



*The* PRAŚNA-UPANIṢAD *of the*  
ATHARVA-VEDA



SARVAMANGALA FOUNDATION

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

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EDITOR

Āchārya Vidyābhāskar

TEMPLATE AND LAYOUT DESIGNER

Vladimir Maliutin

CONTENT DESIGNER

Divya S. Kaushik, B. Lustig

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SARVAMANGALA

प्रश्नोपनिषत्

*The* PRAŚNA-UPANIṢAD *of the*  
ATHARVA-VEDA



**SIDDHA-LAKṢMĪ, THE LAKṢMĪ OF THE ACCOMPLISHED ONES**

The Praśna-Upaniṣad teaches that innumerable realities emerge from Absolute Reality.

*Ancient Nepali Stone Statue, in Private Collection @ Himalayan Art Resources*

## प्रश्नोपनिषत्

### The PRAŚNA-UPANIṢAD of the ATHARVA-VEDA

#### Śānti-Mantra

#### Prayer for Peace

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May we hear the Auspicious with our ears, o Devas, *luminous ones!* May we see the Auspicious with our eyes, o you who are worthy of veneration! With steady limbs and bodies may we live praising *you*, the *span of life* allotted to us by the Devas, *the luminous ones.*

Om Peace, Peace, Peace

ॐ स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।

स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May Indra of widespread renown *grant us* the Auspicious!  
May the all-knowing *Nourisher* Pūṣan *grant us* the Auspicious!  
May Tārṁṣya, *the divine Eagle* whose *chariot* wheel is invulnerable,  
*grant us* the Auspicious!

May Bṛhaspati, *the Teacher of the Gods*, grant us the Auspicious!

Om Peace, Peace, Peace

प्रथमः प्रश्नः ।

## First Question

*From where do all beings originate?*

ॐ सुकेशा च भारद्वाजः शैब्यश्च सत्यकामः सौर्यायणी च गार्ग्यः  
कौसल्यश्चाश्वलायनो भार्गवो वैदर्भिः कबन्धी कात्यायनस्ते हैते  
ब्रह्मपरा ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः परं ब्रह्मान्वेषमाणा एष ह वै तत्सर्वं  
वक्ष्यतीति ते ह समित्पाणयो भगवन्तं पिप्पलादमुपसन्नाः ॥ १.१ ॥

OM Sukeśā Bhāradvāja, Śaibya Satyakāma, Sauryāyaṇī Gārgya, Kau-  
salya Āśvalāyana, Bhārgava Vaidarbhi, and Kabandhī Kātyāyana:  
These *six students* were intent on Brahman, committed to Brahman,  
seeking the ultimate Brahman, *Absolute Reality*. They approached the  
exalted Pippalāda with fuel *for the sacred fire ceremony* in their hands,  
*knowing that*:

‘He will certainly explain it all.’

तान्ह स ऋषिरुवाच भूय एव तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया  
संवत्सरं संवत्स्यथ यथाकामं प्रश्नान् पृच्छत यदि  
विज्ञास्यामः सर्वं ह वो वक्ष्याम इति ॥ १.२ ॥

The Ṛṣi said to them:

‘Once again spend a year *practising*  
Tapas, *spiritual austerity*, Brahmācārya, *celibacy*,  
and Śraddhā, *dedication to Truth*.

Then ask whatever you wish.

If we know, we shall certainly explain everything to you.’

*After fulfilling the Ṛṣi's request:*

अथ कबन्धी कात्यायन उपेत्य पप्रच्छ ।  
भगवन् कुते ह वा इमाः प्रजाः प्रजायन्त इति ॥ १३ ॥

Kabandhī Kātyāyana then approached the Ṛṣi and asked:  
'O exalted one, from where do all these beings originate?'

तस्मै स होवाच प्रजाकामो वै प्रजापतिः स तपोऽतप्यत  
स तपस्तस्त्वा स मिथुनमुत्पादयते । रयिं च प्राणं  
चेत्येतौ मे बहुधा प्रजाः करिष्यत इति ॥ १४ ॥

He said to him:

'Prajāpati, *the lord of beings*, wishing for beings *to be brought forth*  
practised Tapas *by contemplating past world cycles*.  
Having practised Tapas, he brought forth a couple:  
Rayi, nourishment, *the inert field of experience*,  
and Prāṇa, the life-breath, *the experiencer*:  
'These two will bring forth many different beings for me.'

आदित्यो ह वै प्राणो रयिरेव चन्द्रमा रयिर्वा एतत्  
सर्वं यन्मूर्तं चामूर्तं च तस्मान्मूर्तिरेव रयिः ॥ १५ ॥

Prāṇa, the life-breath, *the experiencer*, truly is the Sun,  
*while* the Moon is merely Rayi,  
*the inert recipient and reflector of the sun's light*.  
Rayi indeed is all this that is formed or formless.



Form truly is Rayi.

अथादित्य उदयन्यत्प्राचीं दिशं प्रविशति तेन प्राच्यान् प्राणान्  
रश्मिषु सन्निधत्ते । यद्दक्षिणां यत् प्रतीचीं यदुदीचीं यदधो  
यदूर्ध्वं यदन्तरा दिशो यत् सर्वं प्रकाशयति तेन सर्वान् प्राणान्  
रश्मिषु सन्निधत्ते ॥ १.६ ॥

When the Sun rises and *its light* extends in the eastern region,  
by this it gathers the eastern life-forces in its rays.  
Similarly, when it illumines all of the southern, western, northern,  
lower, upper and in-between regions,  
by this it gathers all the life-forces in its rays.

