

## Yajnavalkya Upanishad

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Om ! That (Brahman) is infinite, and this (universe) is infinite.

The infinite proceeds from the infinite.

(Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe),

It remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.

Om ! Let there be Peace in me !

Let there be Peace in my environment !

Let there be Peace in the forces that act on me !

1. Now King Janaka of the Videhas respectfully approached the sage Yajnavalkya and said: 'Revered Sir, expound to me renunciation'. Yajnavalkya said: Having completed the stage of a celibate student one may become a house-holder. From the stage of the house-holder he may become a forest-dweller (Vanaprastha) and then renounce. Or else he may become a mendicant monk from the stage of a celibate student or a house-holder or a forest-dweller. (There is also the provision that) a person may renounce worldly life that very day on which distaste for it dawns on him, whether he is not observing vows (before the stage of renunciation) or observes them, whether he has undergone the prescribed ablution on completing the disciplined studentship or not, whether he is one who has discontinued maintaining ritual fire at the death of his wife (Utsannagni) or one who does not maintain the ritual fire (anagnika).

2. Some (law givers) prescribe the sacrifice called Prajapatya (of which god Brahma is the presiding deity, prior to a twice-born embracing renunciation). But (though thus prescribed) he may not do so. He shall only perform the sacrifice Agneyi (whose presiding deity is Agni, the god of fire). For Agni is the vital breath (Prana). Thereby he helps (strengthens) the vital breath. (Then) he shall perform the Traidhataviya sacrifice (whose presiding deity is the god Indra). By this sacrifice the three vital fluids (become strong like fire), namely the Sattva (semen), Rajas (blood) and Tamas (the dark one). (Having performed the sacrifice in the prescribed manner he shall smell the holy fire, reciting the following mantra): 'Oh Fire, this (vital breath) is your source; as you are born at the proper time (of the year) you put on effulgence. Knowing him (the Atman, your ultimate source) may you merge (with the Prana, your source). May you increase our wealth (of transcendent knowledge)'. So reciting

the mantra he shall smell the fire. This is the source of fire, this vital air. '(May you) go unto fire (your source). Svaha'. Thus alone the mantra says.

3. Having procured the holy fire (from the house of a well-versed Vedic scholar) in the village he shall be directed to smell the fire as described previously. If he does not get the ritual fire he may offer oblations in the waters. For water is (presided over by) all the gods. Reciting 'I offer the oblation to all the gods, Svaha', he should tender the oblations and picking up (a small portion of) the offered oblation which is mixed with ghee, he shall eat it, as this is beneficial. (Before eating the offered oblation he shall recite) the mantra of liberation (namely Om) which he shall realize as (the essence of) the three Vedas. He shall adore Brahman (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss) as that (connoted by Om). Cutting off the tuft of hair and sacred thread he shall recite thrice 'I have renounced'. (The royal sage Janaka accepted this elucidation by saying) 'Indeed, so it is, revered Yajnavalkya'.

4. (Then prompted by King Janaka) the sage Atri asked Yajnavalkya: How is one without the sacred thread (by wearing which alone he can perform rituals) a Brahmana ? Yajnavalkya replied: This alone is his sacred thread (the conviction), 'That (Self-effulgent) Atman (I am)'. He shall then ceremoniously sip water (thrice with the mantra, 'Reach the sea, Svaha', having previously discarded his tuft and sacred thread). This is the method (to be adopted by those who renounce the world).

5. Then (in the case of those entitled to renunciation) the mendicant monk wearing (ochre) coloured garment, with shaven head, accepting nothing (except food for bare sustenance), pure, injuring none (in thought, word and deed), (austerely) living on alms, becomes fit for realizing Brahman. This is the path of the mendicant monks. (In the case of the Kshatriyas and others not entitled to renunciation, they may seek liberation) by the path of the brave (by courting death in the battle-field), or fast (unto death as a discipline), or enter into water (to rise no more), or enter fire or undertake the great journey (in which they collapse by exhaustion). (For those entitled to renunciation) this way has been prescribed by the god Brahma; the ascetic who has renounced the world (Sannyasin) following this path realizes Brahman. Thus (it is stated in the Vedanta). 'Thus indeed it is, revered Sir, Yajnavalkya', (appreciated the royal sage Janaka).

6. There are the well known sages called Paramahamsas (as in the days of yore, the sages) Samvartaka, Aruni, Svetaketu, Durvasas, Ribhu, Nidagha, Dattatreya, Suka, Vamadeva, Harita and others, wearing no distinguishing marks, with conduct beyond the ken (of worldly people) and who behaved as though bereft of their senses though (perfectly) sane.

7. Averse to others' wives and (desire to stay in) towns and discarding all these, namely, the threefold staff (bamboo), the water vessel, (the earthen plate) used for a

meal, the ceremonial purification with water, the tuft and the sacred thread, internally as well as externally, in the waters reciting 'Bhuh, Svaha', (the Paramahansa) shall seek the Atman.

8. Possessing a form as one new-born (i.e. unclad) unaffected by pairs (of opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain); accepting nothing (except alms, for bare sustenance); well established in the path of the truth of Brahman; of pure mind; receiving alms into the mouth (lit. into the vessel of the belly) at the prescribed time in order to sustain life, becoming equanimous at gain and loss (of alms), drinking water from the vessel of hand or from a water vessel, begging alms but to store in the belly; devoid of any other vessel; the watering place serving as water vessel; sheltering, equanimous at gain and loss of it, in an abode which is free from disturbance and is solitary (such as) an unoccupied house, a temple, a clump of (tall) grass (or hay stack), an ant-hill, the shade of a tree a potter's hut, a hut where ritual fire is kept, the sandy bank of a river, a mountain thicket, a cave, a hollow in a tree, the vicinity of a water fall or a piece of clean ground, without residing in a fixed abode; making no efforts (for gainful activity) and deeply intent on the uprooting of good and bad actions – such a sage who finally gives up his body in the state of renunciation is indeed a Paramahansa. Thus (it has been declared).

9. The mendicant monk who is unclad (lit. clothed by the points of the compass), salutes none, has no desire for wife or son and is above aim and non-aim becomes the supreme God. Here there are the verses:

10. To one who has become an ascetic earlier and who is equal to him in characteristics, obeisance ought to be paid (by an ascetic) and never to any one else.

11. Even ascetics are seen who are careless, whose minds are in outward phenomenal things, are tale-bearers, eager to quarrel and whose views are condemned by the Veda.

12. If an ascetic remains in identity with the highest self-effulgent Brahman which is beyond name, etc., then to whom shall he, the knower of the Atman, pay obeisance ? Then the activity (of bowing) ought not to be done.

13. (If an ascetic is convinced that) the supreme God has entered into beings as the individual Self, then he may fully prostrate on the ground before dog, outcaste, cow or donkey.

14. What possibly is charming in a woman who is a doll made of flesh, in a cage of limbs which is moved by machinery and who is a conglomerate of tendons bones and joints ?

15. Are the eyes (of a woman) charming when we look at them after dissection into skin, flesh, blood and tears ? Why then do you get infatuated in vain ?

16. Similarly, Oh sage, is seen of the pearl necklace which shines bright (adoring women) in the onrush of the Ganga water down the shining slopes of the Meru mountain.

17. In cemeteries (situated) in remote places the same breast of a woman is eaten in due course by dogs as if it were a small morsel of food.

18. Having (attractive) tresses and putting on collyrium, women, difficult to touch but pleasing to the eyes are (verily) the flames of the fire of sin and they burn men as though they were straw.

19. Women pleasing and cruel, are the fuel for the hell-fires, that inflame even at a distance and though juicy (loveable) are devoid of moisture (flavour).

20. Silly women are the nets spread by the hunter called Cupid to entangle the bodies of men in the form of birds.

21. Woman is the bait stuck in the fish-hook at the string of evil propensity to catch men in the form of fish that are in the pond of worldly life and that are active in the mud of the mind.

22. Enough of women to me, forever, who are the strong caskets (to preserve) all gems of evil and are the chains of misery.

23. He who has a woman with him has desire for enjoyment; where is the scope for enjoyment to one who is without woman ? Discarding woman is discarding worldly life; one shall be happy after abandoning worldly life.

24. A son unborn worries the (would be) parents for long; when obtained (in the womb) he gives trouble due to miscarriage or the pangs of child-birth.

25. When the boy is born there is the worry of evil planes, illness, etc., and then his propensity to evil ways. When invested with the sacred thread he does not become learned and if he becomes wise he refuses marriage.

26. In youth he takes to adultery, etc., and has (the curse of) poverty when he has a family. There is no end of worry due to a son and if he is rich he (suddenly) may die.

27. The (good) ascetic has no fickleness of hands and feet; he is not unsteady in his eyes and he is not loose with his speech; conquering his senses he becomes one with Brahman.

28. When a person of discrimination sees equality and oneness between an enemy, a prisoner and his own body, where is (the scope for) anger, as towards the limbs of one's own body ?

29. If you have any anger against a wrong doer, how is it you do not have anger against anger, as it forcibly blocks (the path to) duty, wealth, love and liberation ?

30. My salutation to the anger against anger, which well sets ablaze its substratum and which gives one dispassion and awakens one to one's faults.

31. Where the people are always asleep the man of self-control is wide awake; where they are vigilant, Oh wise one, the prince among the Yogins, is in deep sleep. Be convinced that there is consciousness here, that (all) this is consciousness alone and is pervaded by consciousness, that you are consciousness and I am consciousness, and all these worlds are of consciousness.

32. Ascetics should accept this, the highest position of being a Paramahansa. Oh best of sages, there is nothing higher than this. Thus (ends) the Upanishad.

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Here ends the Yajnavalkyopanishad belonging to the Sukla-Yajur-Veda.