



THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

DISCOURSE-16 (1ST MARCH 1977)

CHAPTER III

First Brahmana (contd)

So, these are four questions which Asvala puts to Yajnavalkya and the answers which Yajnavalkya gives to the four questions. But there are further questions. The man does not leave Yajnavalkya so easily. So he says, "I will ask you some more questions," and we shall now see what they are.

Four more questions are asked. In all he puts eight questions. Four have been answered; four more remain.

7. Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, katibhir ayam adya rgbhir hotasmin yajne karisyatiti: tisrbhir iti katamas tas tisra iti. puro'nuvakya ca yajya ca sasyaiva trtiya: kim tabhir jayatit : yat kim cedam pranabhrd iti.

"In this sacrifice, how many Rg verses are used and what types of verses are used? Can you tell me?" *Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, katibhir ayam adya rgbhir hotasmin yajne karisyanti*: "The Hotr, the Rg Vedic priest, performs the sacrifice by the recitation of a set of Rg Vedic Mantras." "What are those Mantras? Can you tell?" *Tisrbhir iti*: "Three types are there," says Yajnavalkya. "These are used by the Hotr, the Rg Vedic priest." *Katamas tas tisra iti*: "Which are those three?" again Asvala asks. *Puro'nuvakya ca yajya ca sasyaiva trtiya*: "The introductory verses which precede the principal chant, the Mantras that are connected directly with the offering of the oblations called *Yajya*, and the Mantras which are having their concern with the extollation of the consequences or results of the sacrifice, the glorification of the deity of the sacrifice called *Sasya* - these are the verses

that he chants.” *Kim tabhir jayatiti*: “What is the purpose of this chant? What does he gain by it.” “Do you know what he will gain by the recitation of these Mantras which are of a very comprehensive nature?” *Yat kim cedam pranabhrd iti*: “He can gain control over everything,” says Yajnavalkya. “These Mantras are forces which he releases by a method of recitation, and these forces are directed to all those objects which can be regarded as living or non-living. So it is an all-powerful chant which can exercise a control over all beings. So, what does he gain? Everything - *yat kim cedam pranabhrd iti*.”

8. Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, katy ayam adyadhvaryur asmin yajna ahutir hosyatiti: tisra iti: katamas tas tisra iti: ya huta ujjvalanti, ya huta atinedante, ya huta adhiserate: kim tabhir jayatiti : ya huta ujjvalanti deva-lokam eva tabhir jayati, dipyata iva hi deva-lokah; ya huta atinedante, pitr-lokam eva tabhir jayati, ativa hi pitr-lokah; ya huta adhiserate, manusya-lokam eva tabhir jayati, adha iva hi manusya-lokah.

“Well Yajnavalkya! I put you another question. What are those Mantras which the Adhvaryu, the Yajurvedic priest uses in this sacrifice, and what is the connection between these Yajurvedic Mantras that he chants and the results that he expects from the performance of the sacrifice?” *Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, katy ayam adyadhvaryur asmin yajna ahutir hosyatiti*: “How many oblations are offered in this sacrifice? Tell me.” *Tisra iti*: “Three are offered.” *Katamas tas tisra iti*: “What are those three?” *Ya hut ujjvalanti*: “There are certain Yajurvedic Mantras which, when they are recited at the time of the offering of the oblations, cause the flames to flare up vertically in the direction of the sky or the heaven. That is one set of Mantras which he chants. The moment you pour Ahuti by recitation of those Mantras the fire will flare up vertically. *Ya huta atinedahte*: There are other Mantras in the Yajur-Veda which, when they are chanted at the time of the oblations, will cause the flames to make a roaring noise and they rush upwards as if a lion is opening his mouth. They are the second type of Mantras. *Ya huta adhiserate*: There is a third set of Yajurvedic Mantras, which when they are chanted at the time of the offering of the oblations, will make the flames go down and bury themselves in the *Yajna Kunda*” *Kim tabhir jayati*: “What is the purpose of these chants? What does he gain out of these recitations and stirring of the flames in this manner?” *Ya hut ujjvalanti deva-lokam eva tabhir jayati*: “When he recites Mantras which are capable of flaring up the flames vertically, they will produce a force which will take him to the celestial region. This is what he gains. *Dipyata iva hi devalokah*: The celestial region shines like the flames that go upto the sky, *devalokah*. *Ya huta atinendante, pitr-lokam eva*: When he chants Mantras which will make the flames roar with gusto, they will produce a strength and a force and potential by which he will gain the *Pitr Loka*, or the world of the ancestors. *Ya huta adhiserate manusya-lokam eva*: When he chants Mantras which will make the flames go down and bury themselves in the pit, they will produce another kind of vibration which will make him a good human being in the next birth - *adha iva hi manusya-lokah*. So, there are three types of

Mantras which will produce three kinds of effects. This is the result that follows from these recitations of the Yajurveda.”

9. Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, katibhir ayam adya brahma yajnam daksinato devatabhir gopayatiti: ekayeti: katama saiketi: mana eveti, anantam vai manah ananta visve-devah, anantam eva sa tena lokam jayati.

Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca: “Yajnavalkya, I put you another question,” he said. *Katibhir ayam adya brahma yajnam daksinato devatabhir gopayatiti:* “Which is the deity, by the power of which Brahma, the Atharva Vedic priest protects this sacrifice? Tell me which deity it is? How many gods are there whom he resorts to for the protection of this Yajna that is being performed here?” Yajnavalkya says, *ekayeti.* Only one God is there. “He resorts to one God.” *Katama saiketi:* “Which is that one god?” “The mind of the Brahma, the priest, itself is the god. He conducts his mind in such a manner in respect of the purpose of the sacrifice that it becomes a force by itself. There is no other god there except his own mind. *Mana eveti, anantam vai manah ananta visve-devah:* The mind can assume infinite forms through the functions that it performs. So the mind is identical, with what is known as a group of celestials called the *Visve-devas*. The *Visve-devas* are the protectors of the sacrifice. The mind itself stands for *Visve-devas* here. All the gods are comprehended in the mind, and, as a matter of fact, every god is nothing but one function of the mind. So, his mind is all the gods.” “What does he gain by resorting to this psychic god which he has generated in his mind?” *Anantam eva sa tena lokam jayati:* “Infinite is the result that follows. There is nothing which the mind cannot gain if it properly conducts itself in contemplation. So Brahma, the Atharva Vedic priest raises himself to the status of an all-comprehensive force, the *Yisve-devas*, by the very concentration that he practises.”

10. yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, katy ayam adyodgatasmin yajne stotriyah stostyatiti: tisra iti katamas tas tisra iti: puro’nuvakya ca yajya ca sasyaiva trtiya: katamas to ya adhyatmam iti: prana eva puro’nuvakya, apano yajya, vyanah sasya: kim tabhir jayatiti: prthivilokam eva puro’nuvakya jayati, antariksalokam yajyaya, dyu-lokam sasyaya. tato ha hotasvala upararama.

“Yajnavalkya, I ask you another question. Answer that - *Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca. Katy ayam adyodgatasmin yajne stotriyah stostyatiti:* What are the set of Mantras which the Udgatr., the Sama Vedic priest chants here?” *Tisra iti:* “There are three chants.” *Katamas yas tisra iti:* “What are those?” *Puro’nuvakya ca yajya ca sasyaiva trtiya:* “The same are the Mantras as they are mentioned in connection with the Rg Veda - the introductory, the oblationary and the laudatory.” *Katamas ta ya adhyatmam iti:* “Which (Mantras) are the inner ones among these?” “The *Prana* within is identifiable in this context with the introductory verses, the *Apana* is identifiable with the oblationary chants, and *Vyana* is identifiable with the laudatory verses. *Pram eva puro’nuvakya, apano yajya, vyanah sasya:* The *Puronuvakya* is *Prana*, the *Yajya*, or the middle one,

is the *Apana*, whereas the last one, the *Sasya* or laudatory Mantras, the praise that he offers to the gods through the third type of recitation, is identifiable with *Vyana*. So, *Prana*, *Apana*, *Vyana* are the real sources of these Sama Vedic chants. He must meditate in a manner by which the vital breath within becomes the deity of the Samaveda. *“Kim tabhir jayatiti: “What is the purpose of this meditation and what does he gain by these three chants through the Sama Veda?” Prthtvi-lokam eva puro’ nuvakyaya jayati: “The whole earth can be governed by him, by the force generated by the introductory chant. Antariksa-lokam yajyaya: The atmospheric world can be controlled by him by the recitation of the middle one, the oblatinal chant. Dyu-lokam sasyaya: The heavenly world can be gained and controlled by him by the recitation of the third chant, namely, the laudatory one.”* Asvala felt that every question was answered and that he could not put any further questions to this man. He kept quiet and occupied his seat - *tato ha hotasvala upararama*. The chief priest Asvala who put all these questions, the principal priest of the sacrifice performed by Janaka in his court, was defeated in the argument, because to every question which was so difficult to answer, Yajnavalkya gave an immediate answer on the very spot without any hesitation whatsoever. Asvala kept quiet. But though Asvala, the priest, kept quiet, there were some others who wanted to put further questions to Yajnavalkya.

