CHAPTER II

THE IMPORTANT LEGENDS OF THE UPANIŚADS
AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

It has already been mentioned that the Upaniṣads form the last part of the Vedic literature and each Upaniṣad belong to one or other Vedas. Now, though the Upaniṣads belong to different Vedas, they are common in their purpose, in spite of their difference in the way of expression, style, prose and verse types, sizes etc. These poetico-philosophic works are full of grand imagery, extremely charming and lucid in expression. The stiffness of the language of the Mantra or the Sainhitā and the Brāhmaṇa portion of the Vedas is also simplified in the Upaniṣadic literature and the philosophical quests of the ignited minds of the Upaniṣadic seers are beautifully delineated by the help of different legends in these scriptures. In the legends, the unfathomable mystery about the concept of Brahman, including other philosophical speculations are brought out in a very lucid manner by the way of conversations between father and son¹ between preceptor and disciple² including

1. CU, 6.1-16
2. Ibid, 7.1-26, 4.4-9
animals, birds etc., between husband and wife\textsuperscript{3} and also through questions and answers in a debating session among the scholars.\textsuperscript{4} In this way the very profound ideas of the Upaniṣads have become easy to be communicated to the people.

The main purpose of these legends is to educate the people in the path of liberation. There are so many legends and stories in the Upaniṣads, which set down in their unique style the nature of Brahman as both immanent and transcendent of the world. Brahman is all, it is the Self. The search for Brahman is essentially the search for the Self as narrated in the Brhadāranyakopaniṣad. It is precisely depicted through the legends that the 'Brahma-vidyā' i.e. the knowledge of Brahman destroys ignorance, the root-cause of bondage and leads to salvation. The knowledge of Brahman will purify the heart of an aspirant and lead him to merge with Brahman, never to return — 'brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati'\textsuperscript{5} (the knower of Brahman himself becomes Brahman), 'pare'vyaye sarva ekābhavanti'\textsuperscript{6} (into the Ultimate, everything becomes united). To be emancipated is to be united with Brahman, wherein one can get absolute peace and happiness.

\textsuperscript{3} BU, 2.4; 4.5
\textsuperscript{4} PU, 1-6; BU, 4.1-4; 3.6.1; CU, 4.1-2
\textsuperscript{5} MU, 3.2.9
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, 3.2.7
which is the final repose and as such the ultimate aim in human life. Hence an in depth study of the different stories and legends of these works is very necessary and relevant in regard to the ultimate requirement of human life.

In some legends, the sublime teachings of the Upaniṣadic seers are inherited from some philosophical hymns of the Ṛgveda. Among these, it must be mentioned about the Nāsadīya Sūkta of the Ṛgveda which boldly and clearly declares about the one and only unitary world-ground. This is the timeless and living reality which is later formulated in the legend of Śvetaketu and Āruṇi of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. Another hymn of great importance is the Hiranyagarbha sūkta which is appropriately suggested as the most profound hymn of philosophical insight. Other hymns dealing with cosmogony are the Puruṣa sūkta, the Brahmaṇaspati sūkta, the Viśvakarman sūkta etc. In the above mentioned hymns, various ideas of world-cause are advanced as having created the gods and the whole of existence. These hypotheses of various

7. RV, 10.129
8. CU, 6.2.1
9. RV, 10.121
10. Ibid, 10.90
11. Ibid, 10.72
12. Ibid, 10.81

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world-makers seem to be re-united again in the *Asya-vāmasya*\(^{13}\) hymn of the *Rgveda*, where evolves out a monistic principle that forms the basis of the later thought in the Upaniṣads.

Thus in the Upaniṣads, the legends give a fair context to these philosophical ideas of the Vedic seers. The lofty Vedic visions have always inspired the later Upaniṣadic thinkers in their enduring quest of right knowledge through the legends. For example, Nārada’s elaborate progress to attain the Ātmavidyā\(^{14}\) under the able guidance of Sanatkumāra; Śvetaketu’s laborious effort under his father Āruṇi to arrive at the Ultimate, fundamental position as the source, sustenance and goal of our world of multiplicity. In this connection, we also remember the famous words of Maitreyī, the wife of Yājñavalkya, when she said: what is the utility of that which cannot give her *Amṛtam* or the immortal treasure of knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, the summum bonum of human life—‘yenāham nāṃṛtā syām kimaham tena kuryām’\(^{15}\). The sole purpose which is implied in these legends, is to prove the reality of *Brahman*, the Ultimate Principle and the phenomenality or unreality of the world of names and forms and also to establish the absolute oneness of the embodied soul and *Brahman*.

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13. RV, 1.164.46
14. *so haṁ bhagavo mantravidvāsmi nātmavit* CU, 7.1.3
15. BU, 2.4.3
LEGENDS AND MYTHS

From the etymological point of view, the word ‘legend’ is actually a French form and it comes from the Latin word ‘legenda’, which means things to be read, which in turn comes from ‘legere’, or to read. In its primary meaning, it connotes the history or life-story of a saint and then, so applied to those parts of scriptures and selections dealing with the life of the saints as read at divine contemplations. The legends are believed to have a historical basis which resemble greatly folk-tales in content, including super-natural beings and elements of mythology or explanations of natural phenomena, attached to a particular human being or place. Thus any legends are basically some well-known folk-tales of a locality, but sometimes there may be a tendency to quote some stories as legends from one’s own beliefs. In such cases, it seems very difficult to distinguish between myths and legends. Stories treated as legends may in other traditions be classified as myths. Therefore, it is found that “a Christian might refer to stories about the miraculous deeds of a saint as legends, while similar stories about a pagan healer might be called myths.”

17. Ibid, Macropaedia, Vol. 24, p. 24.711.2b
*Iliad*, the great book of the West, the legendary aspects are associated with the heroes who perform remarkable actions to the highest level of human possibilities and the mythical aspects are connected with the gods. Thus, it can be surmised that myths are associated with the super-natural and the sacred, while legends correspond to the historical grounds. In course of time, the original and actual application of the term ‘legend’ as the tales relating to the saints endowed with wonders and miracles, has been widened to include those stories or tales which are handed down by some popular beliefs to be true, without any historical foundation. On the other hand, the word ‘legend’ is also applied of a writing, inscription or motto on coins or medals, and also in terms with coats of arms, shields, monuments etc.

Thus, from the above discussion, we can say that the stories which are handed down all through the Vedic tradition, especially by the Upaniṣadic seers like Yājñāvalya, Uddālaka, Pippalāda, Varuṇa, Satyakāma Jābāla etc. to narrate their sublime teachings deserve to be called legends.

Now, in the following lines we are going to give a brief account of the important legends of the Principal Upaniṣads.

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THE LEGEND OF INDRA AND UMĀ

Kenopanishad, one of the ten principal Upanishads belongs to the Sāmaveda, which forms the ninth or the last chapter of the Jaiminīya or Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa. Hence, this Upāntṣad is also known as Talavakāra Upaniṣad. It starts with the question, ‘Kena’ or ‘by whom’ as the very first word, - ‘keneṣitaṁ patati’ etc., from which it derives its name as Kenopaniṣad. It has four sections or Khaṇḍas. In the first two chapters, we find the discussion about the Ultimate Principle or Brahman which is immanent within this manifested world and the beings, which cannot be attained by ordinary senses. And in the last chapters, through a legend of proud gods and Umā, the all-pervasiveness of Brahman is described beautifully. This interesting legend also reveals Brahman as the inner controller of all beings.

Here, in the legend, it is said that the gods, Indra, Agni, Vāyu etc. once conquered the asuras by the grace of Brahman. On being victorious over asuras, they, out of egoistic self-sufficiency, claimed the credit to their own power and greatness. They, for their haughtiness, forgot, that Brahman is alone the cause for all these effects, victory for the devas and defeat for the asuras. Hence, the senses, the mind, the body etc. are not self-sufficient entities, but they all point out a supreme non-dual
principle beyond and above them, because of which they all are functioning and glorified. This eternal principle is *Brahman* which is said to be underneath every mental state.\textsuperscript{20} *Brahman* is the power behind the senses and the mind of all beings and therefore, he is the thinker of all thoughts. As such *Brahman* became aware of the conceit of the gods. Not liking these proceedings in the minds of the devas, *Brahman* wanted to teach them the true nature of the Self, and desired to bless the devas by diverting their minds from darkness of ignorance to the path of self illumination and knowledge. It desired to remove the ego, born of ignorance from the minds of the devas which would bring about destruction or grief and for this very purpose, *Brahman*, taking the form of *Yakṣa*, appeared before them, by the glory of its power. He, *Yakṣa* means a great adorable being.\textsuperscript{21} The gods saw the strange form and could not recognise what it was. Therefore, after mutual consultations, they decided to depute Agni, the God of fire to find out the fact about that wonedrous form or *Yakṣa*. When Agni reached the spot, *Yakṣa* asked about his identity. Agni praising himself, introduced himself as ‘*Jātaveda*’.

\textsuperscript{20} pratibodhaviditaṁ mataṁ Ibid, 2.4

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. svayoga – māhātmyanirmitenatyadbhutena vismāpanīyena rūpeṇa devānāṁ indriya-gocare prādurbabhūva SB on Ibid, 3.2
which means all – knowing or omniscient. Then Yakṣa wanted to know that what power was inherited in him and in reply to which Agni claimed to burn everything, including all earthly things and also of heaven. Hearing this egoistic statement of Agni, the Yakṣa placed before him a bit of straw and directed him to burn that. Agni, with all his might could not burn that little thing and thus, receiving a jolt of humiliation, he returned to his place. After the failed attempt of Agni to know about the Yakṣa, the gods appointed the God of Air or Vāyu to ascertain what it was. In the same way, Vāyu also approached Him and introduced himself as Māttarīśvan who was capable of blowing off anything in the world. Yakṣa challenged the God of Air to blow away a little bit of straw, placed before him. But same as the former one, all the efforts of Vāyu went in vain. He returned thence, being unsuccessful in his effort of knowing the Yakṣa.

Lastly, the gods requested Indra, who was also known as ‘Maghavan’ to unfold the mystery. He then hastened towards it. In the mean time, the Yakṣa vanished leaving him aghast. But unlike his predecessors Indra did not return to the gods without getting the knowledge of Yakṣa.

