

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

KATHA UPANISHAD

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT WITH AN INTERPRETATION

I.

Seeking for favour, verily, Vajashravasa made a sacrifice of all his possessions. He had a son, named Nachiketas. Him, being still a boy, faith entered as the cattle for the sacrifice were being led up. He thought:

These have drunk water, they have eaten grass, they have been milked of their milk, they are without strength. Joyless, verily, are those worlds; to them he goes, giving these.

He said to his father:

Then to whom wilt thou give me? said he.

A second and third time he asked him.

To Death I give thee! said he.

IF the essence of the Upanishads dwell in those parts of the complete documents which have the form of drama, then it may be said that, of all the dramatic dialogues in these ancient Books of Wisdom, this Upanishad is, in many ways, the finest and most beautiful.

It is also the most universal, embodying the most universal truths of life in the most universal symbolism.

The central symbol is this: The Father sends his Son into the realm of Death. After dwelling three days in the House of Death, the Son rises again and returns to his Father.

It needs no emphasis to make clear that the theme of this ancient Upanishad is the central theme of Christianity. But it is also of the deepest interest that the Western Avatar again and again uses one or another variation of the same symbolic story in the Parables of the Kingdom, which are the most characteristic part of his teaching.

Take, for example, the parable of the man who planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. After he had in vain sent servants to receive the fruit of the vineyard, having one son, well beloved, he sent him also, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

Here, the Father sends the Son to the husbandmen, and the Son is put to death. And the context makes it quite clear that the Western Avatar is, in this parable, speaking of his own mission.

The first three Gospels record this parable. The fourth does not. Yet the fourth gospel conveys exactly the same thought, expressed directly and without parable:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

All four Gospels thus make it clear that the Father sending the Son, with the death of the Son, is, among other things, an accepted symbol of the mission of the Avatar; and that the Western Avatar thus used this symbol.

But he uses the symbol of the Father and the Son in another way, also, in what is, perhaps, the greatest and most beautiful of all the parables: the story of the Prodigal.

Here, it is not the Son of man, but man himself, who is symbolized; man himself, who goes to the place of penitence, and returns thence to his Father.

Using the phrase in one of the texts that bear the name of Shankaracharya, we may say that the Father is the supreme Self, Paramatma, who sends the Son, the personal self, Jiva-atma, into the world. The personal self dwells there three days. And these three days represent "three times," past, present, future; for the personal self, entering the world, falls under the dominion of threefold time. Only when, overcoming the world, he reaches liberation, does he "pass beyond the three times," as another Upanishad puts it.

In one sense, then, the Son whom the Father sends into the world represents the human soul suffering the universal fate. In another sense, the Son is the Avatar.

But there is no contradiction, since the Avatar of set purpose subjects himself to the universal fate; he takes our nature upon him, and is in all points tempted like as we are, becoming subject to death, in order that he may show the way of resurrection. As the profoundly philosophical Epistle to the Hebrews puts it: In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is also able to succour them that are tempted.

The whole of the second chapter of this Epistle sheds a flood of light on the purpose with which an Avatar incarnates, thus making himself subject to death; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death.

This last sentence might serve as a superscription for the Upanishad which we are considering. It represents the victory over death, gained through the teaching of Death.

The Avatar, the Master, subjects himself to the power of death; he takes upon himself the general fate of mankind, and lives a life which, at every point, shall be representative of that universal fate; all this, in order that he may show mankind the way to overcome the common fate, to gain the victory over death. He creates situation after situ-

ation, performs act after act, in order that, as Christ expressed it, the scripture might be fulfilled; in order that his life might be perfectly symbolic of the journey of the soul through death to liberation.

As has been said before in these comments, it would seem that, on its way toward liberation, the soul of the disciple passes through definite ceremonies, the frame for which is set by those who have already attained, those who have been spoken of as Masters; and that these ceremonies not only represent the upward journey of the soul, but also give the soul vital help and inspiration on that journey.

It would appear that this Upanishad is the dramatized record of such a ceremony of initiation; that it records not only the fate of Nachiketas, son of Vajashravasa, who descended into the House of Death, but also a ceremony actually passed through by disciples who, in such an initiation, die to the outer world and awake to the world of immortality.

And, curiously enough, there is still evidence of this character of the Upanishad as the record of a ceremony of initiation, in the Sanskrit text itself. For, toward the end of the first half, which completes the story of Nachiketas, there occur these words: "Arise ye! Awake ye! Having obtained your wishes, understand ye!"—all three verbs being in the plural imperative, and therefore obviously not addressed to Nachiketas alone; exactly the words that might be expected to close a ceremony of initiation.

This, then, is an outline of the symbolism of the whole Upanishad. It represents the journey of the soul, descending into the House of Death, the world of our mortality; dwelling there three days, which represent the "three times," threefold time, perceived as past, present and future; and finally rising again from the House of Death, and returning to the Father. And at the same time this symbolism represents the initiation of a disciple, which initiation is a representation and summing up of the soul's journey to its divine consummation.

There is one point of symbolism still to be considered in the passage translated: namely, the sacrifice of cattle, which preceded the sacrifice of the Son. And it happens that we can once more find the clue of the symbol in the deeply mystical Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, and especially in the tenth chapter:

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of those things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. . . . Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may

establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all . . .”

Here, we have exactly the same sequence as in the Upanishad: first the sacrifice of cattle, an imperfect and ineffectual sacrifice; then the sacrifice of the Son, made once for all.

What then is the significance of this sacrifice of cattle? We may find the clue in the Upanishad itself, in the verse which may be translated thus:

“Those of old have called the powers of sense the horses, and the objects of these powers the pastures, or the roadways.”

The cattle, then, are the bodily senses, the natural powers of perception and action, while the things which they perceive, the things upon which they act, are the pastures in which the cattle graze, or the roads on which the horses travel.

The sacrifice of cattle symbolically represents a stern asceticism which restrains the natural senses and powers, holding them back from objects of sense; yet without the full sacrifice of self, without the true subjection of the heart to the divine law, expressed in the words: “I come to do thy will.” For the motive of this asceticism may well be spiritual ambition, the desire that oneself may excel, that power may be gained for oneself; an ambition full of vanity and evil.

Therefore there is but one perfect and effectual sacrifice: the sacrifice of the personal will to the divine Will, the offering of the human heart to the supreme Heart, the sacrifice of the Son to the Father.

As Nachiketas says, the imperfect sacrifice of asceticism can gain only joyless worlds; as Paul says, it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Sin lies in the will, and can be taken away only by complete obedience to the divine Will, through the absolute offering up of all the wills of self.

So we come back to the dramatic story of the son of Vajashravasa. Nachiketas has been sacrificed, sent by his father to the House of Death. Standing on the way of death, that all mortals tread, he thus considers:

Of many, I go the first; of many, I go the midmost. What is this to be done of Yama, which through me he will today accomplish?

Look after those who have gone before; look toward those who are coming; as it was with those, so it is with these. As grain a mortal ripens; as grain he rises again in birth.

Nachiketas is standing on the road of death. Many are following him; of these he is the first. But he sees also that many have already gone before him; therefore he stands in the midst of a perpetual stream of pilgrims.

The symbol of seed corn sown in the ground, and there losing its form and character, yet through that very change giving birth to new life, would seem to be as old as ancient Egypt, in the days of Osiris. It

is used here, as it is used in the New Testament, as the symbol of resurrection from among the dead. This is the spiritual resurrection, the birth of the spiritual man, the immortal.

