, like a juggler’s illusory creation, assuming bodies in higher and lower species from Brahma down to a clump of grass. In these bodies, He experiences for a while objects of enjoyment corresponding to those bodies, and leaves them off. He himself creates all the objects of enjoyment. He himself becomes the father, mother, protector, preceptor, wife and children, and imagines himself as those higher and lower bodies. Though really He is not attached to enjoyments, He creates in himself, through imagination, the internal organ which is the instrument of enjoyment and also the other objects of enjoyment in accordance with the results of his past Karmas and those in his present birth. Isvara, whose desires ever remain fulfilled, takes the part of the lover in dream and imagines himself as the beloved. In dream, young women of celestial beauty cast lustful looks at him, embrace him, and He finds himself enjoying with them. Sometimes, He sees ugly women and stinking objects as well. At other times, He sees himself as having a grotesque form. He sees in dream things both favourable and unfavourable, similar to those in the waking state. On some occasions, He experiences in dream endless misery caused by objects which He hated most A sinner who is obsessed with fear, in his waking state, from thieves and wild animals like tigers and others, experiences the same fear in his dream, also.

Yajnavalkya, continuing further, said:
O King, some see the Atman about which I have instructed you like a pleasure garden (Arama), but some others do not. Both the garden,—the place of sport for the Atman—and the sporting materials like chariot, horses, etc., contained in it are not different from the Atman. Thus, everything in this universe is the Atman itself, but no one realises this great truth.\(^{28}\)

When Indra, in the form of Jiva, is in deep sleep embracing, as it were, Indrani in the form of consciousness, no one should wake him up. Any disturbance to a couple in love, enjoying in seclusion, would only annoy them. Even so, if this Indra and Indrani are awakened from sleep all of a sudden, it would cause disturbance to the regular flow of Pranas in the subtle nerves. When a king, in the middle of the night, gets up from his bed and goes out, his personal attendants are forced to follow him. And in order to meet him, they rush through the regular routes or sometimes through shortcuts, destroying everything on the way that obstructs their onward march. Even so, in the case of one who is awakened violently from sleep, the Pranas are forced to rush through wrong tracks, which results in incurable bodily and mental diseases. Even is there is any urgent matter, a wise man should not suddenly wake up a person in sleep. He should be roused only gradually by soft touches or light sounds, lest some serious disorder be caused to his physical or psychological personality. Not only that, the separation of Indra and Indrani in union would be an act of sin to both the awakener and the awakened. The former would have the adverse result in a latent form as sin, and the latter in a patent form as physical or mental illness.

It is the same Atman in the dream state that attains the waking state and no change occurs to the Atman in the two states. Some learned men say that no changes occurs to space, time and objects seen in the two states, and hence there cannot be any change in the Atman also. The space, time and objects made up of the five elements seen in the waking state are superimposed on the Atman. Things superimposed can never be real. In dream also, space, time and objects seen are only unreal superimposition, and hence how can there be any difference in them!

Some do not accept space in space and time in time\(^{29}\). They argue that a particular space and time would have relative use only in that space-time continuum. In the world, people engage in such fruitless discussion as space in space, time in time, or pot in pot. All transactions in the waking state involving space, time and objects are on a similar footing. Therefore, they are unreal. Relative truths employed for workaday transactions cannot be acceptable for all time, for any one, at any place.

One who argues that all objects are real experiences reality of a lower type alone, and even that only with great effort. Out of the three kinds of meanings for words, viz., primary, secondary and figurative, the last one, which has the least degree of reality alone, applies to him who argues in favour of the reality of objects here. One who alleges something other

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\(^{28}\) See Acharya Sankara’s commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Mantra IV-3-xiv.

\(^{29}\) Such as pot-space in the universal space and smaller units of time like hours and minutes in bigger units like day and month.
than time in time, something distinct from space in space, and some other object different from pot in a pot due to his attachment to differences, would have to face the defect of logical seesaw—absence of finality. A man who argues without fixity and a firm basis himself becomes unsettled and deviates from established rules. In his case, heat becomes cold and vice versa. In the world, space, time and objects are posited for relative phenomenal day-to-day dealings and experience of the Jivas. Even if such a position is accepted, it can never become a valid proof. It is only due to delusion and wrong perception that one imagines varieties like space, time and objects—gross and subtle. This mistaken perception is the result of superimposition of duality on the non-dual Atman.

As a snake is superimposed on a rope, the universe of time and space is superimposed on the Supreme Atman. This universe seen in both the waking and dream states, along with time, space, etc., finally merges in the Atman itself. All the time, there is no change in the Atman, and therefore there cannot be any change in space, time and objects also. Without change in the rope, how can there be a change in the snake imagined on it? How can change occur in things which are perceived through one consciousness which rests on one support and which form the objects for one subject. Therefore, the same Atman which manifests itself as space in the waking state, manifests itself as space in the dream state also.

The differences in objects seen do not cause difference in space. A pot which is in a man’s hands remains the same pot when it is placed inside the house or in the courtyard. It is not affected by the change in its support. Thus, when all that is seen both in the waking and dream conditions is one homogeneity, it proves that space, which is its support, is also homogeneous. As space is only the manifestation of the Atman, it is established that the Atman also has no change in the waking and dream states. O king, I have thus established that the Atman in the dream state is free from all changes and is self-resplendent. What is your next question? Let me hear.

The wise king who has obtained the boon to ask any number of questions to clear all his doubts, replied.

King: O revered Sage, I usually present learned men who instruct me on spiritual matters with one thousand young milch cows with a bull as big as an elephant, as enjoined by the scriptures, and this fact is known to all. I am now offering the same present to your revered self also, who has instructed me in the knowledge of the Atman.

When the sage heard this reply, he thought within himself: “The king has become my disciple. I have instructed him in Brahma-Vidya completely, but I find that he has not properly grasped my instructions. Not only that, he seems to have taken them lightly, considering this Brahma-Vidya also as one among the several meditations which he has learned from others.”

The Sage said:

Yajnavalkya: O king, you say that you are giving me a thousand cows in return for my instructions. Please tell me first whether you have known the Atman about which I have instructed you, or not.

King: O my adorable preceptor, I have not fully understood the Atman, for I have not grasped your instructions completely. I find that the Atman in the dream state, about which
you instructed me, has the defect that It enjoys sense-objects like an ignorant man. The knowledge of this Atman cannot bestow freedom from this phenomenal existence. In dream, the Atman flirts and enjoys with women and tastes all delicious dishes. It also makes effort to get sense-objects which It likes and to get rid of those It dislikes. I find such defects in the Atman in the dream state.

To clear this doubt of the king, Yajnavalkya explained, once again, how the Atman is completely non-attached in the dream state. The king further asked:

King: O great Sage, the Atman in the dream state depends on the subtle body, and as such, It may be taken to be unattached. But in the waking state, It is related to the gross body and how can It be unattached in this state?

Yajnavalkya: O king, the Atman remains unattached in the gross body exactly in the same manner as It remains unattached in the subtle body. Though It seems to be in contact with objects, It is not really attached to them, even as space in contact with objects remains unattached with them.

The king, who was fearless because of the boon granted to him by the Sage, again asked:

King: O my compassionate preceptor, you said that it is the same Atman that is experiencing both the dream and waking states. How is it possible for It to assume two states? How can one who remains as the king in Mahishmati State\textsuperscript{30} remain in Kasi (Varanasi) State also as its king. Therefore, I think that the Atman in the waking and dream states are different and not the same.

Yajnavalkya: O, king, hear me. If that king is said to remain in two different places at the same time, you are justified in thinking that the persons in the two places are different as you suggested. But here, it is not like that, for the Atman does not assume the two states of waking and dream simultaneously.

To the three relevant questions of the king, the Sage thus gave suggestive answers. The Sage continuing further, gave more detailed exposition:

Yajnavalkya: O king, the Atman, about which I have been explaining to you as self-resplendent in the dream state, itself attains the deep sleep state, referred to as \textit{Samprasada} in the Vedas. It is called by that name as It shines clearly in that state like the autumnal water. Discarding all the distractions of the mind, along with the mind which is their cause, It rests in its own nature and shines lucidly and clearly. Therefore, the wise know the state of deep sleep as \textit{Samprasada}. In fact, the Atman in this state has neither any movement nor enjoyment. The statement in the Vedas that in deep sleep, the Atman enjoys and moves is only conventional, following the waking and dreaming states which precede or succeed deep sleep. Though neither merit nor sin appears in that state, they still lie merged in their cause, and therefore it is said in the Vedas that the self-effulgent Atman remains as their witness in that state. In this beginningless phenomenal existence, the

\textsuperscript{30} Mahishmati state situated on the Narmada between the Vindhya and Riksha mountains, above Bheraghar, below Jabalpur.
Atman has attained innumerable *Samprasadās* in the past and this would continue in the future also.

In whatever body the Purusha goes to deep sleep, he returns from that state to the same body. He does not take a different body when he returns from sleep. If he goes to sleep in the body of a tiger, he enters the same tiger's body when he comes back from sleep. He does not take the body of even another tiger in the same species. Whatever be the body, that of a lion, a wolf, a pig, a woman or a man, he returns to the same body in the same species in which he goes to sleep.

When he returns from that state, he goes either to the dreaming or waking state. But it is said in the Vedas that he returns from deep sleep only to experience dream. This is because the Vedas consider the waking state also as a dream, since both are similar in being that condition in which there is the projection of the phenomena of the world either in the gross or subtle form. All creatures return from the deep sleep state only to experience the phenomenal world projected by the mind, and hence the Vedas declare that the return from deep sleep is only to the dreaming state.

The Atman, after returning from deep sleep to the dreaming condition, experiences sense objects like delicious dishes, contact with the opposite sex, etc. Just as a man who sees a pot is not attached to it, so also the self-effulgent Atman is not bound by those objects perceived in dream. Man cannot perceive an object which is one with himself, as different from himself. Without understanding the qualifier, the qualified and their mutual relationship, no one can have the knowledge of a qualified object. 'A man with a stick' cannot be known unless one knows the man, the stick and their mutual relation. Therefore, if the Atman were to be considered as qualified as any object, it would mean that it gets a new knowledge which was absent before. No object can cognise itself by itself. One cannot hold one's own fist by the very same fist. If one were to cognise oneself by oneself, every thing would become the insentient not-oneself, every thing would become the insentient not-Atman, for all objects cognised are insentient, and an insentient object can never be the Atman. If an inert object can become the Atman, then a pot also should become the Atman. Ether, fire, etc., which are inert do not become the Atman. Therefore, the Atman which is the ‘Seer’ of objects like men, women, dishes, etc., in dream has, however, no relation with them. the cause for the absence of relationship is the seer-ship itself. The seer who sees the seen is never bound by the seen, for a man who sees a pot is not bound by the pot. Therefore, the non-dual Atman remains unattached with the ‘seen’, in the waking state, which can be understood from the example of a pot and a man. One should similarly understand that in the state of dream also, the Atman, which is the seer of dream, is not attached to those objects of dream which come under ‘seen’. Therefore, O king, the Atman in dream remains self-effulgent, without even a trace of attachment. The knowledge of this Atman serves as the best means for liberation. This is in reply to the first question.

The king acquiesced in all that Yajnavalkya said so far. The Sage, continuing, further said: O king, to all creatures, what happens in the waking state is exactly similar to that in dream. The Atman, as a result of the sinful and meritorious deeds done in the past, experiences in the nerves several objects into which the mind has cast itself in dream, and thereafter comes to the waking state. When compared to dream, the waking state seems to be external. Dream seems to be internal with reference to the waking state, and external when
compared to the deep sleep state. Just as in dream, the Atman remains unattached to the objects seen in that condition, so in the waking state, the Atman, which is the seer, remains unattached to everything that is perceived. The non-attachment of the Atman, which is the seer, to objects is similar in both the waking and dream states. This furnishes the reply to the second question.

The king, as before, assented to these views of the Sage, who continued his exposition, citing illustrations, in reply to the third question.

Yajnavalkya: O king, in the waking state, well known to all, the self-effulgent Atman experiences happiness and pain according to the past merits and demerits. It enjoys, as it were, with its beloved and other sense objects, and travels in towns and villages which are only projections of the mind, as in dream. It then passes on to the dream state. O king, I shall, through an illustration, make you understand the condition of the Atman which, while remaining as one only, passes from the waking state to dream, and again from dream to the waking state. Please listen. A great shark living in the waters of a deep river, unswayed by the river currents, goes on moving from one bank to the other, again and again. Similar is the case with the self-effulgent Atman which attains, as it were, the two states of waking and dream again and again, unaffected by anything seen in the two states. O wise king, now listen to another illustration which I am giving for the deep sleep state. A tamed hawk living in a cage flies beyond the vicinity of its cage and goes to invisible heights, either to join its mate or to get its prey, or with the object of fighting with its foe or sometimes without any aim. This bird with one of the other desire, which flies very high to distant places, feels tired and fatigued after some time, and then stretching its wings, returns to its abode of rest. Even so, the self-effulgent Atman flies with its two wings of meritorious and sinful Karmas in the sky of the waking and dreaming states, and when fatigued, seeks the ether in the heart for rest. When the Atman is in deep sleep in the heart-ether, It is known as Samprasada, which term means serenity, purity and freedom from impurity. This Atman in the state of deep sleep does not have any desire for any object, nor does It see any dream. Therefore, It is said to be pure and free from all kinds of impurities in the form of mental Vrittis.

O king, I have now instructed you on the path through which the Atman, which is Existence-Absolute, seems to come and go in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. There are several Nadis\(^{31}\) starting from the heart and leading to the several parts of the body. Scriptures say that, of these, one hundred and one are important ones and that each one of them has branches, several crores in number. It is doubtful whether the subtlety of a hair split into a thousand parts would equal the subtlety of these Nadis. The wise have given the name Hitas for these most subtle Nadis. As the fine arteries in a mother’s breasts are a source of succour and nourishment to her child, so these subtle Nadis, which depend on the body, are the well-wishers and benefactors of the body. They always carry the essence of food and drink, which are dear to all creatures, to all the parts

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\(^{31}\) Nadis are subtler than the nerves of modern physiology. They may be said to be psycho-physical in nature.
of the body, and due to this reason they are called Hitas. These Nadis, filled with liquids of varying colours, can be compared to rivers on this earth flowing with different kinds of waters most essential to plant and animal life. The colours, resembling those of the pigments in a painter’s house, are white, dark blue, yellowish brown, green and deep red. These few important colours mentioned are indicative of several other colours also. All colours other than white and red are said to be only modifications of these two. The Atman moving through these nerves, attains the state of dream or deep sleep. As the waking state is the cause of both pleasure and pain for a man, the dream state also is the case of a mixture of painful and pleasurable experiences. Those objects which are sources of pleasure and pain in the waking condition, act in the very same way in dream also. When one’s past sinful Karmas fructify, one experiences miseries in one’s dream in the form of fear and trouble from thieves, tigers, wolves and others. In fact, the Atman, like the ether, cannot be wounded by weapons; neither can It be killed. But, in dream, It experiences as though It is being pierced by arrows or being killed. In the waking world, thieves who are selfish and who want to grab the wealth of others somehow or other, cause injury to others with weapons like arrows, swords, and sometimes even with their teeth and nails, and all these things are seen in dream also. As senility overpowers a man after middle age, the omnipresent and the omnipotent Atman, which is beyond all control, seems as though controlled in dream by someone of perverted intellect. Great millionaires in a state ruled by an unjust king are controlled by his unfair and corrupt officers. Even so, this Atman in the dream state seems to be controlled by someone. As when a wooden toy elephant is moved, children run away out of fear, so man is frightened by an elephant in dream. A deluded man falls down on a level ground of a beautiful courtyard because he sees a deep chasm there. Even so, the Atman in dream experiences a fall into a ditch. Though the Atman is always fearless, the same objects which are considered the cause of fear in the waking state become also the cause of fear in the dream state due to the mysterious power of ignorance.

The Sage, proceeding, further said: O king, the knowledge of the Atman which particularly bestows on one the nature (Svarupa) of the Atman that is all-pervading, all-comprehensive, self-effulgent and eternal bliss, is called Vidya. This Vidya, being in the form of Consciousness shining in all the mental modifications, becomes the Atman which is pure Consciousness and the Soul of all beings. That which is other than It and which is in the form of non-being (Asat) is called Avidya. Avidya is in the form of Ajnana—ignorance of the Atman. Avidya has no form distinct from ignorance. The Atman, which is one only, which is free from the three kinds of differences[^18], and which is self-effulgent, does not really change into the multitudinous forms in this universe. How then can creation come from It? The ignorance to give a satisfactory reply to this question is given the name Avdiya.

It is due to Avidya that one sees in dream oneself being killed or controlled by another, or thrown down or terrified. These experiences, along with their causes, remain unreal. The delusion caused by sex and other sense-objects and similar other contradictions in dream, is also due to Avidya. I have already told you, O king, that the dream objects like chariots,

[^18]: Vide foot-note number 18.
horses, etc., do not really exist. When that is the fact, how can pleasure and pain be caused from such non-existent chariots and other objects? The heart is too small to contain big objects like chariots and horses, and hence such objects giving rise to happiness and misery cannot really exist in dream. Therefore, any real creation of such objects in dream cannot be reconciled. Who can say that real creation of such objects takes place in the heart? Whatever effects appear to be produced in the absence of causes like space, time, etc., can only be effects of illusion like a city of clouds. That non-worldly and superhuman power which appears to inhere in the Atman in the dreaming state, capable of creating all kinds of objects, is called Avidya by those versed in scriptural lore.

If that power were to be considered as some other thing different from Avidya, what could that other thing be? Does that power, during dream, draw into the heart this phenomenal word of sentient and non-sentient creatures, or itself go to all places and perceive the dream world? In both cases, that power has to be considered only as an illusory one. How can a man draw the whole universe of being and non-being into the ether of his heart which is only as small as one’s thumb? If anyone were to show a serpent as big as a pillar, with numerous legs resting in the cavity of his ear, it cannot but be an illusion. Even so, the universe perceived inside the heart during the dream state, can only be the effect of illusion. Without the help of the illusory power, it is impossible to go from within the body to distant islands and continents in a trice when the Pranas are still functioning in the body. The experience of one who is here, going to the sun-world and returning back in a moment can be noting but mere illusion. It is due to that illusory power that one sees oneself in dream as going to heavens and other worlds and returning from them. The Vedas do not say that in dream the Atman draws in all the external phenomena, nor do they mention that the Atman, which is inside, goes out and experiences the variegated phenomena, but they certainly say that the Atman is the creator of the dream world. In both the alternatives mentioned, the dreamer does not have any real transaction with the other individuals. Those who are seen in dream, when consulted after waking, do not say that the dreamer had taken them into his heart, or that he had met them in their homes. After waking from dream, if the dreamer verifies his dream experiences with those he met there, they would not agree on any account. One has then perforce to treat those sentient beings as inert objects. If all living beings were to go to sleep simultaneously and perceive the same dream, it may then appear feasible to infer that the external universe has been drawn inside. After one’s waking up, all those persons seen either inside or outside in dream are seen only outside oneself, and they are not seen as they appeared in dream. Quarrels are likely to arise after waking up, for when one says to another that the latter had come into his heart, the other would argue: ‘no, you had come into my heart’. This defect cannot be eliminated if all were to see the same dream at the same time. Therefore, even those who consider the universe in the waking state as real have necessarily to accept that in dream, all the creatures that appeared,—whether inside the heart or outside—are all illusory. As in the case of living beings, the inert objects also have to be accepted as illusory even if one does not wish to. The dreamer at one time sees his house as a king’s palace, and at another time sees the expansive ocean with boisterous waves in front of his home, and that he has crossed it as though it were only knee-deep. A black mountain then confronts him. None of these is real, and therefore all of them, along with his own body seen there, are only illusory in spite of the fact that they were the cause of pleasure and pain in that state. When
the whole world in its sentient and non-sentient form becomes illusory, the seer who is the support for this illusion has necessarily to be accepted as real. This position is proved both through reason and through the authority of the Vedas. Therefore, both the alternatives mentioned earlier, viz., that the dreamer draws the universe into this heart, and that he himself goes out and witnesses the whole world, cannot stand the test of reason. Those versed in the scriptures call the ignorance of the Reality, which is capable of creating the dream world, by the appellation of Maya and Avidya.

As the sentient and insentient universe seen in dream is due to illusion, so in the waking state also this whole universe is seen only on account of illusion. In both the states, the Atman is the Seer and all that is not-Atman is the seen. In this matter there is, however, no speciality in the waking state alone. Therefore, that which is the cause of fear in the waking state is the cause of fear in the dreaming state also. The cause of fear in both the states if Avidya. In reality, the Atman is non-dual and therefore free from fear. Dream is seen by the individual soul inside the Nadas when it moves through them in that state. The waking world is unreal like the dream world since the characters of externality or being perceived, materiality, transiency, and also love and hatred as well as pleasure and pain in respect of objects, are common to both states.

12. THE STATE OF DEEP SLEEP

O king, please listen to what I have to say about deep sleep in this connection. I have already told you earlier that deep sleep is called Samprasada in the Upanishads. Moving through subtle Nadas, the self-effulgent Atman attains the Ether in the heart encircled by the entrails. At that time, the effulgent Atman shines like the king of the celestials in union with his spouse, free from all differences. He who is self-effulgent, shines brilliantly by himself without any extraneous help in that state. All distractions, along with their cause, viz., the mind, merge themselves in this state. The dark ignorance also is not perceived in dreamless sleep. In this state, the individual soul entering the heart identifies itself with the Supreme Soul, and enjoys the experience 'I am the all', like the one who is liberated. The Atman remains in complete bliss without any trace of misery. The world attained in the state of deep sleep in the Atman is called the 'Supreme world' in the Vedas. Even if one studies all the scriptures, there is nothing to be known other than this 'Ether in the heart' as the self-effulgent bliss. That which is to be known through the instructions of the preceptor and the scriptures is this alone, and not anything else. Even if one goes to the world of the Creator, that which one should know is only this: Ether in the heart.

What is termed as Atichhanda in the Vedas refers to this Ether in the heart. This Ether, the Atman, which is the Supreme God, being not an object to mind and speech, transcends the Gayatri and other Vedic Mantras. As no sin adheres in the Atman in all the three periods of time (the past, present and future) It, in the form of the heart-ether, is known as

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33 Sri Sankaracharya, commenting on this Mantra (Br. Up. IV-3-xxi) says that the word Chhanda here means desire, and Atichhanda would mean that which transcends desires.
Apahatapapma, one whose sins are destroyed. He who is god himself, becomes the seat of fearlessness, for there is not even a trace of any kind of difference in Him, being the Atman at all. Because it is known that the Ether in the heart, by its very nature, is free from any difference, no difference can exist in the Atman. The cause of fear is perception of difference, i.e., the existence of a second entity other than oneself. Therefore, he who does not perceive difference is free from fear. When any object other than one’s Self becomes a source of pain, one is afraid of that object. In the effulgence of the self-luminous, all-blissful Atman, there is no pain at all. All embodied beings experience pain only when there is the cognition of particularised knowledge. In dreamless sleep, there is identification with the Supreme Self in the form of the Ether of the heart and there is, therefore, no particularised knowledge in that state. In the absence of such objective, particularised knowledge, there is no pain also. When a liver is fully in the embrace of his beloved, he is bereft of all particularised knowledge. At that moment, he is not aware of his sons, wealth and other objects outside, neither is he aware of his beloved in whose embrace he is, nor even his own self. Even so, this individual self identifying itself with the Supreme Atman manifesting as the Ether in the heart, which is self-effulgent and which is pure consciousness, becomes the Supreme Atman itself, and is not aware of the existence of the conglomeration of the five external gross elements, the internal subtle Maya, and Itself which is in the form of bliss. The particularised knowledge that It is enjoying, — bliss in the ether of the heart which is the seat of deep sleep, like Indra and Indrani — is also absent.

The Atman in the deep sleep state has the satisfaction of all desires, such as those for sons, wife, etc., for all of them have their fulfilment in It. It is therefore called Aptakama, one who has the satisfaction of all desires. He who is bliss and self-effulgence has no desires except for his own Self, and is therefore known by the appellation Atmakama, one whose desire is the Atman. As desire for one’s own Atman is natural in every creature, it cannot be included among other worldly desires. The longing to possess a thing not already possessed alone can be called a desire. The Atman, being eternally possessed by all, the love and affection for It cannot be termed a desire. Hence, one whose desire is the Atman alone is also Akama, one who has no desire at all. Any object for which desire arises can only be a source of pain. In the Atman there is no grief, as It is free from desires. The Atman which is free from all grief is termed Asoka, sorrowless.

In the Atman, which is referred to as Atichhandas and the ‘Supreme world’ in the Vedas, which is free from all sins, always fearless, blissful like one in the embrace of the beloved, distinct from all objective knowledge, free from all grief, beyond all desires, in which all desires have found their fulfilment, the father who is the cause of the birth of the physical body is no father, and mother, no mother. How can, then, others exist there? In that state, when everything has become the Atman, organs, sense-objects, presiding deities of the organs, and Vedas do not exist for him. The superimposition of the feeling of ‘mine’ on one’s father and others, and of ‘I’ on one’s own gross body, organs, etc., does not exist. When a

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34 The Acharya, in the commentary on the same Mantra, says that Apahatapapma means that which is free from evils, and evils means both merits and demerits.
man who is a thief in the waking state goes to deep sleep and becomes the self-luminous Atman, he is no more a thief. The word ‘Bhruna’ means a sacrifice or one who performs a sacrifice, as also a foetus in the womb, and one who causes destruction to any one of the above three is called a Bhrunaha, destroyer of Bhruna. In deep sleep, a Bhrunaha is no more a Bhrunaha. One born of a Brahmana mother and a Sudra father is called a ‘Chandala’ or ‘Chaandaala’. A Chandala while in dreamless sleep is no Chandala. A man born of a Kshatriya mother and a Sudra father is known by the term ‘Pulkasa’ or ‘Paulkasa’ which term may also refer to a particular community. A Paulkasa, when he enjoys deep sleep, is not a Paulkasa. The word ‘Sramana’ refers to a Sannyasin who is in the fourth stage of life and who has renounced the world. In deep sleep, a Sramana does not remain as such. A Vanaprastha, also called a Tapasa (one who does penance) is not a Tapasa when he is in deep sleep state. Why multiply examples? No superimposition whatsoever, like ‘I’, ‘mine’, etc., exists in that state. The individual soul in the Ether of the heart, identifying itself with the Supreme Soul, and becoming free from I-ness and mine-ness and from all merits and demerits, transcends all pain and grief. In both the waking and dreaming states there are innumerable pains resulting from contact with objects disliked and separation from those liked. Who can, in these two states, get over these pains which are unbearable like burning fire! In the dreamless sleep, the Atman goes beyond all pains, being free from objective perceptions. The non-perception of this universe by the Atman, transcending all particularised knowledge in that state, is due to the absence of duality besides one’s Self and not because of the absence of Consciousness. That power of Consciousness (Chit-Sakti) which shines in the organ of speech, eyes, ears, mind, skin and intellect, also shines without interruption in the cosmic counterparts of these organs. That power is all-pervasive like space, and hence the Atman which manifests itself as that power does become neither devoid of consciousness nor non-existent in deep sleep.

Though the Atman which is the Supreme Lord appears to see, smell, taste, speak, hear, think, touch, know and do similar actions through the organs, it is really action-less. In deep sleep, there is no action because there is no manifestation of duality due to contact of the organs with their objects, and not because of any defect in the Consciousness of the Atman. Even when fire which has heat and light inherent in it is present, it cannot emit either heat or light when it is covered with ashes. Even so, the Atman in the deep sleep state does not illumine objects, being veiled by ignorance. As the light in fire never gets destroyed, the Consciousness in the Atman, which is the Seer, does not become extinct at any time. As long as the objects exist, their own nature is not destroyed. So long as there is fire, its own nature of heat and light cannot be done away with on any account. Even so, so long as the Seer does not perish, His consciousness also does not perish, and since the Seer is eternal, no destruction can come to Consciousness.

If it is said that the Seer, the Atman is subject to destruction, is that destruction with or without a cause? Both the alternatives have to be ruled out. How can destruction, which is other than the Atman, have existence at all? In the absence of existence to destruction, it is impossible to prove the existence of cause for destruction. The Atman is beyond the three differences and, as such, how can there be any destruction different from it? In the absence of destruction, it is preposterous to presume a cause for it. There cannot be any valid proof whatsoever for the existence of destruction and its cause, which would bring about difference in the non-dual Atman. If destruction is considered as an existent entity, in itself
would have destruction like a pot. If destruction itself, thus, gets destroyed and becomes non-existent, how could that non-existent destruction cause destruction to the eternal all-witnessing Atman! If destruction were to be similar to the Atman, for when both the Atman and destruction are sentient, the sentience in the form of destruction cannot destroy the sentience in the form of the Atman. If sentence were to destroy sentence, the sentient destruction itself would destroy itself. No one can refute this logic advance against the view of the opponent.

Let the characteristic of non-existence of this destruction be enquired into. With what is it related? If it is related with an object other than the Atman, no harm is caused to the Atman on that account, for the non-existence of a pot does affect a cloth. In case the non-existence of destruction relates to the Atman, then one has to find out another destruction. No one sees this happening in the Atman. When there is a pot, it non-existence cannot happen. When this non-existence relates to the Atman, whether the Atman is one or many may be looked into. If the Atman is accepted as one, then It itself is the Atman in the non-existence also, and hence there is no reason for any antagonism. If the Atman were many, though destruction does away with other’s Atman, one may have to posit another destruction to destroy the Atman of destruction. In this way, if one is to posit one destruction after another, there will be the logical fallacy of absence of finality; and if one does not do so, destruction of the Atman cannot happen. Where there is at least one Atman, destruction of the Atman cannot be established, for if there is one pot anywhere, no one can establish the non-existence of the pot.

This destruction does not come under any of the four kinds of non-existence, viz., antecedent non-existence, mutual non-existence, complete non-existence and non-existence due to destruction (Pragabhava, Anyonyabhava, Atyantabhava and Pradhvamsabhava, respectfully). If it does, the Atman will not be destroyed. During the time of antecedent non-existence, is there the Atman or not? If there is the Atman, then destruction of destruction would result. If there were Atman, destruction cannot happen to a non-existent entity. Further, antecedent non-existent does not destroy any object. But it is the case of the creation of another object and gets itself destroyed after the creation. The wise have accepted antecedent non-existence only in the case of objects which have birth. How can it apply to the Atman which is birthless! When destruction cannot be proved directly, birth also should not be imagined in the Atman. If destruction is said to be in the form of mutual non-existence, it cannot happen; and even if it happens, it cannot have any adverse effect on the Atman. There cannot be mutual non-existence in objects like a pot and a cloth in the absence of those objects which are its supports. So, if the Atman, which is the substratum for the non-existence, were to be non-existent, the mutual non-existence cannot apply to the Atman. If complete non-existence of destruction is presumed, destruction would be analogous to a man’s horns. None has any knowledge of such objects. In case it is non-existence due to destruction, the defects pointed out before appear once again. In this world, this kind of non-existence due to destruction of an earthen pot results in the existence of broken pieces, their non-existence due to destruction ends in the existence of dust, and in this manner the non-existence due to destruction of each object causes the existence of another object. When this is accepted, destruction assumes the form of existence, in which case there will be the logical fallacy referred to before.
One does not see destruction taking place anywhere, at any time, without a cause. When a cause for destruction of the Atman is to be admitted, the question whether it is distinct from the Atman or identical with It, would arise as before, and all the objections enumerated there would have to be met with here also. Therefore, there cannot be a cause for the destruction of the Atman. Suppose another cause for the cause of destruction is accepted. Then one would have to accept still another for that second cause, and so on, resulting again in the logical defect of absence of finality. If a second cause is not accepted for the cause of destruction, then the latter would become eternal. When it is eternal, It becomes the Atman, and the Atman becoming the cause of its own destruction can never happen.

Yajnavalkya continued: Besides, O king, the opponent cannot say that there is proof for the destruction of the Atman and its cause. Proof always depends on the subject of enquiry (Prameya) which, in this context, is the destruction of the Atman with its cause. When this subject of enquiry itself is not established, how can the proof therefore stand? Even granting that there is such a subject, it may be considered whether the proof, before it comes into action, is in relation to a non-existence subject or an existent one. If the subject itself is non-existent, there cannot be a proof for it. In case it is argued that proof can exist without the subject of enquiry, then the necessity of the subject does not arise. If the subject is existent, the question whether the existence of the subject is self-created or created by the strength of proof would arise. Where the subject shines due to its own light, the proof becomes meaningless. In the event of the subject shining on the strength of proof, one would be forced to accept that those dealing with non-existence, like the son of a barren woman, etc., would establish the subject. In the sentence, ‘just as a son of a princess in the family of king Janaka is ruling over the kingdom of Videha, so the son of a barren woman is ruling the kingdom’, there is no defect in the proposition, and one may have necessarily to presume that there is the son of a barren woman on the authority of the words. Based on the supposition that the existence of the subject is established on the strength of proof, the words ‘the son of a barren woman’ become the cause of existence of such a man. There is no defect in the logic involved here. If one were to establish the existence and consciousness of the subject, through the strength of proof, words like ‘the son of a barren woman’ would become proofs and thereby non-existent objects would be established to be existent. This contingency should never arise. Therefore, the existence of the subject is to be established by its own strength, and not by the strength of any external proof. Otherwise, the relation between proof and subject of enquiry will become topsy-turvy. The destruction of the Atman which is the subject under discussion here, and its cause, have thus no existence, and proofs therefore are also rendered futile.

Direct perception and all other proofs arising out of it cannot establish the Atman’s destruction, because the Atman is beyond sense-perception and not therefore subject to direct perception by any of the senses. When direct perception itself fails, what to speak of other proofs like inference, etc., which depend on it? There is no Vedic proof for the destruction of the Atman. All the scriptures declare that the Atman is Existence-Absolute and they never say that It is perishable. Besides, we find that there are such proofs as Pratyabhijna, recovering consciousness or recognition of the continuous existence of the Atman. O king, please listen attentively to the illustrations I am citing now. The same ‘I’ who saw an elephant in the dream, now in the waking state sees a blue lotus. The very same ‘I’
now hears your words also. The same ‘I’ who in the waking state saw different objects and heard many discourses, remained without knowing anything in particular in deep sleep like the dull-witted. The same ‘I’ who in youth saw and experienced varieties similar to those in the dream world, now due to old age, has become grey and senile. In this manner there are many proofs of recognition to prove that the Atman continues in all states and in all stages and does not perish at any time. The activities seen in a newborn baby, like suckling, etc., are proofs for the existence of the Atman in previous births. Men of discrimination do only meritorious actions and refrain from sinful ones, which fact leads one to the conclusion that the Atman would exist in future births also. Sacred scriptural texts also contribute to the establishment of the eternal nature of the Atman. Therefore, the Atman, which is the eternal Seer, is beyond destruction. Consciousness in the Atman, otherwise called Jnana, Knowledge, is also therefore eternal. Heat in fire does not die out so long as there is fire. Even so, this Knowledge which is the form of the Atman itself, never becomes non-existent.

Thus, the cause for non-perception of duality in deep sleep is the non-existence of duality, and not the non-existence of consciousness of the Atman. During the dream state, the nature of which is different from that of deep sleep, and in the waking state, which is similar to the dream one, and also in the phenomenal world created by the ‘unique juggler’ where there is the cognition of illusory duality, the Atman sees the duality as distinct from itself due to ignorance which is the cause of the feeling of separateness. The perception of duality is through the external and internal organs which are also superimposed on the Atman. In deep sleep, when the Vikshepa, the projecting power of ignorance, which is the cause of the perception of duality in the waking and dream states, is itself absent, how can there be knowledge of duality different from oneself? The Atman is one undivided homogeneous essence, and the phenomenal world seen through ignorance is like the city in the clouds. The universe made up of the five elements, perceived by the Atman in the two states other than deep sleep, becomes one with It in deep sleep, and does not remain separate from It. O ruler of the earth, as the Atman is free from the three differences, It is one only without any interruption in all the three periods of time. It is this self-effulgent Supreme Person who is also designated as Brahman in the scriptures.

