

## India's Spiritual Tradition: The Upanishads

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**W**hat exactly do we mean when we use the word 'spirituality'? According to the dictionary, the word 'spirituality' means something which is opposed to materiality. Now a scientist will say, there is nothing beyond matter; everything is matter. But when you say 'spirit', when you use the word 'spiritual', you are imagining that there is something which is not matter but something different, something not very perceptible. You feel it is there, though you cannot prove it.

In India, long ago, our people somehow felt that the world we live in is all right. We accept it. But behind this world of sense experience, there is something which is not so obvious, but which does exist and it is, in fact, that world which controls what we consider the material world, the phenomenal world, the empirical world. According to India, it is the pursuit of this spiritual world which is the real purpose of life.

There are two kinds of attitudes. One kind of attitude is when I say, well, here I am living in a world which I can feel, I deal with, I sort of experience it. Sometimes it gives me happiness, sometimes it does not give happiness; it disappoints me, it hurts me. Yet I accept all these experiences because I feel they are all parts of life. There is no escape from them. Naturally, if I accept happiness I have to also accept unhappiness. Both are essential components of life. Somehow I have to come to terms with the situation. Maybe it is a rather unhappy situation—unhappy in the sense that I am not the master of my own destiny. I find that it is rather some invisible

force which controls my destiny more than I control it. There is something in this world which I cannot explain, which perhaps I cannot identify, which is a mystery to me, but which is all the same always there using me as a mere tool in its hands. I accept it nevertheless.

It is no use complaining about it. The world will always be what it is—a mixture of joy and sorrow, good and bad. Sometimes it is good, sometimes it is bad just like the cycle of the seasons. Sometimes the season is hot, sometimes it is cold. Well, I accept both. That is one kind of attitude.

Another kind of attitude is: No, I am not going to accept it. I want to understand how is it that in spite of my best efforts I find that the happiness which I desire eludes me. I try my best to be happy. I want to be happy. In fact that is something natural. Everyone of us wants to be happy. But in spite of our best efforts I find something goes wrong at the last moment. The happiness which I thought almost within my grasp has eluded. It is not there. I thought if I had money I would be happy. I have money now, as much money as I want. But I find I am not happy. What is it that has deceived me in this way? I wanted a son. I have one. But then also I am not happy. Why is it so?

### The Indian mind

The Indian mind has always been trying to unravel the mystery behind this world, the mystery that surrounds him; not only the physical world which is a big mystery itself, but he himself represents a kind of mystery

which keeps puzzling him all through. Why do things happen the way they happen? Why should they happen, after all? How is it that in spite of all my planning and all my efforts and all the care that I have taken, things go wrong? Friends betray me. Children on whom I depended so much do not turn out the way I thought they would be. Somehow things keep going wrong all the time. Why should it be that? And if things do go wrong, what am I to do? What should I do so that I am not completely overwhelmed, that I can still survive and struggle, I can still maintain my own separate 'my' identity, I can still stand erect with my head up, I can be my own self? You can see that these have been questions that have bothered the Indian mind right from the beginning.

You might say that the Indian people must be very funny. Instead of being concerned about food, clothing, and housing, in short, about the problems of physical existence, they have paid more attention to things which are surely not as important as food, clothing, and physical survival are. How come that in India the first priority is to know—what is Truth? Think of it! Everyone seems to be asking himself—'What is Truth?' Now that might seem to be rather an abstract question, a question which is perhaps of some interest to a person who has plenty of time, who has been able to solve all the problems of his day-to-day life, who is happy and very well placed in life. But Indians are not so fortunate; how come, they turn their minds to this kind of question?

Indeed, there are people who say Indians by temperament are world-denying. One of the leading intellectuals of the 20th century, Albert Schweitzer, a German scholar, a savant, has described the Indian mind as being life-denying, world-denying. He has good reasons to apply this description because he has noticed, as has anyone else, that the Indian mind seeks to enjoy occupying itself with

philosophical thoughts and ideas rather than questions that determine whether or not he is going to survive in the face of a famine, in the face of a disease, or in the face of a foreign aggression.

