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The Upanishads

Ancient Hindu Philosophical Texts



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Ancient Hindu Philosophical Texts

THE UPANISHADS

(800-400 BC)



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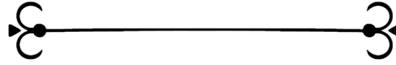
THE UPANISHADS



By Delphi Classics, 2025

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The Upanishads - Ancient Hindu Philosophical Texts



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The Translations



Jagban, a village in the Mithila region of Bihar, Eastern India — the supposed birthplace of the sage Yajnavalkya, author of the oldest Upanishad text. 'Brihadaranyaka', fl. c. 700 BC

The Upanishads (Müller 1884 Translation)



Translated by Max Müller, 1884

These ancient Sanskrit texts of the late Vedic and post-Vedic periods document the transition from the archaic ritualism of the Veda (the oldest scriptures of Hinduism) into new religious ideas and institutions, exploring central religious concepts of Hinduism. They deal with meditation, philosophy, consciousness and ontological knowledge, while the *Vedas* dealt more with mantras, benedictions, rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices.

Among the most important literature in the history of Indian religions and culture, the *Upanishads* document a wide variety of rites, incantations and esoteric knowledge, departing from Vedic ritualism and interpreted in various ways in the later commentarial traditions. The central concern of these texts is to examine and discover the relations between ritual, cosmic realities (including gods) and the human body/person, postulating Ātman and Brahman as the “summit of the hierarchically arranged and interconnected universe”. The Sanskrit term *Upanishad* originally meant “connection” or “equivalence”, but it later came to be understood as “sitting near a teacher,” from upa “by” and ni-sad “sitting down near”, referring to a student sitting close to a teacher while receiving spiritual knowledge.

The general location of the composition of the early *Upanishads* is considered as northern India. The region is bounded on the west by the upper Indus valley, on the east by lower Ganges region, on the north by the Himalayan foothills and on the south by the Vindhya mountain range. Scholars generally believe that the early *Upanishads* were produced at the geographical centre of ancient Brahmanism, Kuru-Panchala and Kosala-Videha, a “frontier region” of Brahmanism, together with the areas immediately to the south and west of these. This region covers modern Bihar, Nepal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, eastern Rajasthan, and northern Madhya Pradesh.

There are 108 extant *Upanishads*, of which the first dozen or so are the oldest and most important and are referred to as the principal (*mukhya*) *Upanishads*. They are found chiefly in the concluding part of the Brahmanas and Aranyakas and were, for centuries, memorised by each generation and passed down orally. The *mukhya Upanishads* predate the Common Era, though there is no scholarly consensus on their date or even on which ones are pre- or post-Buddhist. The *Brhadaranyaka* is regarded as particularly ancient by modern scholars. Of the remainder, 95 *Upanishads* are part of the *Muktikā* canon, composed from about the last centuries of first millennium BC through to c. fifteenth century AD. New *Upanishads*, beyond the 108 in the *Muktika* canon, continued to be composed throughout the modern era, though they often deal with subjects unconnected to the *Vedas*. The *mukhya Upanishads*, along with the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahmasutra* are interpreted in divergent ways in the several later schools of Vedanta.

In the early nineteenth century, translations of the *Upanishads* started to attract attention from a Western audience. The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer was deeply impressed by their nature and called them “the most profitable and elevating reading which... is possible in the world.” Modern era Indologists have discussed the similarities between the fundamental concepts in the *Upanishads* and the works of major Western philosophers.

The authorship of most *Upanishads* is unknown, as almost all the early literature of India was anonymous. The ancient *Upanishads* are embedded in the *Vedas*, which some traditionally consider to be *apauruseya*, “not of a man, superhuman” and “impersonal, authorless”. The Vedic texts assert that they were skillfully created by Rishis (sages), after inspired creativity, just as a carpenter builds a chariot.

The various philosophical theories in the early *Upanishads* have been attributed to famous sages such as Yajnavalkya, Uddalaka Aruni, Shvetaketu, Shandilya, Aitareya, Balaki, Pippalada and Sanatkumara. Women, such as Maitreyi and Gargi, participate in the dialogues and are also credited in the early *Upanishads*. Many believe that the early *Upanishads* were interpolated and expanded over time. There are differences within manuscripts of the same *Upanishad* discovered in different parts of South Asia, differences in non-Sanskrit versions of the texts that have survived, and differences within each text in terms of metre, style, grammar and structure. Therefore, existing texts are believed to be the work of many authors.

The *Brhadaranyaka* and the *Chandogya*, the two earliest *Upanishads*, are heavily edited texts, with much older sources than the others. The two texts are pre-Buddhist and may be placed in the seventh to sixth centuries BC. The three other early prose *Upanishads* — *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya* and *Kausitaki* are next and are likely pre-Buddhist, dating to the sixth to fifth centuries BC. The oldest of the verse *Upanishads*, the *Kena* is followed by the *Katha*, *Isa*, *Svetasvatara* and *Mundaka*, likely composed in the last few centuries BC. They reveal strong theistic tendencies and are probably the earliest literary products of the theistic tradition, whose later literature includes the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Puranas*.

The first German translation appeared in 1832 and Roer’s English version appeared in 1853. However, Max Mueller’s 1879 and 1884 editions were the first systematic English treatment to include the 12 principal *Upanishads*. In 1844 Müller had studied in Berlin with Friedrich Schelling, where he had started to translate the *Upanishads* and continued to research Sanskrit under Franz Bopp, the first systematic scholar of the Indo-European languages. Schelling inspired Müller to relate the history of language to the history of religion. In 1845, Müller moved to Paris to study Sanskrit under Eugène Burnouf, who encouraged him to publish the complete *Rigveda*, making use of the manuscripts available in England. He moved to England in 1846 to study Sanskrit texts in the collection of the East India Company. Müller’s connections with the East India Company and with Sanskritists based at Oxford University led to a career in Britain, where he eventually became the leading intellectual commentator on the culture of India. At the time, Britain controlled this territory as part of its Empire. This led to complex exchanges between Indian and British intellectual culture, especially through Müller’s links with the Brahmo Samaj. At that time the Vedic scriptures were little-known in the West, though there was increasing interest in the philosophy of the *Upanishads*. Müller believed that their sophisticated viewpoint could be linked to the henotheism of early Vedic Brahmanism from which it evolved.

