

# ĪSA UPANIṢAD

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*Om.* That (supreme Brahman) is infinite, and this (conditioned Brahman) is infinite. The infinite (conditioned Brahman) proceeds from the infinite (supreme Brahman). (Then through knowledge), taking the infinite of the infinite (conditioned Brahman), it remains as the infinite (unconditioned Brahman) alone.

Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

## ĪŚĀ UPANIṢAD

*Introduction:* The (Vedic) *mantras* (verses) beginning with *Īśāvāsyam* have not been utilised in *karma* (rituals etc.), for they serve to reveal the true nature of the Self, which is not an appendage to *karma*. The real nature of the Self consists in Its purity, sinlessness, oneness, eternity, incorporeity, omnipresence, etc., which will be indicated later on (Īś. 8). As that (nature) would conflict with *karma*, it is but natural that the verses are not applied to *karma*; for neither is the Self in Its real nature, as defined, a thing to be created, transformed, achieved, or purified, nor is It of the nature of an agent or enjoyer, whereby It could become a factor in *karma*. Moreover, all the Upaniṣads exhaust themselves simply by determining the true nature of the Self, and the Gītā and the scriptures dealing with *mokṣa* (the emancipation of the soul) have only this end in view. Accordingly all *karmas* have been enjoined by assuming such qualities for the Self as multiplicity, agentship, enjoyership, etc., and impurity, sinfulness, etc., which common sense takes for granted. For people who are versed in the science dealing with competence (of people treading this path) say that a man is qualified for *karma* when he hankers after the results of *karma*, be they of this world in the form of spiritual eminence etc., or of the hereafter in the form of heaven etc., and thinks of himself thus: “I am a twice-born man and am free from such defects as being one-eyed or hump-backed which stand in the way of one’s competence for *karma*.” Therefore these verses remove inherent ignorance through the revelation of the true nature of the Self, and thereby produce the knowledge of the oneness etc. of

the Self, which is the means for the uprooting of sorrow, delusion, etc., incidental to mundane existence. We shall briefly explain these (Vedic) verses for which have thus been determined the competent students, the subject matter, the relation between the Vedic text and the subject matter and the purpose.<sup>1</sup>

ॐ ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥ १ ॥

1. *Om.* All this—whatsoever moves on the earth—should be covered by the Lord. Protect (your Self) through that detachment. Do not covet anybody's wealth. (Or—Do not covet, for whose is wealth?)

One who lords it over is *Īt*; <sup>2</sup> *Īśā*, by *Īt*, by the Lord. He who is the supreme Ruler and supreme Self of all is the Lord. For as the indwelling soul of all, He is the Self of all beings and as such rules all. (So) *Īśā* (means) by that Lord, in His true form as the Self; *vāsyam*, should be covered. What (is to be covered)? *Idam sarvam yat kim ca*, all this whatsoever; *jagat*, moves; *jagatyām*, on the earth. All this is to be covered by one's own Self, the Lord, through His supreme reality (present in the realisation): "As the indwelling Self (of all), I am all this": all that is unreal, whether moving or

<sup>1</sup> One who wants emancipation is the competent student; the identity of the individual self and the absolute Self is the subject matter; the relation of the Vedic text and the subject matter consists in the former being the revealer of the latter; and the purpose is the removal of ignorance and the attainment of supreme Bliss.

<sup>2</sup> *Īt* is derived from the root *īś*, meaning "to rule" or "to have power".

not moving, is to be covered by its own supreme Self. As the adventitious bad odour of sandal, *agaru*, etc., resulting from moisture etc., because of their contact with water etc., is covered up by their natural smells through the process of rubbing those woods themselves, just so, (whatsoever moves on the earth will be abandoned through the contemplation of the Self which is the supreme Truth). "Whatever moves" means the apparent duality, the effect of ignorance, which is characterised by such ideas as doership, enjoyership, etc., and which is superimposed on one's own Self; and the phrase "on the earth" having been used illustratively (for all the worlds), it follows that all the bundle of modifications known as name, form, and action will be abandoned through the contemplation of the Self which is the supreme Truth. He, who is thus engaged in the thought of the Self as God, has competence only for renouncing the three kinds of desire for son etc.,<sup>1</sup> and not for *karma*. *Tena tyaktena*, through that detachment. *Tyaktena* means through detachment, (and not "by any abandoned thing"); for a son or a servant, when abandoned or dead, does not protect one, since he has no connection with oneself. So the meaning of the Vedic word (*tyaktena*) is "through renunciation". *Bhuñjīthāḥ*, protect. You who have renounced desires, *mā gṛdhaḥ*, do not covet, do not cherish any desire for wealth. Do not long for *kasya svid*, anybody's—either your own or somebody else's; *dhanam*, wealth—this is the meaning. The word *svid* is a meaningless particle. Or the meaning is this: Do not covet. Why? *Kasya svid dhanam*, whose is wealth?—this (question) is used in the sense of a denial, because nobody has any wealth which can be coveted. The idea is this: All this has

<sup>1</sup> For son, wealth, and worlds (vide Br. IV. iv. 22).

been renounced through this thought of the “Lord”, “All this is but the Self”, so that all this belongs to the Self, and the Self is all. Therefore do not have any hankering for things that are unreal.

So far as the knower of the supreme Self is concerned, the purport of the Vedic text (i.e. of the first verse) is this, that the Self is to be saved through firm devotedness to the knowledge of the Self after the renunciation of the threefold desire for sons etc. As for the other person who is unable to cognise the Self because of his mental preoccupation with the non-Self, the Vedic text (i.e. the second verse) imparts this instruction:

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतः समाः ।

एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥ २ ॥

2. By doing *karma*, indeed, should one wish to live here for a hundred years. For a man, such as you (who wants to live thus), there is no way other than this, whereby *karma* may not cling to you.

*Kurvan eva iha*, verily by doing here—only by accomplishing; *karmāṇi*, *karmas*—Agnihotra (sacrifice) etc.; *jijīviṣet*, one should wish to live; *śatam samāḥ*, a hundred years. That much has been ascertained to be the longest span of human life. So through a restatement of that well-known fact, it is being enjoined that if one would desire to live a hundred years, one should do so by performing *karma* only. *Evam tvayi*, for you, such as you—as you have this kind of hankering for life; *nare*, for a man—for one identifying oneself only with one’s human personality;

*itah*, other than this—than the present mode of life, viz of performing rituals like Agnihotra etc.; *na asti*, there is not, any other mode by which method, *karma na lipyate*, bad *karma* may not cling, i.e. one may not get attached to *karma*. Therefore, one should desire to live by doing only such *karmas* as Agnihotra etc., which are enjoined by scriptures.

*Objection*: But how is it known that the previous verse teaches the pursuit of knowledge for the man of renunciation, and the second one (teaches the path of) *karma* for one who is unable to renounce?

The *answer* is: Do you not remember what was pointed out (in the *introduction*) that the antithesis between knowledge and *karma* is irremovable like a mountain? Here also it has been said: “He who would desire to live should do so by performing work”; as also “All this should be covered by the Lord; protect (the Self) through that detachment; do not covet anybody’s wealth.” Moreover, the Vedic conclusion is this: “One should not hanker after life or death, and should repair to the forest.” Renunciation has been ordained by saying, “He shall not return from there” (*Sannyāsa*). And the difference between the results of these two (paths) will be spoken of (in verses 7 and 18) seriatim. Following on the creation of the cosmos, these two paths did emerge out: the path of *karma* being the earlier one; and the other being renunciation, consisting in the giving up of the three kinds of desire (for son etc.), in accordance with the latter path of detachment. Of these, the path of renunciation is the more excellent. And in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka it is said, “Renunciation did, indeed, excel”. “These then are the two paths on which the Vedas are established: the one consists of duty characterised by

attachment, and the other is clearly marked out by detachment” (Mbh. Śāntiparva, 241.6)—this and similar ideas have been declared, after much deliberation, as his firm conviction to his son (Śuka) by Vyāsa, the teacher of the Vedas. The distinction between the two we shall show hereafter.

Now begins the verse for decrying the man who is devoid of knowledge:

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसाऽऽवृताः ।

तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Those worlds of devils are covered by blinding darkness. Those people that kill the Self go to them after giving up this body.

*Asuryāḥ*, of devils; as compared with the attainment of the non-dual state of the supreme Self, even gods are *asuras*, devils; and the worlds belonging to them are *asuryāḥ*. The word *nāma* is a meaningless indeclinable. *Te*, those; *lokāḥ* (lit. worlds)—(derived) from the root *luk*—means the births in which the results of *karma* are perceived or enjoyed; *āvṛtāḥ*, are covered; *andhena*, by blinding—characterised by blinding—characterised by the inability to see; *tamasā*, by darkness—in the form of ignorance. *Tān*, to them—that extend up to the motionless (trees etc.); *pretya*, after departing, giving up this body; *gacchanti*, go—in accordance with their *karma* and meditation (on gods etc.); *ātmahanaḥ*, those that kill the Self. Who are they? *Janāḥ*, (the common people) those that are ignorant. How do they kill the eternal Self? Because the Self, which exists, is concealed through the fault of ignorance. The experience of the Self

as free from decrepitude and death (present in the realisation, "I am free from decrepitude and death"), that comes as a result of the existence of the Self, remains concealed, as is the consciousness of a person who is killed. So the ordinary and ignorant persons are called the killers of the Self. Because of this fault of slaying the Self, they are subject to birth and death.

What is the nature of the Self by slaying which the ignorant people transmigrate, and contrariwise, the men of knowledge, the non-killers of the Self, become freed? This is being answered now:

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद्देवा आप्नुवन्पूर्वमर्षत् ।  
तद्भावतोऽज्यानत्येति तिष्ठत्तस्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ॥४॥

4. It is unmoving, one, and faster than the mind. The senses could not overtake It, since It ran ahead. Remaining stationary, It outruns all other runners. It being there, Mātariśvā allots (or supports) all activities.

*Anejat*, unmoving. The root *ejr* implies shaking. Shaking is motion, deviation from one's own condition. It is devoid of this, i.e. It is ever of the same form. And It is *ekam*, one, in all beings. It is *javīyaḥ*, faster, *manasaḥ*, than the mind, characterised by volition etc.