Nachiketas goes forward to the door of the House of Death, to seek admission, and speaks thus :

As Vaishvanara, a sacred guest approaches dwellings. Therefore they give him this greeting of peace: Bring water, oh Son of the Sun!

Hope and expectation, friendship and pleasant words, sacrifice and good deeds, sons and cattle, this destroys, of the man of little wisdom in whose house a sacred guest dwells without eating.

The meaning of Vaishvanara, a title of Agni, god of Fire, was discussed in a former comment. There is the one universal, divine Fire, which, in heaven, appears as the sun; in the mid-world, appears as lightning; on the earth, appears as fire on the altar. But the human body is also the altar on which this fire burns. This fire is the breath of life which is common to all men; common, indeed, to all living beings upon the earth, animals and plants as well as men. The human being, therefore, as the abode of this sacred fire, is sacred, and must be received as representative of the god. When the guest comes to the door, god Agni comes to the door. In him, the guest must be greeted.

And here there is a touch of humour in the tradition. The guest, representative of the Fire-god, must be greeted with an offering of water, lest the Fire-god burn up the dwelling. The universal presence of this obligation throughout the East is testified to, by a sentence from another sacred book: "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet."

Water at least must be offered to the guest; and failure to make this offering, because it is a slight offered to the divinity in the guest, burns up the hope and expectation, the friendship and pleasant words, the merit earned by sacrifice, and even the sons and cattle of the inhospitable man who spurns the guest. Friendly words toward him cease, because even the poorest may greet the stranger with friendly words, and he has failed to do this.

Nachiketas, kept waiting three days and nights outside the door of Yama, utters this reproach against Death's inhospitality. Or, as an Indian commentary suggests, the reminder comes from Yama's wife, who recalls to him the duties of hospitality. The text itself gives no indication as to who is the speaker; but it seems more fitting to assign the words to Nachiketas himself.

We come now to Yama, Lord of death, who is addressed here as Death, and also as Son of the Sun. Concerning this mysterious personage, there are many traditions in the ancient books of India, from which, perhaps, we may be able to elicit a consistent meaning.

Yama, with his twin sister Yami, are children of Vivasvat, the Sun. They thus represent the Solar Pitris, the conscious and intelligent souls of mankind. They are represented as twins, perhaps to indicate the early races which were two-sexed, before the separation of the sexes. And the tradition that Yama was wedded to his twin sister Yami, no doubt refers to the period after the separation of the sexes, when sex union began; the epoch of the later Third Race. The fact that Yama is also called Lord of the South may likewise refer to this Third Race, which had its chief development on the southern continent, as the Second Race seems to have had its chief development on the northern continent.

Yama was also the first, according to tradition, who died a physical death; another reference to the same period of the later Third Race. When the time for death came, Yama, as king of the men of that time, volunteered to be the first to taste of death, to descend into the world of darkness. Therefore Yama became Lord of the House of Death, and Judge of the dead. According to their deeds, they were sent to one or another of the twenty-one provinces of Yama; and, when they had received the reward of good works, or the punishment of evil works, they were born again.

This tradition will explain the various names of Yama: Son of the Sun, Lord of Death, Lord of Judgment. As Son of the Sun, representative of the spiritual nature in man, Yama is also the great Initiator, who reveals to men their spiritual powers. Therefore, he is both the host of Nachiketas, as Lord of the realm of Death, and his Initiator, as Son of the Sun, which here, as so often, is the symbol of the Logos, the Sun of Righteousness.

It would be easy to draw parallels with the traditions of Egypt, where Ra is the Sun, while Amen-Ra, the hidden Sun, the sun after sunset, is the Lord of the realm of Death. So also Osiris, the great sacrificial victim, is Lord of the realm of Death and Judge of the dead, and is, at the same time, Lord of the hidden wisdom, Lord of Initiation.

After the passage of three nights, which, as has been shown, stand for the "three times," past, present, future, the forms taken by Eternity in this our place of pilgrimage, Yama, at last greeting his guest, speaks thus to Nachiketas:

Because thou hast dwelt three nights in my house without eating, a sacred guest, worthy of reverence—reverence to thee, holy one, and may it be well with me—therefore, in return do thou choose three wishes.

Nachiketas answers:

That the descendant of Gotama, my father, may be of quiet heart, well-minded, without resentment towards me, O Death, when I am sent forth by Thee; that he may address me gladly—this I choose as the first wish of my three!

Yama replies:

As before, Uddalaka Aruni's son will be well-disposed toward thee through my grace. Happily by night he will sleep with resentment gone, having beheld thee released from the mouth of Death.

There are different shades of meaning in this first wish, according to the different layers of the allegorical story. First, taking the story as a simple narrative of the father, Vajashravasa, who, because of his son's insistence, was forced to sacrifice him to Death, there is the simple wish that that father should be without resentment toward his son, without sorrow; that he should receive his son with all his former love. Then there is the deeper meaning, where the Son is a symbol of the soul which has descended into the world of death; that the Father should once more receive this Son, taking him to himself with love as of old. This is the meaning indicated in the parable of the Prodigal. And there is a third meaning, having to do with the disciple, the candidate for initiation. The father here represents the whole past Karma of the disciple; the web of limitations which he has imposed upon himself by his past acts and faults. After his initiation, a part of his task is, to conquer these limitations, to bring order out of this web of confusion, to bring reconciliation between the past and the new future which is illumined by the light of initiation.

The name of Uddalaka Aruni deserves comment. In a passage in the Chhandogya Upanishad, it is said that: "This sacred teaching Brahma declared to Prajapati, Prajapati to Manu, Manu to his offspring. This sacred truth was declared by his father to his eldest son, Uddalaka Aruni." Shankaracharya, or the disciple who writes in his name, thus interprets this: "Brahma Hiranyagarbha declared it to Prajapati Viraj; he to Manu; and Manu declared it to Ikshvaku and the others."

We may compare with this the passage at the beginning of the fourth book of the Bhagavad Gita. "This everlasting teaching of Union I declared to the Solar Lord; the Solar Lord declared it to Manu; Manu revealed it to Ikshvaku. Thus handed down by spiritual succession, the Rajanya sages received this revelation."

We are concerned here with the succession of the Divine Hierarchy, guardians of the greater Mysteries and revealers of the great Initiation. Having its heart and origin in the Logos, it is imparted to the Regent of the Solar Pitris, who are the bearers of the souls of men; the Solar Lord reveals it to the humanity of our own race, to whom it comes through the line of the Solar Kings, at the head of which traditionally stands Ikshvaku. And from the Solar Kings come the Upanishads, as they themselves abundantly testify.

Therefore the name, son of Uddalaka Aruni, given to the father of Nachiketas, would appear to point directly to the line of transmission of the greater Mysteries, and clearly to indicate that this story is a document of the greater Mysteries: the thought with which the present interpretation is undertaken.

C. J.

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH KATHA UPANISHAD

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT WITH AN INTERPRETATION

II.

In the heavenly world there is no fear at all; nor art Thou there, nor is there fear because of decay. Crossing over both hunger and thirst, passing beyond sorrow, he rejoices in the heavenly world.

Thou indeed knowest the heavenly fire, O Death! Declare it to me, possessing faith. The heavenly worlds enjoy immortality; this as my second wish I choose.

WE may briefly recall what has gone before.

Nachiketas represents the soul of man, sent by his Father, the Higher Self, into incarnation; there to gain, through the long series of births, a harvest of wisdom and sacrifice and power, to be brought back, in the day of liberation, for the enrichment of the Father. The House of Death, into which he descends, is this present world, which is manifested in the "three times", present, past and future, the three-fold refraction of Eternity, through the prism of Maya, the great Illusion of Differentiation.

Because he is now to be liberated from the "three times", he is given a wish corresponding to each of the three times: a wish concerning the past, a wish concerning the present, a wish concerning the future. Through the desire for liberation, he has earned this threefold gift, which is the single gift of divinity refracted through the prism of Maya. The gift for the past, which expresses itself as the return to the Father, reconciliation with the Father, has already been bestowed.

Further, because the great Initiation is the summing up, the consummation of the soul's long journey, Nachiketas equally represents the soul of the disciple entering the great Initiation. The disciple, through aspiration and sacrifice, has already won the first gift: the return to his Father, the Master on whose spiritual ray he is. In virtue of that return, he is ready to ask for the second gift: the entry into present immortality. Therefore he asks the Initiator for this heavenly fire.

The Initiator replies:

To thee I declare it; through awakening, learn thou of me this heavenly fire, Nachiketas, becoming conscious of it. Behold and know the obtaining of the unending world, the root and resting place, that which is hid in the secret place.

He declared to him that fire, which is the beginning of worlds; what

are the bricks of the altar, how many they are, and how they are. And he in turn repeated it to him as it had been told him; and Death, well pleased with him, again spoke.

To him, he of Mighty Soul, well satisfied, said: Today I give again thy wish; thine shall this fire be by name; and take thou this garland of many forms.

He who kindles the triple fire of Nachiketas, gaining union with the three, completing the three works, crosses over birth and death; gaining knowledge of the Radiant Divinity, ever to be praised, who knows that which is born of the Eternal, and comprehending it, he goes to the unending peace.

He who kindles the triple fire of Nachiketas, knowing this triad, who, thus knowing, prepares the altar for the fire of Nachiketas, he, escaping beforehand the snares of death, and crossing beyond sorrow, rejoices in the heavenly world.

This is thy heavenly fire, Nachiketas, which thou hast chosen by thy second wish. This fire, men shall call thine. Choose, Nachiketas, a third wish!

Nachiketas asks for the secret of the heavenly world, the heavenly fire. Perhaps it may be said that the Upanishad, in recording the response of Yama, lord of Death, at once conceals and reveals the secret.

For there is no explicit answer, no clear description of the heavenly fire. Yet, in the answer of Yama, much is revealed as to its nature.

It is known through "awakening"; but awakening means the arousing into activity of Buddhi, the divine principle which brings illumination. So we may take it that the heavenly fire is Buddhi active, which has hitherto been hid in the secret place, dormant in the inner chamber of the soul. With the kindling of Buddhi, comes present immortality, for this is the fire which makes immortal.

It is further called the triple fire, or the fire thrice kindled; we may take it that this refers to the three higher principles: Buddhi-Manas, Buddhi itself, and Atma, of which Buddhi is the manifestation.

This triple fire burns on the altar, which is built four-square: the lower quaternary, the four lower principles, unillumined mind, the form body, vitality and the physical body.

After giving this teaching, Death asks Nachiketas to repeat it to him. Nachiketas does this, a symbol, it would seem, of the blending of consciousness in Master and disciple.

Death then bestows upon Nachiketas a garland. This is, perhaps, the crown of life, given to those who are faithful unto death (Rev. 2, 10). It may be more accurate to render the Greek word (stephanos) as wreath, the wreath of bay leaves given to the victor. This would give a more vivid meaning to Paul's comparison: Every one who contends in the stadium constrains himself in all things; they, indeed, that they

may obtain a wreath which withers, but we, a wreath which withers not (I Cor. 9, 25).

Explaining the phrase: "gaining union with the three", the commentary attributed to Shankaracharya says that the three are "father, mother and Master". But even with this, we still appear to have a hidden meaning, the mother being the past Karma, the sum of aspiration and sacrifice in the past; the father, as before, is the Higher Self, which, through union with the gathered effort of the past, forms the new-born Spiritual Man. The Master guides and safeguards the process of birth and growth.

The Spiritual Man, thus born, escapes from the snares of death before the hour of death has come, and crossing beyond sorrow, rejoices in the heavenly world. So we come to the third wish, the wish concerned with the illimitable future. Nachiketas thus expresses his wish:

This question that there is, in the case of the man who has gone forth; some saying that he is, while some say that he is not; a knowledge of this, imparted by Thee—this, of my wishes, is the third wish!

(Death answers): By the Radiant Divinities even, this was questioned of old! For not easily known and subtle is this law. Another wish choose thou, Nachiketas! Constrain me not, but spare me this!

(Nachiketas speaks): By the Radiant Divinities even, this was questioned, thou sayest, O Death, and it is not easily known! And another like Thee to speak it is not to be gained. No other wish is equal to this!

(Death answers): Choose sons and grandsons of a hundred years, many cattle, elephants, gold, horses; choose the wide dwelling of the earth, and live thyself as many autumns as thou wilt! If thou thinkest this an equal wish, choose thou wealth and length of days. Be thou great on the earth, Nachiketas! I make thee an enjoyer of thy desires!

Whatever desires are hard to gain in the world of mortals, ask all desires according to thy will! These beauties with their chariots and lutes—not such as these are to be gained by men; be waited on by these, bestowed by Me! Ask me not concerning dying, Nachiketas!

This passage marks the vital turning point in the ceremony of the Mysteries, the great Initiation, which we conceive this Upanishad to represent. It is the final trial of the candidate, the last temptation.

Before considering this trial more in detail, we may bring, for comparison, a similar passage, which is found, in slightly different versions, in the two longest of the great Upanishads.

It forms a part of the story of Shvetaketu, descendant of Aruna, a story at once profound and full of humour. Shvetaketu is a youth, both adventurous and conceited, the son of a lovable father, who is the very essence of humility.

Moved by the spirit of adventure, Shvetaketu betakes himself to the court of the great Rajput prince, Pravahana, son of Jivala, a Master, whose disciples are gathered about him.

King Pravahana greets the youth graciously, and asks him whether he has learned the teachings of wisdom from his father.

The youth, with complete self-assurance, declares that he has learned wisdom.

The Rajput king then asks him five questions :

Knowest thou how these beings, going forth, depart on different ways?

Knowest thou how they return again to this world?

Knowest thou how that world is not overfilled by so many, thus going forth incessantly?

Knowest thou at which offering being offered, the waters arising speak with human voice?

Knowest thou the approach of the path, the way of the Gods, or the way of the Fathers, or by doing what they reach the way of the Gods or the way of the Fathers?—For the word of the Rishi has been heard by us: "Two paths for mortals I have heard: path of the Fathers, and path of the Gods. By these two goes all that moves, whatever is between Father and Mother!"

These five questions contain, in fact, the essence of the Mystery doctrine, the twin teachings of Reincarnation and Liberation. For the path of the Fathers is the way of reincarnation, while the path of the Gods is the divine way of liberation, of perfected spiritual illumination, the small, old way that leads to the Eternal. Through Karma, whatever binds to self, they go upon the way of the Fathers. Through faith, fervour and service of the Eternal, they go on the path of the Gods. One or other path, as the ancient Rishi said, is followed by all that moves, whatever dwells between Father Heaven and Mother Earth.

