



Halebidu Rishi, Hoysala sculpture

The *Upanishads*

The central philosophical concerns that are associated with Indian philosophy are first expressed in the texts called the *Upanishads*. Here we find a clear departure from the earlier focus on ritual sacrifice (*yajna*) that is the primary focus of the *Vedas*. Instead of this focus on appealing to the gods for help in dealing with the powerful forces of nature, the *Upanishads* give expression to the vision (*darshana*) of the *rishis*, or seers, that was seen in deep states of meditation. Here we find the first expression of the notion of *samsara*, the round of rebirth or reincarnation. Instead of looking to the gods for success in this world, the central focus shifts to finding release or liberation (*moksha*) from having to be reborn again and again into this world. It is this quest for liberation or enlightenment that becomes the central focus of most Indian philosophies.

It is interesting to think about how this idea of reincarnation or *samsara* may have first developed. Perhaps it was simply the result of seeing the cycles of life repeated again and again in the natural world, as seeds sprout forth in the spring from plants that withered and died in the fall. Or perhaps it arose in an attempt to make

sense of existence, to make sense of the fact that people are born into this world in such extremely different circumstances, with some being born into fortunate lives and others into miserable conditions. Perhaps something like this accounts for all the views about life after death that are found in different cultures. One thing seems clear, and that is that if this present life were all there is, then life would be horribly unjust. Some people do get away with terrible crimes, while others who would seem to be completely innocent become the victims of atrocities. How can the tragedies of life be explained?

One explanation that finds different expressions in different cultures is to think that the present life is not all there is, that there is another life to come after death where the evil are punished and the good are rewarded. In the *Upanishads* we find this explanation in the conception of *samsara*, that people are born again and again into this world, and that the circumstances of their birth is the result of *karma*. This word *karma* is simply a form of the Sanskrit word for ‘action.’ *Karma* might simply be translated as “the law of action” and it gives expression to the notion that our actions have consequences. Combined with the notion of *samsara*, that we are born into this world again and again as a result of our *karma*, then no one escapes the consequences of their actions.

In the *Upanishads* we find the view that it is *karma* that binds one to *samsara*. Whether our actions are good or bad, the law of *karma* says that one will be reborn into this world as a result of their *karma*. Thus, one will be reborn into better circumstances if one’s actions are good, and worse circumstances if one’s actions are bad. Yet the goal of *moksha*, enlightenment or liberation, that is set out in the *Upanishads*, is to somehow be free from this round of rebirth. The stories that were told in the *Upanishads* (they were not actually written down until several centuries later) express the visions of the seers, and what they claim to have seen is the way to be liberated from *samsara* and not have to reborn and die again. In short, they claim to have found the way to defeat death. They claim to have found the way to immortality.

However, if *karma* is what binds one to *samsara*, then in order to attain *moksha*, it is necessary to somehow solve the problem of *karma*. This is the central problem of Indian philosophy. How can one act at all in the world and still attain liberation from *samsara*? The answer, according to the sages of the *Upanishads*, is found only through a special kind of knowledge. It is the knowledge that comes only through the discipline of *yoga*. Most people today think of *yoga* as only a kind of physical exercise. The exercises

are part of yoga, but they are only a preparatory step. The purpose of the physical exercises, as well as certain breath exercises, are to prepare the body so that one can sit still and meditate. The advanced stages of yoga are deeper and deeper states of meditation. Yoga is meditation. It is interesting that the Sanskrit word *yoga* is actually related to the English word ‘yoke’, which originally meant simply to tie something together. So what is it that *yoga* ties together? The simple answer in the *Upanishads* is that *yoga* ties together *Atman* and *Brahman*. The word *Atman* might be translated as “soul.” It originally derived from a word for breath, as did the word for soul in so many languages. It is the deepest part of the self, the ultimate self within. *Brahman* is a word that derived from the word for “great.” It refers to the ultimate reality of the universe. It has often been thought that the ONE spoken of in the Hymn of Origins in the *Rig Veda* is an anticipation of the conception of *Brahman* that developed in the *Upanishads*, and that is the reason why that hymn is regarded as the most philosophical text in the *Vedas*. *Brahman* is thus that ONE essence of reality that underlies all existence. It is that eternal essence that never arose and will never pass away. To say that the *Atman* within is connected with or identical with *Brahman*, is thus to say that the true self within all beings is immortal and never really dies. Thus the central vision expressed in the *Upanishads* is that insight that *Atman* is *Brahman*.

