

SANS-39-2.4

# Institute of Distance and Open Learning

Gauhati University

M.A. in Sanskrit  
2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

Paper IX

HISTORY OF VEDIC LITERATURE



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## Unit - I

### An Introduction to the Brāhmaṇa Literature

In this unit you will be acquainted with the Brāhmaṇa literature. It is a literature closely related to the Saṁhitā literature of the Veda. Actually as a literature, Veda comprises of Mantras and Brāhmaṇas. Of these two, the Brāhmaṇa literature is prescribed for you in the fourth paper. For this, knowledge of this literature is very much necessary for you. In this unit you are to know the following.

1. Meaning of the word 'Brāhmaṇa'
2. The closeness of the two words Brahma and Brāhmaṇa
3. Significance of the word 'Brāhmaṇam'
4. Subjects of the Brāhmaṇas
5. Greatness of the Brāhmaṇa literature
6. Society as reflected in the Brāhmaṇa literature
7. Date of the compilation of the Brāhmaṇas

Now these will be discussed thoroughly for you.

#### 1. Meaning of the word 'Brāhmaṇam'

The word 'Brāhmaṇa' in its neuter form is traced to the  $\sqrt{\text{br}}\text{ḥ}$ , meaning 'to grow'. It is, in reality derived from the word Brahmaṇ, meaning learned, i.e. a man whose knowledge grows excessively, or a man who is unsurpassable in knowledge. The word 'Brāhman' also denotes the utterance of a learned priest, or a sacrificer. Used collectively, the word 'Brāhmaṇa' expresses the utterances of priests. This word in its masculine form denotes a person belonging to one of the four varṇas or castes of ancient India. In the commentary of Taittirīya Saṁhitā it is said that,

ब्राह्मण नाम कर्मणस्तन्मन्त्राणां च व्याख्यानग्रन्थः । ( भट्टभास्करभाष्यम्,  
तैत्तिरीयसंहिता, 1.5.1)

That 'Brahma' and 'Brāhmaṇa' are the same words having

same connotation is accepted by all. Thus there goes the expression - samānārthāvetau brahman śavdo brāhmaṇaśabdaśca (Ś.P. Brāhmaṇa)

SAQ:

How are Brahma and Brāhmaṇa are classified

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## **2. The closeness of the two words Brahma and Brāhmaṇa.**

Scholars have clearly stated about the closeness of the two words - Brahma and Brāhmaṇa. Both the words are traced to the root br̥ḥ 'to grow'. The words 'brahma' and brāhmaṇam are neuter words. While the term brahma means the Ultimate Reality in particular or mantra in general, the word brāhmaṇam denotes a class of literature revealed as explanations of mantras or revelations by which the Ultimate Reality is revealed. Secondly, the word 'brāhmaṇam' denotes sacrifice. This is because the sacrifice is an institution where mantras or brahmaṇas are used profusely.

## **3. Significance of the word 'Brāhmaṇam'**

The word 'Brāhmaṇam' denotes a class of literature closely related to the Veda. The Veda comprises of two types of literatures viz, the Saṁhitā and the Brāhmaṇa. Of these two literatures, the Brāhmaṇa literature possesses great significance.

The great significance of this literature is that it deals at length with the interpretation of the of Saṁhitās. Besides, this literature contains injunctions for the performances of sacrificial rites of ancient India. Thirdly, the Brāhmaṇas deal exclusively with sacrifices performed by Aryans. There is another significance of this literature and that is - this is the earliest prose literature of India. The six subjects such as the Vidhi (rule) Arthavāda (deliberation made on determining the meaning of Vedic words), Nindā (censure), Praśaṁsā (praise) Purākalpa (sacrificial rites performed in remote past) and Parakṛti (achievements made by kings etc.) are made in this literature in large scale. These six subjects made this literature unique in the world literature. Further

this literature is very important for knowing the Indian religion, culture and philosophy. In the Brāhmaṇas, we come across several dialogues in the sacrificial sessions which are regarded as the source of Indian dramatic literature. Myths revealed in the sessions of sacrifices also greatly to the significance of this literature. As the sacrifices performed during the vedic age occupy a prominent place in the Brāhmaṇa literature, so this literature is to be studied for knowing the religious as well as the social aspects of Indian civilization.

SAQ:

Show the salient features of the Brāhmaṇam Śāstra.

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#### 4. Subjects of the Brāhmaṇas

Although the revelation of sacrifices is the main theme of the Brāhmaṇas yet, through these revelations six independent subjects are also revealed beautifully. These six subjects, as mentioned above are vidhi (rule), arthavāda (debate on meaning of vedic words), nindā (censure) praśaṃsā (praise), purākalpa (sacrifices performed in remote past), and parakṛti (achievements made by kings etc. Here, the sacrifice Darśapūrnamāsa may be referred to. This sacrifice begins on the first day of the amāvāsyā and concludes on the first half of the pratipat. The word pratipat denotes the first day of a lunar fortnight. The pūrṇamāsayāga is the other sacrifice which begins on the morning of the fullmoon day and it lasts upto to the morning of the pratipat.

Actually, the fullmoon sacrifice takes place at first half of the month, or it is performed first and then the New-moon sacrifice. These two sacrifices are generally performed by a householder who is married and who belongs to one of the three castes viz the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya. The two sacrifices take two days each for its performance.

He who performs these two sacrifices, first of all has to kindle the sacrificial fire. Thereafter he shall perform pavamāneṣṭi, then Agnihotra sacrifice in the evening, and then the Anvārambhanīyeṣṭi. Four priests will do all these things and they are Adhvaryu, Brahmā. Hotā and Āgnihotra.

### **Pūrṇamāsayāga**

This term is formed of two terms viz., Pūrṇamāsa and yūga. Pūrṇamāsa means purnima of fullmoon, and yāga means sacrifice.

In the pūrṇamāsayāga, there are three small sacrifices viz. Agnidevatāka, Viṣṇuprājāpātyāgnīṣoma with upāṁśuyājyākhyā, and the Agṇṣomadēvatāka purodāsadravyaka. So also in the amāvāsyāyāga, there are other three sacrifices viz, Āgneya purodāsāyāga, Aindraḥ dadhiyāga and Anindraprayoyāgah, take place.

These two sacrifices are performed in two ways viz nitya and kāmīya. That is: these can be performed either regularly or be performed according to desires. Regarding the period of the performance of these, it is said that the proper time for their performance is the junction period of parva and pratipat.

1. Show the difference of the two yāgas performed jointly.

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### **What are to be done on the pūrṇamāsa day?**

On the day of *pūrṇamāsa* a sacrificer, at first performs the Agnihotra sacrifice; that was done by lighting the two fires viz, Āhavanīya and Dakṣiṇāgni. It was done by taking the fire from the *Agnikunḍa*. Which is a place where fire is kept for the year. The fire is taken so with a view to light the fire for Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifices. Thereafter, follows the putting of fire sticks into the three sacrificial fires viz. *Āhavanīya*, *Gārbapatya* and *Dakṣiṇāgni*. Then takes place the act of *vapana* i.e. shaving of breard etc. Then the scarificer takes his bath and going to the east or north direction collects *darbha* grasses for sacrifices. These grasses are to be kept in the roof of the sacrificial houses where *gārbapatya* and āhavana fires are kept. The bunch of *kuśa* grasses shall be of odd numbers, such as, three, five, seven, nine and so on. The darbhagrasses are also to be collected along with *Kuśa* grasses. The sacrificer thereafter, shall collect fire woods, the numbers being twenty one, which are to be dry and fit for lighting fires. This much is followed up and done with regard to the performance of *pūrṇamāsayāga* day.

### **The works to be done on the day of black Pratipat.**

On this day the sacrificer shall perform an *Agnihotra* sacrifice. It shall take place early in the morning. The altar of sacrifice shall be covered with *ulapa* grasses. The sacrificer shall make arrangement of seats for Brahmā and the sacrificer. Thereafter the sacrificer places the sacrificial vessels etc. on the places nearest to the *Ābavanīya* fire.

All the vessels are filled up with water by the adhvaryu.

There are certain other formalities to be execute iness two sacrifices. These are as follows *havirnirvāpa* (offering of oblations into *Śūrpa* meaning a winnowing basket etc.) *avahananapeṣaṇe* (grinding of grains), *haviḥśraṇam* (boiling of offering material), *Vedinirmāṇam* (building of the altar), *ājyagrahaṇam* (taking of liquid ghee), *sāmidhenīkarma* (a kind of prayer made while the sacrificial fire is being kindled) etc.

Now the **six subjects** or the characteristics of the Brāhmaṇa literature shall be discussed.

### **Vidhi**

Among these six subjects *vidhi* the first one is the foremost. *Vidhi*, meaning injunction, plays a vital role in the sacrifices with a view to perform sacrifice in a disciplined way. The revealers of sacrifices had pointed out various vidhis. The vidivākyas or sentences of injunction are characterised of words in potential mood. It is also known as विधिलिङ् ।

There are innumerable such expressions in the Brāhmaṇas. The following are some of them-

- (i) स वै सत्यमेव वदेत् S.P. Br. 1.1.5. i.e., he shall speak the truth.
- (ii) तस्मान्नातिमन्येत । पराभवस्य हैत्मुखं-यदतिमानः । S.P. Br. V.1.1.1.  
i.e. therefore, no man be arrogant, because arrogance leads him to destruction or ruin.
- (iii) यद्यद् यज्ञमुखे जुहुयात् । पशुभिर्वृध्येत । पापीयान् स्यात् । सकृदेव होतव्याः । न पशुमिर्वृध्यते । न पापीयान् भवति । (S.P. Br. XIII.1.3.8)  
i.e. if he offers oblations at the opening time of each of sacrifice, he would be deprived of his cattle and becomes a looser. Therefore, he should offer only once. Then only he would not be deprived of his cattle. Nor he becomes looser or sinner.

### **Arthavāda**

'Arthavāda' means 'explanatory remark' that was made during the sacrificial sessions in the Vedic age. It forms an important part of the Brāhmaṇa literature. In the *arthavāda* of Brāhmaṇas, one may trace the beginning of Indian philology, grammar and philosophy. The following passage of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa may be cited as a good example of *arthavāda*.

‘इन्द्रशत्रुर्वधस्व’- this expression is made in the story of Indra and Vṛtra in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.6.3. According to this story, Tvaṣṭā, the father of Vṛtra wanted to take revenge on Indra who killed his elder son Viśvarūpa by his thunderbolt. With a view to do this he decided to perform a Soma sacrifice for getting a son who would be able to kill Indra. He thought that he should get a son as an enemy of Indra and he would kill him. But due to mispronunciation at the tune of uttering words as *svābhā mantra*, he uttered the above mentioned words with 'udātta' accent in the first syllable. Rather, the accent should fall on the last syllable and that was the syllable 'u'. As a result of this the offerings went to Indra and he became powerful. At last Indra killed Vṛtra. Here the arthvāda was held as follows:

अथ यदब्रवीद् ‘इन्द्रशत्रुर्वधस्व’ इति तस्माद् ह्येनमिन्द्र एव जघान, अथ-यद्ध शश्वदवक्ष्यद् ‘इन्द्रस्य-शत्रुर्वधस्व’ इति-शश्वदु ह स एवेन्द्रमहनिष्यत्॥ (S.P. Br., 1.6.3.10)

i.e., As it is told let he whose enemy is Indra prosper'. etc. as because this is uttered so, therefore Indra, being prospered killed Vṛtra. If it would had been told like this, let the enemy of Indra, prosper? etc., certainly he would be able to kill Indra. Here in this context, the seer has shown the necessity of current accentuation of the Vedic words.

### **Nindā**

*Nindā* meaning censure is found in the Brāhmaṇas abundantly. When a sacrificer was found doing prohibited works or leading an unchaste life then he had to face censure made by priests or people of the society. So also if a man performs unlawful acts then he was censured by all. There are several passages in the Brāhmaṇas which express 'nindā'. The following sentences of Brāhmaṇas are good examples of it.



(i) Upasad is a *iṣṭi* which comprises of a group of rites taking place between the conclusion of the *dīkṣā* and *sutyā* day by always after *pravargya* of the Soma *yāga*. In this rite, as per rule, *yājyā* mantras are applied. Here, only verses of some particular metres are allowed to apply, not the verses of different metres.

If verses of different metres are recited here in this rite, then the *hotā* was said to be attached by a disease called *gaṇḍmālā*, i.e. a disease in which inflammation of the glands of the neck takes place.

Therefore, only verses of same metre shall take place. The expression is as follows –

यद्विच्छन्दसः कुर्याद् ग्रीवासु तद्गण्डं  
दध्यादीश्वरो ग्लावो जानितोः ॥ इति (Aitareyabrahmaṇam 1.4.8)  
सच्छन्दसः कर्तव्या न विच्छन्दसः ॥ etc.

### **Praśamsā**

*Praśamsā* means praise, eulogy, applause etc. When a person or a scarificer was found to be just in performing sacrificial sessions, or when a scarificer was found to be knowledgeable person, then the revealers always praised them. It is a common subject seen in the Brāhmaṇa texts. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* we come across this in a large scale. Actually, this Brāhmaṇa reveals beautifully and elaborately the manifold duties of the *Hotā* who was to be invariably present in the *Śrauta* sacrifices.