22. agnirvā ahamasmītyabraśījjātavedā vā ahamasmīti KeU, 3.4
Remaining at that spot, he started to think about the fact behind that Yakṣa. Seeing this passion for the knowledge of Truth in the heart of Indra, the Truth (Vidyā) itself appeared in front of Indra in the form of the goddess Umā, the daughter of the Himalayas. Umā is described as extremely beautiful. Vidyā means the spiritual knowledge which is the most rare and worthy thing among all. According to Radhakrishnan, here “Umā is wisdom personified”. Indra then asked Umā about the reality behind the Yakṣa and Umā replied that the Yakṣa was none other than Brahman.

It was the power of Brahman through which they were able to earn victory over the asuras. Hence, Brahman is the inner controller of all the manifestations what so ever in this world. It is quite for His abundant mercy that one can sustain and function.

Thus, Indra, for the first time, was blessed to know about Brahman through the grace of spiritual knowledge in the form of Umā and therefore, he excelled the other gods. The other two gods, Agni and Vāyu also had the privilege to recognise him later, through their leader, Indra.

The legend conveys us the message that Brahman is the supreme power above all and through which alone, the gods enjoy greatness.

23. bahusobhamānāṁ KeU, 3.12
24. Radhakrishnan, S., The Principal Upaniṣads, p. 589
Without this, they are but empty vessels. Later, they realised their limitedness and emptiness as separate entities from *Brahman* and the utmost fullness as *Brahman*.

In another sense, these three gods, Agni, Vāyu and Indra are also considered as the sensory forces within the human body. Though, these are the personifications of the natural forces, as in the words of Swami Ranganathananda, “Agni represents the power of speech, Vāyu represents the power of thought and Indra stands for the *Jīva* or the individual soul”\(^{25}\), within the human body. The life of a human being can be regarded as the struggle between the good and evil forces, this contest between the higher and lower natures, is indirectly presented in this legend, according to him as devas and asuras. Neither the sense-organs, i.e. Agni, nor the mind, i.e. Vāyu, can reveal the supreme knowledge or *Yakṣa*; because, it is the innermost strength of their volatile power. Lastly, the *jīva*, who at first did not know about its very nature as *Brahman* itself, after the transcendence of its most destructive ego, by the grace of the Supreme knowledge, with a pure heart can recognise the Supreme Glory. So, it emphasises the fact that the highest spiritual effort and realisation can be arised only on the foundations of self – restraint and moral purity. As the *Praśna*

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Upaniṣad expresses ‘na yeṣu jihmaṁ – anytaṁ na māyā ceti,’\textsuperscript{26} (i.e. where there is no dishonesty, no falsity and no deception, there only can grow spirituality). Thus, in this legend, the importance of moral character is stressed out in the pursuit of attainment of the Supreme knowledge, as it is said in the \textit{Mahābhārata} –

\begin{quote}
"jñānamutpadyate purīśāṁ kṣayāt pāpasya karmanā/, athādārśatātalprakhye pāsyatātmānamātmani"/\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

(This means that the Highest Spiritual realisation is grown in man, when all his evil impulses and actions are overcome and destroyed in totality; and just as he sees himself in a mirror clearly, he realises the \textit{Brahman}, within his own self)

Now in this legend the personification of the spiritual knowledge as Umā has also some significance. Umā is proclaimed as Haimavatī, i.e., the daughter of Himalayas. It signifies that the age-old tradition of the wisdom of India, of which Vedas and Upaniṣads are the sacred – most part, was basically developed by the forest-dwellers who came and practised penances for attaining the true wisdom. The goddess is the embodiment of all knowledge. In the later Purānic and Tantric works, this Goddess Umā is conceived as the Mother Goddess, the Supreme Power. In

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} PU, 1.16
\item \textsuperscript{27} Mahābhārata, 12.197.8
\end{itemize}
the Devī Māhātmyam it is found—’vidyāḥ samastāḥ tava devi bhedāḥ,’\(^{28}\),
(all types of wisdom are different forms of the goddess). Umā also called Durgā, is worshipped as divine wisdom or brahmavidyā, where all passions are subdued, as reflected in the Durgāsaptasati—’moksārthibhir munibhir asta—samasta—doṣair vidyāsi sā bhagavati, paramā hi devī.’\(^{29}\)

Thus, in the path of devotion or bhakti, the divine grace which is the truth, can alone lead a man to acquire liberation, the highest spiritual realisation, without any effort on the part of the individual. In this legend also, Umā Haimavati, the daughter of Himavat, the personified supreme knowledge or Brahman, instructed Indra, who was in a doubt of who could be that Yakṣa, that he, indeed, was Brahman.

THE LEGEND OF YAMA AND NACIKETAS\(^{30}\)

One of the most famous and popular legends of the Upaniṣads is the legend of Naciketas of the Kathopanishad. This legend is also narrated in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, 3.1.8. Naciketas was the son of Vājaśravas, a descendent of Gautama. Being desirous to obtain the fruit of the Viśvajit sacrifice, he gave away as gifts all his possessions like cows etc. to the

\(^{28}\) Devī Māhātmyam, 11.6; Qt.by Swami Ranganathananda, The Message of the Upaniṣads, p. 259

\(^{29}\) Vide, Radhakrishnan, S., The Principal Upaniṣads, p. 590

\(^{30}\) KU, 1.1.1-2.3.18
priests. Naciketas, who was a young boy, noticed that the gifted cows were milked off, strengthless or feeble to breed, and their water drunk and grass eaten. Therefore, they were almost useless. He then thought that the sacrificer who gave those cows as gifts would attain the worlds full of sorrow. He also wanted to do something which was really beneficial for his father who was doing mistake of making gifts of ordinary earthly possessions. Vājaśravas believed in performing sacrifices as the leading way to happiness and prosperity in this world and the heaven. But Naciketas was full of spiritual interests, devoid of earthly desires, though he was only a small boy. Thus, raised by his inner belief to prevent impurities, Naciketas asked his father to whom he had given away his own son. Because, he believed that the son was also one of his father’s adorable possessions. The father did not pay heed to his words and he then repeated it thrice persistently. At that, the father became irritated and in anger, he replied that unto death, he had given away him, the son. But this was only an outburst of the father and did not take it seriously. But Naciketas was quite serious and requested his father to be truthful to his words and to send him to the world of Yama. After that Naciketas proceeded to Yamaloka. But Yama was absent at that time and so he had to wait there for three nights without taking any food or hospitality.
After returning home, being informed of Naciketas, Yama felt very sorry since a brahmana guest remained in his house without taking any food. He therefore wished to give him three boons. At this, Naciketas expressed his first wish that his father should be without any anxiety for him and be pleased and devoid of anger towards him. He must recognise and greet his son as before though returning from the world of death. The first wish concerns with the worldly satisfactions. Yama granted the wish.

For his second boon Naciketas wanted to be taught the knowledge of the fire-sacrifice which leads to immortality. Yama then taught him the knowledge of that fire or Agni through which one attains the heaven. This fire is the foundation of the whole world, lying hidden in the secret place i.e. in the consciousness of the learned. Here, we find that in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, this secret place or guhā is referred as within the body itself.\(^{31}\) In this way, Yama instructed him in detail about that fire and lastly he proclaimed that this fire would be named after his name, i.e. Nāciketa Agni.

Lastly Naciketas wanted to be instructed about the knowledge of the self. He wanted to know what prevailed after death. At this, Yama became sensitive and wished to test him before imparting the Supreme

\(^{31}\) guhā yarī śarīrasya madhye, T Br, 1.2.1.3
knowledge. He then tried to divert the boy’s mind from this profound theme by offering him alternatives more attractive and enjoyable for young hearts.

But Naciketas was totally indifferent towards all these alluring prospects and he stood firm only to know the Truth and nothing else. He declared that wealth could not content a human being. The wealth and other worldly objects are transient. We cannot enjoy wealth, long life and its pleasures because of the fear of death. Death destroys everything which is unescapable. Therefore, Naciketas asked only for the knowledge of Ātman.

Yama was immensely satisfied seeing the perfect discriminating mind of Naciketas. He then proceeded to teach him the highest wisdom. Firstly, he revealed the two ways of Śreyas and Preyas, of which Preyas reflects the pleasant and Śreyas, the good. But Naciketas had not taken the path of Preyas or the pleasant, because one, who took the same fell from his aim or goal.

According to the God of death, the knowledge of Ātman is very difficult to obtain as it is subtle, deeply hidden in the consciousness or buddhi. It can not be attained by logical reasoning, but only by spiritual

32. KU, 1.2. 1-2
contemplation or adhyātma-yoga. Through meditation only the human soul may be completely united with the Supreme soul. Yama pointed out that the Supreme Brahman is never born and it never dies, it is without any quality or adjective. It has no beginning, nor end. It is smaller than the small and greater than the great which resides in the heart of every living being.

In this way, Yama had taught Naciketas the knowledge of Ātman which is the true essence of man. Through the Naciketa-fire, one can move towards the highest eternal Brahman who performs sacrifice. It is just like a bridge to cross to the fearless shore apart from this empirical world. Knowing Brahman i.e. the Highest Spirit, one becomes free from the power of death and rejoices eternal release or Mokṣa. The all pervasive Highest Spirit dwells in the middle of the body, of the size of the thumb. One who has ever known this, he never fears or dislikes anymore. In this way, the unity of the individual self and the Supreme self is proclaimed here very interestingly.

33. Ibid, 1.2.12
34. Ibid, 1.3.2
35. Ibid, 1.3.15
36. aṅguṣṭha – mātraḥ- puruṣa  Ibid, 2.1.12 ; TĀ , 10.38.1; MaitrīU, 6.38; SU, 3.13; 5.8
Thus, Naciketas, received the profound teachings about Yoga i.e. spiritual contemplation as the path to attain the Universal Spirit or Brahman, and also that the Highest Wisdom, as delivered by Yama. He then became untouched by earthly desires, actions and also by death realising the Self i.e. Atman within himself.37

THE LEGEND OF PIPPALADA AND SIX SAGES38

In the Praśna Upaniṣad, six aspirants of Brahmacārya or the knowledge of Brahman, viz., Sukeśa, the son of Bharadvāja, Satyakāma, the son of Śibi, Gārgya, the son of Saūrya, Kausalya, the son of Āśvala, Bhārgava, the son of Vidarbha and Kabandhī, the son of Katya, approached the great sage Pippalāda to acquire the Highest wisdom. The seer asked them to stay with him by observing brahmacārya, tapas or observance of penance or austerity and śraddhā or reverence for a year. The sages did accordingly.