स एष वैश्वानरो विश्वरूपः प्राणोऽग्निरुदयते ।  
तदेतदृचाऽभ्युक्तम् ॥ १.७ ॥

Here Prāṇa, the life-breath, *the experiencer*, rises as Agni, *fire*,  
Vaiśvānara, *common to all*, and Viśvarūpa, *of universal form*.  
This has been explained by the Ṛg *mantra*:

विश्वरूपं हरिणं जातवेदसं  
परायणं ज्योतिरेकं तपन्तम् ।  
सहस्ररश्मिः शतधा वर्तमानः  
प्राणः प्रजानामुदयत्येष सूर्यः ॥ १.८ ॥

Of universal form, *radiant* with rays,  
knowing all that has originated,  
the ultimate basis *of all life-forces*,

the one light burning:  
with thousands of *innumerable* rays  
it is present in hundreds of manifold *ways* –  
as the life-force of *all* beings this Sun rises.

संवत्सरो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्यायने दक्षिणं चोत्तरं च ।  
तद्ये ह वै तदिष्टापूर्ते कृतमित्युपासते ते चान्द्रमसमेव  
लोकमभिजयन्ते । त एव पुनरावर्तन्ते तस्मादेत ऋषयः  
प्रजाकामा दक्षिणं प्रतिपद्यन्ते । एष ह वै रयिर्यः  
पितृयाणः ॥ १.९ ॥

The year, *Time*, truly is Prajāpati, *the lord of beings*.  
He has two pathways: the southern and the northern.  
They who revere activities such as sacrifice and charity,  
*whose merit is eventually exhausted*,  
attain the realm of the Moon  
and indeed return again.  
Therefore the *householder* Ṛṣis who desire progeny  
choose this southern *pathway*.  
This pathway of the Fathers is truly Rayi.

अथोत्तरेण तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया  
विद्ययाऽऽत्मानमन्विष्यादित्यमभिजयन्ते । एतद्वै  
प्राणानामायतनमेतदमृतमभयमेतत् परायणमेतस्मान्न पुनरावर्तन्त  
इत्येष निरोधस्तदेष श्लोकः ॥ १.१० ॥

Now by the northern *pathway*,  
by Tapas, *the austerity to conquer the senses*,  
by Brahmacharya, Śraddhā, *commitment to meditation*, and Vidyā,

*awareness, seeking the Ātman, their true nature,*  
they attain *the realm of the Sun.*

This is the seat of all the Prāṇa *life-forces:*

this is the immortal,

this is the fearless,

this is the ultimate goal:

from here they do not return.

This is the conclusion.

*About this* there is this verse:

पञ्चपादं पितरं द्वादशाकृतिं  
दिव आहुः परे अर्धे पुरीषिणम् ।  
अथेमे अन्य उ परे विचक्षणं  
सप्तचक्रे षडर आहुरर्पितमिति ॥ १.११ ॥

They call him, *Time*, the Father with five feet, *the seasons*,  
with twelve forms, *the months of the year*  
in the place beyond the luminous *sky*  
extending over the realms:  
others call him the perceptive, *all-knowing*,  
with seven wheels and with six spokes embedded.

मासो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्य कृष्णपक्ष एव रयिः शुक्लः प्रणस्तस्मादेत  
ऋषयः शुक्ल इष्टं कुर्वन्तीतर इतरस्मिन् ॥ १.१२ ॥

The month truly is Prajāpati, *the lord of beings:*  
its dark half *represents* Rayi, *the inert*,  
its bright *half* Prāṇa, *the experiencer.*

Therefore *some* Ṛṣis perform the sacrifice in the bright *half*,  
while others *perform* it in the other *half*.

अहोरात्रो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्याहरेव प्राणो रात्रिरेव रयिः प्राणं वा एते  
प्रस्कन्दन्ति ये दिवा रत्या संयुज्यन्ते ब्रह्मचर्यमेव तद्यद्रात्रौ  
रत्या संयुज्यन्ते ॥ १.१३ ॥

Day and night truly are Prajāpati, *the lord of beings*:  
there the day is Prāṇa,  
and the night is Rayi.

They squander their Prāṇa who unite in love by day.  
But it is indeed Brahmacharya, *celibacy*, when they unite in love by  
night.

अन्नं वै प्रजापतिस्ततो ह वै तद्रेतस्तस्मादिमाः प्रजाः  
प्रजायन्त इति ॥ १.१४ ॥

Nourishment is truly Prajāpati, *the lord of beings*.  
From *nourishment* the semen is *produced*.  
From *semen* all these beings originate.

तद्ये ह वै तत् प्रजापतिव्रतं चरन्ति ते मिथुनमुत्पादयन्ते ।  
तेषामेवैष ब्रह्मलोको येषां तपो ब्रह्मचर्यं येषु सत्यं  
प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १.१५ ॥

Thus they who practise the Prajāpati-Vrata,  
*i.e. uniting in love only at night*,  
bring forth both *sons and daughters*.

To them belongs this realm of Brahman  
in whom Tapas, Brahmacharya and Satya are established.

तेषामसौ विरजो ब्रह्मलोको न येषु जिह्ममनृतं न  
माया चेति ॥ १.१६ ॥

To them belongs that faultless realm of Brahman,  
in whom there is no crookedness, untruth or deceit.

इति प्रश्नोपनिषदि प्रथमः प्रश्नः ॥

Thus ends the First Question in the Praśna-Upaniṣad.

द्वितीयः प्रश्नः ।

## Second Question

*Which Deva is the one in whom all is settled?*

अथ हैनं भार्गवो वैदर्भिः पप्रच्छ । भगवन् कत्येव  
देवाः प्रजां विधारयन्ते कतर एतत् प्रकाशयन्ते कः  
पुनरेषां वरिष्ठ इति ॥ २.१ ॥

Then Bhārgava Vaidarbhi asked him:

‘O exalted one, how many Devas,  
*the luminous deities of the elements and senses,*  
support this creature, *the body*?  
Which of them illuminate it?  
And who among them is the most excellent?’