Second Brahmana

THE MAN IN BONDAGE AND HIS FUTURE AT DEATH

1. atha hainam jaratkarava artabhagah papraccha: Yajnavalkya iti hovaca, kati grahah katy atigraha iti. astau grahah astav atigraha iti. ye te’stau grahah astav atigraha, katame to iti.

Another sage now got up. “O Yajnavalkya, I have also got questions because you have carried away my cows.” *Atha hainam jaratkarava artabhagah papraccha:* Another great sage was sitting there who was a descendant of Jaratkaru and his name was Arthabhaga. Arthabhaga puts a question: “Yajnavalkya! I put you this question.” *Yajnavalkya iti hovaca, kati grahah katy atigraha iti:* “How many Grahas are there, how many Atigrahas are there?” Even the words “Graha” and “Atigraha” are unintelligible; we cannot make out their meaning. What do you mean by “Graha” and “Atigraha”? He simply puts a question: ‘you tell us how many Grahas are there, how many Atigrahas are there?’ Yajnavalkya is not in any way deterred by these fantastic questions. He knows the answers to all these. *Astau grahah astav atigraha iti:* “There are eight Grahas and eight Atigrahas,” was the answer of Yajnavalkya. *Ye te’stau grahah, astav atigraha, katame to iti:* “Yajnavalkya! Tell me, exactly what are these eight *Grahas* that you are speaking of and what are the eight *Atigrahas*?”

Here, in this section of the Upanishad, we are dealing with a very important subject, in the answer Yajnavalkya gives to Arthabhaga, the questioner. It is

important from the point of view of Yoga practice and spiritual meditation. It is not merely a fantastic question. It is a highly philosophical question and of great spiritual import from the point of view of actual practice. *Graha* means the senses and *Atigraha* is the object of sense. It is called *Graha* because it *grasps* the object. Anything that grasps is called the *Graha*. In Sanskrit, the root *Grah* signifies the action of grasping, grabbing, holding, controlling etc. As the senses grasp objects, catch hold of them and make them their own, as they hold tightly upon the object of sense, the senses are called the *Grahas*. But the objects are called *Atigrahas*. They are greater graspers than the grasper, the sense itself. Why? If the sense can grasp the object, the object also can grasp the sense. They are like two fighters in a duel. One is catching hold of the other. A does not leave B; B does not leave A. The senses will not leave the objects and the object also will not leave the senses. The more the sense grasps the object, the more does the object stir the sense. So there is a mutual action and reaction between the senses and the objects. The senses flare up more and more, irritated, angered and strengthened by their catching hold of the object. The strength of the sense increases when it catches hold of the object, and the object, inasmuch as it is capable of energizing the sense further and further on account of its coming in contact with it is called a greater grasper. It grasps sense itself. So, the “*Graha*” is the sense, the organ of action and sensation; and the object thereof is the “*Atigraha*.” ‘How many are there?’ “Eight are there,” says Yajnavalkya.

2. prano vai grahah, so'panenatigrahena grhitah, apanena hi gandhan jighrati.

Prano vai grahah: The Prana grasps. *So'panenatigrahena grhitah, apanena hi gandhan jighrati*: The *Prana* here does not mean merely the process of breathing. It is that vital principle or activity inside, by which smell is made possible by the nostrils. The *Prana* functions in an active manner through the nostrils and compels the nose, to ask for more and more of odour as it's own diet, or food. And the *Apana*, which is another function of the vital breath, is the source of the variety of smell which we have in the outer world. It acts like the feelers, as it were, for the varieties of odours in the external world. And so the *Prana* and the *Apana*, jointly, can be regarded as the *Graha* and the *Atigraha*. *Prana* acts upon *Apana*; *Apana* acts upon *Prana*. And it is on account of this mutual action and reaction of *Prana* and *Apana* that we are able to smell and want more and more of smell.