After that, Kabandhī Kātyāyana approached Pippalāda and questioned him about the source of all the creation. He replied then that Prajāpati or the lord of creation is the cause of all. Prajāpati being desirous of creation, created Rayi and Prāṇa, the basic ingredients of the creation. According to Śaṅkarācārya, Rayi means the food or matter and Prāṇa is

37. KU, 2.3.18
38. PU, 1.1-6.8
interpreted as the fire or its eater and enjoyer respectively.\textsuperscript{39} This pair of Rayi and Prāṇa are to be regarded as the cause for the various manifestations of earthly objects. The sun is identified with Prāṇa and the moon with Rayi. The life and growth of all the creation depend upon the sun or Prāṇa.\textsuperscript{40} And Rayi is united with all the embodied and unembodied or gross and subtle elements of the universe.\textsuperscript{41}

Pippalāda then shows the path of liberation also. There are two paths – the southern and the northern. Of these, those who perform īṣṭa and pūrta actions take the southern path; they return again and again to this world. Here īṣṭa means various Vedic performances, observances of hospitality, penance, truth etc. and pūrta means various social works, offering food etc. related to public service.\textsuperscript{42} They attain the region of the moon related to the matter or the food i.e. Rayi.\textsuperscript{43} But people associated with self-restraint, austerity, faith and knowledge, go by the northern path and achieve the sun. They will never return to this world because that is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} rayim ca somamannam prāṇam cāgnimattāraḥ ŚB on Ibid, 1.4
\item \textsuperscript{40} śatadhā anekadhā prāṇibhedena vartamānaḥ prāṇah prajāṇāmuḍa-yatyēṣa sūryaḥ Ibid,1.8; Cf. Maitri U, 6.8
\item \textsuperscript{41} PU, 1.5
\item \textsuperscript{42} Īśādīdgopaniṣadāḥ Vol. I, p. 109
\item \textsuperscript{43} ŚB on PU, 1.9
\end{itemize}
eternal and imperishable. This is the path of liberation as shown by Pippalāda.

After that Bhārgava approached him to know about the support and the illumining power of the universe. He also wants to know the greatest ever of all these creations. In reply, Pippalāda reveals that Prāṇa or breath is the greatest and the support of the body, the sense organs and all the elements. This Prāṇa, dividing itself five-fold i.e. the five forms of breath sustain the body.

After that, Kausalya, the son of Asvala desired to know wherefrom the breath originates, how it enters the body, how it exists in the body dividing itself, how it departs from the body, how it supports the external things, the internal self. All these questions were put together by him before Pippalāda. Pippalāda, realising the anxiety on the part of the student, became very pleased and replied that the breath originated from Ātman i.e. the Supreme Self. It enters the body through the performance of actions as guided by the mind. In a body, it distributes itself in forms, viz., prāṇa, apāna, samāna, vyāna and udāna. Pippalāda then explains the different places in the body where these prāṇas reside. The principal Prāṇa resides in the heart as liṅgātman. One who worships Prāṇa attains immortality.

44. PU, 1.10
After that Souryāyanī Gārgya asked questions concerning sleep. Pippalāda then explained about sleep and deep sleep. While in sleep, all the sense-organs become united in the mind. Therefore, in sleep, one cannot hear, see, smell, taste, touch, speak, eat, rejoice, emit or move. Prāṇa alone remains awake in this body. Prāṇa means the fivefold breaths as quoted earlier. In this state the mind experiences everything which have been cognized earlier by the senses. Gradually when the mind also becomes inactive then that is the state of deep sleep. Then all the elements and the mind merge in Ātman i.e. the Highest principle which is the Ultimate substratum of all. In this state, the nature of bliss of the self is revealed in this body itself.

After Gārgya, Satyakāma asked about the worship of Auṁ. Pippalāda replied that the syllable Auṁ is both Para-Brahman and Apara Brahman. Meditation on this Auṁ, helps one realise Brahman according to the method of meditation. Thus the meditation on one mātrā or element of Auṁ leads a man to this earth after death where endowed with austerity, penance and belief he enjoys greatness. Meditation on two mātrās leads him to the world of moon where he enjoys all the wealth of that world, but again come back to this human world. Further, one who meditates on three mātrās unitedly, becomes free of pains and sufferings. It leads them to the
sun and he obtains liberation.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, through the meditation of \textit{Aum}, one can attain \textit{Brahman}.

At last, Sukeśa approached Pippalāda to know about the person consisting of sixteen parts or \textit{sodāśakalā}. The preceptor then instructed him that He is within the body itself.\textsuperscript{46} He creates \textit{Prāṇa} (breath). From \textit{prāṇa, śraddhā} (faith), ether, air, light, water, earth, sense organs including five organs of action and five organs of knowledge, the mind and then again food, from food, strength, penance, hymns, actions, worlds and names are created. The sixteen parts which form the subtle body merge with the person or \textit{Puruṣa} as spokes in the wheel\textsuperscript{47}, without their names and shapes. He is devoid of parts and immortal.\textsuperscript{48} Everything then becomes \textit{Puruṣa} or \textit{Brahman} which is above all and the Ultimate principle of all. Nothing is beyond Him.\textsuperscript{49}

In this way, by giving instruction to these six sages, Pippalāda gradually revealed the Highest reality or \textit{Para Brahman}. Then the six sages being satisfied, praised Pippalāda as their reverend, spiritual father

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 5.5-6  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, 6.2  
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, 6.6  
\textsuperscript{48} eso\'kalo\'mṛto bhavati Ibid, 6.5; cf, MU, 4.2.8; CU, 8.10  
\textsuperscript{49} etat param brahma veda, nātaḥ paramasūti PU, 6.7
for enlightening them and leading them towards the deathless shore. They paid obeisance to their teacher sincerely and took leave of him.

THE LEGEND OF BHṚGU AND VARUṆA

In the last section of the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, we find the legend of Bhṛgu and Varuṇa, the renowned personality of the Upaniṣadic age. This teaching is also known as bhārgavī vāruṇī vidyā which is presented in the Bhṛguvallī.

According to this, Bhṛgu, i.e. the son of Varuṇa (Vāruṇi) approached his father with the request of being instructed in the knowledge of Brahman. The father advised him that food (annam), breath (prāṇam), sight (cakṣuḥ), hearing (śrotraḥ), mind (manāḥ) and speech (vācaḥ) are the means though which one can attain Brahman. He also stated that from which all the beings come into existence and by which they are sustained in this world and then, after being departed into which they dissolve, that is to be known, that is Brahman. Varuṇa asked Bhṛgu to seek to know that reality by doing penance. Hearing this from his father, Bhṛgu started to do penance in order to realize what is Brahman.

To realise the nature (svarūpa) of Brahman, one has to perform austerities because without this, one cannot realise the true essence of Brahman.

50. TU, 3.1-6
51. Ibid
Bhrigu after contemplating, realised that food is *Brahman*, because food is the cause of everything. But then he was not satisfied, as food being an effect is transient and as such cannot be *Brahman* in the truest sense of the term. Hence, he again approached his father with his earlier request. Varuṇa again advised him to do penance.

That time, after doing *tapāḥ*, he proclaimed that breath is *Brahman*. In this way, one after another, through continued penance, Bhrigu reflected on *Brahman* differently, such as breath, then mind, consciousness or *vijñāna* etc. Ultimately he realised ānanda or bliss as *Brahman*. Thus, he follows an increasing order which leads him more and more towards subtler and deeper thinking. Thus finally he reached *Brahman* as bliss, observing austerity. This time, it is not the insufficient one as in earlier cases and he accepts it with full satisfaction of his own.

This knowledge is thus gradually acquired through five steps, regarded as kośas. They are *annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya* and ānandamaya52 as narrated in the *Brahmānandavalli* of this *Upaniṣad*. In this way, Bhrigu attained the Highest Wisdom or *Brahmavidyā*.

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52. Ibid, 2.1-5
THE LEGENDS FOUND IN THE CHĀNDOGYOPANIŚAD

Beginning from the very first chapter, we notice that there are all total seven important legends in the Chāndogyopaniṣad. These legends, in their unique style, elaborate the unfathomable mystery about the concept of Brahman and also various other relevant topics. Of these legends that of Jānaśruti and Raikva\textsuperscript{53} discusses about what is called Saṁvargavidiyā. In the legend of Satyakāma Jābāla\textsuperscript{54} the nature of the Ultimate Reality is instructed through a bull, the God of fire, Swan, Watery-bird or madgu and then again by his teacher. Upakosala\textsuperscript{55} also was instructed by the sacrificial fires on the knowledge of Ātman and also by the teacher. In another legend the King Aśvapati instructed the six Brāhmaṇas,\textsuperscript{56} i.e. Uddālaka, Aupamanyava, Satyayajña, Indradyumna, Jana and Buḍilla about the Ātman Vaiśvanāra. The very important and well-known legend of Uddālaka Āruṇi teaching his son Śvetaketu,\textsuperscript{57} denotes Brahman as Sat by knowing which everything else becomes known. In this legend, we find the famous teaching of the Upaniṣads, one of the four Mahāvākyas ie. ‘\textit{tat tvam asi’}. Then Sanatkumāra instructs Nārada\textsuperscript{58} on the doctrine of

\textsuperscript{53.} CU, 4. 1-3
\textsuperscript{54.} Ibid, 4.4-9
\textsuperscript{55.} Ibid, 4.10-15
\textsuperscript{56.} Ibid, 5.11-24
\textsuperscript{57.} Ibid, 6.8-16
\textsuperscript{58.} Ibid, 7.1-26
Brahman i.e. Bhūman by following various stages step by step. The last story relates how Prajāpati instructed Indra about the true nature of Ātman.59

There are also some other interesting legends which, though small in size, are significant enough to deliver the message of eternity with some rich background of theological-philosophical thoughts, related to the cosmology, “the glorification of the Udgītha, the precedence of Prāṇa”60 etc.

1. THE LEGEND OF JĀNAŚRUTI AND RAIKVA

Now, we will discuss the legend of King Jānaśruti and Raikva, which in later times, is popularly recognised as Raikva Vidyā.

King Jānaśruti, the great grand-son of Janaśruta, was a benevolent doner who provided people with food and other necessaries. He had also built up rest houses everywhere so that people from every corner come to take meal prepared by them. He was famous for his benefactions. One night when he was lying on his bed, some swans flew over there. Of them, one suddenly spoke to the other who was flying in front, addressing as being shortsighted, as he did not notice brilliant splendour of great King Jānaśruti developed for his generous donations of food etc. The swan was

59. Ibid, 8.7-12

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precautioned by his mate not to touch that brilliant light; otherwise he would be burnt alive. But in reply to that, the other proclaimed with a surprising tone that who was that Jānaśruti, being spoken of with so much respect just like the great Raikva with his cart. Then, the first one eagerly wanted to know about Raikva, the man with the cart. In reply, it was narrated that just like in a game of dice, all the lower turns are to be included into the kṛta, thus, in this world, whatever good men accomplish, all are inevitably included under Raikva’s meritorious deeds. In the play of dice, the highest one is called kṛta with four points, to which belongs the other three throws or dices, namely Treta, Dvāpara and Kāli with three, two and one respectively.