So there is the dividing of the ways. Those bound by Karma go to the world of their reward, and then return again to this world. And, because they return again, that world is not filled to overflowing by so many, going forth in death incessantly. And at the sacrifice of human birth, the waters, that is, the currents of Karma, arise and speak with human voice, the voice of the new-born child.

These five questions not only imply the whole teaching of the Mysteries; they themselves supply the answers. The dividing of the ways, asked after in the first question, is clearly indicated in the fifth. The reason why the world of rewards is not filled, is supplied by the question as to the return of beings to this world.

Shvetaketu, however, each time answered, "No!" Whereupon, the King graciously invited him to remain with him as a pupil, to learn the beginnings of wisdom. The youth, his vanity wounded, ran away, and returned to his good father, whom he began to reproach, saying, "Did you not say that you had instructed us? But this Rajput fellow has asked me five questions, and I do not know one of them!"

Very gently, the father replied: "Thou knowest us, dear, that what-

ever I knew, I told to thee! But let us two go and become the disciples of the wise king!"

"Let your honour go!" the youth replied, his vanity still sore.

So Gautama went to the king's court, where he was graciously received, and bestowed on the king a costly gift. Whereupon the king said:

"We give the worthy Gautama a wish!"

And Gautama replied:

"The wish is promised to me! What thou saidst in the boy's presence, tell that to me!"

But the king answered:

"This is among wishes of the Gods! Speak some wish of the sons of men!"

Gautama answered:

"It is known! For there is store of gold, of cattle and horses, of slave girls and robes and vestures! Be not thou niggardly, Sire, of the Great, the Infinite, the Illimitable!"

And the king replied:

"Thy wish, Gautama, is a holy one!"

"I come to my Master as a disciple!" answered Gautama, for with these words, those of old came to a Master, for this was the formula of discipleship.

Then the king said:

"So do not thou reproach us, thou and thy ancestors, since this wisdom (Vidya) never before dwelt in any Brahman. But I shall declare it to thee, for who is worthy to refuse thee, speaking thus?"

This is the version of the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, closely translated. In the Chhandogya Upanishad, there are slight variants:

Gautama came to the king's dwelling, and the king received him with honour. Then early in the morning Gautama, going to the assembly, went up to the king, who said to him:

"Honoured Gautama, choose thou a wish of the wealth of the sons of men!"

But he replied:

"Thine, O king, be the wealth of men! But the word that thou saidst in the boy's presence, tell that, verily, to me!"

The king was constrained, and bade Gautama dwell with him as his disciple, saying to him:

"Never before thee does this wisdom go to Brahmins, for among all peoples it was the word of command of the Rajputs!"

This is exactly the temptation with which King Yama the Initiator tries Nachiketas: "This is a wish of Gods! Choose thou a wish of men! Choose sons and grandsons of a hundred years, many cattle, elephants, gold, horses. . . . These beauties with their chariots and lutes—not such as these are to be gained by men!"

It is of interest that, by the shortening of a single vowel in the

Sanskrit (reading *hasti* for *ha-asti*), the wish offered to Gautama would be: "Store of elephants and gold, of cattle and horses, slave girls and robes and vestures;" elephants being the symbol of kingly power in India even to this day, when an assembly of princes means also the gathering of a herd of elephants.

Nachiketas is, therefore, tempted by the offer of kingly power, wealth in gold and cattle and horses; sons and grandsons, long lived, to offer for him the sacrifice to the Manes, and all things that allure the sensual man.

These are the things that Prince Siddhartha refused and laid aside when he entered the path of the Buddhas of compassion, coming as his mighty Predecessors had come.

This is, once again, the Temptation in the Wilderness: bread for the hunger of the body; the miraculous flight from the temple, to feed the soul's vanity; the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, to feed the spirit of ambition.

Sensuality, vanity, the pride of kingship and power: the same temptations which every disciple must face and conquer, before he can enter on the Way. Happy is the disciple who is not tempted; who, being tempted, overcomes.

C. J.

(To be continued)

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

KATHA UPANISHAD

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT WITH AN INTERPRETATION

III.

Because these things, lasting only until the morrow, O Thou who makest an end, consume this fire of all a mortal's powers, and even the whole of life is little; Thine, verily, are chariots, Thine are dance and song!

Not by wealth is the son of man to be satisfied. Shall we choose wealth, if we have seen Thee? Shall we live, so long as Thou art lord? But that is the boon to be chosen by me!

Having drawn near to the unfading Immortals, a fading mortal here below, and understanding Them, thoroughly considering the enjoyment of these beauties and of desire, who would delight in long-drawn life?

This, concerning which (even the Radiant Divinities) question, O Death,—What is in the Great Beyond—tell us that! This boon which enters the hidden—no other than this Nachiketas chooses!

THIS is the reply of Nachiketas, as the disciple, to the great temptation, the "temptation in the wilderness". It is the three-fold temptation, appealing to the desires of the body, the vanity of the mind, the ambition of the spirit, which runs through the whole of human life; and the shameful succumbing to which, unhappily, constitutes so large a part of unregenerated human life.

The task of the disciple is, with the help of the Master, to see these things in contrast with the reality, the beauty, and holiness of the Eternal; and, having completely made the contrast, to choose the Eternal.

And, since the Great Initiation is the summing up of human life, in order to make it the stepping-stone to the Great Beyond, it would seem that the first part of the Great Initiation consists in a final viewing of this threefold allurements, and its final rejection.

This rejection by Nachiketas, as the disciple, is the theme of the passage just translated; and the rejection will always be made on the same grounds: the contrast between the Eternal and that which is out of the Eternal; or, putting this in a more concrete form, the contrast between the beauty of holiness, in the Master, and the desires of the lower self, as the disciple finds them within him.

This rejection must continue, in heart and mind and will, in understanding and in act, throughout the whole course of discipleship; discipleship is just this progressive choice and sacrifice, where the field of choice is lit by the light and love of the Master, the holy light of the

Eternal. First, through the Master's light, a discerning between the things of the Master and the things of the lower self; then the courageous sacrifice of the self to the Master; the process carried out in moment after moment, in situation after situation, in act after act, with the unceasing regularity of breathing, or the beating of the heart; like these, this perpetual choosing and sacrifice is the essential condition of life, life in the Eternal.

When the Master sees that both discernment and sacrifice have become habitual, inevitable, penetrating the whole nature of the disciple even to the most hidden corners and crannies, so that no element remains of bodily lust, of vanity, of the ambition which is always based on "the great lie of separateness"; when sacrifice of his own will to the will of the Master has become, not a second nature, but the primary, exclusive, and inevitable bent of his whole will and heart; when the Master sees the heart of the disciple to be clean utterly, then, it would seem, comes the Great Initiation, which is the theme of the eleventh book of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and of much of the Apocalypse, especially the fourth chapter. The inner life and consciousness of the disciple become one with the life and consciousness of the Master, the life and consciousness of the whole Divine Hierarchy; the holy, illimitable life and light of the Logos, the very Being of the Eternal. During the Great Initiation, the disciple, through this union with his Master, is one with the Eternal, possessing the full consciousness, the omniscience and omnipotence of the Eternal. He has become the Eternal, making actual in his conscious realization the great truth that underlies and sanctifies all life: that the true Being of each one of us is, indeed, the Eternal.

The tradition is that, during the Great Initiation, the disciple sees clearly all steps of the divine stairway, up to, and including, the ultimate Being of the Most High; but that, after the Initiation is complete, and he returns to waking consciousness, he sees clearly only the next step, the task immediately before him, revealed by his Master's light. He must set himself to that task. When it is completed, the Great Mystery will again descend upon him, the Eternal will be once more revealed; and he will return from that Illumination filled with the vision of a greater task, a further step forward toward the ultimate goal.

