



## The Creation of the World Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 14

In the beginning this world was Soul (*Atman*) alone in the form of a Person. Looking around, he saw nothing else than himself. He said first: 'I am.' From that arose the name 'I.' Therefore even today, when one is addressed, he says first just 'It is I' and then speaks whatever name he has. Since before (*purva*) all this world he burned up (*ush*) all evils, therefore he is a person (*purusha*). He who knows this, then, burns up him who desires to try to get ahead of him.

He was afraid. Therefore one who is alone is afraid. And he thought to himself: 'Since there is nothing else than myself, of what am I afraid?' Then his fear passed, for of what should he have been afraid? For truly it is from another that fear arises.

But he had no delight at all. For one has no delight when one is alone. He longed for a second person. Since he was as large as a woman and a man together, he caused that Self to split (*pat*) into two pieces, from which arose a husband (*pati*) and a wife (*patnī*). Therefore, this is the reason that Yājñavalkya used to say 'Oneself is like a half-fragment'. Therefore the void that was there is filled by a wife. He copulated with her and from their union human beings were produced.

And she then thought to herself: 'How can he have sexual relations with me after he has produced me from himself? Come, let me hide myself.' She became a cow. But he became a bull and had sex with her and thus cattle were born. Then she became a mare and he a stallion. She became a female ass and he a male ass. Again he had sex with her and from their union solid-hoofed animals were born. She became a female goat and he a male goat; she a ewe and he a ram. And again he had sex with her, and from their union were born goats and sheep. Thus, indeed, he created all the pairs there are, down to the ants.

He knew: 'I am this creation, for I created it all from myself.' From this all creation arose. Anyone who has this knowledge comes to be in that creation of his.

Then he rubbed. From his mouth as from a vagina and from his hands he created fire (*agni*). Both these (i.e. the hands and the mouth) are hairless on the inside, for the vagina (*yoni*) is hairless on the inside. People say, 'Worship this god! Worship that god!'—one god after another. But each god is his manifestation, for he created all gods. Now, whatever is moist, that he created from semen, and that is Soma. Truly, this whole world is just food and the eater of food.

That was Brahma's super-creation: namely, that he created the gods, his superiors; likewise, that, being mortal, he created the immortals. Therefore was it a super-creation. And those who know this come to be in that super-creation of his.

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*The Thirteen Principle Upanishads.* Trans. Robert Ernest Hume. London: Oxford University Press, 1921.  
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