तस्मै स होवाचाकाशो ह वा एष देवो वायुरग्निरापः  
पृथिवी वाङ्मनश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रं च । ते प्रकाश्याभिवदन्ति  
वयमेतद्वाणमवष्टभ्य विधारयामः ॥ २.२ ॥

*The Ṛṣi Pippalāda* said to him:

Space is such a Deva,  
and air, fire, water, earth, speech, mind, sight and hearing.  
Illuminating *the body* they declare[d]:  
‘We maintain this reed *of the body* by upholding it.’

तान् वरिष्ठः प्राण उवाच । मा मोहमापद्यथ अहमेवैतत्  
पञ्चधाऽऽत्मानं प्रविभज्यैतद्भागमवष्टभ्य विधारयामीति  
तेऽश्रद्धधाना बभूवुः ॥ २.३ ॥

Prāṇa, the most excellent *among them*, then said to them:

‘Do not fall into delusion.

It is I who, dividing myself into *my five forms*  
maintain this reed *of the body* by upholding it.’  
Yet they did not believe *this*.

सोऽभिमानादूर्ध्वमुत्क्रामत इव तस्मिन्नुत्क्रामत्यथेतरे सर्व  
एवोत्क्रामन्ते तस्मिंश्च प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्व एव प्रतिष्ठन्ते । तद्यथा  
मक्षिका मधुकरराजानमुत्क्रामन्तं सर्व एवोत्क्रामन्ते तस्मिंश्च  
प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्व एव प्रातिष्ठन्त एवं वाङ्मनश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रं  
च ते प्रीताः प्राणं स्तुन्वन्ति ॥ २.४ ॥

Proudly *the Prāṇa* rose upward as it were,  
and as it was rising upward all the others also rose upward,  
and as it settled, all of them also settled.

It is like with the bees – when the sovereign of the bees rises,  
then they all rise, and when it settles, all of them also settle.  
It is the same with speech, mind, sight, hearing *and so forth*.  
They delightedly praise Prāṇa *thus*:

एषोऽग्निस्तपत्येष सूर्य  
एष पर्जन्यो मघवानेष वायुः  
एष पृथिवी रयिर्देवः  
सदसच्चामृतं च यत् ॥ २.५ ॥

As Agni it burns,  
as the Sun *it illuminates*,  
as Rain *it rains*,  
as Maghavān (Indra) *it protects*.  
It is the air, the earth, the moon, the luminous one,  
both Sat and Asat,  
*existent and non-existent, form and formless:*  
*it is that which is immortal.*

अरा इव रथनाभौ प्राणे सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।  
ऋचो यजूषि सामानि यज्ञः क्षत्रं ब्रह्म च ॥ २.६ ॥

Like the spokes in the nave of the wheel,  
similarly everything is settled in Prāṇa:  
*the mantras called Ṛg, Yajur and Sāma,*  
the sacrifice, the Kṣattra *protector* and the Brahma *priest*.

प्रजापतिश्चरसि गर्भे त्वमेव प्रतिजायसे ।  
तुभ्यं प्राण प्रजास्त्विमा बर्लि हरन्ति  
यः प्राणैः प्रतिष्ठिसि ॥ २.७ ॥

O Prāṇa!  
As Prajāpati, *the lord of beings*, you move within the womb,  
*from mother and father* you are verily born.  
To you these beings bring offerings  
*through their sensual experiences.*  
You dwell together with the senses.



देवानामसि वह्नितमः पितॄणां प्रथमा स्वधा ।  
ऋषीणां चरितं सत्यमथर्वाङ्गिरसामसि ॥ २.८ ॥

You are the foremost among the bearers of oblations to the Devas,  
you are the first Svadhā *offering* of the forefathers.  
You are the steadiness attained among the Ṛṣis,  
you are the truthful conduct of the Atharvāngiras Ṛṣis.

इन्द्रस्त्वं प्राण तेजसा रुद्रोऽसि परिरक्षिता ।  
त्वमन्तरिक्षे चरसि सूर्यस्त्वं ज्योतिषां पतिः ॥ २.९ ॥

O Prāṇa, you are Indra with radiance,  
you are Rudra, the all-round protector –  
you move in the atmosphere,  
you are the Sun, the lord of lights.

यदा त्वमभिवर्षस्यथेमाः प्राण ते प्रजाः ।  
आनन्दरूपास्तिष्ठन्ति कामायान्नं भविष्यतीति ॥ २.१० ॥

O Prāṇa, when *in the form of clouds* you rain down *rains*,  
all these beings of yours abide joyfully,  
as there will be *abundant* nourishment, as *much as* one desires.

व्रात्यस्त्वं प्राणैर्कर्षरत्ता विश्वस्य सत्पतिः ।  
वयमाद्यस्य दातारः पिता त्वं मातरिश्च नः ॥ २.११ ॥

O Prāṇa, you are the Vrātya, *pure by nature*,  
you are the One Seer, the consumer *of all offerings*,

the lord of all that is present,  
whose offerors we are today.  
O Mātariśvan, *primordial wind*, you are our father.

या ते तनूर्वाचि प्रतिष्ठिता या श्रोत्रे या च चक्षुषि ।  
या च मनसि सन्तता शिवां तां कुरु मोत्कमीः ॥ २.१२ ॥

That nature of yours which is established in speech,  
that which is *established* in hearing,  
that which is *established* in sight,  
and that which is woven throughout the mind:  
render that peaceful.  
Do not ascend *and unsettle it*.

