



*The AITAREYA-UPANIṢAD of the  
RG-VEDA*



SARVAMANGALA FOUNDATION

*Translated in the light of Śaṅkarācārya's explanation  
by Achārya Vidyābhāskar*

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SARVAMANGALA

ऐतरेयोपनिषत्

*The AITAREYA-UPANISAD of the  
RG-VEDA*



## INDRA, THE KING OF THE DEVAS

He beheld the supreme Ātman, that is why he is called Indra ("he who saw this").

*Ancient Nepali Statue, Metal Mercuric Gild @ Himalayan Art Resources*

## ऐतरेयोपनिषद्

### The AITAREYA-UPANIṢAD of the RG-VEDA

#### Śānti-Mantra Prayer for Peace

वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितमाविरावीर्म एधि ॥  
वेदस्य म आणीस्थः श्रुतं मे मा प्रहासीरनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रान्  
संदधाम्यृतं वदिष्यामि सत्यं वदिष्यामि ॥ तन्मामवतु  
तद्वक्तारमवत्ववतु मामवतु वक्तारमवतु वक्तारम् ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

With my speech established in mind,  
*and* my mind established in speech,  
*O ultimate Reality*, manifest before me.  
Bring Knowledge (the Veda) close to me.  
May what I study not leave me,  
May I merge day and night with this study.  
I shall speak the actual,  
I shall speak the truth.  
May that protect me,  
May that protect the speaker.  
May that protect me,  
May that protect the speaker.  
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

अथ ऐतरेयोपनिषदि प्रथमाध्याये प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

## First Chapter

### Part One

ॐ आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीन्नान्यर्त्कचन मिषत् । स ईक्षत  
लोकान्नु सृजा इति ॥ १ ॥

In the beginning *all* this was only the Ātman, *the true nature*.  
Nothing else blinked. It observed:  
'Let me bring forth the worlds.'

स इमाँ ल्लोकानसृजत । अम्भो मरीचीर्मापोऽदोऽम्भः परेण दिवं  
द्यौः प्रतिष्ठाऽन्तरिक्षं मरीचयः ॥  
पृथिवी मरो या अधस्तात्त आपः ॥ २ ॥

It brought forth these worlds:

Ambhas: space

Marīci: light

Mara: earth

Āpas: waters.

Space is what is beyond the sky,  
the sky is the support.

Marīci, the light rays, are the region in between.

Mara, where one perishes, is the earth.

What is below are Āpas, the waters.

स ईक्षतेमे नु लोका लोकपालान्तु सृजा इति ॥ सोऽन्य एव पुरुषं  
समुद्धृत्यामूर्छयत् ॥ ३ ॥

The *Ātman* observed:

‘These now are the worlds.

Let me bring forth the protectors of the worlds.’

Having raised Puruṣa, *the primordial being*,  
up from those very waters, it shaped him.

तमभ्यतपत्तस्याभितपत्तस्य मुखं निरभिद्यत यथाऽण्डं  
मुखाद्वाग्वाचोऽग्निर्नासिके निरभिद्येतं नासिकाभ्यां प्राणः ॥  
प्राणाद्वायुरक्षिणी निरभिद्येतमक्षीभ्यां चक्षुश्चक्षुष  
आदित्यः कर्णौ निरभिद्येतां कर्णाभ्यां श्रोत्रं  
श्रोत्राद्विशस्त्वद्विरभिद्यत त्वचो लोमानि लोमभ्य ओषधिवनस्पतयो  
हृदयं निरभिद्यत हृदयान्मनो मनसश्वन्दमा नाभिर्निरभिद्यत  
नाभ्या अपानोऽपानान्मृत्युः  
शिश्मं निरभिद्यत शिश्मादेतो रेतस आपः ॥ ४ ॥

The *Ātman* contemplated upon him.

As he was being contemplated upon,

his mouth split open like an egg:

from the mouth *emerged* speech,

from speech fire.

