

Mandukya Upanishad
Translation and Commentary by
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INVOCATION

ॐ *bhadram karnabhih srnuyama devah*
bhadram pasyemaksabhir yajatrah
sthiraair angais tustuvamsas tanubhir
vyasema devahitam yad ayuh

svasti na indro vrddhas sravah
svasti nah pusa visvavedah
svasti nas tarksyo aristanemih
svasti no brhaspatir dadhatu

ॐ *santih santih santih*

AUM Oh Gods, may we hear with our ears what is auspicious.
May we, who are engaged in sacrifice, with our eyes see what is auspicious.
May we, singing praises, live with healthy bodies
and with perfect limbs our allotted days.

May Indra of great fame, most ancient of wisdom listeners, be gracious unto us.
May the all-knowing, all-illuminating Nourisher (sun) be gracious unto us.
May Aruna and Garuda be gracious unto us.
May Brihaspati, the Lord of the Word, be gracious unto us.

AUM Peace, Peace, Peace

COMMENTARY

ॐ *bhadram karnabhih srnuyama devah*

AUM Oh gods, with our ears may we hear what is auspicious.

An individual person has a physical body, every cell of which is animated by the principle of consciousness. Consciousness can be compared to light. Although it is the same light of consciousness that illuminates the senses, it is experienced differently according to the structural and functional purpose of each part of our body. With our eyes we see and with our ears we hear. The ancient seers of India did not bother to give a precise description either of the structural mechanism of the body or its metabolic function. Their approach to the entire subject of life was very much that of a poet. Modern people may accuse them of anthropomorphism; however, an Indian may not find that there is anything to be ashamed of in seeing this same light enshrined in all living beings. It is believed that St. Francis of Assisi called his body his “brother ass.” Sharing the same attitude, the Indian yogi calls an ass his brother. It is a localization of a universal energy that gains for it a certain status and identification. For this reason, the wise poets of ancient India saw gods residing in all their limbs and vital organs. These supervising gods are asked to take good care of the function of whatever organ they are presiding over. Hence it is only appropriate to address the gods: *deva*.

How do we hear? Is it only because of sound waves vibrating in the air? Certainly not. The air is replete with all kinds of sound waves and radio waves. We do not hear most of them with our naked ears. Even when we think we hear a sound, we recognize it as the honking of a car, the barking of a dog, the buzzing of a mosquito, the banging of a window shutter, the singing of a bird, and so on. All these are affective voices. Some are pleasing and some are jarring. In either case they are sounds that are encoded, structured, and to a very great extent classified. That means there is a selective structuring going on within us. Whoever is the agent of receiving, formulating and interpreting sounds as affective voices should be asked to discern properly and to bring us only sounds that are pleasing, enlightening, inspiring, instructing, consoling, and generally helpful to maintain one’s peace and beatitude. It is with this intention that the seer invokes the attention of the gods of hearing to make every sound that is audible auspicious.

There is a story repeated both in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the Chandogya Upanishad to justify such a prayer. The motor-sensory system, which is favorably conditioned to attune the individual psyche to seek after the higher imperishable and sublime values of life, is allegorically called *deva*. It is believed that there is a counterforce which is negative and compulsive by which one is pushed more and more into the hedonistic and masochistic forms of search. This demonic force is called *asura*. Just as Freud thinks of the ambivalent alternation of the libido between eros and thanatos, the Indian rishis think of a perennial struggle going on between the *devas* and the *asuras*. According to the story, the shining ones thought of overpowering the demons by consecrating the ear with the divine vibrations of AUM. When the demons came to know of this intention they filled the ear with inauspicious sounds. From that day, man hears with his ear both

the auspicious and the inauspicious. What is said about the ear is also true of the eye. So the rishi prays:

bhadram pasyemaksabhir yajatrah

May we, who are engaged in sacrifice, with our eyes see what is auspicious.

When we think, meaningful concepts come and link in our thoughts in a meaningful way. When concepts are revived they bring to our mind visual images which are to be attributed to our sight. Just as we see in pictures, we also think to a large extent with meaningful pictures. The world is too big to take as one piece, so the artist in us breaks it up into ensembles. Each ensemble is seen as a gestalt. This aspect of seeing in pictures is developed today as a special school of psychology. The Royal School of Science in Britain was adamant in saying, "We believe only what we see." Now it is commonly understood that we see what we believe. From a chaotic plethora of light and shade one can figure out an inspiring or awe-filling form and can turn that vision into an exquisite piece of art. Another person seeing the same conglomeration of light and shade may see in it ghastly demonic forms and may even pass out. Who is it or what is it that sits behind our visual faculty and decides what we should see? We do not know that unknown agent even when we want its full cooperation, so we pray for seeing whatever is auspicious. We are not static dumb pieces sitting here and mirroring the play of light and shade outside us. We are active participants in the game of life that is going on. We are burning out like the sacrificial fire; the candle that burns radiates its golden beams and the incense stick that burns gives away itself in fragrance. We burn out and become this civilization: humankind. Such is its history, art and literature, science and technology and everything that goes to posterity. It is in this sense that the rishi calls himself a man of sacrifice. He is not praying to a god outside. The prayer is addressed to the best in him to give him both direction and encouragement.

He does not know for how long we are decreed to live on this earth. He presumes that we will live as long as the gods permit us, so he prays:

*sthirair angais tustuvamsas tanubhir
vyasema devahitam yad ayuh*

May we, singing praises, live with healthy bodies
and with perfect limbs our allotted days.

Let anything be the span of one's life. What is important is to use the allotted term of life fully and in the right manner. To the governor of life we also pray that our limbs and body be made firm and strong.

The Vedic or Vedantic concept of God is not identical with the Christian or Islamic understanding of an intimate God who is deeply interested in the personal life of man. Instead of using one word to represent God, in the Sanskrit philosophical literature there are so many words which refer only to some special aspect of the Absolute. Although the sound *deva* is philologically linked with the idea of light as a philosophical term, it suggests the unavoidable and fateful dithyrambic zigzag of life where one alternately touches glory and tragedy. In epics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, this aspect of God, where He is mentioned as *vidhi*, seems to have a certain capacity which does not permit a man to know why he is mercilessly pushed into the abyss of tragedy. Life is not viewed by the Hindu as a single visitation to this earth. For him every birth is a birth among a million births, and so is his death. As he is a forgetful being, he needs an all-computerizing God to keep track of all his good and evil deeds so that he will always be led to an appropriate womb from where he can gather all the instruments and incentives to continue his karma. All the same, the rishi does not think that the interlinked Divine is callous. He can receive guidance and support through prayer. Both the followers of Vishnu and Siva think that this body, senses and mind are given only to serve the will of God. The individual is willing to make a good job of it provided the instruments are operationally efficient. Hence his prayer for a strong body and dexterous limbs.

Now the seer turns to Indra, the most ancient among wisdom listeners. The senses are called *indriyas* and the mind, being master of the senses, is identified with Indra, the king of the shining ones. He is invoked to make our life on earth rich and peaceful:

svasti na indro vrdhas sravah

May Indra of great fame, most ancient of wisdom listeners, be gracious unto us.

The mind is both fickle and persistent. In the Kena Upanishad we come across the story of Indra, Agni, and Varuna becoming scared of the indiscernible power of an unidentified spirit. In spite of Indra's initial failure, he persisted in his search for Truth and finally succeeded in obtaining wisdom instruction from Uma, the daughter of the snowy mountain. In the Chandogya Upanishad there is another story of how Indra went to Brahma with the intention of knowing the secret of the Self. With him there was also a demon as a co-student. Brahma outwitted both Indra and the demon Virocana with faulty teachings. Virocana gave up, but Indra persisted until obtaining the highest truth from the supreme creator.

