

Chapter 7

The Brhadaranyaka and Other Upanishads

7.1 The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad

This is the longest of the Upanishads and the name *Brhadaranyaka* literally means ‘the vast forest’. It is famous for the long discourse between the philosopher Yājñavalkya and his wife Maitreyi. Some traces of the society of that time period can be discerned clearly from the Upanishad. We find in it many questions posed also by female students. One can deduce that there was no exclusive privilege awarded to gain this knowledge to either of the sexes and some form of equality was in vogue in those days.

Despite its length, the message of the Upanishad is the same as the earlier ones, namely, it teaches of the underlying reality called *Brahman*. It is curious that the Upanishad repeats itself in places, as in the case of the conversation between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyi. In other parts, there are verses which are literally taken from some of the earlier Upanishads such as the Isa and Kena. However, the Upanishad does have the virtue of giving us further meditations on the *ātman* and *Brahman*.

In this lecture, we will give a brief overview of this treatise. The Upanishad is most famous for its “*neti, neti*” doctrine, or the ‘not this, not this’ principle that has come to occupy a central place in the advaita philosophy (the philosophy of non-dualism). We will give free, but faithful, translations of the passages and occasionally pause to highlight significant points.¹

¹Most of these translations have been taken from S. Prabhavananda and F. Manchester,

“The world existed first as seed, which as it grew and developed took on names and forms. As fire is hidden in wood, the Self dwells in all forms and beings, even to the tips of the fingers. Yet the ignorant do not know That, for behind the names and forms, the Self is hidden. When one breathes, one knows him as breath. When one speaks, one knows him as speech. When one sees, one knows him as the eye. When one hears, one knows him as the ear. When one thinks, one knows him as the mind. All these are but names related to the acts of the Self. And he who worships the Self as one or another of them does not know the Self, for of them, It is neither one or another. The Self is the goal of all beings. For by knowing the Self, one knows all. This Self, which is nearer to us than anything else, is indeed dearer than a son or daughter, dearer than wealth, dearer than all beside.”

So far, this is an echo of the message we have heard in the earlier Upanishads. But now comes the entry of the “philosopher-king,” an ideal that was to dominate Indian philosophy of the later periods. The boastful sage Gārgya meets King Ajātasatru and says to him that he will teach him about *Brahman*. The king humbly submits. Then follows a rather interesting dialogue which reveals that the king had advanced further in the path to *Brahman*. Repeating the outer message of the Upanishads, Gārgya begins, “He who is the being in the sun and at the same time the being in the eye, Him I meditate upon as Brahman. He who is in the moon and at the same time in the mind, Him I meditate upon as Brahman. He who is in the lightning and at the same time in the heart, Him I meditate upon as Brahman.” The King replies, “Please do not speak thus of Brahman. That Being, I worship as the transcendental, luminous, supreme, infinite, power.” Gārgya continues, “He who is the being in the sky and at the same time in the heart, Him I meditate upon as Brahman. He who is in the wind and at the same time in the breath, Him I meditate upon as Brahman. He who is in the fire and at the same time in the heart, Him I meditate upon as Brahman.” The King replies, “Please do not speak thus of Brahman. That Being, I worship as all-pervading, changeless, effulgent, invincible, forgiveness, harmony, life force and supreme will.”

In this dialogue, we see the contrast between concrete symbols and abstract concepts that have no physical symbols. The King, by his reverential attitude to higher knowledge has gone beyond the preliminary stage of meditation on Brahman through symbols around him. He has entered the realm of the abstract, whereas the sage was trapped in the realm of symbols. The sage had come to realise this in the course of their dialogue, and so he asks the king, “Sir, please accept me as a disciple and teach me of Brahman.” Then the king took Gārgya by the hand and arose. The two walked side by side and they came upon a sleeping man. Now comes a discussion that can be said to be a continuation of the Māndukya Upanishad on states of consciousness.

The king tried to wake the sleeping man, but the man did not stir. Then he rubbed the hand of the sleeping man, and slowly the man awoke. The king asked Gārgya, “This man, who is a conscious, intelligent being, where was he when he was thus asleep, and how did he thus wake up?” Gārgya was silent. The king continued, “When this man, who is a conscious, intelligent being, is thus in deep sleep, he enters into the Self, within the lotus of the heart, having withdrawn into himself both his senses and his mind. When the person withdraws the senses, he is said to be asleep. When the breath is restrained, speech is restrained, the eye is restrained, the ear is restrained and the mind is restrained. He enters the dream state. Just as a king moves about his own country as he pleases, so also in the dream state one moves about one’s own body as one pleases. Beyond the dream state is the state of deep sleep.² In this state he knows nothing. He enters into the seventy-two thousand nerves which go out from the lotus of the heart. ... As the spider moves along its web, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so the Self moves forth through the *prāna*, through all worlds, through all beings. This is the essence of the Upanishad. *Prāna* is the truth and the Self is the truth of that. That is the truth of truth (*satyasya satyam*).”

As one enters deeper into the issue, we see how neurology has to be factored in. In many of the Upanishads, the sun and the heart are similar. Just as the many rays of light radiate from the sun and energize the world, so also many rays of nerves radiate from the heart energizing the parts of the body. The network of nerves is compared to a spider’s web. The spider can only travel along the threads of the web. Similarly, the Self ‘moves’ along the nerves as *prāna*. *Prana* and more generally its manifestation, this world, is true, the verse says. But beyond that, the “truth of truth” or the “meaning of the meaning” is Brahman.

This passage is significant for many reasons. The subtle teaching comes from the lips of a king, indicating that the kings were deeply interested in the deeper teachings of the Upanishads. Their interest was not academic, but rather, practical. This becomes a dominant theme in the later philosophical treatises, the most celebrated being the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna appears as the ideal “philosopher-king.” Another reason why these verses are important is the use of the phrase, “truth of truth” (*satyasya satyam*) indicating that the world we see is true, but there is a deeper layer of truth behind it. But perhaps the novel feature of this Upanishad is its neurological definition of the dream and deep sleep states. The senses are withdrawn from the outer world and the awareness seems to reside in the *pranamaya kosha*, the nervous network of the human being. If we think of the mind as the cognizer, a part of its activity is to give cohesion to all our sensory impressions and “interpret” it so that we

²For some unknown reason, Prabhavananda and Manchester reverse the order of dream and deep sleep, though in the original Upanishad it is in the order we have given in the translation above.

may understand. The verses of this Upanishad suggest that a similar process is taking place with respect to the neural impressions. They may be given form and ‘interpreted’ in the form of dream.

A good portion of this Upanishad is dominated by the personality of the sage Yājñavalkya. He says to his wife that he will leave for her all his wealth as he is about to renounce the world and begin a life of exclusive meditation. What we see here is that one need not be a mendicant or a stern ascetic to embrace the life of meditation. It is a natural event that comes from maturity and after one has gone through the various phases of life and its teachings. The Upanishadic age refrained from making such compartmental divisions either to society or to life.

Yājñavalkya’s wife, Maitreyi then replies to him, “What will I do with wealth. Your goal is also my goal. Teach me that which will enable me to transcend death.” Yājñavalkya is delighted for he has now found a fit pupil. “Verily, it is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is dear to the wife but for the sake of the *ātman* that she loves him. It is not for the sake of the wife that the husband loves the wife but for the sake of the *ātman* that he loves her. ... None loves a thing for that thing’s sake. It is only for the sake of the *ātman*. This teaching must first be heard, then reflected upon and then meditated upon. When the *ātman* is seen, then all becomes known.”

This requires some explanation. Why do we love anything? It is because the light of the *ātman* animates it. The beauty that shines through the eyes is the beauty of the *ātman*. Thus, the beauty that we enjoy is the bliss of *Brahman*, even though we are not aware of it. Our difficulty arises when we try to narrow the experience through only one person or one thing. This teaching is similar to the earlier teachings of the Upanishads where something familiar is taken and a cosmic aspect of it is revealed. Here the familiar idea taken up for reflection is love and beauty.

In explaining these verses, Vivekananda³ writes, “As soon as you are attached to anything in the universe, detaching it from the universe as a whole, from the *Atman*, there comes a reaction. With everything we love outside the Self, grief and misery will be the result. If we enjoy everything in the Self, and as the Self, no misery or reaction will come. This is perfect bliss.”

Now how can we enlarge our vision and gain this cosmic perspective for everything we encounter? Yājñavalkya explains. “As when a drum is beaten, one is not able to grasp the external sounds, but by grasping the drum or the beater of the drum, the sound is grasped, similarly when one grasps the Pure

³S. Vivekananda, Complete Works, Vol. 2, p. 418.

Self, all things and beings become known. They have no existence apart from the Self. All knowledge is the breath of the eternal. ... As a lump of salt thrown into water becomes dissolved in the water and one cannot separate it, so also the infinite is mingled with all that you see. Everything is permeated with intelligence. This universe arises out of That and goes back to That.”

The imagery here is brilliant. Can we catch the sound? Only by going to the source of the sound can we do so. Similarly, as long as we perceive diversity but no unity behind that diversity, we are confused and subject to the oscillations of pain and pleasure. “Everything is permeated with intelligence,” just as salt is dissolved in water and permeates that water. But this teaching confuses Maitreyi and she asks, “What will become of individuality? It looks like it will disappear. Will there be then no one to love, no one to recognize? What will become of us?”

Then Yājñavalkya replies, “My dear, let nothing I say confuse you. As long as there is duality, one sees the other, one hears the other, and so forth. But where everything has become the Self, who is seen by whom, who is heard by whom? The Pure Awareness that reveals all, by what shall It be revealed? ”

Individuality is, upon closer examination, a myth. The body is constantly changing. The mind is constantly changing. Medical science informs us that the body is composed of about 10^{12} cells and these cells have different life spans. Blood cells are changing every few seconds. The surface of the cells lining the stomach changes every few minutes. These cells are completely transformed within a few hours. Stomach lining cells live only for about two days, a skin cell lives about two weeks, and a red blood cell lives for about two months, liver cells live about two years, whereas heart and brain cells last a lifetime. Expanding on this theme, Vivekananda writes, “The body and the mind are continually changing, and are, in fact, only names of series of changeful phenomena, like rivers whose waters are in a constant state of flux, yet presenting the appearance of unbroken streams. Every particle in this body is continually changing; no one has the same body for many minutes together, and yet we think of it as the same body. So with the mind; one moment it is happy, another moment unhappy; one moment strong, another weak; an ever-changing whirlpool. That cannot be the Spirit which is infinite. Change can only be in the limited. ... These are old delusions, however comfortable they are, to think that we are little limited beings, constantly changing.”⁴

In his inimitable humorous style, Vivekananda continues, “People are frightened when they are told they are the Universal Being, everywhere present. ... They will again and again ask you if they are not going to keep their individu-

⁴S. Vivekananda, Complete Works, Vol. 2, p. 79.

ality. What is individuality? I should like to see it. A baby has no moustache; when he grows to be a man, perhaps he has a moustache and beard. His individuality will be lost if it were in the body. Then a drunkard should not give up drinking because he would lose his individuality. A thief should not be a good man because he would thereby lose his individuality. No man ought to change his habits for fear of this. There is no individuality except in the Infinite. That is the only condition which does not change. Everything else is in a constant change of flux. ... Neither can individuality be in memory. Suppose on account of a blow on the head, I forget all about my past; then, I have lost all individuality; I am gone. I do not remember two or three years of my childhood, and if memory and existence are one, then whatever I forget is gone. That part of my life which I do not remember, I did not live. That is a very narrow idea of individuality.”⁵

Next in the Upanishad, come a sequence of verses that highlight the symbiosis between the human being and the world around. “The earth is honey to all beings and all beings are honey to the earth. They both help each other. The sweetness in all things is the *ātman*. The water is honey to all beings and all beings are honey to the water. They both help each other. The sweetness is the *ātman*.” The idea here is that the things we see around us are not separate from us, but that we are interconnected. The enjoyment that you experience is a particle of the bliss of *Brahman*. The symbols of sweetness offered by the Upanishad are fire, air, space, sun, moon, lightning, thunder.

From these concrete symbols, the Upanishad continues, “The law is honey to all beings and all beings are honey to the law. They both help each other. The essence of both is *Brahman*.” Now we have entered the abstract. The word *dharma*, translated here as ‘the law’ is a complicated word. An accurate translation is ‘social order, social justice.’ Though *dharma* is not directly perceived, its effects are perceived, and we are to reflect upon that. Here we see the beginnings of a theme that later pervades the *Mahabharata*, the philosophy of social justice or *dharma*. An individual is not separate from the state; they both help each other.

The Upanishad now moves toward more abstract notions. “Truth is honey to all beings and all beings are honey to truth. They both help each other. The essence of both is *Brahman*. Humanity is honey to all human beings and all beings are honey to humanity. They both help each other. The essence of humanity is *Brahman*. The *ātman* is honey to all beings and all beings are honey to the *ātman*. The essence of both is *Brahman*. As the spokes of a wheel are held together by the hub of the wheel, so also all beings are held together by the *ātman*. *Brahman* has entered all forms. *Brahman* is without cause, without effect, without inside and without an outside. This *Brahman* is the *ātman*, the

⁵Ibid., p. 80.

all perceiving. (*Ayam ātma brahma.*)”

The purpose of these verses is to give the student a progressive series of meditations. We begin with concrete symbols such as the earth, the sun, the moon, the air and so forth. Then we move to subtler meditations like humanity, *dharma*, truth, and *Brahman*. These meditations culminate in the philosophical equation, the *ātman* is *Brahman*. In science, a mathematical equation compresses a vast history of thought and establishes an identity between two seemingly different expressions. Through that one equation, the scientist, in a single glance, can comprehend the diverse and complicated phenomenon the equation describes.

Now comes a revealing section of the Upanishad. It is revealing for several reasons. First, it shows us that knowledge and learning were highly valued at that time period and all people, from the peasant to the king, were interested in gaining some insight into the nature of *Brahman*. King Janaka held a royal court and invited learned scholars for a philosophical debate. He offered a thousand cows as the prize for the winner of the debate. Yājñavalkya enters the court and sits next to the other sages and the debate begins. A sage stands up and asks the question, “What is the means of overcoming death?” Yājñavalkya responds, “By fire, by speech, we overcome death.”

Here, as we have seen, speech is symbolic of the ‘word’ or the miracle of language. Language is the means for gaining higher knowledge. Fire is symbolic of the will. Thus, by combining learning and the will to learn, one overcomes death.

In the course of the debate, the sage is asked a series of questions and Yājñavalkya emerges victorious in the discussion. We are to infer that the assembly consists of many learned sages, both male and female. The challenges to Yājñavalkya come from all sides. In some parts, the verses are reminiscent of the Kena Upanishad. “He who dwells in speech, yet is within speech, whom speech does not know, whose body is speech, who controls speech from within, that is the *ātman*. He who dwells in the eye, yet is within the eye, whom the eye does not know, whose body is the eye, who controls the eye from within, that is the *ātman*. ... It is unseen, but It is the seer. It is unthought, but It is the thinker. It is unknown, but It is the knower.”

King Janaka is pleased with the debate and comes to reward Yājñavalkya. Now ensues a further discourse. Janaka asks, “Did you come here for cattle or philosophy?” The sage replies, “For both. But before I accept your reward, I would like to hear what your teachers have taught you.” Then, Janaka says, “I was taught that word is *Brahman*.” The sage expands, “It is true that word is

Brahman since the legacy of learning, first from the mother, then the father, and then the sages, is through the power of the word, the power of sound, the *sabda brahman*. The organ of speech is its abode, the space its support. Meditate on sound as pulsating with knowledge.”

Then ensues a long discourse where Yājñavalkya takes Janaka through a progressive series of meditations. “When the sun has set, the moon has set, the stars have set, the fire is out, what illumines the world? Speech (sound) illumines the world and when that is not there, what illumines the world? It is the light of *Brahman* that illumines the world.”

Consciousness is the ultimate source of light. The famous autobiography of Helen Keller, entitled “The World I Live In,” brings this message to us with impressive force in the chapter entitled ‘The Seeing Hand.’ Born blind, deaf and mute, she writes, “My hand is to me what your hearing and sight are to you. ... The hand is my feeler with which I reach through isolation and darkness and seize every pleasure, every activity that my fingers encounter. ... In all my experiences and thoughts, I am conscious of a hand. Whatever moves me, whatever thrills me, is as a hand that touches me in the dark, and that touch is my reality. ... The delicate tremble of a butterfly’s wings in my hand, the soft petals of violets ... My world is built of touch sensations devoid of physical colour and sound; it breathes and throbs with life ... Remember that you, dependent on your sight, do not realize *how* many things are tangible. ... A tangible object passes complete into my brain with the warmth of life upon it and occupies the same place that it does in space, for, without egotism, the mind is as large as the universe. ... The silent worker is imagination which decrees reality out of chaos.”⁶

Apart from its literary beauty, this passage is important for us, as students of philosophy, for several reasons. The passage clearly reveals that in our waking life, with sensory impressions coming from many directions, the impressions are received pell-mell by our brain. The imaginative faculty gives order to these diverse impressions and fashions to us some view of the world. Most of this is happening too fast for us to “listen” to the “inner symphony” being played. When, as the Upanishads instruct, we withdraw the mind from the outer world and observe within, we find a subtler layer of experience. In the case of Helen Keller, the energy expended through the faculties of sight, speech and sound has been eliminated and she finds still a richer world revealed through the sense of touch. Equally amazing is that the mind can still fashion through imagination an idea of the world outside that gives her meaning.

Yājñavalkya continues his discourse by discussing the waking, dream and

⁶Helen Keller, *The World I Live In*, New York, Century, 1909.

deep sleep states. “But beyond is *Brahman*, the One without a second, beyond duality.” With verses that seem to be echoes of the Taittiriya, Isa and Kena Upanishads, the sage teaches, “When one is healthy, wealthy and has lavish enjoyments, this is said to be the highest bliss of human beings. ... But the bliss of the knower of *Brahman* is the greatest. ... According as one acts, according as one behaves, so does he become. ... As is his desire, so is his will. As is his will, so is the deed. Whatever deed he does, that he attains. ... When all the desires of the heart are cast away, then he attains *Brahman*. ... Into blinding darkness they enter, who worship ignorance. Into greater darkness than that, they enter, as it were, who delight in knowledge. ... They who know the life of life, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear and mind of the mind, realise *Brahman*. Only by the mind is it to be perceived. In it there is no diversity. Let the seeker of *Brahman* practice the means to wisdom. Let him not reflect on too many words, for that only gives rise to weariness of speech.”

In conclusion, the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad teaches us that whatever we enjoy in this world and find ‘dear’, is through the bliss of *Brahman*. Thus, joy, with which we are all familiar, is associated with *Brahman*. Next, it tells us that one may meditate on physical symbols as *Brahman*, but there is a higher meditation, on the formless, through mental abstraction. Forgiveness, joy, harmony, humanity, social justice, power, truth, and meaning, are all without form, and yet we continuously experience their manifestations. After speaking about the various states of consciousness, it teaches us how to progressively withdraw our consciousness from the outer world and focus on the inner. One of its powerful symbols is its comparison of the heart radiating its network of veins and arteries to the sun radiating its rays of light and energy. As a spider is limited in its movement to the threads of web it has spun, so also the individual experiences the world only through the network of nerves. By withdrawing the senses, one may actually enlarge the experience. One may say that this Upanishad makes explicit the neurological dimension of the meditative experience more than any other Upanishad.

7.2 A Brief Look at Some Other Upanishads

We will conclude our survey of the Upanishads by highlighting some significant verses from some of them. There is such a thing as the “inner soul” of the Upanishad and one may enter that through meditation. As one meditates and reflects, subtler layers of meaning are revealed.

In the *Aitareya Upanishad*, we find the phrase *prajnānam brahma*, which translates as “intelligence is Brahman.” Here, “intelligence” is not to be interpreted as a function of the mind, but rather to “pure consciousness.” With this

clarification, we can proceed. “The world is guided by intelligence. Brahman is intelligence.”⁷ In other translations, we find different meanings ascribed to the word *prajñā*. Aurobindo⁸ translates it as “wisdom,” others⁹ translate it as “pure consciousness,” or as the “intellect.”¹⁰ However, there is a general consensus that the word indicates the principle of intelligence that pervades all life. In referring to this hidden principle, Aurobindo writes¹¹ “We see it as *prajñā*, the universal Intelligence, conscious in things unconscious, active in things inert. The energy of *prajñā* is what the Europeans call Nature. The tree does not and cannot shape itself, the stress of the hidden Intelligence shapes it.” One may call this “heredity” but the word encompasses more than that. Intelligence is that which forms cosmos out of chaos and gives cohesion to the world. Helen Keller referred to it as “imagination,” but it is clear from her writing that it is the principle of intelligence to which she refers.

Medical science has now proved how “all-pervasive” (*sarvagatah*), this principle of intelligence is. Even the minutest cells in our body “know” what to do and how to function. They even have some form of “cellular telepathy” and can communicate with faraway cells of the body. Our body is not just a bunch of cells and chemicals put together. There is a principle of intelligence that pervades it and this is the message of this particular upanishad.

The Svetāsvatara Upanishad is named after the sage Svetāsvatara. Its teachings find greater expression in the Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies of a later period. One can see here the essential principles of *raja yoga*, or what has been called the “kingly path” to Brahman, clearly delineated. Here is a free translation of its essential ideas.

Matter, mind and Maya is the triad. It is the object of enjoyment, the enjoyer and that which connects the two. But beyond them is the infinite Self. When all three are known as one with Brahman, then is the Self realized. The truth is that we are always united with the Self, but we must *know* this. The way to do this is by meditation on Om. As fire is hidden in sticks and it comes out when they are rubbed together, so also is the Self hidden in all beings. It is realised through the heat (*tapas*) of meditation on Om. Holding the body steady with the chest, neck and head erect, the sense organs and the mental activities must be silenced. Let the yogi practice meditation in a solitary place free from all distractions. By regulating the breathing and neural currents, let the yogi meditate on the syllable Om. The mind is thus trained in inwardness. As you go deeper, you will realize the infinite dimension of the eternal Self. At

⁷S. Radhakrishnan, The Principal Upanishads, p. 523.

⁸Aurobindo, Complete Works, Vol. 12, p. 364.

⁹S. Prabhavananda and F. Manchester, The Upanishads, p. 97.

¹⁰S. Radhakrishnan and C. Moore, A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy, p. 63.

¹¹S. Aurobindo, Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 363.

this point, the sage Svetāsvatara goes into a paeon of song.

srnvantu visve amrtasya putrāāye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuh

...

*vedāham etam purusam mahāntam āditya varnam tamasah parastāt
tam eva viditvāati mrtiyum eti nānyah panthāvidyate ayanāya.*

(Svet. Up. 2.5, 3.8)

Hear ye, children of immortal bliss, even those that reside in the starry heavens. I have found the Supreme Being, luminous and beyond all darkness. Only by knowing the Supreme Self is the way out of the cycle of life and death. There seems to be no other way.

The sage continues. “That Being is everywhere. It resides in the hearts of all beings, *sarvagata sivah*. Truly, It is what has been, what is, and whatever will be. *Sarvatah pāni pādām tat, sarvato’ksi siro mukham, sarvatah sruti malloke, sarvam āvryta tisthati*. Its hands and feet are everywhere. Everywhere, Its eyes, ears, heads and faces on all sides, It envelops the whole cosmos. It is smaller than the smallest, larger than the largest. It is not female, it is not male, it is not neuter either. That is hidden in all beings and in all things, whatever there is. The wise perceive That as their own Self. Then only one may have ever-lasting contentment.” By the power of austerity (*tapas*) and by the grace of the divine, Svetāsvatara spoke about the nature of *Brahman*. May all sincere seekers of Truth benefit from this teaching of the highest mystery.

The final Upanishad we will survey is the Maitrī Upanishad, named after the sage of the same name. The teaching here goes into some detail on the meaning of Om. Here are a few central verses. “By austerity (*tapas*) one achieves goodness. Through goodness, you can take hold of the mind. Through the mind, one can realise the Self. As fire, when its fuel is spent, comes to rest in its source, even so the mind, when the thoughts are silenced, the mind returns to its own source. The mind is the key. Here is the eternal mystery. What you think, that you become.”

yac cittas tan-mayo bhavati guhyam etat sanātanam. (Maitri Up. 6.34.3)

The essential sense of this is that whatever thought we hold, the mind tries to take the shape of that thought, or become that thought as it were. Through that process, we gain understanding. Truly, this is a deep psychological principle that is enunciated here.

The essential message of the Upanishads is that there is a changeless reality

behind the changing. The substratum is *Brahman*. Though it is beyond mind and speech, it has no form or shape, and it is beyond any form of mental conceptualization, the Upanishads tell us with conviction that It can be realized and experienced. Using familiar symbols, they suggest meditation on symbols around us. They transform them. We can no longer treat the sun in the same way as before. The sun becomes a symbol of Brahman. When we look at the moon, that becomes a symbol of Brahman. When we look at the sky, we are reminded of the vastness of Brahman. We have recovered an ancient kinship with the world around us. We can no longer walk upon the earth without feeling some affinity to it. And more importantly, we become aware of the Infinite Spirit, or the Pure Awareness, peering through every eye of every living thing. In fact, the value of a deep study of the Upanishads is that it changes the way we look at the world around us, the way we look at others, and more importantly, the way we look at ourselves. It widens our view from the narrow limited view of ourselves, to a larger view, that we are all part of the Infinite. It changes our thought and energizes the mind. And as the Maitri Upanishad teaches through insightful poetry, whatever we think, that we become. Thus, when we contemplate the Infinite, the Infinite we become.