3. vag vai grahah, sa namnatigrahena grihitah, vaca hi namany-abhivadati.

Vag vai grahah: Speech is another *Graha*. It is also a very simple principle but very active in its *modus operandi* in the set of objects - *vag vai grahah*. *Sa namnatigrahena grihitah, vaca hi namany-abhivadati*: Speech is the repository of all language, all words, all designation, definition, meaning etc. So, the principle of speech is the *Graha* which catches hold of all meaning through language; and language is that which stirs the speech by correlative action. So

speech and the words that we utter through speech, which means to say, everything that we speak, every meaning that we convey through any type of language spoken by word of mouth, may be regarded as *Atigraha*, or the counterpart of the *Graha* which is speech. And likewise, all other senses are *Grahas*, and they have their own objects or their *Atigrahas* which stir them into action.

4. *jihva vai grahah, sa rasematigrahena grhitah, jihvaya hi rasan vijanati.*

Jihva vai grahah, sa rasematigrahena grhitah: The palate, the tongue which is the instrument of taste, is a *Graha*. It catches hold of all taste; and taste is itself an *Atigraha* because the activity of the palate is increased by the presence of a variety of taste. It is caught hold of by the taste. If the tongue asks for taste, the presence of taste increases the vitality and energy of the palate, so that it gets caught more and more - *Jihvaya hi rasan vijanati* - because by the palate it is that we are able to taste all delicious things in the world.

5. *caksur vai grahah, sa rupematigrahena grhitah, caksusa hi rupani pasyati.*

Caksur vai grahah: The eye also is a *Graha* which catches hold of colours and forms. *Sa rupematigrahena grhitah:* All forms have an impact upon the eye so that the eye asks for more and more perception of colours and forms. And so the eyes are never satisfied with perception. *Caksusa hi rupani pasyati:* It is by the eyes that we perceive forms, and so the eyes and the forms connected with the eyes are the *Graha* and the *Atigraha*.

6. *srotram vai grahah, sa sabdenatigrahena grhitah, srotena hi sabdan srnoti.*

The ears are the *Graha*. They catch hold of the sounds and the sounds stir up the activity of the ears, so that they like to hear more and more variety of sound. Because of this fact the ears wish to hear sounds and in turn sounds stimulate the activity of the ears. They act as *Graha* and *Atigraha*.

7. *mano vai grahah, sa kamenatigrahena grhitah, manasa hi kaman kamayate.*

The mind is the *Graha* because it catches hold of all objects of desire, and every fulfilment of desire stirs up the activity of the mind more and more. So, the mind and the object of desire act as *Graha* and *Atigraha*.

8. *hastau vai grahah, sa karmanatigrahena grhitah, hastabhyam hi karma karoti.*

Hastau vai grahah: The hand is also a *Graha*. It catches hold of things. *Sa karmanatigrahena grhitah:* It is fond of action. It does something or the other. It does not keep quiet. So, the urge to act, or to perform Karma or work, is the

Atigraha, the counterpart of this very urge itself which is communicated through the hands that are the instruments of action. So these are the *Graha* and *Atigraha*.

9. *tvag vai grahah, sparsenatigrahena grhitah, tvaca hi sparsan vedayate: ity ete'stau grahah, astav atigrahah.*

Tvag vai grahah: The skin also is a *Graha*. It asks for soft touches etc. *Sparsenatigrahena grhitah:* All touches stimulate the skin and the skin asks for touches. *Tvaca hi sparsan vedayate: ity ete'stau grahah, astav atigrahah:* These are the eight forms of perceptual activity, cognitional activity, the activity of the senses, and the eight kinds of effect that their objects correspondingly have upon them.