प्राणस्येदं वशे सर्वं त्रिदिवे यत् प्रतिष्ठितम् ।  
मातेव पुत्रान् रक्षस्व श्रीश्च प्रज्ञां च विधेहि न इति ॥ २.१३ ॥

Whatever is established in the three worlds,  
all that is under the rule of Prāṇa.  
As a mother *protects her* children,  
protect us! Grant us fortune and wisdom.

इति प्रश्नोपनिषदि द्वितीयः प्रश्नः ॥

Thus ends the Second Question in the Praśna-Upaniṣad.

तृतीयः प्रश्नः

### Third Question

From where does Prāṇa originate?

अथ हैनं कौशल्यश्चाश्वलायनः पप्रच्छ । भगवन् कुत  
एष प्राणो जायते कथमायात्यस्मिञ्शरीर आत्मानं वा  
प्रविभज्य कथं प्रतिष्ठते केनोत्क्रमते कथं बाह्यमभिघत्ते  
कथमध्यात्ममिति ॥ ३.१ ॥

Then Kausalya Āśvalāyana asked him:

‘O exalted one, from where does this Prāṇa originate?

How does it enter into this body?

Dividing itself, how does it abide?

By what does it ascend?

How does it provide support outside and within?’

तस्मै स होवाचातिप्रश्नान् पृच्छसि ब्रह्मिष्ठोऽसीति  
तस्मात्तेऽहं ब्रवीमि ॥ ३.२ ॥

The Ṛṣi Pippalāda said to him:

‘You ask profound questions.

As you are most deeply dedicated to Brahman, *Absolute Reality*,

I shall tell you.’

आत्मन एष प्राणो जायते । यथैषा पुरुषे  
छायैतस्मिन्नेतदाततं  
मनोकृतेनायात्यस्मिञ्शरीरे ॥ ३.३ ॥

This Prāṇa originates from the Ātman,  
*one's own true nature.*

As in the world a shadow *arises*  
*in dependence* upon a person,  
likewise this *Prāṇa* is fixed on *this Ātman*.  
By the mind-made *intentions, karmas and the like*  
it enters this body.

यथा सम्राट्कृताधिकृतान् विनियुङ्क्ते । एतन् ग्रामानोतान्  
ग्रामानधितिष्ठस्वेत्येवमेवैष प्राण इतरान् प्राणान् पृथक्  
पृथगेव सन्निघत्ते ॥ ३.४ ॥

Just as a sovereign instructs his administrators,  
'Manage these villages',  
'Manage these villages',  
even so this Prāṇa appoints  
the other Prāṇas, *the life-forces*, one by one.

पायूपस्थेऽपानं चक्षुःश्रोत्रे मुखनासिकाभ्यां प्राणः स्वयं  
प्रातिष्ठते मध्ये तु समानः । एष ह्येतद्भुतमन्नं समं नयति  
तस्मादेताः सप्तार्चिषो भवन्ति ॥ ३.५ ॥

The Apāna *life-force presides over* the anus and the genitals.  
Prāṇa itself presides over sight and hearing,  
the mouth and the nose.

The Samāna *life-force presides over* the *body* centre:  
it is this which uniformly processes *nourishment*  
that is drunk and eaten –

from it are *derived* the seven flames of *sensory experience*.

हृदि ह्येष आत्मा । अत्रैतदेकशतं नाडीनां तासां शतं  
शतमेकैकस्या द्वासप्ततिर्द्वासप्ततिः प्रतिशाखानाडीसहस्राणि  
भवन्त्यासु व्यानश्चरति ॥ ३.६ ॥

In the heart is this Ātman, *one's own true nature*.  
Here there are one hundred and one nāḍīs, *subtle channels*.  
Of these each again has one hundred *branching out*,  
and of these each has seventy-two thousand nāḍīs as side branches.  
In these moves the Vyāna *life-force*.

अथैकयोर्ध्व उदानः पुण्येन पुण्यं लोकं नयति पापेन  
पापमुभाभ्यामेव मनुष्यलोकम् ॥ ३.७ ॥

Now rising through one of *these*,  
the Udāna *life-force* leads by merit to meritorious *realms*,  
by vice to vicious *realms* –  
by both to the realm of humans.

आदित्यो ह वै बाह्यः प्राण उदयत्येष ह्येनं चाक्षुषं  
प्राणमनुगृह्णानः । पृथिव्यां या देवता सैषा पुरुषस्य  
अपानमवष्टभ्यान्तरा यदाकाशः स समानो वायुर्व्यानः ॥ ३.८ ॥

The Sun rises as the external Prāṇa.  
It benefits the Prāṇa of the eye.  
The Devatā, *deity*, which is in the earth  
draws down the Apāna of a person.

The space between is Samāna.

The wind is Vyāna.

तेजो ह वा उदानस्तस्मादुपशान्ततेजाः । पुनर्भवमिन्द्रियैर्मनसि  
सम्पद्यमानैः ॥ ३.९ ॥

Light *or fire* is truly Udāna –  
Thus one whose light *or fire* has subsided,  
*attains* another birth,  
with the senses, *speech and the like*  
merged into *one's* mind *in subtle form*.

यच्चित्तस्तेनैष प्राणमायाति । प्राणस्तेजसा युक्तः सहात्मना  
तथासङ्कल्पितं लोकं नयति ॥ ३.१० ॥

*At the time of death*  
in accordance with the *state of* awareness,  
by that one reaches *the chief* Prāṇa.  
*This* Prāṇa, united with the light, *the Udāna*,  
together with the Ātman, *the experiencer*,  
leads on to the *corresponding* realm  
in accordance with the *seeds of* intention  
*infused by wholesome and unwholesome karmas*.

