

LONG WEEKEND FAMILY VEDANTA RETREAT

with

Swami Vidadatmanandaji

on

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad

Passages 3-8-6 to 12

With

Śāṅkarabhāṣya

(Transliteration copy)

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॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 sā hōvāca, yadūrdhvaṃ yājñavalkya divaḥ,
yadavāk pṛthivyāḥ, yadantarā dyāvāpṛthivī imē,
4 yadbhūtaṃ ca bhavacca bhaviṣyaccētyācakṣatē,
kasmimṣtadōtaṃ ca prōtaṃ cēti || 3-8-6¹ ||

6 Translation→ 6. She said, ‘By what, O Yājñavalkya, is that pervaded
which is above heaven and below the earth, which is this heaven and earth as
8 well as between them, and which they say was, is and will be?’

10 Śāṅkarabhāṣya → vyākhyātamanyat . sā hōvāca
yadūrdhvaṃ yājñavalkyētyādipraśnaḥ prativacanaṃ ca
12 uktasyaivārthasyāvadhāraṇārthaṃ punarucyatē. na
kiñcidapūrvamarthāntaramucyatē ..6..

14 Translation→ All this has been explained. The question and the answer are
16 repeated in this and the next paragraph in order to emphasize the truth already stated by
Yājñavalkya. Nothing new is introduced.

20 sa hōvāca, yadūrdhvaṃ gārgi divaḥ, yadavāk
pṛthivyā:, yadantarā dyāvāpṛthivī imē, yadbhūtaṃ ca
22 bhavacca bhaviṣyaccētyācakṣatē, ākāśa ēva tadōtaṃ
ca prōtaṃ cēti, kasminnu khalvākāśa otaśca
prōtaścēti || 3-8-7 ||

24 Translation→ 7. He said, ‘That, O Gārgī, which is above heaven and
26 below the earth, which is this heaven and earth as well as between them, and
which they say was, is and will be, is pervaded by the un-manifested ether
28 (space) alone.’ ‘By what is the un-manifested ether (space) pervaded?’

¹ ३ अध्यायः - ८ ब्राह्मणम् - ६ कंडिका

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaṇiṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 Śāṅkarabhāṣya→ sarvaṁ yathōktaṁ gārgyā pratyuccārya
3 tamēva pūrvōktamarthamavadhāritavānākāśa ēvēti yājñavalkyaḥ.
4 gārgyāha ---- kasminnu khalvākāśa oṭaśca prōtaścēti. ākāśamēva
5 tāvat kālatrayātītatvād durvācyam, tatōpi kaṣṭataramakṣaram
6 yasminnākāśamōtaṁ ca prōtaṁ ca, atōvācyamiti kṛtvā, na
7 pratipadyatē sā apratipattirnāma nigrashthānaṁ tārkkikasamayē;
8 athāvācyamapi vakṣyati, tathāpi vipratipattirnāma nigrashthānaṁ;
9 virudhdā pratipattir'hi sā, yadvācyasya vadanam; atō durvacanaṁ
10 praśnaṁ manyatē gārgī.. 7..

12 Translation→ Yājñavalkya repeated Gārgī's question as it was, and emphasized
13 what he had already stated by saying, 'By the un-manifested ether (*space*) alone.' Gārgī
14 said, 'By what is the un-manifested ether (*space*) pervaded?' She considered the
15 question unanswerable, for the un-manifested ether (*space*) itself, being beyond time
16 past, present and future, was difficult to explain: much more so was the Immutable
17 (Brahman) by which the un-manifested ether (*space*) was pervaded; hence It could not
18 be explained. Now, if Yājñavalkya did not explain It for this reason, he would lay himself
19 open to the charge of what is called in the system of logic 'non-comprehension', if, on
20 the other hand, he tried to explain It, notwithstanding the fact that It was a thing that
21 could not be explained, he would be guilty of what is called 'a contradiction'; for the
22 attempt to explain what cannot be explained is such a contradiction. *Therefore, Gārgī
23 considers this question as unanswerable.*
24

26 **tad dōṣadvayamapi parijihīrṣannāha-**
27 With a view to evading both the charges, he said:

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॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 sa hōvāca, ētadvai tadakṣaram̐ gārgi brāhmaṇā
abhivadanti, asthūlam-anaṇu-ahrasvam-adīrgham-
4 alōhitam-asnēham-acchāyam-atamaḥ-avāyuḥ-
anākāśam-asaṅgam-arasam-agandham-acakṣuṣkam-
6 aśrōtram-avāk-amanaḥ-atējaskam-aprāṇam-
amukham-amātram-anantaram-abāhyam, na
tadaśnāti kiñcana, na tadaśnāti kaścana ||3-8-8 ||

8
10 Translation→ 8. He said: O Gārgī, the knowers of Brahman say, this
Immutable (Brahman) is that. It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor
12 long, neither red color nor oiliness, neither shadow nor darkness, neither air
nor ether (**space**), unattached, neither savour (**to have taste**) nor odour (**to
14 have smell**), without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind, non-
luminous, without the vital force or mouth, not a measure, and without
interior or exterior. It does not eat anything, nor is It eaten by anybody.

16
18 Śāṅkarabhāṣya→ sa hōvāca yājñavalkyaḥ- ētad vai tad yat
prṣṭavatyasi kasminnu khalvākāśa oṭaśca prōtaścēti| kiṁ tat?
20 akṣaram-yanna kṣiyatē na kṣaratīti vākṣaram- tadakṣaram̐ hē gārgi
brāhmaṇā brahmavidōbhivadanti. brāhmaṇābhivadanakathanēna-
22 nāhamavācyam̐ vakṣyāmi na ca na pratipadyēyam-ityēvam̐
dōṣadvayam̐ pariharati. ēvamapākr̥tē praśnē punargārgyāḥ
24 prativacanam̐ draṣṭavyam̐ - brūhi kiṁ tadakṣaram, yad brāhmaṇā
abhivadanti? ityukta āha-

26 Translation→ Yājñavalkya said: O Gārgī, the knowers of Brahman say, this is
that about which you have asked, By what is the un-manifested ether (**space**) pervaded?
28 What is it? The *Immutable*, i.e. which does not decay or change. By referring to the
opinion of the knowers of Brahman, he evades both the charges by suggesting that he will
30 say nothing objectionable, nor that he has failed to comprehend the question. When he
thus answered her question, Gārgī must have rejoined, ‘Tell me, what is that Immutable
32 which the knowers of Brahman speak of?’ Thus addressed, Yājñavalkya said:

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॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 asthūlam tat sthūlādanyat, ēvaṁ tar'hyaṇu – na, anaṇu, astu
tar'hi hrasvam - ahrasvam; ēvaṁ tar'hi dīrgham, nāpi
dīrghamadīrgham; ēvamētaiścaturbhiḥ
4 parimāṇapraṭiṣēdhairdravyadharmāḥ praṭiṣidhdaḥ, na dravyaṁ
tadaḥsaramityarthaḥ. astu tar'hi lōhitō guṇaḥ, tatōpyanyadalōhitam;
6 āgnēyō guṇō lōhitaḥ; bhavatu tar'hyapāṁ snēhanaṁ - na asnēham;
astu tar'hi cchāyā, sarvathāpi anirdēśyatvāt chāyāya apyanyat
8 acchāyam; astu tar'hi tamaḥ - atamaḥ;

10 *It is not gross, i.e. is other than gross. Then It must be minute? No, nor minute.*
Then is It short? *Neither short.* Then It must be long? No, *nor long.* By this fourfold
12 negation of size all the characteristics of a substance are denied of It; in other words, this
Immutable is not a substance. Is It then red colour, which is a quality? No, It is different
14 from that too --- *neither red colour*; red colour is a quality of fire. Is It then the oiliness of
water?² No, *nor oiliness.* Is It then a shadow, being altogether indescribable? No, It is
16 different from that too --- *neither shadow.* Is It then darkness? No, *nor darkness.*

18 bhavatu vāyustar'hi - avāyuḥ; bhavēttar'hyākāśam - anākāśam;
bhavatu tar'hi saṅgātmakaṁ jatuvat – asaṅgam; rasōstu tar'hi -
20 arasam; tathā gandhōstu-agandham; astu tar'hi cakṣuḥ, acakṣuṣkam
- na hi cakṣurasya karaṇaṁ vidyatē, atōcakṣuṣkam; "paśyatyacakṣuḥ"
22 iti mantravarṇāt. tathāśrōtram; "sa śrṇōtyakaraṇaḥ" iti; bhavatu tar'hi
vāk - avāk; tathā amanaḥ;

24
Let It then be air. No, *neither air.* May It then be the ether? No, *nor ether (space).*
26 Is It then sticky like lac? No, It is *unattached.* Is It then savour? *Neither savour.* Let It
then be odour. No, *nor odour.* Has It then eyes? No, It is *without eyes*, for It has not
28 instrument of vision; as the Mantra says, 'He sees without eyes' (Sv. III. 19). Similarly It
is without *ears*, as the Śruti puts it: 'He hears without ears' (Ibid). Let It then have the
30 vocal organ. No, It is *without the vocal organ.* Similarly It is without the *mind.*

32

34

² It is an assumption of the Vaisesika philosophy that oiliness is the quality of water.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

tathā atējaskam-avidyamānaṁ tējōśya tat atējaskam; na hi
2 tējaḥ agnyādiprakāśavat asya vidyatē; aprāṇam-ādhyātmikō vāyuḥ
pratiśidhyatēprāṇamiti; mukhaṁ tar'hi dvāraṁ - tat amukham;
4 amātram-mīyatē yēna tanmātram, amātram mātrārūpaṁ tanna
bhavati, na tēna kiñcinmīyatē; astu tar'hi cchidravat- anantaram
6 nāsyāntaramasti; sambhavēt tar'hi bahistasya, abāhyam; astu tar'hi
bhakṣayitr̥ tat – na tadaśnāti kiñcana; bhavēt tar'hi bhakṣyaṁ
8 kasyacit, na tadaśnāti kaścana; sarvaviśēṣaṇarahitamityarthaḥ;
ēkamēvādvitīyaṁ hi tat - kēna kiṁ viśiṣyatē.. 8..

Likewise It is *non-luminous*, for It has no lustre like that of fire etc. It is without
12 *the vital force*; the vital force in the body is denied of It. Has It then a mouth or opening?
No, It is without a *mouth*. Not a *measure*: It does not measure anything. Is It then porous?
14 No, It is *without interior*. Then may be It has an exterior? No. It has no *exterior*. Is It then
an eater? No, *It does not eat anything*. Then is It anybody's food? No, *nor is It eaten by*
16 *anybody*. In other words, It is devoid of all attributes, for It is one only without a second;
so what is there that can be specified, and through what?