There was a seer whose name was Gaurivīti. He had revealed several hymns. Gaurivīti, the son of Śakti went near to heaven but could not enter it. Being unable to enter into the heaven he had revealed a hymn that begins with the word *जनिष्ठा उग्र* etc. By this revelation he at last had entered into it. Likewise, on the earth a scarificer could attain the heaven by the recitation of this hymn.

एतद् गौरिवीतं, गौरिवीतिर्ह वै शाक्त्यो  
नेदिष्ठं स्वर्गस्य लोकस्यागच्छत्, स एतत्  
सूक्तमपश्यत्: तेन स्वर्गं लोकमजयत्, तथैवैतद्  
यजमान एतेन सूक्तेन स्वर्गे लोकं जयति। (A.B. III.2.8)

### **Purākalpa:**

The word ‘purākalpa’ means ‘former creations or a story of the past. The Brāhmaṇas are abound in purākalpas or stories. These are told in connection with the sacrifices revealed in the

Brāhmaṇas. Thus the story of Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava is told in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* in the context of his two important hymns. These two hymns express ideas relating to the science of Art. According to the seer, there were two types of arts viz, the Divine art and human art. The story of Nābhānediṣṭha is as follows:

'When Nābhānediṣṭha was studying Vedas in the preceptor's house, his brothers had divided the patern property among themselves. They refused to give share of paternal property to him. After completing his study when he approached his brothers asking about his share then they pointing out at their father Manu said this could be classified by their father Manu, who was the revealer of Dharmas and giver of justice to all. etc. (A.B., V.2.9)

### **Parakriti:**

'Parakriti' denotes the achievement made by important personalities such as kings, scholars, sacrificers etc. There are also certain stories of achievement made by Śrotriyas. In the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* there are several stories that had expressed achievement of kings who were duly consecrated for royal kingship by renowned priests. One such story is expressed below:-

एतेन ह वा ऐन्द्रेण महाभिषेकेण  
दीर्घतमा मामतेयो भरतं दौषन्तिमभिषेच,  
तस्माद् भरतो दौषन्तिः समत्तं सर्वतः  
पृथिवीं जयन् परीयायाश्वैरुरी मेध्यैशेजे ।  
हिरण्येन परीवृतान् कृष्णाञ्शुकलदतो मृगान् ।  
मष्णारे भरतोऽददाच्छतं बद्धानि सप्त च ॥  
भरतस्यैष दौषन्तेरग्निः साचीगुणे चितः ।  
यस्मिन् सहस्रं ब्राह्मणाः बद्धशो गा विभेजिरे ॥ (A.B., VIII. 4.9)

i.e., by this *Aindramahābhiṣeka*, Dīrghtāmā Māmateya, a sage, had consecrated the king Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta. Therefore, Bharata Dausyanti, conquering the earth on all sides and going round it, had performed the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. Bharata gave hundreds of and in crores antelopes of black colour, of white teeth and those too covered with golds in a place, Maṣṇāra by name. Besides, he had kindled fires in Sāciguṇa, where the Brāhmaṇas took cows in crores among themselves.

SAQ

Write about the six characteristics of the  
Brāhmaṇa literature.

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### 5. Greatness of the Brāhmaṇas

Regarding the greatness of the Brāhmaṇas Professor Jogiraj Basu had remarked thus the Importance of the Brāhmaṇa literature can never be overestimated. The Brāhmaṇa texts are invaluable records not of sacrificial paraphernalia but also of ancient Indian thought and civilization which find expression through legendary lore, metaphysical thought, social and political customs and linguistic speculations (Basu, J., Introduction part, India of the Age of the Brāhmaṇas). The following are some of its greatness-

1. The Brāhmaṇas are of highest importance as the only genuine prose words which the Sanskrit has ever produced. They offer a rich field of enquiry for comparative study of syntax, eg. “एते वाव देवाः प्रातर्यावाणो यदग्निरूषा अश्विनौ त एते सप्पभिः सप्तभिश्छन्दोभिरागच्छन्ति।” A. B. II.2.5  
i.e. Agni, Uṣas and Aśvins are gods of the morning time. These three gods come to sacrifices with seven metres.
2. These are invaluable authorities to the student of religion, for the history of sacrifice and priesthood. e.g.  
अपरिमितमनुच्यमपरिमितो वै प्रजापतिः  
प्रजापतेर्वा एतदुक्तं यत्प्रातरनुवाकस्तस्मिन्  
सर्वे कामा अवरूध्यन्ते स यदपरिमितम-  
न्वाह सर्वेषां कामानामवरुद्धयै। (A.B., II. 2.7)
3. Maxmuller, an Indologist, opines as to the importance of this literature as follows: Passages in the Brāhmaṇas are full of genuine thought and feeling, and most valuable as pictures of life and as records of early struggles, which have left no trace in the literature of other nations. (History of Ancient Sanskrit literature, pg. 408, as quoted by J. Basu, ibid, pg. xi introduction)
4. Besides, these Vedic texts are also Invaluable records of ritualistic metaphysical, linguistic, legendary aspects as well

as social and political life of the later Vedic age. This can be exemplified by the following passage of the Śatapath Brāhmaṇa where features of studentship in ancient India is beautifully revealed.

1. Praising the life of a *brahmachari* the seer said as follows:  
A *brahmachārī* should collect his firesticks invariably. If he did not do so, he would lose one day of his life.  
तस्मात् ब्रह्मचारी समिधमाहरेत्/नेत् आयुषोऽवदाय वसानीति। (S.P. Brāhmaṇa-XI.3.3.1)
  2. A boy, when takes a *brahmachārī* life, was ordained to do four duties chiefly. viz. he should serve the household fire, he should serve the society by begging alms, at that time he should be like a poor person and should be devoid of shame. Thus, he should beg alms.
  3. He should serve his teacher.
  4. He should beg alms from his mother or from the teachers' wife. By such an act he would prosper in his life.  
This passage is enough to show that the Brāhmaṇas are documents of life, education etc of the people of ancient India.
  5. The linguistic peculiarity of the Brāhmaṇas is another important thing to note. Most of the words revealed in these show the origin and development of Vedic language from the view point of morphology and phonology. While the morphology is the science of study of words, the phonology is the science of the study of sound in language.
- (i) Pacchah (पच्छः) is a word that means according to pāda of a verse. It is formed of the word *pat* and *ca*. meaning at the end of each pāda, or sentence. (A.B., II.2.8)

## 6. Society as reflected in the Brāhmaṇas

The Brāhmaṇa literature is voluminous in size and content. Each of the four Saṁhitās has its own Brāhmaṇa text. In the revelations of the Brāhmaṇas, we come across a well defined society as of present day.

The society of the time of Brāhmaṇas was predominated by cast system. In Indian tradition there was the prevalence of four castes viz the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śudra. They lived in the same society with unity. The basic difference among them lied in the assignment of duties. This we come to know from its

revelation in the Brāhmaṇas as-

चत्वारो वै वर्णाः ब्राह्मणो राजन्यो वैश्यः शुद्रश्च। (Ś.P. Brāhmaṇa V.5.4.9)

The cast system was so designed that not only the human beings but also things like gods, trees, animals were also described as having the four names. For example, the Palāśa tree had been called as Brāhmaṇa in the plant world. (S.P. Bra. 1.1.1.4. *Brahma via Palāśab*). The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, further states that a *Brāhmaṇa* was assigned the duties of ‘receiving gifts, drinking soma juice, moving at will, being smart and so on. So also a *Vaiśya* has been described as one who pays tax to other. The *Śudras* are the people who served the other castes. The *Ksatriyas* were assigned the duties of protecting the country and its subjects. Among the four castes, the Brāhmaṇa had enjoyed a good position.

Marriage occupied an important place in the society. It was almost compulsory for every man and woman to marry. A man was regarded incomplete without a wife. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas* has stated that a man regards him as a complete whole when he secures a wife (A.B., 1.2.5). This Brāhmaṇa refers to the marriage that is characterised of selecting the bridegroom by the bride. (A.B., 4-17-11). This is known as the *svayambara vivāha*.

Education was compulsory for the three higher castes viz the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya. This was done in the preceptor’s house. The preceptor did it by giving a sacrificial thread to the student and imparted the Vedas, along with Vedāṅgas, to the student. This was called the *Upanayana* ceremony. Here in this ceremony, first initiation took place and then the study of Veda. This was called as the *Brahmacarya* life. The teacher was to impart knowledge by saying the following words.

“ब्रह्मचार्यसि। कर्म कुरु। समिधमाधेहि। मा सुषुप्याः। अपो अशान।”

i.e. thou art a brahmacāri, do thy work, put fuel sticks on the fire, do not sleep, drink water.

Thereafter the teacher teaches the sāvitrī verse to his student. Here goes the saying -

- अथास्मै-सावित्रीमन्त्राह। i.e. thus he was imparted the *sāvitrī mantra*. (S.P. Brāhmaṇa, XI. 5.4.5,6). After the completion of the study of Vedas, the students were given farewell through a

ceremony and that was known as the समावर्तन ceremony. Besides, the students were to do manifold duties in the teacher's house. Among these, tendering of cows and the collection of fuel sticks were foremost. Although formal education was not given to girls and women, yet the Brāhmaṇas possess numerous examples of educated women who were at par with men. From the references of various female seers such as Maitreyee, Gārgī in the Brāhmaṇas, it can safely be said that the parents took keen interest in educating their girls in an homely environment. The Brihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, thus clearly says, 'if anyone desires that a learned daughter be born upto him, he should cook a particular item of food and feed his wife with it.' (Bri. Ā. Up., VI-18)

The people of the Brāhmaṇic age was very conscious about their dress and food habits. People had a fondness for good dress and wanted to be well clad. Hence, the terms Suvāsā (well clad) and Svālaṅkṛtā (good garment) occur frequently in the *S.P. Brāhmaṇa* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the seer reveals the taste as, garment is man's outward appearance. When people on seeing a well-clad man, asks, "who can this be? For he is perfect in his outward appearance. (S.P. Brāhmaṇa, XIII. 4.1.15). From the numerous references of milk food in the Brāhmaṇas it can be said that milk food was favorite to most of the people. Fruits were also taken by people of that age is concerned. People were very much interested in eating meat etc.

So far as the position of ancient Indian Polity in the Brāhmaṇa age is concerned, this can be stated that the king was the Supreme Ruler, who took oath to look after his subjects with great interests. This can be illustrated by the texts of the *Aśvamedha* and *Rājasūya* sacrifices described in the Brāhmaṇas. A passage from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* can be cited to show the performance of sacrifices related to kingship in ancient India.

"A sacrificer attains everything by performing the *Aśvamedha*. It is the expiation of all crimes. It is the medicine of all i.e. universal panacea. (S.. Brāhmaṇa, XIII. 3.1.1.). The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* too reveals on the coronation of a king and on the role of Purohita in ancient Indian Kingdom. Thus, here in this Veda there are revelations on the *Punarabhiṣeka*, *Aindramahābhiṣeka*, and *Rājābhiṣeka*. That is, Reinitiation Ceremony of a Kṣatriya, Snitiation ceremony for Indra and Initiation Ceremony of a king.

A king was given the charge by an oath taking ceremony. Besides, cattle rearing and cultivation of lands were the chief occupations of people. Agriculture was the main occupation. Wheat, paddy and barley were the staple food. Somajuce was a hieratic drink.

In this way it is seen that the Brāhmaṇas of ancient India record a very cultured society.

### **Date of the compilation of Brāhmaṇas**

Like the other part of the Veda (i.e. the mantras or Samhitās) the Brāhmaṇas are mere revelation of the poet-seers of ancient India. The Brāhmaṇas are texts traditionally handed down. Most of the scholars of both east and west have fixed the date of its compilation as 2500 B.C.

### **Answer the following:**

1. Give the derivation of the word Brāhmaṇam.
2. State briefly the significance of the word Brāhmaṇam.
3. Write about the characteristics of the Brāhmaṇam
4. Give an estimate of the Brāhmaṇa literature

## UNIT - II

### A note on the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa and the Śāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa

#### Part - I

#### The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa

#### Contents

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Recension
- 1.4 Seer of the Aitarya Brāhmaṇa (A.B.)
- 1.5 Contents of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
- 1.6 Salient Features
- 1.7 Language
- 1.8 Summing Up

#### 1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this unit is to help you in getting the knowledge of

- (a) Recension of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (A.B.)
- (b) Its contents
- (c) Seer of A.B.
- (d) Salient features of A.B.
- (e) Language of A.B.

#### 1.2 Introduction

The *Aitareya Brāhmana*, belonging to the Ṛgveda is an important text in the Vedic literature. It reveals the minute details of Vedic sacrifices as well as the duties of the *hotṛ* priest in the sacrifices. Besides, this veda reveals several '**gāthās**' or sacrificial songs that unfold the achievement of ancient royal sages and



kings of India. This veda also expresses certain Brahmodyas i.e. theological discussions made in the sacrificial sessions. The earliest political scenario of India also is revealed in this text of veda. Certain linguistic speculations are also met with in *the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* consists of forty chapters. These are also divided into eight great divisions, each of which is named as '**pañcikā**'. This word denotes a text that consists of five chapters each and thus there are eight pañcikās in this vedic text.

The way of revealing the ideas already expressed in the *Ṛgveda* by this *Brāhmaṇa* is also unique. With a view to show the duty of a *hotā*, the seer at first revealed the verse where the duties of *hotā* are expressed and then he had explained the underlying meanings of the particular verse.

The revealer of this Brāhmaṇa is **Mahīdāsa Aitareya**. Therefore, this Brāhmaṇa is named after the revealer.