*Objection*: How can there be such contradictory statements that It is constant and motionless, and yet faster than the mind?

*Answer*: There is no inconsistency, for this is possible from the standpoint of the conditioned and the unconditioned. As such, It is spoken of as "unmoving, one", in

respect of Its own unconditioned aspect. And by reason of Its following the limiting adjunct, the mind, the internal organ characterised by volition and doubt, (It appears to be subject to modifications). The mind though encased in the body in this world, is able to reach such distances as the world of Brahmā in a single moment, at one volition; and hence the mind is well known as the fastest thing in the world. When that (speedy) mind travels fast to the world of Brahmā etc., the reflection of the conscious Self is perceived to have reached there, as it were, even earlier; and hence It is said to be (*manaso javīyaḥ*) faster than the mind. *Devāḥ*, the gods—the senses, the organs of knowledge such as eyes etc., are the *devas* because of illuminating (*dyotana*) their objects, *na āpnuvan*, could not overtake; *enat*, It, the reality of the Self that is under discussion. The mind is faster than these (senses). Because of the interposition of the activity of the mind, (between the Self and the senses), even a semblance of the Self does not become an object of perception to the senses; since, being all-pervasive like space, It *pūrvam arṣat*, ran ahead—reached the goal even before the swift mind. Though the all-pervasive entity of the Self, in Its real unconditioned state, is devoid of all worldly attributes and is subject to no mutation, yet (by reason of following the limiting adjunct, the mind), it appears, in the eyes of the non-discriminating people, to experience all empirical modifications brought about by the limiting adjuncts, and It also appears to be diverse in relation to the individual bodies. Hence the verse said so. *Tat*, That; *atyeti*, outruns—as it were; *dhāvataḥ anyān*, all other fast moving ones (runners), viz the mind, speech, the senses, etc., which are distinct from the Self. The sense “as it were” is suggested by the verse itself by the use of (the expression)

*tiṣṭhat*, remaining stationary, which implies, "Itself remaining unchanged". *Tasmin*, It being there—while the entity of the Self endures, which by Its nature is everlasting consciousness; *mātariśvā*, Air—so called because it moves (*śva-yati*) in space (*mātari*)—which sustains all life, which is of the nature of activity, on which depend all bodies and senses, in which all inhere, which is called Sutra<sup>1</sup> (thread), and which holds together the whole world. That *Mātariśvā*, *dadhāti*, allots; *apaḥ*, the activities<sup>2</sup>—consisting in the efforts of creatures, as well as flaming, burning, shining, raining, etc. in the case of fire, sun, cloud, etc. Or *dadhāti* many mean supports, in accordance with such Vedic texts as "From His fear the wind blows" (Tai. II. viii. 1). The meaning is that all these modifications of causes and effects occur so long as the eternally conscious reality of the Self, the source of everything, endures.

Since the Vedic *mantras* are untiring in their emphasis, the idea imparted by the previous verse is being stated again:

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।

तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥ ५ ॥

5. That moves, That does not move; That is far off, That is very near; That is inside all, and That is outside all.

<sup>1</sup> Hiranyagarbha, who is possessed of the twofold power of action and knowledge, is called Sūtra when conceived of as the principle of action.

<sup>2</sup> Since all Vedic sacrifices are performed with liquids like *soma*, ghee, milk, etc., and life, too, is dependent on liquids, *apaḥ* (water) is figuratively used for action—the cause for the effect, i.e. activities of life.

*Tat*, That, the entity of the Self that is under consideration. That *ejati*, moves; and That again, by Itself, *na ejati*, does not move. The meaning is that, though in Itself It is motionless, It seems to move. Moreover, *tat dūre*. That is far off—That seems to be far away, since It is unattainable by the ignorant even in hundreds of millions of years; *tadvantike* is split into *tat u antike*, That is very near indeed—to the men of knowledge—It being their Self, that is not only far off, but is near too; *tat antar*, That is inside; *asya sarvasya*, of all—in accordance with the Vedic text: “The Self that is within all” (Br. III. iv. 1)—of all this world, consisting of name, form, and activity; *tat*, That; *u*, also; *sarvasya asya bāhyataḥ*, is outside all, because It is all-pervasive like space; and It is inside because It is extremely subtle. Besides, It is without interstices, (It is continuous), in accordance with the Vedic text: “Pure intelligence alone” (Br. IV. v. 13).

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥ ६ ॥

6. He who sees all beings in the very Self, and the Self in all beings, feels no hatred by virtue of that (realisation).

*Yaḥ*, he who—the mendicant who wants to be freed; *anupaśyati*, sees; *sarvaṇi bhūtāni*, all beings—beginning from the Unmanifested and ending with the immobile; (as existing) *ātmani eva*, in the very Self—i.e. he does not see them as different from the Self, *sarvabhūteṣu ca*, and in all those beings; sees *ātmānam*, the Self—sees the Self of those beings as his own Self thus: “Just as I, the soul of the body which is an aggregate of causes and effects, am the witness

of all perceptions, and as such I am the source of its consciousness, and am pure and unconditioned, similarly in that very aspect of mine am I the soul of all, beginning from the Unmanifested and ending with the immobile"; he (who realises the unconditioned Self in all beings thus), *tataḥ*, by virtue of that vision; *na vijugupsate*, feels no hatred, does not hate. This is only a restatement of a known fact. For this is a matter of experience that all revulsion comes to one who sees something as bad and different from oneself, but for one who sees only the absolutely pure Self as a continuous entity, there is no object that can be the cause of revulsion. Therefore he does not hate.