In the next stage of the prayer, the eyes are lifted to the heavens and the god of the solar orb is invoked for the continuous showering of his nourishing energy. The link between the cosmos and the individual is traced through the element of fire that is present in the sun, in the *prana*, vital breath, the Word, *vac*, and the sacrificial fire with which man conducts his daily rounds:

svasti nah pusa visvavedah

May the all-knowing, all-illuminating Nourisher (sun) be gracious unto us.

Next come the twin brothers born of Vinata: the charioteer of the sun Aruna and the celestial eagle Garuda. These are two beings who became immortal by their prowess. Unlike the devas, who secured their immortality by partaking of the divine nectar *amrita*, the best models before man for life's highest accomplishment are Aruna and Garuda. With his own prowess and wisdom, *purusartha*, man can cross over the duality of birth and death. Recognizing the uniqueness of man, the rishi prays:

svasti nas tarksyo aristanemih

May Aruna and Garuda be gracious unto us.

Finally he closes this beautiful invocation with a prayer for grace from Brihaspati:

svasti no brihaspatir dadhatu

May Brihaspati, the Lord of the Word, be gracious unto us.

Both for his interpersonal programming of life and interpersonal participation with his fellow beings, man needs the continuous aid of words. A wrong word which drops out from his lips at a wrong hour can ruin his entire life. On the other hand, sweet and truthful words which can inspire and console will gain for man the entire world. Brihaspati is the Lord of the Word and hence he is invoked.

In conclusion, we want to have peace from the world of our transactions, the world of our subjective ideation, and the deep-rooted urges and incentives of life. The prayer, therefore, closes with:

ॐ *śāntih śāntih śāntih*

AUM Peace Peace Peace

FIRST MANTRA

*omitye tad aksaram idam sarvam
tasyopavyakhyanam
bhutam bhavad bhavisyad iti
sarvam omkara eva
yaccanyat trikalatitam
tadapyomkara eva*

That (eternal) syllable, AUM, is all this;
its further elaboration, past, present, and future,
all is this AUM indeed;
even what is beyond, transcending the three times,
that too is AUM.

The Upanishad is commonly described as a secret science. By secret it does not mean that the Upanishad is an esoteric science. Although Truth is everywhere and the knowledge of it is available to all, paradoxically untruth hides Truth and people have to sharpen their wits to realize Truth. An intense search is required to discover it. It is for this reason that the Upanishad is called a secret. Another meaning of the Upanishad is to sit close so that the preceptor can easily show where the supreme knowledge resides. For a well discerning seeker, a mere suggestion is enough to get an idea of the whole Truth. The Upanishad is such a suggestion or pointer. In that sense also the Upanishad is a secret.

For a wise person, the world is like an open book. Everything in this world speaks to them. A blade of grass, a small worm, a bird in the bush or a floating cloud - anything can reveal to a seeker the hidden meaning of this world. Dattatreya received his instructions, according to legends, from 24 gurus, and most of them were not human beings. Even in the Chandogya Upanishad, we read of a canine saint, Sunaka, who was teaching a group of puppies how to intone certain mantras like the "*hirikara*." The rishi of the Mandukya Upanishad, at least in name, is a frog. When the frog's eggs hatch we see tadpoles coming from them. In the second stage of the tadpole's growth it develops hind legs. In the third stage, it swims around with four legs and a tail. Finally in the fourth stage, when the tail is fully absorbed, the frog jumps out of the water. This is suggestive of the wise man who is not bound to society with the memory of his obligatory duties, and who can also jump out of the fish pond of *samsara*. In the present Upanishad there is some

similarity between the four stages of development of the frog and the four aspects of consciousness. As we proceed from the wakeful to the transcendental, one aspect of consciousness is merged in the next. Most of our reflex functions and body movements are controlled by the spinal cord, which is a repository of our genetic information bits. The tail is nothing but a prolongation of the spinal cord, hence the allegorical reference to the cessation of the tail amounts to transcending of one's genetic memory, which in Vedanta is described as *vasana*. Narayana Guru in his Atmopadesa Satakam instructs the seeker to transcend all memories on which one might stumble from moment to moment (see verse 64). The only memory he recommends is the primeval memory of one's true Self.

Awareness occurs in consciousness with an act of calling attention, as it were, to what is often expressed as "this." "This" is suggestive of an undefined occurrence of a general sense of awareness. All the same it has become an object for consideration. There cannot be an object of awareness without a subject to apprehend the object. The subject reveals itself as one's I-consciousness, *aham*, the ego. When the awareness of the knower relates itself with the object indicated by the general apprehension of "thisness," the most primary pulsation of the mind has already taken place. The I-consciousness or ego awareness makes a judgment, a prediction about the object of awareness. Unlike in grammar, in formal logic the object of awareness is called the subject. The predicate consists of the special characteristics attributed to the subject. Suppose the general knowledge comes as "this." It is immediately followed by the question "what is this?" This is suggestive of the two main components of one's apprehension: they are the "this" and the "what." If the mind readily comes out with an answer: "this is a pot," "this" is qualified with the characteristics of a pot. "This" remains, and the "what" is substituted with the idea of a pot. In a number of such predications you can see that the general idea "this" remains unchanged and the interrogation "what" is substituted with object identities such as "this is a pen," "this is a watch," "this is a stone," etc. When F.H. Bradley says: "this 'this' is different from this 'this' because of the difference between the 'what' of this 'this' and the 'what' of this 'this,'" he is not playing with words but putting his finger on the primeval incidence of specifying awareness entering the uncharted field of consciousness.

In the present opening mantra of the Mandukya Upanishad, "this" is qualified with "all" (*idam sarvam*). In this case, the specifying predication is as vast and wide as the general awareness that came up for apprehension. Both at the object side and the subject side, consciousness is modulating without specifying boundaries. The subtlety of the mantra makes it a fit subject for reflection. To get into the spirit of it, one should sit quietly, if you prefer, on a hilltop where you have a vast panorama to watch. Then say to yourself: "this all." When you say "this," you will experience a sudden convergence of awareness to the central focus of your attention, and from

there, instantaneously, the awareness expands in all directions and you are compelled to believe that something is taking you even beyond the seeming bounds of the horizon.

This expanding universe of awareness not only transcends space, but it also transcends time. Instead of saying “all this,” if you were to say “this dewdrop,” “this flower,” “this rainbow,” you could also think of the dewdrop disappearing in evaporation, the flower drooping and falling off, and the rainbow vanishing. In all these specific objects of experience one can see the stamp of phenomenality. Like an Omar Khayyam you can sigh in frustration: “this will pass away.” In the present mantra you are in the company of a joyous teacher and not a weeping philosopher. When Keats said: “a thing of beauty is a joy forever,” he was seeing eternity in the beauty of the otherwise transient world of phenomenality. It does not trouble the poet or the artist how short-lived are the dewdrops, the butterflies, the sunrise, the rainbow, and the smile of recognition. From the very dawn of the human appreciation of beauty, poets were singing the glory of all these enchanting visitations of the divine. Thus a philosophically trained eye can see the imperishable dwelling in the very heart of the perishable. So it is not a poetic exaggeration to say “all this is AUM the imperishable.”

The contemplative who has taken this mantra for reflection should first dive deep into the meaning of “all” (*sarvam*). There cannot be an all without including one’s self also in that all embracing awareness. The imperishable in Sanskrit is called *aksara*. This is bound to bring confusion to the minds of those Indian people whose regional languages have close affinity with Sanskrit. In the Sanskrit language, vowels are called *svara* and consonants are called *vyanjana*. Together they make the alphabet, which in turn is called the *aksara*. AUM is also written using two vowels and a consonant. For that reason, AUM is an *aksara*. Because of this language background, one may interpret the mantra as meaning that everything seen in this world is an alphabet. Nobody can see the sign for AUM as written in Sanskrit, or any other language, anywhere in the sky or earth or water. In many popular commentaries we can see this grave error committed, and as a result, even serious students of this Upanishad are grievously handicapped. They fail to see how the blue sky, the gorgeous mountains, the running rivers, and the sprawling cities with innumerable people can be the Sanskrit syllable *AUM*.

On the other hand, they should know that their attention is called to appreciate the existentiality of things and the philosophical validity of reducing everything to the persistent verity of erasable existence. This is certainly not the approach of an idealist. Even highly respected Indian pundits like Dr. Radhakrishnan could not see the methodological correctness of the Indian rishi who gave primacy to *sat*, existence. “Existence precedes essence,” was not any new invention of Jean-Paul Sartre. As Dr. Radhakrishnan did not see this point, he depicted Vedanta as an idealist view of life. It is the existence that is then interpreted, described and restructured to suit the conceptual

clarity of the perceiver. The seer did not give up the theme simply by saying “this is all,” (*idam sarvam*) but he equated the indestructibility of the existence of “all this” with AUM. That can be confusing. The sound AUM is produced with a wisp of breath. The mere articulation of a sound can be even more transient than the disappearance of a dewdrop. Hence, such a pronouncement should be followed with an explanation. That is why the rishi says: *tasyopavyakhyanam* (this is thus explained).

The Gospel According to St. John begins with a pointed reference to the Word. He says: “In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God.” The confusion in the Gospel is of the same order, which we have already taken pains to elaborate. The English word “word” cannot really be compared with “the Word.” In the original Bible, John used a Greek word, *logos*, meaning the causal and primordial intelligence which has gone into the creation of the world. He borrowed that term from his personal instructor, Philo the Jew. Philo, a contemporary of Jesus, was an enthusiast of Plato’s philosophy, and he borrowed the term *logos* from Plato. All credit should be given to Heraclitus for conceiving of the *logos* as an ambivalent principle of creation and destruction implied in the ascending and descending fire of the Word. In the light of such a study, the Word, equated with God’s creation and God himself, cannot be a three-lettered or a four-lettered word spoken by someone somewhere.

Only by comprehending the imperishable existence of everything covered by time and even not touched by it can one grasp the connotation of AUM implied in this mantra. To make it explicit the three aspects of time are specially underlined here for further reflection. Only by experiencing a thing do we become impressed by the truth of its existence. As we move in time our appreciations of existence are piled one over the other and everything of the past is still held close to the present by converting the existentiality of the past into an ever-present memory. It is by the relevancy of that memory that we give our present its vast magnitude both in time and space. There is no past sitting anywhere other than in the immediate awareness of the present. Similarly there is no future except in the anticipation of an individuated mind. Existence cannot support itself, at least for the recognition and appreciation of it by the human mind, unless every form of existence is substantiated by a comprehending consciousness. This shows the methodological excellence of the Indian rishi who placed *chit*, consciousness, immediately after *sat*, existence. These two aspects of Truth are inseparable. That is why Nataraja Guru defined science as a discipline which transforms visibles into calculables.

It is not necessary to get into all the jargon of philosophy to appreciate the perennial persistence of fundamental values. That is why even a sentimental poet can readily see the truth of a perennial joy dwelling in the heart of beauty. Here we see the relevancy of *ananda* coming as the culminating mark of our search. Bishop Berkeley insisted that the validity of the world is

perception. He said “*esse es percipi.*” When asked what would happen to the world when there was no one to look at it, he said: “In such a contingency, God will be perceiving it.” We quote Berkeley here to show the limitation of human consciousness. Granted that there is something existing outside the scope of time, the rishi wants us to know that even that is imperishable and should be included in the notion of AUM. This first mantra of the Mandukya Upanishad should be read along with the great dictum “That Thou Art,” (*tat tvam asi*) given in the Chandogya Upanishad.

SECOND MANTRA

*sarvam hyetad brahma
ayam atma brahma
so'yam atma catuspat*

All here is the Absolute (Brahman) indeed;
this Self (Atma) is the Absolute;
this same Self (he) is four-limbed.

The first part of this mantra appears to deal with three entities: “this,” “all” and “Brahman.” The word *sarvam* “all,” is the description of “this,” *etat*. When sound is being emitted from a single point its vibration goes expanding in all directions. It looks linear only when you draw on paper the modulation of a sound wave. The reference to “this” also suggests a nucleus from which there can go in all directions an expansion of “thisness” which can be in the form of sound, light, and all kinds of ideational and emotional energy forces. If this eruption of energy and its accompanying consciousness are not delimited by any conceiving mind, they expand into infinity, in which time and space become negligible. Such is the connotation we attribute to the word *sarvam*. In such a picture this marks the alpha of an eventual apprehension, and *sarvam* carries it to an omega where the mind cannot reach. In such a context the eventual perception gets absorbed in the non-eventful “all.” It is this “all” that is termed here as Brahman. The seeker has no prior experience of comprehending Brahman; hence there is no point in asking anyone to meditate on Brahman. In specific references such as “this is a pot” “this is a leaf,” or “this is a cloth,” consciousness is directed to specific objects with specific qualities. This is not the case when one’s attention is called to “this all.” To understand this let us think of “this” as a spark coming out of a hidden world of consciousness.

The second mantra calls our attention to the widest span of perception. From the shimmering stars placed hundreds of light years above the tip of your nose, everything can be included in one

single physical vision. From the feeblest voice dying out in the farthest fringe our ear can reach, to the loudest din, all can be included in the auditory perception that goes along with the visual perception. Let that experience be enriched with all the data that are provided by the other senses also. After presenting such a universe of immensity, if one were to ask “what is this?” a straight answer to it is “this is Brahman; this is the Absolute.” The answer is categorical because the mantra says *brahmani*, the Absolute indeed. This simplifies the search for the Absolute. The seeker is in the here and now and is already having a direct encounter with the Absolute from above and below and from all directions, and from inside out. Here the seeker is not treated as an alien to the situation; he is an integral, indivisible part of what is already described as “all.” The term “all” has no religious connotation; it has no theistic coloration; all the same, it has the irresistible quality of involving us in it. As we sit and meditate on this mantra there immediately arises in us our positive participation in all and everything. It is not by first knowing Brahman that we interpret all this: it is through our immediate perception of everything presented to our senses and mind at this very moment that we conceive the Absolute. We are in the stream of consciousness and in the flux of becoming. The “all” that we experience is not a static, frozen clay image of the Absolute. It is plastic, flexible, moving, transforming and transmuting, and yet the old and the new have an unbroken continuity. The perception and the modulating consciousness with which the flowing perception is occurring are not separate entities. When will it come to a close? No one can say. With poetic permission one can affirm: this is beginningless; this is endless.

That which increases, and thereby involves in it more and more of what was hitherto unknown and will never be filled is an operational connotation that can be attributed to Brahman. Here the seeker is not imagining things; he is in a factual world with all his senses fully opened to every possible avenue of understanding. He does not inhibit his sense of wonder or his natural curiosity. The more he sees, the more he understands the rich possibility of the Brahman which he comprehends through this simple act of perception. How wonderful is such an experience, with which you can relate yourself with far-off galaxies, with which you can commune with the gentle breeze that comes to you. Even a beautiful panorama is breathtaking; then how much more magnificent it is to be placed within a panorama, within a melody, within a wonder, within a sweetness, within a majesty which has no end. As we sink more and more into it, ecstasy grows on all sides, and the only reaction that you are capable of by way of self-expression is to say: “All this is Brahman.” It is something quite similar to what the Sufi mystic Mansur al Hallaj said: “*anal haq, anal haq...*”

The next part of the mantra is “This Self is the Absolute.” However wide this world is, however immeasurable is its dimension, the central focus of my world is where I experience the agency of its cognition and the wonder of my enjoyment. “I” the perceiver, “I” the cognizer, “I” the enjoyer,

is the most central core of experiencing all this. Is that “I” consciousness a static point of any fixed notion? No, it is like a radiance that goes in all directions, that becomes an unbroken illumination of all that is experienced. Now which is the world, and who am I? There is no separation; there is no duality. If all this is Brahman, I am also included in that. If all this is a modulation of consciousness, the self and the world are not two. This is not a conjecture. It is an immediate experience. The conclusion is again categorical. “This Self is Brahman.”