### 1.3 Recensions

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* has been handed down in two recensions. These are the *Śākala* and the *Bāṣkala*. Of these two, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* of the *Śākala* recension is more popular and this text is mostly followed up in Vedic sacrifices.

### 1.4 Seer of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa

There is a story that speaks of the birth of the seer of this Brāhmaṇa as follows:

Itarā was a *śūdrā* woman. She was not loved at all by her husband. Even her son Mahīdāsa was neglected by his father. Once, while a sacrificial session was going on, Itarā saw that her husband neglecting her son Mahīdāsa, took his other children in his lap. At this Itarā became upset and feeling hurt, she had prayed her tutelary deity mother Bhūmī to bless her son. Hearing her prayer the goddess Bhūmī came down to the sacrificial ground and by placing Mahīdāsa in a golden throne made him a revealer by bestowing that power upon him. By the grace of the goddess Bhūmī Mahīdāsa subsequently became a revealer and his revelation, afterwards is known by the name 'Aitareya Brāhmaṇa'

## 1.5 Contents of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* contains eight pañcikās which again cover forty chapters and 285 kaṇḍikās.

In the first two pañcikās, the seer reveals the duties of *hotṛ*, the chief priest of *R̥gveda* rituals. These revelations are made with a view to perform the Agnīṣṭoma sacrifice.

The next two pañcikās reveal the duties of *hotṛ* in relation to the three savanas, the rites of filtering somajuce in the Agnīṣṭoma sacrifice. Here revelations on śāstras are also met with. There are also revelations on the modified sacrifices such as Ukthya, Atirātra, ṣoḍaśas of the Soma sacrifice.

In the fifth *pañcikā* revelations have been made on the *Dvādaśāha* sacrifice, and in the sixth we see revelations on the duties of *hotā* in relation to the sacrifices performed in seven days. Duties of other priests are also expressed here in this *pañcikā*.

The seventh *pañcikā* deals with the Rājasūya sacrifice in detail. There are also revelations on the division of sacrificial Animal, expiations for errors in the sacrifice, expiations for errors affecting the fires, expiations for various errors, the rule of fasting, the legend of Śunaḥśepa, the deliberations on the supremacy of Brāhmaṇas the Kṣatriyas in sacrifices, the portion of the sacrifice and proper food for the king etc.

The eighth *pañcikā* of this Brāhmaṇa reveals the knowledge of the specialities of storas and śāstras of the somasacrifice, the *Punarabhiṣekayagā* (the reconsecration ceremony of kings), the *Mahābhiṣeka* of Indra, the consecration of kings in general and so on.

## 1.6 Salient features

The literary critics have pointed out numerous salient features of this Brāhmaṇa. Scholars have taken this Brāhmaṇa as an important work in the bulk of Vedic literature. Some of these features are mentioned below-

1. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa is a prose revelation wherein a good prose composition is seen.

e.g. देवासुरा वा एषु लोकेषु समयतन्त, ते वै देवाः

सद एवाऽऽयतनमकुर्वन्त, तान् सदसोऽजयन्त आग्नीं संप्रापद्यन्त, ते ततो न पराजयन्त, तस्मादाग्नीं उपवसन्ति... (A.B. II. 5.4)

2. This book is a running commentary on the R̥gvedic verses. In the process of commentary this book quotes the verses to be applied in a particular sacrifice and the revealer interprets the words of the verse.

e.g. *Agniṣṭoma* is the model sacrifice soma sacrifices which is said as of seven varieties. Agnistoma is also one of them. Among these, *ukthya* in one. With a view to describe *ukthya*, the seer tells a story as follows:

Once the gods took shelter in the *Agniṣṭoma* sacrifice and the demons in that of *ukthya* sacrifice. Both were of equal strength, therefore, no difference is seen between them. Among the seers, Bharadvāja only saw the Asuras (demons). He thought himself about this. Both the seers and gods could not perceive the Asuras taking resort in the Ukthya, and thus feeling he invoked Agni which is as follows:-

“एह्यू षु ब्रवाणि तेऽग्न इत्येतरा गिरः एमिर्वर्धास इन्दुभिः ।” R.V. VI.16.16  
Mahīdāsa explain the word इतरा thus - असूरीया ह वा इतरा गिरः i.e. the speech made by asuras all favourable to them only. These are unfavourable or opposing to Gods. The term itara here in the sentence means speech of Gods. The term *asūryā* means speech suitable for Asuras.

3. In many places of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* we see that the seer Mahīdāsa repeatedly speaks of the utility of Vedic sacrifice. That is whether one should perform sacrifice or not or what is its practical utility? etc. Thus he expressed.

SAQ : *Somasamsthā*

The names of seven varieties of soma sacrifice are: agniṣṭoma, atyagnistoma, ukthya, ṣoḍaśī, vājapeya, atiratra, and aptoryāma

एतद्वै यज्ञस्य समृद्धं यद्रूपसमृद्धं यत्कर्म क्रियमाणम् ऋग्भिर्वदति । (A.B.I.1.4)

Which means, this is the prosperity of a sacrifice that it is often rich in application of mantras, the rite where the verse would be applied, it's speaker describes the very rite e.g.

अग्निर्मुखं प्रथमो देवतानामग्निश्च

विष्णो तप उत्तमं मह इत्याग्नावैष्णवस्य हविषो याज्यानुवाक्ये भवतः । (A.B. I.1.4)

The two verses mentioned here are अग्निर्मुखं etc. and अग्निश्च विष्णो are called as आगनावैष्णव्यः because both the verses describe Agni and Viṣṇu as presiding deities. In the sacrifice 'Dikṣanīyeṣṭī' both these verses are to be recited as *yājyā* and *anuvākya* at the time of offering of *ājya*, i.e. liquid ghee. These are called as rupasamṛddhi (रूपसमृद्धि) because the verse that carries the ideas is related to Agni and Viṣṇu. Therefore it is applied to the sacrifices of Agni and Viṣṇu. Were, you shall know the meaning of the two technical terms of sacrifices. There are, *yājyā* and *anuvākya*.

SAQ

Show the difference between *yajya* and *puronovākya*.

.....  
.....  
.....

याज्या, - a name of vedic verse, meaning - "that which is to be sacrificed" the technical name of a formula of consecration. It is composed of a verse recited by the *Hotā*, so also,

अनुवाक्या - which is also called as पुरोनुवाक्या, is a call of a deity is pronounced by the *Hotā*, while he sits for offering.

4. Many important Vedic sacrifices are revealed in the *Aitareya Brāhmana*. In these revelations, the seer expressed different rules for them. Some of these sacrifices are -

अग्निहोत्रयागः, अग्निष्टोमः, गवामयनम्, द्वादशाहयागः, अग्नीषोमप्रणयनम्, राजसूययागः etc. Of these, the *Prātarnuvāka* sacrifice, a *vikṛti* variety of the *Agniṣṭoma* sacrifice, and its rules will be mentioned.

By *prātasranuvāka* is meant a number of verses recited in the morning session of the fifth day of the *Agniṣṭoma* sacrifice. The session is called so because the litany takes place early in the morning, the time being the last part of the previous night and during this time the voice of birds are not heard at all. Here recital of verse relating to Agni, Uṣas and Āśvins takes place at three different times. In this sacrifice offerings such as grounded *dhāna* (rice grain), and barley, fried powder of barley mixed with ghee, fried rice grain, *purodāśa* and curd- these are offered to Indra Harivān, Indra Puṣaṇvān, Sarasvatī, Indra and Mitrāvaruṇa accordingly.

SAQ:

1. Describe the rite Prataranuvāka.

.....  
.....  
.....

**प्रातरनुवाकयागः-** It is

a Vedic rite of *vikṛti* type under the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, the model of soma sacrifice.

5. The manifold duties of *Rgveda* priests, specially those of *hotṛ* are stated in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. (A.B.V.5.1). One example is given below:-

e.g.

with a view to express the duties of a *hotṛ* priest in the *Agnihotra* sacrifice, Mahīdasa expresses thus- the sacrificer of this sacrifice shall request the Adhvaryu priest (chief priest of the Yajurveda) to do the duty of bringing the sacrificial fire in the evening. Thus goes the expression:-

“उद्धराहवनीयमित्यपराहण आह, यदेवाह्ना साधु करोति, तदेव तत्प्राङ्दुहृत्य तदभये निधत्ते ।”

i.e. (the sacrificer who is going to perform a *Agnihotra* shall say to the Adhvaryu), O priest you shall bring the kindled fire from the Gārhapatya fire and place it to that of the Āhavanīya. In this way whoseover, does it in the day time some religious acts, he had placed all those virtues in the Āhavanīya fire and remains fearlessly.

6. The *Aitareya Bhāhmaṇa* reveals certain Brhmodyas that are related to the sacrifices. Brahmodyas are nothing but theological discussions made on sacrificial matters.
7. There are innumerable etymologies in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. In fact, the revelation of etymologies of vedic words in understanding the real meaning of Vedic terms. Some of the etymologies revealed in this *Brāhmaṇa* are given below-

1. इष्टि :- (A.B.I.1.2)

यज्ञो वै देवेभ्य उदक्रामत् तमिष्टिभिः प्रैषमच्छैन्यदिष्टिभिः प्रैषमैच्छंस्तदिष्टीनामिष्टित्वं तमन्वविन्दन् ।

i.e., sacrifice went away from the gods. The gods wanted to search for it by sacrifices like *Dikṣaṇīyeṣṭi* and *Prāyaṇīyeṣṭi*.

The iṣṭis are called as iṣṭis because gods desired it by means of sacrifice. (is+knin = iṣṭih)

२. आहुतिः

आहूतयो वै नामैता यदाहुतय एताभि वै देवान्

यजमानो ह्वयति तदाहुतीनामाहूतित्वम्। (A.B.I.1.2)

Āhuti are called Ahūtis because the sacrificer called upon the gods by offering materials. Āhuti is same as the Āhūti.

३. प्रानरनुवाकः (A.B. II.2.5)

प्रातर्वै स तं देवेभ्योऽन्वब्रवीद् यत्प्रातर

न्वब्रवीत् तत्प्रातरनुवाकस्य प्रातरनुवाकत्वम्।

Prajapati uttered the verses for the gods in the morning accordingly. As the utterances were made accordingly, therefore, these verses got the name *prātaranuvāka*.

8. The concept of sacrifice, its origin and development ideas and such are found in this Brāhmaṇa. According to Mahīdāsa, (1) Agni spreads the sacrifice for the sacrificer त्वया यज्ञं वितन्वत इति यज्ञमेवास्मै एतद् वितनोति। A.B.I.1.4

(2) वृत्रं वा एव हन्ति यं यज्ञ उपनमति तस्माद् वार्तघ्नावेव कर्त्तव्यौ। A.B.I.1.4.

The sacrificer whom the sacrifice impells becomes able to kill his enemies. Therefore he should recite the verses (2) addressed to Indra, the killer of Vṛtra.

(3) एतद्वै यज्ञस्य समृद्धं यद्रूपसमृद्धं यत् कर्म क्रियमाणमृगभिवति। A.B.I.1.4

8. There are many revelations on ancient Indian political system in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. Besides names of many Indian kings and their priests are also stated herein this text.

In the eight *pañcikā* of this Brāhmaṇa we see the revelations on the inauguration ceremony of kings that were taken place in the Rājasūya sacrifice. Rules were laid down for these inauguration ceremonies in this Brāhmaṇa. Not only the inauguration ceremony of kings were stated here but also the great inauguration of Indra and that of kings in general are also expressed in detail. Besides, names of kings of ancient India and their priests are also expressed here.

Names of kings and their priests-

(1) King Janmejaya, the son of Parikṣita- Priest Tura, the son of Kavaṣa.

(2) King rānava, the son of Śaryāta, priest Cyavana, the son of Bhrigu

(3) King Śātānika, the son of Satrājeeta-Priest-Somaśuṣma, the son of Vājaratna.

(4) King Āmbāṣṭhya - Priests-Parvata and Nārada.

(5) King Yudhānśrauṣṭi, son of Ugrasena, priests parvata and Nārada.

(6) King Viśvakarmā, the son of Bhuvana, Priest - Kaśyapa.

(7) King Sudāsa, son of Pijavana, priest Vasiṣṭha.

(8) King Marutta priest Saṁvart son of Aṅgirasa, the son of Aṅgirasa

(9) King Aṅga- the son of Virocana, Priest-Udamaya, the son of Atri.

(10) King Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta, Priest Dīrghatamā, son of Mamatā.

(11) King Durmukha, the son of Pāñchāla, Priest, Seer Bṛhaduktha.

(9) The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* possesses several **gāthās**, i.e., religious songs, sung to glorify the liberal donations of kings of ancient India. These were sung in connection with the celebrations of inauguration of kings to the throne according to law and following of the rules of great *Aindra Mahābhīṣeka*. Among different **gathas** mentioned in this Brāhmaṇa, the **gāthā** of Bharata Duṣyanti was a popular one. It is described as follows: (A.B., VIII.4.9).

