

Gaudapada Karikas

Advaita Vedanta's First Philosopher

A Plain English Translation by Richard H. Jones

The Mandukya Upanishad

[1] Om — this entire world is this syllable. To explain further: the past, present, and future — all that is simply Om. And whatever is beyond the three times is also simply Om.

[2] Truly, everything that is, is Brahman. Brahman is this Self.

Brahman is the Self consisting of four quarters.

[3] The first quarter of the Self is Vaishvanara. It is the one common to all. It is stationed in the waking state and perceives outwardly. It has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and enjoys the manifestly material.

[4] The second quarter is Taijasa, the brilliant one. It is stationed in dream sleep and perceives inwardly. It possesses seven limbs and nineteen mouths and enjoys subtle (i.e., invisible) things. [5] The third quarter is Prajna, the cognitive one. It is stationed in deep sleep, i.e., when a sleeping person has no desires and sees no dreams whatsoever. Prajna is one and thus is truly a single mass of cognition. It consists of bliss and enjoying bliss. It has consciousness as its mouth. [6] This is the lord of all, the knower of all, the inner controller, and the womb of all things. It is truly the beginning and end of all beings.

[7] (The fourth quarter is Turiya.) People say that the fourth quarter neither perceives outwardly nor inwardly nor both. It is not a mass of cognition — it is neither cognitive nor noncognitive. It is unseen, not open to interaction, ungraspable, without a defining mark, inconceivable, indescribable, the cessation of material proliferation, tranquil, auspicious, and without a second (advaita). The essence of its certainty is the one Self. That is the Self. That is what is to be known.

[8] Om (“aum”) is this very self, as shown by its phonemes, “a-um.” The constituent phonemes are the four quarters of the Self, and the four quarters are the constituents, “a,” “u,” “m,” (and the fourth that has no phoneme).

[9] The first phoneme “a” is Vaishvanara (the first quarter of the Self), stationed in the waking state. It is from “apti(‘obtaining’)” or “adimattva (‘being the first’).” One who knows thus indeed truly obtains all desires and becomes the first.

[10] The second phoneme “u” is Taijasa (the second quarter), stationed in dream sleep. It is from “utkarsha (‘exaltation’)” or “ubhayatva(‘in the middle’).” He who knows thus indeed exalts the continuity of knowledge and becomes the same. In the family of one who knows thus, no one not knowing Brahman is born.

[11] The third phoneme “m” is Prajna (the third quarter), stationed in deep sleep. It is from “miti(‘constructing’)” or “minati(‘destructing’).” He who knows thus constructs all that is in the world and becomes its destruction.

[12] The fourth is without a phoneme. It is not open to interaction. It is the cessation of material proliferation. It is auspicious and without a second. Thus, Om truly is the Self. He who knows thus enters the Self by himself.

The Gaudapada Karikas

1. On the Tradition

(With the Mandukya Upanishad in inserted in bold italics)

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[1] The first quarter — Vaishvanara — is the all-pervading knower of the entire external world. The second quarter — Taijasa, the brilliant one — is the knower of the internal world (i.e., dreams). The third quarter — Prajna, the cognitive one — is a mass of cognition. But it is the one Self alone that is known in these three states. [2] The opening for knowing the external world is in the right eye (a symbol for all the sense-organs). For

the internal world, it is the mind. For the mass of cognition, it is space within the heart. Thus, the one Self is threefold in the body.

[3] The knower of the external world always experiences visible objects; the knower of the internal world always experiences invisible objects; and the cognitive one always experiences bliss. Thus, know that experience is threefold. [4] Visible objects satisfy the knower of the external world; subtle objects satisfy the knower of the internal world; and bliss likewise satisfies the cognitive one. Thus, know that satisfaction is threefold.

[5] Thus, the objects of experience and the experiencer are in these three states. One who knows both as described is not contaminated by enjoying experiences.

Theories of Creation

[6] It is well-accepted (among the unenlightened) that all existing entities must have an origin. Life-breath manifests the objective universe, and the cosmic person creates separately the rays of consciousness (i.e., the individual phenomenal beings) in their manifold forms.

[7] Some who consider the idea of the “creation” of the universe think it is the expansion of the Self by its power. Others imagine creation as having the same form as a dream or a magical illusion. [8] Others have a firm conviction that the reality of the manifested objects is merely the desire of the Lord. Those who regard time as real declare time to the creator of all beings. [9] Some say creation is for the purpose of the Self’s enjoyment. Others say it is merely the Self’s play.

But creation must be from the very nature of the radiant Self — for what desire can there be for the one has accomplished everything?

[7] (The fourth quarter is Turiya.) People say that the fourth quarter neither perceives outwardly nor inwardly nor both. It is not a mass of cognition — it is neither cognitive nor noncognitive. It is unseen, not open to interaction, ungraspable, without a defining mark, inconceivable, indescribable, the cessation of material proliferation, tranquil, auspicious, and without a second (advaita). The essence of its certainty is the one Self. That is the Self. That is what is to be known.

[10] The fourth state of the Self brings about the cessation of all suffering. It is known as the changeless, all-pervading, nondual radiant Lord of all entities. [11] The first and second quarters are conditioned by cause and effect. The third quarter is conditioned by cause alone. But in the fourth quarter, neither cause nor effect is established.