What a magnificent meditation we get in this mantra! The expansion of the Self has happened without any effort. The union of the world and the Self was effected without even giving a thought to it. At this point the rishi wants to give us a caution. Although we now think we have seen all, our kind mentor wants us to know that there are other worlds, seen only from the periphery, which we have not incorporated. There are depths to gauge. For a tadpole, its world is a frog pond, but for a frog who can come out of the water, can hop around and see a much wider world, the horizon is far larger. The world of perceptual experience, although physically immense, is a prison house of the soul. There are fixed patterns such as sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, by which we know this world. It is a poor man’s menu. Those who stop at the empirical level do not realize what they miss. In the world of creative imagination, from the mind of a Shakespeare there can hop out hundreds of heroes like Othello, Hamlet, King Lear, Richard III and Henry V, and heroines like Ophelia, Portia, and several others who have become more real to the reading public than any who lived in flesh and blood in England at any time. There is still another world to look into, which is the treasure house of all secrets. Scientists, artists, poets and mystics spend years at the doors of the secret vault to have a word with the hidden oracle of the most concealed of all depths. Even after being blessed with the divinity of secrets, man has covered only three-fourths of his search. The last quarter is paradoxically not a quarter; it is the whole, containing all the other quarters within it. We make a full circle and come back to the Absolute, the unnamable which no one could ever encounter. This is the ocean where the salt doll, gone into it to measure its depth, loses its identity. In this fourth, the world and the mind go into eternal silence. Such a marvel is this *atman* with its four quarters: “*ayam atma catuspat.*”

THIRD MANTRA

*jāgaritasthāno bahihprajñah sāptānga
ekonavimsatimukhah sthūlabhug
vaiśvānarah pratamah padah*

In the waking state, (he is) overtly conscious,
having seven parts and nineteen faces, nourishing himself on the concrete,

the Universal Man, the first limb.

The world is enormous, but it has an inner coherence and unity which makes it a universe. The universe is like a person with complementary limbs and several faces to enjoy itself with. I am a finite being, and yet I am privileged to act in unison with the world and be its interpreter and commentator. The program of the cosmic person is to enjoy. He is like a voracious caterpillar gobbling up everything on all sides until he is ready to go to sleep in his cocoon and dream of transforming into a butterfly that can emerge from the pupa with widespread wings and fly into the sublime heights of heaven. The cosmic person's head touches the world of the luminaries and his feet are planted firmly on earth. He is like a vertical parameter spanning the earth and the heavens. Between the earthly alpha and the heavenly omega he has many worlds to enjoy. With his cosmic eye, the sun, he fashions forms and colors.

Simultaneously, the visibles are fed into the admiring eyes of sentient beings. Seeing sunlight, the vegetative world blushes with lush green vitality. Plants burst into laughter with flowers. Birds fill the sky with lustful songs. Man prowls around looking for fresh forms of fascinating beauty. The whole world is alerted. All are programmed like busy bees. All get immersed in their varied activities. The biosphere of earth heaves rhythmically. The ancient winds of stormy seas blow into the land, and mountain winds hold them in sweet embrace. Between them they generate the invisible *prana*, the life-giving energy. The *prana* installed in a living organism is like a cute little motor that sets into motion a million movements, even in an organism as small as an ant. By breathing in and breathing out, man receives into every cell of his being the cosmic promise of life. The cosmic *prana* is called *matariśvan*, the grand assigner of duties. The enjoyer in man is a hard taskmaster. Even in listening to a single sound there is a wide range of harmonics. For conscious enjoyment the senses are to be disciplined and well attuned to every shade of meaning and nuance so that the individual person may perfect himself as an aesthete.

The world is said to have originated from the self-sacrificing fire of the primeval person's urge to transmute. The individual person keeps a fire in his hearth to cook his food. The man has that fire in his generative organ to create a replica of himself in the sacrificial fire of his woman's yearning for motherhood. That fire sits in the pit of one's stomach and burns as alchemic flames that can transmute the nourishment of food into a growing phenomenon of a living person. The same fire fumes, sparks, and leaps into verbal expressions of blasting words that can fill the hearer's ear with conceptual meanings out of which a world within a world can be created. In this gross world of impenetrable matter each body has a natural claim to occupy its own required space, space to be in and space to move about. In that variegated world of multitudinous bodies each has its own stamp of uniqueness. Even a microbe has its place and a role to play in the infinite scheme of things. Life breeds only where there is moisture. Water is a carrier of life; it fills and empties. It

enters the body as nourishment. When the day's bread is enjoyed and digested, the same water flushes out the filth and purifies the organism.

Perhaps no one notices that at least half of the grand program of this world is in the form of its creation. The child's first pleasure is the sucking of the mother's breast; the breast excretes; the child sucks. The child excretes and derives anal pleasure. Excretory pleasures can range from the anus to the mouth, and from the procreation of the species to the creation of music and literature. Artisans excrete their energy into unfashioned raw materials, and transmute them into consumer products with a concretization of their ideas and energies. The earth supports man, and in turn man measures it by pacing over it with sturdy feet. When resources become lean in one area, he transports himself to another pasture of abundance. Such is the grand scheme in which the universe conducts itself as a grand designer of action programs to enjoy. However, the world would be a meaningless place shorn of beauty and wonder if there were not the consciousness of man to be the enjoyer of the whole of which he is a part. For this reason the world is honey to man and man is honey to the world, with his five vital energies, five senses of perception, five organs of action and the fourfold functioning of his inner organ—questioning, remembering, deciding and becoming affected as a person. Man is privileged to enjoy to the maximum. Why call this world a world of thorns and thistles and pestilence and fury? For the discerning person, it is a world of figs and grapes, a carnival of colors and music, a world to love and be loved in. This is the picture we get of the conscious experiencing of psychophysical enjoyment. The rishi calls it the first quarter of the cosmic person, with seven limbs and nineteen faces to enjoy.

FOURTH MANTRA

*svapnasthāno antaprajñah saptanga
ekonavimsatimukhah praviviktabhuk
taijaso dvitiyah padah*

In the dream state (he), the inwardly conscious,
with seven parts and nineteen faces, nourishing himself on the well-selected,
is the luminous one (*taijasa*), the second limb.

Erwin Schrödinger thinks of this world as a construct. It is constructed with percepts and concepts in a very private part of this world, which is none other than the human mind. There is no studio or workshop more busy than the human mind, where artistic, formal, symbolic, mythical and pragmatic compositions are continuously attempted. The fabrications that go on within the human mind are not without purpose. Man does not even scratch, sneeze or cough

without a biological need for it. Even a worm squirms because a change of position brings greater comfort. The composition of mental images and the construction of the world are attempted by the mind to create a universe out of the chaotic onrush of all sorts of energies which pour into human awareness through the several inlets of the body. The subjective, creative functioning of the mind is to be performed with great technological skill so that the parade of forms that represent the world can give the experiencing of a continuous, organically knit story which can at once be beautiful and meaningful. It is very disturbing to see any lacuna in such a creative process.

The psychology of subjective creation is a fabulous subject which has been studied by scholars all over the world. The *Mahabharata* and the *Yoga Vasistha Ramayana* are among the books that describe this superhuman ability, which can be seen in even the feeblest human minds. The great ability of the myth-making mind can be directly experienced by reading great books like the epics of Homer, the tales of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, the fables of *Aesop*, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, *Monkey* of China, the *Kathasaritsagara* of India, and the *Panchatantra* tales. Equally brilliant literature is confined within the treasuries of each culture, such as Mayan, Incan, African, and that of the Australian aborigines.

It is as if mind presides in a workshop of ideational engineering where the raw material for world structuring first comes through the five senses and is later stored in the black box of memory. In the storage of memory a cataloguing and coordination is made of all the transformed variables of basic symbols. This is the hidden house of the archetypes of which Carl Gustav Jung speaks with awe and admiration. From a mere point the mind can make a locus of events; out of three points it can make a triangle. From a smudge it can reproduce the masterpiece of a forgotten artwork. If God is a creator, and he is still creating his work, that is happening right here and now within the folds of our own brains. Even a small mimicry of it is fascinating. For example, while passing through the funhouses of Disneyland such as the 'Pirates of the Caribbean', 'Passage Through Inner Space', 'The Haunted House' and 'The Country Bear Jamboree', even well-informed, mature-minded people who know how they can be tricked with light and sound feel thrilled. When we see these artistic creations we forget that the same creative process is generated with immense perfection at least 20 to 22 hours a day, while we take it for granted as a world outside us and a few dreams inside us. The economy of energy that is carefully looked into and adhered to with parsimony is another hidden story which man has not understood much. All that we know is that the eye and ear refuse to register light and sound when the vibrations of these phenomena are of a low frequency or high frequency. Many things we see explicitly are not actually warranted by the data given to our senses. That is why it is dangerous to ask an imaginative person to proofread. He will always read what he already knows.

It is strange that man makes so much of the transactions of the wakeful life and gives almost no attention to the subjective phenomena, described here as *svapna*, dreaming. Only the psychoanalysts give some credence to the symbolic language of dreams. All major scientific inventions were first presented to the minds of individual scientists as fictional hypotheses. Poets, artists, playwrights and mystics are first cradled in the magic of dream. Now we should ask who the programmer is of this wonderland of creation. The programmer is called *taijasa*. He is none other than *isvara*, who is all brilliance, and has an inexhaustible resource of energy. He appears from the future, passes through the present, and stealthily takes with him the cream of his creation to the storehouse of the past. He knows all the cunning of the sophisticated society of man; in children he will create tantrums and the role of the underdog, so that they can drag their parents by the nose. He can make the most aggressive woman play magnificently the role of the weaker sex, just for the joke of playing hide and seek with a psychiatrist. He can change the symbol of apple jelly into a viper with black and white stripes and easily transform it into a nun with black robes and white hood. If one day man fails to dream, doomsday will literally come upon him. The seven limbs and nineteen faces mentioned in the previous mantra are fully complemented and exploited by *taijasa*. Let us be grateful that we can dream.

FIFTH MANTRA

*yatra suptō na kamcāna kāmam kāmāyate
na kamcana svapnam pasyati tat susuptam
susuptasthana ekibhūtaḥ prajñānaghana
evānandamayo hyanandabhuk cetomukhaḥ
prājñāstrtiyaḥ pādaḥ*

That (state) wherein, on falling asleep, one desires nothing at all,
that is the well dormant (*sushuptam*) (which), attaining to a unitive status,
filled even with a knowing-content, made of bliss,
nourishing himself on bliss, of a sentient mouth,
is the knower, the third limb.

From the moment of the fertilization of an ovum to the hour of the birth of the child, the fetus is in deep sleep. In that state it has no desire and it does not see any dream. This long period of the unconscious state of the growing fetus can be called *sushupti*. In spite of having no conscious desire or semiconscious dream the growing fetus is active. This is one of the greatest miracles of this world. A thick and slimy drop of vital fluid is transferred from the male generative organ to the female womb where it joins another drop, then duplicates and replicates in a strange manner.

Without the conscious deliberation of anyone it becomes fully formed into a small person with perfect hands and legs and senses to perceive. It is paradoxical that the child is growing in the womb of the mother without being attended by either of its parents. Narayana Guru remembers this prenatal state with gratitude:

Within the womb, O Lord of good,
Was that lump in hand - this humble self.
With what exceeding love,
Who but Thou, kind One, nurtured it into life!
Ordered by Thee, all comes about.
Thus knowing, this Thy servant
To Thee now surrenders all.

Of earth, water, fire, air and ether too,
From each gathered, and firmly shaping in the palm,
Who confines me within a cell with blazing fire alit -
Even from the oppression great of such a feminine divinity,
Protect and nourish me in Thy nectarine immortality....

For months full four and five,
Growing, becoming by slow degrees,
Even Thou it was who eyes formed one after one,
Ever warding off Death's hand.
All that is now past,
But to my recollective weeping of that prime fetal time,
Listen, oh Lord of Good.

Yea, semen it was that mixed with blood;
And thus by sound matured and taking form, I lay mediate.
Then for me there was no mother or father;
So by Thee alone raised, sole parent mine,
All that I am is here today.

Prenatal Gratitude, v. 1,2,5,6
Translated by Nataraja Guru

Perhaps this is the only period when man is not tormented by the problems of this world. So it is only natural that man seeks the security and warmth of the womb of the unconscious night after

night and feels comforted and rejuvenated when he is blessed with deep sleep. In the Gita it is said that what is day to a worldly man is night to a yogi, and what is night to the worldly man is the time for the yogi to keep awake and be alert. This is also true of the unconscious, which is busy when the conscious mind is inoperative. Even the vegetative world reveals this secret. Flower buds which look unimpressive in the evening change overnight into fully bloomed flowers. This is a silent zone; the unconscious does not speak. From the beginning of the birth of consciousness in man, he has been curious to find out how everything comes into being without the hustle and bustle of planning commissions and construction engineers. Those who are poetically inclined listen to the whisperings of the muses and become informed of a God who created everything, and they believe that God is never tired of continuing the creation in secret. Some conceited earthlings who are proud of their power to coin equations claim that it all happened with a big bang; of what, they do not know. What being, laboring and fashioning the world, was doing it, in silence and in loneliness? For example, if we go with the scientist and believe that there were only whirling clouds of nebulae to begin with for millions of years, the clouds were whirling without deciding into how many stars they should split to make a neat and well-formed galaxy. Sri Aurobindo, in his legend and symbol of *Savitri*, refers to this in his inimitable style:

It was the hour before the Gods awake.
Across the path of the divine Event
The huge foreboding mind of Night, alone
In her unlit temple of eternity,
Lay stretched immobile upon Silence' marge.
Almost one felt, opaque, impenetrable,
In the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse
The abysm of the unbodied Infinite;
A fathomless zero occupied the world....

As in a dark beginning of all things,
A mute featureless semblance of the Unknown
Repeating for ever the unconscious act,
Prolonging for ever the unseeing will,
Cradled the cosmic drowse of ignorant Force
Whose moved creative slumber kindles the suns
And carries our lives in its somnambulist whirl.

Savitri, p. 1.

Such was the prenatal sleep of the cosmos through which the galaxies, stellar systems, planetary systems, and life on earth emerged. The human prenatal unconscious is only a feeble echo of the cosmic formation in silence. Eminent psychologists like Robert Ornstein want to believe that man only recently became really awakened from the somnambulism of his race. What a grand theme is this unconscious, this *sushupti*, which the Mandukya Upanishad speaks of as the third quarter, from which the dream of the second quarter and the transaction of the first quarter emerged. This well correlated, well coordinated, neat scheme of the rishi helps us to make a breakthrough into the dark abyss where our fateful lives are pre-discussed, pre-designed and pre-determined by the gods of destiny who alone are present for the selection and coordination of chromosomes, whenever innocent parents, drunk with orgiastic wine, copulate in madness. Even the pious fakir Jalal al-din Rumi thinks: "First you were mineral, then vegetable, then man. You will be an angel and you will pass beyond that too." Like one who has made a great discovery, he further adds: "The worker is hidden in the workshop."

Thus everywhere, ancient savants and modern scientists vaguely realize that there is a super-cosmic intelligence hiding its plan from everyone, while keeping itself busy creating everything from a subatomic particle to a supernova. When we chant the mantra Aum, this sonic vehicle transports us to the last terminus of the journey of rational intelligence and brings us to the very home from where the song of creation has emerged. The master magician who lives in another world of creation is described as *prajnanaghana*, consciousness through and through. No hungry mind lusting after desires enters this world, and no fool is allowed to have any mind games there. Dreams are barred. Hence this region is christened as the domain of *ananda*, pure and simple: *anandamaya*.

The god who dwells in *sushupti* is eternally nourished with self-generated bliss. He is called *anandabhuk*. The captain's room is out of bounds for passengers, but whenever he pleases, through his chosen channels, he can reach all passengers individually and collectively. The same is the privilege of the god of the unconscious. He can let loose his Ariels and Pucks to entertain individual minds with dreams, and he also knows how to keep animated beings on the leash of rationality so that they may behave according to the norms and conventions of a universally concrete world, which is repeatedly revealed at regular intervals. Take any branch of science and walk through the corridors of its research laboratories – sooner or later you will come to the house of ignorance, beyond which the physicist, the chemist and the biologist cannot move another step. This is the *mysterium tremendum* in which everything is fused into one, which the rishi describes as *ekibhutam*. The seer of the Upanishad takes pity on us and offers yet another mantra to look at this still unidentified spirit, *yaksha*.

SIXTH MANTRA

*esa sarvesvara esa sarvajna eso' ntaryamesa
yonih sarvasya prabhavapyayau hi bhutanam*

This the lord of all, the all-knower; this the inner negation factor;
This is the source of everything, and the beginning and end of beings.

On a certain morning when you go for a walk, you may see along the footpath a large amount of white froth with innumerable bubbles all shining in the sun with a pearly luster. From where does this froth come? Certainly not from the grass. If you have the inquisitiveness of a child you may sit and touch the froth, to look for the source of it. To find out its cause, you need a lot of patience. If you seek relentlessly you will ultimately come to a small bug not bigger than a head louse. This amazing creature is called the spittlebug or spit-bug. The enormous quantity of froth has come from the tiny mouth of that smallest of all creatures.

Compared to this spittlebug, there is another being which is infinitesimally smaller because it is not even visible with the most powerful microscope. Indians call it *srishta*, the projector of the universe. In a clumsier way, Westerners call it 'the creator'. Functionally, the *srishta* is a super-super spit-bug who spits out nebula after nebula from which the galactic systems are continuously emerging. What baffles us when we look at the quantity of froth produced by a spit-bug is the incomprehensible power of the bug; the quantity of the liquid emerging from it cannot be adequately accounted for when we consider its source. The spitting out, the projection and the creation of the world, also offers a similar paradox. What is its material cause? Is it the substance out of which the universe evolves or the Word with which God creates?

The Indian God does not create with the Word; he only dreams. It is not that the dream is there because it is dreamt, but the dreamer derived his status from the dream that is dreamt. In this strange methodology we go topsy-turvy because God, who should have been the efficient cause, becomes the material cause, although there is nothing material about him, and his intention becomes both the efficient and final cause. With a view of putting some order into this otherwise incomprehensible story of creation, Narayana Guru, in verse 5 of his Universal Prayer, said:

Are You not creation, the creator too,
As also the magical variety of created things?
Is it not You again, Oh God, who is the very stuff
Of which all creation is made?

Here we get the first and final cause and all the in-between causes implied in creation, all in one package deal. Pointing to the same, the seer of the Mandukya Upanishad says, *esa sarvesvara*, “this is the Lord of all.” Why *sarvesvara*? Because he is the unmoved mover. Sitting where he is he goes everywhere, and without moving he overtakes the fastest of all moving entities.

Incidentally, Aristotle should be credited for defining God as the ‘unmoved mover’. It is probable that Aristotle got this idea of the unmoved mover from his juvenile experience of falling in love with some young Greek girl, who must have learned her cunning by combining the strategies of Artemis and Aphrodite. A lover has only one dream: to make his otherwise depressive looking beloved bloom into a smile, however transient that smile is. There is a Hercules in every lover who is willing to do any amount of labor to please the beloved. God is the most impossible of all beloveds. He is not sitting there as one person. He can be experienced only as the spasmodic convulsion of urges and appetites experienced as the first cause of all movements.

Love does not work alone. Love is born with a twin sister, Hate. Between them the ping-pong game of life is played. In planning this gigantic intrinsic game, God transformed himself into a genius of mathematics, of whom Pythagoras knew better than Aristotle. Even when creation was in its cradle, God was careful in structuring the atomic models of basic elements. He never made the mistake of mixing the number of protons with the number of electrons; consequently his atoms will never crossfire. Only God knows how many eons passed when he was all alone to appreciate the efficient harmony with which his creation was progressing, until he got aides like Galileo Galilei who gave a third eye to modern scientists to look at the marvel of God’s creation. Then an even more valiant person came in that tradition, Sir Isaac Newton, who became lyrical in his appreciation of God’s precision techniques. He admitted without reservation that God knew. The seer of the Upanishad knew it long before, so he said: *esa sarvajna*, “he is the all-knower.”

In the opening mantra of the Isavasya Upanishad there is an intriguing appellation given to God. The Sanskrit word used is *avasya*. India’s monist philosopher Sankara interprets it as “being enveloped or covered.” This meaning is challenged by the qualified monists and the dualists, who interpret it as “the indwelling.” They are both right and both wrong. Or even more generously, we can say that they are both right and not wrong in the least. It is the weaver’s intention to make a cloth, so he warps the thread around the woof. Both the warp and the woof are yarn. The monist sees only the primary oneness of the first cause. He thinks the cloth conceals the reality of the thread, by presenting the homogenous look of the final product. So he is right in saying the reality is hidden behind the superimposed idea of the cloth. In commenting on the Isavasya Upanishad, Sankara ingeniously applies a converse understanding of the theory of superimposition. Those who see the world do not see its hidden cause, God, because the reality of God is covered by the appearance of the world. Sankara expects the wise man to see the reality as much on the surface

as beneath, and reverse the order of superimposition, so that God, instead of being hidden, can be seen as the all-pervading principle.

The qualified monists and the dualists who are pragmatic in their philosophical pursuit and realistic in their empirical approach, take into account the intention of the creator, whether it is a potter, a weaver, or God, and put emphasis on the finality of things as a concretization of the intention of the creator. The pot does not only appear to be a pot, but it is the potter's idea of the pot that holds every particle in its place to give the inner cohesion of the finished pot. Similarly, it is the idea of the cloth that prompts the weaver to ply his thread in a certain way so that the final product can express in every bit of it the actualization of his intention.

On a much larger scale this is also true of God the Creator. Thus, God as Idea is the indwelling reality of this universe which issues out of Him. Hence it is said: "He is the indweller, he is the womb where the world is secretly nurtured." In the Gita, Krishna goes one step further by referring to himself as the father who has invested the sperm of every being into the respective wombs from which they are born. So it is said: "I am the source (womb) of everything." In this third quarter, the circle comes to a full round. Birth and dissolution are only two faces of the same Reality, so this is described as both the beginning and the end of all beings.