Then, again many people wonder how India has no history as such. What has happened over the centuries in India is not recorded. There is no connected and authentic records of events that have shaped the Indian destiny. However, the fact is that there is a very reliable record of thought processes of the Indian mind. Indian history is not a history of kings and emperors, of great political personalities, of wars and foreign aggressions, of internal disturbances or social changes. Indian history is the history of ideas. It is indeed amazing to discover how, starting from the earliest Vedic times, thoughts have slowly taken shape in India! At first perhaps they had begun in a very nebulous form, but slowly they began to crystallize. And finally they reached a point when one could feel as if the human mind had reached its greatest height in terms of philosophical thinking. For instance, many people say that when you come to the Upanishads you feel you have reached the summit of philosophical thinking.

It all started when Indian people thought that the forces of Nature were all the gods and goddesses who controlled their destiny. They began to worship them. They offered sacrifices to them, offered oblations to them. That was the starting-point. One would say that was the primitive stage of Indian spiritual tradition. But what is surprising is that while a group of people were content with worshipping the forces of Nature—the sun, the moon, the rains, the mountains—there were also people who said: No, they are not supreme. There are other forces. We do not see them, we do not know anything about them, but they are there which control the forces of Nature, which control the planets, which control the day and night, which control this phe-

nomenal world. They were seers. At first they looked outside for God—God outside in Nature, in air, in water and so on. But soon they began to feel that no, God is not outside. God is inside. Slowly a group of people began to say: Yes, these phenomena—the sun, the moon—they surely are very powerful but they are not supreme. It seems there is somebody or some power which is controlling them. They are not independent themselves and it may be that the same power which controls this phenomenal world also controls the human mind. But what is that power?

It is remarkable that the Indian mind thought that it was more important that we should find an answer to this question than engage ourselves in efforts to conquer new territories, to send our armies outside India, or to consolidate our political power.

#### The first priority

It is also difficult to explain how in the course of this evolution Indian thinking people cared to recognize that there are four things which are most important to an individual. What are these four things? *Dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *moksha*. They are called *chaturvarga*. Please note that the Indian spiritual thinkers are not ruling out *artha* or *kāma*. *Artha*, ie money, is necessary. Material prosperity is necessary. Then, *kāma* or desires. No use pretending that I have no desires. Maybe we have even some desires which are illegitimate, which are bad, which may do us harm. That is why we find that our first priority is *dharma* or some moral laws that sustain society. This *dharma* is also known as *rita*, Truth. When they used the word *dharma*, they did not mean religion. *Dharma* is that which sustains you as an individual or as a people. If you are an honest person people will respect you and listen to you. They will say, here is a man who means what he says and says what he means. So they trust you. They are ready to enter into some kind of agreement with you,

to deal with you, in business as well as in day-to-day affairs of life. They will say, 'Ah! here is a person I can depend upon. I need not worry about his bona fides'. That sustains you. You are an object of respect, wherever you are, in whatever situation you might be. You find people trusting you, loving you, caring for you. This is perhaps more true in the case of a nation. A relation between one nation and another develops and becomes firm and stable if both are honest. So, long ago our people realized that *dharma* alone holds together a family or a society. Even between a husband and a wife, between a father and a son there must be *dharma*—mutual trust. If this trust is missing, there can be no happy family relations. This condition equally applies to the society as well as international community. So *dharma* is the first priority. You may say that Indians are living in an ivory tower. You are free to say so. Yet long ago the Indian mind realized that the first priority in life is *dharma*.

Then they also realized that in order to survive man has to have *artha*—material wealth and prosperity. If you want to have a happy and comfortable life, you have to have money. Please do not think that when India speaks of renunciation she is advocating poverty. Renunciation is that which impels you to reject a thing which you consider not very important and then try to achieve something which to you is more important. If you renounce money it means that you have in view something which to you is more important than money. It may be you are one who is involved in some kind of scholastic pursuit so that money becomes secondary to you. Maybe you are writing a book and you love to write that book. You are so engrossed in it that you do not mind if you have to make some financial sacrifices. Or, maybe you are a scientist. You are doing some research in your laboratory. Somebody comes to you and says: 'Look, I need a good partner in business. Will you come and join me? I think I will be able to

give you a lot of money if you are with me since you are a scientist.' But you will perhaps spurn the offer. You will say, 'I do not care for your money. Leave me alone. I am happy. I would like to stay poor. I would like to concentrate on the research in which I am now involved.' This is renunciation. Renunciation means trying to reach out to something higher, something more satisfying to you than what you have now.