Having overheard these conversations of the swans, Jānaśruti spent the night deeply thinking over it and in the next morning, when he got up, he asked his attendant about Raikva. Then that attendant went out in search of him but could not find him anywhere. The King then asked him to search for Raikva in such places where a Brāhmaṇa i.e. the knower of Brahman used to live, in the forests, the river banks, some other areas of solitude and silence etc. Here Brāhmaṇa does not refer to any person of Brāhmaṇa caste, but the person who knows Brahman or the Ultimate

61. prasiddhaḥ - catu- rankaḥ ŚB on CU, 4.1.2
Reality.62 This time, the attendant of the King set out and noticed a man under a cart scratching his body due to itch(es) or skin – disorders. He then asked him whether he was that Raikva with the card and the man responded positively. Thereafter, he informed the King all that had happened.

Jānaśruti, then approached Raikva with six hundred cows, a gold chain and a chariot drawn by mules and requested him to impart the knowledge of the God worshipped by him. But Raikva refused to accept all these things and also refused to teach him addressing him as a śūdra.

Being thus returned Jānaśruti, went away and came back for the second time to Raikva with one thousand cows, a gold-chain, a chariot with mules, a village where he lived and this time, along with his own daughter too, as a wife. He again requested him to enlighten on Brahmavidyā.

Raikva was immensely pleased with Jānaśruti comprehending his eagerness for knowledge. He then gave his consent to teach Jānaśruti and accepted all his gifts. The villages, which were gifted to Raikva, were introduced in later times as ‘Raikva-parṇa’ where did Raikva live, in the region of Mahāvrṣa. According to Śaṅkarācārya, knowledge can be

62. BU, 3.5.1; 3.8.10
imparted to six types of persons, viz., the Brahmacāri, to the donor of wealth, the intelligent one, the near and dear ones, one who knows the Vedas and the knowledge itself.63 Thus, Raikva also taught the King Jānaśruti, the Ultimate Truth through his daughter regarding her as the path of knowledge.

Here the teaching which was imparted by Raikva concerns about Samvarga Vidyā. Now the question is, what is this Samvarga Vidyā? This is a type of meditation like Samāpāda, Adhyāsa etc., where in two factors are thought of as one owing to similarity of action. In his instruction, Raikva first says that "Vāyu is certainly samvarga (the place of merger)"66. Vāyu or air is regarded as samvarga, because all other divinities such as the fire, the sun, the moon and the water all merge into Vāyu or the air ultimately. In the same way Prāṇa or the breath also is stated as samvarga, i.e. the ultimate substance in which merge all other senses, i.e. the speech or vāk, the sight (eyes) or cakṣuḥ, the hearing (ears) or śrotram and the mind or manāḥ while in sleep.67 Thus, these two are called as two

63. brahmacāri-dhanadāyi medhāvī śrotriyaḥ priyah vidyayā vā vidyām prāha, tani tirthāni śan-mama ŚB on CU, 4.2.5
64. BSS, 1.1.4
65. Ibid
66. CU, 4.3.2
67. prāṇo vāva samvargah, sa yadā svapiti prāṇām eva vag apyeti

Ibid, 4.3.3

78
absorbents, air among the divinities and breath among the senses or breaths. Thereafter, worship of these two sanvargas, is illustrated with a small legend of Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārī.

Once, Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārīn Kākṣaseni did not offer food to one Brahmacārin in spite of his begging humbly. Then, the student exclaimed that the one god, who is known as Prajāpati, has engulfed in himself the four others; as Vāyu he has engulfed Agni etc. and as prāṇa, vāk etc. He is protector of the world. People cannot grasp him who has manifested into various forms. Hence, the food which is basically collected and prepared for Him only and for whom it is intended, is not served. Here the significance of the words of the Brahmacārin is that he has cognised the non-difference between the Prāṇa, the eater and himself. Hence, if the food is not given to him, then that will mean to deprive the prāṇa. Śaunaka Kāpeya, after reflecting on these, had greeted the Brahmacārin with words that he or the Prajāpati was truely the great one with golden teeth, the eater and the creator of all the beings, the soul of the divinities and also he was the one who ate all other things which were inedible without being eaten. This is how one can worship Him. Then Kāpeya ordered him to be fed.

It is then concluded that these five i.e., the air, the fire, the sun, the moon and the water and the others five, i.e., the breath, the speech, the
eyes, the ears and the mind are unitedly recognised as the ten which is called *Krta*, the highest throw in the play of dice. This is the *Virāt*, the one greatest consumer of all food. Hence the person who knows this or can assume himself as identical with the Vāyu and the Breath, and also subsequently with other objects, unto him divert all other foods as an integrated principle in all things, by which all beings nourish themselves. To him, the whole world becomes visible. This may be called as *Saṃvarga-vidyā*. This also recurred in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*\(^{68}\) as speech, eyes, mind, ears enter into the vital breath during sleep and are evolved in the state of waking; and the cosmic forces like the fire, the sun, the moon and the heavenly directions enter into the wind, which again are produced out of it. According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, it is known as *brahmaṇaḥ parimaraḥ*\(^{69}\), where lightening, rain, the moon, the sun and fire are attributed to the wind, from which they again emerge.

Thus, in this legend, Raikva, in spite of his utmost poverty and miserability, knew the *Saṃvarga*-doctrine and also knew himself as identical with all the ten things and for this reason, he stood in the supreme position as similar to the grade of *Krta* in the game of dice, if compared to

\[68. \text{ Sat Br, 10.3.3.6-8} \]
\[69. \text{ Ait Br, 5.28; Kau U, 2.12.13} \]
the rich Jānaśruti, the King. The legend of Jānaśruti and Raikva has given rise to a great controversy among the scholars regarding the use of the word śūdra by Raikva. Raikva addressed the King Jānaśruti as Śūdra. Many scholars here opine that this King was an Indra by birth. According to Śaṅkarācārya, however, this word does not connote śūdra by caste. In his view śūdra here means one who is striken by grief (soka). Śaṅkara maintains that as Raikva could read the mind of the King who was engrossed in deep sorrow, having heard the greatness of Raikva as expressed by the swans, he addressed him a śūdra. The word śūdra can be split to mean that he rushed (abhidudrava) by that Raikva because of sorrow (soka). In another sense, śūdra means a person who is melting in deep sorrow. Again, it is explained that the King went up to Raikva with not so much wealth so that he could be pleased and therefore he addressed Jānaśruti, as śūdra, in an insulting attitude. Śaṅkara also points out that Raikva called the king a śūdra since he approached him holding his royal ego, not with proper obeisance and admiration which is fitted as a sign of higher castes. In this way, the King Jānaśruti, actually was not a śūdra by caste. Because, a śūdra is not given the right to acquire the knowledge of

70. BSS, 1.3.34
71. śūdravadvā dhanenaivaināṁ vidyāgraha-ṇāyopajagāma na ca śuśrūṣayā, na tu jātyaiva śūdra iti ŚB on CU, 4.2.3
Brahman or the Ultimate Reality according to tradition.

This view of Śaṅkarācārya is more or less accepted by all the traditional commentators of the Upaniṣads and the Brahmasūtra. However, the modern scholars do not agree with this view and think that the explanation of the word śūdra by Śaṅkarācārya is not acceptable.72

2. THE LEGEND OF SATYAKĀMA JĀBĀLA

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Satyakāma. One day he asked his mother what his gotra was or to which family he belonged; for he wanted to become a brahmaśarin, i.e. a student desiring sacred knowledge of the Vedas. Then his mother replied that she did not know the gotra to which Satyakāma belonged because she gave birth to him in her youth, when she was very busy in her husband's house attending to the guests like a maid. So she could not manage to ascertain the fact because of the scarcity of time. She then consoled him saying that as she was known as Jabālā and he was her son so he could call himself as Satyakāma Jābāla (Satyakāma, the son of Jabālā).

Satyakāma, then went up to the teacher, Gautama, the son of Haridrumata and prayed to him to accept him as his disciple. Gautama, before accepting his proposal, wanted to confirm about his family-

72. Cf. Purkayastha, S., Right to Knowledge : In Vedantic Perspective, pp. 147-151
background and asked him about his gotra or predecessors. Satyakāma told him the truth as it was, as repeated by his mother. Gautama then, with an overwhelmed heart by his honesty and sincerity, replied him that only a Brāhmaṇa child could speak the truth like that and therefore, he undertook him as his pupil by performing the ceremonial rites initiating him to Brahmacarya. After that, the teacher entrusted him with a herd of four hundred lean and thin and weak cattles for tend them and ordered him to go with them. Satyakāma also with an enthusiastic spirit, promised before his preceptor, not to return until the number of cows increased up to the thousand.

After many years of careful tending by Satyakāma in a forest, the number of cows touched one thousand. Then one bull, who was in reality Vāyu, the god of the cosmic force of air, became pleased with his sincere caring and wanted to impart the knowledge of a quarter of Brahmaṇ. So saying it disclosed before him the knowledge of one fourth part of Brahmaṇ, that the east (prācī) is one part; the west (pratīcī), the north (udīcī) and the south (dakṣīnā) are three other parts. These four directions constitute one quarter of Brahmaṇ named as prakāśavān.73 One who meditates upon this quarter or foot of Brahmaṇ consisting of four

73. catus-kalāḥ pādo brahmaṇaḥ prakāśavān nāma CU, 4.5.2
parts becomes glorious and ever illuminating in this world and also obtains enlightened worlds. The bull said Satyakāma that the fire-god or Agni would teach him another foot or quarter of Brahman. The next day, Satyakāma started for his teacher’s home with cattle. In the evening when it was getting dark, he tethered the cattle and lighted a fire at that place. Collecting samidha for fire, he sat at the back of that fire facing the east direction. Agni then instructed him another one fourth part of Brahman which was recognised as anantavān\textsuperscript{74} or endless. Here it is conveyed that the earth, the atmosphere (antarikṣam), the heaven (dyauḥ) and the ocean (samudra) are the four parts of one quarter of Brahman. One who worships Brahman having known this quarter as anantavān, attains the infinite worlds and also becomes infinite like the Infinite one.\textsuperscript{75}

After that, Agni informed Satyakāma that a swan (haṁsa) would further teach him about the third foot of Brahman. Then in the next evening, after travelling some distance with his cattle, he again set burning fire and seated himself very near the fire. Āditya in the form of a swan appeared before him and revealed to him the truth about the third foot or quarter of Brahman which is acknowledged as Jyoṭiṣmān or the bright one.