ētasya vā akṣarasya praśāsanē gārgi
20 sūryācandramasau vidhr̥tau tiṣṭhataḥ, ētasya vā
akṣarasya praśāsanē gārgi dyāvāpr̥thivyau vidhr̥tē
22 tiṣṭhataḥ, ētasya vā akṣarasya praśāsanē gārgi
nimēṣā muhūrtā ahōrātrāṇyardhamāsā māsā ṛtavaḥ
24 sanvatsarā iti vidhr̥tāstiṣṭhanti; ētasya vā akṣarasya
praśāsanē gārgi prācyōṅyā nadyaḥ syandantē
26 śvētēbhyaḥ parvatēbhyaḥ, prācyōṅyāḥ, yām yām ca
diśamanu; ētasya vā akṣarasya praśāsanē gārgi
28 dadatō manuṣyāḥ praśānsanti, yajamānaṁ dēvāḥ,
darvīm pitarōṅvāyattāḥ || 3-9-9 ||

Translation → 9. Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgī,
32 the sun and moon are held in their positions; under the mighty rule of this
Immutable, O Gārgī, heaven and earth maintain their positions; under the

॥ ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgī, moments, Muhurtas³, days and
2 nights, fortnights, months, seasons and years are held in their respective
places; under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgī, some rivers flow
4 eastward from the White Mountains, others flowing westward continue in
that direction, and still others keep to their respective courses; under the
6 mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgī, men praise those that give, the gods
depend on the sacrificer, and the manes on independent offerings
8 (Darvihoma).⁴

10 Śāṅkarabhāṣya → anēkaviśēṣaṇapraṭiṣēdhaprayāsāt astitvaṁ
tāvadaḥkṣarasyōpagamitaṁ śrutyā; tathāpi lōkabudvimapēkṣya
12 āśāṅkyatē yataḥ, atōstitvāya anumānaṁ pramāṇamupanyasyati-
ētasya vā akṣarasya. yadētadadhigatamakṣaram sarvāntaram
14 sākṣādaparōkṣādbrahma, ya ātmā aśanāyādidharmātītaḥ, ētasya vā
akṣarasya praśāsanē-yathā rājñāḥ praśāsanē rājyamasphuṭitaṁ
16 niyataṁ vartatē, ēvamētasyākṣarasya praśāsanē ---

18
20 Translation → The Śruti, by attempting to negate various attributes of the
Immutable, has indicated Its existence. Yet, anticipating the popular misconception about
It, it adduces an inferential evidence in favour of Its existence: *Under the mighty rule of*
22 *this Immutable*, the Brahman that has been known to be within all, immediate and direct -
-- the self that is devoid of all attributes such as hunger,

24
26 hē gārgi sūryācandramasau, sūryaśca candramāśca
sūryācandramasau ahōrātrayōrlōkapradīpau, tādarthiyēna praśāsitrā
tābhyām nirvartyamānalōkaprayōjanavijñānavatā nirmिताu vidhṛtau
28 ca, syātām--- sādharmaṇasarvaprāṇiprakāśōpakāraḥ
laukikapradīpavat . tasmādasti tad, yēna vidhṛtau īśvarau svatantrau
30 santau nirmिताu tiṣṭhataḥ
niyatadēśakālanimittōdayāstamayavṛd'dhikṣayābhyām ca vartētē;
32 tadasti ēvamētayōḥ praśāsitr akṣaram, pradīpakartrvidhārayitṛvat.

34

³ Equivalent to about 48 minutes

⁴ A class of offerings that have neither any subsidiary parts nor are themselves subsidiary to any sacrifice.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 *O Gārgī, the sun and moon, which are like two lamps giving light to all beings by*
3 *day and night respectively, are held in their positions, as a kingdom remains unbroken*
4 *and orderly under the mighty rule of a king. They must have been created for the purpose*
5 *of giving light by a Universal Ruler who knows of what use they will be to all, for they*
6 *serve the common good of all beings by giving light, as we see in the case of an ordinary*
7 *lamp⁵. Therefore That exists which has made the sun and moon and compels them,*
8 *though they are powerful and independent, to rise and set, increase and decrease,*
9 *according to fixed place, time and causes⁶. Thus there exists their mighty Ruler, the*
10 *Immutable, as the lamp has its maker and regulator.*

11
12 *ētasya vā akṣarasya praśāsanē gārgi dyāvāpr̥thivyau – dyauśca*
13 *pr̥thavī ca sāvayavatvāt sphuṭanasvabhāvē api satyau gurutvāt*
14 *patanasvabhāvē sanyuktatvād viyōgasvabhāvē*
15 *cētanāvadabhimānidēvatādhiṣṭhitatvāt svatantrē api --*
16 *ētasyākṣarasya praśāsanē vartētē vidhr̥tē tiṣṭhataḥ.ētaḍ'dhi akṣaram̐*
17 *sarvavyavasthāsētuh sarvamar̥yādāvidharaṇam, atō nāsyākṣarasya*
18 *praśāsanam̐ dyāvāpr̥thivyāvaticrāmataḥ; tasmāt*
19 *sid'dhamasyāstitvamakṣarasya; avyabhicāri hi talliṅgam, yad*
20 *dyāvāpr̥thivyau niyatē vartētē; cētanāvantam̐*
21 *praśāsītāramasansārīṇamantarēṇa naitadyuktam. 'yēna dyaaurugrā*
22 *pr̥thivī ca dr̥dhā' iti mantravarṇāt.*

23
24
25 *Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgī, heaven and earth maintain*
26 *their positions, although they are by nature subject to disruption because of having parts,*
27 *inclined to fall owing to their weight, liable to separate, being a compound, and are*
28 *independent, each being presided over by a conscious deity identifying itself with it. It is*
29 *this Immutable which is like a boundary wall that preserves the distinctions among things*
30 *--- keeps all things within their limits; hence the sun and moon do not transgress the*
31 *mighty rule of this Immutable. Therefore Its existence is proved. The unfailing sign of*
32 *this is the fact that heaven and earth obey a fixed order; this would be impossible were*
33 *there not a conscious, transcendent Ruler. Witness the Mantra, 'Who has made heaven*
34 *powerful and the earth firm' (R. X. cxxi. 5).*

⁵ As from a lamp we infer the existence of its maker, so from the sun and moon we infer the existence of an omniscient God, 'the Immutable'.

⁶ Adr̥ṣṭa or the resultant of the past work of beings.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 ētasya vā akṣarasya praśāsanē gārgi, nimēṣāḥ muhūrtāḥ ityētē
- yathā lōkē prabhuṇā niyatō gaṇakaḥ sarvamāyaṁ vyayaṁ
4 cāpramattō gaṇayati, tathā prabhusthāniya ēṣāṁ kālāvayavānāṁ
niyantā. tathā prācyāḥ prāgañcanāḥ pūrvadiggamanā nadyaḥ
6 syandantē sravanti, śvētēbhyaḥ himavadādibhyaḥ parvatēbhyaḥ
giribhyaḥ gaṅgādyā nadyaḥ - tāśca yathā pravartitā ēva niyatāḥ
8 pravartantē, anyathāpi pravartitumutsahantyaḥ, tadētallīṅgaṁ
praśāstuḥ. pracīcyōhyāḥ pracīcīm diśamañcanti sindhvādyā nadyaḥ,
10 anyāśca yām yām diśamanupravṛttāḥ tām tām na vyabhicaranti;
tacca liṅgam.

12

14 *Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gārgī, moments, Muhurtas, etc. --- all*
16 *these divisions of time, which count all things past, present and future that are subject to*
18 *birth --- are held in their respective places. As in life an accountant appointed by his*
20 *master carefully calculates all items of incomes and expenditure, so are these divisions of*
22 *time controlled by their master, the Immutable. Similarly some rivers, such as the Ganga,*
flow eastward from the White Mountains, the Himalayas, for instance, and they,
notwithstanding their power to do otherwise⁷, keep to their original courses; this too
indicates a Ruler. Others flowing westward, such as the Indus, continue in that direction,
and still others keep to their respective courses, do not deviate from the courses they
have taken; this is another indication.

24

26 kiñca dadataḥ hiraṇyādīn prayacchataḥ ātmapīḍāṁ kurvatōpi
28 pramāṇajñā api manuṣyāḥ praśansanti; tatra yacca dīyatē, yē ca
dadati, yē ca pratigr̥ṇanti, tēṣāmihaiva samāgamō vilayaśca anvakṣō
30 dr̥śyatē; adr̥ṣtastu paraḥ samāgamaḥ, tathāpi manuṣyā dadatām
dānaphalēna sanyōgaṁ paśyantaḥ pramāṇajñatayā praśansanti;
32 tacca, karmaphalēna sanyōjayitari kartuḥ karmaphalavibhāgajñē
praśāstari asati, na syāt; dānakriyāyāḥ pratyakṣavināśitvāt;
tasmādasti dānakartṛṇām phalēna sanyōjayitā.

34

36

⁷ Since the deities identifying themselves with these are sentient beings.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaṇiṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

Moreover, even learned *men praise those that give* gold etc., even at a personal sacrifice. Now the conjunction and disjunction of gifts, their donors and their recipients are seen to take place before our eyes in this very life. But the subsequent recombination (of the donor and the fruit of his gift) is a matter we do not directly see. Still people praise the charitable, for they observe on other evidence that those that give are rewarded. This would be impossible were there no Ruler who, knowing the various results of actions, brought about this union of the giver and the reward, for the act of giving obviously perishes then and there. Therefore there must be someone who connects the givers with the results of their charity.

apūrvamiti cēt, na, tatsadbhāvē pramāṇānupapattēḥ.
praśāsturapīti cēt. na, āgamatātparyasya sid'dhatvāt; avōcāma hi
āgamasya vastuparatvam. kiñcānyat, apūrvakalpanāyām ca
arthāpattēḥ kṣayaḥ, anyathavivōpapattēḥ. sēvāphalasya sēvyāt
prāptidarśanāt. sēvāyāśca kriyātvāt, tatsāmānyācca
yāgadānahōmādīnām sēvyād īśvarādēḥ phalaprāptirupapadyatē.
dr̥ṣṭakriyādharmaśāmarthyamaparityajyaiva
phalaprāptikalpanōpapattau dr̥ṣṭakriyādharmaśāmarthyaparityāgō na
nyāyyaḥ. kalpanādhikyācca -- īśvaraḥ kalpyaḥ, apūrvam vā? tatra
kriyāyāśca svabhāvaḥ sēvyāt phalaprāptiḥ dr̥ṣṭā, na tvapūrvāt; na
cāpūrvam dr̥ṣṭam; tatrāpūrvamadr̥ṣṭam kalpayitavyam, tasya ca
phaladātr̥tvē śāmarthyam, śāmarthyē ca sati dānam cābhyadhikamiti.
iha tu īśvarasya sēvyasya sadbhāvamātram kalpyam, na tu
phaladānaśāmarthyam dātr̥tvam ca, sēvyāt phalaprāptidarśanāt.
anumānam ca darśitam - 'dyāvāpṛthivyau vidhr̥tē tiṣṭhataḥ' ityādi.