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 वृ० उ०॥ ॥ १॥ ॥ २॥ ॥ ३॥ ॥ ४॥ ॥ ५॥ ॥ ६॥ ॥ ७॥ ॥ ८॥ ॥ ९॥ ॥ १०॥ ॥ ११॥ ॥ १२॥ ॥ १३॥ ॥ १४॥ ॥ १५॥ ॥ १६॥ ॥ १७॥ ॥ १८॥ ॥ १९॥ ॥ २०॥ ॥ २१॥ ॥ २२॥ ॥ २३॥ ॥ २४॥ ॥ २५॥ ॥ २६॥ ॥ २७॥ ॥ २८॥ ॥ २९॥ ॥ ३०॥ ॥ ३१॥ ॥ ३२॥ ॥ ३३॥ ॥ ३४॥ ॥ ३५॥ ॥ ३६॥ ॥ ३७॥ ॥ ३८॥ ॥ ३९॥ ॥ ४०॥ ॥ ४१॥ ॥ ४२॥ ॥ ४३॥ ॥ ४४॥ ॥ ४५॥ ॥ ४६॥ ॥ ४७॥ ॥ ४८॥ ॥ ४९॥ ॥ ५०॥ ॥ ५१॥ ॥ ५२॥ ॥ ५३॥ ॥ ५४॥ ॥ ५५॥ ॥ ५६॥ ॥ ५७॥ ॥ ५८॥ ॥ ५९॥ ॥ ६०॥ ॥ ६१॥ ॥ ६२॥ ॥ ६३॥ ॥ ६४॥ ॥ ६५॥ ॥ ६६॥ ॥ ६७॥ ॥ ६८॥ ॥ ६९॥ ॥ ७०॥ ॥ ७१॥ ॥ ७२॥ ॥ ७३॥ ॥ ७४॥ ॥ ७५॥ ॥ ७६॥ ॥ ७७॥ ॥ ७८॥ ॥ ७९॥ ॥ ८०॥ ॥ ८१॥ ॥ ८२॥ ॥ ८३॥ ॥ ८४॥ ॥ ८५॥ ॥ ८६॥ ॥ ८७॥ ॥ ८८॥ ॥ ८९॥ ॥ ९०॥ ॥ ९१॥ ॥ ९२॥ ॥ ९३॥ ॥ ९४॥ ॥ ९५॥ ॥ ९६॥ ॥ ९७॥ ॥ ९८॥ ॥ ९९॥ ॥ १००॥ ॥

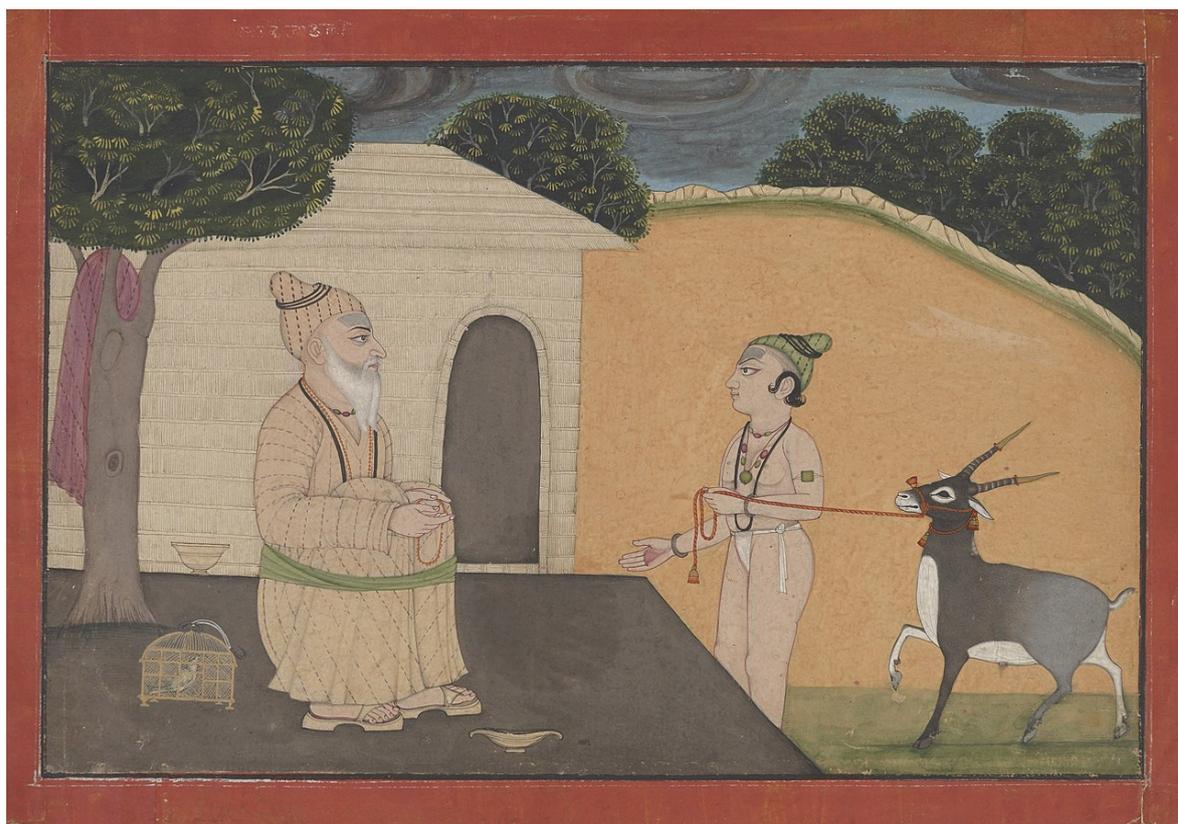
॥ ६० ॥ स्वस्ति श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ ॐ नमः श्रीब्रह्मणे ॥ ॐ इत्याह प्राजापत्याः देवाश्चासुराः
 अततः कानीयसा एव देवा ज्ञायसीत्सुरास्त एषु लोकेषु स्पृष्टन्त ॥ १ ॥ तिह देवा ऊचुर्हन्तासु
 रान्मृज उज्जीयेनात्ययामेति ॥ २ ॥ तिह वाचमूचुस्त्वन उजायेति तथेति तेभ्यो वा गुदगा
 यद्यो वाचिभोगस्तं देवेभ्य आगायद्यत्कल्याणम्बदति तदात्मनेते विदुरनेन वेन उजात्रा
 त्येष्यन्तीति तमभिद्रुत्य पाप्मना विध्यंत्सयः स पाप्माय देवेदमप्रतिहयम्बदति स एव
 स पाप्मा ॥ ३ ॥ अथ ह प्राणमूचुस्त्वन उजायेति तथेति तेभ्यः प्राण उदगायद्यः प्राणेभोगस्तं
 देवेभ्य आगायद्यत्कल्याणम्बदति तदात्मनेते विदुरनेन वेन उजात्रात्येष्यन्तीति तमभि
 द्रुत्य पाप्मना विध्यंत्सयः स पाप्माय देवेदमप्रतिहयं जिघ्रति स एव स पाप्मा ॥ ४ ॥ अथ वरु
 रुचुस्त्वन उजायेति तथेति तेभ्यश्चरु रुदगायद्यश्चरुषिभोगस्तं देवेभ्य आगायद्य

॥ शिवः ॥
 ॥ १॥

'Brihadaranyaka Upanishad', verses 1.3.1 to 1.3.4 — the oldest of the 'Upanishads', estimated to have been composed in the seventh century BC