Like *artha*, *kāma* is also recognized by the Indian spiritual tradition. I am frank enough to admit that I have desires. I want honour. I want social recognition, a high position in society. I also want political power. These desires are considered natural. Religion does not say you have to repress your natural and legitimate desires. Surely you are at liberty to try to enjoy life, but do it in keeping with the principles of *dharmā*. Take care of the ends and means. I would like to be rich, but surely not at the expense of other people, by cheating other people, by dishonest means. You are a capable person. So what is wrong if you say that you want to be the boss in the office where you are working now? This is legitimate. You do not have to say, 'Oh I don't care!'

Please remember the argument Sri Krishna puts forward when Arjuna says he does not want to fight. Sri Krishna scolds him and says: You have to fight. Why should you not fight? You have every right to fight for what is due to you. The kingship is due to you. Since you have been deprived of it wrongly, you have every right to recover it. So fight. If you do not fight you are a coward. And there is no greater sin than being a coward. Arjuna says: I would live by begging. I would be a monk. I do not want to be a king.

Sri Krishna said: You are pretending to be a man of renunciation. You are being, in fact, a coward. And a coward is not a person who commands respect in society. So *kāma* is also fine. But then, there are people who are not

interested so much in worldly success. Somehow they feel they have enjoyed life well; they do not want to enjoy any further. Such a person thinks, maybe there are other kinds of joys, maybe there are higher pleasures, and he will try to get them. Truly, there are some pleasures which are gross, but there are pleasures which are more enduring. So there are people who say that in order to get higher pleasures, real joy and real happiness, they have to have *moksha*. Material pleasures, they argue, are after all very transient. Therefore they want spiritual joy which is not transient. Spiritual joy is something which people cannot see and it cannot be exhibited to other people. But if I have spiritual joy I *f-e-e-l* it. I know I have spiritual joy and it is something that is most important to me, that is what I would like to achieve by all means.

So our people were idealistic no doubt, but not life-denying as some people have alleged. It is only a question of priority. Money? Yes, I need some money. But how much? I need money but I need other things also. If I have only money I would not be entirely happy. For that I also need love, respect, and honour; I need some amount of moral development, not just material development. So in the whole history of India you find that there are certain personalities who stand out as being the pillars of society. Who are they? They are the philosophers, who have shaped the destiny of this country, who have shaped the courses of our thought processes.

There is a very interesting story in the Upanishads where you find the Brahmins, all scholarly people, would sometimes go about inviting fellow Brahmin scholars to debate. Now a king called Janaka once said that he would like to debate with them. The Brahmins thought it was their prerogative that they should debate among themselves. They did not want any non-Brahmin to debate with them. But there was one Brahmin named

Yājñavalkya who felt that Janaka must be a great scholar. 'Maybe', Yājñavalkya reasoned, 'he knows more than what we know; we have no reason to back out just because he is a Kshatriya.' So Yājñavalkya went to King Janaka. And then they argued. Finally, he found Janaka was indeed a great scholar and he learnt from him. His argument was, it did not matter whether Janaka is a Brahmin or not; since he is a scholar, he would very gladly sit at his feet and learn.

#### Great importance of knowledge

Please note, right from the beginning India has attached great importance to knowledge. India has always held in the highest esteem those who are scholarly people. However, scholarship did not mean book-learning in those days. It was not book-learning that impressed people. They were impressed by character that was developed by the direct perception of Truth. So, not just intellectual accomplishment, but character based on personal realization of Truth was of utmost importance. The question of being a Brahmin or non-Brahmin was immaterial. Therefore again and again you will find King Janaka organizing public debates on issues of great spiritual importance such as 'What is Life?' 'What happens after death?' etc. Upanishads try to answer such questions. The *Kathopanishad*, for instance, deals with such spiritual questions. It contains a long, captivating conversation between a young boy named Nachiketā and the god of death, Yama, against the backdrop of a story.

The story says that once Nachiketā's father Āruni Uddālaka, a great scholarly sage, performed a *yajna* (sacrifice) in which he took a vow to give away all his possessions to other people. But while giving away he was giving only those things which were of no utility to him. He had a herd of dying cattle. He started giving them away to the Brahmins and others who had assembled there. Nachiketā was

watching. He did not approve of it. He knew his father was not doing the right thing. To draw the attention of his father to this fault, he approached him and asked—'Father, to whom shall you give me away?' Nachiketā's father ignored him. Second time the son put the same question. Still his father ignored. Third time, when Nachiketā repeated his question, his father got very upset and said: 'To Yama.' Nachiketā then started his journey to Yama's abode. His father tried by all means to dissuade him from going to the house of death because it meant death and nobody can return to this earth. But Nachiketā was undaunted and said he had to fulfil his father's word and could not make it untrue.

Nachiketā reached Yama's palace and waited outside the gate for three days. When Yama returned after three days and saw a Brahmin boy waiting for him for three days without receiving any hospitality, he atoned for the lapse and gave him three boons. Nachiketā then asked Yama: 'What happens after death?' Yama was astonished to hear such a deep question of wisdom from a young mouth. He at first tried to dissuade him for seeking an answer to such a vital question by offering him wealth, fame, beauty, long life and many such apparently tempting things. But Nachiketā did not budge. Then, Yama, pleased with his sincere single-minded devotion to truth agreed to answer and thus began the discourse of the *Kathopanishad*. This is only a story, but a very significant story. It points out the way the Indian mind worked.

Indeed, the Indian mind has always been obsessed with such questions as: 'What is life?', 'What is the purpose of life?', 'What is Real in this world?' This phenomenal world, this world of empirical senses, as a matter of fact, is always changing. Everything is changing. I am changing, my body is changing. I was young once. Now I am old and feeble. So the question pops up again and again: Is there something which is permanent?

Similarly, what is the essence of existence? This physical world? Is that all? Or, is there something more to it? Is there something not perceptible that holds together the universe? So these questions have always bothered their minds. Please note that nowhere else has man raised such profound questions.

At first man began to worship Nature. He thought if he could keep Nature in good humour he would not die. But ultimately he discovered that does not solve the problem. At first he thought, there was some power, maybe in Heaven, maybe outside somewhere, which is supreme, which controls everything. But gradually man discovered that the power which controls everything is not an objective power. The greatest discovery that man ever made is that the objective world can be controlled. But the power which is supreme, which controls everything, is not in the objective world. It is in the subjective world. It is in the mind. It is inside, in me. In fact, the power which is within me is the power which is also outside. If I can control the power which is within me, I can control also the power which is outside. The power outside may hurt me but I will not be upset, I will not be perturbed. I can ignore it and it is possible for me to ignore it.

You see, the ancient Indian seers declared in the *Kaivalya Upanishad*, '*na karmanā na prajayā dhanena tyāgena eke amritattvamānashuh.*' 'Not by money, not by children, not even by all the sacrifices, only by renunciation a few great souls achieved immortality.' What does this statement actually mean? Does it mean that money is not required? No, it is needed. It can help you to a certain extent, but not beyond that. Children? Well, you need their support, but ultimately they also will not help you. *Sakāma karma*, ie work with desires, will also not help. I say, 'O Mother Kāli, I will present you a gold crown, I will perform this and that sacrifice, I will spend lots of money.' All these, however, will be of no avail. It is only

renunciation that will help. What is renunciation? Renunciation is the ability to say, 'No, I don't care for your political power, for your money, for even death. Money cannot tempt me. Scholarship also cannot tempt me. Nothing can tempt me. I am supreme.' Renunciation is this sort of defiant attitude. Even we have to defy death because, by defying death, we achieve immortality. The body is perishable. The body may be in pain, but I am beyond the body, beyond the mind, beyond the intellect. I am the Spirit, ever free. I am Supreme. It is this new concept which makes man move on to realize something which is the highest.

You begin as a slave, but slowly you begin to discover the power that is lying hidden within you. You will begin to discover your supremacy over everything outside. Then you are your own master. Then you are always your own Self irrespective of what happens outside. This discovery of your true nature is what is described as immortality in the Upanishad which is the culmination of all our spiritual and moral thinking. This is how our spiritual tradition has evolved.

#### Truth is within

As I said earlier, our people were very thoughtful. They found the world very attractive; yet they kept on asking again and again the question: Why things happen the way they happen? Who, for instance, controls the planet, the sun? How come, the sun rises at a certain hour and then again sets at a certain hour! Who regulates it? It seems that there is somebody controlling everything. Who is that somebody? So they began questioning and somehow it dawned on them that perhaps the answer could be found not outside, but within. What made them think in this manner, no one knows, nonetheless they thought if they meditated on the question they might some day be able to find the answer. So they meditated on this and many

such questions. And finally they got the answer that came from within.

