

Title

# **Maitrâyana-Brâhmana-Upanishad**

Translated by  
**Max Müller**

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## About this eBook

“Maitrâyana-Brâhmana-Upanishad”; Translated by Max Müller.

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## Maitrâyana-Brâhmana-Upanishad

### FIRST PRAPÂTHAKA

1. The laying of the formerly-described sacrificial fires<sup>1</sup> is indeed the sacrifice of Brahman. Therefore let the sacrificer, after he has laid those fires, meditate on the Self. Thus only does the sacrificer become complete and faultless.

But who is to be meditated on? He who is called Prâna (breath). Of him there is this story:

2. A King, named Brihadratha, having established his son in his sovereignty<sup>2</sup>, went into the forest, because he considered this body as transient, and had obtained freedom from all desires. Having performed the highest penance, he stands there, with uplifted arms, looking up to the sun. At the end of a thousand (days)<sup>3</sup>, the Saint Sâkâyanya<sup>4</sup>, who knew the Self, came near<sup>5</sup>, burning with splendour, like a fire without smoke. He said to the King: 'Rise, rise! Choose a boon!'

The King, bowing before him, said: 'O Saint, I know not the Self, thou knowest the essence (of the Self). We have heard so. Teach it us.'

Sâkâyanya replied: 'This was achieved of yore; but what thou askest is difficult to obtain<sup>6</sup>. O Aikshvâka, choose other pleasures.'

The King, touching the Saint's feet with his head, recited this Gâthâ:

3. 'O Saint, What is the use of the enjoyment of pleasures in this offensive, pithless body - a mere mass of bones, skin, sinews, marrow<sup>7</sup>, flesh, seed, blood, mucus, tears, phlegm, ordure, water<sup>8</sup>, bile, and slime! What is the use of the enjoyment of pleasures in this body which is assailed by lust, hatred, greed, delusion, fear, anguish, jealousy, separation from what is loved, union with what is not loved<sup>9</sup>, hunger, thirst, old age, death, illness, grief, and other evils!

4. And we see that all this is perishable, as these flies, gnats, and other insects, as herbs and trees<sup>10</sup>, growing and decaying. And what of these? There are other great ones, mighty wielders of bows, rulers of empires, Sudyumna, Bhûridyumna, Indradyumna, Kuvalayâsya,

<sup>1</sup> The performance of all the sacrifices, described in the Maitrâyana-brâhmana, is to lead up in the end to a knowledge of Brahman, by rendering a man fit for receiving the highest knowledge. See Manu VI, 82: 'All that has been declared (above) depends on meditation; for he who is not proficient in the knowledge of the Self reaps not the full reward of the performance of rites.'

<sup>2</sup> Instead of virâgye, a doubtful word, and occurring nowhere else, m. reads vairâgye.

<sup>3</sup> Or years, if we read sahasrasya instead of sahasrâhasya.

<sup>4</sup> The descendant of Sâkâyana. Saint is perhaps too strong; it means a holy, venerable man, and is frequently applied to a Buddha.

<sup>5</sup> Both M. and m. add muneh before antikam, whereas the commentary has râgñah.

<sup>6</sup> Though the commentator must have read etad vrittam purastâd duhsakyam etat prasñam, yet prasñam as a neuter is very strange. M. reads etad vrittam purastât, dussakama prikkha prasñam; m. reads etad vratam purastât asakyam mâ prikkha prasñam aikshvâka, &c. This suggests the reading, etad vrittam purastâd duhsakam mi prikkha prasñam, i.e. this was settled formerly, do not ask a difficult or an impossible question.

<sup>7</sup> Read maggâ.

<sup>8</sup> M. adds vâta before pitta; not m.

<sup>9</sup> An expression that often occurs in Buddhist literature. See also Manu VI, 62: 'On their separation from those whom they love, and their union with those whom they hate; on their strength overpowered by old age, and their bodies racked with disease.'

<sup>10</sup> The Sandhi vanaspatayodbhûta for vanaspataya udbhûta is anomalous. M. reads vanaspatayo bhûtapradhvamsinah.

Yauvanâsya, Vadhryasva, Asvapati<sup>11</sup>, Sasabindu, Hariskandra, Ambarîsha<sup>12</sup>, Nahusha, Anânata, Saryâti, Yayâti, Anaranya<sup>13</sup>, Ukshasena<sup>14</sup>, &c., and kings such as Marutta, Bharata (Daushyanti), and others, who before the eyes of their whole family surrendered the greatest happiness, and passed on from this world to that. And what of these? There are other great ones. We see the destruction<sup>15</sup> of Gandharvas, Asuras<sup>16</sup>, Yakshas, Râkshasas, Bhûtas, Ganas, Pisâkas, snakes, and vampires. And what of these? There is the drying up of other great oceans, the falling of mountains, the moving of the pole-star, the cutting of the wind-ropes (that hold the stars), the submergence of the earth, and the departure of the gods (suras) from their place. In such a world as this, what is the use of the enjoyment of pleasures, if he who has fed<sup>17</sup> on them is seen<sup>18</sup> to return (to this world) again and again! Deign therefore to take me out! In this world I am like a frog in a dry well. O Saint, thou art my way, thou art my way.'

## SECOND PRAPÂTHAKA

1. Then the Saint Sâkâyanya, well pleased, said to the King: 'Great King Brihadratha, thou banner of the race of Ikshvâku, quickly obtaining a knowledge of Self, thou art happy, and art renowned by the name of Marut, the wind<sup>19</sup>. This indeed is thy Self<sup>20</sup>.'

'Which<sup>21</sup>, O Saint,' said the King.

Then the Saint said to him:

2. 'He<sup>22</sup> who, without stopping the out-breathing<sup>23</sup>, proceeds upwards (from the sthûla to the sūkshma sarîra), and who, modified (by impressions), and yet not modified<sup>24</sup>, drives away the darkness (of error), he is the Self. Thus said the Saint Maitri<sup>25</sup>.' And Sâkâyanya said to the King Brihadratha: 'He who in perfect rest, rising from this body (both from the sthûla and sūkshma), and reaching the highest light<sup>26</sup>, comes forth in his own form, he is the Self<sup>27</sup> (thus said Sâkâyanya); this is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman.'

<sup>11</sup> M. carries on asvapatisasabinduhariskandrâambarîsha.

<sup>12</sup> After Ambarîsha, M. reads Nabhushânanutusayyâtiyâyâtyanaranyâkshasenâdayo. Nahusha (Naghusha?) is the father of Saryâti; Nâbhâga, the father of Ambarîsha. These names are so carelessly written that even the commentator says that the text is either khândasa or prâmâdika. Anânata is a mere conjecture. It occurs as the name of a Rishi in Rig-veda IX, 111.

<sup>13</sup> Anaranya, mentioned in the Mahâbhârata, I, 230.

<sup>14</sup> M. reads anaranyâkshasena.

<sup>15</sup> M. and m. read nirodhanam.

<sup>16</sup> M. adds Apsarasas.

<sup>17</sup> AL and m. read âsritasya, but the commentator explains asitasya.

<sup>18</sup> Here we have the Maitrâyaṇa Sandhi, drisyatâ iti, instead of drisyata iti; see von Schroeder, Maitrâyaṇi Samhitâ, p. xxviii. M. and m. read drisyata.

<sup>19</sup> Prishadasva in the Veda is another name of the Maruts, the storm gods. Afterwards the king is called Marut, VI, 30.

<sup>20</sup> This sentence is called a Sûtra by the commentator to VI, 32.

<sup>21</sup> M. reads Kathaya me katamo bhavân iti.

<sup>22</sup> M. leaves out atha.

<sup>23</sup> One might read âvishtambhanena, in the sense of while preventing the departure of the vital breath, as in the Brih. Âr. VI, 3, prânena rakshann avaram kulâyam.

<sup>24</sup> M. reads vyathamâno 'vyathamânas.

<sup>25</sup> M. leaves out Maitrih-ity evam hyâha. The commentator explains Maitrir by mitrâyâ apatyam rishir maitrir maitreya. In a later passage (II, 3) M. reads Bhagavatâ Maitrena, likewise the Anubhûtiprakâsa.

<sup>26</sup> M. adds svayam gyotir upasampadya.

<sup>27</sup> M. reads esha for ity esha, which seems better.

3. 'Now then this is the science of Brahman, and the science of all Upanishads, O King, which was told us by the Saint Maitri<sup>28</sup>. I shall tell it to thee:

'We hear (in the sacred records) that there were once the Vâlahkilyas<sup>29</sup>, who had left off all evil, who were vigorous and passionless. They said to the Pragâpati Kratu: "O Saint, this body is without intelligence, like a cart. To what supernatural being belongs this great power by which such a body has been made intelligent? Or who is the driver? What thou knowest, O Saint, tell us that<sup>30</sup>.'" Pragâpati answered and said:

4. 'He who in the Sruti is called "Standing above," like passionless ascetics<sup>31</sup> amidst the objects of the world, he, indeed, the pure, clean, undeveloped, tranquil, breathless, bodiless<sup>32</sup>, endless, imperishable, firm, everlasting, unborn, independent one, stands in his own greatness, and by him has this body been made intelligent, and he is also the driver of it.'

They said: 'O Saint, How has this been made intelligent by such a being as this which has no desires<sup>33</sup>, and how is he its driver?' He answered them and said:

5. 'That Self which is very small, invisible, incomprehensible, called Purusha, dwells of his own will here in part<sup>34</sup>; just as a man who is fast asleep awakes of his own will<sup>35</sup>. And this part (of the Self) which is entirely intelligent, reflected in man (as the sun in different vessels of water), knowing the body (kshetragnâ), attested by his conceiving, willing, and believing<sup>36</sup>, is Pragâpati (lord of creatures), called Visva. By him, the intelligent, is this body made intelligent, and he is the driver thereof.'

They said to him: 'O Saint<sup>37</sup>, if this has been made intelligent by such a being as this, which has no desires, and if he is the driver thereof, how was it?' He answered them and said:

6. 'In the beginning Pragâpati (the lord of creatures) stood alone. He had no happiness, when alone. Meditating<sup>38</sup> on himself, he created many creatures. He looked on them and saw they were, like a stone, without understanding, and standing like a lifeless post. He had no happiness. He thought, I shall enter<sup>39</sup> within, that they may awake. Making himself like air (vâyû)<sup>40</sup> he entered within. Being one, he could not do it. Then dividing himself fivefold, he is called Prâna, Apâna, Samâna, Udâna, Vyâna. Now that<sup>41</sup> air which rises upwards, is Prâna.

<sup>28</sup> M. reads Maitrena vyâkhyâtâ.

<sup>29</sup> M. M., Translation of Rig-veda, Preface, p. xxxiv.

<sup>30</sup> M. adds: brûhîti te hokur Bhagavan katham anena vâsyam yat Bhagavan vetsy etad asmâkam brûhîti tân hovâketi.

<sup>31</sup> The commentator allows ûtrdhvaretasasah to be taken as a vocative also.

<sup>32</sup> Nirâtmâ is explained by the commentator as thoughtless, without volition, &c. But âtmâ is frequently used for body also, and this seems more appropriate here. M., however, reads anîsâtmâ, and this is the reading explained in the Anubhûtiprakâsa, p. 228, ver. 60. This might mean the Âtman which has not yet assumed the quality of a personal god. See VI, 28; VI, 31.

<sup>33</sup> The reading anishthena is explained by the commentator as free from any local habitation or attachment. He also mentions the various readings anishtena, free from wishes, and anishthena, the smallest. M. reads anikkhena, and this seems better than anishtena. The Anubhûtiprakâsa reads likewise anikkhasya.

<sup>34</sup> I read buddhipûrvam, and again with M. suptasyeva buddhipûrvam. I also read amsena without iti, as in M. The simile seems to be that a man, if he likes, can wake himself at any time of night, and this 'if he likes' is expressed by buddhipûrvam. See Anubhûtiprakâsa, vv. 67, 68.

<sup>35</sup> M. reads vibodhayati, atha.

<sup>36</sup> See Maitr. Up. V, 2; Cowell's Translation, pp. 246, 256; Vedântaparibhâshâ, ed. A. Venis, in the Pandit, IV, p. 100.

<sup>37</sup> M. adds: bhagavann îdrisasya katham amsena vartanam iti tân hovâka.

<sup>38</sup> AT. reads abhidhyâyan.

<sup>39</sup> It is better to read with M. visânîti.

<sup>40</sup> M. vâyum iva.

<sup>41</sup> M. Atha yo 'yam.

That which moves downwards, is Apâna. That by which these two are supposed to be held, is Vyâna. That<sup>42</sup> which carries the grosser material of food to the Apâna, and brings the subtler material to each limb, has the name Samâna. (After these (Prâna, Apâna, Samâna) comes the work of the Vyâna, and between them (the Prâna, Apâna, and Samâna on one side and the Vyâna on the other) comes the rising of the Udâna.) That which brings up or carries down<sup>43</sup> what has been drunk and eaten, is the Udâna<sup>44</sup>.

Now the Upâmsu-vessel (or prâna) depends on the Antaryâma-vessel (apâna) and the Antaryâma-vessel (apâna) on the Upâmsu-vessel<sup>45</sup> (prâna), and between these two the self-resplendent (Self) produced heat<sup>46</sup>. This heat is the purusha (person), and this purusha is Agni Vaisvânara. And thus it is said elsewhere<sup>47</sup>: "Agni Vaisvânara is the fire within man by which the food that is eaten is cooked, i.e. digested. Its noise is that which one hears, if one covers one's ears. When a man is on the point of departing this life, he does not hear that noise."

Now he<sup>48</sup>, having divided himself fivefold, is hidden in a secret place (buddhi), assuming the nature of mind, having the prânas as his body, resplendent, having true concepts, and free like ether<sup>49</sup>. Feeling even thus that he has not attained his object, he thinks from within the interior of the heart<sup>50</sup>, "Let me enjoy objects." Therefore, having first broken open these five apertures (of the senses), he enjoys the objects by means of the five reins. This means that these perceptive organs (ear, skin, eye, tongue, nose) are his reins; the active organs (tongue (for speaking), hands, feet, anus, generative organ) his horses; the body his chariot, the mind the charioteer, the whip being the temperament. Driven by that whip, this body goes round like the wheel driven by the potter. This body is made intelligent, and he is the driver thereof.

This<sup>51</sup> is indeed the Self, who seeming to be filled with desires, and seeming to be overcome<sup>52</sup> by bright or dark fruits of action, wanders about in everybody (himself remaining free). Because he is not manifest, because he is infinitely small, because he is invisible, because he cannot be grasped, because he is attached to nothing, therefore he, seeming to be changing, an agent in that which is not (prakriti), is in reality not an agent and unchanging. He is pure, firm, stable, undefiled<sup>53</sup>, unmoved, free from desire, remaining a spectator, resting in himself Having concealed himself in the cloak of the three qualities he appears as the enjoyer of rita, as the enjoyer of rita (of his good works).'

<sup>42</sup> M. reads: yo 'yam sthavishtam annam dhâtum annasyâpâne sthâpayaty anishtham kânge 'nge samnayati esha vâva sa samâno 'tha yo 'yam. Leaving, out annam, this seems the right reading. The whole sentence from uttaram to udânasya is left out in M.

<sup>43</sup> M. nigirati kaisho vâva sa udâno 'tha yenaitâs sirâ anuvyâptâ esha vâva sa vyânah.

<sup>44</sup> The views of these five kinds of wind differ considerably. Here the commentator explains that the prâna and apâna, the up-breathing and down-breathing, keep the bodily warmth alive, as bellows keep up a fire. The food cooked in it is distributed by the Samâna, so that the coarse material becomes ordure, the middle flesh, the subtle material mind (manas). The udâna brings up phlegm, &c., while the Vyâna gives strength to the whole body.

<sup>45</sup> Two sacrificial vessels (graha) placed on either side of the stone on which the Soma is squeezed, and here compared to the Prâna and Apâna, between which the Self (kaitanyâtâmâ) assumes heat.

<sup>46</sup> M. reads taylor antarâle kaushnyam prâsuvat.

<sup>47</sup> See Brihadâranyaka Up. V, 9; Khând. Up. III, 13, 8.

<sup>48</sup> The Vaisvânara or purusha, according to the commentator, but originally the Pragâpati, who had made himself like air, and divided himself into five vital airs.

<sup>49</sup> Thus the âtmâ, with his own qualities and those which he assumes, becomes a living being.

<sup>50</sup> M. reads esho 'sya hridantare tishthann.

<sup>51</sup> M. reads: Sa vâ esha âtmeti hosann iva sitâsitaih. This seems better than usanti kavayah, which hardly construes.

<sup>52</sup> M. reads abhibhûyamânay iva, which again is better than anabhibhûta iva, for he seems to be overcome, but is not, just as he seems to be an agent, but is not. See also III, 1.

<sup>53</sup> M. has alepo.