

# KENA UPANISHAD 1

Re-translated by James Swartz

## Chapter I

**1. OM.** The disciple asked: By whose will is the mind directed to its objects? By whose command does the life breath do its duty? Who causes the eyes to see and the ears to hear? Who speaks through the mouth?

**2.** The teacher replied: It is the Eye of the Eye, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of speech, the Life of life, and the Ear of the Ear. Separating the Self from the senses and renouncing the world the wise one realizes his or her immortal nature.

**3,4 .** The eye does not go out on its own, nor the speech or the mind. We do not know the Awareness behind them. We do not know how anyone can teach It . It is different from the known and above the unknown. Thus we have heard from the preceptors of old who taught It to us.

**5 .** That which cannot be expressed by speech but by which speech is expressed...know That alone to be limitless Awareness and not that which people worship here.

**6 .** That which cannot be known by the mind but by which the mind is known...know That alone to be limitless Awareness and not that which people worship here.

7. That which cannot be seen by the eye but by which the eye is seen...know that alone to be limitless Awareness and not that which people worship here.

8. That which cannot be heard by the ear but by which sounds are known...know that alone to be limitless Awareness and not that which people worship here.

9. That which the breath cannot smell but by which the breath smells objects...know that alone to be limitless Awareness (Brahman) and not that which people worship here.

## Chapter II

1. The teacher said: If you think you know Awareness well, then you only know a small portion of its limitless form. Therefore Brahman, limitless Awareness, is worthy of inquiry.

2. The disciple said: I think I know Awareness. I don't think I know It well, but I don't think I don't know It either.

The one who says, 'neither do I know nor do I not know It , knows It.

3. The one who doesn't know It , knows It: the one who knows It, knows It not.

4. To say you know it you must know it in every state of mind. To know it is to realize that you are immortal. By

virtue of Awareness one gains life but one gains immortality by knowing It .

**5.** If a person knows the Self, eternal Awareness, the true goal of life is achieved. Suffering awaits those who do not know. Knowing It the wise let go of worldly things and claim their deathless status.

## **Chapter III**

According to an ancient story Brahman obtained a victory for the gods.

They became elated and said, "The glory is ours alone."

Brahman, the Great Spirit, who understood their arrogance, appeared before the gods. But they did not know who He was.

They told Fire to find out who the Great Spirit was.

He approached Brahman who said, "Who are you?"

"I am Fire" he said proudly.

"And what do you do, by what power are you known?" replied Brahman?

"I can burn anything on earth," he said.

"Burn that!" said Brahman putting a small thin straw

before him.

Agni generated an immense heat that blackened the whole universe but he could not ignite the straw.

Dejected, he returned to the Gods.

“I could not find out who that Great Spirit is,” he said.

Next, they told Air to find out who the Great Spirit was.

He approached Brahman who said, “Who are you?”

“I am Air” he said proudly.

“And what do you do, by what power are you known?”  
replied Brahman?

“I can carry away anything that is on the earth,” Air  
replied haughtily.

“Blow that away!” said Brahman putting a small thin  
straw before him.

Air generate an intense gale but he could not move the  
straw.

Dejected, he returned to the Gods. “I could not find out  
who that Great Spirit is,” he said.

Finally, the gods told the Mind to find out who the Great  
Spirit was.

“I will” he said and hastened toward it. But when he got quite close Spirit disappeared.

Then he looked up in the sky and saw the daughter of the Himalayas . He approached her and asked, ‘Who is that Great Spirit?’

## **Chapter IV**

"It is Brahman, limitless Awareness" she said. Through the victory of Brahman alone have you attained glory," she replied. Then the Mind understood that It was Brahman.

Since they approached very near and were the first to know that It was Brahman they excelled the other gods. Because it got nearest to the Self, the Mind excelled the others.

This is the instruction about Awareness with regard to the powers in the mind: It is like a flash of lightning; It is like a wink of the eye.

Now the instruction about Awareness with regard to the individual self: The mind should go to it. By means of the mind the seeker communes with It intimately again and again. This should be the mind's motivation.

That Awareness is adorable; it should be worshipped. All creatures desire the one who worships the Self.

The disciple said; 'Teach me, sir, the Upanishad.'

The preceptor replied: "I have already told you the Upanishad. I have certainly told you the Upanishad about limitless Awareness, your own Self."

Austerities, self-restraint, and sacrificial rites are Its feet, and the Vedas are Its many limbs. Truth is Its home.

The one who knows this Upanishad shakes off all sin and becomes firmly established in the Infinite, the highest heaven.

### **The Peace Chant**

***Om. May Awareness protect the teacher and the  
disciple!***

***May It bestow upon us the fruit of Knowledge!***

***May we both gain the resolve to acquire Self  
knowledge!***

***May we both reveal the Truth!***

***May we cherish no ill feeling toward each other!***

***Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!***

Om. May all parts of my body be nourished!  
All, indeed, is Awareness as is declared in the  
Upanishads.

May I never deny Awareness!

May Awareness never deny me!

May all the virtues described in the Upanishads  
belong to the one devoted to Awareness!  
May they all belong to me!

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!