Bharata was inaugurated to the throne by the illustrious priest Dīrghatamas, the son of Mamata. Bharata was the son of Duṣyanta. He was inaugurated by the great Aindra Mahābhīṣeka. It is heard that he conquered the world and he roamed the entire world and thus he performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice. His greatness crossed the boundaries of his kingdom. It is also heard that he donated seven crores of elephants that were decorated with gold ornaments and that were possessed of white teeth and also they were mostly black coloured. The place where this act took place was Maṣṇāra. He performed *Agnicayana* sacrifice in the province Sāncīguṇa. In this sacrifice each of thousands Brahmaṇas took crores of cows. Besides, he bound 78 horses and in the bank of the river Yamunā he caught 55 horses for Indra, the killer of Vṛtra. By catching thirty three hundreds of sacrificial horses, king Bharata, being dutiful, surpassed other deceitful persons of his time. Persons who preceded him or who succeeded him were

unable to surpass his greatness like the persons who were unable to touch the heaven by their hands. These achievements and greatness of the king Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta were told by the seer Bṛhaduktha to the king Durmukha, the lord of Pāñcāla. Having heard only this king Durmukha was able to roam all over this earth and he conquered the earth.

(10) The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* is rich in stories. With a view to show the importance of sacrifices and its technicalities, it narrates several stories. The story of Śunaṣepa is an Important one.

**The story of Śunaṣepa:** A.B..VII.3.1

This story was told on the day of inauguration of a king in the Rājasūya sacrifice. The story is described as follows-

The king Hariścanda, the son of the king Vedhasa of the Ikṣāku dynasty, was sonless. With a view to get a son, he asked Parvata and Nārada, two seers staying with him, about the ways for getting a son. Replying to the kings enquiries about the merits and demerits of having sons, the two seers advised him to approach the god Varuṇa for this. Accordingly, the king approached the god Varuṇa for this and gave words to him that he would worship him with his son. The king Varuṇa conceded to it and, the king Hariścandra got a son, Rohitā by name. Thereafter the god Varuṇa asked the king Hariścandra to offer his son Rohitā more than one time. Thus when the boy became tendays old, thereafter too, Varuṇa asked Hariscandra to offer Rohitā to him. But Hariścandra delayed in doing so. Once Hariścandra told his son about the happening for which he agreed to offer him to king Varuṇa. Having heard about it, Rohitā denied to it and he fled to forest. There he spent one year roming in the forest. Seeing this, king Varuṇa inflicted Hariścandra with the disease of Dropsy. When Rohitā came to know about it he wanted to return to his father but he was prevented by Indra, in the guise of Brāhmaṇa he persuaded him not to return to his place from the forest. Indra told him that he should not be disappointed hearing about his father's condition. Infact he was advised by Indra to experience himself. Thus Rohitā roamed for about six years in the forest. At last he found the seer Ajīgarta the son of Sūyavasa, who had three sons viz Śunaḥpucca, Suṇaṣepa and Śunolaṅgulaḥ. Rohitā told him that he wanted to buy one of his three sons. Out of these three, the father denied to offer his eldest



son to Rohitā, because he loved him most. The mother too denied to give her youngest son, whom she loved most. Thus both of them agreed to sale the middle son Śunaḥśepa to Rohitā, taking hundred cows. Thereafter, Rohita, taking Śunaḥśepa, returned home and told his father that Śunaḥśepa be offered as sacrificial object to the king Varuṇa. The king Hariścandra then ordered his priests to begin the rite where Śunaḥśepa would be offered as an offering material to Varuṇa. The king Hariścandra asked his men to bind Sunaśepa into a sacrificial post. But nobody came forward to carry it out. Seeing this Ajīgrata, the father of Śunaḥśepa offered himself to do it on the condition of getting other hundred cows from Rohita. When Śunaḥśepa was tightened to the sacrificial post, the king Hariścandra asked his men to cut Śunaḥśepa. But this time too nobody came forward to cut him. Then Ajīgarta offered himself to do it on the condition that he should be given other hundred cows. The king Hariścandra had agreed to do it. Thereafter, Ajīgarta taking the sword began to sharp it. Seeing his father sharpening the sword for cutting him Śunaśepa decided to pray to the gods for his rescue. Deciding thus Śunaśepa approached different gods whom he worshipped with beautiful verses. Each time he worshipped god he was freed of the rope that bound him. At last he was freed of the ropes that bound him. The Rājasūya sacrifice, where Śunaśepa was about to be offered to the king Varuṇa was performed by Viśvāmitra as the chief priest, Jamadagni the Adhvaryu, Vasgnṣṭha, the Brahmā and Ayāsyā the Udgātā. Seeing the beautiful revelations made by Śunaḥśepa Viśvāmitra wanted to adopt Śunaḥśepa as his eldest son. As because he had hundred sons, the first fifty sons objected to the proposal made by their father for adopting Śunaḥśepa as their eldest brother. The other fifty sons accepted it and they regarded Śunaḥśepa as their eldest son. By the time, Ajīgarta requested Śunaḥśepa to be his son. But Śunaḥśepa denied to it, saying that a father when agreed to cut his own son, might do the crime again and again. Thereafter, accepting the proposal offered by the seer Viśvāmitra. Śunaḥśepa became the eldest son of the seer and became famous by the name Devarāṭ.

### 1.7 Language

Scholars opine that the language of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* is very much close to that of the *Ṛgveda*. Yet certain crude forms

are found in it. When 'a' is joined with 'ṛ' in two words, such as *asya* and *ṛcam*, the resultant form is 'ar'. But in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* it is uttered simply as: *asyarcam* only. So also 'stomebhiḥ' is uttered in place of *stoma* (AB. IV.15). So also *balīṣṭhatama* is used in place of *balīṣṭhaḥ* (A.B. III.46), 'vāva' is frequently used in place of 'vai'.

### 1.8 Summing Up

After going through the discussions made on the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* you will certainly be able to know the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* from its different aspect. This *Brāhmaṇa* is an important revelation on the exposition of Ṛgvedic verses. Besides you will be able to know the duties of *Hotā*, the chief priest of vedic sacrifice where the recitation of Ṛgvedic verses takes place. Stories related to Vedic sacrifices are important tools for understanding the technical aspects of Vedic sacrifices. You will certainly be entertained with these stories. The Brahmodyas (theological discussions) also help in the understanding of the philosophy of Vedic sacrifices. From this write up you will be able to know the special meanings of vedic words with the help of etymologies.

### Books consulted

1. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇam* edited and translated by Pt Sudhakar Malaviya in two vols. Tara Prenting Works Varanasi 1987.
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## **Part - II**

### **The Sāṁkhāyana Brāhmaṇa**

#### **Contents**

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Recension
- 1.4 Seer of the Brāhmaṇa
- 1.5 Contents of Brāhmaṇa
- 1.6 Features
- 1.7 Language
- 1.8 Summing up

#### **1.1 Objectives**

The objectives of this part of the Unit II is to inform you about the other Brahmana text of the Ṛgveda and this is the Sāṁkhāyana Brāhmaṇa. Here you will learn about.

- (a) recension of the Brāhmaṇa
- (b) contents of this Brāhmaṇa
- (c) Seer of the Sāṁkhāyana Brāhmaṇa
- (d) features and
- (e) language

#### **1.2 Introduction**

The *Sāṁkhyaṇa Brāhmaṇa* reveals in its thirty chapters almost all the subjects revealed in the first thirty chapters of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. This Brāhmaṇa is the revelation of the seer Sāṁkhyāyana, the son of Śāṅkha. According to the Bhāgavatā Purāṇa (Skandha 8) Sāṁkhyāyana was an *ācārya* (preceptor) and

a prominent disciple of Sānatkumāra. Bṛhaspati is another equally prominent disciple. This Brāhmaṇa holds revelations on many subjects such as the establishment of the fires, the Agnihotra like Darśa pūrṇa māsayāga, some sacrifice special sacrifices, Cāturmāsya etc. The great Soma sacrifice is described elaborately here in this Brāhmaṇa.

This Brāhmaṇa is also known by the name 'Kauṣītaki'. The words kauṣītaki means revelations made by Kuṣītaki, the son of kuṣītaka.

1.3 The *Sāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa* belonging to the Śākala Śākhā is widely read in the schools of Vedic studies.

1.4 There is very little information that we can get of the seer Sāṅkhyāyana in the Vedic literature. The text of this Brāhmaṇa too furnishes little knowledge in this regard. The name kauṣītaki occurs in the ninth chapter of the work and the word 'अहम्' occurs in the same chapter (Sāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa 8/9) and also else where.

1.5 The Sāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇ begins with the establishment of the sacrificial fires. Here, the seer deals at length with the offerings made to the forms of Agni. Besides, for offerings and after offering attained by Agni, the time of establishment of the fires, etc are revealed in the first chapter of this Brāhmaṇa.

In the second chapter, the *Agnihotra* sacrifice is revealed. The Darśa purṇāsa sacrifice

(the New and Full-Moon sacrifices) and their offerings, and also special sacrifices like Abhyuditā, the Turāyaṇa, the offerings of first-fruits of Millet are some of the subjects revealed in the third and fourth chapters of the Brāhmaṇa. In the fifth chapter, the Four Monthly sacrifices are beautifully expressed. The revelations on the Brāhmaṇa priest takes place in the chapter VI. Thereafter, the soma sacrifice has been revealed in the remaining chapters of the book i.e. from VII in to XXX th chapter.

1.6 In many respects this Brāhmaṇa is unique. Although scholars opine that there is little difference between the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Sāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa*, yet this Brāhmaṇa possesses certain features of its own, unseen in the *Aitareya*

Brāhmaṇa. Here, a few such features will be pointed out for you.

- (1) This Brāhmaṇa begins with the revelations on the establishment of sacrificial fire. According to the seer it should take place in the month of *Aṣāḍha* when there will be the new moon and when it is in contact with the two stars Punarvasūs. The different forms of Agni are also stated here.
- (2) *Arthavāda* or debate at the time of offering oblations in the *Agnihotra* sacrifice is seen in this text. Infact, this Brāhmaṇa, like other Brāhmaṇas is full of arthavādas. By the debate, mentioned above the seer confirmed that the offering in this sacrifice (Agnihotra) takes place at night only, because this is the time for going to the gods. Thus the seer Kauṣītakī declares-  
तदु ह स्माह कौषीतकिः सायमस्तमिते पुरा तमस्तस्मिन्काले जुहुयात् स देवानः  
केतुस्तमेवारम्य स्वस्ति स्वर्गं लोकं समश्नुते (K.B.,2/9)
- (3) Different names of offering are stated here. Mention can be made of ājya milk, paśu, vapā etc.

### **Agnihotra sacrifice:**

This is a rite of offering cows milk into the fire, performing daily in the evening and early in the morning. It begins with the setting up of the sacrificial fires.

- (4) Some special sacrifices revealed in this Brāhmaṇa are-
  1. Anunirvāpyā (अनुनिर्वाप्य)
  2. The Abhuditā (अभुदिता)
  3. The Abhyddrṣṭā (अभ्युददृष्टा)
  4. The Dākṣāyaṇa (दाक्षायणः)
  5. The Iḍādadhāḥ (इडादधः)
  6. The Śaunakaḥ (शौनकः)
  7. The Sārvaseniya (सार्वसेनियः)
  8. The Vasiṣṭha (वसिष्ठः)
  9. The Sākaṁprasthāyya (सामम्प्रस्थाय्यः)
  10. The Munyāyana (मुन्यायनः)
  11. The Turāyana (तुरायणः)
  12. The offering of first-fruit of Millet (आग्रयणेष्टिः)
  13. The offering of first fruits of bamboo seeds (वेणुयवेष्टिः)
  14. The offering of first fruits of rice and barley (व्रीहिसस्येष्टिः)

SAQ

1. Name some rites performed in the Vedic times as recorded in the Śāṅkhyayan Br.

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5. The Soma sacrifice has been elaborately revealed in this Brāhmaṇa. These are narrated in twenty four chapters. Although the contents of these chapters are similar to those of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, yet certain new ideas are being seen revealed in this *Brāhmaṇa* e.g. the consecration of kings according to Keśī Dārbhya, (Kau. Br., VII.4). It is narrated in the form of a dialogue in the fourth part of the chapter VII of the text. The dialogue was made between the king Keśī and a golden bird.

1.7 The language of the Śāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa is very much close to that of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. The Vedic language is very much peculiar in the sense that this is always guided by it's accents. But the language of both the Brāhmaṇas of the *Ṛgveda* are seen to be handed down without accents. The languages here appear to be very much similar to the language of the classical Sanskrit Literature. This apparently shows the late compilation of these two revelations, e.g.

SAQ

1. Show the distinctions in between Vedic language and languages of the two Brahmanas of the Ṛgveda.

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ब्रह्म वा अग्निस्तद्यदुपवसथेऽग्निं प्रणयन्ति ब्रह्मणैव तद्यजमानस्य पाप्मानमपध्नन्ति  
पुरस्तादाहवनीयेन... (Śāṅkhyāyanabrāhmaṇam, 9th chapter)

### 1.8 Summing up

From the foregoing discussion on the *Sāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa* it is clear to you that like the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* it possesses its own characteristics. There are a few differences between the two texts with regard to its contents. Mention here

can be made of the Soma sacrifice. While the *Śāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa* holds it elaborately, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* holds it in a few chapters only. Secondly, the *Rājasūya* sacrifice as revealed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* is not seen here in this *Brāhmaṇa*. Besides, the revealer expresses the legend of Kavaṣa in the context of the narration of the performance of the Aponaptrīya. Revelations on the Ājya Śāstra, Āditya cup, Vaiśvadeva Śāstra, the Śoḍaṣin Śāstra are some of the Śāstras made in this *Brāhmaṇa*. The *Gavāmayana* sacrifice is also narrated in this *Brāhmaṇa*. The duties of the *Grāvastut* is expressed in the twenty ninth chapter of this *Brāhmaṇa*.