The wise sage Yajnavalkya thus instructed Janaka, the king of Videha, that the Atman in the deep sleep state, explained at length by him, is the Supreme Goal. Yajnavalkya, continuing his instructions, said:

Yajnavalkya: O king, there is no goal to be attained superior to this in all the three worlds. This is to be attained by the merits earned through the performance of several meritorious Karmas like sacrifices and others, spiritual practices such as celibacy, non-injury, etc., and through hearing the truth from one’s own preceptor, reflection and deep meditation. As among the mortals, Kubera’s (the god of riches) wealth is matchless, so this deep sleep is the unparalleled supreme wealth for man. In this state, there remains nothing other than the Atman. This wealth of the Atman, which always remains attained, is everlasting, undecaying and is greater than all that is great. All other kinds of wealth, being accidental and ephemeral, are far inferior to the wealth of the Atman. All attain this supreme wealth of the Atman every day during dreamless sleep. This Atman itself is referred to as the ‘Supreme world’, as there is nothing other than It to be attained or known. The happiness
one derives from the possession of the most lovely spouse, virtuous sons, a fair and tender body for oneself, elephants as big as mountains, horses which can fly through the sky, chariots which roll on with thundering sound a matchless army, treasuries similar to those of Kubera which never diminish, granaries full to the brim with all varieties of grains, heavenly damsels to attend upon, beautiful mansions comparable only to those of the king of celestials, innumerable ladies-in-waiting—each one resembling Indrani, countries inhabited by health and contented subjects, one’s own state equal to the heavens, and all such affluence and wealth, is liable to pass away as it is dependent on external objects and circumstances. But, the Atman in deep sleep is eternal, and therefore the bliss which is Its very nature never gets diminished. It is the Supreme, and It alone is to be attained. The Atman attained by the individual soul in deep sleep is of the nature of Supreme Bliss. This Atman in the form of the supreme goal, the supreme world, the supreme bliss, and this universe, is unsurpassable and is therefore the Supreme of all supremes.

All beings, both movable and immovable, enjoy happiness by living on a Matra—an infinitesimal portion—of the bliss of the Atman. The clouds in the sky absorb only a Matra (very small fraction) of the total quantity of the water in the oceans, and pour down as rain in the rainy season. Matra here means a trace or a very small quantity. If any oily or greasy or wet matter is kept in the hand for some time, small atomic particles of the matter would stick on to the hand even after the matter is thrown off, and this is called Matra or Lesa. All creatures from Brahma, the Creator, down to a blade of grass, partake only of a Matra of the bliss of the Atman. This establishes the Bliss-Absolute nature of the Atman. The blissful nature of the Atman in this context has to be understood in this manner. No one can deny the existence of this bliss, for all men experience day and night the happiness which they derive from the attainment of desired objects. Sense-objects,—like delicious dishes, sex, sons, friends, etc., appear to be the cause for this happiness. These sense objects, in fact, cannot by themselves create the happiness. They, however, cause cessation of pain. Due to the absence of the knowledge of the Atman and the perception of external sense-objects, desires arise in creatures which subsequently become a source of pain in them. When an object for which desire has arisen in one’s mind is obtained, that desire ceases for the time being. As long as the absence of that desire remains, and no fresh desire for the same object or any other object arises, there is no pain; and so long the bliss of the Atman veiled by ignorance shines without distraction. This ray of the bliss of the Atman veiled by ignorance, experienced by men, is given the appellation of sense-pleasure in their empirical activities. The knowledge that ‘I am of the form of Bliss’ is, therefore, absent in men. In this Samsara, the mundane world of relative phenomenal existence, the real nature of the Atman remains hidden. The happiness that seems to be derived from sense-objects, resulting from the satisfaction of desire for those objects, is microscopically small and insignificant in quantity when compared to the bliss of the Atman. It is like the illumination by a star or a firefly in a dark night. Even in quality, the pleasures of sense do not equal even a jot of Atman-Bliss because sense-pleasures are distorted by the defects of the senses, as also by the hidden worries of the mind even when it is apparently enjoying pleasure. Since such joy is derived from the cessation of the pain caused by desires, there are various degrees in it when experienced by beings. The trace of the bliss experienced due to the fulfilment of one desire does not continue when another desires arises. I have already told you, O king, that this bliss if the nature of the Atman. It has to be presumed that men are desirous of even the
pleasure derived from sneezing, for when sneezing is controlled, every one experiences an urge to sneeze. appeasement of desire, and that in proportion to it there is a gradation in the intensity of happiness, have been established. Wise men do not consider this sense-pleasure as being born out of, or caused by external objects, and as different from the blissful Atma.

O king, imagine a person who is in the prime of youth, with a well-built body, strong like Bhima, and Arjuna, all knowing like Vyasa, all powerful and an adept in the use of weapons like Lord Parameswara, the wielder of Pinaka (a divine bow), free from any kind of disease like the Asvini Kumaras, in possession of the greatest external help also like Arjuna who had Lord Krishna himself by his side, the king of all those who inhabit the seven continents and therefore an emperor of the whole world, and a Siddha, a perfected Yogi. This most fortunate and blessed person who has in his command all that a man may wish to possess for his happiness,—like food, drinks, women, power, fame, etc., remains as one in whom all desires are fulfilled. The happiness of such an emperor of the world may be taken as the supreme happiness among human beings in this world, which is available to no one else. A hundredfold of this climax of human joy of an emperor of the whole world is enjoyed by those manes, who, in the previous Kalpa have duly performed all the rites like Sraddha (offerings to departed ancestors with full faith and sincerity) and attained even in the beginning of this Kalpa, those happy worlds as a result of those Karmas. The manes’ joy multiplied a hundred times equals the joy of the great celestial minstrels called Gandharvas who live in the heavenly worlds. Again, a hundredfold of their joy equals that of Karma-Devas who have done meritorious deeds in this Kalpa and enjoy their fruit of heavenly happiness. The Ajana-Devas who have become Devas even in previous Kalpas through their meritorious Karmas, like sacrifices and others, enjoy happiness equal to one hundred times that of the Karma-Devas. A hundredfold the joy of the Ajana-Devas is the joy of Prajapati (an epithet of Brahma or one of the ten lords of created beings first created by Brahma), and a hundredfold of the joy of Prajapati is the joy of Virat. Hiranyakagrabha’s joy is again a hundred times that of Virat. Hiranyakagrabha is otherwise called Sutratma and is the cause of this gross universe. No embodied being anywhere, whether with a gross body or subtle body, can experience joy greater than that of Hiranyakagrabha. With a view to create dispassion even in the joy of Hiranyakagrabha, those versed in the Vedas have enumerated this gradation of joy, the existence of which depends on the gross and subtle bodies. The knower of Brahman who is free from desire for any of these joys, who is learned in the Vedas, who has known their true import and who is free from sin, enjoys each of the above different grades of joy. When he becomes desireless even for the joy of Hiranyakagrabha, which is the highest in the above series, then he becomes one who has experienced that joy.

35 Bhima and Arjuna are two of the five Pandavas, the heroes of the Mahabharata epic.
36 Vyasa is the celebrated author of the eighteen Puranas, Mahabharata, Brahma Sutras, etc.
37 Asvini Kumaras are the twin physicians of the celestials.
38 A Kalpa is said to be equal to 1000 Maha Yugas or 4320 million years of mortals, which is equal to a day of Brahma.
also. That bliss, of which the Vedas say that the joy of Hiranyagarbha is only a Matra, a very small fraction, and which is experienced in deep sleep, is the nature of the Supreme Self itself. It is greater than the greatest joy of Hiranyagarbha. This bliss has no comparison anywhere, and is beyond the reach of speech and mind. This blissful Atman is the witness of this phenomenal world, both manifested and unmanifested. It is to establish that the bliss of Brahman is beyond that of Hiranyagarbha, that the dispassionate and desireless knower of Brahman has been introduced in this context. By saying that a knower of Brahman who is beyond all desires, experiences the joy of Hiranyagarbha, it is made clear by the Vedas that the bliss of such a knower of Brahman is far superior to that of Hiranyagarbha.

Yajnavalkya thus instructed king Janaka on the Bliss which is the nature of Supreme Brahman. He further said:

Yajnavalkya: O king, that Bliss attained during deep sleep, which goes by the name of Brahma-Loka, world of Brahman, about which I have instructed you, is superior to the joy of Hiranyagarbha.

Hearing this, the king repeated the same offer as on the previous occasions, and said:

King: O my preceptor, I have listened to your most valuable exposition. I am giving you one thousand cows as a gift in return. I further pray to impart to me such further instructions as would liberate me from this transmigratory existence.

13. THE STATE OF DEATH AND TRANSMIGRATION

The thoughts that were passing through the mind of the king at this stage were:

“This great Sage has instructed me that the Atman, which is one only, deluded by ignorance, experiences the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. Though, in fact, the Atman is free from all attachments due to the effects of the previous Karmas, It experiences, as it were, the waking and dream states, and when they are exhausted, passes on to the deep sleep state also. Just as a bird, when fatigued after flying in all directions, takes resort to its nest, so this individual soul, when tired of the experiences of the two states of waking and dream, reaches the Supreme Soul in deep sleep. By knowing so much, how can one be liberated from this mundane existence, for in the waking state there are, again, the numerous desires and the experience of the six modifications, viz., existence, birth, growth, change, decay and death? The Sage has not refuted them by any logical argument. Therefore, how can the individual Jiva who experiences agency and enjoyership quite contrary to the nature of the Atman which is eternally free of all modifications, become the Atman itself in the form of Bliss? So long as a man does not possess knowledge free of all doubts and misconceptions, he cannot attain liberation even in several births.

Yajnavalkya, who knew that the king was entertaining such doubts, was afraid that the intelligent king would compel him to impart the full knowledge. He, however, had great appreciation for the subtlety of the king’s intellect and thought within himself: “I have several disciples who are all very intelligent, but none of them can rise equal to this king. Under the pretext of the boon granted by me, he is trying to get a thorough and complete knowledge of Brahman here and now. This knowledge is such that one cannot obtain it even if he serves a preceptor for a number of years. This wise king has bound me, as it
were, by the rope of the boon which I have granted him. I am therefore obliged to impart to him now the whole Knowledge which I have learnt after a long period of discipleship under my preceptor.” He said to the king:

Yajnavalkya: O foremost among kings, the Supreme self-effulgent Purusha, about whom I have instructed you before, resides in the cage of this body as the witness of the intellect. He experiences dreams either before or after deep sleep. In dream, He creates by His own light, men, women and other objects and enjoys with them. Entering the various subtle Nadis, He experiences pleasure and pain as the fruits of meritorious and sinful actions done in the past. He who is self-luminous, unattached and blissful, again returns to the waking state and resides in the gross body to enjoy gross objects. He comes to the waking state only to experience the phenomenal gross world and not for any other purpose. When the Karmas which yielded the dream experiences get exhausted, He enters the waking state, and when the Karmas which are the cause of the experience of gross objects while remaining in the gross body also run out, He takes another body in the next birth. O king, I shall explain how He leaves this gross body and takes another one, though an illustration. Please listen.

The carriage engaged by a man for a long travel contains all sort of utensils and other household effects besides money, womenfolk and children. This carriage thus heavily loaded, plods on at a very slow pace, grating and creaking all the way under the weight. Even so, the subtle body about to leave the gross body, heavily loaded with materials in the form of merits and demerits, groans and moans under their weight while leaving at the time of death. Man’s thoughts at that time would be as follows and sometimes he may be seen talking aloud, giving expression to them:

“O my dutiful sons, O my dear and beautiful wife, O all my wealth which I have earned by the sweat of my brow, O my sincere friends and relatives, I have now to part with you all. Fie on me, a sinner leaving all of you who have been a source of pleasure to me on many an occasion. I am going to a distant unknown destination never to return. I feel miserable, for I have absolutely no help now. In my boyhood while I was healthy and strong, I have intimated and thrashed my weaker play-mates. I have kicked with my feet the images of gods and goddesses. I have caused grief to my own mother who had undergone untold sufferings for my sake. She carried me in her womb like a piece of rock for long ten months, and she had always my welfare in her heart. I came out of the womb causing her unbearable travails. The excruciating pain suffered by her at that time can be compared only to that caused by cutting one’s limbs by a sharp blade or by the stinging of insects and worms on the fresh surface of a wound. She used to clean my body of its discharges and excretions with her tender lotus-like hands without any repulsive feeling. She used to feed me day and night through her breasts with the essence of the food and drink she consumed. In my childhood I was living on her milk alone. Out of extreme affection for me, she used to give delicious dishes, depriving herself of them. In my early ages, due to want of discrimination, I considered such a compassionate and loving mother as a demoness. I had tormented her many a time with harsh and provoking words. I never care to listen to her words, as though they were coming from an unreliable stranger. I have also used abusive words against my father, preceptor, aged men, the learned, those versed in the scriptures, and several well-wishers of mine. I have eaten unwholesome and forbidden food. Due to
ignorance, I have done many acts which are prohibited by the society and the scriptures. In my prime of youth, I was always thinking of my wife and other women, and almost worshipping them like goddesses. Due to insatiable greed, I have unlawfully appropriated wealth, cattle, wives, houses, cultivatable fields and gold belonging to the virtuous and the poor. The whole of day-time was spent in the accumulation of wealth and all night in the company of women. I have committed many heinous crimes like killing of the pious and learned, which would certainly bring me their fruits of never-ending pain and misery. With the setting in of old age, when grey hairs and wrinkles made their appearance and my limbs became benumbed, desire, anger and passions aggravated, and my sufferings increased all the more. Tormented by sex even in that state, and unable to move, I suffered agony in the presence of women and also in their absence. No living many can bear the pains which I suffered due to bodily weakness, old age and the fire of anger. My mind was deluded, and due to greed, I was not willing to spend money even for my own comforts. The misery I am now undergoing is equal to the result of the sin of killing a knower of Brahman. I wonder how these passions of desire, anger and greed have not broken my heart so far! In this old age, my wife and children disregard and despise me like a cankerous dog. Desire, anger, greed and delusion, four vicious traits took firm root in me from my very boyhood, and like the flames of ablating fire fed with ghee, went on increasing as days passed. Now death has come to me, and even in such a deplorable condition I am engaged in committing sins. Death is about to catch me in its net, as an angler would catch the fish. This house of mine is like a waste tank with filthy water in the form of wife, wealth, etc., where I am being scorched by the sun's heat in the shape of the three kinds of miseries, viz., Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhidaivika. I am covered completely by the filth and mud in the form of passions like desire, anger and others. Like a fish being cut into pieces by the fisherman, my limbs are being cut off, as it were, by the cruel god of death. As a butcher slughters the sheep, he massacres me as though for sport without the least mercy. I feel as though I am pierced by thousands of sharp needles all over my body. My limbs are now like logs of wood. My head whirls. My eyes have become dim and I am unable to see anything. My mind and organs are out of my control like a pair of turbulent oxen. Due to congestion of phlegm in my throat, I am unable to breathe freely. Pains are becoming unbearable. The gastric fire combining with the wind dries up and burns my whole system. The pain which I am now suffering is as acute as that caused by repeated stings of myriads of scorpions with their poisonous tails all over my body."

Sage Yajnavalkya said:

O king, with such thoughts, and making half audible voice, the Jiva leaves the physical body. At that time, though he could not speak clearly, some gibbering sounds like ‘ghur, ghur’ are produced till the vital force completely leaves the body. When such sounds are heard, one can be sure that death is very near and the man will not survive for long. Just as in deep sleep the Jiva attains the Supreme Atman shining in the heart in the form of bliss, so in death also he attains the Supreme Atman. In sleep, one has no particularised knowledge, and in death also such particularised knowledge ceases to exist. The Jiva identifies itself temporarily with the Supreme Brahman and then takes up another body. When a man in his death-bed becomes unconscious and gasps for breath, he is about to take another body, the nature of which depends on his past actions. Old age combined with disease and weakness is followed by long and hard breaths and unconsciousness. Finally, he leaves off
this gross body and takes another. O king, hear another illustration from me. Fully ripe mangoes in a tree drop off their stalks without any effort. Even so, when the Karmas that sustain this body are exhausted, the Jiva drops off the body. Just as those mangoes had identification with the tree before their separation from the stalk, the Jiva has identification with the body before death. The fruit separated from the tree does not remain in mid-air. Even so, the Jiva who has left the gross body does not remain without any support, but takes another body according to the subtle impressions of the past Karmas.

There is no uniform rule that one would take a body similar to that which is left off. The nature of the new body taken varies according to the Karmas done in previous births. That the ignorant Jiva will take another gross body is however certain, for the subtle body never dies before attainment of the Knowledge of Brahman. It can neither exist without a gross body. In this phenomenal world, the subtle body remains only in two places. During deep sleep it resides in the causal body in the form of subtle impressions, and at all other times it rests on the gross body. In hell, heaven or even in the world of Brahma, the subtle body experiences pleasure and pain only through a gross body. Though no extraneous help is required for the subtle body to leave off the gross body, it requires the help of the gross body to experience pleasure, pain and the rest. This mundane world is experienced as an admixture of happiness and misery by ignorant men and as unmixed pain by discriminating men. Experience of happiness and misery, along with those objects which are conducive to those experiences,—such as food, drink, etc., cannot be had in the absence of the gross body. Just as a vulture flying in the air is unable to eat the piece of meat held in its beak while flying, so the subtle body, which is in a station of motion, cannot enjoy food and drink in that condition. Therefore the subtle body leaving the gross body immediately assumes another gross body to experience pleasure and pain. Though it is thus certain that the Jiva which leaves one gross body will take another, there is no surety that the new body to be taken will be similar to the previous one. Some creates in hell are born as men on this earth, and thereafter as celestials in heavens due to their meritorious actions done during their sojourn here in this world. Celestials, due to sinful Karmas, take birth as men on this earth, and sometimes due to preponderance of sins go to hells also. Just as a child plays with a monkey tied to a tree with a long rope, the Supreme Lord, who is also the creator of this universe, has tied all the creatures which inhabit the several worlds with the strings of subtle impressions of merits and demerits earned by them in their several births. When the Lord just pulls a string, the helpless creatures start experiencing the particular results of their previous actions. Therefore, the Jiva cannot be sure of getting a similar body after death. All creatures bound by the unseen subtle impressions of the Karmas remain under the control of the Lord. He who makes us do meritorious and sinful actions and also dispenses with their results is the Lord himself. He himself leads the creature to the different worlds according to their Karmas. The Jiva who has been ensnared in the noose of Karmas, being always dependent, has no freedom to choose as he likes a body similar to the previous one. The Jiva who is in the body of a blade of grass may get the body of Brahma,

39 It is, however, the opinion of many authorities, that in these super-physical realms, all experience is had through a specially acquired form of the subtle body known as Ativahika-Sarira.
the creator, and vice versa. Just as an insect caught in the breeze is helplessly taken along with it, so this Jiva after death is taken either to hell, heaven, earth, sky, or any part of this universe according to his past actions. There is no certainty that he would get a body similar to the one left off. The mention in the Vedas that the Jiva would take a similar body after death only points to the likelihood of it due to the strength of the similar subtle impressions, and is not to be considered as a rule. Had there been such a law, the results of merits and demerits would be rendered ineffective. In this beginningless cycle of births and deaths, it cannot be known which Jiva would get which body. If there were any definite known ruling in the matter, then the cycle would have a beginning, which presumption is not acceptable to anyone. Even in the birth of a creature, none can say that it is its first birth. No one can similarly assert that a particular waking state is the first of its kind. When such is the condition, how can one posit a beginning for this universe! Creation, preservation, and destruction are going on like a Persian wheel,—incessantly. It is impossible to know which is the first creation. The universe, which was in its causal unmanifest form, is seen to manifest itself. The manifested universe is seen to be sustained. The same universe thus created and sustained is also seen destroyed in course of time. The universe which merges itself in its unmanifested cause in the form of subtle impressions at the time of destruction, is again created. Because of this never-ending process, it is compared to a Persian wheel.

He who argues that this universe is with a beginning will not be able to answer the question as to when was that beginning, and therefore his arguments would fall flat. If he says that this transmigratory life came into existence with the birth of this body, it is not

NOTE: The scriptures admit of one of two types of creation, viz., sudden creation (Yugapad-srishti) and gradual creation (Krama-srishti). According to the former view, Isvara creates the universe with the fiat of his will, as it is said, for example: ‘let there be light and there was light’, which would mean that God creates the variety of the universe through sheer discretion and an arbitrary will. According to the latter view, creation is only a manifestation, rather than a sudden projection, by which what is manifest was already existent in a potential causal state, so that God becomes a helping factor in the effectuation of the cause rather than a creator of something absolutely new. Even accepting the view of Yugapad-srishti or sudden creation by Isvara as it would appear from certain passages in such creation texts as the Srimad Bhagavata (vide III Skandha), we have to conclude, on the basis of the opinion of teachers like Acharya Sankara, that God has no special preference for or against any ting, and the so-called sudden appearance of variety during creation is only a manifestation into effect of the variety that was already present in the variety of the cause thereof, —as, for instance, there is a sudden growth of a variety of plants during the rainy season, all conditioned by the variety of their own seeds or roots.

All this would amount to saying that evolution and involution are progressive and gradual and there cannot be an effect without a corresponding cause behind it. As such, the statement that the Jiva in the body of a blade of grass can rise to the status of Brahma has to be taken in the sense of an evolutionary progression by stages rather than a sudden ascent without intermediary stage.

Also, the question has another interesting side. It is this: since it is impossible to fix a beginning for the process of creation, every cycle of creation being determined by the potentialities of a previous cycle (vide, the Vedic dictum: Yatha-purvam Akalpayat), it is quite probably and reasonable to believe that any particular thing or individual might have been possessed of any kind of body, so that there is no saying which body one would assume in which birth. Thus, too, there seems to be a case for it likely being that even a blade of grass can be raised to the status of Brahma, etc. etc. (Editor—‘The Divine Life’)

The Philosophy of Sage Yajnavalkya by Swami Brahmananda
acceptable to reason, for the father and mother who were the cause of his body existed even before him, and his body, which has come out of them, cannot therefore be the first of its kind. Hence, the time of birth of his body cannot be considered as the time of creation of this phenomenal world. Suppose he says: ‘though this transmigratory existence may be beginningless in others’ view, in my view the time of birth of my body is the beginning of my Samsara,—mundane existence’. If he says that he refers to his body, there is no objection, and no one would disagree with him that his body is with a beginning. The object is that we cannot accept his statement that his body is the first among all bodies. If he says, ‘To me, this is the first body’, we ask him: “Who are you? What is the nature of ‘you’ who make the above assertion? Are you the body or different from it?” In case he replies that he is different from the body, we would ask him, “Where were you before the birth of this body, and wherefrom have you come to occupy this body?” In reply to this question, if he says that before the birth of this body he was residing in the Atman and by chance he had entered this body, he should be questioned again: ‘Whether you have assumed any other body before coming to this body, and if not, why? Did not the ‘chance’ which is said to be the cause of taking this body exist even before? If it did not, what is the cause for it?’ He cannot give proper answers to these questions. He may say: ‘I cannot say that I had a previous body, for I have no remembrance about it now.’ This is not a logical answer, for none can decide the non-occurrence of an incident merely because one says that one does not remember about it.’ In this world, none can remember all the experiences even in this life. Leaving off his arguments that he is different from the body because of the above objections, if he argues ‘I am this body’, then also he has to face the same very objection. When he argues that the cycle of birth and death has come to him only with the birth of this body, and that he is the body, he completely forgets his parents who are the cause of this body, and his reasoning being quite contrary to facts proved through perception, cannot be acceptable. Therefore, everyone has to accept the beginninglessness of this phenomenal universe and the cycle of births and deaths. They have also necessarily to accept the rules and regulations laid down in the scriptures about merits and demerits of one’s Karmas. When once these are accepted, one can see that the remark in the Vedas,—that a man after death takes a body similar to the just previous one—has to be considered only in a secondary sense. In this context, in addition to the word ‘Yathagata’, the Vedas have used the two significant words ‘Pratinyaya’ (in the same way) and ‘Pratiyoni’ (to particular bodies) which throw more light on the matter. When one ponders over their meanings, the position taken, viz., that the remark should not be taken in its literal sense, is confirmed. In the beginningless cycle of births and deaths, it is also not unlikely that after death one may sometimes get a similar body, for we see that a creature immediately after birth is able to do certain functions pertaining to its species even without any external help or instructions. The reason for this is not far to seek. It is only the persistence of the subtle impressions of the activities in the previous birth, and it has to be presumed that is has taken a similar body in this new birth. The same karmas which take a man to hell, heaven or the world of Brahma, yield their corresponding fruits for his experience there, and he gets the next gross body according to the subtle impressions of these Karmas.

O king, hear from me an illustration for one who has done several Karmas in this life, taking another gross body in the next birth.
Those who are born of a woman of the Kshatriya class and a man of the Vaisya community are known as Ugras. Those who do cruel and wicked deeds in this world, disregarding scriptural rulings, are also called Ugras. Sutras are those born of a Brahmana mother and a Kshatriya father. Some of them are charioteers by profession and some are well versed in epics. The term Suta is also used with reference to those who attend on Kings irrespective of their birth or social order. This word literally means one who is born. This can apply to all embodied creatures, for all are born beings. The word ‘Enas’ means sin. The servants of a king engaged in execution of criminals and other similar actions of a cruel nature are referred to as Pratienasah. Those who are in charge of villages are called Gramanyah. These Ugras, Sutas, Pratienas, village authorities and also other people await their king at the time of his return after long foreign tours, with all ceremonious and auspicious articles. The court musicians play sweet music with their different instruments, and courtesans with lighted lamps in their hands, anxiously await the return of the king. Beautifully decorated living quarters are got ready for the followers of the king and his army, and they are provided with delicious food and drinks for being served to them immediately on their arrival. High officials eagerly wait at their respective district boundaries. All their conversation is only about the arrival of the king: ‘How far has the king come? O! He has reached that place. He would arrive here very shortly.’ Conversing thus, they remain in their stations expecting the king’s arrival every moment.

As in the above illustration, for every creature, after death, the Karmas which are to yield pleasure and pain readily await its arrival. They get ready everything for the experience of the Jiva in his future life. They decide which man should be born in which place and for which parents. The Karmas determining these matters anxiously await his arrival and welcome him when he comes. The presiding deities of the organs like the sun, fire and others, and the five elements which are the constituents of the body, await his coming, ready to dispense with the results of his actions, with objects of enjoyment and suffering depending upon the nature of his past actions.

O king, you can further extend the application of the above illustration of the king going on a tour, in his case. When the Ugras and other servants of the king hear that their master has started on a tour, they hurry up to follow him. Even so, when the Jiva is about to leave his body, the organs of speech, hearing, etc., and the Pranas follow him along with the chief Prana. This is the time when the man in his death-bed begins to gasp for breath. Due to weakness, when he loses his power of memory and could not recognise even his sons and others near him, at that time the Jiva draws up all the organs in the subtle form of light and enters the heart. When the Jiva who was residing in the eyes, nose, palate, speech, ears, mind, skin and intellect, enters the heart along with them, the man does not see, smell, taste, speak, hear, think, touch and know anything. Similarly, the Jiva does not illumine the other organs also. Unitig with the Supreme Lord in the ether of the heart, the Jiva becomes one with him. This fact is well known in the world. At that time, those dear and near ones who squat around the dying man say: “He does not see us who are sitting near him, neither does he hear our words. He does not smell the Tulasi (holy basil) garland put on his neck. He does not taste the cure poured into his mouth. He does not speak even a word to us who are always dear to him. He does not even touch us who are his devoted sons.”
Just as in deep sleep one is not able to think or know anything due to the merging of the organs and the mind in the heart, so in death, one is unable to think or cognise anything. The wise men who are near the dying man then say that the organs have united with the heart, and therefore he has lost his power of sight, thought, etc. When the Jiva gets united with the Ether in the heart, the nerve-end of the orifice of the heart is lighted up as though to illumine the path of the Jiva to go our leaving the body. As brilliant lights illumine the roads when the king starts for a journey, the Heart’s light illumines the path of the Jiva to the next world. At that time, the Jiva, who is the Lord, and also Indra, bids farewell to this body, the city of eleven gates, viz., two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, anus, genitals, navel and the crown of the head called the sagital suture.

The Jiva of a sinner who is to go to hell after death leaves the body through the anal orifice. The Jiva of one who is very sexual passes out through the genitals. He who goes to the world of departed spirits leaves through the navel. One who is too much attached to food and drinks generally leaves the body through the mouth. In case one has great attachment to pleasant smells and scented articles, his Jiva escapes through the nostrils. He who is very fond of music finds is way out through the ear-holes and goes to the world of the celestial musicians. The Jiva who passes through the eyes goes to the world of the sun or fire or the moon, and that Jiva who leaves the body through the crown of the head reaches the world of Brahma. According to this order, the anal orifice forms the most degrading, the crown of the head forms the most glorious, and all other apertures occupy comparatively a lower or higher position. The Supreme Lord, with the limiting adjunct of the intellect, leaves the body followed by the vital power along with the organs. The Atman, with the intellect as the limiting adjunct though united with the Supreme Being, as in deep sleep, becomes possessed of the knowledge of the future body to be assumed. Knowledge and Karmas with the previous subtle impressions follow the Jiva who is leaving the body and who is the experiencer of pleasure and pain. When knowledge and Karmas which are a mixture of good and bad, along with subtle impressions, fructify at the proper time, they bestow a corresponding body on the Jiva.

The fact that a Jiva, after leaving one body, does not remain without assuming another one is illustrated by the example of a grass leech. When this creature moves among the grass, it does not leave the posterior part of its body from one grass before firmly attaching its anterior part to the next grass. Even so, the Jiva who resides in one gross body does not leave off that body before getting hold of another one. If another body is not obtained, it will not leave the present one. A king or a landlord or any other person for that matter does not leave his dilapidated house before constructing a new one. Similarly, before getting ready the new body, the Atman does not leave the old one. Though the Atman, in fact, is omnipresent, homogeneous an indivisible and does not allow any movement from one place to another, one should know that such movements are perceived in It because of its identification with the intellect. The intellect residing in one body cannot take another body. Just as the organ of sight, starting from the physical eyes, goes to the distant stars millions of miles away through modifications of the mind, so the intellect also, with the subtle impressions of virtuous and vicious actions, even while remaining in the old body, reaches the new body through psychosis by the Law of the Supreme Lord. Just as the organ of sight which has its seat inside the gross fleshy eyes and which has reach the star does not know that it has gone there, so at the time of death the intellect in the body, though it
attains the new body, does not know that fact. As soon as the palace officials come to know the king's desire for a new palace, they at once, even while the king is residing in the old palace, construct a new one and furnish it with all requirements, like horses, elephant, etc. Seeing the well furnished new palace, people may say that the king is residing there, though the king may be in his old palace or on his way to the new one. Even so, the several Karmas of a person who is in the jaws of death create well in advance the body to be assumed by him after death. Since the Atman is all pervasive, and since the Karmas have reach the point of fructification, and also since the intellect has the change of reaching the new body through psychosis, it is said that the man who is about to die has connection with both the present and the future bodies. This man is to enjoy the fruits of his actions in the next body, and he has already enjoyed a portion in the present body and thus he is related to both the bodies. Just as one who thinks of renewing the chain on the neck or the upper cloth on the shoulders looks at the new chain or the new cloth kept at a distance, so the dying man who is about to leave his body sights at a distance his new body which has been created by the Karmas residing in the intellect. Manifested fire in burning fuel when in contact with a ball of iron identifies itself with the iron and makes it bright and hot. When the burning fuel leaves off its heat and light, the iron ball becomes cold and loses its brightness. Even so, when the reflection of the consciousness of the Atman identifying itself with the body due to superimposition leaves the body, it (the body) becomes inert. The separation of the burning fuel from the red hot iron ball results in the destruction of the latter. Similarly, the separation of the reflection of the Atman from the body results in the destruction of the body. The burning fuel leaving the first ball may come in contact with another ball which then becomes bright and hot. Even so, the reflection of the Atman on the expiry of the Karmas which gave the experiences in one body, leaves off that body and enters another more comfortable and agreeable or in consonance with the Karmas that are to materialise in the next birth.

In this world, a goldsmith makes different kinds of ornaments with a single piece of gold. If one of them is found to be old or defective, he melts it and makes a new one out of it. Thus, the same gold takes up one form after another. Even so, the Atman shapes the Ajnana (nescience) into different bodies. When the particular group of Karmas which was the cause of one body is worked out, that body, which was till then considered as dear and therefore taken care of, is thrown off as rotten and unwanted due to the influence of the group of Karmas which is the cause of the new body. The Jiva considers the new body as a better one, although it may be really worse in many respects. This seems to be the rule in all creatures. A man who is under the influence of Mantras (mystic formulae) or drugs, and whose intellect has as a result been confounded, considers a leper woman with her dirty and diseased body as very beautiful and equal to Indrani, the spouse of Indra, the king of the celestials. Her nose and ears might have been affected by the dire disease. Still, in his eyes, she appears most lovely as though with well shared and perfect limbs. Analogous is the case of a deluded man who divorces, without any consideration, his virtuous wife who is of celestial beauty, who is always faithful and devoted, and who is born in a nobler family than himself. Similarly, when the results of the meritorious actions are spent up, the Jivas in the bodies of kings and other superior beings, in which all kinds of pleasures have been enjoyed, leave them off and take birth in the wombs of dogs, swine or other similar and
more degrading wombs, and deluded by the multitudinous sins, consider the new bodies as beautiful and lovely.

In the event of good and virtuous thoughts arising at the time of death, there is a chance of getting births in superior wombs. If all the previous subtle impressions, knowledge and Karmas happen to be favourable and meritorious, the Jivas obtain, in conformity with their intensity, the bodies of either the manes, celestial musicians, celestials, Virat or Hiranyagarbha. When the Karmas are a mixture of good and bad, productive of merit and demerit, they get human birth on this earth. If sin predominates, the bodies of inferior and low-born creatures like dogs and swine are taken by the Jivas. In this way, all beings, from Brahma the Creator down to a blade of grass, being involved in the process of the universe, whirl round and round in this endless cycle of evolution and involution, births and deaths.

In the bliss of the non-different, non-dual Atman, which is not separate from the Atman, there is difference in the degree of its manifestation when it is experienced by creatures, and I have pointed out this fact to you earlier. This difference in degree is proportional to the degree of the Sattva-Guna (the quality of goodness and purity) of that Vritti of the intellect which removes the veil of ignorance over the Atman. Just as we see difference in space due to its limiting adjuncts like a jar, a pot, etc., though space has no difference in itself, so difference is perceived in the Atman limited by the intellect and its modifications, although in reality the Atman is non-dual and one only. No difference is really caused in the nature of the space limited by a need, a pot, a house, a mansion or a city. Even so, no difference is caused in the Atman due to the pleasures and pains in the limited adjuncts of Brahma (the Creator) in the Brahma-Loka and a dog in the street. A starving man feels satisfied when he gets something to eat to appease his hunger. A king feels satisfied when he is given delicious dishes. There is no difference in the satisfaction derived by the two persons. There is difference in the objects of enjoyment in the two cases, but the happiness experienced is the same. The rich man may acquire the objects of enjoyment with much ease, and the poor may have to exert much to get them, yet both enjoy the same feeling of satisfaction. Just as a poor man suffers due to hunger or illness, so a king also suffers when he is hungry or ill. Likewise, misery and pain are similar in the poor as well as the rich. Hunger, thirst, fear, sleep, desire to possess objects liked, hatred toward those disliked, ignorance of the bliss Atman and the urge to excrete faeces and discharge urine are the eight blemishes in man. The pain caused by them and the pleasure caused in their appeasement are the same in all creatures. There is no difference in them among the poor and the rich and among even the animals, dogs, worms, and insects. From a worldly point of view, there may be difference in some minor items, but as far as the more important ones are concerned, they are the same in all creatures. As the same space remains in objects like a pot and others, it is the same Atman which resides in Hiranyagarbha, a dog, and all other creatures. O great king, it is the omnipresent Brahman who resides as the Atman in the hearts of yourself, myself, nay, all creations moving and not moving. I have told you earlier that, when He is with the limiting adjunct of the intellect, He himself becomes the Vijnanamaya, the self constituted by valid knowledge. He who is Isvara himself, identifying himself with the limiting adjunct of mind, vital force, etc., becomes localised. He is then called Manomaya, Pranamaya, etc.—the self constituted by the organ of sight, organ of hearing, etc. The Atman which is the Supreme Lord, attaching itself to the five elements, similarly becomes possessed of their particular nature, and It is then
designated as the self constituted of those elements. The same is the case with all other
limiting adjuncts like the quality of inertia, desire, anger, virtue and even absence of virtue,
non-virtue and positive vice. O great king, I need not expatiate this any further. I may tell
you, in short, the whole universe of subtle and gross nature is this Atman itself. It is this
same Atman that constitutes all that resides everywhere in all the forms visible directly and
indirectly. Whatever Karma It does or custom it follows, It becomes one with it. Karma
done and custom followed are the same in one sense. Custom differs from Karma in being
different in different countries. In this context, actions either enjoined or prohibited in the
scriptures are referred to as karmas, and actions generally done in the world which do not
come under the injunctions and prohibitions of the scriptures are referred to as customs.
Men who do only those Karmas sanctioned by the scriptures are called virtuous, and those
who go contrary to them are said to be non-virtuous. By doing virtuous deeds one earns
merit, and by non-virtuous deeds, sin. Therefore, Karmas and customs are not two distinct
factors. If all the virtuous deeds, both scriptural and worldly are classified as meritorious,
and all actions contrary as non-meritorious, there will only be two classes of Karmas, viz.,
meritorious Karmas and sinful ones.

Truly speaking, desire and anger, virtue and vice, and external and internal Tamas (inertia)
do not adhere to the Atman. So also the five great elements, the ten organs, the vital force
which manifests itself as different functions in the body, the mind and the intellect which
exist in the form of myriads of perceptions and consciousness, and all the sense-objects like
sound, touch, etc., with their resultant effects of pleasure and pain, do not inhere in the
Atman. O king, all these are only endless sources of pain, while the Atman is eternal,
blissful, self-effulgent, beyond the reach of mind and speech, and free from all differences.
This Atman, though omnipresent, shines particularly in the heart of yourself, myself, nay,
all creatures, mobile and immobile objects, eternally in all states, as along as there is a
body. O king, just as the non-attached space becomes the cause of the city of clouds, the
Atman becomes the cause of this whole universe. O king, when the blissful eternal Atman is
bereft of the knowledge of Itself, It experiences misery for no particular reason. Due to
ignorance, It attaches Itself to the limiting adjunct of the intellect and becomes one with it.
Then assuming doership and enjoyership, It is subjected to desire, action and ignorance,
and drifts about in this vast ocean of births and deaths like the rind of a gourd-fruit in the
stormy sea. Just as boys toss a puck here and there with their hockey sticks, the several
Karmas throw the Jiva into various wombs. Due to the instigation of the Karmas, the Jiva
transmigrates again and again, revolving like the Persian wheel, taking birth sometimes in
higher and sometimes in lower wombs. The pots in a Persian wheel fill themselves with
water, empty themselves after a time, remain empty for a short time, and again fill
themselves with water. Even so, the intellectual self attains this world at one time, the
nether world at another time, sometimes hell and sometimes heaven. He who is non-
different from the Supreme God considers the body assumed by him, whether it is that of
Brahma the Creator or of a dog, as his Self. Whenever he has to leave such bodies, he treats
them as contemptible as offal. After entering a body, he considers the food for that body as
the most delicious and superior among all eatables and does not see anything else to
compete with it in delicacy. When the body is troubled by hunger and thirst, he considers
himself being affected adversely. Similarly, when the body is smeared with sandal paste, he
identifies himself with that also. In a like manner, life in the several wombs, birth in
different species, and experiences of pleasure, pain and death belonging to the body are
identified with himself. O king, you have already experienced all these. I have, therefore,
enumerated but a few instances just to remind you in this context.

I have told you before that this Atman, identifying with the intellect, appears to suffer
untold pains when leaving the body due to its relation with Karmas, and that It takes a new
body immediately after. Sometimes, this new body happens to be in hell. O king, I am
horrified to even think of the excruciating pains and tortures a sinner has to undergo there.
Just as, in the dream state, though one experiences fear and pain, there is no destruction of
the gross body, so in hell, whatever pains one may suffer, the body subjected to those
sufferings (the Yatana-Sarira) is not destroyed. Those creatures who were injured by one
while living in this world through either thought, word or deed, take the very same forms
in hell and return those injuries ten millionfold, and they have to be suffered without any
murmur or resistance. When a sinner who has cause suffering to innocent wayfarers or
misled them on wrong paths goes to hell, he experiences short distances as miles and mils
long. Those sinners who pilfer others’ shoes or sandals will be made to walk on bare foot
over sharp iron nails with poisoned tips. When those who have committed theft of food
materials and drinks go to hell, they suffer from extreme hunger and thirst. Men who have
robbed others’ clothing will be robbed of their clothes in the hell by the agents of Death in
the presence of their mothers and grandmothers. Those who disobey their parents and
preceptors here have to undergo great torture in hell. The fair skin of those men who were
engaged in stealing gold in this life will be peeled off again and again by the messengers of
Death. Those who have committed the sin of murdering learned and respectable men are
smitten on their heads by iron clubs resembling thunderbolts, like blacksmiths hammering
iron bars on the anvil. Men who are addicted to drinks are made to drink molten iron
poured into their mouths forcibly in spite of all their cry and anguish. If one had stolen even
a small piece of gold from a knower of Brahman, his body would be chipped off on the
wayside. The sinner who had illegal connection with his preceptor’s wife, who is to be
respected as one’s own mother, gets his genitals cut off and made to embrace the form of a
woman made of cast iron with red hot spikes all over it. Those who have illegal connection
with others’ wives also undergo the same suffering with the only difference being that the
punishment of cutting of the genitals is waved in their case. A woman of loose conduct also
undergoes the very same unbearable tortures.

Whether the sinner is a man, woman or eunuch, the fruits of the sins have to be suffered
invariably. The use of the word ‘man’ in the scriptures is only indicative and it includes all
human beings. Even women who have an equal status with men in all sacrifices and other
ritualistic Karmas have to experience the results of their meritorious and sinful actions. If
they were to have no connection with these, the Mantras chanted at the time of marriage
which mean, ‘You shall be a partner to me in all my Dharmas, Arthas, and Karmas’, would
be falsified. No scripture anywhere says that women shall enjoy the fruits of meritorious
deeds and not suffer those of sinful actions.

Whether it is a man or woman, whoever induces or causes another to do sinful actions is a
greater sinner and therefore suffers misery of a more intense type than one who actually
commits the sin. If attachment to sinful action is the same in both of them, the sin and its
resultant suffering will also be equal. In the case of one who, by force, makes another to
commit a crime, when the latter happens to be ignorant of it, the sin and its result accrue only to the former. When a man and woman engage in illegal connection by the force of one of them, if the weaker of the two has no desire for, or attachment in the act, he or she does not become a sinner. When such cases of sinful actions are forced upon one, he or she should resist provided there is the necessary strength. If one is not able to resist due to weakness, sin does not adhere in that person, and the one who has by force made the other the victim of the sinful action, alone will have to suffer. Even if one has to lose his life to get out of such sinful actions, he should not hesitate to die and thereby avoid the action. This is the view of some great saints. They also opine that when the man prepared to die in order to avoid the sin is prevented from death, the whole of the sin accrues to the first man who is the cause for the commitment of the sinful action. Some sages differ in this matter. They say that one should not lose one's life at any cost, and they hold suicide as taboo, which is a greater sin than all other sins. That between one's own death and a sinful action, one should prefer the latter to the former, is their view. That when one threatens another with death for not committing a particular sinful action, the latter should do the action and thus save his life, is the view of some wise sages. They argue that when a sinful deed is thrust upon one by force another, the whole in on account of the commitment of that action goes to the latter, and the former is free from any stain. But, if the former is to die and the crime remains uncommitted, the instigator is freed from the sin, for he only wanted the other man to do the act and had no desire for his death. There are also scriptural statements to the effect that even at the risk of one's life, one should not do prohibited actions and that one should do only those actions which have the sanction of the scriptures. Such statements are meant to apply only to those who do actions of their own accord. They cannot apply to those who are compelled to act by external forces, because we do not find any expiatory rite for the sin of suicide. Not only that, the Vedas also say that people who commit suicide attain undivine worlds covered with darkness. Therefore, one should always refrain from doing sinful actions himself, and from causing others to do such actions. The doer and the instigator both will have to suffer the results if they have attachment to the action. Anyone who is able to prevent the commitment of a crime, remaining on the spot at the time but keeps quiet and allows the perpetration of the crime, also has an equal share of the sin. Though all the three are equally responsible for the action, there may be slight variations in their respective share of the sin which will be proportional to their attachment to the crime.

The scriptures have prescribed expiatory rites for sins committed unwittingly. But upon one who after performing the expiatory rite repeats the same sinful action, those rites do not bestow the desired result. When a man commits sin even while doing the expiatory rites, the rites become fruitless like a bath in the Ganges given to an elephant. Let one be a man or women, if he or she continues to do sinful actions without even the thought of expiatory rites, they have to suffer endless miseries and pains in hell.

One who keeps company with great sinners for a full year will also suffer the pain of hell like those sinners. One who kills dumb creatures is tormented by those creatures with deadly weapons, their sharp teeth, hoofs, nails and their pointed horns. The flesh in the body of a meat-eater is devoured by birds of prey from all sides, even while alive. The wife and children of a sinner of deluded intellect who, doing his lifetime, without knowing the existence of a world after death, misappropriates others' wealth for the sake of maintaining
them, become prey to wild carnivorous animals in his very presence. He, with all the members of his family, is taken away by huge vultures to distant places in the sky and dropped over glazing fire. Sometimes they are dropped down on hard rocks from great heights. The vultures tear them into pieces with their pointed beaks and drag them on the earth. He who is always bent upon doing harm to other fellow-beings is thrown into burning fire or deep chasms or heaps of offal. Falling in these places, afflicted by physical and mental agony, fatigued by hunger and thirst, losing all individuality, without any help from any source, he becomes as contemptible as a cankerous street dog. This sinner, alone or with others who are also suffering like him in hell, reaches the path leading to the terrible world of the dog of death, the dispenser of justice. While travelling through that path, some places on the way are white-hot due to the heat of the twelve blazing suns, and some other places are paved with red-hot copper where there is neither water nor shady trees, not to speak of food and drink. Just as thieves and other criminals, while being taken handcuffed along the streets, are beaten black and blue by the king’s officers, these sinners who have caused misery to creatures through their thoughts, words and deeds while travelling along those paths, are flogged heavily by the agents of Death, again and again. They denounced him by proclaiming all his sinful actions done in this world. Counting them one after another, they curse him, bind him with ropes, strike him with iron clubs and drag him to the hellish world. They address him thus:

“O sinful man, although born in a sacred land and having obtained the rare human birth, you have failed to do meritorious acts to enable you to attain heave or final liberation. Not only that, you have also done many a sinful action. O dull-witted man, you may have wives, sons and other relations in the hell also, but none of them would give you happiness. In the hell you will not get the pleasures which you desire so much. The wife and children for whose sake you engaged yourself in sinful deeds have all left you in the crematorium itself. If you had done virtuous actions, their results in the form of merit would have followed you now like the sins which have come with you. All men in the world were terribly afraid of you and shunned you like a wild animal, for you were always engaged in robbing them of their wealth and property. Whatever useful things such as cows, women and wealth others possessed, you took them away from their rightful owners by sinful means. The retribution has not come and the vultures tear your eyes and heart into pieces with their sharp bills. You had caused intense pain to many by your cruel words and deeds and their results have now come upon you. You have to be considered a most despicable man, for even after being born as a human being in a holy land, you have managed to come to this hell. A man devoid of merit, even if given a kingdom to rule, will not prosper with it, but will only be doomed to suffer.

A Jiva who has done virtuous Karmas, leaving this body attains the worlds of the deities presiding over smoke, night time, the dark fortnight and the six months of the southern solstice, one after the other. From there, he attains the happy world of the manes, and thereafter the everlasting heavenly world. From this world, he goes to the world of the moon filled with divine nectar. Remaining there, he enjoys all divine pleasures given to him by the celestials. Only he who has performed sacrifices, charities and other similar meritorious Karmas, attains such worlds. O sinner, you have not done any of these Karmas. You have no right for these worlds. How can you then hope for the world of Brahma.
Those who have human births, having controlled their organs and acquired the knowledge of several methods of meditation, and mastered the Ashtanga Yoga, the Yoga of eight limbs of Sage Patanjali, attain the world of Brahma either by meditation on the Supreme Lord through the Panchagni Vidya (meditation on the five fires) or through the worship of any of the deities. Such men leave their bodies through the subtle Nadi called Sushumna (that passes through the spinal column from the anal plexus to the crown of the head), go out through the tenth orifice of the body, attain first the deities presiding over the northern path of the sun and the year, and in this order reach the celestial world in the course of one year. From there, they go to the presiding deity of air who provides them with a tub-like path similar to the hole in a chariot-wheel. Going through this path, they attain the presiding deity of the sun who has an aperture inside as that of a Dambara (a kind of musical instrument) through which they pass on to the presiding deity of the moon. This deity has a hole similar to that of a kettledrum which leads them further on to the deity of lightning. When they reach that deity, an angel, awaiting their arrival, takes them from there to Varuna (the president deity of water), Indra (the chief of the celestials), and Prajapati (Lord of all created beings) and finally to the world of Brahma, the Creator, which is above all the worlds. In this world, there is a lake called Ara and a river named Viraja, both filled with the waters of desire, anger, etc., which obstruct their attainment of the world, and which they have to cross. As soon as they reach the shores of the lake, five hundred celestial damsels welcome them with all kinds of auspicious articles. One hundred of them hold beautiful garlands of flowers. Another one hundred damsels have divine, sweet-scented articles. One hundred others carry with them innumerable varieties of celestial fruits. The fourth set of hundred brings different kinds of perfumed powders of exquisite smell. The last batch of hundred has costly clothes and ornaments. These women dress the Jiva and adorn him as they adorn Brahma, the Creator. The Jiva, who has thus been embellished and honoured, crosses the Ara lake in a moment by his mere wish and comes to the presiding deities of Muhurta known by the name of Yeshthahas. Because they cause obstructions in the path of meditation and worship for the attainment of the world of Brahman by creating desires and imaginations in the spiritual aspirants, they are called by that name. When they, who are thirty in number, see this great soul, they run away in all the ten directions. Thereafter, he mentally distributes all his sins to his enemies, his merits to his friends and his wealth to his sons, becomes free from birth and death, and crossing the Viraja river reaches the tree called Ilya. At the foot of this tree, he enjoys the rare scent of divine perfumes which are available to Brahma alone. The next halt in his journey is the city referred to as Salyaja where he experiences divine tastes. The word Salyaja means a beautiful city with tanks, wells and lakes. Thereafter, he enters the residence of Brahma known by the name of Aparajita. Here he attains Brahmic effulgence and becomes equal to Brahma, with Indra and Prajapati as his sentinels. They show great fear and respect for him and lead him further on to the heavenly court of Brahma, which goes by the

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41 Muhurta is a unit of time roughly equivalent to 48 minutes.
42 The word Ilya means modification of earth.
name of Vibhupramita. At this stage, this great soul attains the glory and renown of Brahma himself.

The next higher stage in his onward march is called Asandi, which is a specially constructed altar with legs made of wood. It is the principle of intelligence and hence, when he reaches this stage, his intellect expands and becomes very subtle. The two portions of Sama Veda called Brihat and Rathantara form the two legs of this altar on the eastern side, and the two portions called Saitya and Noudha, the two legs on the western side. The four corners are the four portions which are known as Vairupa, Vairaja, Svakara and Raivata. The most wonderful sofa known by the names of Prana and Amitaujasa, is above this altar. The universe consisting of the three worlds and the three durations of time, viz., the past, present and future, forms the two legs for this sofa, and Bhudevi and Sridevi (the two goddesses of the earth and wealth) the remaining two legs. Sama Veda portions with the appellations of Brihat, Rathantara, Bhadra and Yajnayajniya form the planks of this sofa. The strings (Sutra) running from north to south and those from east to west are the Sukla and Krishna Yajurvedas, and the Rik and Sama Vedas respectively. The rays of the moon form the soft bedding over this sofa and the Udgitha of the Sama Veda is the snow-white bed sheet spread over it. The pillow that is placed there is Sri, auspiciousness and wealth. The Sridevi referred to before represents worldly wealth, and Sri here refers to spiritual and Vedic wealth. On the above sofa rests Hiranyakarbara who is the primeval Purusha, the Lord of the Universe known by the name of Brahma. In this phenomenal universe, there is no happiness greater than that enjoyed by this Hiranyakarbara. Here, there is a sacred peepal tree called Somasavana which is very dear to him. As the nectar of immortality is always flowing from this tree, it is called by the name of Somasavana. There are also two oceans in this world of Brahma called Ara and Nyam which are filled with the waters of divine ambrosia and which are greatly cherished by Brahma. Avidya (primal nescience) which is the cause of the mind and all its concomitant effects, helps creation by Brahma who is also the Sutratma (the immanent deity of the cosmic subtle body). The light in the eyes which is the material cause for the organ of sight, and which is the Sattvic portion of the fire element, is the reflection of this Hiranyakarbara. The Vedic sounds referred to as Ambah, and consciousness arising from those sounds, encircle Brahma in the form of celestial nymphs. In this world of Hiranyakarbara flow rivers in the form of meditation and worship, with the waters of the knowledge of Brahman with and without attributes, which yield everlasting happiness to all by their perennial flow in all parts of that world. The innumerable other worlds are the flowers for the use of Hiranyakarbara, and since they cover him and form a veil over him, they are said to be his garments.

He who meditates and worships Hiranyakarbara through Paryanka Vidya—meditation on the Sofa of Brahman—as described above, attains the Satya Loka which is another name for the world of Brahma. Seated along with Brahma in his seat, the aspirant remains protected by him, like a son by his father. He has, henceforth, no fear of fall from that seat. Then follows a conversation between Brahma and himself, ‘Who are you and what are your means?’—asks Brahma. The aspirant replies: ‘I am thyself and all thy means are my means.’ After this short dialogue, with Brahma’s permission, he stays there most comfortably, just like Brahma.
The five main vital forces., viz., Prana, Apana, Vyana, Saman and Udana form the supports for the eyes, speech, ears, mind and air (Vayu) respectively. The supports for the five vital forces are the five openings in the heart on the east, west, south, north and at the top in the above serial order. The universal counterparts of the eyes, speech, ears, mind and air (Vayu) are the sun, fire, directions, rain and ether. O sinner, you have not meditate and worshipped this lotus of the heart with the above five orifices. When you have done even this, how could one expect you to meditate on the attributeless Brahman? One who meditates on the formless Brahman need not have the least fear of this transmigratory life in the gross and subtle bodies caused through Ajnana (primal nescience). The meditation and worship which by the name of Ahamgrahopasana can be taken up only by one whose mind is introverted and who has his consciousness on the inner Self. This is most difficult to practise. Its result is gradual liberation from this cycle of metempsychosis.

The meditation on the five fires (Panchagni Vidya) is easier to practise and it bestows the world of Brahma with rebirth at the exhaustion of the merits. You have not done this meditation either. Heavens, clouds, human world, man and woman are the five objects to be meditated upon. These five should be imagined as five fires in this meditation which is very meritorious, for through this one attains the world of Brahma. One who does the Agnihotra sacrifice (the daily oblations offered in the sacred fire by the householders) regularly alone has the right to practise this meditation and worship. You have not been doing Agnihotra and other ritualistic Karmas. The aspirant should meditate on the sun, year, earth, open mouth, and the organ of generation as the fuel for the five fires. Similarly, in the place of smoke coming out of the fires, he should imagine the sun’s rays, white clouds, ordinary smoke, life-force and hair respectively. The daytime, lightning, night, speech and womb respectively, should be meditated upon as the flames for these fires. The charcoal left after burning in each case is the directions, thunder, moon, eyes, and pleasure in the middle of the sexual union. The sparks are the sub-divisions of the directions, thunder, stars, ears and pleasure during the course of the sexual act. For the oblations, one should imagine the following five, viz., faith, moon, rain, food and semen respectively, and the presiding deities of the organs should be meditated as the priests in this fire sacrifice.

When the stock of meritorious deeds, the results of which enabled the Jiva to attain the world of Brahma, get exhausted, he returns to the human world through ether, air, clouds, etc. In taking birth, he suffers intense pains from the state of the foetus in the womb till he comes out as a baby. The pains in the hell which I described do not come anywhere near those one experiences in the womb. You have directly experienced them yourself. No sentient being can bear the excruciating agony inside the mother’s womb which is surrounded by foul-smelling faeces, urine and worms. When one is there, he cannot even breathe. O sinner, you are not now suffering even a small fraction of these pains which you suffered inside your mother’s womb. The acute pain at the time of birth has no comparison with any pain in hell. The torment and torture one undergoes at the time of coming through the narrow mouth of the womb cannot be described in words. How did you manage to spend ten long months inside that fleshy cage with all the discomfort caused by the sour, pungent, saltish and hot foodstuffs that the mother consumed every day! O wretched man, how did you survive the life in the burning womb which is covered on all sides as though by blazing fires, enduring the continuous stings of serpent-like worms. O idiot, O low born, when we merely speak of your sufferings in your mother’s womb, our bodies shiver and
fear makes us faint. If one is to live in hell for millions of years enduring all the sufferings there, it can have some comparison with those in the mother’s womb. In case the mother has sexual union at the time, it causes endless pain to the child inside and to the parents. This is not however spoken of in the world. Those wise people who know this fact of this suffering call such sexual connection as Aparam Bhadram. The man who goes to his wife after impregnation incurs the sin of murdering the woman and the child. Similarly, the woman who has sex-connection during that period commits the sin of killing herself and the foetus within her.

O sinner, you have caused sufferings to yourself and to others in your several births in the world, and have as their result endured the miseries of the hell a number of times. Forgetting that, you have been doing evil actions again and again. You identified yourself with your perishable body which is abhorring like the excreta, and which becomes food for jackals and dogs. You were repeatedly doing sinful Karmas in the world against the injunctions of the scriptures and the worldly laws. You are now reaping the fruits of those actions and there is no cause for any complaint. The cause of your present suffering is neither we who are the agents of Death, nor Death himself, nor other creatures. O sinner, please do not forget that actions done by you against another through either mind, speech or body, which if done to yourself would not be liked by you, will turn against you on a future date and that they will never leave you who are wicked and have always injured other creatures. You have cause great sufferings to the peace-loving and pious persons. Due to passion and delusion, you have insulted the forest-dwellers, the celibates and the monks with vile words. You used to say about them:

“These so-called Brahmans eat, drink and enjoy like me. How can one say that they are real ascetics! They have none of the qualifications like control of mind and celibacy. They perceive sense-objects such as forms, sounds, etc., through their organs of sight, hearing, etc., like ordinary men. These people who pretend to be very wise, experience pleasure and pain through their mind like all of us. How can I believe that such people whose organs of sense and action are all active and who live in solitude do not have connection with the opposite sex also. No living creature with all the organs in a healthy condition will be able to renounce food, sleep and sex. None of the organs of a man in this world can remain in active. When such is the condition, how can the sex organ alone remain without doing its function! Even in a deer which lives on simple grass, in a fish which lives on water alone, and in a snake which subsists only on air, we see the sex organ active. Then how can these persons who live on solid substantial food and who have got the discriminating faculty, be free from sex impulse? They have got very high notions about themselves and being young in age, attract others and ensnare them into their fold and carry on their livelihood. They are of very hard-hearted nature and misappropriate others’ wealth and women. While their eyes are fixed on the tip of the nose, all their concentration is on others’ women and their hard-earned wealth.”

O man, you, a sinner, have no control over your mind and have abused and ill-treated virtuous men in all possible manner. Not being satisfied, you have insulted and harassed modest ladies of spotless character. Looking at pure and chaste women, you were saying:

“Which woman would not desire to possess a fair and healthy man! Let him be her own father, brother or son; if he is good looking, passion is around in her. If a woman does not
go astray, there must be some immediate reason. It may be that the man is not equal to her in social status, or because of a feeling of shame that others may come to know about it. It may also be due to fear for her husband and others, or want of suitable time and place, but never due to the purity of her mind. That woman who, at the sight of a man other than her husband, bending her head looks down, is really looking at the three worlds with her passion roused. How can the God of love who wins over the mind of even great and wise men of discrimination, remain quiet without ravishing the mind of a weak woman! A woman who appears virtuous and chaste in this world should be considered a regular prostitute who deceives her own people by putting on a false appearance."

By such uncharitable and ignoble utterances, you have disgraced the whole feminine world. You have completely turned your back to virtue and righteousness which form the support for this earth. Just as pure white cloth is stained by oil and dirt, you have disfigured the fair face of this earth with your vile and malevolent thoughts, abusive words and sinful actions. You have dishonoured and outraged your revered preceptors and the pious ascetics. Your parents and others related to you have received the most contemptuous treatment at your hands. Your desire and greed were never satiated with whatever you got. You had by illegal means robbed others’ wealth and women many a time. You mind was always engaged in thinking of how to create trouble to other living beings.’ I have now succeeded in causing this suffering to my enemy. I will see that he is put to still greater pains. Pretending to be his bosom friend, I will cause never-ending misery to him in course of time.’ By entertaining such sinful thoughts, speaking sinful words and doing sinful actions, you have been a source of unhappiness and misery to others.

O king, reprehending him thus, the messengers of death lead the sinner from one hell to another and make him experience the results of all his past sins. The poor Jiva suffers countless miseries in these hells. Those who do sinful actions suffer their results both in the hells and in future births. Whether the body lives or dies, they suffer unbearable pain always. They attain a body in any one of the four species of living beings, viz., those born of egos, womb, sweat and earth, either in the world of Brahma, the heavens, this earth or the nether worlds. In all these worlds, the denizens do not enjoy the same degree of happiness. There arises a feeling of jealousy against those who enjoy more pleasure than themselves. The fear that the enjoyments may cease at any time, and want of freedom, harass them. They are afraid of those who are equal and also superior to them in these worlds. The mere possessing a body is seen to be the cause of all kinds of pain and unhappiness in all the worlds. This is a fact which is beyond all doubts. Fear of death, and desire to enjoy more and more sense pleasure, are found to be present in all the worlds equally. The pain in this world due to death, longing for sense objects, and loss of dear and near ones, multiplied a millionfold is that experienced by creatures in the nether worlds, heavenly worlds and in the world of Brahma. In all these places, one has parents, wives, sons, relations, friends, enemies and indifferent men, as one has on this earth. After death, when one goes to any of the other worlds, all the above said persons will be found there also.

Hiranyagarbha, who is the grandfather of all, who enjoys the highest happiness, who is possessed of all virtues and all wealth and who is the creator and the doer of all Vedic Karmas, also possesses a body. He is the cause of creation, preservation and destruction in crores of years, and yet remains non-dual and free from all duality. From this,
Hiranyagarbha, who identifies himself with the cosmic subtle body, myriads of universes come out and dissolve themselves. His sovereignty and supremacy depend upon the Satya Loka and other worlds. He is the supreme God resting on the sofa of Prana, with consciousness as his spouse. He has four faces in the form of four Vedas and He resides in the world of Brahma. Indra, residing in the city of Amaravarti who is the foremost among the celestials, the consort of Sachidevi and the ruler of the three worlds, also possesses a body. The eight regents of the cardinal points, and the world-renowned eight Nagas, like Vasuki (king of snakes said to be the son of Sage Kasyapa) and others also have bodies. Because of the possession of bodies, none of them enjoy real happiness. In matters of birth and death, pleasure and pain, derived from different sense-objects and possession of bodies constituted of the five elements, there is no difference between a worm and the Sutrata.

O king, the intellectual self, being always with the body, does not remain distinct from pleasure and pain. As long as there is a body, one cannot avoid experiencing pleasure and pain in this world. The unstained, spotless Atman, having identified itself with the intellect, appears to take higher and lower births. When It identifies itself with the mind, numerous desires and thoughts about auspicious as well as inauspicious objects, doubts about good and bad and belief in theism and atheism arise. In all bodies, It has qualities and functions like bravery, cowardice, shyness, ratiocination, determination, fear, etc. The Atman identifying itself with the vital force, enters the body and remains in the form of the five main Pranas called Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana, the five subsidiary Pranas, viz., Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadatta and Dhananjaya and in various other forms depending on the innumerable subtle Nadis in the body. In the form of the ingoing and outgoing breaths, It becomes the cause of the very life in all creatures. According to the results of the past Karmas, It also becomes the enjoyer of all delicious dishes. Identifying itself with the organ of sight, It becomes the seer of colours like blue, yellow and others. Uniting with the organ of hearing, It hears sounds of low, middle and high pitches. Similarly, this omnipresent Atman identifying itself with other organs, perceives their respective objects and enjoys them. Becoming one with the five elements, It functions in all the bodies in the four species of living creatures through the ten organs of sense and action.

Identifying itself with the primal nescience, the Atman as though becomes the cause of the veiling and projecting powers which veil the blissful Atman and project the phenomenal worlds. The Atman identifies itself with inertia (Tamas), as it were, and causes lethargy, drowsiness, sleep, etc. Identifying itself with desire in general, the Atman causes the birth of sons, daughters, etc., and also other pleasures arising out of the quality of activity (Rajas) which in the end turn into pain and misery. When the Atman identifies itself with the desire for sex, It attains a most miserable state by becoming a toy, as it were, in the hands of those of the opposite sex of a frivolous nature. It does virtuous as well as vicious actions and causes accumulation of their results in the form of merits and demerits. When It is one with anger, It goes generally sinful actions alone, and suffers burning pain like that experienced while remaining in the midst of a blazing fire. It commits horrible crimes such as murder of the wise and the learned, and goes to the darkest hells like 'Kumbhi-paka' where the wicker sinners are baked like the clay pots of the potter. One should realise that the main causes of transmigration are desire and anger. When one is completely freed from these two dire evils, one becomes liberated in this life itself. The intellectual Self is said to be the cause of
happiness and misery, when It identifies itself with virtue and vice. According to the unseen results of Karmas, It becomes the cause of the differentiation of high and low in bodies made up of the same five elements. In this manner, the Atman, the Lord of the universe, identifies itself either directly or indirectly with all objects, and itself becoming those objects, attains them. Though really without name, form, etc., It derives the appellations like holy or unholy man, a saint or a sinner, etc., due to Its identification with actions and habits of persons. The truth is that It is devoid of any kind of attachment and is omnipresent like space, and therefore, It neither becomes holy or unholy nor does It become a saint or a sinner.

He who has done meritorious deeds, earns a fair name, good repute and great happiness, and he who has done sinful actions earns just their opposites, viz., bad name, disrepute, and great misery. On this subject, some learned men of discrimination have said: ‘The Purusha is attributeless, unattached and free from heterogeneity. He does not do any action. Neither does He become a cause or an effect. He does not create the bodies either gross or subtle, but gets himself attached with primal nescience mysteriously, and due to the very same nescience, He creates desire, and then becomes one with everything. In the beginning, He thought that He himself would become many, and created this universe, gross and subtle.’ A being endowed with the faculty of intellect also does the same thing. As soon as it is born, it thinks and entertains such thoughts as ‘that should become mine,’ etc. Thereafter, gradually bound by the noose of time, it loses all freedom and falls in the cycle of births and deaths with all its concomitant brief and sorrow of every kind.

14. DESIRE—WHY IT SHOULD BE AVOIDED

The wise say that the words ‘Kama’, ‘Ichha’, and ‘Raga’ all have the same meaning. Even in the view of those who say that Kama commonly connotes passion for sex, it is only a desire for enjoyment with the opposite sex, and hence it is only a form of Ichha, signifying desires in general. Kama is said to be the seed of the poisonous tree of the cycle of births and deaths. The Jiva, who is the intellectual self caught in the transmigratory existence, is always the fruit of this tree. So is the case with the mental self and others. But the Atman, which is identical with Brahman, does not become the fruit of this tree. These learned men have also expounded the cause for the apparent identification of the Atman with Kama. They say that one possessed of a body in the lowest scale of evolution, first entertains a wish: ‘I should get that object which is dear to me and I will get rid of this object which I hate.’ He then starts exerting to fulfil that wish and does actions which bring him happiness as well as misery here in this world and in the next, for one who does either meritorious or sinful deeds eventually attains their fruits in the form of happiness or pain.

Though every being does actions with the desire of acquiring happiness and avoiding pain, those actions do not bring about the expected results. In all desire-engendering Karmas, one cannot avoid defects and shortcomings in the instruments utilised for the performance of those Karmas. Due to this fact and the inherent painful nature of the mundane world, a man of desire reaps only pain in the end. Therefore, an embodied being, on account of the mental modifications of desire, has to suffer endless pain resulting from the several bodies he takes in this never-ending cycle of metempsychoses. At the time of death of each body, prompted by the past Karmas, the Jiva desires that object or situation for which he had the greatest attachment during his life. The Jiva who has only a subtle body after death, attains

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a gross body either in the world of Brahma or the heavens according to his previous Karmas. This is an infallible rule. If he is attached to heavens due to his merits, he gets the body of a celestial, experiences the pleasures in that world, and thereafter takes birth here on this earth or any other world depending upon the subtle impressions of his Karmas. If such birth happens to be on this earth and particularly in sacred lands, he is born in any one of the higher classes. Again prompted by the subtle impressions of his meritorious Karmas, he leads a virtuous life doing meritorious Karmas which take him to heaven again after death. Again he returns. If at any time, when sinful actions get the upper hand, they drag him to hell. In this manner, a man of desires takes different bodies in the heavens, the nether worlds, the hells, or in the world of Brahma. A man in dream sometimes assumes bodies of which he had thought about seriously in the waking state. Even so, a man, after death, attains a body according to the subtle impressions of his Karmas in this life.

O king, as I have already told you earlier, a man with desires, impelled by his meritorious and sinful actions, attains that which is uppermost in his mind at the time of death. The Prarabdha Karmas, which gave him the present body, are completely exhausted with the fall of the body, and his Sanchita Karmas do not get fully ripe so as to yield their fruits before the death of the body. It is because of these facts that the thought of one at the time of death fulfils itself without obstruction. The Atman gets out of the prison of Karmas, as it were, at the time of death, and at the moment, whatever is thought of by It which is of pure will, is fulfilled then and there. Like an actor assuming different parts in a drama, It assumes several bodies through a mere desire which is sufficient for the purpose. The thoughts of a man of desires take definite shape as to what should happen and how it should happen, and he acts accordingly. He again gets himself involved in the meshes of desires and thus the rounds of births and deaths go on endlessly in this world. Desire for good and evil sprouts from man’s past actions, and from desire subtle impressions are formed in the Chitta. He does good and bad actions in accordance with his will, and those actions again become the cause of good and evil desires. Therefore, one should know that after the birth of a body, Kama is the cause for the will or determination which goes by the name of subtle impressions and which is the source of all Karmas. The cause of this mundane transmigratory existence is also the very same Kama otherwise called ‘Ichha’. There is nothing in this world which can fully satisfy desire. The whole of paddy, wheat and similar other grains together with the entire wealth of this world will not be able to satisfy a man caught in the burning fire of desire. The great Indra, the lord of the celestials, also is said to have desire, for he is always desirous of possessing the world of Brahma which is the utmost limit for all happiness. There is nothing in all the three worlds to serve as fuel to this unquenchable fire of desire consuming the world of Brahma, the heavens and this earth. The Jiva completely depends on the vehicle of the subtle body which is covered and protected by the armour of desire. Nothing can harm this vehicle which is used for the journey in the various bodies assumed by him in the three worlds. The wise say that desire is the first modification of the mind and forms the cause, like the thread, to weave the raiment of this universe. The primordial nescience which is the root-cause of this phenomenal existence, is dependent on the mind, and the mind, with the support of desire, triumphs over the entire animate and inanimate universe.

What can the mind with its umpteen modifications, or for that matter, the primal nescience itself which has, as it were, deluded even the Atman and created the universe, do in those
who are free from desires? The objects experienced by a desireless man do not create
pleasure and pain in him, and therefore their subtle impressions are not formed in his
mind. Though the vital force which is the cause of inhalations and exhalation functions in
him, he is as though without it, or it is incapable of creating any feeling of happiness or
misery in him. In the same manner, the ten organs, the five elements and the gross body
practically do not exist for him. Women of ravishing beauty, enemies who perpetrate acts
of cruelty with their thought, word and deed, as also virtue and vice which yield happiness
and pain, are non-existent for him. Objects of this world can react only on a man of desires.
What can the wife, son and all the worlds do in a man who is above all wants! It is desire
alone that goes by the name of phenomenal existence and not anything else. One in whom
this mental modification of desire is absent, is equal to a liberated man.

