Chapter - IV

PRAJĀPATI IN THE ĀRAṆYAKA LITERATURE

In the Āraṇyaka literature, Prajāpati is identified with Ātman and Brahman. The identification of Prajāpati with Ātman and Brahman in the Āraṇyakas leads to the concept of Prajāpati’s identification with the Ultimate Reality as depicted in the Upanisadic literature. Prajāpati is the Self (Ātman), he is Brahman, Indra, all the gods, the five elements, earth, air, ether, water etc. He is also stated as anirukta, i.e. undefined in the Aitareya Āraṇyaka. In this context, Sāyaṇa interprets this word thus – ‘prajāpatiḥ prajāpālako jagadiśvaraḥ, sa cānirukta iśvarasya karmaprāti padeḥābhāvenendrādivannikṣṛṣya mūrtvaktumaśakya tva’.

He is also described as a man having twenty five elements, ten fingers, ten toes, two legs, two arms and the soul is the twenty fifth. Prajāpati is identified with Hirṇyagarbha Brahman, Katama, Svayambhū, Saṁvatsara etc. He is also identified with Yajña, Viṣṇu, Vaṣṭākara,

1. esa brahmaśa indra esa prajāpatirete sarve devā imāni ca pañca
mahābhūtāni prthivi vāyurākāśa āpo...

A.Ā., 2.6.1

2. anirukto vai prajāpatiḥ/

Ibid., 1.2.2

3. Sāyaṇa, Ibid.

4. tāstriḥ prathamayā triruttamayā pañcavirñsatirbhavanti pañcavirñśa ātmā pañcavirñśaḥ prajāpātirdaśa hastyā aṅgulayo daśa pādyā dvā ūrū dvau bahu ātmāva pañcavirñśa/

Ibid., 1.1.4

5. brahmā viśvaḥ katamaḥ svayambhūḥ prajāpatiḥ saṁvatsara iti/

T.Ā., 10.63.1
Rudra and Brahman.

In the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, the creation of the universe has been explained properly and it describes Prajāpati as the creator. It states that, in the beginning of creation, there existed nothing but a sea of water, in which Prajāpati was alone, produced from a blue lotus. His mind grew up for the aspiration of the creation and generation. He wearied himself and performed fervid devotion (tapas). By the performance of fervid devotion, Prajāpati’s body trembled. From the flesh of this body three sages were produced. The nails of Prajāpati appeared as Vaikhānasasage, the hair appeared as Vālakhilya and the liquid portion of his body became a tortoise. It is also stated that Prajāpati was first born from rta, i.e. parabrahman. He created all the creatures and the directions; and he himself entered into his creation. In this context Sāyaṇa explains the nature of Prajāpati thus—

\[
\text{ṛtasya satyasya parabrahmaṇaḥ sakāśātprathamutpāṇnah praśāpatirlokānbhūrādīnividhāya bhūtāni prāṇīnaśca vidhāya prācyādyā mukhyadiśa āgneyyādyā vidiśaśca vidhāyā 'tmanā svakīyena samyakprāviveśa'.
\]

Prajāpati is Dasahotṛ and all this

---

6. tvāṁ yajñastvāṁ viśṇustvāṁ vaśaktarṣṭvāṁ rudrastvāṁ brahmatvāṁ prajāpatih/ 
   Ibid., 10.31.1

7. āpo vā idamāsantsalilameva/ sa prajāpatirekaḥ puṣkarparṇe samabhavat/ 
   tasyāntaranasan kāmaḥ samavartata/ idarī srjeyamiti ...... sa 
   tapo 'tapyata/ sa tapastaptvā/ śārīramadhūnuta/ tasya yanmāṁsāṁsātīt/ 
   tato 'rūnāḥ ketavo vātaraśanā ṛṣaya udatiṣṭhan/ ye nakhāḥ, te vaikhānasāḥ/ 
   ye vālāḥ/ te vālakhilyāḥ/ yo rasah/ so 'pām/ 
   Ibid., 1. 23. 1-2

8. prajāpatiḥ prathamaj a rtasya/ atmanā 'tmanāṁmabhisaṁviveśeti/ 
   Ibid., 1.23.9

9. Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
belongs to him. Prajāpati created the beings and he moves in the womb of brahmānda and manifests himself in various forms, i.e. immovable, movable etc. Gods considered him as kāmadhenu and squeeze out milk. Sāyaṇa comments thus- ‘purā kadāciddevavāḥ sarve prajāpatiṁ kāmadhenuṁ kṛtvā śukrāṁ payaḥ pravargyarupam ksīrāṁ dugdhavantāḥ.’ This signifies that he can bestow everything to the mankind.