\textsuperscript{74} ātmagocarameva dārānamagnih abrabīt ŚB on Ibid, 4.6.3
\textsuperscript{75} sa tathaiva tadguṇo bhavati, asmiṅloke mṛtaśca – anantavato ha lokān sa jayati Ibid, 4.6.4
Thus swan said that the fire, the sun, the moon and the lightning constitute four parts of the third quarter of Brahman. One who has learnt all these, can achieve all the luminous worlds like the sun and the moon glowing luminously. According to Śaṅkara, for this very reason, the haṁsa or swan is to be understood here as Āditya or the sun.\(^\text{76}\) Like the former ones, the swan also informed Satyakāma that a Madgu or a water-bird would communicate to him the last, i.e. the fourth foot of Brahman. Here, the Madgu implies the breath, for the reason of its connection to the water.\(^\text{77}\) The next evening as informed by the swan, the Madgu instructed Satyakāma about the fourth food of Brahman which is known as Āyatanavān. It conveys that four adjuncts constituting the last part of Brahman are the breath i.e. prāṇa, the eyes, the ears and the mind respectively. One who meditates on this quarter can become like the supporting one and also enjoys all the worlds of holding supports. In this way, Satyakāma had come to know all the four padas or quarters of Brahman, and thus becoming a brahmajñā (knower of Brahman), he reached his teacher’s residence. The teacher for his deep insight noticed the glow all over Satyakāma’s face of knowing Brahman, the Supreme

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76. ato haṁsasya – ādityatvāṁ pratīyate Ibid, 4.7. 3-4

77. madguḥ – udakacaraḥ pākiṣṭ, sa ca-apsāṁvandhāt prāṇaḥ Ibid, 4.8.1
knowledge and wished to know about the truth. For a person, who has acquired the knowledge of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, feels like contented and pleased with a happy mood and smiling face without any tension and anxiety and also becomes satisfied and fulfilled of aim and wishes. Satyakāma then revealed everything to his teacher stating that only from some living beings other than men, he had gained the Supreme knowledge. But, he desired to know all these from his teacher alone because of the fact that the knowledge, received directly from the teacher can only excel in the long run and make one capable of attaining liberation or Mokṣa. At last the guru himself taught him the whole Śoḍaśakala-Vidyā or the knowledge of Brahman consisting of sixteen parts, once again.

According to Deussen, “the knowledge of the four phenomenal worlds, above which to be understood the four feet of Brahman are the directions, world-parts, world-light and vital breaths, divides again to four parts each, are established in this legend of Satyakāma-Jābāla, recognised as śoḍaśakala-vidyā. It is also expressed in the third chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad.

78. prasannendriyah prahasita-vadanas ca niścintah kṛtārtho brahma-vid bhavati Ibid, 4.9.2
79. Deussen, P., Sixty Upanishads of the Veda, p. 122
80. CU, 3.18
3. THE LEGEND OF UPAKOSALA

In the legend of Upakosala, *Brahma-vidyā* (knowledge of *Brahman*) and also the *Agni-vidyā* (knowledge of the fires) and fruits of attaining such knowledge are recorded thoroughly. Upakosala, the son of Kamala, lived in the house of his *guru* Satyakāma Jābāla taking the oath of *Brahmacarya* and looked after his sacrificial fires for twelve years. At last Satyakāma allowed all other disciples to return home after finishing the Vedas except Upakosala. His wife also requested him to impart the sacred knowledge to him which he desired most, seeing his dedication and sincerity in the service of the fires with penance. In spite of her words, the teacher did not pay attention to that and without giving him the teaching, he left the āstrama for some other place.

Upakosala, at this, filled with deep sorrow, made up his mind to do fasting. His preceptor’s wife requested him to take some food, but he politely refused expressing his worries. Taking pity upon his plight, the fires, i.e. *Gārhapatya*, *Dakṣiṇa* and *Āhavanīya* discussed among themselves and decided to instruct him. Accordingly they instructed him that *Prāṇa* i.e. breath is *Brahman* as also *ka* i.e. joy and *kha* i.e. the ether (*ākāśa*) are *Brahman*. Upakosala then expressed his ignorance about the knowledge of *ka* and *kha* as *Brahman* – *kāṁ ca tu kham ca na vijñānāṁiti*. At that, the

81. Ibid, 4.10.5
Agnis informed him that ka is verily the same as the ether and also kha is the same as joy. This implies that here ka does not mean worldly joy and kha also does not mean material sky. Both being qualified by both represent the Ultimate Reality or Brahman.82

Thus giving instruction about Brahman these fires then separately revealed to him the knowledge of their own self and also the fruit of worshipping these fires. In this way, at last, the three fires unitedly made it clear to Upakosala that the knowledge which they had imparted to him was recognised as Agnividadā or also as Ātmavidyā and the means to it, would be revealed by the teacher. Satyakāma then, after returning home, asked him about the happenings, seeing his brightened face and he also narrated everything to his teacher. The teacher remarked that only a partial knowledge of the regions like prthivī i.e. earth etc. were given by the fires, but not the entire knowledge of Brahman. Then, Satyakāma revealed that just as water never sticks to the lotus-leaf, so also the knower of Brahman is never touched by the sins or any kind of blemishes.

In this way, the preceptor imparted Upakosala the knowledge of Brahman. He said that the person whom one can see in the eye is Brahman itself. It is immortal and fearless. Hence, when one drop of a

82. Ibid
little bit of water or butter into the eye, it moves away towards the sides. All the auspicious things go towards it, for which it is regarded as *saṁyadvāma*. It is also called *vāmanī*, for it alone leads all the living beings to auspicious things or blessings. He who knows this, acquires all the auspicious and virtuous things. It is also known as *Bhāmanī*, because it shines in all the worlds of the sun, the moon, fire etc. and the knower of it also shines like this. Here it is connoted that *Brahman* is the material and efficient cause of the universe. According to Deussen, it should be understood as “the man (person, spirit, *puruṣa*) who appears in the eye i.e. as the seer of seeing, the subject of knowledge, the soul in us”.”

Now, through this legend, the way to attain *Brahman* and its results are spoken of. When a man, who knows *Brahman*, dies, whether there is a ritual performance or not, his soul, which is made up of light (*Jyotिमat*) enters into light, thence to the day, from the day to the bright half of the month i.e. *śuklapakṣa*, then to the six months of the sun going northwards, from that into the year, thence to the sun, from the sun to the moon and then again into the lightning, where from a super-human person lifts him to the Supreme Being or *Brahman*, to the region of truth.” This is the path called *deva-yāna* or the path of gods which ultimately leads to

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84. brahma satyalokastham gamayati ṢB on CU, 4.15.5

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Brahman. This is the way to Brahman, which is also denoted as Brahmapatha.\textsuperscript{85} those who go on this path, never return to this cycle of birth and death. According to Śaṅkarācārya, this is the path of gradual liberation (kramamukti), in which the self travels from one loka to other and ultimately attains final liberation.\textsuperscript{86}

4. THE LEGEND OF ĀŚVAPATI AND SIX BRĀHMAṆAS

Pracīnasāla, the son of Upamanyu, Satyayajña, the son of Puluśa, Indradyumna, the son of Bhāllavi, Jana, the son of Śarkarākṣa and Buḍila, the son of Āsvatārāśva, were five great householders with a good conduct and vast learning of Vedas. Ones they discussed among themselves about the concept of Ātman and also of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. But, they failed to reach any certain conclusion because of their inadequate knowledge. They then went to Uddālaka Āruṇī, who, in turn, led them to King Āśvapati, the son of Kekaya who was the possessor of that sacred knowledge.

King Āśvapati started his instruction first by interrogating them one by one, before expounding the concept of Vaiśvānara Ātman. At first, he asked Aupamanyava about the thing on which he used to meditate as the self. He replied that the heaven only was regarded by him as the self.

\textsuperscript{85} esā devapatho brahmapathah CU, 4.15.5
\textsuperscript{86} ŚB on Ibid
The King, finding this definition inadequate, revealed that the heaven was only a part of Vaiśvānara Ātman called Sūtejas and not the full, complete Vaiśvānara. Then the King proclaimed that, the heaven was only the head of Vaiśvānara self and people who meditate on that become indigenous with Brāhmaṇic splendour.

After that, King Aśvapati questioned Satyayajña Pauluṣi about his concept of Ātman, in reply to which, Satyayajña said that he worshipped the sun as self. Then again the King stated that the sun was only one part of that Vaiśvānara called Viṣvarūpa. Therefore, this definition is also partially true and it is regarded as the eye of the Vaiśvānara Ātman. One who meditates on this self, his family becomes enlivened by the illumined knowledge of Brahmaṇ, enjoying worthy and manifold wealth, because of the Universal Form of the sun.

After that, in reply to the query of the King, Indradyumna Bhāllaveya disclosed that he regarded Vāyu or the Air as the self. Aśvapati said that that the air was only the breath or Prāṇa of the Vaiśvānara Ātman. It was only a part of it.

Vāyu or the air is divided into seven categories as āvaha, nivaha, saṁvaha, udvaha, vivaha, pravaha and parivaha, based on their various courses of actions. Those who are the mediators of Vāyu, offerings or gifts
of homage come to them from various ways and separate rows of chariots also follow them.