य एवं विद्वान् प्राणं वेद न हास्य प्रजा हीयतेऽमृतो  
भवति तदेषः श्लोकः ॥ ३.११ ॥

A wise one who understands Prāṇa thus,  
his progeny does not diminish,  
he becomes immortal.

*Here* there is this verse:

उत्पत्तिमायति स्थानं विभुत्वं चैव पञ्चधा ।  
अध्यात्मं चैव प्राणस्य विज्ञायामृतमश्नुते  
विज्ञायामृतमश्नुत इति ॥ ३.१२ ॥

One who understands how Prāṇa is originated,  
*how it arrives, how it abides,*  
and *how it pervades the body with its fivefold aspects,*  
*its external forms as the Sun and the like,*  
as well as its *internal self-related nature:*  
he enjoys the immortal,  
one who realises *this* enjoys the immortal.

इति प्रश्नोपनिषदि तृतीयः प्रश्नः ॥

Thus ends the Third Question in the Praśna-Upaniṣad.

चतुर्थः प्रश्नः ।

## Fourth Question

*Who is it that is awake, who is it that dreams?*

अथ हैनं सौर्यायणि गार्ग्यः पप्रच्छ । भगवन्नेतस्मिन् पुरुषे  
कानि स्वपन्ति कान्यस्मिञ्जाग्रति कतर एष देवः स्वप्नान् पश्यति  
कस्यैतत् सुखं भवति कस्मिन्नु सर्वे सम्प्रतिष्ठिता भवन्तीति ॥ ४.१ ॥

Then Sauryāyaṇi Gārgya asked him:

‘O exalted one, in a person,  
which ones *of these Devas* are asleep,  
which ones are awake in him?  
Which Deva perceives the dream?  
To whom does the bliss *of deep sleep* occur?  
In whom are they all completely established?’

तस्मै स होवाच यथा गार्ग्य मरीचयोऽर्कस्यास्तं गच्छतः सर्वा  
एतस्मिंस्तेजोमण्डल एकीभवन्ति ताः पुनः पुनरुदयतः प्रचरन्त्येवं  
ह वै तत् सर्वं परे देवे मनस्येकीभवति तेन तर्ह्येष पुरुषो न  
शृणोति न पश्यति न जिघ्रति न रसयते न स्पृशते नाभिवदते  
नादत्ते नानन्दयते न विसृजते नेयायते स्वपितीत्याचक्षते ॥ ४.२ ॥

*The Ṛṣi Pippalāda* said to him:

‘Gārgya, just as the rays of the setting sun  
all become one in this circle of light,  
and when it rises they all go forth once more,  
likewise all this becomes one in the supreme Deva: the mind.



It is by this that a person does not hear,  
does not see, does not smell, does not taste, does not touch,  
does not speak, does not receive, does not delight,  
does not discharge, does not move.  
Therefore they say: 'he is asleep'.

प्राणाग्नय एवैतस्मिन् पुरे जाग्रति । गार्हपत्यो ह वा एषोऽपानो  
व्यानोऽन्वाहार्यपचनो यद्गार्हपत्यात् प्रणीयते प्रणयनादाहवनीयः  
प्राणः ॥ ४.३ ॥

Only the fires of Prāṇa are awake in this city *of the body*.  
The Apāna *force* is the Gārhapatya *fire*,  
the Vyāna is the Anvāhāryapacana *fire*;  
as it is taken from the Gārhapatya *fire*,  
having thus been fetched, Prāṇa is the Āhavanīya *fire*.

यदुच्छ्वासनिःश्वासावेतावाहुती समं नयतीति स समानः । मनो ह  
वाव यजमानः । इष्टफलमेवोदानः । स एनं यजमानमहरहर्ब्रह्म  
गमयति ॥ ४.४ ॥

It is the Samāna *life-force* as it equally directs  
the inhalation and exhalation as offerings.  
The mind is the offeror.  
The desired fruit is the Udāna *life-force*,  
it leads the offeror to Brahman day by day.

अत्रैष देवः स्वप्ने महिमानमनुभवति । यदृष्टं  
दृष्टमनुपश्यति श्रुतं श्रुतमेवार्थमनुशृणोति

देशदिगन्तरैश्च प्रत्यनुभूतं पुनः पुनः प्रत्यनुभवति दृष्टं  
चादृष्टं च श्रुतं चाश्रुतं चानुभूतं चाननुभूतं च  
सच्चासच्च सर्वं पश्यति सर्वः पश्यति ॥ ४.५ ॥

Here this Deva *of the mind* experiences  
the magnificence in the dream.  
It sees what has been seen before.  
It hears once again the matter it has heard before.  
It experiences once more what has been experienced  
in different areas and regions.

*Being* everything,  
it sees what has been seen and what has not been seen before,  
what has been heard and what has not been heard before,  
what has been experienced and what has not been experienced be-  
fore, what exists and what does not exist.

स यदा तेजसाऽभिभूतो भवति । अत्रैष देवः स्वप्नान्न  
पश्यत्यथ यदैतस्मिञ्शरीर एतत्सुखं भवति ॥ ४.६ ॥

When *the mind* is overwhelmed by light,  
then this Deva does not see any dreams,  
then there is this bliss in the body.