Since the Great Initiation consists, not in set teaching, but in the union of the disciple's consciousness with the consciousness of the Master and the consciousness of all the Heavenly Host, it is clear that no written record of set teaching can embody it.

Therefore, the remainder of this Upanishad is not a continuation and completion of the Drama of the Mysteries, but rather a series of precepts and teachings, as we may believe, from some book of discipline for disciples. Every part of it will lead up to the supreme Mystery; but, for a knowledge of the Great Mystery itself, we must await the day of final trial and illumination, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

We come, therefore, to the series of precepts for disciples, though the form of a dialogue between Death and Nachiketas is still loosely maintained:

One thing is the better; other than that, verily, is the dearer. These two draw a man in different directions.

Of the two, for him who takes the better it is well; he fails of his goal who, verily, chooses the dearer.

The better and the dearer come near to a man; viewing both well, the wise man discerns between them. For the wise man chooses the better above the dearer; the fool through lust of possession, chooses the dearer.

Thou, indeed, pondering over dear and dearly loved desires, Nachiketas, hast passed them by; not this flowery way of wealth hast thou accepted, in which sink many of the sons of men.

Far different are these two ways: the unwisdom of delusion, and that which is known as wisdom. I hold Nachiketas a chooser of wisdom; nor do many desires draw thee astray.

Others, turning about in the unwisdom of delusion, self-wise, thinking themselves learned, stray, wandering in the way, deluded, like the blind led by the blind.

This is so clear that it needs hardly any comment. It may stand for the practical application of the whole of the Eastern Wisdom.

The point to keep in mind would seem to be that the initial choice of the disciple is only the first step; it must be followed by successive choosings of the better rather than the dearer, day by day and moment by moment. It must be kept in mind, it must be engraven on the heart, that every moment brings its choice of the better, whether as effort or as sacrifice and acceptance. And unbroken, never flagging effort, is by no means the least difficult sacrifice. Often we feel ourselves ready to ask for suffering rather than the hard necessity of effort; but to seek suffering that we may shirk effort, is to choose the dearer rather than the better.

The word here rendered "the unwisdom of delusion" is hard to translate in its full meaning, because it goes back to a deep conception of the whole universe of Life. There is the Eternal, beginningless, undying, everlasting; there are also all manifested and transitory things, the whole many-coloured pageant of the worlds, which are unreal in so far as they are not eternal.

In every situation, in everything without exception, both these powers or elements are present: the Eternal, and that which is but the painted apparition of the Eternal, part of the great Glamour of things visible and manifest. Wisdom must discern between them, but it is a moral discerning, an act of will and sacrifice, rather than an act of understanding; or, more truly, an act at once of sacrificial will and understanding. The East, perhaps, lays the greater emphasis on the understanding; the West, on the choice of the will. But this is mainly a

matter of emphasis. Both discernment and sacrifice must be present in each moment, each act, if the goal is to be completely won.

The Great Beyond shines not to the child, led forward by allurements, misled by the delusion of wealth. "This is the world! There is none beyond!"—thinking thus, again and again he falls under my dominion.

He who is not to be gained by many, even for a hearing; whom many know not, even when they hear: wonderful is the speaker, blessed is the receiver of Him; wonderful is the knower, receiving the teaching from the blessed.

Nor when declared by the lower man is He to be well known, though pondered in many ways. There is no going to Him, unless He be declared by the other, for He is inconceivably more subtle than the measure of the subtle.

Nor is this mind to be gained by reasoning; declared by the other, verily, it may be known well, beloved!—this, which thou hast gained, for thou holdest the Real firmly; may there be for us a questioner like thee, Nachiketas!

The fundamental thought here is the divine and mysterious principle which makes possible the Great Initiation: the sharing of consciousness by virtue of the ultimate reality that all consciousness is One, namely the consciousness of the Eternal.

Were it not true that the consciousness of the supreme Eternal is the highest and most real consciousness of each one of us, it would be eternally impossible for us to attain. It is only because our consciousness is realized as greater and ever greater, that we can go forward even a step upon the spiritual way.

And only because that supreme Eternal is the ultimate Self of each, and, therefore, of all, can there be any communication whatever between living beings. Even though we do not recognize it, every word spoken to another invokes that highest Self which is in us both. Even hatred and envy and malice bear testimony to that common Being.

Sharing of consciousness, therefore, is the deep, vital truth; a sharing of the consciousness of others, based ever on the supreme mystery, our partaking in the consciousness of the Eternal.

On this shared consciousness rests all human life; all human betterment, through sharing a consciousness even a little higher than our own. It is the direct sharing of the consciousness of the Master that makes discipleship possible; that makes the Great Initiation possible, when the supreme day comes.

Therefore, we are told: "There is no going to Him, unless He be declared by the other." The divine consciousness is communicated to the disciple by the Master; the knowledge of the Master is communicated by the disciple to him who is not yet a disciple, but who seeks discipleship. And the disciple communicates that consciousness by living in unison with it; there is no other way.

I know that what is called treasure is unenduring; nor is that unchanging One to be gained by things that change. Therefore the fire of Nachiketas has been kindled by me; for changing things I have gained the Unchanging.

The gaining of desire, the world's foundation, the unending fruit of sacrifice, great fame, the wide foundation, thou, wise in valour, Nachiketas, hast passed by.

But He, who is hard to see, who has entered the hidden place, who dwells in secret, standing in the deep, the Ancient, pondering on that divine One, through the path of union with the Higher Self, the wise leaves exultation and sorrow behind.

Hearing this and fully comprehending, the mortal, setting aside that which is conditioned, and gaining this subtle One, rejoices; for he has gained what is worthy of rejoicing. I think Nachiketas is an open dwelling.

In the loosely woven dialogue, the first paragraph is attributed to Nachiketas; the remainder, to the Teacher, Death.

The second paragraph is once more "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them",—the great temptation which Nachiketas has overcome.

Having conquered, he is ready to seek the Divine Self within himself, to receive the Master's light. Therefore he is an open dwelling, emptied of all other things; ready to receive that Divinity which declares, in the words of the Sufi poem: "the house will not hold Me and thee."

Other than law, other than lawlessness; other than what is done or abstained from here; other than what has been or what shall be—what thou so seest, say that it is That.

That resting place which all Vedas proclaim and all fervent devotions declare; seeking for which, they fulfil the service of the Eternal—that resting place briefly I tell to thee: It is Om.

For this unchanging Om is the Eternal; this, verily, is the Supreme. Knowing, verily, this unchanging Om, whatever a man desires, that is his.

This is the most excellent foundation; this is the supreme foundation. Knowing this most excellent foundation, he is mighty in the world of the Eternal.

The full mystical meaning of Om is set forth in the *Mandukya Upanishad*. It is the universe as the manifestation of the Divinity, which yet remains one, the hidden Spirit.

That Divine Self is the theme of all Vedas, or books of wisdom; it is the goal of all fervent devotions. It is that which all disciples seek, each finding it first in his own Master.

Since all things are but the manifestations of the Divine One, he who has found that, possesses all things; whatever he desires, that he has.

This is in truth the most excellent foundation for the soul to rest on, since it is the foundation of the universe itself.

That Seer is not born, nor dies; nor does He proceed from aught, nor has any become He. Unborn, eternal, immemorial, the Ancient is not slain when the body is slain.

If the slayer thinks to slay Him, if the slain thinks of Him as slain, both these understand not; He slays not, nor is slain.

More subtle than the subtle, yet mightier than the mighty, the Self is hidden in the inmost heart of the creature here. Him he beholds, who is without desires, his sorrow gone, through the grace of that divine Disposer, beholding the mightiness of the divine Self.

This is the original of the splendid passage, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which Krishna, as the Initiator, incites Arjuna to the immemorial battle. It inspires the splendid intuition of the Higher Self, unborn, eternal, everlasting.

The contrasted nature of That which is more subtle than the subtle, and yet mightier than the mighty, is expressed in a very similar way in the parable of the grain of mustard seed, "which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." So, in the Upanishads, the Divine Self is likened to the least of seeds, the kernel of a grain of rice; it is also a great tree, lord of the forest; to it all beings come, as birds come to a tree to rest.

Seated, That goes far; resting, It goes everywhere. Who other than I is worthy to know that Divinity, who is joy without exultation?

Bodiless in bodies, stable among unstable things; understanding this mighty Lord, the Divine Self, the wise grieves not.

Not by speaking is this Divine Self to be gained, nor by reasoning, nor by much hearing. Whom It chooses, by him It is to be gained; this Divine Self chooses his body as Its own.

He who has not ceased from evil doing, who has not attained to peace, who is not one-pointed, whose heart has not gained peace, cannot win Him even by much knowledge.

Of Whom Priest and Warrior are the food; Whose condiment is Death: who knows truly where He is?

Here is a final truth which every disciple, everyone who has come into contact with discipleship, will confirm. After all is said and done, after all aspiration and sacrifice, every effort and act of discipline, there remains, in the unveiling of the Divine Life, an inscrutable element of grace.

Nor is it thinkable that, even when the mightiest Masters have attained the final culmination of divine illumination, they can penetrate the ultimate secret, the last and unfathomable mystery, why God is love.

(To be continued.)

C. J.

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

KATHA UPANISHAD

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT WITH AN INTERPRETATION

IV.

The knowers of the Eternal, they who know the five sacred fires, they who offer the triple fire of Nachiketas, tell of the two, the shadow and the light, entering the hidden place in the upper half of the life-cycle, and there drinking spiritual power in the world of good works.

THIS is what students of Theosophy, using a word taken from the Buddhism of Tibet, describe as the teaching of Devachan. "The shadow and the light" are the principles of Manas and Buddhi, the latter the manifestation of Atma; after death, the higher triad is withdrawn into "the hidden place", the higher, subjective plane, and there draws in spiritual power, energy and refreshment for the spiritual nature, in preparation for the following rebirth.

The symbol of the "five fires" is taken from the five fires in the dwelling of the religious householder; but, esoterically, the dwelling is man himself; the fires, really seven in number, are spiritual powers, manifestations or reflections of the fire of Buddhi. This is made clear in the great dialogue between King Pravahana and Shvetaketu Aruneya, the opening sections of which have been translated in an earlier comment. This dialogue sets forth the fundamental Mystery Teaching which contrasts the Path of the Sun, also called the Path of the Gods, which is the way of Liberation, with the Path of the Moon and of the Fathers, which is the way of Reincarnation through Karma and bondage to personality. Of those who follow the latter path, it is said that, at death, they go to the "lunar world", and become "the food of the gods", the divine element in them gathering and assimilating the harvest of the life just ended. Then, after they have dwelt in the lunar world so long as the accumulation of their good works lasts, they descend again into incarnation through the door of birth, the character and rank of that birth being determined by their conduct in the earlier births. (*Chhandogya Upanishad*, 5, 10, 5-8.)

May we gain power over the sacrificial fire of Nachiketas, which is the bridge of those who sacrifice, and which is the imperishable Eternal, the Supreme; the bridge of those who seek to pass over to the farther shore where no fear is.

This verse picks up and expands the reference to the sacrificial fire

of Nachiketās, spoken of in the preceding verse. That sacrifice is, in reality, the way of Initiation, with its threefold sacrifice, transforming body, soul and spirit; this is the bridge which leads to the fearless shore. The root of the word to "cross over" is the root of the word Avatar, one who, having crossed over, returns again to lead others by the same way.

Know the Higher Self as the lord of the chariot, and the body as the chariot; know the soul as the charioteer, and the mind and emotional nature as the reins.

They say that the powers of perception and action are the horses, and that objective things are the roadways for these; the Self joined with the powers through the mental and emotional nature is called the enjoyer of experience by the wise.

But he who is without understanding, with mind and emotional nature ever uncontrolled, of such a one his powers of perception and action are not under his command, like the unruly horses of the charioteer.

But he who is possessed of understanding, with mind and emotional nature controlled, his powers of perception and action are under his command, like the well-ruled horses of the charioteer.

But he who is not possessed of understanding, with ungoverned mind and emotional nature, ever impure, gains not that goal, but follows the circling path of death and rebirth.

But he who possesses understanding, with well governed mind and emotional nature, ever pure, he indeed gains that goal, from which he returns not to rebirth.

But the man who, using the wisdom of the charioteer, keeps the mind and emotional nature, the reins, well in hand, he gains the consummation of the way, the supreme goal of the divine Pervading Power.

This famous simile of the chariot, which is used by Plato also, suggests the setting of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where Krishna and Arjuna ride in the chariot between the assembled armies. But, while Krishna acts as Arjuna's charioteer, the simile here is somewhat changed; the lord of the chariot is Atma, the Higher Self; he acts through Buddhi, the charioteer, with Manas, the combined mental and emotional nature, as the reins; the five powers of perception and the five powers of action which act through the organs of the body are the horses, and the world of objective life is the road. The ideal is, that the intelligence and will of Buddhi, which embodies Atma, should rule firmly the mental and emotional nature in conformity with Atma, so that the mind thinks spiritual thoughts and the heart entertains spiritual desires; these spiritual thoughts and purposes being then expressed in outer action in the world. Every perception and power must be made obedient to divine wisdom

and will, so that Divine Wisdom is made a living power in every part of life.

The last three verses again sum up the Mystery Teaching: He who follows Divine Wisdom reaches the goal of the Logos, the divine Per- vading Power, called here Vishnu; but he who is under the sway of personality falls again into rebirth through the bondage of Karma.

There is an exact parallel in the Revelation of Saint John: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God" (3, 12).

Higher than the powers of perception and action are the impulses; and higher than the impulses is the mental and emotional nature; but higher than the mental and emotional nature is the soul; and higher than the soul is the Self, the Great One.

Higher than the Great Self is the Supreme Unmanifested; higher than the Unmanifested is Spirit. Higher than Spirit is nothing; Spirit is the goal, the highest Way.

This Self, hidden in all beings, shines not forth, but by the keen and subtle vision of seers the Self is perceived.

He who has gained illumination should control speech and mind; he should rule them through the Self which is wisdom; the Self which is wisdom he should rule through the Self which is mighty; this he should rule through the Self which is Peace.

The phrase "mental and emotional nature" here, as before, is used to translate Manas; Buddhi is translated soul; Atma is translated Self. It is evident that we have here one aspect of the Principles, taken in order from the lowest to the highest, with the universal Principles, the Logos, manifested and unmanifested, and Spirit, or Parabrahm, from which the Logos, the Higher Self, the soul and powers of man come forth.