[12] The third state (Prajna, the cognitive one) does not apprehend anything of the Self or non-self, of truth/reality or untruth/reality. But the fourth is eternally existent and sees all (and hence is omniscient). [13] Both the third and fourth quarters do not cognize any duality. But the cognitive one is associated with dreamless sleep which is a causal state (i.e., a seed for dreams). Such sleep does not exist in the fourth.

[14] The first and second quarters are associated with dreaming and dreamless sleep. The third is associated with dreamless sleep. Knowers of Brahman see neither sleep nor dreams in the fourth state. [15] Dreaming is a misapprehension of how Reality truly is, and sleep is a total nonapprehension of Reality as it truly is. When the errors in these two states disappear, one realizes the fourth state.

[16] The phenomenal individual is asleep due to the influence of the beginningless illusion of the manifest world (of Brahman's projection). When it is awakens, it realizes (in the fourth state) the unborn, sleepless, and dreamless nonduality (that is the Self). [17] If the projected phenomenal world of multiplicity truly existed, it would no doubt cease to exist (as would any second reality upon awaking to the nondual Self). But this duality is only an illusion — from the point of view of reality, there is only nonduality. [18] If the imagined conceptions of a "teacher," a "doctrine," and "scripture" truly existed, then they too would disappear (upon awaking). These dualistic conceptions are only a way of speaking for the purpose of instruction. When Truth/Reality is realized, no duality is seen.

[8] Om ("aum") is this very self, as shown by its phonemes, "a-um." The constituent phonemes are the four quarters of the Self, and the four quarters are the constituents, "a," "u," "m," (and the fourth that has no phoneme).

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[11] The third phoneme "m" is Prajna (the third quarter), stationed in deep sleep. It is from "miti ('constructing') or "minati ('destructing')." He who knows thus constructs all that is in the world and becomes its destruction.

[19] When the identity of the first quarter (the all-pervading knower of the entire external world) with the letter "a" is described, the principal reason given is the common feature that both are the first. Another reason for the identify is that each is all-pervasive. [20] The clear reason for realizing that the identity of the second quarter (the knower of the internal world) and the letter "u" is the common feature that both are superior (to the first part). Another clear reason for their identity is that each is in the middle. [21] The clear reason for the identity of the third quarter (the cognitive one) with the letter "m" is the common feature that both are the measure (by which the other two parts are measured). Another clear reason for their identity is that everything becomes one in them.

[22] He who knows with certainty the common features of the three states (of the Self) is worthy of worship and adoration by all beings. He is a great sage. [23] (Meditation on)

the sound “a” leads to the first quarter, on “u” to the second quarter, and on “m” to the third quarter. (But when attempting to meditate on) what is free of sound, there is no attainment (for there is no object to meditate upon).

[12] The fourth is without a phoneme. It is not open to interaction. It is the cessation of material proliferation. It is auspicious and without a second. Thus, Om truly is the Self. He who knows thus enters the Self by himself.

[24] The syllable Om should be known quarter by quarter. There is no doubt that the quarters (of the Self) are the same as the sounds/letters of Om. Having grasped Om quarter by quarter, one should not reflect upon anything else whatsoever. [25] One should fix one’s mind on Om. Om is the free-from fear Brahman. He who is continually fixed on Om knows no fear anywhere. [26] Om indeed is the lower Brahman. It is also declared to be the higher Brahman. Om is without a cause and unique. There is nothing outside of it. It is unrelated to any effect. It is changeless.

[27] The syllable Om is indeed the beginning, the middle, and also the end of everything. Knowing Om in this way, one indeed immediately realizes (the nondual Self). [28] Know that Om is the Lord Ishvara, eternally present in the hearts of all. Having contemplated the all-pervading syllable Om, the wise do not grieve (but achieve bliss). [29] Om is both without measure and of infinite measures. It is auspicious and the cessation of duality. One who knows Om is a sage and no other.

2. The Illusoriness of Objects in the Dream and Waking States

[1] The wise declare the unreality of all objects seen in a dream because they are located inside a person and because they are covered up there. [2] And because of the shortness of time, it is not possible for a dreamer to go out of the body and see the places one has gone to in a dream. In addition, when one awakens one does not find oneself in the place seen in the dream. [3] This reasoning comports with the nonexistence declared in scripture of such things as chariots perceived in dreams. Thus, the wise say that the unreality of objects experienced in dreams is established by that.

[4] The diverse objects in dreams are known from their location in the dream state. (But the nature of objects experienced) is the same in the waking state as it is for objects in dreams; objects in dreams only differ in that the dream objects are covered up within the person. Thus, objects experienced in the waking state are unreal for the same reason stated above concerning dream objects. [5] The wise say that the waking and dream states are the same because of the similarity of objects (perceived in both states) based on the grounds already mentioned.

[6] What does not exist in the beginning or in the end is also nonexistent in the present. Thus, the sense-objects that we perceive are like the illusions we perceive. Nevertheless, they are regarded (by dualists) as real. [7] The claim that objects in the waking state are real because they serve a purpose is contradicted by dreams (where illusory objects also

serve purposes). Thus, because they have a beginning and an end, they most certainly must be regarded as illusory.

