The Upanisads are regarded as the store-house of the deep penetrating thoughts of the seers. They deal with the living experiences, and not with some mere illustrations. For them, the Vedic hymns serve as the rich backgrounds to flourish to the fullest extent. The thoughts bestow upon the Upanisads hold a unique position among the entire philosophical speculations of India. Their teachings have been very charming to inspire the human spirit of its own real identity. They raise the sleeping instinct and awareness of their eternal status as Brahman alone. We notice that in most cases, these profound teachings of age-old vitality are delivered through some simple yet interesting legends, which have attracted our attention.

In my post-graduate classes, I have come in close connection with the study of the Upanisads through these legends which left me spell bound with their simple style and profound depth. The legends of Āruṇi – Śvetaketu, Nārada – Sanatkumāra etc., left me impressed by their warmth of knowledge, lucid expression and rich speculations. Since then, I always wanted to know more about these texts. Hence when I decided to do Ph.D. Research, I have chosen these legends for my study.

Many prominent scholars like Maxmuller, Deussen, Hume, Radhakrishnan and others have dealt elaborately with the philosophy of
the Upaniṣads in their works. Some scholars like Jogeswar Sharma etc. have discussed about the education system and literary beauty of the Upaniṣads. However, no such attempt has come to our notice to study the legends of the Upaniṣads directly. So, it is felt that a study of the legends of the Upaniṣads will be fruitful in order to grasp the deep and mysterious teachings of the Upaniṣads.

The concept of Brahman or Ātman is the cardinal theme of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads have identified Brahman with Ātman. This theme is clarified with so many similes and examples in many a legend of the Upaniṣads. We have discussed this prime theme in our write-up. However, the Upaniṣads deal with many more things such as Value, Upāsanā etc. We have also included these topics in our discussion. But as the Upaniṣadic legends are many in number, we have restricted our study mainly to the legends of the Chāndogya and Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣads.

The proposed study is carried out under eight chapters, of which the first one is introductory. The second chapter gives a summary of the legends of the Principal Upaniṣads. The third chapter named the Spirit of the Upaniṣads, deals with the concept of Brahman. The fourth chapter discusses about the relation of jīva and Brahman. In the fifth chapter, the concept of Value is discussed from the Upaniṣadic stand-point. The sixth chapter deals with the Highest value i.e. Mokṣa. In the seventh chapter,
we have discussed about the Upaniṣadic concept of Upāsanā. In the concluding chapter, we have collected together our findings.

Lastly, I must admit that despite my utmost care, there may be some mistakes and shortcomings in my exposition and interpretation.

Bagmita Sandilya
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