We see in this world men, due to desire, taking birth in high and low wombs and suffer all
kinds of miseries. When man becomes desireless, due to the preponderance of merits
earned in the course of several lives, he need not suffer any pain anywhere at any time. Due
to dispassion, when all desires in a man disappear, he becomes a Nishkama—one who is
desireless—as in deep sleep. This man becomes as though possessed of all sense-objects
like son, wife, and others, which a man of desire does not always gain. Therefore, he is
called a Nishkama. Such an ideal spiritual man of no desire becomes Atmakama, for he sees
all objects as the Atman which he has attained. For the same reason, he who is Atmakama is
also Aptakama—one who has no desires at all. A man of desire gets some of his desires
fulfilled once in a way, and even there, the objects obtained are only perishable ones, and
only serve to fan the flame of further desires. Fulfilment of desires in the case of Atmakama
is quite different. He feels that the whole universe is the Atman alone, and this feeling
brings everything to his feet at a stroke. Even among worldly people, we find an ocean of
difference between those who are rolling in wealth and yet always unhappy due to desire
to possess more and more, and those who are poor but live a happy and care-free life.
Those who keep their desires to the minimum are always seen to be contented with what
they have, and therefore, are always cheerful. A moneyed man who is greedy, runs about
here and there to satisfy his multiform desires, all the while undergoing difficulties and
hardships in the form of servitude to the king and his officers, and seldom gets a little
pleasure. A poor but contented man, without any great suffering, enjoying whatever comes
to him as a result of his Prarabdha karmas (that portion of the Karmas which determines
one’s present life and which has already begun to bear fruit), leads his life like the king of
the celestials. He has nothing to fear from the king or robbers like the rich millionaire.
Contentment coupled with little effort results in happiness, while desire bring only pain
and sorrow. Just as a pair of sandals put on by a man walking in the forests gives him
comfort, so contentment becomes the cause of joy in all embodied beings. On the other
hand, if the man attempts to make the whole forest free of thorns and stones, it would only
cause him great hardship and suffering. Similar is the attempt of a man of desires who, in
trying to fulfil all his desires, puts great efforts for that purpose and finally finds himself
drowned in unhappiness only. The happiness enjoyed by one free of all desires is not
available even for an emperor of the world or the king of the celestials, or even for Brahma,
the creator. In a desireless person alone, arises the knowledge ‘I am Brahman’, and once he
possesses that knowledge, his mind will never go after external sense-objects. A light
burning inside a house when extinguished, gets merged there itself. Even so, in a knower of
Brahman, on the fall of his body, the vital forces and the organs which depend on the subtle body, along with the mind, merge themselves inside the body. The Jiva, who is non-different from Brahman even before the dawn of the knowledge, becomes one with Brahman when the body dies. The space within the pot, which remains one with the outer space even during the existence of the pot, becomes one with the outer space when the pot is broken. Even so, the knower of Brahman, all the while remaining as Brahman, becomes one with Brahman after the fall of the body. In the pure sky, the castles in the air are perceived in the absence of the knowledge of the former. Similarly, the universe is perceived in the pure Atman when there is no knowledge of the Atman. The tree of this universe sprouts out of the seed of desire and exists on the basis of the desire-free Atman. When the seed of desire is destroyed with the dawn of the knowledge of the Atman, the tree of this phenomenal world cannot sprout any more. The desires arise in a person due to the absence of the knowledge of the Atman. With the rise of that knowledge, the primeval nescience is destroyed, and with the destruction of nescience, the desires, which are only its effects, also get burnt out. When the desires are thus no more, the tree of the phenomenal world, which thereby becomes seedless, will not sprout again. When the subtle and gross desires in one’s heart subside, the mortal, even while remaining in this body, becomes the immortal Brahman.

15. JIVANMUUKTI AND VIDEHAMUKTI—SALVATION, EMBODIED AND DISEMBODIED

While remaining in the body, if a person renounces identification with it, he becomes disconnected with the body. Such a person, although with a body, is a liberated soul without any connection with the body. The wise say that the superimposition of desires on the Witness of the intellect in the heart is bondage, and the destruction of that superimposition by the knowledge of the universal Atman, is liberation. The desires are not destroyed completely without the knowledge of Brahman. When such a complete destruction of desires is effected even while living in this body, that desireless one is called a Jivanmukta, one who is liberated while living. The realisation of the self-effulgent and blissful Atman is called liberation. If after this realisation the body continues to live, that state is known as Jivanmukti (embodies salvation) and the state after the destruction of this body is called Videha Mukti, disembodied salvation.

The learned are of the view that the existence of desires in the heart alone is bondage. The wise one having no desires in the heart is a Jivanmukta. Ajnana or ignorance has two powers, viz., the veiling power and the projecting power. The latter is, again, of two kinds. By one, the phenomenal world is perceived as existent, and by the other, attachment to this world is created. That which screens the Atman is the veiling power of the ignorance. When that part of the projecting power causing attachment and the veiling power are done away with in an aspirant, he becomes a Jivanmukta. When the remaining part of the projecting power, viz., perception of the universe, is also removed, he becomes a Videhamukta. Those who are versed in the scriptures say that perception of the ‘seen’ in the form of the three bodies identified with the Atman, is bondage, and its perception without identification is Jivanmukti. In the case of boys, mad men, etc., food, drink and other similar necessaries of life fall to their lot without their efforts according to their Prarabdha Karma. Even so, in the case of the liberated sage, food and other necessaries destined for him go running after him.
and reach him in accordance with his Prarabdha Karmas. Just like a child within the womb takes in the food and drink from its mother till the ninth month but does not know their tastes, so a Jivanmukta established in the Atman, does not have particularised knowledge about the pleasure and pain experienced by him as a result of the force of his Prarabdha Karmas. Those who are drunk, those who are extremely dull-witted, children, etc., may be enjoying several sense-objects, but they may not have discriminating knowledge about them. Similar is the case of a Jivanmukta who does not have particularised awareness about sense-enjoyments. One who is intoxicated will have his mind attached to a particular object. Even so, the mind of a Jivanmukta always rests in the Atman.

A virtuous person, even if he forgets by some accident the nobility and the high status of his family will not engage himself in demeaning activities due to the predominance of the subtle impressions of his previous habits. In the same manner, a Jivanmukta freed from the identification with the body and from all desires will not stood down to sinful and mean actions due to the subtle impressions of his earlier spiritual practices like control of mind, organs, etc. When a man well-versed in the scriptures suffers due to his ill luck, even in that condition he will be talking about the meanings of scriptural texts alone, the reason being the force of his previous subtle impressions. Similarly, a Jivanmukta who is the preceptor for seekers of truth, performs all his routine works with the consciousness of the Atman. A magician who is also learned in the scriptures may project an illusory scene of a preceptor imparting spiritual instructions to the disciples who are all his own illusory creation quite non-different from him, but the on-lookers see him as though separate from the whole scene. Similar is the relationship of a Jivanmukta to his disciples and the instructions give to them. In reality, there is no distinction as preceptor, disciple, etc., in him. He is in the form of bliss and non-dual, but due to the trace of ignorance left in him to enable the exhaustion of the remaining portion of the Prarabdha Karma, he sees differences as preceptor, disciples, etc., and does activities like instruction on the knowledge of Brahman. A sleeping man is not aware of the existence of his own body, and he perceives a dream. In the dream, sometimes he may have the knowledge that he is seeing a dream and the objects seen are unreal. If he is one versed in the scriptures, he will find himself imparting scriptural knowledge to his disciples in dream also. Similarly, the Jivanmukta engages in instructing his disciples, knowing all the while that all gross and subtle objects together with Ajnana (nescience) which is their cause, are not real. Action do not bind him. When one renounces his egoism in the body, one is not bound and does not suffer even while possessing a body. The Jivanmukta who is wise, learned and discriminating has no egoism in his body, and therefore he has neither bondage nor suffering. A snake casts off its slough at the mouth of its burrow, and by seeing it, it does not get attached to it. Even so, the Jivanmukta who is without the least egoism in his body, even while seeing the body, is not attached to it as his awareness is fixed in the knowledge that he is the unattached Atman. One who is egoistic with regard to his body, alone suffers. If one possessed by a ghost is honoured or harassed, the consequent pleasure or pain is experienced by the body and not by the ghost. Even so, in the liberated man, pleasure and pain affect the body and not the Atman who is beyond merit and demerit caused by the Karmas. The objective knowledge of pleasure and pain in a man of liberation who is free from likes and dislikes is similar to that in a child whom it is practically absent. Even that pleasure and pain experience by a liberated man are caused by others’ actions alone. A diseased bedridden man experiences
pleasure and pain due to actions resulting from the desires of his kith and kin. Even so, happiness and misery are caused in the liberated man by the desires of those other than himself. He is neither joyed nor grieved by worldly gain and loss. Just as a very rich landlord possessing extensive areas of landed properties is neither elated at the sight of a flourishing crop nor distressed by a waning one in a small field, so the liberated man is not affected in either way by any worldly loss and gain. His mind rests mainly on the thought of the Atman. A paid servant does not work as the master himself would work, but manages the work somehow waiting for the close of the day for his wages. The case of a liberated sage engaged in worldly duties can be compared to the servant, for his actions are limited to those required for the maintenance of the body,—the fall of which he awaits, all the time keeping his mind fixed on the Atman. The life’s journey of such a sage who does not entertain any thought about the body goes on consistent with his Prarabdha Karmas. Just as in children’s play, the wooden toys connected and supported by strings move about in all directions by the movement of the strings, the body of the liberated one also moves about in this world acted upon by the strings of past actions. Just as a life-sized toy elephant becomes the cause of pleasure and pain on the grown-ups and children according to their mental attitudes towards him. Though his mind does not function even for the maintenance of his body, the body engages itself in action consistent with the subtle impressions of his past actions. Just as an arrow discharged from the bow of an archer travels till its momentum is spent up, even so the body of a liberated sage continues to do actions till the force of his Prarabdha Karma is exhausted and the body falls. A man possessed by an evil spirit does not know what he is doing or talking. Even so, the liberated sage is not aware of the activities of his body, as his mind is firmly rooted in the Atman. Whether the body lives or dies, one who has reached such an exalted state is unborn and therefore immortal, devoid of the three bodies: the gross, subtle and causal. He is devoid of Prana and Apana and still becomes the Prana of Pranas, the Life of life. He who is free from all the three kinds of differences is self-illumined and is, therefore, Brahmic-effulgence itself, and nothing short of It.

16. KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN IS THE MEANS FOR LIBERATION

King Janaka heard from the mouth of his preceptor the above exhaustive exposition on the Atman. He was still ignorant of the means of realising the Atman. The king thought: “The Atman cannot be attained by one who has not got a purified mind, even if he hears the Vedantic truths directly from the preceptor.” As on the previous occasions, the king said: “O most compassionate Sage, I have gained knowledge from you, and I give you a thousand cows as requital for what you have taught me.”

Hearing this, Yajnavalkya started his further instructions on the various spiritual practices to be followed for attaining the Atman, as detailed in the Mantra and Brahmana portions of the Vedas.

Yajnavalkya: O king, the means for liberation, which I came to know in this, which is my last birth, is the one existing from time immemorial, very subtle to grasp and the most auspicious for men. This means is known as Brahma Vidya, or the Knowledge of Brahman. There is no other better means than this for attaining liberation. I alone have properly understood this means which bestows everything to every being. Who else other than me can know this most subtle and mysterious means! I, always of a contemplative nature, have
learnt it from my revered preceptor who is the very embodiment of the Vedas. Learned men who have the necessary qualifications like non-injury, celibacy, etc., can, by adopting this means, attain the heaven of Brahmic bliss and remain merged in the blissful Brahman, like rivers which have attained the ocean. They are freed from all pains of mundane existence, and they remain well established in the blissful Atman. They are freed from likes and dislikes and their ignorance is destroyed. With the complete annihilation of egoism in the body, they become liberated. The Path of the Sushumna extending from the sun in the heart up to the sun in the sky, through which the Satya Loka (world of Brahma) is attained by the practice of Yoga, is in conformity with this means, for such Yogis, after reaching Satya Loka, attain disembodied salvation along with Brahma through Brahma Jnana. The path to the world of the qualified Brahman is connected with the heart and the sun. The most subtle Nadis starting from the heart and the rays starting from the sun meet and a highway is made, as it were, for a comfortable journey. Those who meditate and follow the path of the qualified Brahman perceive forms of different colours like white, blue, red, blood-red, green etc. This path of different colours is known through Brahman in the form of the Witness. He who practises Ahamgrahopasana (meditation in which one identifies oneself with Saguna Brahman) travels through this path. A householder, through the practice of Panchagni Vidya (meditation on the five fires), also goes along this path. Those in the other orders, viz., celibates, forest-dwellers and monks who are lifelong celibates, doing Karmas appropriate to their orders, and practise Ahamgrahopasana, also go through this path.

Others, who leaving all these, perform Karmas without meditation and with expectation of fruits, go through the southern path (path of smoke, night, etc.) and attain those heavenly worlds which cause delusions on account of son, wife, etc., and which are, therefore, called worlds of blinding darkness. Attachment to wife, sons and others blinds the eye of discrimination, and hence these heavenly worlds are said to be of blinding darkness. From this, one can easily imagine the extremely miserable condition of those men who do only sinful actions and going through the third path, attain the worlds of hells. Men who worship Brahma, Indra, and other deities through several kinds of meditation, being desirous of sense-enjoyments greater than what they get in this world, are worse than those who follow the path of Karma. Those men, through the worship of such deities, attain the worlds of the respective deities, and enjoying superior sense-pleasures, become more attached to sense-objects than those treading the path of Karma. After enjoying the pleasures of those worlds for some time, they again come back to this world of misery and pain. Those men who are devoid of the knowledge of the Atman, after death attain the worlds which are well known for their pain and misery and the blinding darkness which surround them. O king, thus have I told you the three paths,—the path of the Devas, that of the manes and of the hell—which are classified as superior, middling and inferior and which related to men of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (rhythm, mobility and inertia), respectfully. Out of these, men who do only sinful actions and go to the hells do not have any chance of redemption even after several births. Those who go by the northern and southern paths have the chance of attaining the knowledge of Brahman in course of time according to their degree of evolution. Those who follow the path of meditation and worship, and those who tread the path of action, have a chance to attain the knowledge of Brahman through purification of mind, but only the few fortunate will get that chance. One who has entered the path of
knowledge free from pleasure and pain has to leave all the above three paths without any distinction. By combining meditation with rites, one goes to the world of Brahma. By doing rites alone, one goes to heaven, and after enjoying the fruits, returns to the world of men. The result of purely sinful actions is attainment of hell. In all these worlds one has to take a body to experience the pleasures and pains there. According to the conclusion arrived at by the knowers of Brahman, pleasure and pain pertain to the body alone, and the Atman has no connection either with the body or with the pleasure and pain experienced by the body. But all the ignorant men of the world think that the Atman also experiences corresponding pleasure and pain along with the body. The reason for this mistaken thinking is the superimposition of the body due to ignorance. Because of this superimposition, they desire that they should always enjoy pleasure, and they are consumed by the fire of this desire. The Atman, which is of the nature of bliss, is self-effulgent and is like an ocean in which all the sensual pleasure in all the worlds if but a drop. The Supreme God, who is immeasurable bliss, always shines in one’s own heart. If one in a thousand realises directly ‘I am this Supreme Self’, then he has no cause to imbibe the afflictions of the body for the sake of any object or for the sake of anyone.

One who has known the Atman is freed from delusion and thereby the identification with the body is destroyed. In the absence of identification with the body, how can the Purusha, who is always bliss and distinct from the body, have bodily affictions! As long as an iron-ball identifies itself with fire, so long it blazes like fire, but once it is separated, it no more possessed the heat and light of fire. Even so, when the identification with the body is negated by the aspirant, he is not affected through the body. As long as a man of the world considers his kith and kin as his own self, so long he experiences their joy and pain as if they are his own. If the feeling ‘they are mine’ is renounced, he need not suffer as before. When one renounces this feeling of ‘mine’ on objects like one’s wife, son, etc., no pain arises on their account for they now stand on the same footing as complete strangers. The attributeless Atman, therefore, appears to suffer pains due to the identification with one’s own body and also with others, and is freed from these apparent sufferings when that identification is renounced. The blissful Atman which has entered the deep recess in the aggregate of this body, organs, etc., should be known through the mystical initiation of the preceptor and reflection on the import of the scriptures. The Atman resides in the lotus of the heart as the self-effulgent one. It is distinct from the conglomeration of the body, organs, etc. It is omnipresent and is the Lord of this phenomenal world. It is the substratum for this world of pleasure and pain. As the rope is the substratum for the snake superimposed on it, so is It the support for, and the underlying truth of this seeming ephemeral world. Besides It, there is no other support for this universe. The three worlds, viz., the world of Brahma, the heave and the hell, attainable through the three paths explained by me, are not different from It. The rope-serpent is rope itself. Even so, the whole subtle and gross universe seen is nothing but the Atman. O Indra, among kings, leaving off the three paths which lead to this dense forest of transmigratory existence,
march on quickly through this subtle but wide path of the knowledge of Brahman before being ensnared by the god of death.

O king, even while living in the body, one should know the imperishable and inscrutable Atman. He who knows one’s own Atman becomes the universal Atman then and there. O King, even after getting a human body suitable for attaining the knowledge of Brahman, if one does not attain It and thereby effect the identity between the Atman and Brahman, it will be a tremendous loss indeed. The aim of one in this rare but evanescent human body but be to get an escape from the misery of birth, death and other afflictions. The ghee that is once spilt over heated sand cannot be recovered by anyone however intelligent he may be. O king, it is easy to get births in higher and lower wombs. O foremost among kings, there is no greater gain than a human birth in a sacred land, a fit and qualified receptacle for the descent of the knowledge of Brahman. O great king, living beings get different bodies and different sense-enjoyments in heaven and hell according to their Karmas. This holy land is specially intended for human beings for doing karmas. If Karmas are performed here, one gets a body, as also sons, wife, etc., in the higher and lower worlds consistent with their merits and demerits.

In conformity with the intensity of the meritorious deeds done here, one attains the Patala Loka which is even superior to heavens in sensual enjoyments. That world is of seven kinds, all filled with every kind of sense-enjoyments. In that world, one seems to witness the dances of most bewitching women with their lovely limbs smeared with yellow sandal paste. These women with faces like the full-moon, fully adorned with gems and diamonds, appear like painted pictures. They completely unnerve the mind of youthful men. When women of such exquisite beauty are not seen even in heavens, how can they be seen here in this human world! One is led to presume that all meritorious deeds of the inhabitants there have solidified into one mass, as it were, which has given the name Patala to that world. In that world, myriads of gems are worn on the heads of Nagas (non-poisonous snakes) each shining like a sun by itself. They wear thousands of necklaces of pearls each as big as the fruit of the Bilva tree and lustrous as the rays of the moon. The use of the adjective ‘Asuryam Pasya’ by Sage Panini (the celebrated grammarian who is said to have derived the knowledge from Lord Siva) with regard to this world, is very suggestive, for none of the denizens in this world can see the sun. Here, there are great demons and Sarpas (poisonous snakes) rolling in riches and enjoying all sense-pleasures and hence the name Bhogis (those who enjoy pleasures) has been rightly assigned to them. The great serpent Vasuki who adorns the neck of Paramesvara or Lord Siva, and Adisesha who forms the couch for Lord Vishnu, are residents of this world. The famous Takshaka who is supposed to rest in the sun’s chariot and for whose dreadful poison there is generally no antidote in the world, also lives there. The other renowned serpents like Karkotaka, the friend of Nala, those named Padma, Mahapadma, Sangha, Kulika, Elapatra, and many others, inhabit this world.

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44 Patala Loka is the last of the seven regions of worlds below said to be peopled by Nagas; the seven regions are Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Talatala, Mahatala and Patala.

45 A celebrated king of the Naishadhas and the hero of the poem, Naishadhacharita.
They all inherit their families’ fame and are of highly poisonous nature. They live here with their innumerable relatives and servants. Their names are enumerated in connection with the description of the earrings, bracelets, etc., of the celestials. The other residents of this world are Mayasura who is equal to Visvakarma (the architect of the celestials), Viprachitti, and several other demons, who are the enemies of Indra, as also Mahabali and others, the celebrated kings of the demons. The celestials always live in fear of these demons. Great sages like Narada (one of the ten mind-born sons of Brahma), going from Patala to the heavens, described these glories of this world to the celestials there.

O king, you know the wonderful pleasures that are being enjoyed by men of great merit in this world, the heavens and the world of Brahma. The pleasure one enjoys in the worlds beginning from Patala up to that of Brahma, are the results of the meritorious actions done by one after taking birth as a human being in this holy land. Similarly, the sufferings one experiences in the hell are the fruits of one’s sinful actions done in this land. In a like manner, the spiritual practices of Sravana (hearing about the Atman from the preceptor), Manana (reflection) and Nididhyasana (deep meditation also) have to be done here itself in order to attain the state of disembodied salvation. Grains are produced in fields but they are consumed in houses. Even so, Karmas are performed in this world, and their fruits are enjoyed in other worlds. Attainment of the knowledge of Brahman by those who are in the other worlds, possessing the requisite qualifications, is doubtful. But, here one can be certain of attaining that Knowledge. One who, after taking birth in a human body in this holy land, does not endeavour for liberation thinking that he can get it in the next life, is like the hungry man who, throwing away the bolus of delicious food in his hand, licks the empty hand. An ignorant man may do that as well. There is none in this world who is as foolish as such a man, for no one can be sure of the nature of the body one would get in one’s next life and the nature of the results of one’s Karmas which one has to experience in it. Such a foolish man, though old in age, is to be considered as only childish. The subtle impressions of the past meritorious and sinful Karmas that lie dormant, obstructed for the time being by the Prarabdha Karmas, are numerous. Therefore, if after the fall of this body, he has perhaps to experience the fruits of his sinful actions, all his hopes to make an endeavour for liberation would become futile.

In gambling with a very high stake, if one loses, that heavy loss cannot be completely made good by playing any number of times thereafter. Even so, in this deceitful gambling of worldly existence, if once the gambler of the transmigrating Jiva loses the wager of human birth, how can he regain it! He may take births in different bodies either in the nether worlds, heaven, hell or the world of Brahma or this human world. In all the bodies, he experiences only pain, for the sense-pleasures which he may get at times, being limited to factors like dependence, cessation, etc., are in no way better than pain. The gamblers in the form of sense-objects who have scored a success over the Jiva with the wager of this human body, pursue him wherever he goes,—ready to play another game and defeat him again. These fraudulent and dishonest gamblers again succeed in their attempt, and robbing him

46 The expert conjurer who is the architect of the demons.

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of all his wealth of meritorious deeds, give him the loin cloth of sin, which is the only thing left for him. The ignorant men, therefore, meet with utter destruction after the fall of this body. Is there a greater misfortune for a man than being left with his sins alone!

O great king, you should therefore never entertain, like an ignorant man, the hope that you can attain Brahmic Knowledge in a future birth. We, who are fit and qualified aspirants, should attain the knowledge of Brahman even in this very birth. We have begun to play with the deceptive gamblers of sense-objects, with the scriptures as the referee. We shall win over those rogues this time, for they cannot deceive us now. O king, remain firm now. These gamblers play false and defeat us only in the absence of an honest referee. Now that we have got the scriptures in the post of the referee, they cannot gain false scores in his presence. With what can they win over us now! Our referee, in the form of scriptures, has, after much consideration, fixed the wagers of celibacy and others with which we can win a victory over our enemies easily. Our opponents in the form of sense-objects can be defeated with the arrow of sacrifice and others and bound by the rope of Sama (control of mind), Dama (control of senses) and the rest. Now start with the water of celibacy and other spiritual practices. O king, the parents of our enemies, along with their relatives, can be destroyed in the fire of the knowledge of Brahman. The mother of these wicked players is the perverted intellect with the power to veil the Atman, and the mind is their father. The hosts of subtle impressions are their kith and kin. In the blazing fire of the knowledge “we are Brahman”, we can burn them out along with their whole family and win a victory over them. O king, these objects of enjoyment have defeated us several times in the past. We are not the only victims, for they have vanquished all the worlds and their rulers. From today onwards, all of us should be vigilant. With the arrows of the organs themselves, and with the help of our referee, viz., the scriptures, we can certainly win a victory over these swindlers. You need not fear any more. Just as the virtuous Pandavas defeated the wicked Kauravas with the help of Lord Krishna, who acted the part of the referee, we can also win a victory now over our enemies. The great loss so far incurred by us is due to our playing with them in over-confidence in the absence of an umpire. Great souls like Vamadeva and others, who triumphed over these gamblers of false sense objects of enjoyment, attained the deathless Atman. O foremost among kings, similarly we can also win a victory over them and become the immortal Brahman. Do not have any more anxiety in this matter. Those of dull intellect, who played with these deceitful gamblers of sense objects without the referee in the form of scriptures, were deprived of their wealth of meritorious deeds and left along with their loin cloth of sins. O great king, if you enquire in the world, you will find many people similarly defeated in this game, who suffer miseries coming in quick succession one after another. Birds, animals wild and tamed, serpents, immovables, etc., seen on all sides, are those defeated in the play with these deceptive sense objects. Because these objects are very good at false play with their dices known as Kritam, they manage to win over men also who are not possessed of Aksha Hridaya. Now that we have become possessed of this Aksha Hridaya. Now that we have become possessed of this Aksha Hridaya of Brahman, we are invincible by the Akshas—dices. The Aksha Hridaya, i.e., the self-effulgent Brahman who is in the form of the Atman, can be known through the initiation by one’s preceptor and reflection over the scriptural texts. This Brahman controls the universe in the past, present and future. When one once knows this Aksha Hridaya, Brahman, he does not find fault with himself and repent: “I have got a human birth fit to
attain the knowledge of Brahman in this holy land. Still I gambled with the false players in the form of sense objects of enjoyment and got defeated in no time. They have deprived me of all my spiritual wealth earned through meditation and worship and have left me with the loincloth of sins. There will not arise any occasion to repent as above after attaining the knowledge of Brahman.

The Atman in all embodied beings, in the form of Truth Absolute, is always indestructible. It is neither the doer, nor the enjoyer, nor the knower and It is different from the individual ego with agency, enjoyership, etc. The ‘time’ which is in the form of years, and also the days of great Brahma and others, is with several differentiations. It is born of the Atman, the brilliance of which does not depend upon any exterior effulgence other than It. The Atmic resplendence illuminates the sun and other effulgent objects and hence the Atman becomes the Light of all lights. That which forms the life of all creatures is neither the Prana nor the Apana (the ingoing or outgoing breaths). It is this effulgent Atman which is the Light of lights that manifests itself as the life principle. Thus have the celestials come to the right decision that life or vital power is the Atman itself. I realise as my own Atman that supreme Isvara who is the Illuminator of all illuminators, who is free from changes like birth, death, etc., and in whom rests the all-pervading ether with the other four elements and the five vital forces (Pranas) which are referred to as Panchajanas and others in the Upanishad. Whoever knows this Supreme Isvara as his own Atman frees himself from all changes and becomes liberated like me.

O king, in the world, the vital force, eyes, ears, mind and speech are usually called the five lights. But those who have the knowledge of the Atman have decided that Brahman, previously referred to as Aksha Hridaya which is the infinite, the full, the most ancient and the immortal, is the Light of all lights. This Brahman remains homogeneous and non-dual before the creation of the universe and also after its destruction. In the middle, It remains, as though, with differentiated forms due to the superimposition of limiting adjuncts. The nature of this Brahman which is beyond all possible differentiations, cannot be known through the external organs. The spotless, pure Brahman expounded in the Vedas can be known only through the modification of the mind with the subtle impressions of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana (hearing, reflection and meditation). Brahman has created first the mind as an instrument to know everything. Therefore, all objects in the three periods of time and those beyond them are known by the mind. But the mind of man is generally seen to be devoid of any fixity and definiteness. This can never be due to the defect of the mind. When the mind is one with the organ of hearing, it does not cognise forms. Though one has the organ of hearing and the mind, one does not see forms if he has no organ of sight. The absence of the organ of sight is the only reason for the non-cognition of forms. Nobody finds fault with a colour blind man who sees blue colour as yellow. Similarly, if the mind devoid of the help of Pramanas is found to have no fixity and definiteness in objects, it is not to be blamed. The perceiver, through the organs of sight and others, cognises only

47 The Upanishadic Mantra (IV-4-17) refers to five groups of five. Some commentators say that the five groups are the Gandharvas or celestial singers, the manes, the gods, the demons and the Rakshasas or Titans.
differences. When the mind functions with the help of instruments which perceive only
differentiation, it cognised those differences alone. But, when it functions with the help of
the authoritative statements of Vedanta which establish non-difference, it cognised unity. It
is in this sense that the mind becomes the illuminator of all objects and concepts.

Therefore, O blessed soul, Brahman, which is free of all differentiations and which is the
Atman in all movables and immovables, animate and inanimate, should be understood only
through the mind. Heterogeneous matter is called differently through different names in
this world. There is no such heterogeneous matter in Brahman. The word Brahman means
Brihat, or great. Primary greatness does not inhere in any of the finite and limited objects of
this world. When this word Brihat, or great, is used with reference to objects like an
elephant, etc., it is to be understood only in a secondary sense. Those who have mastered
that branch of the scriptures dealing with sounds, words and their meanings have
confirmed that meanings of words are of two kinds—primary and secondary. According to
them, the word Brihat, when used with reference to elephants and other similar objects,
will have only a secondary meaning. When the primary meaning of a word is appropriate in
a particular case, no one should resort to its secondary meaning. The use of this word
Brihat in relation to all worldly objects is only in a relative and secondary sense, while its
use in Brahman is in its primary sense and independent without any external reference. No
finite object can come under the primary meaning of this term Brihat. The learned call all
finite objects Paricchinna—limited. Limitation involves measurements on the four sides
and those with measurements are said to be limited and finite. All finite objects become
limited like a gooseberry fruit in the hand. Thus, Brihat meaning great, and Paricchinna
meaning small, are two diametrically opposed qualities and cannot adhere to one and the
same object. A great thing cannot be small at the same time, and a small thing cannot,
similarly, be great also. All kinds of objects in this world have three kinds of limitations,
viz., limitation by space, time and substance. The wise agree that all objects have got
limitations and that Brahman, which is free from all kinds of heterogeneity, is alone
without any of the above three limitations. In a tree, there is a difference among its stem,
branches, leaves and other parts. Such a difference, which goes by the name of Svagata
Bheda (intrinsic difference), does not exist in the nature of Brahman. In a set of cows,
differences may exist among them. One may be hornless, another may be limbless, and so
on. This kind of distinction called Sajatiya Bheda (difference in the same species) also does
not adhere to Brahman’s own nature. That difference which exists between a man and an
object like a pot or a jar, which is known by the name of Vijatiya Bheda (difference among
different species) also has no place in Brahman.

All objects in the universe coming under gross and subtle are, in fact, undifferentiated
homogeneous Brahman itself. The imaginary city in the sky, which is indescribable, being
neither existent nor non-existent, is non-different from the sky in all the three periods of
time. Even so, the whole universe which appears to exist in Brahman, the Absolute, is not
distinct from Brahman in the three durations of time. In dream, along with dream objects,
time and space are also perceived in the heart. Similarly in the waking state also, all the
universe, along with time and space, is perceived in Isvara who is a reflection of Brahman
in Maya. Brahman, who is Supreme Bliss and Light of all lights and who is free from all
differentiation, exists everywhere. Just as no differentiation is caused in space through
objects, no differentiation is caused in Brahman by consciousness. Just as space is
homogeneous inside and outside the bodies of small insects like a mosquito, and big animals like an elephant, so the Atman also is equamious and homogeneous in every object. That which is existing as space and time, as also every conceivable object here, is but Brahman alone and none else. There is no other really existing object.

The snake seen on a rope is not different from the rope in the beginning before the superimposition, in the middle when there exists the superimposition and the resultant mistaken perception, and in the end when the superimposition is negated. Similar is the case with space, time and every object superimposed on Brahman. They are non-different from Brahman in the beginning, middle and end. The Atman in all embodied objects is of the nature of the Supreme Brahman. In this Atman alone, the primary meaning of the word Brahman will be most appropriate. There is nothing beyond this Brahman. Therefore, Vedas refer to Isvara, who is the manifestation of Brahman, as Sarvadhika (greater than all). Being in such a unique position, no differentiation can exist in him. If there be any differentiation, Brahmanhood cannot be attributed to It, and when once it is attributed, there cannot be any differentiation. The Brahmanhood of Brahman being internal is to be accepted, and differentiation being external is to be rejected. The external differentiation does not cause differentiation in the internal Brahmanhood. That which is called Brahman is to be known as the Atman. If destruction is attributed to Brahman, it is tantamount to attributing destruction to the Atman. Is it not better to reject differentiation than to accept destruction of the Atman? Men who are lustful, covetous and greedy, though intelligent, say that everything should be renounced when one is threatened with one’s own destruction. Those who are extroverted and see differentiation, give up everything else when there is the fear of destruction of anything connected with the Atman. Therefore, for the sake of liberation, the supreme aim of human life, why should one hesitate to leave off all differentiations?

Those who prepared themselves to abandon the Atman due to intense attachments to inert objects, are foolish and dull-witted, for where there were no Atman, the objects themselves become non-existent even without one’s leaving them. Considering this, one should be prepared to renounce those perishable objects now itself. When even the materialistic disciples of Brihaspati (the preceptor of the celestials) admit that this universe is destroyed with the destruction of the Atman, how can those who are theists and who believe in the authority of the scriptures, and follow the Vedic injunctions, refuse to accept the fact! Non-sentient objects cannot exist in the absence of sentience. The Atman, being the Light of all lights, is sentience itself. Everything other than the Atman is non-sentient. One experiences in deep sleep that the Atman does not become non-existent even when all the mental modifications subside. One can establish that the non-dual Brahman is not destroyed with the destruction of the non-sentient objects. Let these non-sentient objects be, therefore, renounced. One should never leave out Brahman. No differentiation should be cognised in Brahman. How can differentiation not cognised exist in Brahman which is itself the Atman! When we say Brahman, we mean That which is free from all differentiations, and to attribute differentiation in It, can never be reasonable. When the substratum of the rope is being cognised, there cannot exist in it the superimposed snake. Even so, when Brahman shines, no differentiation can exist in It. The appearance of darkness in light is only due to illusion. Even so, perception of differentiation in Brahman is also due to illusion and nothing else. It should, therefore, be known that the differentiation perceived in Brahman
due to space, time, etc., is merely in name, similar to the son of a barren women. If there were any object exterior to Brahman, then there may be no objection to accept differentiation. But when everything is Brahman, from where can differentiation arise!

Though this differentiation seems to be innumerable through the force of speech and intellect, in reality it is non-existent like a barren woman’s son and a hare’s horn. When in the midst of differentiation, the word differentiation and its knowledge come in, there is the appearance of differentiation like manifoldness. Even if such a perception arises, no differentiation can really happen in Brahman who is the Atman. He who perceives differentiation in the self-effulgent, non-dual Atman which is beyond the reach of speech and mind, attains this phenomenal world again and again and suffers in the cycle of births and deaths. The cognition of differentiation yields the fruits of transmigratory existence which is the cause of misery and pain. Therefore, not the least difference should be perceived in the Atman. He who sees differentiation in the Supreme God, Brahman, suffers intense pain cause through the body. Therefore, Brahman is the Light of all lights, beyond the reach of speech and mind, beyond the purview of all proofs (Pramanas) and free from all movements. This Brahman itself is the Atman of all embodied beings and is free from the three kinds of differences, viz., Sajatiya, Vijatiya and Svagata Bhedas.

The primal ignorance, the mother of this painful phenomenal existence which is in the form of this universe, has only a lower status when compared to the all-bliss Brahman. The existence of the witnessed can come only after the witness. The ignorance which is the cause of the heterogeneity cannot co-exist with the real nature of the Atman. Therefore, The Atman is the supreme, most eminent, without birth and death, immovable and beyond the limitations of space, time, etc. A wise man hearing about the nature of the Atman directly from the preceptor is freed from the pains of the pairs of opposites such as likes and dislikes, etc., and becomes childlike. The mind which hears the great sentences of the Upanishads reflects on their meaning, fixes itself on the goal without allowing itself to go after the external sense-objects, and rests on the Atman itself is called Prajna (Consciousness). This consciousness is in the form of destruction of all pains and attainment of Bliss. One should abandon the study of all literature dealing with not-Atman and resort to the hearing of the scriptures dealing with one’s own Atman which is conducive to the expansion of consciousness. Thoughts on matters related to the not-Atman, though not prohibited by worldly scriptures, cause wear and tear to the organs of speech, mind and the rest. Anything not connected with the Atman, whether it is enjoined or prohibited by the scriptures, should be eschewed by the spiritual aspirant. Just as a man carrying a heavy load on his head always feels miserable, so one who merely thinks only of the present leaving out the past and the future is subject to grief and sorrow. As long as he entertains thoughts about his beloved objects abandoning the inexhaustible Atman, so long those objects weigh heavily on the heart-lotus causing him only pain. The organs are fatigued even by those thoughts and actions enjoined in the scriptures. Therefore, a seeker after truth should completely renounce all thoughts about everything that is not-Atman which causes pain to his mind and organs. Thus, one should make his consciousness expand more and more and when his sorrows and pains would start leaving him. Men who had known this depended on the only means of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana—hearing, reflection and deep meditation,—and none else. They followed the path of discrimination and transcendence of the five sheaths (Kosas) which form the five gates, as it were, in the.
citadel of the Atman. The intellect which passes through these gates becomes very subtle. Those persons who are equipped with the necessary qualifications such as celibacy and others, who are adepts in the practice of discrimination and reflection following the method which I have detailed so far, cross the ocean of this transmigratory existence with their thoughts introverted and realise the Atman directly. There is no other means for the realisation of the Atman.

O king, the mere study of scriptures like the Vedas and Vedangas, such as the science of proper articulation and pronunciation, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, the science of prosody and astronomy and the several philosophies like Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga and Mimamsa, by men of extroverted mind, is as futile as medicines taken by patients without adequate dietetic restrictions prescribed by the doctor. For illustration, take the case of words like Rudhi, Yoga, Guna, Lakshana, etc., in grammar. They only serve to confuse the mind of a spiritual aspirant. A seeker after Truth, if once enters this labyrinth of words and their science of derivation, origin, etymology, etc., will be confused and confounded and will find himself inextricably involved in it. Great persons learned in such sciences are very often led astray by the words and ensnared by the intricacies in sentences. The science of grammar, philology, terminology, etc., are all helpful only to delude the spiritual aspirant and to fatten his egoism.

O, king, one who discusses in an assembly the meaning of sentences in the Purva Mimamsa, deals also with the underlined import of the ritualistic portions of the Vedas. Sacrifices and several other rites form a part of the spiritual practices for the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman. I know all of them and none else is so conversant like me. There are sentences with three parts, two parts or five parts of a syllogism, which are the means of knowing their meanings. The dialecticians put forward several technical objections and defects like reciprocal relation of cause and effect, argument in a circle, absence of finality, etc. O king, a person who has renounced the world but is attached to logic and similar other sciences is often found to be unsteady in mind. He imagines that he alone knows everything and that all others are ignoramuses. He becomes egoistic and proud and causes provocation in others without reason. He behaves like a dog which grins and barks at another dog exhibiting its teeth and runs after it. Such a man is seen to be a slave to hunger, thirst and sleep more than any other. With his mouth open he always howls like a jackal. This man poses himself as learned and ridicules those who are engaged in the exposition of the knowledge of Brahman. By his fantastic arguments, he always becomes the cause of strike in others. He attributes false charges of vice and sin on great souls. He says: “Panini the great grammarian has erred in his aphorism. Rishi Jaimini (propounder of Purva Mimamsa) was a little careless in this context. Sage Badarayana (the author of the Brahma Sutras) has said this without much thought. This Vedic sentence is like the words of an insane man. That sentence is an interpolation by somebody, otherwise it would not have become meaningless. The meaning of this particular text is known only to me.” He also decries those who chant the Vedas, and says that they have completely mutilated them with their wrong intonation and accent. Due to egoism, he poses himself as great, and puffed up with pride brings discredit to his own preceptor. He says: “My preceptor’s intellect is not as keen as mine. Even Brahma had no such sharp intellect in the past. Neither has he got it now nor will he have it in future. My words surge like the beautiful waves of the ocean. My language is perfect, for it possesses all the characteristics required by the science of philology and
terminology." Suffering pain and misery due to the heavy load of scientific information, he always bawls out in the above manner. Such a man is to be shunned and avoided like a donkey, as far as possible, by the spiritual seekers. Even though he has left off his home, estate, wife, etc., difficult of renunciation, it is strange why he does not leave off this mountain of egoism and false prestige. Just as a man throwing off a package of delicious food in his hand and carries a big block of hard granite on his head, so this man, having renounced wife and others who are the source of pleasure in this world, carries on his head the pain-giving egoism most difficult to be renounced.

Therefore, those who are desirous of getting the unsurpassed bliss of the Atman should not think and speak too many words which fatigue the mind and the organ of speech. No wise man would cause fatigue to the Kamadhenu (the heavenly wish-yielding cow) of speech which has four udders. Therefore, fixing your intellect on the Atman and abandoning all thoughts from the mind, renounce all the activities of the organs. O king, if you consider that it is not possible to annihilate the mind which is most turbulent and which churns, as it were, the whole body and the organs, hear from me a device to do it.

The great Atman itself, also known as ‘Aja’ (unborn), resides in the vital forces, intellect and the ether in the heart. In deep sleep, the Jiva who is identified with the intellect lies in this Atman. In the waking state, that very same Atman identifying itself with the intellect becomes one with differences like the support and the supported. In deep sleep, this Atman and the cognitional self become one. The Atman is Supreme and unborn. Just as everything projected by a juggler remains under his control, the whole universe projected by the Atman remains in its control. All living beings have won over the Atman and they keep It in their hearts, like children who keep their affectionate mother in their hearts. Just as the master of a house has all the inmates under his control, so the Atman has all the universe under its control. As the sun illumines the earth, the Atman illumines the universe.

In this world, one becomes great and virtuous by doing meritorious actions. But the Atman does not become great by righteous and noble deeds. People become degraded by committing sinful actions. But the Atman is not degraded by such actions. The Atman which is free from merit and demerit and which is the Lord of all, preserves all the worlds, keeping them under its authority without any distinction, like a king ruling over his country. Like the sun, the Atman is the king of all living beings, and like a mother tending her children, It takes care of all beings. The Atman, which is self-effulgent and of the nature of unsurpassable bliss, holds within It the different social and religious orders of life (Varnas and Asramas) like an embankment. It regulates the course of all the worlds and controls their movements like a great dike. It is due to the Atman that all beings keep themselves within their limits. Who but the Atman can prevent the great five elements like earth, fire and others from exceeding their limits! Who else can make the fearless warrior kings possessed of immense strength and wealth, who are masters of all sciences and superior to all in valour and courage, act within the limits of justice! Similarly, who is there

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48 In the form of Svahakara, Vashatkara, Svadhakara, and Hantakara, which are the Mantras chanted at the time of making offerings to propitiate the celestials, Sages, manes, and men.
expecting the Atman to prevent the wise, the knowers of Brahman, whose fire of anger can turn to ashes all the worlds, who have the Yogic power to bless and curse, from doing harm to the world! Who else other than the Atman is keeping the wild animals of the forest which are fierce and cruel under control and preventing them from destroying the animal kingdom! Who is preventing the mighty oceans with their mountain-high billows from swallowing the earth within their chasms! Who else makes the water flow downwards! Who other than the Atman can keep the earth floating and keep the sun and other heavenly bodies moving in their orbits!

O king, know this Supreme Lord who holds all the worlds in him as the Atman. Since He cannot be known by the extroverted mind, wise men versed in the Vedas have given us an expedient. Just as the mind, due to its attachment to sense-objects becomes extroverted, it can also become introverted by faith and ardent desire to know the Atman. The mind easily attains that which it considers as good. Desire for objects of enjoyment arises because the mind perceives beauty in them. If one is to get firm faith in the knowledge of the Atman, he should perceive the beauty of the Atman. Therefore, O king, make all efforts to perceive beauty in the Atman. It is due to the unseen factor of merit and sin, a man gets knowledge of both desirable and undesirable objects. Just as sin is the cause for the knowledge of the inauspicious in the sinner, merit becomes the cause for the knowledge of the auspicious in the great and virtuous. In the scriptures, mention has been made about meritorious Karmas like sacrifices, charities, and others. One gets auspicious results by the performance of such meritorious Karmas due to which one comes to know the beauty of the Atman, and thereby becomes desirous of attaining the knowledge of the Atman.

Though it is ordained in the Vedas that sacrifices and other rites are the means for the attainment of heavenly worlds, the same Vedas have also enjoined that they (sacrifices, etc.) will also serve as means to the attainment of the knowledge of the Atman. Even though rites like Darsa (sacrifice performed on the new-moon day) are included among the obligatory Karmas, they themselves become desire-engendered actions capable of yielding fruits when the performer does them with desire for any particular result. Similarly, sacrifices and other Karmas which bestow heavenly worlds on their performers who are desirous of them, become the cause for the dawn of the knowledge of Brahman in a seeker after liberation. Scriptures ordain that sacrifices, charity, penance and such other Karmas should be performed consistent with one’s social order (Varna) and religious order (Asrama). They have enjoined sacrifices like Jyotishtoma (a Soma sacrifice considered as the type of a whole class of sacrificial ceremonies) for the householders, and Japan and Yoga for those in the other three orders, viz., celibates, forest-dwellers and Sannyasins. To the Sannyasins, Jnana Yajna (offering the individual in the universal) is specially ordained. Different forms of charities, like giving of free food and grains to the poor and the needy, etc., are to be done by all except those in the fourth order of life, viz., Sannyasins. For a Sannyasin, the greatest charity is not doing any injury either through thought, word or deed to all the four categories of creatures, (viz., those born of eggs, sweat, earth, and womb) and considering them as his own Self. There is no charity superior to this. This charity should be done by men in all the four Ashramas of life as far as possible. To the Sannyasin, this is the only charity ordained. The ‘fear-not’ boon is the sine qua non of the order of Sannyasins. The Paramahamsa Sannyasins (the fourth and the highest order among Sannyasins—the other three being Kutichaka, Bahudaka and Hamsa) should move
about with the Mantra, “Let there be fearlessness to all creatures from me”, on their lips. This applies to all the other classes of Sannyasins also. To direct all one’s actions in such way that not even a trace of fear or trouble is caused either to the mind, organs or body of any creature, is the primary duty of one in the fourth order of life. Imparting Knowledge and the means of its attainment to others by him should not be for self-aggrandisement. As his duty is to protect whoever goes to him with the boon of fearlessness, the gift of knowledge, etc., becomes included in it. It is said that one who gifts fearlessness to another gets a result superior to that obtained by giving, with all faith, the three worlds with all their wealth earned by righteous means, in the holy Kurukshetra, at the auspicious time of the eclipse of the sun, along with oneself, to a virtuous and pious Brahman. When such is the magnitude of the result obtainable by the gift of fearlessness to one among the infinite number of creatures, how great it would be for one who makes the gift to all the creatures in this world! There are not many who make such a gift on this earth. There is no other gift superior to this one, not even one equal to it. He who moves about on this earth making this gift, has no fear in this gross body or any other body, either subtle or causal.

When no injury is caused to any creature either in thought, word or deed, in that non-injury resides Dharma—virtue and righteousness—in all its aspects. It is a well-known fact in this world that injury caused to animals in sacrifices, etc., only results in their death. Slaying any of the creatures in the four species, using weapons, Mantras, medicines, etc., comes under injury through Karmas. Affliction caused to persons by forcible separation of their spouses or wealth also comes under injury through action, for though in the beginning it causes only mental affliction, it finally ends in bodily suffering. Speaking about another’s guilt before the authorities, talking ill of others causing infamy to them, and censuring the virtuous come under oral injury. Feeling of jealousy on account of others’ superior learning, fame and other virtues, entertaining evil thoughts about others’ souses and thinking of harming animals, are examples of injuries through thought. It is said that counselling another in harming his enemy and rendering financial help for that purpose also come under injury. There are several other kinds of injuries in this world. As uttering falsehood is the cause of misery to oneself as well as to others in this world and the next, it is also one form of injury. Obstructing another from performing sacrifices by unreasonable arguments and the like, and not doing such virtuous acts oneself, cause degradation and suffering here and hereafter in the hell, and therefore they also come under injury. Not performing one’s own duties like physical and mental purification, etc., enjoined by the scriptures, and doing prohibited actions, are the cause of the downfall of oneself, one’s family and the country at large.

All thoughts, speech and actions contrary to the above and which have the sanction of the scriptures, are Dharmas. All Dharmas are contained in the one virtue Ahimsa—non-injury. Hence it is that non-injury is eulogised in the scriptures as a great virtue. All those who have a discriminating intellect should practise non-injury by every possible means.

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49 An extensive region nearly Delhi supposed to be the scene of the great Mahabharata war between the Pandavas and Kauravas.
Through non-injury arises Dharma, and through Dharma liberation attained. When even liberation from this transmigratory existence is easy of attainment through this virtue of non-injury, success in gaining worldly wealth and fulfilment of desires through it, need no special mention.

Celibacy is included in non-injury, for great harm is seen to be the final result of connection with the opposite sex. If a woman in her youth has sexual connection with a man, pregnancy results which is a source of pain to the woman and the child in her womb. This pain, which is not uncommon, is equivalent to death itself. Besides, it is due to this connection between the opposite sexes that the Jiva is made to enter this prison of the body. In the absence of such connection, creatures would not have to take gross bodies which are the cause of the three kinds of miseries, viz., the Adhyatmic, etc. Therefore, a man who causes pregnancy in a woman commits a sin, bringing with it great pain and misery. This injury can be avoided by the practice of celibacy. Therefore, celibacy comes under non-injury.

That high-souled saint who refrains from all such injuries to creatures through thought, word and deed, has no necessity to utter falsehood, and therefore he always speaks truth alone. Why should he who has abstained from all kinds of injury to others desire to rob others of their wealth and possess them! Non-injury is the mother of the other four virtues coming under 'Yamas', viz., truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-acceptance of gifts. One who does not injure any living being in any manner is really a God among men.

For Sannyasins, non-injury is, therefore, the highest gift to be given by them. Though it is a very good virtue for others as well, they may find it difficult to practise. Doing one's own duties enjoined by the scriptures, consistent with one's social and religious orders, itself forms penance. Refraining from enjoyment of even those objects not forbidden by the scriptures is Anasanam—fasting—for all persons. It is only proper that every spiritual aspirant observes this fasting as far as it lies within his capacity. To the Sannyasin, remaining without even a trace of desire for anything connected with this world or the next one is real fasting. According to the rules of the Sannyasa order, a Sannyasin is to take that food which he gets accidentally through begging and clothe himself with raiments similarly obtained. Entertaining a desire for anything other than these is not befitting his order of life.

Sacrifice, charity, penance and fasting are actions which are conducive to accumulation of merit as well as attainment of the knowledge of Brahman. When one attains the knowledge of Brahman, the desire for direct realisation of Brahman rises of its own accord due to Adrishta and Drishta (unseen and seen results) and the inherent beauty in Brahman. It is said that Adrishta here means the merit derived from sacrifices and other virtuous actions, and Drishta means the preceptor, the mastery of scriptures and a fit and qualified human birth gained through Adrishta. From Adrishta one gains Drishta, and from Drishta indirect knowledge which kindles the desire for direct realisation. This desire makes the mind introvert, and when the mind does not go out to external objects, the knowledge becomes firm, free from defects like doubts regarding the identity between the individual Atman and the Supreme Brahman. Such knowledge arises in one only as a result of the fructification of great meritorious deeds, and therefore, it is very rare. A learned man with the knowledge of the Atman should become a Muni (sage) who always concentrates his mind on the Atman.
One who has no knowledge of the Atman cannot be a Muni. Those high-souled men who are desirous of knowing the Self-effulgent and non-dual Atman which is of the nature of Brahman beyond the reach of the mind and speech but which is always being experienced by the Self-realised Sannyasins, renounce all actions. One who is attached to actions can never get fixed in the Atman. The embodied Jivas, due to their great attachment to sense-enjoyments, are unable to renounce actions with desire for fruits and those prohibited by the scriptures. Even if they renounce them due to discrimination, there is this defect. All have necessarily to perform the daily obligatory rites as also the occasional ones enjoined in the scriptures, according to the time, place and other circumstances in which they live. Failure to do them would result in sin which would bring unhappiness and misery. While their performance becomes a hindrance to remain fixed in the Atman, their non-performance results in sin. Therefore, renunciation of all actions as prescribed in the scriptures alone will be conducive to happiness. Renunciation done otherwise will only be a source of misery. This is the declaration of the Vedas.

How can a passionate person whose mind is always attached to objects of sense-enjoyments, like flower garlands, sandal paste, opposite sex and the like, attain the knowledge of the Atman! When the mind of one engaged in ritualistic Karmas becomes free of attachment to sense objects, why should one continue to bear the load of those pain-giving Karmas! The scriptures enjoin that one who is qualified for such Karmas should necessarily perform them. How can a man who has no desire for sense-pleasures be said to be a qualified man for doing Karmas! Therefore, to such a great and noble man of no desires, the scriptures say, renunciation comes of its own accord. Just as sense-objects make the mind of creatures extrovert, even so the daily and occasional obligatory rites also make the mind extrovert. Activities involved in begging, etc., do not create extroversion like the Agnihotra sacrifices and other rites. Sannyasins do not incur the sin of omission if they do not go for begging, but a man of desire incurs sin if he fails to do the daily and occasional obligatory Karmas. Therefore, those who wanted to attain the knowledge of the Atman renounced all Karmas, and embracing the monastic order, freed themselves from all attachments. In ancient days, the wise Brahmanas who had attained knowledge of the Atman, renounced all Karmas knowing them to be the cause of distraction. The aspirants in the path who had not actually reached the goal, also gave up all Karmas. Those who had realised the self-effulgent, blissful, non-different Atman like a gooseberry-fruit in one’s palm, renounced all desires and remained actionless, knowing that all Karmas are the cause of distraction like sense-enjoyments. When one asked those high-souled men who, embracing Vidvat Sannyasa even while in the student’s stage attained liberation in this life, why they did not enter the householder’s life which gives progeny and pleasure, they replied: “There is no happiness greater than the happiness of the Atman which we are having always. For getting this happiness, no external objects are required. Marriage is done with the object of getting happiness from progeny in this world and in the next, which comes only indirectly and not directly. We are now of the very nature of Bliss. Even dogs

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50 Sannyasa taken after attainment of the Knowledge of Brahman, as differentiated from Vividisha Sannyasa taken with the intention of getting Brahman-knowledge.
and other animals have progeny and what we shall do with such progeny! We have the eternal treasure of bliss of the non-dual, self-luminous, immortal Atman.” So saying, all those wise men embraced Sannyasa and lived on alms. Some of them were already married and others not. The former set renounced the three desires, viz., the desire for progeny, wealth and worlds here and hereafter, as well as the enjoyments derived from them and entered the order of monks. Desire for progeny is the same as desire for wealth, for to a father, the son becomes wealth like cattle and riches. Therefore, progeny is included in wealth. Similarly, desire for wealth is included in desire for worlds, for wealth is the cause of happiness like the heavens and other worlds. Those versed in the Vedas declare that desires are only of two kinds, desire for happiness and desire for objects. Why should those who enjoy the highest Bliss without the aid of external objects, entertain these two desires!

O king, He about whom I have instructed you as the self-illuminating, blissful supreme God, is known as the Atman by those wise sages. It is about this Atman I questioned that learned Sakalya on a previous occasion. This Atman is distinct from being and non-being aspects of the gross and subtle universes, and yet It remains as their witness. He who is self-effulgent is not illumined by the organs like speech and others, and by the other illuminating objects of the world such as the sun, fire and the like.

The wise say that an act of cognition would always have the support of a second entity. Cognition consists of different factors such as the one who cognises, the act of cognition, the object cognised, the consciousness which illumines the object and the relationship among them. There can be no cognition in the absence of these differences. The self-luminous blissful Atman which is also called the Supreme Person, being devoid of all the three kinds of differences, viz., Sajatiya, Vijatiya and Svagata, is beyond cognition. Due to the absence of differences in the Atman, It does not decay or wear off with passage of time like a pot or a cloth. It remains unattached with all the objects around. There is no death for It. That which has difference, alone will have attachment. The Atman, which is by nature painless, is not pained. Which intelligent man can know That which is known as the Atman by those high-souled men who, having renounced all the three desires, lead a mendicant life completely depending on alms! This Supreme person is not consumed by the fire of merits and demerits which are the cause of pleasure and pain. Both merits and demerits bring about pain and misery to all creatures alike. Misery arises due to commission of demerits and omission of merits. Sin causes pain in the course of commission and also by the thoughts of the sufferings in the infernal regions which result from them. Merits also are the cause of pains, for there are several difficulties in performing virtuous actions which produce them, and there arise thoughts that their results in the form of enjoyments in the heavenly worlds would soon be exhausted. If one does not commit any sinful action, the egotistic feeling that arises in him that he is a sinless man becomes the cause of pain and misery. When a man who refrains from meritorious actions sees other people suffering, compassion in the form of thoughts that he has not done anything to alleviate their troubles becomes a source of misery in him. When a good Karma in the course of its performance is obstructed by the results of past sins, one feels miserable for his inability to complete that meritorious action. When a virtuous man sees, either in this world or in the heavenly worlds, persons who have performed greater meritorious Karmas than him enjoying their superior results, the thought that he has not been able to perform such actions like them becomes a source of misery in him. To an ignorant man, the thought that he has, throughout his life, from birth
to the time of death, done only sinful actions and not any meritorious deeds, becomes the source of great misery.

Just as Hanuman (the chief of the monkeys and a great devotee of Sri Rama) crossed the ocean of both merit and demerit which is difficult of wading by ordinary men. Thoughts like, ‘I will attain heaven through these virtuous actions; I will have to go to hell because of these sinful deeds,’ do not arise in the mind of the wise. Similarly, thoughts about the prosperity and well-being of his sons and cattle, which are results of unseen merits, also never enter his mind in his lifetime. ‘I am selfish and I am minding my own business only; therefore, I will be immediately affected by dire diseases and great infamy’—such thoughts also do not torment a knower of Brahman who has transcended both merit and demerit. O king, the glory of a knower of Brahman does not perish in all the three periods of time. There is neither increase nor decrease to it. The Mantra portions of the Vedas also have eulogised a knower of Brahman. Such a sage is neither elated by virtuous actions, nor is he dejected and depressed by sinful ones. He who has realised the Atman as Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute attainable here and now, and rests in that Atman, becomes greatly exalted, as explained by me. None other than this unique peerless knower of Brahman can go beyond virtue and vice which are most difficult to cross. Those wise men in ancient days who renounced all the three desires, and embracing the Sannyasa order, lived on alms, and who controlling the senses possessed the wealth of realisation of the Self, went beyond the realm of merit and demerit. Therefore, one whose sins have been washed off by the performance of virtuous Karmas like sacrifices and others, and who has a pure, reflective and contemplative mind in which the desire for the knowledge of the Atman has been awakened, and who has the following qualifications alone, should embrace Sannyasa.

He should be child-like by mentally renouncing all sense-objects. The turbulent horses of the ten senses should be brought well under control. He should be able to perform the life-journey with the food and drink obtained by chance through begging. He should neither feel elated by getting anything special, nor should he feel dejected when he gets nothing to eat. He should not be angry with those who may cause pain either to his body, organs or mind. About such men he should entertain in his pure mind only such thoughts as: ‘Those who despise me are my near relations, for they take away all my sins. I should not hereafter be angry with them, because they have completely freed me of my sins which are the cause of pain in this world. They are all intelligent and of help nature always. Suffering mental and oral pains themselves, they take away all my sins which are the seeds from which future pains sprout. Therefore, they are really good and virtuous people. Why should they trouble me without any benefit? Alas! Let them not get lower births because of their sinful thoughts against me. They beat me and kick me, but let them not suffer pain in their limbs on that account. They are in fact beating and kicking their own body, and let them not experience any anguish. They who have come here now are not the real cause of my pain. The sins committed by me in my previous births are not yielding their bitter fruits. According to the instructions of my preceptor, as also of the scriptures, they are all my own body and so let not the pain experienced in my body now be felt by them. Let all men be happy and be free from misery. Their bodies are the same as my body. Let no sin accrue to anyone.’ When others cause any trouble to his body, mind or organs, the sincere aspirant should think on the above lines and remain unaffected. He should always have his mind
fixed on the realisation of the Atman. He should be a theist having complete faith in the words of his preceptor and the Vedas. His stream of thoughts should be made to flow towards the Atman by a process of ratiocination not incompatible with the scriptural statements. He should realise with the help of the mind itself, the non-dual, blissful Brahman referred to in the scriptures as Light of lights which resides in the mind, through the knowledge arising out of the contemplation on the meaning of the great sentence of the Upanishads, viz., 'I am Brahman'. The illusion which veils the Atman and projects this phenomenal world, will not resurrect again when once it is destroyed by the realisation of Brahman. With the complete annihilation of this illusion, one always knows the Atman through the light of the Atman itself from which the speech and mind return baffled.

O king, in this manner, a knower of Brahman crosses over all merits and demerits irrespective of their magnitude. They do not affect him any longer. Like one crossing the ocean through a steamer, he crosses merits and sins and burns them outright in a moment, like the lightning consuming a heap of cotton. A knower of Brahman with the above qualifications and who goes beyond merit and demerit becomes devoid of even a trace of ignorance and is freed from all doubts. It is because of this reason that the Vedas have stated that a knower of Brahman is Brahman himself. When I was explaining the deep sleep state, I described the Atman as the world of Brahman attainable by all, and as the witness of all the modifications of the intellect in all embodied beings. O king, this Atman resides in the heart of my self, yourself and all creatures. It is the Light of all lights and of the very nature of Bliss. Though, due to ignorance, It appears as though deluded and experiencing birth and death and the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep with all their activities. It is really actionless. I have instructed you before that this Atman is the fearless Brahman. What I have now told you is also about the same Atman. There is nothing in this universe, either gross or subtle, different from this Atman. O king, I have now instructed you in the true knowledge of Brahman and the means to attain It. O intelligent king, you have now become a knower of Brahman.

When Yajnavalkya concluded thus, the great king Janaka who had realised Brahman, revealed that fact in the following words:

King: O Brahman, what is now in my charge is the country of Videha which I have already gifted to you. The whole State along with myself, my wife and children are not ready to attend on you as your servants. Your Holiness, after accepting all of us along with the State, can remain here itself or leave this, as it pleases you. In either case, I cannot leave you and remain separated from you.

17. THE PRECEPTOR CONCLUDES HIS INSTRUCTIONS

Preceptor: O my dear disciple, hearing these words from the king, Sage Yajnavalkya, because of his high regard and affection for the king, constructed a suitable dwelling house in the garden near the capital city of Mithila and stayed there. Thereafter, the Sage imparted the knowledge of Brahman to his wife Maitreyi, and embracing Sannyasa attained, along with the king, that Supreme Absolute state from where there is no return. That glorious Atman itself is referred to as That which is beyond old age and death, the eater of all food, the giver of all wealth in charity and also the fruits of the charity attained by the donor. Remaining as the Atman of him who receives the gift, It becomes the enjoyer.
of the food and wealth received. He who gives several kinds of wealth and food, and he who enjoys the fruits of the charitable Karmas in this birth or future births, is this very same Atman. Sage Yajnavalkya eulogised this Atman which is Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute as the Supreme seat of fearlessness. Man experiences misery due to birth, old age and death, and as the Atman is free from these three, It is neither born nor does It die. The Atman which is distinct from the gross and subtle bodies and also from ignorance which is their cause, and which is all-pervasive like the ether, is that Supreme stupendous Brahman itself—so said Yajnavalkya. O disciple, I have instructed you all that Sage Yajnavalkya, knower of the Supreme Brahman, imparted to the great king Janaka. Now tell me what more you wish to hear?
CHAPTER III

INSTRUCTIONS TO MAITREYI ON IMMORTALITY

1. DISCIPLE’S FURTHER ENQUIRY

After hearing directly from the preceptor the Brahmavidya imparted by Sage Yajnavalkya to king Janaka, the disciple again addressed the preceptor thus:

Disciple: O Lord, you have instructed me on the supreme Knowledge propounded in ancient days, by Rishis Aitareya and Kaushitaki, the Sun-god, Indra and sage Dadhyangatharvan. You have also explained in detail sage Yajnavalkya’s instructions to king Janaka. Towards the end, you referred to Yajnavalkya’s instructions on Brahmavidya to his wife Maitreyi and his embracing Sannyasa. I desire very much to hear how the Sage, before entering the order of Sannyasa, instructed his wife on the knowledge of Brahman.

The preceptor, who was delighted to hear this further enquiry about Brahma Vidya from his disciple, narrated that very interesting Vedic episode contained in both the Madhukanda and Yajnavalkya Kanda of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

2. YAJNAVALKYA LEARNS THE VEDAS FROM THE SUN-GOD

Preceptor: O my dear disciple, hear me with attention. This sage Yajnavalkya, also called by the name of Vajasaneya even from his very boyhood, was averse to sensual enjoyments. He engaged himself only in righteous actions. His countenance shone with spiritual lustre. But for all outward appearances, he seemed like a worldly man. He was always for helping the world, and was interested in penance from his early age. His fortitude and courage remained unshaken, even after entering the thick forest of the householder’s life filled with wild animals like wolves in the form of sex. In the rainy seasons, he used to lie down on the bare floor like a piece of rock or wood, sleep without any covering for the body, calmly bearing the cold due to the downpour of the rains. In summer, he used to perform penance under the midday sun on burning rocks with blazing fire on the four sides. He used to fix his gaze on the Sun-god, the deity of the Vedas residing within the solar orb, and worship him with all devotion. He voluntarily emaciated his body by eating only leaves, fruits and roots. He took such meagre food once in three days or six days, and sometimes once in twelve days. He always did Japa of the Gayatri Mantra into which his father had initiated him, and meditated continuously on the Supreme Brahman in the form of the Sun. Surmounting fearlessly the hosts of obstacles in the way, he did severe penance uninterruptedly for a number of years, at the end of which the Sun-god appeared before him in human form. The Sage was overjoyed in seeing him who is difficult of perception with the fleshy eyes and who is the vital force of the whole universe. He at once fell prostrate before him and extolled him to the best of his ability. The Sun-god, the life of all lives and lover of his devotees, with his eyes filled with tears of joy and with hair standing on end, caressed him with great affection and said:

51 This corresponds to Chapter VII in the original text of Atma Purana.
O my dear, you have in your boyhood itself come to the forest, and through penance worshipped me, undergoing great hardship. May auspiciousness be unto you in future! I am now ready to grant you boons. Ask for whatever you want.

Hearing these worlds of the Sun-god, Yajnavalkya, with his head bowed down in humility, holding his two hands together over his head and with eyes turned away due to the great effulgence of the god, said:

O God, verily you are the vital force of the universe, the witness of all actions and the supreme Person. There is naught in this world unknown to you. Still, since you have commanded me to ask for boons, I would submit to you my desire:

O Lord, I was adoring my preceptor Maharshi Vaisampayana, disciple of the great sage Vedavyasa. I worshipped my preceptor with my mind, speech and body considering him as God himself. For an offence of breach of promise committed unwittingly, the sun of Brahmahatya (killing a knower of Brahman) was brought down upon him by the curse of other sages. Seeing my preceptor completely dejected due to the curse, I, with all humility and respect, addressed him thus: ‘O blessed holy soul, you are too old to do any penance by way of expiation for the sin that has come upon you. You r other celibate disciples are all boys and weaklings and they cannot take upon themselves this heavy burden. I am in my youth with full vigour and strength. I shall therefore gladly undergo the expiatory rites on behalf of your revered self.’ These most sincere and innocent words of mine only aroused anger in him. Due to the greatly agitated condition of his mind, he called me a wicked man who caused defame to the wise; and without any feeling of compassion, commanded me more than once to return all the knowledge that I have learned from him till then. I could not understand the reason for this sudden outburst against me. I prostrated before him and tried my best to please him with all my thought, word and deed, but did not succeed. Due to the sin of Brahmahatya, his rate and fury only increased. His eyes turned red and he addressed me: ‘O vile Brahmana, if you again try to please me, I will curse you with utter destruction. If you have the least desire for happiness and peace in this world and the next, return this very moment all the knowledge that you have learned from me. If not, you will be damned.’ Thereupon, I refrained from all further attempts to appease him and return all the knowledge I possessed by vomiting it. I am now completely ignorant and I have take refuge in you. With my previous experience fresh in my mind, I do not want to be a disciple again under any human being on this earth.

Hearing this, the Sun-god took Yajnavalkya with him in his chariot and taught him all the four Vedas (Rik, Yajus, Sama and Atharvana) and the six Sastras (Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Chhandas, Nirukta and Jyotisha) with their exoteric and esoteric meanings. Thus, Yajnavalkya became a favourite disciple of the Sun-god, like Ambhini, a deity who was a former disciple of the god.

52 He is also known as Krishna Dvaipayana. He is the son of sage Parasara and is the author of the eighteen Puranas, the epic Mahabharata, the Brahma-Sutras, etc.

53 The Mandala-brahmanopanishad gives the instructions given to Yajnavalkya by the Sun-god (Lord Narayana).
With a correct and complete mastery of the scriptures, Yajnavalkya turned away from worldly life and prepared himself for embracing Sannyasa. Seeing the strong dispassion that has taken hold of his disciple, the Sun-god said: ‘O Yajnavalkya, now that you have completed the studies, you should give me my fee. The fee which I demand from you is not wealth or any such thing. You must create a line of disciples for this Vedic Knowledge. For that purpose, you must accept a householder’s order and impart this knowledge to all those who are qualified for receiving it, and thereafter you can take to the order of Sannyasa. You should disseminate Brahma Vidya in this world after taking Sannyasa or even before doing so.

3. YAJNAVALKYA’S LIFE AS AN IDEAL HOUSEHOLDER

Yajnavalkya, with bowed head, agreed to the Preceptor’s commandments and returned to this world like another sun with great spiritual resplendence. Thereafter, following his own father’s advice, he got plenty of wealth from King Janaka, and married the two daughters of Katyayana and Mitra. Scriptures say that man has to clear off three debts in this life, viz., those to the sages, celestials and manes. Just as he cleared the debt to the sages through his life of celibacy and study of scriptures, Yajnavalkya cleared the other two debts which pertain to the householder’s order through ritualistic sacrifices such as Agnishtoma and the like with the necessary gifts, and through procreation of progeny. All his sons and daughters became great and learned, equal to himself. Though really there cannot be any kind of debt to such a sage of great dispassion, they clung to him because of his acceptance of the householder’s order. Just as a celibate has to repay the debt to the Rishis, a householder has debts to be repaid to the celestials and the manes. If one renounces and takes to Sannyasa, he has no connection whatsoever with the debts relating to the previous orders of life. A Sannyasa, just as he is free from worldly debts, is also free from the three other-worldly debts mentioned in the scriptures. Before taking to Sannyasa, even if one is a knower of Brahman, he is not free from these debts. It is a well-known fact in this world, which is also stressed in the Vedas, that when there is an occasion or cause for an action, that action arising out of that particular cause should necessarily be done. The orders of celibacy and householdership in the life of man are instrumental causes for the three kinds of debts, and therefore one who is in either of the orders, has perforce to perform Karmas to clear off these debts.

For those men belonging to the three higher strata into which the society is divided according to the scriptures, it is not proper to remain outside the four orders of life, viz., those of celibate, householder, forest-dweller and Sannyasin. The wise have fixed the proper time to enter the forest-life when alone, one should take to that life. It is laid down, as a rule, that when a person who is in the householder’s order finds himself aged with wrinkles and grey hairs and comes to know that his son has begotten a son, he should enter the forest life. One can enter the order of monks from either of the other three orders. But there is no scriptural sanction for a celibate to enter the order of a forest-dweller directly. The injunction that one should remain in any one of the four orders till the fall of the body does not contradict the above ruling. If a person decides to spend all his life in one of the three, either as a celibate, a householder or a forest-dweller, he can very well stick to that decision but he should not have attachment to the duties of the subsequent order. In his case, the non-acceptance of the next order does not cause the sin of omission, Pratyavaya,
as in the case of those who have desire to enter into another order. Merely living in a forest will not make a celibate a forest-dweller in the real sense of that term. Similarly, if, in times of danger, a householder goes and dwells in a forest or takes to begging, they will not make him either a forest-dweller or a monk. A life-long celibate will have none of the debts which a householder has. A householder should take to forest-life only after clearing off the three debts. Otherwise, he cannot be said to have followed the scriptural injunctions strictly. Householdership can only succeed householder’s life. This rule will apply only to the first three orders of life and not to the fourth order of Sannyasa, for it is stated in the scriptures that one should embrace Sannyasa the moment real dispassion dawns. For a Dvija,—a twice-born—(this term refers to all those in the three higher social orders), the final and the only order to be entered into is the fourth order of Sannyasa, and once he takes to Sannyasa, there is nothing more to be done by him. A twice-born should always be in any one of the four orders of life. A forest-dweller becomes purified because in the preceding two orders as a householder and a celibate, he clears off all the three debts. As a householder is free from one debt, a forest –dweller is free from all the three debts. A Sannyasin, by his very renunciation, becomes free from all the debts. Sage Yajnavalkya, though highly learned, because of the fact of his being a householder, had two debts to be cleared. Having thought about these matters, the intelligent Sage, a disciple of the Sun-god and rich in penance, gave in charity cows, gold and other wealth with great faith and compassion to propitiate the celestials and the manes. He thought within himself: “Remaining as a celibate, I easily cleared the debt due to the Rishis (Saints and sages). As a householder, I have duly cleared the debts to the celestials and the manes also and I am entering the Sannyasa order. These actions of mine are in strict conformity with scriptural enjoinments, and at the same time, they fulfil my preceptor’s desire. I have the satisfaction that I have done justice to both the paths of action and renunciation.

The householder’s life led by the Sage was exemplary and it won the admiration of all alike. Day and night he was engaged in rendering help to others. He was having two wives, many children and plenty of wealth. By his daily sacrifices and other rites, he was a support for the celestials. By (i) the regular study and chanting of the Vedas, (ii) begetting of progeny and offering of libations to the manes, (iii) charitable acts like giving shelter for the night, food, drinks and wealth to the poor and needy, (iv) supply of fodder and water to animals, and (v) by causing the supply of grains that remain in the field and threshing floor after harvest and of remnants of food-materials left after washing and cleaning the kitchen utensils to birds, etc., he was a great benefactor of the Rishis, manes, animals and other creatures like birds, insects and worms, respectively. His chanting of Vedic Mantras with Svaha, Vashat, Svadha and Hanta served as an invitation through a trumpet, as it were, to all,—in all the ten directions, to his hospitable home. Yajnavalkya was thus a great and renowned householder of those days.

His wife Katyayani, daughter of Katyayana, was an ideal housewife. She was virtuous and intelligent in her household duties. She always kept the floor, walls and verandahs of the house very clean and tidy. She was also an expert in decorating the house with suitable paintings in an artistic manner. The household utensils were kept spotlessly clean. In cooking she was equal to Bhima, Nala and others of yore and followed their methods in the preparation of the four kinds of food (those consumed by swallowing, masticating, drinking and licking). She also knew methods of preparing dishes which have to be dried in the sun
in the process of cooking. She used to attend on her husband, his father, brothers, sisters
and relatives and also guests with great respect and reverence due to them. As an ideal
housewife, she was peerless in her time. There was none to equal her in the past, nor would
there be anyone in the future.

His second wife, Maitreyi of Upanishadic fame, the daughter of Mitra, was a jewel among
women. She had realised the ephemeral and false nature of this phenomenal existence. She
was dispassionate and free from all worldly cares. She was always pondering over
questions such as ‘Who am I?’, ‘What is my nature?’, ‘Why have I come to this world?’,
‘Where am I now?’, ‘Where am I to go after death?’, ‘Who is this person called husband?’,
‘Who are these sons?’, ‘What is the nature of the organs like eyes, etc.?’, ‘What is the nature
of the people that I see all around me?’, etc. Such thoughts tormented her mind so much
that she was always feeling miserable and looked like a cow which has just lost its calf.
Although Yajnavalkya was aware of this condition of Maitreyi, he had ordered her to
engage herself in household work so that there might not be any shortcomings or
omissions in the householder’s duties to be done by them.

Days, months and years rolled on and Yajnavalkya became old. One day he sat in a secluded
place and cogitated as follows: “Alas! To possess a body is most painful to all creatures. The
Jiva has entered this prison of a body which is constituted of seven elements (chyle, blood,
flesh, fat, bone, marrow and semen) and the three humours (wind, bile and phlegm), which
is filled with pus, urine and faeces and which is really foul-smelling and fearful to look at.
Diseases affecting the head, eyes, neck, bowels, anus and other parts of the body trouble
man at all stages. Creatures like snakes, scorpions, spiders and others are another source of
pain to the body. Excessive heat and cold also cause much discomfort. Pain is caused by
enemies and wicked persons whose evil actions are incomprehensible and who use their
thoughts, words and deeds only to harm others. One suffers intense grief due to ignorance.
Likes, dislikes, grief and weakness also bring about pain. In all stages of life, one has to
experience pain only. There is fear in leaving the body at the time of death, taking another
one and living inside the womb of the mother; Constant fear causes pain which is greater
than the pain actually experience inside the womb. In this manner, due to dependence on this
body, innumerable kinds of sufferings come to one in this world and the next. When the
body is a source of pain even to a liberated man living in seclusion, is there any need to say
that it is the cause of pain to one like me who is in the midst of worldly life! By identifying
with one body alone, so much pain is experienced. Then what will be the magnitude of the
sufferings of one who identifies himself with other bodies as those of wife, son and others!
Attachment verily brings about destruction to all, for even the Atman, which is really
unattached and attributeless, appears as if subjected to pain due to attachment. Water, the
nature of which is cold, becomes hot due to contact with fire. From this alone one can know
that attachment is the womb of pain. By the contact of one axe with a tree, the latter falls
and dies. In a like manner, the contact of weapons with the bodies of creatures causes great
harm to them. An introverted mind becomes extroverted due to contact with objects. Those
who are sinners by themselves, suffer greater pain due to their company with more
heinous sinners of vile and wicked conduct. Those who are happy become unhappy by
moving closely with those who are unhappy. Similarly, dispassionate men become
passionate when they keep contact with passionate people. These are matters of daily
experience to all. Objects by their mere presence stimulate the senses and the mind of man.
The mere sight of a sour object causes secretion of saliva in one’s mouth. Similar results are seen in the case of non-sentient objects also. A magnet attracts iron pieces kept at a little distance away from it, and they move towards it. When this is the case with an inert object in the presence of another inert object, the case of a sentient creature in contact with another sentient creature may better be imagined. It is a matter of common experience that a single modification of the mind becomes the cause of thousands of further ramifications which branch out from it. Thus, for all creatures, their body is the cause of pain.

My body has become the seat of innumerable distractions due to my contact with my wives, sons and daughters. During my student career, when I was living in the forest with my preceptor, I had then an indomitable will. I was full of dispassion. I then considered my body as equal to offal and vomit. In those days, even heavenly damsels were unable to distract my mind. They have a slow and measured gait due to Cupid’s influence. Their bodies are scented with sweet-smelling flowers. They have a golden complexion and their well-formed limbs are as soft as lotus-petals. The garments worn by them hang loose when they move about due to the weight of their heavy and plumpy breasts, hips and loins. Their charming and mellifluous faces are like the full moon, and their attire and ornaments which adorn their body are matching to their amorous beauty. Their captivating eyes exhibit their inner feelings of seductive love, and are able to win over the mind of any man in this world. The bewitching smiles on their lips are pregnant with meaning and they fan the flame of sexual passion in all those of the opposite sex. Their voice is sweet and musical. The bangles on their shoulders and wrists, the girdles with tinkling bells on their waists, the ornaments worn on other parts of their body, the saffron on their foreheads, the collyrium in their eyes, the sandal-paste in their foreheads and bosom, the scented flowers that drop down from their heads and their whole body with horripilation along with their heavenly music are as though trumpeting the victory of the god of love. Their residence is in the white sandy hills in the beautiful shores of the celestial Ganges, with heavenly pleasure-gardens resounding with the sweet warbling of the cuckoos and the gentle breeze of the spring season. These nymphs of ravishing beauty were not able to excite my mind in the least. That mettle and firmness have now forsaken me completely.

That which is a conglomeration flesh, blood, faeces, urine, nerves, bones, and fat is called by the nomenclature of body. The bodies of my wives are not different in any way; yet I consider them as the source of pleasure. Though I clean my body ever so many times with earth and water, it never becomes pure. This dirty and defiled body brings me never-ceasing pain. My wives are not as clear as myself, for they do not bestow so much attention in the matter. It is nothing but delusion to consider such persons as a source of happiness. A passionate man thinks that the fat and corpulent breasts of women in their youth are like golden pitchers. But if only he discriminates a little, he will realise that they are nothing but two inflammations of flesh in the chest. There is really no different between a woman’s breasts and a man’s buttocks. All other parts of the body are the same in both man and woman. But this thought does not arise when one is under the delusion of sex-passion. There is no difference between the two orifices, the anus and the uterus. A woman’s body is with two downward apertures while a man’s body is with only one such aperture.

To a discriminating person the bodies of a male and female are alike. The thought that a woman’s body is the source of pleasure is a false one and it arise in my mind certainly due
to delusion. Why I am not ashamed in my attempt to reach the Atman in the form of the Supreme Person residing in the heart of woman through the sexual act! That pleasure is derived through the contact of two bodies of opposite sex is not a correct judgment of facts, for pleasure is not produced when a youthful son embraces his mother or when a young daughter is pressed to the bosom by her father. Though their embrace is with love, it is not the love of the lovers with sex-excitement. Similarly, when a brother and sister embrace with great affection, they do not enjoy the pleasure experienced by a loving couple. If a married couple have ill-feeling against each other for some reason, their mutual contact at that time is not productive of any happiness to either of them. Therefore, the feeling of happiness experienced by man and woman in each other's body which is devoid of happiness is only a mental Vritti, an imagination of the mind rising out of ignorance.

Sage Yajnavalkya continued his cognition. The train of thoughts that passed through his mind was as follows:

Alas! I have wasted my life hopping and jumping like a man possessed by a ghost in the hellish world in the form of sex-life. The non-dual supreme blissful Atman which is the Light of all lights, resides always in my heart. How strange it is that leaving aside that Atman in me, the supreme love, the never-failing friend of all, the dear mother and father of every creature in this universe and the supreme bliss, I have, in quest of pleasure, fallen into the clutches of these two women. By disregarding the Atman, I have committed the sin of parricide. Is there anyone in this world who is a greater sinner than me! I am worse than an illiterate man, for after attaining the knowledge of the non-dual Brahman, I have directed by mind outward and attached myself to sense-objects, while the mind of the ignorant and illiterate man is extroverted due to the absence of the knowledge of Brahman in him. Aged men do not have desire for the company of old women, but my case seems to be different. I have become old and decrepit and my two wives are also advanced in age. Their breasts with ill-looking nipples have become repulsive and unsightly and they have shrunken so much due to the suckling of the children that their very existence seems doubtful. Their bodies are now stiff and hard, like logs of wood. In spite of this condition of theirs, my mind is still drawn towards them. Is there any wonder greater than this! My preceptor, who is in the centre of the resplendent orb of the sun, ordained me only to disseminate the Vedic knowledge and to beget progeny. Alas! Whatever I have done now over and above these two items are sinful actions of commission. Following the instructions of my preceptor, I have imparted the Vedic knowledge in the traditional manner to several disciples in all the four branches of the Veda, each of whom has now a number of disciples of his own. Thus, when there are many to continue the tradition, I have not renounced my householder's duties. The reason for this is certainly my attachment to my wives and children.

I first thought: "Our residence is in the forest. My wives are very much attached to me. They would feel great pain if I were to leave them now and take up Sannyasa. Therefore, let me remain with them for some time more for the sake of their happiness, satisfying their desires and helping them. Thereafter, I would certainly mind my own business.” Days passed and years rolled on. I then thought: "It would not be proper on my part to leave my wives before begetting a son. Otherwise, they would feel miserable in my separation. Therefore, I would wait patiently till a son is born to each of them. Thereafter, I can fulfil
my own desire of embracing Sannyasa. After the birth of the sons, and as soon as the rituals in connection with their birth are over, I will mind my own business and will not remain in this bondage any longer.” When the sons were born and the rituals were completed, then I thought I should educate them in all the scriptures I have studied. When their education was also over, the thought arose in my mind: ‘Let me wait till their marriage.’ There was also the desire to give my daughters in marriage to sons-in-law who matched them in every respect before I renounce the world. When the marriage of my daughters and sons were all over, I thought I should have a look at my grandsons before I retire to seclusion. While thus remaining in the householder’s order with such never-ending desires, my mind was being tainted by sense-objects from all sides. Why dwell any more on the matter! Even to one who has taken to the Sannyasa order, attachment does great havoc. Alas! That attachment brings along with it great misery has been proved beyond doubt from my own experience. Even one to whom Brahman is as clear as a gooseberry fruit in one’s palm should not have the least attachment to sense-objects, not to speak of sex, for scriptures have proclaimed that persons of opposite sex are hells walking on two legs. Youthful persons of the opposite sex should be shunned like the darkest hell and one who happens to fall into it cannot extricate oneself even if he or she be very learned in the scriptures. I have become a standing monument for posterity, for I find myself unable to find a way out of this hell in the form of my two wives. Even those who have Yogic powers are likely to fall from their high Yogic state due to attachment. It is a great wonder that I myself, learned in all scriptures, am suffering the miseries of hell here. Attachment to this body is the path leading to the several hells. Therefore, one is treading the path of liberation should renounce all connections with the opposite sex. It is stated that the body of the opposite sex is the cause of great fear to those aspirants following the path of renunciation. They need not fear cobras, tigers, thieves, kings, water, poison, fire, diseases,—mental and physical,—the celestials and ghosts, but they should be afraid of the opposite sex. The very thought of sex arouses passion, and it takes away one’s strength and fortitude. Nothing need therefore be said about the dire consequences that would follow from sight, conversation and contact with the opposite sex. Those who have taken to the order of monks with the welfare of their Atman as the aim, should not have any kind of transaction with the opposite sex either mentally, bodily or through any of the organs. Just as ghee gets melted by contact with fire, one’s will and strength melt away by contact with persons of the opposite sex. There is only one antidote for the poison of sex, and that is not to think about it and to refrain from seeing or hearing about it. There is no other means except this one. This antidote does not work in me who is always moving with my wives. I am always thinking of renouncing their company which brings about future births and thereby destruction itself. One sees in his dream those sense-objects which have created strong impressions in the mind in the waking state. Similarly, the body one takes after death depends on the subtle impressions created in this life. A man becomes passionate by contact with other passionate men and women. When such a passionate man dies, he takes birth as a sensuous, angry, greedy and deluded person. Contact with desire, anger and the like makes one’s mind turbid and impure. When the mind becomes impure, even the knowledge of Brahman already possessed gets destroyed. How can the knowledge arise afresh in that mind! One who is caught in the meshes of desire, anger and other similar traits, being unable to attain the knowledge of Brahman or to follow the paths of meditation and ritualistic Karmas, leaves off the two paths, viz., the northern and the southern, and goes.
through the third path which leads to hell. In this way, due to contact with men and women of sexual desires, one has to undergo misery and pain alone for millions of Kalpas without even a trace of happiness. Just as company of passionate women is a source of pain, company of passionate men also causes misery, for they describe and portray sex and women equally. The inherent strength in the sounds of the words contained in their portrayal create in the mind thoughts about sex. The fire in the form of sex which has managed to enter into the house of the subconscious mind through those thoughts, completely burns that house. Therefore, he who sincerely seeks the good in preference to the pleasurable should embrace Sannyasa and completely renounce all dealings with passionate and sensuous men and women by all means. A light, though burning, cannot give out light and destroy darkness if it is disturbed by a strong breeze. Even so, the knowledge of Brahman, even when possessed, cannot destroy the ignorance when there is attachment to the senses and their objects. How can then a man of attachment be able to acquire this knowledge afresh? He can never even dream of it.

After pondering over the several aspects of the matter, Yajnavalkya further continued his reflections:

The wise have stated that if a person is in company with another for such a short period as the time required to take seven footsteps, the latter becomes a friend of the former. In my case, I have been living with my two wives for a number of years. My wife Katyayani has no qualifications to possess the knowledge of Brahman. She has only an ordinary woman's intellect. She does not know what is good and what is bad. If I take to Sannyasa, she would fall a prey to worries on my account. My other wife Maitreyi would not be satisfied with wealth alone. She is being consumed by the fire of this mundane existence and has always an ardent desire for liberation. She had no desire for sex even in her younger days. She had no love even for her own body. How then can she love others such as her husband and children! She has dispassion in all sense-objects. She had been so far obedient to me only because of fear for the injunctions of the scriptures and not due to desire for sex and other sensual pleasures. Ordinary women love their husbands mainly for sex. She is not like them. Therefore, I can impart that supreme knowledge of Brahman to her.

4. MAITREYI'S DISPASSION AND YEARNING FOR LIBERATION

Yajnavalkya finally decided to enter the fourth order, viz., Sannyas, without further postponement. He called his wife Maitreyi to his side and addressed her thus:

O my dear, I have now decided to renounced the householder’s order and take up the glorious order of Sannyasa. To this proposal of mine, I want your permission. As a preliminary step, I propose to partition whatever wealth I possess, between you and Katyayani so that both of you can spend the rest of your lives happily.

Maitreyi, whose mind was heavy with thoughts of this mundane life, had never before such an occasion to express her desire to her husband. She grasped the opportunity given to her by the Sage and said in reply:

54 The import is that intense pain is cause to the person.
O Lord, whatever wealth which you think of giving me should become the cause of bestowing immortality on me. I desire only such wealth and not any worldly riches which are the cause of misery and death. Even if you give me the whole world with all its affluence, I doubt very much whether I can get immortality through it. I would like to accept the wealth which you propose to give me, only after clearing this doubt.

Hearing these words of his dear wife, sage Yajnavalkya said:

O my dear Maitreyi, in this world, no embodied being can become free from death through riches. This ephemeral wealth cannot make one deathless. Through this wealth, one is sure to meet with death alone. To a wealthy man, thieves and wicked people are always causes of fear and pain which may sometimes result even in his death. No rich man in this world is free from mental worries. Even in his dreams, he is greatly afraid of the king and others. God seems to favour the poor and not the rich, for the latter are usually found to suffer from indigestion, want of appetite and other diseases. In spite of the great wealth which they have amassed, they are never contented, and they are, in many cases, short-lived also. Some of them are in conflict with their own sons and others in the family, and like dogs, pick up quarrels with strangers as well. Entertaining thoughts that things should take place in such and such manner according to their ill-conceived plans, they become deluded and never get even a trace of happiness or peace. They do not generally love the virtuous, the poor and the half-starved. They commit several sinful actions. The poor who are always afraid of everything refrain from sinful activities. The wealthy and the affluent who have no discrimination are often found to disregard God, the king, the preceptor, the guests, those learned in the scriptures and those men of Atman-knowledge who are great and majestic like the ocean. They consequently suffer several kinds of pains. O Maitreyi, those men trouble not only their own people but others as well. In this way, while a rich man has ever so many pains, the poor man is free from them. Therefore, O Maitreyi, in this respect, the poor is definitely superior to the rich. By getting wealth, your life will also be like those of the other wealthy people. There is no cause for any doubt. Just as rich men whose minds are always turbulent have no desire for liberation, you may also cease to yearn after immortality if you become possessed of much wealth. Liberation, which is otherwise called Immortality, is attained by the removal of one’s identification with the body, organs and the rest. This identification is caused due to ignorance, and the ignorance will not be destroyed without the knowledge of the all-blissful Atman. These wealthy men of unsteady mind will not get the knowledge of the Atman, and without that Knowledge, the ignorance cannot be annihilated. When ignorance persists, the subtle body will necessarily continue even after the fall of the gross body. As long as the subtle body exists, there will be the accumulation of merits and demerits, and so as there are these merits and demerits, no one can avoid the gross body which is the source of pleasure and pain. Even the primeval person has death because he has got a body. Therefore, O Maitreyi, through the possession of wealth, you cannot have even a ray of hope for liberation.

After listening to this, Maitreyi again addressing her husband said:

O my Lord, since you say one cannot even entertain a hope for liberation with the possession of riches, then what am I to do with all the wealth that you propose to give me? O Lord, I do not want this wealth. Let the whole wealth be given to Katyayani. You propose to live on alms till the end. I also think of doing likewise. O great Sage, in you who are
entering the glorious order of Sannyasa, the thought of maintenance of my body should not arise at all. That supreme Lord of all who maintained and protected me for ten months while I was in my mother’s womb will certainly look after me in future also. When this foul-smelling body full of diseases and which is too heavy to carry falls, the cause of all pains and sufferings will also cease. I am one who is terribly afraid of sins. I am not attached to this body of mine laden with pains and infirmities. I carry on my routine duties just as a prisoner taking his food and attending to his other physical needs while he is all along being inflicted with torture by the agents of the king. Food is the cause of desire, anger, greed, delusion, sleep laziness, discharge and excretion. It is food that gives strength to the organs of sense and action, to the mind and the body to do their different functions. O Brahman, if one does not take food, there would be only a single suffering due to hunger. But when it is taken, it becomes the source of innumerable sufferings from several enemies such as desire, anger, and the like. The havoc created by desire in me is known to you very well. I need not therefore dwell upon it now. I Brahman, women experience the painful consequences of their sex desire in the form of immediate pregnancy. The pain in the process of carrying the foetus in the womb and delivering the child after ten months is several million times greater than the pangs of death. The poisonous tree of sex yields numerous fruits of all kinds of pain in a woman. She understands them better than man. I wonder how my body has survived these pains. God must have made the woman’s body with some extremely hard material like the unbreakable ‘thunderbolt’ of Indra, the king of celestials! The pains and miseries caused by anger, etc., are also well known to you who are all-knowing, and therefore I do not propose to detail them in your presence. I consider it is better to meet death through the pains of hunger than through those caused by desire, etc. O Lord, it will not be difficult to face a single strong opponent, but it will be impossible for even a strong and powerful man to face a number of enemies simultaneously even if all of them are individually very weak. If one well-versed in the scriptures tries to meet in argument several persons at the same time, it will surely cause him fatigue. O Brahman, I therefore think it is not a difficult job to face the enemy of hunger and fight with him, though he may be strong. O God among the sages, I do not propose to fight with desire, anger and others although they are comparatively weaker than the other enemy, viz., hunger. O learned Sage, if this body could not be sustained without depending upon worldly wealth, let it perish. I have renounced this body long before considering it as a heavy burden. O foremost among sages, you may perhaps doubt whether I am not abandoning the body due to ignorance, but I assure you it is not due to that. Like yourself, after mature consideration, I think that I can be happy with whatever I get through the results of my Prarabdha Karma. Therefore, if you are pleased with me, kindly instruct me how to attain immortality.

5. YAJNAVALKYA’S INSTRUCTION TO MAITREYI—STARTS

Having heard these words of Maitreyi, Yajnavalkya made up his mind to impart to her the supreme knowledge of Brahman. He approved in toto all her views about the worthlessness of worldly riches. I may be possible to attain Dharma (virtue) and Kama (satisfaction of desire) through Artha (wealth), but never can one get Moksha (liberation) through it. Wealth often becomes the cause of desire for sex. But what is the nature of happiness that one derives from the satisfaction of that desire? It is not correct to say that the cause of happiness that one enjoys from contact with the opposite sex is desire. The
happiness that a passionate lover of perverted intellect seems to enjoy in the sexual act is mere delusion and nothing else. If one is to thump with his fists on the paining of muscles of the legs of a man fatigued by a long walk, he will feel a sense of happiness due to the relief from pain. There is no difference between this and that derived from sexual conduct. We see that dogs and other animals which do not possess any wealth also enjoy sex. The feelings of a dog towards a bitch and those of a lover towards his beloved are identical. One may say through wealth one can get pleasurable objects like flowers, music and other, and therefore it (wealth) is the cause of happiness. This is not a factual statement, for butterflies, cuckoos, etc., which have no riches like men, enjoy the scents, and the honey in flowers. The cows and similar animals kept in temples enjoy oral and instrumental music without the help of wealth. The poor, who have no resources, see the person of harlots without spending money. The flies enjoy the contact with the bodies of beautiful princesses which are not easily obtainable by all human beings. In this world, those who are affluent are not able to enjoy all sense-pleasures through their wealth, while penniless men sometimes enjoy many of the pleasures. There does not seem to be any injunction that meritorious actions laid down in the scriptures, which are the cause of pleasures in the next world, should be performed by spending huge amount of wealth. Many a poor man in this world has accepted the householder’s order, and performing the duties pertaining to that order according to scriptural injunctions, have attained heavenly worlds. Noble and eminent persons like Mudgala55 and others, even though they were too poor to have even one square meal a day, have attained heaven through meritorious deeds. On the other hand, there have been several instances in the past of opulent men doing sinful actions and going to the hells as a result thereof. Now also there are several such cases and there will be many in future as well. Therefore, one has to conclude that heaven cannot be attained by mere wealth alone. It is a fact that sacrifices like Agnishtoma and others cannot be performed without large sums of money. Men who are unable to perform such rites for want of means may not get those heavenly worlds which are the fruits of those Karmas, but there are ever so many other expedients for attainment of these higher worlds. These sacrifices and similar Karmas are never seen to be the cause of liberation. As a means for the attainment of heaven, they are in the same category of penance and others which can be done without any money. Sacrifices like Agnishtoma and others performed with great resources will not serve to create even a hope for liberation. With these views in his mind, Yajnavalkya imparted to his wife the supreme knowledge of the Atman which is the cause of liberation. He addressed her thus:

O dear Maitreyi, I am overjoyed to hear your words, for I am in full agreement with your laudable views about the ephemeral value of wealth in this world. I therefore love you all the more. What you have prayed for is not only for the good of yourself and myself, but it is also the knowledge much loved and desired by all men. I have great affection for you as my

55 Mudgala was a pious but poor man who lived upon the grains left scattered in market places and in fields after harvest. Due to the merit earned by being able to feed a guest one day with the grains thus collected, he attained the heavenly world. This is related in the Mahabharata.
Jaya even before, for you have birth to me again in the form of our son. Hearing your words now, my affection towards you has redoubled. Woman of your type alone deserves the name Jaya. Others who are maintained by giving food and clothing are only Bharyas. Therefore, I am now addressing you as Jaya. My dear Jaya, please come near me who am free from all desires. Your enquiry about the Atman, which is dear to desireless men, is a source of great joy to me. O lovely lady, as you have been free from doubts all along, let you remain without any doubt now also. Please abandon womanly feelings of shame and bashfulness. In the householder’s order, these traits are like ornaments which adorn a woman, but now you have to abandon them. O dear, I propose to tell you in detail the Immortality about which you have asked me directly. Please listen with all attention and with tranquilised mine.

Sage Yajnavalkya started his instructions to his wife Maitreyi by giving an exposition on the supreme blissful nature of the Atman, through the process of Anvaya and Vyatireka (Synthesis and analysis).

6. THE ATMAN IS THE REAL SOURCE OF ALL LOVE AND HAPPINESS

Yajnavalkya: O Maitreyi, myself who is your husband is always dear, to you and so are you who are my wife dear to me. We love and cherish in relation to the bodies is not due to the desire of each for the other. Your love for me is due to your desire for your self and my love towards you is on account of my desire for myself. A woman loves her husband because he provides her with all conveniences like food, clothing and others and satisfies her sexual desire. She never loves her husband when he is hostile towards her. Women do not bestow their love on their husbands who have illegal connection with other women. Similarly, a man loves his wife because she satisfies his lust and serves him nicely by cooking his food and attending to his several other needs. A husband never loves a wife who is at loggerheads with him in sex and other matters. Husbands, wives, sons, wealth and a host of other things: the four social orders, this earth and other worlds, celestials, Vedas, the movable and immovable creatures,—nay the whole universe becomes dear to one only when they are sources of happiness to oneself, and not otherwise. When the beloved sons and other close relations turn against a man, they are no more dear to him; on the other hand, they are disliked and hated. They are loved for the sake of one’s own self and not for their sake. If objects of this world, like husband, wife and others are not favourable to oneself, they are not loved, and when they are favourable, all of them seem to be the source of love. Contact with objects disliked does not cause happiness, while that with objects like does become the cause of pleasure. This proves beyond doubt that objects by themselves are not productive of either pleasure or pain. These objects like husband, wife, etc., cause pain by their destruction. Though they are sources of happiness during their existence, they become the source of misery by their non-existence. To be always favourable to man is not the nature of any object in this world. Insentient objects cannot become sentient without

56 Jaya usually means wife. Its etymological meaning is a woman in whom the husband is born again here as the son.

57 Bharya also means wife. Its root meaning, however, is a woman who is protected and nourished.
association with the Atman. It is this association with the Atman that is the cause of its being agreeable also. Though love is not inherent in the objects, when there is the feeling that they are agreeable, they become lovable, and when they are disagreeable, they lose their lovable nature. Therefore, husband, wife, and all mundane objects in this universe are not lovable by themselves. Since one’s own Atman is dear to oneself due to contact with that Atman, things considered as one’s own also appear dear. For all creatures, the blissful Atman remains as the most dear one. Pain, as also the objects causing pain, are never dear to any creature. Husband, wife, etc., being objects of pleasure, are considered dear. Happiness in the form of Sattvic modifications of the mind is to be considered as dearer. This happiness is also dear to one for the sake of one’s own self and not for the sake of happiness. If happiness were dear for the sake of happiness itself, one should love the happiness in one’s enemy. But the experience is otherwise. Therefore, happiness also becomes dear for the sake of one’s own self alone. Compared to objects, happiness can be said to be dearer, and the blissful Atman, which is always the object of greatest love, is the dearest. Thus, objects related to oneself are dear; the happiness caused by the contact with those objects is dearer, and the Atman, which is the cause of that happiness is the dearest. The self-resplendent, eternal and blissful Atman is superior to Hiranyagarbha, because Hiranyagarbha and others enjoy happiness which is only a very small fraction of the bliss of the Atman. O Maitreyi, the blissful Atman is free from all relationships, always shining and superior to all the heavenly joys including that of the world of Brahma.

7. HEARING, REFLECTION AND MEDITATION—THE MEANS OF REALISATION

O my dear Maitreyi, with a view to realise this Atman, like a fruit in one’s palm, one with the necessary qualifications should ‘hear’ (Sravana) repeatedly the Vedic texts, Mahavakyas, the great sentences of Upanishads dealing with the identity of the Atman with Brahman directly from the mouth of the preceptor who is himself possessed of the knowledge of the scriptures and established in Brahman. The qualifications of the aspirant are Sama, Dama (control of the mind and control of organs) and others. After ‘hearing’, he should ‘reflect’ (Manana) on what he has heard with their pros and cons not going against the import of the Vedas. The logic employed in ‘reflection’ should be such as to establish (1) that the non-dual transcendental Brahman alone becomes this diversified phenomenal universe, (2) that the effect, viz., this universe merges in its cause, the supreme Brahman, (3) that every thing depends upon Brahman for its existence in all the states and stages, and (4) that none of the objects in this universe has the characteristics of Brahman. It should be capable of removing the obstacles in the path of the spiritual aspirant, like doubt as to how the individual soul, the universal soul and this phenomenal world, can really be non-different from the one, non-dual and transcendental Brahman. It should firmly establish him in that non-dual Brahman. Concentration of the mind on the one thought, viz., Brahman, is the means to the realisation of Brahman. To attain this, one should begin by entertaining the thought of one object among the several objects of the world to the exclusion of all other thoughts, and concentrate his full attention on that, and that alone. When one becomes an adept in such concentration, he should then leave off that object and switch on his thought to the Atman. By this means, the mental Vritti will, leaving off its outgoing tendency, take the form of the Atman. This is deep meditation (Nididhyasana). By these processes of reflection, concentration and meditation, the mind is freed of all
obstacles like doubt, etc., and is turned inward, and the aspirant attains the realisation of
the Atman which is the fruit, as it were, of hearing the great sentences of the Upanishads.

Organs of sight and others function without partiality on objects irrespective of the fact
whether they are supported by valid proof or not. There is nothing preventing the eyes
seeing a yellow conch, though all conches are white in colour. Similarly, mental
modifications can act without partiality in phenomenal as well as transcendental matters.
The contact of the senses with their objects is the cause of sensual perceptions, and contact
by the mind is the cause for mental perceptions. Mind engaged in reflection and meditation
will cause the dawn of direct knowledge of the non-dual and blissful Atman. For this, the
Vedas are clear proofs. When one gets direct realisation of the Atman, the ignorance, with
all its concomitant effects in the form of this painful universe, gets itself destroyed, and
thereby the self-effulgent, ever-blissful Atman, which is dearer than the dearest, shines
everywhere. Just as the sky becomes bright and clear with the disappearance of the clouds,
the Atman shines as non-dual and blissful with the annihilation of ignorance. A man who
wakes up from dream realises the unreality of the pains he experienced in the dream. Even
so, the wise who attain the knowledge of the Atman come to realise that all this pain in the
form of phenomenal universe is only illusory. Just as a fearless king who experiences fear in
his dream without any cause is freed from the fear when he wakes up, even so the blissful
and fearless Atman, due to the ignorance of itself, perceives the phenomenal world of pains
and sorrows, and after attaining the knowledge of Itself, realises the world to be illusory.

Like the illusory city of clouds appearing in the sky, the unreal phenomenal world is seen in
the Atman due to ignorance. The city of clouds in the sky and the temple of Lord Siva (Kasi
Kshetra) on the earth are both non-existent in all the durations of time. Even so, O
Maitreyi, all the worlds seen in the non-dual and pain-free Atman do not really exist in the
three periods of time: the past, present and future. A man whose eyes are affected by the
disease of Timira (diplopia) sees two moons, so also due to the beginningless disease of
ignorance, the one and non-dual Atman is perceived as many, in the form of the universe.
Just as a boy, by pressing his eyelids with his finger, sees all kinds of colourful designs, so
too one who is boyish, the Atman, which is ever of the nature of bliss, and one alone,
appears full of pains and diversified because of the illusory ignorance. Even learned men of
this world are sometimes confounded, and they are not able to know the directions like
east, west, etc. In the same way, due to illusion, one sees in the blissful Atman everything
contrary to Its real nature. Due to excess of bile in the system, one sees a pure white conch
as yellow and tastes the sweet sugar as bitter. O Maitreyi, in a like manner, even in a
Jivanmukta who has a firm conviction that the Atman is self-effulgent and all-bliss due to
the non-annihilation of the perception of duality completely, experience of pain may make
its appearance. To a weary and thirsty traveller walking in the mid-day sun in a sandy
desert, an ocean of water with boisterous waves (mirage) makes it appearance because of
his clouded intellect. Even so, to a man whose intellect is deluded, due to his intense

\[58\] The real Kasi-Kshetra is the one which is in the heavenly worlds. It is described in the Puranas as held
by the Lord through his Yogic strength, without contact with the earth and where there is no difference in
Yuga-Dharmas which change according to the Yugas on this earth.
attachment to sense-objects, differentiation seems to exist in the non-different blissful Atman. Like a man greedy after wealth perceives silver in a mother-of-pearl lying on the roadside, one who has differentiated intellect perceives the illusion of the world in the non-dual Atman. In the semi-darkness of twilight, a man mistakes a garland for a serpent and a post for a ghost. Even so, a man of dull intellect sees the not-Atman in the form of the inert and painful universe, in the self-resplendent and pain-free Atman. This phenomenal universe consisting of husband, wife and others, is not distinct from the Atman. Just as the dream world is an imagination of the mind, the waking universe is also a creation of the mind. This world of relationships, like husband, wife, etc., is truly the Atman itself.

O Maitreyi, you must attain the direct experience of this Atman. For that, you must reflect on the import of the statements in the Upanishads with one-pointed mind. You must fix the mind on Brahman who is the subject-matter of all the Upanishads. You must remain fearless\(^{59}\) in Brahman. O dear, if you get the realisation of the Atman through the means which I have told you, you will never thereafter experience the pains of the mundane world. Just as the city of clouds imagined on the sky is really the sky alone, so the universe imagined on the Atman is really the Atman alone. Therefore, the ‘hearing’, ‘reflection’ and ‘meditation’ on the Atman becomes those on the universe. Through the knowledge of the Atman, one acquires the general knowledge of the universe, but not particularised knowledge. There is no use in acquiring particularised knowledge of each of the myriads of objects in the universe. Such knowledge is not conducive to any of the four Purusharths. Like husband, wife and similar objects which are sources of pleasure, all objects in this world are not causes of happiness. Even if all the other objects were to serve any useful purpose, it is humanly impossible for one to get particularised knowledge about all of them. Such objects which are causes of pain are, therefore, not necessary for anyone. If due to your womanly nature you desire to know about everything in the universe, the best means for that also is this knowledge of the Atman alone. Reflection on the Atman is tantamount to reflection about the universe. By knowing the nature of clay, men are able to know the nature of all articles like pot and others made out of clay. Even if those objects which are the effects, are out of sight due to factors such as space, time, etc., one can still know them. Although all the effects of clay are differentiated on account of space, time, etc., there is no impediment to know that they are all made of clay. Therefore, O my dear, the universe, which is the effect of the Atman, is not distinct from the Atman. This knowledge will dawn on one by the ‘hearing’, ‘reflection’ and ‘meditation’ on the Atman.

\(^{59}\) It is said that fearlessness here has reference to Sri Gaudapadacharya’s statement in the Mandukya Karika (vide verse No. 39-Chapter III) that Yogins who are dualists are afraid of the final state of Asparsa-Samadhi.
8. PERCEPTION OF DIFFERENTIATION SHOULD BE AVOIDED

Men whose intellect cognises differentiation cannot have happiness either in this world or in the next. How can they then attain liberation? It is impossible. If the wife does not consider that her husband and other relatives are like her own self and treat them accordingly, they abandon her. Similarly, if the husband does not consider his wife like his own self, she also abandons him. The husband, wife, son, wealth and cattle renounce one when they come to know that one does not love them like one’s own self. A wife who is supported by her son and others dislikes her husband when she finds that he does not bestow proper love on her and has a differentiating intellect. As long as men and women love and protect the objects connected with them, both sentient and non-sentient, considering them like themselves, only so long they (objects) remain as a source of happiness to them. When a man of dull intellect treats his people as different from himself, he is separated from them with the result that he has to repent and feel sorry over his conduct very soon. The fact that everything in this world such as husband, wife, etc., is the Atman itself is thus established through the analytical and synthetical methods. We see that when one considers another as one’s own self, it brings him happiness, and just the contrary behaviour results in misery. Similarly, if one sees the established four social orders (Varnas) as different from the Atman, they will be the cause of misery to him in this world as well as the future worlds. To consider oneself as belonging to the social orders such as Brahmana, Kshatriya, etc., and not as the non-dual Atman, is seeing those orders as different from the Atman. Births in the higher orders in future is not a certainty. Bodies in the lower orders also may have to be assumed. This will be the cause of unhappiness to him who sees differentiation. Likewise is the case with the worlds, deities, Vedas, etc., which become the cause of misery here and hereafter to him who sees them as different from the Self. This kind of offence to the worlds hurls one into the world of hell. In this world also, he has to suffer by wandering here and there like a street-dog wanted by none. This offence caused to the deities results in the most distressing pains. He has to suffer unhappiness and misery on account of the displeasure of the celestials by considering them as different from himself. The resentment of the Vedas, which have been alienated through this offence, also sows the seeds of censure here and hereafter. Even if one has birth in one of the higher orders now, he may have a fall into the lower orders in future births. Supposing he gets birth in the higher order there also, he may then be deprived of culture and refinement. Such men chant the Vedas with wrong accent and intonation since they cannot master them perfectly. A few who somehow manage to get an imperfect mastery will not be able to get a knowledge of the meaning of the words and their usages. Even if they success there, they are likely to forget them easily for want of daily repetition and regular study of these scriptures. For various reasons, such men are unable to put into practice the several injunctions of the Vedas in their daily lives.

In this manner, all objects, whether movable or immovable, harm and injure that ignorant man who considers them as different from himself. Such a man becomes a victim to great sufferings caused by those who afflict him through their thoughts, words and actions, and refrain from rendering any kind of help to him in any manner, and this deplorable condition pursues him in all the worlds he goes. Thus, the universe and the five elements become an eternal source of pain to the man who perceives differentiation. Any object, whether it is sentient or non-sentient, if seen as distinct from oneself due to delusion,
brings in only pain and unhappiness. All embodied beings in this world experience pain in the attainment of objects disliked and the non-attainment of objects liked. Thus, both love and hate, likes and dislikes, become the cause of pain. After obtaining the object longed for, if for some reason or other he is not able to enjoy it, then also he feels miserable. When he has to leave it and go to another place, pain is again caused. If destruction of the object is brought about either by himself or another or of its own accord, it also results in similar unhappiness. Thus, all objects, both sentient and insentient, seen as different from oneself, are only sources of pain to the ignorant. It is said that a man who perceives differentiation has to undergo great sufferings in this world and the next one. Hence, every object in this universe should be seen as the supreme Brahman alone.

O my dear, therefore you should never see even a trace of difference or separateness in this universe. Those who have a distorted vision have to undergo countless sufferings. It should therefore be avoided completely by all possible means. The knowledge that the self-resplendent, blissful Atman is immune to the three kinds of differences is the correct and complete knowledge. If anything is perceived as distinct from the Atman, that knowledge which is the result of cognition of separateness is incomplete and incorrect. Therefore, be established in the truth that the several social orders, the innumerable worlds and celestials, Vedas, all the inert and sentient objects, the five elements,—in short, the whole universe is that non-dual Brahman who is the Supreme Lord. This universe of apparent heterogeneity is not at all different from Him, as it has, as it were, merged out of Him, remains in Him, and finally merges in Him. O my dear, the primeval ignorance which is the root of this phenomenal universe gets itself destroyed with the rising of this knowledge of the Atman which always remains non-dual. To bring about a firm conviction in your mind about this truth, I shall give you some illustrations. Please listen carefully.

9. THE ATMAN ALONE IS, EVEN NOW, IT ALONE WAS BEFORE CREATION, AND IT ALONE WILL BE AFTER DISSOLUTION

During the existence of the universe, all objects which come under the three Gunas: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, remain undifferentiated in the Atman. I shall take the examples of a drum, a conch and a lute and explain to you this truth. When you hear from one like myself, learned in the scriptures, that the Atman remains as non-dual even at the time of the existence of this universe, you should not become confused. O fair lady, a drum, a conch and a lute produce sounds which may be classified as harsh, medium and soft respectively. For producing these sounds, accessories such as a stick, air blown from the mouth, and fingernails respectively, are necessary. O virtuous lady, the particularised knowledge of the notes of these musical instruments is gained from the general knowledge of sound. In the absence of the cognition of the general knowledge, particularised knowledge cannot arise. Only after hearing the general sound of these instruments arises the particular knowledge, ‘this is the sound of the drum’, ‘this is the sound of the conch’, and ‘this is the sound of the lute’. Even so, if there were no consciousness of the Atman which is the eternal Light of all lights and ever blissful, no particularised cognition can be effected.

That which is the content of the concept of the words ‘this’, ‘I’, ‘he’, the indescribable ‘mine’, and the like, is the same as the content of the concept in the names of Hiranyagarbha and others as well. In the analogy of a rope-snake, as the rope is the substratum for the snake superimposed on it, the same one Consciousness is the substratum and support for all the...
The same Consciousness, through the attributed particularised names of 'this', etc., becomes the content of the concept of the word 'you' (Yushmat Sabda), and through words like 'I', 'mine', etc., becomes the content of the concept of the word 'we' (Asmat Sabda). On reflection, one realises that the contents of the concepts in the two cases are not different, for an identical entity is referred to by both viz., the same Consciousness. A non-sentient object like a conch, by its contact with the sentient man, appears as though sentient. Similarly, by identification with different bodies, the content of the concepts of the two sounds becomes as though different. But, all objects which we have decided as coming under the meaning of the word 'you', are cognised as different from all other objects, and therefore they (the latter) become the content of the concept of the word 'we'. All non-sentient objects, being pervaded by the one Consciousness, become the body of that Consciousness. There is no creature in the universe which does not identify itself with the feeling of 'I'. the non-dual Isvara identifies himself with Maya. Hiranyagarbha, who is the supreme Lord, and who is the cause of Virat, identifies himself with the whole subtle universe which is the effect of Maya. The Virat identifies himself with the gross universe inclusive of the great five elements and the cosmic egg. Each of the non-sentient objects in this universe consider itself as 'I' due to individual consciousness. Therefore, everything is preserved and protected by the Consciousness. In relation to each such subject, all the others are the content of the concept of 'you' and that which is cognised as itself is the content of the concept of 'we'. The Atman, which is beyond the reach of speech and mind, does not become the content of the concept of any word or sound, but remains as the eternal effulgence which illumines the whole phenomenal universe of the form of the knowledge of the contents of the concepts of words. Therefore, the two words 'you' and 'we', as also the words such as 'this', 'that', etc., all connote the same meaning. These words delineate objects of the nature of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The same Atman which is the Effulgence of all effulgences, deathless, and of the form of Bliss, always shines as all objects. Men superimpose differences and particularities on this Atman. When the general sound is being cognised continuously without break, men of dull intellect superimpose particular sounds as, 'this is the sound of drum', 'that is the sound of lute', etc., on that general sound. Even so, when the Atman, which is the Light of all lights, is shining as one mass of consciousness, in that one effulgence the ideas of 'I', 'you', etc., are imagined. Just as in the absence of the general sound, no particular sound can be heard, so also, if there were no consciousness of the self-luminous Atman, worldly dealings with ideas like 'you', 'I', etc., cannot happen. O my dear, this phenomenal world remains as the non-dual Atman always, in the manner explained by me. It is this Atman which is the substratum of the phenomenal world, about which I have instructed you as dearer than dearest, and naught else.

O Maitreyi, even while this Atman remains non-dual and without differentiation, the phenomenal world comes out of it. To make this point clear, I shall give an illustration. Please listen. From a blazing fire, sparks come out along with smoke. Some of these sparks may be similar to the fire and some dissimilar. Even so, this universe, which is sentient and non-sentient, has come out of the blissful Atman. O my dear, when sparks come out of fire, no change is caused to the nature of the fire. So also, by the creation of this universe from the Atman, there is no change to the non-dual and blissful nature of the Atman. O my dear, you are cognising this universe which is both sentient as well as non-sentient. Hiranyagarbha has created this world from the Sabda Brahman, the word-Absolute. You
must have heard from the Smriti texts (traditional laws) that God created the sun, moon and the worlds as in the previous Kalpas. But you would not have had the occasion to hear about the creation of the Vedas. I shall now tell you how the Vedas which are in the form of sounds strung together, have come from the blissful Atman.

O Maitreyi, from fire comes out smoke which is distinct from it and which goes up and pervades the sky. The smoke is produced from both dry and wet fuel. Even so, from the Supreme Atman which is replete with different kinds of knowledge, have come out the Vedas in the form of a collection of sounds distinct from the Atman. Any sound which depends on another evidence, has a beginning and it succeeds a preceding thought. All worldly sounds comes under this category. But the Vedas stand on a different footing altogether. They have come out of the self-effulgent Atman like the outcoming breath. Words spoken after thinking may not always be factual. Unlike them, the Vedas are not preceded by any thinking, nor are they incapable of expressing facts in their true perspective. Words coming out without previous thought from any one other than Isvara, even if he be a denizen of the world of Brahma, will only convey mistaken ideas contrary to their real concepts like the prattlings of an insane man. The sounds that have come out of Isvara without any previous thought in the form of the Vedas, are self-enlightening and hence to know their imports no outside proofs are necessary. They do not convey any wrong ideas either. In view of these fact, they become the proof of knowledge itself.

When the followers of the Purva Mimamsa philosophy accept that meaning of even the words used in workaday world is self-evident, it goes without saying that the import of the Vedas is self-evident. When the words of even an unreliable person do not fail to create their meaning on the hearer, how can one think that the Vedas would fail in that respect! When a man says to a wayfarer, ‘fruits required by you are available on the river-bank’, it does not fail to create a cognition of the meaning of the words in the wayfarer’s mind. Relying on the words, when he goes to the river-bank, suppose he does not find any fruit there. Still, there is no defect in the communication of the meaning of those words. On such occasions, direct perception does not serve as proof as it creates no cognition, while words do become proof because they cause cognition of their meaning. Proof and non-proof depend on cognition and non-cognition. That which causes cognition is proof and that which does not is non-proof. The Naiyayikas (those who follow the philosophy of Indian Logic of Gautama) are of the view that proofs are those which are capable of producing action. In the case of those who have decided that the property of proof is not the creation of cognition, how can there be a proof for that decision! The statement that proof is that which causes action alone and not cognition, is not correct, for there can be no action without cognition. How can an action take place without cognition? It can never happen. If one were to say that action has the power to cause happiness and misery, the same power may be found in the words of an unreliable man also. In the illustration of the wayfarer cited, those words do not fail to create the experience of happiness or pain. There is no rule that an action, whether it be worldly action or a scriptural rite, should cause happiness alone without any pain, for the logicians are strongly of the opinion that nowhere in this world can there be happiness without an admixture of pain. They who are frightened by the view of Advaita Vedanta do not desire even the Bliss of liberation, which is well known in the Vedas as the pure Supreme Bliss. They also argue that liberation is of the nature of absence of pain. The argument that action is the cause of happiness alone, therefore,
becomes too flimsy to be taken serious notice of. Hence, the characteristic of proof inheres in proof due to the fact that it is able to create cognition. On this basis, to say that even the words of an unreliable person becomes proof, seems to be reasonable.

Let the words of such an unreliable man create cognition through another sentence with the addition of Nakara (the letter ‘na’ in the Sanskrit alphabet which means ‘no’). Even there, there is no objection. This letter ‘na’ has very great force among the letters of the alphabet. Just as a lion is very strong among the beasts, so is this Nakara very strong among the letters, for it is able to nullify the meaning of any word or sentence connected with it. When two men are engaged in controversy, both of them may use this Nakara to refute each other’s views, and one has therefore to resort to a third proof to come to a decision in the matter. Such a third proof adduced, should be such that it should not be contradicted by a fourth one. But in the controversy, if one of the views advanced is pragmatic and other Vedic, there is no necessity to go in for a third, for going after proofs is to cure the defect in the argument, and defects creep in only in worldly arguments and not in Vedic ones which are stronger proofs than worldly ones. Just as a controversy may arise between two statements relating to worldly matters, difference can arise between one scriptural and one worldly statement. Statements such as ‘fruits are available on the banks of the river’ and ‘they are not available there’, illustrate the former. Statements like ‘future worlds exist’ and ‘they do not exist’, illustrate the latter. In such cases, the worldly statements become weak and non-substantive, while the Vedic statements which by themselves are free from any defect, become strong and authoritative. The power of creating cognition is present in ordinary sounds also. Letters of the alphabet produce knowledge about those letters, and they therefore become proof of knowledge. Suppose one says that sounds which do not produce any cognition also become proofs. Thereby no harm comes to the Vedantic argument that the characteristic of proof is the creation of cognition. In the cases of mutually contradicting proofs, some may be able to refute others with the help of the Nakara. Therefore, one should know that among the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, Nakara has immense power. Thus, no sound in this world remains without causing cognition and for this reason, all sound remain as proofs also. When such is the case, how can the Vedas which of superhuman divine origin, be said to be not valid proof!

The great Vedas, which are thus the crown of all valid proofs, contain two parts called Mantra and Brahmana. They have another fourfold classification as Rik, Yajus, Sama and Atharva. There is still another eightfold classification of Scripture, as Itihasas, Puranas, Vidyas, Upanishad, Slokas, Sutras, Vyakhyanas and Anuvyakhyanas. Portions containing statements and accounts like ‘there was Janaka who was the king of Videha’ are called Itihasas (legendary or historical, epic narratives). Those portions that speak of creation of ether, air, etc., from the supreme Cause, their preservation and destruction, the lineage of the preceptors of Knowledge, the birth and life of Svayambhuva Manu, the son of Brahma and the generation that succeeded him, the rights and duties of the four social orders and which have thus the five characteristics of Sarga, Pratisarga, Vamsa, Manvantara and Vamsanucharita are called Puranas. Those portions which enjoin meditation go by the name of Vidyas. Those portions of the Scripture dealing with the mystical meaning of the deities, and which treat about the Truth of all truths, are known as Upanishads. The Mantras that occur in the middle of the Brahmanas are named Slokas (verses or poetic compositions). Those statements like ‘meditate as the Atman’, which are pregnant with
meaning and which are aphoristical have the appellation of Sutras. Vyakhyanas deal with the explanation of the meanings of the Brahmana portion and Anuvyakhyanas are the further explanation of the aphorisms in eulogical and narrative forms. As the aphorisms are abstruse statements full of hidden meanings, they require greater and greater explanations, and such expositions are called Anuvyakhyanas. Sutras derive their name from the fact that they indicate the several meanings or truths which lie hidden in them. Learned men interpret them in different ways and attribute several meanings to one and the same aphorism. This is not to be considered as a defect. On the other hand, it contributes to the glory of the aphorisms. Thus, the great and magnificent Kalpa-Vriksha (heavenly-wish-yielding tree) of the Veda with eight subdivisions is with the four main branches of Rik, Yajus, Sama, and Atharva and innumerable smaller branches and twigs. As the Veda has come out of Brahman, it connotes the meaning of the word Brahman. Both the word Brahman and its meaning can be used for the Veda also. Just as the primal sound in the form of the Vedas has emerged from Brahman, their meaning and import also have come out from Him. The renowned Yogas, the various gifts and charities performed on the sacrificial altar, all the happiness and pain in this life as well as the future lives, their causes, all the creatures moving and non-moving, the great five elements, their presiding deities, the eleven organs, the vital forces like Prana, Apana and others, in short, everything ahs come out of this Supreme Lord like the outcoming breath without the least effort. Thus, the Atman alone was before creation.

When the phenomenal world of sentient and non-sentient objects meets with destruction, the Atman still remains non-dual and unaffected. O Maitreyi, hear my illustration on this point. All the waters in the rivers and those in the clouds finally reach the ocean, the former directly and the latter indirectly. By the entry of all these waters, the ocean is not affected in any manner. It remains the same one ocean without any increase or decrease. O Maitreyi, even so, at the time of dissolution, all creatures attain the Supreme Lord in the form of blissful Atman, and no modification is created in Him thereby. The sense-objects like sound and others merge in the organs which are their causes. The organs dissolve in their sources, viz., the subtle elements. Both the gross and subtle elements become one with the blissful Lord. O Maitreyi, all feeling of touch merges in the skin, all tastes in the palate, all smell in the olfactory organ, all forms in the eyes, all worldly sounds in the ears, all desires in the mind, all knowledge in the intellect, all actions in the hands, all enjoyments in the generative organ, all excretion in the anus, all movements in the feet and all the Vedas in speech. O Maitreyi, at the time of the great deluge, all the effects along with their causes attain the causeless Cause, viz., the Supreme Brahman.

Now, hear my illustration showing how Maya gradually merges when the knowledge of Brahman arises. Just as ocean water, which has the quality of liquidity becomes solid crystals of salt and ice, the Atman itself, due to ignorance, becoming gross assumes the form of individual soul. In a crystal of salt, there is no difference in its saltish nature either in the exterior, interior or in the middle. Even so, nowhere in the individual soul is there any difference in the nature of the Atman. The water, which is in a liquid form, for some reason freezes and becomes solid ice. In a like manner, due to ignorance, the unattached Supreme Atman becomes the transmigratory individual soul. A crystal of salt dropped into water dissolves in it. Even so, this mass of illusion disappears when dropped in the water of the knowledge of Brahman. The solid and the massy nature of the salt is seen only when it
is separated from the ocean water. In the same way, the illusion becomes perceptible only when it is separated from the blissful Atman. Just as the salt which has come out of the ocean is really not different from the ocean, either in the beginning or middle or in the end, the individual soul is ever non-different from the Supreme Atman. O virtuous lady, in salt, its nature of solidity is perishable, while that of liquidity (as salt-water of the ocean) is non-perishable. Even so, the individual nature as Jiva is perishable, while its nature as the Atman is eternal. As with the destruction of solidity, the salt disappears from our vision, the transmigratory nature of the individual soul is annihilated with the removal of the illusion. The nature of salt is to be saltish in all its parts. This nature does not change at any time either when it is in the solid form, or prior to it or posterior to it. O Maitreyi, likewise, no change is caused anywhere, at any time, to the self-effulgent nature of the Atman. In all conditions, It is self-resplendent. Even while the sun or other illuminating objects are shining, those whose eyes are affected by cataract are unable to see the light. In the same manner, those whose intellect is veiled by the darkness of illusion can never know the self-effulgent and omnipresent Atman even though It is always shining. One whose mind is intensely attached to one particular object, does not see another object even though it is in front of one. So is the case with one attached to this mundane world who does not perceive the blissful Atman. In the Atman, with the limiting adjunct of the subtle body, particularised knowledge of objects is created by the gross body made up of the five elements, and with the elimination of that gross body, the Atman, with particularised knowledge, also meets with destruction. Fire shining in contact with a piece of iron gets extinguished with the destruction of the iron-piece. Likewise, the Atman, the pure Consciousness which is self-luminous, which is really free from the three kinds of limitations due to space, time and substance, and which is distinct from the body, identifying itself with the body, meets with destruction when the body is destroyed.

After the destruction of the body, particularised knowledge ceases to exist. It is to point out this aspect of the matter alone that the Sage, the foremost among the wise and the intelligent, has said here that the Atman, with particularised knowledge, also is destroyed along with the destruction of the body. As in deep sleep, particularised knowledge, which causes perception of differentiation in all creatures, merges at the time of the death of the body. Because of this merging, one does not experience any pain in respect of his previous body. Though in deep sleep also, all distinctions which are the cause of cognition of particularised knowledge, and experience of pain completely get themselves merged; on waking, they again rise up in the body and cause the experience of misery. In death, this does not happen. Therefore it is that Yajnavalkya, a god among the sages, left out the deep sleep state and cited death as an illustration to the point. By the destruction of this body composed of five elements, no pain is caused to the Atman, for at the time of death, the Atman, which is one, self-illuminating, and in the form of pure consciousness, becomes devoid of particularised knowledge. Therefore, one does not experience pain and misery. Similarly, when particularised knowledge is destroyed through the annihilation of primal ignorance, pain does not arise again in the self-effulgent and blissful Atman. Ignorance is not destroyed in ordinary men at the time of death, and hence they have to undergo painful transmigration. The liberated man, in whom there is no more ignorance, never again experiences any pain. This was the view of the most eminent sage Yajnavalkya, who had
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profound knowledge in such matters. But, his wife, Maitreyi, could not fully grasp the truth, and she therefore addressed him again.

10. THE LAST DOUBT OF MAITREYI—CLEARED

Maitreyi: O my dear husband, you have told me earlier that the Atman, dearer than the dearest, is eternal. Now you say that It is destroyed with the destruction of the body made up of the five elements. This statement of yours shatters all my convictions, even as a strong breeze scatters a heap of cotton in all directions. My mind does not get fixed anywhere. O Lord, your words have become the cause of delusion in me. The attendants of a king who are unable to understand their master’s intentions would only be confounded. Even so, my mind has become very much confused because I am not able to follow your instructions. Like a cow with desire to eat grass runs into a mire covered over by grass due to want of discrimination, O foremost among the sages, I, keenly desirous of acquiring the knowledge of the Atman from you have sunk, as it were, into the quagmire of your words. O blessed soul, I have heard often from you, as well as other learned men, that the Atman is eternal and deathless. That firm conviction of mine has now been shaken by your present instructions that the Atman also dies along with the body.

Hearing these words of Maitreyi, Yajnavalkya, with great compassion, further explained the matter to her.

Yajnavalkya: O Maitreyi, do not become confounded by my words. O my dear, you should not feel miserable. Remain calm with your mind fixed on the Atman. I will not cause any delusion in you who have taken refuge in me. O Maitreyi, you have unnecessarily become confused without understanding the real import of my instructions. On the annihilation of the great illusion, this intellectual Atman (Vijnanaghana Atman) leaves off the nature of a separate individual Jiva and rests on its own self-effulgent nature. In this state, particularised knowledge previous possessed by the individual being absent, one does not experience any pain. It is, in this sense, I said that the Atman also is destroyed with the destruction of the gross body. O my dear, the idea implied in my statement is that on the destruction of this body, the individual Atman (as Jiva) loses the power of particularised objective knowledge, and not that the nature of the Atman is perishable. When a pot is broken, people speak of the destruction of the pot—either by superimposing on the ether destruction which is not really in it. O Maitreyi, this Atman is a homogeneous mass of Self-effulgence, Consciousness and Bliss. Even in death, It remains pervading the body. The only difference is that the knowledge caused through the body, organs, etc. is absent because of their absence. In death, separated from all objective knowledge which has a beginning, the self-resplendent Atman does not experience pain because It is then freed from all duality. When this is the condition of the Atman even when It remains as a transmigrating soul, how can It cognise or experience the pain of transmigration, which is the effect of primeval ignorance, when It is freed from that ignorance in the liberated state! In that Supreme State, the Atman does not have the least desire for experiencing duality. Therefore, in both deep sleep and death, the Atman, devoid of particularised knowledge, remains deathless. The resplendent Atman, being free of any cognition of duality in both these states, does not experience particularised knowledge. This is the case in liberation also. In this manner, the self-effulgent blissful Atman verily remains deathless in deep sleep, in death and in liberation. It does not leave off its Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute nature at any time.
In deep sleep, though It remains self-resplendent, It does not cognise objects like son, daughter, etc., due to the absence of duality in It. As the Atman is omnipresent, It always resides in the organs of sense and action, the body and the internal organ. O Maitreyi, in deep sleep, death and liberation, the self-resplendent Atman is not destroyed, and remains possessed of strength in the form of pure Consciousness and freedom from change. In this non-dual Atman which is self-luminous and eternal bliss, there is no duality at any time. The duality perceived in the Atman during the waking and dreaming states in this mundane world is illusory, as the Atman is beyond all transmigratory existence. When the duality of this phenomenal world is perceived as distinct from one’s Self and cognised with all its differentiations as other than the Atman, when it becomes the objects cognisable by one through the sense-organs, when the feeling that oneself as an individual is separate from the universal, and when the knowledge of Brahman has not dawned, in that state of ignorance, pains and sufferings come to the embodied being from inside and outside through all the eleven organs, viz., the five organs of action, the five organs of sense and the mind. When the ignorance is dispelled by the knowledge of Brahman one experiences no pain whatsoever through any of the organs, for one is then devoid of all differentiation, agency and enjoyership, and remains as the self-resplendent and blissful Atman. When there comes the direct realisation that ‘everything is verily Brahman alone’, all the sentient and non-sentient bodies, the organs of sense and action, their corresponding objects and the internal organ, viz., the mind, become non-existent to him, for the simple reason that in that supreme state of direct realisation of the non-dual Brahman, the ignorance which is the cause of all the above-said things is done away with,—with the result that its effect, viz., the phenomenal universe is not projected again. Since the ignorance which is the cause of everything here meets with destruction, all objects, which are only its effects, also meet with the same fate, and the self-effulgent Atman, remaining alone and absolute, shines by Itself in Its own glory. In this Atman, no differentiation can exist on any account at any time, and therefore pain, which is the result of perceiving differentiation, also does not exist. During the time of perception of duality in the self-luminous Atman, which is foreign to It, one cognises only the duality and not the Atman. He who is all-knowing is not known even in the state of phenomenal existence with the perception of duality. Then, when the knowledge that ‘everything is Brahman alone’ arises, who can this non-dual, effulgent Deity, and how!

After clearing the doubt raised by his dear wife, Maitreyi, sage Yajnavalkya further said:

O Maitreyi, if any one of dull intellect says: ‘I know the all-knowing Atman’, he should be asked: “With what did you know the Atman? In this world one knows an object through some means. No one can know anything without a means. Please tell us with what means did you know the Atman. There is neither existence nor non-existence in the universe, gross and subtle in the Atman free from ignorance. It cannot be known through the external and internal organs. Under such conditions, with what can you know It? That which can be known will surely meet with destruction in course of time. Objects of cognition like cloth and others are seen to wear away and perish by passage of time. So, if the Atman also were to come under cognisable objects, It would be subjected to old age and death. In this world phenomena, perishable objects are seen to have relation with parts or limbs. He who is attached to anything has fear from that thing. As the body is found to have attachment with the organs, it experiences fear. The Atman, being fearless, is completely
non-attached to everything. Fear certainly causes pain, and when there is pain, destruction follows on its heels. The Atman is deathless, and is therefore free from pain. As It has no pain, It has neither fear. Absence of the feeling of ‘mineness’ brings about non-attachment. How can the Atman, which is thus deathless, fearless, non-attached and egoless, become old and decayed? What is that means through which you have known this Atman which is beyond cognition? It is not possible even to speak about the means and other things in the Atman which is free from existence and non-existence, fearless and self-illuminating. Following the method of Vedanta and Yoga, if we enquire, we cannot find out a means of knowing the Atman. Neither the Vedantins who have followed the Upanishadic method of enquiry and attained the *summum bonum* of existence, nor those Yogins who have practised the Yoga of sage Patanjali and reached the final goal, have stated that the Atman can be attained through the organs or any other similar means. The Charvakas (Materialists) who consider the aggregate of the body, organs, etc., as the Atman, do not say that their Atman can be known through any of the organs, for all the organs come under the aggregate of the body which they consider as the Atman. Thereby, they come under the ‘subject’ and there is nothing left to know the Atman. In the case of those who hold that the organs are the Atman, the same argument holds good. Coming to those who consider that the Atman is the mind, or the vital force or the intellect which are different from the aggregate of the body and the organs, they also do not perceive an Atman with form through their organs of sight and others. As the organs are unable to grasp that Atman, they cannot be said to be the means of knowing It. Mind cannot grasp objects with form, etc., without the help of the organs, and hence it cannot also be the means of knowing the Atman. If it is argued that the Atman, which is different from the aggregate of the body, etc., is formless, even then it cannot be grasped by the mind, for a means must always have a ‘subject’, and the Atman, when known by another, becomes the ‘object’. When an ‘object’ has no existence without a ‘subject’ and the ‘Atman’ becomes the ‘object’, who else is there in the place of the ‘subject’? If the Atman is not the ‘object’, it will naturally be the ‘subject’ and what will be the ‘object’ then? In the absence of the ‘object’, there cannot be any means of knowing it. Of the two, viz., ‘subject’ and ‘object’, if either is absent, means of knowing cannot exist, because the means is always dependent on the subject and object. That with which the subject does an action is called the ‘means’ by the wise. The Atman cannot be postulated as subject and object for the same action simultaneously. Such a contingency is not seen anywhere in actual experience. O dull-witted, if you can accept such a ‘means’ in the consciousness of the Atman, to know the Atman which is against all reasoning, scriptures and actual experience, what objection can you have to accept that the Atman is self-illuminating without bring in the differentiation of means?”

The Atman is the witness of all proofs and not-proofs. In fact, the Atman does not become the means in illuminating the Atman. But, by reflection and meditation following the scriptural statements, the Atmakara Vritti (the sole thought of the non-dual Atman alone to the exclusion of every other thought) arises in qualified aspirants like us. When such a continuous flow of the thought of the Atman is there, the veil of ignorance, which has so long been veiling, as it were, the Atman, is torn asunder. And when the veil of ignorance is done away with, the self-effulgent Atman shines by itself.

O Maitreyi, when it is established that there is no means or instrument to illumine the Atman, following the logic of the dull-witted materialistic people, does it need any special
mention that this truth stands established,—uncontradicted in the opinion of those who are well-versed in the scriptures! It is known to all that the body, organs, etc., being inert by themselves like the Kamandalu (water pot of the ascetic) and other objects, cannot be the Atman. Thus it is confirmed that the non-dual, blissful Atman is of the nature of self-effulgent Consciousness. The Atman illumines all the modifications of the intellect and remains as their witness. O Maitreyi, by what means can you know this Atman! Therefore, my dear, you should know that non-dual blissful Atman which, being self-effulgent, shines without any external light, and which is dearer than the dearest, through that Atman Itself and rest in that Atman. Renounce everything, husband, sons and other objects of this mundane world, for all of them are only different forms of pain and misery. O my dear, you asked me about the means to attain immortality, and in reply, I have imparted to you the knowledge of the Atman along with the means to attain It. You need only know so much about the Immortality which you wanted to know from me. There is no doubt about it. O Maitreyi, there is no Immortality other than knowing the non-dual, blissful Atman residing in one’s own heart. O Maitreyi, if one casts off one’s mortal coil after knowing one’s own Atman in this manner, one will have no more birth thereafter. The mind should not be allowed to go after the external sense-objects, leaving aside the deathless, non-dual, self-effulgent and eternal Atman residing in the heart. O my dear, if you follow my instructions and act accordingly, you will never meet with death. You will attain Immortality.

11. SAGE YAJNAVALKYA EMBRACES SANNYASA

Preceptor: O disciple, Yajnavalkya, the most eminent among the sages, thus imparted the knowledge of Brahman to his wife, Maitreyi. Thereafter, the sage, having become completely dispassionate, renounced the householder’s order and embraced Sannyasa. He had rightly and fully understood that the illusory power of the Atman with the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, is not really the Atman, and therefore only unreal. He realised that power which the sages of yore had discovered after mature enquiry as the cause of this universe as illusory. Those sages of extremely purified mind, with the help of that illusory power, knew that the Atman itself is the cause of the universe, and thus they had a correct knowledge of that illusory power. Yajnavalkya, the foremost among the sages, who had realised the emptiness of the inscrutable power, which is said to be the cause of this universe, after becoming a monk had equal vision in the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, friend and foe, good and ad, and even in his own body and all the beings from Brahma down to a blade of grass. He who had the firm conviction that in all the activities of the workaday world, it is the organs that act on their respective objects, and that the Atman has no attachment to them, did neither prevent his organs from going towards their objects, nor did he entertain any desire to enjoy the objects. This sage, with his body, organs, etc., along with his mind, wandered over the face of this earth giving the ‘fear-not-gift’ (Abhayadana) to all the creatures. Like her husband, Maitreyi, who is herself of the nature of the Atman, also led the life of a wandering mendicant, but without the outward symbols of a Sannyasin.
The scriptures have ordained that only those great Brahmanas who have embrace the order of Sannyasa can have the outer insignia of that order. Those who belong to the other classes, even if they enter into the order of Sannyasa, have no scriptural sanction to wear the emblems of that order. The spiritual practices, like celibacy, etc., followed by a Sannyasin, can be followed with advantage by women also, because they are the general obligatory duties enjoined by the scriptures for that order. Even those in the lowest moral order who are prohibited from taking to Sannyasa, have no objection to follow the general spiritual practices like self-restraint, celibacy and others. Women in the three higher orders are not prohibited from studying the scriptures and attaining knowledge through reflection on the scriptural statements. The Brahmanas are not forbidden from imparting the highest knowledge to them. The Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, being those with more of Rajas and Tamas in them, have no scriptural authority to embrace Sannyasa with all its outer insignia, nor to initiate others into that order. The potency and efficacy, as far as the final result is concerned, are the same in the case of the Brahmanas taking up the order with all the outer marks pertaining to it and those in the other two classes taking to that order without those marks. Just as those in the lowest class are prohibited from performing ritualistic sacrifices, those in the other two classes are forbidden from putting on themselves the symbols of the Sannyasa order. However, if Brahmanas are not available for initiation, there is no restriction in Kshatriyas and Vaisyas initiating those in their own classes including women. But he who initiates should be one who follows the injunctions of the scriptures. One who is in the Vaisya class can accept men and women of his class as disciples, but not the women of the higher classes. When there is a break in the lineage of preceptors among males, females in the first three classes can instruct those in their level. All those in the three classes, when unable to procure a fully qualified preceptor, may get themselves initiated from anyone else to follow the tradition, and then with their own intellect, reflect on the Vedic texts and understand them. Among women, one who gets her own husband as her preceptor is really blessed. A man who occupies that high status of the preceptor, should himself have a noble character and should have in his boyhood undergone the course of instructions in the traditional manner from his parents and preceptor, and should possess full knowledge. In case a woman is unable to get her own husband as preceptor, she can accept anyone belonging to her own class or to the higher ones. One who is low in character is not qualified to be a preceptor to anyone on any subject. Such men should not be accepted as preceptors even at the time of death. Those men and women belonging to the fourth class may be initiated in the Puranas, in case they lead a virtuous life according to the injunctions of the scriptures. Nothing prevents them from acquiring knowledge through them.

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60 The wise say that Brahmanas are those in whom Sattva-Guna predominates with a trace of Rajas and Tamas; Kshatriyas are those in whom Rajas has subordinated Sattva and Tamas; Vaisyas are those in whom Tamas is predominant with some Sattva and Rajas; and Sudras are those in whom Tamas has the upper hand. This social classification is thus a psychological grouping of characters which determine conduct and action.
Maitreyi, being all-conversant with all the scriptural laws received the instructions on the knowledge of the Atman from her own husband. Equipped with all the spiritual practices like Brahmacharya and others and without having the external marks of the Sannyasa order, she spent the rest of her life as a wandering ascetic. Excepting for the outer insignia pertaining to the order of Sannyasa, there was no difference between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi. Yajnavalkya had all the outer sings of a Sannyasin, while Maitreyi did not have them. Equal vision, compassion towards all creatures and similar other virtues were found in the fullest extent in both of them.

12. THE PRECEPTOR CONCLUDES

Preceptor: O disciple! I have thus instructed you in the knowledge of Brahma, as imparted by sage Yajnavalkya to his consort Maitreyi.