The great Prajāpati is regarded as the Ukthaśastra of the Vedas. He is also stated to have created the Mahāvrata and the Niṣkevalya šastra, the essence of the Vedas. It is also described that Prajāpati is the saṁvatsara and his soul (ātman) is said to be the Mahāvrata rite. Prajāpati, the year, after creating creatures, burst. He put himself together by the metres. Because he put himself together

---

10. prajāpatirdasahotā/ sa idaṁ sarvam/ Ibid., 3.7.4
11. rucitadvai prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjat/ Ibid., 5.6.11
12. prajāpatiscarati garbhe antah/ ajayamano bahudhā vijāyate/ tasya dhirāḥ pariṣjānanti yonim/ Ibid., 3.13.1
13. prajāpatirī vai devaḥ sukram payoḍurhan/ Ibid., 5.10.1
15. puruṣa evaokthamayameva mahānprajāpatirhamukthamasmīti vidyāt/ A.Ā., 2.1.2
16. (a) prajāpatiridam brahma vedānāṁ sasṛje rasam/ Ibid., 5.3.2
(b) purā prajāpatirvedānāṁ rasāṁ sārabhūtamidāṁ brahma prouḍharāṁ mahāvrataṁ niṣkevalyaṁ va śṛṣṭavān/ Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
17. prajāpatirvai saṁvatsarasāstyaśaṁ ātmā yanmahābratam/ Sān.Ā., 1.1
by means of the metres, therefore the Vedic text is called the Samhitā. It is also noted that the gods are the seed of Prajāpati. He is Vāmadeva, Viśvakarman, Dhātr, and Vidhātr. He is also spoken as Brahmā Svayambhū.

The Aitareya Āraṇyaka holds that Prajāpati uttered the first word consisting of one syllable or two, viz. tata or tāta. Sāyaṇa explains that this word was uttered by Prajāpati for his first-created son Hirṇyagarbha. When he first spoke he uttered the word of one or two syllables, tata or tāta just like a child. In this context, A.B. Keith rightly observes that ‘tad’ is the first word of the first stanza of the first hymn of the Niṣkevalya Śastra (R.V., 10.120.1). He holds

18. prajāpatiḥ praśṭva vyasraṁsata sarīvatṣaraḥ sa
cchandobhirātmānaṁ samadadhādyacchanobhirātmānaṁ
  cchandobhirātmānaṁ samadadhātyaṁ  A.Ā., 3.2.6
19. praśṭatetore devā/
  Ibid., 2.1.3
20. praśṭatirvai vāmadeva/
  Sāh.Ā., 1.2
21. praśṭatirvīśvakarmā/
  Ibid., 2.17
22. dhātā vidhātā paramota sarīrdrk prajāpatiḥ parameśtḥo suvārcaḥ/
  Ibid., 12.4
23. praśṭatirbrahmaṇo brahmā svayambhūḥ/
  Ibid., 15.1
24. praśṭatipraḥthamaṁ vācaṁ vyāharadekāṣaṇarṇsāraṁ tateti tāteti/
  A.Ā., 1.3.3
25. sa praśṭatirṣaṁvaḥ prathamaṁḥ saṁcetāṁ hirṇyagarbhāṁ
  putramabhilakṣyoḥ pāṭyostasminyathoktaṁ pīṭvācakaṁ sābdadvayāṁ
  prayuktavān/ ata evaṁníṛtana api stanamdhayaṁ putram
  pīṭvācakaṁ abdenopalālayanti/yadvā praśṭatirhirṇyagarbhāḥ prathamaṁ
  bhāṣāmabhyasyatta teti vā tateti vā vācaṁ vyāharati/  Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
that the first uttered word is *tat (tat tad iti)*, Sāyaṇa takes it as a repetition. Max Muller seems to regard the two alternatives as *tat* and *tata* or *tāta*. This of course is the usual signification of *ekākṣara* and *dvyaṅkṣara*, but Sāyaṇa refers these words to the quantity of the first and second syllables in *tata* and *tāta* respectively. Sāyaṇa is probably right in thinking *tat* and *tāta* similar enough for the purpose here in view. This passage, indeed, seems to be a deliberate and somewhat elaborate variant of the older legend preserved in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*. In the relevant passage of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, it is stated that Prajāpati, when he first spoke, uttered *bhuh, bhuvah* and *svah*, which are words of one and two syllables respectively. Thus, Prajāpati is the creator of the speech also.

Thus, it is found that Prajāpati is extolled as the creator as well as the all-pervading god in the Āraṇyakas also.

---

26. Ś.B., 11.1.6
27. cf. Keith, A.B., The Aitareya Āraṇyaka, p. 181, Notes 1-4

* * *