

Aiterya Upanishad

~ *Translated by Swami Gambhirananda*

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Om ! May my speech be based on (i.e. accord with) the mind;

May my mind be based on speech.

O Self-effulgent One, reveal Thyself to me.

May you both (speech and mind) be the carriers of the Veda to me.

May not all that I have heard depart from me.

I shall join together (i.e. obliterate the difference of) day

And night through this study.

I shall utter what is verbally true;

I shall utter what is mentally true.

May that (Brahman) protect me;

May That protect the speaker (i.e. the teacher), may That protect me;

May that protect the speaker – may That protect the speaker.

Om ! Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

I-i-1: In the beginning this was but the absolute Self alone. There was nothing else whatsoever that winked. He thought, “Let Me create the worlds.”

I-i-2: He created these world, viz. ambhas, marici, mara, apah. That which is beyond heaven is ambhas. Heaven is its support. The sky is marici. The earth is mara. The worlds that are below are the apah.

I-i-3: He thought, “These then are the worlds. Let Me create the protectors of the worlds.” Having gathered up a (lump of the) human form from the water itself, He gave shape to it.

I-i-4: He deliberated with regard to Him (i.e. Virat of the human form). As He (i.e. Virat) was being deliberated on, His (i.e. Virat") mouth parted, just as an egg does. From the mouth emerged speech; from speech came Fire. The nostrils parted; from the nostrils came out the sense of smell; from the sense of smell came Vayu (Air). The two eyes parted; from the eyes emerged the sense of sight; from the sense of sight came the Sun. The two ears parted; from the ears came the sense of hearing; from the sense of hearing came the Directions. The skin emerged; from the skin came out hair (i.e. the sense of touch associated with hair); from the sense of touch came the Herbs and Trees. The heart took shape; from the heart issued the internal organ (mind); from the internal organ came the Moon. The navel parted; from the navel came out the organ of ejection; from the organ of ejection issued Death. The seat of the procreative organ parted; from that came the procreative organ; from the procreative organ came out Water.

I-ii-1: These deities, that had been created, fell into this vast ocean. He subjected Him (i.e. Virat) to hunger and thirst. They said to Him (i.e. to the Creator), "Provide an abode for us, staying where we can eat food."

I-ii-2: For them He (i.e. God) brought a cow. They said, "This one is not certainly adequate for us." For them He brought a horse. They said, "This one is not certainly adequate for us."

I-ii-3: For them He brought a man. They said "This one is well formed; man indeed is a creation of God Himself". To them He said, "Enter into your respective abodes".

I-ii-4: Fire entered into the mouth taking the form of the organ of speech; Air entered into the nostrils assuming the form of the sense of smell; the Sun entered into the eyes as the sense of sight; the Directions entered into the ears by becoming the sense of hearing; the Herbs and Trees entered into the skin in the form of hair (i.e. the sense of touch); the Moon entered into the heart in the shape of the mind; Death entered into the navel in the form of Apana (i.e. the vital energy that presses down); Water entered into the limb of generation in the form of semen (i.e. the organ of procreation).

I-ii-5: To Him Hunger and Thirst said, "Provide for us (some abode)." To them He said, "I provide your livelihood among these very gods; I make you share in their portions." Therefore when oblation is taken up for any deity whichsoever, Hunger and Thirst become verily sharers with that deity.

I-iii-1: He thought, "This, then, are the senses and the deities of the senses. Let Me create food for them.

I-iii-2: He deliberated with regard to the water. From the water, thus brooded over, evolved a form. The form that emerged was verily food.

I-iii-3: This food, that was created, turned back and attempted to run away. He tried to take it up with speech. He did not succeed in taking it up through speech. If He had succeeded in taking it up with the speech, then one would have become contented merely by talking of food.

I-iii-4: He tried to grasp that food with the sense of smell. He did not succeed in grasping it by smelling. If He had succeeded in grasping it by smelling, then everyone should have become contented merely by smelling food.

I-iii-5: He wanted to take up the food with the eye. He did not succeed in taking it up with the eye. If He had taken it up with the eye, then one would have become satisfied by merely seeing food.

I-iii-6: He wanted to take up the food with the ear. He did not succeed in taking it up with the ear. If He had taken it up with the ear, then one would have become satisfied by merely by hearing of food.

I-iii-7: He wanted to take it up with the sense of touch. He did not succeed in taking it up with the sense of touch. If He had taken it up with touch, then one would have become been satisfied merely by touching food.

I-iii-8: He wanted to take it up with the mind. He did not succeed in taking it up with the mind. If He had taken it up with the mind, then one would have become satisfied by merely thinking of food.

I-iii-9: He wanted to take it up with the procreative organ. He did not succeed in taking it up with the procreative organ. If He had taken it up with the procreative organ, then one would have become satisfied by merely ejecting food.

I-iii-10: He wanted to take it up with Apana. He caught it. This is the devourer of food. That vital energy which is well known as dependent of food for its subsistence is this vital energy (called Apana).

I-iii-11: He thought, "How indeed can it be there without Me ?" He thought, "Through which of the two ways should I enter ?" He thought, "If utterance is done by the organ of speech, smelling by the sense of smell, seeing by the eye, hearing by the ear, feeling by the sense of touch, thinking by the mind, the act of drawing in (or pressing down) by Apana, ejecting by the procreative organ, then who (or what) am I ?"

I-iii-12: Having split up this very end, He entered through this door. This entrance is known as vidriti (the chief entrance). Hence it is delightful. Of Him there are three abodes – three (states of) dream. This one is an abode, this one is an abode. This one is an abode.

I-iii-13: Being born, He manifested all the beings; for did He speak of (or know) anything else ? He realised this very Purusha as Brahman, the most pervasive, thus: "I have realised this".

I-iii-14: Therefore His name is Idandra. He is verily known as Idandra. Although He is Idandra, they call Him indirectly Indra; for the gods are verily fond of indirect names, the gods are verily fond of indirect names.

II-i-1: In man indeed is the soul first conceived. That which is the semen is extracted from all the limbs as their vigour. He holds that self of his in his own self. When he sheds it into his wife, then he procreates it. That is its first birth.

II-i-2: That becomes non-different from the wife, just as much as her own limb is. Therefore (the foetus) does not hurt her. She nourishes this self of his that has entered here (in her womb).

II-i-3: She, the nourisher, becomes fit to be nourished. The wife bears that embryo (before the birth). He (the father) protects the son at the very start, soon after his birth. That he protects the son at the very beginning, just after birth, thereby he protects his own self for the sake of the continuance of these worlds. For thus is the continuance of these worlds ensured. That is his second birth.

II-i-4: This self of his (viz. the son) is substituted (by the father) for the performance of virtuous deeds. Then this other self of his (that is the father of the son), having got his duties ended and having advanced in age, departs. As soon as he departs, he takes birth again. That is his (i.e. the son's) third birth.

II-i-5: This fact was stated by the seer (i.e. mantra): "Even while lying in the womb, I came to know of the birth of all the gods. A hundred iron citadels held me down. Then, like a hawk, I forced my way through by dint of knowledge of the Self". Vamadeva said this while still lying in the mother's womb.

II-i-6: He who had known thus (had) become identified with the Supreme, and attained all desirable things (even here); and having (then) ascended higher up after the destruction of the body, he became immortal, in the world of the Self. He became immortal.

III-i-1: What is It that we worship as this Self ? Which of the two is the Self ? Is It that by which one sees, or that by which one hears, or that by which one smells odour, or that by which one utters speech, or that by which one tastes the sweet or the sour ?

III-i-2: It is this heart (intellect) and this mind that were stated earlier. It is sentience, rulership, secular knowledge, presence of mind, retentiveness, sense-perception, fortitude, thinking, genius, mental suffering, memory, ascertainment resolution, life-activities, hankering, passion and such others. All these verily are the names of Consciousness.

III-i-3: This One is (the inferior) Brahman; this is Indra, this is Prajapati; this is all these gods; and this is these five elements, viz. earth, air, space, water, fire; and this is all these (big creatures), together with the small ones, that are the procreators of others and referable in pairs – to wit, those that are born of eggs, of wombs, of moisture of the earth, viz. horses, cattle, men, elephants, and all the creatures that there are which move or fly and those which do not move. All these have Consciousness as the giver of their reality; all these are impelled by Consciousness; the universe has Consciousness as its eye and Consciousness is its end. Consciousness is Brahman.

III-i-4: Through this Self that is Consciousness, he ascended higher up from this world, and getting all desires fulfilled in that heavenly world, he became immortal, he became immortal.

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Here ends the Aitareyopnishad, as contained in the Rig-Veda