Here ends ‘The Philosophy of Sage Yajnavalkya’ as depicted in Chapters V, VI, and VII of the Atma Purana by Sri Swami Sankarananada. This is perhaps the most exalted exposition of the Supreme Reality in all the Upanishads, revealing the stupendous heights to which the spirit of man can soar. When the ultimate truth of the divinity of man, as also in the universe, which is established by scriptural testimony, is also proved through reasoning employed by the scriptures and experienced by oneself, all doubts vanish destroying once for all the pains of this Samsara. This is what is aimed at and purported to be achieved by one who studies the three chapters, reflects over the teachings contained therein and meditates over them. These instructions have been summed up by Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in his aphoristic saying: “Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realise”. The teachings of the all-knowing Sage, Yajnavalkya, to the Vedic scholars in the court of king Janaka, those to the king himself and thereafter to his consort Maitreyi, clearly depict the three stages of spiritual Sadhana. The first preparatory stage is when the aspirant turns away from all phenomena which, he is told at this stage, are unreal, and seeks the Real beyond the purview of the mind and senses. The second stage is the complete absorption of one’s consciousness in the cosmic Consciousness when the world of duality is obliterated, as it were. The Sadhana does not end here, even as the Lord’s instructions in the Bhagavad Gita do not end with the 11th Chapter wherein Arjuna has the vision of the Universal, inclusive of himself. After this God-vision, the aspirant who has all along been a Sadhaka and has now become a Siddha, comes back to the world-consciousness, but with a completely different vision. He is no more bound. He is a liberated sage moving in the world, seeing it as a manifestation of God, nay, as God Himself. No more does this Sage turn away from the world as he did during the preparatory stage. He does not see any evil, nor does he experience any pain. This is what Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi experienced. This is what king Janaka of Videha experienced. This is what all sages like Vyasa, Vasishtha, Suka and a host of others experienced. It is said that Sage Yajnavalkya, A Videha-Mukta, did neither prevent his organs from going towards the objects, nor did he entertain any desire to enjoy the objects. Both Jivanmukti and Videhamukti, embodies liberation and disembodied liberation, are enjoyed even while one is with the body. In Jivanmukti, the sage may at times come down to world-consciousness, the consciousness that he is a man, a sage, etc. In Videhamukti, the flow of the Supreme Atman-Brahman-Consciousness is unbroken like the continuous flow of oil from one vessel into another. The question...
whether he has a body or not does not arise at all, although to others the Sage may be possessing a body.

_Om Santih! Santih! Santih!_
APPENDIX 1

SAGE YAJNAVALKYA

Sage Yajnavalkya was one of the greatest geniuses of the Upanishadic period. Not much historical information, in the modern sense of the term, is therefore available. Most of the facts relating to him as a saint and philosopher are contained in the text itself.

It is in the court of the kings, Janakas of Videha, that we meet this great personage, being the author of Vajasaneyi Samhita or the Sukla-Yajurveda. The word Janaka was a dynasty name. Scholars say that it began with Mithi Janaka and ended with Kriti Janaka. The source of this information seems to be the Puranas, especially the Vayu Purana and Brahmananda Purana. Siradhvaja Janaka, the father of Sita, the consort of Sri Rama, was one of the Janakas of the dynasty. Janakas were considered to be extremely benevolent in nature and great patrons of learning during those days. King Ajatasatru of Kasi, himself a philosopher of no ordinary calibre, wished his people to look upon him as a Janaka (Br. Up. II-1-1 and Kaushi. Up. IV-1). The Mahabharata (XII-276) says that in instructing Mandavya, one Janaka said: “I have nothing; yet I live in great happiness. If the whole of Mithila burns in a conflagration, nothing of mine will be burnt down.” Such was the spirit of detachment of the Janakas who ruled a vast dominion.

Yajnavalkya is said to be the most prominent Sage in the court of king Daivarati, Janaka’s father, and played a prominent part. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, we see the Sage as the greatest philosopher and Jnani. He is also portrayed as a distinguished sage of unsurpassed wisdom and skill in logical argumentation. After the incident in which Indra cut off the head of Sage Dadhyang Atharva, another Brahma-Vidya-Guru of that time, it is said there was none in those days other than Sage Yajnavalkya to teach this supreme knowledge of the Atman without fear from Indra (Vide page 2 and 3 of the text). As a Srotriya-Brahmanishtha-Guru, he is seen attending the Brahmodayam in the Bahu-Dakshina Sacrifice conducted by king Janaka who was desirous of picking out the greatest Brahma-Vidya-Guru, so that he might get himself initiated into that Supreme knowledge. How the Sage took away the huge prize offered by the king, how it started a heated controversy and ended in a clear exposition of Brahma Vidya, are detailed in the text.

Sage Yajnavalkya was also a great Yogi who received instructions on Yoga from Hiranyakarbha, a pupil of Sage Jaimini (Vide Srimad-Bhagavata-Purana IX-12-3 & 4). In the Jabala Upanishad, we find the Sage instructing sage Atri on meditation on the Trikuti, the meeting place of Varana and Nasi (Varansi). Atri enquires: “What is Varana and what is Nasi?” Yajnavalkya replies: “That which overcomes all the faults done by the sense-organs is Varana, and that which destroys all the evils done by the sense-organs is Nasi.” The abode of Varana and Nasi is the meeting place of the eyebrows and nose.

Another Upanishad named after the Sage and called Yajnavalkya Upanishad contains his instructions to King Janaka and Sage Atri on Sannyasa Asrama. The bold declaration: Yadahareva Virajet Tadahareva Pravrajet (on that day in which the spirit of true renunciation dawns, on that very day let him renounce and become a recluse.) comes out from the mouth of this great Sage both in the Jabala and Yajnavalkya Upanishads. This lays down Vairagya, true dispassion, a complete absence of desire for sense-pleasures in all the worlds, resulting from Viveka, real discrimination between the Atman and not-Atman, as
the condition to precede the taking to Sannyasa or renunciation as means to attain the Supreme. Whether one is a student (Brahmacharin), or a householder (Grihastha) or a forest-dweller (Vanaprastha), whether one has completed his worldly duties or not, this Mantra qualifies one to take to Sannyasa when dispassion dawns. In another place a number of qualifications to be possessed by one who wants to enter the last order of Sannyasa are prescribed by the Sruti. These two apparently contradicting statements get themselves reconciled when one understands that the spirit of true dispassion dawns only in one who is possessed of the said qualifications. One who gets dispassion even in very early age in this life would have secured all the necessary qualifications in his previous lives.

Sage Yajnavalkya is seen as the greatest authority on questions of rituals in the Satapatha Brahmana. Srimad Bhagavata Purana, while describing the genealogy of the Panchalas, Kurus, and the kings of Magadha, states that Janamejaya’s son Satanika learnt the three Vedas and received the knowledge of the rituals from Sage Yajnavalkya (IX 22-38). He, it is said, caused many ritualistic sacrifices to be performed and himself became the Acharya in them. He is also said to be the author of Yajnavalkya Smriti, Yajnavalkya Siksha, Pratijna Sutra, Satapatha Brahmana and Yoga-Yajnavalkya.

Yajnavalkya was the son of the sister of the great Sage Vaisampayana. Sri Vaisampayana, the Vedacharya of the Taittiriya section was therefore his maternal uncle, who was also his Guru, under whom he studied the Taittiriya Samhita. While he was undergoing discipleship under Vaisampayana, some misunderstanding arose between the Guru and the disciple, as a result of which they were separated. Yajnavalkya then propitiated the Sun-god, the glorious Lord Hari, who, pleased with his penance, assumed the form of a horse and taught the sage such fresh portions of Yajur-Veda as were not then known to any other. These new portions of the Veda go by the names of Sukla, Madhyandina, Kanva, and Vajasaneya Yajurveda. More details about the sage’s penance and worship of the Sun-god are contained in the text itself.

About his life as a householder also, there is some information in the text itself. He had two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi, of whom the latter was a Brahmavadini. After instruction Janaka on Brahma-Vidya which is the subject matter of Chapters I and II of the text, the Sage instructs Maitreyi on Immortality, which forms the contents of Chapter III. It is said that Yajnavalkya had many children, both sons and daughters. Some say that he had three sons through Katyayani, who were named Chandrakanta, Mahamegha and Vijaya.

The Mahabharata (XII-319) tells us that as a result of Yajnavalkya’s instructions on Brahmavidya, King Daivarati Janaka, who had direct realisation of the Reality, after installing his son on the throne, embraced Sannyasa. How can one who made an emperor leave off all the sense-pleasures of the world readily available to him and take to the order of monks with a begging bowl, remain at home with his wives and children! So, after imparting the immortal instructions on Atma Vidya to his consort Maitreyi, the Sage left off the householder’s life and embraced Vidvat Sannyasa. To this all-knowing Sage, one of the greatest Srotiya Brahmanishtha Gurus, a master of all scriptures, always established in the supreme consciousness, and at the same time, a Karma Yigin, a Raja Yigin and a Bhakti Yigin, and lastly an ideal Jivanmukti and Videhamukta, may we offer our heartfelt Pranams and silent adorations:

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Vandeham mangalatmanam
    bhasvantam vedavigraham,
Yajnavalkyam munisreshtham
    jishnum hariharaprabham;
Jitendriyam jitakrodham
    sada dhyana-parayanam,
Anandanilayam vande
    yoganandam munisvaram.
Chapter I: Giving of gifts to the spiritual preceptor and discussion with those who are well-versed in the scriptures and established firmly in the non-dual Absolute, are two outstanding factors in the traditional method of acquiring the knowledge of the Atman, the Absolute Reality. Following the tradition, the story of Janaka, the king of Videha, performing a great sacrifice, his inviting the wise and the learned in the country, and offering large wealth to the greatest knower of Brahman, sage Yajnavalkya taking away the prize, the discussion on Brahma Vidya that followed, and the final victory of the Sage, have been included in this chapter. Eight great sages including a lady-saint take part in the discussion with Sage Yajnavalkya. They are Asvala, Artabhaga, Bhujyu, Ushasta, Kahola, Uddalaka, Gargi and Sakalya. The discussions reveal the rise of consciousness in a steady and progressive manner from the grossest level to the subtlest and then to the transcendental. Starting from the emancipation from death in the form of Karmas and time, the consciousness is freed from the senses and their objects. Then one transcends all Karmas, the result of which is only ephemeral, even if it be the world if Hiranyagarbha, the utmost limit of attainments through Karmas combined with meditation. With this ends the discussion with the first three sages, Asvala, Artabhaga and Bhujyu.

Now the Upanishad enters into the ext stage in the onward march of the spiritual seeker, viz., discrimination between the Atman and not-Atman, in the questions of Ushasta and the answers furnished by Yajnavalkya. “Brahman is self-luminous, direct, most immediate and without attributes. It is more immediate than all objects including one’s body. Scriptures say that this Brahman is the same as the Atman, the innermost entity in all. In view of these facts, how can the Atman be separate from the aggregate of the body, organs, etc.? This is the doubt raised by Ushasta to which sage Yajnavalkya replies that He, who remaining in one’s heart controls the vital forces and directs their functions, is quite different and distinct from the aggregate of the body, organs, etc. No one can see the Seer. The Atman, which is the knower of all the modifications of the intellect, cannot be known by the intellect.

Having thus discriminated the Atman from the not-Atman, the next step, as revealed in the discussions between Kahola and Yajnavalkya, is to know the chief characteristics of the Atman, viz., immediacy, directness and freedom from the six kinds of evils—hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, decay and death—and the means of realisation which is renunciation combined with Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana referred to by the enigmatic terms Panditya, Balya and Mauna.

A further description of the nature of the immediate and direct Atman-Brahman is given in the discussions with the remaining three sages. A series of questions are put by Gargi, the lady-saint, which are aimed at knowing the Supreme through the method of logical reasoning. She, however, succeeds in raising the consciousness only up to the cosmic Intelligence. How can the individual, finite intellect transcend the cosmic Intelligence which is infinite in its nature! Therefore, the next logical question raised by Gargi regarding the cause or support of the cosmic Intelligence is disallowed by Yajnavalkya. Gargi has necessarily to stop her questioning for the time being.
The question of Uddalaka starts where Gargi left off. He demands from the Sage a clear exposition of the Sutra (literally means thread, or that which points out) and Antaryamin (Inner Controller). The Sage replies that the Sutra is Vayu which means Cosmic Prana, which is a manifestation of the Supreme. About the Antaryamin, the Sage says that the Supreme Being resides as the Antaryamin in the five elements such as earth, water, etc., in heavenly beings such as a sun, moon, etc., and in all living and non-living beings. As the individual Self, He resides in the Prana, speech, semen, intellect, etc. These different entities themselves are not aware of the Lord, although He is always remaining in them as their inner Ruler. All of them form the body of the Lord. But none of them can see Lord with the eyes, nor hear Him with the ears. He is the Seer of seeing and Hearer of hearing. There is no seer, hearer or knower other than Him.

Gargi steps in again and puts two more questions with the prior permission of the Sage and the assembly, this time basing her questions on the scriptures and not on logic. In reply, we get from Yajnavalkya the most exalted exposition of the Supreme as Akshara—the Immutable—indicating Its existence by negating all possible attributes such as grossness, minuteness, etc. Anticipating the popular misconception that “then, It is something non-existent”, the Sruti adduces inferential evidence in favour of its existence and says that it is under the mighty rule of this Immutable that the sun and moon are held in their orbits, the heaven and earth are maintained in position, etc. To refute the contention that like heat and light of fire, the rulership of the immutable is natural to the insentient Pradhana of the Sankhyas, Yajnavalkya says this Immutable is never seen but is the Witness, is never heard but is the Hearer, etc. There is no other witness but This, no other hearer but This. When the Sage finishes his reply, Gargi bows down and refrains herself from further questioning. She advises the Assembly also not to question the Sage further for, she says that none can defeat him who being a knower of Brahman, is Brahman himself.

The final phase of the discussion is portrayed in the answers of Yajnavalkya to Sakalya’s questions and concluded in the reply given by Yajnavalkya himself to his own questions which is addressed to the assembly. The immediacy and directness of Brahman are conveyed by reference to the gods who are all but the manifestations of that Supreme Reality and whose number is said to range from one to infinity. After a detailed description of the eight abodes of the Purusha, the corresponding eight worlds, the eight deities and the eight Purushas, the Sage explains how Isvara, the cause of the universe, pervades in all these four sets of eight entities, like thread in cloth, holds them and controls them. This Supreme Purusha is to be known only through the Upanishads. Having said so much, the Sage asks Sakalya: “Who is this Purusha who is known only through the Upanishads?” Sakalya is not able to answer this question. His head falls.

The Sage now addresses the assembly: “In the case of a seed and its sprout, there is the earth without which both cannot exist. Similarly, there is something which acts as the cause of this body and the unseen principle from which the body is seen to sprout. What is that something? In other words, what is the cause of this universe, and of its cause, the Isvara?”

No one in the assembly is able to answer the question. Thus defeating all those who have come from various parts of the country, Yajnavalkya justifies his taking away the prize offered by the king to the greatest knower of Brahman. The chapter concludes with the answer furnished by the Sage to his own question, through which he establishes that the
The ultimate causeless Cause of the universe is Knowledge-Bliss-Brahman who is the bestower of the fruits of actions and the Supreme Goal of him who has renounced everything and realised Him and is established in Him.

Chapter 2: Detached from the story part of it, the instruction of sage Yajnavalkya to king Janaka contained in this chapter may be broadly divided into four progressive steps in the Sadhana of a seeker which are Upasana, Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana—worship and meditation, hearing the Truth from the preceptor, reflection on what has been heard, and deep meditation on the Truth.

(a) Upasana: Under Upasana, worship combined with meditation, the Sage instructs the king that meditation on each of the deities such as fire, air, sun, directions, moon and Brahma, in which the king was an adept, cannot lead to the final goal of liberation, since each of them forms only one Pada (quarter), i.e., a partial manifestation of Brahman. He therefore instructs the king on meditation on the remaining three quarters also, viz., the abodes of the deities, their support, and their secret names, showing thereby that through the rise of consciousness,—from the gross to the subtle, and then to the causal or the unmanifest,—one reaches the Supreme.

(b) Sravana: Having had a glimpse of the Supreme in meditation through Upasana, one should approach one’s preceptor for Sravana, with utmost humility and sincerity. This is illustrated in the king’s surrender to the Sage and prayer to be instructed on the means of final redemption from the transmigratory cycle. The Atman and Its manifestation as this universe are referred to as Indra and Indrani, his spouse, and located in the two eyes in the waking state to facilitate meditation. They are non-different from one’s own Self. In dream, the Atman entering into the subtle nerves, enjoys subtle objects created by the mind. In deep sleep, the Atman enters the heart-ether when the universe—both gross and subtle—becomes one with the Atman, even as Indra and Indrani remain as one in seclusion. The royal road for the divine couple to travel is the Shoshanna Nadir, and starting from the heart and going up to the crown of the head, it leads to Brahma-Loki. The pure Atman, self-effulgent, eternal, unattached, and non-dual, does not really have any kind of relationship, and all enjoyments, movements, etc., attributed to It, are only figurative. It is beyond all Parmesan or proofs, for proofs themselves depend on the Atman for their existence.

(c) Manana: Manana, or reflection, is a *sine qua non* for the spiritual seeker. The Atman, which is identical with Brahman (both the names being only superimpositions on that nameless, formless, non-dual, eternal Absolute) is the unchanging substratum for all the three states, viz., waking, dreaming and deep sleep, and yet remains transcending all the three. Compared to the Turiya, or the transcendental state of liberation which is the real waking state when man wakes up to his true nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda-Rupa from the false sleep of ignorance, the three states are only sleep, because the darkness of ignorance persists in all the three states. The Upanishads sometimes use the term ‘deep sleep’ to refer to all the three state. Similarly, the term ‘dream’ is used sometimes to include both the waking and dream states, because in both the states there is the perception of false duality in the form of a phenomenal world. Ample opportunity is given in the Upanishad to the seeker to ponder over these truths and reflect over them. Merely hearing the truths from the preceptor is not enough. Unless one cogitates over the import of the teachings again and again, once is likely to forget them and slip down into the old ways of wrong thinking.
This is illustrated through the story of Sage Yajnavalkya coming back to Mithila a second time to instruct the king on reflection on the truths already imparted to him succinctly on the previous occasion and granting the boon of Kama-Prasna. This also illustrates the truth that although in the early stages the disciple goes in search of a preceptor, in the final stage, the Guru himself comes to the disciple and initiates him into the final mysteries of the Advaitic Truth. This time, the discussion starts with the question of the king as to what is it that illumines objects in the waking state. From the light of the sun and moon which are external to oneself and individual in nature, the Sages takes the king to fire which is all-pervasive, then to speech which is internal, and finally shows that all these four illuminants get their power of illumination only from the self-luminous Atman. This Atman called Visva in the waking state, is name Taijasa in the dream state. The Atman creates the cloth of the dream world with the thread of the mind. Mind alone is the cause of creation, preservation and destruction of the dream world. The individual mind, which is, by itself, non-sentient, receives its sentiency from the Atman. It is verily the mind that becomes the subtle dream world as well as the gross waking world. Through pure reasoning it is established that Consciousness free of all differentiations is self-luminous, is of the nature of bliss, and that It rests in the Atman itself, for Consciousness and the Atman are one. This takes the aspirant to the next step, where he is convinced that there is no difference among the different objects, all being verily in essence the non-dual Consciousness.

The next question of the king is: “Which among the body, organs, etc. is the Atman?” The Sage answers: “When you are hearing these answers of mine to your questions, he who is residing within you, as though a witness of all your thoughts, is the Atman who is the witness of all psychoses in all creatures. Though It is the witness, It does not see. It is also known by the name of Purusha. This Purusha who is infinite does not really assume any body, nor does He take birth, nor undergo death. People attribute sentience to the not-Atman and non-sentience to the Atman due to ignorance and gross misunderstanding of the imports of scriptural texts. Brahman which is unmanifested and devoid of name and form and which is the cause of this universe, is itself the self-effulgent Atman in all bodies.

The king raises doubts as to how the Atman in the dream and waking states could be said to be non-attached and how It could be non-different in the two states. The Sage again explains the truth that it is the same Atman called Visva in the waking state, which seems to pass on to the dream state when it is known by the name of Taijasa, and it is the same Atman that appears to attain the state of deep sleep when it is called by the name of Prajna. As the seer of an object is not attached to the object seen, the non-dual Atman remains unattached with the seen in the waking and dream states.

In the deep sleep state, the Atman as though enters the heart-ether and shines in all its glory free from all differentiations of the waking and dream states, along with their cause which is one’s own mind itself. The ignorance which is the cause of the mind though present in the deep sleep state also, is not however perceived then. The individual soul identifies itself with the Supreme Soul and enjoys the experience “I am the all”, like one who is liberated. In that state, It transcends all desires, all merits and demerits, all grief and all relationships like father, mother, etc. The phenomenal universe is not seen because it is absent and not because of the absence of consciousness. Consciousness, being non-dual and eternal like the Atman, is not subject to the four kinds of non-existences, viz., antecedent
non-existence, mutual non-existence, complete non-existence and non-existence due to
destruction. Just as the non-existence of the snake in the rope-snake analogy rests in the
rope and merges in the rope, the non-existence of the phenomenal universe, which is an
unreal superimposition on the Atman due to nescience, becomes the very nature of the
Atman. All the happiness that one gets in the waking and dream states is only the
experience of absence of pain. The Atman attained by the individual soul in deep sleep is of
the nature of Supreme Bliss. It is the supreme goal, the supreme wealth, the supreme
world, the Supreme among all supremes. It is on a very small fraction of the bliss of the
Atman that all the world enjoys happiness. Through a calculus of the degrees of joy enjoyed
by beings in the different levels of evolution, beginning from a human being and ending
with Hiranyagarbha, the Upanishad shows that as one’s consciousness rises higher and
higher, the joy also increases, that the joy of the highest of creations, viz., Hiranyagarbha is
also limited, that a knower of Brahman who is free from desire, who is learned in the
scriptures, and who is free from sin, enjoys all the joys in all the levels, that the bliss of the
Atman has no comparison anywhere, and is beyond the reach of speech and mind.

The king again raises another doubt. How can the individual Jiva attain liberation by merely
knowing the experiences of the three states? The Sage thereupon gives another exhaustive
exposition on the Atman, with special reference to the transmigration of the Jiva. When the
Karmas which brought about this body are exhausted, the Jiva, the subtle body, takes
another gross body according to the past Karmas. How the Jiva leaves the body, how it
takes another one, how at no time the Jiva remains without a body, how one’s Karmas
await and bestow the new body, how all these processes are common to all beings from
Brahma down to a clump of grass, and all connected matters are explained at great length.
Incidentally, a short account of a sinner’s suffering in the hells, the northern and southern
paths taken by Jivas, the path to Brahma Loka, Panchagni Vidya, Paryanka Vidya, and
Ahamgrahopasana are also given in this context. Dwelling upon desire, the Sage exhorts the
king to become completely free from all desires, as the knowledge of Brahman arises only
in a desire-free mind. While a man of desires transmigrates, one who is devoid of desires
merges in Brahmin. His organs do not depart. Remaining as Brahman, he attains Brahman,
declares the Upanishad. Such a sage is called a Jivanmukta while he is with the body, and a
Videhamukta when he is freed from the body.

(d) Nididhyasana: Having reflected thus, one comes to the conclusion that one’s own Atman
is identical with Brahman and that the Absolute Reality is non-dual and free from all kinds
of relationships. This conviction alone is not enough for the attainment of the final goal of
liberation. The sage therefore instructs the king on the means of attaining Brahman. This
means is Brahma Vidya—the knowledge of Brahman. Leaving off all other paths which lead
only to perishable worlds, one should enter the path of knowledge and realise directly ‘I am
the Supreme Self’. “If a person knows ‘I am the self’, then desiring what, and for whose sake
will he suffer in the wake of the body?”, meaning that a sage of realisation has no bodily
suffering either for his sake or of another. Sri Swami Vidyaranya, in his work Panchadasi,
quoting this Mantra of the Upanishad (Br. Up. IV-4-12) devotes the seventh chapter named
‘The Lamp of Perfect Satisfaction’ (Tripti Dipa), containing nearly 300 verses, completely to
give an exhaustive commentary of the Mantra. One, who after taking a human birth does
not endeavour for liberation, thinking that he can do it in the next world, is compared to a
foolish hungry person who throws away the delicious food in his hand and then licks the

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empty hand. In another beautiful analogy, Sri Swami Sankarananda compares human birth to a high stake in gambling, which if lost, is very difficult to regain. The study of scriptures alone without Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana, is not productive of the final result. One should not therefore think and speak too many words which only fatigue the mind and the organ of speech. For, those who are not able to attain the goal directly through the Svarupa Lakshana are advise to meditate on the Tatastha Lakshana and attain the final liberation. Introversion of the mind, which is a must in both cases, can be had when one sees beauty in the Atman which is dearer than the dearest.

For Sannyasins who have completely dedicated their lives in search of the Truth, the greatest Yajna is Jnana Yajna, and Ahimsa is the greatest charity. Ahimsa in its widest sense includes celibacy, truth, non-stealing and non-acceptance of gifts. As desire is the root-cause of Karmas, one who has renounced all the three desires, viz., those for progeny, wealth and worlds, has no Karmas to perform. He enjoys the highest bliss of the Atman. A knower of Brahman who has raised his consciousness to that stupendous height where it becomes one with the Supreme, is said to be Brahman himself.

Chapter 3: this chapter contains the most sublime instructions on Atma Vidya imparted by Sage Yajnavalkya to his consort Maitreyi. It also gives a glimpse of the life of the great Sage. He is seen studying the scriptures from sage Vaisampayana, his own maternal uncle whom he leaves on account of some misunderstanding between them. He then propitiates the Sun-god from whom he gets a complete knowledge of the Vedas. Having become a knower of the Vedas, he marries two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi, and enters the householders order. He disseminates the knowledge he has learnt to many qualified aspirants. In describing how the sage discharged the three kinds of debts—debts to the sages, celestials, and manes,—Sri Swami Sankarananda indirectly points out to his readers the necessity of possessing the Sadhana Chatushtaya and satisfying certain conditions before an aspirant, enters the path of renunciation. Katyayani is shown as an ideal housewife, while Maitreyi is painted as an ardent spiritual aspirant of great dispassion, with all the qualifications necessary for receiving the knowledge of Brahman. The story goes that Yajnavalkya becomes old and decides to embrace Sannyasa. Sri Swami Sankarananda gives a graphic description of the then state of mind of the Sage. The Sage one day sits in a secluded place and cogitates about all that has happened so far in his life and how he has been postponing, on some silly excuses, the renunciation of the householder’s order. This shows the attraction which the objects of the world have on the senses and mind of even such a great learned and wise Sage. The Sage who has so far been leading his life in this world as a Jivanmukta, now decides to pass on to the next and final stage of Videhamukti by embracing the fourth order of Sannyasa without any further delay. He calls his wife Maitreyi to his side and informs her of his decision and proposes to partition his wealth between her and Katyayani, the other wife. Maitreyi has been waiting for an opportunity to give expression to her cherished desire which she has all along been keeping to herself out of modesty and extreme regard, almost bordering to fear, for her husband. To Maitreyi, Yajnavalkya has been more than a God. She reveals the high degree of dispassion in her for wealth and all material objects of this world, and prays to be instructed on Immortality.

Having mad himself sure that Maitreyi is a fit receptacle for receiving the highest knowledge of the Atman, the Sage starts his instructions on Immortality, which have
become the crest-jewel in the crown of Upanishadic literature. That while it may be possible to obtain the first and the third of the Purusharthas, viz., Dharma and Kama through the second one, Artha (wealth), it is well-nigh impossible even to hope for the last one, which is Moksha through wealth, is established through reasoning. If happiness is not obtained from wealth, what then is the ultimate source of happiness? It is the ever blissful, self-effulgent Atman, says the Sage, which is the real source of all joy here. Objects are considered dear not for the sake of the objects as such, but for the sake of the Atman. When persons and objects which are supposed to give happiness turn against a man and become sources of pain, he spurns them. Objects by themselves are not lovable. They become dear due to the contact with the Atman which is always blissful. Objects of pleasure appear dear; happiness supposed to be derived from them seems dearer, and the Atman, the source of happiness itself, is the dearest. Happiness in one’s enemy does not give happiness, but becomes the cause of pain. Thus, when happiness itself becomes the source of unhappiness, what to speak of objects! The Atman alone, which is self-resplendent, eternal, and blissful is the source of all joy, and it is superior to the joy enjoyed by even Hiranyagarbha, because that joy of Hiranyagarbha which is the sum total of all happiness in all the worlds, is only a drop in the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman.

With a view to realise this all-blissful Atman, the qualified aspirant should hear the truth from his preceptor, reflect over it, and practise deep meditation. The whole idea is expressed by the Upanishad in the aphoristic Mantra: *Atma Va Are Drashtavyah Srotavyo Mantavyo Nididhyasitavyo, Maitreyi.*

Just as the city of clouds imagined in the sky is really the sky alone, so the universe imagined on the Atman is truly the Atman alone. By attaining the knowledge of the Atman through hearing, reflection and meditation, one acquires the general knowledge of the universe also, since the universe is not distinct from the Atman. The homogeneous nature of the Atman in the form of the universe is beautifully brought out through Anvaya and Vyatireka. A wife who considers her husband like her own Self enjoys happiness. When she starts treating him as different from her Self she gets a kick from him. Likewise is the case with every object in the world, all of which become the source of happiness so long as they are treated as one’s own Self and turn into cause of misery when treated as different from one’s Self. Hence, every object in the universe should be seen as one’s own Atman which is identical with Brahman.

To bring about a firm conviction on the above Svarupa Lakshana, or the real nature of Brahman, sage Yajnavalkya next gives the Tatastha Lakshana of Brahman, i.e., Brahman as the ultimate cause of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. Even as the rope in the rope-snake analogy alone really exists before the appearance of the snake, during its appearance and after its disappearance, the Atman, on which the universe has been superimposed due to ignorance, alone exists before the creation of the universe, during its existence and after its dissolution. Thus, the whole universe, with all its heterogeneity and umpteen varieties, is non-different from the non-dual Brahman even during its existence. This appears to be a fantastic idea, unbelievable, as it contradicts sense-experience. The Upanishad establishes the fact through the analogies of three musical instruments: a lute, a drum and a conch. The particular knowledge of the notes of these instruments is gained from the general knowledge of sound. In the absence of the
general knowledge of sound, knowledge of particular notes and tunes of the instruments cannot arise. Even so, if there were no consciousness of the Atman, no particular cognition of the world can arise. It is the consciousness of the Atman that manifests itself as the variegated universe. The content of the concepts of words such as ‘this’, ‘I’, ‘he’, ‘mine’, ‘Hiranyagarbha’, ‘Virat’, ‘Isvara’, etc., is the same one non-dual Consciousness. The Atman, which is beyond the reach of speech and mind, never becomes the content of any concept or object, but remains as the eternal effulgence which illumines the whole universe of the form of knowledge of the content of the concepts of words. Therefore, all words and their concepts are superimpositions on the Atman. Just as in the absence of the cognition of the general sound, no particularised notes can be cognised, so if there were no consciousness of the Self-luminous Atman, worldly dealings with ideas like ‘you’, ‘I’, ‘this’, etc., cannot exist. Thus is established that the phenomenal world remains as the non-dual Atman even during the existence of the world.

Now, what is the position before creation? This Atman, says the Upanishad, remains non-dual without differentiation then also. This phenomenal world of sentient and on-sentient nature comes out of It like sparks and smoke from a blazing fire. Just as no change is caused to the nature of fire by the emanation of smoke and sparks, so also by the creation of the universe, no change is caused in the Svarupa, the Sat-Chit-Ananda nature of the Atman. The Vedas also come out of that non-dual Atman, without any previous thought or effort on the part of the Atman.

When the meanings of ordinary words used in the work-a-day world themselves are self-evident, it goes without saying that the import of the Vedas is self-proved. The Veda which is the crown among all valid proofs and which has come out of Brahman, connotes the meaning of the word Brahma, which meaning is the meaning of the Vedas also. The Vedas, with their meaning and import, have emerged from Brahman, like the outcoming breath without the least effort, and Brahman still remains non-dual and unaffected.

Similar is the case of the Atman after dissolution also. Just as the waters in the rivers and those in the clouds finally reach the ocean directly or indirectly, and still the ocean remains unchanged, even so, in dissolution the whole universe merges itself in the Supreme Atman, and no modification is created in It. In the process if dissolution, all kinds of touch are merged in the touch in general which merges itself in the mind and the mind in the intellect. Becoming mere consciousness, it is merged in pure Intelligence, the Supreme Brahman. Similarly, sight, sound, smell and taste merge themselves in their causes and become one with Brahman. Just as water due to cold solidifies and becomes ice, so also, due to ignorance, the unattached non-dual Atman appears as the transmigratory soul. This ignorance vanishes in the knowledge of Brahman, even as a crystal of salt dropped into the ocean dissolves and loses itself in the ocean. In the Atman with the limiting adjunct of the subtle body, particularised knowledge is created by the gross body made up of the five elements and with the destruction of the gross body, the Atman also meets with destruction.

Maitreyi, being unable to grasp the full import of these instructions, raises a doubt at this stage. How can the Atman which is eternal, non-dual and without parts meet with destruction along with the body? The Sage replies that he does not mean destruction of the Atman which can never happen as It is eternal. What he means is that on the annihilation of
the great illusion of ignorance, the intellectual Atman leaves off its idea of separate individual Jiva and rests in its own self-effulgent non-dual nature. As there is no individual, particularised knowledge also vanishes and one becomes merged in the infinite ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Only when there is the feeling of duality, as it were, in the absence of the knowledge of Brahman, one experiences particularised knowledge of objects in the form of sight, hearing, etc., different from one’s own Self. But, when, to the knower of Brahman everything has become Brahman itself, there is nothing outside oneself and therefore the sage of realisation does not perceive anything through his organs which also do not exist apart from the Self. The Upanishad abruptly stops here with the statement: “So you have got the instruction, Maitreyi. This much indeed is the means of Immortality.” Saying this, the Sage left.

Sri Swami Sankarananda in the Atma Purana gives us some more information. After instructing Maitreyi, Yajnavalkya takes to Vidvat Sannyasa. Having known the real nature of the universe, he had equal vision in the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc. It is said that he did neither prevent his organs from going towards the objects nor did he allow the organs to hunt after their objects. He wandered on the face of the earth giving the fear-not boon to all creatures. Like her husband, Maitreyi, who also had realised the identity of the Atman and Brahman, led the life of a wandering mendicant without the outward symbols of the Sannyasa order. The chapter is concluded with a short account of the scriptural views on Sannyasa.
AIMS AND OBJECTS OF
THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY
The Divine Life Society has been established

1. To Disseminate Spiritual Knowledge

By publication of books, pamphlets and magazines dealing with ancient, oriental and occidental philosophy, religion and medicine in the modern scientific manner, and their distribution on such terms as may appear expedient to the Board of Trustees;

By propagating the Name of the Lord, and by holding and arranging spiritual discourses and conferences and frequent Sankirtans or spiritual gatherings for singing and glorifying the Name of the Lord;

By establishing training centres or societies for the practice of Yoga, for moral and spiritual Sadhanas, and the revival of true culture to enable aspirants to achieve regeneration through worship, devotion, wisdom, right action and higher meditation, with systematic training in Asanas, Pranayama, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi; and

By doing all such acts and things as may be necessary and conducive to the moral, spiritual and cultural uplift of mankind in general, and to the attainment of the above-mentioned objects in Bharata-varsha in particular;

II. To Establish and Run Educational Institutions

On modern lines and on right basic principles and to help deserving students by granting them refundable or non-refundable scholarships for doing research work in the various branches of existing scriptures and comparative religion, as also to train them to disseminate spiritual knowledge in the most effective manner.

III. To Help Deserving Orphans and Destitutes

By rendering them such assistance as the Society may deem proper, whether in any individual case or in any particular class of cases;

IV. To Establish and Run Medical Organisations

Or any other medical institutions and hospitals or dispensaries for the treatment of diseases and dispensing medicines and performing surgical operations, etc., to the poor in particular, and to the other public in general, on such terms and in such manner as may be deemed expedient by the Board of Trustees.

V. To Take Such Other Steps from Time to Time

As may be necessary for effecting a quick and effective moral and spiritual regeneration in the world and in Bharatavarsha in particular.

This Society was registered as a Trust in the year 1936 and has been actively functioning since then to fulfil the above sublime aims and objects in the world.