Objection: Cannot the extraordinary result of an action (Apuva) serve this purpose?

Reply: No, for there is nothing to prove its existence.

Objection: Does not the same objection apply to the Ruler too?

Reply: No, for it is an established fact that the Śrutis seek to posit His existence. We have already said that the Śrutis aim at delineating the Reality. Besides, the implication on which the theory of the extraordinary result depends is out of place, for the fruition can be otherwise accounted for. We observe that the reward of service is obtained from the person served; and as service is an act, and sacrifices, gifts, offering oblations in the fire, etc., are just as much acts, it is fitting that the reward for their performance should come from those in whose honour they are performed, viz God and so forth. Since we can explain the obtaining of rewards without sacrificing the directly observed inherent

॥ ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

power of acts, it is improper to sacrifice that power. Moreover, it involves a superfluity of assumptions. We must assume either God or the extraordinary result. Now we observe that it is the very nature of an act of service that it is rewarded by the person served, not by the extraordinary result; and no one has ever actually experienced this result. So (in your view) we have to assume that the extraordinary result, which nobody has ever observed, exists; that it has the power to confer rewards; and that having this power, it does in addition confer them. On our side, however, we have to assume only the existence of the person served, viz God, but neither His power to confer rewards nor His exercise of it, for we actually observe that the person served rewards the service. The grounds for inferring His existence have already been shown in the text: Heaven and earth maintain their positions, etc. (this text).

tathā ca yajamānaṁ dēvāḥ īśvarāḥ santō jīvanārthēhugatāḥ,
carupurōḍāśādyupajīvanaprayōjanēna, anyathāpi jīvitumutsahantaḥ
kr̥paṇām dīnām vṛttimāśritya sthitāḥ -- tacca praśāstuḥ praśāsanāt
syāt. tathā pitarōḥi tadarthaṁ, darvīm darvīhōmam anvāyattā
anugatā ityārthaḥ, samānaṁ sarvamanyat..9..

Likewise *the gods*, although they are so powerful, *depend on the sacrificer* for their livelihood --- for such means of subsistence as the porridge and cakes. That in spite of their ability to live otherwise they have taken to this humiliating course of life, is possible only because of the mighty rule of the Lord. Similarly the *manes* depend for their subsistence *on independent offerings*. The rest is to be explained as before.

yō vā ētadakṣaram gārgyaviditvāsmimlōkē juhōti
yajatē tapastapyatē bahūni varṣasahasrāṇi,
antavadēvāsyā tadbhavati; yō vā ētadakṣaram
gārgyaviditvāsmāllōkātpraiti sa kr̥paṇōtha ya
ētadakṣaram gārgi viditvāsmāllōkātpraiti sa
brāhmaṇaḥ || 3-8-10 ||

Translation → 10. He, O Gārgī, who in this world, without knowing this Immutable, offers oblations in the fire, performs sacrifices and undergoes austerities even for many thousand years, finds all such acts but perishable; he, O Gārgī, who departs from this world without knowing this Immutable, is miserable. But he, O Gārgī, who departs from this world after knowing this Immutable, is a knower of Brahman.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 Śāṅkarabhāṣya→ itaścāsti tadakṣaram, yasmāt tadajñānē
3 niyatā sansārōpapattiḥ; bhavitavyam tu tēna, yadvijñānāt
4 tadvicchēdaḥ, nyāyōpapattēḥ. nanu kriyāta ēva tadvicchittiḥ syāditi
5 cēt? na - yō vā ētadakṣaram hē gārgi aviditvā avijñāya asmin lōkē
6 juhōti yajatē tapastapyatē yadyapi bahūni varṣasahasrāṇi, antavad
7 ēvāsyā tat phalam bhavati, tatphalōpabhōgāntē kṣiyanta ēvāsyā
8 karmāṇi. api ca yadvijñānāt kārpaṇyātyayaḥ sansāravicchēdaḥ,
9 yadvijñānābhāvācca karmakṛt kṛpaṇaḥ kṛtaphalasyaivōpabhōktā
10 jananamaraṇaprabandhārūḍhaḥ sansarati -- tadasti akṣaram
11 praśāsitr; tadētaducyatē - yō vā ētadakṣaram gārgyaviditvā
12 asmāllōkāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ, paṇakṛita iva dāsādiḥ. atha ya
13 ētadakṣaram gārgi viditvā asmāllōkāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ..10..

14

Translation→ Here is another reason for the existence of the Immutable, because
15 until one knows It, one is bound to suffer transmigration; and That must exist the
16 knowledge of which puts a stop to it, for this is but logical.

17 Objection: May not rites alone do this?

18 Reply: No, *he, O Gārgī, who in this world, without knowing this Immutable offers*
19 *oblations in the fire, performs sacrifices and undergoes austerities even for many*
20 *thousand years, finds all such acts but perishable. After he has enjoyed their fruits, those*
21 *rites are inevitably exhausted. Besides, that mighty Ruler, the Immutable, exists by*
22 *knowing which misery is at an end --- transmigration is stopped, and not knowing which*
23 *the ritualist is miserable --- enjoys only the results of his rites and moves in an endless*
24 *series of births and deaths. So the text says: He, O Gārgī, who departs from this world*
25 *without knowing this Immutable, is miserable, like a slave etc. bought for a price. But he,*
26 *O Gārgī, who departs from this world after knowing this Immutable, is a knower of*
27 *Brahman.*

30 Śāṅkarabhāṣya→ agnērdahanaprakāśakatvavat
31 svābhāvīkamasya praśāstr̥tvam acētanasyaivētyata āha -

32

Translation→ It may be contended that like the heat and light of fire, the rulership
33 of the Immutable is natural to the insentient Pradhāna (of the Sāṅkhyas, and not to
34 Brahman). The reply is being given:

35

36

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyah ॥

2 tadvā ētadakṣaram̐ gārgyadr̥ṣṭam̐ draṣṭra, aśrutam̐
3 śrōtr̥, amataṁ mantr̥, avijñātam̐ vijñātr̥; nānyadatōṣṭi
4 draṣṭr̥, nānyadatōṣṭi śrōtr̥, nānyadatōṣṭi mantr̥,
5 nānyadatōṣṭi vijñātr̥; ētasminnu khalvakṣarē
6 gārgyākāśa oṭaśca prōtaścēti|| 3-8-11 ||

7 Translation→ 11. This Immutable, O Gārgī, is never seen but is the
8 Witness; It is never heard, but is the Hearer; It is never thought, but is the
9 Thinker; It is never known, but is the Knower. There is no other witness but
10 This, no other hearer but This, no other thinker but This, no other knower
11 but This. By this Immutable, O Gārgī, is the (un-manifested) ether (space)
12 pervaded.

13 Śāṅkarabhāṣya→ tadvā ētadakṣaram̐ gārgi adr̥ṣṭam, na
14 kēnacid dr̥ṣṭam, aviṣayatvāt, svayam̐ tu draṣṭr̥ dr̥ṣṭisvarūpatvāt. tathā
15 aśrutam̐ śrōtr̥aviṣayatvāt, svayam̐ śrōtr̥ śrutisvarūpatvāt. tathā
16 amataṁ manasōviṣayatvāt, svayam̐ mantr̥ matisvarūpatvāt. tathā
17 avijñātam̐ bud'dhēraviṣayatvāt, svayam̐ vijñātr̥ vijñānasvarūpatvāt.
18 kiṁ ca nānyat ataḥ asmādakṣarāt asti - nāsti kiñcid draṣṭr̥
19 darśanakriyākartr̥; ētadēvākṣaram̐ darśanakriyākartr̥ sarvatra. tathā
20 nānyadatōṣṭi śrōtr̥; tadēvākṣaram̐ śrōtr̥ sarvatra. nānyadatōṣṭi mantr̥;
21 tadēvākṣaram̐ mantr̥ sarvatra sarvamanōdvārēṇa. nānyadatōṣṭi
22 vijñātr̥ vijñānakriyākartr̥, tadēvākṣaram̐ sarvabud'dhidvārēṇa
23 vijñānakriyākartr̥, nācētanam̐ pradhānam̐ anyadvā. ētasminnu
24 khalvakṣarē gārgyākāśa oṭaśca prōtaścēti. yadēva
25 sākṣādaparōkṣādbrahma, ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ
26 aśanāyādisansāradharmātītaḥ, yasminnākāśa oṭaśca prōtaśca, ēṣā
27 parā kāṣṭhā, ēṣā parā gatiḥ, ētat param̐ brahma, ētat
28 pr̥thivyādērākāśāntasya satyasya satyam..11..

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

2 Translation→ *This Immutable, O Gārgī, is never seen* by anybody, not being a
3 sense-object, but is *Itself the Witness*, being vision itself. Likewise *It is never heard*, not
4 being an object of hearing, *but is Itself the Hearer*, being hearing itself. So also *It is never*
5 *thought*, not being an object of the mind, *but is Itself the Thinker*, being thinking itself.
6 Similarly *It is never known*, not being an object of the intellect, *but is Itself the Knower*,
7 being intelligence itself. Further, *there is no other witness but This*, the Immutable; this
8 Immutable Itself is everywhere the Witness, the subject of vision. Similarly there is *no*
9 *other hearer but This*; this Immutable Itself is everywhere the Hearer. There is *no other*
10 *thinker but This*; this Immutable Itself is everywhere the Thinker, thinking through all
11 minds. There is *no other knower but This*; this Immutable Itself --- neither the insentient
12 Pradhāna nor anything else --- is the Knower, knowing through all intellects. By *this*
13 *Immutable, O Gārgī, is the (unmanifested) ether (space) pervaded*. The Brahman which is
14 immediate and direct, which is the self within all and is beyond the relative attributes of
15 hunger etc., and by which the (unmanifested) ether (space) is pervaded, is the extreme
16 limit, the ultimate goal, the Supreme Brahman, the Truth of truth (the elements)
beginning with earth and ending with the ether (space).

18 sā hōvāca, brāhmaṇā bhagavantastadēva bahu
19 manyēdhvam yadasmānamaskārēṇa mucyēdhvam;
20 na vai jātu yuṣmākamimaṁ kaścīdbrahmōdyaṁ jētēti;
21 tatō ha vācaknavyupararāma || 3-8-12 ||
22 || iti aṣṭamaṁ brāhmaṇam||

24 Translation→ 12. She said, Revered Brāhmaṇas, you should consider
25 yourselves fortunate if you can get off from him through salutations. Never
26 shall any of you beat him in describing Brahman. Then the daughter of
27 Vacaknu kept silent.