It would seem, as was earlier suggested, that we have here passages from a Book of Discipline for Disciples, supplementing the Drama of Initiation. The closing verse, bidding the disciple who has gained illumination to control speech and mind, seems to suggest three consecutive steps in spiritual progress; three degrees, let us say, of the Spiritual Man.

Arise ye! Awake ye! Having obtained your boons, thoroughly understand them. A razor's edge, sharp, hard to pass over, a path difficult to tread is this, as seers declare.

Without sound, without touch, passing not away, without taste, everlasting, without odour, beginningless, unending, higher than the Great One, set firm,—perceiving That, he is set free from the mouth of Death.

Having declared this immemorial Teaching of Nachiketas, spoken forth by Death, hearing it, the wise man grows great in the world of the Eternal.

Whoever recites this supreme hidden teaching in the assembly of the Eternal, or with devotion at the time of the sacrifice for those who have gone forth—he builds for the everlasting; he builds for the everlasting.

The words "Arise ye! Awake ye!" indicate, as was earlier suggested, the ending of the Drama of the Mysteries which the *Katha Upanishad*, like many of the dialogues in the Upanishads, appears to constitute: a ceremony in which many take part and not simply a dramatized tale of Nachiketas. The benediction at the close resembles the blessing which ends the Bhagavad Gita; may it rest on the present translator!

The second part of the Upanishad has not even the appearance of continuing the drama between Death and Nachiketas, except at its close. It would seem to consist of excerpts from a Book of Discipline for Disciples; pages chosen for their philosophical depth and religious feeling, rather than as embodying the more technical teachings.

The Self-being pierced the openings of the senses outward; therefore man looks outward, not within, toward the Self.

A certain wise man, with reverted vision, turned his sight toward the Self, seeking immortality.

The children of men go after outward desires; they go to the wide-spread net of Death. Therefore the wise, beholding immortality, seek not that which is permanent among impermanent things.

That, through which he discerns form, taste, odour, sounds, mutual contacts, by that, verily, he discerns wisdom; for what else is there left here? This, verily, is That.

That through which he beholds both dreaming and waking, meditating on this Great One, the Lord, the Self, the wise man grieves no more.

He who has come to know this taster of honey as the Self, the Life, near at hand, Master of what has been and what shall be, thereafter seeks not to hide himself from That. This, verily, is That.

He who of old was born of fervent brooding, born of old from the waters, who, entering into the hidden place, standing there, looked forth through beings: This, verily, is That.

She who comes to birth through the Life, the Mother, clothed with divinity, she who, entering into the hidden place, standing there, was born through beings: This, verily, is That.

The Fire-lord hidden in the fire-sticks, like the germ well borne by those who bear the germ, day by day to be adored by the sons of men who keep vigil, offering oblations, the Lord All-knowing: This, verily, is That.

That, whence rises the sun, and whither he goes to his setting, in Him all Bright Powers are set firm, nor does any transcend Him: This, verily, is That.

From the primordial waters, the hidden deeps of the Unmanifested Infinite, through fervent brooding, the Manifested Logos came forth, to be born as consciousness in the hearts of all creatures, looking forth through the eyes of all beings; as a twin power, yet subordinate, appeared the feminine form of the Logos, the Mother, who is manifested in the lives of all beings.

As the two fire-sticks evolve fire between them, so these two aspects of the Logos evolve all life; life personified as Divine Fire, which, at one extreme, is the inspiration of genius and, at the other, is the warmth of natural life. This, verily, is That: this manifestation and all manifestations are the Life and Light of the Logos, the One: "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." A better translation is, perhaps, "The darkness overcame it not."

How is the Logos to be found? The answer is given in the opening sentence: "The Logos pierced the openings outward, therefore man looks outward, not within, toward the Self. A certain wise man, with reverted vision, turned his sight toward the Self, seeking immortality."

Lao Tse's teaching is identical: "This is the nature of the Way, the Logos: It is without form, It is concealed. Within It are the forms of beings. Within It are beings. Within It is the Spiritual Power. Within It is the unchanging Witness. It is the door through which all beings come forth. How do I know that it is thus with all beings? I know it through the Way, the Logos" (*Tao-Teh-King*, 21).

That, verily, which is here, that, indeed, is there; that which is there, that is also here. From death to death he goes, who beholds difference in this.

By mind and heart, verily, it is to be apprehended that there is in this no difference at all. From death to death he passes, who beholds difference in this.

The Spirit, of the measure of a thumb, stands in the midst, in the Self; Master of what has been and what shall be; therefrom he seeks not to conceal himself: This, verily, is That.

The Spirit, of the measure of a thumb, like a flame that is without smoke; Master of what has been and what shall be; the same to-day, the same to-morrow: This, verily, is That.

As water, rained on broken ground, flows away among the mountains, so he who beholds the properties of life scattered abroad, runs hither and thither after them.

As pure water, poured into pure water, becomes one with it, thus, verily, is the Self of the silent sage, who has attained to wisdom, O Gautama.

This is the teaching of the Oneness of Divinity, the Unity which Lao Tse also reverences. That which is there, in the spiritual world, namely, Divine Spirit itself, is here also in this manifested world, for this manifested world is Spirit and Spirit only.

The Spirit of the measure of a thumb is the same divine Life hid within us that Christ compared to a grain of mustard seed: smaller than small, yet mightier than mighty: "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Standing in command of the eleven-doored dwelling of the Unborn, of unbending consciousness, he grieves not; and, being set free, he is free: This, verily, is That.

The Swan in the ether, the Power in the interspace, the Priest at the altar, the Guest in the dwelling; dwelling in man, in the gift, in righteousness, in the clear sky; born in the waters, born in the sacred cow, born in righteousness, born in the mountains, is the Righteous, the Great One.

He leads upward the forward-life; He impels the downward-life. All the Powers worship the Dwarf seated in the midst.

When this Lord of the body, who dwells within the body, departs, set free from the body, what, indeed, remains there? This, verily, is That.

No mortal lives by the forward-life or by the downward-life; but the mortal lives through another, in Whom these two are set firm.

Behold, This shall I declare to thee, the Eternal, hidden, immemorial; and also how it is with the Self, coming to death, O Gautama: To the womb go some, for the embodying of the Lord of the body; to that which moves not go others; according to their Work, according as they have heard.

The commentary attributed to Shankara Acharya, speaking of the eleven-doored dwelling of the Self, the body, enumerates, besides the eyes, nostrils, ears and mouth, an added "door in the head," which would seem to be the same as "the opening at the dividing of the hair," a door of divine vision and inspiration, spoken of in another Upanishad.

There follow beautiful symbols of the Self: the divine Swan soaring in the ether; the Power in the interspace, mediating between heaven and earth; the Priest perpetually offering sacrifice; the Guest in the dwelling, through whose presence the body is the temple of God.

The sacred cow is the symbol at once of the Holy Spirit, which gives each day our spiritual nourishment sufficient for the day, and of mother Earth, nourisher of all.

The Dwarf seated in the midst is once again the Spirit of the measure of a thumb, smaller than small, yet mightier than mighty. In this divine Life are set firm the forward-life, which goes forth in sight through the eyes, in speech through the lips, and the downward-life, which builds outer perception and outer nourishment into the body. No mortal lives by these; as it is written: "Man shall not live by bread alone."

As to the fate of those who go forth at death, the deeper meaning would seem to be that some enter again into birth, through the bonds of Karma, of their works, while others, following the Path of the Gods, attain that quiet dwelling from whence they "go no more out."

C. J.

(To be continued)

IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH

KATHA UPANISHAD

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT WITH AN INTERPRETATION

V.

This Spirit who is awake in those who sleep, moulding desire after desire: this, verily, is the luminous one, this is the Eternal; this, verily, is called the immortal. In this all worlds are set firm, nor does any transcend it. This, verily, is That.

As the one vital Fire, entering the world, has shaped itself according to form after form, so the one Inner Self of all beings shapes itself to form after form, and is also outside them.

As the one Breath, entering the world, has shaped itself according to form after form, so the one Inner Self of all beings shapes itself to form after form, and is also outside them.

As the Sun, the eye of all the world, is not stained by visible outward defects, so the one Inner Self of all beings is not stained by the evil of the world, being outside it.

The one Ruler, the Inner Self of all beings, who makes one form manifold: the wise who recognize Him dwelling within them, theirs is joy everlasting, but not of others.

The enduring among unenduring things, the Intelligence of intelligences, who, being one, disposes the desires of many: the wise who recognize Him dwelling within them, theirs is peace everlasting, but not of others.

This is that, they say, the ineffable, supreme joy; how may I understand it? Does this give light, or shine by another's light?

The sun shines not there, nor the moon and stars, nor these lightnings, nor fire like this. After this shining, all shines; from the shining of this, all draws its light.

THIS passage is so clear, so eloquent and full of beauty, that it hardly needs any comment. It is the teaching of the supreme Divine Self, which is at once Divine Consciousness and Divine Will; which is the inner Divine Self of all beings, and the origin and source of all power, of every form of force and will throughout the universe.

As being the source and substance of all force, it is that everlasting Motion which is one aspect of the Eternal. And, since motion, in one of its manifestations, is light, this everlasting Motion is perpetual, eternal Light.

One phase of our perceptive consciousness is recipient of natural light, which is a manifestation of the everlasting Light. If we can conceive a spiritual consciousness directly perceptive of that Light, we shall recognize that such a consciousness will dwell in everlasting Light.

This is one of the most universal of all religious and mystical symbols: the Eternal is the "Father of Lights"; the incarnate Logos is "the Light of the world"; and we find, in the *Upanishads* and in the *Apocalypse*, exactly the same expression of the self-luminous spiritual world: "The sun shines not there, nor the moon and stars. . . . from the shining of this, all draws its light"; and "There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light".

Yet another universal religious teaching finds its expression in the passage translated above: the teaching that the Divine is both immanent and transcendent. The one Breath, the Spirit, enters the world shaping itself to form after form, and yet remains outside them. The Divine Spirit is at once the substance, the force and consciousness of every manifested form; yet this manifestation, this endless differentiation does not for an instant impair the perfect unity, the entire perfection of the Divine.

Rooted above, downward branching is this immemorial Ashvattha tree: this, verily, is the luminous one, this is the Eternal; this, verily, is called the immortal. In this all worlds are set firm, nor does any transcend it. This, verily, is That.

Whatever is here, the whole moving world, moves in the Life, made manifest from That. This is the great Fear, the uplifted sceptre; they who know this, become immortal. Through fear of this, fire burns; through fear of this, the sun glows; through fear of this, Indra and Vayu, and Death runs as the fifth.

If one has been able to awaken to this, here, before the body's dissolution, thereafter he builds for embodiment in the creative worlds.

As in a mirror, so in oneself is this perceived; as in dream, so in the world of the Fathers; as in the waters, dispersedly, this is perceived in the world of the Seraphs; as in the light and the shadow, it is perceived in the world of the Eternal.

The immemorial Ashvattha tree is the Tree of Life, rooted above, in the Eternal, and branching downward through the manifested worlds. This again is a universal symbol, found in all religions.

The Eternal is the "great Fear", the everlasting Mystery, before which even the loftiest spirit must ever bow down in reverent awe; the unseen, supreme Lord, whom all manifested powers, whether of life or death, perpetually obey.

The recognition of this Divine Eternal makes for the building of the spiritual body, "the house not made with hands".

While we are here, the Divine Self is indistinctly seen; it appears "as in a mirror, enigmatically," in Saint Paul's words; in the world of the Fathers, the restorative paradise between death and rebirth, it is seen as in a dream, since that is a world of celestial dreams; in the world of the Seraphs, the angelic world, its radiance is like the gleam of sunlight on rippled water, every celestial being reflecting something of that light. In the world of the Eternal, there is the light and the shadow: the light of the Logos, the shadow of the manifested worlds.

The wise man, considering that the activity of the powers of perception and action is separate from his real being, and that they have their rising and setting, as of activities arising apart from himself, grieves not.

Higher than the powers is Mind; higher than Mind is spiritual being; above spiritual being is the Great Self; above the Great is the Unmanifest. But higher than the Unmanifest is the Spirit, all pervading, without distinctive mark. Knowing this, a living being is set free and goes to immortality.

This is what may be called the classification of the Principles: there are, first, the powers of perception and action; then Manas; then the spiritual being, Buddhi, the manifestation of Atma; above Atma is the Logos; beyond the Logos is the Eternal. Knowing this spiritual stairway, man ascends it to immortality.

The form of the Eternal cannot be seen, nor can any one behold Him with the eyes. Through the heart, through illumination, through the understanding He is apprehended. They who know this, become immortal.

When the five powers of perception come to rest, with the mind, and the understanding no longer strives, this they call the highest way; this they hold to be union, the steady controlling of the powers; thereupon he becomes undeluded, for union is a rising and a surcease.

Not, verily, by speech, or by thought, or by the eyes, can this be obtained. It is apprehended of him who realizes its being; how could it be known otherwise?

It is to be apprehended by realizing its being, and by direct experience of both; to him who has apprehended it through realization, its true being is revealed.

When all desires that dwell in his heart are let go, the mortal becomes immortal and enters the Eternal.

When all the knots of the heart are untied, the mortal becomes immortal; so far goes the teaching handed down.

These passages would seem to be the original source of the teaching of union, of Yoga, one formulation of which has come down to us.

connected with the name of Patanjali, while there is another expression of the same teaching in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Only one sentence appears to call for comment: "It is to be apprehended by realizing its being, and by direct experience of both": the meaning appears to be, a direct experience of the Divine within us and the Divine above us; the dim star within, and the infinite light.

A hundred and one are the channels of the heart; of them, one rises to the crown; ascending by this, he reaches immortality; the others lead in diverse ways.

Of the measure of the thumb, the Spirit, the Inner Self, dwells ever in the hearts of creatures. Let him draw this forth from the body, steadily, like a reed from its sheath. Let him know this to be the luminous, the immortal; let him know this to be the luminous, the immortal.

Something has already been said, in a previous section, concerning the "channel in the head" through which the divine fire ascends, to what Shankara calls "the door". This appears to be a reference to the same teaching.

As has already been said, the second part of *Katha Upanishad* appears to consist of pages taken from some Book of Discipline for disciples, each passage almost complete in itself, with the result that there is some lack of external continuity. But the inner thought is continuous, as will become clear as each passage is read, pondered on, and inwardly digested. The repetition of the closing sentence, here, as elsewhere, is meant to mark the end of the text.

There is, however, an added passage, intended to preserve the unity of the whole book by declaring that the preceding passages were a part of the teaching given by Death to Nachiketas. This passage follows.

Nachiketas, receiving this wisdom declared by Death, and the perfect rule of union, attained to the Eternal, gaining freedom from passion and from death. So, verily, will he who knows this, concerning the Divine Self.

C. J.