In this way you will learn a lot about the sacrificial paraphernalia of the Vedic age.

**Aponaptriya:** It Is an *iṣṭi* (sacrifice) as well as an oblation prepared by mixing the *vasativarī* water and *ekadbanā* water in a bowl of the *hotṛ*.

**Grāvastut:** It means the praiser of stone (grāva). He is a *grāvastut* who conducts the functions of sacrifice as an assistant to the *Hotṛ* priest.

**Answer the following:**

1. Write an introductory note on the Śāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa.
2. Name some special sacrifices dealt with in the Śāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa.
3. Write on the special characteristics of the Śāṅkhyāyana Brāhmaṇa.

**Books Consulted**

1. Śāṅkhyāyanabrāhmaṇam edited by Hari Narayan Apte, Anandasrama granthavali, Books no.-65, 1832.
2. A.B. Keith: Rigveda Brāhmaṇas, The Aitareya and Kauṣītiki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1981.

## UNIT - III

### A note on the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa

#### Contents :

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 The contents of the Ś.P. Brāhmaṇa
- 3.4 Śākhā or recension of the Ś.P. Brāhmaṇa
- 3.5 The myths and legends of the Ś.P. Brāhmaṇa
- 3.6 Salient features of this Brāhmaṇa
- 3.7 Summing up

#### 3.1 Objectives

In this unit you will be acquainted with another important text of the Veda and it is nothing but the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, belonging to the *Śukla Yajurveda* or the White Yajurveda. In many respects this Brāhmaṇa text is regarded as the most important text.

#### 3.2 Introduction

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* belonging to the *White Yajurveda* is available in two different recensions. They are the *Mādhyandina Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Kānva Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Of these two, the first one was revealed by the celebrated seer Madhyandina and the next one by the seer Kanva. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, revealed by the seer Madhyandina is a popular text and it is widely read by the students of vedas.

In this context, the name *Śatapatha* needs an explanation. While the word 'śata' means hundred, the word 'patha' denotes



chapter. Thus the word as a whole denotes a text consisting of hundred chapters. Besides, this book contains 14 books, the last book being an Upaniṣad. This is known as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Thus in all there are fourteen kāṇḍas, sixty eight prapāthakas, 438 Brāhmaṇas and 7624 kaṇḍikās in the Mādhyndina recension of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

**SAQ :**

Give the derivation of the word शतपथ. What are the two recensions under which this text is handed down.

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### 3.3 Contents of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, as said earlier, consists of 100 chapters, being divided into 14 books. These are called as kāṇḍas. The first nine kāṇḍas are a continuous commentary on the first eighteen sections of the Śuklayajurveda. In these kāṇḍas, the seer Madhyndina reveals subjects like - the Darśapūrṇamāsa iṣṭi (1st kāṇḍa), the *Agnihotra*, *Pinḍapitṛyajña*, the *Dākṣāyana*, *Navānna* sacrifice, *Cāturmāsya*, (2nd kāṇḍa), Soma sacrifice in detail (3rd and 4th kāṇḍas), and the *Rājasūya* and *Vājapeya* sacrifices (5th kāṇḍa). The Kāṇḍas from the sixth to the tenth mainly deal with the culling of the sacrificial fire and construction of the fire altar which is symbolic of Prajapati, Agni, Yajamāna and the creation of the Universe. The mystic science of Agni called *Agni Rahasya* or *Agnividya* imparted by the seer Sāṇḍilya occurs in this portion of the Brāhmaṇa (S.P.Br. - x - 6 - 3). The eleventh book treats of Paśubandha, the five Mahāyajñas or great sacrifices and Mitrāvindyeṣṭi and Darśapūrṇamāseṣṭi. The twelfth book deals with the satra or sessional sacrifice called Dvāśāha, the annual or Samvātsarasatra and expiatory rites for excess in drinking etc. known as Śautrāmanī,

The thirteenth book gives the details of four important sacrifices such as the *Aśvamedha*, *Puruṣamedha*, *Sarvamedha* and *Pitṛmedha*. Of these, the *Aśvamedha* became popular due

to its objective of being a paramount sovereign ruler. The revelations of the Aśvamedha are a good testimony to the constitutional status of the monarch, queens, the royal paraphernalia, the attendants of the queen, the arms and weapons etc. of the vedic times. The fourteenth book deals with *Pravargya* sacrifice and contains the great metaphysical and theological discourse known as *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat*. This *upaniṣat* is a masterpiece in its own field of delineating the religio-social as well as spiritual attitudes of ancient Indian poet seers. The whole Indian philosophy has been beautifully revealed in this text of the Veda.

**SAQ :**

Write a note on the contents of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

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**3.4 Recension (Śākhā) of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa**

Recension plays a vital role in the transmission of vedic learning throughout the ages. The Ś.P. Brāhmaṇa is also handed down through two recensions i.e. this text of the vedas was revealed by two seers of vedic age, viz, Kanva and Mādhyandina. There is a little difference in the texts of these two texts.

**3.5 Myths and legends in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa**

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is rich in myths and legends. While the myths are traditional stories usually involving supernatural powers and imaginary person etc. the legends are also traditional stories or famous stories but of somewhat famous or remarkable stories or events. Among the different myths revealed in this Brāhmaṇa, the following are noteworthy.

- (i) The slaying of Viśvarūpa and Vṛtra by Indra (I-1-3-4)
- (ii) The sacrifice and the Black Antelope (I-1-4-1)
- (iii) The story of Manu and the Bull (I-1-4-14)
- (iv) The story of Araru (I-2-4-17)
- (v) The story of Dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu (I-2-5-5)

- (vi) Māthava Videgha (I-4-1-10)
- (vii) Prajapati and his daughter (I-7-4-1)
- (viii) Manu and the fish (I-8-1-1)
- (ix) Chitra and Indra (II-1-2-13)
- (x) Aditi and the Elephant (III.1.3.3)
- (xi) Trikakud (III.1.3.12)
- (xii) Ahalyā, the wife of the seer Gotama (III.3.4.18)
- (xiii) Story of the king Pururavas and Urvaśi (III.4.1.22)
- (xiv) Story of Cyavana Bhārgava (IV-1-5-5) and
- (xv) Story of Dustaritu (XII-9-3-1)

Among these stories, the *story of Indra Vṛtra* is more appealing to all. The story is also known by the name of killing of Visvarupa and Vritra by Indra. Here we will describe this story as revealed in this Brāhmaṇa.

### **Story of Indra-Vṛtra :**

Tvaṣṭā had a son who was possessed of three months and six eyes. Owing to such absurd form he was given the name Viśvarūpa. He was very powerful and energetic. One of his mouths was named as *somaṇānamukham*, because by this he was used to drink somajuice. By the second mouth he was used to drink the *surā* liquor. That is why this mouth was called as the *surāṇānamukham*. By the third mouth he took different types of food. Therefore, that mouth was called as *anyanmukham*. The seer perceived that by the first mouth a partridge sprang forth. This bird was brown coloured and its colour was same with that of a liquor. A sparrow was seen to sprang forth from the second mouth of Viśvarūpa. This bird holds the colour of *surā*. This bird speaks more just like a person, who after taking *surā*, speaks more. By the third mouth came out a *tittiri* bird. The feathers of this bird is of variegated colours. Seeing the abstract form of Viśvarūpa Indra, the lord of gods killed him out of hatred. Seeing the deceitful killing of his son Viśvarūpa his father became furious. He became upset and therefore he decided to get a son, as mighty as Indra and wished that the son might be able to kill Indra. For this, he made his mind to perform a Soma sacrifice and in this sacrifice he would exclude Indra. Accordingly Indra, fell ill. Of course, after wards, he was cured of by all other gods. Tvaṣṭṛ, seeing that his juices were forcibly drunk by Indra, decided

to perform the Soma sacrifice, by the juices left in the vessels. At the time of offering juices into the sacrificial fire, he uttered the words—“let the foe of Indra be grow”. When the juices came into contact with the sacrificial fire, there came forth a form and it spreads on all sides. That form was of the essence of the fire and soma juice. Seeing its being spreaded over all directions people called him as Vṛtra. As because he arose footless, therefore he was also named as Ahi and afterwards Vṛtra’ was embraced by demon mother Danu and demon father Danāyu. For this Vṛtra became famous by the name Dānava too. Thus being born, Vṛtra became mighty one and he became attached with all good things of Universe.

Having seen the mighty Vṛtra, Indra became upset and he decided to persuade the two gods Agni and Soma for coming over to him. He wished that the two gods should leave Vṛtra and join him. It was desired so that only gods performed actions for good of people and not the demons. He promised the two gods to offer eleven kapālas of purodāśa. Considering the proposal of Indra, Agni and Soma left Vṛtra and joined Indra. Thereafter, he became as mighty as Vṛtra. He, thus, after being powerful, killed Vṛtra with his thunderbolt. The seer, here, told that Vṛtra was killed because Tvaṣṭṛ uttered the oblation offering verse wrongly. Instead of uttering words with the acute accent on the last syllable, he did it with this accent uttered in the very first short vowel. As a consequence, Vṛtra was killed by cutting into two pieces by Indra.

### **Legends in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa**

There are, as pointed out by scholars, two legends being revealed in this text of the Veda. These two are:

- (i) Manu-Matsyakaṭhā (I.8.1) and
- (ii) Pāriplava legend (XIII.4.3.3). (Revolving, recurrent, or cyclic legend)

Now these two legends will be narrated briefly.

**(i)** Manu-Matsya Kathā: (Story of Manu and fish) (S.P.Br. I.8.1)

Once in a fine morning, Manu (a mythical person), was about to wash his hand by waters that had been brought in by his men. Then all of a sudden, a fish floating on the water, asked Manu to rear him up very carefully and thereafter he requested him to

protect him from a deluge, that was impending. The fish told Manu that there would be a great flood that would carry away the creatures. From such a delusion he would save Manu. The process as to how Manu would be saved by the fish, was also pointed out. The fish told Manu that he should be reared by Manu by keeping him in a jar. When he will out grow the jar then he should be kept by Manu in a pit. When the fish would outgrow that too, he should be dropped into the sea. After this as the fish said, he would be out of danger. When the flood will come Manu should prepare a ship and after mounting on it he should set out in the sea. There from, the fish would save him. One day, as the fish had pointed out, flood came and Manu boarded on his ship and thereafter the fish swam up to him and he tied the rope of the ship on its horn and passed swiftly up to the northern mountain. Thus the fish saved Manu. That ship was fastened to a tree. When the water subsided, he descended from the mountain. Thereafter that mountain was named as the Manu's descent.

(ii) Pāriplava Ākhyāna (S.P.Br. XIII.4.3.3)

(This story was told by the *hotṛ* priest to the *Adbavaryu*, after the sacrificial Horse, being let loose in the Horse sacrifice)

There was a king Manu Vaivasvata by name. He rules over his subjects on this earth for long. His subjects were householders and unlearned in the scriptures. These subjects attended the Horse sacrifice. The Adhvaryu instructed them on the Vadas. He taught that the Ṛgveda is the veda proper. Just a hymn of this veda should be recited. Masers of lute prayers too attended this sacrifice. These players are asked to sing of the sacrificer along with righteous kings of ancient times. They accordingly sang of these. Thereafter, the *Adbvaryu* preforms the *Prakrama* oblations.

On the first day, a Rājanya lute player striking up the *uttaramandra* tune sang three stanzas composed by himself of topics like kings, who after fighting with enemies won the battles.

On the second day, he sang of king Yama Vaivasvata who possessed Fathers as his subjects. He instructed them knowledge of Yajurveda.

On the next day, he sang forth of king Varuṇa Āditya who had the Gandharvas as his subjects. They were instructed upon the knowledge o Atharvaveda.

On the fourth day, king Soma Vaishnava was instructed upon by the Adhvaryu about the Aṅgiroveda. This king has Apsaras as his subjects.

On the fifth day, king Arbuda kādraveya, whose subjects were snakes, was instructed upon the knowledge of Sarpavidyā. Hearing about this king, the snakes and snake charmers came to the sacrifice.

On the sixth day king Kubera Vaisravana was instructed upon the *Devajanavidyā*. Rakṣasas were his subjects. After knowing this evil doeres, robbers came there.

King Asit Dhānva was instructed upon the knowledge of Magic veda on the seventh day. This king was the lord of Asuras. Knowing this, usurers came there to attend the sacrificial sessions.

On the eight day, king Matsya Sāmmada, who had water dwellers as his subjects, was instructed upon the Itihāsa Veda. To this session of the Horsesacrifice, fish and fishermen came.

On the ninth day, king Tārکشya Vaipasyata was instructed upon the Purāṇaveda. His subjects were birds and bird-catchers.

On the tenth day, king Dhurma Indra was instructed the Sāmaveda. Gods were his subjects and the learned theologians, accepting no gifts came to the place.

The person knowing about this story attains fellowships and communion with these Royalities and gains the Sovereign rule and many more things.

**SAQ :**

Describe the Manumatsya Kaṭhā as described in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

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### 3.6 Salient features of this Brāhmaṇa

Scholars of both East and West unanimously declare the importance of this Brāhmaṇa. There are several salient features of this Brāhmaṇa which the other Brāhmaṇa texts do not possess. Among these only a few features of this Brāhmaṇa will be mentioned to you.