All of Indian philosophy is divided between the orthodox traditions which accept the authority of the *Upanishads* and the heterodox traditions, like Jainism and Buddhism, which reject some part of the teaching of the *Upanishads*. Here are some selections which provide a brief glimpse of the vision of the *Upanishads*. In this first selection from the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad*, we find the notion of *samsara* introduced. Here we find the suggestion that life is like a fire. The whole world is said to be a fire. A person is a fire, conceived first in the fire of love, and then after death, the body is returned to burn in a fire. Then, at the end, in verse 15, there is the statement that for some, for those who have gained knowledge, there is no returning. The ones who have gained the insight go to the “world of Brahma” and don’t have to come back to this world. There is a difference between Brahma and Brahman. Brahma is one of the gods, while Brahman is the eternal essence that precedes even the gods. Nevertheless, this expression “going to the world of Brahma” is just a way of expressing this insight that through gaining the knowledge that *Atman* within is really the immortal essence of Brahman then one does not return again to this world.

बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद्

Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad

CHAPTER 2

1. Śvetaketu Āruṇeya came to an assembly of the Pañcālas. He approached Jaivali Pravāhaṇa, who was being waited on by his entourage. Seeing him, the prince called, ‘Young man!’

‘Sir?’ he called back.

‘Have you been educated by your father?’

‘OM,’ he said.

2. ‘Do you know,’ cried the prince, ‘how people, when they depart, go in different directions?’

‘No,’ he said.

‘And do you know how they come back to this world again?’

‘No,’ he said.

‘And do you know how that world does not become full with the many people who depart to it again and again?’

‘No’ was all he said.

‘And do you know how many offerings have to be offered before the waters take on a human voice, rise up, and speak?’

‘No’ was all he said.

‘And do you know how to reach the path that leads to the gods or the one that leads to the ancestors — what they do to reach the path that leads to the gods or the one that leads to the ancestors? For we have heard the saying of the Ṛṣi:

I have heard of two ways for mortals,

To the ancestors and to the gods:

By them goes everything that moves

Between the father and the mother.'

'I do not know a single one of these things,' he said.

3. The prince invited him to stay with him, but the young man, not honouring his hospitality, ran away. He came to his father and said, 'Now, father, you said before that we had been educated!'

'What of it, clever one?'

'A princeling asked me five questions, and I do not know a single one of them.'

'What are they?'

'These' — and he told him the subjects.

4. He said, 'You should know me, son: whatever I know, I have taught you. But come, we two will go to him and live with him as his students.'

'You go, father.'

Gautama went to Pravāhaṇa Jaivali's house. The prince offered him a seat, had water brought for him, and welcomed him as an honoured guest. He said, 'We grant a boon to the blessed Gautama.'

5. He said, 'I accept the boon. Tell me the words you spoke in the presence of the young man.'

6. He said, 'Gautama, that falls among boons for the gods. Name something that belongs to human beings.'

7. He said, 'It is well known, that I have plenty of gold, cows and horses; slave-women, coverings and clothing. Sir, do not stint me of what is great, endless, unlimited.'

'Then, Gautama, you should ask for it in the proper way.'

The ancients used to go to their teachers by saying, 'I come to you, sir' : and so Gautama became his student by announcing that he was going to him.

8. He said, 'Gautama, may you not be displeased with us, nor your grandfathers either, but this knowledge has never before lived in any Brāhmaṇa. But I will teach it to you: for who could refuse you when you ask in this way?'

9. 'That world is a fire, Gautama., The sun is its fuel; the rays its smoke; the day its flame; the

directions its embers; the intermediate directions its sparks. In that fire the gods offer faith (*śraddhā*). From that offering King Soma arises.

10. 'Parjanya is a fire, Gautama. The year is his fuel; the clouds his smoke; the lightning his flame; the thunderbolt his embers; the hailstones his sparks. In that fire the gods offer King Soma. From that offering rain arises.

11. 'This world is a fire, Gautama. The earth is its fuel; fire its smoke; the night its flame; the moon its embers; the constellations its sparks. In that fire the gods offer rain. From that offering food arises.

12. 'A man (*puruṣa*) is a fire, Gautama. The open mouth is his fuel; breath his smoke; speech his flame; the eye his embers; the ear his sparks. In that fire the gods offer food. From that offering the seed arises.'

13. 'A young woman is a fire, Gautama. The loins are her fuel; the body-hairs her smoke; the vagina her flame; what one does inside, her embers; the pleasures her sparks. In that fire the gods offer the seed. From that offering a person arises. He lives as long as he lives, and when he dies —

14. 'They carry him to the fire. Then his fire becomes the fire; his fuel the fuel; his smoke the smoke; his flame the flame; his embers the embers; his sparks the sparks. In that fire the gods offer the person. From that offering a person of the colour of light arises.

15. 'Those who know this, and those who in the forest worship faith as truth, go into the flame, from the flame into the day, from the day into the waxing fortnight, from the waxing fortnight into the six months in which the sun goes northward, from the months into the world of the gods, from the world of the gods into the sun, from the sun into that which is made of lightning. The person of mind goes to those beings of lightning and leads them to the world of Brahmā. Exalted, far above, they dwell in the worlds of Brahmā. For them there is no returning.

16. 'But those who win worlds by sacrifice, giving and asceticism go into the smoke, from the smoke into the night, from the night into the waning

fortnight, from the waning fortnight into the six months in which the sun goes southward, from the months into the world of the ancestors, from the world of the ancestors into the moon.

'Reaching the moon, they become food. There the gods partake of them, as they do of King Soma, saying, "Grow full!": "Wane!"

'When that passes away for them, they enter into space, from space into the air, from the air into the rain, from the rain into the earth.

'Reaching the earth, they become food. They are offered again in the fire of a man, and from that are born in the fire of a young woman, rising again to the worlds. So they circle around. But those who do not know the two paths become worms, flying things, and everything that bites.'

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In this second selection, from the *Katha Upanishad*, the teaching of yoga is introduced. In this story a young man named Naciketas is sent to death by his father. The implication is that his father killed him in anger. So Naciketas goes to the door of Yama, the god of death, but Yama was not home. Thus, when Yama returns he feels he owes the young man something. So he offers Naciketas three wishes. Naciketas's first wish is to have peace with his father. Yama grants the wish. Then Naciketas wants to know the secret of the fire ritual. Again this wish is granted. Then, for the last wish, Naciketas wants to know what happens after death. Yama tries to persuade him to ask for something else. He offers long life, wealth, many beautiful women, etc. but Naciketas is not tempted by any of these offerings because he knows that he will have to come to death again someday and thus nothing is more important than the knowledge of what happens after death. Yama finally relents and tells him the secret and the secret is that for those who have gained the insight through the discipline of yoga there is no death. Through yoga one gains immortality.

कठ उपनिषद्

Kaṭha Upaniṣad

BOOK I

1. OM. Uśan Vājaśravasa once offered a sacrifice entailing the giving away of all his possessions. He had a son called Naciketas.
2. Though he was just a boy, when the gifts of cattle were being led away, faith entered him and he thought:
3. 'They have drunk their water and eaten their grass,
Have given their milk, senseless ones:
"Joyless" are the worlds called
To which goes the one who gives these.'
4. And he said to his father, 'Daddy, to whom will you give *me*?' A second and a third time he said it.
'I give you to Death!'
5. 'First of many I go;
Midst of many I go.
What work has Yama to do
That he will be doing with me?
6. 'Looking towards those before me
And looking back at those who come after —
Like the crops a mortal ripens
And like the crops springs up again.'
7. As fire a Brāhmaṇa
Guest enters a house,
And so they quench him.
Bring water, son of Vivasvat!
8. From that man of little wit
In whose house he stays, unfed,
A Brāhmaṇa takes hope and expectation,
Friendship, happiness, action and merit,
sons and cattle — everything.

9. 'Brahmā, since you, a guest to be honoured,
Have stayed three nights in my house, unfed,
Homage to you, Brahmā! May it be well with
me!
Choose three boons.'
10. 'May Gautama, his mind at peace, well-
disposed,
His anger towards me gone, O Death,
Greet me, content, when I am released by you.
I choose this as the first of the three boons.'
11. 'Auddālaka Āruṇi, released by me,
Shall be content as before.
He shall sleep well nights, his anger gone,
Once he has seen you set free from the
mouth of Death.'
12. 'In the heavenly world there is no fear:
You are not there, nor does one fear old age:
Having crossed over both hunger and thirst,
One rejoices in that heavenly world beyond
sorrow.
13. 'You teach me, Death, about the heavenly fire.
Tell it to me, who have faith.
The heavenly worlds share in immortality.
I choose this by way of my second boon.'
14. 'I will tell you, Naciketas, so listen to me
And learn of the heavenly fire.
Know of this, which is kept in a secret place —
How to win an endless world, and remain
there.'
15. He taught him of the fire, the beginning of the
world,
What bricks to use and how many, and how
to build it —
And he repeated it back as it had been told to
him.
Then Death, satisfied, spoke again.
16. The great-hearted (*mahātman*) one, pleased,
said,
'Today I give you another favour:
This fire will be known by your name.
Grasp this chain with its many forms.
17. 'The one of three Nāciketa-fires, who has
attained union with the three,
Who does the three works, crosses over birth
and death.
Knowing the god, worthy of offerings, who
knows all that is born from *brahman*,
And building the fires, he reaches this
surpassing peace.
18. 'The one of three Nāciketa-fires, knowing this
threesome,
Who, knowing this, builds up the Nāciketa,
Thrusting Death's snares from before him,
Going beyond sorrow, rejoices in a heavenly
world.
19. 'Naciketas, since you chose the heavenly fire
By way of your second boon,
Folk will speak of this fire as yours.
Naciketas, choose your third boon.'
20. 'There is doubt concerning a man who has
departed.
Some say, "He is", and others say, "He is
not."
Taught by you, I would know this.
This is the third of my boons.'
21. 'This was doubted here too, by the gods
before:
It is a subtle *dharma*, not easily understood.
Choose a different boon, Naciketas.
Do not, do not insist: release me from this.'
22. 'So this was doubted here too, by the gods!
Since you, Death, tell me it is not easily
understood,

- And no one else can be found who can teach
this as you can,
There is no boon to equal this.'
23. 'Choose a hundred years, sons and grandsons,
Many cattle, elephants, gold, horses:
Choose a great estate of land,
And yourself live as many autumns as you
will.
24. 'If you think fit, choose another boon, equal to
this,
Wealth and long life too.
Naciketas, enter a great realm of desires:
I will make you the enjoyer of your desires.
25. 'Whatsoever desires are hard to obtain in the
mortal world,
Ask for them all, at your ill.
Here are fair ladies, with chariots, with
musical instruments,
Their like not to be won by men.
Enjoy yourself with them — I give them to
you —Naciketas, but do not ask me about
dying.'
26. 'Ephemeral things, Ender! Since they wear out
The potency of all a mortal's faculties,
And all life is so short,
The chariots are yours, the dance and song
yours still.
27. 'A human being cannot be satisfied by wealth.
Shall we get wealth if we have seen you?
We shall live just as long as *you* decree.
That boon of mine is the only one to choose.
28. 'Once he has encountered the agelessness of
the immortals,
How could the ageing mortal, dwelling on
earth below, understanding this,
Contemplating their beauty, pleasures and
delights,
Find pleasure in very long life?
29. 'Tell us, Death, what people are doubtful of
In the great matter of their passing away.
Naciketas chooses no other boon but this one
That is so deeply hidden.'

BOOK II

1. 'The better is one thing, the pleasanter
another:
Both bind a man, to different ends.
Of the two, it is well for the one who chooses
the better.
The one who chooses the pleasanter fails of
his end.
2. 'When both have examined the better and the
pleasanter human course,
The wise one discriminates between the two.
The wise one chooses the better over the
pleasanter;
The foolish one chooses the pleasanter, for
the sake of getting and enjoying.
3. '*You*, Naciketas, contemplating desires
Both pleasant and pleasant-appearing, have
let them go.
You have not taken on this chain made of
wealth
Into which many human beings have
plunged.
4. 'These two are far apart, disparate,
Ignorance and what is called wisdom.
I think Naciketas is a seeker of wisdom:
Many desires have not distracted you.
5. 'Living in the midst of ignorance,
Wise in their own view, thinking themselves
learned,
The foolish rush about,
Like blind men led by one who is blind.
6. 'Intoxicated, deluded by the glamour of riches,
The childish one does not see that he must
pass away:

Thinking, "This is the world: there is no other",
Again and again he comes into my power.

7. 'What many will not get the chance even to hear of,
What many, though hearing, do not know —
Wonderful is the speaker of it, skilled the winner of it,
Wonderful the knower of it, taught by a skilled one.
8. 'Through the teaching of an inferior man it cannot easily be known,
Though it be thought about in many ways:
There is no way to it without another's teaching,
For it is subtler than the subtle, not to be reasoned out.
9. 'This thought, which cannot be grasped by reasoning,
Yet is easily known when taught by another,
You, my dear, have grasped. How steadfast in truth you are!
May we find another questioner like you!'

[Naciketas:]

10. 'I know that what is called treasure is impermanent,
That what is constant cannot be got through inconstant means,
So I have built the Naciketa-fire:
Through impermanent objects I have won the permanent.'

[Yama:]

11. 'Fulfilment of desire, a firm foundation in the world,
Infinity of power, the further shore of fearlessness,
Greatness of praise, a wide-ranging foundation,
Naciketas, you have seen, and, being wise, have steadfastly let go.

12. 'By the study of the yoga of the self, the wise one knows as god
That which is hard to see, that is deeply hidden,
That lies in a secret place, that rests in the depths, ancient,
And abandons joy and sorrow.
13. 'Hearing and grasping this, a mortal,
Drawing out that which belongs to *dharma*, attains this subtle one.
Then he rejoices, for he has won what is worthy of rejoicing.
I consider Naciketas a fitting home for this.
14. 'It is different from *dharma*, different from *not-dharma*,
Different from this that is made and unmade,
Different from both past and future.
Tell me what you see!'

[Naciketas cannot, so Yama continues:]

15. 'The word which all the Vedas recollect, .
Of which all ascetic practices speak,
Searching for which folk live as students of *brahman*,
I will tell you in brief.
It is OM.
16. 'This syllable is *brahman*.
This syllable is supreme.
Knowing this syllable,
Whatever one wishes for one has.
17. 'This support is the best.
This support is supreme.
Knowing this support,
One is honoured in the world of Brahṁā.
18. 'The wise one is not born, nor does it die.
It is not from anywhere, nor was it anyone.
Unborn, everlasting, eternal, primeval,
It is not slain when the body is slain.

19. 'If the slayer thinks it slays;
If the one who is slain thinks *it* is slain:
Neither of them understands.
It does not slay, nor is it slain.
20. 'Subtler than the subtle, greater than the great,
The self is hidden in the secret place of a
being.
One without will, through the creator's
favour,
Sees the greatness of the self, his sorrow at
an end.
21. 'Sitting, it travels far.
Lying down, it goes everywhere.
Who else but I (*mad-*) is able to know
The god who is ever delighted (*madāmada*).
22. 'Knowing this great all-pervading self —
Bodiless among bodies,
Stable among the unstable
The wise one does not grieve.
23. 'The self cannot be won by speaking,
Nor by intelligence or much learning.
It can be won by the one whom it chooses.
To him the self reveals its own form.
24. 'Neither the one who has not ceased from
wrongdoing,
Nor the unpeaceful nor the unconcentrated,
Nor the one of unpeaceful mind
Can win it through knowing.
25. 'The one for whom priesthood (*brahman*) and
royalty (*kṣātra*),
Both, are the rice
And death is the sauce:
Who, truly, knows where he is?

BOOK VI

1. 'There is an eternal pipal tree
With its roots above, its branches below.
It is the bright; it is *brahman*;
It is called the immortal.
On it all the worlds depend:
No one goes beyond it.
This is that.
2. 'Whatever there is that moves,
The breath impels it as it is sent forth.
It is a great terror, an upraised thunderbolt.
They who know this become immortal.
3. 'From fear of it, Agni burns.
From fear, Sūrya shines.
From fear both Indra and Vāyu,
And Death, as fifth, run on.
4. 'If one has been able to wake up to it here
Before the break-up of the body,
One is fitted to attain a body
In the worlds of creation.
5. 'In oneself, it appears as though in a mirror;
In the world of the ancestors, as though in a
dream;
In the world of the *gandharvas*, as though it
appeared in water;
In the world of Brahmā, as though in bright
light and shadow.
6. 'Knowing the senses to be separate,
Likewise the rising and setting
Of things that arise separately,
The wise one does not grieve.
7. 'The mind is higher than the senses,
Being (*sattva*) higher than the mind:
The great self is above being,
The unmanifest higher than the great.

8. 'Above the unmanifest is the person,
Pervading and without mark,
Knowing which, a being is liberated
And reaches immortality.
9. 'Its form is not present to the sight
No one sees it with the eye.
The wise one, adept in mind, sees it in his
heart.
Those who know it become immortal.
10. 'When the five knowings cease,
Together with the mind,
And the intelligence does not stir,
They call that the highest bourn.
11. 'This steadfast control of the senses
Is known as "yoga" —
Then one becomes undistracted:
For yoga is the origin and the passing away.
12. 'It cannot be won
By speech or mind or eye.
How can it be grasped in any other way
Than by one saying, "It is!"
13. 'It can be grasped so: "It is!"
Through the real nature of both.
When it has been grasped so: "It is!"
Its real nature becomes clear.
14. 'When all the desires that dwell
In one's heart are let go,
Mortal becomes immortal:
One reaches *brahman* here.
15. 'When all the knots of
The heart here are broken,
Mortal becomes immortal:
This is the teaching.
16. 'A hundred and one are the channels of the
heart.
Of them, one flows out through the head.

Going up by it, one reaches immortality.
Others, on departing, go in all directions.

17. 'The person, a thumb in length, in the midst of
the self,
Ever resting in the hearts of people,
One should by wisdom draw out from one's
own body
Like the cane from a *muñja*-reed.
One should know it as the bright, the
immortal.
One should know it as the bright, the
immortal.'
18. Naciketas, having received this knowledge,
taught by Death,
And the complete method of yoga,
Attaining *brahman*, became free of impurity,
deathless,
And so will any other who knows it in
relation to the self (*ātman*).



In this last selection, from the *Chandogya Upanishad*, we find the famous phrase "That you are" (*tat tvam asi*) which expresses the insight that the true self within, the *Atman*, is one and the same with the subtle eternal essence of *Brahman*.

छान्दोग्य उपनिषद्

Chāndogya Upaniṣad

BOOK VI

CHAPTER I

1. OM. There once was a boy called Śvetaketu Āruṇeya . His father said to him, Śvetaketu, go and live as a *brahmacārin*. Good lad, there is no one in our family who is just a Brāhmaṇa by birth, without learning.'
2. So at twelve years old he went, and at twenty-four years old he returned, having learned all the Vedas, haughty, proud of his learning, and opinionated. His father said to him, Śvetaketu,

good lad, since you are haughty, proud of your learning, and opinionated, did you ask for the symbolic statement

3. 'by which the unheard becomes heard, the unthought thought, and the unknown known?'

'Blessed one, what sort of symbolic statement is that?'

4. 'Good lad, just as through one lump of clay everything made of clay is known, so difference of shape is just name, dependent on speech: "clay" is the reality.

5. 'Good lad, just as through one copper ornament everything made of copper is known, so difference of shape is just name, dependent on speech: "copper" is the reality.

6. 'Good lad, just as through one nail-clipper everything made of iron is known, so difference of shape is just name, dependent on speech: "iron" is the reality. Such, good lad, is the symbolic statement.'

7. 'The blessed ones certainly did not know this, for, if they had known it, how would they not have told me? Blessed one, *you* tell me about it.'

'I will, good lad,' he said.

CHAPTER 9

1. 'Good lad, just as bees secrete honey by collecting the nectars from different kinds of trees, and combine the nectar into oneness,

2. 'and just as there they do not keep any distinction, so as to be able to say, "I am the nectar of that tree", "I am the nectar of *that* tree", so, good lad, all creatures, once they have entered into being, do not know that they have entered into being.

3. 'Whatever they are here — a tiger, a lion, a wolf, a boar, a worm, a flying thing, a gnat or a mosquito — they become *that*;

4. 'This subtle part is what all this has as self (*ātman*). It is truth: it is the self. *You* are that (*tat tvam asi*), Śvetaketu.'

'Blessed one, explain it to me further.'

'I will, good lad,' he said.

CHAPTER 10

1. 'Good lad, the eastern rivers flow east and the western rivers flow west, and from the sea merge into the sea: That is just sea. Just as there they do not know "I am that river", "I am *that* river",

2. 'so, good lad, all creatures, once they have come forth from being, do not know that they have come forth from being. Whatever they are here — a tiger, a lion, a wolf, a boar, a worm, a flying thing, a gnat or a mosquito — they become *that*.

3. 'This subtle part is what all this has as self (*ātman*). It is truth: it is the self. *You* are that (*tat tvam asi*), Śvetaketu.'

'Blessed one, explain it to me further.'

'I will, good lad,' he said.

CHAPTER 11

1. 'Good lad, if someone were to strike at the root of this great tree, it would ooze sap but live. If someone were to strike at the middle, it would ooze sap but live. If someone were to strike at the top, it would ooze sap but live. Pervaded by the life, by the self, it stands, happy, everdrinking.

2. 'If the life leaves one branch of it; that branch dries up. If it leaves a second, that dries up. If it leaves a third, that dries up. If it leaves the whole tree, the whole dries up. Good lad, know that this is the same,' he said.

3. 'When separated from the life, *it* dies, but the life does not die. This subtle part is what all this has as self. It is truth: it is the self (*ātman*). *You* are that (*tat tvam asi*), Śvetaketu.'

'Blessed one, explain it to me further.'

'I will, good lad,' he said.

CHAPTER 13

1. 'Put this salt in water, and come to me in the morning.'

He did so. His father said to him, 'Now, bring me the salt that you put in water last night.'

He felt for it, but did not find it.

2. 'Quite,' said his father, 'for it has dissolved. But sip from the side of it. What is it like?'

'Salt.'

'Sip from the middle of it. What is it like?'

'Salt.'

'Sip from the other side of it. What is it like?'

'Salt.'

'Throw it away, then come to me.'

He did so, and said, 'It is there all the time.'

His father said to him, 'You do not see *being* here, but it *is* here.'

3. 'This subtle part is what all this has as self (*ātman*). It is truth: it is the self. *You* are that (*tat tvam asi*), Śvetaketu.'

'Blessed one, explain it to me further.'

'I will, good lad,' he said.



All selections are from:

Roebuck, Valerie J., ed. and trans. *The Upaniṣads*. London and New York: Penguin Classics, 2003.

KEY TERMS

ब्रह्मन् brahman <i>Brahman</i>	*the One, self-existent impersonal Spirit, universal Soul, Divine Essence and source from which all created things emanate or with which they are identified and to which they return, the Absolute, the Eternal
आत्मन् ātman <i>Atman</i>	*variously derived from: to breathe, to move, to blow, the breath *the Soul, the Self, principle of life and sensation *the highest personal principle of life
धर्म dharma <i>Dharma</i>	*that which is established or firm, steadfast decree, law *right, justice *virtue, morality, religion, religious merit, good works
सम्सार samsāra <i>Samsara</i>	reincarnation *going or wandering through, undergoing transmigration *a course, passage, passing through a succession of states, circuit of mundane existence, the world, secular life, worldly illusion
कर्म karma <i>Karma</i>	from <i>kri</i> , to act; thus action, performance the law governing the fruit of action
मोक्ष mokṣa <i>Moksha</i>	*emancipation, liberation, release, enlightenment *release from worldly existence or transmigration, final or eternal emancipation
गुरु guru <i>Guru</i>	a spiritual teacher
योग yoga <i>Yoga</i>	the discipline or practice that leads to enlightenment