10. *yajnavalkya iti hovaca, yad idam sarvam mrtyor annam, ka svit sa devata, yasya mrtyur annam iti: agnir vai mrtyuh, so pam annam, apa punar mrtyum jayati.*

Yajnavalkya iti hovaca, yad idam sarvam mrtyor annam, ka svit sa devata: Yajnavalkya! This activity of the senses is, veritably, death for them. It is very well-known. It is not a good thing for the senses to work in this manner, because they fight with each other. The senses fight with their objects and the objects fight with the senses. They finally kill each other, one day or the other. Everything is destructible; everything is subject to death. Nothing can be free from the jaws of death. Now, Arthabhaga asked Yajnavalkya: "Inasmuch as everything here is a 'food' for death which is the *Devata*, for whom death itself the food?" There is no escape from death. Death swallows everybody as if it is food. But is there a death of death? Is there anything of which death itself is the food? Can you tell me who is death to death itself? What is death? Which *Devata*, which deity, which god can eat death in the same way as death eats everything, so to say? *Sarvam mrtyor annam, ka svit sa devata, yasya mrtyur annam iti: agnir vai mrtyuh, so pam annam, apa punar mrtyum jayati:* Yajnavalkya says: "My dear friend! You know that there is a death for everything, and one thing can be swallowed by another thing. Fire is an eater of everybody. It can burn and swallow and destroy anything. But fire can be eaten up by water. If you pour a particular quantity of water, fire gets extinguished. So, in the same way as water can be regarded as an eater of death in the form of fire which is the eater of other thing, there is an eater of that eater too. The meaning implied herein is that the eater of death is the Supreme Being - *mrtyuryasya upase canam.*" We are told this in the Katha Upanishad. The Supreme Being is the swallower of death. That means to say, one cannot overcome death unless one resorts to the Supreme Being. Not before that can you escape transmigration. There cannot be freedom from birth and death, there cannot be therefore freedom from the consequent sorrow of life, until and unless the great Reality is realized. So, who is the death of death? Who is the eater of death? The Supreme Being, the Eternal, the Absolute, He is the eater of death, and no one else can eat death.

11. *yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, yatrayment puruso mriyate, ud asmat pranah kramanty aho neti, na iti hovaca yajnavalkyah, atraiva samavaniyante, sa ucchvayati. adhmayati, adhmato mrtah sete.*

Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, yatrayment puruso mriyate, ud asmat pranah kramanty: “Well; you say there is an eater of death, by resort to whom death ceases, as it were, which means to say, there is freedom and liberation, emancipation. That is the meaning of freedom from death which one attains by resort to the eternal Reality. What happens to the *Pranas* of this individual when he attains liberation by freedom from the clutches of the senses and their corresponding objects, the *Grahas* and the *Atigrahas*? Do the *Pranas* of a realized soul depart from the body?” Generally, when a person dies, the *Pranas* depart from the body. They leave through the nose, head or some other point. Some passage is open and the *Prana* goes out. And along with the *Prana* the *Jiva* flies. This is the belief. The soul takes rebirth by means of the aperture created by the *Prana*. So the *Prana* goes. The *Jiva* leaves the body and enters into some other realm. But what happens to the *Prana* of the individual who has conquered the onslaught of the *Grahas* and the *Atigrahas* by resort to that which eats up death itself? Does the *Prana* of that person depart from the body? - *ud asmat pranah kramanty. Aho neti, na iti hovaca Yajnavalkyah:* “No; no,” says Yajnavalkya. “They do not depart from the body. In the case of the individual who has realized the Eternal Being, the *Pranas* do not leave the body by any aperture. They do not find an avenue to go out. There is no going out of the *Prana* in the case of a realized soul. There is no out or in for that person.” “What happens then?” *Yajnavalkya, atraiva samavantiyante:* “They merge there itself.” Inasmuch as the aim and purpose of the realized soul is at the very place where he or she is, there is no need of running to another place to gain what one needs. If what you need is just under your nose, why should you move to a shop or a bazaar? Why do you go to any place if that which you require from that place is just here near you? That which one aims at in realization is just at the spot where one is, and therefore the *Prana* does not move out. Why does the *Prana* in the case of an ordinary person depart? Because of the desires of the individual to fulfil certain unfulfilled ones, which can be fulfilled only under conditions different from the one in which the body was living previously. And inasmuch as the conditions required to fulfil unfulfilled desires are different from the one in which one was earlier, there is a necessity to depart from the body. Just as you have to go to Delhi or some place because you want something else from that place which you cannot get here, but if everything is here itself, you need not move from this place. But he the realized soul, has found everything in the very place where he is, and therefore the *Pranas* dissolve like a bubble in the ocean there itself - *atraiva samavaniyante. Sa ucchvayati, adhmayati, adhmato mrtah sete:* Only the body swells, deteriorates and becomes one with the physical element, the earth, but the *Prana* does not go, the *Jiva* does not depart, there is no movement through the plains of existence. There is no rebirth for that individual because he has attained liberation, then and there. This is called *SadyoMukti*, immediate liberation, very difficult to attain. Only Masters can attain such a state.

12. yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, yatravam puruso mriyate, kim evam na jahatiti: nama iti, anantam vai nama, ananta visve-devah, anantam eva sa tena lokam jayati.

Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, yatravam puruso mriyate, kim evam na jahatiti: “When you say that the Pranas do not depart, they merge there itself, dissolve themselves at the very spot they are, does anything remain of that person or everything goes? Everything is exhausted, or extinguished of that personality or do you think something remains of that individual even after the attainment of the liberation, freedom from *Graha* and *Atigraha*?” *Kim evam na jahatiti. Nama iti:* “Nothing remains there except his own name.” We say Govinda attained liberation meaning someone of that name. Like that his name will be remembered always. So and so has attained liberation; he has gone to Brahmhaloka; he has attained Mukti. We speak of him even after he has gone. Vasishta, Valmiki, Suka, and other ancient sages, we speak of them even now. They may be there or may not be there. They might have merged themselves in the Absolute, it does not matter. But their names remain. Nothing remains of them; that is what he means, except the name only - *nama iti. Anantam vai nama:* “The renown is the only thing that remains and the renown is *Ananta*.” It is sung; everywhere it is spoken of, because of the glory of that name. *Ananta visve devah:* “All gods he has become and he becomes as glorious and famous and renowned as all gods themselves. *Anantam eva sa tena lokam jayati:* “He has attained to the infinite worlds.” What else can remain in his personality?

13. yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, yatrasya purusasya mrtasyagnim vag apyeti, vatam pranah, caksur adityam, manas candram, disah srotram, prthivim sariram akasam atma, osadhir lomani, vanaspatin kesah, apsu lohita ca retas ca nidhiyate, kvayam tada puruso bhavatiti. ahara, somya, hastam, artabhaga; avam evaitasya vedisyavah, na nav etat sajana iti. tau hotkramya, mantrayam cakrate: tau ha yad ucatuh, karma haiva tad ucatuh atha yat prasasamsatuh karma haiva tat prasasamsatuh: punyo vai punyena karmana bhavati, papah papaneti. tato ha jaratkarava artabhaga upararama.

Yajnavalkya, iti hovaca, yatrasya purusasya mrtasyagnim vag apyeti: Now, what happens to the individual at the time of liberation? Some mysterious processes take place. This individuality is a conglomeration of certain particulars, certain elements taken from the cosmos. This body is made up of certain building bricks got from somewhere else. The body is not a compact indivisible single entity. It is a composite substance like a building. What is the building made of? You have got many things in the building. There are bricks; there is mortar; there are iron rods; there are nails; there are wooden rafters and many other things. From where have you got all these things? They have come from various sources. You have got bricks from brick kilns; iron from iron merchants; and mortar from cement shop and so on and so forth. Likewise, this body of the individual, this individuality has been constituted of various elements. The sense-organs also are

certain principles which have been taken partly by way of abstraction from the cosmic principles. Then what happens? When the body dies the building collapses, and the material goes back to the source from where it has come. The effect returns to the cause. The body will not remain as an isolated entity. All the constituents of the body will be returned to the sources from where they were brought for the particular purpose of embodiment.