SEVENTH MANTRA

*nantahprajnam nabahisprajnam no' bhayatahprajnam
na prajnana ghanam na prajnam na aprajnam adrstam
avyavaharyam agrahyam alaksanam a dintyam
avyapadesyam ekatmapratyayasaram prapancopasamam
santam sivam advaitam cathurtham manyante
sa atma sa vijneyah*

As not inwardly conscious, not outwardly conscious, as not filled with a knowing content, not conscious, not unconscious, unseen, non-predicable, ungraspable, bereft of quality, unthinkable, indeterminate, as the substance of the certitude of a unitive Self, as the calmer of the unmanifested, tranquil, numinous, nondual is the fourth limb considered to be. He is the Self; that is to be recognized.

"Dust thou art and to dust thou returneth," is a biblical statement about a fact of life. However, the man who is holding onto the Bible with faith is also asked to believe that he is from God, and

ultimately he will be called back to God. How does the Bible accommodate such glaring contradictions?

Contradiction is not anything special to the Bible or Christianity. All religions subscribe to it. The fact of life has its relevancy only within the world of time and space where a continuous program of transformation is going on. The simplest example of it is our own life on earth. All physically sound people go into deep sleep and after lying there for a while absolutely unconscious they wake up and go from one program of action to another. Again in the night they are knocked out and go into the same unconscious sleep. This is very similar to coming out of the dust with an individual personality and then returning to the ignoble state of the dust. This is a repetitive process. Nowadays machines also behave intelligently by even initiating the programs with a certain amount of automation. They are doing it without a ghost in the machine.

Life becomes far more intriguing and worthwhile when the essence of it is related to the Universal Witness of the opening and closing of cosmic functioning. Here we make a departure from the intricate machinery of nature and go into the simplest of all realities, which is described only with a non-functional function - "is" - or, more elaborately, "which alone is," *tat eva sat*. Is it a consciousness that is throbbing within? The rishi says no. Is it an elaboration or modulation of consciousness which is seen as all this? Again the answer is no. Now putting these together, we naturally have to dismiss everything felt and seen and experienced within and all that is registered by the senses and mind as existing outside.

One may suspect that the reality under discussion could be a subtle condensation of possibilities that can someday elaborate itself into time and space with variegated forms and names. That way it could be a potential consciousness through and through. But we have a conditioned mind. Whenever we hear terms like "knowing," "becoming aware of," or "conscious of," we create a playground, and put on one side a mysterious entity experiencing a state of awareness, and in the other field the drama that is unfolded to him. Such kinds of conditional states have no relevancy here. As we do not know any alternative other than inertial matter, which does not have any sensation or awareness, we may come to the conclusion that it is incapable of knowing. That surmise is dismissed.

It is a matter of deconditioning and unlearning whatever one has gained in this manifested world such as seeing, transacting, grasping, taking note of hallmarks, or anticipating, even though what is referred to is not any of this. One gets to it by transcending all this. By going beyond sound, touch, form, taste, smell, one comes to a peace with which one was never acquainted before. It is the numinous toward which everything moves. It is other than the wakeful, the dream and the deep sleep. What is it? Well, it is the fourth. Call it *atma* if you may. This is to be known.

EIGHTH MANTRA

*so'yam atma adhyaksaram onkaro dhimatram
pada matra matrascapada akaraukaro makara iti*

The same Self treated as the AUM is substance;
state is substance and substance is state, under letters A, U, and M.

The earth under our feet is firm. We build our houses on it, till or plow the land and cultivate it. We make mines in it and dig out sturdy metals ranging from iron to gold. We think of the rocky hills and mountains as immobile. Except in the polar regions, water is not hard; it flows, and makes rivers, lakes and oceans. It has no shape of its own. Even more subtle is fire. It is a great revealer of forms with its own light. Air is like a spirit; we do not see it at all. It can sweep earth and make it barren, a desert land of sands. It can tickle water and make it tremble, or it can cause tidal waves of monstrous ferocity. It can make fire enraged and blow into a conflagration. It can be as subtle as our vital energies. The subtler an element, the mightier it becomes in its power to manifest.

Even more mysterious is *akasa*, for which English has no proper word. *Akasa* is the donor of space for everything to be, and it is the grand arena of the electromagnetic field, and even of the vibration of such energies which we have not fully understood. It is this *akasa* which makes our own little globe a part of the gigantic universe. Indians attribute one quality to *akasa*: sound. There is *akasa* in the person, the vibrating space of consciousness within: it is the *cidakasa*. From this indwelling cosmic energy system, man, or rather his consciousness, reaches outward through the articulation of sounds and the world seeps into him through his organ of hearing. He can chant Aum. From his heart there arises the energy of sound, and it goes into the wide world, making wave after wave. It affects everyone around him, including himself, because it comes back to him as a sound that can be heard. Thus, sound functions both centrifugally and centripetally. This is the greatest of all man's weapons to deal with the world at large. He can immortalize himself with his word. Certain powerful beings, like Lord Buddha, Moses, Jesus, and the Prophet Mohammed articulated words of wisdom whose echoes are still vibrating, and those sounds, like alchemy, create godlike people from the morbid mass of the five elements.

The rishis saw, in the scheme of articulation, a four-fold centrifugal expansion, and a three-fold centripetal inversion. The four-fold centrifugal manifestation consists first of *para*, the

unmanifested infinitude, from which manifestation arises; the second is *pasyanti*, the configuration of ideas in the deep unconscious, from where it can activate the preconscious threshold of the individuated mind, where the mystery of semiosis takes place. Then from the *pasyanti* the manifesting word enters into the secret manipulation of *madhyama*. There the meanings of conceptual configurations are clothed with the tonality of sound provided by the measured release of quanta of *prana*. Finally there is *vikhari*, which brings sounds bursting into meaning in the auditory awareness of the listener. The centripetal inversion begins with the mouth whose lips are fully parted, such as when we articulate “A.” The second location is seen in the throat, as when we say “U,” for which the lips are rounded, and finally it culminates in the heart, where we say “M” with the mouth fully closed.

These three sounds “A,” “U,” and “M,” are symbolically looked upon as three measures that can respectively represent the wakeful, the dream and the causal unconscious. Although the forms that belong to the earth are perishable, the idea carved into the niches of sound can remain as eternal Truth. For that reason, like the fourth, with which we became familiar in the previous mantra, the Word, logos, Aum, is also imperishable, *aksara*. At all the four levels of consciousness, Aum is the link between the individuated person and Brahman, the substratum of the cosmos. This is the grand scheme of the Mandukya Upanishad.

NINTH MANTRA

*jagaritasthano vaisvanaro karah prathama matra
apteradimatvad va apnoti ha vai sarvan
kamanadisca bhavati ya evam veda*

The “A” stands for the waking state where the Universal Man is the first substance because of obtaining or being the first. He obtains all he wants and becomes first, too, who understands thus.

Pain and pleasure are the dual principles by which a living organism is steered through the stream of life. Pleasure prompts acceptance and pain impels avoidance. Transaction is the continuous process of acceptance and avoidance with several degrees of compromise between them. The first tool a human child has to call attention to its wants is making a vocal sound. In other words, an open mouth is the gateway of human transaction. The impulse to avoid is often demonstrated by refusing to speak. In this mantra the act of communication is symbolized by the sound “A.” For a person who wishes to participate in the wakeful program of the gross world, there is a

surrounding community of people and hundreds of programs of action to which one is led either by natural inclination or by social obligation.

Man is only one of the many species of social beings. Whales, elephants, lions, caribou, wolves, dolphins, monkeys, human beings, crows, bees and ants are all social beings who live and participate in their respective groups with instinctive or conscious acceptance of their rights and responsibilities. The sociobiologist who studies the social behavior of species is sure to appreciate the general principles that govern all these beings in a similar way. It is as if one Universal Person is expressing itself through the group behavior of the species and the individual behavior of each member. One common cause which brings members of a species together is hunger. Most of them hunt together and distribute the catch or spoils. Thus hunger and thirst have become an invisible force which strings all members of our species into a Universal Person. As man has developed his faculties much more than the others, he farms and produces a variety of consumer goods. The human family is like a single matrix with countless cooperative units endlessly working for the collective good of all. Except for some manmade restrictions such as national boundaries, there is nothing to stop a person from extending their interest to the farthest corners of this globe.