1. This Śruti text holds revelations on various vedic sacrifices that we cannot see in other text of the Veda.

2. This Brāhmaṇa is an extensive commentary on the White Yajurveda. Seriality of expositions of verses of the White Yajurveda has been maintained here in this Brāhmaṇa.
3. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is an important revelation of prose style. The classical Sanskrit prose works of Post-Kalidasa era were very much indebted to this prose composition of Vedic poets.
4. The dialogues revealed in this Brāhmaṇa are unique in themselves. An example is given below: S.P. Brāhmaṇa XI.3.1.2)

तद्धैतज्जनको वैदेहो याज्ञवल्क्यं पप्रच्छ ।

वेत्थाग्निहोत्रं याज्ञवल्क्य । इति । वेद सम्राडिति । किमिति । पय एवेति ॥ ३ ॥

i.e. Now as to this, Janaka of Videha, (a province) once asked Yājñavalkya - O Yājñavalkya do you know Agnihotra (a sacrifice)? Yājñavalkya replied - yes, I know it, O king. Then Janaka asked him, what is it? Him, Yājñavalkya replied, it is Milk.

5. Some important derivations were stated in this Brāhmaṇa. Thus for example, the word Agni, meaning fire in this Brāhmaṇa. Thus for example, the word Agni, meaning fire in general and a god in particular is explained as follows : Prajāpati, in his process of creation, first of all created Agni. As because Agni was first (agre, अग्ने) created therefore he was named as Agni. 'Agni' is same as the 'Agre'. Being generated Agni went forth as the first (pūrva, पूर्व). As he went forth everywhere first, therefore he had been called as the 'head' (agre) such then is the origin and nature of Agni (S.P. Brāhmaṇa, II.2.4.2)

The oblation समिष्टयजुः is explained as follows :

अथ यस्मात्समिष्टयजुर्नाम । य वा एतेन यज्ञेन देवता ह्वयति-याभ्य एष यज्ञस्तायते, सर्वा वै तत्ताः समिष्टा भवन्ति । तद् यत् तासु सर्वासु, समिष्टासु- अथैतज्जुहोति । तस्मात् समिष्टयजुर्नाम ।

The word समिष्ट is formed of two words, i.e., and सम इष्ट.

As because by offering this oblation in sacrifices gods are invoked, and for these gods the sacrifice is performed and as because those are sacrificed together therefore this oblation is named as the समिष्टयजुः । (S.P. Br., I.9.2.27)

6. Among the sacrifices revealed in this Brāhmaṇa, the Horse sacrifice (अश्वमेध) occupies an important place. According to

the seer Madhyandina the sacrifice is an eternal process in which sacrifice performed by men is an integral part of it. The sacrificial Horse, in this sacrifice, has been eulogized as a Divine one. Here, in this sacrifice, the Horse, which was to be sacrificed, was described as mighty, valorous, speedy, and best. He is equal with the thunderbolt in powers (वज्रोऽश्वः) . The Horse was set free towards the north-east direction. the guardians of the regions such as Āpyas, Sādhyas, Anvādhyas and Maruts were asked to guard this Horse for a year with out turning it back. When it returns after one year, he was consecrated with anointment, and holywater. Afterwards he was quieted. Parts of the House are offered in to the fire. Specially the 'meda' meaning 'fat' was offered into the fire. A few lines revealing the Aśvamedha are given below for your knowledge -

ब्रह्मौदतं पचति । रेत एष तद्धते । यदाज्यमुच्छिष्यते । तेन रशनामभ्यज्यादत्ते । तेजो वा आज्यम् । प्रजापतिमेव तेजसा समर्द्धयति । अपूतो वा एषोऽमेध्यो यदश्वः । (S.P. Brāhmaṇa, XIII. 1.1.1)

7. Names of several kings of Ancient India are revealed in this Brāhmaṇa. Among these Videgha Mathava is worthy to mention (S.P. Brāhmaṇa I, 4.1.10). There is a story related this king. It is as follows :

Māthava, the king of Videgha (videha) carried Agni Vaisvānara in his mouth. The seer Gotama Rāhugana was his family priest. On his journey of carrying this fire, when he was questioned by his family priest he remained silent. He did not answer to the seer, fearing that the fire which he carries might go out of his mouth. But the priest asked him repeatedly about Vaisvānara Agni. Even then the king did not answer. When Mathava arrived at the shore of the river Sarasvāī, the Vaisvānara Agni came out from his mouth, hearing the name of Agni, the butter-sprinkled one. Agni then went burning the rivers along the earth towards the east. King Videgha Māthava and his priest Gotama Rahugana followed after him as he was burning along. He burnt over all the rivers. But he could not burn the river Sadānīrā, which flowed from the Northern Himalaya mountain. In former times, Brāhmaṇas could not cross over this river, because it was not burnt by Vaisvānara Agni. Of course, later on, the



east part of it was inhabited by Brāhmaṇas. It is heard that in former times it was an uncultivated land, as it was not tasted by Agni Vaiśvānara. Later on, as the seer had pointed out, the Brāhmaṇas began to live there because they caused Agni to taste it by performing sacrifices.

This story of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is a proof of the fact that Aryan civilization had been spreaded over to the river Sadānirā.

**SAQ :**

Give an account of the salient features of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

.....  
.....  
.....

**3.7 Summing Up :**

From the study of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, you are expected to learn a lot about this *śruti* text. It is a voluminous work that records the religious lives of the Vedic people. Besides, you are able to know about political systems of the Vedic age. The sacrifices revealed in this Brāhmaṇa are not mere external performances, but these had been revealed with certain spiritual values too. Myths and legends narrated here, had a great bearing on the society. The spiritual aspect of the great sacrifices are beautifully revealed in the Bṛhadāraṇyākopaniṣat, that forms a part of this Brāhmaṇa.

**Suggested Books :**

1. Vaidika Sāhitya Aru Saṁskṛiti by Acarya Baladeva Upadhyāya, published by Sarada Saṁsthān, Varanasi- 5, 1989.
2. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, according to the Mādhyandina Recension with the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya. Vol-1-5. Gian Publishing House, Delhi-7, 1987.
3. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Translated by J. Eggeling Parts I - V. Motilal Banarasidass Delhi. 1988.

## Unit - IV

### An Introduction to the Aranyaka Literature

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#### 4.1 Introduction

The vast Vedic literature is mainly divided into two parts, viz. *Mantra* and *Brahmanamantrabrahamanayorvedanamadbeyam*, which is stated by Apastamba in his *Srautasutra* (24.1.31). In his introduction to the commentary on the *Rgveda*, Sayanacarya also states very clearly- *mantrabrahmanatmakasabdarsivedab*. Of the two constituents of the Vedic literature, viz. *Mantra* and *Brahmana*, the latter is divided into three parts- *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka* and *Upanisad*. Mantras, also called Samhitas, are the collection of hymns, prayers, benedictions, sacrificial formulae, litanies, magic songs etc. The Brhmanas are voluminous prose-texts containing theological matters, such as observations on sacrifices and detailed discussions on ritualistic activities. The Aranyakas deal with the subtle and mystic interpretations of the contents of the Brhmanas

and the Upanisads concern themselves with the study of the Ultimate Reality, i.e. Brahman.

The Aranyakas stand midway between the Brhmanas and the Upanisads. Being the bridge between the Brhmanas and the Upanisads, the Aranyakas correspond to both the ritualistic and theosophical expositions. However, in contents and spirit, the Aranyakas constitute a literature of transition. The *Brahmana* literature contains the rules for the rituals and their explanations, the cosmogonic myths and the accounts of the extensive sacrifices. The Aranyakas, on the contrary, contain the philosophical speculations on the sacrificial science of the Brahmanas. The mystical and philosophical doctrines, contained in the Aranyakas, are most difficult to understand. Linguistically, these works form a transition between the Brhmanas and the Upanisads. The concept of philosophy, envisaged by the esoteric Aranyakas, led to the growth and development of the Upanisadic literature. The Aranyakas are generally considered as the closing chapters of the Vedic ritual discussions and these promote hard discourses on Vedic metaphysics and spirituality. The Samhitas and the Brahmanas are called *Karmakanda*, i.e. the section of work and the Aranyakas and the Upanisads are known as *Jnanakanda*, i.e. the gnosis or the section of knowledge.

#### 4.2 Objectives

The unit aims at introducing you to the Aranyakas of the Vedic literature. In course of reading this unit, you will be acquainted with the basic concepts of the *Aranyaka* literature. The unit is designed to help you.

- understand the meaning of the term *aranyaka* along with the views of the traditional and modern scholars.
- to be familiar with the stages that led to the emergence of the *Aranyaka* literature.
- acquire the knowledge of the principal Aranyakas related to each of the Vedas and their contents in detail.

#### 4.3 The Meaning of the Term *aranyaka*: Views of the Traditional and Modern Scholars

The word *aranyaka* itself denotes its closeness to *aranya* or forest. Panini has derived the word *anyaka* in the sense of en

associated with forests with the suffix *bun* (=aka) attached to the stem *aranya-aranyanmansuye* (*Astadhyayi*, 4.2.129). Katyayana, in his *Vartika*, first explains the term in the sense of a chapter or treatise relating to forest. He observes that Panini would not have left off by referring *aranyaka* in the sense of forest-dwelling men only, but it should be stated rather that the suffix *bun* is added to *aranya* in the sense of a way, a lesson or doctrine, a maxim, play or game, a man or an elephant-*pathyadhyayanayabihar amanusyahastisviti vacyam/ aranyakah panthab adhyayo nyayo viharo manusyo basti va.*

Sayanacarya is of the opinion that the Aranyakas are called so because they are to be taught or studied in the forest-*aranya eve pathyam syadarany-akamitiryatam* (Vide, Sayanacarya's Introduction to the commentary on the *Aitareya Aranyaka*). Again he states-*aranyadhyayanadeadaranyakam itiryate/aranye tadadhiyitetyevam vakyam pracaksyate//* (Vide, Sayanacarya's Introduction to the commentary on the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*), Samkaracarya also supports the view that the Aranyakas are closely associated with forests. He holds that the *Brhadaranyakopanisad* is so named because it was taught in the forests-*seyam sadadhyayi aranye nucyamanatvadaranyakam/* As it is large in the in its contents, it is called *Brhadaranyaka-brhatvat parimanato brhadaranyakam/* (Vide, Samkaracarya's Introduction to the commentary on the *Brhadaranyakopanisad*).

It is well-known that the hermit life was made an essential part of the Brhamanical religious system in the ancient Indian society. The people of the three higher casts who desired to lead a religious life had to pass through four stages of life. Having performed the duties pertaining to the life of a student (*Brahmacarya*) and a householder (*Garbasthya*), a person had to lead the life of a forest-dweller (*Vanaprasthya*) in the third stage of religious life. In the fourth order of religious life, one had to completely renounce the worldly attachment and led the life of an asectic (*Sannyasa*). As a forest-hermit, a person had to perform the sacrifices in a limited manner and he had to meditate more on the mystic and symbolic significance of the sacrifices. The *Manusambhita*, states very clearly that the hermit should mainly learn the Upanisadic texts-

*etascanyasca seveta diksa vipro vane vasan/  
vividhascaupanisadiratmasamsiddhaya srutih//*

(Manu, 6.29)

The Agnihotra and some of the simple domestic rites were the rituals suitable for the retired householder and the forest was the proper place for performing those rites as the hermit moved to the forest in search of knowledge and asceticism.

According to H. Oldenberg (*Die Hymnen des Rigveda*, Vol. I, Berlin, 1988, p. 291) the Aranyakas were called so certainly because they were communicated 'in the forest instead of in the village on account of their highly mystical sacredness.' (Quoted by Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol.I, Delhi, 1987, p. 216, fn.1). Macdonell remarks that the Aranyakas are of a specially theosophic character and are meant to be imparted or studied in the solitude of the forests (Vide, Macdonell, A.A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi 1997, p. 28). That the teachings of these texts took place in the forests is hinted at in a few passages of the *Sankhayana Grhyasutra* (2.12.11-18) also.

C.V. Vaidya holds that the word *aranyaka* is formed from the stem *arana* which might carry the meaning of philosophical work. According to him, *Aranyaka* is the collection of aranas. The term *arana* is derived from the root *r* meaning originally 'to go' and thence 'to know' and thus, it may indicate the philosophical works. In support of his views he quotes a passage from the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* which reads *brahmanah udaranamasi*/(TA 1.12). (Vide, Vaidya, C.V., *History of Sanskrit it Literature*, Vol.II, Section II, Poona, 1930, p.150)

### **Stop to Consider**

The word *aranyaka* is variously interpreted by some other moern scholar also. C. Kunhan Raja holds that the word *aranya* originally meant the garden and it came to have the meaning of 'forest' in later Sanskrit and not in the Vedic period. He suggests that the word *aranya* is rooted in *arani* and '*aranya* is the place where people gathered *arani* or sacred fuel for their rituals and that is only the garden near about the homes'. The teaching and learning was in practice in sich gardens as secret texts were to be imparted to the disciples from the reach of noise and bustle of

human habitation. (Vide, Raja, C.K., *Survey of Sanskrit Literature*, Bombay, 1962, p.40-41)

S. Radhakrishnan is of the view that those who continue their studies without entering the householder's life are called aranas or aranamanas. They lived in the hermitages or forests. Aranyas are the forests where lived the aranas and the Aranyakas contain their speculations. (Vide, Radhakrishnan, S., *The Principal Upanisads*, London, 1953, Introduction, p.30)

**SAQ**

1. What is the derivative meaning of the term Iaranyaka according to Panini?

.....  
.....