इंद्रमः ॥ ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यद्विज्जगत्प्राजापतिः ॥ ते ज्ञानं तदंशं तमुंजीयामाग्धः कस्यखिद्वनं ॥ कु
र्वन्ते वेदुं कर्मोति सिद्धिं विषेक्तं ॥ समाः शवंत्वमिनाय येतोस्ति न कर्म विप्यते नरे ॥ प्रसृष्ट्याः नामते लो
काश्च न्येन तमसा व ताः ॥ तां स्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छेति ये के चात्मह नो जनाः ॥ ३ ॥ अने जे देकं मन सो ज्ञवी
येनेत देवाश्चापु व न्यर्व मशीर तद्वा बतोन्या नयेति तिष्ठत्स्मिन्त पोमा तरि प्रवादधाति ॥ तदे जति
ने जति ते देरे तद्वेति के चतं तरस्य सर्वस्य त्तु सर्वस्यास्य वा ह्यतः ॥ ५ ॥ पस्तु सर्वोशिभू ता न्यात्त न्येवा
न्य पश्यति सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विज्जगत्सते ॥ ६ ॥ यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मेवाभूदि जीनतः
तत्र कोहः केः शोकरा कवमनु पप्रतः ॥ ७ ॥ स पर्यगा कु र्त्तु म कायम ब्रह्मामस्त्रा विर ॥ ८ ॥ इन्द्रमपाप
विद्वंके विर्म नीषी परिभूः स्वयंभू यथा तप्यतो ध्यानव्यदधा च्छा श्वतीभमः समाभ्यः ॥ ९ ॥ अन्धन्त
मः प्रविशन्ति ये विद्यामुसते ततो भयश्च ते तमोपडु विद्याया ॥ १० ॥ प्रमदेवाहुर्विद्यया न्यरा
इरविद्यया इति प्रुप्रम धीशया येन स्तदि च च क्षिरे ॥ १० ॥ विद्या चा विद्या चा विद्या च यस्तदे सो
भयं ॥ सह अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्यया मृतमश्नुते ॥ ११ ॥ अंधं तमः प्रविशन्ति ये स भूतिमुपा

A page of 'Isha Upanishad' manuscript



An encounter between an aged ascetic and his young disciple within an ashram during the monsoon season — Basohli or Mankot, Punjab Hills, India., c. 1740

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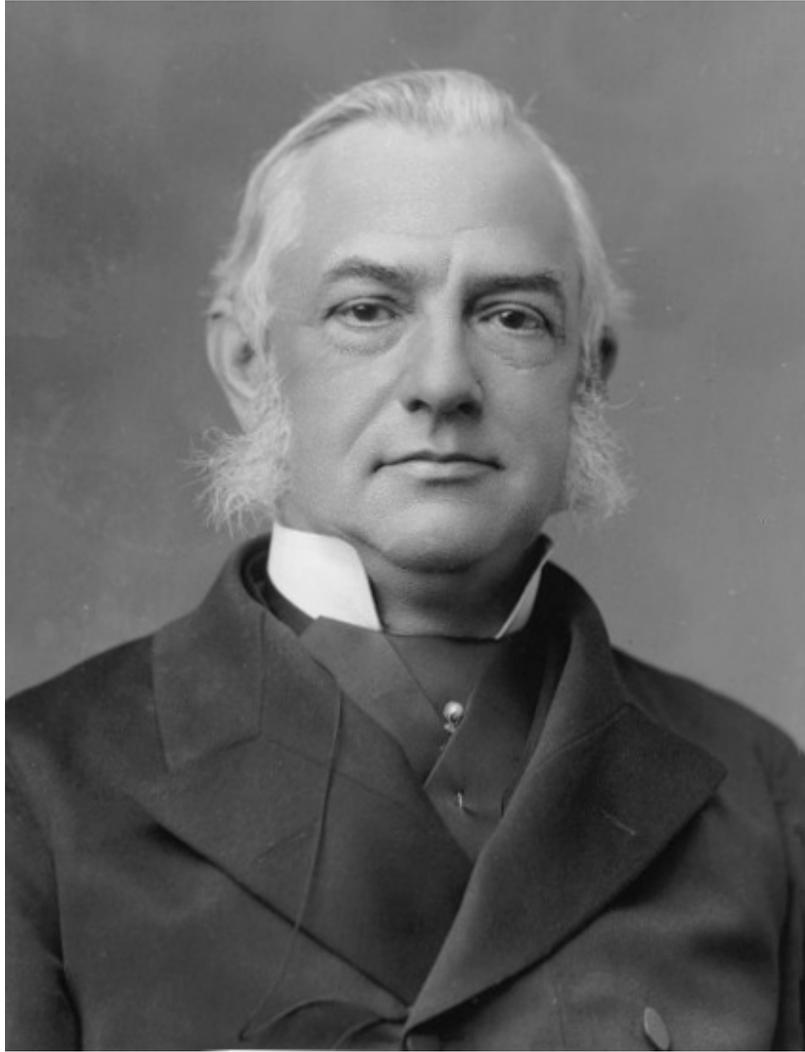
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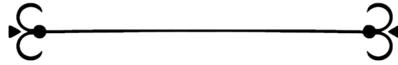


Statue of the fabled sage Yajnavalkya at the entrance of Uchchaith Bhagawati Mandir near Benipatti town in the Madhubani district of the Mithila region in Bihar



The translator, Max Müller, 1883. Müller (1823-1900) was a German-born British comparative philologist and Orientalist. He was one of the founders of the Western academic disciplines of Indology and religious studies. He directed the preparation of the 'Sacred Books of the East', a 50-volume set of English translations which continued after his death.

Dedication



TO THE RIGHT honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, kg. Chancellor of the university of Oxford, lately secretary of state for India, Sir Henry J. S. Maine, k.os.i. member of the council of India, and the very rev. H. G. Liddell, dd. Dean of Christ Church, to whose kind interest and exertions this attempt to make known to the english people the sacred books of the east is so largely indebted, I now dedicate these volumes with sincere respect and gratitude,

F. MAX MÜLLER.

'The general inclinations which are naturally implanted in my soul to some religion, it is impossible for me to shift off: but there being such a multiplicity of religions in the world, I desire now seriously to consider with myself which of them all to restrain these my general inclinations to.

And the reason of this my enquiry is not, that I am in the least dissatisfied with that religion I have already embraced; but because 'tis natural for all men to have an overbearing opinion and esteem for that particular religion they are born and bred-up in. That, therefore, I may not seem biassed by the prejudice of education, I am resolved to prove and examine them all; that I may see and hold fast to that which is best....

'Indeed there was never any religion so barbarous and diabolical, but it was preferred before all other religions whatsoever, by them that did profess it; otherwise they would not have professed it....

'And why, say they, may not you be mistaken as well as we? Especially when there is, at least, six to one against your Christian religion; all of which think they serve God aright; and expect happiness thereby as well as you.

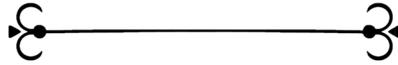
And hence it is that in my looking out for the truest religion, being conscious to myself how great an ascendant Christianity holds over me beyond the rest, as being that religion whereinto I was born and baptized, that which the supreme authority has enjoined and my parents educated me in; that which every one I meet withal highly approves of, and which I myself have, by a long continued profession, made almost natural to me: I am resolved to be more jealous and suspicious of this religion, than of the rest, and be sure not to entertain it any longer without being convinced by solid and substantial arguments, of the truth and certainty of it.

That, therefore, I may make diligent and impartial enquiry into all religions and so be sure to find out the best, I shall for a time, look upon myself as one not at all interested in any particular religion whatsoever, much less in the Christian religion; but only as one who desires, in general, to serve and obey Him that made me, in a right manner, and thereby to be made partaker of that happiness my nature is capable of.'

BISHOP BEVERIDGE (1636-1707).

Private Thoughts on Religion, Part 1, Article 2.

Preface to the Sacred Books of the East



I MUST BEGIN this series of translations of the Sacred Books of the East with three cautions: — the first, referring to the character of the original texts here translated; the second, with regard to the difficulties in making a proper use of translations; the third, showing what is possible and what is impossible in rendering ancient thought into modern speech.

Readers who have been led to believe that the Vedas of the ancient Brahmans, the Avesta of the Zoroastrians, the Tripitaka of the Buddhists, the Kings of Confucius, or the Koran of Mohammed are books full of primeval wisdom and religious enthusiasm, or at least of sound and simple moral teaching, will be disappointed on consulting these volumes. Looking at many of the books that have lately been published on the religions of the ancient world, I do not wonder that such a belief should have been raised; but I have long felt that it was high time to dispel such illusions, and to place the study of the ancient religions of the world on a more real and sound, on a more truly historical basis. It is but natural that those who write on ancient religions, and who have studied them from translations only, not from original documents, should have had eyes for their bright rather than for their dark sides. The former absorb all the attention of the student, the latter, as they teach nothing, seem hardly to deserve any notice. Scholars also who have devoted their life either to the editing of the original texts or to the careful interpretation of some of the sacred books, are more inclined, after they have disinterred from a heap of rubbish some solitary fragments of pure gold, to exhibit these treasures only than to display all the refuse from which they had to extract them. I do not blame them for this, perhaps I should feel that I was open to the same blame myself, for it is but natural that scholars in their joy at finding one or two fragrant fruits or flowers should gladly forget the brambles and thorns that had to be thrown aside in the course of their search.

But whether I am myself one of the guilty or not, I cannot help calling attention to the real mischief that has been done and is still being done by the enthusiasm of those pioneers who have opened the first avenues through the bewildering forest of the sacred literature of the East. They have raised expectations that cannot be fulfilled, fears also that, as will be easily seen, are unfounded. Anyhow they have removed the study of religion from that wholesome and matter-of-fact atmosphere in which alone it can produce valuable and permanent results.

The time has come when the study of the ancient religions of mankind must be approached in a different, in a less enthusiastic, and more discriminating, in fact, in a more scholarlike spirit. Not that I object to dilettanti, if they only are what by their name they profess to be, devoted lovers, and not mere amateurs. The religions of antiquity must always be approached in a loving spirit, and the dry and cold-blooded scholar is likely to do here as much mischief as the enthusiastic sciolist. But true love does not ignore all faults and failings: on the contrary, it scans them keenly, though only in order to be able to understand, to explain, and thus to excuse them. To watch in the Sacred Books of the East the dawn of the religious consciousness of man, must always remain one of the most inspiring and hallowing sights in the whole history of the world; and he whose heart cannot quiver with the first quivering rays of human thought and human faith, as revealed in those ancient documents, is, in his own way,

as unfit for these studies as, from another side, the man who shrinks from copying and collating ancient MSS. or toiling through volumes of tedious commentary. What we want here, as everywhere else, is the truth, and the whole truth; and if the whole truth must be told, it is that, however radiant the dawn of religious thought, it is not without its dark clouds, its chilling colds, its noxious vapours. Whoever does not know these, or would hide them from his own sight and from the sight of others, does not know and can never understand the real toil and travail of the human heart in its first religious aspirations; and not knowing its toil and travail, can never know the intensity of its triumphs and its joys.

In order to have a solid foundation for a comparative study of the religions of the East, we must have before all things complete and thoroughly faithful translations of their sacred books. Extracts will no longer suffice. We do not know Germany, if we know the Rhine; nor Rome, when we have admired St. Peter's. No one who collects and publishes such extracts can resist, no one at all events, so far as I know, has ever resisted, the temptation of giving what is beautiful, or it may be what is strange and startling, and leaving out what is commonplace, tedious, or it may be repulsive, or, lastly, what is difficult to construe and to understand. We must face the problem in its completeness, and I confess it has been for many years a problem to me, aye, and to a great extent is so still, how the Sacred Books of the East should, by the side of so much that is fresh, natural, simple, beautiful, and true, contain so much that is not only unmeaning, artificial, and silly, but even hideous and repellent. This is a fact, and must be accounted for in some way or other.

To some minds this problem may seem to be no problem at all. To those (and I do not speak of Christians only) who look upon the sacred books of all religions except their own as necessarily the outcome of human or superhuman ignorance and depravity, the mixed nature of their contents may seem to be exactly what it ought to be, what they expected it would be. But there are other and more reverent minds who can feel a divine afflatus in the sacred books, not only of their own, but of other religions also, and to them the mixed character of some of the ancient sacred canons must always be extremely perplexing.

I can account for it to a certain extent, though not entirely to my own satisfaction. Most of the ancient sacred books have been handed down by oral tradition for many generations before they were consigned to writing. In an age when there was nothing corresponding to what we call literature, every saying, every proverb, every story handed down from father to son, received very soon a kind of hallowed character. They became sacred heirlooms, sacred, because they came from an unknown source, from a distant age. There was a stage in the development of human thought, when the distance that separated the living generation from their grandfathers or great-grandfathers was as yet the nearest approach to a conception of eternity, and when the name of grandfather and great-grandfather seemed the nearest expression of God ¹. Hence, what had been said by these half-human, half-divine ancestors, if it was preserved at all, was soon looked upon as a more than human utterance. It was received with reverence, it was never questioned and criticised.

Some of these ancient sayings were preserved because they were so true and so striking that they could not be forgotten. They contained eternal truths, expressed for the first time in human language. Of such oracles of truth it was said in India that they had been heard, *sruta*, and from it arose the word *sruti*, the recognised term for divine revelation in Sanskrit.

But besides those utterances which had a vitality of their own, strong enough to defy the power of time, there were others which might have struck the minds of the

listeners with great force under the peculiar circumstances that evoked them, but which, when these circumstances were forgotten, became trivial and almost unintelligible. A few verses sung by warriors on the eve of a great battle would, if that battle ended in victory, assume a charm quite independent of their poetic merit. They would be repeated in memory of the heroes who conquered, and of the gods who granted victory. But when the heroes, and the gods, and the victory were all forgotten, the song of victory and thanksgiving would often survive as a relic of the past, though almost unintelligible to later generations.

Even a single ceremonial act, performed at the time of a famine or an inundation, and apparently attended with a sudden and almost miraculous success, might often be preserved in the liturgical code of a family or a tribe with a superstitious awe entirely beyond our understanding. It might be repeated for some time on similar emergencies, till when it had failed again and again it survived only as a superstitious custom in the memory of priests and poets.

Further, it should be remembered that in ancient as in modern times, the utterances of men who had once gained a certain prestige, would often receive attention far beyond their merits, so that in many a family or tribe the sayings and teachings of one man, who had once in his youth or manhood uttered words of inspired wisdom, would all be handed down together, without any attempt to separate the grain from the chaff.

Nor must we forget that though oral tradition, when once brought under proper discipline, is a most faithful guardian, it is not without its dangers in its incipient stages. Many a word may have been misunderstood, many a sentence confused, as it was told by father to son, before it became fixed in the tradition of a village community, and then resisted by its very sacredness all attempts at emendation.

Lastly, we must remember that those who handed down the ancestral treasures of ancient wisdom, would often feel inclined to add what seemed useful to themselves, and what they knew could be preserved in one way only, namely, if it was allowed to form part of the tradition that had to be handed down, as a sacred trust, from generation to generation. The priestly influence was at work, even before there were priests by profession, and when the priesthood had once become professional, its influence may account for much that would otherwise seem inexplicable in the sacred codes of the ancient world.

