

**SOME SAYINGS FROM
THE
UPANISHADS: DONE INTO
ENGLISH WITH NOTES**

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Some sayings from the Upanishads: done into English with notes by L. D. Barnett

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Some Sayings from
the
Upanishads.

DONE INTO ENGLISH

WITH NOTES

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Hoꝛewoꝛd.

Wellnigh two thousand and eight hundred years ago, when the Aryans of India were growing somewhat weary of worshipping in blind veneration their fathers' gods of sky and cloud and dawn, there was a dreamer among them who one day sang thus of the world's beginning.

Not-Being then was not, Being was not, light-garth was not, nor heaven, nor what is beyond. Was there a shroud thereof? where, and in whose ward? Were there waters wildering, deep?

Death was not, nor deathlessness then, nor was understanding of night and day. Windless breathed as it listed This, lonely; beyond it was naught else.

Darkness first there was, hidden in darkness, beyond understanding: water was this All. When it was covered over with emptiness, by the might of heat was born the One.

First over it stirred Love, that was the first seed of mind, the bond of Being with Not-Being that by wisdom seers searching found in their heart.

Was their line spread forth aslant, or was it below, or was it on high? Sowers of seed there were, mighty ones there were. Food was below, striving above.

Who knoweth in sooth, who here may tell, whence and from what was this world's building? The gods were afterward in the building of this world; then who knoweth whence it came forth?

Whence came forth this world's building, whether He set it up or no, He soothly knoweth who is warden over it in the highest heaven — or haply He knoweth not. *

* This hymn is in the Rig-veda, X. 129.

Such were the searchings of heart with which Brahmans set forth from the old world of Aryan thought to the new — from the worship of manifold nature gods no more eternal than the Nature in which they were revealed, to the thought of the everlasting One, the changeless All-Being, Brahma.

These men did not wholly break with their past. They preserved many of their fathers' ceremonies; nay, they added many more, and developed a most complicated system of sacrificial ritualism. But there were many of them who saw through the shapes of the world and the sacrifices that controlled its weal a vision of the Infinite; and thus amidst the Brāhmaṇas, the lore of ritual, grew up the pantheism of the Upanishads.

There are many Upanishads, and they preach many doctrines. But the older Upanishads, amidst much wild and often tasteless fantasy, agree in this, that they hold the whole of existence to be One, a single Idea in essence unchangeable and indeterminable; with this every Soul or "Self" (*ātman*) is in reality one, bound to an unending sorrowful experience in body after body by its former "works". Every experience of the soul is the resultant of former works, and in turn has its resultant in experiences yet to come; and thus the infinite succession of works goes on, save for the happy few who succeed in annihilating the resultants of their souls' works in knowledge and quietude, and thus in their lifetime unite their Self with the everlasting selfhood of the Absolute.

Chhândogya Upanishad.

Chapter VI.

The Teaching of Uddālaka.

There was one Svetaketu, Āruṇi's son.¹ To him his father spake, saying "Svetaketu, go walk the Brahma-way². Truly there is none of our stock, beloved, who is unlearned and a Brahman by birth only."

Twelve years old was he when he went in; and when he was four and twenty years old he had read all the Vedas, and came home swollen of soul, deeming himself learned, and haughty. To him his father spake, saying. "Svetaketu, thou art swollen of soul, deeming thyself learned, and haughty; but, beloved, hast thou sought the lore whereby that which is not heard is heard, that which is not thought is thought, that which is not understood is understood?"

"Nay, my lord", said he, "how may this lore be?"

"As by one clod of clay, beloved, all things that are of clay may be understood, their several shapes

being but an holdfast of speech, and their name being in truth clay; as by one copper toy, beloved, all things that are of copper may be understood, their several shapes being but an holdfast of speech, and their name being in truth copper; as by one iron nail-knife, beloved, all things that are of iron may be understood, their several shapes being but an holdfast of speech, and their name being in truth iron; so is this lore, beloved." ³

"Indeed my lords knew not this. Had they known it, how should they not have spoken to me thereof? But now let my lord tell it to me."

"Be it so, beloved," said he.

"Being was This in the beginning, beloved, One with naught beside. Now some say that Not-Being was this in the beginning, One with naught beside, and from this Not-Being was born Being. But how in sooth may it be so, beloved?" Thus he spake. "How from Not-Being may Being be born? Nay, Being was This in the beginning, beloved, One with naught beside.

It thought in itself "I will be many, I will beget offspring." It brought forth Heat.

The Heat thought in itself "I will be many, I will beget offspring." It brought forth Water. Therefore whensoever a man sorrows or sweats, from heat ariseth thereupon water.

The Water thought in itself "I will be many, I will beget offspring." It brought forth food. Therefore whensoever it raineth, there is very much food. From water ariseth thereupon food for eating.

Three in sooth are the seeds of these born beings. They are from an egg, from a Live One, or from a sprout⁴.

The Godhead thought in itself "Lo, I will go with the Live Self into these three godheads, and sunder them into Name and Showing⁵. Threefold will I make each of them." The Godhead went with the Live Self into these three godheads, and sundered them into Name and Showing. Threefold it made each of them. Now learn from me, beloved, how each of these three godheads becometh threefold

The red showing of Fire is the showing of Heat; the white is of Water; the black is of Food. From Fire firehood hath gone away; its several shapes are but an holdfast of speech, their name in truth is "Three Showings." The red showing of the Sun is the showing of Heat; the white is of Water; the black is of Food. From the Sun sunhood hath gone away; its several shapes are but an holdfast of speech, their name in truth is "Three Showings." The red showing of the Moon is the showing of Heat; the white is of Water; the black is of Food. From the Moon moonhood hath gone away; its several shapes are but an holdfast of speech, their name in truth is "Three Showings." The red showing of the Lightning is the showing of Heat; the white is of Water; the black is of Food. From the Lightning lightninghood hath gone away; its several shapes are but an holdfast of speech, their name in truth is "Three Showings"⁶.

Wotting this, great house-lords and great priests of yore spake thus: "None now may tell us of a