The only requirement for a person to relate with another is the ability to communicate. The foremost means of communication is the tool of word power. Word power can be limited to a few sound signals of approval or denial or it can be made most effective with the extensive vocabulary of all spoken languages. Wakeful consciousness accompanied with attentiveness brings us to such a wide world of possibilities. Any person who knows this knows that this is the first quarter of the total significance of man's life on earth, and that he has a role to play there. His thoughts, his words and his actions are all of utmost importance, and he fulfills his role by making his functional presence most relevant and appropriate to the situation in which he is placed. The seer of the Upanishad is not asking us to think of the wakeful world as an illusory appearance of no consequence. Instead, he wants us to live as fully as possible the wide range of values that are relevant to the wakeful world, which forms the first quarter of the Absolute to which we organically belong.

TENTH MANTRA

*svapnasthanah taijasa ukarodvitiya matra utkarsad
ubhayatvadva utkarsati ha vai jnanasantatim samanasca
bhavati nasyabrahmavit kule bhavati ya evam veda*

The "U" stands for the dreaming state, which is the luminous one, the second substance, because of superiority or from being

intermediate. He leads wisdom generations and becomes one of sameness too. None ignorant of the Absolute could be born in the family of him who understands this.

Every idea is a word receptacle which holds the essence of what has been and what will be. Dreams occur like the germination of the future in the present. Actualization of those seeds is what is seen around us as the human dwelling, ranging from hutments to skyscrapers, and all the edifices of human achievements, such as cities, roads, bridges, and machinery of every kind. What is achieved is then withdrawn again into the imperishable memory of the past. Recorded memories are like countless millions of tragedies and comedies hiding in ambush on library shelves, popping into the minds of people again and again. The spirits of human dreams wander around with their subtle bodies and act upon human consciousness like wisdom bacteria, or the “little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump.” No man can read a poem or a play or watch the unfolding themes of a drama without himself transforming into a poet, a storyteller, a playwright, and all the characters he confronts. Thus, between the objective world of facts and the deep unconscious is placed the grand theme of transmuting the harsh and unwieldy matter of physicality into the delicate petals of a blooming mind that can waft its fragrance through millennia of human history. Such is “U,” the domain of *taijasa*, the god who walks among us with a million faces, a million hands and a million feet. Because of the masquerade he puts on, we recognize his face only as Vyasa and Homer, Valmiki and Dante, Da Vinci and Michelangelo, Newton and Einstein, Beethoven and Tan Sen, Li Po and Basho.

We have no way to look into the ability of the lower animals to recall the memory of their species, but it is evident that even the simplest among human beings has a treasury of the finest memories. Those who are aware of the gift of this and several other talents should not dismiss their threshold of consciousness as the rashes of an itching brain. Instead, we should recognize our co-creatorship with Isvara, the untiring creator of the stars and flowers and birds and galaxies. Such is the inspiration we gain from this wonderful Upanishad, which shows us the riches of a life that can be whole and overwhelmed with wonder.

ELEVENTH MANTRA

*susuptasthanah prajno makarah trtiya matra
miterapitirva minoti ha va idam sarvam apitisca
bhavati ya evam veda*

The “M” stands for the well-dormant state, the knower,

which is the third, because of ascent or from descent.
He verily ascends or descends into everything,
who understands this.

After a day's tiresome work when our limbs fail and our mind fades out, we go into the lap of sleep. Like a pilgrim tired of the world's oddities, we seek refuge in the peaceful haven of God's mercy. Time comes to an absolute pause in deep sleep and thus is devoid of any event. There is no memory to recall. However, when a person wakes up after a short or long period of deep sleep, they do not lose their self-identity. That means the stream of consciousness which characterizes life does not altogether leave a person in the state of deep sleep. In all alternating and cyclic functions there comes an inevitable pause. This pause is absolutely necessary for the rejuvenation and continuation of all pulsating energy systems. When living beings mature, the uniqueness of each species is gathered into the seed or sperm or ovum, to wait as an incipient principle until nature gives it the green light to proliferate. The consciousness that functions at such a critical juncture is not a passive onlooker or a conditioned reflex. It is a secret lobby of life where the Omnipresent Omniscience exercises the divine power of a god to act with a well-designed and far-sighted ingenuity as the one executor without a second, to whom is entrusted the entire responsibility of programming life.

Life is deprived of all its power to sense and cogitate when it enters into this dark room of programming. When the same life energy emerges from such alternating anesthesia it regains its conscious agency to act as a fully informed courier or executor. For this reason, the sound "M," the terminating syllable of Aum, is compared to a measuring vessel which receives into it a measure of withering vitality during sleep, and then measures out into the wakeful an equal quantity of replenished energy for another wakeful thrust. The living organism is like a colony of billions of autonomous living units which are held together, controlled, ruled and functionally coordinated by this unifying principle of a paradoxically inconscient consciousness. The same corporeality which is miraculously effected in each individual organism is further extrapolated into what may be called a universal mind of intrapersonal and interpersonal coordination of the highest order. Such an inconscient consciousness which is constantly engaged in the structuring of this universe should be called the supreme dharma. No individuated being can ever aspire to escape the magnetic domination of this perpetual dharma. The only exception is when transcendence happens in the white heat of the individual's mystical merger with the inner freedom and spontaneity of the cosmic principle, which can be dharma and Brahman at the same time.

TWELFTH MANTRA

*amatrah caturtho'vyaharyah prapancopasama
sivo dvaita evamonkara atmaiva samvisatyatmana
atmanam ya evam veda*

Free from substantiality, the Fourth is outside discussion,
calmer of the manifested, numinous is the nondual one,
which is even the AUM, the Self itself. He enters the
Self by the Self who knows thus.

If psychobiology is treated as a study of living organisms with a behavioral pattern animated with consciousness, there are several factors that constitute the subject matter of our study. First of all there is subjective consciousness, which includes sensations, mentations and emotionality. Secondly there is a network of neural interconnectedness. Thirdly, there are many chemical and biochemical interactions which cannot be fully discerned. Finally there are a number of typical and atypical behavioral reactions which have socio-historical significance. All these aspects are governed by specific laws which are intrinsically connected with general laws that govern the universe as a whole. All functions in an organism are directly connected with a pulsation of energy, which is quantifiable at least in principle. The unit measurement of a quantum of energy is called *matra*. The variegations in the quantum are responsible for the distinction between one experience and another. For this reason all dualities such as heat and cold and pain and pleasure are described in the Bhagavad Gita as the variations that inevitably happen in the transient matrix of the organisms and their environments as part of the eternal flux of becoming.

The experiential horizon of any significance to the individual is limited to the measurable field within which an organism's motor-sensory system can operate, and the orientation of each event is consequently strung to the antecedent and the consequent with a string of memory which has the special quality of being perennial and unceasing. This mysterious omnipresence that shines from within every bead of experience is ananda, the central locus of *atman*, the Self. Ananda is like light. No one can alter the speed of light, yet it can be intercepted and thus its saturation can be affected. From the invisible to the brightest light, there are several shades of obscurations. In the physical world of reflected and refracted light we are beset by many optical illusions. The same is also true of ananda when it is experienced within the altering states of consciousness already described as the wakeful, dream, and deep sleep. The phenomenon does not make the whole story. There is also the noumenon, light in itself, which is ananda through and through. The fourth and last immeasurable silence that follows the articulation of AUM is suggestive of a final plunge into the noumenon, where there is nothing to quantify and nothing to measure. This is the merging of the dewdrop in the sea.

AUM TAT SAT