The nostrils split open:

from the nostrils *emerged* the Prāṇa *life-breath*,

from Prāṇa the air.

The eyes split open:

from the eyes *emerged* vision,

from vision the sun.

The ears split open: from the ears *emerged* hearing,

from hearing the *ten* directions *of space*.

The skin split open:

from the skin *emerged* the hairs,

from the hairs the plants and trees.

The heart split open:

from the heart emerged the mind,

from the mind the moon.

The navel split open:

from the navel *emerged* the Apāna *life-force*,

from Apāna *emerged* Death.

The genitals split open:

from the genitals *emerged* semen,

from semen the waters *of life*.

इत्यैतरेयोपनिषदि प्रथमाध्याये प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part One in the First Chapter of Aitareya-Upaniṣad.

अथ ऐतरेयोपनिषदि प्रथमाध्याये द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

## Part Two

ता एता देवताः सृष्टा अस्मिन्महत्यर्णवे प्रापतन्  
। तमशनापिपासाभ्यामन्ववार्जत् । ता  
एनमब्रुवन्नायतनं नः प्रजानीहि यस्मिन्न्यतिष्ठिता अन्नमदामेति ॥ १ ॥

After these Devatās had been brought forth  
they fell into this Great Ocean of *Sam̄sāra* –  
the *Ātman* subjected it to hunger and thirst.  
They addressed the *Ātman*:  
'Appoint a dwelling for us,  
residing within which we may consume food.'

ताभ्यो गामानयत्ता अब्रुवन्न वै नोऽयमलमिति ।  
ताभ्योऽश्वमानयत्ता अब्रुवन्न वै नोऽयमलमिति ॥ २ ॥

It brought a Cow before them.  
They said: 'This is not sufficient *as a dwelling*.'  
It brought a Horse before them.  
They said: 'This is not sufficient *as a dwelling*.'

ताभ्यः पुरुषमानयत्ता अब्रुवन् सुकृतं बतेति पुरुषो वाव सुकृतम् ।  
ता अब्रवीद्यथायतनं प्रविशतेति ॥ ३ ॥

It brought a Human before them.  
They said ‘This is truly well-fashioned.  
The Human is well-fashioned.’  
It said to them:  
‘Enter according to your *respective* places.’

अग्निर्वाग्भूत्वा मुखं प्राविशद्वायुः प्राणो भूत्वा नासिके  
प्राविशदादित्यश्चक्षुभूत्वाऽक्षिणी प्राविशादिशः  
श्रोत्रं भूत्वा कर्णौ प्राविशन्नोषधिवनस्पतयो लोमानि भूत्वा  
त्वचं प्राविशश्चन्द्रमा मनो भूत्वा हृदयं प्राविशन्मृत्युरपानो  
भूत्वा नार्भं प्राविशदापो रेतो भूत्वा शिशं प्राविशन् ॥ ४ ॥

Becoming speech, Fire entered the mouth.  
Becoming the Prāṇa *life-breath*, Air entered the nostrils.  
Becoming vision, the Sun entered the eyes.  
Becoming hearing, the *ten* directions of *space* entered the ears.  
Becoming hairs, the plants and trees entered the skin.  
Becoming mind, the moon entered the heart.  
Becoming the Apāna, Death entered the navel.  
Becoming semen, the waters entered the genitals.

तमशनायापिपासे अब्रूतामावाभ्यामभिप्रजानीहीति ते अब्रवीदेतास्वेव  
वां देवतास्वाभजाम्येतासु भागिन्यौ करोमीति । तस्माद्यस्यै कस्यै  
च देवतायै हर्विर्गद्धते भागिन्यावेवास्यामशनायापिपासे  
भवतः ॥ ५ ॥

Hunger and thirst said to the *Ātman*:  
‘Consider a dwelling for us.’  
Then it said to them:  
‘I assign you to receive a share among these Devatās.’  
Therefore to whichever Devatā an offering is made,  
hunger and thirst receive a share of that.

इत्यैतरेयोपनिषदि प्रथमाध्याये द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part Two in the First Chapter of Aitareya-Upaniṣad.

अथ ऐतरेयोपनिषदि प्रथमाध्याये तृतीयः खण्डः ॥

### Part Three

स ईक्षतेमे नु लोकाश्च लोकपालाश्चान्नमेभ्यः सृजा इति ॥ १ ॥

The *Ātman* observed:

'These now are the worlds and these are the protectors of the worlds.  
Let me bring forth food for them  
*to be consumed through the senses and so forth.*'

सोऽपोऽभ्यतपत्ताभ्योऽभितप्ताभ्यो मूर्तिरजायत ।  
या वै सा मूर्तिरजायतान्न वै तत् ॥ २ ॥

It contemplated upon the waters.  
As they were being contemplated upon,  
*a mass of form emerged from them.*  
The form that emerged from them:  
*that is the food to be consumed through the senses and so forth.*

तदेनत्सृष्टं पराङ्मत्यजिघांसत्तद्वाचाऽजिघृक्षत्  
तन्नाशक्तोद्वाचा ग्रहीतुम् ।  
स यद्वैनद्वाचाऽग्रहैष्यदभिव्याहृत्य हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ३ ॥

Having been brought forth thus,  
*the food wished to escape fearing its eaters.*  
The *primordial Being* tried to capture it with speech  
but he could not get hold of it by speech.

Had he got hold of it by speech  
one would be satisfied by merely speaking about food.

तत्प्राणेनाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशकोत्प्राणेन ग्रहीतुं स  
यद्वैनत्प्राणेनाग्रहैष्यदभिप्राण्य  
हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ४ ॥

The *primordial Being* tried to capture it with breath  
but he could not get hold of it by breath.

Had he got hold of it by breath  
one would be satisfied by merely breathing at food.

तच्छृष्टाऽजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशकोच्छृष्टा ग्रहीतु/न् स  
यद्वैनच्छृष्टाऽग्रहैष्यदद्वा हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ५ ॥

The *primordial Being* tried to capture it  
by means of vision but he could not get hold of it by means of vision.  
Had he got hold of it by means of vision  
one would be satisfied by merely seeing food.

तच्छ्रोत्रेणाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशकोच्छ्रोत्रेण ग्रहीतुं स  
यद्वैनच्छ्रोतेणाग्रहैष्यच्छ्रुत्वा हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ६ ॥

The *primordial Being* tried to capture it with hearing  
but he could not get hold of it by hearing.  
Had he got hold of it by hearing  
one would be satisfied by merely hearing about food.

तत्त्वचाऽजिघृक्षत् तत्त्वाशकोत्त्वचा ग्रहीतुं स  
यद्वैनत्त्वचाऽग्रहैष्यत् स्पृद्धा हैवान्नमत्रपस्यत् ॥ ७ ॥

The *primordial Being* tried to capture it with the *touch of the skin*  
but he could not get hold of it by the *touch of the skin*.  
Had he got hold of it by the *touch of the skin*  
one would be satisfied by merely touching food.

तन्मनसाऽजिघृक्षत् तत्त्वाशकोन्मनसा ग्रहीतुं स  
यद्वैनन्मनसाऽग्रहैष्यच्छात्वा हैवान्नमत्रपस्यत् ॥ ८ ॥

The *primordial Being* tried to capture it with the mind  
but he could not get hold of it with the mind.  
Had he got hold of it with the mind  
one would be satisfied by merely thinking about food.

तच्छेनाजिघृक्षत् तत्त्वाशकोच्छेन ग्रहीतुं स  
यद्वैनच्छेनाग्रहैष्यद्वित्सृज्य हैवानमत्रपस्यत् ॥ ९ ॥

The *primordial Being* tried to capture it with the genitals  
but he could not get hold of it by the genitals.  
Had he got hold of it by the genitals  
one would be satisfied by merely discharging food.