Another verse also expresses the same purport:

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।

तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥ ७ ॥

7. When to the man of realisation all beings become the very Self, then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for that seer of oneness? (Or—In the Self, of the man of realisation, in which all beings become the Self, what delusion and what sorrow can remain for that seer of oneness?)

*Yasmin vijānataḥ*, when to the man who has realised, (Or—in the aforesaid Self of the man of realisation in which); *sarvāṇi bhūtāni*, all those beings; *atma eva abhūt*, have become the Self alone—as a result of the realisation of the supreme Self; *tatra*, at that time (or to that Self); *kaḥ mohah*, *kaḥ śokah*, what delusion and what sorrow can there be? Sorrow and delusion happen to the ignorant

man who does not perceive the seed of desire and actions, but not *anupaśyataḥ ekatvam*, to the man who realises the oneness, of the Self which is pure like space. The impossibility of grief and delusion, the effects of ignorance, having been indicated through the question, “what delusion and what sorrow can there be?”, the total eradication of worldly existence, with its cause, has been shown *ipso facto*.

This verse indicates what the Self, that was spoken of in the previous verses, really is in Its own nature:

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रण-

मस्नाविरः शुद्धमपापविद्धम् ।

कविर्मनीषी परिभः स्वयम्भु-

र्याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ॥८॥

8. He is all-pervasive, pure, bodiless, without wound, without sinews, taintless, untouched by sin, omniscient, ruler of mind, transcendent, and self-existent; he has duly allotted the (respective) duties to the eternal years (i.e. to the eternal creators called by that name).

*Saḥ*, He the aforesaid Self; *paryaḡāt*, is all-pervasive, like space—(the word) being derived from *pari*, on all sides, and *aḡāt*, went. He is *śukram*, pure, bright, resplendent, *akāyam*, bodiless, i.e. without the subtle body; *avraṇam*, without wound, scatheless; *asnāvīram*, without sinews—one in whom there is no sinew. By the two expressions, “without wound” and “without sinews”, the gross body is negated. *Śuddham*, taintless, devoid of the dirt of ignorance; thereby is negated the causal body. *Apāpavidham*,

untouched by sin in the form of merit and demerit etc.<sup>1</sup> The expressions beginning with *śukram* are to be converted into masculine because the introduction is made with *saḥ paryagāt* and the conclusion with *kaviḥ maṇiṣī* in the masculine form. *Kaviḥ* (omniscient) means the seer of the *krānta*, past,<sup>2</sup> i.e. seer of all, as the Vedic text says, "There is no other seer but this" (Br. III. viii. 11). *Maṇiṣī* means the ruler of the mind, i.e. omniscient God. *Paribhūḥ* is one who exists above all (transcendent). *Svayambhūḥ* means he who exists by himself. He, the all, becomes by Himself all, viz all that is transcended as well as all that is transcendental; and hence He is self-existent. He, the ever-free (all-powerful) Lord, because of His omniscience, *yāthātathyataḥ*, duly, as it should be, in consonance with actual result and endeavour; *arthān*, the duties; *vyadadhāt*, has allotted, i.e. distributed in the proper way (according to individual competence); *śāśvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ*, to the eternal years, to the Prajāpatis (creators) called the years.

Here the first purport of the Vedas is devotedness to knowledge after renouncing all desires; and this idea has been expressed by the first verse thus: "All this should be covered by the Lord. . . . Do not covet anybody's wealth." And the second purport of the Vedas is that, in case this devotedness to knowledge is impossible for the man of ignorance, there should be continuance in the path of duty, which fact is stated in the second verse thus: "By doing *karmas*, indeed, should one wish to live." This division of paths of life, as shown in these verses, has also been indi-

<sup>1</sup> The idea is that the Self transcends morality, though a man of knowledge never acts immorally, his past training being a sufficient guarantee against this.

<sup>2</sup> By implication, past, present, and future.

cated in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. Thus from the text, "He desired, 'Let me have a wife,'" etc. (Bṛ. I. iv. 17), it can be clearly understood that works are meant for a man who is ignorant and hankers after results. And from the sentence, "The mind is his soul, and speech his wife," etc. (ibid. I. iv. 17), it can be clearly understood that ignorance and desires are the characteristics of a man devoted to work. So the result of this work is the creation of seven kinds of fruits<sup>1</sup> and continuance in a state of identification with them under the idea that they are the Self. And by the text, "What shall we achieve through children, we to whom the Self which we have attained is the goal?" etc. (Bṛ. IV. iv. 22), it has been shown that for those who have realised the Self by renouncing the threefold desire for wife etc. (i.e. for son, wealth, and heavens), there can only be continuance in the Self Itself, as opposed to the continuance in the path of *karma*. After the condemnation of the ignorant man by the verse, "Those worlds of the devils" etc. (Īś. 3), the true nature of the Self has been revealed by the verses ending with, "He is all-pervasive," etc. (Īś. 8), to those men of renunciation who are steadfast in knowledge, so as to show that they alone are qualified for this and not those who have desires. So also in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (VI. 21) this has been separately spoken of thus: "To those (men of complete renunciation) who had gone beyond all (the four) stages of life,<sup>2</sup> he spoke this holiest of things which is fully

<sup>1</sup> Bṛ. I. v. 1-3. (1) The common human food; (2-3) *huta* and *prahuta* or *Darśa* and *Pūrnamāsa*, which are foods for gods; (4-6) mind, speech, and vital force, which are foods for the soul; (7) milk, which is food for animals.

<sup>2</sup> The student, the householder, the man who has repaired to the forest, and the formal anchorite, as distinguished from the man who renounces either after or for the sake of God-realisation.

adored by the seers as a class." But the present verse is meant for those men of activity who have desires and want to live by doing *karma*.

*Objection:* How is it, again, known that it is not meant for all?

The *answer* is: None but a fool will wish to combine with any work, or with any other knowledge (i.e. meditation), that knowledge of the oneness of the Self that has been imparted to the passionless man after the eradication of the distinction of all ends and means, by the text, "When to the man of realisation all beings become the very Self, then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for such a seer of oneness?" (Īś. 7). But the condemnation of the ignorant etc. is done here with a view to achieving a combination (of *vidyā*, i.e. worship or meditation, and *karma*). And as to that, not the knowledge of the supreme Self, but the thing—viz the divine possession (i.e. the meditation on the gods)—that can possibly be combined with the other factor (viz *karma*), has been spoken of here as the associate of *karma*, since for this *vidyā* (meditation or worship) a result, different from the knowledge of Brahman has been declared thus: "Through *vidyā* is attained the world of the gods" (Br. I. v. 16). The denunciation of the separate pursuit of either of these two—*vidyā* and *karma*—is not merely for the sake of denunciation, but for the sake of bringing them together, for a distinct result is declared for each by the Vedic texts: "They ascend to this through *vidyā*"; "The world of gods (is attained) through *vidyā*" (Br. I. v. 16); "The people following the Southern Path do not reach there"; "The world of the Manes through rites" (Br. I. v. 16); and this is so because nothing enjoined by the scriptures can be unworthy of performance.

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।

ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायाः रताः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Those who worship *avidyā* (rites) enter into blinding darkness; but into greater darkness than that enter they who are engaged in *vidyā* (meditation).

Of these two, they *praviśanti*, enter; into *andham tamaḥ*, blinding darkness, characterised by absence of perception. Who? *Ye avidyām*, those who (worship) *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is different from *vidyā*, i.e. it is *karma*, since *karma* is opposed to *vidyā*; (they) *upāsate*, worship; that *avidyā* in the form of Agnihotra etc., alone. The import is that they perform this whole-heartedly. *Tataḥ*, than that darkness, characterised as blindness; *bhūyah iva tamaḥ*, into greater darkness; *te*, they; enter. Who? *Ye*, they, who giving up rites; *vidyāyām u ratāḥ*, are engaged only in *vidyā*, are always bent on the meditation on (and worship of) gods.

With regard to that matter, again, the separate secondary results of meditation and rites are advanced as reasons for the combination of the two, as otherwise, if one of these two closely associated factors bore fruit, while the other did not, they would be related as the part and the whole, (which is absurd).<sup>1</sup>

अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्ययाऽन्यदाहुरविद्यया ।

इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचक्षिरे ॥ १० ॥

10. "They say that by *vidyā* a really differ-

<sup>1</sup> *Vidyā* and *karma* are very often enjoined to be performed separately by men of different tendencies; and separate results are enjoined for them. This would not have been so, if either formed part of the other.

ent result (is achieved), and they say that by *avidyā* a different result (is achieved)", thus have we heard the (teaching of) those wise men who explained that to us.

*Anyat eva*, a really different (thing); is produced as a result; *Vidyayā*, by *vidyā* (worship or meditation)—(this) *āhuḥ*, they say, because of the Vedic texts: "The world of gods is (won) through meditation" (Bṛ. I. v. 16); "They ascend there through meditation". *Āhuḥ*, they say; *anyat avidyayā* by *avidyā*, *karma* (rites), a different (result) is produced, because of the Vedic text: "The world of the Manes (is won) through *karma*" (Bṛ. I. v. 16). *Iti*, thus; *śūsruma*, we have heard; *dhīrāṇām*, (the teaching) of the wise men, those teachers, who *vicacakṣire*, explained to us; *tat*, that—*karma* and meditation. The purport is that this is their knowledge traditionally received.

विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।

अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ ११ ॥

11. He who knows these two, *vidyā* and *avidyā*, together, attains immortality through *vidyā*, by crossing over death through *avidyā*.

Since this is so, therefore *vidyā* and *avidyā*, i.e. meditation on deities and rites; *yaḥ tad veda ubhayam saha*, he who knows these together, knows them as things to be performed by the same person; for that man alone, who thus combines (the two), there occurs the successive acquisition of the two goals in the same individual. This is being said:

*Avidyayā*, through *avidyā*, through rites such as Agni-hotra; *mṛtyum*, death—rites and meditation induced by

one's nature;<sup>1</sup> *tīrtvā*, crossing over—over both these which are called death; *vidyayā*, through *vidyā*, the meditation on the deities; (one) *aśnute*, attains; *amṛtam*, immortality, identification with the deities; that very fact of becoming one with the gods being called immortality.

Now, with a view to combining the worship of the Manifested and the Unmanifested, each is being denounced separately:

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽसम्भूतिमुपासते ।

ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ सम्भूत्याऽ रताः ॥ १२ ॥

12. Those who worship the Unmanifested (Prakṛti) enter into blinding darkness; but those who are devoted to the Manifested (Hiraṇyagarbha) enter into greater darkness.

*Ye*, those who; (worship) *asambhūtim*: *Sambhūti* means the fact of being born, as also the effect that has this (quality of being born); other than that is *asambhūti*, called Prakṛti (primal material cause), *avidyā* (ignorance), and *avyākṛta* (the Unmanifested). Those who *upāsate*, worship; this *asambhūti*—known as the unmanifest Prakṛti, cause, and *avidyā*, which is the seed of desire and work, and is blinding by nature; *te*, they; *praviśanti*, enter into; *andham tamaḥ*, blinding darkness, which is of a similar nature. *Tataḥ* than that; *bhūyaḥ*, greater; *iva*, as it were; *tamaḥ*, darkness; *praviśanti*, enter; *ye*, those who; *sambhūtyām ratāḥ*, are devoted to *sambhūti*—to the manifested Brahman called Hiraṇyagarbha.

<sup>1</sup> "The impression (created on the mind) by merit, demerit, etc., acquired in a previous birth, as manifested at the time of death, is called nature."—Śaṅkara's commentary on the Gītā, XVII. 2.

Now in this verse are being stated the results of the two constituent worships, which (results) necessitate the combination of those worships:

अन्यदेवाहुः सम्भवादन्यदाहुरसम्भवात् ।

इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥ १३ ॥

13. "They spoke of a different result from the worship of the Manifested, and they spoke of a different result from the worship of the Unmanifested"—thus we have heard (the teaching of) those wise men who explained that to us.

*Anyat eva*, a different result indeed; *āhuh*, they spoke of; *sambhavāt*, from *sambhūti*, the Manifested; the idea is that they spoke of the result, comprising supernormal faculties such as becoming subtle etc., accruing from the worship of the manifested Brahman (Hiraṇyagarbha). Similarly too, they *anyat āhuh*, spoke of a different result; *asambhavāt*, from *asambhūti*, *avyākṛta*—from the worship of the Unmanifested—that which has been referred to in the text, "They enter into blinding darkness" (Iś. 12) and is called absorption into Prakṛti (Primordial Nature) by the *paurāṇikas*. *Iti*, thus; *śuśrūma dhīrāṇām*, we have heard the speech of the wise; who *vicacakṣire*, explained that to us, i.e. explained the result of the worship of the Manifested and the Unmanifested.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Māyā, depending on Consciousness and acting as a limiting adjunct of the supreme Lord, is well known in the other Vedic text: 'Know Māyā as Prakṛti (material cause) and the great Lord as the possessor of Māyā' (Śv. IV. 10)—that Māyā and not Brahman is spoken of here by the word Unmanifested, for it is not possible for the unchanging Brahman to be directly the material cause."—A.G.

Since this is so, and since both are meant for the same human goal, it is proper to combine the worship of the Manifested and the Unmanifested. This is being said by the verse:

सम्भूतिं च विनाशं च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।  
विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भूत्याऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ १४ ॥

14. He who knows these two—the Unmanifested and Destruction (Hiraṇyagarbha)—together, attains immortality through the Unmanifested by crossing death through Destruction.

He who knows these two—the Unmanifested and Destruction—together; *vināśena*, through Destruction; though *vināśa* (destruction) is an attribute of the evolutes of its substantive, it is spoken of as identical with the substantive itself (i.e. manifested Brahman or Hiraṇyagarbha), of which, too, it (*vināśa* or destruction) is a characteristic; by that, by the worship of that (*vināśa*); *mṛtyum tīrtvā*, crossing over death—the bundle of faults such as absence of supernormal faculty, and demerit, desire, etc.; for through the worship of Hiraṇyagarbha is obtained such results as powers of becoming subtle; *mṛtyum tīrtvā*, crossing over death, consisting in the non-possession of supernormal faculties; *asambhūtyā*, through the worship of the Unmanifested; *amṛtam aśnute*, (he) attains immortality—characterised as absorption in Prakṛti. It is to be noted that in *sambhūtim ca vināśam ca* there is a presentation by omission of the letter *a* (before *sambhūti*) which should be *asambhūti* in conformity with the mention of the fruit, viz absorption in Prakṛti (i.e. *asambhūti*).

It is indicated by the scriptures that absorption into Prakṛti is the highest result attainable through human and divine wealth.<sup>1</sup> Up to this is the course of worldly existence. Beyond this is the identification with the Self in all, as indicated earlier in the verse: "When to the man of realisation all beings become the very Self" (Īś. 7), which is the result of devotion to knowledge after renouncing all desires. Thus has been revealed the twofold purport of the Vedas consisting in desire for and desisting from activity. As to this, the (Śatapatha) Brāhmaṇa, ending with the Pravargya ritual, is devoted to the revelation as a whole of the Vedic purport indicated through injunction and prohibition of activity. And the Bṛhadāraṇyaka thereafter is devoted to the revelation of the Vedic purport characterised by desisting from activity. In this connection, the verse, "He who knows these two—*vidyā* and *avidyā*—together, attains immortality through *vidyā*, by crossing over death through *avidyā*" (Īś. 11), has been cited for the person who wants to live by doing rites—beginning from conception and ending in death—in conjunction with meditation on the lower Brahman. Now, then, the question, "By what route will he achieve immortality?" is being answered. "Now, That which is the Truth (Brahman), is the Sun—who is the Person in the solar orb, as also the Person in the right eye" (Bṛ. V. v. 2)—he who has meditated on both these (Persons) as the Truth (Brahman) and performed the rites as mentioned (in the scriptures), prays at the time of death, to the Self, for the door leading to the Self, in the verse: "The face of Truth is concealed with a golden vessel" etc.

<sup>1</sup> "Cattle, land, gold, etc., are human wealth; meditation on gods is divine wealth."—A.G.

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।

तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृण सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥ १५ ॥

15. The face of the Truth (Brahman in the solar orb) is concealed with a golden vessel. Do thou, O Sun, open it so as to be seen by me who am by nature truthful (or am the performer of rightful duties).

*Hiraṇmaya* means golden, appearing as though made of gold, i.e. resplendent; by that; *pātreṇa*, by the vessel, which is like a lid that hides from view; *apihitam*, is concealed, covered; *mukham*, the face, the door, *satyasya*, of Truth, of that very Brahman who is in the solar orb. *Tat tvam pūṣan*, that thou, O Sun; *apāvṛṇu*, do open, i.e. remove. I who have got the quality of Truth, by meditating on you as Truth, am *satyadharmā*; so *satyadharmāya* means, for my sake who am of that kind (truthful); or it means, for the sake of one (i.e. me) who performs the rightful duties. *Dṛṣṭaye*, so as to be seen; so that you yourself, who are the Truth, may be realised.

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्यं प्राजापत्य

व्यूहं रश्मीन् समूहं तेजः ।

यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि

योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥ १६ ॥

16. O, thou, who art the nourisher, the solitary traveller, the controller, the acquirer, the son of Prajāpati, do remove thy rays, do gather up thy dazzle. I shall behold that form of thine

which is the most benign. I am that very Person that is yonder (in the sun).

*Pūṣan*, O Sun! The sun is the *pūṣā*, nourisher, because he nourishes the world. Similarly he travels alone (*ekarṣat*); hence he is *ekarṣi*. *Ekarṣe*, O solitary traveller. So also he is *yama*, controller, because of controlling (*saṁyamanāt*) all; O controller. Likewise he is *sūrya*, acquirer, because of securing to himself (*svīkaraṇāt*) all rays, vital forces, and liquids; O acquirer. The son of Prajāpati is *prājāpatya*; O son of Prajāpati. *Vyūha*, remove; thy own *raśmīn*, rays; *samūha*, gather up, withdraw; thy *tejaḥ*, heat, the oppressing dazzle. *Yat te*, that which is thy; *rūpam kalyāṇatamam*, most benign, most graceful, form; *tat*, that; *paśyāmi*, I shall see; by *te*, thy—thy grace, who art the Self. Moreover, I do not entreat thee like a servant; *yaḥ asau*, the Person who is there, in the solar orb—whose limbs are the *vyāhṛtis*,<sup>1</sup> and who is called a Person (Puruṣa) because he has the figure of a person; or because by him, in the form of the vital forces and intelligence, the whole world is filled; or because he resides in the city (of the heart)—*saḥ aham asmi*, that Person am I.

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।

ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥ १७ ॥

17. Let (my) vital force now attain the (all-pervading) immortal Air; (and) now let this body be reduced to ashes. *Om*, O my mind,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Bhūh* (earth) is his head; *Bhuvah* (sky) his hands; *svah* (heaven) his legs (Br. V.v. 3-4, Tai. I. v-vi, f.n., p. 254).

<sup>2</sup> "*Om*, O my mind" means—O Fire (i.e. Brahman) who is identified with the mind and whose symbol is *Om*.

remember—remember all that has been done.  
Remember—remember all that has been done.

*Atha*, now; as I am dying, let my *vāyuh*, vital force; give up its physical limitation and attain its divine nature which is the all-pervading, *amṛtam anilam*, immortal Air, i.e. *sūtrātmā* (Hiraṇyagarbha). The word “attain” has to be supplied to complete the sentence. The idea, “And let this subtle body, purified by rites and meditation, ascend”, is also understood, by virtue of the solicitation for the path (to ascend by). *Atha*, now; *idam śarīram*, this body; being offered as an oblation to fire; *bhasmāntam*, may be reduced to ashes. Since Brahman has *Om* as Its symbol, therefore, consonantly with the meditation followed (by the dying man), Brahman, which is called Fire and is Truth by nature, is presented here as identical with *Om*. *Krato*, O mind, whose characteristic is volition; *smara*, (you) remember; the time has arrived when all that has to be remembered by me should be remembered; therefore (you) remember all that has been thought of so long. And O Fire, *smara*, remember; *kṛtam smara*, whatever work has been done from my childhood, that too, thou remember. *Krato smara, kṛtam smara*—this repetition implies solicitude.

He prays for the path again through another verse:

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्  
विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।  
युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो  
भूयिष्ठां ते नमउक्तिं विधेम ॥ १८ ॥

18. O Fire! O god! Knowing, as thou do, all our deeds, lead us by the good path for the

enjoyment of the fruits of our deeds; remove from us all crooked sins. We offer thee many words of salutation.

*Agne*, O Fire; *deva*, O god; *vidvān*, knowing; *viśvāni vāyunāni*, all deeds or meditations; *naya*, lead; *asmān*, us—who are endowed with the aforesaid fruits of virtue; *supathā*, by the good path. The attribute “good path” is used for eschewing the Southern Path (*Pitṛ-yāna*). I am disgusted with the Southern Path which is characterised by going and coming; hence I entreat thee again and again, “Lead by the good path which is free from going and coming.” *Rāye* means, for the sake of wealth, i.e. for the enjoyment of the fruits of deeds. Moreover, *yuyodhi*, remove, destroy; *asmat* means *asmattaḥ*, from us; *juhurāṇam*, crooked, deceitful; *enas*, sin. The idea is this: Becoming purified thereby, we shall achieve our desired object. But (as) at present we cannot render any service to thee, (so) *te*, to thee; *bhūyisṭhām*, many; *namaḥ uktim*, words of salutation; *vidhema*, we offer—i.e. we serve thee with salutations.

(*A doubt*): Some people are filled with doubt at hearing the texts: “Crossing over death, through *avidyā*, attains immortality through *vidyā*” (Īś. 11), and “Crossing over death, through Destruction, attains immortality through the Unmanifested” (Īś. 14). Hence, to remove that doubt, we shall discuss (the topic) in brief. Now, then, the reason why the doubt arises is being stated: “By the word *vidyā*, why should not the knowledge of the supreme Self itself be understood; and so also (why should not) immortality (be taken in the primary sense)?”

*Answer*: Is it not a fact that by reason of the opposition between the knowledge of the supreme Self and

*karma*, mentioned earlier, there is no possibility of combination?

*Objection:* True. But the opposition is not comprehended, because opposition or agreement rests on the authority of scriptures. Just as the performance of *karma* and the pursuit of knowledge rest on the authority of the scriptures, so also do their opposition and agreement. Just as the prohibition, “Do not kill any living thing”, learnt from scripture, is overridden by the injunction, “One should kill an animal in a sacrifice”, so also it is possible in the case of *karma* and knowledge that *karma* and knowledge are to be combined.

*Answer:* No (they cannot be combined), because of the Vedic text: “What are known as *vidyā* (knowledge) and *avidyā* (*karma*) are entirely different, and they follow different courses” (Ka. I. ii. 4).

*Objection:* Suppose we say that there is no antagonism because of the text: “He who knows *vidyā* and *avidyā* together” (Īś. 11).

*Answer:* No, because of the opposition involved in (their) causes, natures, and results.

*Objection:* Since (on the one hand) it is impossible to accept either alternative when there is both opposition and non-opposition between *karma* and knowledge, and since (on the other hand) their combination is enjoined (here), may we not argue that there is (really) no contradiction (between them)?

*Answer:* No, since their co-existence is absurd.

*Objection:* Suppose we say that knowledge and *karma* may cohere in the same person successively.

*Answer:* No.<sup>1</sup> For when knowledge arises, *karma* vanishes, since in the person in whom knowledge exists, *karma* cannot remain. For it is a fact that when the knowledge, “Fire is hot and effulgent”, has arisen in a person, then in that very person there cannot arise the ignorance or doubt or error (of the form), “Fire is cold or non-illuminating”. The impossibility of sorrow and delusion (for a man of knowledge) is declared by the Vedic text: “When to the man of realisation all beings become the very Self, then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for that seer of oneness?” (Īś. 7). And we have already said that since ignorance is impossible (for such a man), *karma*, which originates from ignorance, is also impossible.

As for the text, “He attains immortality”, (Īś. 14) the immortality is a relative thing. If the knowledge of the supreme Self is understood by the word *vidyā*, the prayer for the path etc. in the text, “The face of the Truth (Brahman) is covered” etc. (Īś. 15) becomes irreconcilable.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the combination (of *karma*) is with meditation and not with the knowledge of the supreme Self. Thus we conclude by remarking that the meaning of the verse is just as we have interpreted.

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

<sup>1</sup> If the succession consists in ignorance being earlier and knowledge later, then it is certainly admitted. But if ignorance is later (than knowledge), then it is impossible”—A G.

<sup>2</sup> For there can be no going or coming for a knower of Brahman who becomes all by becoming Brahman Itself

