

# SAMNYĀSA UPANIṢADS

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Hindu Scriptures on Asceticism and  
Renunciation

Translated and with an Introduction by  
PATRICK OLIVELLE

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PATRICK OLIVELLE

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*For Meera*

*prajāṃ anu prajāyase  
tad u te martyāmṛtam*

In your offspring you are born again;  
That, O mortal, is your immortality.

TB 1.5.5.6

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## *Preface*

Now that this task is complete, it is my duty to pay my debts to individuals and institutions who made it possible; would that all my duties were as pleasant! The Department of Religious Studies and the Office for Research of Indiana University at Bloomington supported this project with a variety of grants. Few institutions provide a better environment for personal growth and scholarly endeavors. My gratitude is heightened as I prepare to leave them after a seventeen-year association to join the University of Texas at Austin.

The Wolfson College of Oxford University provided unparalleled resources and a beautiful environment during 1977–1978 and 1981–1982 to conduct research. The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Poona and the Theosophical Society in Adyar, Madras, were generous in accommodating even my most unreasonable requests. Research at Oxford and in India was supported by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Smithsonian Institution, and the American Institute of Indian Studies.

We owe an intellectual debt to all those from whose labors we profit. They are too numerous to name; some of them will appear frequently in the footnotes and the bibliography. To two of them, however, I owe a special debt of gratitude. This

## *Preface*

translation would have been much poorer but for the many works of Professor Joachim Friedrich Sprockhoff listed in the bibliography. Over innumerable cups of tea at his home I learned a great deal from the late Dr. V. V. Bhide—about the Vedic ritual, about the intricacies of Mīmāṃsā exegesis, but most of all about the way Brahmin pandits think and write. His untimely death is a great loss to Indological studies.

Mary Jane Gormley read all the translations and helped me with more than commas and colons. Ross Vemeer assisted me in compiling the index. Anne Feldhaus read an early draft of the introduction; it is the better for it. Cynthia Read's patience is matched only by that of my wife, Suman; to both a heartfelt thank you. To Meera this book is dedicated; contrary to Vedic theologians, she has proven that a daughter does indeed bring unsurpassable delight to a father and is "a light in the highest heaven."

*Bloomington, Ind.*  
*April 1991*

P.O.

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## *Note on the Translations*

The ideal of every translator is clarity and accuracy, two goals that often tend to exclude each other. I have attempted here to reproduce in English as accurately as current scholarship and my abilities permit the meaning of the original Sanskrit text. Although this work may be of some help to scholars who know Sanskrit, it is nevertheless aimed primarily at the non-specialist. The introduction provides a context for reading these documents, and I have tried to make the translation as clear and comprehensible as possible on its own without reference to the Sanskrit original.

I have regularly ignored the Sanskrit syntax, therefore, using several short English sentences to translate a single Sanskrit sentence. I have also departed from the common practice of placing within parentheses all English words not directly founded on the Sanskrit. Such parenthetical words and phrases only distract the reader who has no access to the original. It is, furthermore, unnecessary to use parentheses when the English translates accurately the original and often succinct Sanskrit, even when the English idiom or the exigencies of comprehension may require more words. On a few occasions, however, I have used parentheses to demarcate phrases not found in the original but that I felt would add to the comprehension of the text.

The translation follows Schrader's critical edition. It contains numerous conjectural readings that are on the whole plausible and necessary. I have not noted all these conjectural readings in the translation; they are meaningless to readers unfamiliar with the original Sanskrit, and those who have access to the original can always find them in the critical edition. I have placed within brackets the following: (1) all explanatory material not syntactically connected to the translation; (2) numbers of sections not given in the critical edition; (3) page numbers of the critical edition; and (4) passages that are placed within brackets in the critical edition.

I have given within brackets the page numbers of Schrader's critical edition so as to facilitate cross-reference. For the same reason, I have also used these page numbers in the index. It is the current scholarly practice to refer to these Upaniṣads by the page numbers of that edition. These numbers may appear in the middle of sentences. Where the difference in syntax between the two languages made it impossible to place a page number at the proper place within a sentence, I have placed it at the beginning of that sentence.

I have left *saṃsāra* untranslated. It has entered the English vocabulary and dictionaries, and there is no simple English equivalent. It means life subject to rebirth, the world in which that life is led, and the suffering nature of that life. The term *dharma* has such a vast semantic range that one can never be consistent in translating it. I have used "duty" (duties), "right," "righteousness," and "Law," and on a few occasions I have left it untranslated. I have translated the several Sanskrit terms for the Veda uniformly as "Veda," and the rather vague term *smṛti* as "scripture(s)." The terms *varṇa* and *āśrama* have been rendered as "class" and "order," respectively. I have not attempted to translate directly such uniquely Sanskrit idioms as *katham iti cet* (NpU 171). Similarly, I have left untranslated the initial *atha*, except when it begins a narrative, where I have translated it as "once," and the repetitions of final words that signal the conclusion of a major section.

*Note on the Translations*

Although I am sensitive to the use of sexist language, I have consistently used the masculine pronouns unless the context calls for the inclusion of both sexes. There is no point in hiding the fact that these documents and much of Brāhmaṇical theology speak almost exclusively to men. The historian's task is to be accurate, not to pass judgment.

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# *Introduction*

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# I

## *The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads*

The Upaniṣads form the concluding sections of the several Vedic collections handed down in the ancient Vedic schools and are therefore called *Vedānta*, which literally means the end of the Veda. The Upaniṣads, however, came to be viewed in many traditions not merely as the last books of the Vedas but also as the most important. The very term *Vedānta* was understood to mean not just the end but also the summit and crown of the Veda.

Many indigenous traditions divide the Vedic corpus into two sections: the section on rites (*karmakāṇḍa*), consisting of the earlier portions, and the section on knowledge (*jñānakāṇḍa*), consisting of the Upaniṣads. The theology of Vedic revelation within the mainstream of the Brāhmaṇical tradition regarded the Vedas to be without an author; they constitute the temporal manifestations of eternal and transcendent knowledge. As the ritual section contains infallible directions in ritual and moral matters, so the Upaniṣads contain the transcendent knowledge needed for human salvation. Within the soteriological traditions, such as Advaita Vedānta, that considered knowledge as the sole means of liberation (*mokṣa*), therefore, the Upaniṣads came to be regarded as its most authoritative source. As one



medieval text puts it, "The Vedānta is contained in the Veda like oil in the seed."<sup>1</sup>

Because of the foundational nature of the Upaniṣads, later Hindu sects and theologies sought to find in them the revealed basis of and the ultimate justification for their doctrines and practices. The proponents understood their sectarian doctrines and practices to be the explication of the essential message of the Upaniṣads. Thus many Hindu sects called their own doctrines *Vedānta*.

The early Upaniṣads, composed many centuries before the rise of these sects and traditions, however, did not always directly support their often contradictory positions. Sectarian theologians, therefore, resorted frequently to hermeneutical strategies, interpreting the ancient Upaniṣads in ways that would provide support for their doctrines;<sup>2</sup> sometimes they composed new Upaniṣads. Given the lack of an acknowledged and closed canon of the Vedic corpus,<sup>3</sup> these new texts were able to gain recognition, at least within the sects in which they were composed, as authentic Vedic documents, having the same sanctity and authority as other Vedic books. The number of Upaniṣads thus swelled to well over 100, and Upaniṣads continued to be composed down to modern times to support every sort of religious belief and practice.

In the eyes of the believers, all Upaniṣads have the same authority. They are eternal and transcend history. Scholars who use them as sources for the reconstruction of Indian religious history, however, must approach them as human documents located in space and time. From a historical perspective, therefore, modern scholarship has customarily distinguished between the *major* (sometimes called *classical*) and the *minor* Upaniṣads. The former are generally older and were composed

1. *Mukṭikā Upaniṣad*, 1.9.

2. I have discussed some of these strategies in Olivelle 1986, 57–76.

3. For a survey of the problems relating to the canon and transmission of the Vedic texts, see Olivelle 1986, 66–76; L. Renou, *The Destiny of the Veda in India*, trans. D. R. Chanana (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965).

within the Vedic schools, whereas the latter are by and large later compositions, some of which are sectarian in nature.<sup>4</sup> The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads belong to the latter category.

They are a collection of twenty texts written in Sanskrit. Their common characteristic is the theme of *saṃnyāsa*, or renunciation. The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads, however, do not constitute an indigenous classification of the Upaniṣads; no Indian list or collection of Upaniṣads groups these texts together. Paul Deussen was the first to use the category *Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads*. In his German translation of sixty Upaniṣads, Deussen (1905; Eng. tr. 1980, 567–568) classified the Upaniṣads belonging to the Atharva Veda under five headings “according to the tendency predominant in them:” (1) Purely Vedāntic Upaniṣads, (2) Yoga-Upaniṣads, (3) Saṃnyāsa-Upaniṣads, (4) Śiva-Upaniṣads, and (5) Viṣṇu-Upaniṣads.<sup>5</sup> Under *Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads* he included seven texts: Brahma, Saṃnyāsa, Āruneya, Kāṭhaśruti, Paramahansa, Jābāla, and Āśrama. That number was expanded to twenty in Schrader’s critical edition of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads.

From the viewpoint of Brāhmaṇical theology, these Upaniṣads provide the basis in Vedic revelation for the institution of renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) and for the rules and practices associated with that state. They played a central role in the theological reflections and disputes concerning that key institution of Brāhmaṇical religion.<sup>6</sup> Apart from providing valuable data for the history of Indian ascetical institutions, therefore, these Upaniṣads are especially significant for tracing the development of the Brāhmaṇical theology of renunciation.<sup>7</sup>

4. Although this statement is valid as a generalization, sections of some so-called minor Upaniṣads are as old as some of the classical Upaniṣads.

5. Deussen was in fact expanding on a classification first proposed by A. Weber, *History of Indian Literature* (London, 1878), 156.

6. For a study of some of these theological disputes, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.

7. Scholars have come to recognize the importance of the indigenous theological and exegetical traditions as objects of study for scholars of religion. Jonathan Z. Smith has articulated this eloquently: “I have come to believe that a prime object of study for the historian of religion ought to be theological tradition . . . in particular, those elements of the theological endeavor that are concerned with

## 1.1 EDITIONS, TRANSLATIONS, AND STUDIES

Deussen's fivefold classification, with the addition of the Śākta-Upaniṣads, was followed by the Adyar Library when, under the direction of F. Otto Schrader, it drew up a plan to publish critical editions of all the minor Upaniṣads (Schrader, ii-iii). The first volume to be published in the series contained the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads, a collection of twenty texts critically edited by Schrader himself and published in 1912 with an original Sanskrit commentary, *Ṭippanī*, prepared by Schrader with the help of several pandits. The present translation is based on Schrader's critical edition.

Unfortunately, the editors of the remaining volumes of this series did not follow Schrader's lead; the other collections were not critically edited. They were published without a proper critical apparatus and reproduce the version commented on by Upaniṣadbrahmayogin. The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads thus remain the only collection of minor Upaniṣads to have been critically edited.

As part of the same series, the Adyar Library in 1929 produced another publication of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads based on the version commented on by Upaniṣadbrahmayogin (see Dikshit 1929), a version far inferior to the critically reconstituted edition of Schrader. A reprint of it amounting in reality to a new edition was published in 1966.<sup>8</sup> Individual texts of the collection have been published frequently in uncritical editions.<sup>9</sup>

In his introduction Schrader says that his translation of the

---

canon and its exegesis. . . . It [exegetical enterprise] is, at the same time, the most profoundly cultural, and hence, the most illuminating for what ought to be the essentially anthropological view point of the historian of religion and a conception of religion as human labor." *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 43.

8. For differences in the two editions, see Sprockhoff 1990, 7-17.

9. All these editions are listed by Sprockhoff (1976) at the beginning of his discussion of each Upaniṣad.

Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads “is practically ready for the press.”<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, it was never published. The Adyar Library recently published a translation of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads by A. A. Ramanathan (Ramanathan 1978). Besides being an extremely poor and inaccurate translation, it is not based on Schrader’s critical edition but follows by and large Dikshit’s edition of the version commented on by Upaniṣadbrahmayogin.<sup>11</sup> I have been unable to consult the recent French translation of these Upaniṣads by Alyette Degrâces-Fahd referred to by Sprockhoff (1989, 138; 1990, 47, n. 150), who considers it an uncritical translation.

Joachim Friedrich Sprockhoff, a student of Schrader, has made an excellent and detailed study of all the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads (Sprockhoff 1976). Sprockhoff’s work is indispensable for any serious study of these documents. It is neither possible nor desirable within the scope of this introduction to include all the details of his analysis. For more detailed and technical information on these documents, including their textual histories, I can do no better than refer the reader to Sprockhoff’s study, which ought to be regarded as a standard work of reference on Brāhmaṇical renunciation. Besides being the only group of minor Upaniṣads to have been critically edited, the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads remains also the only group to have been subjected to such a thorough historical and philological study.

It is my hope that this first complete English translation of the critical editions of all the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads will make that valuable collection accessible to a wider group of people interested in the history of Indian religion and culture.

10. Schrader, iii, n. 1. He repeats this claim elsewhere: Schrader, 80, nn. 1–2. Cf. Sprockhoff 1976, 10, n. 3.

11. For an assessment of Ramanathan’s translation, see my review in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 (1982): 228–229. A detailed critique of this translation has been made by Sprockhoff 1990. Individual texts, especially of the older group, have been translated into English and other European languages, but they are for the most part not based on Schrader’s critical edition. For a bibliography of these translations, see Sprockhoff 1976 under each Upaniṣad. The *Śāṭyāyanīya* was translated by me in Olivelle 1987, and the *Kaṭhaśruti* (together with the *Kaṭharudra* of the SR) by Sprockhoff 1990.

## 1.2 DATES

The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads share with other ancient Indian texts a common problem: it is impossible to date them with any degree of precision or certainty. Neither the texts nor their manuscript traditions contain any information regarding their authors or the dates and places of their composition. Except for citations in other datable works, we have no external evidence regarding their dates. Almost all these texts, furthermore, are not original compositions. They draw extensively from other Brāhmaṇical sources, such as the classical Upaniṣads, the epics, and the Purāṇas.<sup>12</sup> Many of them, moreover, are composite texts, containing sections taken from older works or from other Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads. Some of the later Upaniṣads appear to be expansions of older ones. Others, such as the *Laghu-Saṃnyāsa* and the *Kuṇḍikā*, as well as the *Kaṭhaśruti* and the *Kaṭharudra* (which occurs only in the SR), appear to be different recensions of the same text. Each text, therefore, contains several layers that may be separated by hundreds of years. All of this makes any dating of these documents tentative and provisional at best.

In his critical edition, Schrader arranged these Upaniṣads in a manner that in his view approximated their relative dates: “The texts edited in this volume fall into two groups, an older one and a younger one. The older one comprises the first six texts, the younger one Maitreya and the succeeding Upaniṣads. Āśrama-Upaniṣad cannot well be included in either of the groups; it seems to stand exactly on the dividing-line” (Schrader, xxvi).

Sprockhoff’s exhaustive study generally confirms this broad division. Sprockhoff, however, has attempted to date individual Upaniṣads and even the different strata within them. He

12. Sprockhoff (1976 especially 277–295) has dealt extensively with the composition and the sources of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads. He gives all the sources and parallel passages in seventeen detailed tables (319–377) and in an extremely helpful diagram on p. 280.

assigns the older group to the last few centuries before the common era. The *Āśrama Upaniṣad* was composed around 300 C.E. The texts of the younger group for the most part belong to the medieval period. Sprockhoff assigns the *Nārada-parivṛāja* to around 1150 C.E. and the *Śāṭyāyanīya* to 1200 C.E. Most of the others belong to the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

A clue to the dating of the older group is found in a controversy recorded in all except the *Laghu-Saṃnyāsa*. These texts attempt to answer the objection that if a renouncer cuts his topknot and discards his sacrificial string, he can no longer be regarded as a Brahmin (see below 4.3). Now the abandonment of the string as well as any objection to such an abandonment have significance only if it was either an obligation or at least a universal custom among Brahmins to wear such a string. It is no doubt true that in medieval and modern times the wearing of a sacrificial string was regarded as the hallmark of a Brahmin. The older Brāhmaṇical documents, however, do not record a rule or custom that required Brahmins to wear a sacred string at all times. The term *yajñopavīta*, which in later times came to mean the sacrificial string, is used in them to refer to a particular mode of wearing the upper garment during ritual acts.<sup>14</sup> It is nowhere mentioned that a garment or a string should be worn in that manner at all times.

That the custom of wearing a string was a late development is confirmed by the fact that the oldest texts are silent on the investiture of a boy with the sacred string at his initiation, an investiture that later became its central element. After examining all the evidence, Kane concludes:

From the above passages, from the fact that many of the gṛhyasūtras ["treatises on domestic ritual"] are entirely silent about the giving or wearing of the sacred thread in upanayana ["Vedic

13. For details on the dates of each Upaniṣad, see the appropriate chapter of Sprockhoff 1976.

14. The garment or string goes over the left shoulder and hangs under the right arm. Other ways of wearing it are called *prācīnāvīta* (over the right shoulder and under the left arm), used during rites for the dead, and *nivīta* (hanging from the neck).

initiation”] and from the fact that no mantra is cited from the Vedic Literature for the act of giving the yajñopavīta (which is now the centre of the upanayana rites), while scores of vedic mantras are cited for the several component parts of the ceremony of upanayana, it is most probable, if not certain, that sacred thread was not invariably used in the older times as in the times of the later smṛtis and in modern times, that originally the upper garment was used in various positions for certain acts, that it could be laid aside altogether in the most ancient times and that the cord of threads came to be used first as an option and later on exclusively for the upper garment. (*sic*; Kane, HDh, 2:291)

If Kane is right in dating the custom of wearing a sacred string at all times to the period of the *smṛtis*, that is, roughly the first few centuries of the common era—and I believe he is—then the texts of the older group, with the exception of the *Laghu-Saṃnyāsa*, must be younger by several centuries than assumed by Sprockhoff. The earliest date to which these texts in their present form can be assigned is the first few centuries of, rather than before, the common era. It is possible, of course, that sections of these composite documents belong to an earlier period.

With regard to the *Śāṭyāyanīya Upaniṣad*, it may be possible to add some more information bearing on the date to that given by Sprockhoff. This text was clearly the product of a Vaiṣṇava sect, in all likelihood the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava founded by Rāmānuja. As far as I know, the earliest citation of this Upaniṣad is found in Varadācārya’s *Yatiliṅgasamarthana*.<sup>15</sup> Varadācārya (1165–1275 C.E.) was the grandson of Rāmānuja’s sister’s son (Olivelle 1986, 23–24). Rāmānuja’s elder contemporary and teacher was Yādava Prakāśa. Tradition has it that Rāmānuja converted his former teacher from a non-dualist form of Vedānta to his Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy.<sup>16</sup> Yādava’s literary activities, therefore, must have taken place in the second half of the eleventh century C.E.

15. See the edition and translation of this text in Olivelle 1987.

16. Vedānta Deśika (13–14th cent. C.E.) in his *Śatadūṣaṇī* refers to the conversion of Yādava Prakāśa: see Olivelle 1987, 82.

He wrote an extensive treatise on renunciation called *Yatidhar-masamuccaya* (Olivelle 1986, 22), which generally supports the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava position on renunciation, especially on the disputed issue of the insignia of a renouncer. He fails, however, to cite the *Śāṭyāyanīya Upaniṣad*, even though it would have given him plenty of scriptural ammunition against the Advaita position. It is quite unlikely that Yādava would have been ignorant of or deliberately ignored such an important scriptural text of his tradition, a text that is cited prominently a few generations later by Varadācārya. The likely conclusion is that the *Śāṭyāyanīya* was either composed or attained the status of an Upaniṣad sometime between Yādava and Varada, probably in the early part of the twelfth century.

### 1.3 CONTEXT: BRĀHMANICAL LITERATURE ON RENUNCIATION

The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads did not arise in a vacuum; they were part of a broader literary tradition concerning renunciation and related topics both within the Brāhmaṇical mainstream and in non-Brāhmaṇical traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism. Here I want to present a brief conspectus of that broader tradition that provides the context within which these documents were composed and need to be studied.

There is sufficient evidence for the existence of organized ascetical institutions<sup>17</sup> in northern India probably during the sixth—and for certain by the fifth—century B.C.E. At a very early age, moreover, at least some of these ascetical institutions produced literary works often ascribed to their founders. At first they were, in all likelihood, composed and transmitted or-

17. I use the term *institution* in the broadest possible sense. We have little evidence regarding how large these institutions were or how they were organized. From early Buddhist evidence it appears that each ascetic group coalesced around a teacher who became its corporate head and, at least in the case of institutions known to us, such as Buddhism and Jainism, provided both an ideology and rules of conduct for its members.



ally. Examples of such texts are found both within and outside the Brāhmaṇical tradition.

Whatever may be said about the dates of their extant canons of scripture, the Buddhist and Jain traditions—and possibly other extinct non-Brāhmaṇical sects such as the Ājīvika—produced a considerable body of literature not long after their founding. These literary products often claim to record the very words of the deceased founders of their respective sects and were thus infused with their personal authority, becoming thereby sacred and authoritative. The early ascetic literature of non-Brāhmaṇical sects thus became the nucleus of their sacred scriptures, which paralleled—and which may have even been composed in imitation of—the Vedic scriptures, the model par excellence of sacred text in India.

Many of the earliest of these literary products appear to have been codes of ascetic conduct; this is indeed a feature common to all ancient ascetical literature in India. Given that the main features of the renunciatory life are by and large uniform across all the traditions, it appears likely that these texts for the most part codified existent patterns of ascetic behavior, even though each sect modified them to suit its own needs and also included rules peculiar to it. An early example of such a code is the Buddhist *Prātimokṣa*, a list of over 200 monastic rules.<sup>18</sup> It is also likely that early ascetic texts also included the rituals and ceremonies that accompanied the entry of a person into the ascetic life; initiation rites occupy a prominent position in the extant versions of these texts.

That this early ascetic literature should have focused on ascetic practice should come as no surprise, for in India throughout the ages proper conduct has counted for more than ideological purity. As we shall see (2.5), what a person did—and

18. For a discussion of the *Prātimokṣa* and Buddhist monastic discipline, see S. Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*. 2d ed. (London: Asia Publishing House, 1960); W. Pachow, "A Comparative Study of the *Prātimokṣa*," *The Sino-Indian Studies*, VI(1951), pts. 1–2; C. S. Prebish, *Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit *Prātimokṣa Sūtras* of the *Mahāsāṃghikas* and *Mūlasarvāstivādins** (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975).

even where one did it—was considered inseparable from the broader issues of world view and religious ideology; indeed, the latter was often reducible to the former. Within Brāhmaṇism itself, moreover, the bulk of the religious literature of this period was produced mostly for very practical reasons: either for the proper performance of Vedic or domestic rituals (the *Śrauta-* and *Grhya-sūtras*) or to inculcate proper personal and social behavior (the *Dharma-sūtras*). Indeed, all the so-called ancillary Vedic texts (*Vedāṅgas*) have very practical purposes.

Within Brāhmaṇism itself the earliest literature with an ascetic thrust is found in the classical Upaniṣads. Passages with a strong ideological slant in favor of the ascetic worldview and way of life are found in the earliest of the Upaniṣads, such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*. Some of them will be examined in the next section. It is unclear, however, whether these passages were produced within ascetic institutions and later incorporated into the Upaniṣads or merely reflect the influence of ascetic ideologies on some segments of the ancient Vedic schools.

The earliest evidence we possess pointing to the existence of independent ascetical codes within the Brāhmaṇical tradition comes from the grammatical treatise *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, commonly assigned to the fourth century B.C.E. In explaining a particular type of derivative noun meaning “proclaimed by,” Pāṇini (IV.3.110–111) refers to the *bhikṣusūtras*—codes of conduct for mendicants—proclaimed by Pārāśarya and Karman-din.<sup>19</sup> That these were not generic texts intended for all but codes that regulated the life of sociologically distinct groups of mendicants can be gathered from the reference to “Pārāśarin mendicants” (*pārāśariṇo bhikṣavaḥ*) as a distinct group by Patañjali, generally assigned to the second century B.C.E., in his

19. For a detailed discussion of these, see Ajay Mitra Shastri, “The Bhikṣu-sūtra of Pārāśarya,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (Calcutta), 14, nos. 2–4 (1972): 52–59 (issued May 1975). I agree with Shastri that, despite some contradictory evidence from the poet Bāṇa, Pāṇini considered these *sūtras* to have been Brāhmaṇical works.

commentary, *Mahābhāṣya* (IV.2.66), on Pāṇini's grammar. This evidence, coming as it does from grammarians intent on finding examples for grammatical rules among words in common use, is historically very significant and certainly more reliable than any information we may find in the normative literature.

We know very little, unfortunately, about these early Brāhmaṇical authors of ascetic texts.<sup>20</sup> It is not even clear whether their composition and transmission were carried out within or outside the Vedic schools. There is considerable evidence, especially in the epics, nevertheless, for a close association between the early Sāṃkhya school of philosophy and the renunciatory mode of life. Ancient Sāṃkhya teachers, such as Kapila and Pañcaśikha,<sup>21</sup> are portrayed as wandering mendicants. Although I am inclined to believe that the earliest Brāhmaṇical literature on renunciation originated among such Sāṃkhya renouncers, there is insufficient evidence at present to demonstrate that conclusion with any certainty, especially because none of these early ascetic texts has been preserved.

One possible reason for the disappearance of independent texts on asceticism may have been the absence of organized ascetic or monastic institutions within Brāhmaṇism until the early medieval period, institutions that would have facilitated the preservation and the transmission of the ancient texts. Another and possibly more important reason may have been the Brāhmaṇical theology of scriptural authority.

By the last few centuries before the common era, Brāhmaṇical theologians had developed the principle that scriptural authority resided solely and primarily in the Veda and derivatively in texts referred to as *smṛtis*. Both these categories of sacred texts, but especially *smṛti*, were very elastic and without

20. There were also parallel codes dealing with forest hermits. Baudhāyana (fourth century B.C.E.), for example, explicitly refers to a *vaikhānasaśāstra* ("Treatise for Hermits" or "Treatise by Vikhanas"): BDh 2.11.14.

21. Some scholars have identified Pañcaśikha with Pāṇini's Pārāśarya on the basis of a reference in the *Mahābhārata* (12.308.24) to Pañcaśikha as belonging to the lineage of Pārāśarya (*pārāśaryagotra*). See Shastri, 55.

recognized canons or boundaries. “*Smṛti*” itself included many categories of texts, themselves without definite boundaries: ritual texts (*Śrauta-* and *Gṛhya-sūtras*), epics, *Purāṇas*, and the like. As time went on, more and more texts, and classes of texts, especially of sectarian provenance, were added to this category. What all the *smṛti* texts have in common, however, is that they are viewed as representing the Vedic tradition, which is the context for transmitting and understanding the Vedas. According to Brāhmaṇical theology, *smṛtis* derive their authority from the Vedas on which they are based. For regulating social conduct and individual morality, the central *smṛti* texts were the *Dharma-sūtras* and their later counterparts, the *Dharma-śāstras*, that are often and significantly referred to simply as *smṛtis*. They are *smṛti* par excellence.

Lacking an independent scriptural tradition, such as those created in Buddhism and Jainism, the only way ascetic codes could acquire scriptural authority within Brāhmaṇism was by being incorporated into the elastic categories of *Veda* or *smṛti*. The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads are examples of ascetic texts that were either incorporated into or deliberately composed to fit the Vedic category of “Upaniṣad.”

The *dharma* literature represented by the *smṛtis*,<sup>22</sup> however, contains the bulk of the ancient Brāhmaṇical literature on asceticism. There are four extant *Dharma-sūtras* ascribed to Gautama, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, and Vasiṣṭha and belonging roughly to the last four or five centuries before the common era. Each of them has a section containing the rules of conduct of both renunciators and forest hermits. These are given within the context of the *āśrama* system that permits a person to live a religious life as a student, a householder, a hermit, or a renouncer.<sup>23</sup> It appears likely that these rules were taken from

22. Under this rubric I include not only the ancient *Dharma-sūtras* and the later *Dharma-śāstras*, but also the *dharma* portions of the epics and *Purāṇas*.

23. GDh 3.1–36; BDh 2.11.6–34; 2.17–18; ĀpDh 2.21.1–17; VDh 10.1–31. For further discussion, see 2.6.

ascetic codes; the *Dharma-sūtras* frequently quote from unnamed sources.<sup>24</sup> Gautama and Baudhāyana, moreover, present the *āśrama* system as the view of an opponent. These rules on asceticism are in prose and set in the aphoristic genre of *sūtra*; in this they do not differ from the other sections of the *Dharma-sūtras*. With the exception of the earliest strata within the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads, the ascetic rules contained in the *Dharma-sūtras* are the earliest extant ascetic literature within the Brāhmaṇical tradition.

The *Dharma-śāstras*, belonging roughly to the first five or six centuries of the common era, as well as the sections dealing with *dharma* in the epics and the Purāṇas, follow the *sūtras* in incorporating rules of ascetic behavior within the context of the *āśrama* system.<sup>25</sup> These texts, however, are written for the most part in verse, and versification also characterizes the ascetic literature of this period. Most of these texts are now extinct. There is a staggering number of citations in medieval ascetic texts from these lost *Dharma-śāstras*.

We have to wait until the medieval period, after the organization of Brāhmaṇical monastic orders, traditionally ascribed to the Advaita theologian Śaṅkara, for the composition of independent ascetic texts. They were probably composed within monastic establishments as handbooks for the use of monks and generally fall within the category of *dharma* literature known as *paddhati*, handbooks dealing with specific topics mostly of a ritual nature.<sup>26</sup> They did not form part of Veda or *smṛti*, and thus their authority did not transcend the boundaries of their sects. This sociological background also explains the sectarian

24. See, for example, GDh 3.1; BDh 2.11.8; 2.17.30; 2.18.13; VDh 10.2, 20.

25. MDh 6.33–86; YDh 3.56–66; ViDh 96; VaiDh 1.9; 2.6–8; 3.6–8. The *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas also contain discussions of ascetic life, mostly within the context of the *āśrama* system. Several of these passages, such as the dialogue between Bhṛgu and Bharadvāja (MBh 12.184), appear to be remnants of extinct *Dharma-sūtras*.

26. The *paddhati* itself can be viewed as a subcategory of the *nibandha* class of literature. *Nibandhas* are not *smṛti* and therefore not part of scripture. They are medieval digests of law in the broadest sense of the term and include all the topics covered in the *Dharmaśāstras*.

biases they reveal, even though all claim to hand down the Vedic *dharma* on asceticism and cite profusely from Vedic and *smṛti* sources. Some of them are even polemical in nature.<sup>27</sup>

Within the Brāhmaṇical mainstream, the earliest independent work on renunciation outside the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads that has come down to us is a work called *Yatidharmasamuccaya*, written by Yādava Prakāśa (eleventh century C.E.).<sup>28</sup> Yādava, according to tradition, subscribed to some form of non-dualist Vedānta but was later converted by his own pupil, Rāmānuja; the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition claims him as one of its own. He is cited by later Śrī-Vaiṣṇava authors, and Vedānta Deśika says that only Yādava's "treatise on the *dharma* of renouncers is unanimously accepted by the learned, just as Manu's law book and the like."<sup>29</sup> The medieval period saw the proliferation of similar compendia of ascetic rules and customs, although none can match the depth, comprehensiveness, and lucidity of Yādava's work.<sup>30</sup>

One of the few, and clearly the most important, independent medieval works on renunciation that is not a mere handbook is Vidyāraṇya's (literary activity 1330–1385 C.E.) *Jīvanmuktiviveka*. Written from an Advaita Vedānta standpoint, it deals with the state of a renouncer who has achieved the liberating knowledge of Brahman and contains a commentary on the *Paramahansa Upaniṣad*.

The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads fall broadly into the pattern of development traced above. The earlier texts are largely written in prose and often exhibit the pithy style of the *sūtra* genre; this is most evident in the *Nirvāṇa Upaniṣad*. Some of them proba-

27. For such polemical works, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.

28. See above 1.2 and n. 16. I am currently engaged in preparing a critical edition and translation of this work. Its third chapter is included in Olivelle 1987.

29. *Yatilingabhedabhaṅgavāda* of the *Śatadūṣaṇī*. See Olivelle 1987, 82.

30. Kane (HDh 1: 989–1158) lists over eighty such works. Many more have come to light since Kane published his work in 1930. Almost all these works exist only in manuscript and, therefore, are unavailable to all but the most assiduous of scholars. Among the ones published are Viśveśvara Sarasvatī's *Yatidharmasamgraha* (cf. YDhS) and Vāsudevāśrama's *Yatidharmaprakāśa* (ed. and trans. Olivelle 1976 and 1977).

bly existed as texts of the *sūtra* tradition before they were classified as Upaniṣads.<sup>31</sup> The *Āśrama Upaniṣad*, for example, has many recensions, some of which are considered as *smṛtis*.<sup>32</sup> Some of the later documents within the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads, such as the *Nārada-parivṛājaka Upaniṣad*, on the other hand, show all the characteristics of medieval legal compendia (*nibandha*). These later Upaniṣads are collections of passages, some in prose but mostly in verse, from older *smṛtis* and other sources. Unlike the *nibandhas*, however, they do not reveal their sources. It appears likely that these later documents were composed deliberately in a manner that would allow them to be perceived as Upaniṣads.

The fact that the major monasteries of early medieval India—monasteries where the old ascetic texts were preserved and new ones produced—belonged to the Advaita Vedānta tradition may explain the strong Advaita leaning of most of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads. Old texts with different views may not have been preserved; others may have been recast in the Advaita mold. The only Upaniṣad of our collection with a non-Advaita, or even an anti-Advaita, orientation is the *Śātyāyana-nīya*, and it was undoubtedly composed within the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava camp, possibly to counter the Advaita bias of the others.

31. For more details of the prehistory of the early Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads, see Sprockhoff 1976. Sprockhoff (1987) has drawn special attention to the similarities between the *Kaṭhaśruti Upaniṣad* and a section of the *Mānavaśrautasūtra*.

32. For the textual history of this Upaniṣad and its relation to the *Kāṇvāyana*—or *Kātyāyana-smṛti*, see Sprockhoff 1976, 120–124.

## *Renunciation and Society: The Inner Conflict of Tradition*

As the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads need to be located within the broader literary tradition of Brāhmaṇism, so the renunciatory life and ideals of India can be adequately studied only in their historical context and within the framework of their interaction with societal religion and ethics. That the ascetic way of life and the so-called life-negating and world-denying ideals and ideologies are central elements or even defining characteristics of Indian religions is often taken as axiomatic by scholars and lay observers alike. Such assumptions, however, often create the impression of a monolithic religion unrelated to historical vicissitudes. Albert Schweitzer's evaluation of the Indian religious ethos and its presumed contrast to the Hellenistic, or more generally the Western ethos is representative:

When Hellenic thought turns towards world and life negation, it is because in the end it begins to have misgivings about the world and life affirmation which for centuries had seemed a matter of course. . . . In the thought of India, on the other hand, world and life negation does not originate in a similar experience. It is there from the very beginning, self-originated, born as it were in a cloudless sky. And it is there in a very curious guise. Unlike Hellenic world and life negation, it does not claim



to be generally accepted, but remains on good terms with world and life affirmation, which it allows to exist alongside of it.<sup>1</sup>

Schweitzer is wrong on both counts. First, world-denying ideals and ways of life were not “there from the very beginning” in India. They were not “self-originated” but arose at a particular time in history—probably around the sixth century B.C.E.—against the background of momentous socioeconomic changes along the Ganges valley. Second, world renunciation in India did not always remain “on good terms” with society-oriented ideologies. It took a long period of domestication for the renunciatory ideals to be incorporated into the fabric of mainstream religion, and even this incorporation, as the evidence of the *Śaṃnyāsa Upaniṣads* themselves demonstrates, did not altogether erase their irresolvable conflict. The reality of Indian religions is more complex than Schweitzer’s observations suggest.

In assessing the emergence of renunciatory ideologies and ways of life, scholars have been generally divided into two camps; some see it as a natural or, to use Heesterman’s term, an *orthogenetic* development of the Vedic tradition, while others regard it as a new phenomenon that challenged and transformed the Vedic religion.

Heesterman’s work remains the best argued and most developed exposition of the former position.<sup>2</sup> He sees the emergence of renunciation not “as a protest against brahmanical orthodoxy” but as “the orthogenetic, internal development of Vedic thought,” the final and logical outcome of the internal maturation of the Vedic sacrificial theology that sought ultimate autonomy and transcendence (Heesterman 1964, 24).

The opposite view has been argued most forcefully by Louis

1. Albert Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and its Development*, trans. Mrs. Charles E. B. Russell (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1960), 18. The book was originally published in 1936.

2. See, for example, Heesterman 1964. This essay is included in his recent collection, Heesterman 1985. This view is also evident in the writings of Madeleine Biardeau (for example, in Biardeau and Malamond, 1976). For an accessible account of this controversy, see Kaelber 1989, 101–124.

Dumont (1960) in his seminal essay "World Renunciation in Indian Religions." Even though I am willing to admit lines of continuity between renunciation and sacrificial religion, I believe that Dumont is right in viewing it as a "new" element that at least initially challenged and contradicted many of the central premises of sacrificial theology. Nothing in history, after all, emerges *ex nihilo*, and Vedic religion provided the backdrop both positively—for example, in providing key concepts and a technical vocabulary—and negatively for the emergence of renunciation. Yet, I believe—and the following study, I trust, will demonstrate—that when the evidence is examined completely it does point to a profound conflict between the two, a conflict that cannot be adequately explained if renunciation was in fact "an orthogenetic development of Vedic thought." The claim frequently made in later sources that the Brahmin householder is the ideal renouncer far from supporting Heesterman's position appears to reflect the incorporation of renunciatory values into Brāhmanical institutions and theology; often it is mere rhetoric.<sup>3</sup>

Although I consider world renunciation to be a "new element" that challenged the Vedic world, I do not subscribe to the view put forward by some scholars that ascetic modes of life were non-Aryan in origin. These scholars argue that the emergence of renunciation as a major force in religion signals the growing influence of non-Aryan populations on the Aryans as they migrated east along the Ganges valley.<sup>4</sup> Such an hy-

3. These claims of Brahmin householders are taken at their face value by A. Wezler, *Die wahren "Speiseresteesser"* (*Skt. vighasāśin*). Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. (Wiesbaden: Kommission Steiner Verlag, 1978). Bodewitz (review of Wezler in WZKSA 24 (1980): 239–242) is right, I think, in caricaturing this type of Brāhmanical rhetoric by comparing it to a right-wing politician's characterization of employers as the "true workers," because they do not just work from nine to five but have to continuously think about their business.

4. See, for example, S. K. Belvalkar and R. D. Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2: *The Creative Period*, 2d ed. (Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1974), 79–81, 400–403; G. C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism* (Allahabad: University of Allahabad, 1957), 251–261; G. C. Pande, *Sramaṇa Tradition: Its History and Contribution to Indian Culture* (Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1978). S. Singh, *Evolution of the Smṛti Law: A Study in the Factors Leading*

pothesis is clearly untenable if we confine ourselves to the available evidence. It is obvious that the Vedic society contained large numbers of people whose roots were non-Aryan and that their customs and beliefs must have influenced the dominant Aryan classes. It is quite a different matter, however, to attempt to isolate non-Aryan customs, beliefs, or traits at a period a millennium or more after the initial Aryan migration into India. The mere absence of a practice or belief in the extant Vedic documents is not sufficient to call it non-Aryan. The Vedic literature provides us with merely a peephole into the society of that period; it does not give us a complete account of the religious life of the Aryans, who, moreover, should not be considered to have been a monolithic group. That some customs or ideas we observe at a later period are absent in the early Vedic texts is no proof of their absence at that time, much less of their non-Aryan provenance.

A culture, furthermore, develops and changes over time not only through external influences but also through its own inner dynamism and because of social and economic changes. New elements in a culture, therefore, need not always be of foreign origin.

In the absence of an adequate definition of orthodoxy within the Brāhmaṇical tradition of this period, moreover, the division of conflicting theologies and modes of life into *orthodox* and *heterodox* is both anachronistic and utterly useless for historical purposes. The challenges to the mainstream Vedic views are found, as we shall see, across a broad spectrum of religious literature, including some of the most authoritative texts of Brāhmaṇism. Opposition to accepted views of a tradition, after all, can and often does come from within that tradition. Thus, when I assert that renunciation was a “new” element, I do not mean that it was either non-Aryan or even non-Brāhmaṇical.

The subtitle of this chapter—“The Inner Conflict of Tradi-

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to the Origin and Development of Ancient Indian Legal Ideas (Varanasi: Bhāratīya Vidyā Prakāśana, 1972), 176–185.

tion”—is a reference to the conflict between societal and renunciatory values and ideas that in one form or other persists throughout the tradition, a conflict observable in the *Samnyāsa Upaniṣads* themselves.<sup>5</sup> In what follows I want to explore the background of and possible reasons for the historical emergence of renunciatory ideologies and their initial conflict with the Vedic world.

## 2.1 VEDIC THEOLOGY: SACRIFICE AND MARRIAGE

The Vedic religion had reached great complexity and sophistication by the sixth century B.C.E. Its central element both practically and theologically was the Vedic sacrifice. By this time it had become extremely intricate and expensive, requiring an array of ritual specialists. The development of the Vedic sacrificial theology paralleled that of the sacrifice; finding ever-new meanings and cosmic significances in ritual acts, this theology created both a cosmology and a soteriology centered on the sacrifice. The Vedic sacrificial theology was based on two significant claims. First, creation itself resulted from the sacrifice. Second, gods themselves attained immortality<sup>6</sup> through the sacrifice, setting an example for humans to follow.

5. I have deliberately adopted the title from Heesterman's (1985) volume. Heesterman sees it primarily as a conflict between the renunciation-oriented Brahmin and the this-worldly king. I hope to show that the deeper conflict within Indian religions is between the renunciatory life and ideals (whether they are espoused by Brahmins or Buddhists) on the one hand, and the socioritual order sponsored by priests and rulers alike. This conflict, moreover, is not between concrete individuals but between ideal types. The conflict, therefore, did not historically prevent alliances between rulers and renunciatory sects; clearly other-worldly people and ideas can be and have been put to good this-worldly use. See, for example, my "The King and the Ascetic: State Control of Asceticism in the *Arthaśāstra*," *The Adyar Library Bulletin* 51 (1987): 39–59.

6. The exact meaning of immortality (*amṛta*) in these ancient texts is not clear. As Collins (1982, 42–44) points out, in this context the term probably means freedom from death and the indefinite continuation of existence, a meaning quite different from the deathless state envisaged within the later concept of *mokṣa* ("absolute freedom"), a state that transcends both life and death. In the latter view, life

The *Ṛg Veda* (10.90) in the celebrated Puruṣa hymn presents the sacrifice as the primordial cosmogonic principle. The Brāhmaṇa literature came to identify the sacrifice with a new and somewhat artificial creator god, Prajāpati, which identification became the cornerstone of later sacrificial theology. Prajāpati is both the sacrifice personified and the primordial performer of the sacrifice. From Prajāpati as sacrifice and sacrificer flows the entire creation: heaven and earth, gods and humans.<sup>7</sup>

As the fountain of creative power, the sacrifice is also the source of immortality. The gods were the first to obtain the knowledge of the sacrifice. By performing it correctly they attained immortality. The Vedic seers discovered that same knowledge, and the Vedas are its repository. The sacrifice, then, is the source of immortality for humans, as it was for gods. It is connected, moreover, with the archetypal activity of the creator god Prajāpati, as well as of gods and seers. This activity, recorded in myth and reinforced by Brāhmaṇical theology, therefore, becomes doubly paradigmatic for humans.

The obligation to imitate the gods by performing sacrifices is grounded also in a practical concern: humans seek to be like gods, to attain the world of gods, in other words, to become immortal. Brāhmaṇical theology, however, also gives that obligation a cosmic dimension. As the cosmos first emerged from the sacrifice, so it must be continually recreated and renewed through the sacrifice if it is not to lapse into chaos and death. The king, as the hub of the social cosmos and as the chief sacrificer in society, occupies a central position in the sacrificial recreation of the cosmos. As Heesterman observes:

. . . the *rājasūya* ["royal consecration"] seems to be an abridgment of what originally must have been an unremitting series of yearly ceremonies with the object of regenerating the universe.

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and death are inseparable correlatives constituting our present state of *saṃsāra* ("life subject to repeated births and deaths"), a concept that by definition assures the indefinite continuation of existence.

7. For an accessible discussion of the Brāhmaṇical theology of sacrifice and for further bibliography on the subject, see Kaelber 1989.

The king took a central place in it. The universe had yearly to be recreated and so had the king who, like the common śrauta ["Vedic"] sacrificer, incorporated the cosmos.<sup>8</sup>

In the Vedic sacrifice, therefore, Brāhmaṇical theology combined the cosmological and the soteriological; the individual and social obligation to perform sacrifices was thereby doubly reinforced. The focus of this obligation fell in a special way on the daily fire sacrifice called *agnihotra*. Most Vedic sacrifices were offered on special occasions or on specific days of the ritual calendar. Given their elaborate nature and the enormous expense they entailed, few in all likelihood could have afforded to perform the major Vedic sacrifices. The relatively simple daily offering of *agnihotra* thus began to assume an ever-increasing importance among theologians as the paradigmatic sacrifice. The obligation to offer it daily assumed a central position within the sacrificial ethic; a person has the duty to offer it every day during his entire life. As one text puts it:

It is assuredly a long sacrificial session upon which they enter who offer the *agnihotra*. This is indeed a session to be broken off only through old age. For one is absolved from it either by old age or by death.<sup>9</sup>

A corollary to the obligation to offer the daily fire sacrifice is the duty to maintain one or more of the sacred Vedic fires burning at all times in one's house. These ritual obligations defined the Brāhmaṇical ethic regarding normative behavior encapsulated in the term *dharma*, which for all Indian religions indicated the "right way" of both behavior and ideology. From a symbolic and sociological point of view, the presence of a sacred fire at home placed that household squarely within the Brāhmaṇical *dharma*.

A second and less obvious corollary of sacrifice is the obligation to marry, for only a married man accompanied by his

8. J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*. Disputationes Rheno-Trajectinae, no. 2 (The Hague, 1957), 10.

9. ŚB 12.4.1.1; *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa*, 1.51.

legitimate wife is qualified to be a sacrificer. The two constitute a single sacrificial persona. “A man who has no wife,” says the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (2.2.2.6), “is not entitled to sacrifice.” The intimate and unbreakable union between husband and wife in the sacrifice, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (12.8.2.6) says, is like that between truth and faith, and between mind and speech: wherever the husband is, there also is the wife.

Next to sacrifice, therefore, the obligation to get married and procreate children (especially a son) is central to Brāhmaṇical theology, which regards the family—father, mother, and son—as the only complete person. The wife is said to be one half of the husband, because so long as a man is without a wife he remains childless and incomplete.<sup>10</sup> “Therefore, having found a wife,” says the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (1.2.5), “a man considers himself to be, as if, more complete.”

Apart from her role in ritual activities, the wife’s importance is directly related to her being the mother of her husband’s son. It is, however, not just the child that she begets; the husband himself is born again in her as the son. This rebirth and continuation of the husband is said to be the true wifehood of the wife:

The husband enters the wife;  
Becoming an embryo he enters the mother.  
In her become a new man again,  
He is born in the tenth month.<sup>11</sup>  
A wife is called wife,  
Because in her he is born again.<sup>12</sup>

“The father,” says the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (12.4.3.1), “is the same as the son and the son is the same as the father.” Conse-

10. TS 6.1.8.5; ŚB 5.2.1.10.

11. In ancient India the period of human gestation was taken to be ten months.

12. AitB 7.13. The authors play on the word *jāyā* (“wife”), which is derived from the verbal root *jan* (“to be born”). The later law book of Manu (9.13) says: “The husband, after conception by his wife, becomes an embryo and is born again of her; for that is the wifehood (*jāyātva*) of a wife (*jāyā*), that he is born (*jāyate*) again by her.”

quently, one should desire a good wife, thinking “let my self come into existence in something good,” and guard her continuously “lest in my womb, in my world somebody else come into existence” (*Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, 1.17).

The cardinal point in the Brāhmaṇical theology of religious life that the son constitutes the immortality of the father is already expressed in the Ṛg Vedic (5.4.10) prayer: “Through offspring, O Agni, may we attain immortality.” The Brāhmaṇas never tire of repeating this: “In your offspring you are born again; that, O mortal, is your immortality” (TB, 1.5.5.6).

The Brāhmaṇical conceptions of immortality as freedom from physical death and of the family as the true and complete person are reflected in the belief that a man’s immortality is found in his son. The family line continues in the son despite the death of the father. As the son survives after the father’s death, so the father in his son survives his own death. Upon his death, the son takes the place of the father as the ritual head of the household.<sup>13</sup> This appears to be the meaning of the statement that a father is born again in his son. This new birth frees him from the death that must eventually end the life begun at his first birth. In a very significant way, therefore, the family is what guarantees human immortality.

The theologies of sacrifice and marriage, the obligations to sacrifice and to procreate, thus complement and support each other. We find, for example, that sexual imagery is often transferred to the sacrificial act and sacrificial imagery to the sexual act. The sacrificial and creative act of Prajāpati, for example, has all the features of the procreative act. The Sanskrit term for creature and offspring is the same: *prajā*. Prajāpati, “the lord of *prajā*,” is not only the creator of creatures but also the father

13. This shows why a daughter cannot become a similar continuation, because she cannot ritually replace the father. There may also have been an underlying idea that the seed or semen contains the essence of the father. But I think this idea is not as crucial as the ritual continuation of the father in the son, for the same semen, after all, creates also the daughter.



of offspring.<sup>14</sup> Human procreation thus follows the archetypal activity of creation and is likened to a sacrifice. The sexual act is called a fire sacrifice.<sup>15</sup> The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (6.4.3) homologizes the sexual parts of a woman with elements of the sacrifice and equates sexual intercourse to a Soma sacrifice:

Her vulva is a sacrificial altar; her pubic hairs, the sacrificial grass; her skin, the Soma-press; and her labia, the fire in the middle. As great indeed as the world gained by one who performs a Soma sacrifice, is the world gained by one who, with this knowledge, engages in sexual intercourse.

The obligation to sacrifice and to procreate puts in a nutshell the complex set of duties that defined Brāhmaṇical *dharma* during this early period. This *dharma* revolved around ritual duties comprehended by the sacrifice and familial-social duties epitomized by procreation and defined to a large measure the world<sup>16</sup> created by Brāhmaṇical theology.

A significant aspect of this world is that the human individual is not given any conceptual reality within it. This is one of the major premises of the seminal work of Louis Dumont (1960, 42), who states rather bluntly that in the Vedic world “the individual is not.” The Brāhmaṇical system of ethics works almost exclusively at the level of social groups, and individuals become real only as members of such groups. An individual’s rights and obligations, roles and aspirations, are all determined by the group to which that individual belongs. The most fundamental of the social divisions is the *varṇa* system: the four social classes of Brahmin, warrior, commoner, and servant. Other divisions, for example on the basis of caste (*jāti*), guild, sex, and age, exist either side by side or are integrated into the *varṇa* classification. The main point for our discussion, how-

14. For an accessible account of the sexual imagery used by Brāhmaṇical theologians in describing the work of Prajāpati, as well as the elements of the sacrifice, see Kaelber 1989, 30–33, and *passim* elsewhere.

15. See, for example, ŚB 11.6.2.10.

16. I use the term *world* in the sense it is used by the sociology of knowledge: see Berger and Luckmann 1966 and Berger 1969.

ever, is the relative insignificance of the individual as a conceptual category for Brāhmaṇical theology and ethics.

## 2.2 SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGES IN SIXTH-CENTURY INDIA

In the foregoing discussion we saw a central feature of, to use Peter Berger's (1969) category, Brāhmaṇical world construction, that is, the social creation of a common conceptual framework within which individuals can understand and find meaning in their discrete experiences of themselves and of the social and physical world outside. Sacrificial and procreative theology addressed in a special way the marginal situation of death where the socially constructed world is threatened with ultimate meaninglessness. In explaining death and the means of overcoming it, moreover, this theology legitimized the central social institution of marriage and, by extension, society itself.

All culturally created worlds, however, are intrinsically unstable (Berger 1969, 29). They are constantly challenged by new experiences, by changes in geography, climate, and economics, by social and political upheavals, and by individuals and groups seeking better answers and new meanings. Here I want to examine briefly the momentous social, economic, and political changes that took place along the Ganges valley roughly around the sixth century B.C.E., changes that facilitated the rise of rival worldviews and the ascetic challenge to the Brāhmaṇical definition of the ideal religious life.

The Aryans who migrated into India during the second millennium B.C.E. were nomads. They lived in tribes, and their economy was based principally on cattle rearing. Their tribal organization persisted even after these people had settled down in the upper Gangetic plane and agriculture had replaced cattle as their principal economic activity. They lived in small village communities. The Vedic civilization remained village based until the sixth century B.C.E. This village culture is the social back-

ground of the Brāhmaṇical theology that we have examined. The Brāhmaṇical *dharma* is addressed to the villager.

The Indus Valley Civilization boasted an urban culture centered around the two principal cities of Harappa and Mohenjo Dāro, but this ancient urban civilization came to an end toward the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., and it is unlikely that it exerted an appreciable influence on Vedic culture and religion. “For her next cities, her ‘second urbanization,’ India had to wait for over a thousand years after the disappearance of the Indus cities—till the middle of the sixth century B.C., which saw simultaneously the beginnings of her historical period” (Ghosh 1973, 2).

We can detect five major elements in the socioeconomic changes of the sixth century: food surplus, increase in population, trade, monarchical states, and, above all, cities.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the Vedic period we detect the movement of the Aryan population to the lower regions of the Ganges valley, where the land was very fertile and rain more abundant. Rice cultivation on wetlands became the major agricultural activity, and rice replaced barley as the staple food. Although there is disagreement among scholars regarding the cause, it is clear that wetland rice cultivation gave rise to an agricultural surplus that permitted both urbanization and an increase in population.<sup>18</sup>

The last three elements—trade, monarchies, and cities—are the most significant for our study. All three ultimately depended on the agricultural bounty of the rich Gangetic soil. Gombrich (1988, 53) offers some insightful comments on the interrelationship of these elements:

17. For a balanced, clear, and informative description of these changes, see Ghosh 1973, and Gombrich 1988, 49–50.

18. Some scholars argue that it was the invention of the iron axe and plough that made possible the clearing of the forests and the large-scale colonization and cultivation of that fertile land. Others point to the lack of archaeological evidence for such widespread use of iron tools during this period and question their need for successful farming or for creating urban cultures. See Gombrich 1988. Regarding the effects of rice on the increase of population, see Ling 1976, 49–51, where further bibliography is also given.

Towns and cities arise primarily as settlements of people whose main livelihood is not derived directly from agriculture—though to be sure they may also house absentee landlords. They are political and commercial centres. There can be no trade without an economic surplus; but though trade seems to be a necessary condition for the creation of towns, it is not a sufficient one. On the other hand, it is too easily forgotten that commerce itself depends on organization: on an infrastructure of communications and a certain level of legality and security, both products of stable political conditions. . . . It is kings who construct the roads along which vehicles can move and allow for land trade in larger quantities than a pedlar carries on his back. Moreover, security in the countryside of Bihar and neighbouring areas has rarely if ever been good; without the security provided by towns, large-scale trade is impossible.

Along the Ganges valley, in a region commonly referred to as the “Middle Country,” relatively large kingdoms began to be consolidated under the absolute authority of kings who were constantly seeking to expand their power and territories through aggression and alliance. We detect here the beginning of states, as opposed to the village or regional political structures that existed in the Vedic period.

The military capability of the kings assured a relatively efficient and safe network of roads and waterways, a necessary prerequisite for maintaining a central government and for administering a large territory. The facility of travel also enabled religious mendicants to travel freely over a large region and to disseminate new ideas and customs. It also enabled a merchant class to flourish. Merchants established the first professional organizations in India. Merchant guilds had their own laws and government, which were respected by the civil authority. Trade was also facilitated by the creation of money; the first coins of India go back to the late sixth century B.C.E.<sup>19</sup>

Cities and courts of kings attracted nobles, priests, philosophers, and leaders of religious sects. The breakdown of the strict

19. It is a matter of controversy whether writing was used during this period. See Ghosh 1973, 27; Gombrich 1988, 53.

family and kinship networks that urban life entailed and the resultant freedom for individual initiatives clearly encouraged both ideological and practical challenges to traditional Brāhmaṇism. The many religious movements that arose about this time were primarily urban in nature. Speaking of Buddhism, one of the most successful of such movements, Gombrich (1988, 50) says:

The most obvious difference from the [Vedic] society . . . is that that was entirely rural, a village-based society, whereas the Buddha spent much of his time in cities. Max Weber aptly begins his account of Buddhism with these words: "Like Jainism, but even more clearly, Buddhism presents itself as the product of the time of urban development, of urban kingship and the city nobles."<sup>20</sup> The Buddha talked to kings, Pasenadi of Kosala, Bimbisāra and his son Ajātasattu of Magadha, who ruled quite sizeable territories from their urban capitals.

Cities, kings, and the merchant class contributed to the rise of individualism, a factor extremely significant for our study. Dumont (1960), as we have remarked, has argued that Vedic thought lacked the concept of the individual; it was the group that gave the individual conceptual reality. Caste ideology stressed the centrality of the group at the expense of the individual. Even though Dumont's dichotomy between the lack of the individual in the world and the centrality of the individual in the renunciation of the world may not present a totally accurate picture of the individual in Indian history, nevertheless he is right in pointing out the marginal status of the individual in the mainstream of Vedic thought. The factors that contributed to the discovery of the individual as a central concept in religious and social thought both within and outside the institution of world renunciation, however, were the emergence of kingship and urban culture. The king, of course, was the supreme individual in society. That he belonged to the noble class was pure theory; he was not just another member of a

20. Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, trans. and ed. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (New York: The Free Press, 1958), 204.

group. There was no one like him in his kingdom. Ambition, strategy, and intrigue all played a role in a man's becoming a king and in expanding his realm. Even patricide appears to have been committed by impatient royal heirs. A similar individualistic mentality may have been prevalent among merchants, whose success depended less on following an inherited and ritualized pattern of behavior than on initiative and enterprise.

The individualistic spirit permitted the creation of the first voluntary religious organizations in India. The Buddhist and Jain monastic orders are the earliest available examples of such organizations. People entered them because they wanted to, because they had taken a personal decision regarding how they wanted to live their lives. They were not following a set pattern for correct living ritualized in life-cycle ceremonies. They exercised the same individual initiative at the religious level that kings and merchants exercised in the political and economic fields. The freedom to choose that was encouraged by the new urban environment, we shall see, is at the heart of both the challenges to the Vedic religious ideal and the theology of the *āśrama* system.

### 2.3 RIVAL VIEWS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Not all was well, however, during that period of social change and economic prosperity, and there appears to have been a growing sense of dissatisfaction and unease in the urban population. It is reflected in the ideologies of many religious movements, such as Buddhism and Jainism, born during that time of upheaval, which proved to be a watershed in the history of Indian culture and religion. These ideologies shared the view that human life was essentially suffering, which even death could not end; death is a mere interlude in the never-ending cycle of rebirth. Many adopted life-styles of intense mortification, separating themselves completely from social and familial ties and

from economic activities, in search of an escape from the bondage of life.

In discussing how an urban environment may have contributed to these radical changes in outlook and life-style, Gombrich (1988, 57-58) provides a lucid summary of Ghosh's (1973, 38) conclusions:

It has been customary to point out that rapid social change tends to upset people. This is no doubt true, though not very informative. Professor Ghosh has provided a more precise and interesting summary of how urbanization may engender a spiritual malaise: the movement from village to town to city entails a more complex division of labour and professional specialization; social organization less in terms of kinship groups and more in terms of goal-oriented associations; less stringent control over the individual and greater dependence on impersonal institutions of control (bureaucracy, police, etc.); greater individual freedom and mobility and hence some disintegration of the traditional culture and social order. We may add that these factors operate more rapidly as one climbs the social scale: some city slum neighbourhoods are more like village communities than the wealthier districts can ever be. We know too little about the Buddha's social environment to apply every factor Ghosh has listed to that time, but the general picture is familiar: a move away from the closed community towards a more open society, an increase in the individual's power to choose and hence doubt about choosing rightly.

Another reason for the emergence of ascetic institutions and ideologies asserting that life is full of suffering is suggested by William McNeill's study of the relationship between disease patterns and human civilizations.<sup>21</sup> McNeill has shown the key role microparasites and the infectious diseases they cause have played in the development of societies and cultures. What is most significant for our study, however, is that for their propagation many of the most virulent microparasites require a minimum number of persons living in close proximity. For

21. William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday), 1976.

measles, to take but one example, the threshold appears to be between 300,000 and 400,000 people (McNeill 1976, 60). The startling conclusion is that many forms of deadly infectious diseases go hand in hand with the creation of cities, which alone can provide those thresholds. Lacking any immunity at first, the early urban populations may have been decimated by viral infections, in the same way as in modern times when colonial expansions introduced new diseases to hitherto isolated populations. For the first time in Indian history, urbanization along the Ganges valley in the sixth century B.C.E. provided the population threshold for such infections; many unknown diseases and epidemics may have erupted, causing widespread death. Gombrich (1988, 58–59) was the first to suggest a relation between such urban epidemics and the ascetic ideologies of ancient India. Although the lack of evidence regarding disease patterns in India during this period prevents us from drawing any certain conclusions, the widespread death from previously unknown diseases might have provided a catalyst for considering life as bondage and suffering.

The new religious ideologies and the increasingly widespread ascetic life-styles fostered by urbanization stood in sharp contrast to the Vedic religious world centered around the householder and his duties of sacrifice and procreation. What is significant for our study, moreover, is that the challenges to the Vedic world came not just from those outside the Brāhmaṇical tradition, such as the Buddha, but also from people who chose to remain within that tradition. Brahmins themselves were becoming urbanized, sharing the common concerns of the rest of the increasingly urban population. One study on the social composition of a sample of over 300 Buddhist monks and nuns to whom are ascribed two collections of religious poems in the Pāli canon finds that 86 percent came from cities and about 40 percent were Brahmins.<sup>22</sup>

22. B. G. Gokhale, "The Early Buddhist Elite," *Journal of Indian History* 42, pt. 2 (1965): 391–402; and "Early Buddhism and the Brahmins," in *Studies in the History of Buddhism*, ed. A. K. Narain (Delhi: B. R. Publication Corp., 1980), 68–80.



New sects that spawned during this time became increasingly influential socially and politically. Kings and rich merchants were attracted to them by what Gombrich calls their “ethic for the socially mobile”<sup>23</sup> and became their patrons. The exclusive privilege enjoyed by Brahmins in the area of religion was broken. A new religious elite, the ascetic virtuosi, competed with the Brahmins for the allegiance and economic support of the people.

Within Brāhmaṇism itself, it was the urban Brahmins who, in all likelihood, were most influenced both by the dramatic socioeconomic changes of urbanization and by the rising prestige and influence of non-Brāhmaṇical religious movements. Most urban Brahmins probably remained within their tradition but challenged and changed it from within. It is these changes, and not the threat posed by non-Brāhmaṇical groups as assumed by many scholars, that I believe were the catalysts for the creation of inclusivistic institutions and theologies, such as the *āśrama* system, that sought to integrate the emergent ascetic worldview and way of life into the Vedic culture. In the following discussion, therefore, I shall focus mainly on the challenges to the Vedic world posed by the changes occurring within Brāhmaṇism itself, even though the ideas and life-styles we will examine are not exclusive to Brāhmaṇism.

The sources I examine are mainly the early Upaniṣads. They are difficult documents to analyze because they are anthologies that contain texts of diverse nature and different provenance. These texts were composed over a long period of time. They contain sections dealing with sacrificial theology and symbolism that are very similar to the liturgical texts of the Brāh-

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His findings are summarized in Gombrich 1988, 55–56. As Gombrich notes, the social composition of the monks is given in a commentary that dates from the fifth century C.E., and the dates of the *Thera-* and *Therī-gāthā* are also uncertain. The conclusions, therefore, are to be used with caution. There is, however, ample evidence of numerous Brahmin converts to the Buddhist monastic order.

23. For an excellent presentation of the new Buddhist ethic aimed at merchants, financiers, and politicians, see Gombrich 1988, 78–86. This ethic encouraged saving and reinvestment, discouraged ostentatious consumption, and posited wealth and success as moral goals and as the result of moral living.

maṇas and reflect the old Vedic ideology. There are other sections, however, that share the new symbolic world we are about to discuss. The ideas and attitudes expressed in them, especially their antiritual and procelibacy stance, make it likely that they originated within a socioeconomic background similar to that of Buddhism and Jainism. In other words, I think that the new doctrines of the Upaniṣads were urban products.

The internal evidence of the early Upaniṣads, especially the larger collections of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*, appears to support such a conclusion. Many scholars have long argued that the major Upaniṣadic doctrines were the product of the nobility. The Upaniṣads themselves present several doctrines as known only to the nobility and record many instances when kings, reversing the accepted roles, became teachers of Brahmins. Deussen articulates this position clearly:

. . . we are forced to conclude, if not with absolute certainty, yet with a very high degree of probability, that as a matter of fact the doctrine of the ātman ["self"], standing as it did in such sharp contrast to all the principles of the Vedic ritual, though the original conception may have been due to Brāhmins, was taken up and cultivated primarily not in Brāhman but in Kshatriya circles, and was first adopted by the former in later times.<sup>24</sup>

Frauwallner (1973, 1:35), in this context, draws a parallel between the noble origin of Upaniṣadic doctrines and the fact that the Buddha and Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, were also of noble descent.

I think that the proper question to ask, however, is not whether or why these doctrines, Upaniṣadic or Buddhist, were created by nobles. It is impossible to determine with any degree of historical certainty whether an Upaniṣadic doctrine was actually created by the nobility or, for that matter, whether the Buddha and Mahāvīra were in fact nobles. The more significant questions are why the proponents of these Upaniṣadic

24. Deussen 1906, 19. See also Frauwallner 1973, 1:34–35, and 359 for further bibliography.

doctrines ascribed them to kings and why the adherents of Buddhism and Jainism portrayed the founders of their respective traditions as nobles.

It is not possible to investigate these questions fully here. I think, however, that the proponents of these doctrines must have found it advantageous to align their doctrines with the nobility in general and with kings in particular. We do not have sufficient historical data regarding the various kings named in the Upaniṣadic texts to identify the reasons why their names were used. In general, however, I think the alignment with the nobility served to distinguish these doctrines from the Vedic doctrines that were identified with the Brahmins. The very term *Veda* signified “knowledge” par excellence; the three Vedas were referred to as *trayī vidyā*, “the triple knowledge.” It may not be too farfetched to imagine that in the minds of urban intellectuals this “knowledge” was closely associated with the old village culture. In a positive way, moreover, the identification of a doctrine with a king (or calling the Buddha the son of a king) may have served to signal that it was a doctrine of and for the new age, an urban doctrine suitable for the new urban culture.

In this light, what appears a problem for those who upheld the noble provenance of Upaniṣadic doctrines, namely why Brahmins should have preserved these stories that belittled them, ceases to be a problem at all. I would argue that it was precisely the Brahmin partisans of these doctrines who stood to gain by such stories. Aligning with kings gave their doctrines a new status and prestige, and served to distinguish them from the old beliefs and practices. What these stories of kings teaching new doctrines to Brahmins point to, I believe, is a divide that existed within the Brahmin tradition between the village Brahmins clinging to the old ritual religion and the city Brahmins catering to the needs of an urban population.<sup>25</sup>

25. By “city Brahmins” I do not mean Brahmins actually living in cities, but

## 2.4 THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW WORLD

The challenge to the old Vedic views was made at two inter-related levels: theology and practical life-style. On the theological plane a set of ideas came into being that shaped a new symbolic world that was at total variance with the Vedic world. That symbolic world is so well known by anyone familiar with Indian culture that it is unnecessary to describe it in detail.

Its principal components were: (1) *saṃsāra*: human existence is subject to rebirth and it is a state of bondage and suffering; (2) *karma*: ritual and moral actions determine the rebirth process and contribute to the continuation of human bondage; and (3) *mokṣa*: liberation from *saṃsāra* is the ultimate goal to which all religious efforts should be directed. Most religious traditions of India accept these doctrines as axiomatic. Their disagreements, however, center on the cause(s) of human bondage and release. This is not the place to discuss these doctrines in detail, but one can detect two rival viewpoints. One claims that the human predicament is due to a lack of understanding and that freedom can come only from acquiring the proper gnosis. The other locates the problem in human actions (*karma*) and/or intentions, and prescribes a path of self-control and asceticism. Elements of both viewpoints are often found in the same tradition.

A couple of significant conclusions flow from this new framework for understanding human life and death. The two central religious activities of the Vedic world, offering sacrifices and begetting offspring, come to be considered as obstacles to achieving liberation, the ultimate religious goal of the new world; they are activities that a person who pursues the

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those who had come under the influence of the new urban civilization. It is interesting to note in this regard that several *Dharma-sūtras*, which belong to a somewhat later period but which reflect the mentality of the conservative village Brahmins, advise Brahmins not to visit cities: BDh 2.6.31–34; ĀpDh 1.32.21.

new religious ideal should seek to avoid. Liberation, the new equivalent of immortality, is a metaritual (according to some even a metaethical) state with regard to which ritual activity is ineffective. Sacrifice, the *karma* par excellence, far from being the source of immortality, is in fact a principal cause of human bondage and suffering. Ritual activity, therefore, is not only devalued but also acquires a negative connotation. Gods and heavenly worlds that formed the context of the sacrificial theology are now reduced to being mere components of *saṃsāra*. Rebirth follows upon death; sons and funeral offerings cannot assure personal immortality or permanent bliss. This is an individualist ideology where the situation after death as well as final liberation are determined by what an individual does and knows and not by intermediaries, whether they are priests or heirs. The individual stands alone at the center of this symbolic world, the sole architect of his or her own future.

A passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (1.4.10) states in effect that gods desire to keep people ignorant in order that they may continue to receive sacrificial offerings. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.6–10) has an interesting and satirical passage regarding the inefficacy of sacrifices and the delusion that constitutes the sacrificial theology contained in the Vedic texts. After describing (1.2.1–5) the efficacy of sacrifices proposed by those theologians, the author puts these words in the mouth of the offerings personified:

Saying, “Come, come!” the splendid offerings carry that sacrificer on the rays of the sun, praising him and saying sweet words to him: “This is your Brahma-world of merits (*punya*) and good acts (*sukṛta*).” (MuṇU 1.2.6)

The author then exposes the guile of sacrificial theology:

These are indeed unsteady rafts, the eighteen sacrificial forms,<sup>26</sup> which teach an inferior ritual (*karma*). The fools who hail it as superior (*śreyas*) sink repeatedly into old age and death.

26. The identity of these eighteen forms is unclear. According to Śaṅkara, they refer to the sixteen types of ritual specialists, the sacrificer, and his wife.

Living in the midst of ignorance, self-wise, and thinking themselves to be learned, the fools go about hurting themselves, like blind men led by one who is himself blind.

Living endlessly in ignorance, the fools think "We have reached our goal!" Because of their passion, those who perform rites (*karmin*) do not understand. When their worlds are exhausted, therefore, they fall down wretched.<sup>27</sup>

Regarding sacrifices and good works as the best, the fools know nothing better (*śreyas*). After enjoying the highest heaven of good acts (*sukṛta*), they enter again this or even a lower world. (MuṇḍU 1.2.7–10)

Several significant points are made in this passage. Those who perform rites (*karma*) gain, or perhaps make for themselves,<sup>28</sup> a heaven after death. They live in the realm of ignorance (*avi-dyā*) and consider this heaven as *śreyas*, a term that means the ultimate good or bliss.<sup>29</sup> But this heaven will one day come to an end, and the performers of rites will return once again to earth. Such people are referred to repeatedly as fools pretending to be wise; they are the guardians of the old sacrificial religion. I am tempted to think that the author of the *Muṇḍaka* is satirically referring to the Vedas, the knowledge par excellence for the ritualists, as ignorance. The ritualists who daily study the Vedas and follow their directions are wallowing in ignorance. Could it be that the blind man who leads other blind men is indeed the Veda? The *Muṇḍaka* (1.1.4–5) elsewhere denies the authority of the Vedas:

Two kinds of knowledge are to be known, as, indeed, the knowers of Brahman declare—the higher as well as the lower. Of these the lower is the *Rg Veda*, the *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda*, the *Atharva Veda*, phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, metrics, and astrology. And the higher is that by which the Undecaying is apprehended.

27. The meaning is that they fall to lower levels of existence when they have exhausted the reserve of merit that had won them the heavenly worlds.

28. The heaven is said to be *sukṛta*. It probably means that the heaven is made by performing correctly (*su*) the ritual acts.

29. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.1–2) opposes *śreyas* to *preyas*, the fleeting delights. The wise choose the former, and the fools the latter.

Vedic knowledge deals only with the ritual. It is useful only for worldly existence (MuṇU 1.2.1–6). It is not the knowledge that leads to final liberation, and from that perspective it is ignorance masquerading as knowledge.

## 2.5 THE HOUSEHOLDER AND THE CELIBATE

As the sacrificial ideology promoted the married householder as the paragon of religious life, so the new worldview minimized the religious significance of marriage and children and advocated the value of celibacy.

From the perspective of the new framework for understanding the human individual, the claim that a son constitutes a person's immortality would have seemed downright silly. At a sacrifice of King Janaka, Yājñavalkya, a proponent of the new theology, compares a human being to a tree and questions the assembled priests:

Now, a tree, when it is cut down, grows anew from its root. From what root does a man grow, when he is cut down by death? Do not say "from the semen," for he produces it while he is alive. (BāU 3.9.27.4–5)

A son issues from his father's semen, but he is not the continuation of his father's existence. Individuals are now considered as complete in themselves, with personal continuities of their own from one life to another. The family is no longer needed to transform the individual into a complete person. The son is not the father's self but the result of the father's desire.

In the early Vedic cosmology Prajāpati's desire for progeny is regarded as the impetus for creation. The human desire for offspring is a continuation of that creative impulse. In the new theology, however, which considers creation as *saṃsāra*, such a desire results from ignorance and prolongs *saṃsāric* existence. For a person seeking liberation, overcoming desire and attach-

ment is the major goal, for achieving which ascetic celibacy is the only path:

The great unborn self, indeed, is he who among the senses consists of knowledge. In the space within the heart lies the controller of all, the lord of all, the ruler of all. He does not increase by good acts (*karma*) or decrease by evil acts. He is the lord of all, he is the ruler of beings, and he is the protector of beings. He is the causeway that separates and keeps these worlds apart. It is him that Brahmins seek to know by reciting the Vedas, by sacrifices, by gifts, by penance, and by fasting. It is he, on knowing whom, one becomes a silent sage (*muni*). It is he, desiring whom as their world, wandering ascetics wander forth. When they came to know this, indeed, the men of old had no desire for offspring: "We possess this Self, this world; what is the use for us of offspring." Rising above the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, and the desire for worlds, they lead a mendicant life. (BāU 4.4.22)

This passage associates three central features of ancient Indian asceticism—celibacy, homeless wandering, and mendicancy—with those who aspire after the knowledge of the Self.<sup>30</sup> The householder is replaced by the celibate ascetic as the new religious ideal.

The rejection of the religious primacy of the householder is found also in other traditions sharing the new worldview. The Buddhist literature is emphatic in its rejection of the salvific value of both the sacrifice and the householder's life. The following stock phrase, repeated frequently in the Pāli canon, clearly shows the Buddhist attitude to home life:

The household life is a dusty path full of hindrances, while the ascetic life is like the open sky. It is not easy for a man who lives at home to practice the holy life (*brahmacariya*) in all its fullness, in all its purity, in all its bright perfection.<sup>31</sup>

30. Elsewhere in the same Upaniṣad (BāU 3.5.1) the ascetic and celibate life is presented as the natural outcome of knowing Brahman. See also MaitU 6.8.28; MuṇU 3.1.5; 3.2.6.

31. *Dīgha Nikāya*, I.63; *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.179; III.35, 134. Cf. *Sutta Nipāta*, 406. On the superiority of the renouncer over the householder, see also *Majjhima Nikāya*, II.197–205; *Sutta Nipāta*, 18–34, 393.



The Upaniṣads express the contrast between the ideals of the new theology and of the Vedic tradition in terms of the opposition between wilderness (*aṛaṇya*) and village (*grāma*).<sup>32</sup> Here we have a clear example of the close association in ancient India between way of life and place of residence. Two parallel passages found in two of the oldest Upaniṣads, the *Chāndogya* (5.10.1–2) and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (6.2.15–16), apply the doctrine of the two paths along which the dead travel—the path of gods and the path of the fathers—to the two classes of people, those who live in the wilderness and those who dwell in villages.<sup>33</sup> I cite the *Chāndogya* version, which is probably the older<sup>34</sup> and where the opposition between wilderness and village is drawn most sharply.

Now, those who know thus and those in the wilderness here who worship with the thought “Faith is our austerity,” pass into the flame, and from the flame into the day, from the day into the fortnight of the waxing moon, from the fortnight of the waxing moon into the six months when the sun moves north, from these months into the year, from the year into the sun, from the sun into the moon, from the moon into lightning. There is a person there who is not a man. He leads them to Brahman. This is the path leading to the gods.

But those in a village here who worship with the thought “Sacrifice and good works are our gift,” pass into the smoke, and from the smoke into the night, from the night into the latter [i.e. dark] fortnight, from the latter fortnight into the six months when the sun moves south—they do not pass into the year—from these months into the world of the fathers, from the world of the fathers into space, from space into the moon. . . . They live there until (their merits) are exhausted and return by the same course along which they went.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* version states explicitly that those who live in the wilderness do not return, while those who win worlds

32. For a detailed discussion of the wilderness-village opposition see Sprockhoff 1981, 32–67, where all the relevant Upaniṣadic data are examined.

33. See also KauṣU 1.1–7; Frauwallner 1973, 1:38–41.

34. See Sprockhoff 1981, 51, and note 86 there for additional secondary literature. On the importance of the wilderness, see also MNU 508; MaitU 1.2. The flame and smoke in these passages refer to the fire and smoke of the funeral pyre.

by sacrifice return the same way they went. The central activities of those who live at home in a village, especially sacrifice, are associated with return, that is with the prolongation of the rebirth process. Cessation of that process is associated with the activities of those who have left home and village and live in the wilderness.

The corresponding passages of the *Muṇḍaka* and *Praśna Upaniṣads* appear to follow the *Chāndogya* version (Sprockhoff 1981, 51), although their emphasis is on the inability of sacrifices and good works to procure liberation. The *Muṇḍaka* verse follows immediately after the verses I have cited above (2.4) regarding the inefficacy of sacrifice and the foolishness of those who perform them:

Those in the wilderness who practice austerity and faith, tranquil, wise, and living a mendicant life, pass without stain through the sun's door to where that immortal person, the imperishable self, dwells. (MuṇU 1.2.11)

The message is clear. Those who, living in villages, perform sacrifices, do good works, and beget children are subject to rebirth. Those who live in the wilderness attain liberation. The *Muṇḍaka* identifies the life in the wilderness with religious mendicancy, while the *Praśna* (1.9–10) observes that such people practice chastity.

Most scholarly discussions of the contrast between village and wilderness assume that “village” is a shorthand for society and civilization. That may well be true, but still it is the village and not the town or city that is so contrasted. This point becomes significant because the literature that contains this contrast was probably an urban product, and the ascetics and the ascetic ideology that were identified with the wilderness had urban associations. Ghosh (1973, 55) observes:

How the urban population regarded the rural one we do not know. Later literature is replete with references to the naiveté and crudeness of the rural folk. The word *grāmya* came to mean ‘vulgar’; the attitude of the townsmen was one of mockery, condescension and even unfriendliness.

Is there a subtle hidden message in the contrast between the village and the wilderness: the activities of the village are not only unprofitable but vulgar and not fit for elite, whether it be urban or ascetic?

The central position assumed by the wilderness in these rival views of religious life becomes even more significant when we consider the negative value ascribed to the wilderness vis-à-vis the village within the Vedic mainstream (Sprockhoff 1981, 32–43). The revaluation of the wilderness implies the revaluation of a wide spectrum of places, practices, and life-styles. In every case the value system of the Vedic world is inverted: wilderness over village, celibacy over marriage, economic inactivity over economic productivity, ritual inactivity over ritual performance, instability over stable residence. Both in ideology and in life-style these reversals clearly represented a radical challenge to the Vedic world.

## 2.6 WHEN TWO WORLDS MEET: CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE

When alternative definitions of reality are created within a single society, there results an inevitable conflict of worlds. The alternative definitions, as Berger and Luckmann (1966, 106–107) point out, pose a threat not only at an ideological level but also at a very practical and institutional level; they threaten the privileges enjoyed by the guardians of the old world:

The group that has objectivated this deviant reality becomes the carrier of an alternative definition of reality. It is hardly necessary to belabor the point that such heretical groups posit not only a theoretical threat to the symbolic universe, but a practical one to the institutional order legitimated by the symbolic universe in question.

The ascetic world we have examined provided such an alternative definition of reality. Here I want to explore briefly the

resultant conflict with the established world and the inevitable interaction between the two worlds that radically transformed them both. I shall focus here mostly on the institutional aspects of this interaction, leaving the ideological and theological aspects for the remaining sections of this introduction, because they are clearly visible in the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads themselves.

During the first phase of such a conflict we should expect the guardians of the old world that is being challenged to reject and denounce the deviant world and to present an uncompromising defense of the old. Such a defense will include attempts at theological legitimation of the central institutions of that world. We encounter such attempts in a spectrum of Brāhmaṇical texts belonging to widely different periods.

An early legitimation of sacrifice and marriage is found in the theology of debts.<sup>35</sup> There are different versions, but the best-known is the scheme of three debts found in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* of the *Yajur Veda* (6.3.10.5):

A Brahmin, at his very birth, is born with a triple debt—of studentship to the seers, of sacrifice to the gods, of offspring to the fathers. He is, indeed, free from debt, who has a son, is a sacrificer, and who has lived as a student.

It is significant that this theology uses the concept of debt to characterize the obligatory nature of these three duties. The term debt (*ṛṇa*) in ancient India carried the meaning both of debt in the strict sense and of fault, guilt, or sin; the two meanings are often presented together as components of a single concept.

Indebtedness is considered a grave state, and gods are frequently petitioned to eliminate one's debt.<sup>36</sup> The Apsarases, for example, are asked in the *Atharva Veda* hymn 6.118 to discharge debts incurred in gambling, while in the very next hymn

35. For a detailed discussion of the theology debts in Brāhmaṇism, see Charles Malamoud, "Theologie de la dette dans les Brāhmaṇas," *Puruṣārtha: Science sociales en asie du sud* 4 (1980): 39–62.

36. Petitions are directed at Varuṇa (RV 2.28.9), Ādityas (RV 2.27.4), Soma (RV 9.47.2), Uṣas (RV 10.127.7), Indra (RV 4.23.7), and the Maruts (RV 1.169.7).

(AV 6.119) Agni Vaiśvānara is requested to remit debts not related to gambling. A suppliant prays:

Debtless in this (world), debtless in the higher, debtless in the third world may we be; the world traversed by gods and traversed by the fathers—in all the paths may we abide debtless. (AV 6.117.3)

The remitting of a debt by gods clearly does not refer to the actual payment of the sum owed to a creditor but rather to the release from the inner state of bondage and obligation that indebtedness creates. It is to this inner state that the second meaning of debt, namely guilt, refers. When people are in debt they lack something; they are wanting in fullness. Significantly, the term *ṛṇa* is used in mathematics to indicate the “minus.”

Happiness in this world and the next, therefore, can be assured only if one is free from debts, for debtors are bound by their debts even after death. To be under debt also implies that one is not free. Later authors associate this lack of freedom when one is indebted with the concepts of bondage and freedom (*mokṣa*) central to the new world, arguing that one can hardly be expected to attain absolute freedom if one is still under the obligation of debts. As a device for legitimation, therefore, “debt” had great potential.

An important feature of the theology of debts is that a man becomes indebted by the mere fact of his birth. This stands in sharp contrast to the normal understanding that a debt is contracted by a deliberate action of an adult. Sāyaṇa, the great medieval commentator on the Vedas, (on ŚB 1.7.2.1) recognized the new definition of debt in this theology when he says that “birth alone is the cause of indebtedness” (*ṛṇatve jananam eva nimittam*). The texts do not throw any light on the mechanism whereby a man falls into debt at birth. There is no myth of origin that would provide us with some clues. Unlike the Judeo-Christian doctrine of original sin, the debts one incurs at birth, on the one hand, are not caused by some act committed

by one's ancestors, and, on the other, affect only twice-born males. The manner in which debts are inherited, furthermore, contradicts the ideology of *karma*.<sup>37</sup> While the doctrine of *karma* insists that people reap what they sow, the doctrine of debts asserts that twice-born men become guilty of debts without any deliberate act on their part. Further, even though debts are incurred immediately upon birth, the tradition is unanimous that their payment can only be made when the individual is able and qualified to do so: the payment of the debt to the seers requires Vedic initiation, and the payment of the debts to gods and forefathers presupposes marriage.

It appears, therefore, that the concept of debt was given a new meaning in this theology and that it was used to illustrate and define the obligations of ritual actors—namely adult males—in the context of their relationship to significant individuals who play central roles in the Vedic world. The inhabitants of this world—including gods, ancestors, seers, and other human and non-human beings—live in a web of interdependent relationships that creates reciprocal rights and obligations. The obligations of twice-born adult males, who are the principal actors in the social world, are here singled out and defined as debts.

An early and eloquent defense of marriage and procreation, the central institutions of the old worlds, coupled with a total and uncompromising rejection of the celibate ideal is found in these beautiful verses of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (7.13):

A debt he pays in him,  
And immortality he gains,  
The father who sees the face  
Of his son born and alive.

Greater than the delights  
That earth, fire, and water  
Bring to living beings,  
Is a father's delight in his son.

37. In all likelihood, the theology of debts predates the origin of *karma* and rebirth as significant explanatory concepts in Indian theodicy.

## *Introduction*

By means of sons have fathers ever  
Crossed over the mighty darkness;  
For one is born from oneself  
A ferry laden with food.

What is the use of dirt and deer skin?  
What profit in beard and austerity?  
Seek a son, O Brahmin;  
He is the world free of blame.

Food is breath, clothes protect.  
Gold is for beauty, cattle for marriage.  
The wife is a friend, a daughter brings grief.  
But a son is a light in the highest heaven.

The husband enters the wife.  
Becoming an embryo he enters the mother.  
In her become a new man again,  
He is born in the tenth month.

A wife is called wife,  
Because in her he is born again.  
He is productive, she's productive,  
For the seed is placed in her.

The gods and the seers  
Brought to her great lustre.  
The gods said to men:  
"She is your mother again."

"A sonless man has no world."  
All the beasts know this.  
Therefore a son mounts  
Even his mother and sister.

This is the broad and easy path  
Along which travel men with sons, free from sorrow;  
Beasts and birds see it;  
So they copulate even with their mothers.

In this poem we see a broad-based attempt to defend marriage and procreation against ascetic ideologies extolling the virtue of celibacy. It uses both the theology of debts and the ancient doctrine that the son constitutes the immortality of the father. Beyond these, the poem appeals to the natural instincts of man:

consider the joy that a newborn son brings to one's heart! The poet even appeals to the testimony of animals who instinctively follow the natural law: desiring a son they even engage in incest. The statement "A sonless man has no world" is the strongest that can be made within the framework of the Vedic world; it is tantamount to saying that a sonless man has absolutely no future in this world or the next and is subject to total annihilation.

Humans' debts to gods and ancestors are also seen as related to the needs of gods and especially of ancestors. Gods feed on sacrificial oblations. Ancestors likewise depend on their sons and subsequent male descendants for ritual offerings of food and water. The needs, interpreted as rights, of gods and ancestors, therefore, create corresponding duties in humans. In a telling episode recorded in the *Mahābhārata* (3.94.11-15), Agastya saw his forefathers hanging upside down in a cave, reduced to that miserable state due to Agastya's decision to turn celibate, leaving no descendants to present them with ritual offerings. The dilemma of a renouncer who aspires to personal liberation only to find that he has harmed his forefathers is presented graphically in the account of Asita and Jaigīshavya, also recorded in the *Mahābhārata* (9.49). Seeing that Asita, following Jaigīshavya's advice, had renounced, his "forefathers wept aloud saying 'Who will feed us now?' "

Attempts to defend and legitimize the totality of the old world, however, are never completely successful, and the guardians of the old are compelled finally to accept the new world and to respond to it at a different level. This response

involves the more ambitious attempt to account for all deviant definitions of reality *in terms of* concepts belonging to one's own universe. . . . The deviant conceptions are not merely assigned a negative status, they are grappled with theoretically in detail. The final goal of this procedure is to *incorporate* the deviant conceptions within one's own universe, and thereby to liquidate them ultimately. (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 115)



Berger and Luckmann assume that this process of compromise and assimilation is initiated solely by the custodians of the established world. The example of the ascetic world in ancient India demonstrates that it was indeed a two-way street; the champions of the new world, especially when it has become institutionalized, also seek acceptability, allegiance, and power through compromise and assimilation at both the institutional and the ideological levels. The initiative often came from the renouncers themselves, eager to gain social respectability and political patronage. For our purpose, however, the authors are less important than the dynamics of the process itself.

The most significant structural innovation that facilitated the incorporation of renunciatory ideals and way of life into the Brāhmaṇical world was the creation of the *āśrama* system. The original formulation of the system is found in the four early *Dharma-sūtras*,<sup>38</sup> and it differs markedly from the classical formulation found in Manu and later *Dharma-śāstras*. The original formulation posits four alternate modes of religious life for adult males: student, householder, forest hermit, and renouncer. These modes are given the technical term *āśrama* (order of life). They are regarded as lifelong undertakings that an adult is free to choose. The time for making that choice is after the young adult has returned home upon completion of his Vedic studies.

The *āśrama* system is a completely new invention; the very term *āśrama* is absent in the early vocabulary. The system was created probably around the fifth century B.C.E. A careful reading of the early *Dharma-sūtras* shows that the authors of the system were Brahmins who were supporters of or sympathetic toward the ideals of celibacy and renunciation. The openness and the liberal attitude of the authors, demonstrated by the freedom of choice, which is a central element of the system, suggests that they belonged to the urban elite. The system envisages the *āśramas* as voluntary institutions. People are free to

38. For a more extensive account of the historical development of the *āśrama* system, see Olivelle 1974 and 1984.

choose what they want to be as adults. The same principle was the basis of other voluntary organizations, such as the Buddhist and Jain monastic orders. It is difficult to see how the individual freedom inherent in this bold theological innovation could have arisen within a village context.

The original *āśrama* system was a structure for inclusion. The purpose of creating the system was clearly to legitimize celibate modes of life by providing a place for them within the sphere of *dharma*. In doing so they expanded the meaning of *dharma*; it is made to include institutions and ideals of the old as well as the new world. The expanding concept of *dharma* provided the umbrella that could bring two opposing worlds together. Thus we find the related division of *dharma* into *pravṛtti* (active) and *nivṛtti* (non-active).<sup>39</sup> The former is the *dharma* of society and is connected with the saṃsāric process. The latter is the *dharma* of renunciation and is connected with the path to liberation. The old threefold classification of life's aims (*trivarga*)—*dharma*, *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (pleasure)—is transformed into a fourfold division with the inclusion of *mokṣa* (liberation). *Mokṣadharmā*, a term that may have been viewed as a contradiction by early Brāhmaṇical theologians, becomes a respected branch of the science of *dharma*.

*Dharma*, a term at the heart of the old world, is now given new dimensions and used to define the new worlds. The use of that term, indeed, signals that the proponents were presenting the new worlds as alternatives to and substitutes for the old. The Buddha himself, for example, presented his message as *dharma*. The new sectarian *dharma*s and even the original *āśrama* system brought an important element into the religious discourse: one can discuss which is *better* and one can *choose* the *dharma* that one considers superior or more suitable for oneself.

Gombrich (1989, 58) refers to the “doubt about choosing rightly” that accompanies the freedom to choose. An excellent

39. For a detailed treatment of these concepts, see Greg Bailey, *Materials for the Study of Ancient Indian Ideologies: Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti*. Pubblicazioni di “Indologica Taurinensia,” no. 19. (Torino, 1985).

example of the trauma created by doubts regarding what is right (*dharma*) is found in the famous *Bhagavad Gītā* where Arjuna is torn between his duty as a warrior to fight and the awful prospect of killing his own kinsmen. Renunciatory ideals such as not injuring any living creature and the assertion of the individual as the ultimate moral agent were no doubt at the root of such moral dilemmas that underlie the inner conflict of tradition.

The later history of the *āśrama* system represents both a retreat from the initial spirit of liberalism and a fuller incorporation of the system and of renunciation into the framework of the Brāhmaṇical world. The social and theological context that gave birth to the system had changed radically by the beginning of the common era. Celibate institutions, including renunciation, were now considered as thoroughly Brāhmaṇical. A structure for inclusion, such as that envisaged in the original system, was unnecessary and superfluous. Instead, the four *āśramas* came to be regarded as constituting four ideals of the Brāhmaṇical ethic, ideals that can and should be realized by each individual.

Thus, in contrast to the original system, the classical formulation considers the *āśramas* not as alternative ways of life open to an individual but as obligatory modes of life suitable for different periods of an individual's life. Choice, which was the central element in the original formulation, is eliminated, and the *āśramas* are transformed from permanent and lifelong vocations to temporary periods, the only exception being renunciation, which in the new formulation occupies the final days of an individual's life. At least ideally, a person is expected to pass from one *āśrama* to the next in an orderly manner and at specific points in his life. The *āśramas* accompany an individual as he grows old and assumes new and different duties and responsibilities. The entry into each *āśrama* is a rite of passage that signals the closing of one period of life and the beginning of another.

The journey through the *āśramas*, according to the new sys-

tem, begins at a boy's Vedic initiation, which is now considered the rite of entry into the first *āśrama*. The initiatory studentship thus constitutes the first *āśrama*. The fusing of the initiatory studentship and the first *āśrama* transformed the latter from an adult into an adolescent mode of life and converted the former from a period of preparation for all *āśramas* into one that prepares a youth to assume the responsibilities of marriage. This represents a return to the conception of initiatory studentship as envisaged in the system of Brāhmaṇical sacraments (*saṃskāra*).

The period of initiatory studentship concludes with the ritual bath of the student and his return (*samāvartana*) from the teacher's to his parents' home. We saw that in the original formulation this was the critical time of a young adult's life, when he had to make a decision regarding how he would live his adult life by choosing one of the four *āśramas*. In the classical formulation, however, the return of the student signals the completion of his first *āśrama* and the preparation for assuming the second *āśrama*.

After he returns home, his parents set about finding him a suitable partner. The rite of marriage initiates the young man into his second *āśrama*, the life of a married householder. The productive years of an adult's life are thus spent in activities that contribute to the welfare of family and society. He raises a family, engages in economically productive activities as required by his caste affiliation, and lives as a responsible member of society.

According to the classical system, this mode of life is also temporary. When a householder has produced children, educated them, given them in marriage, and settled them in their occupations—when, in other words, he has completed his household obligations—he is ready to assume the third *āśrama*, that of a forest hermit. Passage into the third *āśrama* is clearly related to old age and retirement. During the final years of his life he becomes a renouncer. In the last two *āśramas* a man is able to set aside the worries of everyday life and to dedicate

himself to penance, mortification, and meditation in preparation for what awaits him after death.

That this grand compromise did not end the inherent conflict between societal religion and renunciatory values is exemplified in the following delightful dialogue between a father, the prudent guardian of the old world, and a son, the embodiment of a restless age, recorded in the *Mahābhārata* (12.169):

- Son* Since soon the days of mortals end,  
How ought the wise their lives to spend?  
What course should I, to duty true,  
My sire, from youth to age pursue?
- Father* Begin thy course with study; store  
The mind with holy Vedic lore.  
That stage completed, seek a wife,  
And gain the fruit of wedded life,  
A race of sons, by rites to seal,  
When thou art gone, thy spirit's weal.  
Then light the sacred fires, and bring  
The gods a fitting offering.  
When age draws nigh, the world forsake  
Thy chosen home the forest make;  
And there a calm, ascetic sage,  
A war against thy passions wage,  
That, cleansed from every earthly stain,  
Thou may'st supreme perfection gain.
- Son* And art thou then, my father, wise,  
When thou dost such a life advise?  
What wise or thoughtful man delights  
In formal studies, empty rites?  
Should such pursuits and thoughts engage  
A mortal more than half his age?  
The world is ever vexed, distressed;  
The noiseless robbers never rest.
- Father* Tell how the world is vexed, distressed;  
What noiseless robbers never rest?  
What means thy dark, alarming speech?  
In plainer words thy meaning teach.
- Son* The world is vexed by death; decay  
The frames of mortals wear away.

## Renunciation and Society

Dost thou not note the circling flight  
Of those still robbers, day and night,  
With stealthy tread which hurrying past  
Steal all our lives away at last? . . .  
No moment lose; in serious mood  
Begin at once to practise good;  
Tomorrow's task today conclude;  
The evening's work complete at noon;  
No duty can be done too soon.  
Who knows whom death may seize tonight,  
And who shall see the morning light?  
And death will never stop to ask,  
If thou has done or not, thy task.  
While yet a youth, from folly cease;  
Through virtue seek for calm and peace. . . .  
And then thou say'st that I should wed  
And sons should gain to tend me dead  
By offering pious gifts, to seal,  
When I am gone, my spirit's weal.  
But I shall ask no pious zeal  
Of sons to guard my future weal.  
No child of mine shall ever boast  
His rites have saved his father's ghost  
Of mine own bliss I'll pay the price  
And be myself my sacrifice<sup>40</sup>

Despite conflict and controversy, however, the new theological definition of the *āśramas* put the system and, by implication, renunciation at the very heart of the Brāhmaṇical world's definition of itself as *varṇāśramadharmā*, the *dharma* of classes-castes and of *āśramas*. *Varṇāśramadharmā* then provides the context for Brāhmaṇical discussion of renunciation, the central theme of the documents we are about to examine.

40. I have given the verse translation of Muir cited by M. Winternitz, "Ascetic Literature in Ancient India," *The Calcutta Review*, October, 1923, 5–8. Although it is clearly not literal, Muir's version captures well the spirit of the original dialogue.

## *The Nature and Purpose of Renunciation*

In examining the contents of the Saṁnyāsa Upaniṣads, the first, and possibly the most significant, issue I want to explore is the Brāhmaṇical self-understanding of the meaning and nature of renunciation. What is the purpose of renunciation? What theological definition of a renouncer's status does the Brāhmaṇical tradition provide? How does that definition affect other significant elements of the Brāhmaṇical religious world? The Saṁnyāsa Upaniṣads do not deal with these issues explicitly. A well-developed theology of renunciation, however, underlies their discussions of such central issues as the rite of renunciation and the rules governing a renouncer's life. It is this theology that I want to explore in this section, drawing on information provided by these and other Brāhmaṇical texts.

A point that we need to bear in mind as we explore the Brāhmaṇical theology of renunciation, however, is that the very institution of renunciation as a single entity was the creation of that same theology (Sprockhoff 1976, 288–295). There were many life-styles and institutions of holiness, old age, and separation from society in ancient India. Evidence of these institutions is found in the Saṁnyāsa Upaniṣads themselves. The *Laghu-Saṁnyāsa Upaniṣad*, for example, contains a rite for withdrawal from society in the case of a person who recovers

from a life-threatening illness. Such a withdrawal was probably connected with the rite in extremis described in several major Upaniṣads.<sup>1</sup> Within Brāhmaṇism many of these institutions were conflated into the single yet complex institution of renunciation. It is this theologically constituted institution that is referred to in the Brāhmaṇical literature by the technical term *saṃnyāsa*, literally meaning “discarding” or “abandonment.”

The term *saṃnyāsa*, as I have explained in detail elsewhere (Olivelle 1981), is a rather new term in the Sanskrit vocabulary. It is absent not only in the ancient Vedic texts but also in the Buddhist and Jain vocabularies. The term is not only new, but its usage is strictly limited to the Brāhmaṇical tradition. It is a mistake, therefore, to assume that the term *saṃnyāsa*, common as it may be in medieval and modern India, was ever a generic term for the way of life of wandering mendicants.

In its earliest usage, moreover, the term referred specifically to a single aspect of that life, namely the abandonment of ritual activity, which, as we shall presently see, became the central and defining characteristic of Brāhmaṇical renunciation. In its early usage the object of *saṃnyāsa* is often explicitly stated, and it is invariably rites. The term is, by extension, applied to the ritual process (see below 4.2–4) by which rites are abandoned and occurs in the central element of that process, the ritual formula of renunciation (see below 4.4). The very semantic history of the term most commonly used to designate Brāhmaṇical renunciation, therefore, points to the centrality of the ritual and its abandonment in the Brāhmaṇical understanding of renunciation.

The general framework and the basic categories of Brāhmaṇical theology were ritual. As the ritual is at the center of Brāhmaṇical religion and theology, so the absence of the ritual, as the semantic history of the term *saṃnyāsa* points out, becomes the central element of the Brāhmaṇical theology and practice

1. On this rite, called *saṃpradāna* or *saṃpratti*, see Sprockhoff 1976, 52–66; 1979, 386–398; 1987.



of renunciation. At the same time, however, renunciation as such and several elements of a renouncer's life are viewed by the same theology as the fulfillment and perfection of the ritual and as producing powerful ritual effects both in the renouncer and in those related to him. This paradoxical and often ambivalent attitude toward renunciation underlies many of the discussions of renunciation we will encounter in these Upaniṣads.

### 3.1 RENUNCIATION AS A NON-RITUAL STATE

The basic assumption of most Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads is that renunciation essentially consists in the abandonment of ritual activities; renunciation is a non-ritual state. The *Āruṇi*, one of the oldest of these Upaniṣads, opens with Āruṇi's question to Prajāpati: "By what means, O Lord, can I give up rites completely?" The answer to this question lies in the procedure of renunciation: one can eliminate the need for rites and assume a non-ritual state only by going through the proper ritual process for abandoning rites.

Both this question and the elements of the renunciatory rite that we will presently examine presuppose that the person who intends to renounce is the typical Brahmin adult: that is, a man who is married, who maintains the sacred fires, and who offers regular sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is the fundamentally ritual nature of the Brāhmaṇical religion that gives significance to the definition of renunciation as a non-ritual state. To renounce rites, therefore, has significance only for a person who is qualified and obliged to perform rites.<sup>3</sup>

2. There are, of course, exceptions. People who are unmarried and even uninitiated, for example, are allowed to renounce if they are completely detached from the world (JU 64). The ideal-typical candidate for renunciation, however, is the married householder.

3. This is one reason why Brāhmaṇical renunciation disregards those who are not qualified to perform Vedic rites, such as Śūdras, women, and people with moral and physical disabilities (see below 4.1). There is, after all, no meaning or purpose in giving up what one is not entitled to or does not possess.

Thus the foundation of Brāhmaṇical renunciation is the belief that at some point in an individual's life the ritual religion can and must be transcended. This belief is based on the common Upaniṣadic doctrine systematically developed in the monistic theology of Advaita Vedānta, a theology that most of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads subscribe to, that rites operate within and promote *saṃsāra*, the life bound to repeated births and deaths, and that the renunciation of rites is a necessary precondition for the acquisition of the liberating knowledge.<sup>4</sup> The *Brhat-Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad* (272) puts it bluntly:

People are bound by rites and liberated by knowledge. Wise ascetics, therefore, do not perform rites.

The Sanskrit word for rite is *karma*. This term, which literally means "action," can and often does have a meaning broader than rite; it may refer to the entire spectrum of moral, physical, and mental activities of human beings. *Karma* is also a well-known concept in Indian speculations regarding the rebirth process. In that context it refers to the result or residue of human actions that determines an individual's future lives; it is thus a central concept of Indian ethics. Within the Brāhmaṇical tradition, however, the most common, the most basic, and the most significant dimension of *karma* is the ritual act. We have seen that in Brāhmaṇical theology, rites are the most powerful and the most efficacious actions human beings can perform. They have the power to produce effects after the death of the performer; hence the oft-repeated saying that a person desirous of heaven should offer a sacrifice (see below 3.2).

When translated into the theology of *saṃsāra*, however, ritual acts, because of their very power and efficacy, become the principal *karma* that causes the continuation of the rebirth process.<sup>5</sup> Within the Brāhmaṇical theology of renunciation, con-

4. For a detailed discussion of this point, see Śaṅkara's commentary on the BāU 3.5.1, translated in Olivelle 1986.

5. The concept of rite within the Brāhmaṇical context, however, comprehends a much broader spectrum of human actions than the English term *rite* (see below n. 11). The ritual dimension of the concept and law of *karma* is often overlooked

sequently, the elimination of *karma* means principally the elimination of rites.

What a Brahmin renounces, therefore, is *karma*, not just any action but ritual actions. The *Nārada-parivṛāja* makes this point clear:

Bathing, muttering prayers, divine worship, sacrifices, propitiatory rites, and rites such as the fire sacrifice do not apply to him, O Nārada, in this world.

Neither do divine praise, rites for ancestors, pilgrimages, vows, categories such as right (*dharma*) and wrong (*adharma*), injunctions, and temporal activities.

He shall abandon all rites and every worldly custom. (NpU 197)

Consequently, the central elements of the rite of renunciation, as we shall see below (4.2–3), consist in the abandonment of key elements of the ritual life: sacred fires, fire drills, sacrificial implements, sacrificial string, topknot, and mantras. The lack of a sacred fire in particular is the hallmark of a renouncer. As the presence of a sacred fire in a home signals the householder's allegiance to the ritual religion of society, so its absence represents the most telling symbol of a renouncer's separation from that religion. He is called "a fireless man" (*anagnī*), and his fireless condition is permanent. "Having renounced the fires," one text declares, "let him not bring them back" (KŚU 40; LSU 20). The fire drills that were used formerly to light the sacred fire, as well as the wooden sacrificial utensils such as spoons, cups, and pots, are burnt. Metal implements are given away. The sacrificial string is cut and discarded. The topknot is plucked out. A renouncer is expected to avoid every article or symbol associated with ritual activities.

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by scholars. Indeed, the very automatic nature of that law closely resembles the operation of ritual acts. See W. Halbfass, "Karma, *Apūrva*, and 'Natural' Causes: Observations on the Growth and Limits of the Theory of *Śaṃsāra*," in *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, ed. W. D. O'Flaherty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 268–302; Herman W. Tull, *The Vedic Origins of Karma: Cosmos as Man in Ancient Indian Myth and Ritual* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989).

The non-ritual state of a renouncer underlies the prohibition against uttering *svāhā* or *svadhā*, the two exclamations that accompany offerings to gods and ancestors, respectively, and against invitation and dismissal—a reference to the formal invitation addressed to gods or ancestors just prior to an offering and to their dismissal at its conclusion.<sup>6</sup>

Renouncers similarly give up the use of mantras, the ritual formulae that must accompany ritual offerings. The connection between rite and mantra is invariable; the one cannot exist without the other (NpU 137–138). The *Āruṇi* (ĀrU 6) puts it plainly: “Thereafter [namely, after renunciation] let him function without mantras.”<sup>7</sup> The abandonment of mantras is performed during the rite of renunciation. The *Gāyatrī* (ĀrU 6, n. 4), which is the most sacred mantra of Brāhmaṇism and the first mantra to be imparted to a boy at his initiation, is formally abandoned.<sup>8</sup> The only mantra a renouncer recites is the sacred syllable OM, which is regarded as the audible manifestation of Brahman.

A medieval text gives the following formal definition of renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*): “Renunciation is the abandonment of rites known through injunctions—the *śrauta* and *smārta*, the permanent, occasional and optional—after reciting the Call (*praiṣa*).”<sup>9</sup>

Even though renunciation is thus defined as a negative state, as the abandonment of every type of ritual activity, the fact remains that renouncers continue to perform some actions. They are subject to rules and regulations, that is, they are subject to their particular *dharma*. Following the rules of their *dharma*, they perform activities distinctive to their state, such as begging, wearing particular types of clothes or no clothes at all, carrying a begging bowl, bearing a staff, and the like. Aren’t these ritual

6. PhU 50–51; NpU 149, 153.

7. See also TaU 242.

8. See ĀrU 6; NpU 151, 166.

9. *tatra saṃnyāso nāma vidhito gṛhītānāṃ nityanaimittikakāmyasmārtakarmanāṃ praiṣamantraṃ samuccārya parityāgaḥ*. Ypra 1.2. Śrauta rites are those prescribed in the Vedas, while the *smārta* are those given in the *smṛtis*. For a discussion of this definition, see Olivelle 1975.

actions? The hermeneutical principles used by medieval exegetes who answered such objections are instructive and point to the special status that renunciation occupies among the Brāhmaṇical institutions.<sup>10</sup>

From the viewpoint of Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics, rites (*karma*) are defined as actions that are enjoined by positive injunctions (*vidhi*) found either in the Vedas or in the *smṛtis*.<sup>11</sup> If renunciation is defined as the abandonment or the non-performance of rites, then the renunciatory mode of life cannot be the object of any positive injunction. Further, because the abandonment of prescribed rites can be legitimate only if their abandonment is scripturally authorized, renunciation must be the subject of negative injunctions, namely prohibitions (*niṣedha*). Renouncers, therefore, do not perform rites because they are forbidden to do so.

According to the Brāhmaṇical hermeneutical tradition, the entire edifice of proper conduct (*dharma*) is founded on injunctions (that is, positive actions enjoined on a particular group of people) and on prohibitions (that is, actions that a group should avoid or abandon). Injunctive texts are called *pravṛttiśāstra* (texts promoting action), and prohibitive texts are called *nivṛttiśāstra* (texts promoting non-action). If renunciation is defined as a non-ritual state, then only the latter class of texts would apply to renouncers.

Yet renouncers continue to perform certain distinctive actions. Kuṭīcakas, for example, wear sacrificial strings and carry triple staffs. Paramahansa carry begging bowls. Some renouncers are expected to shave their heads at prescribed times. All are expected to beg their food daily at the proper time and

10. For an analysis of the hermeneutical principles involved in the definition of renunciation, see Olivelle 1975.

11. It is important to note that *karma* is defined as an action that is prompted by an injunction. Thus *karma* covers a broader spectrum of actions than its English counterpart *rite*. Actions such as brushing the teeth, bathing, eating, begging, wearing a particular garment, carrying a staff, and sleeping in a particular way are ritual actions within Brāhmaṇical theology. The abandonment of *karma* by renouncers, therefore, should theoretically refer to all these types of activity.

according to prescribed rules. All these actions are performed legitimately by renunciators because they are the subject of clear and positive injunctions. The problem for the Brāhmaṇical theologians is this: if renunciation is a negative state, how can these positive injunctions apply to renunciators, and how is it legitimate for renunciators to perform rites enjoined by those injunctions?

The answer has two steps and applies rules of interpretation developed within the school of Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics (*mīmāṃsā*). The first step is based on the distinction between two types of injunctions: general (*utsarga*) and specific (*apavāda* or *niyama*). The second considers all positive rules governing a renouncer's life as belonging to a particular class of injunctions called "exclusive specification" (*pariśamkhyā*).

That renunciators should cease performing ritual acts is a general prohibition (*utsarga*). It is this general prohibition that *defines* their renunciatory status; they are renunciators because they fall under this general prohibition and, consequently, abandon ritual activities. The specific actions performed by some renunciators are the subject of "specific injunctions" (*niyama*). It is a common principle of Brāhmaṇical hermeneutics that specific injunctions have greater force than and, therefore, set aside the provisions of general injunctions.<sup>12</sup> The argument is that the ritual acts that some renunciators continue to perform are exceptions to the general rule. The question then is how such exceptions are possible without violating the very definition of renunciation as a non-ritual state.

This is where the second step in the argument comes in. The specific rules that form these exceptions belong to a special category of injunctions known as "exclusive specification" (*pariśamkhyā*). Such an injunction has a positive form but contains a negative prescription; that is, the injunction is in reality a prohibition. A medieval exegetical text defines such an injunc-

12. This principle is frequently formulated in the maxim "An exception has greater force than the rule" (*utsargāpavādo balīyān*). See *Mīmāṃsākośa*, 2:1110; Olivelle 1977, 1.14n, 1.16n.

tion thus: “When both alternatives are simultaneously established, an injunction that aims at excluding one is an injunction of exclusive specification.”<sup>13</sup> The classical example of such an injunction is the following: “The five five-nailed animals are to be eaten.”<sup>14</sup> Within the context of this injunction, there are two alternatives regarding the eating of these animals: one may eat the five mentioned animals and/or animals other than those five. Both alternatives are established by the natural appetite and inclination of people, who tend to eat the flesh of all sorts of animals with five nails or toes. Now, the injunction in specifying the five five-nailed animals that are to be eaten *excludes* the eating of five-nailed animals other than these five. The injunction, therefore, actually amounts to a prohibition against eating the flesh of animals other than those specifically mentioned. The injunction, furthermore, does not enjoin people to eat the five types of animals; it only says that if people want to eat meat they may eat the meat of only these animals. Thus a person can decide not to eat meat at all, including the meat of these five animals, without violating this injunction.

Interpreted as exclusive specifications, the rules regarding the behavior of renouncers do not require renouncers to perform any specific action. They simply specify a particular way of acting if a renouncer undertakes that type of activity. The rule on begging, for example, excludes all methods of obtaining food except begging; thus, if a renouncer wants to eat, this rule forces him to obtain his food only by begging. He may, however, decide not to eat at all, in which case he is not required to beg. Such a decision will not violate the rule on begging. Insofar as they are exclusive specifications, therefore, the positive rules concerning renouncers and the positive actions that some renouncers perform on the basis of those rules do not

13. *ubhayasya yugapat prāptāv itaravyāvṛttiparo vidhiḥ parisaṅkhāvidhiḥ*. Apadeva, *Mīmāṃsānyāyaprakāśa*, ed. and trans. F. Edgerton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), 244. See also HDh 2:1229.

14. *pañca pañcanakhā bhakṣyāḥ*. MBh 12.139.66; ĀpDh 1.5.17.37; VDh 14.39; MDh 5.17–18. The five are porcupine, hedgehog, hare, tortoise, and iguana.

constitute their renunciatory status. These actions are merely incidental. The essence of renunciation is constituted by the abandonment of ritual acts and not by the few rituals acts that renunciators may continue to perform.

Within the context of the above discussion, the ideological distinction between renunciators and other groups within the Brāhmaṇical world is striking. Brāhmaṇical theology defines a group, whether it be based on caste, sex, or religious practice, as constituted by its own particular *dharma* (*svadharma*) that results in duties, rights, and practices peculiar to that group. It is the *dharma* that defines a group. The particular *dharma* of a group is embodied in specific and positive injunctions that people belonging to that group are expected to follow and that define their peculiar status. A householder—that is, a person belonging to the householder's order of life (*āśrama*)—is defined, for example, by the performance of actions peculiar to that state, such as procreation and sacrifice. The exception is the renouncer, who is defined by what he has given up rather than by what he does. Technically, his *dharma* consists of prohibitions (*nivṛttiśāstra*) rather than injunctions. There is, indeed, no practice that is obligatory on a renouncer, because all injunctions that apply to him are exclusive specifications.

These scholastic explanations of activities that are distinctive to renunciators underscore the unique theological position of renunciation within the Brāhmaṇical tradition. It is the only non-ritual state recognized within a fundamentally ritual ideology.

The householder and the renouncer represent the two major types of Brāhmaṇical religiosity. Their distinction is based on the role of ritual in their lives: performance of rites and the absence of rites are their respective distinguishing characteristics, their peculiar *dharma*. The *Nāradaṣarivṛjaka* (196) makes the same point negatively:

These two shall not attain eminence because their actions are inconsistent with their states: a householder who abstains from rites and a mendicant who engages in them.



### 3.2 RENUNCIATION AS THE PERFECTION OF THE RITUAL

The thoroughly ritual framework of the Brāhmaṇical world and of Brāhmaṇical thought inevitably led to the employment of ritual categories in developing the theology of renunciation. In a negative way, that employment is evident in the very conception of renunciation as a non-ritual state. More positively, however, aspects of the renouncer's life came to be viewed not merely as the abandonment of rites but as their perfection, and the very rite of renunciation was believed to produce powerful ritual results for the renouncer and for those related to him.

The non-ritual state of renunciation, first of all, is often depicted as the ultimate perfection of the ritual. Within this context, the abandonment of rites and ritual accessories, as we shall see, is regarded as a process of internalization. The abandoned fires, for example, are carried internally in the form of the breaths or the internal fire responsible for digestion. Whatever a renouncer eats, therefore, becomes a sacrifice offered in the internal fires.<sup>15</sup> The following passage of the *Kaṭhaśruti* illustrates the ritual perfection achieved by a person in the non-ritual state:

What he eats in the evening becomes his evening sacrifice. What he eats in the morning becomes his morning sacrifice. What he eats on the new moon becomes his new moon sacrifice. What he eats on the full moon becomes his full moon sacrifice. When in the spring he shaves his head, his beard, and the hair of his body, and pares his nails, that constitutes his *Agniṣṭoma* sacrifice. (KṣU 39)

The internalized ritual is more permanent and more sublime. The renouncer's internal fires are permanently lit; he kindles them with every breath. His eating becomes a sacrificial offering. His body and bodily functions are transformed into a long

15. On the Brāhmaṇical ritual of *Prāṇāgnihotra* ("fire oblation in the breaths") and its relationship to the renouncer's offering in the breaths, see Bodewitz 1973.

sacrificial session. The renouncer's body thus becomes a sacred object; it is equal to the fire altar where the Vedic rites are performed.<sup>16</sup>

A renouncer who abandons the external string and topknot but wears the internal string of knowledge is the perfect Brahmin (see below 4.3). The perfection of the Brahmin state is achieved through the perfection of the ritual, and the perfection of the ritual requires that the external performance be replaced by internal detachment and knowledge. The very act of renunciation is a great act of ritual sacrifice by which a man achieves greatness both in asceticism and in ritual:

Having deposited the sacred fires in himself, an ascetic who offers the entire phenomenal world in the fire of knowledge is a great ascetic and a true fire-sacrificer. (BSU 272)

I have already had occasion to refer to Heesterman's (1964) provocative essay, "Brahmin, Ritual and Renouncer," in which he argues that the renouncer ideology that considers the renouncer's non-ritual state as the perfection of the ritual is an orthogenetic and logical development of the ritual ideology that gave rise to the classical Vedic sacrificial system. According to Heesterman, the preclassical sacrifice of ancient India was based on an ideology of complementarity and mutual dependence between the sacrificial patron and the officiating priests. The priests, by accepting gifts and food, take upon themselves the death and impurity of the patron; and the patron is reborn rit-

16. This religious construction of the body contrasts sharply with another cultural construction of the human body in Indian asceticism that we shall presently examine (3.4), where the body is viewed as full of filth and equal to a corpse. The sacred nature of a renouncer's body, however, is expressed in the belief that it is a visible image of god: "There are two forms of Vāsudeva: the mobile and the immobile. The mobile form is the renouncer; the immobile consists of images" (Ypra 3.15-16). Other texts also highlight the analogy between an idol and a renouncer: "A fast purifies a person who fails to pay homage when he sees an image of a god or a triple-staffed renouncer" (Ypra 70.3-4). "In whosoever house a renouncer eats, in his house eats Hari [Viṣṇu] himself" (Ypra 70.8). See Raymond B. Williams, "The Holy Man as the Abode of God in the Swaminarayan Religion," in *Gods of Flesh/Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India*, ed. Joanne Punzo Waghorne et al. (Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Publications, 1985), 143-157.

ually through the sacrifice. The classical sacrificial ideology eliminates this interdependence; the sacrificial patron becomes the sacrificer (*yajamāna*) whose rebirth is assured by the efficacy of the sacrificial act itself. The patron and the officiants are no longer rivals; they are fused into a single ritual unit. Heesterman sees this individualization of the ritual, where dependence on others is replaced by the independent efficacy of the ritual act, as the precursor of renunciation, in which the individualization is made so complete that the renouncer becomes totally independent, independent even of priests and the external act of sacrifice:

The development of brahminical theory, set off by the individualization of the ritual, did not stop at the point where the host-guest, protagonist-antagonist complementarity was fused into the single unit of *yajamāna* [sacrificer] and officiants. It has to advance to its logical conclusion, that is the interiorization of the ritual which makes the officiants' services superfluous. . . . It would seem to me that here we touch the principle of world-renunciation, the emergence of which has been of crucial importance in the development of Indian religious thinking. (Heesterman 1964, 22-23)

The point I want to stress is that the institution of renunciation is already implied in classical ritual thinking. The difference between classical ritualism and renunciation seems to be a matter rather of degree than of principle. The principle is the individualization of the ritual which could not but lead to its interiorization. (Heesterman 1964, 27)

As I have observed above, Heesterman's theory depends too heavily on the development of ideas to be applicable without modifications to the history of the institution of renunciation, which transcends the boundaries of Brāhmaṇism. In examining the origin and development of the institution (as opposed to the ideology) of renunciation, we need to take into account social, economic, and political factors, as well as the impact of rival ideologies and the growing ethnic diversity in ancient India. Heesterman's theory, however, highlights significant as-

pects of the Brāhmaṇical appropriation of renunciation and the ways in which Brāhmaṇical theology understood and explained the status of a renouncer. It is in this appropriation that we notice strong continuities between the theologies of sacrifice and renunciation.

All Indian renouncers, both within and outside the Brāhmaṇical tradition, gave up ritual activities. They refused to use fire. It is only within the Brāhmaṇical tradition, however, that the renouncer's abandonment of fire and rites became the focal point for the theology of renunciation. This theology considers the abandonment as the internalization and, therefore, the perfection of ritual life. The renouncer is totally independent— independent of the officiants and of the external acts—because his very act of existence is transformed into a perfect and internal sacrifice. The Brāhmaṇical theology of renunciation—and this is the significant point of Heesterman's analysis—is a direct and logical development of the Brāhmaṇical theology of the sacrifice.

### 3.3 THE RITUAL EFFECTS OF RENUNCIATION

Not only was renunciation regarded as the perfection of the ritual, it also produced powerful ritual effects. Renunciation was thought to produce automatic effects, just like a ritual.<sup>17</sup> Renunciation, for example, was believed to erase the renouncer's sins, produce heavenly rewards for his relatives, and dissolve the bonds of marriage. The construction of many of these ritual effects of renunciation was clearly the result of the renouncers' difficult and ambivalent relationships to their families.

The ritual bond between parents and children, and more generally between preceding and succeeding generations of a

17. For the legal effects of renunciation, including the dissolution of marriage and the abolition of all rights to ancestral property, see Olivelle 1984, 140–149. Undoubtedly, many of these legal effects have a ritual basis.

family, was a key element of the Brāhmanical world. We have already seen that the obligation to marry, to procreate children, and thus to continue the family line, is a central theme in Vedic theology. Celibacy, on the other hand, was a key element of renunciation. The tension between these two opposing values is reflected in most Brāhmanical discussions of domesticity and renunciation.

In spite of the doctrine of *karma* that established the moral autonomy of individuals and placed on their shoulders the sole responsibility for their condition after death, the necessity of male descendants to assure a person's happiness after death through ritual offerings remained a significant element of the Brāhmanical ideology of death. This belief finds expression in the funeral rites, at which the doctrines of *karma* and rebirth are significantly absent, and in the offerings to deceased ancestors (*śrāddha*). A son through his ritual offerings was believed to assure a happy existence for his deceased parents and ancestors.

The celibate and non-ritual state of a renouncer consequently was perceived as a threat to the Brāhmanical world. The classical formulation of the *āśrama* system, as we have seen, mitigated this conflict by postponing renunciation until retirement from family responsibilities. Payment of the three debts was made a condition for renouncing. The *Nārada-parivṛāja* (NpU 140), citing Manu (MDh 6.94), says:

Having observed steadfastly the tenfold Law and having duly studied the Vedāntas, let a Brahmin renounce when he is freed from his debts.

Brāhmanical theology sought to lessen the conflict between familial duties and the celibate way of life also by developing theories regarding the ritual benefits that accrue to his relatives when a man takes to renunciation. One text declares:

The wise man who says: "I have renounced," rescues sixty generations of kin who have gone before him and sixty generations who will come after him. (BSU 251)

Far from being a threat to the welfare of the family, renunciation, according to this theory, directly benefits the relatives of a renouncer. The *Śātyāyanīya* says that a renouncer “rescues from this existence his forefathers, relatives by marriage, blood relations, companions, and friends” (ŚU 331), and cites what it calls Vedic verses in support of this statement:

One hundred prior generations as well as 300 subsequent generations attain the world of the virtuous when a wise man of their lineage takes to renunciation in this world.

A virtuous renouncer rescues thirty (generations) immediately before him, thirty beyond those, and thirty after him: so, indeed, the Vedas declare. (ŚU 331)

The theory of the ritual effects of renunciation facilitated the forging of bonds between renouncers and the world that they had renounced. These ritual effects gave renunciation a social significance. Scholars have become increasingly aware of the strong ties that continued to bind Indian renouncers of all sects to those who were closest to them in society, in particular to their parents and children.<sup>18</sup> The image of a renouncer totally divorced from and unconcerned about ordinary people and about his relatives is purely a theological (and perhaps scholarly) figment.

Renunciation was also believed to have ritual effects on the renouncer himself. His former sins, for example, are effaced, and he regains complete purity through the rite of renunciation.

The fire of the Call [MU 116, n. 15] will burn up all faults, both the congenital and the corporal, as chaff-fire gold. (BSU 252)

18. Schopen has demonstrated how inscriptions on votive offerings made by Buddhist monks and nuns show their continued concern for the welfare of their parents: Gregory Schopen, “Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of ‘Sinicization’ Viewed from the Other Side,” *T’oung Pao* 70 (1984): 110–126; “Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit,” *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1985): 9–47.

The custom of renouncing when a person was at the point of death (*āturasaṃnyāsa*)<sup>19</sup> also may have resulted from the belief in similar ritual effects of renunciation. Clearly the purpose of such a renunciation was not the adoption of an ascetic life aimed at liberation. The *Śāṭyāyanīya* (331–332) gives one reason:

A man who utters: “I have renounced,” even while breathing his last, rescues his forefathers: so the Vedas teach.

To a person who renounces at the point of death, the *Nārada-parivrājaka* (177) assures a birth in a pleasant world.

Other medieval texts mention a ritual effect not recorded in our Upaniṣads: renunciation eliminates the period of impurity that follows the death of an ordinary person. During this time the deceased exists in the condition of a ghost (*preta*). The rite of renunciation, even the mere pronouncement of the Call: “I have renounced,” at the time of death, abolishes this state.<sup>20</sup> The deceased renouncer becomes a forefather (*pitṛ*) immediately upon death. The normal funerary ritual (*sapīṇḍikaraṇa*) aimed at leading the newly departed from the ghostly state to the world of the fathers is not performed for a dead renouncer (Ypra 71.12–20, 52–53).

As renunciation has ritual effects, so does the fall from renunciation. Apostates and their children become outcastes, they are not allowed to become renouncers, and, according to many legal texts, they are reduced to slavery.<sup>21</sup> The *Śāṭyāyanīya* (329–330) says that the sin of apostasy is as great as all the mortal sins combined. It is even greater than them, because there is no expiation for it:

A thief, one who drinks liquor, a violator of his teacher’s bed, and a treacherous friend—these become purified through expia-

19. See JU 68–69; NpU 137–138, 162, 173, 177; ŚU 331–332.

20. See Ypra 4.80, 93; 20.14.

21. On the legal effects of apostasy, see Olivelle 1984, 149–151; Y. Krishnan, “Was It Permissible for a *Samnyāsī* (Monk) to Revert to Lay Life?” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute* 50 (1969): 79–89. On apostasy, see BSU 250–251; ŚU 329–330.

tions. But he who bears the manifest or the unmanifest emblem of Viṣṇu and then abandons it, is not purified by all the lustre of the self. (ŚU 330)

### 3.4 RENUNCIATION AND DETACHMENT

The reason for the abandonment of rites and the basis for many of the rules and customs of renunciation is the fundamental virtue that is expected to govern a renouncer's life: detachment from and disgust toward (*vairāgya*) all worldly things. This detachment is based on the conviction that nothing within the realm of *saṃsāra*—not even the pleasures of heaven—can truly satisfy the human longing for total and permanent happiness. Detachment is the one necessary condition for renunciation.<sup>22</sup>

Only when indifference toward all things has arisen in their minds, do they seek renunciation. Otherwise a man shall become an outcaste.

Let a wise man renounce when he is detached but live at home so long as he is attached. For the vile Brahmin who renounces while he is attached will go to hell. (NpU 138)

When detachment is present, a person does not have to await the appropriate time for renunciation (see below 4.1). The urgency of the call for personal liberation inherent in detachment forces a person to renounce immediately: "Let him even renounce on the very day that he becomes detached" (JU 64).

Rites, according to Brāhmaṇical theology, are performed for specific ends either in this world or after death; they are especially aimed at attaining a heavenly world. This basic ritual principle is enunciated in the well-known injunction: "One desirous of heaven should perform a sacrifice."<sup>23</sup> Giving up ritual activity, therefore, is based on detachment from everything that one may desire in this life or the next. Abandoning the desire

22. See JU 64; MU 116; NpU 149; PpU 278.

23. *svargakāmo yajeta*: Śābara's commentary on PMS 6.1.1–3.



for “worlds,” that is, for the happiness of the various heavens of Hindu cosmology, is a point repeated in these documents.

Betraying their male-oriented nature, our documents dwell especially on the need to be detached from the two most potent sources of attachment: one’s own body and women. The body is compared to a house filled with filth, disease, and misery.

Let him abandon this impermanent dwelling place of the elements. It has beams of bones tied with tendons. It is plastered with flesh and blood and thatched with skin. It is foul-smelling, filled with feces and urine, and infested with old age and grief. Covered with dust and harassed by pain, it is the abode of disease.

If a man finds joy in the body—a heap of flesh, blood, pus, feces, urine, tendons, marrow, and bones—that fool will find joy even in hell. (NpU 144; cf. NpU 160)

House is a common image in Indian ascetic literature to describe the human body.<sup>24</sup> The image fits well with the homeless condition of the Indian ascetic. As a person becomes an ascetic by leaving home for the homeless state, so an ascetic must leave, that is become detached from, his body in order to attain the bodiless state of liberation. Both one’s home and one’s body contain numerous things that can become sources of attachment.

Borrowing an analogy from Hindu purificatory rites, the *Maitreya* points out that the human body is the most impure of things. One who touches it—and we are in continuous contact with our body—should take a bath as surely as one who touches a corpse or an outcaste.

Composed of its parents’ dirt, this body dies soon after it is born. It is a filthy house of joy and grief. When it is touched a bath is ordained.

24. For an excellent study of the “house image” in Buddhist ascetic ideology, see Collins 1982, 165–176. On the parallel between an embodied soul in bondage and the householder, see NpU 189–190, n. 81.

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By its very nature, foul secretions continuously ooze out from its nine openings. It smells foul and it contains awful filth. When it is touched a bath is ordained. (MU 113–114)

If the body itself is the main source of pollution, the rites people use to purify the body are utterly useless. Rites cannot purify the very source of pollution. The only thought of one living in such a filthy abode should be how best and how soon to leave it, as exemplified in the lamentable plea of King Bṛhadratha (MU 108).

The best way to reflect on one's body is to consider it as a corpse (PhU 48; NpU 153, 175, 201). The body that we nourish, wash, decorate, clothe, and love is left at the end in a cemetery to rot, food for worms and vultures.

Even more deadly than the love of one's own body is the lust that women, more specifically the bodies of women, arouse in men. Ascetics are constantly admonished to stay away from them.

A man becomes intoxicated by seeing a young woman just as much as by drinking liquor. Therefore, a man should avoid from afar a woman, the mere sight of whom is poison.

He shall avoid speaking or chatting with women, looking at them, dancing, singing, or laughing with them, and reproaching them. (NpU 196–197; cf. NpU 156)

With stylish hair and painted eyes, hard to touch but pleasing to the eye, women are like the flame of sin and burn a man like straw.

Burning even from afar, sweet and yet bitter, women indeed are the fuel of hellfire, both lovely and cruel. (YU 315–316)

Passion does not die with age. Old men continue to lust, and old women continue to arouse lust.

A wise man, though he may be very old, should not place his confidence even in very old women: an old piece of cloth sticks to even very old patched garments. (BSU 270)

Women are depicted not only as exciting lust in men but also as active temptresses who demoniacally pull men away from

the path of virtue. A deep-seated fear and hatred of women, a veritable gynephobia, appears to have been present in many of the authors of these documents.

The *Yājñavalkya Upaniṣad*, in a passage borrowed from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* (1.21.1–6), attempts to create revulsion toward a woman's body:

What, pray, is the beauty of a woman, who is a puppet of flesh furnished with tendons, bones, and joints, within a cage of limbs moved by a machine?

Examine her eyes after separating the skin, the flesh, the blood, the tears, and the fluid, and see if there is any charm. Why are you bewitched in vain?

The same breast of a girl, on which we see the brilliant splendor of a pearl necklace . . . is in time eaten with relish by dogs in remote cemeteries as if it were a little morsel of food. (YU 315)

The *Nārada-parivṛāja* makes similar remarks regarding the female sexual organs that excite the passions of men:

Even though a woman's private parts are not different from a deep and festering ulcer, men generally deceive themselves by imagining them to be different.

I salute those who take delight in a piece of skin split in two scented by the breaking of the wind! What could be more rash. (NpU 160)

### 3.5 RENUNCIATION AND LIBERATION

Renunciation is presented in our Upaniṣads not as an end in itself but as the path leading to the final goal of human existence, namely liberation (NpU 130; BSU 251). Detachment from worldly things and the abandonment of rites are the necessary conditions for achieving this final goal. The *Bṛhat-Saṃnyāsa* (272) puts this clearly:

People are bound by rites and liberated by knowledge. Wise ascetics, therefore, do not perform rites.

Most of our Upaniṣads subscribe to the Advaita Vedānta doctrine that the world of multiplicity and our own consciousness as separate individuals are ultimately illusory, and that the knowledge of Brahman as the sole reality and of our own ultimate identity with that reality is the cause of liberation. Renunciation, therefore, amounts to achieving the freedom from attachment to worldly things and from the pursuit of all other goals in order to focus all one's energies on achieving the knowledge that grants absolute freedom.

A renouncer who does not pursue knowledge is a false renouncer. Dire consequences await him, for he has abandoned his normal duties without undertaking the corresponding obligation to pursue knowledge.

A man who, giving up all desires and abiding steadfastly in the Absolute, bears the staff of wisdom, is called a single-staffed ascetic.

A man who merely carries a wooden staff and, although he lacks wisdom, eats from all goes to Mahāraurava and other such terrible hells. (PhU 50)

He who renounces for the sake of wealth, food, clothes, or celebrity, falls from both paths and is unable to attain release. (MU 117)

Such a renouncer falls from both paths, that is, from the path to heaven that requires the performance of rites and from the path to liberation that requires knowledge. A text cited in many medieval sources acknowledges that base motives prompt many people to become renouncers: "There are many Brahmins who make a living by carrying the emblem of the triple staff. He who knows not Brahman, the scriptures say, is not worthy of the triple staff" (Olivelle 1977, 64, 160).

Even our documents acknowledge, nevertheless, that the goal of the lower types of renunciation is not directly liberation but the attainment of a heavenly world (NpU 177). Yet they posit liberation as the final goal toward which all renouncers should work.

The revulsion toward the world, the torment of living con-

tinuously in this miserable life, and the yearning to acquire the liberating knowledge, then, should be the motives for renunciation. King Bṛhadratha's lament as he pleads with the sage Śākāyanya to instruct him in the liberating knowledge illustrates this point:

Lord, this body is produced just by sexual intercourse and is devoid of consciousness; it is a veritable hell. Born through the urinary canal, it is built with bones, plastered with flesh, and covered with skin. It is filled with feces, urine, wind, bile, phlegm, marrow, fat, serum, and many other kinds of filth. In such a body do I live; you are my refuge.

But why speak of these when, among other things, mighty oceans dry up, lofty peaks crumble down, the pole star swerves, the wind-ropes are cut down, the earth is submerged, and gods fall from their station? I am also like that. So what purpose is there in enjoying desires within a saṃsāric existence such as this when we see that people attached to them are reborn repeatedly? So, please deliver me. In this saṃsāric existence, I am like a frog in a dark well. You, O Lord, are my only refuge. (MU 108–109)

A man who has eradicated all attachments and acquired the liberating knowledge is the highest type of renouncer. Throughout these documents there are eulogies of the renouncer who has thus liberated himself in this very life.<sup>25</sup> The liberated renouncer, who has experienced his identity with Brahman, exclaims in joyful ecstasy:

I am I, but also the other.  
I am Brahman, I am the source.  
I am the teacher of the whole world.  
I am the whole world.  
I am he!  
I am only I, I am perfect.  
I am pure, I am supreme.  
I am spotless and eternal.  
I am I.  
I am always he!

25. LSU 25–27; PhU 47–50, 55; JU 69–71; MU 118–126; BSU 255–262; BAU 305–310.

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I am wisdom, I am special.  
I am the moon, I am complete.  
I am splendid, I am without grief.  
I am spirit.  
I am the same!  
From honor and dishonor,  
and from qualities I am free.  
I am Śiva!  
From oneness and duality  
and from opposites I am free.  
I am he! (MU 119–120)

The very definition of renunciation as freedom from rites implies, as we have seen, also the freedom from Vedic injunctions, because rites are the subject of such injunctions. That freedom, however, is achieved gradually. As we shall see (chapter 5), there are several types of renunciators, and their hierarchy is determined precisely by their degree of freedom from such injunctions. At the highest level, however, stands the liberated renouncer; his freedom is total and unconditioned. He is subject to no injunction or prohibition; he transcends both the ritual sphere and the realm of morality. Liberation while still alive is thus an antinomian state. Translated into the Brāhmaṇical vocabulary, it means that the liberated renouncer is beyond *dharma*, the totality of which is subsumed in the code “*dharma* of classes and orders” (*varṇāśramadharma*).

When a man attains the vision of his self and the rules of class and order consequently melt away, he transcends all classes and orders and abides in his own self.

There are no rules or prohibitions, no laws on what is allowed and what is forbidden, nor any other restrictions, O Nārada, for those who know Brahman. (NpU 193–194)

To such an ascetic applies the phrase that recurs frequently in these Upaniṣads: he has done all there is to do, and so he has nothing that he needs to do.<sup>26</sup>

26. PhU 55; NpU 155–156; PpU 289; TaU 245. On the medieval controversies regarding the antinomian state of a liberated individual, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.

## 4

# *The Rite of Renunciation*

The proper ritual procedure for becoming a renouncer is a major concern of our Upaniṣads. Several of them open with that question. Āruṇi, for example, asks Prajāpati: “By what means, O Lord, can I give up rites completely?” (ĀrU 3). When Śaunaka and the other seers ask Nārada: “Lord, tell us the procedure of renunciation,” Nārada replies: “It is only proper that we learn all its features from the mouth of the Grandfather himself” (NpU 132). The procedure is presented as a deep secret—an *upaniṣad*—that can be learned only from the creator god himself.

The abandonment of rites, paradoxically, can be accomplished only through the appropriate rite. Renunciation is not a mere refusal to perform rites, for that would constitute an offense against one’s *dharma*. It is a state in which rites are absent, and that state can be attained only through the proper ritual process. As one source puts it, renunciation is not like throwing away old clothes; even an enlightened person has to renounce following the proper rules of procedure (*vidhinā*).<sup>1</sup>

The more ancient Upaniṣads of our collection do not attempt to describe the rite of renunciation in detail; they only

1. JMV 153, 401–402; Ypra 5.97.

present some of its key elements directly related to the abandonment of rites. The only Upaniṣad to present the rite in its entirety, as it is found in the medieval handbooks (*paddhati*), is the *Nāradaṣarivṛājaka*. My aim here is not to describe the rite in detail,<sup>2</sup> but to highlight certain elements of it that would help us comprehend the Brāhmaṇical understanding of renunciation.

#### 4.1 THE QUALIFICATION FOR RENUNCIATION

The first question that Brāhmaṇical theology addresses when it discusses any rite concerns the person who is qualified or entitled to perform it (*adhikārin*). It is not surprising, therefore, that our Upaniṣads devote a considerable amount of space to the discussion of the qualifications for renunciation and the related question of the proper time for renunciation.

With regard to caste, it is obvious that people not belonging to the three upper classes (*varṇa*) are not permitted to perform the rite of renunciation. Many elements of the rite, such as the abandonment of the sacred fire and the ritual implements, presuppose that the person undergoing renunciation is qualified to perform Vedic rites. Even though Śūdras and other low-caste persons are clearly excluded, there is some uncertainty as to whether persons from all three upper classes or only Brahmins could perform this rite. Our documents do not engage this question, which looms large in medieval discussions on renunciation.<sup>3</sup> It is nevertheless evident that even though these Upaniṣads do not explicitly exclude others, they address themselves principally to Brahmins. This attitude is revealed when the texts refer to a renouncer by the many Sanskrit terms for a Brahmin: *brāhmaṇa*, *vipra*, *dvijottama*. A good example is found in the question that we have already examined (see above 1.2)

2. For an accessible description of the rite, see Olivelle 1977, 37–45, and the Ypra 5–21 translated there.

3. See Olivelle 1977, 32–33, and Ypra 3.1–50 translated there.



regarding the abandonment of the sacrificial string: “How can a man be a Brahmin when he has no sacrificial string?” (JU 65). The implicit assumption in the entire discussion on the abandonment of the sacrificial string is that the renouncer who abandons it is a Brahmin. Thus the *Brahma Upaniṣad* (87) says that “He possesses the complete Brahmin state . . . whose topknot and whose sacrificial string consist of knowledge.”

The question of the renunciation of women is also not addressed in our documents. It is abundantly clear, however, that these texts were written by and for men and assume that renouncers are men.<sup>4</sup> Women in Brāhmaṇical theology are not independent ritual actors. They enter the ritual only as wives of their husbands; women are incompetent to perform independently the ritual actions called for in the rite of renunciation. I have, moreover, already cited several passages that warn renouncers about the danger posed by women and that reveal an attitude of gynephobia. Women enter the picture only as objects of passion and temptresses eager to entrap men.

In Brāhmaṇical discussions, questions regarding the qualifications and the proper time for renunciation are generally associated with the *āśrama* system, that is, the orders or stages of life through which, according to the classical formulation of the system, a Brahmin was expected to pass during his lifetime. The early Upaniṣads in our collection do not mention the *āśrama* system by name, yet they refer to the institutions of student, householder, and hermit that precede renunciation in the classical system. The *Kaṭhaśruti* (KśU 37–38), for example, says:

After a Vedic student has studied one, two, or all the Vedas and completed his studentship, he should marry a wife, beget sons, place them in suitable occupations, and offer sacrifices according

4. There is ample historical evidence for the existence of female renouncers both within and outside the Brāhmaṇical tradition (Olivelle 1984, 114–115). The question here is not about their existence but about their theological legitimacy.

## *The Rite of Renunciation*

to his ability. Renunciation is meant for such a man with the approval of his elders and relatives.

The *Jābāla* (JU 64) gives the classical *āśrama* theory without, however, using the term *āśrama*:

After he has completed his Vedic studentship, a man should become a householder. After he has been a householder, he should become a forest hermit. After he has been a forest hermit, he should renounce.<sup>5</sup>

For those who have detachment, however, the obligation to pass through these stages does not apply. They may renounce at any time.

Or rather, he may renounce directly from Vedic studentship, or from home, or from the forest. Let him even renounce on the very day that he becomes detached, regardless of whether he has taken the vow or not, whether he has graduated or not, and whether he has kindled the sacred fire or is without a fire.<sup>6</sup>

Thus a person who possesses detachment may renounce as a young man before he has married or even as a boy before he has undergone Vedic initiation.

A few sources<sup>7</sup> require a person who intends to renounce to obtain the consent of his relatives. The *Kaṭhaśruti* requires him to obtain the consent of his mother, father, wife, sons, friends, and relatives at one place (KśU 31) and of his elders and relatives at another (KśU 38).

The Upaniṣads composed during the medieval period, such as the *Nāradaṣarivṛājaka* and the *Bṛhat-Saṃnyāsa*, provide a mélange of physical, social, and moral disabilities that would disqualify a person from renunciation. Persons thus disqualified include the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the bald, cripples, eunuchs, outcastes, heretics, sinners, and people belonging to some sects (NpU 136–137; BSU 250–251).

5. See also LSU 17–18; KśU 31; NpU 131, 134, 149; BSU 254; PpU 278.

6. JU 64. See also ArU 5–6, 9. 7. See PpU 278; ŚU 327.

## 4.2 THE RENUNCIATION OF FIRE

Fire occupied the central place within the ritual religion of Brāhmaṇism. All the Vedic sacrifices were offered in the sacred fire. Tending the fire of his teacher was a major occupation of a student. When a student completed his studies and got married, he was expected to establish the domestic fire. It was the focal point of domestic religiosity. In addition, some Brahmin householders maintained the three sacred fires employed in Vedic sacrifices. The abandonment of that ritual religion by the renouncer is symbolized by his renunciation, or more exactly the “depositing within himself,” of the sacred fires, which is clearly the central and the most important element of the renunciatory rite.

The theology of renunciation that underlies this rite, however, considers the abandonment of fire not as a rejection but as an internalization. The external fires are deposited within the renouncer, who continues to carry them internally and, therefore, in a more perfect and more permanent manner.

There appears to have been no uniform rite for abandoning fire. Sources give several versions of the rite, all of which, however, present the abandonment of fire as its internalization. The *Āruṇi* (6), for example, says that a man “should deposit his external fires in the fire of his stomach.” The plural “fires” indicates that the man was assumed to have maintained the three Vedic fires. The human body was thought to possess a fire responsible for bodily warmth and digestion. The external fires are merged by this rite into the internal stomach fire.

Other sources state that the fires are to be deposited in one’s self or in one’s breaths. According to some sources, during the rite of abandonment, the renouncer inhales the warmth of the fires, while he recites the verse:

This is your due place of birth  
whence born you did shine.

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Knowing this, O Fire, mount it,  
and make our wealth increase. (JU 65–66)

The place of birth, or the womb (*yoni*), of fire is here identified with human breath. The fire is not extinguished but reduced to its latent state within its source. The renouncer thus continues to possess the abandoned fires in a more complete manner. Carrying them internally, he is never separated from them. The *Kaṭhaśruti* (38) records the words the renouncer addresses to the fires immediately after abandoning them: “Do not leave me and go away; I shall not leave you and go away.”

The ritual depositing of the fires in oneself is not unique to the rite of renunciation. It is recorded in the Vedic literature and was a somewhat common rite associated with travel. When a Brahmin who maintained the sacred fires went on a long journey, it was impractical to take with him his fires physically. If he did not take them along, however, he was not able to perform the daily fire sacrifice or to fulfill other ritual obligations. The ritual experts, therefore, designed three non-physical ways in which a traveling Brahmin could take his fires along with him.

The first, and perhaps the most ancient, was the depositing of the fires in the two fire drills (*araṇi*) that were used to produce the ritual fire. This method is mentioned in the rather early *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (3.4.10.4–5). In all likelihood, it was considered the standard procedure, while the other two were viewed as acceptable alternatives.<sup>8</sup> The *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra* (6.28.8–9) gives the following procedure for depositing the sacred fires in the fire drills. After offering a sacrifice called *Vāstoṣpatya*,<sup>9</sup> the performer holds the two fire drills separately over each fire, reciting the formula: “This is your due place of birth. . . .” (see JU 65–66). In this context the fire drills are appropriately considered as the womb of the fire. Thereafter, the

8. The *Bhāradvāja Śrautasūtra* (6.6.12), for example, calls the depositing of the fires in the self “the next best alternative.” See also TS 3.4.10.5.

9. See TS 3.4.10.1–4; *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra*, 6.28.1–8; *Bhāradvāja Śrautasūtra* 6.6.8–10.

fires are ritually contained within the fire drills. During the journey the Brahmin takes these fire-drills with him. Whenever he wishes to perform a sacrifice, he uses the drills to produce a fire while reciting a special ritual formula.<sup>10</sup> Ritually this new fire is identical to the sacred fire that he had earlier deposited in the fire drills.

A second method is to deposit the sacred fires in a piece of firewood. The piece of wood is held over the sacred fire until it turns black. It is carried by the Brahmin during the journey and is used to kindle a fire whenever he needs his sacred fires.<sup>11</sup>

The third, and from the point of view of the renunciatory ritual the most significant, is the depositing of the fires in one's self or body.<sup>12</sup> The *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (3.4.10.5) observes that the fire drills may be lost during a journey after the fires have been deposited in them. In that event the Brahmin would have to perform the entire elaborate ritual for establishing his sacred fires over again. It prescribes, therefore, an alternative and safer method of carrying one's sacred fires: the fires may be deposited in the traveler's own body or self (*ātmasamāropa*). There are diverse opinions regarding the actual procedure for depositing the fires in one's body. According to the *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra* (6.28.11), one warms the hands over the fires and then places the hands over one's mouth.<sup>13</sup> The ritual formula used during this rite is the following:

With your body worthy of sacrifice, O Fire, come here and mount my body, procuring many riches, splendid and manly. Becoming the sacrifice, sit down at the sacrifice, your own abode. Born from the earth, O Jātaveda, come with your abode. (TB, 2.5.8.8)

10. The formula *upāvaroha jātavedaḥ punas tvam* ("Descend again, O Fire") is given in the TB 2.5.8.8 and the *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra*, 6.28.12.

11. See the *Vaikhānasa Gṛhyasūtra*, 3.6.

12. The technical term is *ātmasamāropa*. The term *ātman* in this context may mean the self or, what is more likely, the body.

13. The *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtra* (3.10.6), without mentioning the *ātmasamāropa*, only states that the hands should be warmed over the householder's, i.e. the western, fire (*gārhapatya*).

When the sacred fire is needed, the traveling Brahmin blows on an ordinary fire, reciting the same formula as when the fire is kindled after it had been deposited in the fire-drills (see above n. 10).

The rite of renunciation has undoubtedly borrowed the ceremony of depositing the fires in the body or self from the Vedic ritual practice. The influence of Vedic practices relating to travel is noticeable in the rite of depositing the fires in the body at renunciation. Thus, for example, sources prescribe “This is your due place of birth . . . ,” as well as “With your body worthy of sacrifice . . . ” as the mantra that is recited when a renouncer deposits the fires in himself. Within the Vedic ritual the former is used when the fires are deposited in the fire drills, whereas the latter is used for depositing them in one’s self.<sup>14</sup>

Vedic ceremonies associated with travel provided a ritual parallel to the wandering life of a renouncer. There are, however, two significant differences. The traveling Brahmin periodically rekindles his sacred fires and finally returns home. The wandering renouncer has permanently internalized his fires and will never return home. His internalization of fire amounts to its abandonment, for he will no longer perform any rites. The renouncer is instructed: “Having renounced the fires, let him not bring them back” (KśU 40; LSU 20).

#### 4.3 RITUAL DEATH AND THE ABANDONMENT OF RITUAL IMPLEMENTS

Renunciation was considered the ritual death of the renouncer; that the renouncer is a ritually dead person, even though he is physically alive, is a significant aspect of the Brāhmaṇical the-

14. The depositing in the fire drills is used in the rite for becoming a forest hermit (*vānaprastha*), which also involves the departure from home to the forest. The hermit rekindles his fires after he has established himself in a hut within the forest. See VaiDh 2.4–5.

ology of renunciation. The fact that renunciation is a non-ritual state, for example, can be explained theologically on the basis of the ritually dead status of a renouncer. People are obliged to perform rites only until death. As one Vedic text puts it:

It is assuredly a long sacrificial session upon which they enter who offer the daily fire sacrifice (*agnihotra*). This is indeed a session to be broken off only through old age. For one is absolved from it either by old age or by death. (*Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, 1.51)

If renunciation is death, then renouncers may legitimately cease to perform sacrifices.

Some of the legal effects of renunciation also result from this understanding. As at a man's death, so at his renunciation his marriage is dissolved and, according to some sources, his wife is permitted to remarry; he is freed from contractual debts; and his property is partitioned among his heirs (see chapter 3, n. 17).

Several elements of the rite of renunciation bear striking resemblance to Brāhmaṇical rites associated with the dying and the dead. Many medieval sources, including the *Nārada-parivṛāja Upaniṣad* (NpU 162–163), for example, prescribe the offering of eight oblations (*śrāddha*) prior to the rite of renunciation. The last of these is offered to the renouncer's grandfather and father, and to himself. The inclusion of the renouncer in this ritual triad is significant. The typical monthly oblation to one's deceased relatives (*pārvaṇaśrāddha*) includes the father and the paternal grandfather and great-grandfather. When a person dies, his great-grandfather is dropped from the triad and his son offers the oblation to his newly deceased father and to his father's father and grandfather. At the rite of renunciation, likewise, the great-grandfather is dropped from the triad and his place is taken by the renouncer himself. He is now counted among the deceased relatives.

A ceremony in the rite of renunciation that signals the imminent death of the renouncer is taken from the ancient cere-

mony (*saṃpratti* or *saṃpradāna*) that was to be performed by a man who was about to die (see chapter 3, n. 1). The renouncer addresses his son, saying: "You are Brahman! You are the sacrifice! . . ." The son replies: "I am Brahman! I am the sacrifice! . . ." (see KśU 36). After this ceremony, just as after the death of the father, the son assumes his father's position as the ritual head of the household.

One ceremony above all, however, clearly demonstrates that renunciation constitutes the ritual death of a renouncer. It relates to the disposal of ritual implements and is taken from the Brāhmaṇical rite of cremation. When a sacrificer dies, his wooden sacrificial implements are placed on designated parts of his body and are cremated along with him, using his sacred fires. The *Kaṭhaśruti* (31) describes a procedure according to which the renouncer's sacrificial implements are disposed of in a similar manner. They are placed on various parts of the renouncer's body prior to depositing the sacred fires in his body, which, in all likelihood, parallels cremation, at which his sacrificial fires also enter his body.

Two significant articles connected with the sacrifice and with ritual life in general are the sacrificial string and the topknot. As we have seen, by the beginning of the common era these had become symbols of the twice-born status of the three upper classes in general and of the Brahmin priests in particular. Not all Brahmins maintained in their homes the sacred fires, but all Brahmins wore a sacrificial string as the primary symbol of their state and status. Its abandonment at renunciation had a special significance in Brāhmaṇism. It is also one element of the rite of renunciation mentioned in almost every discussion of the rite.

Discarding the sacrificial string and getting rid of the topknot appear to have caused some controversy in Brāhmaṇical circles.<sup>15</sup> Most of our documents deal with this question. The

15. For a detailed examination of a medieval debate on this issue between the Advaita and the Viśiṣṭādvaita (Śrī-Vaiṣṇava) traditions, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.



*Jābāla* (JU 67 = NpU 151) puts it bluntly: “I ask you, Yājñavalkya, how can a man be a Brahmin when he has no sacrificial string?” The answer is that for a renouncer the knowledge of one’s self constitutes the sacrificial string. The greater portion of the *Brahma* (BU 85–91) and the *Parabrahma* (PbU 293–299) are devoted to the allegorical understanding of the sacrificial string. Knowledge is the sacrificial string of renouncers; knowledge, not long hair, constitutes the true topknot (BU 86–87). Brahman, indeed, is the supreme string on which the entire universe is strung like pearls on a string; those who know Brahman possess the true string (BU 86–87). The *Brahma Upaniṣad* (BU 87) is thus able to conclude:

He possesses the complete Brahmin state, the knowers of Brahman say, whose topknot and whose sacrificial string consist of knowledge.

The answer then to the question we started with is that the renouncer is the true Brahmin, not those who wear outward signs and perform rites. The reason, however, for the abandonment of the external string is the non-ritual state of a renouncer. The *Brahma* (BU 87) states that the external string should be worn only by those who are qualified to perform rites, because the string is a subsidiary element of ritual acts. When rites are abandoned, the qualification to perform rites ceases, and with it the requirement to wear an external string and topknot.

The abandonment of the sacred fire as well as the sacrificial accessories during the rite of renunciation underscores the Brāhmaṇical doctrine that renunciation is a non-ritual state that resembles death. Although ritually dead, the renouncer yet continues to live physically in the world, thereby putting himself in an ambivalent and liminal position within Brāhmaṇism. Both his condition of ritual death and the fact that, having deposited the sacred fires in himself, he is engaged in a continu-

ous sacrifice, conspire to make the renouncer ritually impure, in spite of the claim that he is beyond such categories.<sup>16</sup>

In India, as we have seen, people who have died recently are believed to exist in a liminal state; such people are called *preta* (ghost). They are neither in this world nor in the next. In that state they are impure and dangerous. Although the textual evidence is not altogether clear, I believe that the liminal condition of a renouncer resembles that of a newly dead person (*preta*). Both are impure and dangerous. *Pretas* are released from that state through a rite called *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* that ritually incorporates them into the community of deceased ancestors. For a deceased renouncer, as we have seen, this ceremony is not performed. His very physical death, it appears, eliminates the *preta*-like condition he had voluntarily assumed while he lived as a renouncer.

The continuous state of a renouncer's internal sacrifice, likewise, assimilates him to a person who is initiated for a sacrifice (*dīkṣita*). Heesterman has clearly demonstrated that a man so initiated is ritually impure, even though in the classical Vedic ritual his initiation (*dīkṣā*) is regarded as a purificatory rite.<sup>17</sup> He is ritually taboo; people are not allowed to eat his food, to wear his clothes, to touch him, or even to pronounce his name.

The impurity of the renouncer, whether it is related to his death or to his sacrificial status, is also marked by various restrictions that affect his relationship to people in the world.

One should not eat the food of a renouncer even though one is breathing one's last; a renouncer's food is equal to cow's meat and his water equals drops of liquor.

One should not eat three kinds of food: the food of a renouncer, the food in the begging bowl of a renouncer, and that which is

16. Many sources assert that a renouncer is beyond dualistic categories, such as right and wrong, true and false, and pure and impure: see VaiDh 1.9.

17. "The Yajamāna [sacrificer], who has undergone *dīkṣā*, is not pure, but on the contrary is charged with the evil of death to which he has to submit in order to be reborn." Heesterman 1964, 2. See also his "Vrātya and Sacrifice," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 6 (1962): 18-24.

## Introduction

given to a renouncer. After eating such food one should observe the lunar fast.<sup>18</sup>

The liminal and ambivalent status of a renouncer is nicely illustrated in an episode related by Agehananda Bharati, the Viennese gentleman turned Hindu ascetic, during a visit to a Hindu temple in Benares:

I took a last bath at the Ghat of Ten Horse Sacrifices, offered *tarpanam* ["water offering"] to Mother Gaṅgā, worshipped Lord Viśvānāth [*sic*] at his Golden temple, partook of the *prasād* [food offered to a deity and then distributed to devotees] which the priest gave to me with his left hand: for this is the way food oblations are given to the *sannyāsī* ["renouncer"], in the same manner as to the manes. For ritualistic purposes the *sannyāsī* is dead and his participation in any ritual can be only that of a witness or else in the same hierarchy as the dead to whose memory certain rituals are directed. When a *sannyāsī* enters a temple, he blesses the idol, because as one who has shed desires and rebirth and who no longer participates in matters of phenomenal existence, he is above the god of the temple, whose interest in worldly affairs entitles him to dwell in a temple.<sup>19</sup>

The renouncer, on the one hand, is as impure as a dead man and the priest has to use the left hand to deal with him so as not to pollute the food given to other people. On the other hand, he is higher than the god enthroned in the temple whom he is entitled to bless.

### 4.4 THE RITUAL FORMULA OF RENUNCIATION

The procedure of renunciation is long and elaborate. Are all its rites and ceremonies equally necessary for renunciation, or is

18. These verses are cited in Ypra 68.30–38. On the lunar fast, see ĀśU 101, n. 9.

19. Agehananda Bharati, *The Ochre Robe: An Autobiography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 156–157.

there an essential component that is responsible for making a person a renouncer? A medieval work addresses this question directly. After describing all the rites associated with this procedure, it concludes: "Of the preceding rites, renunciation essentially consists of only three: (1) The declaration of intent . . . ; (2) The proclamation of the *praiṣa*; (3) The gift of safety. All other rites, from the *nāṇḁmukha-śrāddhas* to taking the staff, are supplementary."<sup>20</sup>

*Praiṣa*, which I have translated as "Call," is a technical term in the Vedic ritual vocabulary. Within that context it refers to the formulae used by the Adhvaryu priest, who performs most of the sacrificial acts, to instruct other priests to perform specific procedures. The term is used in the rite of renunciation with reference to the formula: "I have renounced."<sup>21</sup> It is unclear why this formula was given that technical appellation.

The declaration "I have renounced" is directed first at the people who are witnessing the ceremony but also at all beings. Immediately after reciting the Call, therefore, the new renouncer gives safety (*abhaya*, lit. "freedom from fear") to all beings.<sup>22</sup> This is a formal affirmation of his vow never to kill or hurt any living being.

The belief that the formula of the Call is the essential element of the rite<sup>23</sup> is expressed in the procedure prescribed for a person who is in danger of imminent death. Such a person, as we have seen, may renounce by reciting the Call either orally or mentally.

20. Ypra 20.1-2. A similar statement is also made in the Ydhs, 18.

21. ĀrU 9; MU 116; NpU 137, 167-168; BSU 251; PpU 281.

22. ĀrU 9; NpU 167; PpU 281-282.

23. Even modern Indian courts have recognized that the recitation of this formula is necessary for a person to be considered a renouncer: "The recitation of the Presha Mantram or the renunciation formula is of course indispensable and has been considered essential by different High Courts." Judgment in *Krishna Singh v. Mathura Ahir*, *All India Reporter*, 1980, S.C. 708.

#### 4.5 THE SYMBOLS OF THE RENUNCIATORY STATE

The first section of the renunciatory rite ends with the Call and the granting of safety to all beings and constitutes the essence of renunciation. This part has a largely negative tone, consisting as it does of abandoning various items that define a Brahmin's life in society, and it accords with the very nature of renunciation, which, as we have seen, is defined as a negative state.

At a very practical level, however, a renouncer needed certain basic requisites, such as a begging bowl, to fulfill the duties of his new life. These same articles, technically called *mātrā*, in time became symbols of his new life. Besides the begging bowl, the most significant were the staff,<sup>24</sup> the water pot, the waistband, the loincloth, and the garment (see below 6.3). These articles were ritually handed over to the new renouncer in the second part of the renunciatory rite, which part has all the characteristics of an initiatory rite. Indeed, the *Kaṭhaśruti* (KŚU 40) uses the term *dīkṣā* ("initiatorial consecration") with reference to this section of the rite.

As the earlier part of the rite symbolically expresses the death of the renouncer, so several elements of the second part express the new birth of the renouncer. At the conclusion of the first part, the new renouncer takes off all his clothes and becomes naked. The Sanskrit term is *jātarūpadhara*, which literally means "having the form one had at birth." The renouncer now resembles a newborn infant.

The later documents of our collection expect the new renouncer to place himself under the direction of an experienced renouncer, who becomes his teacher and father. It is the teacher who gives him a new name and hands over to him the articles

24. For a detailed discussion of the symbolism of the staff, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.

## *The Rite of Renunciation*

that are emblems of his new state. The renouncer accepts them while reciting mantras, underscoring the sacred nature of these articles. According to the *Nāradaparivṛājaka* (169–170), the mantras are as follows:

<i>Staff</i>	Protect me, friend, You who are my strength and my friend. You are the bolt of Indra, slaying obstructions. Be my refuge and banish all that is evil.
<i>Water pot</i>	You are the life of the world! You are the vessel of life! Like a mother, you who are all gentle, Always give me counsel.
<i>Waistband</i>	Waistband, the support of the loincloth, OM!
<i>Loincloth</i>	Loincloth, the cover of the private parts, OM!
<i>Garment</i>	Garment, the sole guardian of the body, protecting against cold, wind, and heat, OM!

After he is invested with the symbols of his new state, the renouncer is expected to live under his teacher's guidance for at least one year.<sup>25</sup> While the first part of the rite is performed by Brahmin priests, the teacher plays the central role in the second part. Medieval accounts (Ypra 21.137–160) of the renunciatory rite highlight its initiatory character by introducing several features borrowed from the rite of Vedic initiation. The teacher, for example, imparts a special mantra—namely the syllable OM—to the student renouncer and, placing the right hand on the student's head, recites the mantra:

Under my will I place your heart;  
Your mind shall follow mine.  
Devoted to me alone, you shall rejoice in my word.  
May Bṛhaspati join you to me.

As these initiatory aspects of the rite indicate, renunciation was viewed not only as the death but also as the new birth of the renouncer.

25. See NpU 168–170, 195–196.

## *The Classifications of Renouncers*

The early Upaniṣads of our collection use the term *Parama-ḥaṃsa* with reference to a higher type of renouncer. It appears, for example, that the *Āruṇi*'s discussion focuses on the *Parama-ḥaṃsa*, even though that term is used only toward the end of the text (ĀrU 11). Thus, when it says that a Kuṭīcara should give up his family and the like (ĀrU 6), it is probably referring to the elevation of a lower type of renouncer to the level of a *Parama-ḥaṃsa*. The term is also used in the *Parama-ḥaṃsa* and *Jābāla Upaniṣads*. It is unclear, however, whether during the time of these early documents this term was used within the context of a formal classification of renouncers.

The *Āśrama Upaniṣad* is the earliest document in our collection to provide such a classification. It gives a fourfold division of all four *āśramas*, including renunciation. The four types of renouncers are Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, Haṃsa, and *Parama-ḥaṃsa*. This has remained the traditional classification of renouncers in most medieval documents, including the little *Bhikṣuka Upaniṣad*.

In the *Āśrama* and the *Bhikṣuka* the four types of renouncers are distinguished in terms of both their life-styles and the symbolic articles they possess (ĀśU 101–102). Thus, for example, there are significant differences in the way each class obtains its

food. Likewise, the lower classes carry triple staffs, Haṃsas carry single staffs, while Paramahaṃsas do not carry them at all. During medieval times there was a controversy regarding the symbolic articles carried by a renouncer. The Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas disagreed with the position of the Advaita tradition that the various classes of renouncers were distinguished according to the emblematic articles they carry. The Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas required all renouncers, irrespective of class, to wear sacrificial strings and to carry triple staffs. Most of our Upaniṣads support the Advaita view, while the Vaiṣṇava position forms the basis of the *Śāṭyāyanīya Upaniṣad* (323–325).<sup>1</sup>

The *Nārada-parivṛāja Upaniṣad* (171–178; BSU 253–255) provides several classificatory systems. Renunciation, it says, is essentially one. Due to external circumstances, however, it came to be divided into three, four, and finally six.

First it became threefold on account of ignorance, inability, and the absence of rites. Then it came to be fourfold: renunciation by reason of detachment, renunciation by reason of knowledge, renunciation by reason of both knowledge and detachment, and renunciation by reason of rites. (NpU 171 and n. 53; BSU 253–254)

Later the *Nārada-parivṛāja Upaniṣad* (174–175) gives a sixfold classification, adding Turīyātīta and Avadhūta to the traditional four given in the *Āśrama Upaniṣad*. The difference between the Turīyātīta and the Avadhūta is not altogether clear, and some documents, such as the *Turīyātītāvadhūta Upaniṣad*, combine them into a single class. Renouncers belonging to both are regarded as possessing the liberating knowledge and, therefore, as not subject to any rule or prohibition. Theirs appear to be a totally antinomian state.

These six classes are also distinguished by the goals to which they aspire. Kuṭīcakas are said to aspire to the atmospheric world, Bahūdakas to the heavenly world, Haṃsas to the Penance-world, and Paramahaṃsas to the Truth-world (ĀrU 4,

1. For a detailed discussion of this controversy, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.



n. 3), whereas the Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas attain liberation in this life (NpU 177–178).

These different and sometimes conflicting classifications of renouncers point to the original variety of ascetic life-styles that, as I have already observed, were conflated into the single institution of *saṃnyāsa* by Brāhmaṇical theology.

## *The Behavior and Customs of Renouncers*

Although renunciation is defined as an essentially negative and even antinomian state, in practice, however, the renouncer's way of life was regulated by clear rules and characterized by established patterns of behavior. Our Upaniṣads devote considerable space to exhorting renouncers to follow these rules and customs.

### 6.1 WANDERING ALONE AND HOMELESS

Constant itinerancy and the absence of a stable residence characterize the daily life of a renouncer. One of the most common names for a renouncer, *parivrājaka*, literally means “wanderer.” At the conclusion of the renunciatory rite, the new renouncer turns his back on his home and village and walks toward the north. The technical term for this “going forth” is *pravrajyā*, which is also a common term for renunciation. “Going forth with his arms raised,” says the *Laghu-Saṃnyāsa* (LSU 20–21; KṣU 41), “let him not restrict himself to specific roads, but wander about homeless.”

Living without a home or a stable place of residence, therefore, is the hallmark of a renouncer's life. “A residence, the

great sages have proclaimed,” says one text, “is equal to the dung of sows. Let an ascetic abandon it, therefore, and roam about like a worm” (NpU 181). He is instructed to “spend just one night in a village and five nights in a town.”<sup>1</sup> Another text says: “Where he is at sunset, there let him sleep. Let him live without a fire and without a home” (NpU 182). Renouncers were vagabonds, and their homelessness, just like their refusal to use fire, was a powerful symbol of their separation from society that values stable residence. They are further required not to ask for directions as they wander; their wandering is aimless. They are not traveling anywhere. They are pilgrims without a destination.

A renouncer should avoid traveling in the village and region in which he formerly lived and where he is known. “A sage should leave his native land right after he has renounced. He should live far away from his own, like a thief just released from jail” (MU 115). The reason for abandoning one’s native region appears to be twofold. First, living close to one’s family and relations makes it easier to get attached to them. Second, he may be treated there with greater respect and kindness, which would make it impossible for him to live the anonymous and humble life of a renouncer (see below 6.4).

Renouncers are expected to live an itinerant life, however, only during the dry season, which lasts eight months. During the four months of the rainy season, roughly from June to September, when traveling becomes difficult and dangerous, they live in one place. “An ascetic shall wander alone for eight months;” says the *Āruṇi* (8), “he shall keep a fixed residence during the entire rainy season or during just two months of it.” The rain residence was a practice common to all renouncers both within and outside the Brāhmaṇical tradition. In time, these months of forced residence became a holy period. Many customs associated with it are recorded in the medieval literature on renunciation (Ypra 61.1–65.37).

1. KśU 33; NpU 158, 201–202; PpU 284.

As they wander about, renouncers live in the wilderness, which may be defined as uninhabited areas outside towns and villages, and enter a village only to beg for food.<sup>2</sup> They spend the night "in deserted houses, in temples, on haystacks, by ant-hills, at the foot of trees, in potter's sheds, in sheds for fire sacrifices, on sandy banks of rivers, in mountain caves, in glens, in the hollows of trees, in lonely spots, or in open fields."<sup>3</sup> Life in the wilderness, as we have seen (2.5), defines the renouncer's life in opposition to the ritual life of the householder lived in the village.

## 6.2 MENDICANCY

Another distinctive feature of a renouncer's life is mendicancy, from which is derived a common Sanskrit name for a renouncer, *bhikṣu* ("beggar"). Mendicancy is the inevitable result of a renouncer's abandonment of all possessions. A renouncer is totally separated from economic activities; he is neither an owner nor a producer. Owning nothing that is his own, a renouncer is reduced to fulfilling all his requirements by begging.

Of all those requirements, however, the most necessary and the most constant is food. Because a renouncer is forbidden to hoard anything, he is permitted to beg food only sufficient for a single meal. Because he cannot use fire, he is required to beg food that is already cooked. Begging, therefore, becomes a daily exercise; indeed, a renouncer's day appears to revolve around his begging round. Food and the methods of obtaining food are so central to a renouncer's life that they form the basis of most classifications of renouncers.<sup>4</sup>

2. For a detailed discussion of the concept of "wilderness" (*aranya*), see Sprockhoff 1981 and 1984.

3. JU 70-71. Cf. LSU 22; ĀśU 102; NpU 154; BhU 236.

4. See P. Olivelle, "Food and the Indian Ascetic," in *Problems of Dharma: Rules and Remedies in Classical Indian Law*, ed. I. Julia Leslie (Leiden: E. J. Brill), in press.

The ideal method of begging is called *mādhūkara*, which means to beg like a bee. As a bee gathers nectar a little at a time from many flowers, a renouncer begs a little food at a time from several houses. As a bee does not injure the flowers from which it obtains the nectar, so a renouncer, obtaining just a mouthful from each, does not become a burden on any householder. The *Bṛhat-Saṃnyāsa* (266) defines *mādhūkara* as the food that is begged from five or seven houses at random; that is, the renouncer does not select the houses he will visit. He is indeed instructed not to visit the houses that have acquired a reputation for giving plenty of almsfood. Lack of forethought and planning is the hallmark of a renouncer's attitude toward food. His attitude is one of indifference; such a renouncer is said to be "tongueless":

He who does not notice even as he eats that one thing is tasty and another is not, and whose words are kind, measured, and true, is said to be a tongueless man. (NpU 147)

He remains the same when he receives food and when he does not:

Let him not be elated when he receives food or be dejected when he receives not. Let him beg only as much as will sustain his life without getting attached to his belongings. (NpU 181)

Some renouncers give up all efforts at obtaining food. They remain in one place and eat anything that people may bring to them unasked. This practice is called *ajagaravrata* ("python vow"), because the ascetic waits for his food to come to him, just as a python.

Renouncers carry begging bowls to collect their almsfood. The bowls are made from a variety of materials, including clay, wood, and bottle-gourd.<sup>5</sup> The renouncers collect the food in their bowls and eat only after they have completed their begging round. The highest types of renouncers, however, are expected to give up the use of external bowls. Some receive the

5. ĀrU 11; LSU 22.

food in their hands and eat it as soon as it is received. They are called *pāṇipātrin*, “people who use their hands as begging bowls.” Others forego even the hands; the donors throw the food on the ground and they eat it directly with their mouths in imitation of cows. They are called *udarapātrin*, “people who use their stomachs as begging bowls.”

Food is necessary for survival, but it can also be a source of attachment. Love of food results in greed, a vice that our documents frequently warn the renouncers to guard against. They are expected to eat merely to sustain their life, not to gain any pleasure. They should therefore regard food as medicine.<sup>6</sup> Many sources instruct the renouncer to eat little—according to some, just eight mouthfuls a day—so that he becomes lean and puts on no fat.<sup>7</sup> Fear of food, as I have shown elsewhere (see above n. 4), is a central theme in the ascetic ideology and practice of all Indian religious traditions.

### 6.3 POSSESSIONS AND EMBLEMS

Renunciation, we have seen, was understood as essentially a negative state. Most injunctions are thus prohibitions; they instruct renouncers to give up or to discard various practices and objects. Renouncers, nevertheless, require certain articles for their life of wandering and mendicancy. We have seen that these are formally handed over to the new renouncer immediately after his renunciation (see above 4.5). The *Laghu-Saṃnyāsa* (21) cites a verse that lists these articles:

A pot, a drinking cup, a sling, a tripod, a pair of shoes, a patched garment against the cold, a loincloth, a water strainer, a bathing cloth, and an outer garment: an ascetic should avoid anything else other than these.

Several of these articles commonly carried by renouncers became symbols of their state. Thus the staff, the begging bowl,

6. KśU 33; JU 70.      7. NpU 174, 176.

and the ochre garment are often taken as emblems of renunciation. These articles are collectively called *liṅga*, the emblem of the renunciatory state.<sup>8</sup>

Advance in renunciation, however, is marked at least in the Advaita Vedānta tradition by the abandonment of emblems associated with lower levels.<sup>9</sup> Thus, for example, the *Paramahansa Upaniṣad* (46–47), after describing the articles taken by a renouncer, says that those articles do not signal the highest state of renunciation: “Now this is the highest: A Paramahansa lives without a staff, without a topknot, without a sacrificial string, and without a garment.” The *Nārada-parivrājaka* (154–155) says: “Triple staff, sling, bowl, water pot, waistband, and loincloth: let him abandon all these in water, saying: ‘Earth, *svāhā!*’ ”

As the abandonment of things that characterize the ritual life defines renunciation as such, so the abandonment of things that are associated with lower levels of renunciation defines its higher forms. Renunciation thus remains essentially a negative state, defined by what it abandons rather than by any custom with which it may be associated.

One of the customs associated with the highest type of renouncer is nudity. At the conclusion of the renunciatory rite, the new renouncer takes off all his clothes and, as the texts put it, “becomes clad as he was at birth.” This ritual nudity and the statement that he return to a newborn state, as we have seen (4.5), implies the ritual rebirth of the renouncer. In the case of the lower types, however, the new renouncer then takes the emblems of his status, including a loincloth and an ochre garment.

The higher types of renunciators, however, are expected to go totally naked. “Waistband, loincloth, staff, garment, and water pot: let him throw all these in water and thereafter wander clad as he was at birth and seeking the self” (NpU 155).

8. On the emblems of renunciators, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.

9. A medieval document called *Pañcamāśramavidhi* gives the appropriate rites and formulae for abandoning these insignia of renunciation: see Olivelle 1986, 143–156.

The *Turiyātītādvadhūta* (242) describes clearly the process of advancement in renunciation:

At the outset, then, such a person becomes a Kuṭīcaka, then in due order he advances to the Bahūdaka state, and when he is a Bahūdaka he proceeds to the Haṃsa state. Once he is a Haṃsa he becomes a Paramahaṃsa. He comes to know the entire universe by the deep contemplation of his own nature. Staff, water pot, waistband, loincloth, and garment—all these he throws into water after performing the rites prescribed in his own rule. He then becomes naked, giving up even the use of discolored old clothes, bark garments, or antelope skins.

#### 6.4 COURTING DISHONOR: MADNESS AND ACTING LIKE ANIMALS

A saying that recurs frequently in our Upaniṣads is that a renouncer should wander about the earth like a worm. The analogy of a worm is quite appropriate, because like a worm a renouncer is expected to go about unnoticed on the one hand, and despised on the other.

The highest type of renouncer should display no emblem or insignia of his state and keep even his conduct concealed (JU 69). Some of our Upaniṣads tells him to go about in disguise, so that people would not recognize him as a holy man (NpU 141).

A renouncer should not be influenced by the honor some may show him or by the disrespect and insults others may heap on him.

If a man remains as well pleased when people assault him as when they honor and worship him, he is then a true almsman. (NpU 139)

When he is praised let him not rejoice, nor curse others when he is reviled. (LSU 22)

To take pleasure in praise and honor can be fatal to the advancement in the path of perfection.



Praise is fatal to the success of yoga, and a yogin who is scorned by men attains the perfection of yoga. Without reviling the path of good men, therefore, let a yogin act in such a manner that people will despise him and never associate with him. (NpU 185)

Let a Brahmin ever shrink from praise as if it were poison. Let him always long for insults as if they were nectar.

For those who suffer insults sleep at ease, and at ease they rise from sleep. At ease, likewise, they roam this world. But a man who insults will perish. (NpU 143)

A renouncer is thus instructed not merely to avoid praise and honor but to actively court dishonor and insults.<sup>10</sup> He should find satisfaction when people insult him and maltreat him, for he is then able to conquer pride.

When evil men abuse and revile him; when they cheat and envy him; when they beat him, put him in jail, and deprive him of his livelihood; when fools throw feces and urine at him and assault him in many ways; desiring bliss but overtaken by pain, let him lift himself up by himself. (NpU 185)

Renouncers are also instructed to assume the appearance of and to behave like madmen. The *Jābāla* (69), for example, says that renouncers, "although they are sane, behave like madmen." The *Nāradaparivṛāja*, likewise, declares: "He acts as if he were a fool, a lunatic, or a goblin" (NpU 154).

His emblem and aim concealed, he should present himself to the people as a madman or a simpleton even though he is a sage, and as a fool even though he is wise.

Let him not do anything, say anything, or think of anything

10. Regarding the practice of courting dishonor, see Daniel H. H. Ingalls, "Cynics and Pāśupatas: The Seeking of Dishonor," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962): 281–298. Minoru Hara, "A Note on the Pāśupata Concept of Purity (*śauca*)," *Svasti Śrī: Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra Felicitation Volume*, ed. K. V. Ramesh et al. (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1984), 237–244. See also David H. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Saivite Sects*. Australian National University Centre of Oriental Studies, Oriental Monograph Series, no. 12 (New Delhi: Thomson Press, 1972).

## *The Behavior and Customs of Renouncers*

whether it is good or bad. In this manner a sage shall roam like a fool, finding his delight in himself.

Let a wise man play like a child and let a clever man act like a fool. Let a learned man speak like a lunatic, and let a Vedic servant act like a cow. (NpU 184)

The three terms that recur with some frequency in this context are *bāla*, *unmatta*, and *piśāca*. The first can mean both a madman and a child; in either case it indicates behavior that goes against adult and rational norms. *Unmatta* can mean a lunatic and a man who is intoxicated, both symbols of irrational and improper behavior. *Piśāca* is a class of demonic beings who delight in eating raw flesh and who elicit feelings of disgust and loathing.

Separation from society and, therefore, from human culture is a characteristic of most Indian ascetic institutions and ideologies. This separation is expressed, as we have seen, in the opposition between village and wilderness common to most Indian ascetic traditions. Society is centered in the village, and ascetic life-styles are associated with the wilderness. An interesting aspect of this opposition is that the two are the typical habitats of humans and wild beasts, respectively. Many ascetic traditions use the image of the ascetic imitation of animals to express their opposition to society and culture, their rejection of the cultural norms of rational and proper behavior, and their return to nature.

An ancient law book introduces life-styles dedicated to holiness with a verse that admonishes people seeking holiness to behave like beasts:

Moving about with wild beasts,  
And dwelling with them alone,  
Living a life just like theirs—  
Clearly that's the way to heaven.

(BDh 3.2.19; 3.3.22)

The imitation of animals is most often associated with the way ascetics obtain and eat their food. We have already seen

that the typical way of begging food (*mādhūkara*) is named after the bee and imitates the way bees gather nectar. Two special ways of obtaining food that are associated with higher classes of renunciators, as we have also seen, are named after the cow and the python (see above 6.2).

Other sources tell us of ascetics who imitated cows and dogs. The *Mahābhārata* (5.97.14) offers the following definition of an ascetic who practices the cow-vow (*govrata*): “He is said to observe the cow-vow who lies down anywhere [that is, wherever he may happen to be in the evening], feeds on anything, and covers himself with anything whatsoever.” A Buddhist source speaks of ascetics who imitate dogs by going naked, walking on all fours, lying on the ground, and picking up food thrown on the ground with the mouth.<sup>11</sup> The Buddhist writer Aśva-ghoṣa gives this interesting classification of ascetics:

Some live like birds by what they can pick up from the ground, others graze on grass like deer, and others, turned into anthills by the forest wind, pass their time with snakes.<sup>12</sup>

Some gain their subsistence by laborious pounding with stones, others eat only what has been husked by their own teeth, and some again cook for others and meet their needs on anything that may be left over.

Some with their coils of matted hair soaked with water twice offer oblations to Agni chanting sacred texts; others plunge into

11. *Dīgha Nikāya*, III.6–7. The *Majjhima Nikāya* (I.79) describes how the Buddha before his enlightenment walked on all fours and behaved like an animal and records (I.387) a meeting between the Buddha and two ascetics, one of whom practiced the cow-vow and the other the dog-vow.

12. The editor and translator, E. H. Johnston, comments: “But as I understand it, the wind piles up earth around the motionless ascetics lying on the ground, turning them into anthills and thus giving them an additional resemblance to snakes who are often mentioned as living in anthills.” The *Mahābhārata* (3.122) relates an episode where the ascetic Cyavana stood motionless for so long that ants built an anthill around him. In another episode, Jājālin stood still for such a long time that a pair of birds built a nest on his head (MBh 12.253.20–46). See also the verse in the BSU 262: “As I remain mute in the repose of undivided contemplation, when will the birds of the forest build their straw nests on my head?” Jain saints are often represented iconographically with wild creepers twining around their legs and bodies as they stand naked and motionless in meditation.

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the water and dwell with the fishes, their bodies scored by turtles.<sup>13</sup>

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (5.5.32), likewise, describes several ascetic vows that imitate the behavior of animals:

When the Lord noticed that this world was definitely opposed to the practice of yoga, he considered any resistance to it as abhorrent and he undertook the vow called "python." Thereafter he ate, drank, chewed, and passed urine while he was in a prone position. . . . Likewise, following the life-style of cows, deer, and crows, he behaved like them, drinking and passing urine while he was walking, standing, and sitting down.<sup>14</sup>

Imitating animals, acting mad, and seeking dishonor by loathsome conduct clearly have complex sociological, psychological, and theological reasons and causes. Our sources identify one reason: the seeking of dishonor from society. Madness and irrationality, however, are often associated with divinity, divine possession, and holiness.<sup>15</sup> Thus, irrational and improper behavior, just as ecstasy and possession,<sup>16</sup> may have reasons other than seeking dishonor, especially when such behavior was expected of a certain class of individuals, such as renouncers. Such behavior may indeed confirm their holiness in the eyes of the believers and their position in society as extraordinary and powerful individuals. From a theological point of view, moreover, the mystic knowledge that these renouncers seek, at least within the Advaita Vedānta tradition, is associated with the transcendence of rationality. Madness,

13. *Buddhacarita*, 7.15–17 (Johnston's translation).

14. See also the legend of Ādi-Bharata recorded in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 2.13. Cf. Olivelle 1987, 135–147.

15. For an account of madness in the life of Guṇḍam Rāṭī, considered an incarnation of god in the Mahānubhāva sect, and how madness can become a proof of divinity for the believers, see Anne Feldhaus, *The Deeds of God in Riddhipur* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

16. For an excellent study of the sociological framework of spirit possession, see I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1971).

## *Introduction*

therefore, just as other aspects of a renouncer's life, proclaims their separation from the world of illusion to which belong rationality, morality, and all social norms and structures and at the same time guarantees them a powerful position within society.

# *Translations*

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# Āruṇi Upaniṣad

## I

[3] Āruṇi went to the world of Prajāpati, and, going up to him, he said: “By what means, O Lord, can I give up rites<sup>1</sup> completely?” Prajāpati said to him: “A man should forsake his sons, brothers, relatives, and so forth; he should give up the topknot, [4] the sacrificial string, the sacrifice, the ritual code,<sup>2</sup> and Vedic recitation; and he should disregard the worlds of Bhūr, Bhuvās, Svar, Mahas, Jana, Tapas, Satya, Atala, Pātāla, Vitala, Sutala, Rasātala, Talātala, and Mahātala,<sup>3</sup> and the entire universe. [5] Let him take a staff and a garment; and let him give up everything else.”

1. The Sanskrit term *karma* has several related meanings. In general it means work or action. Although this meaning is always present, in the literature on renunciation the term normally has the specific meaning of ritual action. A renouncer gives up all rites and things related to ritual activity, such as the sacred fires and the sacrificial string. Throughout the translation of these Upaniṣads, therefore, I have translated *karma* as rite or ritual action. See Introduction, 3.1.

2. The term probably refers to the text describing the rituals and ceremonies [*kalpasūtra*] of one's Vedic branch.

3. The first seven are the pleasant worlds: Earth, Atmosphere, Sky, “Great,” “People,” “Austerity,” and “Truth.” The last is often identified with the world of Brahmā. The final seven are the nether worlds or hells of Indian mythology. For an account of these, see ViP I.5–6; HDh 4:159–171.



II

“A householder or a Vedic student or a forest hermit should discard his sacrificial string on the ground or in water. [6] He should deposit his external fires in the fire of his stomach and the *gāyatrī*<sup>4</sup> in the fire of his speech.

“A celibate Kuṭīcara<sup>5</sup> should give up his family, put away his bowl, discard his water strainer, throw away his staffs, and forsake the heavenly worlds.” So said Prajāpati.

“Thereafter let him function without mantras.<sup>6</sup> He should bathe at the start of the three junctures of the day, [7] and, in deep contemplation, he should realize his union with the Self.<sup>7</sup> Of all the Vedas let him recite just the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads.”<sup>8</sup>

4. The *gāyatrī*, also called *sāvitrī*, is the famous verse of the R̥g Veda [3.62.10]: “We meditate on that excellent glory of the god Savitr̥, that he may stimulate our prayers.” The abandonment of sacred fires and of sacred formulae is here conceived of as their internalization: cf. Introduction, 3.2.

5. As the previous paragraph speaks of the renunciation of a non-renouncer, so this paragraph deals with a Kuṭīcara’s elevation to the Paramaham̐sa state. Kuṭīcara, more commonly called Kuṭīcaka, literally means “hut-dweller” and is the lowest class of renouncers (cf. ĀśU 100; NpU 174–178; BSU 254; Introduction, chapter 5). Such renouncers live with or receive food from their relatives. Thus, giving up the family probably means that they cease to live with and to receive food from them. “Worlds” are the seven pleasant worlds mentioned above. They are elsewhere viewed as the goals of lower types of renouncers (cf. NpU 177; BSU 263).

6. A Paramaham̐sa renouncer uses no mantra other than the mystic syllable OM (Ypra 38.14; 40.11–12). He performs acts such as sipping and bathing in silence. His abstention from mantras follows from his abandonment of ritual activity, for the two are inseparably linked (NpU 137).

7. The junctures (*sandhyā*) occur between night and day (dawn), between forenoon and afternoon (noon), and between day and night (dusk). These are sacred times at which Hindus worship the sun with special rituals, also called *sandhyā*. In the Advaita tradition the highest class of renouncers, namely Paramaham̐sas, do not perform this worship in the customary manner with mantras, water offerings, and other rites. Their *sandhyā* consists of meditating on the unity between all creatures and Brahman (Ypra 41–46). Within this context the term *sandhyā* is allegorized using its phonetic similarity to and its etymological relationship with *samādhi* (deep yogic contemplation) and *sandhi*, which means both juncture and union. A Paramaham̐sa’s *sandhyā*, therefore, consists of contemplation (*samādhi*) in which he realizes his union (*sandhi*) with Brahman. See also JU 62.

8. This statement implies that the renouncer no longer recites the ritual portions of the Vedas: cf. Introduction, 3.1.

### III

“I am truly Brahman. ‘String’ [*sūtra*] is derived from ‘stringing’ [*sūcana*]. Brahman is the string; and assuredly I, who know it,<sup>9</sup> am the string. Let a wise man who knows thus discard the external string.<sup>10</sup> [8] Let him also give up desire, anger, greed, delusion, deceit, arrogance, falsehood, and the like. An ascetic shall wander alone for eight months; he shall keep a fixed residence during the entire rainy season or during just two months of it.”<sup>11</sup>

### IV

[9] “A man who knows the import of the Veda may indeed abandon these either before or after his Vedic initiation [JU 64]: father, son, fire, sacrificial string, rites, wife, and everything else here below. ‘I have renounced! I have renounced! I

9. The term *vidvān* may be taken adjectivally; the meaning would then be “I who am wise.” In these texts, however, this term is frequently used in a verbal sense. In the present context the term refers to the previous statement. The meaning, therefore, is that the man who knows Brahman to be the string becomes himself identified with the string.

10. Here we have an allegorical explanation of another renunciatory custom, the abandonment of the sacrificial string. By the early centuries of the common era, the wearing of this string had come to symbolize the twice-born status of the upper classes and especially the priestly status of Brahmins. The conferring of the sacrificial string had become by this time the central feature of the Brāhmaṇical rite of initiation. In the present allegory Brahman, the absolute reality, is considered the true sacred string (*sūtra*), following the statement of BāU 3.7 where Brahman is said to be the string that ties the universe together. A similar metaphor is found in the BhG 7.7: “On me all this is strung, as rows of gems upon a string.” Within the context of the string metaphor, the term *sūcana*, which normally means pointing or indicating, seems to have a different significance; it appears to indicate a needle’s (*sūci*) act of piercing, namely, the passing of a thread through several objects to tie them together. The true sacrificial string, therefore, is Brahman and, consequently, one’s own self. One who knows this does not need an external string. Cf. BU 86–87; PbU 295–299.

11. Normally the rainy season when an ascetic has to live in one place lasts four months: KśU 33. He is expected to wander for the eight months of the dry season.

have renounced!’—having proclaimed this three times, he should say:

“Safety<sup>12</sup> from me to all beings!  
From me everything proceeds.

“He should raise the bamboo staff with the mantra:

“Protect me, friend,  
You who are my strength and my friend.  
You are the bolt of Indra, slaying obstructions;  
Be my refuge and banish all that is evil.

[10] “Let him then take nothing besides a loincloth.

“Thereafter they<sup>13</sup> live the life of mendicants. Celibacy, non-injury, non-possession, and truthfulness—guard these assiduously.”

V

[11] “Now, Paramahaṃsa renunciators sit and sleep on the ground. Celibates use bowls made of clay, bottle-gourd, or wood, while ascetics enter a village to beg for food, using their hands or stomachs as begging bowls.<sup>14</sup> Let him utter the mys-

12. The term *abhaya* literally means freedom from fear. The renouncer here declares that he will not be a source of fear for any living being. This is the ritual expression of the principle of non-injury (*ahiṃsā*) that should govern the renouncer’s life.

13. The text here shifts from the singular to the plural, probably because this is a citation taken from BāU 3.5.1. The next sentence, likewise, shifts to the second person plural.

14. The category of celibates is clearly contrasted with that of ascetics. Celibates use bowls, whereas ascetics receive food with their hands. “Celibates” appears to be a synonym for Kuṭīcakas, who were called “celibate” earlier at ĀrU 6, while “ascetics” are identified with Paramahaṃsas, the highest class of ascetics. An ascetic who uses his stomach as a bowl (*udarapātrin*) uses his mouth to gather food that is thrown on the ground by the donor. A verse cited in the Ypra (57.56–57) states: “Like a cow, the sage always seeks food with his mouth” (MBh 1.86.17; NpU 182; BSU 268).

tic saying: ‘*Oṃ hi, oṃ hi, oṃ hi.*’ It is truly the mystic saying.<sup>15</sup> Wise is he who knows this.

“Let him discard his Palāśa, Bilva, or Udumbara staff, his deerskin, his girdle, and his sacrificial string.<sup>16</sup> [12] Valiant is he who knows this.

“That highest step of Viṣṇu  
The sages always see,  
Like an eye stretched across the sky.  
That highest step of Viṣṇu  
The wise men, ever vigilant,  
Light up with joyous praise. [RV 1.22.20–21]

“That is the teaching on liberation. That is the teaching of the Veda.”

15. Here and elsewhere in these documents, I have translated the term *upaniṣad* as “mystic saying” or “mystic doctrine.” The term appears with a similar meaning in the most ancient Upaniṣads (ChU 1.13.4; 8.8.4–5; TU 2.9.1). It refers to secret texts with magical powers and to secret teachings. Many of these texts, such as the one given here, have no linguistic meaning.

16. Since only Vedic students carry such staffs, this statement must refer to renunciation of students. Staffs of Palāśa (*Butea Frondosa*) and Bilva (*Aegle Marmelos*, commonly called wood apple) are prescribed for Brahmin students, and Udumbara (*Ficus Glomerata*) staffs for Vaiśya students. Although the Kṣatriya staff of Banyan wood is not mentioned, the intent seems to be to include all three upper classes. At least implicitly, therefore, the ĀrU appears to recognize that people of all these classes, and not just Brahmins, are qualified to renounce.

# *Laghu-Saṁnyāsa Upaniṣad* and *Kuṇḍikā Upaniṣad*

[A]

[15] When a man who had maintained the three sacred fires<sup>1</sup> dies, his funerary rite is performed with mantras. If he happens to recover,<sup>2</sup> however, he should resolve: "I wish to go beyond the order."<sup>3</sup> Then, he should duly gather the requisites<sup>4</sup> and retire to the wilderness with the intention of offering an oblation to his ancestors. Early in the morning of the new moon,

1. I follow the division of this Upaniṣad into sections A–G given by Sprockhoff 1976, 37–38. The three sacred fires are the east fire (*āhavanīya*), the west or householder's fire (*gārhapatya*), and the south fire (*dakṣiṇāgni*). They are used for Vedic sacrifices. A person who maintains all these fires constantly in his house is called *āhitāgni*. He is distinguished from those who maintain just one fire (*ekāgni*), i.e. the domestic fire established at marriage, and from those who do not maintain any sacred fire (*anagni*). The *āhitāgni* is the model Brahmin, and the standard rite of renunciation is addressed to him. Medieval handbooks prescribe modified versions of the rites for the others. Cf. Ypra 7.30f; 10.5; 11.6; 12.6–7.

2. The opening sentence makes it clear that the rites explained in this Upaniṣad are addressed to a Brahmin who was on the point of death but who has recovered his health.

3. The meaning of the compound word *āśramapāram* is not altogether clear. It can mean beyond the four orders or the farthest limit of the orders. It is more likely, as Sprockhoff (1976, 54) has suggested, that the term means beyond the order in which he is now, namely the householder's order. This resolution is more than a mere wish or desire as assumed by Sprockhoff 1976, 52; it is rather the formal and public declaration of intent (*saṁkalpa*) that precedes any ritual action, including renunciation.

4. I have followed here the conjectural reading offered by Schrader (345), which makes much better sense than the possibly corrupt reading adopted in the critical edition on the basis of the manuscript evidence (Sprockhoff 1976, 55).

after kindling the fires, he should offer the libation connected with an oblation to ancestors, and perform the Brahma-sacrifice.<sup>5</sup>

He is omniscient and all-knowing;

knowledge is his austerity.

[16] This, his offering divine,

leads to immortality.

Having thus (declared his intention),<sup>6</sup> he should then recite:

Rising victorious above

heaven and earth, all yonder worlds;

May Brahman, creator of all,

kindly grant all prosperity.<sup>7</sup>

In the east at first Brahman was born;

Vena revealed him from the radiant summit,

Disclosed his forms, the deepest, the most exalted,

womb of the existent and the non-existent.<sup>8</sup> [AV 4.1.1]

Let him then offer an oblation with the words: “To Brahman, to Atharvan, to Prajāpati, to Anumati, to Agni Sviṣṭakṛt!” Next, he should offer the two fire drills<sup>9</sup> in the fire with the words:

O Sacrifice!

Go to the sacrifice!

Go to the Lord of the sacrifice!

Go to your own place of birth! *Svāhā!* [AV 7.97.5]

5. We have very little information regarding this sacrifice (Sprockhoff 1976, 57–59). An offering called *brahmānvādhāna* is described in BDh 2.17.18–19.

6. The formal declaration of intent (*saṃkalpa*) precedes every ritual act. See above LSU 15, n. 3.

7. This verse constitutes the *puro’nuvākya*, that is, the invitory formula recited by the Hotṛ priest prior to the principal offering. Here and in the two following verses beginning with “O Sacrifice . . .” and in the verse beginning “Into me . . .” the manuscripts give only the first words (*pratīka*). This is a common practice among classical Indian authors when they cite mantras well known to their readers. I have provided the whole text for the benefit of modern readers.

8. This verse constitutes the *yājyā*, that is, the formula of consecration recited by the Hotṛ priest immediately before the Adhvaryu priest throws the oblation into the fire.

9. The fire drills consist of a cylindrical shaft and a flat slab of wood. The drill is turned on the slab with the aid of a string. The friction creates a fire that is used for starting sacred fires. The drills are part of the sacrificial paraphernalia that a renouncer discards at his renunciatory rite.

O Lord of the sacrifice!  
This is your sacrifice,  
Full of great power and strength,  
accompanied by songs of praise! *Svāhā!* [AV 7.97.6]

[17] Thereupon, he should offer the oblations of ghee, reciting the four lessons beginning with: “To a friend would I turn with friendship. . . .”<sup>10</sup> His consecration takes place through these very lessons.<sup>11</sup> He should then deposit the two fires<sup>12</sup> in himself, saying:

Into me first I take the fire,  
with power, with splendor, with might.  
In me children, in me long life,  
in me the fire I place. *Svāhā!* [AV 7.82.2]

Let him steadfastly keep his vow. On this there are the following verses:

[B]  
[Beginning of the Kuṇḍikā Upaniṣad]

When a man who took delight in serving his teacher becomes tired of the student life, [18] and, after finishing the study of Vedas, is permitted to leave by his teacher, he is called an *āśramin*.<sup>13</sup>

10. These four lessons form the eighteenth book of the *Atharva Veda*. They are funeral hymns addressed to Yama, the god of the dead.

11. It is clear that this statement refers back to the very first sentence of the Upaniṣad. The recitation of these verses constitutes the funerary rite or the last sacrament, (*saṃskāra*, translated here as “consecration”) of the person who is about to renounce. Cf. Sprockhoff 1976, 60–63.

12. The two fires are probably the east fire and the west fire. Two fires are also deposited at the *sarvamedha* sacrifice: ŚB 13.6.2.20.

13. This term commonly means a person who lives in an order (*āśrama*). People outside such orders, e.g., widowers, are called *anāśramin*. Here a rather technical meaning is given to the term: an *āśramin* is viewed as a young man who has completed his period of Vedic study and has returned home ready to undertake household duties. Such a person is generally known as a *snātaka*: one who has taken the bath that concludes the period of studentship.

Having married a wife of equal birth, and kindled the fire as well as he can, let him offer a Brahma-sacrifice [LSU 15, n. 5]. Let him offer it (after fasting for) a day and a night.<sup>14</sup>

Dividing his estate among his sons, and getting rid of vulgar sensual lusts, let him pursue the path of the forest and wander around in a pure region.<sup>15</sup>

He may subsist on air or on water, or he may eat the prescribed food and live on fallen fruit. [19] When he deposits the sacred fires in himself, let them not shed any tears on earth.<sup>16</sup>

When indeed a person possesses it, how can one say that he has renounced? But how can it have the same name, because of which one is called a renouncer?<sup>17</sup>

Fire that is cleansed of reward, therefore, hinders<sup>18</sup> not renunciation. That fire departs to the forest and takes refuge with a hermit.

“Self-controlled, he once departed from the world to the forest along with his wife. Now forsaking desires he renounces. What fear has overtaken him? [20] Or, pray, on account of what grief does he abandon great pleasures?”

14. The text is obscure and possibly corrupt. Schrader’s conjectural emendation of *tāsām* (“of them”) to *tasyā* poses a problem of *sandhi*; the form can be either the genitive singular *tasyāḥ* or the dative singular *tasyai*. Schrader does not offer any explanation. I think that it is the genitive, and that Schrader has assumed that the object of the verb *nirvāpet* in this context should be in the genitive. With regard to the interpretation of *ahorātreṇa* as “after fasting for a day and a night,” I have followed Nārāyaṇa’s commentary given in the *Ṭippaṇī*.

15. This and the following verse imply that a man should spend some time as a forest hermit before renouncing. Although an *āśrama* theory is not explicitly formulated, these verses reflect the classical view that a man should live successively as a student, a householder, and a hermit before becoming a renouncer. Cf. JU 64.

16. During renunciation neither the new renouncer nor his relatives are expected to cry. Cf. KśU 37.

17. The meaning of this verse is extremely unclear. I have followed Deussen (1905, 689, n. 2). The first half-verse appears to be a genuine question, while the second half-verse seems to be the answer in the form of a rhetorical question. After depositing the fire in himself, the renouncer carries it internally and thus possesses a fire. This internal fire, as the next verse points out, is pure and does not hinder renunciation.

18. In interpreting *sahate* as “hinders not,” I follow Nārāyaṇa’s commentary given in the *Ṭippaṇī*: *saṃnyāsavirodhī na bhavati*, “it is not an obstacle to renunciation,” which is also followed by Deussen.



“Afraid of dwelling in a womb, afraid likewise of heat and cold, I seek to enter the Cave, the state supreme that is free from pain.”<sup>19</sup>

[C]

Having renounced fire, let him not bring it back.<sup>20</sup> “When Manyu brought his wife home . . .”: silently reciting these mantras concerning the self,<sup>21</sup> let him then undergo initiation.<sup>22</sup> He should wear an ochre garment, and keep the hair of his armpits and the pubic region.<sup>23</sup> Going forth with his arms raised [cf. NpU 168], let him not restrict himself to specific roads,<sup>24</sup> [21] but wander about homeless. He eats what he begs;

19. According to one source, the last two verses are recited during the eight oblations to the deceased ancestors that precede the rite of renunciation (Sprockhoff 1976, 51, n. 56). The question-and-answer format of the verses fits this context well. The Brahmins invited to the feast ask the question, and the man who intends to renounce gives the answer. “Cave” here has a double meaning. It is one of the ideal places of residence for a renouncer. It also means the cavity of the heart, which a renouncer enters mentally during meditation.

20. Or: “After having renounced, let him not bring back the fire.” See Sprockhoff 1989, 154, n. 69. The term *return* here probably has a technical meaning. The depositing of the sacred fires is not peculiar to the rite of renunciation. The fires are deposited in the fire drills or in the self when a Brahmin wants to carry them along on a journey. When the fires are needed for a rite, they are rekindled or brought back by a special rite. Cf. *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*, 4.13. Our text wants to point out that after renunciation one is not allowed to bring back the fires and to return to ritual activity. Cf. Introduction, 4.2.

21. These mantras are the thirty-four verses of AV 11.8. They deal with the origin of certain gods and with the creation of human beings.

22. This is one of the few places where the technical term *dīkṣā* (“consecration” or “initiation”) is used with reference to the procedure for becoming a renouncer. The term, however, is used here not with reference to the preceding renunciatory ritual at which the sacred fire is abandoned but with regard to the assumption of the various insignia of renunciation. Cf. Introduction, 4.5.

23. Renouncers are required to shave the hair of the head and face. They are, however, explicitly forbidden to shave the armpits and the pubic hair.

24. The Sanskrit term *vimuktamārga* is unclear. I have followed Schrader’s explanation. The *Mahābhārata* [12.9.18] has a similar verse: “Not inquiring from anyone about the road and wandering along any road, let him not desire to go to any special region.”

he should not give alms.<sup>25</sup> Let him carry a water strainer to protect living things.<sup>26</sup>

[D]

On this there are the following verses:

A pot, a drinking cup, a sling,<sup>27</sup> a tripod,<sup>28</sup> a pair of shoes, a patched garment against the cold, a loincloth, a water strainer, a bathing cloth, and an outer garment: an ascetic should avoid anything else other than these.

[22] Let him sleep on a river bank or in a temple. Let him not afflict his body with extremes of pleasure or of pain.

Let him bathe, drink, and cleanse himself with water that is purified. When he is praised let him not rejoice, nor curse others when he is reviled.

A split-gourd bowl for begging and such, and bathing materials are allowed. He shall always come out victorious, who lives this life with his senses controlled.

[E]

The union of knowledge occurs in the mind. From the mind arises space, from space wind, from wind light, from light water,

25. Even though it is not explicitly stated, the reason for not giving alms appears to be the fact that a renouncer eats begged food. A beggar does not own anything that he may legitimately give away. Giving is one of the basic virtues of all Indian religions. It is significant that the renunciators are the only group of people who do not practice that virtue.

26. The use of the water strainer before drinking saves the lives of insects and other little creatures that live in water.

27. A sling is made with strings and is similar in shape to a pot hanger. It is tied to the staff and is used to carry the water pot. Cf. Olivelle 1986, 44-49.

28. In an earlier period a tripod (*triviṣṭabdhā*) was used by wandering ascetics to carry a pot of water. In later times it was replaced by a walking stick made by tying three bamboo reeds (*tridaṇḍa*) together. The two are frequently confused in later literature. For a discussion of the tripod and the triple staff, see Olivelle 1986, 35-54.

from water earth, from earth [23] [plants, from plants food, from food semen, and from semen man. He who knows thus the origin]<sup>29</sup> of these beings attains Brahman. He attains the Ageless, the Deathless, the Imperishable, the Unchanging, when he controls his out-breath and his in-breath while repeatedly reciting it.<sup>30</sup>

[F]

On this there are the following verses:

Placing both his hands on the spot between his anus and genitals, and gently biting<sup>31</sup> his tongue extended out to the size of a barley corn, let him engage in the control of breathing.<sup>32</sup>

Eyes open the size of a bean and fixed on ears and brows, [24] let him keep his nose and his ears from contact with odors and sounds.

Through this exercise whose habit comes from former lives, he then attains the blessed state, where abides Brahman, the final end.

Then, fixing the heart on penance by these means, breath breaks the crown, rises up from the body, and reaches the Imperishable.<sup>33</sup>

29. The section within brackets is wanting in the manuscripts. It is given within brackets by Schrader in the critical edition following the parallel passage in TU 2.1.

30. The SR inserts here the first four verses of section G. It is probably these verses that the renouncer is expected to recite repeatedly (Sprockhoff 1976, 42).

31. I have followed the reading *saṃdāśya* found in the SR, which is also found in many northern manuscripts. The critical edition reads *saṃdṛśya* ("behold"), which does not suit the context at all.

32. I have followed Nārāyaṇa's commentary given in the *Ṭippaṇī* in interpreting the term *saṃśrayet* (here probably meaning "resort to") as practicing the control of breathing.

33. This verse deals with the death of a man who has attained the liberating knowledge. "By these means" refers to the yogic practices, such as breath control, alluded to above. "Heart" means the mind. "Penance" refers to the supramental state called *unmanī* (NU s. 48; Schrader, 385). Some commentators explain "breaking the crown" to mean that the breath goes up through the opening at the top of the head. It may also be an allusion, however, to the ritual breaking of the skull of a dead renouncer. Cf. Ydhs, 135; Ypra 71.32.

*Laghu-Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad and Kuṇḍikā Upaniṣad [25–26]*

[25] People who know the High and the Low,<sup>34</sup> and who, having broken their body's crown, have attained the highest state, do not return to earth again.

*[End of the Laghu-Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad]*

[G]

Stirred by the wind of illusion,  
the waves of the whole universe  
Repeatedly rise and fall<sup>35</sup>  
within me, the ocean of total bliss.<sup>36</sup>

As the sky is not tied to a cloud,  
so to the body I am not tied.  
Awake, dreaming, or deep in sleep,  
how could I its qualities have?

Like the sky am I,  
far beyond the reach of time.<sup>37</sup>

Like the sun am I,  
other than the illumined.

Like a hill am I,  
forever unchangeable.

Like the sea am I,  
without a farther shore.

[26] I am Nārāyaṇa! Naraka I killed!  
I am Puruṣa! Citadels I laid waste!  
I am the Lord!

34. The reference is probably to the highest Brahman who is without attributes and to the lower Brahman to whom are ascribed such activities as the creation of the world.

35. The author plays on the double meaning of the Sanskrit terms *vīci* and *vibhrama*. The former means both waves and deceit, while the latter means both stirring and error. This and the following verses appear in a different order in the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (495–529) ascribed to Śaṅkara.

36. This series of verses that close the Upaniṣad are uttered by a man who has obtained the liberating knowledge of his identity with Brahman, the ultimate reality.

37. In translating *kalpavidūragah* I have followed the interpretation given by Schrader in the *Tippaṇi: kālātītaḥ*. *Kalpa* generally refers to the time between the birth and death of the universe. In all likelihood, in the present context it refers to time in general, which characterizes all worldly existence.

*Kuṇḍikā Upaniṣad [27]*

I am pure consciousness, the witness of all!  
I am free from the thought of “I” and “mine”!  
I have no lord!  
The witness is different; he is untouched  
by the qualities of things witnessed.  
Like a lamp, the unchanging and impartial man  
is not touched by the duties of home.<sup>38</sup>  
Let this insentient body  
wallow in water or on land.  
By its qualities I am not touched,  
as space by the qualities of a pot.<sup>39</sup>  
I do not act, I do not change.  
I have no parts, I have no form.  
I am eternal, I have no thought.  
I am unique, I have no support.  
All are myself and I am all!  
I am unique and I transcend all!  
I am my own eternal bliss,  
pure undivided consciousness!  
Seeing me alone everywhere,  
knowing myself to be unique,  
[27] Enjoying the bliss of myself,  
I become free from every thought.  
Walking, standing, or sitting down,  
sleeping, or doing anything else,  
Let a wise sage live as he likes,  
ever delighting in himself.

That is the secret teaching.

38. The meaning is that an “unchanging and impartial” renouncer is not subject to the duties of householders. The example of the lamp seems to mean that a lamp is not affected by the objects it illuminates. So the witness is not touched by the qualities of the objects he witnesses. The parallel is more striking in Sanskrit, where the same term *dharma* indicates both qualities and duties.

39. The relationship between the conscious self and the unconscious body is compared to that between space and a pot. Space is by its very nature unlimited, and even when it becomes limited by the dimensions of a pot, it remains unaffected by the pot's qualities of fragility and finitude. Similarly, although in the state of ignorance the self is limited by the body, constituting thereby the individual human being (*jīva*), yet it does not assume the qualities of the body.

# Kaṭhaśruti Upaniṣad

## CHAPTER ONE

[31] “He who renounces in the proper order<sup>1</sup> becomes a renunciant.”

“What is it that people call renunciation? And how does one become a renunciant?”<sup>2</sup>

“A man who has protected himself well by rites<sup>3</sup> should obtain the cheerful approval of his mother, father, wife, sons, friends, and relatives. Having invited as before all the priests who usually officiate for him, he should offer a sacrifice to Agni Vaiśvānara and give all his possessions.<sup>4</sup> After the offici-

1. The proper order in all likelihood refers to the proper sequence of ceremonies constituting the rite of renunciation: see below KśU 34, n. 8. It is less likely that it refers to the four orders (*āśrama*) that a person is expected to pass through. See NpU 137, n. 13; Sprockhoff 1976, 72–73; 1990, 29. For a comparative study of the KśU and the *Mānava Śrautasūtra*, see Sprockhoff 1987.

2. The text does not identify the interlocutors. They may be the same as those of the second chapter, namely Prajāpati and the gods.

3. These rites are probably the sacraments (*saṃskāra*). See NpU 135. Regarding the meaning of *karma* as “rite,” see ĀrU 3, n. 1.

4. “As before”: the reference could be to an earlier chapter of the original text from which this section is taken, in which case the procedure of invitation would have been given there (Sprockhoff 1976, 74). Or else, it may just mean that he should invite them in the usual manner. The text does not identify the person(s) to whom he gives his possessions. It is likely that this gift is actually the sacrificial fee (*dakṣiṇā*) given to the officiating priests. A sacrificial fee of all one’s possessions is mentioned in MDh 6.38. In LSU 18 and elsewhere the candidate for renunciation is expected to divide his estate among his sons.

ating priests have placed all the sacrificial vessels on the sacrificer's body,<sup>5</sup> [32] he should deposit all the breaths, namely, the in-breath, the out-breath, the diffused breath, the up-breath, and the middle breath, in all the fires, namely, the east fire, the householder's fire, the south fire, the hall fire, and the domestic fire.<sup>6</sup> He should remove his hair together with the topknot and discard his sacrificial string. He should then go out and, looking at his son, utter this parting address:

“You are Brahman!  
You are the sacrifice!  
You are all!

“If he has no son, he should think of himself in the same manner. Then he should go forth toward the east or toward the north without looking around.

“He may beg food from all four classes. He should take his food using his hand as a begging bowl. [33] Let him partake of food as if it were medicine; and let him eat whatever he happens to get merely to sustain his life, so as not to put on fat and to remain lean. Let him spend just one night in a village and five nights in a town. He may spend the four months of the rainy season in a village or in a town. Let him take a ragged garment or one made of bark; let him not take anything else. If he is infirm, however, he may mortify himself using whatever enables him to endure his infirmity.”<sup>7</sup>

5. This ceremony reinforces the funerary character of the renunciatory rite. Cf. Introduction, 4.3; LSU 15. At the funeral of a Brahmin who had offered Vedic sacrifices, each of his sacrificial vessels is placed on a particular part of his body during cremation, e.g., the *juhū* spoon in his right hand and the *upabhyt* spoon in his left hand. Cf. HDh 4:207.

6. These are the five sacred fires connected with Brāhmanical rites: LSU 15, n. 1. For details of the rite of depositing the fires in the breaths, see JU 65–66.

7. The text is unclear and possibly corrupt. I follow Schrader's conjectural reading. If this sentence is related to the preceding, the meaning appears to be that an infirm renouncer is not required to mortify himself by using only a ragged garment or a bark. He is allowed to use clothes to protect himself from the cold without diminishing his mortification thereby. If it is unrelated to the preceding, then it can be translated: “. . . he may mortify himself in a manner that enables him to endure his infirmity.” Cf. Sprockhoff 1989, 149.

[34] [They asked:] “When a person renounces thus in the proper order or when a person abandons,<sup>8</sup> what serves as his sacrificial string? What is his topknot? How does he perform his ablutions?”

He told them: “This very contemplation of the self is his sacrificial string, and knowledge is his topknot. He may perform ablutions with water found anywhere, but not in a water pot, for the knowers of Brahman say that he resides at the water’s edge.”<sup>9</sup>

[35] [They asked:] “After the sun has set how can he perform ablutions?”<sup>10</sup> He told them:

“As by day so also by night;  
For him there is no day or night.

“The same point has also been made by a seer: ‘For him, indeed, it is always day’ [ChU 3.11.3]. He who knows thus unites himself with it.”<sup>11</sup>

8. The meaning of the term *vyuttiṣṭhati* (“abandons”) is not clear. It appears to indicate the opposite of “renouncing in the proper order” (see above KṣU 31, n. 1). As Sprockhoff (1976, 73) has suggested, it may refer to a man who renounces when he is about to die (*ātura*) and, therefore, is unable to follow all the prescribed rites: NpU 137. If, however, we take *vā* as an emphatic particle, then the two statements may refer to the same person: “When, in fact, a person renounces thus in the proper order, when indeed he abandons, . . . .”

9. The implication is that he does not carry the customary water pot used for ablutions: NpU 154–155. He may actually dwell near a river, or there may be an allegory of the river. His knowledge becomes an internal river that purifies him without the need for external cleansing. One text gives a verse to be recited when the water pot is discarded: “O water pot! O great *tīrtha* (sacred bathing place)! You purified me in the past. Henceforth I shall remain immersed in the *tīrtha* of knowledge. Away with you! I have obtained inner purity. What use have I of external purification.” Cf. Olivelle 1986, 156.

10. The Sanskrit term *upasparśana* refers to a variety of rites using water: washing, bathing, sipping water, and touching certain parts of the body with water. This question seems to suggest that a renouncer bathes or washes himself without regard to the appropriate times (e.g., at dawn and dusk) and that he bathes even after sundown. It also suggests that a renouncer is constantly purified internally without regard to the time of day.

11. The reference of the pronoun *it* is unclear (Sprockhoff 1976, 69). It probably refers to the self, which is beyond time and which is not bound by day and night. Sprockhoff (1989, 150) takes it to mean Brahman.



## CHAPTER TWO

### I

Now, the gods came together and said to Prajāpati: “We do not know! We do not know!” He told those holiest of people: “When I tell it to you, you will understand it.” Thereafter,<sup>12</sup> indeed, those holy ones no longer spoke—they no longer spoke! That is all. [36] He who knows this becomes equal in rank with the gods; he goes to the same world as the gods; and he attains union with the gods.

### II

[The gods said to the Lord: “Lord, teach us the knowledge of Brahman.” Prajāpati told them:]<sup>13</sup> “He should remove his hair together with the topknot and discard his sacrificial string. He should then go out and, looking at his son, say:

“You are Brahman!  
You are the sacrifice!  
You are *vaṣaṭ*!  
You are OM!  
You are *svāhā*!  
You are *svadhā*!  
You are the creator!  
You are the ordainer!  
You are the carpenter!<sup>14</sup>  
You are the foundation!

12. The text is elliptic. The meaning probably is that Prajāpati remained silent. His very silence is the most eloquent instruction on the nature of Brahman. Realizing this, the gods themselves observed silence with reference to the nature of Brahman. Śaṅkara, commenting on VeS 3.2.17, cites a similar saying: “It is also stated in the Veda that when Bādhva was questioned by Bāṣkalin, he explained Brahman by remaining silent: ‘He [Bāṣkalin] said: ‘Sir, teach me.’ He [Bādhva] remained silent. Asked a second and a third time, he said: ‘I speak but you do not understand. This self is silence.’ ” See Sprockhoff 1976, 69–70.

13. The section within brackets is found only in the SR and is placed within brackets in the critical edition.

14. The exclamations *vaṣaṭ*, *svāhā*, and *svadhā* are used while oblations are poured into the sacred fire. *Svāhā* is used in oblations to the gods, while *svadhā* is used in

“The son then says:

“I am Brahman!  
I am the sacrifice!  
I am *vaśaṭ*!  
I am OM!  
I am *svāhā*!  
I am *svadhā*!  
I am the creator!  
[37] I am the ordainer!  
I am the carpenter!  
I am the foundation!

“These are (the addresses and the responses). Let him not shed tears while he follows (his father). If he sheds tears, he will cut down his progeny and his knowledge. After circumambulating (the new renouncer), they return without looking to and fro. Such a person will go to heaven.”<sup>15</sup>

### III

“After a Vedic student has studied one, two, or all the Vedas and completed his studentship, he should marry a wife, beget sons, place them in suitable occupations, and offer sacrifices according to his ability. Renunciation is meant for such a man [38] with the approval of his elders and relatives.

“Repairing to the wilderness, he should offer a fire sacrifice with milk for twelve days and subsist on milk during those twelve days. At the end of the twelve days he should offer to Agni Vaiśvānara an oblation prepared in twelve dishes, to Prajāpati a porridge offering, and to Viṣṇu an oblation prepared

ancestral rites. Tvaṣṭṛ is the divine carpenter or builder in Vedic mythology. Cf. Introduction, 3.1.

15. The text shifts from the singular to the plural and back again to the singular. Such shifts are not uncommon in these Upaniṣads and often indicate borrowing from a different source. Here, however, the plural may be used because the injunction is aimed at all who follow the new renouncer and not just at the son of the renouncer. “Such a person” (lit. simply “he”) may refer to the son or the father.

in three dishes.<sup>16</sup> He should throw into the fire the wooden vessels he had formerly used for fire rituals. He should throw the clay vessels into the water and give the metal ones to his teacher. 'Do not leave me and go away; I shall not leave you and go away': he should address thus the householder's fire, the south fire, and the east fire [LSU 15, n. 1]. [39] Some say that he should drink<sup>17</sup> a handful of ashes taken from the area where the fire drills (were burnt). He should remove his hair together with the topknot, take off his sacrificial string, and offer it in water, saying: 'Earth, *svāhā*!' Thereupon he may resort to not eating, drowning, entering a fire, the path of heroes, or the great journey;<sup>18</sup> or he may retire to a dwelling for the aged.<sup>19</sup>

"What he eats in the evening becomes his evening sacrifice. What he eats in the morning becomes his morning sacrifice. What he eats on the new moon becomes his new moon sacrifice. What he eats on the full moon becomes his full moon sacrifice. When in the spring he shaves his head, his beard, and the hair of his body, and pares his nails, that constitutes his *Agniṣṭoma* sacrifice."<sup>20</sup>

16. For a description of these rites see Ypra 12.6–33. Regarding the term *kapāla* (here translated as "dish") and the oblations cooked on different numbers of dishes, see J. Gonda, *Rice and Barley Offerings in the Veda* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987). The porridge is made by boiling rice or barley with butter and milk.

17. Presumably he mixes the ashes with water before drinking. Given the ambiguity of the Sanskrit syntax, the statement "Some say" may indeed refer to the entire section from "Do not leave . . ." to ". . . fire drills (were burnt)."

18. These are the traditional methods of religious suicide. The path of heroes is to die in a just battle. The great journey is to walk toward the north without eating anything until one drops dead. See JU 68 and my "Ritual Suicide and the Rite of Renunciation," WZKSA 22 (1978): 19–44. I cannot follow Sprockhoff's (1979, 395; 1987, 257; more recently 1989, 154, n. 62) argument against calling such a death suicide. I take suicide to be any act that is intended to cause and does cause one's own death. The fact that one accepts that death freely or for a noble reason does not make such a death less a suicide. Although in starvation, heroic death, and the Great Journey one does not positively bring about death, yet entering fire and drowning constitute positive acts of suicide.

19. The Sanskrit expression *vyddhāśrama* is ambiguous. It can mean the order (*āśrama*) reserved for the old, in which case it amounts to renunciation. It is more likely, however, that the term refers to a hermitage of or for the aged. Cf. Sprockhoff 1976, 70, n. 11; 1979, 395–396.

20. This passage is a good example of the tendency of these Upaniṣads to un-

### CHAPTER THREE

[40] “Having renounced the fires,<sup>21</sup> let him not bring them back. ‘When Manyu brought his wife home . . .’ [AV 11.8]: he should silently recite these mantras regarding the self and undergo initiation, saying: ‘May all living beings prosper!’ He should wear an ochre garment and, leaving the hair of his armpits and the pubic region, shave himself closely. He shall wear no sacrificial string and use his stomach as a begging bowl [ĀrU 11, n. 14]. Why? Because he contemplates his very self.<sup>22</sup> [41] Going forth with his arms raised, let him not restrict himself to specific roads but wander about homeless. He eats what he begs; he should not give alms. Let him carry a water strainer<sup>23</sup> to protect living things. An exception is made during the rainy season.<sup>24</sup> On this, moreover, there are the following verses:

“The pot, the drinking cup, the sling, the tripod, the pair of shoes, the patched garment against the cold, the loincloth, the water strainer, the bathing cloth, the outer garment, the sacrificial string, and the Vedas: all these ascetics shall avoid.<sup>25</sup>

derstand and to interpret the renouncer’s life and activities using ritual categories and concepts: Introduction, 3.1 As the fires, so also the fire sacrifice is internalized. An *agniṣṭoma* is a long Vedic Sacrifice at which Soma is offered to the gods. On the fire sacrifice offered in one’s breath (*prāṇāgnihoṭra*) see H. W. Bodewitz, *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa I, 1–65, Translation and Commentary with a Study Agnihoṭra and Prāṇāgnihoṭra* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973).

21. This entire chapter corresponds, with some variations, to LSU 20–22, where explanatory notes are given.

22. This elliptic question and answer may be a gloss (Sprockhoff 1989, 155, n. 77). It is lacking in the parallel passage in LSU 20. It probably refers to the controversy frequently hinted at in these Upaniṣads on the abandonment of the topknot and the sacrificial string. Thus the meaning may be that he regards his self as his topknot and sacrificial string. See KśU 34.

23. I follow Schrader’s conjectural reading; see, however, Sprockhoff’s (1976, 71) observations.

24. The context does not provide any clue as to what rule this exception applies. In general, however, the rule of wandering is suspended during the rainy season. See KśU 33.

25. These verses also occur at LSU 21. But note the significant change. The LSU forbids renouncers to carry *anything besides* the items listed, whereas the KśU forbids the listed items: cf. JU 69–70.

[42] “Let him bathe, drink, and cleanse himself with water that is purified. Let him lie on a river bank or sleep in a temple.

“Let him not afflict his body with extremes of pleasure or of pain. When he is praised let him not rejoice, nor curse others when he is reviled.

[“Let a recluse keep himself chaste with great care. To look and to touch (a woman); to play, to offer praise, and to talk in secret; to intend, to resolve, and to complete the sexual act: these the wise call the eight forms of sex. Chastity is their opposite, and it is to be observed by those who seek liberation.]<sup>26</sup>

“A man who follows this way of life conquers his senses.”

26. The section within brackets is found only in the SR and is given within brackets in the critical edition. The *Kaṭharudra Upaniṣad* found in the SR has thirty-five additional verses (translated into German by Sprockhoff 1989, 158–163).

# *Paramahamṣa Upaniṣad*

## I

[45] Once Nārada went up to the Lord and said to him: “What is the way of Paramahamṣa [ĀrU 14, n. 14] yogins? What is their state?”

The Lord said to him: “The way of Paramahamṣas is extremely rare in the world and not at all common. If there is one such person, he alone abides in the eternally pure Being, [46] and he alone is the man of the Vedas:<sup>1</sup> that is the opinion of the wise. He is a great man whose mind always abides in me alone. Accordingly, I also abide in him alone.

“That man should renounce his sons, friends, wife, relatives, and so forth, as well as the topknot, the sacrificial string, Vedic recitation, and all rites. He should forsake also the entire universe, and take a loincloth, a staff, and a garment for the good of his own body and as a favor to the world.<sup>2</sup> [47] That again

1. The meaning is unclear. It may refer to a man who has truly mastered the Vedic knowledge or to one who represents the ideal man propounded in the Vedas.

2. According to commentators, these items are for the good of the renouncer's body because the staff permits him to ward off cattle, snakes, and the like, and the clothes protect him from cold, heat, and shame. They are also for the good of the world because people recognize him as a renouncer by reason of these insignia, thus enabling them to acquire merit by paying him homage and offering him food. Cf. JMV, 156, 406; Ypra 4.92–94.

is not the highest.<sup>3</sup> ‘Who is the highest?’ you may ask. Now this is the highest:

## II

“A Paramahansa lives without a staff, without a topknot, without a sacrificial string, and without a garment. He is affected neither by cold nor by heat, neither by pleasure nor by pain, neither [48] by respect nor by disrespect. He is freed from the six waves of existence.<sup>4</sup> He gives up slander, pride, jealousy, deceit, arrogance, desire, hate, pleasure, pain, lust, anger, greed, delusion, excitement, indignation, egotism, and the like, and he regards his body as a corpse. He constantly turns away from this wretched body, the cause of doubt, perversity, and error, and abides in that eternally pure Being. That itself is his state.<sup>5</sup>

[49] “I am indeed that calm and unchanging Being, a single mass of bliss and consciousness. That alone is my highest abode. That alone is my topknot and my sacrificial string. By knowing that the highest Self and the lower self are one, the difference between them dissolves into oneness. [50] This knowledge is his twilight worship [ĀrU 7, n. 7].”

## III

“A man who, giving up all desires and abiding steadfastly in the Absolute, bears the staff of wisdom, is called a single-staffed [BU 90, n. 29] ascetic.

“A man who merely carries a wooden staff and, although he lacks

3. The text assumes that there are two types of Paramahansas. The lower Paramahansas wear clothes and carry staffs. What follows refers to the highest class.

4. The six are hunger and thirst, grief and delusion, and old age and death.

5. This is a clear reference to the opening question regarding the “state” of Paramahansas.

wisdom, eats from all<sup>6</sup> goes to Mahāraurava and other such terrible hells. [ĀrU 4, n. 3]

“He who knows this difference is a Paramahaṃsa.”

#### IV

“A mendicant shall be naked. He shall neither pay homage nor utter *svadhā*, neither give praise nor [51] utter *vaṣaṭ*.<sup>7</sup> For him there is neither invitation nor dismissal,<sup>8</sup> neither mantras nor meditation nor even worship, neither the perceptible nor the imperceptible, neither the separate nor the non-separate, neither day nor night [KśU 35, n. 10], nor anything at all! His is a homeless state.

[52] “A mendicant thus should neither accept nor even look at such things as gold. One may respond that there is no harm in merely looking at them. [53] On the contrary, it is truly harmful, because if a mendicant looks at gold with longing he becomes a murderer of a Brahmin; if a mendicant touches gold with longing he becomes an outcaste; if a mendicant grasps gold with longing he becomes a murderer of the self; but if a mendicant does not look at, touch, or grasp gold with longing, he destroys all the desires lurking in his mind.

[54] “He does not fear pain. He longs not for pleasure. He forsakes love. He is not attached anywhere either to the pleasant or to the unpleasant. He does not hate. He does not rejoice. The activities of all his senses have come to rest. Firmly fixed

6. A renouncer eats food begged from all castes, thus violating the laws of purity. Without the saving knowledge, such impurity causes the rebirth in unpleasant worlds.

7. See KśU 36, n. 14. Forbidding *svadhā* and *vaṣaṭ* is an indirect prohibition of ritual activity.

8. The ceremonial invitation of gods is performed at the beginning of a sacrifice. The gods are dismissed at its conclusion.



in knowledge, the self ever abides in the self alone. He is called an ascetic. He alone is a yogin; and he alone [55] is a knower. 'I am that Brahman who is consummate bliss and pure consciousness': realizing this, he becomes one who has done all there is to do."

# *Jābāla Upaniṣad*

## I

[59] Bṛhaspati said to Yājñavalkya: “Tell me what is comparable to the field of Kurus<sup>1</sup> as the sacrificial ground of the gods and as the seat of Brahman open to all beings.”

Yājñavalkya said: “Avimukta<sup>2</sup> truly is the field of Kurus; it is the sacrificial ground of the gods and the seat of Brahman open to all beings. Wherever he<sup>3</sup> may go, therefore, he should think of that place thus: ‘This truly is the field of Kurus; [60] this is the sacrificial ground of the gods and the seat of Brahman open to all beings.’ For here,<sup>4</sup> as the vital breaths depart from a person, Rudra reveals the saving prayer<sup>5</sup> by which he

1. Kurukṣetra is the ancient name of a plain near modern Delhi where the epic battle described in the *Mahābhārata* is believed to have been fought. It is regarded as holy ground and is called *dharmakṣetra*, “the field of *dharma*” (BhG 1.1), and a place of sacrifice, a righteous battle often being homologized with a sacrifice.

2. Avimukta literally means “a place that is never abandoned (by Śiva).” It normally refers to a specially sacred area within the holy city of Benares, but it is also used frequently to designate the entire city. Because Śiva never abandons it, his devotees are also advised never to leave it. Our text, following the general practice of these Upaniṣads, explains the term allegorically in a variety of ways. Avimukta is the self, and it is therefore located within the renouncer who knows the self. The place where he resides becomes the true Avimukta.

3. Although the person is not identified, it appears likely that the author has a renouncer in mind.

4. Namely, in Avimukta, here identified as the place where the renouncer is.

5. This may refer to the sacred syllable OM, which is identified with Brahman, or to the Śatarudrīya hymn (see below JU 62–63, n. 11). Cf. also the *Rāmottara-tāpanīya Upaniṣad*, 1.

becomes immortal and attains liberation. Therefore, a man should live only in Avimukta, and he should never forsake Avimukta.”

“That is truly so, O Yājñavalkya.”

## II

Then Atri asked Yājñavalkya: “How can I know this infinite and unmanifest self?”

Yājñavalkya replied: “He should be worshipped as Avimukta; [61] for this infinite and unmanifest self is located in Avimukta.”

“Where is Avimukta located?”

“It is located between Varāṇā and Nāsī.”<sup>6</sup>

“What is Varāṇā? And what is Nāsī?”

“Varāṇā gets its name from the fact that it wards off [*vārayati*] all faults committed by one’s organs. Nāsī gets its name from the fact that it destroys [*nāśayati*] all sins committed by one’s organs.”

“But where is it located?”

[62] “The juncture [*saṃdhi*] between the eyebrows and the nose is the juncture between the heavenly world and the other world.<sup>7</sup> The knowers of Brahman, therefore, worship this very juncture [*saṃdhi*] as their twilight worship [*saṃdhyā*].<sup>8</sup> He<sup>9</sup> should

6. These are the names of the two rivers flowing into the Ganges to the north and south of Vārāṇasī (Benares). According to an etymology derived from phonetic similarity, the name Vārāṇasī is formed by the combination of the names of these two rivers. The names of the rivers are likewise allegorized by resorting to etymologies based on the phonetic similarity between Varāṇā and *vārayati* (warding off faults) and between Nāsī and *nāśayati* (destroying sins). The rivers and the city are also allegorically explained as located in the renouncer’s body.

7. According to the commentators, “other world” refers to the Truth-world, the highest of the worlds [ĀrU 4, n. 3]. The Truth-world is located above the forehead, while the lower worlds, including the heavenly worlds other than the Truth-world, are located below the eyebrows.

8. For the allegory of *sandhyā* see ĀrU 7, n. 7.

9. This statement refers back to the opening remark of Yājñavalkya’s reply concerning the unmanifest self. Here, however, the statement may be intended to include a man who recognizes the mystical identities referred to above. In him exists the true Vārāṇasī; he is the true Avimukta.

be worshipped as Avimukta. Indeed, a man who knows it as such proclaims his Avimukta knowledge.”<sup>10</sup>

### III

The Vedic students said to him: “Tell us the prayer the muttering of which leads to immortality?”

[63] Yājñavalkya replied: “The Śatarudrīya.<sup>11</sup> These truly are the names of the immortal. By them indeed one becomes immortal.”

“That is truly so, O Yājñavalkya.”

### IV

Then, Janaka, the king of Videha, came up to Yājñavalkya and said: “Lord, explain renunciation.”

Yājñavalkya said: [64] “After he has completed his Vedic studentship, a man should become a householder. After he has been a householder, he should become a forest hermit. After he has been a forest hermit, he should renounce. Or rather, he may renounce directly from Vedic studentship, or from home, or from the forest. Let him even renounce on the very day that he becomes detached, regardless of whether he has taken the vow or not,<sup>12</sup> whether he has graduated or not,<sup>13</sup> and whether he has kindled the sacred fire or is without a fire.<sup>14</sup>

10. His knowledge is *avimukta* because it relates to the Self defined earlier as Avimukta, or because it is never forgotten.

11. This is a long hymn containing a hundred names of Rudra-Śiva: VS 16.1–66.

12. “Vow” refers to Vedic initiation. Thus a detached person may renounce before or after his initiation. See ĀrU 9.

13. *Snātaka*, here translated as one who has graduated from Vedic school, is a young adult who has performed the ceremony (*samāvartana*) that concludes the period of Vedic studies. This ceremony ends in a ritual bath, and hence the graduate is called a *snātaka*, “one who has taken the bath.”

14. See LSU 15, n. 1. Kindling the sacred fire is an indirect reference to marriage, because only a married man can have a sacred fire.

“Here, some do indeed perform a sacrifice to Prajāpati.<sup>15</sup> But one should not do so. [65] One should perform, on the contrary, a sacrifice to fire, for fire truly is the vital breath, and thereby he offers to breath. Let him perform just the ‘Three-Element’ offering.<sup>16</sup> These are the three elements: goodness, energy, and darkness.

“This is your due place of birth  
whence born you did shine.  
Knowing this, O Fire, mount it,  
and make our wealth increase. [VS 3.14; TS 1.5.5.2]

[66] “Reciting this mantra, let him inhale the fire.<sup>17</sup> Breath is truly the birthplace of fire. He declares the same when he says: ‘Go to breath, *svāhā!*’<sup>18</sup>

“Having fetched the sacred fire from the village,<sup>19</sup> let him inhale it as described before. If he cannot obtain fire, let him offer the oblation in water, for the waters truly are all the gods. He should offer the oblation with the words: ‘I offer to all the gods, *svāhā!*’ He should then take some from it and eat that salubrious oblation mixed with ghee. He shall thus learn that the mantra of liberation [viz. OM] is the triple Veda. [67] That is Brahman. That should be worshipped.”

15. Sources record two divergent customs regarding this last sacrifice prior to renunciation. Some prescribe that it be offered to Prajāpati: KśU 38; NpU 138. The JU rejects that practice and prescribes that the sacrifice be offered to Agni, the fire god: KśU 31.

16. This is a rite associated in the Vedas with the consecration of a king (*rāja-sūya*). A cake of rice and barley is prepared in twelve dishes (KśU 38, n. 16) and offered to Indra and Viṣṇu. According to the ŚB (5.5.5.1–6), it is called *Traidhātavī* (“consisting of three elements”) because the three Vedas were retrieved from the demon Vṛtra by Indra and Viṣṇu. Our text, however, associates the name with the three strands (*guṇa*) of Sāṃkhya cosmology.

17. The translation of this mantra here and elsewhere is taken with slight modifications from Keith’s translation of the TS. “Inhale the fire” means to inhale the smoke or the warmth of the fire: cf. Introduction, 4.2.

18. The renouncer says these words when he internalizes the fire. They show that breath is the womb or the birthplace of fire. This is made more explicit in the variant reading found in NpU 150 and PpU 279.

19. This section appears to be addressed to a man who has not maintained a sacred fire. He should either obtain the fire from a person who has one or make the offering in water. See the variant reading in PpU 279 and Schrader’s comment on it (468).

“That is truly so, O Lord.”

So said Yājñavalkya.

V

Atri then asked Yājñavalkya: “I ask you, Yājñavalkya, how can a man be a Brahmin when he has no sacrificial string?”

Yājñavalkya replied: “After he eats and sips water, this very self becomes his sacrificial string.<sup>20</sup> [68] This is the rule for wanderers when they resort to the path of heroes, not eating, drowning, entering a fire, or the great journey [KśU 39, n. 18]. Now a wanderer<sup>21</sup> who wears discolored clothes, shaves his head, has no possessions, is pure and without enmity, and subsists on almsfood, is fit for becoming Brahman. If a man is in mortal danger, [69] he may renounce mentally or orally.<sup>22</sup> This path was discovered by Brahman, and along that path travels a renouncer who knows Brahman.”

“That is truly so, O Lord.”

So said Yājñavalkya.

VI

Of these,<sup>23</sup> Paramahamṣas [ĀrU 11, n. 14] are men such as Saṃvartaka, Āruṇi, Śvetaketu, Durvāśas, R̥bhu, Nidāgha, Jaḍ-abharata, Dattātreyā, and Raivataka, who have no visible em-

20. The eating and the sipping may refer to the eating of the oblation mentioned at the end of the previous section. For the allegory of the sacrificial string see ĀrU 7; KśU 34; BU 85–87; PbU 293–300.

21. That is, if he decides to continue living. See KśU 39; Ypra 17.1–32; 18.1–13.

22. A person is in danger of imminent death (*ātura*) either because of an illness or when he is attacked by robbers or wild animals (cf. NpU 137; Ypra 20.12). At such a time one can renounce by saying the mantra “I have renounced” either orally or mentally. This procedure is known as *āturasaṃnyāsa*.

23. The reference is probably to ascetics in general, who were the subject of the preceding sections.

blem,<sup>24</sup> who keep their conduct concealed, and who, although they are sane, behave like madmen. [70] Triple staff, water pot, sling [LSU, 21, n. 27], bowl, water strainer, topknot, sacrificial string: abandoning all these in water with the words: “Earth *svāhā*,” let him seek after the self. He is clad as he was at birth. He is indifferent to the pairs of opposites.<sup>25</sup> He has no possessions. He is firmly established in the path of Brahman. His mind is pure. Merely to sustain his life, he begs food randomly at the prescribed time, using his stomach as a begging bowl<sup>26</sup> and remaining the same both when he receives and when he does not. In deserted houses, in temples, on haystacks, [71] by anthills, at the foot of trees, in potter’s sheds, in sheds for fire sacrifices, on sandy banks of rivers, in mountain caves, in glens, in the hollows of trees, in lonely spots, or in open fields, he lives without a home. He does not strive. He is selfless. He devotes himself completely to meditating on the pure Brahman. He is grounded in the Supreme Self. He is dedicated to the uprooting of impure acts. Such a man who abandons his body through renunciation is called a Paramahansa.

24. The emblem of an ordinary renouncer consists of articles such as staff, begging bowl, sacrificial thread, and topknot. Paramahansas abandon these and live without outward symbol of their state. See ŚU 324, n. 9.

25. These pairs are cold and heat, pain and pleasure, and the like. See PhU 47–48.

26. “Randomly” means that he does not select the houses he will visit beforehand. The proper time for begging is the late afternoon, when the people have already finished their meals. See BSU 267. On the use of the stomach as a begging bowl, see ĀrU 11, n. 14.

# Brahma Upaniṣad

## CHAPTER ONE

[75] Śaunaka, a wealthy householder, asked Venerable Pippalāda, the Aṅgiras:<sup>1</sup> “In the divine city of Brahman<sup>2</sup> how are they [the sense organs] established? How do they project outward? From whom does this power of theirs arise? [76] Who truly is he from whom this power arises?”<sup>3</sup>

He [Pippalāda] declared to him the most excellent knowledge of Brahman: “He, indeed, is the breath; he is the self.<sup>4</sup> This power arises from the self. He is the life of the gods;<sup>5</sup> he is their beginning and their end.<sup>6</sup> Brahman, who shines forth dustless, partless, pure, and imperishable in the divine city of Brahman, controls them as a queen bee [controls the bees. As all the bees rise up when the queen bee rises, even so all these

1. Aṅgiras is the name of a class of ancient fire priests.

2. This city is the human body, the seat of the self. Śaunaka's question relates to the function of the sense organs within the human body.

3. The question relates to the source from which the senses derive their power to reach out to the objects and to know them.

4. On the relationship between breath and the organs, on the one hand, and between breath and the self, on the other, see Deussen 1906, 263–280.

5. In this context the term *gods* (*deva*) refers to the sense organs, a usage common in the early Upaniṣads: BāU 1.3.9–18; 1.5.21; PraśU 2.2; KauṣU 1.6; 3.3; 4.20; ĪśU 4; MuṇU 3.1.18.

6. On *nidhana* (“end”) and *anidhana* (“non-end” or “beginning”) see ChU 2.1–21. The self, here identified with breath, is regarded as the chief of the senses: BāU 1.3.10f; 6.1.1–14; ChU 5.1.1–15.



gods rise up after him when he rises. [77] He emits and withdraws them]<sup>7</sup> like a spider. As a spider with a single thread spreads out a cobweb and with the same thread withdraws it, so also does this breath when it withdraws what it has emitted and retires.<sup>8</sup> During deep sleep breath is the god of all the veins, as illustrated by the simile of hawk and sky. As a hawk, after sporting in the sky, goes to its nest, so also does a person when he falls into a deep sleep. Just as this Devadatta [78] does not feel even when he is beaten with a stick,<sup>9</sup> so he is not touched by rites and pious deeds or by good and evil. As a child without desires experiences joy, even so this Devadatta experiences joy while he is in deep sleep. He sees [79] the highest light. In love with that light, he finds joy in that light. He returns by the same way to the dream state, like a leech: as a leech moves from the tip of one (leaf) to that of another, it moves to the latter, yet remains attached to the former and does not let go of it. [80] He is said to be awake.<sup>10</sup> Just as he carries the eight sacrificial dishes together. . . .<sup>11</sup> That which hangs down like a nipple<sup>12</sup> is the womb of gods. There, as he awakens, the ineffable good and evil of this god are manifested. This god is perfect stillness and the inner controller; he is the bird, the crab,<sup>13</sup>

7. The section within brackets is missing in the manuscripts. It was conjecturally reconstructed by Schrader (352–353) on the basis of PraśU 2.4. For the simile of the spider see BāU 2.1.20; MuṇU 1.1.7; and below BU 89, n. 27.

8. In sleep and at death the senses are believed to enter the breath, which returns to the heart or the veins: ChU 4.3.3; BāU 2.1.16–19.

9. The text implies that Devadatta of this example is in deep sleep, in a trance, or otherwise unconscious.

10. Schrader thinks that the text contains a lacuna here. The original probably contained a passage that illustrated the process of waking from sleep.

11. The text contains a lacuna. According to Schrader's reconstruction (411–412) the missing passage should read something like this: "Just as he [Devadatta when he desires to offer a sacrifice] carries the eight sacrificial dishes together, so the awakened self carries eight perceivers (*graha*)."<sup>11</sup> Eight dishes are carried by a person about to perform a particular sacrifice [KśU 38, n. 16]. The eight perceivers are the five organs of perception together with mind, speech, and hands. Cf. BāU 3.2.

12. The reference appears to be to the uvula. This passage is borrowed with some changes from TU 1.6.1.

13. Bird: the reference probably is to the ŚvU 4.6, where the individual and the supreme selves are likened to two birds, the former enjoying fruits while the

and the lotus; he is Puruṣa, breath, and the swan; he is the higher and the lower [81] Brahman; and he is the self. He stirs these gods into consciousness.<sup>14</sup> He who knows this reaches the Knower of the Field,<sup>15</sup> the highest abode of Brahman.”

## CHAPTER TWO

“Now, this person has four sites: [82] the navel, the heart, the throat, and the head. In them the quadruple Brahman [namely, the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, and the fourth state]<sup>16</sup> shines forth as Brahmā in the waking state, as Viṣṇu in the dreaming state, as Rudra in deep sleep, and as the Imperishable in the fourth state.<sup>17</sup> He is Āditya, Viṣṇu, and Īśvara; he is Puruṣa; he is breath; he is the individual self; he is the fire that lies awake.<sup>18</sup> The highest Brahman shines forth among them,<sup>19</sup> [83] although it is without mind or ears, without hands or feet, and devoid of light. In that state there are no worlds and non-worlds, Vedas and non-Vedas, gods and non-gods, sacrifices and non-sacrifices, mother and non-mother, father and non-father, daughter-in-law and non-daughter-in-law, Cāṇḍāla and non-Cāṇḍāla, Paulkasa and non-Paulkasa,<sup>20</sup> recluse and

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latter merely looks on. Crab: Schrader explains that as the crooked movement of a crab is difficult to follow, so also that of the Supreme Self in this world.

14. At the time of awakening, the self causes the sense organs to become active and conscious of their respective objects.

15. “Knower of the Field” (*kṣetrajña*) refers to the center of consciousness in an individual, as opposed to the body and the world, which constitute the field. Cf. ŚvU 6.16; BhG 13.1–3, 26, 34.

16. The section within brackets is probably a gloss and is missing in many manuscripts. It is placed within brackets in the critical edition.

17. The meaning is that during the four states of consciousness Brahman appears as various deities present in the navel, the heart, the throat, and the head. For a similar statement see below, BU 90.

18. The phrase is obscure. Schrader understands it as the dreamless life (*prāṇa*), seeing it as a reference to PraśU 4.3: “The fires of life alone lie awake in this city.”

19. That is, in the four states of consciousness.

20. Cāṇḍāla is an untouchable outcaste. Paulkasa is a low-born person, a son of a Śūdra father and a Kṣatriya mother.

non-recluse, ascetic and non-ascetic.<sup>21</sup> Thus the one and only supreme Brahman shines forth.

“In the space within the heart exists the space of consciousness. It is also the external space. One should know that it exists in the space of the heart, that within it this universe roams to and fro, [84] and that on it all this is woven like warp and woof. He is ever present within all creatures. And the person who knows him by meditation becomes the highest Brahman; that is liberation. There gods, seers, and ancestors do not rule, for he is enlightened and omniscient.

“In the heart abide all the gods. The breaths are fixed within the heart. [85] In the heart abide life and light, and that great triple string.<sup>22</sup>

“It rests in the heart, that is, in the consciousness.<sup>23</sup>

“Wear the white sacrificial string,  
The best purifier and the foremost giver of life,  
Born of old with Prajāpati.  
May it confer power and strength.

“Cutting his hair together with the topknot, let a wise man discard his external string. As his string let him wear the supreme and imperishable Brahman.

“ ‘String,’ they say, is derived from ‘stringing’ [ĀrU 7, n. 10]. The string is truly the highest abode. He who knows that string is a wise Brahmin; he has truly fathomed the Veda.

[86] “Let a yogin who knows yoga and who sees the truth wear that string on which this whole world is strung like rows of pearls upon a string.

21. In the final state there is no duality and, therefore, no distinctions between various classes. Several manuscripts, however, lack the negative *na*, in which case the translation would be: “In that state worlds are not worlds, Vedas are not Vedas, gods are not gods, . . .” This would agree better with the similar passage in BāU 4.3.22, on which our text is clearly based.

22. The string is made by twisting three threads: PbU 295, n. 12. See also ĀrU 8; KṣU 34; JU 67.

23. This statement appears to be a commentator’s gloss that has been inserted into the body of the text by a scribe.

“Having entered upon the highest yoga, a wise man should discard the external string. Wise is he who wears the string that has the nature of Brahman. By wearing this string a man never becomes sullied or unclean.”

### CHAPTER THREE

“They alone on earth know the string, and they truly wear the sacrificial string who carry the string within themselves, and who wear the sacrificial string of knowledge.

“Knowledge is their topknot; in knowledge they are firmly fixed; and knowledge is their sacrificial string. [87] Knowledge alone is supreme for them, and knowledge is their best purifier.

“The wise man who, like a fire, wears not a separate topknot, and whose topknot consists of knowledge,<sup>24</sup> is said to wear a topknot, and not others who just wear their hair long.

“This string,<sup>25</sup> however, should be worn only by Brahmins and others who are qualified to perform Vedic rites. For the scriptures declare that it is a subsidiary element of a rite.<sup>26</sup>

“He possesses the complete Brahmin state, the knowers of Brahman say, whose topknot and whose sacrificial string consist of knowledge.

“He who is intent on this supreme sacrificial string [88] is a wise man. He truly wears a sacrificial string. He is the sacrifice and a knower of the sacrifice.

“The one god who is hidden in all beings,  
pervading all, of all the inmost self;  
Overseer of deeds, abode of all beings,  
witness, knower, alone, without attributes. [ŚvU 6.11]

24. The flame that flares up from a fire is compared to a topknot. As the flame is not something different from the fire, so the topknot of a renouncer is identical with the knowledge of his own self.

25. The reference here is to the external sacrificial string. It needs to be worn only by those who are required to perform rites.

26. The exegetical tradition of India recognizes two types of actions or things within a rite: the principal and the subsidiary. The latter has no independent purpose. The subsidiary elements help the principal ritual act to attain its object. The sacrificial string and the topknot are considered such subsidiary elements of ritual actions.

“The one sage who makes the one form manifold,  
amidst the many who are inactive;  
The wise see him as their very self;  
none other than they have eternal peace. [ŚvU 6.12]

[89] “Make the self the bottom fire drill [LSU 16, n. 9],  
the mystic OM the top fire drill;  
And turn them with meditation;  
then one shall see god like latent fire. [ŚvU 1.14]

“As oil in seeds, butter in curd;  
as water in streams, fire in drills; [ŚvU 1.15]  
So he grasps the self in himself,  
who seeks him with penance and truth.

“As a spider emits the threads and withdraws them again, so the  
soul goes to the waking and dreaming states and returns again.<sup>27</sup>

“The cavity that is turned downward like the calyx of a lotus,  
[90] know that to be the heart, the great seat of the universe.

“Know that when it<sup>28</sup> is awake, it is in the eyes, and when it  
dreams, it remains in the throat. When it is deep in sleep, it rests  
in the heart, and in the fourth state it is fixed in the crown.

“When through wisdom the self unites itself to the Supreme Self,  
then his meditation alone becomes his twilight worship. He per-  
forms, therefore, the twilight worship.<sup>29</sup>

“The twilight worship which consists of meditation, which is  
performed without water and without tiring one’s speech or body,  
and which leads all beings to unity, is the twilight worship of  
the single-staffed.<sup>30</sup>

“That which speech and mind reach not, and from which they  
turn back, is the soul’s bliss. On knowing it the wise are freed.

27. The meaning seems to be that, as a spider’s thread becomes manifest when it is emitted and unmanifest when it is withdrawn, so the soul becomes manifest in the waking and dreaming states and returns to its unmanifest state in deep sleep.

28. The reference is to the individual soul that goes from one state to another. See above BU 81–82, n. 14.

29. Twilight worship (*sandhyā*) is the worship of the sun performed at dawn, noon, and dusk. For this allegory see ĀrU 7, n. 7.

30. In the Advaita tradition, Paramahamsas, the highest class of renouncers, carry staffs consisting of a single bamboo, while lower classes carry staffs made by tying three bamboos together (triple staff). The former are known as *ekadaṇḍin* (“single-staffed”), and the latter as *tridaṇḍin* (“triple-staffed”).

*Brahma Upaniṣad [91]*

[91] “The self that pervades every being,  
as butter that inheres in milk,  
Is the root of self-knowledge and penance.  
It is Brahman, the mystery supreme.” [ŚvU 1.16]

# *Āśrama Upaniṣad*

## I

[95] There are four orders with sixteen subdivisions. There are four types of Vedic students: Gāyatra, Brāhma, Prājāpatya, and Bṛhan.<sup>1</sup>

Of these, a Gāyatra is one who, after his Vedic initiation, studies the *gāyatrī* [ĀrU 6, n. 4] verse for three nights, during which he abstains from salt.

[96] A Brāhma is one who lives as a Vedic student for forty-eight years, or for twelve years per Veda, or for as long as it takes him to master the Veda.

A Prājāpatya is a person who is devoted to his wife; who approaches her during the proper season;<sup>2</sup> and who always avoids the wives of others.

Alternatively, a Brāhma is one who lives at his teacher's for twenty-four years, while a Prājāpatya is a person who lives with his teacher for forty-eight years.

1. Gāyatra: relating to the *gāyatrī* verse. Brāhma: relating to Brahman, here meaning the Veda. Prājāpatya: relating to the creator god Prajāpati. Bṛhan: great, who is referred to as *naiṣṭhika*, "perpetual," in the VaiDh 1.3, which gives a similar classification.

2. He approaches her only during the fertile period following her menses not for pleasure but because it is his duty to procreate children. Here the proper sexual relationship with one's wife is equated with celibate studentship. This type is called Prājāpatya, possibly because of Prajāpati's close connection to offspring.

A Bṛhan is a perpetual student who does not leave his teacher until death.

## II

There are also four types of householders: Vārttāvṛttis, [97] Śālīnavṛttis, Yāyāvaras, and Ghorasamnyāsikas.<sup>3</sup>

Of these, Vārttāvṛttis are those who follow the blameless occupations of agriculture, cattle rearing, and trade; who offer sacrifices lasting a hundred years;<sup>4</sup> and who thus seek the self.

Śālīnavṛttis are those who offer sacrifices but do not officiate at them; who study but do not teach; who give but do not receive; who offer sacrifices lasting a hundred years; and who thus seek the self.

Yāyāvaras are those who offer sacrifices and officiate at them; who study and teach; who give and receive; who offer sacrifices lasting a hundred years; [98] and who thus seek the self.

Ghorasamnyāsikas are those who perform rites with water that is drawn out and purified; who live on gleanings gathered each day; who offer sacrifices lasting a hundred years; and who thus seek the self.

## III

There are also four types of forest hermits: Vaikhānasas, Audumbaras, Vālakhilyas, and Phenapas.<sup>5</sup>

3. Vārttāvṛtta: those who obtain a livelihood through normal occupations. Śālīnavṛtti: those who are associated with houses. Yāyāvara: itinerant. Ghorasamnyāsika: extreme renunciant; these are called Ghorācārika in the VaiDh 1.5, which has a similar classification.

4. A Brahmin is required to offer sacrifices all his life (ŚB 12.4.1.1), and the ideal life span of a man is 100 years (TS 1.5.2.2). A Veda contains the prayer: "For a hundred winters may I kindle thee" (TS 1.7.6.5). The phrase "lasting a hundred years," therefore, probably means that the person continues to offer sacrifices all his life. Cf. ĪśU 2.

5. Vaikhānasa: followers of Vikhanas (BDh 2.11.14). Audumbara: relating to



Of these, Vaikhānasas are those who tend the sacred fires using plants and trees that grow on unplowed land outside the village; who perform the five great sacrifices;<sup>6</sup> and who thus seek the self.

[99] Audumbaras are those who tend the sacred fires with figs, jujubes, wild rice, and millet fetched from the direction which they face when they get up in the morning; who perform the five great sacrifices; and who thus seek the self.

Vāḷakhilyas are those who have matted hair; who wear rags, skin, or bark; who, having thrown away flowers and fruits on the full moon of Kārttika, follow their regular livelihood during the remaining eight months;<sup>7</sup> who tend the sacred fires; [100] who perform the five great sacrifices; and who thus seek the self.

Phenapas are those who, feigning insanity, eat withered leaves and rotten fruits; who dwell here and there; who tend the sacred fires; who perform the five great sacrifices; and who thus seek the self.

#### IV

There are also four types of renouncers: Kuṭīcaras, Bahūdakas, Haṃsas, and Paramahaṃsas.<sup>8</sup>

Of these, Kuṭīcaras are those who beg their food from the houses of their sons, and who thus seek the self.

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Udumbara or the Banyan. Vāḷakhilya: a legendary class of seers and ascetics (MBh 1.26–27; 13.14.61–63; 13.129.38–42). On the origin of the Vaikhānasas and the Vāḷakhilyas see MBh 13.85. Phenapa: lit. “froth drinkers.” Regarding ascetics who subsist on the froth of cow’s udders, see MBh 5.100.5–6.

6. The five great sacrifices are offered to gods, seers, ancestors, human beings, and spirits. They consist of fire sacrifices, Vedic study, oblations of food and water, hospitality, and food offerings, respectively. Cf. ŚB 11.5.6–7.

7. The meaning appears to be that these hermits gather sufficient food at the beginning of the rainy season to last the four rainy months. At the end of that period, that is on the full moon of Kārttika (October–November), all remaining supplies are thrown away. Cf. Schrader, 421; VaiDh 1.7.

8. Kuṭīcara: cf. ĀrU 6, n. 5. Haṃsa and Paramahaṃsa: cf. ĀrU 11, n. 14. Bahūdaka refers to one who dwells close to water.

[101] Bahūdakas are those who carry a triple staff, a water pot, a sling [LSU 21, n. 27], a shoulder yoke, a water strainer, a bowl, shoes, and a seat; who wear a topknot, a sacrificial string, a loincloth, and an ochre garment; who beg their food from virtuous Brahmin households; and who thus seek the self.

Haṃsas are those who carry a single staff; who wear a sacrificial string but not a topknot; who carry in their hand a sling and a water pot; who spend only one night in a village and five nights in a town or a sacred bathing place; who perform penances such as the one- and two-day fasts, the *kṛcchra*, and the lunar fast;<sup>9</sup> and who thus seek the self.

Paramahaṃsas [102] are those who carry no staff; who are shaven-headed; who wear a loincloth and a patched garment; whose emblem and conduct are concealed [JU 69, n. 24]; who, although they are sane, act like madmen; who abandon the triple staff, the water pot, the sling, the shoulder yoke, the water strainer, the bowl, the shoes, the seat, the topknot, and the sacrificial string; who live in deserted houses and temples; for whom there is neither right nor wrong nor even falsehood; who endure everything; who are the same toward everyone; who regard a clod, a stone, and gold as the same; who beg their food from any of the four classes that they happen to come across; [103] and who thus liberate themselves.

9. *Kṛcchra* is a general term for several penances. According to many sources a common form consists of taking one meal a day in the morning for three days and in the evening for three more days, eating what is received unasked during the three following days, and fasting completely during the final three days: GDh 26.1–5; ĀpDh 1.27.7. A lunar fast (*cāndrāyaṇa*) consists of decreasing and increasing by a mouthful the quantity of food eaten each day, according to the waning and the waxing of the moon. A person eats fifteen mouthfuls on the full moon day and decreases the food by one mouthful a day until the new moon, on which he fasts. The food is similarly increased during the period of the waxing moon. Cf. GDh 27.12–15; MDh 11.217.

# *Maitreya Upaniṣad*

## CHAPTER ONE

### I

[107] A king named Bṛhadratha, realizing that this body is a transient thing, became detached from the world. He appointed his son to rule over his kingdom and retired to the wilderness. There, practicing severe austerities, he stood with his arms raised gazing at the sun. Then, at the end of a thousand days, the Venerable Śākāyanya, who had the knowledge of the self, came before that sage like a smokeless fire, burning as if with splendor.

“Arise! [108] Arise!” he said to the king, “Choose a boon.” The king paid homage to him and said: “Lord, I do not possess the knowledge of the self. I have heard that you know its true nature. Explain it to me.” He replied: “Such things used to take place in former times. Do not ask for something impossible, O scion of Ikṣvāku.<sup>1</sup> Choose other things you may desire.” The king clasped the feet of Śākāyanya and uttered this lament:

### II

“Lord, this body is produced just by sexual intercourse and is devoid of consciousness; it is a veritable hell. Born through the

1. Ikṣvāku was the first king of the solar dynasty, to which most ancient Indian kings claimed to belong.

urinary canal, it is built with bones, plastered with flesh, and covered with skin. It is filled with feces, urine, wind, bile, phlegm, marrow, fat, serum, and many other kinds of filth. In such a body do I live; you are my refuge.

### III

“But why speak of these when, among other things, mighty oceans dry up, [109] lofty peaks crumble down, the pole star swerves, the wind-ropes<sup>2</sup> are cut down, the earth is submerged,<sup>3</sup> and gods fall from their station? I am also like that. So what purpose is there in enjoying desires within a saṃsāric existence such as this when we see that people attached to them are reborn repeatedly? So, please deliver me. In this saṃsāric existence, I am like a frog in a dark well. You, O Lord, are my only refuge.”

### IV

Extremely pleased, the Venerable Śākāyanya then said to the king: “Great King Bṛhadratha, the foremost banner of Ikṣvāku’s race, you shall come to know the self and attain your purpose. You are widely known by the name Wind,<sup>4</sup> and that indeed is your self.” The king asked: “What is it, Lord? And how would you describe it?” He said to him:

1. [110] “Sound, touch, and other objects of sense are truly worthless.<sup>5</sup> A soul that is attached to them recalls not the highest state.

2. Wind-ropes are believed to tie the sun’s chariot to the polar star as the sun travels around the earth. The ropes are lengthened during the sun’s southern course and shortened during its northern course. See Wilson’s translation of *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 2.8, n. 5.

3. The reference is to the well-known myth regarding the submersion of the earth under the ocean. Viṣṇu then became incarnate as a boar and pulled the earth up from the depths with his tusk. The intent is to show how transient all things are, even those that appear most stable.

4. Bṛhadratha is also known by the name Marut, which means wind. The wind is shown to be his self through the following equivalences: wind = breath (*prāṇa*) = self (*ātman*).

5. The author makes a pun by saying that *artha* (a term that means objects of sense as well as things of value) are in fact *anartha* (“non-*artha*”), that is, without value.

2. "By austerity a man achieves goodness, and through goodness he takes hold of the mind. Through the mind he reaches the self, and reaching the self he comes to rest.
3. "As a fire, when its fuel is spent, comes to rest in its source,<sup>6</sup> so the mind, when its thoughts are destroyed, comes to rest in its source.
4. "To a mind which rests in its source and travels by the path of truth, and which is dead to the objects of sense, things within the purview of rites are false.
5. "For the mind alone is *saṃsāra*! Let a man purify it with zeal. The mind a man possesses shapes his future course: that is the eternal mystery.
6. "For when his mind is tranquil, he destroys good and evil deeds. His self serene, he abides in the self and enjoys undecaying bliss.
7. "If people's minds were as set on Brahman as they are on objects of sense, who would not be released from bondage?
8. "Within the lotus of the heart let him cherish the supreme Lord. [111] He is the witness of the reason's dance,<sup>7</sup> and the object of the utmost love.
9. "He is beyond the range of mind and speech. He is bereft of beginning and end. He is pure being, and his nature is pure light. He is beyond the scope of thought.
10. "He can be neither seized nor forsaken. He has no common or special mark. He is immovable, calm, and profound. In him there is neither light nor darkness. He pervades, free from change or false appearance. He is knowledge that constitutes release.
11. "The Supreme Being, who is eternal, pure, enlightened, free, true, subtle, all-pervading, unique, and an ocean of bliss—I am He, the inner essence. Of this I have no doubt.

6. The meaning probably is that when its fuel is burnt up a fire returns to its latent and unmanifest form. Fire, for example, is believed to be latent within the fire drill (cf. LSU 16, n. 9), which is considered the womb of fire: LSU 16.

7. Sāṃkhya philosophy uses the simile of a dancing girl to illustrate the activity of primal nature (*prakṛti*) that manifests itself as the phenomenal world. There the world is depicted as the dance of reason, the first product of nature's evolution. The spirit (*puruṣa*) is distinct from nature but is enthralled by and absorbed in the dance. The recognition of its distinction from nature's dance constitutes its liberation.

12. “In my innate bliss I take refuge, the ogress desire I despise, [112] and the illusion of the world I perceive. So how can grief overtake me, who am detached.
13. “Fools, tied to customs of class and order, get their rewards according to their deeds. Men who abandon the duties of class and the like become sated by their own bliss.
14. “Classes and orders contain subdivisions and have a beginning and an end. They are nothing but a great torment. Free from attachment to the body and to sons and the like, let a man live in supreme and endless bliss.”

## CHAPTER TWO

### I

Once the Venerable Maitreya went to mount Kailāsa.<sup>8</sup> Arriving there he said [113]: “O Lord, tell me the secret of the highest reality.” The Great God [Śiva] said:

1. “The body is said to be a temple, and the soul is truly Śiva. Discard the faded flower offerings of ignorance. Worship with the thought: ‘I am he.’ [MU 118]
2. “‘Knowledge’ is to perceive no distinctions. ‘Meditation’ is to withdraw the mind from objects. ‘Bathing’ is to get rid of mental impurities. ‘Purification’ is to subdue the senses.
3. “Let him drink the nectar of Brahman. Let him beg to sustain his life. Let him become a solitary and live in a lonely and deserted place. In this manner should a wise man live; he shall thus attain release.”

### II

1. “Made with its mother’s and father’s filth, this body dies soon after it is born.<sup>9</sup> [114] It is a filthy house of joy and grief. When it is touched a bath is ordained.<sup>10</sup>

8. Kailāsa is the abode of the god Śiva.

9. The reference probably is to the impurity associated with sexual intercourse and childbirth. See above MU 108.

10. This and the following three verses expand on the subject of the internal or spiritual bath that consists of cleansing the mind. The body’s external impurity symbolizes the effect of lust and passion on the mind. On the comparison of the body to a house, see MU 108, NpU 144.

2. "Built with humors, it is a great disease. Strewn with countless vicissitudes, it is an unsteady house of sin. When it is touched a bath is ordained.
3. "By its very nature, foul secretions continuously ooze out from its nine openings. It smells foul and it contains awful filth. When it is touched a bath is ordained.
4. "Through its mother the body is impure at birth; in birth-impurity it is born. It is impure also through death.<sup>11</sup> When it is touched a bath is ordained.
5. "Feces and urine are 'I' and 'mine.' Removing their smell and stain is said to be true purification. Cleansing with water and soil constitutes the common type.<sup>12</sup>
6. [115] "Washing with the soil of knowledge and the water of detachment is called true purification. It is the purification that brings purity to the mind and destroys the three tendencies."<sup>13</sup>

### III

1. "To meditate on the One is almsfood and on the many is proscribed food. For almsmen is prescribed almsfood that is in accord with the directions of the teacher and of the scriptures.
2. "A sage should leave his native land right after he has renounced. He should live far away from his own, like a thief just released from jail.
3. "Pride is his son and wealth his brother. Delusion is his house and lust his wife. A man is freed, there is no doubt, as soon as he abandons these.

11. Periods of impurity (*sūta*) follow the birth and the death of a person. Although normally the impurity affects the near relatives, this verse sees it as affecting even more intensely the very body, which is subject to birth and death.

12. After answering calls of nature a Brahmin purifies himself by washing with water and soft soil used much like soap. Here the true pollutants are identified as the conceptions of "I" and "mine." True purification requires their elimination.

13. Tendencies or mental habits (*vāsanā*) are the unconscious and latent mental impressions derived from past experiences. The three referred to here are the tendencies associated with heavenly worlds, with the body, and with the various sciences. Cf. NpU 172.

4. “Delusion, our mother, has died. Enlightenment, our son, is born. With a double impurity at hand, how can we perform the twilight worship?<sup>14</sup>
5. [116] “The sun of consciousness always shines brightly in the sky of our hearts. It does not set and it does not rise. How can we perform the twilight worship?
6. “ ‘There is one alone without a second’: this conviction arrived at through these teacher’s words, they say, is true solitude, not a cloister or a forest’s depth.
7. “Men who doubt not attain release, while those with minds clouded with doubts are never freed birth after birth. A man should therefore acquire faith.
8. “Forsaking rites or chanting the Call<sup>15</sup> does not make renunciation. To meditate at twilight: ‘Soul and Supreme Self are one,’ is said to be true renunciation.<sup>16</sup>
9. “He to whom all desires seem like vomit, and who is rid of love for his body, is qualified to renounce.
10. “When aversion to all worldly goods arises in one’s mind, then only should a wise man renounce. Otherwise he will become an outcaste.
11. [117] “He who renounces for the sake of wealth, food, clothes, or celebrity, falls from both paths<sup>17</sup> and is unable to attain release.

14. Advaita renouncers do not perform the normal rites (*sandhyā*) associated with dawn and dusk (cf. ĀrU 7, n. 7). The reasons for their non-performance are satirized in this and the following verse. Deaths and births in the family create periods of impurity when such rites are suspended. A renouncer is similarly impure, because his mother (delusion) has died, and a son (enlightenment) is born to him. Likewise, as the true sun of consciousness within him does not rise or set, there is no dawn or dusk for an enlightened man. Therefore, he does not have to perform the twilight worship.

15. The Call (*praiṣa*) is the ritual formula “I have renounced” (*saṃnyastam mayā*). It is recited three times by the candidate and constitutes the essential element of the rite of renunciation. Cf. ĀrU 9; Ypra 20.1.

16. For the allegory of twilight and the unity between the individual and the supreme Self, see ĀrU 7, n. 7. The author is playing with the phonetic similarity between *saṃnyāsa* (“renunciation”), *saṃdhi* (“juncture”), and *saṃdhyā* (“twilight worship”).

17. He falls both from the path to heaven, which requires the performance of rites, and from the path to liberation, which requires knowledge.



12. “The best is to contemplate the truth. To reflect on the scriptures is middling. To ponder over mantras is the worst, and to think about sacred bathing spots is even worse.
13. “In Brahman fools rejoice in vain without truly experiencing It. Their joy is like that of tasting fruits hanging at the end of a branch reflected in a water pool.
14. “Almsfood gathered in the manner of a bee [NpU 174, n. 57] is his friend, whose father is detachment, whose wife is faith, and whose son is wisdom. If an ascetic abandons not that friend, he shall attain release.
15. “Those who reach eminence by reason of wealth, age, or learning are but servants of a man who is eminent by reason of wisdom—and of even his pupils.
16. “By my delusion their minds deluded, [118] even the learned ever roam about like crows to fill their stomachs tormented by hunger without ever finding me, the self and the fullness.
17. “Worship of idols made of stone, metal, clay, or precious stones causes a man who seeks after freedom to undergo repeated births. A recluse, therefore, shall worship only within his heart. To avoid rebirth let him shun outward worship.
18. “He is full within and full without, like a full pitcher in the sea. He is empty within and empty without, like an empty pitcher in space.
19. “Think not of yourself as the perceiver or as the perceived. Abandoning all thoughts, think of yourself as consisting of what remains.
20. “Leave behind the seer, the seeing, and the seen, along with their impressions, [119] and worship only the self that shines before the act of sight.<sup>18</sup>
21. “The state that resembles a stone, the state in which all thoughts have come to rest, the state which is beyond the

18. The self is revealed prior to the mental act (*vytti*) that precedes and causes any perception. The perception of the Self, therefore, is not dependent on mental activity.

states of waking and sleeping, is the highest and essential state.”

### CHAPTER THREE

1. “I am I, but also the other.  
I am Brahman, I am the source.  
I am the teacher of the whole world.  
I am the whole world.  
I am he!
2. “I am only I, I am perfect.  
I am pure, I am supreme.  
I am spotless and eternal.  
I am I.  
I am always he!
3. [120] “I am wisdom, I am special.  
I am the moon, I am complete.<sup>19</sup>  
I am splendid, I am without grief.  
I am spirit.  
I am the same!
4. “From honor and dishonor,  
and from qualities I am free.  
I am Śiva!  
From oneness and duality  
and from opposites I am free.  
I am he!
5. “From coming into being and ceasing to be  
and from light I am free.  
I shine!  
I am the power of the void and the non-void,  
I am both ugly and beautiful.
6. “I am free from the equal and the unequal.  
[121] I am pure and sempiternal.

19. The meaning is that, like the full moon, he is complete with all the parts.

*Maitreya Upaniṣad [122]*

I am the eternal Śiva!<sup>20</sup>  
I am free from the All and the Non-all.  
I have the nature of goodness.<sup>21</sup>  
I always am!

7. "I am free from the number one,  
and I do not have the number two.  
I am free from the distinction  
of being and non-being.<sup>22</sup>  
I am without thoughts.

8. "I distinguish not between selves,  
For I embody complete bliss.  
I am not I, I am not another.  
I have no body and the like.

9. "I have no refuge; I am no refuge.  
I do not have a support.  
[122] From bondage and from freedom I am free.  
I am pure. I am Brahman.  
I am he!

10. "I am without mind and all such things.  
I am the highest, higher than highest.  
I am ever reflective thought.  
Yet I reflect not.  
I am he!

11. "I am the letters 'a,' 'u,' and 'm.'<sup>23</sup>  
I am eternal.  
I am beyond the meditator, meditation,  
and the object meditated on.  
I am he!

20. *Sadā Śiva* is the ultimate form of Śiva in which there is no duality. The entire Upaniṣad teaches the unity between the enlightened renouncer and the ultimate Śiva.

21. Goodness (*sattva*), according to the Sāṃkhya philosophy, is the best of the three qualities (*guṇa*) that constitute every material entity.

22. It can also mean "free from the distinction between good and evil."

23. The letters *a*, *u* (which combine to make the diphthong *o*), and *m* (in Sanskrit called *ma*) make up the mystic syllable OM, which is considered the audible manifestation of Brahman.

*Maitreya Upaniṣad [123–124]*

12. “My nature is replete in all.  
I am being, consciousness, and bliss.<sup>24</sup>  
I am the essence of all sacred bathing spots.<sup>25</sup>  
I am the Supreme Self.  
I am Śiva!
13. “I am beyond the visible and the invisible.  
[123] I am the essence that perishes not.  
I am beyond the measurer, the measure,  
and the measured.  
I am Śiva!
14. “I am not the world. I witness all.  
I have no organs such as eyes.  
I am full grown and fully awakened.  
I am serene.  
I am Hara!<sup>26</sup>
15. “I am without any organs,  
Yet every action I perform.  
I find joy in all the Vedāntas.  
I am always easily attained.
16. “I am called ‘Pleased’ and ‘Displeased.’  
I am the fruit of all holy vows.<sup>27</sup>  
I am pure spirit eternally.  
[124] I am always being and consciousness.
17. “I possess nothing at all.  
Yet of the least thing I am not short.  
I am free from the knot of the heart.<sup>28</sup>  
I live in the lotus of the heart.
18. “I am free from the six changes.  
I am without the six sheaths.

24. In Advaita Vedānta these three are regarded as the essential attributes of Brahman.

25. A liberated renouncer has no need to visit these holy places, for he contains their essence: cf. JU 59–60, nn. 2–4.

26. This is another name for Śiva.

27. Specifically the vows of silence observed by ascetics.

28. Knots are things, especially doubts, that bind the soul. Cf. MuṇU 2.2.8; KathU 6.15.

*Maitreya Upaniṣad [125–126]*

I am free from the six enemies.<sup>29</sup>

I am nearer than the heart.

19. “I am free from space and time.  
Mine is the joy of the unclad.<sup>30</sup>  
From the thought ‘I have not,’  
and from the word ‘not’ I am free.<sup>31</sup>
20. [125] “I have the form of undivided space,  
for I possess a unitary form.  
My mind is free from all the world.  
I am free from the whole world.
21. “My form consists of total light.  
The light of pure consciousness am I.  
I am free from the triple time.<sup>32</sup>  
I am free from lust and the like.
22. “I am free from body and soul.  
I am without attributes.  
I am alone!  
I am beyond the freed.  
From freedom I am always free.  
I am free!
23. “I am free from truth, untruth, and the like.  
I am none other than Pure Being.  
There is no place where I must go.  
[126] From traveling and the like I am free.
24. “I am eternally the same.  
I am calm, I am the Person Supreme.

29. According to the *Varāha Upaniṣad* (1.8–11), the six changes are existence, birth, growth, maturity, decay, and death. The six sheaths are skin, blood, flesh, fat, marrow, and bones. The six enemies are desire, hatred, greed, delusion, pride, and envy.

30. A naked ascetic does not observe the regulations regarding time and place in such matters as eating, sleeping, bathing, and other rites and duties. The joy in being so free is a prefiguring of the ultimate bliss of liberation.

31. People in the world worry about lacking this or that. Naked and not possessing anything, an ascetic is free from all such worries. The word “not” (or more accurately, “have not,” because Sanskrit does not have a word for “have”) does not exist in his vocabulary.

32. The three times are the past, the present, and the future.

*Maitreya Upaniṣad [126]*

The man who perceives himself thus,  
Undoubtedly, I am he.

He who hears this even once will himself become Brahman;  
that is the secret teaching.<sup>33</sup>

33. The expression *iti upaniṣad* occurs at the end of this and of all the Upaniṣads that follow, as well as after each chapter of the NpU. I have uniformly translated it "That is the secret teaching." The expression may also simply mean "Thus ends the Upaniṣad." I have opted for the former because this expression is followed in the edition and the manuscripts by . . . *upaniṣat samāptā* ("Thus concludes the . . . Upaniṣad"), which would then duplicate the other expression. It also occurs at the end of each section in the NpU.

# *Nārada-parivṛāja* *Upaniṣad*

## CHAPTER ONE

[129] Once upon a time Nārada, a jewel among ascetics, in the course of touring the entire world, cast his gaze on and thus sanctified the incomparable sanctuaries and sacred bathing places. He achieved thereby purity of mind and became calm, composed, free from enmity, and totally indifferent to everything. After meditating deeply on his own self, he beheld the Naimiṣa forest,<sup>1</sup> a sanctuary noted for that distinctive joy resulting from penance, and filled with saintly people. [130] He came there bewildering the throngs of men, beasts, demigods, gods, centaurs, and nymphs with songs about the feats of Viṣṇu, songs that were marked by devotion to the Lord, and that caused animate and inanimate beings to prostrate themselves. These songs were set in special musical notes called *sa*, *ri*, *ga*, *ma*, *pa*, *dha*, and *ni*,<sup>2</sup> which arouse detachment and which cause aversion to the world.

At that time Śaunaka and the other great omniscient seers,

1. Naimiṣa is a sacred forest celebrated in myth and legend. The opening verse of the *Mahābhārata* introduces it as a land of great ascetics where the epic was first recited.

2. These are the abbreviations of *Ṣaḍja*, *Ṛṣabha* (pronounced *Riṣabha*), *Gāndhāra*, *Madhyama*, *Pañcama*, *Dhaivata*, and *Niṣādha*, the seven primary notes of the Indian musical scale. It is unclear whether the clause "which cause aversion to the world" qualifies the notes or the songs.

masters in the knowledge and recitation of the Veda, devoted to penance, and endowed with knowledge and detachment, were engaged in performing a sacrificial session that was to last twelve years. Seeing Nārada, the son of Brahmā and a devotee of the Lord, they rose to greet him and paid him homage. After the customary rites of hospitality, they offered him a seat. All of them then sat down and asked: “Blessed Lord, son of Brahmā, please tell us the way to liberation.”

Thus petitioned, Nārada said to them: [131] “After he has been properly initiated, a boy coming from a good family should wear his sacrificial string and learn all the Vedas, beginning with those of his own Vedic branch, from a single teacher whom he loves and who has undergone the forty-four sacraments.<sup>3</sup> Then he should live as a Vedic student for twelve years in obedience to this teacher, as a householder for twenty-five years, and in the forest hermit’s order for a further twenty-five years. He should complete them successively according to the rule. He should then study thoroughly the duties of the four types of students, the six types of householders, and the four types of forest hermits,<sup>4</sup> and carry out all the activities proper to each of them. Then, equipped with the four aids,<sup>5</sup> [132] he ceases to have any yearning in thought, word, or deed for all saṃsāric things and any attachment to mental impressions and desires.<sup>6</sup>

3. The Sanskrit term *saṃskāra*, here translated as sacrament, refers to rites that prepare a person for a function by imparting new qualities and/or by purification. The term covers a broad range of preparatory and purifying rites, but it is used with special reference to rites associated with an individual’s life cycle, such as the birth rite, the naming ceremony, initiation, and marriage. The number of sacraments listed in primary sources differs widely: cf. HDh, 2:193–197. Forty sacraments are enumerated in GDh 8.14–24; cf. NpU 135.

4. The text does not identify these types. For a classification of the four orders, see above ĀśU 95–103. For other classifications, see BDh 3.1–3; VaiDh 1.1–11.

5. They are: (1) discrimination between the eternal (Brahman) and the non-eternal (all else); (2) detachment from the joys of heaven and earth; (3) acquisition of the six virtues: tranquility, self-control, equanimity, forbearance, concentration, and faith; and (4) desire for liberation.

6. The meaning appears to be that he has no attachment to the mental impressions (NpU 172) and to the traditional objects of desire [*eṣaṇā*], namely, sons, wealth, heavenly worlds, and the like. See BāU 3.5.1 (cited at NpU 167) and Śaṅkara’s commentary on it translated in Olivelle 1986, 82–91. Mental impres-



He is calm, composed, free from enmity, and a renouncer. He who, while living thus in the Paramahansa order and meditating without interruption on his own true nature, abandons his body, becomes liberated [JU 71]. That is the secret teaching.”

## CHAPTER TWO

Then Śaunaka and all the other seers asked the Venerable Nārada: “Lord, tell us the procedure of renunciation.” Nārada looked at them and said: “It is only proper that we learn all its features from the mouth of the Grandfather himself.”

Soon after the completion of the sacrificial session, he went with them to the Truth-world [ĀrU 4, n. 3] and duly paid homage to and sang the praise of the Supreme Lord, who was engrossed in the contemplation of Brahman. [133] According to custom, Nārada sat down together with them at the behest of the Grandfather and said to him: “You are the Teacher. You are the Father. You know the secret of every science. You know everything. So, please tell me the one secret that I wish to know, for who apart from you is able to reveal the secret that I seek, namely the proper sequence of renunciation. Please reveal it to us.”

Thus petitioned by Nārada, the Supreme Lord looked at all of them seated around him and for a moment remained rapt in deep contemplation. Concluding that Nārada was seeking to put an end to the misery of saṃsāric existence, the Grandfather looked at him and said: “My son, I shall explain to you clearly the secret taught formerly by Virāt-Puruṣa assuming an unsurpassed form, the mysterious form recounted in the mystic text of the Puruṣa hymn.<sup>7</sup> The sequence of renunciation [134] is a deep secret. So listen attentively.

sions are habits and tendencies of the mind that come from previous experiences one has had either in this life or in previous lifetimes.

7. Virāt is the first creature produced from the sacrifice of the Puruṣa as recounted in the Puruṣa hymn (RV 10.90).

“At the outset, O Nārada, an uninitiated person who comes from a good family, and who is obedient to his father and mother, should undergo Vedic initiation. Soon thereafter he should leave his father and find a good teacher who belongs to a sound religious tradition; who is a man of faith; who comes from a good family; who is learned, virtuous, and honest; and who loves the scriptures. After paying him homage and rendering him appropriate service, he should inform the teacher of his wish and learn all the Vedas during twelve years of service.

“Then, with his teacher’s permission, he should marry a girl whom he loves and who befits his family. For twenty-five years he should carry out the duties incumbent on a householder, and, wiping away the stigma of a bad Brahmin, he should beget one son to perpetuate his line.<sup>8</sup>

[135] “After completing the twenty-five years customarily allotted to the householder’s state, he should live as a forest hermit observing the major restraints [NpU 196, n. 91] for another twenty-five years. As a forest hermit, he bathes three times a day; eats once every fourth mealtime;<sup>9</sup> stops going to towns and villages that he used to visit formerly; and fulfills the duties incumbent on that order, which permits no hoarding. Taking no interest in objects seen or heard of, and sanctified by the forty sacramentary rites [NpU 131, n. 3], he becomes indifferent toward everything; attains purity of mind; and burns away desire, jealousy, envy, and egotism. Endowed with the four aids [NpU 131, n. 5], such a man is fit to renounce. That is the secret teaching.”

8. A virtuous Brahmin learns the Vedas, offers sacrifices, and begets offspring. These are referred to as the three debts a Brahmin incurs at birth (TS 6.3.10.5). The two latter obligations imply marriage, because only a married man is qualified to perform a Vedic sacrifice. The statement “he should beget one son” is probably based on the belief that only one son is required by law. Only the first, therefore, is begotten according to the law (*dharmaja*), whereas others are the offspring of lust (*kāmaja*). See MDh 9.107.

9. Normally there are two meals a day. The fourth mealtime, therefore, is the evening of every other day. A person observing this vow eats once every two days. See MDh 11.110; ĀpDh 1.25.10.

### CHAPTER THREE

Thereupon Nārada asked the Grandfather: “Lord, [136] how does a man renounce? And who is entitled to renounce?”

“I shall first explain who is entitled to renounce and then describe the procedure of renunciation. Listen attentively.

“The blind, eunuchs, outcastes, cripples, the effeminate, the deaf, the childish, the dumb, heretics, discus-bearers, phallus-bearers, Vaikhānasas, Haradvijas,<sup>10</sup> mercenary teachers, bald men, and people without a sacred fire: these, even though they are detached, are unfit for renunciation. If they have already renounced, they are not entitled to receive instruction in the Great Sayings.<sup>11</sup> An elder renouncer<sup>12</sup> is entitled to become a Paramahansa.

“He truly is a renouncer who has lost the fear of others, and whom others have ceased to fear: so the scriptures declare.

“Eunuchs, cripples, the blind, the childish, criminals, [137] outcastes, doorkeepers, Vaikhānasas, Haradvijas, people who bear a discus or a phallus, heretics, bald men, people without a sacred fire, people who have renounced two or three times, and mercenary teachers: these men are unfit for orderly renunciation, and may renounce only when they are in mortal danger.”<sup>13</sup>

10. These terms apparently refer to sects or religious groups common at the time. There is no scholarly consensus regarding their identities. Discus-bearers and Vaikhānasas belong to the Vaiṣṇava tradition, whereas phallus-bearers and Haradvijas are Śaivas. For a detailed discussion, see Sprockhoff 1976, 180–185.

11. The Great Sayings (*mahāvākya*) are Upaniṣadic statements that teach the identity between Brahman and the individual self. The most famous of them are “That art thou” (ChU 6.8.7) and “I am Brahman” (BāU 1.4.10).

12. The meaning of the term *pūrvasaṃnyāsī* is unclear. It means an elder renouncer in the only other place that it occurs in these Upaniṣads, YU 314 (cf. Ypra 53.3–8). Schrader interprets it to mean a person who is already a lower class of renouncer, e.g., a Kuṭīcaka. See Sprockhoff 1976, 203, 258.

13. “Orderly renunciation” (*kramasaṃnyāsa*) is to renounce following the proper sequence of rites given in the procedure for renunciation: NpU 133–134, 162; Sprockhoff 1976, 205. When a person is mortally sick or is otherwise in imminent danger of death, he is permitted to renounce without regard to qualifications. Cf. JU 69 n. 22.

“What do honorable people regard as the time of mortal danger?”

“The time when life is about to depart is given the name ‘mortal danger.’<sup>14</sup> No other is a time of mortal danger, which opens the way to liberation.

“Even when he renounces at a time of mortal danger, a wise man should renounce only according to the rule by reciting the appropriate mantra.<sup>15</sup>

“Whether it is orderly renunciation or renunciation at a time of mortal danger, there is no difference in the Call [MU 116, n. 15]. There is no mantra divorced from a rite; a rite, likewise, requires a mantra.

“What is performed without a mantra is not a rite. Let him, therefore, not give up the mantra. [138] Performing a rite without a mantra is like offering an oblation in ashes.<sup>16</sup>

“Renunciation at a time of mortal danger, the scriptures say, is performed by abridging the prescribed rites. Therefore, O Sage, reciting the mantra constitutes the procedure of renunciation at a time of mortal danger.

“If a man who has maintained the Vedic fires becomes detached while he is away in a foreign land,<sup>17</sup> he should renounce only after offering an oblation to Prajāpati in water. [JU 66]

“A wise man should renounce either mentally, or by reciting the mantras given in the procedure, or after he has offered the oblation either into water or as laid down in the Veda.<sup>18</sup> Otherwise he shall become an outcaste.

14. The Ypra (20.12) defines: “. . . a mortally afflicted person is one who is considered to be at the point of death either that very moment, due to the threat posed by a thief, tiger and the like, or that very day, due to an illness and the like.”

15. This mantra is the Call (MU 116, n. 15), which constitutes the essential element of the renunciatory ritual: see Introduction, 3.4.

16. The simile is taken from the Vedic sacrificial theology. A sacrifice is efficacious only when it is offered in and consumed by the sacrificial fire, and not when it is thrown in ashes after the fire is extinguished. The mantra referred to here is probably the Call: “I have renounced.”

17. It appears that this verse and the next deal with the procedure of renunciation when a person is away from home and is therefore without his sacred fires in which sacrifices are normally offered: JU 66.

18. One renounces mentally by saying mentally the Call: “I have renounced”

“Only when indifference toward all things has arisen in their minds, do they seek renunciation. Otherwise a man shall become an outcaste.

“Let a wise man renounce when he is detached but live at home so long as he is attached. For the vile Brahmin who renounces while he is attached will go to hell.

“If his tongue, sexual organ, stomach, and hands are all under complete control, [139] a Brahmin may renounce while he is still a student and unmarried.

“Seeing that *saṃsāra* is truly without substance, people are imbued with intense detachment and, desirous of seeing the true substance, renounce while they are still unmarried.<sup>19</sup>

“Rites are marked by an active life, and knowledge by renunciation. So for the sake of knowledge here, a wise man should renounce.

“Now, when a man has come to know the highest truth, the eternal Brahman, let him then take a single staff and discard the topknot together with the sacred string.

“When man is attached to the Supreme Self, detached from all that is not the Supreme Self, and freed from all desires, he is fit to eat almsfood.

“If a man remains as well pleased when people assault him as when they honor and worship him, he is then a true almsman.

“When in a man this conviction is firmly planted: ‘I am the one and imperishable Brahman called *Vāsudeva*,’ he is then a true almsman.

“When a man is peaceful, tranquil, pure, truthful, content, sincere, [140] artless, and without possessions, he may live in the order aimed at liberation.

[“When a man is not evilly disposed in thought, word, or deed toward any living being, he is then a true almsman.

(MU 116, n. 15). The two other alternatives are (1) to recite orally all the mantras contained in the renunciatory rite and (2) to actually offer the sacrifice that precedes the renunciatory rite. The latter sacrifice, furthermore, may be offered either into water or into the sacred fires, as prescribed in the Veda.

19. There is a play on the Sanskrit word *sāra* (“pith” or “substance”). *saṃsāra*, if one ignores the nasal, can mean “with substance.” In reality, however, *saṃsāra* is *niḥsāra* or “without substance.” The true *sāra* or substance behind the phenomenal world is Brahman.

“Having observed steadfastly the tenfold Law and having duly studied the Vedāntas, let a Brahmin renounce when he is freed from his debts [NpU 134, n. 8]. [MDh 6.94]

“Steadfastness, forbearance, self-control, abstention from stealing, purity, control of the senses, modesty, knowledge, not giving way to anger, and truthfulness: these are the ten points of the Law. [MDh 6.92]

“When a man neither think about past joys nor dreams about future joys, nor even delights in present joys, he may live in the order aimed at liberation.]<sup>20</sup>

“When a man is always able to keep the inner faculties inside and the outer objects outside, he may live in the order aimed at liberation.

“If even in life a man feels no pleasure or pain, as does his body after death, [141] he may live in the order aimed at liberation.

“A pair of loincloths, a patched garment, and a single staff are his only possessions; a Paramahansa ascetic is allowed nothing more.

“If through desire he were to take anything more, he shall descend to the Raurava hell [ĀrU 4, n. 3], and thereafter he shall be reborn in animal wombs.

“Piecing old but clean scraps of cloth, he should make a patched garment, dye it with ochre, and wear it as an outer cover.

“Wearing a single garment or none at all, his thoughts fixed on the One, let him always wander without desire and completely alone. During the rains, however, he should stay in one place.

“An ascetic should abandon his family, sons and wife, all the auxiliary sciences of the Veda,<sup>21</sup> the sacrifice, and the sacrificial string, and wander about in disguise.

“Giving up desire, anger, pride, greed, delusion, and other such faults, an ascetic should become selfless.

[142] “A sage should be free from love and hate; regard a clod, a stone, and gold as the same; stop hurting living beings; and have no desire for anything.

20. The section within brackets is not found in the NR, and it is given within brackets in the critical edition.

21. The auxiliary sciences (lit. limbs: *vedāṅga*) of the Veda are phonetics, meter, grammar, etymology, astronomy, and ritual.

“When he is free from pride and conceit, when he desists from hurting and slandering others, and when he comes to possess the knowledge of the Self, an ascetic shall attain liberation.

“When a man is attached to his senses, undoubtedly he incurs guilt. But once he brings them under control, he will attain perfection. [MDh 2.93]

“Desire is never quenched by enjoying the desired things. It will only grow stronger, like a fire fed with ghee. [MDh 2.94]

“When a person feels neither elation nor revulsion at what he hears, touches, eats, sees, or smells, he should be regarded as a man who has conquered his senses. [MDh 2.98]

“Only a man whose speech and mind are always pure and well guarded reaps all the fruits promised in the Vedāntas. [MDh 2.160]

[143] “Let a Brahmin ever shrink from praise as if it were poison. Let him always long for insults as if they were nectar. [MDh 2.162]

“For those who suffer insults sleep at ease, and at ease they rise from sleep. At ease, likewise, they roam this world. But a man who insults will perish. [MDh 2.163]

“Let him bear harsh words with patience; let him not insult any man; and let him not show hostility to anyone for the sake of this body. [MDh 6.47]

“At those who show anger let him not direct his anger in return; let him bless when he is cursed; and let him not utter a false speech scattered at the seven gates.<sup>22</sup> [MDh 6.48]

“Rapt in the joy of the inner self, he sits still, free from cares and longing. With himself as his sole companion, let him wander on earth seeking bliss. [MDh 6.49]

“By restraining his sense organs, by destroying love and hate, [144] and by not hurting living beings, a man becomes fit for immortality. [MDh 6.60]

22. Commentators of the MDh give a variety of explanations of the phrase “seven gates.” (1) The gates are the reasons for uttering falsehoods. The seven gates, thus, may refer to the seven pleasant worlds [cf. ArU 4, n. 3] for the sake of which a person may lie. (2) The gates are the origins of false speech. One may lie, for example, with reference to what one has seen, heard, or thought. The seven gates would thus be (a) intellect, mind, and the five senses; or (b) ego principle, mind, and the five senses; or (c) two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, and tongue.

“Let him abandon this impermanent dwelling place of the elements. It has beams of bones tied with tendons. It is plastered with flesh and blood and thatched with skin. It is foul-smelling, filled with feces and urine, and infested with old age and grief. Covered with dust and harassed by pain, it is the abode of disease. [MDh 6.76–77]

“If a man finds joy in the body—a heap of flesh, blood, pus, feces, urine, tendons, marrow, and bones—that fool will find joy even in hell.

“The belief that ‘I am in my body’ is the path to Kālasūtra. It is the snare of Mahāvīci, and the row of Asipatravana.<sup>23</sup>

“A man should spare no effort to rid himself of that belief, even if it costs him everything. A pious man should never even touch that belief, as he would not an outcaste wench carrying dog’s meat.

[145] “Assigning his good deeds to his friends and his bad deeds to his foes, he attains the eternal Brahman through the practice of meditation. [MDh 6.79]

“In this manner having abandoned little by little all attachments, and having become freed from all the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25], he abides in Brahman alone. [MDh 6.81]

“Seeking perfection, let him wander alone at all times without a companion. For he realizes that a solitary man, who neither forsakes nor is forsaken, attains perfection. [MDh 6.42]

“A begging bowl, the foot of trees,<sup>24</sup> a ragged garment, the solitary life, and impartiality toward all: these are the marks of a liberated man. [MDh 6.44]

“After he has renounced he should be tranquil, show kindness toward all beings, carry a triple staff and a water pot, rejoice in solitude, and enter a village only in order to beg food. [YDh 3.58]

23. These are the names of three of the hells in Hindu mythology. Cf. MDh 4.88–90; HDh 4:162–165. In Kālasūtra people are constantly being cut by a string the way newly thrown pots are cut by the potter’s string. In Mahāvīci people are submerged by waves and continually drown. Asipatravana is a forest with rows of trees whose leaves are sharp blades that continually cut the inhabitants.

24. The foot of a tree is recognized as the ideal dwelling place of a renouncer.



“One constitutes a true mendicant. Two, the scriptures say, form a pair.<sup>25</sup> Three are called a village. Anything more make a city. [DSm 7.34]

[146] “Let him never form a city, or a village, or even a pair. An ascetic who forms these three falls from the Law proper to him. [DSm 7.35]

“Such people gossip with each other about news of kings, alms-food, and the like. Intimacy undoubtedly gives rise to attachment, backbiting, and jealousy. [DSm 7.36]

“Living alone and without desires, let him never talk with anyone. When he is addressed, let a recluse always merely respond: ‘Nārāyaṇa!’

“Living alone, let him contemplate Brahman in thought, word, and deed. Let him never long for death or for life. [Let him await his appointed time, when his life will come to an end.

“Let him not yearn for death; let him not yearn for life.]<sup>26</sup> Let him await his appointed time, as a servant his command.<sup>27</sup> [MDh 6.45]

“A mendicant who is tongueless, a eunuch, lame, blind, deaf, [147] and stupid, will be released undoubtedly by these six means.

“He who does not notice even as he eats that one thing is tasty and another is not, and whose words are kind, measured, and true, is said to be a **tongueless** man.

“A man who remains the same when he sees a sixteen-year-old lass, as when he sees a newborn girl or a hundred-year-old woman, is a **eunuch**.

“A man who travels only to beg his food or to answer nature’s calls, and who even then does not go beyond a league, is indeed totally **lame**.

“When an ascetic, as he stands or walks, does not look afar but fixes his gaze on the ground just six feet in front of him, he is said to be **blind**.

25. The Sanskrit term *mithuna* (“pair”) implies sexual intimacy.

26. The section within brackets is missing in the NR, and it is placed within brackets in the critical edition.

27. The critical edition reads *nirdeśa* (“command”), even though the NR, which normally has better readings and which Schrader usually follows, has the reading *nirveśa* (“wages”). As Bühler remarks in his note to MDh 6.45, the latter appears to be the better reading.

“Even when he hears words that are kind or unkind, that please or hurt, he who remains as if he has not heard them, is said to be **deaf**.

“When in the presence of sensual things a mendicant acts as if he is asleep, although he is able and has the full use of his faculties, he is said to be **stupid**.<sup>28</sup>

[148] “Shows by actors and the like, gambling, friends, food, refreshments, and menstruating women: at these six let him never heedlessly look.

“Love, hate, pride, fraud, harm, and deceit directed at others: let an ascetic not consider these six even in his mind.

“Couches, white garments, talk of women, passion, sleeping during the day, and vehicles: these are the six causes of a renouncer’s fall.

“A man who meditates on the self should carefully avoid long journeys. Let him constantly study the Upaniṣadic teachings, which lead to liberation.

“An ascetic should not be addicted to fasts, dwell constantly at sacred bathing places, or make a habit of constantly studying or teaching.

“Let him always keep his conduct sinless, honest, and sincere, [149] withdrawing his senses completely, as a tortoise withdraws its limbs,

“He shall undoubtedly attain liberation whose mind and senses have ceased to act; who is without desires and possessions; who is beyond the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25]; who neither salutes nor utters *svadhā* [KṣU 36, n. 14; PhU 51, n. 7]; who is free from the conceptions of ‘I’ and ‘mine’; who has no cares; who covets not; and who loves lonely places.

“After he achieves detachment, if a Vedic student or a householder or a forest hermit who is vigilant, who has attained mastery of rites, devotion, and knowledge, and who is independent, wishes to follow the principal mode of life,<sup>29</sup> he<sup>30</sup>

28. The Sanskrit term, like its English counterpart, means a state both of stupidity and of stupidity.

29. The principal mode of life is renunciation.

30. The section from here until the end of 150 is taken almost verbatim from the JU 64–66, where explanatory notes are given.

should complete his Vedic studentship and become a householder. From home he should first become a forest hermit and then renounce. Or rather, he may renounce directly from Vedic studentship, or from home, or from the forest. Let him even renounce on the very day that he becomes detached, regardless of whether he has taken the vow or not, whether he has graduated or not, and whether he has kindled the sacred fire or is without a fire.

[150] “Here, some do indeed perform a sacrifice to Prajāpati. Or else, one may not do that but perform just a sacrifice to fire, for fire is the vital breath and thereby he offers to breath. Afterwards, let him perform just the ‘Three-Element’ offering. These are the three elements: goodness, energy, and darkness.

“This is your due place of birth  
whence born you did shine.  
Knowing this, O Fire, mount it,  
and make our wealth increase. [Vs 3.4; TS 1.5.5.2]

“Reciting this mantra, let him inhale the fire. Breath is truly the birthplace of fire. He declares the same when he says: ‘Go to breath; go to thy birthplace, *svāhā!*’

“Taking some fire out of the east-fire [LSU 15, n. 1], let him inhale it as described before. If he cannot obtain fire, let him offer the oblation in water, for the waters truly are all the gods. He should offer the oblation with the words: ‘I offer to all the gods, *svāhā!*’ He should then take some from it and partake of that water and of the salubrious and salvific oblation mixed with ghee. [151] He who has the knowledge of the self wanders about only after he has abandoned his topknot, sacrificial string, father, son, wife, rites, study, and other mantras.<sup>31</sup> He shall thus learn that the mantra of liberation [namely, OM] is the triple Veda. That is Brahman. That should be worshipped.”

“That is truly so.”

31. He gives up all mantras other than the mystic syllable OM.

Then Nārada again asked the Grandfather: “How can a man be a Brahmin when he has no sacrificial string?” The Grandfather said to him:

[“In<sup>32</sup> the heart abide all the gods. The breaths are fixed within the heart. In the heart abide life and light, and, the wise say, the triple string.]<sup>33</sup>

“Cutting his hair together with the topknot, let a wise man discard his external string. As his string let him wear the supreme and imperishable Brahman.

[152] “‘String,’ they say, is derived from ‘stringing.’ The string is truly the highest abode. He who knows that string is a wise Brahmin; he has truly fathomed the Veda.

“Let a yogin who knows yoga and who sees the truth wear that string on which this whole world is strung like rows of pearls upon a string.

“Having entered upon the highest yoga, a wise man should discard the external string. Wise is he who wears this string that has the nature of Brahman. By wearing this string a man never becomes sullied or unclean.

“They alone on earth know the string, and they truly wear the sacrificial string who carry the string within themselves, and who wear the sacrificial string of knowledge.

“Knowledge is their topknot; in knowledge they are firmly fixed; and knowledge is their sacrificial string. Knowledge alone is supreme for them, and knowledge is said to be their purifier.

“The wise man who, like a fire, wears not a separate topknot, and whose topknot consists of knowledge is said to wear a topknot, and not others who just wear their hair long.

“This string, however, should be worn only by Brahmins and others who are qualified to perform Vedic rites. For the scriptures declare that it is a subsidiary element of a rite.

[153] “He possesses the complete Brahmin state, the knowers of Brahman say, whose topknot and sacrificial string consist of knowledge.

32. This entire section in verse until the beginning of 153 is taken from BU 84–87, where explanatory notes are given.

33. The section within brackets is missing in the SR, and it is placed within brackets in the critical edition.

“Knowing that, if a Brahmin, after he has renounced, is unable to endure bodily discomfort, he should become a wandering ascetic who wears a single garment; who is shaven-headed; and who has no possessions [JU 68]. Or, if he wishes to follow the normal rule, he should become clad as he was at birth; he should renounce his sons, friends, wife, close relatives, and so forth, as well as Vedic recitation, and all rites; he should also forsake this entire universe; and he should discard his loincloth, staff, and garment. Enduring the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25], he is affected neither by cold nor by heat, neither by pleasure nor by pain, neither by sleep nor by honor and dishonor. He is freed from the six waves of existence [PhU 48, n. 4]. He gives up slander, egotism, jealousy, pride, deceit, envy, indignation, desire, hate, pleasure, pain, lust, anger, greed, delusion, and the like, and he regards his body as a corpse. He considers nothing within or without as other than himself. He pays obeisance to no one. He neither pays homage nor utters *svāhā* or *svadhā* [KṣU 36, n. 14; PhU 51, n. 7]. He neither blames nor gives praise. Let him live without forethought or planning, [154] satisfied with whatever he receives at random. Let him not accept gold and the like. For him there is neither invitation nor dismissal [PhU 51, n. 8], neither mantras nor non-mantras, neither meditation nor worship, neither the perceptible nor the imperceptible, neither the separate nor the non-separate, neither day nor night [PhU 51]. At all times he lives resolutely without a home in deserted houses, at the foot of trees, in temples, on haystacks, in potter’s sheds, in sheds for fire sacrifices, in the southeastern quarter, on the sandy banks of rivers, in cellars, in glens, by waterfalls, in open fields, or in a forest. Like Śvetaketu, Ṛbhu, Nidāgha, Vṛṣabha, Durvāśas, Saṃvartaka, Dattātreyā, and Raivataka, he has no visible emblem; he keeps his conduct concealed; he acts as if he were a fool, a lunatic, or a goblin; and, although he is sane, he behaves like a madman. Triple staff, sling [LSU 21, n. 27], bowl, water pot, [155] waistband, and loincloth: let him abandon all these in water, saying: ‘Earth, *svāhā*!’ Waistband, loincloth, staff, gar-

ment, and water pot: let him throw all these in water and thereafter wander clad as he was at birth and seeking the self. He is clad as he was at birth. He is indifferent to the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25]. He has no possessions. He is firmly established in the path of the true Brahman. His mind is pure. At the proper time and merely to sustain his life, he eats food that he receives without asking,<sup>34</sup> using his hand or his mouth as a begging bowl [ĀrU 11, n. 14], and remaining the same both when he receives and when he does not. He is selfless. He devotes himself completely to meditating on the pure Brahman. He is grounded in the Supreme Self. He is intent on the uprooting of both pure and impure acts [JU 69–71]. After renouncing, he gives up the three bodies<sup>35</sup> in the manner of the wasp and the worm,<sup>36</sup> calling to mind the mystic OM with the thought: 'I am Brahman, who is absolute bliss and pure consciousness.' Such a man, who abandons his body through renunciation, has done all there is to do. [156] That is the secret teaching."

## CHAPTER FOUR

"Forsaking the worlds and the Vedas, the senses and the objects of sense, he who abides in the self alone attains the highest state.

34. Here I have departed from the critical edition, which reads: *vā yācitāhāram āharan* ("he eats food he has begged"). In the light of the earlier statements that a renouncer should live without forethought or planning and that he should be satisfied with whatever he receives at random, the reading clearly should be: *vāyāci-tāhāram āharan*.

35. The three bodies are the gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body. The gross body is the visible body that perishes at death. The subtle body survives death and accompanies the self from one life to another. The causal body is the cosmic illusory power (*māyā*) that creates both the gross and the subtle body. See below NpU 209–213.

36. The maxim of wasp and worm exemplifies the ancient Indian belief that one can assume the form of another by focusing one's mind on it. "On whatever a man focuses his entire mind through love, hate, or fear, he attains its form. A worm [possibly a larva], contemplating the wasp who has brought him to his hive, O King, becomes like a wasp without losing its former shape." BhP 11.9.22–23. See also below NpU 178 and Sprockhoff 1976, 168, n. 42.

“A good ascetic should never disclose his name, lineage, and so forth, his Vedic school, the time and place of his birth, or his learning, rewards,<sup>37</sup> age, conduct, vow, and piety.

“Let him neither converse with any woman, nor call to mind one he has previously seen. Let him avoid talking about women and not even look at a picture of one.

“An ascetic’s mind is inevitably perturbed if he behaves with women foolishly in these four ways. When his mind is perturbed he will perish.

“Craving, anger, falsehood, deceit, greed, delusion, likes and dislikes, fine arts, the work of interpretation, desire, passion, possessions, [157] egotism, selfishness, the practice of medicine, law enforcement, atonement, travel abroad, and the use of mantras, medicines, poisons, and blessings: all these are forbidden to him. Practicing them will cause his downfall.

“A sage who is intent on liberation should not say ‘Come!’ ‘Go!’ or ‘Stay!’ or utter words of welcome or respect even to a friend.

“A mendicant should neither accept nor oblige others to give him gifts. Let him likewise not press others to do so even in a dream.

“An ascetic should forsake grief and joy; he should not be perturbed when he sees or hears of the prosperity or misfortune of his wife, brothers, sons, and the like, or of his relatives.

“Non-injury, true speech, non-stealing, chastity, poverty, humility, cheerfulness, serenity, firmness, candor, detachment, service of the teacher, faith, patience, self-control, tranquility, equanimity, fortitude, kindness, forbearance, compassion, [158] modesty, knowledge, wisdom, yogic restraint, a light diet, and steadfastness: these are said to be the duties proper to self-controlled ascetics.

“The fourth type of ascetic [ĀśU 99] is a Paramahansa, who is indifferent to the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25], ever abides in goodness, and regards all with equal eyes. He is, indeed, Nārāyaṇa in visible form.

37. The meaning of “rewards” (*phala*) is unclear. It may refer to the heavenly rewards he may have acquired through meritorious deeds. The reading, however, appears to be uncertain. The same verse in Ypra 68.3 reads *bala* (“powers”), and in Ydhs, 103, it reads *kula* (“family”). See also MDh 3.109.

“Outside the rains let him spend one night in a village and five nights in a town. During the rainy season, however, let him live in one place for four months [ĀrU 8, n. 11].

“A mendicant should not spend two nights in the same village. Doing so will give rise to passion and the like, as a result of which he will go to hell.

“In deserted areas on the outskirts of villages let him roam the earth like a worm, homeless and controlled. During the rains let him stay in one place.

“Naked or clad in a single garment, rapt in contemplation, with his sight fixed on the One, and free from desire, let him wander on earth without offending the path of good men.

[159] “Observing the duties proper to him, let a mendicant yogin at all times wander in a pure region, looking always at the ground.<sup>38</sup>

“Let him not wander about at night, at midday, at dawn and dusk, in deserted or inaccessible regions, or where harm may come to living beings.

“A mendicant may spend one night in a village, two in a burg, three in a town, and five in a city. During the rains let him remain in a place that has plenty of pure water.

“Regarding all beings as himself, let a mendicant wander about the earth, as if he were blind, hunchbacked, deaf, mad, and dumb [NpU 146–147].

“A bath is ordained three time a day for hermits and Bahūdakas, and just once a day for Hamsas. There is no such rule for Paramahamsas.

“Silence, yogic posture, meditation, patience, solitude, [160] desirelessness, and equanimity: these seven are practiced by single-staffed ascetics [PhU 50].

“Bathing and the like are not ordained for men who live in the Paramahansa order. Hence they must perform just the abandonment of all mental activities.

38. A renouncer inspects the ground in front of him to avoid trampling little creatures. Cf. MDh 6.46, 68. Not looking around while he walks is also a sign of concentration and modesty. Cf. Ypra 57.12–13.



“Those who take delight in this collection of skin, flesh, blood, tendons, marrow, fat, and bones, stinking with feces and urine—what difference is there between them and worms?

“What has this body—a great pile of phlegm and so forth—in common with qualities such as beauty, fragrance, and loveliness?

“If a man finds joy in the body—a heap of flesh, blood, pus, feces, urine, tendons, marrow, and bones—that fool will find joy even in hell. [NpU 144]

“Even though a woman’s private parts are not different from a deep and festering ulcer, men generally deceive themselves by imagining them to be different.

“I salute those who take delight in a piece of skin split in two scented by the breaking of the wind! What could be more rash?

[161] “There are neither duties nor emblems [JU 69, n. 24] for a wise man. A sage should be selfless, fearless, tranquil, and indifferent to the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25]. He should accept food without respect to the class of the donor; he should go naked or wear a loincloth; and he should be devoted to meditation. A yogin who is thus intent on meditation is fit to become Brahman.

“Even when this emblem [JU 69, n. 24] is present, knowledge alone is the cause; the entire set of emblems is of no use for the release of creatures in this world. [MBh 12.308.48]

“When no one knows if he is good or bad, if he is learned or ignorant, or if he is virtuous or vile, he is then a true Brahmin. [VDh 6.44]

“Resorting to the practice of disguise, therefore, let a wise man who knows the Law live a life of obscurity, without emblems and devoted to the vow of chastity.

“Unrelated to class or order and an enigma to all creatures, let him wander about the earth, as if he were blind, stupid, and dumb [NpU 146–147].

[162] “Seeing him thus with a serene mind, the gods are filled with envy. The absence of emblems brings release: so the Vedas teach.”

Thereupon Nārada said to the Grandfather: "Describe to us the procedure of renunciation." "Yes," said the Grandfather in assent, and declared:

"Regardless of whether it is the orderly renunciation [NpU 137, n. 13] or the renunciation of those who are in mortal danger [JU 69, n. 22], he should first perform the expiatory penances<sup>39</sup> and then offer the eight *śrāddha*<sup>40</sup> oblations to prepare himself for entering the fourth order. The eight *śrāddha* oblations should be offered to the gods, to the seers, to the divine beings, to the human beings, to the elements, to the fathers, to the mothers, and to the self, respectively. He should invite a pair of Brahmins to represent each of the following: at the outset the All-gods named Satya and Vasu,<sup>41</sup> then Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara [Śiva] at the oblation to the gods; the divine seers, the royal seers, and the human seers at the oblation to the seers; the Vasus, the Rudras, and the Ādityas at the oblation to the divine beings; Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanatkumāra, and Sanatsujāta at the oblation to the human beings; [163] the five gross elements beginning with earth, eyes, and the other organs, and the four classes of living beings at the oblation to the elements;<sup>42</sup> the father, the paternal grandfather, and the paternal great-grandfather at the oblation to the fathers; the mother, the paternal grandmother, and the paternal

39. These expiatory penances [*kṛcchra*] are described in detail in Ypra 6.1–19. See also ĀśU 101, n. 9.

40. *Śrāddhas* are offerings made to departed ancestors. The ceremonies include the feeding of invited Brahmins who represent the ancestors. By extension, *śrāddhas* are offered also to other beings, such as gods and seers. The eight *śrāddhas* offered prior to renunciation include all the classes of beings inhabiting the universe.

41. A *śrāddha* is offered to a group of divine beings known as *viśvedeva* (All-gods) before the eight other *śrāddhas*. Some sources enumerate ten All-gods, two of whom are to be invited to each of the five types of *śrāddhas*. Satya and Vasu are invited to a *śrāddha* performed at an auspicious occasion (*vṛddhi* or *nādimukha*) such as renunciation. See Ypra, trans. 7.23n.

42. Five elements are earth, water, fire, air, and ether. The five organs of perception are eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and skin, and the five organs of action are larynx, hands, feet, and the organs of excretion and procreation. The four classes of living beings are the viviparous, the oviparous, and those produced by sweat and germination.

great-grandmother at the oblation to the mothers; the self, the father, and the paternal grandfather, or, leaving out the father if his father is still alive, the self, the paternal grandfather, and the paternal great-grandfather, at the oblation to the self. If he performs them as eight separate rites, he should offer the eight oblations on eight separate days, whereas if he performs them as a single rite, he should offer them all on a single day, in each case using the mantras proper to his own Vedic branch.<sup>43</sup> He should honor the Brahmins in the manner ordained for an oblation to deceased ancestors, and duly complete the rites up to the feeding of the Brahmins. Then he should offer the balls of rice and dismiss the Brahmins after gratifying them with sacrificial fees and betel leaves.

[164] “Leaving seven hairs so that he may complete the remaining rites. . . .

“Leaving aside seven or eight hairs so that he may complete the remaining rites, a Brahmin should get his hair and beard shaved and his nails cut.

“Following these texts, he should save seven hairs<sup>44</sup> and shave himself excluding the armpits and the pubic region. He should then bathe, perform the evening twilight worship [ĀrU 7, n. 7], mutter the *gāyatrī* [ĀrU 6, n. 4] 1,000 times, and offer the sacrifice to Brahman.<sup>45</sup> Next, he should fetch his sacred fire, conclude the recitation of the text of his own Vedic branch,

43. When a series of rites are performed separately, all the ceremonies are performed at each rite. When the series is performed as a single rite, then the ceremonies common to them are performed only once. Only the principal rituals specific to each are performed separately. The Sanskrit technical term for the latter method is *tantrēṇa*. A Brahmin belongs to one of the several branches or schools [*śākhā*] attached to the four Vedas. Each branch has special mantras to be used at Vedic rituals. The differences in this rite for several Vedic branches are recorded in Rudradeva’s *Samnyāsapaddhati*, 2.1–4.81.

44. These hairs are saved to serve as a topknot, because later on the rite calls for it to be plucked out: NpU 167. I have been unable to trace the two passages cited here as authorities.

45. The sacrifice to Brahman may mean either the daily recitation of the Veda, which is one of the five Great Sacrifices, or the oblation to Brahman (LSU 15, n. 5).

and in the manner prescribed therein perform the ghee oblation up to the offerings to Agni and Soma. Having completed the ceremonies of that oblation, he should eat barley meal three times with the mantras: 'OM Homage to the Self. . . .'<sup>46</sup> Then, after he has sipped water, he should guard that fire and, sitting to its north on a black antelope skin, keep awake listening to Purāṇas.

"At the end of the fourth watch<sup>47</sup> he should bathe, have a porridge offering cooked on that fire, [165] and offer sixteen oblations of food while reciting the Puruṣa hymn.<sup>48</sup> He should then offer the Virajā oblation,<sup>49</sup> after which he should sip water and present the priests with a garment, a golden vessel, and a cow, along with the sacrificial fee. Having completed all that, he should abandon the Veda and then recite:

"May the Maruts, may Indra,  
may Bṛhaspati sprinkle me!  
May this Fire sprinkle me with long life,  
with wealth, and with strength!  
Long may he make me live! [TĀ 2.18.1]

"He should deposit the fire in himself with this mantra:

"With your sacred body, O Fire,  
come here and ascend my self,  
bringing me great and manly riches.  
Becoming the sacrifice, reach  
your birthplace, the sacrifice.  
Born from the earth, O Fire,  
come here with your own abode. [TB 2.5.8.8]

46. The mantras are: "OM Homage to the self! OM Homage to the inner self! OM Homage to the highest self! OM Homage to Prajāpati!" See Ypra 21.48.

47. A watch is a three-hour period. The end of the fourth watch of the night coincides with daybreak.

48. This hymn is Rg Veda 10.90. An oblation is offered with each of its sixteen verses. The porridge consists of rice or barley boiled with milk or butter.

49. At this rite fuel sticks, ghee, and boiled rice or barley are offered after reciting each of the nineteen Virajā mantras. For a description of the rite and the mantras see Ypra 14.1-47.

“After contemplating that fire, he should circumambulate, worship, and then abandon it.

“Next, he should perform the morning twilight worship [166] and, after reciting the *gāyatrī* 1,000 times, worship the sun. He should then enter the water up to his navel; offer water to the guardian deities of the eight directions; and abandon the *gāyatrī*, making the *sāvitrī* enter the Great Utterances.<sup>50</sup> He should then recite:

“I am the shaker of the tree!  
 My fame is like a mountain peak!  
 I am supremely pure, like the  
 excellent nectar in the sun.  
 I am a treasure shining bright,  
 immortal, undecaying, and wise!  
 This is the Vedic recitation of Triśaṅku. [TU 1.10]

“Exalted in the Vedic hymns,  
 he possesses every form.  
 Surpassing the Vedic hymns,  
 he has sprung from the immortal.  
 May this Indra deliver me with wisdom!  
 May I, O God, be the immortal’s keeper!  
 May my body be vigorous!  
 May my tongue be exceedingly sweet!  
 [167] May I hear greatly with my ears!  
 You are Brahman’s sheath, covered with wisdom!  
 Preserve for me what I have heard. [TU 1.4.1]

“I have turned away from the desire for a wife, from  
 the desire for wealth, and from the desire for  
 worlds. [Cf. BāU 3.5.1]

“He should then proclaim either mentally or aloud first in a low pitch, then in a medium pitch, and finally in a high pitch:

50. *Sāvitrī* is another name for the *gāyatrī* verse (ĀrU 6, n. 4). Sources give different descriptions of the rite by which this mantra is abandoned by renunciators. According to some, the renouncer merely says three times: “I enter *sāvitrī*.” According to others (PpU 280), before its final abandonment the *sāvitrī* is first made to enter the Great Utterances while reciting: “I make the *sāvitrī* enter the Great Utterances.” The latter consist of the names of the first three or of all seven pleasant worlds: *bhūh*, *bhuvah*, *svar*, *mahas*, *jana*, *tapas*, *satya* [ĀrU 4, n. 3].

“OM Earth! I have renounced!  
OM Atmosphere! I have renounced!  
OM Heaven! I have renounced!  
OM Earth, Atmosphere, Heaven! I have renounced!

“Thereafter, he should drink some water, saying:

“Safety from me to all beings! [ĀrU 9, n. 12]  
From me everything proceeds, *svāhā!*”

“and, filling his cupped hand with water, he should throw it toward the east. He should then pluck out his topknot [NpU 164, n. 44] saying: ‘OM *svāhā!*’

“Wear the white sacrificial string,  
The best purifier and the foremost giver of life,  
Born of old with Prajāpati.  
May it confer power and strength.  
[168] “The sacred string shall not reside outside!  
Enter within, you the best purifier;  
And, abiding within the heart,  
Grant me knowledge and detachment,  
Strength, wisdom, and fame.

“With these words he should cut his sacrificial string, take it in his cupped hands filled with water, and offer it in the water, saying: ‘OM Go to the sea, *svāhā!*’ Then he should proclaim three times:

“OM Earth! I have renounced!  
OM Atmosphere! I have renounced!  
OM Heaven! I have renounced!

“Consecrating some water by repeating this mantra three times, he should drink it and then sip some water. He should then throw his garment and waistband also into the water, saying: ‘OM Earth *svāhā!*’ With the thought: ‘I have ceased from all rites,’ he should become clad as he was at birth and, meditating deeply on his own true nature, walk toward the north with his arms raised.

“A man should act in the above manner if he is an en-

lightened renouncer. Having received from his teacher instruction on the mystic syllable OM and on the Great Sayings [NpU 136, n. 11], he should wander about at will, thinking: ‘There exists no one else other than me.’ [169] He should roam the hills, forests, and temples, living on fruits, leaves, and water. Now, after his renunciation he should go naked, roam everywhere, and always fill his heart solely with the personal experience of bliss. Profiting from being totally removed from rites, intent on sustaining his life with fruits, juices, barks, leaves, roots, and water, and aspiring to liberation, he should give up his body in a mountain cave, calling to mind the syllable OM.

“If he is a renouncer seeking after knowledge, he should take a hundred steps, after which he is directed by learned Brahmins such as his teacher: ‘Stop! Stop, Your Reverence! Take a staff, a garment, and a water pot. Come near a teacher to learn about the mystic syllable OM and the Great Sayings.’ Thereupon, he should receive from the teacher a staff, a waistband, a loin-cloth, a single garment, and a water pot. The staff should be a single bamboo reed having the required qualities.<sup>51</sup> It should reach from his feet to his head, and it should be even, smooth, and without bruises or black spots. He should take it after sipping water and saying:

“Protect me, friend,  
You who are my strength and my friend.  
You are the bolt of Indra, slaying obstructions.  
Be my refuge and banish all that is evil.

[170] “He should take the water pot, saying OM and the mantra:

“You are the life of the world!  
You are the vessel of life!  
Like a mother, you who are all gentle,  
Always give me counsel.

“He should take the waistband, saying:

51. On the size, appearance, and other qualities of a bamboo reed used for a renouncer’s staff, see Olivelle 1986, 37–42.

“Waistband, the support of the loincloth, OM!

“the loincloth, saying:

“Loincloth, the cover of the private parts, OM!

“and the garment, saying:

“Garment, the sole guardian of the body, protecting against cold, wind, and heat, OM!

“Then, after he has sipped water, he should be invested with the yoga band.<sup>52</sup> ‘I have attained my goal’: keeping this in mind, he should devote himself thereafter to the conduct proper to his order. That is the secret teaching.”

## CHAPTER FIVE

Thereupon Nārada said to the Grandfather: “Lord, earlier you said that renunciation eliminates all rites [NpU 168]. [171] Now you say: ‘He should devote himself to the conduct proper to his order.’ ”

The Grandfather then replied: “An embodied soul embraces the following states: waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth. Subject to them, human beings pursue rites, knowledge, or detachment and observe the conduct appropriate to each.”

“If that is so, O Lord, how many types of renunciation are there? And how do they differ in practice? Please explain them to us accurately.”

“Yes,” said the Grandfather in assent and explained to him the difference in conduct that results from the difference in the type of renunciation.

“Now, in reality there is only one renunciation. First it became threefold on account of ignorance, inability, and the ab-

52. The investiture with the yoga band (*yogaṇṭha*) appears to be a form of higher ordination of a renouncer. After this ceremony (see Ypra 66.1–24) a renouncer is allowed to teach and to initiate others into renunciation.



sence of rites.<sup>53</sup> Then it came to be fourfold: renunciation by reason of detachment, renunciation by reason of knowledge, renunciation by reason of both knowledge and detachment, and renunciation by reason of rites. They are as follows [BSU 253–254].

[172] “A man who attains indifference toward perceivable objects because vile lust is absent in him, and who then renounces by the power of his former pious deeds—he is a renouncer by reason of detachment.

“A man who becomes indifferent to the phenomenal universe through his knowledge of the scriptures and because he has heard accounts of what is experienced in the pleasant worlds;<sup>54</sup> who turns away from the whole saṃsāric existence full of anger, envy, jealousy, egotism, and pride; who abandons the mental impressions created by the body, the scriptures, and the worlds [NpU 132, n. 6], which involve the desire for a wife, the desire for wealth, and the desire for worlds; who regards this entire physical world as something to be shunned like vomit; and who then, endowed with the four aids [NpU 131, n. 5], renounces—he alone is a renouncer by reason of knowledge.

“A man who has studied and experienced everything in due order; who, by meditating deeply on his own true nature through knowledge and detachment, is left with nothing but his body; and who, after he has renounced, becomes clad as he was at birth—he is a renouncer by reason of both knowledge and detachment.

“A man who, after he has completed his Vedic studentship,

53. Schrader explains this elliptic passage thus. One type of renunciation results from ignorance and another from its opposite, knowledge, which it implies. They are the renunciation of the enlightened (*vidvatsaṃnyāsa*) and the renunciation of those who seek knowledge (*vividiṣusaṃnyāsa*). The cessation of rites, according to Schrader, is caused by inability, e.g., old age or sickness. From that cessation results the renunciation of those in mortal danger (*āturasaṃnyāsa*). Others see the three reasons given in the text—ignorance, inability, and absence of rites—as three causes of the three types of renunciation, although it is unclear what the three types are. See Sprockhoff 1976, 164–165.

54. The meaning appears to be that he has learned from the scriptures and from accounts of those who have experienced them that the heavenly worlds and their pleasures are subject to the same impermanence that characterizes our present lives.

becomes a householder, and then proceeds to the order of a forest hermit, [173] and who then renounces following the sequence of orders, even though he may lack detachment—he is a renouncer by reason of rites.

“A man who renounces while he is still a Vedic student and after his renunciation becomes clad as he was at birth, is a renouncer by reason of detachment. An enlightened renouncer is the same as a renouncer by reason of knowledge. A renouncer who seeks after knowledge is the same as a renouncer by reason of rites.

“Renunciation by reason of rites is also of two types: renunciation occasioned by an event and renunciation unrelated to an event. That which is occasioned by an event is the renunciation of a man in mortal danger, while that which is unrelated to an event is orderly renunciation [NpU 137, n. 13]. Renunciation of those in mortal danger, when their life is about to depart and when all their rites have ceased, is the renunciation occasioned by an event. A man who, although firm-bodied, nevertheless realizes that the body and every such thing should be shunned, because all created things are perishable; who becomes convinced that everything besides Brahman is perishable, as it is said:

“The gander seated in the light, the Vasu seated in the  
atmosphere;  
The priest seated at the altar, the guest seated in the  
house;  
Seated among men, seated in the highest;  
Seated in the truth, seated in the sky;  
Born of waters, born of cows;  
Born of truth, born of the mountains;  
Is the Great Truth! [VS 10.24]

“and who renounces following the proper sequence—his is the renunciation unrelated to an event.

[174] “There are six types of renunciation: Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, Haṃsa, Paramahaṃsa, Turīyātīta, and Avadhūta.<sup>55</sup> A

55. For the first four, see ĀśU 100, n. 8. Turīyātīta literally means “one who

Kuṭīcaka has a topknot and a sacrificial string, carries a staff and a water pot, and wears a loincloth and a patched garment. He is devoted to honoring his father, mother, and teacher, to the use of articles<sup>56</sup> such as a pot, a spade, and a sling [LSU 21, n. 27], and to the practice of eating food obtained from one place. He wears a white vertical mark on his forehead and carries a triple staff.

“A Bahūdaka wears a topknot, a patched garment, and so forth, as well as a triple mark on his forehead, being similar to a Kuṭīcaka in all things. He eats eight mouthfuls begged in the manner of a bee.<sup>57</sup>

“A Haṃsa has matted hair and wears a triple and a vertical mark on his forehead.<sup>58</sup> He eats food begged in the manner of a bee from houses that he has not preselected,<sup>59</sup> and he wears a rag as a loincloth.

“A Paramahaṃsa has no topknot or sacrificial string. He adheres to the practice of eating food obtained from just five houses, and he uses his hand as a begging bowl. [175] He wears

is beyond the fourth.” The “fourth” may refer both to the fourth class, namely Paramahaṃsa, and to the fourth state of consciousness (NpU 178–179; 189–191), beyond which is Brahman. Avadhūta literally means “one who has shaken off” worldly existence. The two terms are often used as synonyms or together in the compound Turīyātāvadhūta (cf. TaU) to refer to an ascetic who has achieved the liberating knowledge. The NpU, however, makes a clear distinction between the two.

56. The term *mātra* here does not mean “merely,” as suggested by Sprockhoff 1976, 217. It is clearly a variant of *mātrā*, the technical term for the personal effects of a renouncer. Schrader’s rejection of the reading *mantra* and his conjecture of *mātra*, following the reading of BSU, are sensible.

57. This is a method of begging technically called *mādhūkara*. A renouncer begs from several houses at random, taking a morsel from each and thus not becoming a burden on the householders. This is considered similar to the way a bee gathers honey from flowers without causing them harm. For a description of the methods of begging, see BSU 265–266.

58. It is unclear whether both these marks were to be worn by the same individual or at the same time. See Sprockhoff 1976, 132 (n. 47), and 218. There are clear precedents for the same person wearing both types of marks. See HDh 2:673. The vertical mark is usually the sectarian sign of Vaiṣṇavas, while the horizontal mark is the sign of Śaivas.

59. The term *asaṃklepta* (“without forethought”) does not refer to food that has not been specially prepared for the renouncer, as assumed by Sprockhoff 1976, 127 and 218; 1990, 32. Its meaning within this context is clearly stated in a couple of verses in the BSU, 265–266. See also Ypra 54.5–10.

a single loincloth and a single dress, and he carries a single bamboo staff; or else he wears just a single garment.<sup>60</sup> He is given to smearing himself with ashes. He abandons everything.

“A Turīyātīta uses his mouth in the manner of a cow.<sup>61</sup> He eats fruits, and, if he eats cooked food, he obtains it from three houses. He is left with nothing but his body. He is naked, and the activity of his body is like that of a corpse.

“An Avadhūta, on the other hand, is subject to no restrictions. He is given to obtaining food in the manner of a python,<sup>62</sup> receiving it from all classes except the outcastes and the infamous [BSU 251, n. 3]. He is devoted to meditating deeply on his own true nature.

“If a man who renounced when he was in mortal danger lives, he should perform the rite of renunciation following the proper sequence [NpU 137, n. 13] customary for Kuṭīcakas, Bahūdakas, and Haṃsas. The procedure of renunciation for renouncers beginning with the Kuṭīcakas follows the pattern of the orders from Vedic studentship to the fourth order.<sup>63</sup> The rule for the three classes beginning with the Paramahaṃsas is as follows: they are without a waistband, without a loincloth, without a dress, without a water pot, and without a staff; they adhere to the practice of begging from all classes; and they are clad as they were at birth.

60. Schrader explains that under this option a Paramahaṃsa wears a single garment without a loincloth.

61. A renouncer who follows this practice does not use his hands to accept food. The donor throws the food on the ground, and the renouncer picks it up with his mouth in imitation of a cow. This practice is the same as that of the *udrapātrin*, one who uses his stomach as a begging bowl (ĀrU 11, n. 14).

62. A renouncer who follows this vow remains in one place and waits for someone to give him food without being asked, just as a python lies in wait for its prey to come to it.

63. The exact meaning of this statement is unclear. It may mean that the first four classes of renouncers differ from each other in a manner similar to the four orders. In other words, ceremonies are performed for passing from one to another and there are clear differences in their emblems. Among the last three classes of renouncers, however, there is no distinction with respect to emblems. Cf. Sprockhoff 1976, 164.

“Now, at the time of renunciation he should study until he has acquired a sufficient understanding. Thereupon [176] he should discard everything—waistband, loincloth, staff, garment, water pot—in water, and go about clad as he was at birth, without the slightest trace of a patched garment. Let him neither study nor expound; let him not listen to anything else.<sup>64</sup> He shall not pursue either a philosophy or even scriptures other than the syllable OM. Let him not teach numerous scriptural passages, and, with the use of his throat, hands, and so forth, let him not greatly tire his voice by speaking. Let him not use a different language,<sup>65</sup> or speak with Śūdras, women, outcasts, and menstruating women. Ascetics shall not perform divine worship, watch festivals, or undertake pilgrimages to sacred bathing places.

“Turning once again to the distinction among ascetics, a Kuṭīcaka begs food from a single house. A Bahūdaka begs in the manner of a bee from houses that he has not preselected [NpU 174, n. 59]. A Haṃsa begs eight mouthfuls from eight houses. [177] A Paramahaṃsa begs from five houses and uses his hand as a begging bowl. A Turīyātīta eats fruits and uses his mouth in the manner of a cow [NpU 175, n. 61]. An Avadhūta obtains food from all classes in the manner of a python [NpU 175, n. 62].

“An ascetic shall not live in one place. He shall bow to no one. Seniority is not recognized among Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas. One who is ignorant of his true nature, however, is a junior, even though he may be a senior.<sup>66</sup> Let him not swim

64. Schrader explains this elliptic passage thus. The renouncer should not study or expound the ritual portions of the Veda (*karmakāṇḍa*). Similarly, he should not listen to any text other than the Vedāntas (NpU 179).

65. According to Schrader’s interpretation, the renouncer should not use any language other than Sanskrit when he teaches.

66. Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas are by definition enlightened. Therefore, seniority cannot exist among them because there is no gradation in enlightening knowledge. Among other types of renouncers, however, seniority is recognized. It is generally reckoned from the date of ordination (cf. Ypra 53.20–22). Nevertheless, a renouncer who is ignorant is considered junior to one who is enlightened, even though the former may be senior in ordination. See also YU 314.

across rivers, climb trees, or mount carriages. He shall not engage in buying and selling, or in bartering anything. He shall neither cheat nor tell a lie. An ascetic has nothing that he needs to do. If he has, there will be confusion.<sup>67</sup> The qualification of renouncers, therefore, extends only to reflection and the like.<sup>68</sup>

“To those who renounce at a time of mortal danger and to Kuṭīcakas belong the earthly world and the atmospheric world, respectively. To Bahūdakas belongs the heavenly world, to Haṃsas the Penance-world, and to Paramahaṃsas the Truth-world [ĀrU 4, n. 3]. [178] To Turīyātītas and to Avadhūtas belongs the attainment of liberation in their very selves through the deep meditation on their own true nature in the manner of the wasp and the worm [NpU 155, n. 36].

“Whatever state a man calls to mind as he leaves his body at death, that very state and none other shall he attain: so the Vedas teach. [BhG 8.6]

“Knowing that, let a man not devote himself to practices other than the deep meditation on his own true nature. By the power of each practice one attains a corresponding world; but a man endowed with knowledge and detachment attains liberation in his very self. Therefore, one should never engage in or be attached to such practices.

“The same embodied soul abides in the states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep: he is Viśva when he is awake, he is Taijasa when he is dreaming, and he is Prājña when he is in deep sleep.<sup>69</sup> The difference of states requires a difference in

67. According to Schrader, the confusion results from the mixing of the path of knowledge and the path of works.

68. Reflection and meditation, along with study (*śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsaṇa*), constitute the threefold path of Advaita Vedānta. A renouncer's qualification (*adhikāra*) extends to these and not to ritual activities, which he abandoned at his renunciation.

69. These are categories of the elaborate cosmological scheme of Advaita Vedānta. The self (*ātman*) in the waking state that thinks it has a physical body and perceives objects through the senses is called by the technical term Viśva. The self in the dream state that thinks it has a subtle body and is engaged in dreaming is called Taijasa. The self in deep sleep, when all cognition ceases but when it is still under the influence of the ignorance [*māyā*] that conceals Brahman, is called Prājña. See the *Pañcikaraṇa*, a text ascribed to Śaṅkara, translated in Ypra 42.1–46.

the spirit that controls those states; in other words, different effects require different causes. The fourteen organs<sup>70</sup> that exist in those states have external and internal functions. Their material cause consists of the four (internal) faculties, namely mind, reason, ego-principle, and intellect. The various practices come to be distinguished on account of the difference in the operation of each function.

[179] “Know that when it is awake, it is in the eyes, and when it dreams, it remains in the throat. When it is deep in sleep, it rests in the heart, and in the fourth state it is fixed in the crown. [BU 90]

“When a man, recognizing that the fourth state is imperishable, lives while he is awake just as he does in deep sleep, without seeming to notice anything that he hears or sees, he will remain like that even when he is in the state of dream. Such a man, they say, has attained liberation while he is still alive. That he alone is liberated is also the true teaching of all the Vedas.

“A mendicant shall not long for anything in this world or the next. If he longs for something, he will assume a corresponding form. The study of texts other than those relating to the deep meditation on his own true nature is as unprofitable to him as a load of saffron to a camel. He shall not engage in the pursuit of yogic texts, or in the study of Sāṃkhya works, or in the perusal of manuals on mantras. If an ascetic pursues other texts, it is like putting ornaments on a corpse. He is as far removed from ritual activity, proper conduct, and learning, as a shoemaker.<sup>71</sup> [180] He shall not occupy himself with the recitation of OM. Whatever rite a man performs, of that he reaps the fruit. Abandoning, therefore, everything connected with rites, as one would remove the froth from castor oil,<sup>72</sup> and

70. The external organs are the five organs of perception and the five organs of action. The four internal organs are mind, reason, ego-principle, and intellect.

71. Shoemakers constitute a low and impure caste and are thus not entitled to take part in any rite of the Brāhmaṇical religion.

72. Schrader explains the image thus. When a persons wants to fill a bottle with

regarding the control of the mind as his staff, the hand as his begging bowl, and space as his garment, a mendicant shall wander about like a fool, a madman, and a goblin. Let him long for neither life nor death; let a renouncer await his appointed time, following the maxim of the servant and the command [NpU 146].

“An ascetic who merely lives on almsfood, but lacks virtues such as patience, knowledge, detachment, and tranquility, is the bane of the ascetic life.

“Not by carrying a staff, not by shaving the head, not by a special dress, and not by a hypocritical life does a man become free.

“A man who bears the staff of wisdom is called a single-staffed ascetic. A man who merely carries a wooden staff and, although he lacks wisdom, eats from all goes to Mahāraurava and other such terrible hells. [PhU 50]

[181] “A residence, the great sages have proclaimed, is equal to the dung of sows. Let an ascetic abandon it, therefore, and roam about like a worm.

“His food and clothing shall be what he may happen to receive unasked. Acceding to someone’s wish, he shall go naked, and, similarly acceding to someone’s wish, he shall take a bath.

“A man who is as much in control of himself when he dreams as when he is awake is said to be the very best, the foremost of all who follow the Vedānta.

“Let him not be elated when he receives food or be dejected when he receives not. Let him beg only as much as will sustain his life without getting attached to his belongings. [MDh 6.57]

“Let him altogether disdain what is given with a great show of respect, for such gifts bind even an ascetic who has attained release. [MDh 6.58]

“Just to sustain his life, let him go around to the homes of approved classes to beg for food at the proper time, when the embers have been extinguished and the people have finished their meals.

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castor oil, he needs to remove the froth that forms at the top when the oil is being poured. Similarly, a renouncer who wants to attain liberation needs to get rid of everything connected with rites.



[182] “A yogin who uses his hand as a begging bowl shall not beg more than once. He may eat while he stands or he may eat while he walks, but he shall not sip water in between.”<sup>73</sup>

“People with pure minds remain within their proper bounds, as the ocean within its shores. Great men leave not the prescribed course, as the sun its appointed path.

“When, however, a sage seeks his food with his mouth like a cow [NpU 175, n. 61], then he becomes the same toward all and fit for immortality.

“He shall visit houses of good repute and avoid houses of ill repute. He shall enter a house with an open door but never one whose door is closed.

“With his body covered with dust and forsaking all friends and foes, let him find shelter in a deserted house or at the foot of a tree. [MBh 1.110.8]

“Where he is at sunset, there let him sleep. Let him live without a fire and without a home. [183] Patient and with his senses subdued, a sage shall live on whatever he happens to receive. [MBh 12.61.8]

“He has departed from the world and taken to the woods. With knowledge as his sacrifice and with his senses subdued, he roams awaiting his appointed time. He is fit to become Brahman. [MBh 12.154.25]

“No creature ever poses any danger to a sage who roams about after granting safety [ĀrU 9, n. 12] to all creatures. [MBh 12.185.4]

“Free from egotism and pride, unaffected by the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25], and released from doubts, he never gets angry, he does not hate, and an untruth passes not his lips. [MBh 12.228.33]

“Visiting holy places and not harming any living beings, let him beg for food at the proper time. He is fit to become Brahman. [MBh 12.234.7–8]

73. Not begging more than once may mean either that he should beg only once a day or that he should visit a given house only once. A renouncer who uses his hand as a bowl receives his food in his hand and eats it immediately while he stands or as he walks to the next house. He does not perform the purificatory rite of sipping between houses. He sips only after he has completed his begging round.

“Let him never associate with householders or with hermits. Let him long for an obscure life and not permit himself to be thrilled. Let him roam this earth like a worm along the path shown by the sun.<sup>74</sup> [MBh 12.269.16; 14.46.32]

“Let him never perform rites associated with divine blessings, with injury, or with the welfare of the world. Let him not even have them performed by another. [MBh 14.46.37]

[184] “Let him not cling to false doctrines or make his living by a trade. Let him forsake diatribes and debates, and let him not join any faction.

“Let him not keep many disciples or read many books. Let him never undertake rites or engage in explaining texts.

“His emblem and aim concealed, he should present himself to the people as a madman or a simpleton even though he is a sage, and as a fool even though he is wise.

“Let him not do anything, say anything, or think of anything whether it is good or bad. In this manner a sage shall roam like a fool, finding his delight in himself.

“Without attachments and with his senses subdued, self-possessed and regarding everything with equal eyes, let him roam this earth alone, finding amusement and delight in himself. [BhP 11.18.20]

“Let a wise man play like a child and let a clever man act like a fool. Let a learned man speak like a lunatic, and let a Vedic scholar act like a cow. [BhP 11.18.29]

[185] “When evil men abuse and revile him; when they cheat and envy him; when they beat him, put him in jail, and deprive him of his livelihood; when fools throw feces and urine at him and assail him in many ways; desiring bliss but overtaken by pain, let him lift himself up by himself.

“Praise is fatal to the success of yoga, and a yogin who is scorned by men attains the perfection of yoga. Without reviling the path of good men, therefore, let a yogin act in such a manner that people will despise him and never associate with him. [ViP 2.13.42–43]

74. The meaning appears to be that he should not ask anyone for directions to a particular place. See LSU 20–21.

“Keeping himself controlled, let him not cause harm by thought, word, or deed to creatures born from wombs, eggs, and so forth [NpU 163, n. 42], and let him give up all attachments.

“A recluse shall give up desire, anger, pride, greed, delusion, and other such faults, and become free from fear.

[186] “Almsfood, silence, austerity, right understanding, detachment, and above all meditation: these are deemed the duties of a mendicant.

“Dressed in ochre and devoted to the practice of meditation, let him always dwell in the outskirts of a village, at the foot of a tree, or in a temple. Let him always subsist on almsfood and never eat a meal given by a single person.<sup>75</sup> [MDh 2.188]

“A wise man shall constantly observe (the vow)<sup>76</sup> until he attains purity of mind. Then, equipped with a pure mind, let him go forth and wander about everywhere.

“For, seeing Viṣṇu everywhere within and without, let him roam everywhere like the wind, silent and free from stain.

“Patient, the same in sorrow and joy, and eating what falls into his hand, he regards Brahmins, cows, dogs, deer, and the like with equal eyes and without hostility.

[187] “Contemplating Viṣṇu, the Lord and Supreme Self, he recalls: ‘I am Brahman, Pure Consciousness and Supreme Bliss!’

“Knowing this, he takes the staff of the mind [NpU 192, n. 88], rids himself of all desires, and, wearing the garment of space, casts aside in his thoughts, words, and deeds everything that has to do with saṃsāra. Turning away from the phenomenal world, he attains liberation by deeply meditating on his own true self in the manner of the wasp and the worm [NpU 155, n. 36]. That is the secret teaching.”

75. *Ekāṇṇa* is the technical term for a full meal provided by a single person or household. Mendicants are not permitted to eat such a meal, because they are expected to beg their food a little at a time from many houses.

76. Even though the text here does not speak explicitly about a vow, it is clear that a vow is implied. A young renouncer is expected to spend a year with a teacher observing various austerities before he is allowed to wander by himself. See NpU 195–196.

## CHAPTER SIX

Thereupon Nārada asked the Grandfather: “Lord, (you say that a man is liberated) by the power of that practice in the manner of the wasp and the worm. How does one perform it?”

The Grandfather said to him: “A man should live speaking the truth, excelling in knowledge and detachment, and as one for whom the only thing left is his body.<sup>77</sup> Understand that knowledge is the body; detachment is the vital force; tranquility and self-control are the pair of eyes; the mind is the mouth; the intellect is the bodily substrata;<sup>78</sup> the twenty-five principles<sup>79</sup> are the limbs; [188] the states<sup>80</sup> are the five elements; and the paths of action, devotion, knowledge, and detachment are the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth. The fourteen organs [NpU 189] are like pillars stuck in the mud. Let him, nevertheless, bring them under his control with his mind, as a pilot a ship run aground, or as a mahout an elephant. Regarding everything other than himself as created and perishable, the detached man should constantly repeat: ‘I am Brahman.’ There is nothing else to be known. Left with just himself, he lives as a man liberated while he is still alive. He has done all there is to do!

“Let him never say: ‘I am not Brahman.’ On the contrary, ever fixed in the knowledge: ‘I am Brahman,’ during the states of waking, dreaming, [189] and deep sleep, he attains the fourth state and then proceeds to the state beyond the fourth. The day

77. Here I depart from the reading of the critical edition (*viśiṣṭadehāvaśiṣṭo*) and follow the emendation suggested by Sprockhoff 1976, 168, n. 43: *viśiṣṭo dehāvaśiṣṭo*. The parallel readings cited by Sprockhoff make his reading highly plausible.

78. They are flesh, blood, fat, phlegm, urine, bile, and semen.

79. These are probably the twenty-five principles of Sāṃkhya cosmology: spirit (*puruṣa*), primal matter (*prakṛti*), and the twenty-three products of primal matter: five subtle elements, five gross elements, ten organs, mind, ego, and intellect.

80. Generally this term (*avasthā*) refers to the four conscious states: waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth, which is the liberated consciousness that identifies itself with Brahman. These, however, are referred to individually in the very next statement. The term can refer to other conditions, such as childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age.

is the waking state; the night is the state of dream; and mid-night is the state of deep sleep. In each state, however, all four states are present [NpU 190–191].

“The fourteen organs such as the eye, each of which is responsible for a single operation, have the following functions: eyes—the perception of form; ears—the perception of sound; tongue—the savoring of taste; nose—the perception of smell; voice—the articulation of speech; hands—grasping; feet—walking; anus—evacuation; sexual organ—the perception of pleasure; skin—the perception of touch. Dependent on these the intellect grasps objects. One understands with the intellect, reasons with the mind, and becomes self-conscious with the ego-principle. The individual soul creates these and then, by considering the body as its own, it becomes an individual soul, just as by considering a house as his own [190] a person becomes a householder.<sup>81</sup> Thus the individual soul continues to dwell in the body. He should know that its face is as follows:<sup>82</sup> in the eastern petal resides righteous conduct; in the southeastern petal reside sleep and sloth; in the southern petal reside cruel intentions; in the southwestern petal reside sinful intentions; in the western petal resides the love of amusements; in the northwestern petal reside sexual intentions; in the northern petal resides tranquility; in the northeastern petal resides knowledge; in the pericarp resides detachment; and in the filaments resides reflection on the self.

“The states of a living being are as follows: the first is wak-

81. An interesting parallel is drawn here between the two sets of opposing categories: householder–renouncer, and individual soul–Brahman. A householder builds his house and then imagines that it belongs to him. From this assumption flows the moral code that defines a householder. When he abandons the house, he becomes a renouncer and becomes freed from the householder’s moral code. What the house is to a householder, a body is to an embodied soul. The soul creates its bodily functions and then imagines them to belong to it. This becomes its self-definition. By abandoning them it sheds its definition and becomes identified with Brahman.

82. The soul is thought to abide in the heart, which is compared to a lotus. Its face or visible surface consists of the various activities of the soul. Its hidden essence, however, is Brahman, which witnesses these actions but which is not affected by them.

ing, the second is dreaming, the third is deep sleep, and the fourth is the 'fourth state.' The state beyond the fourth is devoid of these four states. There is one alone differentiated as Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña, and Taṣastha.<sup>83</sup> That one is god, he is the witness, and he is without attributes. Let him declare: 'I am that Brahman.'

"Alternatively, while awake there exist the four states beginning with the state of waking,<sup>84</sup> while dreaming there exist the four states beginning with dreaming, in deep sleep there exist the four states beginning with deep sleep, and in the fourth [191] there exist the four states beginning with the fourth. Such, however, is not the case in a person who is beyond the fourth state, and who is without attributes. As Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña, and the Lord, having the gross, the subtle, the causal, and the fourth form, respectively, the witness, however, remains one and the same in all the states.

"The one beyond Taṣastha<sup>85</sup> does not perceive. He clearly does not perceive because he is beyond perception. The individual soul is affected by the condition of being an actor and an enjoyer, by the ego-principle, and by other such qualities. He who is other than the individual soul is not thus affected.

"It is wrong to argue that the individual soul also is not thus affected. When a man thinks that he is an individual soul, he comes to regard the body as his, and conversely when he thinks that the body is his, he comes to regard himself as an individual soul. The state of an individual soul possesses a distinction similar to that between space limited by a pot and open space.<sup>86</sup>

83. See NpU 178, n. 69. Taṣastha (lit. "standing on the shore") is the same as the Lord, or Brahman with qualities: NpU 191.

84. Each state has four substates. The waking state, for example, includes (1) full waking state, (2) half-waking and half-dreaming state, (3) state of half-waking and half-deep sleep, and (4) half-waking and half-fourth state. The other three states also have similar substates.

85. Uttataṣastha (lit. "the one beyond Taṣastha") is Brahman without attributes.

86. This is a common analogy in Advaita Vedānta. The relation of the individual soul to Brahman is similar to that of the space limited by a pot to the unlimited open space. The one is identical with the other and is separated only by the limiting force, the body in the one case and the pot in the other. See LSU 26, n. 39.

Precisely because of this distinction, one meditates deeply uttering the mantra: *haṃsaḥ so 'ham*, while one inhales and exhales.<sup>87</sup>

“Knowing that, let him stop considering the body as his own. [192] He indeed who regards not the body as his own is called Brahman.

“Giving up attachment, extinguishing anger, eating little, curbing the senses, and shutting the doors of the senses by the power of reason, let him bend his mind to meditation.

“Let a yogin, ever intent, duly embark on his meditation always in a deserted place, in a forest, or in a cave.

“He who knows yoga and aims at success should never attend receptions for quests, *śrāddhas* [NpU 162, n. 40], sacrifices, and processions and festivals of gods, or visit crowded places.

“Let an intent yogin conduct himself in such a way that people would scorn and despise him, but let him not revile the path of good men.

“The staff of speech, the staff of deeds, and the staff of the mind:<sup>88</sup> that great ascetic is truly triple-staffed in whom these three staffs are firmly established.

“An ascetic who begs like a bee [NpU 174, n. 57] from the houses of foremost Brahmins when smoke has ceased to ascend and when the fires have been extinguished, the scriptures say, is the best of all.

[193] “He who obtains almsfood by reason of his staff,<sup>89</sup> but who has no concern for his duties, will not attain detachment, for he is a vile ascetic.

87. Literally, this mantra means: “I am that swan.” *Haṃsa* is a term that is frequently used with reference to the pure spirit in a human being. It is also a name for a renouncer. See Sprockhoff 1976, 82–88, 125–128. When repeated frequently the phrase *so'ham* (“I am he”) becomes inverted and one begins to say *haṃso*.

88. This is an allegory of the three staffs carried by some renouncers. The Sanskrit term *daṇḍa*, like the English “rod,” means both staff and punishment or control. The internal staffs that control speech, action, and mind are considered the true staffs of a renouncer. See MDh 12.10.

89. The staff is the emblem of a renouncer. People recognize a man as a renouncer on account of it and give him food. “There are many twice-born men who make a living by carrying the emblem of the triple staff.” DSm, 7.31. See Olivelle 1986 and 1987.

“The scriptures state that he alone is an ascetic who does not knowingly visit again a house from which he obtains abundant almsfood.

“He indeed is beyond classes and orders who knows the Supreme Reality, which is devoid of body, senses, and the like, which is the witness of all and absolute consciousness, whose self is bliss, and which shines by itself. [SūS 3.5.16–17]

“He indeed is beyond classes and orders who knows by means of the Vedāntas: ‘Classes, orders, and the like have been contrived in the body by cosmic illusion. They never belong to me, who am the self, which is pure consciousness.’ [SūS 3.5.19–20]

“When a man attains the vision of his self and the rules of class and order consequently melt away, he transcends all classes and orders and abides in his own self. [SūS 3.5.31]

“Now, a man who abides in his very self after transcending orders and classes [194] is beyond classes and orders: so state those who know the meaning of all the Vedas. [SūS 3.5.32]

“Therefore, O Nārada, classes and orders belong elsewhere. They are all mistakenly ascribed to the self by some, but not by those who know the self. [SūS 3.5.36]

“There are no rules or prohibitions, no laws on what is allowed and what is forbidden, nor any other restrictions, O Nārada, for those who know Brahman. [SūS 3.5.37]

“Becoming detached from everything, even from Brahmā’s abode, uprooting love for everyone, even for sons, friends, and the like, with faith in the path to freedom and a desire for Vedāntic wisdom, let him approach with a present in his hand a teacher who knows Brahman.

“Gratifying him for a long time with his attentive service, let him always listen attentively to the meaning of Vedāntic texts.

“Without selfishness and pride, free from all attachments, and endowed with tranquility and the like [NpU 131, n. 5], he always beholds the self in himself.

[195] “Detachment always arises only when a person perceives the evil of saṃsāra; and renunciation undoubtedly comes to a person who is detached from saṃsāra.

“One who desires liberation is called a Paramahansa. By the study of Vedāntas and other such activities he should reflect constantly



upon the knowledge of Brahman, which is the sole direct means of attaining liberation.

“In order to acquire the knowledge of Brahman a man bearing the name Paramahaṃsa should equip himself with all the requisites such as tranquility and self-control [NpU 131, n. 5].

“He shall always remain tranquil, self-controlled, devoted to the study of the Vedāntas, free from fear, selfishness, and the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25], without possessions, and with his senses subdued.

“Let him be shaven-headed and either clad in a ragged loincloth or naked. No one but he who is wise, who is a yogin, who possesses Vedāntic knowledge, who is free from selfishness and pride, who is the same toward friends and the like<sup>90</sup> and friendly toward all beings, who is alone, wise, and composed, shall attain release.

“Devoted to the welfare of his teachers, let him dwell there for one year. [196] He shall always carefully observe the minor and the major rules of restraint.<sup>91</sup>

“Then, at the end of that period having attained an unrivaled mastery of knowledge, let him wander on this earth without transgressing the Law.

“Then, at the end of that year having attained an unrivaled mastery of knowledge, he should give up the three orders<sup>92</sup> and enter the highest order.

90. The meaning probably is that he is the same toward friends and enemies.

91. In Yoga the minor restraints (*yama*) are non-injury, truthfulness, not stealing, chastity, and non-possession, whereas the major restraints (*niyama*) are cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study, and contemplation of god. See *Yogasūtra*, 2.30–32. The *Yājñavalkya Dharmaśāstra* (3.312–313) lists ten under each category: (1) chastity, compassion, patience, liberality, truthfulness, purity, non-injury, not stealing, affection, and self-control; (2) bathing, silence, fasting, sacrifice, study, continence, obedience to the teacher, purity, freedom from anger, and not being lazy. The two terms may also mean the vows and minor vows listed in the BDh 2.18.2–3: see Sprockhoff 1976, 270.

92. The reference is unclear. In all likelihood the passage refers not to the first three orders of student, householder, and hermit, because the man under question is already a renouncer, but to the first three classes of renouncers: Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, and Haṃsa. The highest order, then, would be the Paramahaṃsa.

“He should then take leave of his teachers and wander about this earth, abandoning attachments, conquering anger, eating little, and subduing his senses.

“These two shall not attain eminence because their actions are inconsistent with their states: a householder who abstains from rites and a mendicant who engages in them.

“A man becomes intoxicated by seeing a young woman just as much as by drinking liquor. Therefore, a man should avoid from afar a woman, the mere sight of whom is poison.

“He shall avoid speaking or chatting with women, looking at them, [197] dancing, singing, or laughing with them, and reproaching them.

“Bathing, muttering prayers, divine worship, sacrifices, propitiatory rites, and rites such as the fire sacrifice do not apply to him, O Nārada, in this world.

“Neither do divine praise, rites for ancestors, pilgrimages, vows, categories such as right and wrong, injunctions, and temporal activities.

“He shall abandon all rites and every worldly custom. A wise and yogic ascetic, his thoughts fixed on the highest goal, shall not destroy worms, insects, moths, trees, and other living beings.

“Introspective and engrossed in yourself, pure and composed, wander about the world, O Nārada, abandoning inner attachments. A sage, who journeys alone, should not travel in a country without a king.

“An ascetic should not offer praise, pay homage, or even utter *svadhā* [PhU 51, n. 7]. [198] His abode should be both permanent and impermanent, and he should live on what he gets by chance.<sup>93</sup>

“That is the secret teaching.”

93. This verse is found in the *Gauḍapādakārikā*, 2.37. Śaṅkara in his commentary interprets the permanent abode as Brahman and the impermanent abode as the body. This is clearly an allegory of the ascetic practice of not having a permanent residence. *Acala* (lit: “immovable”) in this context may therefore refer to “hills” where ascetic roam: NpU 202. Thus the ascetic’s residence is both impermanent or mobile, because he does not have a house, and permanent or immobile, because he lives in the hills.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

Nārada then asked: “What is the discipline of an ascetic?” The Grandfather praised him and said in reply: “A man who is detached, after he has renounced, should reside in the same place during the rainy season, but during the remaining eight months he should wander alone and not live in one place [ArU 8, n. 11]. Prompted by fear, a mendicant, like an antelope, should not stay in one place. He should not accept anything that would hinder his travel.<sup>94</sup>

[199] “He shall not swim across rivers or climb trees. He shall not go to see divine festivals or live in a house. He shall not perform the fire worship or travel everywhere. He shall not accept food that has been offered to a deity or eat at a single house [NpU 186, n. 75]. He shall not worship external gods. Abandoning everything other than himself and obtaining his food in the manner of a bee [NpU 174 n. 57], he shall become lean and not put on fat. He shall avoid ghee as he would blood, a full meal from a single house as he would meat, putting on perfume as he would smearing himself with filth, [200] salt as he would a person of the lowest caste, a garment as he would an unclean bowl, inunction as he would sexual intercourse with a woman, hot water as he would urine, covetousness as he would cow’s meat, a region where he is well known as he would a Cāṇḍāla district, women as he would a snake, gold as he would a deadly poison, a place of assembly as he would a cremation ground, capital cities as he would the Kumbhīpāka hell,<sup>95</sup> and a full meal from a single house as he would a rice ball offered to the dead.<sup>96</sup>

“Let him give up worldly occupations whose goal is to get

94. The meaning appears to be that he should not accept invitations from devotees to stay with them or any other responsibilities that would not permit him to travel freely.

95. This is a hell in which the inhabitants are continuously boiled in caldrons.

96. The term *śavapiṇḍa* may also mean a piece of flesh from a corpse.

another body.<sup>97</sup> Let him quit his native land and leave the region where he is well known. He recalls his own bliss, which is like the thrill of recovering a forgotten object, [201] while he forgets his native land and the pride in his body, admitting that his body is fit to be discarded like a corpse. Like a thief released from jail, let him forsake his sons, close relatives, and his birthplace, and live far away.

“He should eat what he obtains without effort and devote himself to meditating deeply on the Brahman-OM [NpU 206–207]. Freed from all rites, he should burn up lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy, and the like. Transcending the three strands, devoid of the six waves of existence, and bereft of the six transformations of being,<sup>98</sup> he shall speak the truth, remain pure, and be free of enmity.

“Let him spend one night in a village, three nights in a town, five nights in a city, six nights in a holy place, and seven nights at a sacred bathing place. [202] Homeless, resolute, and not uttering a falsehood, let him dwell in mountain caves and wander all alone. Alone indeed shall a mendicant wander, because two form a village, three a town, and four a city [NpU 145–146]. He shall not let the fourteen organs [NpU 178, n. 70] gain a foothold there. Enjoying the wealth of detachment because of his incessant knowledge, he reflects within himself: ‘There is no one else different from me.’ Perceiving only his own form everywhere, he attains liberation while he is still alive. [203] Knowing that his fourfold form continues until the appearance that has commenced comes to an end,<sup>99</sup> until he

97. The original reading is unclear. I follow Schrader’s conjectural reading, which is not altogether certain. See Schrader, 356–357, and Sprockhoff’s [1976, 229] detailed comments.

98. The three strands are goodness [*sattva*], energy [*rajas*], and darkness [*ta-mas*]. In Sāṃkhya philosophy they constitute material nature [*prakṛti*]. For the six waves of existence, see PhU 48, n. 4. The six transformations of being are birth, existence, growth, transformation, decline, and death. See *Nirukta*, I.2.

99. The current bodily appearance is the result of the type of *karma* known as *prārabdha*, that is the *karma* that is now bearing fruit. This type of *karma* is not eradicated by the advent of knowledge. Hence, the body continues to exist even after a person has become liberated while he is still alive. Regarding the fourfold form, see below NpU 210–212.

dies he should spend his time in deep meditation of his own true nature.

“A bath is ordained three times a day for Kuṭīcakas, twice a day for Bahūdakas, and once a day for Haṃsas. A mental bath is ordained for Paramahaṃsas, a bath with ashes for Turīyātītas, and a wind bath for Avadhūtas. A vertical mark on the forehead is ordained for Kuṭīcakas, a triple horizontal mark for Bahūdakas, both a vertical and a triple horizontal mark for Haṃsas [NpU 174, n. 58], the smearing with ashes for Paramahaṃsas, a spot with sandal paste for Turīyātītas, but none at all for Avadhūtas. Kuṭīcakas are required to shave every season, and Bahūdakas every other season.<sup>100</sup> [204] Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas are not required to shave, but if they do, they shave every six months.<sup>101</sup> Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas do not shave at all.

“Kuṭīcakas may eat a full meal given by one person. Bahūdakas beg their food in the manner of a bee [NpU 174, n. 57]. Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas use their hands as begging bowls, while Turīyātītas use their mouths like cows and Avadhūtas obtain their food in the manner of a python [NpU 175, nn. 61–62].

“Two garments are prescribed for Kuṭīcakas, a single garment for Bahūdakas, and a rag for Haṃsas. Paramahaṃsas may go naked or wear a single loincloth. Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas are clad as they were at birth. An antelope skin is prescribed for Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas, but not for others.

“Divine worship is ordained for Kuṭīcakas and Bahūdakas, mental worship for Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas, [205] and the *so'ham* meditation [NpU 191, n. 87] for Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas. Kuṭīcakas and Bahūdakas are qualified to mutter mantras, while Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas are qualified to medi-

100. There are six seasons in the Indian year, each lasting approximately two months. The renunciators shave the head and face at the change of seasons. See Ypra 62.1–63.38 for a detailed discussion of this practice.

101. They shave at the two solstices, which begin the two half-years of the Indian calendar during which the sun moves north and south, respectively.

tate. The qualification of Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas, however, does not extend to anything that involves another.<sup>102</sup> Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas, as well as Paramahaṃsas, are qualified to teach the Great Sayings [NpU 136, n. 11]. Kuṭīcakas, Bahūdakas, and Haṃsas are not qualified to teach others.

“To Kuṭīcakas and Bahūdakas belongs the human OM, to Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas the internal OM, and to Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas the Brahman-OM [NpU 207–209]. Study pertains to Kuṭīcakas and Bahūdakas, reflection to Haṃsas and Paramahaṃsas, and meditation to Turīyātītas and Avadhūtas [NpU 177, n. 68]. The injunction to meditate deeply on the self is common to all.

[206] “Thus, a person who seeks liberation shall constantly keep in mind OM, the rescuer from saṃsāra, and live as one liberated while he is still alive. Let an ascetic seek the means of attaining liberation suited for his special qualification. That is the secret teaching.”

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Thereupon Nārada said to the Supreme Lord: “Explain to us OM, the rescuer from saṃsāra.” Saying “Yes,” the Supreme Lord set out to explain it in its individuality and its universality, according to the text: “OM is Brahman” [TU 1.8.1]. “What is its individuality? What is its universality?”

[207] “It is threefold: the destructive OM, the creative OM, and, because it includes both these, the internal-cum-external OM; the Brahman-OM, the internal OM, and the practical OM; the external OM, the seers’ OM, and, consisting of both these, the Virāṭ-OM; the destructive OM, the Brahmā-OM, and the OM of the half-mora.<sup>103</sup> OM is Brahman.<sup>104</sup>

102. The meaning appears to be that they are not qualified to perform any rites, such as the recitation of mantras, that involve a deity other than their own selves.

103. These four sets of triads describe the syllable OM in its individual aspect, that is, as a separate entity. Schrader groups them as follows, the names in each

“Know that the single syllable OM̐ is the internal OM̐. It divides itself into eight: *a*, *u*, *m*, the half-mora, *nāda*, *bindu*, *kalā*, and *śakti* [NpU 209, n. 107]. Of these, the first four (constitute the external OM̐), namely the phoneme *a* consisting of 10,000 parts, the phoneme *u* consisting of 1,000 parts, the phoneme *m* consisting of 100 parts, and the half-mora sound consisting of an infinite number of parts.

“The creative OM̐ has attributes, whereas the destructive OM̐ is without attributes. [208] The Virāt-OM̐ consists of both; as the Virāt is prolated, so it also ends the prolation.<sup>105</sup>

“The Virāt-OM̐ consists of sixteen morae and transcends the thirty-six categories.<sup>106</sup> I shall explain how it comes to have sixteen morae. The phoneme *a* is the first; the phoneme *u* is the second; the phoneme *m* is the third; the half-mora is the fourth; *nāda* is the fifth; *bindu* is the sixth; *kalā* is the seventh; *kalātīta* is the eighth; *śānti* is the ninth; *śāntyatīta* is the tenth; *unmanī* is the eleventh; *manonmanī* is the twelfth; *purī* is the thirteenth; *madhyamā* is the fourteenth; [209] *paśyantī* is the fifteenth; and *parā* is the sixteenth.<sup>107</sup> It further consists of 64 morae;

column referring to the same aspect of OM̐:

destructive OM̐	creative OM̐	internal-cum-external OM̐
internal OM̐	practical OM̐	Brahman-OM̐
seers' OM̐	external OM̐	Virāt-OM̐
destructive OM̐	Brahmā-OM̐	OM̐ of half-mora

The three paragraphs that follow explain the aspects represented by the three columns.

104. This defines OM̐ in its universality.

105. The syllable OM̐ consists of three phonemes: *a*, *u*, *m*. The first two combine to form the diphthong ‘o,’ and the final ‘m’ becomes the concluding nasal. The first phoneme is said to be short, the second long, and the third prolated. Virāt is said to reside in the nasal. So with reference to the first two phonemes it is prolated. Because it concludes the sound of OM̐, however, it also ends the prolation.

106. Schrader explains these thirty-six thus: the twenty five categories of the Sāṃkhya system (NpU 187, n. 79), the five breaths (KṣU 32), the three bodies (NpU 155, n. 35), and the three states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

107. The first three constitute the phonetic components of the syllable OM̐ (NpU 208, n. 105). The half-mora is the time taken to pronounce the final nasal. *Nāda* (“resonance”) is the semicircle above the Sanskrit letter, which, together with the *bindu* (“dot”) within the semicircle form the graphic representation of the

on the basis of the duality of matter and spirit, it comes to have 128 morae; and, insofar as it is both endowed with and devoid of attributes, (it comes to have 256 morae).<sup>108</sup> Yet the Brahman-OM is just one.

“It is the highest light, the foundation and sovereign lord of all. The womb of all that sustains<sup>109</sup> the universe, it consists of all the gods.

“It is time; it includes all syllables. It is auspicious; it contains all sacred texts. The highest of all the Vedas, it contains all the Upaniṣads. One should seek after it.

“Learn, Sir, that the imperishable, manifested in the three times as past, present, and future, is also just OM, the bestower of liberation.

[210] “Likewise, having experienced that one, immortal, and undecaying being by means of OM, learn that this very syllable, which has been extolled by the term Brahman, is the self.

“Similarly, having elevated by means of OM that embodied self to the state of Brahman, firmly grasp that the bodiless self is the supreme Brahman.

“One should meditate on the supreme Brahman thus, following the sequence of Viśva and so forth: by reason of the gross body and of its enjoyment (he is Viśva); by reason of the subtle body and of its enjoyment (he is Taijasa); and by reason of oneness and of the enjoyment of bliss (he is Prājña). [NpU 178, n. 69]

“This same self is fourfold. The first quarter is the self who abides in the quadripartite waking state [NpU 190, n. 84]; who knows

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final nasal. The rest of the terms belong to the Tantric mystical speculations surrounding this syllable. They are too abstruse to be explained in a short footnote. For an accessible account of these speculations see A. Padoux, *Recherches sur la symbolique et l'énergie de la parole dans certains textes tantriques* (Paris: Éditions E. De Boccard, 1963).

108. The aforementioned sixteen morae are multiplied by four on the basis of the fourfold division of reality: gross, subtle, causal, and the fourth. Thus OM is said to have sixty-four morae. Since reality is divided into matter (*prakṛti*) and spirit (*puruṣa*) in Sāṃkhya cosmology, the 64 are doubled to give 128 which number is again doubled on the basis of the duality between Brahman with attributes and Brahman without attributes.

109. Schrader explains this to mean the *śaktis* (powers or female counterparts) of the gods. The meaning then is that OM is the origin of both the male and the female aspects of the divinity.



and enjoys gross objects; who has nineteen mouths and eight limbs;<sup>110</sup> and who is omnipresent and mighty. Now the self who enjoys gross objects is himself fourfold: Viśva, Vaiśvānara, Pumaṇ, and Viśvajit.<sup>111</sup> [Cf. MāṇU, 3]

[211] “The second quarter is said to be the self who abides in the state of dreaming; who is the lord; who knows subtle objects; and who of his own will<sup>112</sup> possesses eight limbs. But he is one and the same,<sup>113</sup> O scourge of foes. Now the self who enjoys subtle objects is himself fourfold: Tajjasa, Bhūtarāj, Hiranya-garbha, and Sthūlo’nta. [Cf. MāṇU, 4]

“When a sleeping person entertains no desires whatsoever and has no dreams at all, that clearly is deep sleep. The third quarter is said to be the self who abides in deep sleep; who has become one; who consists solely of consciousness; who is happy and consists of eternal bliss; and who is the self abiding in the hearts of all beings. Nevertheless, the self who enjoys bliss and who is the door of consciousness is fourfold: Sarvagata, Avyaya, Īśvara, and Prājña. [Cf. MāṇU, 5]

“He is the universal Lord. He is omniscient. He is the cause of subtle reality. He is the inner controller. He is the womb of all. He is the beginning and the end [212] of beings. [Cf. MāṇU, 6]

“All these three quarters prevent the cessation of everything, for they resemble deep sleep and a dream and they are said to be mere illusions.

“The fourth quarter is also fourfold: Sat, Cit, Ekarasa, and Aja.<sup>114</sup> Because each quarter in due order finally ends in the fourth

110. Śaṅkara, in his commentary on MāṇU, 3, identifies the nineteen mouths as the five organs of cognition (NpU 163, n. 42), the five vital breaths (KṣU 32), mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahaṃkāra*), and thought (*citta*). They are called mouths because the outside world enters one’s consciousness through them. The eight limbs are two feet, two hands, two knees, chest, and head. When one worships, one prostrates oneself on the ground, touching it with these eight parts of the body.

111. He is fourfold following the fourfold division of the waking state (NpU 190, n. 84). The names identify the four divisions. The same divisions occur also in the other states, and their names are given in the verses that follow.

112. In dream the dreamer freely creates his own body.

113. The meaning is that the self in this state is not ultimately different from the self in the waking state.

114. The basis for its fourfold division is the same as for the other three parts. Sat = being; Cit = consciousness; Ekarasa = single essence; Aja = unborn.

quarter, one obtains here the knowledge of Ota, Anujñātṛ, Anujñāna, and Avikalpa.<sup>115</sup>

“Knowing that even here the three differentiated states resemble deep sleep and a dream, and that they are purely subjective and illusory, (one recognizes that the fourth quarter) is itself divided into Sat, Cit, Ekarasa, and Aja.

“This is the daily teaching:<sup>116</sup> it is neither conscious of gross objects, O Sage, nor conscious of subtle objects; it is neither perpetually conscious nor occasionally conscious; [213] it is clearly not unconscious; it is neither conscious nor unconscious of what is within and it is not conscious of what is both within and without; it is not a single mass of consciousness; it is, indeed, unseen.

“It is without attributes; it is imperceivable, inexpressible, inconceivable, and indescribable; the knowledge of the one self is its essence; into it the world dissolves; it is benign, tranquil, and non-dual—thus do they conceive of the fourth. That is the Brahman-OM. It should be understood. Nothing else is the fourth. Like the sun, it is everywhere the support of those who seek liberation. It is self-luminous. It has the form of Brahman. It shines always, for it is the supreme Brahman. That is the secret teaching.”

## CHAPTER NINE

Nārada then asked: “What is the true nature of Brahman?” The Grandfather said to him: “You ask about the true nature of

115. We have seen that each state has four substates. Each substate of the waking state, therefore, becomes absorbed into the corresponding substate of the state of dream. The substates of dream likewise are absorbed into the corresponding substates of deep sleep, and the substates of deep sleep into the substates of the fourth state. The universal self as present in the four states bears the names Ota, Anujñātṛ, Anujñāna (or Anujñāikarasa), and Avikalpa. The *Nṛsiṃhottaratāpanīya Upaniṣad* (2) describes these as follows. The Ota self is like the universe at the end of time when it is destroyed by fire. The Anujñātṛ self transforms everything into itself, like the sun the darkness. The Anujñāna is the self that is pure thought, like fire after it has burnt up its fuel. The Avikalpa is the self that is beyond the reach of speech and mind.

116. What follows is a description of the fourth substate of the fourth state. It is the absolute state of consciousness.

Brahman. [214] ‘He is one and I am another’ [BāU 1.4.10]: those who think thus are animals;<sup>117</sup> they do not behold their true nature.<sup>118</sup> A wise man who knows him to be such<sup>119</sup> is released from the jaws of death. There is no other path for going there.

“Time, the inherent nature, fate, chance, the elements, the womb, the male—should these be considered as the cause? Or a combination of these? Surely not, given the nature of the self. And even the self is powerless over what causes pleasure and pain. [ŚvU 1.2]

“Those who follow the practice of meditation have beheld God’s native power hidden by his attributes. He alone rules over all those causes, from time to self. [ŚvU 1.3]

“We think of him as a wheel. It has one rim, three tires, sixteen ends, [215] fifty spokes, twenty counter-spokes, and six sets of eights. Its one rope has every form. It follows three different paths. Its one delusion has two causes.<sup>120</sup> [ŚvU 1.4]

117. This echoes the statement of BāU 1.4.10, where people who do not know their true identity are said to be like animals vis-à-vis the gods. As animals serve men, so these people serve the gods in the mistaken belief that they are different from the gods. The gods do not like to lose any of these human animals and therefore prefer to keep them in this state of ignorance.

118. Here I follow Schrader’s conjecture. All manuscripts, however, read *na svabhāvapaśavaḥ*: “they are not animals by nature.”

119. The meaning is that a wise man understands Brahman to be none other than his very self.

120. The allegorical references are to categories of Sāṃkhya philosophy. The three tires are the three strands: goodness (*sattva*), energy (*rajas*), and darkness (*tamas*). The sixteen ends are the five elements, the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, and the mind. The fifty spokes refer to the fifty conditions (*bhāva*) of Sāṃkhya: five erroneous views (darkness, confusion, deep confusion, gloom, and dark gloom), twenty-eight disabilities (eleven weaknesses of the ten organs and the mind, and seventeen defects of the intellect that prevent its attaining the following satisfactions and perfections), nine satisfactions (four internal, consisting of the belief in winning final release through nature, asceticism, time, or good fortune; and five external, consisting of the renunciation of the five sensations), and eight perfections (meditation, study, scripture, removal of sorrow caused by ourselves, by others, or by fate, the winning of friends, and purification of mind). See A. B. Keith, *Sāṃkhya System*, 2d ed. (Calcutta, YMCA Publishing House, 1949), 103–104. The twenty counter-spokes are the ten senses and their ten corresponding objects. The six sets of eights are (1) five elements, mind, intellect, and ego-principle; (2) eight constituents (*dhātu*) of the body: outer skin, inner skin, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow, and semen; (3) eight forms of superhuman

“We think of him as a crooked and impetuous river with five streams from five sources. Its waves are the five vital breaths [KśU 32]. Its original source is the fivefold perception. In it five whirlpools swirl impetuously with the fivefold misery. It has fifty tributaries and five branches.<sup>121</sup> [ŚvU 1.5]

“That is the great wheel of Brahman, which gives life to all and which subsists in all. In it the soul flutters about thinking that the self is different from him who impels to action. Then, favored by him, it attains immortality. [ŚvU 1.6]

“Now this supreme Brahman has been celebrated in song. In it there is a triad.<sup>122</sup> It is imperishable and its own support. Knowing its essence and intent on it, knowers of the Veda become merged in the supreme Brahman. [ŚvU 1.7]

[216] “The Lord supports all this joined together as perishable and imperishable, and as manifest and unmanifest. Not being the Lord, however, the self is bound, because he is an enjoyer. Once he knows God, he is released from all fetters. [ŚvU 1.8]

“There are two unborn males. The one knows and the other knows not; the one is omnipotent and the other is impotent. There is just one unborn female connected with both the enjoyer and the objects of enjoyment. Then there is the infinite self, who is inactive and has a universal form. When one discovers this triad, it is Brahman. [ŚvU 1.9]

“Perishable is primal nature. Immortal and imperishable is Hara [Śiva], the one god who rules over both the perishable and the self. By meditating on him, by uniting with him, and by enter-

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power (*siddhi*): becoming infinitely small (*aṇimā*), infinitely light (*laghimā*), or infinitely big (*mahimā*), obtaining anything (*prāpti*), non-obstruction of one's wish (*prakāmya*), mastery over elements (*vaśitva*), sovereignty (*iśitva*), and power of determining anything (*kāmavaśāyitā*); (4) eight mental states (*bhāva*): righteousness, unrighteousness, knowledge, ignorance, detachment, attachment, power, and powerlessness; (5) eight gods: Brahmā, Prajāpati, Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Forefathers, and Piśācas; (6) eight virtues: compassion, forbearance, absence of jealousy, purity, freedom from fatigue, auspiciousness, freedom from nigardliness, and desirelessness. The one rope is desire. The three paths are righteousness (*dharma*), unrighteousness (*adharma*), and knowledge (*jñāna*). The causes of illusion are the results of good and evil deeds.

121. The five streams are the five senses. The five sources are the five elements. The five whirlpools are the five objects of sense. The five miseries are the pains of residence in the womb, birth, old age, sickness, and death. The fifty tributaries and the five branches remain unclear.

122. The world, the individual soul, and the cosmic lord.

ing his being, once again every illusion will finally come to an end. [ŚvU 1.10]

“By knowing god one is released from all fetters; [217] when cares<sup>123</sup> cease birth and death come to an end. By meditating on him one attains at the dissolution of the body a third state—universal lordship. Then, desires fulfilled, one remains alone.<sup>124</sup> [ŚvU 1.11]

“What eternally abides in the self should be known, for beyond that there is nothing to be known. The enjoyer, the object of enjoyment, and he who impels to action: when these are known, all is said! That is the threefold Brahman. [ŚvU 1.12]

“The root of self-knowledge and austerity—that is Brahman, that is the highest secret teaching. [ŚvU 1.16]

“For one who knows this, for one who reflects only on his own self, ‘for one who perceives the unity, what room is there for delusion, what room for sorrow?’ [ĪśU 7] Therefore, Virāt is the past, the present, and the future, and he is by nature imperishable.

“More minute than the minute, greater than the great is the self hidden here in the hearts of creatures. [218] By the grace of the creator does a person free from sorrow see the Lord devoid of active will and his greatness. [ŚvU 3.20; cf. KāthU 2.20]

“He is without hands and feet; yet he grasps and he is swift. He is without eyes and ears; yet he sees and he hears. He knows what there is to know; yet no one knows him. People call him the great primeval person. [ŚvU 3.19]

“Bodiless he abides in bodies. Stable he abides in unstable things. Knowing that great all-pervading self, the wise grieve not. [KāthU 2.22]

“One should know him as the creator of all whose power is beyond thought. One should know him as the highest message of

123. The term *kleśa* may simply mean pain or suffering. The *Śvetāśvatara*, however, appears to use many technical terms of Sāṃkhya-Yoga. In Yoga *kleśa* is a technical term for five vices: ignorance, egotism, desire, hatred, and attachment to existence. See *Yogasūtra*, 2.3.

124. “Alone” (*kevala*) and “isolation” (*kaivalya*) are technical terms in Sāṃkhya for the state of liberation (*mokṣa*).

all the Upaniṣads. One should know him as higher than the highest, as the very highest. At the time when everything comes to an end one should know him as death.

“He is the ancient Seer. Higher than the highest being and the Lord of all, he is to be worshipped by all the gods. Endless and imperishable, he is without beginning, middle, or end. [219] He supports the worlds of Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Brahmā.

“He pervades this whole universe that consists of five and is present in five.<sup>125</sup> In him the quintuplicated elements<sup>126</sup> come into being in innumerable ways, and yet he is not obstructed by his quintuplicated components. He is higher than the highest, greater than the great, and naturally brilliant. He is eternal and benign.

“People who desist not from evil ways, who are not tranquil and composed, and whose minds are restless, cannot obtain him through mere wisdom. [KāthU 2.24]

“He is conscious of neither what is within nor what is without; he is (conscious of) neither the gross nor the subtle; he is neither conscious nor unconscious; he is not conscious of what is both within and without [NpU 213]; he is imperceivable and inexpressible; he abides in himself; he is just himself. A man who knows him as such attains liberation; [220] he truly attains liberation.” So said the Blessed Grandfather.

A wandering ascetic who knows his true essence wanders alone. When he halts, he resembles a deer trembling with fear. He does nothing that would hinder his travel [NpU 198, n. 94]. Abandoning everything but his body, he subsists in the manner of a bee [NpU 174, n. 57]. Meditating deeply on his own essence and realizing that there is nothing different from himself, he attains liberation in his very self. The wandering ascetic who turns away from all that produces actions, who is

125. The universe consists of the five elements. It is present in or perceived by the five senses.

126. In Advaita Vedānta cosmology the subtle elements (earth, water, air, fire, and ether) are converted to the respective gross elements through the process of quintuplication. Each subtle element is divided in half. One half of each element is then divided into four equal parts. Each half is then combined with one smaller part of each element other than its own. Thus each gross element contains half of itself and an eighth portion of the other four elements.

freed from teachers, pupils, sciences, and the like, and who has abandoned all earthly things is not subject to delusion.

How can a wandering ascetic be happy when he has no riches? He is truly rich, for, with the thought “I am He,” he transcends both knowledge and ignorance, both pleasure and pain. He shines with his own light. He is famous among all, he knows all, he bestows all success, and he is the Lord of all. That is the highest step of Viṣṇu, [221] reaching which yogins return not. There the sun shines not, nor even the moon. He does not return again; he truly does not return again. That is Isolation [NpU 217, n. 124]. That is the secret teaching.

# Nirvāṇa Upaniṣad

- [225] 1. Now we shall expound the Nirvāṇa Upaniṣad.
2. “I am that Paramahaṃsa”: (those who know this) are wanderers; they wear the final emblem and rule the field of passion.
3. The sky is his belief.

1. The sentences of this text have the characteristics of the aphoristic style (*sūtra*) commonly used in ritual and other technical literature: see Sprockhoff (1976, 187) and Schrader (liii, n. 1). The critical edition, however, does not number the aphorisms. The numbers I have given follow the division of *sūtras* given in that edition and are identical with those of Sprockhoff. Given the need for frequent explanatory notes in an aphoristic text such as this, I have given a single note for each aphorism and included therein all the necessary comments. The notes, therefore, follow the numbering of the aphorisms.

2. In all likelihood, “Paramahaṃsa” here refers to the highest self (*paramātman*) and not to the class of ascetics called by that name, although there may be a double entendre. On the multiple meanings of Haṃsa and for further literature on this topic, see Sprockhoff 1976, 82–88. On the mantra *so’ham*, see NpU 191, n. 87. “Final emblem” refers to the emblem of a renouncer, which consists of such items as the staff and begging bowl: see Olivelle 1986 and 1987. The emblem is called “final” either because the renouncer’s is the final order of life or, according to Schrader, because as an enlightened person this will be his final life. The Sanskrit term *liṅga*, however, may also mean penis. The phrase would then mean that their penises hang loose, i.e., they are not sexually excited. “Field of passion” refers to the senses in which passion toward their objects is generated. The meaning, therefore, is that they control their senses.

3. “Sky” is a metaphor for consciousness, which is all-encompassing and indivisible like the sky (MU 116). The meaning appears to be that he does not adhere



4. The billow of immortality is his river.
5. The Imperishable is his purity.
6. He who is free from doubt is his seer.
7. He who is liberated is his divinity.
8. Undivided is his activity.
9. His knowledge is of the absolute.
- [226] 10. The higher is his scripture.
11. The supportless is his seat.
12. Union is his initiation.

to any specific tradition of belief or doctrine; his own consciousness, which is identified with the absolute consciousness of Brahman, is his only belief. These aphorisms are composed in a nominal style, often even without copulative verbs. A translation naturally cannot reflect the pithy Sanskrit; a different sentence structure is required for understanding. I have opted to use the singular “his” in the English translation in this and the following *sūtras* even though the text begins (s. 2) with a statement in the plural and the nominal sentences often give no indication regarding number. The reason for adopting the singular is that where the number can be detected it is always in the singular. In an effort to make the translation readable and aesthetically pleasing, I have not put within parentheses “his” or the verbs, even though they do not appear in the original Sanskrit.

4. This is an apparent reference to rites of purificatory ablution. He does not need an external river to bathe in; the waves of immortality that engulf him within constitute the river that continually washes him.

6-7. These *sūtras* appear to allegorize the metaritual state of a liberated renouncer (Introduction, 3.1). Before reciting any mantra, a person ordinarily has to announce the name of the seer who composed it and the divinity to which it is addressed. “He who is free from doubt” and “he who is liberated” of these two *sūtras* probably refer to the renouncer himself. As a renouncer does not utter audible mantras, so his seer and divinity are his very self. Given the ritual setting, it seems unlikely that the term *devatā* would mean divine nature (*devatva*), as assumed by Sprockhoff (1976, 189, n. 10).

8. We can see here too an allegory of the metaritual state. Ritual activity (*pravṛtti*) is divided into numerous parts, whereas the activity of a liberated renouncer is undivided and has no parts, for it consists only of the mental reflection on the unity of all reality. Hence it is called non-activity (*nivṛtti*).

10. “Higher,” according to Schrader, refers to the higher or latter section of the Veda, better known as the *jñānakāṇḍa* (“section on knowledge”). Renouncers study only this part and not the section on rituals (*karmakāṇḍa*). See ĀrU 7.

11. Some of these ritual references appear to be in the context of the initiation of a Vedic student. The seat of a student is a layer of sacred grass. The renouncer’s seat, however, consists of that which has no support and which is the support of all, namely Brahman.

12. Union with Brahman constitutes the initiation of the renouncer.

13. Separation is his instruction.
14. And the joy of initiation is his purification.
15. He sees the twelve suns.
16. Discrimination is his protection.
17. Compassion alone is his pastime.
18. Bliss is his garland.
19. Freed from the seat, the delight he experiences within the cave of solitude is his fellowship.
20. He eats almsfood obtained at random.
21. *Haṃsa* (swan) is his practice.

13. The ability to distinguish the self from the body is separation. The instruction probably refers to the imparting of a mantra at initiation.

14. This *sūtra* refers back to s. 12. The union with Brahman is his initiation, and the joy that results from it constitutes his purification. He does not require external purificatory rites. See also s. 4.

15. Twelve suns are expected to appear at the end of the world. For an enlightened person, however, the end of the world is already at hand, because he recognizes its illusory nature.

16. He discriminates between the self and what is not the self. He who has this discrimination has nothing to fear, for there is nothing outside of himself. "Protection" here may refer to amulets that ordinary people wear to guard against evil.

17. Pastime (*keli*) is any sport or recreational activity one undertakes for pleasure or amusement.

18. Bliss is one of the defining characteristics of Brahman. The garland that gives him joy is not made with flowers; it consists of the bliss of Brahman that he experiences.

19. The term *muktāsana* is unclear. Schrader explains it as "one who has given up the seat," that is, one who has no support because he is established in Brahman (see above s. 11). According to Upaniṣadbrahmayogin, it means that he has given up the use of all yogic postures. It is also the name of a yogic posture also known as *siddhāsana* (see Sprockhoff 1976, 195–196, n. 43). If we take that meaning, the translation would be: "The delight he experiences in the posture of the liberated within the cave. . ." Schrader takes "solitude" (*ekānta*) to mean Brahman, which is the "cave" in which the liberated person meditates.

20. I follow the *Ṭippaṇī* in taking *akalpita* to mean *asaṃkalpita* (see NpU 174, n. 59). For food obtained by begging from houses chosen at random, see BSU 265.

21. The meaning is not altogether clear. Schrader explains that the ascetic should wander like a swan. It is more likely, however, that the phrase *haṃsācāraḥ* refers to the mantra *haṃsaḥ so'ham* (cf. NpU 191, n. 87), which Paramahaṃsas are expected to recite (see above s. 2). This interpretation is more likely because the next *sūtra* appears to be a commentary on this (Sprockhoff 1976, 193).

22. His teaching is: "The *haṃsa* (swan) abides in the heart of every being."
23. Fortitude is his patched garment.
24. Equanimity is his loincloth.
25. Investigation is his staff.
26. The vision of Brahman is his yoga band.
27. Happiness is his sandals.
28. His conduct follows the wishes of others.
29. *Kuṇḍalinī* is his bond.
30. He who is free from the reviling of others is a man who is liberated while alive.
31. Śiva is his yogic sleep, and *kecarī* is his *mudrā*.
32. His bliss is supreme.

22. The swan here refers to Brahman (Sprockhoff 1976, 82–88).

23. This and the following *sūtras* contain allegories of the common paraphernalia of a renouncer.

26. This is a band of cloth used by ascetics during yogic exercises. The ritual investiture with this cloth marked a kind of higher ordination of Brāhmaṇical ascetics. See NpU 170, n. 52; Ypra 66.1–23.

28. He performs such customary acts as bathing not because it is necessary for him to do so but because he wants to respect the wishes of others. See NpU 181.

29. "Bond" (*bandha*) is used here probably in the technical sense of *mudrābandha*, which refers to certain mystical bodily postures of Tantrism that are intended to unite the practitioner with the highest spirit. See Gupta et al. 1979, 117. *Kuṇḍalinī* is the name of the female power that resides at the base of the body in the form of a coiled serpent. The release of this power and its union with the male power resident above the head is the goal of the Tantric path. See Varenne 1976, 164f.

30. There is play on the word *mukta* ("freed from something" or "liberated"). The expression *parāpavādamuktaḥ* is not altogether clear. Freedom from the reviling of others can mean that others do not revile him, or that he remains unaffected by such reviling (cf. Introduction, 5.4). As Schrader points out, however, it can also mean that the ascetic has given up finding faults with others. See NpU 161.

31. *Mudrā* is used not only with reference to mystical hand gestures but also with the meaning of bodily postures. By means of the *kecarimudrā*, the yogin awakens the power residing in the *Kuṇḍalinī* and makes the vital breath (*prāṇa*) rise through the duct (*nāḍi*) called *śuṣūmnā*. For a description of this *mudrā*, see Svātmārāma's *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1972), 4.43f. At 4.49 it states that the *kecarimudrā* should be practiced until one experiences the yogic sleep. See also Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka*, 29.150–160, translated and commented by Silburn 1988, 198–202.

33. What is free from the three strands [227] is to be reached by discrimination; it is beyond the reach of mind and speech.
34. The world is impermanent, for it is produced. It is similar to a dream world, a cloud-elephant, and the like. Accordingly, the multitude of things such as the body, formed by the web of delusion's strands, is produced by imagination just as the rope-snake, and it is called by hundreds of names such as Viṣṇu and Vidhi.
35. The goad is his path.
36. His watchword is not emptiness,
37. but the existence of the supreme lord.
38. Union with the truth and with the perfect is his monastery.
39. The abode of gods is not its true nature.
40. The primordial Brahman is self-knowledge.

33. The three strands are the Sāṃkhya categories of goodness, energy, and darkness (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*), which constitute the primordial nature (*prakṛti*). What is free of the strands is the soul (*puruṣa*). On discrimination see note to s. 16.

34. Advaita Vedānta often identifies the source of the material universe (*prakṛti*) in Sāṃkhya cosmology with illusion (*avidyā* or *māyā*), the source of imagined reality according to Advaita Vedānta. The strands of delusion are the strands of *prakṛti* (s. 33). "Rope-snake" is the classical Advaita example of mistaken identity. One sees the rope but mistakenly takes it to be a snake, just as one sees Brahman, the sole reality, and mistakenly takes it to be the world. Vidhi is another name for the creator god Brahṃā.

35. An elephant trainer uses a goad to keep the elephant on the proper path. The control of the mind and senses keeps the ascetic on the path to liberation.

36–37. This is an apparent reference to the Emptiness School (*śūnyavāda*) of Buddhism.

38. Truth here stands for Brahman. The meaning of "the perfect," on the other hand, is unclear. Schrader, following the *Nirālamba Upaniṣad*, explains it as referring to liberated persons. However, it may be used here as a synonym of truth with reference to Brahman. See Sprockhoff 1976, 190, n. 13. For further allegories of a monastery see s. 47 and MU 116.

39–40. The true nature of Brahman does not consist of heaven where gods dwell. Brahman is pure consciousness; that is, Brahman's self-knowledge of itself. Regarding the double meaning of *saṃvid* ("consciousness" and "property") in the literature on renunciation, see Sprockhoff 1976, 189, n. 11, and below s. 79.

41. The unmuttered is his *gāyatrī*.
42. He should bear in his mind the staff that checks mental agitations.
- [228] 43. That which suppresses the mind is his patched garment.
44. By yogic practice he sees the nature of Being and Bliss.
45. He eats the almsfood of bliss.
46. Although he is in a vast cemetery, he lives as if in a blissful grove.
47. A solitary place is his monastery of bliss.
48. His state is the entranced mind.
49. His behavior is retiring.
50. His course is the entranced mind [s. 48n].
51. His immaculate body is the seat of the supportless [s. 11n].
52. The billow of immortality is his activity of bliss [s. 4n].

41. "The unmuttered" appears to be a technical term for the mantra *hamṣo*: see NpU 191, n. 87. For *gāyatrī*, see ĀrU 6, n. 4.

42. This is a variant of the common allegory of the renouncer's staff, using the secondary meaning of *daṇḍa* as control and punishment. See above s. 25, PhU 50, and NpU 192, n. 88.

43. Instead of the external garment that protects against the cold, the renouncer wears internally the yogic restraint that suppresses mental activity.

46. Schrader explain the vast cemetery as the world in which people are constantly killed by the action of time. Even though a renouncer lives in this cemetery, he is full of joy as if he were in a pleasure grove, because he has the vision of Brahman.

48. The term *unmanī* refers to the ultimate state of consciousness achieved by a yogin, when the mind is not disturbed by any thought and is merged with the absolute consciousness. The *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* (4.106) describes this state: "During the state of *unmanī* the body becomes absolutely like a log of wood and the yogin hears not even the sound of a conch or a drum." The term can also mean a state of frenzy and madness often associated with the behavior of an ascetic. See below s. 50.

49. The meaning of the term *śaradā* is not altogether clear. Upaniṣadbrahmayogin takes it to mean the knowledge of Brahman (*brahmavidyā*), which is rather unlikely. It probably refers to the fact that ascetics were expected to keep their conduct concealed so as not to attract praise from the world (cf. Introduction, 6.4).

53. The clear sky is his great belief [s. 3n].
54. His body and senses are skilled in the practice of divine virtues such as tranquility and self-control [NpU 131, n. 5].
55. In him takes place the union between the supreme self and the inferior self.
56. The syllable OM is his instruction [s. 13].
57. The non-dual Being and Bliss is his divinity [s. 7n].
58. The restraint of his internal senses is his observance.
59. The abandonment of fear, delusion, grief, and anger constitutes his abandonment.
- [229] 60. He tastes the sweetness of the unity of the supreme self and the inferior self [s. 55].
61. From the absence of restrictions is derived his immaculate power.
62. In the self-illuminated essence of Brahman he cleaves the phenomenal world enveloped by Śiva's power, and likewise with Viṣṇu's eye, which is his water pot [s. 66], he burns up the process of coming into being and ceasing to be.

55. He realizes in himself the identity between Brahman and the individual self.

58. On the minor and major observances, see NpU 196, n. 91. This and the following *sūtra* point out that external observances and the abandonment of external things are replaced by inner virtues.

61. On the antinomian state of a liberated ascetic, see below s. 75, and Introduction, 6.4

62. The power of Śiva probably refers to the cosmic illusion (*māyā*) in the form of primal nature (*prakṛti*) that produces the phenomenal world. The process of coming into being and ceasing to be is the transitory and ever-changing nature of the phenomenal world and refers especially to the process of death and rebirth. Viṣṇu is referred to here by the epithet "Petal-eyed"; his eye is here identified with the renouncer's water pot. Schrader interprets Viṣṇu's eye to mean the "sun of consciousness" (*cidāditya*) that never sets and illumines the darkness of ignorance (MU 116). Thus burning here may have its opposite meaning, too. The world is commonly regarded as a burning fire. The water from the pot will extinguish it.

63. Śiva, the fourth, who is the support of the universe and space, is his sacrificial string.
64. His topknot consists of the same.
65. And his staff of release consists of consciousness.
66. Viṣṇu's eye is his water pot [s. 62].
67. The uprooting of action [*karma*] is his patched garment.
68. He burns up illusion, selfishness, and egotism; so in the cemetery his body remains intact.
69. The contemplation of the true nature of what is free from the three strands removes from him the error of conventional practices.
- [230] 70. He burns up lust and similar dispositions.
71. Firmness is his tight loincloth.
72. Bark and antelope skin are his clothes.
73. The soundless is his mantra [s. 41n].
74. Non-action is his delight.
75. He conducts himself as he pleases [s. 61n].
76. His own nature is his liberation.

63. Śiva, here identified with the fourth state (cf. NpU 190–91), i.e., Brahman, is the support of the phenomenal reality in the form of the physical universe (*vibhūti*, lit. “great expanse”) and space or ether. For other allegories of the sacrificial string, topknot, and staff, see BU 85–87.

65. “Release” here refers to the suspension of the phenomenal universe through the knowledge of Brahman. This is a reference to the common allegory of the renouncer's staff, which is said to consist of knowledge: PhU 50.

66. *Samtātākṣi*, lit. “stretched eye,” that is, an eye that is always open, is a reference to the eye of Viṣṇu referred to in s. 62.

68. A renouncer's body is not burnt after death, so it remains intact. The reason for this, the text says, is because in his case what needs to be burnt—the impurities of illusion, selfishness, egotism, and the like—have already been burnt by the fire of knowledge.

69. What is free of the three strands (s. 33n) is Brahman. The conventional practices probably refer to religious activities such as pilgrimages recommended in sacred texts (MU 117).

76. The true nature of his self is Brahman, the realization of which is liberation.

77. His course is equipped with the raft leading to the highest Brahman.
78. He acquires chastity and tranquility.
79. Having studied in the order of a student and having studied in the order of a hermit, he arrives at renunciation, which is the abandonment of all possessions.
80. At the end he obtains the indivisible Brahman and the eternal destruction of all doubts.
81. This teaching on liberation [*nirvāṇa*] should not be imparted to anyone other than a disciple or a son.
82. That is the secret teaching.

77. The raft that permits one to cross the river of saṃsāra is the mystic syllable OM. This syllable is often called Brahman. If *parabrahma* in the text is an explicit reference to it, then the translation would read: “. . . equipped with the raft of OM.”

79. The Sanskrit *sarvasaṃvinnyāsaṃ* (“abandonment of all possessions”) is clearly a gloss on *saṃnyāsaṃ* (“renunciation”), explaining the prefix *saṃ* as *sarvasaṃvid* (“all possessions”). On the double meaning of *saṃvid*, see the note to ss. 39–40.



## *Bhikṣuka Upaniṣad*

[233] There are four types of mendicants who aspire to liberation: Kuṭīcakas, Bahūdakas, Haṃsas, and Paramahaṃsas [ĀśU 100, n. 8].

Kuṭīcakas are people such as Gautama, Bharadvāja, Yājñavalkya, and Vasiṣṭha, who, eating eight mouthfuls,<sup>1</sup> seek only liberation by the yogic path.

[234] Bahūdakas are those who carry a triple staff and a water pot; who wear a topknot, a sacrificial string, and an ochre garment; who, avoiding honey and meat, beg eight mouthfuls of food from the house of a Brahmin seer; and who seek only liberation by the yogic path.

Haṃsas are those who do not stay more than one night in a village, five nights in a town, and seven nights in a sacred place; who consume cow's urine and dung;<sup>2</sup> who are always given to the lunar fast [ĀśU 101, n. 9]; and who seek only liberation by the yogic path.

1. Renouncers are expected to eat just eight mouthfuls of food a day, according to the frequently repeated verse: "A sage should eat eight mouthfuls, a forest hermit sixteen, a householder twenty-two, and a student an unlimited amount." ĀpDh 2.9.13; BDh 2.13.7; 2.18.13; VDh 6.20. See also MDh 6.28.

2. It is a common Indian practice to consume the five products of a cow (milk, butter milk, ghee, urine, and dung), which are considered purificatory. Ascetics sometimes take the urine and dung of cows in lieu of medicine: Vin 1.58.

Paramahāṃsas<sup>3</sup> are [235] men such as Saṃvartaka, Āruṇi, Śvetaketu, Jaḍabharata, Dattātreya, Śuka, Vāmadeva, and Hārīta, who, eating eight mouthfuls, seek only liberation by the yogic path. They live at the foot of trees, or in deserted houses, or in cemeteries. They either wear a garment or go naked. They make no distinction between right and wrong, between receiving and not receiving [JU 70]. They are free from the duality of the pure and the impure. They regard a clod, a stone, and gold as the same. Begging their food from all classes, [236] they see everywhere only their own self. Clad as they were at birth, indifferent to the pairs of opposites [JU 70, n. 25], without possessions, completely devoted to the meditation of the pure Brahman, and grounded in the self, they go to beg for food at the proper time to sustain their life. They dwell in deserted houses, in temples, on haystacks, by anthills, at the foot of trees, in potters' sheds, in sheds for fire sacrifices, on sandy banks of rivers, in mountain caves, in glens, in the hollows of trees, by waterfalls, and in open fields. They are firmly established in the path of Brahman and their minds are pure. They abandon their bodies through the renunciation carried out according to the Paramahāṃsa practice. Such people are Paramahāṃsas.

That is the secret teaching.

3. For parallels see JU 69–71, ĀśU 102, NpU 154–155.

# *Turiyātītāvadhūta*

## *Upaniṣad*

[241] Once the Grandfather went to the Blessed Father, Ādi-Nārāyaṇa, and said to him: “What is the way of Turiyātītāvadhūtas? [NpU 174, n. 55] What is their state? [PhU 45]”

The Blessed Nārāyaṇa said to him: “The way of Avadhūtas is extremely rare in the world. It is not common at all. If there is one such person, the wise consider that he alone is eternally pure, [242] that he alone is the embodiment of detachment, that he alone is knowledge incarnate, and that he alone is the man of the Vedas [PhU 46, n. 1]. He is a great man whose mind abides in me alone. I also abide in him alone.

“At the outset, then, such a person becomes a Kuṭīcaka, then in due order he advances to the Bahūdaka state, and when he is a Bahūdaka he proceeds to the Haṃsa state. Once he is a Haṃsa he becomes a Paramahaṃsa. He comes to know the entire universe by the deep contemplation of his own nature. Staff, water pot, waistband, loincloth, and garment—all these he throws into water after performing the rites prescribed in his own rule.<sup>1</sup> He then becomes naked, giving up even the use

1. The meaning probably is that he should recite the appropriate mantras when he discards these items (cf. PpU 284; Introduction, 6.3). “The rule” may refer to the ritual text of his own Vedic school. The sentence, however, may also mean:

of discolored old clothes, bark garments, or antelope skins. Thereafter he functions without mantras [ĀrU 6, n. 6]. He gives up shaving, inunction, bathing,<sup>2</sup> the vertical sectarian marks, and the like. He does away with all worldly and Vedic rites. Everywhere [243] he avoids pious and impious deeds. He gives up even knowledge and ignorance. He overcomes cold and heat, pleasure and pain, respect and disrespect. He burns up blame, praise, pride, jealousy, deceit, arrogance, desire, hate, lust, anger, greed, delusion, excitement, impatience, indignation, self-protection, and the like, together with the three mental impressions.<sup>3</sup> He regards his body as a corpse. Remaining the same both when he receives and when he does not, he sustains his life in the manner of a cow, without effort, without regard to rules, without greed, and eating just what he happens to come by.<sup>4</sup> He reduces to ashes the entire body of learning and scholarship. He conceals his true nature. He repudiates the distinction between the superior and the inferior [PpU 288]. He contemplates the non-dual (Brahman), which is superior to all and which is the essence of all. This divine secret and ancient [244] treasure he draws into himself: “There is no one else different from me.”<sup>5</sup> He does not fear pain. He does not rejoice at pleasure. He longs not for love. He is not attached anywhere either to the pleasant or to the unpleasant. All his senses have come to rest. He does not call to mind the prominence he had formerly attained with respect to order of life, conduct, learning, or virtue. He abandons conducts associated with classes and

“ . . . and garment, as well as rites and the like prescribed in his own rule—all these he throws into water.”

2. It is unclear whether *abhyāṅgasnāna* refers to both inunction and bathing, or whether it means merely using oil or unguents while bathing (the Indian oil-bath).

3. The three are the mental impressions created by the body, the scriptures, and the world. See NpU 132, n. 6, and 172.

4. Such a renouncer does not observe the rules of begging. He just eats anything that people would give him without being asked. On the imitation of cows and pythons, see NpU 175 and nn. 61–62 there.

5. The divine secret, according to Schrader, refers to the secret that Death revealed to Naciketas in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. On the wealth of a renouncer, see NpU 220.

orders of life. He never dreams, for he always remains the same during day and night. He is always given to wandering. He is left with just his body [NpU 172, 175]. A place of water is his water pot.<sup>6</sup> Although he is sane, he wanders always alone as if he were a fool, a lunatic, or a goblin [JU 69; NpU 154]. He is not given to conversation. By meditating on his own nature, he finds support in (Brahman) which has no support [NU s. 11, 51]. In keeping with his concentration on his self, he gives up everything. In the guise of a Turīyātītāvadhūta [245] he is intent on concentrating on the non-dual (Brahman). He abandons his body by realizing that he has the nature of OM. Such a man is an Avadhūta. He has done all there is to do. That is the secret teaching.”

6. The meaning is that he has given up the use of a water pot for ablutions (cf. NU s. 4).

# *Br̥hat-Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad*

## CHAPTER ONE

[249] We shall now expound the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad.

[The rest of this chapter, with minor variants, is the same as chapter 1 of the *Kaṭhaśruti Upaniṣad*, 31–35.]

## CHAPTER TWO

Sanctified by the forty sacramentary rites, he becomes indifferent toward everything; attains purity of mind; and burns away desire, jealousy, envy, and egotism. [250] Only such a man, endowed with the four aids, is fit to renounce [cf. NpU 135].<sup>1</sup>

He who resolves to renounce and then does not do so should perform a full penance [ĀśU 101, n. 9], after which he becomes fit to renounce.

One who lapses from renunciation, one who admits a lapsed man into renunciation, and one who hinders renunciation: these three are reckoned to be lapsed.<sup>2</sup>

1. Most of the prose passages of the BSU agree verbatim with sections of the NpU, references to which are given at the end of each BSU passage. The reader should refer to the NpU for explanatory notes on these passages.

2. There is play on the word *patita*, which I have translated as lapsed. It refers both to a person who has fallen from renunciation, i.e., an apostate, and to a

Now, eunuchs, outcastes, cripples, the effeminate, the deaf, the childish, the dumb, heretics, discus-bearers, phallus-bearers, lepers, Vaikhānasas, Haradvijas, mercenary teachers, bald men, people without a sacred fire, and unbelievers: these, even though they are detached, are unfit for renunciation. If they have already renounced, they are not entitled to receive instruction in the Great Sayings [cf. NpU 136].

Children of apostate renouncers, those who have bad nails or dark teeth, those who suffer from consumption, and cripples are not at all fit to renounce.

[251] One should never admit to renunciation apostate renouncers, mortal sinners, Vrātyas, and the infamous.<sup>3</sup>

One should never admit to renunciation those who have neglected vows, sacrifices, austerity, liberality, fire offerings, and Vedic recitation, and those who have fallen from truth and purity.

These men are unfit for orderly renunciation and may renounce only when they are in mortal danger.<sup>4</sup>

He should pluck out his topknot, saying: “OM *svāhā!*”<sup>5</sup>

person who has fallen from his caste, i.e., an outcaste. Admitting a lapsed man into renunciation may refer to the admission of an outcaste (Sprockhoff 1976, 202), but in this context it is more likely that it refers to a man who has fallen from renunciation, technically referred to as *ārūḍhapatita*: see the next verse following the prose passage. In the statement that these three men are “lapsed,” the term clearly refers to fall from caste.

3. The mortal sins are the murder of a Brahmin, drinking liquor, stealing gold, adultery with the teacher’s wife, and association with one guilty of the above sins (ChU 5.10.9; MDh 9.235). Vrātya here in all likelihood refers to those who have lost their caste because they failed to undergo initiation at the proper time (BDh 1.16.16; MDh 2.39; 10.20–23) or to people of mixed caste (BDh 1.17.15). The infamous are people guilty of major crimes, such as the murder of a Brahmin, and abortion. For the definition of the infamous see ĀpDh 1.24.6–9; BDh 1.11.35; VDh 23.14–15.

4. See NpU 137, n. 13. Schrader (463) misunderstands this passage: Sprockhoff 1976, 205.

5. The text here proceeds right into the middle of the renunciatory ritual and introduces what the author probably perceived as its central elements: the abandonment of the topknot and sacrificial string, the proclamation of the Call, and the taking of the renouncer’s insignia such as the staff. For a more complete description of the rite, see NpU 162f.

The sacred string shall not reside outside!

. . . . .

Grant me knowledge and detachment,

Strength, wisdom, and fame. [NpU 168]

With these words he should cut his sacrificial string. He should throw his garment and waistband into the water, saying: “OM Earth *svāhā!*” Then he should recite three times the mantra: “I have renounced!” [NpU 168].

Seeing a twice-born renouncer, the sun swerves from its place, thinking: “This man will cleave my orb and reach the highest Brahman.”<sup>6</sup>

The wise man who says: “I have renounced,” rescues sixty generations of kin who have gone before him and sixty generations who will come after him. [Cf. ŚU 331]

[252] The fire of the Call [MU 116, n. 15] will burn up all faults, both the congenital and the corporal, as chaff-fire gold.<sup>7</sup>

He should take the staff, saying: “Protect me, friend!” [NpU 169].

An ascetic should carry a bamboo staff which is smooth; whose bark is intact and joints are equidistant; which has grown in a pure place; which is cleansed of various impurities; which is not burnt or damaged by worms; which is adorned with joints and knots; and which reaches up to his nose, eyebrows, or head.

It is enjoined that a man should always have his staff with him.<sup>8</sup> A wise man should not travel the distance of three bowshots without his staff.

He should take the water pot, saying:

6. It was an ancient belief that after death a person passes through the sun to reach Brahman: see ChU 5.10.2; BāU 6.3.15; MuṇU 1.2.11.

7. As fire burns up the impurities and leaves behind pure gold, so renunciation burns up defects and sins inherited at birth or caused by one's bodily actions.

8. The literal meaning of the text is that the ascetic's body and his staff should always be united. The contact or touch between the body and the staff is a significant element of the symbolism with which an ascetic's staff is imbued. An ascetic, for example, is not allowed to let anyone pass between him and his staff. See Olivelle 1986, 42.



You are the life of the world!  
You are the vessel of life!  
Like a mother, you who are all gentle,  
Always give me counsel.

[253] Then, after he is invested with the yoga band [NpU 170, n. 52], he may go about as he pleases [NpU 170].

Abandon right and wrong; abandon truth and untruth. Having abandoned both truth and untruth, abandon that by which you abandon.<sup>9</sup>

(The one original renunciation) became fourfold [NpU 171]: a renouncer by reason of detachment, a renouncer by reason of knowledge, a renouncer by reason of both knowledge and detachment, and a renouncer by reason of rites. They are as follows:

A man who attains indifference toward objects he has seen or heard of, and who then renounces because of the excellence of his former pious deeds—he is a renouncer by reason of detachment.

A man who becomes indifferent to the phenomenal universe through his knowledge of the scriptures and because he has heard accounts of what is experienced in the unpleasant and pleasant worlds; who abandons the mental impressions created by the body, the scriptures, and the world; who regards all that promotes mundane existence<sup>10</sup> as something to be shunned like vomit; and who then, endowed with the four aids [NpU, 131, n. 5], renounces—he alone is a renouncer by reason of knowledge.

A man who has studied and experienced everything in due order; [254] who, by meditating deeply on his own true nature

9. According to Schrader, that by which one abandons, i.e., the means of abandonment, is the mind. The yogin transcends the mind when he ascends to the higher levels of consciousness. See Sprockhoff 1976, 214.

10. The parallel passage in NpU 172 clearly refers to the physical world that has evolved from the primal nature (*prakṛti*). Here the ambiguous term *pravṛtta* (manuscripts have *pravṛtti*) is used. It may mean the same as the NpU passage, or refer to actions that promote continued existence in *samsāra*, which appears more likely: Sprockhoff 1976, 216.

through knowledge and detachment, is left with nothing but his body; and who, after he has renounced, becomes clad as he was at birth—he is a renouncer by reason of both knowledge and detachment.

A man who, after he has completed his Vedic studentship, becomes a householder, and then proceeds to the order of forest hermits, and who then renounces following the sequence of orders, even though he may lack detachment—he is a renouncer by reason of rites [NpU 170–173].

There are six types of renunciation: Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, Haṃsa, Paramahaṃsa, Turīyātīta, and Avadhūta. A Kuṭīcaka has a topknot and a sacrificial string, carries a staff and a water pot, and wears a loincloth, a garment, and a patched garment. He is devoted to honoring his father, mother, and teacher, to the use of articles such as a pot, a spade, and a sling, and to the practice of eating food obtained from one place. He wears a white vertical mark on his forehead and carries a triple staff.

A Bahūdaka wears a topknot and so forth, as well as a patched garment and on his forehead a triple mark, being similar to a Kuṭīcaka in all things. He eats eight mouthfuls begged in the manner of a bee.

A Haṃsa has matted hair and wears a triple and a vertical mark on his forehead. He eats food begged in the manner of a bee from houses that he has not preselected, and he wears a rag as a loincloth.

[255] A Paramahaṃsa has no topknot or sacrificial string. (He obtains his food) from just five houses, and he uses his hand as a begging bowl. He wears a single loincloth and a single garment, and he carries a single bamboo staff; or else he wears just a single garment. He is given to smearing himself with ashes. He abandons everything.

A Turīyātīta eats fruits using his mouth in the manner of a cow. If he eats cooked food, he obtains it from three houses. He is left with nothing but his body. He is naked, and the activity of his body is like that of a corpse.

An Avadhūta, on the other hand, is subject to no restric-

tions. He is given to obtaining food in the manner of a python, receiving it from all classes except the outcastes and the infamous. He is devoted to meditating deeply on his own true nature [NpU 174–175].

Truly, I am not this world with its trees, grass, and hills. What is external is totally inert; how can I be that, I who pervade all?<sup>11</sup> [Yogav 5.34.9]

I am not the insentient body that perishes in a short time. [Yogav 5.34.10]

[256] I am not insentient sound, whose form is the void, which arises from the void, and which is grasped by the inert and transient orifice of the ear. [Yogav 5.34.11]

I am not insentient touch, which comes into being by the grace of consciousness, and which is grasped by no other means than the skin that soon perishes. [Yogav 5.34.12]

I am not insentient taste, worthless and short-lived, which rests on matter and comes into being through the fickle and restless tongue. [Yogav 5.34.13]

I am not insentient form, which is perishable and rests on the act and object of sight that are soon destroyed, and which disappears in the pure witness. [Yogav 5.34.14]

I am not insentient smell, subtle and of unstable form, which is contrived by the perishable nose insensitive to smell. [Yogav 5.34.15]

I am pure consciousness alone—unselfish, without thought, tranquil, free from the confusion of the five senses, and devoid of parts. [Yogav 5.34.16]

I am pure consciousness devoid of an object. I am this illuminator, pervading both the without and the within, undivided and spotless. I am the one, all-pervading self, the light of unchanging consciousness. [Yogav 5.34.17, 19]

[257] I alone, who am consciousness, by the lustre of my own self, illuminate like a lamp all these things, from pots and clothes right up to the sun. [Yogav 5.34.18]

11. This and the following verses, taken from chapters 34–53 of the *Yogavās-istha*, reveal a thoroughly Advaita Vedānta understanding of the human self. See Introduction, 1.3.

From me alone by the lustre shining within do these manifold acts of the senses burst forth here, like streaks of sparks from a fire. [Yogav 5.34.21, 20]

This pure vision of consciousness, enjoying eternal bliss and endowed with supreme calm, surpasses all other visions. [Yogav 5.34.68]

Homage! Homage to me alone abiding within all things, who am consciousness turned inward and devoid of the objects of thought! [Yogav 5.34.69]

Divers powers<sup>12</sup> are produced by consciousness, which is unchanged by its illusory force, which is clear and even, and which is not composed of parts. [Yogav 5.34.90]

For a consciousness which disregards the three times,<sup>13</sup> and which is indifferent to the objects of thought and is freed from their shackles, equanimity alone remains. [Yogav 5.34.100]

[258] Indeed, because it is beyond the reach of words, they teach that it is as if it had entered what appears to be the state of eternal non-being—the condition that underlies the doctrine of “no-soul.”<sup>14</sup> [Yogav 5.34.101]

A consciousness that is covered within by the taints of likes and dislikes is unable to soar, like a bird caught in a snare. [Yogav 5.34.104]

By the delusion of the pairs of opposites arising from love and hate, people are rendered equal to worms wallowing in the crevices of the earth. [Yogav 5.34.109]

Homage be to me, the self that is perpetual consciousness! [Yogav 5.34.112]

I am remembered! I am perceived! Speedily I have risen! I am delivered from doubts! I am who I am!<sup>15</sup> Homage to you—to

12. According to the commentary, *Vāsiṣṭhacandrikā*, on *Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha*, 5.4.71, these powers are deities such as Brahmā.

13. The three times are the past, present, and future.

14. The state of consciousness here described is very similar to the state of non-being taught by the Buddhists. The commentary on *Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha* identifies the Buddhist school as *śūnyavāda*, which taught the doctrine of Emptiness.

15. As Schrader explains, the man is now aware of being what he always has been in reality. When one grasps the unity of all reality, there is no distinction between god and oneself: the “thou” and “I” become one and the same.

you, the eternal, who are me, and to me, the conscious self, who am you! [Yogav 5.34.113–114]

[259] Homage to you, the supreme lord! Homage to me, the auspicious one (Śiva)!

For, though he stands, he is not still; though he goes, he does not move; though he is at rest, he is busy at work; and though he acts, he is not defiled. [Yogav 5.35.4]

This bee within the heart of the lotus-bodies of all is obtained with extreme ease,<sup>16</sup> and with ease it can be known, like a close relative. [Yogav 5.35.11]

I long neither for the prolongation of pleasures nor for their cessation. Whatever comes, let it come; whatever goes, let it go. [Yogav 5.35.38–39]

When the mind, by the mind destroyed, reaches the egoless state, and when thought perishes by thought, I abide alone in myself.<sup>17</sup> [Yogav 5.35.77]

Without thought and without mind, without egotism and without desire, my enemy<sup>18</sup> just abides in the pure self of unalloyed bliss. [Yogav 5.35.78]

Snapping the cords of desire's web and soaring from my body's cage, [260] I know not where the bird of non-egotism has flown. [Yogav 5.35.81]

Resplendent is his life whose mind is untouched by ego, whose intellect is unsullied, and who is the same toward all beings. [Yogav 5.39.47, 46]

Resplendent is his life, who, with an intellect cooled from within and untouched by love or hate, views this world like a witness. [Yogav 5.39.48, 46]

Resplendent is his life, who, with correct understanding, gives up both the permissible and the impermissible and places the mind within the mind. [Yogav 5.39.49]

16. As the bee is found in the heart of the lotus, so the eternal self is in the innermost part of the body, here compared to a lotus.

17. The impure mind mired in this world is destroyed by the pure mind. Thought (*bhāva*) that is enlightened to the non-duality of Brahman destroys the thought that accepts the reality of the world.

18. The former enemy was the mind. Now it is no longer an enemy but rests in the supreme self.

When the connection between the perceived and the perceiver is broken, peace is able to arise. Peace that has attained permanence is called by the name “liberation.” [Yogav 5.40.19]

In the heart of those liberated while still alive, the latent mental impressions [NpU 132, n. 6] become pure, resembling withered seeds bereft of the germs of future births. [Yogav 5.42.14]

Resulting from the pure spirit, they are purifying and highly exalted. Eternal and consisting of the meditation on the self, they abide as if in deep sleep. [Yogav 5.42.15]

For consciousness without discursive thought is said to be inner consciousness. Because its nature is free from thought, in it there is no taint of perceptions. [Yogav 5.50.21]

[261] Surely, where the mind is destroyed, that is truth; that is the auspicious state; that is the absolute state; and that is the state of omniscience and total bliss. [Yogav 5.50.22]

When I talk, give, take, or open and close my eyes, experiencing the joy that comes from eliminating discursive thought, I remain engrossed in pure consciousness. [Yogav 5.50.29]

Having discarded the dirt of the objects of knowledge, having thoroughly uprooted the mind, and having cut off completely the bonds of desire, I remain engrossed in pure consciousness. [Yogav 5.50.34]

Without thoughts good and bad, rid of perceptions agreeable and disagreeable, free from sickness, and totally at peace, I remain engrossed in pure consciousness. [Yogav 5.50.35]

Laying aside the distinction between myself and others, making no distinctions in the worldly realm,<sup>19</sup> and clinging to the self as to an adamant pillar, I remain firm. And in my own consciousness free from taint or desire I remain fixed. [Yogav 5.50.39, 43]

Free from likes and dislikes, rid of the permissible and the impermissible, and abiding in the self-luminous state, when shall I obtain inward joy? [Yogav 5.51.31]

19. According to Schrader, the meaning is that he does not make distinctions such as that between friends and enemies.

[262] In a mountain cave, with my thinking stilled through undifferentiated contemplation,<sup>20</sup> when shall I become like a stone? [Yogav 5.51.33]

As I remain mute in the repose of undivided contemplation, when will the birds of the forest build their straw nests on my head?<sup>21</sup> [Yogav 5.51.35]

Having cut down the forest of the mind with its trees of ideas and creepers of desires and reached the open land, I go about as I please. [Yogav 5.53.67]

I have reached that state! I am alone!<sup>22</sup> I have conquered!<sup>23</sup> I am liberated! I am without desire! I am undivided! I am without a wish! [Yogav 5.53.75]

Purity, strength, reality, cordiality, truth, wisdom, bliss, tranquility, joy, fullness, true nobility, splendor, and unity have arisen forever. [Yogav 5.53.78–79]

[263] Reflecting thus on his own true nature, the mendicant, indeed, came to know at once his own undifferentiated nature and became undifferentiated [cf. BSU 262, n. 20].

If a man who renounced when he was in mortal danger lives, he should perform the rite of renunciation following the proper sequence [NpU 175].

Ascetics shall not speak with Śūdras, women, outcastes, and menstruating women. Ascetics shall not perform divine worship, or watch festivals [NpU 176]. This world, therefore, is not the goal of renunciation.

To those who renounce at a time of mortal danger and to Kuṭīcakas belong the earthly world and the atmospheric world, respectively. To Bahūdakas belongs the heavenly world, to

20. This is the highest stage of the meditative path (*nirvikalpasamādhi*), in which the object of meditation disappears, leaving consciousness alone.

21. The images of a stone and of birds building nests on the head illustrate the stillness and physical immobility of a person in the highest level of meditative trance. Other images in ascetic literature include creepers winding and ants building anthills around the body of the meditating ascetic.

22. “Alone” or “isolated” (*kevala*) probably has a double entendre: the ascetic lives alone without companions, and he is also liberated, which state is considered in Sāṃkhya cosmology as “isolation” (*kaivalya*).

23. Conquering is also a metaphor used with regard to liberation. A liberated person is often referred to as “conqueror” (*jina*).

Haṃsas the Penance-world, and to Paramahaṃsas the Truth-world. To Turīyātītas and to Avadhūtas belongs the attainment of liberation in their very selves through the deep meditation on their own true nature in the manner of the wasp and the worm [NpU 177–178].

The study of texts other than those relating to the deep meditation on his own true nature is as unprofitable to him as a load of saffron to a camel. [264] An ascetic shall not engage in the pursuit of yogic texts, or in the study of Sāṃkhya works, or in the perusal of manuals on mantras, or in the pursuit of other texts. If he does so engage, it is like putting ornaments on a corpse. He is removed from ritual activity, proper conduct, and learning. A wandering ascetic shall not occupy himself with the recitation of divine names.<sup>24</sup> Whatever rite a man performs, of that he reaps the fruit. Let him abandon everything, as one would remove the froth from castor oil [NpU 179–180].

He shall not accept food that has been offered to a deity. He shall not worship external gods. Abandoning everything other than himself and obtaining his food in the manner of a bee, he shall become lean and go about without putting on fat [NpU 199]. Let him live out his days begging his food in the manner of a bee, using either his hand or his mouth as a begging bowl.

Let a self-possessed ascetic gather food just sufficient (to sustain) himself.

Two quarters (of the stomach) are for food, and the third quarter is for water. Let him leave the fourth for the movement of air.

[265] Let him always subsist on almsfood and never eat a meal given by a single person [NpU 186, n. 75]. But let him diligently visit the houses of those who look upon him without agitation.<sup>25</sup>

24. According to Schrader, the meaning is that he should not proclaim his name, lineage, and the like (NpU 154). The parallel passage in NpU 180 on the non-recitation of OM makes that interpretation unlikely: cf. Sprockhoff 1976, 224.

25. According to Appayadikṣita's commentary, they are people who have no devotion to ascetics and are therefore not afraid when they see an ascetic on his begging round, thinking that they would have to give him food. The intent ap-



Let him seek almsfood from five or seven houses belonging to men who perform rites. He should stop there for just the length of time it takes to milk a cow. After leaving a house he shall not return to it.

A fast is better than eating only at night. What is given unasked is better than a fast. Begged food is better than what is given unasked. Let him, therefore, subsist on begged food.

At the time of begging let him not visit houses both clockwise and counterclockwise. Let him not skip foolishly a house in which there is no fault.<sup>26</sup>

Let him not beg food from learned Brahmins when it is given without faith and devotion. Let him beg at the house of even a fallen man [Vrātya: BSU 251, n. 3] where faith and devotion are displayed.

Scriptures have proclaimed five types of almsfood: *mādhūkara* (bee-like begging from houses) not deliberately selected, *prākpraṇīta* (offered in advance), *ayācita* (unsolicited), *tātkālika* (contemporaneous), and *upapanna* (offered).

[266] *Mādhūkara*, the scriptures say, is (food begged) in the manner of a bee [NpU 174, n. 57] from five or seven houses that have not been deliberately selected.

*Prākpraṇīta* is the almsfood received after one has been invited repeatedly by devotees that morning or the previous day. Even thus a person may maintain himself.

*Ayācita* is the almsfood received after one is invited by somebody just before one sets out on the begging round. It may be eaten by those seeking liberation.

*Tātkālika* is said to be what is proclaimed by a Brahmin as almsfood the moment (an ascetic) approaches. It may always be eaten by ascetics.

*Upapanna*, sages seeking liberation declare, is the cooked food brought to the monastery by a Brahmin.

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pears to be that the ascetic should visit houses at which it is difficult to obtain food.

26. This is a prohibition against selecting houses for begging. One should go to each house on a street, moving either clockwise or counterclockwise and not erratically. One can skip a house only if it has a fault, such as impurity caused by a death or a birth.

An ascetic may beg food in the manner of a bee even from the house of a barbarian. But he shall not eat a full meal<sup>27</sup> even from a man equal to Bṛhaspati. Let him maintain himself with solicited and unsolicited types of almsfood.

[267] The faults of what it touches do not defile the wind, or the act of burning the fire. Urine and excrement do not defile water, or the faults of food an ascetic.<sup>28</sup>

When no smoke ascends and the pestle lies motionless, when the embers have been extinguished and the people have finished their meal, let him go on his begging round late in the afternoon. [= MDh 6.56]

Let him beg food, avoiding those who are infamous [BSU 251, n. 3] or fallen from their caste, heretics, and temple priests. In times of distress he may beg from all classes.

Ghee is like dog's urine, and honey is equal to liquor. Oil is pig's urine, and broth is equal to garlic.

Bean cake and the like are cow's meat, and milk is equal to urine. With every effort, therefore, an ascetic should avoid ghee and the like.

Let him never eat food mixed with ghee, broth, and the like.

His hand should be his begging bowl; with that let him maintain himself. A yogin who uses his hand as a begging bowl shall not beg more than once. [NpU 182, n. 73]

[268] When, however, a sage seeks food with his mouth like a cow [NpU 175, n. 61], then he becomes the same toward all and fit for immortality.

He shall avoid ghee as he would blood, a full meal from a single house as he would meat, putting on perfume as he would smearing himself with filth, salt as he would a person of the lowest caste, a garment as he would an unclean bowl, inunction as he would sexual intercourse with a woman, hot water as he would urine, covetousness as he would cow's meat, a region where he is well known as he would a Cāṇḍāla district,

27. That is, a full meal given by a single person: NpU 186, n. 75.

28. The wind does not become impure when it touches an impure thing, or fire when it burns a corpse. Running water remains pure even when people perform their toilet in it. See VDh 28.1.

women as he would a snake, gold as he would a deadly poison, a place of assembly as he would a cremation ground, capital cities as he would the Kumbhīpāka hell, and a full meal from a single house as he would a rice ball offered to the dead. He shall not worship gods. Giving up worldly occupations, he will become liberated while still alive [NpU 199–200].

Sedentariness, loss of bowl, hoarding, gathering of disciples, [269] sleeping during the day, and idle talk are the six fetters of an ascetic.

Spending (more than one day in a village or five days in a city) outside the rainy season is called **sedentariness**.<sup>29</sup>

When the aforementioned bowls made of gourd and the like [ŚU 327] are not available, the taking of some other bowl by an ascetic for his normal use is called **loss of bowl**.

When one has already obtained a staff and so forth, the acceptance of another for use at a future date is called **hoarding**.

The acquisition of disciples not out of compassion but in order to obtain service, profit, and homage, or for the sake of fame, is called **gathering of disciples**.

Learning, because of its brightness, is called day, and ignorance night. The negligence of learning is called **sleeping during the day**.

Any talk with the exception of conversations pertaining to the self, and speaking at the time of begging, granting a favor, or asking a question, is called **idle talk**.

[270] A full meal given by one person [NpU 186, n. 75], pride, envy, adorning with perfume and flowers, betel leaves, inunction, amusement, desire for pleasure, elixir, boasting, reviling, imparting blessings, astrology, buying and selling, rites, ritual disputes, violating the commands of the teacher, involvement in quarrels and reconciliations, vehicles, couches, white clothes, masturbation, sleeping during the day, metal begging bowls,<sup>30</sup>

29. The first half of the verse, translated here within parentheses, is missing in the Upaniṣad. It is cited in the JMV 5, 169, where these verses are ascribed to Medhātithi.

30. Schrader explains *bhikṣādharma* as “saving alms-food for future consumption.” This is a rather far fetched interpretation, possibly influenced by the fact

poison, weapons, seeds,<sup>31</sup> injuring, fierceness,<sup>32</sup> sexual intercourse, observances, such as those of a householder, which were abandoned through renunciation, all social divisions such as lineage,<sup>33</sup> father's and mother's families, and wealth—these are forbidden. He who resorts to them will sink downward.

A wise man, though he may be very old, should not place his confidence even in very old women; an old piece of cloth sticks to even very old patched garments.

[271] Immovable and movable property, seeds, metal objects, poison, and weapons: these six an ascetic shall refrain from accepting, as he would urine and excrement.

Outside a time of distress, an ascetic shall never carry any provisions for a journey. During a time of distress when food is unavailable, he may take with him a cooked dish.

A young and healthy mendicant should not live in a monastery. One should not accept something for the use of another, and one should never give [LSU 21; KṣU 41].

An ascetic should work for the welfare of creatures, because of their wretched state. By begging cooked or uncooked food he sinks downward.<sup>34</sup>

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that *taijasaṁ* is in the neuter and therefore cannot qualify the masculine *bhikṣād-hāraḥ*. But the Ydhs (106), where these verses occur, uses *taijasaḥ*, and it appears that the final “m” instead of the *visarga* “ḥ” is either a scribal or a grammatical error. On the prohibition against accepting metal begging bowls, see Ypra 68.45–46, 106–111, and below BSU 171 first verse.

31. The meaning is not altogether clear. Schrader explains it as a prohibition against eating vegetables and fruits that have seeds.

32. Here I depart from the conjectural reading (*ceṣṣādi-*) adopted by Schrader on the basis of the reading in the edition of the Ydhs 106. All the manuscripts of BSU read *taikṣṇyam ca*, which corresponds to a variant reading in the Ydhs.

33. The term *carāṇa* here in all likelihood does not refer to the Vedic schools but more generally to social divisions based on birth, marriage, and the like. For an explanation, see Ypra 68.55–56.

34. The meaning here is unclear. Upaniṣadbrahmayogin (Dikshit 1929, 266) and, following him, Ramanathan 1978, 230, explain that an ascetic should not beg cooked or uncooked food for the sake of another. Schrader thinks that what is meant here is very special and rich types of cooked food. In the verse before last, however, *pakva* (“cooked food”) appears to be contrasted with *anna* (“food”), in which context the former is a full meal that one takes with oneself, whereas the latter is food begged a little at a time from many houses. A similar meaning may be attached to *pakva* in this verse.

A mendicant intent on giving food, one who accepts garments and the like, and an ascetic who receives garments made of wool, non-wool material, or silk will fall without doubt.

[272] Resorting to the ship of non-dualism, he shall attain the state of a man liberated while still alive.

He shall practice silence as the staff of speech and fasting as the staff of the body. The control of breathing is prescribed as the staff of the mind [NpU 192, n. 88].

People are bound by rites and liberated by knowledge. Wise ascetics, therefore, do not perform rites [ĀrU 3, n. 1].

There are lots of clothes on the road, almsfood is available everywhere, and the earth is a spacious bed: so why should ascetics be unhappy?

Having deposited the sacred fires in himself, an ascetic who offers the entire phenomenal world in the fire of knowledge is a great ascetic and a true fire-sacrificer.

Advancement (toward liberation) is twofold: the cat-type and the monkey-type. The cat-type is that of people engaged in acquiring knowledge, whereas the monkey-type is indeed secondary.<sup>35</sup>

Let him not speak to anyone who has not asked him a question or who has questioned him improperly, for a wise man, though he possesses knowledge, should behave in the world as if he were stupid.

[273] When all the sins rise up en masse, let him repeat the syllable OM 12,000 times, for it effaces them.

To him who silently recites the syllable OM 12,000 times a day, the supreme Brahman will become manifest in twelve months.

That is the secret teaching.

35. Could this be a gibe at the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava sect, where the simile of cat-kitten and monkey-baby monkey are used to illustrate a higher and a lower type of devotion to god? The term *bhākta* may also have a double entendre: “secondary meaning” and “devotee of god.”

# *Paramahaṃsaparivrājaka Upaniṣad*

[I]

[277] Once the Grandfather went to his father, Ādi-Nārāyaṇa, and, having paid him obeisance, asked: “The classes, the orders, their respective duties, and their proper sequence—all these, Lord, we have heard, learned, and understood from your mouth. I want to learn now the characteristics of a Paramahaṃsa wanderer. Who is qualified to become a wanderer? What are the characteristics of a wandering ascetic? Who is a Paramahaṃsa? How (does he relate to) the wanderer’s state? Explain to me all that.” Lord Ādi-Nārāyaṇa replied:

[II]

“Having learned the travail of all the sciences from a good teacher, [278] having discovered the agony inherent in all the pleasures of this world and the next, and having confessed that the three longings,<sup>1</sup> the three latent mental impressions [NpU 132, n. 6, 172], selfishness, egotism, and the like ought to be

1. The three longings are for sons, wealth, and heavenly worlds: BāU 3.5.1. Several sections of the PpU are taken from Upaniṣads already translated. References to them are given at the end of each such section. The reader should refer to them for explanatory notes.

shunned like vomit, a wise man taking the only entry into the path of liberation, after completing his Vedic studentship, should become a householder. From home he should first become a forest hermit and then renounce. Or rather, he may renounce directly from Vedic studentship, or from home, or from the forest. Let him even renounce on the very day that he becomes detached, regardless of whether he has taken the vow or not, whether he has graduated or not, and whether he has kindled the sacred fire or is without a fire [JU 64; NpU 149]. Realizing this, a Vedic student, a householder, or a forest hermit, who is detached from everything relating to saṃsāra, [should renounce]<sup>2</sup> after he has obtained the cheerful approval of his father, mother, wife, son, and the circle of close relatives, or, in their absence, the consent of his pupil or a fellow resident [KśU 31].

“Here, some do indeed perform a sacrifice to Prajāpati. But one should not do so. One should perform, on the contrary, a sacrifice to fire, for fire is the vital breath, [279] and thereby he offers to breath, Let him perform just the ‘Three-Element’ offering. These are the three elements: goodness, energy, and darkness.

“This is your due place of birth  
whence born you did shine.

Knowing this, O Fire, mount it,  
and make our wealth increase. [VS 3.14; TS 1.5.5.2]

“Reciting this mantra, let him inhale the fire. Breath is truly the birthplace of fire. He declares the same when he says: ‘Go to breath; go to your birthplace, *svāhā!*’ [JU 64–66; NpU 150]

“Having fetched the sacred fire from the village, that is, from the house of a learned Brahmin, let him inhale it in the manner given in his own rules<sup>3</sup> as described before. Or, if he is in

2. The verb “should renounce” is not found in the manuscripts, and it is placed within brackets in the critical edition.

3. The author appears to provide here glosses on the text of JU 66: “from the house of a learned Brahmin” on “from the village,” and “in the manner . . . rules” on “as described before.” Similarly, in the next sentence, “if he is in mortal danger” appears to be a gloss.

mortal danger and cannot obtain fire, let him offer the oblation in water, for the waters truly are all the gods. He should offer the oblation with the words: ‘I offer to all the gods, *svāhā!*’ He should then take some from it and eat that salubrious oblation mixed with ghee [JU 66; NpU 150]. This is the rule when one resorts to the path of heroes, not eating, drowning, entering a fire, or the great journey. [280] If a man is in mortal danger he may renounce mentally or orally. This is the path [JU 68–69].”

### [III]

“If a man is healthy and follows exactly the proper order [NpU 137, n. 13], he should offer the *śrāddha* oblation to himself as well as the Virajā oblation [NpU 165, n. 49]. He should then deposit the fire in himself. He should deposit his Vedic and secular skills as well as the activities of his fourteen faculties<sup>4</sup> in his son, utter this parting address: “You are Brahmā! You are the sacrifice!” and think of him as Brahmā. In the absence of a son he should deposit them in his pupil, and in the absence of a pupil in just himself [KśU 32]. After he has performed the entry into *sāvitri* [NpU 166, n. 50] and while he remains in the water, he should merge the mother of the Vedas [i.e., *sāvitri*], which contains the meaning of all knowledge and which is the support of Brahminhood, in due order<sup>5</sup> into the three Great Utterances [NpU 166, n. 50]. He should then merge the three Great Utterances in the phonemes *a*, *u*, and *m*.<sup>6</sup> Keeping his attention on that [OM], he should drink some water, pluck out

4. Generally thirteen faculties are enumerated: the five organs of actions, the five organs of perception [NpU 163, n. 42], mind, ego, and intellect. The fourteenth may be the spirit (*puruṣa*) of the Sāṃkhya classification system.

5. The order probably refers to the recitation of the three feet of the *gāyatrī* verse during the merging. Before the first, one recites *bhūh*, before the second, *bhuvaḥ*, and before the third, *svaḥ*. Each of the feet is thus merged in the respective Great Utterance.

6. These are the phonemes that constitute the mystic syllable OM.



the topknot while reciting OM, [281] and cut the sacrificial string. Then he becomes clad as he was at birth, throwing even his garment on the ground or into water, saying: ‘OM Earth *svāhā!* OM Atmosphere *svāhā!* OM Heaven *svāhā!*’ Meditating on his own nature, he should then proclaim mentally as well as orally three times, first in a low, next in a middle, and finally in a high tone, the triple<sup>7</sup> Call [MU 116, n. 15] each preceded by the mystic syllable OM and the respective Great Utterance [NpU 168]: ‘I have renounced! I have renounced! I have renounced!’ Intent solely on the meditation of OM, he should then recite: ‘I give safety to all beings, *svāhā!*’ [ĀrU 9, n. 12] With raised arms and meditating deeply on the true meaning of statements such as ‘I am Brahman’ [BāU 1.4.10] and ‘You are that’ [ChU 6.8.7], he should walk toward the north. He should go about clad as he was at birth. This is renunciation.”

#### [IV]

“If he is not qualified to do that,<sup>8</sup> after he is entreated by a householder [NpU 169], [282] he should take a bamboo staff possessing the appropriate characteristics [BSU 252] with the following mantra preceded by OM:

“Safety from me to all beings!  
From me everything proceeds, *svāhā!*  
Protect me, friend,  
You who are my strength and my friend.

7. The text uses rather convoluted language to indicate the number of times the Call has to be recited. The triple or triplicated Call is recited three times in a low, medium, and high pitch. It appears that each of the three Calls, i.e., “OM Earth I have renounced!” etc., is recited three times, first in a low pitch, then in a medium pitch, and finally in a high pitch. There are thus nine proclamations.

8. The conclusion of the last paragraph, namely that the new renouncer should wander naked, applies to one who is already enlightened. One who has become a renouncer in search of that knowledge is not qualified to do that. This paragraph deals with such a man. See NpU 168–169.

You are the bolt of Indra, slaying obstructions;  
Be my refuge and banish all that is evil.

“as well as a waistband, a loincloth, a water pot, and a single discolored garment.”<sup>9</sup> Then he should go to a good teacher, pay homage to him, and from his teacher’s mouth learn the Great Saying: ‘You are that,’ preceded by OM [NpU 169–170].

“Thereafter, he wears an old garment, one made of bark, or an antelope skin. He gives up descending into water, traveling aloft,<sup>10</sup> and a full meal from a single person [NpU 186, n. 75]. He bathes at the three appointed times of the day. He studies the Vedāntas and then engages in the recitation of OM. He is well established on the path of Brahman. Keeping his ego in check within himself, he is selfless and fixed in the self. [283] He forsakes lust, anger, greed, delusion, conceit, jealousy, deceit, arrogance, egotism, indignation, pride, desire, hate, excitement, impatience, selfishness, and the like. He is endowed with knowledge and detachment. He avoids wealth and women. He has a pure mind. He reflects on the meaning of all the Upaniṣads. He guards strenuously celibacy, non-possession, non-injury, and truthfulness [ĀrU 10]. He has conquered his senses. He is free from external and internal attachments. Pure and without enmity, and merely to sustain his life, he subsists on food begged from the four classes, with the exception of the infamous [BSU 251, n. 3] and the outcastes. Such a man is fit for becoming Brahman [JU 68].

“Remaining at all times the same both when he receives and when he does not, he should eat food begged in the manner of a bee, using his hand as a begging bowl. He should become lean and not put on fat. With the thought: ‘I am Brahman,’ he should enter a village for the sake of his teacher. [284] He shall wander alone for eight months and shall keep a fixed residence

9. The syntax of this sentence makes it unclear as to which mantras are recited when these articles are taken. If the term *praṇavapūrvakam* (“preceded by OM”) applies to all of them, then they are taken while reciting OM. For more specific mantras, see NpU 170.

10. Schrader explains “descending into water” as the use of ghats at holy bathing places. “Traveling aloft” means to go on vehicles.

(during the entire rainy season) or during just two months of it [ĀrU 8].”

[V]

“When he has acquired sufficient understanding, a Kuṭīcaka, a Bahūdaka, a Haṃsa, or a Paramahaṃsa should discard everything—waistband, loincloth, staff, water pot—in water with the respective mantra [see Introduction, 5.3]. Thereafter he should go about clad as he was at birth [NpU 175–76].

“He spends one night in a village, three nights at a sacred bathing place, five nights in a town, and seven nights in a holy place [NpU 201–202]. Homeless, resolute, not tending the sacred fire, and unchanging, let him give up both pious and impious deeds. Remaining the same both when he receives and when he does not, for the sake of sustaining his life he begs food in the manner of a cow without regard to rules [TaU 243, n. 4]. A place of water is his water pot [TaU 244, n. 6]. A secluded place free from danger is his residence. He is not concerned with what he receives and what he receives not. He is dedicated to the uprooting of both pure and impure acts [NpU 155]. Everywhere he sleeps on the ground. He has given up shaving. [285] He observes the vows and restrictions relating to the four rainy months.<sup>11</sup> He devotes himself completely to meditating on the pure Brahman [JU 71]. He avoids wealth, women, and cities. Although he is sane, he behaves like a madman. He has no visible emblem. He keeps his conduct concealed [JU 69]. He never dreams, for he remains the same during day and night [TaU 244]. He attends to the path of meditation on his true nature and on the Brahman-OM.<sup>12</sup> Such

11. There are many rules governing the four months of the rainy season, including the dates when a renouncer must begin and end his rain residence, the ceremonies at the beginning, times for shaving, etc. See Ypra 61–65.

12. The mystic syllable OM is the sound embodiment of Brahman. On the various types of OM, see the next section and NpU 206–209.

a man who abandons his body through renunciation is a Paramahansa wanderer.”

[VI]

Brahmā asked: “Lord, what sort of a thing is the Brahman-OM?”<sup>13</sup> Nārāyaṇa replied: “The Brahman-OM consists of sixteen morae [NpU 208]. It is within the range of the four quadruple states, since while awake there exist the four states beginning with the state of waking, while dreaming there exist the four states beginning with dreaming, in deep sleep there exist the four states beginning with deep sleep, and in the fourth there exist the four states beginning with the fourth [NpU 190–191, n. 84]. [286] In the state of waking there exist the four forms of Viśva: Viśva-Viśva, Viśva-Taijasa, Viśva-Prājña, and Viśva-Fourth.<sup>14</sup> In the state of dream there exist the four forms of Taijasa: Taijasa-Viśva, Taijasa-Taijasa, Taijasa-Prājña, and Taijasa-Fourth. In the state of deep sleep there exist the four forms of Prājña: Prājña-Viśva, Prājña-Taijasa, Prājña-Prājña, and Prājña-Fourth. In the fourth state there exist the four forms of the fourth: Fourth-Viśva, Fourth-Taijasa, Fourth-Prājña, and Fourth-Fourth. These reside respectively in the sixteen morae: the waking-Viśva in the phoneme *a*, the waking-Taijasa in the phoneme *u*, the waking-Prājña in the phoneme *m*, the waking-Fourth in the half-mora, the dreaming-Viśva in *bindu*, the dreaming-Taijasa in *nāda*, the dreaming-Prājña in *kalā*, the dreaming-Fourth in *kalātīta*, the deep sleep-Viśva in *śānti*, the deep sleep-Taijasa in *śāntyatīta*, the deep sleep-Prājña in *unmanī*, the deep sleep-Fourth in *manonmanī*, the Fourth-Viśva in *purī*, the Fourth-Taijasa in *madhyamā*, the Fourth-Prājña in *paśyantī*,

13. For explanatory notes on this section, see NpU 206–209.

14. Viśva, Taijasa, Prājña, and Fourth (*turiya*) are the names of the consciousness that is present in each of the four states (NpU 178f). As pointed out in NpU 190, n. 84, each state has substates. Thus Viśva-Viśva is the state when one is fully awake, Viśva-Taijasa is the half-waking and half-dreaming state, and so forth.

and the Fourth-Fourth in *parā* [NpU 208, n. 107]. [287] The four morae of the waking state are portions of the phoneme *a*. The four morae of the dreaming state are portions of the phoneme *u*. The four morae of the state of deep sleep are portions of the phoneme *m*. The four morae of the fourth state are portions of the half-mora. This indeed is the Brahman-OM. It should be worshipped by Paramahaṃsas, Turīyātītas, and Avadhūtas. Through it alone Brahman is manifested. By means of it one attains bodiless liberation.”<sup>15</sup>

[VII]

Brahmā asked: “Lord, how can a man remain totally steadfast in Brahman and how can a man be a Brahmin, when he has no sacrificial string or topknot, and when he has abandoned all rites?”<sup>16</sup> Viṣṇu replied: “O my child, for a man who has the non-dual knowledge of the self, that very knowledge is his sacrificial string. Steadfastness in meditation alone is his topknot. This very act is his purificatory ring.<sup>17</sup> Know that he is a performer of all rites; he is a Brahmin; he is steadfast in Brahman; he is a god; he is a seer; he is eminent; he alone is superior to all; he is the teacher of the world; he and I are the same.”

[VIII]

“A Paramahaṃsa wanderer is extremely rare in the world. [288] If there is one such person, he alone is eternally pure, he alone is the man of the Vedas. He is a great man whose mind abides in me alone. I also abide in him alone [PhU 46]. He indeed is

15. Bodiless liberation is the state of liberation after death, when the person becomes freed from the body. This is distinguished from liberation while still alive (*jīvanmukti*), when the liberated person still has a body.

16. For this question, see JU 67, NpU 151.

17. This is a ring made of sacred grass and worn on the fourth finger during certain rites.

always satisfied. He has overcome cold and heat, pleasure and pain, respect and disrespect. He endures rebuke and wrath. He is freed from the six waves of existence [PhU 48, n. 2]. He is without the six transformations of being [NpU 201, n. 98]. He makes no distinction between the superior and the inferior [TaU 243]. He does not perceive anything as different from himself. He is naked. He does not pay homage. He does not utter *svāhā* or *svadhā*.<sup>18</sup> He is not given to dismissing [PhU 51, n. 8]. He is beyond blame and praise. He is not occupied with mantras or Tantric rites.<sup>19</sup> He refrains completely from meditating on other gods.<sup>20</sup> He brings to an end the perceptible and the imperceptible. For him everything has ceased. He is a mass of non-dual consciousness characterized by being, consciousness, and bliss. He who is steadfast in the thought: 'I am indeed Brahman who is consummate bliss and pure consciousness,' and through deep meditation on the Brahman-OM has done all there is to do, is a Paramahaṃsa wanderer. That is the secret teaching."

18. *Svāhā* is uttered in offerings to gods, and *svadhā* in offerings to the manes. Cf. PhU 51, n. 7.

19. The expression *mantratantra* may also mean treatises on mantras: see NpU 179; BSU 264; Sprockhoff 1976, 224, n. 113.

20. The only god he meditates on is his own self, which is identical with Brahman.

# Parabrahma Upaniṣad

## CHAPTER ONE

[This chapter is the same as chapter 1 of the *Brahma Upaniṣad*.]<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO

[293] “Now, this person<sup>2</sup> has a topknot and a sacrificial string that are internal. Wearing a topknot and a sacrificial string that are internal pertains to Brahmins who seek liberation, whereas wearing a topknot and a sacrificial string that are externally visible pertains to householders, who perform rites. [294] But the mark of the internal sacrificial string is similar to that of the external string; yet the former is unmanifest, and it is the internal joining of the principles.<sup>3</sup>

1. The only significant variant occurs in the last sentence. The PbU reads: “How can he who knows thus stir (them) into consciousness? It teaches that the individual soul has the nature of Brahman; that is the truth.”

2. Chapter 2 of the BU (81) also begins with this phrase. In the present context, however, the reference is to a person who is striving after liberation as an ascetic. The conclusion of the PbU indicates that the speaker is Śaunaka. In the BU, on the other hand, it is Śaunaka who addresses the questions to Pippalāda.

3. The meaning of this sentence is not altogether clear. Appayadikṣita’s commentary, cited by Schrader, does not clarify what is meant by *antastattvamelanam*, which I have translated as “internal joining of the principles.” The author attempts to find analogies between the working of the inner string, consisting of various cosmic principles drawn from different Indian cosmologies, and the process of manufacturing a sacrificial string, as described below in detail.

“It is neither being, nor non-being, nor even both being and non-being. It is neither different nor identical, nor even both different and identical. It is neither with parts, nor without parts, nor even both with and without parts. It is something to be discarded after a person has acquired the knowledge of the unity between Brahman and the self, because it is illusory.<sup>4</sup>

“The five-footed Brahman has nothing.<sup>5</sup> Brahman in the form of the individual soul residing within the four-footed<sup>6</sup> has four sites. In the navel, heart, throat, and head—that is, in the east fire, west fire, south fire, and hall fire<sup>7</sup>—reside the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and the fourth, respectively. In the waking state is Brahmā, in the dreaming state is Viṣṇu, in deep sleep is Rudra, and the fourth state is the Imperishable, which consists of consciousness [BU 81–82]. The quadruple state, therefore, is like the winding (of the thread) around four fingers.<sup>8</sup> [295] One separates the ninety-six principles as one does the threads<sup>9</sup> and folds into three<sup>10</sup> (the inner string) so

4. This is a succinct description of the internal string. I follow here the explanation of Appayadikṣita. The description fits the Advaita explanation of *māyā*, the cosmic principle of illusion, to whose sphere belongs the cosmic principles that constitute the internal string. Both *māyā* and the internal string are abolished by the knowledge of Brahman.

5. The reference is to the absolute Brahman, which is beyond the fourth state, namely Brahman with qualities, and therefore contains all five states: NpU 178, n. 69. The absolute Brahman has nothing, i.e., it is beyond designation.

6. The reference is to the body, which is subject to the four states.

7. These fires are four of the five sacred fires used in rituals and sacrifices, the fifth being the domestic fire: LSU 15, n. 1; HDh, 2:676–680. Here they are identified with four parts of the human body.

8. The author here embarks on a long and detailed explanation of the analogy between the external and internal strings. When one makes a sacrificial string, one takes a thread and winds it around four fingers ninety-six times. That is the length of thread needed for the manufacture of the string.

9. The ninety-six windings of the thread parallel the ninety-six cosmic principles given in the *Varāha Upaniṣad*, 1.1–15: see *The Yoga Upaniṣads*, ed. Pandit A. Mahadeva Sastri (Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1920), 464–467. They are the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, the five vital breaths, the five subtle elements (sound, touch, form, taste, smell), mind, reason, ego-principle, intellect, the five elements (earth, water, fire, wind, and ether), the five quintuplicated elements (NpU 219, n. 126), the triple body (gross, subtle, causal), the triple state (waking, dreaming, deep sleep), the six transformations of being (existence, birth, growth, change, decline, death), the six waves of existence (hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, old age, death), the six sheaths (skin, blood,



conceived, thereby obtaining the abstract of thirty-two principles. One recognizes (the triple string) as the Trimūrti, which has the nature of the three strands purified by knowledge, and one perceives it as having nine strands named after the nine Brahṁās.<sup>11</sup> One again divides into three lots the nine strands, and twists them together while conceiving them as segments of the sun, moon, and fire. Then one also joins the beginning and the end together, and makes three knots in the middle, contemplating them as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. Joining the beginning and the end, one makes the knot of non-duality in the knot of consciousness.<sup>12</sup> Even though (the string) extends from the navel to the fontanel, is severally associated with the twenty-seven principles, is endowed with the three

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flesh, fat, marrow, bone), the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, envy), the three principles of life (Viśva, Tajjasa, Prājña), the three strands (goodness, energy, darkness), the three actions (beginning, approaching, obtaining), speaking, taking, going, ejecting, joy, thinking, resolution, conceiving of oneself, ascertainment, joy, compassion, friendliness, equanimity, cardinal points, wind, sun, Pracetas, Aśvins, Agni, Indra, Upendra, Mṛtyu (death), moon, Brahmā, Rudra, Kṣetrajña (knower of the field), and Īśvara (Lord). To come up with ninety-six, the triple body and the triple state are each counted as a single principle.

10. Throughout this description there is a play on the word *guṇa*. It can mean "thread" as well as the "strands" or "qualities" that constitute primordial nature (*prakṛti*) in Sāṃkhya cosmology. The term therefore can be applied to both the external string and the internal cosmic principles. The same term is used with the verb *√ kr* ("to do") and the word *tri* ("three") to mean "fold into three" or "triplicate." Even though one meaning is clearly meant in a given case, the author appears at the same time to draw a connection to the other meanings. See Sprockhoff 1976, 245. The external thread is folded into three to make the string. The folding signifies the gradual movement away from the many and toward oneness.

11. The Trimūrti consists of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. The three strands of primal nature affect these gods; they too are within the sphere of illusion. The nine threads or strands of a sacrificial string are compared to the nine divinities responsible for creation. The nine Brahṁās or Prajāpatis are Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Aṅgiras, Marīci, Dakṣa, Atri, and Vasiṣṭha. Cf. ViP 2.7.5–6. For other enumerations, see Wilson's note to this verse in his translation of the ViP.

12. In making the sacrificial string, the nine threads are divided into three lots. The three threads in each lot are twisted together. The three strings thus obtained are placed together and three knots are made in the middle. The two ends are then joined to form a loop. In the allegory, the three middle knots are represented by the three divinities of the Trimūrti, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara (Śiva), and the knot joining the two ends represents the non-dual consciousness. As this knot symbolically reduces the multiplicity of the string into the unity of the loop, so the knot of non-duality reduces into oneness the multiplicity of cosmic principles.

strands, and is characterized by the attributes of the Trimūrti, one reduces it to unity. One considers it as extending from the left shoulder to the right hip. Knowing thus that the combination resulting from the fastening of the beginning and the end is the single source (of all, one comes to know all, as it is said): ‘(Just as, my dear, by one piece of clay) all that is made of clay becomes known; its modification is merely a verbal distinction, just a name. The reality is that it is just clay’ [ChU 6.1.4].

[296] “By the two syllables ‘Haṃ-sa’ [NpU 191, n. 87], one identifies a man who wears a topknot and a sacrificial string that are internal. Being a Brahmin means being worthy to meditate on Brahman. Being an ascetic means wearing a topknot and a sacrificial string that are imperceptible and internal. Likewise, a householder has a topknot and a sacrificial string which are externally perceptible but which are used for performing rites and for acquiring knowledge, respectively, whereas a pseudo-Brahmin merely has a mass of hair for a topknot and a visible sacrificial string made of cotton threads.<sup>13</sup>

“One makes (the string) fourfold (so as to accomplish) the thread’s function of bringing about the twenty-four principles. (One then contemplates the string) as having nine principles, and finally as the one and only supreme Brahman.<sup>14</sup> People consider the use of many paths, because they are suitable for returning to it [Brahman]. For all—for Brahmā and other gods, for the divine seers, and for humans—there is only one liberation, only one Brahman, and only one Brahminhood. There

13. The author makes a triple distinction here. A renouncer who aspires only after knowledge wears the internal topknot and string. In the case of a proper householder, the external topknot is used for performing rites and the external string for acquiring knowledge. A pseudo-Brahmin neither performs rites nor acquires knowledge, and thus his topknot and string are hollow symbols.

14. This passage is extremely obscure, and the commentary does not clear all the difficulties. The meaning may be that the sacrificial string is thought of as having four instead of three strings, each of which is made of three threads. Thus one sacrificial string will have twelve threads. A householder has two such strings containing twenty-four threads, which are homologized with the twenty-four principles of Sāṃkhya cosmology (NpU 187, n. 79). The nine principles are probably the nine Brahmās noted above.

are special customs peculiar to each class and order, but there is only one topknot and sacrificial string for persons of (all) classes and orders.

“For a liberated ascetic, [297] they say, the topknot and sacrificial string are rooted in just the one mystic syllable OM. ‘Haṃsa’ is his topknot, the syllable OM is his sacrificial string, and *nāda* [NpU 209, n. 107] is his union (with them). This is *dharma*; nothing else is *dharma*. How can that be?<sup>15</sup> The triple string consisting of the syllable OM, ‘Haṃsa,’ and *nāda* abides in the consciousness within the heart [BU 83]. Know that to be the threefold Brahman. Let him abandon the topknot and sacrificial string that relates to the phenomenal world.”

### CHAPTER THREE

“Cutting<sup>16</sup> his hair together with the topknot, let a wise man discard his external string. As his string let him wear the supreme and imperishable Brahman. To put an end to rebirth let him think of liberation day and night.

“‘String’ is said to be derived from ‘stringing’ [ĀrU 7, n. 10]. The string is truly the highest abode. A man who knows that string—he is a seeker after liberation, he is a mendicant, he is knower of the Veda, he is a man of good conduct, he is a learned Brahmin, he is a man who purifies his fellow diners.<sup>17</sup>

[298] “Let a Brahmin ascetic, a yogin who knows yoga, wear that string on which this whole world is strung like rows of pearls upon a string.

“A learned Brahmin who knows yoga and who is devoted to knowledge should discard the external string. He who wears the

15. This rhetorical question is probably similar to those in other texts with regard to the legitimacy of abandoning the sacrificial string: KśU 34; JU 67; NpU 151; PpU 287.

16. Most of these verses are taken from chapters 2 and 3 of the BU, where explanatory notes are given.

17. Literally, it is a man who purifies those who sit with him in a row at

string that has the nature of Brahman enjoys liberation. By wearing this string a man never becomes sullied or unclean.

“They alone on earth know the string, and they truly wear the sacrificial string who carry the string within themselves, and who wear the sacrificial string of knowledge.

“Knowledge is their topknot; in knowledge they are firmly fixed; and knowledge is their sacrificial string. Knowledge alone is supreme for them, and knowledge is said to be their purifier.

“The wise man who, like a fire, wears not a separate topknot, and whose topknot consists of knowledge [BU 87, n. 24], is said to wear a topknot, and not others who just wear their hair long.

“This string [BU 87, n. 25], however, which is made of threads and which is a subsidiary element of rites, should be worn by those who are qualified to perform Vedic or worldly<sup>18</sup> rites.

[299] “Those who live as Brahmins in appearance only so as to fill their stomachs go to hell and wander from birth to birth.

“Let a wise man, however, wear a sacred string as intensely within as without from the left to the right, that is, extending from the left shoulder to the right hip—a string whose threads are the principles [PbU 294, n. 3] and which measures from the navel to the fontanel.

“He alone, and no one else at all, possesses the complete Brahmin state, whose topknot and whose sacrificial string consist of knowledge.

“He who wears this sacrificial string, which is supreme and which is the ultimate end—he is a wise man, he truly wears a sacrificial string, and he enjoys liberation.

“A learned Brahmin who wears the sacrificial string both within and without is fit to renounce. But a man who wears a single sacrificial string<sup>19</sup> is not at all fit to renounce.

“With all his effort, therefore, let an ascetic set his sight on liberation. Abandoning the external string, let him wear the string that is within himself.

dinner. He is generally a man of great learning and virtue: Kane HDh, 2:767–768.

18. The reference is probably to domestic rites and the like that are given in the *smṛtis* and other non-Vedic texts.

19. The reference is to a man who merely wears an external string without cultivating the inner virtues that it symbolizes.

“Paying no heed to the wearing of a topknot and a sacrificial string that are external and relate to the phenomenal world, [300] and devoting himself to the wearing of the topknot and the sacrificial string that consist of OM and ‘Haṃsa,’ respectively, [PbU 297] let him work out his liberation.” So said the Blessed Śaunaka. That is the secret teaching.

# *Bṛhad-Avadhūta*

## *Upaniṣad*

[303] Once Sāṃkṛti went up to the Blessed Avadhūta, Dattātreyā, and asked: “Lord, who is an Avadhūta? What is his state? What is his emblem? What is his conduct?” The most compassionate Lord Dattātreyā said to him:

[304] “Because he is imperishable, because he is the most excellent, because he has shaken off the bonds of saṃsāra, and because he is denoted by the phrase ‘You are that,’ he is called ‘Avadhūta.’<sup>1</sup>

“He who has passed beyond orders and classes and who always abides in the self alone—that yogin who transcends class and order is said to be an Avadhūta.

“Regarding pleasure as the head, delight as the right side, and great delight as the left side, he easily sees bliss as (the body). [Cf. TU 2.5]

“(Brahman) that resembles a cow’s hair<sup>2</sup> is neither in the head, nor in the middle, nor even in the lower part. According to the statement, ‘Brahman is the bottom, the foundation’ [TU 2.5],

1. The author considers the term *Avadhūta* to be composed of the first syllables of the four terms used in this description of his nature: *akṣara* (“imperishable”), *vareṇya* (“most excellent”), *dhūta* (“shaken off”), and *tat* (“that”).

2. The comparison with a cow’s hair is meant to indicate the extremely subtle nature of Brahman.

he should regard it as the bottom. Those who thus consider it as having four paths<sup>3</sup> attain the highest state.

“Some have obtained immortality not by rites, offspring, or wealth, but by renunciation. [MNU 227]

“His conduct consists of wandering about freely and unobtrusively. He may wear a garment or go naked. For him there is neither right nor wrong, neither pure nor impure. [305] He offers the internal sacrifice, (which is equal to) a horse sacrifice accompanied by the *Sāṃgrahaṇī* sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> It is a great sacrifice, a great offering. (Conducting himself) as he pleases, let him not condemn all these manifold rites. That is the great vow. Unlike a fool, he is not defiled.

“As the sun imbibes all liquids, and as fire consumes everything, even so a yogin enjoys all objects while remaining pure, untouched by good or evil deeds. [BSU 267, n. 28]

“When all objects of desire enter a man as waters the ocean, which remains unperturbed in its depth even as it is filled, he attains peace; not so the man who desires them. [BhG 2.70]

“There<sup>5</sup> is neither destruction nor production; there is no one who is bound and no one who employs the means; [306] there is no one who seeks after liberation and indeed no one who is liberated: that is the absolute truth. [Pd 6.235; 8.71]

“Formerly I undertook numerous activities to gain a multitude of things here and hereafter and to attain liberation. All that has now been done. [Pd 7.253]

“[Reflecting thus on] that state where one has done all there is to do, as well as on the state that is its opposite, [he feels always content].<sup>6</sup> [Pd 7.254]

3. The four paths are the head, right and left sides, and the body referred to in the previous verse.

4. The internal sacrifice probably refers here to the *Prāṇāgnihotra* (“fire sacrifice in the vital breaths”): cf. KṣU 39, n. 20. The *Sāṃgrahaṇī* is a *Vaiśvadeva* sacrifice performed prior to a horse sacrifice: *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, 15.3.

5. The following verses are taken from Vidyāraṇya’s *Pañcadaśī*. They reflect the thoughts of a man who has gained insight into his identity with Brahman.

6. The Avadhūta’s present state is one in which there is nothing that he needs to do. There was a time, however, when the opposite was the case and he was obliged to perform various activities. The half-verse represented by the section within brackets is found in the Pd but not in the manuscripts of the BAU. In the critical edition Schrader also puts it within brackets.

“Let the miserable and ignorant men gladly continue in saṃsāra for the sake of sons and the like. I am filled with supreme bliss; for what reason should I continue in saṃsāra? [Pd 7.255]

“Let them who wish to attain heavenly worlds perform rites. All the worlds are my self; what should I perform and for what purpose? [Pd 7.256]

“Let them who are qualified to do so explain texts and teach the Vedas. [307] I am not qualified, however, because I perform no rites. [Pd 7.257]

“I do not desire sleep or begging, bathing or purification, and I do not engage in them. If they see (me doing them), let them so imagine.<sup>7</sup> Why should I be concerned about what others imagine? [Pd 7.258]

“A heap of red berries and the like do not burn simply because others superimpose fire on them.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, I do not experience the saṃsāric qualities others impose on me. [Pd 7.259]

“Let them who are ignorant of the truth study. I know it; so why should I study? Let them who have doubts reflect. I do not reflect, for I have no doubts. [Pd 7.260]

“Let him who is deluded meditate. What meditation can there be when there is no delusion?<sup>9</sup> I never experience the delusion of taking the body for the self. [Pd 7.261]

“Even without that delusion relative experiences, such as ‘I am a man,’ come about due to latent mental impressions [NpU 132, n. 6] accumulated over a long time. [Pd 7.262]

“When the *karma* that is currently operative is exhausted, the relative experience comes to an end.<sup>10</sup> [308] But when *karma* is not

7. These activities appear to be performed by the liberated renouncer. In fact, however, they are performed by the body and are as illusory as the body. The true self of the renouncer is not the agent of any action.

8. The reference is to *guñja*, which are small red berries with black spots. Somebody seeing a heap of such berries may think it to be on fire, but the berries are not affected by that mistake. Similarly, others may think that a liberated person performs normal functions, whereas those functions only appear to be performed by the illusory body. The true nature of the liberated individual is not affected either by those activities or by this mistake that others make.

9. Study, reflection, and meditation constitute the three major components of the Advaita Vedānta path.

10. The relative experience signifies the entire sphere of ordinary experience, which is opposed to the absolute sphere in which only Brahman is real. The *karma*



exhausted, it does not cease even by meditating a thousand times.  
[Pd 7.263]

“If you wish to lessen the relative experience, you may want to meditate. Seeing actions that impede (the perception of non-duality) as part of relative experience,<sup>11</sup> why should I meditate?  
[Pd 7.264]

“I do not have any distraction; so I practice no concentration. Be it distraction or concentration, they belong to the mind that is subject to change. [Pd 7.265]

“I have the nature of eternal experience; what separate experience can I have here? What has to be done has been done and what has to be attained has been attained—thus indeed is it forever!  
[Pd 7.266]

“Whether their origin is worldly, scriptural, or otherwise, let my activities of the relative sphere proceed as they have begun; for I am neither their agent nor touched by them. [Pd 7.267]

“Or else, even though I have done all there is to do, yet yearning for the welfare of the world I shall proceed along the path pointed out by the scriptures. How could that hurt me? [Pd 7.268]

“Let my body pursue the worship of gods, bathing, purification, begging, and the like. Let my speech mutter the syllable OM and likewise recite the Upaniṣads. [Pd 7.269]

[309] “Let my intellect contemplate Viṣṇu or melt into the bliss of Brahman. I am the witness. I do not do anything here, nor do I cause anything to be done. [Pd 7.270]

“He is content because he has done all he had to do and he has attained all he had to attain. So contented, he reflects thus continually in his mind: [Pd 7.291]

“I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
I always know my self instantly.

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that is currently operative (*prārabdhakarma*) is that portion accumulated during previous lives, which has come into fruition and constitutes one's present life. The enlightening knowledge destroys all *karma* except this. An enlightened person, therefore, continues to live because of the presence of this *karma*. At death this *karma* comes to an end and with it the ordinary sphere of experience.

11. Even acts of meditation short of the perception of Brahman are part of the relative sphere, which is illusory. Such meditations also impede the perception of one's identity with Brahman.

I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
The bliss of Brahman shines clearly on me. [Pd 7.292]

“I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
Today I do not see the misery of saṃsāra.  
I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
My ignorance has fled somewhere. [Pd 7.293]

“I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
There is nothing I have to do.  
I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
Today I have attained all there is to attain. [Pd 7.294]

“I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
To what in the world can my contentment be compared?  
I am fortunate! I am fortunate!  
Fortunate! Fortunate! Doubly fortunate! [Pd 7.295]

[310] “O what merit! O what merit!  
It has borne fruit! It surely has borne fruit!  
Because of the excellence of this merit,  
How wonderful we are! How wonderful we are! [Pd 7.296]

“O what knowledge! O what knowledge!  
O what happiness! O what happiness!  
O what scripture! O what scripture!  
O what a teacher! O what a teacher!<sup>12</sup> [Pd 7.297]

“He also who studies this becomes one who has done all there is to do. He is cleansed of drinking liquor. He is cleansed of stealing gold. He is cleansed of killing a Brahmin. He is cleansed of not doing what should be done. Knowing that, let him commit himself to behaving as he pleases. OM is the truth. That is the secret teaching.”

12. After praising the knowledge of Brahman and the bliss that that knowledge brings, he praises the scripture that contained that knowledge and the teacher who communicated it.

# *Yājñavalkya Upaniṣad*

[313] [The first three sections of this Upaniṣad are identical with sections IV, V, and VI of the Jābāla Upaniṣad.]

## IV

A wanderer who is naked, who pays no homage [PhU 50], who craves not for wife or son, [314] and who removes both the perceptible and the imperceptible,<sup>1</sup> becomes the Supreme Lord. On this there are the following verses:

Homage should be paid only to a senior renouncer if he is one's equal in conduct, and never to any other.<sup>2</sup>

One even sees renouncers who are careless, whose minds are set on outward things, who are backbiting and quarrelsome, and whose designs are condemned by the Veda.

1. The meaning is unclear. It may refer to the outward marks and the inward behavior by which a renouncer is recognized. See PhU 50; NpU 154.

2. A senior renouncer is one who entered renunciation earlier. "Equal in conduct (*dharma*)" refers to the level of one's renunciation. Thus, a Paramahansa need not pay homage to a Kuṭīcaka, even if the latter had renounced earlier, because a Kuṭīcaka's level of conduct is lower than that of a Paramahansa. See NpU 177, n. 66.

If he abides in the non-dual and self-effulgent state that is beyond name and the like, to whom shall he, who knows the self, bow? Then rites are of no use. [*Upadeśasāhasrī*, 27.64]

“The Blessed Lord has entered with a portion of himself as the soul”: so thinking, let him bow even to a dog, a Cāṇḍāla, a cow, or a donkey, prostrating himself on the ground like a stick.

[315] What, pray, is the beauty of a woman, who is a puppet of flesh furnished with tendons, bones, and joints, within a cage of limbs moved by a machine? [*Yogav* 1.21.1]

Examine her eyes after separating the skin, the flesh, the blood, the tears, and the fluid, and see if there is any charm. Why are you bewitched in vain? [*Yogav* 1.21.2]

The same breast of a girl, on which we see the brilliant splendor of a pearl necklace comparable to swift waters of the Ganges rippling down the slopes of mount Meru, is in time eaten with relish by dogs in remote cemeteries as if it were a little morsel of food. [*Yogav* 1.21.5–6]

With stylish hair and painted eyes, hard to touch but pleasing to the eye, women are like the flame of sin and burn a man like straw. [*Yogav* 1.21.11]

Burning even from afar, sweet and yet bitter, [316] women indeed are the fuel of hellfire, both lovely and cruel. [*Yogav* 1.21.12]

Foolish women are the nets spread out by the fowler called Kāma,<sup>3</sup> binding the limbs of men as if they were birds. [*Yogav* 1.21.18]

A woman is the bait on the fishhook tied to the line of evil tendencies, for men who are like fish in the pond of birth, wading in the mud of the mind. [*Yogav* 1.21.20]

I have done forever with women, who are the chains of suffering and strongboxes for all the gems of sins. [*Yogav* 1.21.23]

A man with a woman desires pleasure. In a man without a woman, where is the room for pleasure? When one abandons women one abandons the world. When one abandons the world one becomes happy. [*Yogav* 1.21.35]

3. The term means both lust and the god of love.

A son, when he is not conceived, long torments the parents. When conceived, he causes pain by miscarriage or in delivery. [Pd 12.65]

When he is born (one has to contend with) the influence of evil planets, illnesses, and the like. When he is young he takes to mischief. [317] Even after he is initiated he may not learn, and should he become learned he may not marry. [Pd 12.66]

As a young man he may commit adultery and the like. When he has a family he may become penniless. If he is rich then he may die. There is no end to the suffering caused by a son. [Pd 12.67]

An ascetic shall not be undisciplined with regard to hands, feet, eyes, or speech; controlling his senses he becomes Brahman. [Cf. VDh 6.42]

In a man of discrimination who sees an enemy, a prisoner, and his own body as one and the same, how can there be anger? Can there be anger toward members of one's own body? [*Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, 2.18]

If you are angry at a wrongdoer, why are you then not angry at anger itself, which fiercely opposes the pursuit of duty, wealth, pleasure, and liberation?<sup>4</sup>

Homage to my anger which quickly burns its own support, and which bestows detachment on me who am angry and reveals to me my faults.

[318] Where people are asleep, there the man of discipline lies always awake. Where they are awake, there the wise chief of yogins goes into a deep sleep. [SūS 5.3.40]

“There is only consciousness here. All this is pure consciousness and consists only of consciousness. You are consciousness, I am consciousness, and these worlds are consciousness”: so should you meditate. [Yogav 5.26.11]

The state of a Paramahansa is the highest position that can be attained by ascetics. There is nothing higher than that, O best of sages.

That is the secret teaching.

4. These are the four aims of human existence (*puruṣārtha*) of classical Hinduism.

## Śāṭyāyanīya Upaniṣad

[321] The mind alone is the cause of people's bondage and of their release: it binds when it is attached to objects and releases when it is freed from them—so the scriptures state. [MaitU 6.34(11)]

If people's minds were as set on Brahman as they are set on the objects of sense, who would not be released from bondage? [MaitU 6.34(5)]

For the mind alone is saṃsāra. Let a man purify it with zeal. [322] The mind a man possesses shapes his future course: that is the eternal mystery. [MaitU 6.34(3)]

He who knows not the Veda perceives not that Great Being. He who knows not Brahman attains not the highest abode. Knowing Vāsudeva, the striding Viṣṇu,<sup>1</sup> a learned Brahmin perceives the truth and attains the state of a truly learned Brahmin.<sup>2</sup>

Now, let learned Brahmins, untouched by desire, turn their minds to the highest and eternal Brahman. He indeed who is calm, controlled, tranquil, patient, devoted to learning, and possessing equanimity, comes to know it. On knowing it, without desires

1. I follow Schrader's explanation of *viṣṇukrāntam*. The meaning seems to be that Vāsudeva in the form of Viṣṇu traversed the universe in three steps.

2. As Sprockhoff (1976, 269) points out, the first four verses appear to be later additions to the Upaniṣad. Most citations begin with the fifth verse: cf. Yls I.6; Ybh 46 in Olivelle 1987.

and free from debt [NpU 134, n. 8, 140], he may live in any order whatsoever as a silent sage.<sup>3</sup>

[323] Then, he enters the final order, taking as appropriate the five articles.<sup>4</sup> Having ascertained that the entire universe has the nature of Brahman, let him wander on earth unnoticed, bearing the emblem of Viṣṇu.

Triple staff, sacrificial string, loincloth, sling, and water strainer: these he should carry all his life.

These are the five articles of a renouncer. They are declared to be the five parts of Brahman.<sup>5</sup> Let him not abandon them until death. Even at death he should be buried with them.<sup>6</sup>

The emblem of Viṣṇu is said to be twofold, the manifest and the unmanifest.<sup>7</sup> [324] By abandoning even one of them, he shall undoubtedly fall.

The triple staff is the emblem of Viṣṇu. It is the means of liberation for learned Brahmins and the cessation of all *dharma*s:<sup>8</sup> so the Vedas teach.

Now these, my dear, are the four classes of wanderers: Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, Haṃsa, and Paramahaṃsa. All these bear the emblem of Viṣṇu, wear the topknot and the sacrificial string, and have pure minds. By themselves they contemplate their self as Brahman, and they take delight in worshipping him who is pure consciousness. They are given to silent recitation, and

3. The sources of this verse are BāU 3.5.1 and 4.4.22–23.

4. On the obligatory nature of these five articles enumerated in the very next verse, see Ln 45–46, 61; Ypra 8.25.

5. According to Upaniṣadbrahmayogin (Dikshit 1929, 231), Brahman here refers to the sacred syllable OM (*praṇava*), which has five constituent parts: *a*, *u*, *m*, *bindu*, and *nāda* (NpU 209, n. 107). The five articles of a renouncer, then, are homologized with these.

6. Renouncers are generally buried and not cremated. The articles such as the staff and the water pot are placed on the corpse at burial, just as the sacrificial implements are placed on a sacrificer's body prior to cremation. Cf. Ypra 71.1f, especially 71.31.

7. The manifest or the external emblem is the triple staff. The unmanifest or the internal emblem is the control (*danḍa*) of mind, speech, and body: NpU 192, n. 88; BSU 272.

8. Ramanathan translates: "the extinction of all worldly characteristics." *Dharma* here can mean either the characteristics of samsāric reality or the duties peculiar to various classes and orders of life.

they observe the minor and the major rules of restraint [NpU 196, n. 91]. Their conduct is pure, and they enjoy a good reputation. This very point has been declared in these Vedic verses:

Kuṭīcaka, Bahūdaka, Haṃsa, and Paramahaṃsa: these are distinguished by their life-styles.<sup>9</sup> [325] All of them constantly bear the emblem of Viṣṇu both in their inner conduct and manifestly, both within and without [ŚU 323, n. 7].

They offer the five sacrifices<sup>10</sup> and are occupied with the Vedāntas. They perform rites<sup>11</sup> and abide in the knowledge of Brahman. Abandoning the tree, they resort to the root of the tree; renouncing the flowers, they enjoy just the essence.<sup>12</sup> In Viṣṇu they sport, and in Viṣṇu they find delight.<sup>13</sup> Viṣṇu is their very self, and into Viṣṇu indeed they enter, liberated.

Worshipping at the three junctures of the day [ĀrU 6–7, n. 7], bathing according to one's ability, offering libations, cleansing, divine worship, and the five sacrifices—these he should perform until death.

The sacrifice of silent prayer consists of (reciting) the four-footed *gāyatrī* at the three junctures of the day, together with the mystic syllable OM repeated ten times, the seven Great Utterances, and the *śīras* formula.<sup>14</sup>

9. There was a controversy between the Advaita Vedānta tradition and the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition regarding the emblematic articles that should be carried by renouncers. The former saw the distinction among the various classes of renouncers as based on their gradual abandonment of these emblems, whereas the latter regarded that distinction to be based not on emblems but on their divergent life-styles. According to the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas, all renouncers are required to carry the same emblems. See Introduction, chapter 5. For a detailed discussion of this controversy, see Olivelle 1986 and 1987.

10. These are described in the following verses as consisting of silent recitation, yoga, austerity, study, and knowledge, which replace the five well-known sacrifices of a householder: ĀśU 98, n. 6.

11. The author seems to be deliberately opposing the Advaita doctrine, enunciated in all the other Upaniṣads in this collection, that a renouncer does not engage in any ritual action. Cf. MuṇU 3.1.4; Introduction, 2.1.

12. The tree and flowers represent saṃsāra as well as the Veda, while the root and essence indicate Brahman and OM.

13. Cf. ChU 7.25.2; MuṇU 3.1.4.

14. *Gāyatrī*: see ĀrU 6, n. 4. Great Utterances: *bhūh, bhuvaḥ, svar, mahas, janas, tapas, and satyam*. They are the seven pleasant worlds: ĀrU 4. The *śīras* formula is: *om āpo jyotiḥ raso 'mṛtaṃ brahma bhūr bhuvaḥ suvar om*—"OM The Waters, the Light, the Taste, the Immortal, Brahman! Earth Atmosphere Heaven! OM!" (MNU 342)



The sacrifice of yoga consists of always serving Viṣṇu, his teacher,<sup>15</sup> with singleminded devotion. [326] Not injuring (any creature) by word, thought, or deed constitutes the sacrifice of austerity.

The sacrifice of private Vedic recitation is said to be the study of various Upaniṣads. When he offers his self attentively in the fire of Brahman while reciting OM, it should be considered the sacrifice of knowledge, the very best of all sacrifices.

Knowledge is their staff, knowledge is their topknot, and knowledge is their sacrificial string. He possesses the complete Brahmin state whose topknot and sacrificial string consist of knowledge—so the Vedas teach. [Cf. BU 87.6–7]

Now, my dear, these wanderers become (after death) what they appear to be (here).<sup>16</sup> Overcoming lust, anger, greed, delusion, deceit, arrogance, envy, egotism, conceit, and the like, shunning honor and dishonor, praise and blame, let him stand like a tree, and, when hacked, not utter a word. Those who know this become immortal in this very world. [327] That has been declared in these Vedic verses:

With the cheerful approval of his relatives and son, let him walk toward the east or the north, with his head bowed and without looking back at them, composed and enduring the pairs of opposites. [JU 70, n. 25]

He carries a bowl and a staff, he looks just four cubits ahead, he is shaven-headed, and he wears a topknot and a sacrificial string—such is his family care.<sup>17</sup> He accepts from people almsfood, both what is begged and what is received unasked,<sup>18</sup> merely to sustain his life.

His bowl shall be made of clay, wood, bottle-gourd, or leaves. His cloak should be a tattered linen cloth. [328] His garment

15. The meaning could also be “serving his teacher as if he were Viṣṇu.” On the identification of the teacher with god, see ŚU 333.

16. I follow Schrader and Sprockhoff (1976, 271) in translating this elliptic phrase.

17. While a householder has many family affairs that he must attend to, a renouncer has no family, and his solicitude is limited to his few possessions.

18. Sources mention five types of food permitted to renouncers, some of which are obtained by begging, while some are given to them unasked: BSU 265–266; Ypra 54.4–20.

should be made of grass or leaves, or it could be a discarded piece of cloth, which should be used unwashed.<sup>19</sup>

At the junctures between seasons<sup>20</sup> let him shave only the head. He should never shave the pubic region, the armpits, or the top-knot. During the four months (of the rainy season), when the Inner Self, the Omniform Person, is asleep,<sup>21</sup> let him reside in one place.

During the remaining eight months, when (the Lord) is awake once more, (a renouncer) may either wander or dwell in one place with the desire of performing his own duties. Let him reside in a temple, or in a fire hall, or at the foot of a tree, or in a cave, unattached and without exhibiting his virtue or conduct. Coming to rest, like a fire when its fuel is spent [MU 110, n. 6], [329] let him neither fear nor cause fear anywhere at all.

If a man knows the self, with the thought "I am he," then with what desire, for the love of what, would he cling to the body? [BāU 4.4.12]

By knowing him only, a wise Brahmin should acquire wisdom. Let him not reflect on many words, for that is a weariness of speech. [BāU 4.4.21]

Doing away with Vedic knowledge, let him desire to live as a child. Doing away with both Vedic knowledge and the childhood state, he becomes a self-possessed sage. [Cf. BāU 3.5.1.]

When all the desires lurking in one's heart have fallen off, then a mortal here becomes immortal and attains Brahman. [BāU 4.4.7]

Now, my dear, he who abandons this state of renunciation, the final<sup>22</sup> *dharma* of the self, is a slayer of a hero, he is a slayer

19. This passage is rather obscure and is possibly corrupt. I have followed Schrader's explanation.

20. According to some texts, renouncers are required to shave their heads at the change of seasons, except when it falls within the four months of the rainy season. For a long discussion of this topic, see Ypra 61.94-142.

21. During the rainy season Viṣṇu is believed to be asleep. This is often given as a reason why the renouncers cease wandering and remain in one place during the rains: cf. Ypra 65.8-11.

22. *Naiṣṭhika* means final, perfect, definitive, as well as something that ends with death. Therefore, it cannot be given up. The term is most commonly used with reference to a student (*brahmacārin*) who remains with his teacher until death.

of a Brahmin, he is a slayer of an embryo, and he is guilty of a great crime. He who gives up this Vaiṣṇava state is a thief, he is a violator of his teacher's bed, he is a treacherous friend, [330] he is an ingrate, and he is banished from all the worlds. This very point has been declared in these Vedic verses:

A thief, one who drinks liquor, a violator of his teacher's bed, and a treacherous friend—these become purified through expiations. But he who bears the manifest or the unmanifest emblem of Viṣṇu [ŚU 323, n. 7] and then abandons it, is not purified by all the lustre of the self.

The utter fool who, after abandoning the internal or the external emblem of Viṣṇu, resorts to his own order or to a non-order,<sup>23</sup> or who undergoes an expiation—we see no happy issue for such people even after 10 million eons.

Abandoning all other orders, let a wise man live long in the order devoted to liberation. There is no happy issue for one who has fallen from the order devoted to liberation.

He who takes to renunciation and then fails to persevere in his own *dharma* should be known as an apostate—so the Vedas teach.<sup>24</sup>

[331] Now, my dear, after receiving this final *dharma* of the self, this Vaiṣṇava state, he who lives without violating it becomes a master of himself. He will enjoy a good reputation. He becomes a knower of the universe. He becomes a knower of the Vedānta. He becomes a knower of Brahman. He becomes omniscient. He becomes a sovereign. He attains the highest Brahman, the Lord, and he rescues from this existence his forefathers, relatives by marriage, blood relations, companions, and friends. This very point has been declared in these Vedic verses:

23. Non-order (*anāśrama*) refers to any state that is not recognized as an order, e.g. the state of a widower. In renunciation, however, the term often refers to the highest state of asceticism, which the Advaita tradition considers to be beyond all orders of life: NpU 193–195.

24. The technical term for an apostate is *ārūḍhapatita* or *ārūḍhacyuta*: literally meaning “one who has mounted to the highest state and has then fallen from it.” Such people are considered outcastes: cf. BSU 250–251; Ypra 68.159–167.

One hundred prior generations as well as 300 subsequent generations attain the world of the virtuous when a wise man of their lineage takes to renunciation in this world.

A virtuous renouncer rescues thirty (generations) immediately before him, thirty beyond those, and thirty after him: so, indeed, the Vedas declare.

A man who utters: “I have renounced,” even while breathing his last, [332] rescues his forefathers: so the Vedas teach.

Now, my dear, they say that one should not disclose this final *dharma* of the self, this Vaiṣṇava state, to a man who is perverse, or to a man who is not devoted to learning, or to a man who knows not the self, or to a man who has not overcome passion, or to a man who is impure, or to a man who has not duly approached him for study, or to a man whose mind is not well prepared. This very point has been declared in these Vedic verses:

Knowledge, verily, approached the Brahmin and said: “Protect me; I am your treasure. Do not impart me to a man who is envious, or perverse, or insincere. Thus I shall wax strong.” [VDh 2.8]

To a man who has duly approached him for study and whom he finds after a careful examination to be pure, diligent, wise, and chaste, [333] he should impart this Vaiṣṇava state. [Cf. VDh 2.9.]

As those Brahmins who, after receiving instruction, do not honor their teacher in thought, word, and deed, are of no profit to their teacher, even so their learning will not profit them. [VDh 2.11]

The teacher alone is the highest *dharma*. The teacher alone is the highest goal. Learning, austerities, and knowledge seep away from a man who praises not the teacher who imparted to him the single syllable OM, as does water from an unbaked pot.

He who has the highest devotion to god, and as to god so also to his teacher [ŚvU 6.23], is a knower of Brahman and attains the highest: so the Vedas teach.

That is the secret teaching.

# *Laghu-Avadhūta* *Upaniṣad*

[337] This is the Yoga of eight limbs: discipline, restraint, posture, breath control, withdrawal, concentration, meditation, and mental absorption.<sup>1</sup>

Detachment from the body and the senses is called **discipline** by the wise. Constant attachment to the highest truth is said to be **restraint**.

Indifference toward all things is the foremost **posture**. The conviction that this whole world is false constitutes **breath control**.

When the mind is focused within itself, that is the best **withdrawal**. Maintaining the steadfastness of mind they consider to be **concentration**.

[338] The thought “I am just pure consciousness” is said to be **meditation**. The total oblivion of meditation is termed **mental absorption**.

1. These are the well-known eight steps of classical Yoga. The Upaniṣad, however, presents allegorical meanings of them. The LAU probably is not an independent text, for it consists of a few verses drawn from the mantra section (*mantra-bhāga*) of the *Triśikhūbrāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*, 27–32, 163–166 (published in *The Yoga Upaniṣads*, ed. Pandit A. Mahadeva Sastri. [Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1920]). See Sprockhoff 1976, 249, n. 1.

Having thus purified his organs,<sup>2</sup> the yogin with his mind free of desires comes to rest in himself, just as a fire when its fuel is spent [MU 110, n. 6].

When there is nothing to be grasped, a man, free of mind and breath and endowed with steadfast knowledge, becomes dissolved in the pure and supreme reality, as a lump of salt in water.

He has torn asunder the web of delusion, and he sees everything as if it were a dream. By his very nature he is supremely steadfast, and he goes about as if in deep sleep. Entering the state of cessation (*nirvāṇa*), the yogin attains isolation (*kaivalya*).<sup>3</sup>

The yogin, indeed, attains isolation, and he who knows thus. That is the secret teaching.

2. The term *tattva* refers to the cosmic principles that have evolved from primal nature (*prakṛti*) and which constitute the organs and the material components of a person's existence. In this context it refers especially to mental and sense faculties that are purified of their attachments through yogic practices.

3. Cessation probably refers to the products of primal nature (*prakṛti*) that constitute a person's material existence. They return to their unmanifest condition upon the liberation of the soul (*puruṣa*). This state of liberation, in which the soul is unrelated to any other reality, is technically known in Sāṃkhya and Yoga as isolation (*kaivalya*).

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## Abbreviations and Bibliography

- AitB *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. trans. A. B. Keith. Harvard Oriental Series, no. 25. Cambridge, Mass., 1920.
- AitU *Aitareya Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.
- ĀpDh *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*: trans. Bühler.
- ĀrU *Āruṇi Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- ĀśU *Āśrama Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- AV *Atharva Veda(saṃhitā)*. trans. R. T. H. Griffith. 2 vols. Benares: E. J. Lazarus, 1916–1917.
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- BAU *Bṛhad-Avadhūta Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- BāU *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.
- BDh *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*: trans. Bühler.
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- KauṣU *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume
- KśU *Kaṭhaśruti Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- KU *Kuṇḍikā Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader
- LAU *Laghu-Avadhūta Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
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- LSU *Laghu-Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- MaitU *Maitri Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.
- MāṇU *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.
- MBh *Mahābhārata*. Ed. V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar. 19 vols. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1927–1959.
- MDh *Mānavadharmasāstra* (Manu Smṛti) trans. G. Bühler. The Sacred Books of the East, no. 25. Reprint. N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1969.
- MNU *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*. Ed. and trans. J. Varenne. 2 vols. Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1960.
- MU *Maitreya Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- MuṇU *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.
- NpU *Nāradaparivṛājaka Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- NR Northern Recension of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads.
- NU *Nirvāṇa Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.

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PbU *Parabrahma Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.

Pd Vidyāraṇya: *Pañcadaśī*. Ed. and trans. Swāmī Swāhānanda. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1967.

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PMS Jaimini: *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*. Ed. and trans. with Śabara's commentary by G. Jha. 3 vols. Gackwad's Oriental Series, nos. 66, 70, 73. Reprint. Baroda, 1973-1974.

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PraśU *Praśna Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.

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RV *Rg Veda(samhitā)*. trans. R. T. H. Griffith. Reprint. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973.

ŚB *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. 5 pts. trans. J. Eggeling. Sacred Books of the East, nos. 12, 26, 41, 43, 44. Reprint. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978.

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- 1990 “Vom Umgag mit den Saṃnyāsa-Upaniṣads.” *WZKS* 34:5–48.
- SR Southern Recension of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads.
- ŚU *Śāyāyāniya Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- SūS *Sūta Saṃhitā of the Skanda Purāṇa*. 3 vols. Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, no. 25. Poona, 1893.
- ŚvU *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.
- TĀ *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*. 2 vols. Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, no. 36. Poona, 1898.
- TaU *Turīyātītādvadhūta Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.
- TB *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. 3 vols. Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, no. 37. Poona, 1898.
- Tippanī* The original Sanskrit commentary on the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads written by O. F. Schrader with the assistance of Paṇḍits Yajñeśvaradīkṣita, Rāmānujācārya, and others. See under Schrader.
- TS *Taittirīya Saṃhitā of the Yajur Veda*. trans. A. B. Keith. Harvard Oriental Series, nos. 18–19. Cambridge, Mass., 1914. Reprint. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967.
- TU *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*: trans. Hume.

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- Varenne, J., 1976. *Yoga and the Hindu Tradition*. Trans. D. Colman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- VDh *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*: trans. Bühler.
- VeS *Vedānta Sūtra*. trans. with Śaṅkara's commentary by G. Thibaut. Sacred Books of the East, nos 34, and 38. Reprint. N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1962.
- Vin *Vinaya Piṭaka*. trans. I. B. Horner. 5 vols. Sacred Books of the Buddhists, nos. 10, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21. London, 1949–1966.
- ViP *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. trans. H. H. Wilson. Reprint. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1972.
- VS *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* of the *Yajur Veda*. trans. R. T. H. Griffith. Reprint. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1987.
- WZKS *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*.
- Ydhs Viśveśvara Sarasvatī: *Yatidharmasaṃgraha*. Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, no. 60. Poona, 1909.
- Yogav *Yogavāsiṣṭha*. Ed. Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Paṇṣikar. 3d ed. 2 vols. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1981.
- Ypra *Yatidharmaprakāśa*: see Olivelle 1976 and 1977.
- YU *Yājñavalkya Upaniṣad*: ed. Schrader.

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