[8] Perceiving unusual things in a dream is the norm for a dreamer, just as it is for one dwelling in a heaven. The dreamer perceives those things there in the dream, just as one who is well-instructed here sees those things here.

[9] Even in the dream state, what is imagined inwardly by the mind is regarded by the dreamer as unreal while what is grasped outwardly by the mind in the dream is regarded as real by the dreamer. (That is, dreamers make a distinction between unreal objects they imagine in the dream and real objects in the external world they see in the dream). But both are seen to be erroneous (upon awakening). [10] So too, in the waking state what is imagined inwardly by the mind is regarded by the experiencer as unreal while what is grasped outwardly by the mind is regarded as real. But both should rightly be held to be unreal (as is seen to be the case upon enlightenment).

The Nature of Perceived Objects

[11] Objection: If the diverse objects seen in both the dream and waking states are erroneous (i.e., illusory), who is the one who makes the wrong interpretation of these things? Who imagines them?

[12] Reply: The radiant Self imagines itself by means of itself through its creative illusory power. It is it alone who cognizes all objects. This is the conclusion of Vedanta (i.e., the Upanishads). [13] The Self imagines the diverse objects of the world. With its mind focused outwardly, it establishes what is already in its mind. In this way does the powerful one imagine various conceptions.

[14] Things that are cognized inwardly apparently exist in private time (as long as the thought of them exists). Things that are cognized outwardly in dualistic time (i.e., publically) also apparently exist. But all are only mere imaginations. There is no differentiation between them due to any other cause. [15] Again, both those things that are within the mind alone and are unmanifested and those things that are manifested outwardly as objective objects are all only imagined (and are equally unreal); the distinction between them lies only in the different organs used to cognize them.

[16] First the Self imagined the phenomenal individual person. Next it imagined various external and internal objects. As is one's knowledge, so is one's memory. [17] Just as a rope that is not clearly ascertained at dusk is imagined to be such things a snake or a line of water, so likewise the Self is imagined as various objects (due to ignorance). [18] When the rope is fully ascertained, all illusions cease, and the conviction arises that it is nothing but the one rope. So too with the full ascertainment of the Self.

Illusory Conceptions of the Self

[19] Nevertheless, the Self is imagined to be the life-breath and innumerable other things. This is the illusory power of the radiant one by which it itself has been deluded. [20] The knowers of the life-breath (as the creative force) call the Self “the life-breath.” Those who know the great elements call the Self “the great elements.” Those who know the qualities call the Self “the qualities.” Those who know the categories call the Self “the categories.” [21] Those who know the quarters call the Self “the quarters.” Those who know the sense-objects call the Self “the sense-objects.” Those who know the worlds call the Self “the worlds.” Those who know the gods call the Self “the gods.” [22] Those who know the Vedas call the Self “the Vedas.” Those who know the sacrifices call the Self “the sacrifices.” Those who know the enjoyer (of the fruit of our actions) call the Self “the enjoyer.” Those who know the object of enjoyment call the Self “the object of enjoyment.” [23] Those who know the invisible call the Self “the invisible.” Those who know the manifest call the Self “the manifest.” Those who know the personal deity with form call the Self “the personal deity.” Those who know the formless (or immaterial) call the Self “the formless.” [24] Those who know time call the Self “the time.” Those who know the four directions of space call the Self “the four directions.” Those learned in disputation call the Self “the theory defended.” Those who know the fourteen worlds call the Self “the fourteen worlds.” [25] Those who know the mind call the Self “the mind.” Those who know the intellect call the Self “the intellect.” Those who know the consciousness call the Self “consciousness.” Those who know virtue call the Self “virtue” and those who know vice call it “vice.”

[26] The Samkhyas say that Reality is constituted by twenty-five categories; Patanjali of the Yoga Suttas says twenty-six; others say thirty-one; others say the categories are innumerable. [27] Those who know only how to please people call the Self “people.” Those who know the four stages of life call the Self “the stages.” Grammarians call the Self “the male, female, and neuter.” Others know it as the “higher” and “lower” Brahman. [28] Those who know the creation of the phenomenal universe call the Self “creation.” Those who know the dissolution of the universe call the Self “the dissolution.” Those who know the preservation of the universe call the Self “the preservation.”

[29] One cognizes only the object presented to him (by a teacher as the true cause of the universe); and the Self, having taken the form of that object, protects him. Possessed by that object, he realizes it (as the Self). [30] The Self, although it is not separate from these objects, is imagined as separate. One who knows thus imagines without hesitation according to what is real.

The Nature of Reality

[31] Just as dreams, illusions, and the city of the Gandharvas in the sky are seen (to be unreal), so is this entire universe seen by the wise who are well-versed in Vedanta. [32] There is no birth or dissolution, no bondage, no one practicing spiritual disciplines, no one seeking liberation, and no one liberated. This is the highest truth. [33] This Self is imagined by the nondual Self itself to be only the unreal objects that are perceived to exist. These objects (are imagined) to exist (as real) only by the nondual Self. Thus, nonduality is the most auspicious. [34] The diversity of this world does not exist as real

either by the nature of the Self or by the world's own nature. Nothing whatsoever is separate or nonseparate. This the knowers of Reality know. [35] The sages, who are free of desire, fear, and anger and who are well-versed in the meaning of the Vedas, realized the Self to be without imagination, free of multiple projected independent realities, and nondual.