तदपानेनाजिघृक्षत् तदावयत् सैषोऽन्नस्य ग्रहो  
यद्वायुरनायुर्वा एष यद्वायुः ॥ १० ॥

The *primordial Being* tried to capture it with the *Apāna*,  
the digestive force. That is when he consumed it.  
It is this force which gets hold of food,  
the force whose life is food, *Annāyu*.

स ईक्षत कथं न्विदं महते स्यादिति स ईक्षत कतरेण प्रपद्या इति ।  
स ईक्षत यदि वाचाऽभिव्याहृतं यदि प्राणेनाभिप्राणितं यदि  
चक्षुषा दृष्टं यदि श्रोत्रेण श्रुतं  
यदि त्वचा स्पृष्टं यदि मनसा ध्यातं यद्यपानेनाभ्यपानितं  
यदि शिश्रेन विसृष्टमथ कोऽहमिति ॥ ११ ॥

*Then the Ātman observed:*

‘How could *all* this remain without me?’

It observed:

‘By which *pathway* should I enter this *body*?’

It observed:

‘If I can be uttered by speech,  
if I can be breathed by Prāṇa,  
if I can be seen by means of vision,  
if I can be heard by hearing,  
if I can be touched by the skin,  
if I can be thought about by the mind,  
if I can be consumed by the Apāna,  
if I can be discharged by the genitals  
– then who am I?’

स एतमेव सीमानं विद्यैतया द्वारा प्राप्यत । सैषा विद्तिर्नाम  
द्वास्तदेतन्नाऽन्दनम् ।  
तस्य त्रय आवस्थास्त्रयः स्वप्ना अयमावसथोऽयमावसथोऽयमावसथ  
इति ॥ १२ ॥

Then it opened up the fontanel  
and entered by this doorway.

This doorway is called Vidṛti, the opening, and it is blissful,  
*as it is the pathway to return to Para-Brahman.*

The *Ātman* has three residences:  
*the eye during the day,*  
*the mind while dreaming*  
*and the space in the heart in deep sleep –*  
and three states of repose:  
*the waking state, the state of dreaming and deep sleep –*  
it resides here, it resides here, it resides here.

स जातो भूतान्यभिव्यैर्ब्यत् किमिहान्यं वावदिषदिति । स एतमेव  
पुरुषं ब्रह्म ततममपश्यत् । इदमदर्शनमिती ३ ॥ १३ ॥

Being born he discerned beings and uttered:  
'What other is there here?'  
He perceived this Puruṣa, *his own true nature*,  
to be the supremely pervasive Brahman,  
*and exclaimed:* 'idam adarśam itī', 'Ah, I have perceived this!'.