These are some of the considerations which may help to explain how, mixed up with real treasures of thought, we meet in the sacred books with so many passages and whole chapters which either never had any life or meaning at all, or if they had, have, in the form in which they have come down to us, completely lost it. We must try to imagine what the Old Testament would have been, if it had not been kept distinct from the Talmud; or the New Testament, if it had been mixed up not only with the spurious gospels, but with the records of the wranglings of the early Councils, if we wish to understand, to some extent at least, the wild confusion of sublime truth with vulgar stupidity that meets us in the pages of the Veda, the Avesta, and the Tripitaka. The idea of keeping the original and genuine tradition separate from apocryphal accretions was an idea of later growth, that could spring up only after the earlier tendency of preserving whatever could be preserved of sacred or half-sacred lore, had done its work, and wrought its own destruction.

In using, what may seem to some of my fellow-workers, this very strong and almost irreverent language with regard to the ancient Sacred Books of the East, I have not neglected to make full allowance for that very important intellectual parallax which, no doubt, renders it most difficult for a Western observer to see things and thoughts under exactly the same angle and in the same light as they would appear to

an Eastern eye. There are Western expressions which offend Eastern taste as much as Eastern expressions are apt to offend Western taste. A symphony of Beethoven's would be mere noise to an Indian ear, an Indian Saṅgīta seems to us without melody, harmony, or rhythm. All this I fully admit, yet after making every allowance for national taste and traditions, I still confidently appeal to the best Oriental scholars, who have not entirely forgotten that there is a world outside the four walls of their study, whether they think that my condemnation is too severe, or that Eastern nations themselves would tolerate, in any of their classical literary compositions, such violations of the simplest rules of taste as they have accustomed themselves to tolerate, if not to admire, in their sacred books.

But then it might no doubt be objected that books of such a character hardly deserve the honour of being translated into English, and that the sooner they are forgotten, the better. Such opinions have of late been freely expressed by some eminent writers, and supported by arguments worthy of the Khalif Omar himself. In these days of anthropological research, when no custom is too disgusting to be recorded, no rules of intermarriage too complicated to be disentangled, it may seem strange that the few genuine relics of ancient religion which, as by a miracle, have been preserved to us, should thus have been judged from a purely aesthetic, and not from an historical point of view. There was some excuse for this in the days of Sir William Jones and Colebrooke. The latter, as is well known, considered 'the Vedas as too voluminous for a complete translation of the whole,' adding that (what they contain would hardly reward the labour of the reader; much less that of the translator².' The former went still further in the condemnation which he pronounced on Anquetil Duperron's translation of the Zend-avesta. Sir W. Jones, we must remember, was not only a scholar, but also a man of taste, and the man of taste sometimes gained a victory over the scholar. His controversy with Anquetil Duperron, the discoverer of the Zend-avesta, is well known. It was carried on by Sir W. Jones apparently with great success, and yet in the end the victor has proved to be the vanquished. It was easy, no doubt, to pick out from Anquetil Duperron's translation of the sacred writings of Zoroaster hundreds of passages which were or seemed to be utterly unmeaning or absurd. This arose partly, but partly only, from the imperfections of the translation. Much, however, of what Sir W. Jones represented as ridiculous, and therefore unworthy of Zoroaster, and therefore unworthy of being translated, forms an integral part of the sacred code of the Zoroastrians. Sir W. Jones smiles at those who 'think obscurity sublime and venerable, like that of ancient cloisters and temples, shedding,' as Milton expresses it, 'a dim religious light³.' 'On possédait déjà,' he writes in his letter addressed to Anquetil Duperron, and composed in very good and sparkling French, 'plusieurs traités attribués à Zardusht ou Zeratusht, traduits en Persan moderne; de prétendues conférences de ce législateur avec Ormuzd, des prières, des dogmes, des lois religieuses. Quelques savans, qui out lu ces traductions, nous out assure que les originaux étaient de la plus haute antiquité, parce qu'ils renfermaient beaucoup de platitudes, de bévues, et de contradictions: mais nous avons conclu par les mêmes raisons, qu'ils étaient très-modernes, ou bien qu'ils n'étaient pas d'un homme d'esprit, et d'un philosophe, tel que Zoroastre est peint par nos historiens. Votre nouvelle traduction, Monsieur, nous confirme dans ce jugement: tout le collège des Guèbres aurait beau nous l'assurer; nous ne croirons jamais que le charlatan le moins habile ait pu écrire les fadaïses dont vos deux derniers volumes sont remplis⁴.' He at last sums up his argument in the following words: 'Ou Zoroastre n'avait pas le sens commun, ou il n'écrivit pas le livre que vous lui attribuez: s'il n'avait pas le sens commun, il fallait le laisser dans la foule, et dans l'obscurité; s'il

n'écrivit pas ce livre, il était impudent de le publier sous son nom. Ainsi, ou vous avez insulté le goût du public en lui présentant des sottises, ou vous l'avez trompé en lui donnant des faussetés: et de chaque côté vous méritez son mépris ⁵.'

This alternative holds good no longer. The sacred code of Zoroaster or of any other of the founders of religions may appear to us to be full of absurdities, or may in fact really be so, and it may yet be the duty of the scholar to publish, to translate, and carefully to examine those codes as memorials of the past, as the only trustworthy documents in which to study the growth and decay of religion. It does not answer to say that if Zoroaster was what we believe him to have been, a wise man, in our sense of the word, he could not have written the rubbish which we find in the Avesta. If we are once satisfied that the text of the Avesta, or the Veda, or the Tripitaka is old and genuine, and that this text formed the foundation on which, during many centuries, the religious belief of millions of human beings was based, it becomes our duty, both as historians and philosophers, to study these books, to try to understand how they could have arisen, and how they could have exercised for ages an influence over human beings who in all other respects were not inferior to ourselves, nay, whom we are accustomed to look up to on many points as patterns of wisdom, of virtue, and of taste.

The facts, such as they are, must be faced, if the study of the ancient religions of the world is ever to assume a really historical character; and having myself grudged no praise to what to my mind is really beautiful or sublime in the early revelations of religious truth, I feel the less hesitation in fulfilling the duty of the true scholar, and placing before historians and philosophers accurate, complete, and unembellished versions of some of the sacred books of the East. Such versions alone will enable them to form a true and just estimate of the real development of early religious thought, so far as we can still gain a sight of it in literary records to which the highest human or even divine authority has been ascribed by the followers of the great religions of antiquity. It often requires an effort to spoil a beautiful sentence by a few words which might so easily be suppressed, but which are there in the original, and must be taken into account quite as much as the pointed ears in the beautiful Faun of the Capitol. We want to know the ancient religions such as they really were, not such as we wish they should have been. We want to know, not their wisdom only, but their folly also; and while we must learn to look up to their highest points where they seem to rise nearer to heaven than anything we were acquainted with before, we must not shrink from looking down into their stony tracts, their dark abysses, their muddy moraines, in order to comprehend both the height and the depth of the human mind in its searchings after the Infinite.

I can answer for myself and for those who have worked with me, that our translations are truthful, that we have suppressed nothing, that we have varnished nothing, however hard it seemed sometimes even to write it down.

There is only one exception. There are in ancient books, and particularly in religious books, frequent allusions to the sexual aspects of nature, which, though perfectly harmless and innocent in themselves, cannot be rendered in modern language without the appearance of coarseness. We may regret that it should be so, but tradition is too strong on this point, and I have therefore felt obliged to leave certain passages untranslated, and to give the original, when necessary, in a note. But this has been done in extreme cases only, and many things which we should feel inclined to suppress have been left in all their outspoken simplicity, because those who want to study ancient man, must learn to study him as he really was, an animal, with all the strength and weaknesses of an animal, though an animal that was to rise

above himself, and in the end discover his true self, after many struggles and many defeats.