2. What is the observation of Katyayana on the Paninian rule to form the word *aranyaka*?

.....  
.....

3. What is the meaning of the term *aranyaka* according to Sayanacarya?

.....  
.....

4. Name the four sages of life prescribed in the Brahmanical religious system in the ancient Indian society.

.....  
.....

5. What are the texts prescribed for a retired householder and name the sacrifices that he had to perform in the forest.

.....  
.....

**4.4 The Emergence of the Aranyakas**

Before the emergence of the Aranyakas, the Vedic people were deeply engrossed in performing some rituals which failed to satisfy one's intellectual aspiration. The aspiration for something else led the interested people to search for the realisation of the

essence of the cosmos and the aim of human life. Thus, the new craving for knowledge ultimately resulted in the philosophical speculation of the Vedic people. This mode of reinterpretation led to the new trends in the ascendance, and thereby established that there is a deeper, greater meaning to ritual. The new concept of Prana and the mystic correlation of the human limbs with cosmic elements are given in the esoteric passages of the Aranyakas and this kind of symbolic reinterpretation definitely marks the departure from the earlier period which anticipates the Upanisadic metaphysics. The Aranyakas emphasize the supreme significance of the life principle. There is a gradual movement towards the highly metaphysical concepts from the Brhmanas through the Aranyakas to the Upanisads. Winternitz rightly observes "The main contents of these Aranyakas are no longer the rules on the performance of sacrifices and the explanation of ceremonies but the sacrificial mysticism, and sacrificial symbolism and the priestly philosophy (Vide, Winternitz, M., Op. cit., Vol.I, P.216).

Thus as a literature, the Aranyakas tend for the quest of knowledge and asceticism and this development which was accomplished by the seers was through contemplation on the grandeur of ritualism envisaged in the Brahmanas.

Sayanacharya has clearly stated in his preface to the commentary on the fourth *adhya* of the second *aranyaka* of the *Aitareya Aranyaka* that the *Karmakanda* produces the desire for knowledge and the first three *adhyayas* of the second *aranyaka*, which deal with meditation, help one to achieve this mental attention and a craving for the knowledge of the Brahman-*ittham adhyayatrayena pranavidya prapancita/tavata brahmaidhyayam purusasya mukhyadbikarab sampannab/karmakandoktaib karmabhirvividisaya utpannatvadupasanaya cittaikagryasay sampannatvacca... ato mukhya dbikarinamupalabhya srutiradhyayatrayena brahmatattvam vispastamupadestumadau... (Sayanabhasya on Aitareya Aranyaka, 2.4)*

### **Stop to Consider**

The very name *Rahasya*, ascribed to the Upanisads is also given to the Aranyakas. The Aranyakas contain the secret texts

and esoteric doctrines which are intelligible only to the initiated. The Aranyakas also are the texts meant for the study of those who are engaged in the vow of forest life, the Vanaprasthas-*sarvesa vedesvaranyakamavartayet.../ Arunikopanisat*, 2 (Vide, Sarma, V. (ed.) *Isadyastottarasatopanisadah*, Delhi, 1983, p.133) The *Gopatha Brahmana* uses the term *rabasya* to mean the Aranyakas which states- *evamime sarve veda nirmitah sakalpah sarabasyah sabrahmanah sopanisatkah, setihasab.../ (2.10)*. Medhatithi clearly states in the commentary on the *Manusambhitarabasyani samanyaranyakadhitani* (2.140). Makarin states in the commentary on the *Baudhayana Dharmasutra- rabasyam aranye pathitavyo grantho yah tam* (2.8.3).

#### 4.5 The Aranyakas Belonging to the Three Vedas

The Aranyakas are not separate books but an integral and component part of the Brahmanas. Some of the Brahmanas end in the Aranyaas and some end in themselves as the *Gopinath Brahmana* of the *Atharvadeva*, the *Tandya Mahabrahmana* of the *Samaveda*. The concluding portion of the Brahmanas constitute generally the Aranyakas and the Upanisads form a constituent part therein.

Thus, the *Aitareya Brhmana*, belonging to the *Rgveda* is followed by the *Aitareya Aranyaka* in which the *Aitareya Upanisad* is included. The *Sankhayana Brahmana*, also belonging to the *Rgveda*, ends with the *Sankhayana Aranyaka* of which the *KauSītāki Upanisad* constitutes only a part. The *Taittir Aranyaka* is the concluding portion of the *Taittiriya Brahmana* belonging to the *Krsna Yajurveda*, of which the last four chapters are known respectively as *Taittiriya Upanisad* and the *Mahanarayana Upanisad*. The *Brhadaranyaka form part the Satapatha Brahmana* of the *Sukla Yajurveda* in which the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* is included.

The *Jaiminiya-Upanisad-Brahmana* belonging to the *Jaiiniya Brahmana* of the *Samaveda* bears the character of an *Aranyaka*, but since it is called a *Brahmana* and omits the name of *Aranyaka*, it is generally, regarded as a *Brahmana* text. The *Chandogya Brahmana* of the *Samaveda* contains the *Chandogya Upanisad*, the first section of which is nothing but an *Aranyaka* and it is known as *Chandogya Aranyaka*.



Thus, it is found that the Aranyakas belonging to the three Vedas, viz. the *Rgveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Samaveda* are available while no *Aranyaka* attached to the *Atharaveda* can be traced.

**SAQ**

1. To which *Brahmana* the *Aitareya Aranyaka* belongs?  
.....  
.....
2. In which *Aranyaka* the *KauSītāki Upanisad* forms a part?  
.....  
.....
3. To which *Veda* the *Taittiriya Aranyak* belongs?  
.....  
.....
4. Name the *Aranyaka* pertaining to the *Sukla Yajurveda*.  
.....  
.....
5. Is there any *Aranyaka* text of the *Samaveda*? Name them, if any.  
.....  
.....
6. State true or false-  
There is no *Aranyaka* attached to the *Atharvadeva*.  
.....  
.....

**Check Your Progress**

1. What do you mean by the term *aranyaka*? Discuss the views of the traditional and the modern scholars regarding the interpretation of the term *aranyaka*.
2. Discuss the stages that led to the emergence of the Aranyakas in the Vedic literature.
3. Discuss the relation of the Aranyakas to the Brahmanas and the Upanisads. Name the Aranyakas belonging to each of the Vedas.

## 4.6 The Principal Aranyakas: Introductory Notes

### 4.6.1 The *Aitareya Aranyaka*

The *Aitareya Aranyaka* belonging to the *Rgveda* is in five parts, each part being called an *aranyaka*. Each *aranyaka* is further divided into adhyayas and khandas. Thus, the five aranyakas have eighteen adhyayas and seventy-five khandas altogether.

The *Aitareya Aranyaka* is merely a component part of the *Aitareya Brahmana* which is clearly stated by Sayanacarya in his introduction to the commentary on the *Aitareya Aranyaka* which reads- *airareyabrahmane'sti kandamaranyakabhidham*.

The first, fourth and the fifth aranyakas display the Brahmanical character from their contents. The first *aranyaka* begins with the inception of the Mahavrata ritual, which is to be performed on the penultimate day of the Gavamayana, a Isatra type of sacrifice. Sayanacarya states- *mahavratamahab proktam prathamaranyake sphutam//gavamayanamityukte satre samvatsaratmak e / upantyya masta iyadahastanmahavratanamakam//* (*Sayanabbasya* on the *Aitareya Aranyaka*, Introduction).

The fourth *aranyaka* which is too short, deals with the *Sakkara* and *Mahanamni* verses used in the rite of Mahavrata. The fifth *aranyaka* prescribes the Niskevalyasastras to be recited by the Hotr priest in the Mahavrata.

The second and the third aranyakas constitute the *Aranyaka* power, which contain the Upanisadic texts. The first three adhyayas of the second *aranyaka* of the *Aitareya Aranyaka* have elaborated the concept of Prana, i.e. breath. The last three adhyayas (i.e. fourth to sixth adhyayas) form the *Aitareya Upanisad* or *Baburcabrahmanopanisad*. It is stated there that, in the beginning, there was nothing else than Atman, and therefore, Atman thought of creating the universe *atma va idameka evagra asinnayatkincana misat/sa iksata lokannu srja iti sa imallokanasrjata iti/* (2.4.1)

Sayanacarya, while commenting on this part of the *Aitareya Aranyaka*, has cited many other Upanisadic passages and the passages from the *Brahmasutra* also, for proper understanding of the texts. He, of course, has admitted in his prefatory words to the commentary on the second *aranyaka* of the *Aitareya Aranyaka*, thus, the influence of Samkaracarya on his writing - *karomyupanisadyakhyam samkaracaryavartmana/Sayanacarya*

has clearly stated there that the second and the third *aranyakas* of the *Aitareya Aranyaka* constitute the speculative side (*Jnanakanda*) while the first *aranyaka* deals with the practical side (i.e. *Karmakanda*)

*karmakandam samapyaiva vedo jnanam vivaksati//  
aranyakam dvitiam ca triyam ca tadatmakam/  
jnanakandam tath sopnisadiyabhidhiyate//*

The third *aranyaka* is known as *Sambitopanisad* which starts with the words- *athatah sambitaya upanisat* (3.1). It deals with the mystic meaning of the various forms of the *Sambita* and of the vowels, semi-vowels and consonents etc.

Mahidasa Aitareya who is known as the seer of the *Aitareya Brahmana*, is the expounder of the first three aranyakas of the *Aitareya Aranyaka*. The fourth *aranyaka* was expounded by Asvalayana which is clearly noted by Sadguruisya in his introduction to the *Rksarvanukraman ivrtti* which states- *dvadasadhyayakam sutram catuskagrhyameva ca/ caturtharanyakam ceti byasvalayanasutrakam//* The fifth *aranyaka* was compiled by Saunaka. In his introduction to the commentary on the fifth *aranyaka* of the *Aitareya Aranyaka*, Sayan acarya states- *pancamaranyakam rsiproktam sutram*.

Besides the commentary of Sayanacarya, Sadguruisya wrote the *Moksapradavrtti* on the *Aitareya Aranyaka*. As an Upanisadic text, the *Aitareya Upanisad* is commented upon separately by the traditional scholars. Among them, Samkarcarya's commentary is of prime importance. Vidyaranya also composed the *Aitareyopanisaddipika* commentary on it.

### **Stop to Consider**

The Mahavrata is the rite which takes place on the last day but one of the Gavamayana *Satra*, lasting three hundred and sixth one days. Literally, the word *mahavrata* means great observance. In the *Aitareya Aranyaka*, it is said that Indra, having slain Vrtra, became great. When he became great, then there came into being Mahavrata. Therefore, the Mahavrata ceremony bears the name of Mahavrata- *indro vai vrtram mahanabhavadyan mahanabhavat tan mahavratamabbavat tan mahavratasya mahavratatvam* (1.1.1). Sayanacarya has interpreted the term *mahavrata* in three ways- *mahan bhavatyanaena vrateneti mahavratam, mahato devasya vratamiti mahavratam, abacca*

*tadvratamiti mahavratamiti/ (Sayanabhasaya, 1.1.1). The day on which the rite is observed, is itself known as Mahavratagavamayanamityukte satre samvatsaratmake/upantyamasti yadahab tan mahavratanamakam// (Sayanacarya in his Introduction to the commentary on the Aitareya Aranyaka)*

#### **4.6.2 The Sankhayana Aranyaka**

The *Sankhayana* or *KauSītāki Aranyaka* is the other *Aranyaka* text of the *Rgveda*. The *Sankhayana Aranyaka* which is closely connected to the *Sankhayana Brhmana* is divided into fifteen *adhyayas*, each being divided again into *Khandas*. The *Aranyaka* is more elaborate than the *Aitareya Aranyaka* and hence, it is decided that the *Aitareya Aranyaka* is earlier than the *Sankhyana Aranyaka*.

The first two *adhyayas* of the *Aranyaka* deal with the Mahavrata ritual. The third *adhyaya* contains the dialogue between Citra Gargya and Svetaketu on the significance of the ritual. In the fourth *adhyaya*, dialogue between KauSītāka Paingya and Suksmabhrrigara is described. The fifth and the sixth *adhyayas*, respectively, contain the dialogues between Pratardana and Indra and that between Gargya and Ajatasatru. The four *adhyayas* (iii-VI) of the *Aranyaka* form the *KauSītāki Upanisad*. The seventh *adhyaya* has miscellaneous subjects. The eighth and the ninth *adhyayas* describe the worship of Prana. THE tenth *adhyaya* deals with the symbolic interoretation of the Agnihotra sacrifice. The eleventh *adhyaya* contains some rites of *Santikarman*. The dreams, omens, their signs and their effects to prolong life and to ward off death are also discussed in this *adhyaya*. The twelfth *adhyaya* contains the rites of one who desires blessings and prosperity. The thirteenth *adhyaya* contains instruction regarding the attainment of true knowledge through renunciation. The fourteenth *adhyaya* records the glorification of the Vedic study and condemnation of those who dishonour it. In the fifteenth *adhyaya*, the names of the teachers of the tradition are given where Sankhayana is listed as the first preceptor.