Therefore, truth, according to Hindu philosophy, is within. It reveals to yourself. Only you have to look within with deep concentration and finally the answer suggests itself to you. It comes out, as it were, if your mind is at rest. If you are able to control your mind you would discover the truth. It is those truths which they put together as a set of knowledge or the Vedas. 'Veda' means knowledge which is derived from the root 'vid', meaning to know. Veda is nothing but a mass of knowledge—a mass of knowledge which the *rishis* had acquired from within, not from outside. How? The *Katha Upanishad* says, by being *āvritta chakshu*—closing your eyes. That means you shut out this phenomenal world which is very attractive in itself.

In the *Katha Upanishad* (2.1.1.) you find the statement—'*parānchi khāni / vyatrinat svyambhub*'. It means God has cursed our sense organs. How has He cursed them? By making them outgoing. Therefore, in order to meditate not only you have to close your eyes, you have also to close your ears and all other sense organs. That is how you have to withdraw yourself from the outside world. And then the truth reveals to you. Incidentally, in this manner, our seers discovered many things which you find people discovering today with the help of instruments. The seers did not have external instruments. They just meditated with the help of their purified mind. Through meditation, for instance, they discovered the age of our planet earth.

One very well-known scientist said in one of his lectures that, we, of this age, know how old this earth is. There are many ways of calculating the age of the earth. We calculate the age of the earth with the help of many instruments that we have. But surprisingly long, long ago Indian seers had discovered the age of the earth and had come almost to the same conclusion that we have arrived at. Maybe

there is a little, marginal difference, but we are not sure if they are wrong or we are. So that is what modern science has to say.

So long ago our seers discovered the truth about this universe through meditation; they discovered this universe so to say. It is, however, wrong to think that somebody has created this universe. Our seers dismissed the idea of creation. They say, there is no such thing as 'creation'. There is only *manifestation*. There is one single entity and that has manifested itself.

A simile is used in the *Mundaka Upanishad* to explain this fascinating process of manifestation. It is the simile of a spider (*urnanābhi*) and its web. There is the spider in one corner of your room. You are watching it. Soon you find it brings forth a web, quite a large web. What is the web for? To catch flies and insects. It preys on them, eats them, and then slowly withdraws the web. The web is gone but the spider is there.

Imagine what a wonderful thing they discovered! They said, the same thing is the material cause as well as the efficient cause of this universe. One single entity is there. That entity is the material cause. Again, that entity is the efficient cause. We know what is the material cause of a thing. Take, for instance, a wooden table. We know there is an efficient cause. That is, somebody created it to give the table its form. I needed a table. I placed an order and so the carpenter made it. That is the efficient cause. The material cause is the wood. Two things are separate—the material cause and the efficient cause. The carpenter and the table are two separate entities here. But long ago our people discovered that they are the same, the efficient cause and the material cause of the universe. They said in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (2.6), '*tat srishtvā tadevānuprāvishat*.' If there is a creator, if somebody created the table, then that creator entered into the table, this creation. The creator and creation are the same and not two

distinct entities.

They say, you see so many things around. What a wonderful diversity of objects! They argue, however, that it is the same material that has become all these objects. They will say, suppose you are a rich person. You are using all kinds of jewellery made of gold. You have a necklace made of gold. You have rings made of gold. But it is the same material—gold. Only you have changed its form. And having changed the form you have also given it a new name. That is all. Similarly, there exist diverse objects around you. You see men and women, animals, plants and so on. You see water, fire, space, the sun, the moon, the stars. Some are big and some small. But they say they are all one and made of the same material. In the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* (3.20) they say, '*anoraniyān mahato mahiyān ātmā gubāyām nihito'sya jantoh*'. That is, the Self, which is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest, resides in the hearts of all beings. So they say the same Reality is everywhere. It is the same Reality manifesting Itself everywhere.

Finally they come up with the simile of a banyan tree. The seers ask: Where did the tree come from? From the seed, they answer. The whole huge banyan tree complete with all its outspread branches, leaves, roots, shoots, trunks and fruits, was inside that small seed and out of that seed manifested itself. It was not creation but self-manifestation. It is just like a duckling coming out of an egg. Would you say, it is a creation? Would you say the egg has created the duckling? The egg has become the duckling.

#### The concept of oneness

Similarly, *Brahmānda*, this whole universe was in a potential form in a seminal stage. It was the cause. The cause has become the effect. The seed has become the tree. The egg has become the bird. It is nothing but manifes-

tation. Just as the egg has become the bird, similarly the bird goes and it leaves behind egg. Thus you go back and forth, from cause to effect and from effect to cause. In other words, the cause becomes the effect and the effect becomes the cause. And that is how it is going on all the time. We use the word 'creation' and 'destruction'. But creation and destruction are nothing but change of form. Something new you see and say it has been created. No. It was lying there earlier in some other form which you did not see or know. Only it has changed its form and you say it is a new thing. Take a table for instance. Some day it would disintegrate, but wood would be there and that wood may assume another shape. You would then say, 'Oh! here is a chair' or another kind of furniture. But the material is the same. They call this unchanging material Brahman, which is always there, always present. Only the name and form, *nāma and rupa*, are different. Men and women are made of the same matter but we have different forms. You have one kind of body, I have another. You are tall and fair; I am short and dark. Well, that is all the apparent difference, but we are all made up of the same stuff. Thus from diversity, somehow the concept of oneness, the concept of the unity of existence has emerged. And this truth the seers realized in meditation. One truth after another revealed themselves to them through meditation. And they put the truths together and named it transcendental knowledge. It is not the kind of knowledge which we acquire by reading books with the help of our sense organs. I see you with the help of my eyes. That is also a kind of knowledge. But they called their experience *darshana*, which actually means realization or direct, personal, immediate experience. It is not just seeing with the help of a pair of eyes.

Our seers said, if you depend upon your sense organs you are not sure that they are not betraying you. Maybe they are deceiving you.

Maybe when you see something red, it may not be red at all but yellow. To you it appears to be red because your vision is defective. I am short of hearing. I hear some sound. As I am short of hearing, I am able to hear a sort of sound but not able to hear exactly what you are saying. So you cannot trust your sense organs. When you have some experience through your sense organs you cannot be sure that, that experience is valid, infallible. For example, what a child sees, hears, or experiences cannot be fully reliable as he is immature. But the saying of an old, wise person will be more trustworthy as he speaks from matured experiences. But that too may not be faultless. So truth has to be transcendental, *darshana*. And it is possible to have experiences independent of the sense organs. It is called super-sensuous or transcendental experience. Our seers say such experiences come sometimes in a flash. You find an idea coming to you all of a sudden. You have been trying to sort out a problem for some time, perhaps without finding a way out. But all of a sudden the solution comes into view although you were not thinking of the problem at that moment.

Swami Vivekananda says, if the knowledge is in the books, the books must be great scholars. But, no, they are not. The real knowledge is within. So our ancient seers say that the Vedas are transcendental knowledge which cannot be cancelled like other worldly knowledge. A scientist, for example, makes certain statements and writes a book. But after a few years he retracts the statements made earlier and says he made a mistake. So that is the predicament of worldly knowledge.

Knowledge, according to our seers, is true always. It was true in the past, true at present and will remain so in future. It is independent of time and space. Why? Because knowledge is Brahman and Brahman is knowledge—*jnānam anantam*. To them, knowledge is not illusion. They give the example of a snake-rope, that is, a rope appearing to be a snake in the dark. But when light is brought in, one finds that what was thought to be a snake earlier is an illusion. It is actually a rope.

By contrast, transcendental knowledge is part and parcel of yourself. You get totally transformed when you discover that knowledge hidden within you. That is what our Upanishads claim. That is also what we want. Now I have money, still I am unhappy. I have good health, still I am unhappy. I have good reputation in society, but I am unhappy. No one is happy. No one is *abhaya*—without fear. Everyone has fear and is haunted by it. They say, suppose you are a scholar. You fear lest you come across another scholar superior to you. You are rich. But you think maybe there are people around you who are conspiring to rob you of your money. You worry out of your own imagination about such things and feel unhappy.

How then can one be happy? How can one overcome fear, become *abhaya*? The answer is, by attaining transcendental knowledge. That is our birthright, declare the Upanishads. And knowingly or unknowingly, all of us want to go to that state where we shall have no fear at all, where we will feel we are immortal. According to our Upanishadic spiritual tradition, that is achieved through Self-realization. ■

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