28 Śāṅkarabhāṣya→ sā hōvāca - hē brāhmaṇā bhagavantaḥ
29 śr̥ṅṅuta madīyaṁ vacaḥ; tadēva bahu manyēdhvam; kiṁ tat?
30 yadasmād yājñavalkyāt namaskārēṇa mucyēdhvam mucyadhvam
31 asmai namaskāraṁ kṛtvā, tadēva bahu manyadhvam ityarthaḥ;
32 jayastvasya manasāpi na āśansanīyaḥ, kimuta kāryataḥ; kasmāt? na
33 vai yuṣmākaṁ madhyē jātu kadācidapi imaṁ yājñavalkyaṁ
34 brahmōdyaṁ prati jētā. praśnau cēnmahyaṁ vakṣyati, na vai jētā
35 bhavitā - iti pūrvamēva mayā pratijñātam; adyāpi mamāyamēva
36 niścayaḥ - brahmōdyaṁ prati ētattulyō na kaścīd vidyata iti. tatō ha
37 vācaknavyupararāma..

॥ ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

Translation→ She said: ‘Revered Brāhmaṇas, listen to my words. You should
2 consider yourselves fortunate if you can get off from him, Yājñavalkya, through
salutations, by saluting him. You must never even hope to defeat him, much less do it.
4 Why? Because never shall any of you beat him, Yājñavalkya, in describing Brahman. I
already said that if he answered my two questions, none could beat him. I still have the
6 conviction that in describing Brahman he has no match.’ Then the daughter of Vacaknu
kept silent.

8

10 atra antaryāmibrāhmaṇē ētad uktam - yaṁ pṛthivī na vēda,
yaṁ sarvāṇi bhūtāni na viduriti ca. yamantaryāmiṇaṁ na viduḥ, yē ca
12 na viduḥ, yacca tadakṣaraṁ darśanādikriyākartṛtvēna sarvēṣāṁ
cētanādhāturityuktam – kastu ēṣāṁ viśēṣaḥ, kiṁ vā sāmānyamiti.
14 tatra kēcidācakṣatē - parasya mahāsamudrasthānīyasya brahmaṇaḥ
akṣarasya apracalitasvarūpasya iṣatpracalitāvasthā antaryāmī;
16 atyantapracalitāvasthā kṣētrajñāḥ yaḥ taṁ na vēda antaryāmiṇaṁ;
tathā anyāḥ pañcāvasthāḥ parikalpayanti; tathā aṣṭāvasthā brahmaṇō
18 bhavantīti vadanti. anyē akṣarasya śaktaya ētā iti vadanti,
anantaśaktimadakṣaramiti ca. anyē tu akṣarasya vikārā iti vadanti.
20

22 In the section dealing with the Internal Ruler it has been said, ‘Whom the earth
does not know,’ and ‘Whom no being knows.’ Now what is the similarity as well as
24 difference among the Internal Ruler whom they do not know, those who do not know
Him, and the conscious Principle which, being the subject of the activities of vision etc.
26 of all things, is spoken of as the Immutable?

Regarding this⁸ some say: The Internal Ruler is the slightly agitated state of the
28 ocean of Supreme Brahman, the Immutable, which never changes its nature. The
individual self, which does not know that Internal Ruler, is the extremely agitated state of
30 that ocean. They also imagine five⁹ other states of Brahman; again they maintain that
Brahman has eight¹⁰ states. Others say that these are but the powers of the Immutable,
32 which according to them, has unlimited powers. Still others maintain that these are
modifications of the Immutable.

34

⁸ Some sectional views within the Vedantic school itself are being presented.

⁹ Viz the individual, species, Viraj, Sutra and destiny

¹⁰ Viz the above five together with the Undifferentiated, the Witness and the individual self.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

avasthāśaktī tāvannōpapadyētē, akṣarasya
2 aśanāyādisansāradharmātītatvaśrutēḥ. na hi aśanāyādyatītatvam
aśanāyādidharmavadavasthāvattvaṃ c ekasya yugapadupapadyatē;
4 tathā śaktimattvaṃ ca. vikāravayavatvē ca dōṣāḥ pradarśitāścaturthē.
tasmāt ētā asatyāḥ sarvāḥ kalpanāḥ.

6 Now the states and powers are inadmissible, for the Śrutis declare the Immutable
to be beyond the relative attributes of hunger etc. Certainly one and the same thing cannot
8 simultaneously be both beyond hunger etc. and subject to those conditions. The same
argument applies to the Immutable having powers, while the flaws in attributing
10 modifications and parts to the Immutable have already been pointed out in the second
chapter. Hence all these views are wrong.

12
kastar'hi bhēda eṣām? upādhikṛta iti brūmaḥ; na svata eṣām
14 bhēdaḥ abhēdō vā, saindhavaghanavat
prajñānaghanaikarasasvābhāvyāt,
16 'apūrvamanaparamanantaramabāhyam' 'ayamātmā brahma' iti ca
śrutēḥ. 'sabāhyābhyan tarō hyajaḥ' iti ca ātharvaṇē. tasmāt
18 nirūpādhikasya ātmanō nirūpākhyātvāt nirviśēṣatvāt ēkatvācca 'nēti
nēti' iti vyapadēśō bhavati.
20 avidyākāmakarmaviśiṣṭakāryakaraṇōpādhīḥ ātmā sansārī jīva ucyatē.
nityaniratiśayajñānaśaktyupādhīḥ ātmā antaryāmī īśvara ucyatē.

22
What then is the difference among them? It is all due to the limiting adjuncts, we
24 reply: intrinsically there is neither difference nor identity among them, for they are by
nature Pure Intelligence, homogeneous like a lump of salt. Witness the Śruti too:
26 'Without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior'. 'This self is Brahman' (II. v.
19); also in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad: 'It includes the interior and exterior, and is unborn'
28 (II.i.2). Therefore the unconditioned Self, being beyond speech and mind,
undifferentiated and one, is designated as 'Not this, not this'; when It has the limiting
30 adjuncts of the body and organs, which are characterized by ignorance, desire and work,
It is called the transmigrating individual self; and when the Self has the limiting adjunct
32 of the power of eternal and unlimited knowledge (i.e. Māyā), It is called the Internal
Ruler and Īśvara.

34

36

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaṇiṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

sa ēva nirūpādhiḥ kēvalaḥ śudhdaḥ svēna svabhāvēna akṣaram
2 para ucyatē, tathā
hiraṇyagarbhāvyākṛtadēvatājātipiṇḍamanuṣyatiryakprētādikāryakaraṇ
4 ōpādhibhirvi-śiṣṭaḥ tadākhyaḥ tadrūpō bhavati. tathā 'tadējati
tannaijati' iti vyākhyātam. tathā 'ēṣa ta ātmā' 'ēṣa
6 sarvabhūtāntarātmā' 'ēṣa sarvēṣu bhūtēṣu gūḍhaḥ' 'tattvamasī'
'ahamēvēdaṁ sarvam' 'ātmaivēdaṁ sarvam' 'nānyōtōṣṭi draṣṭā'
8 ityādiśrutayō na virudhyantē. kalpanāntarēṣu ētāḥ śrutayō na
gacchanti. tasmāt upādhibhēdēnaiva ēṣāṁ bhēdaḥ, nānyathā.
10 'ēkamēvādviṭiyam' ityavadhāraṇāt sarvōpaṇiṣatsu..12..
iti tr̥tīyādhyāsyā aṣṭamaṁ brāhmaṇam..8..

12
The same Self, as by nature transcendent, absolute and pure, is called the
14 Immutable and Supreme Self. Similarly, having the limiting adjuncts of the bodies and
organs of Hiraṇyagarbha, the Undifferentiated, the gods, the species, the individual, men,
16 animals, spirits, etc., the Self assumes those particular names and forms. Thus have we
explained this through the Śruti passage: 'It moves, and does not move' (Is. 5). In this
18 light alone such texts as, 'This is your self (that is within all)' (III. iv. 1-2; III. v. 1), 'He
is the inner Self of all beings' (Mu. II. i. 4), 'This (self) being hidden in all beings,' etc.
20 (Ka. III. 12), 'Thou art That' (Ch. VI. viii. 7), 'I Myself am all this' (Ch. VII. xxv. 1),
'All this is but the Self' (Ibid. 2), and 'There is no other witness but Him' (III. vii. 23), do
22 not prove contradictory; but in any other view they cannot be harmonized. Therefore the
above entities differ only because of their limiting adjuncts, but not otherwise, for all the
24 Upaniṣads conclude: 'One only without a second' (Ch. VI. ii. 1).

26 List of abbreviations:

Ch. Chāndogya Upaniṣad

28 Ka. Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Is. Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad

Mu. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

30 English translation from the book 'The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad' by Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashrama,
Calcutta.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaniṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥



- 2 Scene from the first Congress of Indian philosophers convened by Janaka
 Janaka and Yājñavalkya, showing also Maitreyi, Gārgī, Saulbha and Ashtavakra.
- 4 Artist--Shri S. Dhanapal, Madras., Artist Supervisor--Shri K.C.S. Paniker, Madras.

॥ॐ brhadāraṇyakōpaṇiṣadbhāṣyē tr̥tīyōdhyāyaḥ ॥

Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation

- 2 Since Sanskrit is a highly phonetic language, accuracy in the articulation of the letters is important. This is the international transliteration guide to the proper
4 pronunciation of Sanskrit letters in the *devanāgarī* script.

6	अ	a	but	ॠ	ṭh	anthill*3
	आ	ā	calm	30	इ	ḍart*3
8	इ	i	it		ॡ	godhead*3
	ई	ī	beet	32	ण	under*3
10	उ	u	put		त्	path*4
	ऊ	ū	pool	34	थ	thunder*4
12	ऋ	ṛ	rhythm		द्	that*4
	ॠ	ṝ	marine	36	ध	breathe*4
14	ए	e	play		न्	numb 4
	ऐ	ai	high	38	प्	spin 5
16	ओ	o	go		फ	loophole*5
	औ	au	loud	40	ब्	bin 5
18	क्	k	skate 1		भ्	abhor* 5
	ख्	kh	blockhead*1	42	म्	much 5
20	ग्	g	gate 1		य्	young
	घ्	gh	loghut* 1	44	र्	drama
22	ङ्	ṅ	sing 1		ल्	luck
	च्	c	chunk*2	46	व्	vile
24	छ्	ch	catch him*2		श्	shove
	ज्	j	john 2	48	ष्	bushel
26	झ्	jh	hedg <h>o</h> g*2		स्	so
	ञ्	ñ	bun <h>ch</h> 2	50	ह्	hum
28	ट्	ṭ	start*3			
52		ṁ	<i>anusvāra</i> (nasalization of preceding vowel)k			
	:	ḥ	<i>visarga</i> (aspiration of preceding vowel)			
54	ऽ		<i>avagraha</i> (marking the elision of A at the beginning of a word)			
	*	No	exact equivalent for these letters			
56			1 – guttural; 2 – palatal; 3 – lingual; 4 – dental; 5 – labial			