#### **Stop to Consider**

The term *sankhayana* is also written as *sankhyayana* and also as *sankbayana* or *sankhyayana* (Vide, Winternitz, M., Op. cit., Vol. I, p.217, notes 2; also Vide, Sastri G. *A History of Vedic Literature*, Kolkata, 2006, p.120; Bhattacharji, S., *Literature in the Vedic Age*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1986, p.144.

#### 4.6.3 The *Taittiriya Aranyaka*

The *Taittiriya Aranyaka* belongs to the *Taittiriya* school of the *Krsna Yajurveda*. It is the largest of all the Aranyakas which comprises ten prapathakas and those are subdivided again into some anuvakas. Among them, first to sixth prapathakas are devoted to the *Aranyaka* proper and the last four prapathakas deal with the Upanisadic doctrines. The contents of each *prapathaka* appears as follows:

1. *Arunaketukacayana*
2. *Svadhyayabrahmana*
3. *Caturbotrciti, Purusakrticiti, Bhartrsukta and Brahmedha*
4. *Pravargyamantras*
5. *Pravargyabrahmana*
6. *Pitmedhamantras*
- 7-9. *Taittiriya Upanisad*
10. *Yajniki Upanisad, i.e. Mahanarayana Upanisad*

According to another tradition, there are eight prapathakas in the *Aranyaka* and these are further split up into anuvakas. The contents of the *Aranyaka*, according to this tradition, are as follows:

1. *Arunaketukacayana*
2. *Svadhyayabrahmana*
3. *Caturbotracayana*
4. *Pitmedhamantras*
5. *Brahmopasanavidhissaparikara*, which forms the *Taittiriya Upanisad*
6. *Paramatmasukta etc.*, and *Brahmopasanamantras*, which constitute the *Narayanopanisad*
7. *Pravargyamantras*
8. *Pravargyabrahmana*

Bhattabhaskara has cited the contents of the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* of this school, in brief, in his introduction to the commentary of the *Aranyaka* thus:

*botrn pravargyakandam ca yascopanisado viduh/  
arunamayavidhiscava kathake parikirtitah//  
rudra narayanascaiva medho yascaiva pitriyah/  
etadarnyakam sarvam navratisrotumarhati//*

It is here enjoined that, the contents of the *Aranyaka*, according to the tradition are to be recited by a *vratin* in the midst of the *Aranya*, i.e. the forest. The vratas to be observed are enumerated as auxiliary to the *Arunaketukacayana* (1.32) thus: *niyamas samasena/tasmin niyamavisesah/trisavanamudakopasparsi/caturibakalapanabbaktassyat/adbarabarva bbaiksamasniyat/audhumbaribhissamidbhiragnim paricaret/* etc., i.e. The person who observes a vow should take his bath during the three periods of extracting the Soma juice (*savana*). He should take his food only in the fourth part of the day. He should daily feed on the articles given as alms. He should maintain the sacred fire with the Udumbara wood.

These observances are enjoined for those who undergo penance for a year or for at least two months for performing the *Arunaketukacayana*, which consists in offering daily oblation for a year.

The ceremony of piling up of the altar for Arunaketu fire (*Arunaketukacayana*) is described in the first *prapathaka* of the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*. The seer of the first *prapathaka* is Aruna which is stated as *arunah kandarsayah* (1.32). The second *prapathaka* entitled *Svadhayabrahmana* deals with the rite of sacred thread, twilight worship, *Kusmanda* sacrifice, initiato and vows. The first and the second *prapathakas* belong to the *Katha* school of the *Krsna Yajurveda*. The third *prapathaka* deals with the formulas for *Caturhotrciti*, *Purusakrticiti*, *Upahoma* etc. The fourth *prapathaka* contains the *Pitmedha* and the cremation rites. The fifth *prapathaka* comprises the *Taittiriya Upanisad*, divided into *Siksavalli*, *Brhamavalli* and *Bhrguvalli*. The sixth *prapathaka* deals with the *Narayanopanisad*, also called *Yajniki Upanisad*. The seventh and eight *prapathakas* contain the *Pravargya* formulas and their *Brahmana*.

Bhattabhaskara and Sayanacarya have commented on the *Aranyaka*. The commentary of Bhattabhaskara is more useful since he provides elaborate, exegetical and grammatical annotations on the accented text of the *Aranyaka*.

### **Check Yur Progress**

1. Give an account of the principal Aranyakas which constitute a part of Vedic literature.
2. Write notes on
  - (i) *Aitareya Aranyaka*
  - (ii) *Sankhayana Aranyaka*
  - (iii) *Taittir Aranyaka*
  - (iv) The commentators of the Aranyakas
  - (v) The Mahavrata ceremony

### **Summing-up**

After going through this unit, you have got an idea of the basic concepts of the Aranyaka literature. You have come to know the meaning of the term aranyaka, the views of traditional and modern scholars on the meaning of the term and the stages that led to the emergence of the Aranyakas. The Aranyakas belonging to each Veda along with this introductory notes on them are furnished to you. Thus, the unit has definitely helped helped yu to acquire the basic knowledge about the Aranyakas, which form an integral part of the Vedic literature.

### **4.8 References and Suggested Readings:**

1. *Aitareyaranyakam*, *Anandasramagranthavalih*, Anandasram Press, Pune, 1992
2. *Taittiriya Aranyaka*, ed. by Sastri A.M. & Rangacarya, K., Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1985.
3. Bhattacharji, S., *Literature in the Vedic Age*, Vol II, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, 1986
4. Macdonell, A.A., *A History o Sanskrit Literature*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1987
5. Sastri, G.A. *History of Vedic Literature*, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata, 2006.
6. Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, Motilal Banrsidass, Delhi, 1987

## UNIT - V

### An Introduction to the Upaniṣadic Literature

#### Contents :-

- 1.1 Objective
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Definition of the Upaniṣad
- 1.4 Number of the Upaniṣad
- 1.5 Principal Upaniṣads
- 1.6 Age of the the Upaniṣad
- 1.7 A brief note on the principal Upaniṣads: (commentary by Śaṅkarācārya)
- 1.8 Summing up
- 1.9 Sample questions
- 1.10 References

#### 1.1 Objective

After reading this unit you will be able to:

*Define* Upaniṣad

*Analyse* the characteristic features of the Upaniṣad

*Describe* the number of Upaniṣad

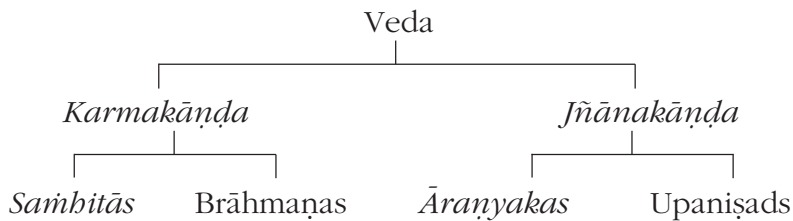
*Discuss* the principal Upaniṣads

#### 1.2 Introduction

The Upaniṣad are a repository of gems of experiences and speculations of ancient Indian seers, which constitute an integral part of Indian culture and civilization. Upaniṣadic discussion are pregnant with metaphysical problems and solutions and proclaim



the eternal truth of life. The beauty and sublimity of expression of the Upaniṣads can hardly be compared to any other literature. Upaniṣads are not the product of a single human mind and a compact single piece of work like those of Bible, Koran etc. The Upaniṣads are actually the outcome unparalleled, untiring endeavors of the ancient sages in their quest for 'truth'. Upaniṣads form a very broad portion of the Vedic literature. The whole Vedic literature is divided into two divisions viz. *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa*. The *Mantra* portion or *Samhitās* are collection of hymns, prayers, incantations etc. The *Samhitās* are the *Ṛg-Veda*, *Sāma-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and *Mantra* portion of the Vedic literature is followed by the *Brāhmaṇas* deal with the sacrificial rites and ceremonies. These are the theosophical treatises written in prose form. Gradually, there develop another new *strata* of the Vedic literature known as the *Āraṇyaka* or forest text. The *Āraṇyaka* are so named because these can be read in the forest and contain everything which was of sacred and mysterious nature. Later on, the speculative part of the *Āraṇyakas* are collected under the title Upaniṣad. The Vedas may be again broadly divided into two divisions according to their themes viz. the *Karmakāṇḍa* or ritualistic section and *Jñānakāṇḍa* or knowledge section. The *Karmakāṇḍa* deals with the sacrificial rites and ceremonies and *Jñānakāṇḍa* deals with the philosophical and theosophical speculation. The Upaniṣads as dealt with *Jñānakāṇḍa* form the source of later philosophical treatise of India. The following diagram shows the main two divisions of Veda :



To understand the Upanisadic literature it is necessary to understand pre-Upanisadic literature. As a pre-Upanisadic literature the four Vedas have tremendous impact on the Upaniṣads. The *Ṛg-Veda*'s impact can be found on *Aitareyopaniṣad* and *Kauṣītakī* Upaniṣads. *Yajur-Veda*'s on *Īśopaniṣad*, *Kathopaniṣad*, *Taittirīyopaniṣad*,

*Svetāśvataropaniṣad*, *Maitrāyaṇopaniṣad*, *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad* and *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad*, *Sāma-Veda's* on *Chāndogyopaniṣad* and *Kenopaniṣad* and *Atharva-Veda's* on *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad* and *Praśnopaniṣad*.

Indian philosophy takes its root in the Upanisadic teachings. The doctrine of Vedānta philosophy is the essence of almost all the major Upaniṣads, the Sāṃkhya owes the doctrine of *Prakṛti* and the theory of three fundamental aspects i.e., *guṇas* to the teachings of the Upaniṣad. Different aspects of Yoga philosophy are reflected in the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*. Mīmāṃsā philosophy has its origin in the *Kaṭhcopaniṣad* etc. The teachings of the Upaniṣadic literature not only have influenced Indian philosophy but also have influenced the literature of the west.

**SAQ**

1. Write what do you know about the different stages of Vedic literature? (100 words)

.....  
.....

2. Name different Upaniṣads related to four Vedas (50 words)

.....  
.....

**1.3 Definition of Upaniṣad :**

It is very difficult to provide an exact definition of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are actually the last portion of the Veda and therefore are named as 'Vedānta' (*veda+anta*), meaning the end of the Veda. Śaṅkarācārya says— *vedānta nāma upaniṣad pramāṇam śārirakasūtradinīca*. However, it can be said that the Upaniṣads are the cream or the very gist of the Vedas; hence in its truest sense the word 'Vedānta' means the essence of the Vedas.

The etymological description of the word 'Upaniṣad' gives a nice picture of what it actually means. In the introduction of the commentary of *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* Śaṅkarācārya mentions that the word Upaniṣad forms as *upa+ni+sad+kvip*. Here *upa* and *ni* are the prefixes and *kvip* is the suffix. According to him the root '*sad*' has three meanings – 1) *viśaraṇa* (to destroy), 2) *gati* (knowledge

or obtaining or gaining) and 3) *avasādana* (to loosen, to enfeeble). According to Śaṅkarācārya the word ‘Upaniṣad’ denotes knowledge. He says that the etymological meaning of the word Upaniṣad denotes knowledge of *Brahman* or Self. This knowledge removes, shatters or destroys the *avidyā* or ignorance or spiritual blindness, which is the seed of all relative existence or worldliness. He describes that those who are desirous of liberation, being devoid of all longings for things seen and heard of, acquires *vidyā* (knowledge) denoted by the word ‘Upaniṣad’. The strict adherence and constant practice of this knowledge destroys the seed of *samsāra* such as *avidyā* (ignorance). In the commentary of the *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* also Śaṅkarācārya explains the term ‘Upaniṣad’ in the same way. He maintains that the term ‘Upaniṣad’ means *Brahmavidyā* or the knowledge of *Brahman* which loosens (*niśātayati*) the bondage, which certainly leads on (*gamayati*) very near to *Brahman* and which completely destroys (*avasādayati*), ignorance the cause of bondage. The same idea is expressed by Śaṅkarācārya in his commentary on other Upaniṣads also. Thus according to him, *Brahmavidyā* is Upaniṣad. In the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* he clearly says ‘*Brahmavidyopaniṣad*’. Moreover Śaṅkarācārya says that the word ‘Upaniṣad’ may be used in the sense of a book also, because both the ‘knowledge’ of the Upaniṣad and the ‘book’ called Upaniṣad, serves the same purpose viz., the establishment of the knowledge of *Brahman*. Therefore, the term ‘Upaniṣad’, according to Śaṅkarācārya, primarily refers to knowledge and secondarily to a book. Moreover in the introduction to his commentary on *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* Śaṅkarācārya says that the word Upaniṣad signifies knowledge (*vidyā*); he who cultivates the knowledge of the Upaniṣad transcends the misery of lying in a womb, of birth and of senility. Etymologically, the word also signifies the knowledge which suppresses the evils of birth, old age etc., or which enables its devotee to realize *Brahman*, or which embodies liberation, or the Highest Good. The commentary of Śaṅkarācārya on *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* also says that the book, too, is called Upaniṣad, because it serves the same purpose. According to Śaṅkarācārya *Agnividya*, the Knowledge of Fire, is also called Upaniṣad.

Some other scholars derive the word from the root *sad*, to sit, with *upa* to mean near, and *ni* meaning down. It would then mean sitting down near the teacher from whom a pupil receives esoteric knowledge. It was the teaching learning process of ancient time in India in which groups of pupils sit near the teacher under a tree to learn from him the truth by which ignorance can be destroyed. Max Muller in his *Sacred Books of the East* seems to echo the same when he says that the Upaniