The well-known interrogation of Śvetaketu on life after death occurs in three parallel versions in ChU. 5, 3, BĀU. 6, 2 and KausU. 1, 1. One of the differences between the latter version and the former two is that it does not consist of five questions. According to Söhnen (1981: 201) Citra asks one question. I would rather assume a twofold, disjunctive question, followed by a concluding one. The agreement between the three versions is that all the questions are yes-no questions. In the KausU Śvetaketu does not know the answer; in the two parallels the questions start with “Do you know?” and Śvetaketu answers “No”.

The disjunctive question in the KausU runs (after the introductory vocative, which does not belong to the sentence):

\[
\text{asti sam. vr. tam. loke yasmin m¯ad h¯asyasy anyatamo v¯adhv¯a} \ldots
\]

Actually the question continues with some words and it is uncertain where the disjunctive question ends.

One of the difficulties of this passage is the exact meaning of samvrtam, which is interpreted by some scholars as ‘hidden place’ and by others as ‘conclusion (of transmigration)’. See Söhnen (1981; 181, n. 12). The translation ‘hidden place’ does not make sense. It is doubtful whether the term may have the meaning ‘conclusion’. Moreover, the addition between brackets ‘of transmigration’ is a pure guess and refers to a concept which was still rather unknown. The ellipsis of such a genitive is quite improbable.

Frenz (1968/69: 105) renders with “Einfriedung” and assumes a metaphor in which the deceased are kept within an enclosure in heaven like cattle within a “Pferch”. In the disjunctive question adhvam then should denote a way out (“... oder [gibt] es einen anderen Weg aus ihr heraus”). Since Citra’s questions obviously do not refer to the temporary transfer of the sacrificer to heaven during the sacrifice (as appears from the context), this interpretation was rightly rejected by Söhnen (1981: 181, n. 12), who makes the question refer to the obstruction of the path to heaven and its overcoming. See also Olivelle (1996: 202 and his note on p. 365).
The alternative of the being closed of heaven should indeed be expressed by *anyatama vādhvā*, which is translated by Olivelle (1996: 202) with “or does it have another road?”. His rendering of *anyatama* does not convince, since *anyatama* is not the same as *anya* and a preceding *adhvan* (which might justify the translation “another”) is not mentioned. Söhnen (1981: 181), who freely reformulates the question as “ob es einen anderen Weg zu jener Himmelswelt gebe” on p. 201, translates “Oder [gibt es] irgendeinen anderen Weg dahin”. Here “irgendeinen” is correct, but “anderen” is not. With the suffix -*tama* the adjective *anya* means ‘one or other’ or ‘one out of more’.

So the opposition is between heaven being closed and having one or other entranceway or one access road among more roads which are blocked.

Söhnen (1981: 181, n. 11) observes that the initial position of the predicate *asti* here is the only formal indication of a question. However, in yes-no questions such a change of wordorder mostly does not suffice. See Strunk (1983: 42) who observes that a Pluti is required and that the initial position of the verbform only supports the marking of a question. Especially in disjunctive questions the Pluti would be compulsory.1 Strunk (1983: 86) mentions the present passage as an extraordinary example of a disjunctive question without a Pluti. It is true that such disjunctive questions mostly consist of two asyndetically connected yes-no questions and that the usual Vedic word for the sometimes occurring connecting particle is *āhoh*, but I believe that indeed the present questions are disjunctive. Since the Pluti is not unknown to the Kausū., one may assume that some Plutis have disappeared in the transmission of the text of the present passage. In such a case a long vowel like *ā* is the best candidate for an emendation. Here the double question might end with *adhvā3* instead of *adhvā*.

Some translators take the following genitive *tasya* with the disjunctive question. See Söhnen (1981: 182, n. 15) who mentions four translators who form an exception and take *tasya* with the next clause. Her formulation “lassen den Nebensatz mit *tasya* beginnen”, however, is rather unfelicitous, since e.g. Hume (1931: 302), one of the mentioned translators, definitely does not turn the clause introduced by *tasya* into a dependent one and translates: “Or is there any road? Will you put me in its world?”

Hume’s translation (of this part of the question) is correct. A question ending with *tasya* and followed by a relative clause based on an emendation of the text (as assumed by Söhnen and others) is hardly acceptable. One does not expect a genitive *tasya* which follows a noun. Moreover, a main sentence ending with *tasya*, and a disjunctive question at that, is odd. Therefore I prefer the following edition, punctuation and translation: