The Kena Upanishad

**FIRST PART**

1. By whom missioned falls the mind shot to its mark? By whom yoked moves the first life-breath forward on its paths? By whom impelled is this word that men speak? What god set eye and ear to their workings?

2. That which is hearing of our hearing, mind of our mind, speech of our speech, that too is life of our life-breath and sight of our sight. The wise are released beyond and they pass from this world and become immortal.

3. There sight travels not, nor speech, nor the mind. We know It not nor can distinguish how one should teach of It: for It is other than the known; It is there above the unknown. It is so we have heard from men of old who declared That to our understanding.

4. That which is unexpressed by the word, that by which the
word is expressed, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

5. That which thinks not by the mind,¹ that by which the mind is thought, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

6. That which sees not with the eye,² that by which one sees the eye’s seeings, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

7. That which hears not with the ear,³ that by which the ear’s hearing is heard, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

8. That which breathes not with the breath,⁴ that by which the life-breath is led forward in its paths, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

¹ Or, “that which one thinks not with the mind”.
² Or, “that which one sees not with the eye”.
³ Or, “that which one hears not with the ear”.
⁴ Or, “that which one breathes not (i.e. smells not) with the breath”.
SECOND PART

1. If thou thinkest that thou knowest It well, little indeed dost thou know the form of the Brahman. That of It which is thou, that of It which is in the gods, this thou hast to think out. I think It known.

2. I think not that I know It well and yet I know that It is not unknown to me. He of us who knows It, knows That; he knows that It is not unknown to him.

3. He by whom It is not thought out, has the thought of It; he by whom It is thought out, knows It not. It is unknown to the discernment of those who discern of It, by those who seek not to discern of It, It is discerned.

4. When It is known by perception that reflects It, then one has the thought of It, for one finds immortality; by the self one finds the force to attain and by the knowledge one finds immortality.

5. If here one comes to that knowledge, then one truly is; if here one comes not to the knowledge, then great is the perdition.
The wise distinguish That in all kinds of becomings and they pass forward from this world and become immortal.

**THIRD PART**

1. The Eternal conquered for the gods and in the victory of the Eternal the gods grew to greatness. They saw, “Ours the victory, ours the greatness.”

2. The Eternal knew their thought and appeared before them; and they knew not what was this mighty Daemon.

3. They said to Agni, “O thou that knowest all things born, learn of this thing, what may be this mighty Daemon,” and he said, “So be it.”

4. He rushed towards the Eternal and It said to him, “Who art thou?” “I am Agni,” he said, “I am he that knows all things born.”

5. “Since such thou art, what is the force in thee?” “Even all this I could burn, all that is upon the earth.”
6. The Eternal set before him a blade of grass; “This burn;” and he made towards it with all his speed, but could not burn it. There he ceased, and turned back; “I could not know of It, what might be this mighty Daemon.”

अथ वायुपुरुषः वायुवेत्तिष्ठानीनांति किमेत्यक्रास्मिति तथेऽति ॥ ७ ॥

7. Then they said to Vayu, “O Vayu, this discern, what is this mighty Daemon.” He said, “So be it.”

तदपश्चाति तद्विष्ठाद्वर्तः कोणस्याति वायुवर्त अहंसमस्वयमवीमातरिः वा अहंसमस्वयमवीमातरिः ॥ ८ ॥

8. He rushed upon That; It said to him, “Who art thou?” “I am Vayu,” he said, “and I am he that expands in the Mother of things.”

ततःस्वरूपम् कं निलंमित्यर्धे सर्वामाधीय महिद्यमात्रामिति ॥ ९ ॥

9. “Since such thou art, what is the force in thee?” “Even all this I can take for myself, all this that is upon the earth.”

तस्मै तु निश्चित्तं वायुवेत्तिष्ठानीति तदपश्चाति तद्विष्ठाद्वर्तः सत्तं एव निश्चित्तं यथेऽत्यक्रास्मिति ॥ १० ॥

10. That set before him a blade of grass; “This take.” He went towards it with all his speed and he could not take it. Even there he ceased, even thence he returned; “I could not discern of That, what is this mighty Daemon.”

अथ वायुपुरुषः वायुवेत्तिष्ठानीनांति किमेत्यक्रास्मिति तथेऽति तद्विष्ठाद्वर्तः ॥ ११ ॥

11. Then they said to Indra, “Master of plenitudes, get thou the knowledge, what is this mighty Daemon.” He said, “So be it.” He rushed upon That. That vanished from before him.

स तत्तत्त्वमेक्षाकामे किमेत्यक्रास्मिति बुद्धोब्धमात्रामुम् हृदयतीति तां हृदैवान्तेत्यक्रास्मिति ॥ १२ ॥
12. He in the same ether came upon the Woman, even upon Her who shines out in many forms, Uma daughter of the snowy summits. To her he said, “What was this mighty Daemon?”

FOURTH PART

सा प्रेक्षितः हृदयाचः व्रज्योऽव एतंकाथे मद्दीप्यवसिति ततो हृदय
विदाह्यं कार्येऽव श्रेयस्ति □ १ □

1. She said to him, “It is the Eternal. Of the Eternal is this victory in which ye shall grow to greatness.” Then alone he came to know that this was the Brahman.

तस्मात् एतेऽद्वा अतिक्रमाध्याय: देवान् यदिनवयोगरिन्येण
क्षे्न्त्रद्विधों परस्यम्यन्ते क्षे्न्त्रक्षत्रो विदाह्यं कार्येऽव श्रेयस्ति □ २ □

2. Therefore are these gods as it were beyond all the other gods, even Agni and Vayu and Indra, because they came nearest to the touch of That...

तस्मात् दन्त्रद्विधातिरान्यायान्यावान् देवान् क्षे्न्त्रद्विधों परस्यम्यन्ते क्षे्न्त्रक्षत्रो विदाह्यं कार्येऽव श्रेयस्ति □ ३ □

3. Therefore is Indra as it were beyond all the other gods because he came nearest to the touch of That, because he first knew that it was the Brahman.

तस्मेव आद्रो यदैत्रस्य ब्रह्मवेद्य: इति-न्य्रामीथिद्या इति-भि -
देवताम् □ ४ □

4. Now this is the indication of That, — as is this flash of the lightning upon us or as is this falling of the eyelid, so in that which is of the gods.

By some mistake of early memorisers or later copyists the rest of the verse has become hopelessly corrupted. It runs, “They he first came to know that it was the Brahman,” which is neither fact nor sense nor grammar. The close of the third verse has crept into and replaced the original close of the second.
5. Then in that which is of the Self,—as the motion of this mind seems to attain to That and by it afterwards the will in the thought continually remembers It.

6. The name of That is “That Delight”; as That Delight one should follow after It. He who so knows That, towards him verily all existences yearn.

7. Thou hast said “Speak to me Upanishad”; spoken to thee is Upanishad. Of the Eternal verily is the Upanishad that we have spoken.

8. Of this knowledge austerity and self-conquest and works are the foundation, the Vedas are all its limbs, truth is its dwelling place.

9. He who knows this knowledge, smites evil away from him and in that vaster world and infinite heaven finds his foundation, yea, he finds his foundation.

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6 Upanishad means inner knowledge, that which enters into the final Truth and settles in it.