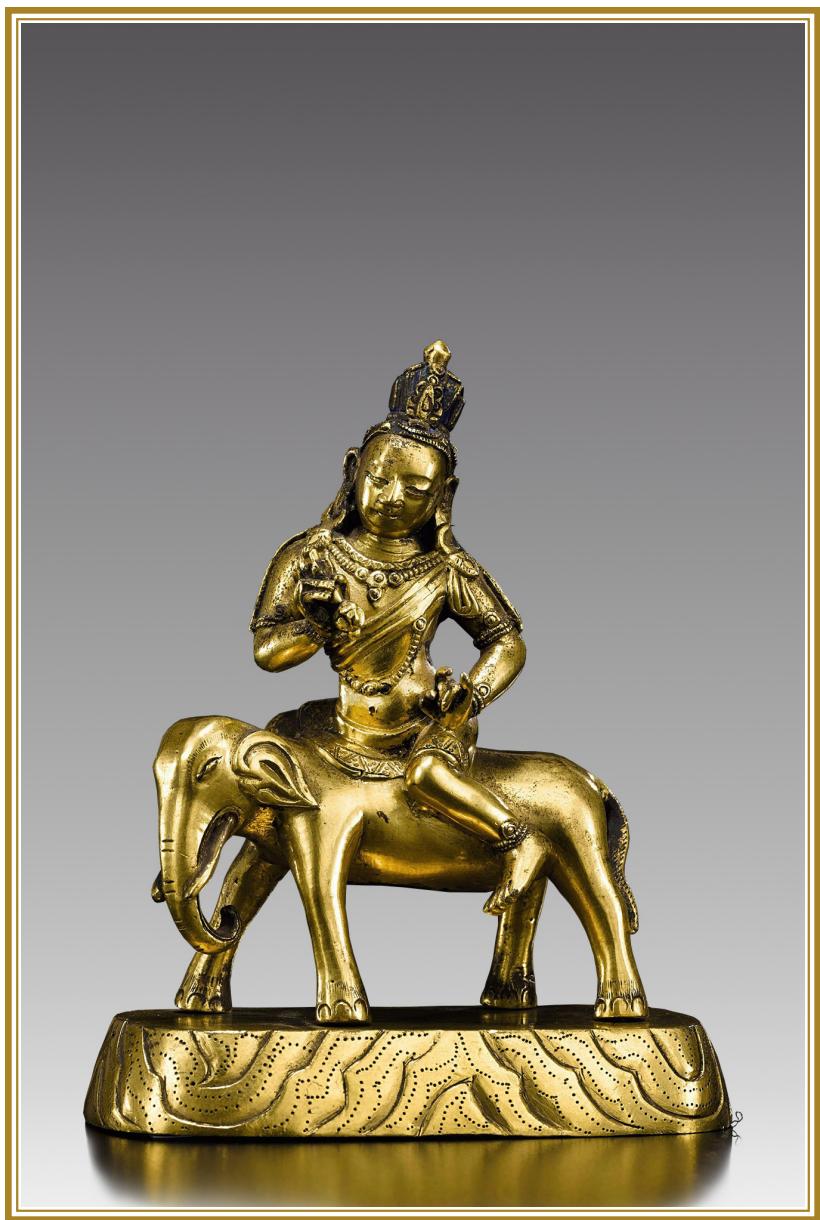
तस्मादिदन्द्रो नामेदन्द्रो ह वै नाम । तमिदन्द्रं सन्तर्मिद्र  
इत्याचक्षते परोक्षेण ।  
परोक्षप्रिया इव हि देवाः परोक्षप्रिया इव हि देवाः ॥ १४ ॥

Therefore he has the name Idan-dra,  
the one who beholds this,  
and is *addressed* with the name of Idan-dra.

But although he is Idan-dra, one calls him Indra –  
because the Devas seem to love the hidden,  
because the Devas seem to love the hidden.

इत्यैतरेयोपनिषदि प्रथमाख्याये तृतीयः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part Three in the First Chapter of Aitareya-Upaniṣad.



## INDRA SEATED UPON AIRĀVATA

In Yoga, the elephant Airavata is associated with the Mūlādhāra or Root-Chakra.

*Ancient Chinese Statue @ Himalayan Art Resources*

अथ ऐतरोपनिषदि द्वितीयोध्यायः ॥

## Second Chapter

ॐ पुरुषे ह वा अयमादितो गर्भो भवति यदेतद्रेतः  
। तदेतत्सर्वं भ्योऽग्ने भ्यस्तेजः संभूतमात्मन्येव त्वानं विभर्ति  
तद्यदा स्त्रियां सिञ्चत्यथैनज्जनयति तदस्य प्रथमं जन्म ॥ १ ॥

In the beginning of a new birth,  
the *Samsārin* (the deluded consciousness wandering in *Samsāra*)  
is present in the Man as the semen that holds the seed:  
this he holds within himself as the brilliance,  
*the quintessence* assembled from all the limbs.  
When he offers this into the Woman,  
he brings it forth as the embryo.  
This is the first birth.

तत्स्त्रिया आत्मभूयं गच्छति यथा स्वमङ्गं तथा । तस्मादेनां न हिनस्ति ।  
साऽस्यैतमात्मानमत्र गतं भावयति ॥ २ ॥

It becomes one with the Woman, just like one of her own body parts,  
therefore it does not harm her. She nurtures his Ātman that has  
arrived here.

सा भावयित्री भावयितव्या भवति । तं स्त्री गर्भं विभर्ति । सोऽग्र  
एव कुमारं जन्मनोऽग्रेऽधिभावयति ।  
स यत्कुमारं जन्मनोऽग्रेऽधिभावयत्यात्मानमेव तद्वावयत्येषं  
लोकानां सन्तत्या ।

एवं सन्तता हीमे लोकास्तदस्य द्वितीयं जन्म ॥ ३ ॥

As she nurtures, she is to be nurtured.

The Woman bears the embryo.

As one nourishes the child at the very start of birth,  
one nourishes oneself, through the continuation of these worlds: thus  
these worlds are continued.

This is the second birth.

सोऽस्यायमात्मा पुण्येभ्यः कर्मभ्यः प्रतिधीयते । अथास्यायामितर आत्मा

कृतकृत्यो वयोगतः प्रैति ।

स इतः प्रयन्नेव पुनर्जायते तदस्य तृतीयं जन्म ॥ ४ ॥

*The child, this Ātman of his,*

*is appointed to do auspicious works.*

*His other Ātman (the parent),*

*once he has completed all that is to be done,*

*becomes old and passes away.*

*Passing away from here he is born again.*

*This is the third birth.*

तदुक्तमृषिणा गर्भे नु सन्नन्वेषामवेदमहं देवानां जनिमानि  
विश्वा शतं मा पुर आयसीररक्षन्नधः इयेनो जवसा निरदीयमिति  
। गर्भ एवैतच्छयानो वामदेव एवमुवाच ॥ ५ ॥

Thus it has been said by the Ṛsi *Vāmadeva*:

“While dwelling in the womb  
I perceived the birth of all these Devas,  
*speech, mind, the senses and the like.*  
*Forms like* a hundred iron cities bore down on me.  
*Yet realising the Ātman,* like a falcon I swiftly took off.”

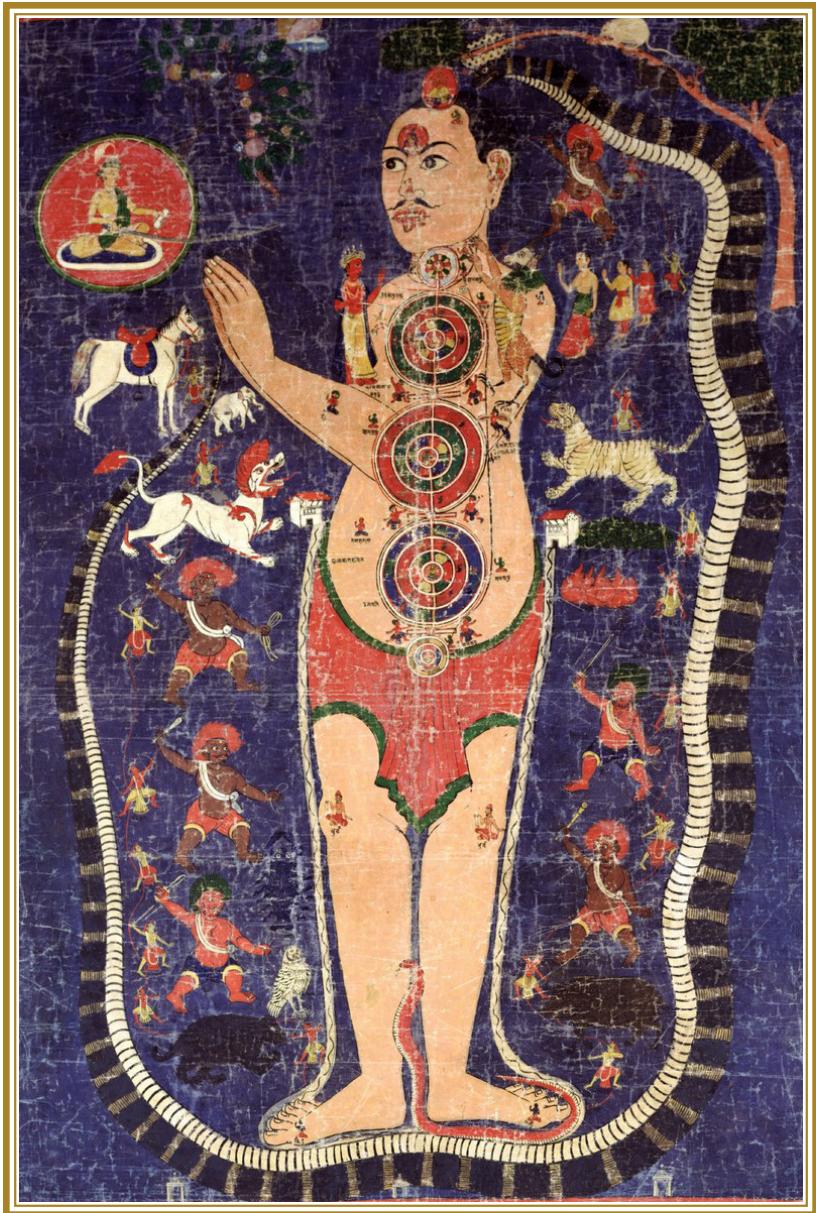
Thus spoke Vāmadeva even while dwelling in the womb.

स एवं विद्वानस्माच्छरीरभेदादूर्ध्वं उत्कम्यामुष्मिन् स्वर्गे लोके  
सर्वान् कामानास्त्वाऽमृतः समभवत् समभवत् ॥ ६ ॥

Realising this *Ātman*,  
upon the demise of the body,  
rising upward he accomplished all desires  
in the luminous realm and became immortal,  
he became immortal.

इत्यैतरोपनिषदि द्वितीयोध्यायः ॥

Thus ends the Second Chapter of Aitareya-Upaniṣad.



## THE SUBTLE BODY

The Devatās are present in the subtle body as different energies.

Nepali Artwork, 1700-1799, Shelley & Donald Rubin Collection @ Himalayan Art Resources

अथ ऐतरोपनिषदि तृतीयोध्यायः ॥

### Third Chapter

ॐ कोऽयमात्मेति वयमुपास्महे कतरः स आत्मा । येन वा पश्यति येन  
वा शृणोति येन वा गंधानाजिग्रहति येन वा वाचं व्याकरोति येन  
वा स्वादु चास्वादु च विजानाति ॥ १ ॥

Who is this Ātman that we venerate?  
Which one is it? –  
that by which one sees,  
that by which one hears,  
that by which one smells fragrances,  
that by which one utters speech,  
that by which one distinguishes the tasty and the tasteless?

यदेतद्वद्यं मनश्चैतत् । संज्ञानमाज्ञानं विज्ञानं  
प्रज्ञानं मेधा  
दृष्टिर्थृतिर्मतिर्मनीषा जूतिः स्मृतिः संकल्पः क्रतुरसुः कामो  
वश इति ।  
सर्वाण्येवैतानि प्रज्ञानस्य नामधेयानि भवन्ति ॥ २ ॥

That which is this heart is also the mind –  
consciousness, determination, comprehension, cognisance, intelligence,  
perception, composure, thinking, wisdom, affliction, memory,  
conceptualisation, decisiveness, life, desire, entrapment, *and so on  
and so forth:*

All these states are names of Awareness.

एष ब्रह्मैष इन्द्र एष प्रजापतिरेते सर्वे देवा इमानि च  
 पञ्चमहाभूतानि पृथिवी वायुराकाश आपो  
 ज्योतींषीत्येतानीमानि च क्षुद्रमिश्राणीव ।  
 वीजानीतराणि चेतराणि चाण्डजानि च जारुजानि च स्वेदजानि चोद्धिज्ञानि  
 चाश्वा गावः पुरुषा हस्तिनो यत्किञ्चेदं प्राणि जड्मं च पतत्रि  
 च यच्च स्थावरं सर्वं तत्प्रज्ञानेत्रं प्रज्ञाने प्रतिष्ठितं  
 प्रज्ञानेत्रो लोकः प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठा प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म ॥ ३ ॥

### *This Awareness*

is Brahman, this is Indra,  
 this is Prajāpati, this is all the Devas,  
 this is the five great elements  
 earth, air, space, water and light,  
 this is the tiny creatures along  
 with their seeds and all the others,  
 the egg-born animals *such as birds*,  
 the womb-born *mammals*,  
 the sweat-born *such as lice*,  
 the sprout-born *such as plants*,  
 and horses, cows, humans, elephants –  
 whatever living being moves, flies,  
 or is fixed *to one spot such as trees* –  
 all that has Awareness as its eye,  
 is established in Awareness,  
 the world has Awareness as its eye,  
 Awareness is the foundation,  
 Awareness is Brahman, *Absolute Reality*.

स एतेन प्राज्ञेनाऽऽत्मनाऽस्माल्लोकादुत्कम्यामुभिन्स्वर्गे लोके सर्वान्  
कामानास्वाऽमृतः समभवत् समभवत् ॥ ४ ॥

Through this aware Ātman  
he, the *R̥si Vāmadeva*,  
rose upward from this world,  
accomplished all desires in that luminous realm,  
and became immortal, he became immortal.

इत्यैतरोपनिषदि तृतीयोध्यायः ॥

Thus ends the Third Chapter of Aitareya-Upaniṣad.

इति ऋग्वेदीय-ऐतरेयोपनिषत् समाप्ता ॥

Thus ends the Aitareya-Upaniṣad of the R̥g-Veda.



## INDRA IN A RELAXED YOGIC POSTURE

As the seer of the Ātman, Indra relaxes into his own nature.

*Ancient Nepali Statue @ Himalayan Art Resources*

## Śānti-Mantra Prayer for Peace

वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितमाविरावीर्म एधि ॥  
वेदस्य म आणीस्थः श्रुतं मे मा प्रहासीरनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रान्  
संदधाम्यृतं वदिष्यामि सत्यं वदिष्यामि ॥ तन्मामवतु  
तद्वक्तारमवत्ववतु मामवतु वक्तारमवतु वक्तारम् ॥  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

With my speech established in mind,  
*and* my mind established in speech,  
*O ultimate Reality*, manifest before me.  
Bring Knowledge (the Veda) close to me.  
May what I study not leave me,  
May I merge day and night with this study.  
I shall speak the actual,  
I shall speak the truth.  
May that protect me,  
May that protect the speaker.  
May that protect me,  
May that protect the speaker.  
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

PRAAYER *to* GODDESS SARASVATI *to*  
INCREASE *our* INTELLIGENCE



## GODDESS SARASVATĪ, THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE PERSONIFIED

*Ancient Nepali Painting of Goddess Sarasvatī © Himalayan Art Resources*

## PRAYER to GODDESS SARASVATI to INCREASE our INTELLIGENCE

ॐ नमस्ते शारदे देवि काश्मीरपुरवासिनि ।  
त्वामहं प्रार्थये नित्यं विद्यादानं च देहि मे ॥

om namaste śārade devi kāśmīra-pura-vāsini |  
tvām aham prārthayे nityam vidyā-dānam ca dehi me ||

Om Obeisance to you, O Goddess Śāradā,  
You who are like the Full-Moon in Autumn,  
You who dwell in the Region of Kaśmīr!  
I ever beseech you: Grant me the gift of knowledge!