“Yajnavalkya! I put you a question.” *Yatrasya purusasya mrtasyagnim vag apyeti*: “The principle of speech goes back to the fire, because it came from fire. *Vatam pranah*: Prana goes to the cosmic wind. *Caksur adityam*: The principle of perception, the eye, will go back to the sun who is the presiding deity thereof. *Manas candram*: The mind will go to the moon. *Disah srotram*: The ears will go back to the quarters, the *Digdevatas*. *Prthivim sariram*: This body, the physical parts of the body will go back to the earth from where they have come. *Akasam atma*: The self will go into the ether. *Osadhir lomani*: The hairs of the body will go back to the vegetable kingdom. *Vanaspatim kesah*: The hair from the head will go back to the trees. *Apsu lohita ca retas*: The vital energy and the blood will go back to the waters. *Kvayam tada puruso bhavatiti*: If all the constituents go like this to their respective places, where does the individual remain?” What becomes the cause of the rebirth of an individual, in case at the time of death the principal elements go back to their sources? Except in the case where the individual has attained liberation, there is always rebirth. But, you know that the body cannot take rebirth. It goes to the earth. It has no life. It dissolves into the material constituent of which it is a part. So the thing that takes rebirth is not the body. Then what is it that takes birth? Something is there, a peculiar thing which becomes the reason for rebirth. It is not something visible. “Yajnavalkya! I ask you; what is it that really takes birth? Which part of the individual is responsible for it?” *Ahara, somya, hastam, artabhaga*: Yajnavalkya says: “I will not answer this question in public. It is a secret. You come with me to a corner. I shall speak to you secretly and tell you what it is. Why should I have it loudly proclaimed?” He got hold of the hand of the questioner and took him to a corner. “I tell you what it is. Let not others hear it. *Avam evaitasya vedisyavah*: Only we two know; nobody else will know. *Na nav etat sajana iti*: The public may not know it. It is useless to talk about it in public because it is a controversial element. Nobody will understand what I say, if I proclaim it publicly in the audience. Inasmuch as it is not going to be intelligible to the people, its meaning is not going to be clear, and it is only going to confuse them and confound them. I will tell you only, in your ear. Let not others hear it.” *Tau hotkramya, mantrayam cakrate*: They went out in a corner and discussed between themselves as to the possibility of various alternatives which may be responsible for the rebirth of an individual. Is it God who is responsible for the rebirth? Some say, God is the cause of rebirth. He punishes. Some say, time is the cause of rebirth. Some say, by accident rebirth takes place. Some say, desire is the cause of rebirth. Some say, simple actions are the cause of rebirth. O’various theories! Some say, there is no rebirth for anyone at all because the body gets dissolved in the earth and the body is the only thing that is there. When body goes, everything goes. So many alternatives have been

offered by various schools of thought, right from the materialists onwards. What is the point, really? The Upanishad tells us the outcome of their discussion. How they discussed and what they argued about and how they came to the conclusion - all that is not mentioned here. Only the conclusion is mentioned. *Karma haiva tad ucatuh*: They came to the conclusion that it is Karma that is the cause of rebirth.

It is very right that Yajnavalkya did not loudly proclaim it because it is a word whose meaning is not clear. Nobody knows what it means. You have heard this word many times, but its meaning cannot be easily understood. Karma is action. Literally, the dictionary meaning is action. Action causes rebirth and it is unintelligible because its meaning here is something different from what the dictionary meaning of it is. Karma is action, but it is not any and every kind of action that can be regarded as the cause of rebirth. It is a particular type of attitude of the total individual that can be regarded as action. If I lift this watch and keep it back, it is an action. It is very unreasonable to say that this simple act can be the cause of my rebirth, though it is an action. So, it is not every action that is the cause of rebirth. It is a peculiar type of action. But, even the word "action" is something unintelligible. You cannot understand what action means. If you walk, it is an action. If you eat, it is an action. If you speak, it is an action. If you think also, it is an action. Does it mean that whatever you do becomes the cause of rebirth? If you walk, you will be reborn? If you eat, you will be reborn? If you think, you will be reborn? Then, you are only to be reborn again and again. There is no other escape from the process of rebirth if everything that you do is a cause of rebirth. This is very difficult to understand. It is not that every little bit of movement of your body or every function of the mind is a cause of rebirth. No, it is a particular attitude generated by a preponderating emphasis laid by the whole personality that may be said to be the cause of rebirth. Well, the word "desire" is a very appropriate term. But even the word "desire" is difficult to understand. It is not every type of want that causes rebirth. It is a very serious urge of the whole psycho-physical personality that can be regarded as the seed of rebirth. We shall not discuss this subject just now in detail. We shall pass on to the actual context of the discussion, and go into the details of this subject when we come to it later on.

So, what I mean to say is that inasmuch as the word "Karma" is very unintelligible and you cannot understand how Karmas can cause rebirth, Yajnavalkya did not want to speak loudly about it, and privately said; this is the point, nothing else. *Karma haiva tad ucatuh atha yat prasasamsatuh karma haiva tat prasasamsatuh: punyo vai punyena karmana bhavati, papah papaneti. tato ha jaratkarava artabhaga upararama*: "The kind of "action" that you perform becomes the cause of a kind of life that you are going to enter into in the next birth." Now Arthabagha, descendant of Jaratkaru, kept quiet. His questions had been answered.