The King then wanted to know about the view of Jana Śārkarākṣya about the self. He expressed that the space or ākāśa was the Ātman. Āsvapati, understanding the insufficiency of knowledge on the part of the Brāhmin, conveyed that the space or ākāśa was only a small portion of the Vaiśvānara Ātman. Ākāśa or space is only the middle part of the whole body of Vaiśvānara Ātman. Then again Buḍila Aśvatarāśvi when asked by the King about the concept of Ātman, replied that it was the water. But he was corrected that by the King that it was only the bladder of the self. It was regarded as the wealth or Rayi. Lastly, Aśvapati asked Uddālaka Āruṇi about his notion of the self. He replied that the earth alone was the Universal Self or Ātman. But the King said that it was only the support or pratīṣṭhā of the Universal Self and that, however, was the feet of the Self. Thus all these sages conceived the Vaiśvānara Ātman just like the differing views of men born blind, who touched different parts of an elephant and mistook that part to be the whole elephant.87

Then Āsvapati explained to them the fruit of worshipping the real Vaiśvānara Self. This Vaiśvānara Ātman is regarded as

87. paricchinna - ātmabuddhi - ityetat, hastidarśana iva jātyandhāḥ

Ibid, 5.18.1
prādesamātraṁ – abhivimānaṁ.\(^{88}\) According to Śaṅkaracārya, prādeśa means the size of a span which is represented through the heaven as the head up to the earth as the feet of the Vaiśvānara Atman. He is the fundamental unity of all of them. The inner self or the individual ‘I’ is to be adored not as different from this Vaiśvānara Atman, which is as a rule named only Vaiśvānara for the omnipresent world-principle. That is united with the individual self along with the whole universe as a microcosm, or prādesamātraṁ. One should realise it in one’s own self. Of this Vaiśvānara self, heaven is the head; Āditya, eyes; Vāyu, Prāṇa; Ākāśa, the middle part of the body; water, bladder; earth, feet. Also sacrificial objects like the altar, the Kuśa grass, the Gārhapatiya, Dakṣīṇa and Āhavanīya fires are the chest, the hair, the heart, the mind and the mouth cavity respectively. Aśvapati also said that the food (anna) taken by the knower of Vaiśvānara Atman, is actually the Agnihotra sacrifice. It may be called as Prāṇāgnihotraṁ, where sacrificial oblations in the form of food or anna are offered to the Prāṇa and through it to the Ultimate one who is omnipresent. There are also five offerings such as prāṇāya svāhā, vyānāya svāhā etc. to the five sub-divisions of Prāṇa i.e. prāṇa, vyāna, apāna, samāna and udāna, through which the five organs

\(^{88}\) CU, 5.18.1
including their respective presiding deities and also the relative phenomenal parts are satisfied respectively and along with these, all the whole objects of this \textit{Vaiśvānara Ātman} are satisfied.

In this way, through this legend, the glorification of the \textit{Vaiśvānara Ātman} is profoundly announced by the seers, which is even compared to the hungry children, who sit around their mother expecting food, so also the whole universe, all beings as if sitting around the fire sacrifice, worship it for the utmost satisfaction.\textsuperscript{89} The knower of this \textit{Vaiśvānara Ātman} performing \textit{Agnihotra} sacrifice, satisfies all through his food because the whole world is his own self – \textit{jagat sarvaṁ vidvad – bhojanena tṛptaṁ bhavati}.\textsuperscript{90}

This unity of the whole world and the realisation of this with the soul within the body through the concept of \textit{Vaiśvānara Ātman} bears a deeper significance in the context of the \textit{Agnihotra} sacrifice, illustrated in this legend of \textit{Asvapati}. In the \textit{Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa}\textsuperscript{91} also, this concept of \textit{Vaiśvānara} or the omnipresent, ever supporting principle is presented beautifully through the legend of King Ajātaśatru and six other

\begin{itemize}
\item[89.] \textsuperscript{89} yatheha kṣudhita bālā mātaram paryupāśata evam sarvāṇi bhūtānyagni-hotram upāsata iti \textit{Ibid}, 5.24.5
\item[90.] \textsuperscript{90} \textit{ŚB} on \textit{Ibid}, 5.24.5
\item[91.] \textsuperscript{91} \textit{Śat Br}, 10.6.1
\end{itemize}
Brāhmaṇas, mostly same as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, but with slight difference of the word Agni and not with the Ātman. Here, it is regarded as the *Vaiśvānara Agni*, where the chief world – principle is the fire, supporting all men and existing in all beings.

5. THE LEGEND OF UDDĀLAKA ĀRUṆI AND ŠVETAKETU

In the legend of Uddālaka Āruṇi and Švetaketu, the superiority of the knowledge of Brahman i.e. *Brahmavidyā* is presented methodologically, with certain demonstrations and practical illustrations. Śaṅkarācārya states in his commentary that this legend is delineated to show the excellency of the knowledge of Brahman.92 Again this legend states Brahman as the cause of the whole universe from which everything has been originated, in which everything persists and lastly returns back to the same while destroyed.

Now, let us come to the story. Švetaketu was the grand-son of Aruṇa and his father was Uddālaka Āruṇi. When he has attained the proper age for acquiring the sacred learnings of the *Veda*, his father told him to approach some guru (preceptor) who would perform his sacred-thread ceremony (*upanayana*) and teach him the Vedas.

Accordingly Švetaketu went to *gurukula* at the age of twelve. For

92. pitāputrākhyāyikā vidyāyāḥ sāriṣṭhatvapradarśanārthā

ŚB on CU, 6.1.1
twelve years up to the age of twenty-four, he studied all the Vedas. After that he returned home with great pride and conceit. He thought as if he had mastered everything that a man could follow. Seeing this, his father clearly understood that the pride was born out of ignorance and he did not acquire the essence of Brahman or the Supreme Reality. Hence, Aruni questioned him about the instruction, by which the unheard becomes heard, the comprehensible becomes comprehensible and the unknown turns to be known.

Śvetaketu did not know about it. Aruni then illustrated with the examples of clay and things made of clay, gold and golden ornaments and iron and nail-cutter that by the true knowledge of cause, the knowledge of all other objects which are its effects can be attained. The modification or effects are mere names, they have no reality apart from their cause. Similarly, Aruni points out that the knowledge of the One principle, which is the cause of all everything else becomes known, as it exists in everything in this universe. This non-dual principle is referred to as the Sat or the Being that only existed in the beginning prior to the various manifestations of this world. This Sat is one, without a second. There is no second or no subordinate one to this Sat. Sat denotes the existing one and only, indefinable, omni-present, indiscriminate and subtle consciousness.
This One Being, with the innate urgency thought to be manifold and the fire came out of it. From fire again, water was created and from water, *anna* or earth. Thus, according to Āruṇi, these three elements, *tejas*, *ap* and *anna* are the primary bricks of the whole universe depicting different characters. Of these, the illuminating brightness and golden colours are of the fire; the liquidity, melting oozness and white colours are of the water and lastly, the heavy, stable and black colours are found in the earth.

Now, these three primary elements being very subtle could not serve purpose of multiplication of names and forms found in this world. For this purpose, says Āruṇi, there must be triplication (ṭrīṛtkaraṇa) of these elements. By triplication or mixture of *tejas*, *ap* and *anna* the evolution of gross entities happen. Āruṇi then describes that at first *Sat* enters into the three divinities in the form of *jīvātman* or individual self, in order to bring into existence the different names and forms.\(^93\) Śaṅkarācārya has described the process of *trīṛtkaraṇa* in which the principal portion of each of the three elements is mixed with the secondary portions of the other two elements.\(^94\)

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93. CU, 6.3.2
94. ekaikasyāḥ trīṛtkaraṇe ekaikasyāḥ prādhānyam, dvayor – dvayorguṇabhāvah SB on Ibid, 6.3.3
Then Āruṇī illustrated with several examples to Śvetaketu that these three elements are present in their triplicate form in everything of this world.

Āruṇī then proceeds to illustrate how these three elements are triplicated in the human body. It is said that the mind, the breath and speech of the beings are made up of the subtlest portions of food, water and fire. This ideal has been clarified by Āruṇī with an example where Śvetaketu was asked to do fasting for fifteen days as the mind of a person consists of sixteen parts made of food. The son after doing this became incapable of remembering the Vedic verses which he had learnt very well. But on taking food again, he restored his mental strength and recited all. Thus Āruṇī illustrated to him that manas is produced from food alone and as such material in nature.95

Uddālaka Āruṇī there after explains to Śvetaketu the phenomenon of deep sleep in which state the jīva becomes united with the Supreme Being or Sat. Here by explaining the term of svapiti, the state of deep sleep or suṣupti is established. In this state, all-the senses such as sight, hearing etc. and speech, mind are being withdrawn, there only remains the breath. Hence, the jīva i.e. the individual self regains its own

95. annopacitatvānmanaso bhautikatvameva Ibid, 6.5.1
nature as the Highest Self. But in the state of waking and dreaming, the jīva is unable to attain the Sat, because it is then subjected to the earthly pleasures and pains, endowed with ignorance or avidyā.

After that, Uddālaka by explaining the nature of hunger and thirst pronounced that all these movable and immovable beings originate from Sat (Being), remain in it and return to it after death. This Sat is the very subtle essence of all the things; this is the truth which is the very self that exists in everybody. And then Āruṇi utters that famous statement of the Upaniṣad – Tattvamasi Śvetaketu (O Śvetaketu, that thou art). This is the Mahāvākya which declares in clear terms the identity of the individual self with the Supreme Self. This famous teaching of Āruṇi is announced here, for nine times repeatedly. These repetitions have pronounced the deep profoundity and the great import of this Mahāvākya. This identity of the individual self with the Supreme Self has been clarified with several examples of honey bees, rivers, a mighty tree etc. by Uddālaka Āruṇi.

According to Āruṇi, one tiny seed of a Nyagrodha fruit96 when broken there is nothing to be displayed, but is the main-cause for the great tree with all its leaves, flowers etc. Thus, Sat is also not perceived by our

96. CU, 6.12.2
senses, but can be understood by some other means. This omnipresent essence is Ātman, which can be attained through the teachings of a preceptor just like a confused man being directed to his native place – Gandhāra. So, the preceptor requires a much higher place than the father and mother. Here it is also mentioned by Āruṇī that the liberated soul does not return to this phenomenal universe whereas the other is involved in the tortures of the cycle of birth and death with the example of a guilty man.

In this way the legend of Āruṇī and Śvetaketu establishes the identity of the jīva and Brahman, which is the ultimate cause of all.