[36] Having thus known the Self, one therefore should fix his attention on nonduality. Having realized nonduality, one should roam this world with apathy. [37] Such a knower should be free from praise and salutations and is free from participating in the funeral rites prescribed to propitiate one's deceased ancestors. He should become an ascetic with no fixed home but his body and the Self, and he should be satisfied with what comes to him by chance. [38] Having seen Reality both inwardly and outwardly, he becomes Reality; and delighting in it, he should not deviate from Reality.

3. Nonduality

[1] The virtue of practicing devotional contemplation arises when Brahman is taken to have arisen. One who follows those practices is said to be of a narrow intellect because he thinks that only before the "birth" of this realm was everything of an unborn nature. [2] Thus, I shall describe that Reality that is free from limitations, unborn, and always the same. From this one will understand that it is in fact not born in any respect, although it is manifest everywhere.

The Analogy of the Space Within Pots

[3] The Self is like space. It rises up in the form of phenomenal beings, like the (one nondual) space enclosed with such things as pots. So too, the Self is said to be existing as the composite bodies of individual beings, just as the composite pots and so forth are said to rise up from space. This is the illustration of "birth."

[4] Just as the spaces enclosed within pots merge into space when the pots are destroyed, so too do the phenomenal individuals here within the world merge into the Self. [5] Just as the dust, smoke, and so forth that soils the portion of (the one nondual) space enclosed within one pot do not soil the portions of space enclosed in other pots, so does the happiness or suffering of one phenomenal individual not affect other individuals. [6] The forms, functions, and names of different objects differ here and there, and yet there is no differentiation of (the one nondual) space. The same is the conclusion regarding phenomenal individuals. [7] Just as the space within a jar is neither a modification of (the one nondual) space nor a part of space, so is a phenomenal individual neither a modification nor a part of the Self. [8] Just as space appears to ignorant children to be soiled by dirt, so does the Self appear to the ignorant to be tainted with impurities. [9] The Self with regard to death and birth, going and coming in rebirth, as well as abiding in all bodies, is not unlike space.

"Creation" and Nonduality

[10] All composite objects are like dreams: they are projected by the Self's creative power. Whether they are superior or equal to one another, there is no valid ground to establish their reality. [11] The supreme Self is the selves of the sheaths beginning with food described in Taittiriya Upanishad 2. That the supreme Self is like space has already been described. [12] Just as the same (nondual) space dwells within both the earth and an individual's stomach, so in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.5 is the same Brahman, the supreme, shown (to be the same) in every pair.

[13] The non-difference of the phenomenal person and the Self is praised in scripture on the basis of their nonduality, and diversity is condemned. Thus, nonduality alone is free from error. [14] The separateness of the phenomenal person and the Self (in Brahman's projection) that is declared in the early sections of the Upanishads dealing with "creation" is only asserted in a secondary (figurative) sense, referring to the state to becoming (from a dualistic point of view). In the primary sense, this does not fit the true situation (since nothing is really born and there is no true "creation"). [15] "Creation" has been set forth in various ways by means of the illustrations of earth, iron, sparks, and so forth, but this is only a means of introducing (nonduality). No diversity whatsoever exists.

[16] There are three stages of life corresponding to the three stages of understanding: low, middle, and superior. This discipline has been taught out of compassion for the benefit of the unenlightened.

The Noncontention of Advaita

[17] Advocates of dualities each firmly cling to their own conclusions and contradict one another. But the position (of the nondualists) does not conflict with them. [18] Nonduality is indeed supreme Reality. Duality is said to be a product of it (but only from a dualistic point of view). Thus, for dualists there is duality either way (but also an ontologically prior nonduality). Thus, nonduality does not conflict with their views.

The Unchangeability of One's Nature

[19] The unborn Self appears manifold through Brahman's illusory power and not in any other way. Were this diversity real, the immortal would in fact become mortal. [20] The disputants wish to establish the birth of the unborn entity. But how can an entity that is unborn and deathless become subject to death? [21] The immortal cannot become mortal, just as an entity subject to death cannot become immortal. For a change in something's nature is never possible in any way. [22] If one maintains that what is immortal by its nature can be subject to death, how can one maintain that the immortal, after undergoing change, remains changeless in its nature?

"Creation"

[23] Creation may be real or unreal. Scripture equally supports either position. But only what is ascertained by scripture and also corroborated by argument is appropriate. [24] From such scriptural passages as "There is no diversity here" and "Indra by means of his

creative power” we know that the Self is unborn but appears in diverse ways through Brahman’s power of projection. [25] By the refutation of real becoming, birth is negated. A cause for the birth of the Self is denied by the verse “Who can cause it to be born?” [26] Because of the incomprehensibility of the Self, the scriptural passage “It is not this, not that” negates all dualistic explanations (including “creation” of something by another). Thus, the unborn alone exists. [27] The birth of what exists only occurs through Brahman’s power of projection, but from the point of view of what is Real it is not truly born. But one who thinks that such birth is real must think that what is already born is born a second time.

[28] What is unreal cannot be born either by means of Brahman’s illusory projection or from the point of view of what is Real. For the (unreal) son of a barren woman is not thought to be born even through Brahman’s power of illusory projection.

States of Mind and Knowledge of the Self

[29] In a dream, the mind vibrates through Brahman’s illusory power with the image of duality — a perceiver and a perceived object — (even though there is only one mind involved). So too, in the waking state, the mind vibrates through the illusory power with the image of duality (even though there is only the Self involved). [30] There is no doubt that in a dream the nondual mind appears as a duality. So too, there is no doubt that in the waking state the nondual mind appears as a duality. [31] All that is in any way dual, the moving and the unmoving, is perceived by the mind. For when the mind has become a no-mind (i.e., has ceased to be aware of anything and so ceases to be a mind), duality is no longer experienced. [32] By realizing the reality/truth of the Self, there are no imagined conceptions. The mind goes to the state of not being a mind since with nothing to grasp, there is no (mental) grasping.

[33] The gnosis that is unborn and free of all imagined conceptions is not distinct from what is known: Brahman — the unborn and permanent — is the known. Thus, the unborn is known by the unborn. [34] The state of the mind when it is completely under control, free of all imagined conceptualizations, and endowed with discrimination should be known as different from the state of mind in deep sleep and not like that. [35] In deep sleep, the mind is withdrawn, but it does not withdraw (from what Brahman has projected) when it is completely under control — that mind completely under control with the all-pervading illumination of gnosis is Brahman, free of fear. [36] Reality is unborn, free of sleep and dreams, without name or form, ever radiant, and omniscient. This statement is not in any way metaphoric.

[37] The Self is beyond all expressions and all acts of the mind. It is completely tranquil, eternally radiant, free of all activity, and free of anything to fear. (The state of no-mind) is the state of a completely concentrated mind. [38] When there is no mental activity, there is no grasping or relinquishing. Then the gnosis rests in itself and attains identity with the unborn Self.

The Yoga of Non-Contact

[39] This discipline of no-contact (with any apparent object) is difficult for any yogin to realize, for yogins following the Yoga Sūtras are afraid of it. But they see fear in what is free of anything to fear. [40] For all yogins (who practice the discipline of no-contact and thus know nonduality), being free of fear, the removal of suffering, knowledge of the Self, and eternal peace depend upon control of the mind. [41] Like draining an ocean one drop at a time with the tip of a blade of grass, so the mind cannot be brought under control without unrelenting diligence. [42] The mind is distracted by desires and enjoyment and is at great ease in deep sleep — for deep sleep is as bad as desire. But by the proper means, the mind should be brought under control. [43] Remembering constantly that all is suffering, one should withdraw the mind from enjoyments and desires (of illusory objects). Always remembering that everything is the unborn Brahman, the born (i.e., apparent dualistic objects) will not be seen (as real or desirable).

Realizing the Awakened Consciousness

[44] The consciousness that is inactive should be awakened and the consciousness that is distracted should be brought back to a state of tranquility. One should know that consciousness can be tainted with passion and should not disturb it when it is established in equilibrium. [45] But one should not enjoy the happiness of that state (i.e., not become attached to the pleasure from the mind in a state of tranquility). Rather, one should become free of attachments by means of insight. When the steadied mind seeks sense-objects, it should be unified again with the Self with great effort (and then it will see only the Self's vibrating consciousness and no duality). [46] When consciousness is not inactive or distracted, then it becomes tranquil and projects no images (of "real" objects). Indeed, it then becomes Brahman.

[47] This supreme bliss is the Self. It is tranquility, liberation (nirvana), indescribable, and unborn. Since it is one with the unborn object of gnosis (i.e., Brahman), it is called "Brahman, the omniscient."

[48] No phenomenal person is ever born. There is no cause that could cause its birth. This is the highest truth/reality: nothing whatsoever is born.

4. Stilling the Wheel of Fire

[1] I bow to the greatest of all men (the Buddha) who, by means of the gnosis that is like (limitless, nondual) space and is non-different from its object of knowledge (i.e., Brahman), fully realized the nature of phenomenal beings, which are also like (empty) space.

[2] I bow to the discipline of no-contact (described above in GK 3.39) that is set forth in the scriptures for the happiness of all beings, that is in fact conducive to the well-being of all, that is free of dispute (by non-Vedantists), and that is free of self-contradictions.

Dualists, Natures, and the Origin of Objects

[3] In their debates, some disputants argue for the birth of something that already exists. Others, proud of their intelligence, argue for the birth of something that does not already exist. Thus they quarrel with one another. [4] But something existent cannot have an origin (but must be permanent and hence eternal), and something nonexistent does not in any way come into existence (since it does not exist). Thus, by arguing among themselves these disputants actually establish the nondualist doctrine of non-origination (by refuting each other). [5] We approve of the doctrine of non-origination revealed by the disputants. We do not quarrel with them. Now learn the doctrine that is free from dispute.

[6] The disputants affirm the birth of something that is unborn. But how can what is birthless and thus deathless become mortal? [7] The immortal cannot become mortal, and the mortal cannot become immortal. For it is not possible for something ever in any way to change its nature. [8] If one maintains that what is immortal by its nature can be subject to death, how can one maintain that the immortal, after becoming an effect of change (i.e., becoming mortal), retains its changeless nature? [9] The “nature” of something is known as that which, when acquired, becomes permanently established, intrinsic, innate, and not produced by another. Anything with a nature never abandons its self-nature. [10] All things (including phenomenal persons) are by their very self-nature free of old age and death. But individuals think they are subject to old age and death, and by this thought they deviate from their nature (i.e., individuals do not see their true nature as being illusory).

Theories of Causation

[11] A disputant who holds the doctrine “Cause and effect are (materially) identical” must hold that the cause has an origin (since the effect has an origin). But if the cause has an origin, how can it be said to be unborn? If it is subject to change, how can it be changeless (i.e., eternal)? [12] If the cause and effect are non-different, then the effect must be without an origin (since the cause is real and thus permanent and unchanging). On the other hand, how can the cause be eternal (i.e., unchanging and thus does not have an origin) if it is non-different from the effect and the effect has an origin? [13] There is no illustration to support the doctrine that an effect is born from an unborn (and hence eternal and unchanging) cause. On the other hand, the doctrine that the effect is born from a cause that is itself born leads to an infinite regress (of produced causes).

[14] Some hold the doctrine that the cause causes the effect and also that the effect causes the cause. But how then can these persons demonstrate the beginninglessness of both the cause and the effect? [15] Those who hold this doctrine describe origins in the same way as the birth of the father from the son. [16] But to assert causation, the order of succession of the cause before the effect must be ascertained by you. For if cause and effect appear simultaneously, there is no relation between the two, any more than there is relation of the two horns of a bull that appear simultaneously. [17] The cause that you affirm as coming into existence from its effect cannot come into existence (prior to the effect) — how can a cause that has not yet come into existence produce any effect? [18]

If a cause is produced from the effect, and, again, the effect is produced from the cause, then which can be born first when its birth depends upon the birth of the other? [19] The inability to answer this question, the ignorance (of dualists) about this matter, and the impossibility of establishing the order of succession if causation is admitted has clearly led the enlightened ones (the Buddhas) to hold the doctrine of non-origination in all ways.

[20] The example of the seed and the sprout is itself something that has yet not been established (under the models of causation offered). If the middle term of a syllogism (i.e., the example) has not yet been established, then it cannot be used to establish the proposition to be proved. [21] (Concerning the seed and sprout example): Ignorance concerning the point of the origin and the end of the cause and effect supremely demonstrates non-origination. If a thing has truly been caused, why is it that its antecedent cause is not grasped?

[22] Nothing whatsoever is born either from itself or from another. Nothing whatsoever that is real, nonexistent, or both real and nonexistent is produced. [23] By their self-nature, cause and effects are beginningless and so are not born. What has no cause also has no birth.

The Question of an Objective Object of Cognition

[24] Objection: Cognition must involve an external object. Otherwise, the duality (of perceiver and perceived object) would be destroyed. In addition, mental impurities depend upon external objects. Thus, the existence of external objects, as held by dualists, must be admitted.

[25] Reply: From the point of view of conventional reason, it is held that a designation has an objective referent. But from the point of view of the true nature of things, it is held that the “objective referent” is not an objective referent. [26] Consciousness does not contact external objects or contact even the appearances of objects. For external objects are in fact nonexistent, and appearances are not separate from consciousness. [27] Consciousness never comes into contact with an objective referent in the past, present, or future. Without an objective referent (as a cause), how can be any misconception of it? [28] Thus, neither consciousness nor the objects perceived by it have any birth. Those who see their birth are seeing foot-prints of a bird in the sky.

Waking and Dream Experiences

[29] What dualists say is born is in fact unborn, for the very nature of the unborn is to be ever unborn. There is never any change in nature whatsoever. [30] If the cycle of death and rebirth is beginningless, then it could have no end (for what is beginningless is real and so cannot change its nature and end). And if liberation has a beginning, it cannot be eternal (since anything with a beginning would be a finite entity and so must end).

[31] What does not exist in the beginning or in the end is also nonexistent in the present (despite appearances to the contrary). Thus, the senseobjects that we perceive are like the

illusions we perceive. Nevertheless, they are regarded (by dualists) as real. [32] That objects (are real because they) serve functions in the world is contradicted by dreams (where illusory objects also serve functions within the dream). Thus, because they have a beginning and an end, they most certainly must be regarded as illusory.

[33] All objects seen in dreams are unreal because they are perceived only within the body. How can what is perceived in this limited space be real? [34] It is not reasonable to think that a dreamer perceives objects in the dream by actually going out to them because of the discrepancy of the time involved (in dreaming and in such a journey). In addition, upon awakening, the dreamer does not find himself in the places seen in the dream. [35] Nor upon awakening does the dreamer find those whom he had had conversations with in the dream. Moreover, in the waking state he does not possess what he had acquired in the dream. [36] So too, the body in the dream is insubstantial since another body is seen (sleeping in the bed). And like the dream body, everything cognized (in the waking state) by consciousness is insubstantial. [37] Since the experience of objects in the dream is the similar to the apprehension of objects in the waking state, some think the waking state is the cause of the dream state. For this reason, the waking state is considered to be real by the dreamer alone.

Denial of Causation

[38] Since birth cannot be established (for what is real and hence eternal), all real things are said to be unborn. And it impossible for what is unreal to be born from the real in any way whatsoever. [39] Having perceived what is not real in the waking state but being deeply impressed by it, one sees it in dreams. Having perceived what is unreal in dreams, he not see it in the waking state. [40] What is unreal cannot have what is unreal as its cause. Nor can what is real be produced by the unreal. What is real cannot cause something else that is real. And how could what is unreal be the product of what is real? [41] Just as through error one may in the waking state grasp objects as real, even though they are in fact inconceivable, so in dreams one sees objects there only because of error.

Teaching Origination

[42] The enlightened teach origination only for the sake of those who, through fear of non-origination, assert the substantiality of objects because of such objects being perceived and because they cling to religious duties. [43] But for those who through fear of non-origination and because of their perception do not accept non-origination, the evil consequences arising from their acceptance of origination does not accrue. The evil effect, if any, will be slight. [44] Just as an elephant conjured by a magician is said to be real because it is perceived and behaves as an elephant should, so things in the external world are said to be real because they are perceived and because we can deal with them.

Everyday Consciousness

[45] What appears to be born, to move, and to take material form is really everyday consciousness. But (changeless) consciousness is in fact unborn, motionless, free of

material form, tranquil, and nondual. [46] Thus, consciousness is unborn. All things are known to be unborn. Those who understand thus do not fall into error.

[47] Just as waving a burning stick appears to be a straight line, a crooked line, a circle, and so forth, so does the vibrating everyday consciousness appear to be a perceiver and something perceived. [48] Just as the firebrand when not in motion is free of all appearances (of being a stick, a circle, and so forth) but remains changeless, so is everyday consciousness when not in motion free of all appearances. It remains unborn (i.e., changeless). [49] When the firebrand is in motion, the appearances (of the straight line, and so forth) do not come from somewhere else. When the firebrand is not moving, the appearances do not go somewhere else, nor do they enter the firebrand itself. [50] The appearances do not emerge from the firebrand because they lack the nature of substantiality. So too with everyday consciousness due to the similarity of the appearances created by moving the firebrand. [51] When everyday consciousness is vibrating (in the waking or dream states), the appearances do not come from somewhere else. When everyday consciousness is not vibrating (in deep sleep), the appearances do not go somewhere else, nor do they enter into consciousness itself.

Causation

[52] Appearances do not emerge from everyday consciousness because they lack the nature of substantiality. They remain inconceivable because they lack a relation of cause and effect. [53] A substance may be the cause of another substance, and a non-substance the cause of a non-substance. But things in the phenomena world cannot be shown to have the nature of either substantiality or non-substantiality. (And so there is no causation.) [54] Things are not born from consciousness, or vice versa. Thus, the wise hold the doctrine of the birthlessness of causes and effects.

[55] Just as long as one is attached to the belief in causation, so long will cause-and-effect arise. When the attachment to the belief in causation ceases, there is no cause and effect. [56] Just as long as he is attached to the belief in causation, so long will he have rebirths. When the attachment to the belief in causation ceases, there is no more rebirths.

[57] According to the conventional point of view, everything in the world is born and thus nothing is permanent. But in terms of what is real, everything is unborn and nothing is destroyed. [58] Things are conventionally said to be born, but this is not possible from the point of view of Reality. Their birth is like that of an object produced by Brahman's power of illusion, and that power is not seen (i.e., does not exist as an independent reality). [59] An illusory sprout comes from an illusory seed. The illusory sprout is neither permanent nor impermanent. The same applies to all things. [60] The terms "permanent" and "impermanent" (or "born" and "unborn") cannot apply to things that are not born (since these terms apply only to phenomena within the "dream" world and not to Reality). What cannot be described by words cannot be discriminated (by the mind).

Perception in the Waking and Dream States

[61] In a dream, consciousness vibrates through its illusory power resulting in the image of duality — a perceiver and a perceived object. So too, in the waking state, consciousness vibrates through the illusory power resulting in the image of duality. [62] There is no doubt that in a dream the nondual consciousness appears as a duality. So too, there is no doubt that in the waking state the nondual consciousness appears as a duality.

[63] A dreamer, while wandering in the ten directions in a dream, constantly perceives the entire variety of beings — those born from eggs, moisture, soil, or wombs. [64] These things are perceived by the consciousness of the dreamer and do not exist apart from consciousness. So too, the objects of perception of the dreamer are only the consciousness of the dreamer. [65] While wandering in the waking state, an awake person constantly perceives the same variety of beings. [66] These beings are perceived by the consciousness of the awake person and do not exist apart from consciousness. So too, the objects of perception of that person are only the consciousness of the awake person.

[67] Both (consciousness and its object) are seen in terms of each other. Can one exist independently of the other? The answer of the wise is “No.” Both are empty of any defining marks that would distinguish them (as two separate realities). For each can be cognized only through the other.

[68] Just as a person in a dream appears and disappears, so also do all phenomenal persons exist and not exist in the waking state. [69] So too, they are like persons conjured by a magician or [70] by supernatural means (e.g., by an incantation).

Reality is Unborn Consciousness

[71] No thing whatsoever is born. Nor is there any cause for such a birth. This supreme truth/reality is that nothing whatsoever is born. [72] The duality of a perceiver and the perceived is nothing but the vibration of consciousness. This consciousness does not contact any object. Thus, it is declared to be permanent and unattached.

[73] What exists due to being conventionally imagined is not real from the highest point of view. So too, what is said to exist based on the doctrines of other philosophical schools is not real from the highest point of view. [74] The Self is said to be born only from being conventionally imagined and from the doctrines of the other schools. But it is not even “unborn” from the highest point of view. [75] People persist in their belief in the reality of the unreal (i.e., a duality of a perceiver and the perceived), but there is no duality (but only the Self). One who realizes the absence of such duality is not reborn because no cause for a rebirth remains. [76] When there is no cause — either superior, inferior, or middling — then consciousness is free of rebirths. How can there be an effect without a cause?

[77] Consciousness is unborn and free of casual relations. Its birthlessness is eternal and absolute. All this phenomenal world is merely an (illusory) object of perception to the unborn consciousness.

Liberation

[78] Having realized the truth/reality of the absence of (real) causation and finding no other cause for rebirth, one realizes the state that is free of grief, desire, and fear.

[79] Attached to unreal objects, the mind pursues those objects. But it turns back from them (and returns to a tranquil state) when it realizes the unreality of objects and becomes free of attachment. [80] When the mind is freed from attachments to objects and is otherwise undistracted, it realizes a state free of movement (i.e., free of activity, agitation, or “vibration”). That indeed is the state of mind of the enlightened: undifferentiated, unborn, and nondual. [81] (The enlightened mind is the Self.) The Self is free of birth, sleep, and dreams. It is self-luminating (and thus reveals itself). For the Self is ever luminous by its very nature. [82] But by the mind’s attachment to even a single object, the Blessed One (i.e., the Self) easily becomes hidden and suffering surfaces. It then is revealed only with great difficulty.

[83] By asserting that the Self “exists,” “does not exist,” “both exists and does not exist, or “neither exists nor does not exist,” the foolish indeed conceals the Self through associating it with ideas of changeability, unchangeability, both changeability and unchangeability, and absolute negation. [84] These are the four options regarding the Self; by the attachment to any of them, the Self always remains hidden. He who has known that the Self is ever-free of contact with these positions indeed sees all (i.e., is omniscient). [85] What else remains to be desired for one who has realized the state of being a knower of Brahman, a state of complete omniscience, nonduality, and without beginning, end, or middle?

[86] This is the humility that knowers of Brahman have by their nature. Their tranquility is also spontaneous. Control of their senses also comes by their nature. Having known thus, the enlightened attain peace.

Threefold Consciousness and Knowledge

[87] Knowers of Brahman recognize the ordinary state of waking in which the worldly duality of objects and the idea of coming into contact with objects is accepted. They also recognize a “purer” worldly state (dreaming) in which the perception is dualistic without the presence of an object. [88] They also recognize a supramundane state without objects and without the idea of coming into contact with objects. So knowers of Brahman have always proclaimed knowledge, the object of knowledge, and what is knowable.

[89] The threefold knowledge and objects of knowledge being known in succession, omniscience arises everywhere of its own accord for the knower endowed with great wisdom here in this very life. [90] According to Mahayana Buddhists, four things are to be known first: what is to be avoided, what is to be realized, what is to be cultivated, and what is to be rendered ineffective. Except for what is to be realized (i.e., Brahman/Self), these exist only as imagination.

The Nature of Entities

[91] All entities by their very nature are known to be beginningless, like space. But there is not the slightest (ontological) diversity whatsoever in them anywhere or in any way.

[92] By their very nature, all entities are wellfixed as illumined from the very beginning (i.e., all entities are consciousness). Only one who rests content (without seeking further knowledge than this) is able to attain deathlessness. [93] All entities are tranquil from the very beginning, uncaused, and by nature completely free (of dualities). They are characterized by the sameness (of nature) and non-separation (from each other). They are unborn, identical (with Brahman/Self), and pure. [94] Those who roam in the realm of separateness can never realize the purity (of the Self). Those who sink in the doctrine of separateness (of realities) speak of a diversity (of entities) and thus are said to be of limited understanding. [95] But those who are firmly established in the unborn sameness (of the Self) are alone said to possess the highest knowledge in the world. The common person indeed cannot grasp such knowledge.

[96] The unborn gnosis does not contact the unborn entities. This gnosis is said to be free of attachments since it is not related to any object. [97] If the unwise believe in origination, however slight, of any entity, they can never approach what is free of attachments. How then can there be the destruction of the veil (of illusion covering the Self for such people)?

[98] All phenomenal persons in fact are free from that veil and are pure by nature. They are enlightened as well as liberated (from the cycle of rebirths) from the very beginning. Thus, they are said to be enlightened since they are able to know (the truth/reality). [99] The gnosis of the Buddha, who is all light, does not touch any entity (and so is unrelated to anything). All entities are like gnosis in this regard. Yet this was never stated by the Buddha.

[100] Having realized the state that is hard to perceive, profound, unborn, always the same, all light, and free of diversity, we praise it to the best of our ability.