After this first caution, which I thought was due to those who might expect to find in these volumes nothing but gems, I feel I owe another to those who may approach these translations under the impression that they have only to read them in order to gain an insight into the nature and character of the religions of mankind. There are philosophers who have accustomed themselves to look upon religions as things that can be studied as they study the manners and customs of savage tribes, by glancing at the entertaining accounts of travellers or missionaries, and then classing each religion under such wide categories as fetishism, polytheism, monotheism, and the rest. That is not the case. Translations can do much, but they can never take the place of the originals, and if the originals require not only to be read, but to be read again and again, translations of sacred books require to be studied with much greater care, before we can hope to gain a real understanding of the intentions of their authors or venture on general assertions.

Such general assertions, if once made, are difficult to extirpate. It has been stated, for instance, that the religious notion of sin is wanting altogether in the hymns of the Rig-veda, and some important conclusions have been based on this supposed fact. Yet the gradual growth of the concept of guilt is one of the most interesting lessons which certain passages of these ancient hymns can teach us⁶. It has been asserted that in the Rig-veda Agni, fire, was adored essentially as earthly sacrificial fire, and not as an elemental force. How greatly such an assertion has to be qualified, may be seen from a more careful examination of the translations of the Vedic hymns now accessible⁷. In many parts of the Avesta fire is no doubt spoken of with great reverence, but those who speak of the Zoroastrians as fire-worshippers, should know that the true followers of Zoroaster abhor that very name. Again, there are certainly many passages in the Vedic writings which prohibit the promiscuous communication of the Veda, but those who maintain that the Brahmans, like Roman Catholic priests, keep their sacred books from the people, must have forgotten the many passages in the Brâhmanas, the Sûtras, and even in the Laws of Manu, where the duty of learning the Veda by heart is inculcated for every Brâhmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, that is, for every man except a Sûdra.

These are a few specimens only to show how dangerous it is to generalise even where there exist complete translations of certain sacred books. It is far easier to misapprehend, or even totally to misunderstand, a translation than the original; and it should not be supposed, because a sentence or a whole chapter seems at first sight unintelligible in a translation, that therefore they are indeed devoid of all meaning.

What can be more perplexing than the beginning of the *Khândogya-upanishad*? 'Let a man meditate,' we read, or, as others translate it, 'Let a man worship the syllable Om.' It may seem impossible at first sight to elicit any definite meaning from these words and from much that follows after. But it would be a mistake, nevertheless, to conclude that we have here vox et præterea nihil. Meditation on the syllable Om consisted in a long continued repetition of that syllable with a view of drawing the thoughts away from all other subjects, and thus concentrating them on some higher object of thought of which that syllable was made to be the symbol. This concentration of thought, ekâgratâ or one-pointedness, as the Hindus called it, is something to us almost unknown. Our minds are like kaleidoscopes of thoughts in constant motion; and to shut our mental eyes to everything else, while dwelling on one thought only, has become to most of us almost as impossible as to apprehend one musical note without harmonics. With the life we are leading now, with telegrams,

letters, newspapers, reviews, pamphlets, and books ever breaking in upon us, it has become impossible, or almost impossible, ever to arrive at that intensity of thought which the Hindus meant by ekâgratâ, and the attainment of which was to them the indispensable condition of all philosophical and religious speculation. The loss may not be altogether on our side, yet a loss it is, and if we see the Hindus, even in their comparatively monotonous life, adopting all kinds of contrivances in order to assist them in drawing away their thoughts from all disturbing impressions and to fix them on one subject only, we must not be satisfied with smiling at their simplicity, but try to appreciate the object they had in view.

When by means of repeating the syllable Om, which originally seems to have meant 'that,' or 'yes,' they had arrived at a certain degree of mental tranquillity, the question arose what was meant by this Om, and to this question the most various answers were given, according as the mind was to be led up to higher and higher objects. Thus in one passage we are told at first that Om is the beginning of the Veda, or, as we have to deal with an Upanishad of the Sâma-veda, the beginning of the Sâma-veda, so that he who meditates on Om, may be supposed to be meditating on the whole of the Sâma-veda. But that is not enough. Om is said to be the essence of the Sâma-veda, which, being almost entirely taken from the Rig-veda, may itself be called the essence of the Rig-veda. And more than that. The Rig-veda stands for all speech, the Sâma-veda for all breath or life, so that Om may be conceived again as the symbol of all speech and all life. Om thus becomes the name, not only of all our physical and mental powers, but especially of the living principle, the Prâna or spirit. This is explained by the parable in the second chapter, while in the third chapter, that spirit within us is identified with the spirit in the sun. He therefore who meditates on Om, meditates on the spirit in man as identical with the spirit in nature, or in the sun; and thus the lesson that is meant to be taught in the beginning of the *Khândogya-upanishad* is really this, that none of the Vedas with their sacrifices and ceremonies could ever secure the salvation of the worshipper, i.e. that sacred works, performed according to the rules of the Vedas, are of no avail in the end, but that meditation on Om alone, or that knowledge of what is meant by Om alone, can procure true salvation, or true immortality. Thus the pupil is led on step by step to what is the highest object of the Upanishads, viz. the recognition of the self in man as identical with the Highest Self or Brahman. The lessons which are to lead up to that highest conception of the universe, both subjective and objective, are no doubt mixed up with much that is superstitious and absurd; still the main object is never lost sight of. Thus, when we come to the eighth chapter, the discussion, though it begins with Om or the Udgîtha, ends with the question of the origin of the world; and though the final answer, namely, that Om means ether (âkâsa), and that ether is the origin of all things, may still sound to us more physical than metaphysical, still the description given of ether or âkâsa, shows that more is meant by it than the physical ether, and that ether is in fact one of the earlier and less perfect names of the Infinite, of Brahman, the universal Self. This, at least, is the lesson which the Brahmans themselves read in this chapter ⁸; and if we look at the ancient language of the Upanishads as representing mere attempts at finding expression for what their language could hardly express as yet, we shall, I think, be less inclined to disagree with the interpretation put on those ancient oracles by the later Vedânta philosophers ⁹, or, at all events, we shall hesitate before we reject what is difficult to interpret, as altogether devoid of meaning.

This is but one instance to show that even behind the fantastic and whimsical phraseology of the sacred writings of the Hindus and other Eastern nations, there may be sometimes aspirations after truth which deserve careful consideration from the

student of the psychological development and the historical growth of early religious thought, and that after careful sifting, treasures may be found in what at first we may feel inclined to throw away as utterly worthless.

And now I come to the third caution. Let it not be supposed that a text, three thousand years old, or, even if of more modern date, still widely distant from our own sphere of thought, can be translated in the same manner as a book written a few years ago in French or German. Those who know French and German well enough, know how difficult, nay, how impossible it is, to render justice to certain touches of genius which the true artist knows how to give to a sentence. Many poets have translated Heine into English or Tennyson into German, many painters have copied the Madonna di San Sisto or the so-called portrait of Beatrice Cenci. But the greater the excellence of these translators, the more frank has been their avowal, that the original is beyond their reach. And what is a translation of modern German into modern English compared with a translation of ancient Sanskrit or Zend or Chinese into any modern language? It is an undertaking which, from its very nature, admits of the most partial success only, and a more intimate knowledge of the ancient language, so far from facilitating the task, of the translator, renders it only more hopeless. Modern words are round, ancient words are square, and we may as well hope to solve the quadrature of the circle, as to express adequately the ancient thoughts of the Veda in modern English.

We must not expect therefore that a translation of the sacred books of the ancients can ever be more than an approximation of our language to theirs, of our thoughts to theirs. The translator, however, if he has once gained the conviction that it is impossible to translate old thought into modern speech, without doing some violence either to the one or to the other, will hardly hesitate in his choice between two evils. He will prefer to do some violence to language rather than to misrepresent old thoughts by clothing them in words which do not fit them. If therefore the reader finds some of these translations rather rugged, if he meets with expressions which sound foreign, with combinations of nouns and adjectives such as he has never seen before, with sentences that seem too long or too abrupt, let him feel sure that the translator has had to deal with a choice of evils, and that when the choice lay between sacrificing idiom or truth, he has chosen the smaller evil of the two. I do not claim, of course, either for myself or for my fellow-workers, that we have always sacrificed as little as was possible of truth or idiom, and that here and there a happier rendering of certain passages may not be suggested by those who come after us. I only wish to warn the reader once more not to expect too much from a translation, and to bear in mind that, easy as it might be to render word by word, it is difficult, aye, sometimes impossible, to render thought by thought.

I shall give one instance only from my own translation of the Upanishads. One of the most important words in the ancient philosophy of the Brahmans is Âtman, nom. sing. Âtmâ. It is rendered in our dictionaries by 'breath, soul, the principle of life and sensation, the individual soul, the self, the abstract individual, self, one's self, the reflexive pronoun, the natural temperament -or disposition, essence, nature, character, peculiarity, the person or the whole body, the body, the understanding, intellect, the mind, the faculty of thought and reason, the thinking faculty, the highest principle of life, Brahma, the supreme deity or soul of the universe, care, effort, pains, firmness, the Sun, fire, wind, air, a son.'

This will give classical scholars an idea of the chaotic state from which, thanks to the excellent work done by Boehtlingk, Roth, and others, Sanskrit lexicology is only just emerging. Some of the meanings here mentioned ought certainly not to be

ascribed to Âtman. It never means, for instance, the understanding, nor could it ever by itself be translated by sun, fire, wind, air, pains or firmness. But after deducting such surplusage, there still remains a large variety of meanings which may, under certain circumstances, be ascribed to Âtman.

When Âtman occurs in philosophical treatises, such as the Upanishads and the Vedânta system which is based on them, it has generally been translated by soul, mind, or spirit. I tried myself to use one or other of these words, but the oftener I employed them, the more I felt their inadequacy, and was driven at last to adopt self and Self as the least liable to misunderstanding.

No doubt in many passages it sounds strange in English to use self, and in the plural selfs instead of selves; but that very strangeness is useful, for while such words as soul and mind and spirit pass over us unrealised, self and selfs will always ruffle the surface of the mind, and stir up some reflection in the reader. In English to speak even of the I and the Non-I, was till lately considered harsh; it may still be called a foreign philosophical idiom. In German the Ich and Nicht-ich have, since the time of Fichte, become recognised and almost familiar, not only as philosophical terms, but as legitimate expressions in the literary language of the day. But while the Ich with Fichte expressed the highest abstraction of personal existence, the corresponding word in Sanskrit, the Aham or Ahankâra, was always looked upon as a secondary development only and as by no means free from all purely phenomenal ingredients. Beyond the Aham or Ego, with all its accidents and limitations, such as sex, sense, language, country, and religion, the ancient sages of India perceived, from a very early time, the Âtman or the self, independent of all such accidents.

The individual âtman or self, however, was with the Brahmans a phase or phenomenal modification only of the Highest Self, and that Highest Self was to them the last point which could be reached by philosophical speculation. It was to them what in other systems of philosophy has been called by various names, τὸ ὄν, the Divine, the Absolute. The highest aim of all thought and study with the Brahman of the Upanishads was to recognise his own self as a mere limited reflection of the Highest Self, to know his self in the Highest Self, and through that knowledge to return to it, and regain his identity with it. Here to know was to be, to know the Âtman was to be the Âtman, and the reward of that highest knowledge after death was freedom from new births, or immortality.

That Highest Self which had become to the ancient Brahmans the goal of all their mental efforts, was looked upon at the same time as the starting-point of all phenomenal existence, the root of the world, the only thing that could truly be said to be, to be real and true. As the root of all that exists, the Âtman was identified with the Brahman, which in Sanskrit is both masculine and neuter, and with the Sat, which is neuter only, that which is, or Satya, the true, the real. It alone exists in the beginning and for ever; it has no second. Whatever else is said to exist, derives its real being from the Sat. How the one Sat became many, how what we call the creation, what they call emanation (πρόοδος), constantly proceeds and returns to it, has been explained in various more or less fanciful ways by ancient prophets and poets. But what they all agree in is this, that the whole creation, the visible and invisible world, all plants, all animals, all men are due to the one Sat, are upheld by it, and will return to it.

If we translate Âtman by soul, mind, or spirit, we commit, first of all, that fundamental mistake of using words which may be predicated, in place of a word which is a subject only, and can never become a predicate. We may say in English that man possesses a soul, that a man is out of his mind, that man has or even that man

is a spirit, but we could never predicate Âtman, or self, of anything else. Spirit, if it means breath or life; mind, if it means the organ of perception and conception; soul, if, like *kaitanya*, it means intelligence in general, all these may be predicated of the Âtman, as manifested in the phenomenal world. But they are never subjects in the sense in which the Âtman is; they have no independent being, apart from Âtman. Thus to translate the beginning of the Aitareya-upanishad, Âtmâ vâ idam eka evâgra âsît, by 'This (world) verily was before (the creation of the world) soul alone' (Röer); or, 'Originally this (universe) was indeed soul only' (Colebrooke), would give us a totally false idea. M. Regnaud in his 'Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de la philosophie de l'Inde' (vol. ii, p. 24) has evidently felt this, and has kept the word Âtman untranslated, 'Au commencement cet univers n'était que l'âtman.' But while in French it would seem impossible to find any equivalent for âtman, I have ventured to translate in English, as I should have done in German, 'Verily, in the beginning all this was Self, one only.'

Thus again when we read in Sanskrit, 'Know the Self by the self,' âtmânâman âtmanâ pasya, tempting as it may seem, it would be entirely wrong to render it by the Greek γνώθι σεαυτόν. The Brahman called upon his young pupil to know not himself, but his Self, that is, to know his individual self as a merely temporary reflex of the Eternal Self. Were we to translate this so-called âtmavidyâ, this self-knowledge, by knowledge of the soul, we should not be altogether wrong, but we should nevertheless lose all that distinguishes Indian from Greek thought. It may not be good English to say to know his self, still less to know our selves, but it would be bad Sanskrit to say to know himself, to know ourselves; or, at all events, such a rendering would deprive us of the greatest advantage in the study of Indian philosophy, the opportunity of seeing in how many different ways man has tried to solve the riddles of the world and of his soul.

I have thought it best therefore to keep as close as possible to the Sanskrit original, and where I could not find an adequate term in English, I have often retained the Sanskrit word rather than use a misleading substitute in English. It is impossible, for instance, to find an English equivalent for so simple a word as Sat, τὸ ὄν. We cannot render the Greek τὸ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ὄν by Being or Not-being, for both are abstract nouns; nor by 'the Being,' for this would almost always convey a wrong impression. In German it is easy to distinguish between das Sein, i.e. being, in the abstract, and das Seiende, τὸ ὄν. In the same way the Sanskrit sat can easily be rendered in Greek by τὸ ὄν, in German by das Seiende, but in English, unless we say 'that which is,' we are driven to retain the original Sat.

From this Sat was derived in Sanskrit Sat-ya, meaning originally 'endowed with being,' then 'true.' This is an adjective; but the same word, as a neuter, is also used in the sense of truth, as an abstract; and in translating it is very necessary always to distinguish between Satyam, the true, frequently the same as Sat, τὸ ὄν, and Satyam, truth, veracity. One example will suffice to show how much the clearness of a translation depends on the right rendering of such words as âtman, sat, and satyam.

In a dialogue between Uddâlaka and his son Svetaketu, in which the father tries to open his son's mind, and to make him see man's true relation to the Highest Self (*Khândogya-upanishad* VI), the father first explains how the Sat produced what we should call the three elements¹⁰, viz. fire, water, and earth, which he calls heat, water, and food. Having produced them (VI, 2, 4), the Sat entered into them, but not with its real nature, but only with its 'living self' (VI, 3, which is a reflection (*âbhâsamâtram*) of the real Sat, as the sun in the water is a reflection of the real sun. By this apparent union of the Sat with the three elements, every form (*rûpa*) and every name (*nâman*)

in the world was produced; and therefore he who knows the three elements is supposed to know everything in this world, nearly in the same manner in which the Greeks imagined that through a knowledge of the elements, everything else became known (VI, 4, 7). The same three elements are shown to be also the constituent elements of man (VI, 5). Food or the earthy element is supposed to produce not only flesh, but also mind; water, not only blood, but also breath; heat, not only bone, but also speech. This is more or less fanciful; the important point, however, is this, that, from the Brahmanic point of view, breath, speech, and mind are purely elemental, or external instruments, and require the support of the living self, the *gîvâtman*, before they can act.

Having explained how the Sat produces progressively heat, how heat leads to water, water to earth, and how, by a peculiar mixture of the three, speech, breath, and mind are produced, the teacher afterwards shows how in death, speech returns to mind, mind to breath, breath to heat, and heat to the Sat (VI, 8, 6). This Sat, the root of everything, is called *parâ devatâ*, the highest deity, not in the ordinary sense of the word deity, but as expressing the highest abstraction of the human mind. We must therefore translate it by the Highest Being, in the same manner as we translate *devatâ*, when applied to heat, water, and earth, not by deity, but by substance or element.

The same Sat, as the root or highest essence of all material existence, is called *animan*, from *anu*, small, subtile, infinitesimal, atom. It is an abstract word, and I have translated it by subtile essence.

The father then goes on explaining in various ways that this Sat is underlying all existence, and that we must learn to recognise it as the root, not only of all the objective, but likewise of our own subjective existence. 'Bring the fruit of a Nyagrodha tree,' he says, 'break it, and what do you find?' 'The seeds,' the son replies, 'almost infinitesimal.' 'Break one of them, and tell me what you see.' 'Nothing,' the son replies. Then the father continues: 'My son, that subtile essence which you do not see there, of that very essence this great Nyagrodha tree exists.'

After that follows this sentence: 'Etadâtmyam idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa âtmâ, tat tvam asi Svetaketu.'

This sentence has been rendered by Rajendralal Mitra in the following way: 'All this universe has the (Supreme) Deity for its life. That Deity is Truth. He is the Universal Soul. Thou art He, O Svetaketu ¹¹.'

This translation is quite correct, as far as the words go, but I doubt whether we can connect any definite thoughts with these words. In spite of the division adopted in the text, I believe it will be necessary to join this sentence with the last words of the preceding paragraph. This is clear from the commentary, and from later paragraphs, where this sentence is repeated, VI, 9, 4, &c. The division in the printed text (VI, 8, 6) is wrong, and VI, 8, 7 should begin with *sa ya esho 'nimâ*, i. e. that which is the subtile essence.

The question then is, what is further to be said about this subtile essence. I have ventured to translate the passage in the following way:

'That which is the subtile essence (the Sat, the root of everything), in it all that exists has its self, or more literally, its self-hood. It is the True (not the Truth in the abstract, but that which truly and really exists). It is the Self, i. e. the Sat is what is called the Self of everything ¹².' Lastly, he sums up, and tells Svetaketu that, not only the whole world, but he too himself is that Self, that Satya, that Sat.

No doubt this translation sounds strange to English ears, but as the thoughts contained in the Upanishads are strange, it would be wrong to smoothe down their

strangeness by clothing them in language familiar to us, which, because it is familiar, will fail to startle us, and because it fails to startle us, will fail also to set us thinking.

To know oneself to be the Sat, to know that all that is real and eternal in us is the Sat, that all came from it and will, through knowledge, return to it, requires an independent effort of speculative thought. We must realise, as well as we can, the thoughts of the ancient Rishis, before we can hope to translate them. It is not enough simply to read the half-religious, half-philosophical utterances which we find in the Sacred Books of the East, and to say that they are strange, or obscure, or mystic. Plato is strange, till we know him; Berkeley is mystic, till for a time we have identified ourselves with him. So it is with these ancient sages, who have become the founders of the great religions of antiquity. They can never be judged from without, they must be judged from within. We need not become Brahmans or Buddhists or Taosze altogether, but we must for a time, if we wish to understand, and still more, if we are bold enough to undertake to translate their doctrines. Whoever shrinks from that effort, will see hardly anything in these sacred books or their translations but matter to wonder at or to laugh at; possibly something to make him thankful that he is not as other men. But to the patient reader these same books will, in spite of many drawbacks, open a new view of the history of the human race, of that one race to which we all belong, with all the fibres of our flesh, with all the fears and hopes of our soul. We cannot separate ourselves from those who believed in these sacred books. There is no specific difference between ourselves and the Brahmans, the Buddhists, the Zoroastrians, or the Taosze. Our powers of perceiving, of reasoning, and of believing may be more highly developed, but we cannot claim the possession of any verifying power or of any power of belief which they did not possess as well. Shall we say then that they were forsaken of God, while we are His chosen people? God forbid! There is much, no doubt, in their sacred books which we should tolerate no longer, though we must not forget that there are portions in our own sacred books, too, which many of us would wish to be absent, which, from the earliest ages of Christianity, have been regretted by theologians of undoubted piety, and which often prove a stumbling block to those who have been won over by our missionaries to the simple faith of Christ. But that is not the question. The question is, whether there is or whether there is not, hidden in every one of the sacred books, something that could lift up the human heart from this earth to a higher world, something that could make man feel the omnipresence of a higher Power, something that could make him shrink from evil and incline to good, something to sustain him in the short journey through life, with its bright moments of happiness, and its long hours of terrible distress.

If some of those who read and mark these translations learn how to discover some such precious grains in the sacred books of other nations, though hidden under heaps of rubbish, our labour will not have been in vain, for there is no lesson which at the present time seems more important than to learn that in every religion there are such precious grains; that we must draw in every religion a broad distinction between what is essential and what is not, between the eternal and the temporary, between the divine and the human; and that though the non-essential may fill many volumes, the essential can often be comprehended in a few words, but words on which 'hang all the law and the prophets.'

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