6. THE LEGEND OF NĀRADA AND SANATKUMĀRA

Nārada, who was a great learned sage, approached Sanatkumāra seeking the knowledge of the Supreme Soul or Ātman. Nārada who was proficient in various scriptural knowledges, such as the Rgveda – Sāmaveda – Yajur – Ātharvāṇa, the epics and the Purāṇas, the Veda of the

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97. atrāiva kila vidyamānaṁ sat jaganmūlaṁ upāyaṁtāreṇa lavaṁānimavat upalapsyase ŚB on Ibid, 6.13.2
98. CU, 6.14. 1-2; KU, 2.8
99. Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, 108.17
100. CU, 6.15.2-3; 6.16
101. so’haṁ bhagavo mantravidvāsmi nātmavit Ibid, 7.1.3
Vedas or the grammar, the ritual of the fore-fathers, the science of numbers, the science of portents, the science of time, logic, ethics, etymology etc. was devoid of the Highest knowledge or the knowledge of Ātman. Therefore, he was plunged in the ocean of sufferings. Hence, to find a way to rescue himself from these sorrows, he went to Sanatkumāra, because a knower of self always crosses over sorrow.102 Thus, the learned Nārada, sacrificing his personal egos, born from his intellectuality or knowledges, came nearer for instruction to Sanatkumāra, the knower of the Self as his disciple for the Supreme good.103

Sanatkumāra instructed Nārada step by step from gross to subtle and then about the subtlest of Truth. He says that the scriptural knowledges are mere names. By meditating on name as Brahman one can attain the supremacy or the power to the extent of name.104 But Brahman or Ātman is not limited by mere name. There are many greater things than the name. This inadequacy of name was not unknown to Nārada and to learn the thing greater than name, he went on enquiring about that greater one. Sanatkumāra also revealed to him one by one the supremacy of vak,

102. tarati śokamātmaviditi Ibid, 7.1.3
103. sanatkumāram-upasāda śreyah sādhanaprāptaye SB on Ibid, 7.1.1; TU, 3.1
104. CU, 7.1. 4-5
manas, sañkalpa, citta, dhyāna, vijñāna, bala, anna, ap, tejas, ākāśa, smara, āsā and then prāṇa. He also reveals the fruit of meditating on these principles as Brahmān.

At this point of Prāṇa, Nārada seems to be satisfied by the answer, because here he did not again ask Sanatkumāra whether there was anything greater than that. But Prāṇa was not the highest principle. Hence the teacher himself led him towards a higher goal of revelation. According to him, a man who has known the Prāṇa as the cause of all causes attains excellency. He is considered as Ativādin,\(^{105}\) i.e. a speaker excelling all.

But then the knower of Prāṇa is not the real Ativādin. A real Ativādin is one who knows the truth. And this truth is Bhūman, which is the greatest of all.

Bhūman is the all-pervasive, immortal principle where nothing else is heard, seen and understood even.\(^{106}\) All other empirical objects are changeable and mortal. They rest entirely on Bhūman, the ultimate, omnipresent principle. This is the Ātman or the Self. One who has even known this Ātman becomes self-governing i.e. svarād.\(^{107}\) Out of this Ātman, the

\(^{105}\) Ibid, 7.15.4

\(^{106}\) Ibid, 7.24.1

\(^{107}\) Ibid, 7.25.2
entire multiformity of the universe has sprung. This Ultimate principle at the time of creation assumes different shapes becoming threefold, fivefold etc.

The knower of the Self is free from all pains and sorrows and is raised above death. For him, all other distinctions disappear and he himself becomes one with Ātman or Bhūman.108

In this way, Sanatkumāra taught Nārada the highest knowledge of the Ultimate Reality. Sanatkumāra is called as Skanda for his great wisdom.

7. THE LEGEND OF INDRA, VIROCANA AND PRAJĀPATI

In Chapter VIII of the Chāndogyopaniṣad, commencing from the seventh part of it, the legend of Indra, Virocana and Prajāpati, is narrated very interestingly. Through this legend, the true nature of the individual self i.e., the jīva that resides in the body is elaborated by Prajāpati, through practical teaching method. The jīva is described as sanprasaḍa which is often misunderstood as the body.109 Through this legend, how this sanprasaḍa is raised from its usual form as body to attain the enlightened.

Now, let us come to the legend. Lord Prajāpati depicted the concept of Ātman as that which is devoid of sin, old age, death, pains and

109. CU, 8.7.1
also free from hunger and thrust. It is of true desires and thoughts. The person, who understands this, obtains all worlds and enjoyments.

Both Indra among the gods and Virocana among the demons have heard about this teaching and wanted to be benefitted through this wisdom. Therefore, they approached Prajāpati as his students. They lived there for about 32 years observing Brahmacarya. After that, Prajāpati, for the first time, advised them that the person seen in the eye is the Self.\textsuperscript{110} He is immortal, fearless. He is the Ultimate Reality or Brahman.

They misunderstood the actual meaning of Prajāpati because of their ignorance and took the image of the body, reflected in water and in a mirror as the self. They could not understand the difference between the true Self and the image of the material body assuming different shapes by ornaments, clothes, hairs, nails etc. Realising the impurity of their mind, Prajāpati also did not try to remove this ignorance of Indra and Virocana. They both went away with a calm heart with the mistaken knowledge of Ātman.

Virocana, coming to the demons, declared the body as the self alone and hence it is to be nurtured well. But Indra found difficulty in admitting that when the body dies, the image is also no more. But true

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, 8.7.4
Ātman cannot be conditioned by such limitations. Hence, he again came back to Prajāpati. According to Śaṅkarācārya, due to more and less impurities of heart of Virocana and Indra respectively, they interpreted the same advice of Prajāpati differently, such as the material body by Virocana and its very image by Indra.\textsuperscript{111}

After that, Indra was again advised to observe another 32 years of Brahmacarya. Then Prajāpati advised him that, the Ātman is that which moves in dream. Being satisfied Indra went away. But again, he was uncomfortable with the thought that if the person in dream is the self, then it experiences pains and sufferings. Hence, how can it be the true self which is without suffering etc? Therefore, he came back again, for attaining the true knowledge of the self.

Again after another 32 years of Brahmacarya, Prajāpati taught him that the person in deep sleep who does not experience anything, is without any dreams and sense activities and is happy is the Ātman.\textsuperscript{112} Indra, being satisfied, departed to his abode. But again turned back to Prajāpati, realising the limitation of the instruction. Because according to him, the person, in deep sleep, cannot be the Ātman, since he does not know even his own identity and as such this state is utter annihilation.

\textsuperscript{111} SB on Ibid, 8.9.2
\textsuperscript{112} CU, 8.11.1
S. Radhakrishnan remarks here that “the self is not the undifferenced consciousness of deep sleep. It is the false infinite. Quietistic trance is not final freedom”\textsuperscript{113}

Prajāpati then asked him to do \textit{Brahmacarya} for another five years and thus the total years are 101 for Indra. At last, Prajāpati revealed to him the highest knowledge of \textit{Ātman} that within the body which is mortal, lies the immortal and bodiless Self. As soon as the veil of ignorance of earthly desires is removed, the Self becomes unattached and indifferent to earthly joys and sorrows. In deep sleep, the individual self or \textit{jīva}, shines in His real form as \textit{Ātman} above the phenomenal multiformity of this Universe. He is called as the Supreme person or \textit{Uttamapuruṣa}.\textsuperscript{114} The spirit is adjoined to the body for their actions, but is different in nature from the body. The body, mind and sense-organs are merely instruments of the Spirit for perception.\textsuperscript{115}

Thus, Prajāpati has delivered the message of \textit{Ātman} to Indra and through him, it spreads on to the gods. The gods with the adoration of \textit{Ātmavidyā} possessed all worlds and their all desires were fulfilled. One

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Radhakrishnan, S., \textit{The Principal Upaniṣads}, p. 508
  \item \textsuperscript{114} CU, 8.12.3; BG, 15.16-18
  \item \textsuperscript{115} CU, 8.12. 4-5
\end{itemize}
who worships this Ātman, through constant meditation, achieves those results.

THE LEGENDS FOUND IN THE BRHADĀRANYAKOPANIŚAD

In the Brhadāranyakopanisad, we find many legends, which are very significant from the philosophical and historical standpoints. They speak out the different aspects of Brahmavidyā or the knowledge of Brahman with unique simplicity. Among these, the most interesting ones, the legend of Bālāki and Ajātaśatru¹¹⁶; Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī¹¹⁷; Yājñavalkya and Gārgī¹¹⁸ and also Janaka and Yājñavalkya¹¹⁹ are to be discussed elaborately in this chapter. The last three legends are large in size compared to the first one. Here King Ajātaśatru narrated the concepts of waking, dreaming and deep sleep while revealing Ātmavidyā to Gārgya Bālāki. Then Maitreyī, the talented wife of Yājñavalkya was instructed by the great scholar. This clearly points us that the women of that age also were not indifferent and inactive in the philosophical speculations of India. This truth is re-established in the legend of Yājñavalkya and Gārgī which contains profound logical speculations in the court of Janaka, the

¹¹⁶. BU, 2.1
¹¹⁷. Ibid, 2.4; 4.5
¹¹⁸. Ibid, 3.1-9
¹¹⁹. Ibid, 4.1-4
renowned patron of that age. After that, Yājñavalkya’s thought is presented again in the legend of Janaka and Yājñavalkya, stressing mainly on Ātmavidyā.

1. THE LEGEND OF BĀLĀKI AND AJĀTAṢATRU

Gārgya Balāki was an eloquent expounder, but by nature he was a proud man. He approached the King of Kāsi, Ajātaṣatru with a mind to expound before him the doctrine of Brahman or the Ultimate Principle. Ajātaṣatru was very happy about it and he readily announced a gift of one thousand cows for him.

But Bālāki did not actually know that Ultimate Reality. The King knew more than him about those concepts which were mere limited modifications of that Supreme Reality. We find here Gārgya Bālāki quoting different conceptions, such as Brahman is the person in the sun, the moon, the lightning, the sky, the air, the fire, the water, the mirror, the sound, the directions, the shadow and in the body or self. All these conceptions are only of inadequate natures of the Absolute, Brahman. When the King pointed out this to Bālāki, he then wished to be the disciple of Ajātaṣatru and acquire the knowledge of Brahman from him. Then Ajātaṣatru proceeded to instruct him as his disciple. He revealed before Bālāki the difference of deep sleep and dreaming state of a sleeping man. In the state of dream, a person experiences all the objects of senses because of his past actions, although no senses are active then. But in deep
sleep, they also withdraw from their action. The self then rests in the Supreme Self.

When the self goes into deep sleep, it returns along the seventy-two thousand serves called hitā, which extend from the heart throughout the whole body, and remains in the body. It then reaches the summit of happiness. Ajātāsatru also declared that as the spider moves along the thread it produces, or as from a fire tiny sparks fly in all directions, even so from Atman all organs, all worlds, all gods, all beings come forth. It is the truth of Truth.

2. THE LEGEND OF YĀJṆĀVALKYA AND MAITREYĪ

This legend is repeated twice in the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad. Yājñāvalkya, the great sage of the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, had two wives – Kātyāyanī and Maitreyī. At the time of entering into Sannyāsa āśrama, Yājñāvalkya wanted to divide all his assets in between his two wives for their future well-being. At that time, Maitreyī, with spiritual vision, asked him whether she would be able to attain liberation if she gained the authority of the whole world filled with wealth. Of this, Yājñāvalkya gave her a negative answer. Hearing this, Maitreyī uttered that famous sentence of the Upaniṣad – yenāhaṁ namṛtā syāṁ kimahāṁ tena kuryāṁ.¹²⁰ This

¹²⁰. BU, 2.4.3
means that he had no use of that thing by which she could not be able to get immortality. Hence, she requested Yājñāvalkya to impart to her the knowledge through which immortality could be attained.

Yājñāvalkya was very much pleased hearing all these and he then proceeded to impart her the knowledge of the Self. He said that it is for the sake of Ātman alone, everything in the world that surrounds a man, is dear to him. Not for the sake of husband, wife, children, wealth etc., these are dear to a human heart, but only for the sake of Self or Ātman, they are dear. It is the very Self which is to be seen, heard, thought and meditated upon, through which one can attain the knowledge of all. Nothing is different from this Self. All the living beings and other objects are basically this very Self. Even all the Śāstras, viz., Rgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, Atharvaveda, Itihāsa, Purāṇas etc. are absorbed into the Self. In other way, we can say that all the multiformity of the universe arises out from this Self. It is the supreme cause for everything. Thus, Yājñāvalkya reveals the great truth that all are united with it.

The Self is of the nature of infinite consciousness. Hearing this, Maitreyī again questioned him about the duality that prevails in this world for an ordinary human being. All these beings and objects emerge from that Great Self and again merge into it after their destruction. When all these are dissolved in that Self, there remain no existence of them.
Yajñavalkya then declared that there is only one Self without a second. But when this self takes the form of multifarious objects and beings, them only one can smell, see, hear, ask and know others. But when that unity is perceived, when everything becomes one with the Self there is no question of duality. Through which everything else is known, it is not possible to know that great being by our ordinary means. Thus, Yajñavalkya initiated his wife, Maitreyī to the knowledge of Brahman or Self.

3. THE LEGEND OF YAJÑAVALKYA AND GĀRGĪ

Janaka, the renowned King of Videha, once performed a sacrifice. In the sacrifice, many learned Brāhmaṇas from Kuru and Pāṇcāla came. Janaka then desired to know who was the most learned among them and announced a grand prize of one thousand cows whose horns were decorated with gold for the most learned one. Addressing the Brāhmaṇas, he announced that among them who possessed the greatest knowledge could take possessions of all those cows. No one dared to come forward. Then, Yajñavalkya, asked his pupil to take the cows away. At this, the Brāhmaṇas got angry and challenged him.

At first, Āśvala, the hotṛ priest of the court of Janaka questioned Yajñavalkya concerning certain topics related to mukti and atimukti.¹²¹

¹²¹. BU, 3.1.6
Afterwards he asked about *sampad-upāsanā*. Yājñāvalkya answered him accordingly and he was satisfied. Then Jāratkārava Ārtabhāga asked him about *graha* (sense-organs) and *atigraha* (objects of sense-organs). Yājñāvalkya replied that there were eight grahas viz., nose, speech, tongue, eye, ear, mind, hand and skin; of which, eight objects were *apāna* or outbreath, name, taste, form, sound, desire, action and touch.122 Ārtabhāga, again asked him whether there was death of death. Yājñāvalkya replied that *Brahman* is the ultimate death which has no death. Ārtabhāga again wanted to know the condition of the *jīva* after death. Yājñāvalkya gave him satisfactory answer in private sitting, away from the public. According to him, the result of actions i.e. *karman* is the cause for a new birth after death. Thus, Ārtabhāga remained silent.123

After that, Bhujyu Lāhyāyani asked Yājñāvalkya about the performers of the horse-sacrifices. Yājñāvalkya answered him satisfactorily. Then, Uṣasta Cākrāyaṇa questioned him about that *Brahman* which is immediately present and directly perceived and which is the self of all. Yājñāvalkya explained that it is his own self that exists within all these beings. This innermost self is the agent which makes everything

122. Ibid, 3.2.2-9
123. Ibid, 3.2.13
function properly. Asked about the nature of the innermost self, Yājñāvalkya replied that one cannot see the seer, hear the hearer and think of the thinker. It is the cause of everything that functions and exists in the world.

After that Kahola Kauśītakāya came forward to know Brahman which is the self within all and which is directly and immediately perceived. Yājñāvalkya replied that the self which is within all transcends hunger and thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death. Having realised this self, the Brāhmīns give up the desire for everything. Everything else but the knower of Brahman is perishable. Hearing this Kahola remained silent.

Then Gārgī, the daughter of Vācaknu, who was one of the learned sages present in the court of Janaka started her questions. Thus the famous debate between Gārgī and Yājñavalkya took place. Gārgī asked Yājñavalkya what pervades water by which all is pervaded. The purport of Gārgī’s question is that the effect is always pervaded by the cause. Hence, Yājñavalkya replied that water is pervaded by air which is its cause. Then followed a series of questions and answers pertaining to the series of effects and causes between Gārgī and Yājñavalkya, in which ultimately Yājñavalkya declared that the world of Brahman is the pervader of all. At this, Gārgī again asked about the pervader of Brahmaloka. But Yājñavalkya warned Gārgī that she was questioning too much about a
deity, about who, one should not ask too much. Yājñāvalkya’s contention was that Brahman is the ultimate cause which cannot be known by mere logical speculation. Gārgī also remained silent. Further, Uddālaka Āruṇi questioned Yājñāvalkya about the thread which binds together this world, the other world and all the beings, and also about the inner controller of all these. Yājñāvalkya, the knower of Brahman, asserts that the air is the thread of the universe and being subtle holds the elements of earth, water and fire. Air here means Hiraṇyagarbha.124 For the second question, Yājñāvalkya reveals that the fundamental entity who controls the earth from within is the self alone. This is immortal and inner dweller of everything.125 He is the seer, hearer, thinker and knower, but is beyond seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing. There is no other seer than it, there is no other hearer than it, there is no other thinker than it, there is no other knower than it. It is the self, the Inner controller, the Immortal.

After that, again Gārgī came forward and addressed the Brāhmaṇas saying that she would ask only two questions and if Yājñāvalkya could answer these questions then nobody would defeat him. The Brāhmaṇas allowed her to do accordingly. The first question asked by

124. SB on BU, 3.7.2
125. BU, 3.7. 3-23
Gārgī was, what pervades the Sūtra which is above heaven and below the earth, which is heaven and earth as well as that which is between them and which is regarded as past, present and future. Yājñāvalkya replied that all this is pervaded by ākāśa or space. Gārgī was satisfied.

Then she wanted to know what is the pervader of this ākāśa. Yājñāvalkya said that it is the Imperishable or Aksara. This Aksara is the guiding force behind all, such as the sun, the moon, the heaven, the earth, days, nights, etc. for which they hold their own positions. It regulates the whole world but itself is not governed by anything. That Imperishable is beyond our perception. It is devoid of any qualities. One, who has ever known this Reality in this life, is in the true sense a Brāhmana. Hearing all these, Gārgī was very much satisfied and she declared him as the most efficient one in the knowledge of Brahman.

At last, Vidagdha Śākalya approached and questioned him about the different conceptions of Vedic gods and the Ultimate one, Brahman. In reply, Yājñāvalkya first spoke about the manifestations and then gradually, one after another he arrived at the last point which is the one and only Brahman.

After all these, Yājñāvalkya dared the Brāhmaṇas assembled there to question him unitedly or individually or to give answers to him in the same way. But no one dared to take the challenge. In this way,
Yājñavalkya was declared unanimously as the most learned, the only Brahmavid in the gathering at the court of Janaka.

4. THE LEGEND OF JANAKA AND YĀJÑAVALKYA

In the fourth chapter of the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, we find the famous dialogue between King Janaka and the great teacher Yājñavalkya in the form of a legend. Here, Yājñavalkya approached Janaka, the great patron of that time. Janaka wanted to know the cause of the arrival of the scholar, whether he was desirous to get some cattle or wished to get from him profound teachings about subtle doctrines. Yājñavalkya stated that he wanted both.

Then, Yājñavalkya wished to know from Janaka, whatever he had learnt from his different preceptors about Brahman. At this, Janaka stated before him six different conceptions regarding Brahman as conveyed by different scholars, viz. Śailini Jitvā, Udaṅka Śāulvāyana, Barku Vārṣṇa, Garddabhīvīpta Bhāradvāja, Satyakāma Jābāla and Śākalya. According to these conceptions, Brahman is elaborated in six different ways as speech or vak, breath or prāṇa, eyes or caksuḥ, ear or śrotām, mind or manah and heart or hrdayām respectively. All these are incomplete or inadequate conceptions covering only the one pada or

126. Ibid, 4.1. 2-7
portion among the four pādas of Brahman. So, according to Yājñāvalkya, Janaka was partially instructed by them. After that, Yājñāvalkya himself corrected these notions, adding each conception with other three pādas.

Janaka, then sat down before Yājñāvalkya like a disciple, getting up from his respectable seat and requested for instruction about liberation. He then imparted him the knowledge regarding the place or goal where the soul goes after being released from the body. Yājñāvalkya also stated that this soul is identical with the highest Ātman. This Ātman is incomprehensible by any organs and is stated only as neti neti or not this, not this. Thus, he at last blessed Janaka to attain that Brahman. Janaka became very obliged getting that knowledge. Again in the third brāhmaṇa, we find Yājñāvalkya instructing Janaka about the Ātman.

This Ātman, as narrated by Yājñāvalkya is vijñānamayam or possessing pure consciousness. When all other lights such as the sun, the moon, fire etc. quit, then the Self illumines by itself. The Self transcends the world under the power of death and the other in the dreaming state to its own nature of Self-illumination. Whatever the person i.e. jīva has seen in the dreaming state or whatever he has enjoyed in the waking state, he remains unattached to them. Because this self is basically not associated

127. BU, 4.3.7-14
with worldly attachments.\textsuperscript{128}

Then, in the state of deep sleep or \textit{susupti}, the self sees nothing and also desires nothing. In this state, the self becomes one with the spirit. He does not see, hear, taste, smell etc. anything, because there is not any second entity for him.

Janaka again wanted to know from him about liberation. Then, Yājñavalkya described one after another the conditions of death and after death, and also the state of liberation.

\textsuperscript{128} asaṅgo'yaṁ puruṣa \textit{Ibid}, 4.3.16