स यथा सोभ्य वयांसि वसोवृक्षं सम्प्रतिष्ठन्ते । एवं  
ह वै तत् सर्वं पर आत्मनि सम्प्रतिष्ठते ॥ ४.७ ॥

*My dear, it is like birds settling down on the home tree:  
likewise all this settles down in the ultimate Ātman, one's own true  
nature –*

पृथिवी च पृथिवीमात्रा चापश्चापोमात्रा च तेजश्च तेजोमात्रा च  
वायुश्च वायुमात्रा चाकाशश्चाकाशमात्रा च चक्षुश्च द्रष्टव्यं  
च श्रोत्रं च श्रोतव्यं च घ्राणं च घ्रातव्यं च रसश्च  
रसयितव्यं च त्वक्क स्पर्शयितव्यं च वाक्क वक्तव्यं च हस्तौ  
चादातव्यं चोपस्थश्चानन्दयितव्यं च पायुश्च विसर्जयितव्यं च  
यादौ च गन्तव्यं च मनश्च मन्तव्यं च बुद्धिश्च बोद्धव्यं  
चाहङ्कारश्चाहङ्कर्तव्यं च चित्तं च चेतयितव्यं च तेजश्च  
विद्योतयितव्यं च प्राणश्च विधारयितव्यं च ॥ ४.८ ॥

Earth and the earth particle, water and the water particle,  
light and the light particle, air and the air particle,  
ether and the ether particle,  
the eye and what is seen, the ear and what is heard,  
the *sense of* smell and what is smelled,  
the *sense of* taste and what is tasted,  
skin and what is touched,  
speech and what is spoken,  
the hands and what is received,  
the genitals and the pleasure that is experienced,  
the anus and what is to be discharged,  
the feet and what is to be walked,  
the mind and what is to be thought,  
the intelligence and what is to be understood,  
the I-sense and what is made *an object* of the I-sense,

awareness and what is to be retained in awareness,  
luminosity and what is to be illumined,  
Prāṇa and what is to be upheld by it.

एष हि द्रष्टा स्प्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता  
विज्ञानात्मा पुरुषः । स परेऽक्षर आत्मनि सम्प्रतिष्ठते ॥ ४९ ॥

For this is the seer,  
the one that touches, the hearer,  
the smeller, the taster, the thinker,  
the one that understands, the doer,  
the Ātman of consciousness, Puruṣa.  
It abides in the ultimate imperishable Ātman.

परमेवाक्षरं प्रतिपद्यते स यो ह वै तदच्छायमशरीरमलोहितं  
शुभ्रमक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य । स सर्वज्ञः सर्वो भवति ।  
तदेष श्लोकः ॥ ४.१० ॥

He attains to the utmost imperishable *Reality*  
who realises this shadowless, bodiless, colourless,  
radiant imperishable, *my dear*:  
he becomes all-knowing, *he becomes* the all.  
Here *there* is this verse:

विज्ञानात्मा सह देवैश्च सर्वैः प्राणा भूतानि सम्प्रतिष्ठन्ति यत्र  
तदक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः सर्वमेवाविवेशेति ॥ ४.११ ॥

Where the Ātman of consciousness,  
together with all the Devas, *the senses*,  
the Prāṇas and the elements abide:  
one who realises that imperishable, *my dear*,  
all-knowing he merges with the all.'

इति प्रश्नोपनिषदि चतुर्थः प्रश्नः ॥

Thus ends the Fourth Question in the Praśna-Upaniṣad.

पञ्चमः प्रश्नः ।

## Fifth Question

*What is the fruit of meditating on OM?*

अथ हैनं शैब्यः सत्यकामः पप्रच्छ । स यो ह वै  
तद्भगवन्मनुष्येषु प्रायणान्तमोङ्कारमभिध्यायीत । कतमं वाव  
स तेन लोकं जयतीति । तस्मै स होवाच ॥ ५.१ ॥

Then Śaibya Satyakāma asked him:

‘O exalted one, if one among humans were to meditate  
upon the syllable OM until his last moment,  
what realm would he gain by this?’

*The R̥ṣi Pippalāda* said to him:

एतद्वै सत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदोङ्कारः ।  
तस्माद्विद्वानेतेनैवायतनेनैकतरमन्वेति ॥ ५.२ ॥

‘Satyakāma,  
this syllable OM is the higher and the lower Brahman.  
Thus one who realises it,  
by this support attains either of them.

स यद्येकमात्रमभिध्यायीत स तेनैव संवेदितस्तूर्णमेव  
जगत्यामभिसम्पद्यते । तमृचो मनुष्यलोकमुपनयन्ते स तत्र  
तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया सम्पन्नो महिमानमनुभवति ॥ ५.३ ॥

If he meditates on one measure, *the letter 'A'*,  
gaining insight through this he swiftly attains this world.  
The R̥g *mantras* take him to the realm of humans:  
there gifted with Tapas, Brahmacharya and Śraddhā  
he experiences magnificence.

अथ यदि द्विमात्रेण मनसि सम्पद्यते सोऽन्तरिक्षं  
यजुर्भिरुन्नीयते सोमलोकम् । स सोमलोके विभुतिमनुभूय  
पुनरावर्तते ॥ ५.४ ॥

If he abides *in meditation* within *his* mind  
by means of two measures, *the letters 'A' and 'U'*,  
he is led by the Yajur *mantras* to the realm of the Moon  
in the in-between space.  
After experiencing glory in the realm of the Moon,  
he returns.

यः पुनरेतं त्रिमात्रेणोमित्येतेनैवाक्षरेण परं पुरुषमभि-  
ध्यायीत स तेजसि सूर्ये सम्पन्नः । यथा पादोदरस्त्वचा विनिर्मुच्यत  
एवं ह वै स पाप्मना विनिर्मुक्तः स सामभिरुन्नीयते ब्रह्मलोकं  
स एतस्माज्जीवघनात् परात्परं पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते । तदेतौ  
श्लोकौ भवतः ॥ ५.५ ॥

Further, one who meditates on the ultimate Puruṣa  
by means of three measures as the syllable 'OM' (*A+U+M*),  
abides in the light in the Sun.  
As a serpent is released from its skin,  
he is truly released from evil.

He is led by the Sāma *mantras* to the realm of Brahman.  
Far beyond this mass of Jīvas,  
*individual manifestations of consciousness,*  
*dwelling in the heart lotus in the city of the body,*  
he perceives Puruṣa, *Absolute Awareness.*  
Here there are these two verses:

तिस्रो मात्रा मृत्युमत्यः प्रयुक्ता  
अन्योन्यसक्ताः अनविप्रयुक्ताः ।  
क्रियासु बाह्याभ्यन्तरमध्यमासु  
सम्यक् प्रयुक्तासु न कम्पते ज्ञः ॥ ५.६ ॥

When the three measures,  
each of which *alone by itself* leads to death,  
are properly applied and joined closely to each other,  
not separately applied  
but applied rightly in *Yoga kriyās, Yogic practices*  
outside, within and in between:  
then the knower does not stir,  
*resting in Reality.*

ऋग्भिरेतं यजुर्भिरन्तरिक्षं  
सामभिर्यत् तत् कवयो वेदयन्ते ।  
तमोङ्कारेणैवायतनेनान्वेति विद्वान्  
यत्तच्छान्तमजरममृतमभयं परं चेति ॥ ५.७ ॥

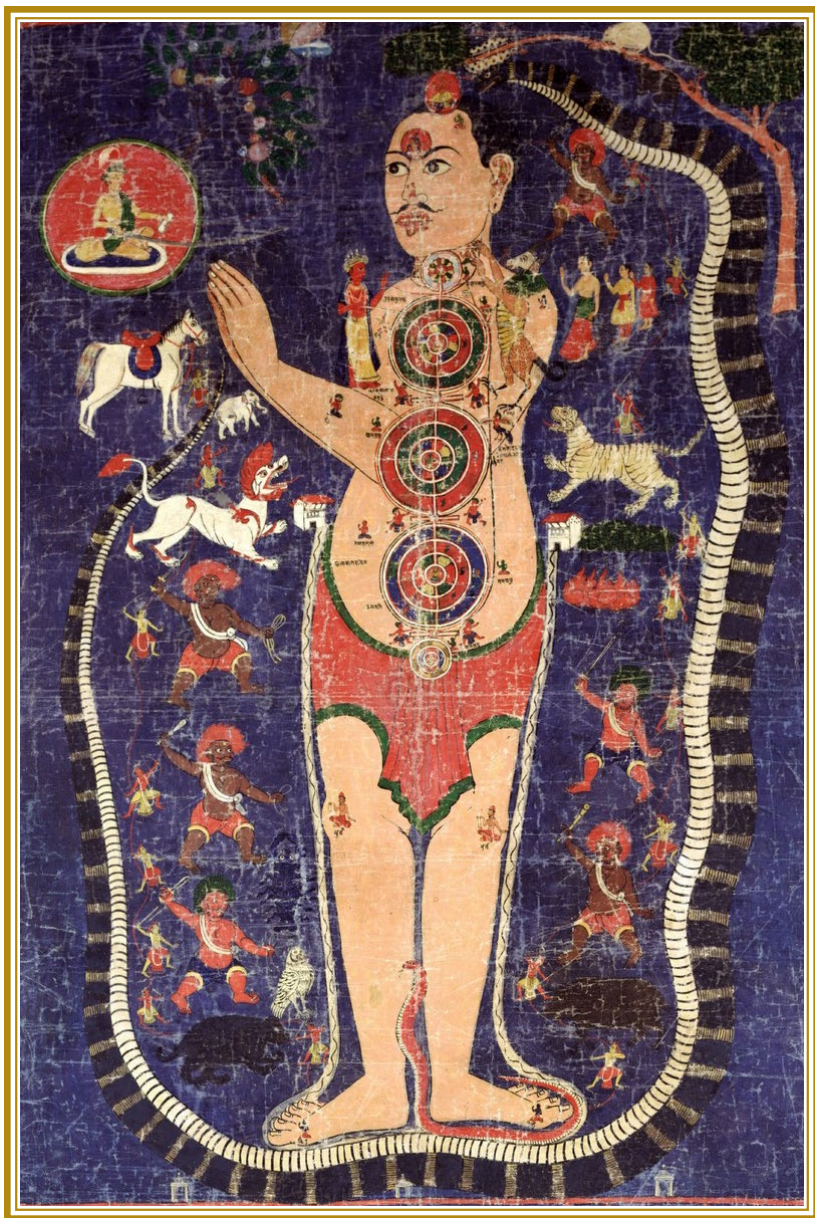
With the R̥g *mantras* this world,  
with the Yajur *mantras* the space in between,



with the Sāma *mantras* that which the seers know:  
with the syllable OM as the support,  
the knower reaches the peaceful, ageless,  
immortal, fearless ultimate.

इति प्रश्नोपनिषदि पञ्चमः प्रश्नः ॥

Thus ends the Fourth Question in the Praśna-Upaniṣad.



## THE YOGIC BODY

A Yogi's subtle body embodies the various states of Consciousness represented by the letters of OM.

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

षष्ठः प्रश्नः ।

Sixth Question:

*Who is Puruṣa?*

अथ हैनं सुकेशा भारद्वाजः पप्रच्छ । भगवन् हिरण्यनाभः  
कौसल्यो राजपुत्रो मामुपेत्यैतं प्रश्नमपृच्छत । षोडशकलं  
भारद्वाज पुरुषं वेत्थ । तमहं कुमारमब्रुवं नाहमिमं वेद ।  
यद्यहमिममवेदिषं कथं ते नावक्ष्यमिति । समूलो वा एष  
परिशुष्यति योऽनृतमभिवदति तस्मान्नार्हम्यनृतं वक्तुम् । स  
तूष्णीं रथमारुह्य प्रवव्राज । तं त्वा पृच्छामि कासौ पुरुष  
इति ॥ ६.१ ॥

Then Sukeśā Bhāradvāja asked him:

‘O exalted one, Hiraṇyanābha of Kosala, son of the king,  
*once* approached me and asked me this question:

‘Bhāradvāja, do you know Puruṣa who has sixteen aspects?’

I replied to that young man:

‘I do not know it.

If I would know it,  
how should I not tell you?

*Like a tree* together with the roots  
one withers who speaks a falsehood.

Therefore I am unable to speak a falsehood.’

He quietly ascended his chariot and departed.

Therefore I *now* ask you:

Who is that Puruṣa?’

तस्मै स होवाचेहैवान्तःशरीरे सोम्य स पुरुषो  
यस्मिन्नेताः षोडशकलाः प्रभवन्तीति ॥ ६.२ ॥

*The Ṛṣi Pippalāda* said to him:  
'Right here within this body, *my dear*, is  
Puruṣa in whom these sixteen parts emerge.

स ईक्षांचक्रे । कस्मिन्नहमुत्क्रान्त उत्क्रान्तो भविष्यामि  
कस्मिन्वा प्रतिष्ठिते प्रतिष्ठास्यामीति ॥ ६.३ ॥

*Puruṣa* contemplated:  
'When what rises upward do I rise upward?  
When what is settled am I settled?'

स प्राणमसृजत प्राणाच्छ्रद्धां खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवीन्द्रियं मनः ।  
अन्नमन्नाद्वीर्यं तपो मन्त्राः कर्म लोका लोकेषु च नाम च  
॥ ६.४ ॥

He brought forth Prāṇa,  
from Prāṇa *he brought forth*  
Śraddhā *as the basis of wholesome karmas*,  
space, air, light, water, earth, the sense *faculties*, mind –  
nourishment, from nourishment *bodily* energy, Tapas,  
mantras, karma, realms,  
and in the realms the name: *the individual appearance*.

स यथेमा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रायणाः समुद्रं प्राप्यास्तं  
 गच्छन्ति भिद्येते तासां नामरूपे समुद्र इत्येवं प्रोच्यते । एवमेवास्य  
 परिद्रष्टुरिमाः षोडशकलाः पुरुषायणाः पुरुषं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति  
 भिद्येते चासां नामरूपे पुरुष इत्येवं प्रोच्यते स एषोऽकलोऽमृतो  
 भवति तदेष श्लोकः ॥ ६.५ ॥

Even as the flowing rivers,  
 which have the ocean as their final abode,  
 attaining the ocean,  
 reach their conclusion in the ocean,  
 their name and form vanished into the ocean,  
 and are called only 'ocean',  
 similarly these sixteen aspects of the seer,  
 which have Puruṣa as their final abode,  
 attaining Puruṣa,  
 merge into it,  
 their names and forms vanish,  
 and are called only 'Puruṣa':  
 this is the part-less immortal.  
 Here *there* is this verse:

अरा इव रथनाभौ कला यस्मिन्प्रतिष्ठिताः ।  
 तं वेद्यं पुरुषं वेद यथ मा वो मृत्युः परिव्यथा इति ॥ ६.६ ॥

'That wherein the aspects are settled,  
 even as the spokes in the nave of the wheel:  
 realise that as the Puruṣa which is to be known,  
 so death may not distract you.'

तान् होवाचैतावदेवाहमेतत् परं ब्रह्म वेद । नातः  
परमस्तीति ॥ ६.७ ॥

Then *R̥ṣi Pippalāda* said to them *all*:  
'This much I know of this ultimate Brahman.  
There is nothing greater than this.'

ते तमर्चयन्तस्त्वं हि नः पिता योऽस्माकमविद्यायाः परं पारं  
तारयसीति । नमः परमत्रहृषिभ्यो नमः परमत्रहृषिभ्यः ॥ ६.८ ॥

Venerating him they said:  
'You are truly our father  
who conveys us across to the other shore of ignorance.'

Obeisance to the supreme *R̥ṣis*!  
obeisance to the supreme *R̥ṣis*!

इति प्रश्नोपनिषदि षष्ठः प्रश्नः ॥

Thus ends the Sixth Question in the *Praśna-Upaniṣad*.



**THE ĀŚVATTHA TREE, THE PATHWAY TO RETURN TO PURUṢA**

Puruṣa is Primordial Awareness that integrates all multiplicity.

*Unknown Artwork, ca. 19th century India*

## Śānti-Mantra

### Prayer for Peace

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।  
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May we hear the Auspicious with our ears, o Devas, *luminous ones!* May we see the Auspicious with our eyes, o you who are worthy of veneration! With steady limbs and bodies may we live praising *you*, the *span of life* allotted to us by the Devas, *the luminous ones.*  
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

ॐ स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।  
स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May Indra of widespread renown *grant us* the Auspicious!  
May the all-knowing *Nourisher* Pūṣan *grant us* the Auspicious!  
May Tārṣya, *the divine Eagle* whose *chariot* wheel is invulnerable, *grant us* the Auspicious!  
May Bṛhaspati, *the Teacher of the Gods*, grant us the Auspicious!  
Om Peace, Peace, Peace



PRAYER *to* GODDESS SARASVATĪ *to*  
INCREASE *our* INTELLIGENCE



## GODDESS SARASVATĪ, THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE PERSONIFIED

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

PRAYER to GODDESS SARASVATĪ to  
INCREASE *our* INTELLIGENCE

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

om namaste śārade devi kāśmīra-pura-vāsini |  
tvām ahaṁ prārthaye nityaṁ vidyā-dānaṁ 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 Kāśmīr!  
I ever beseech you: Grant me the gift of knowledge!

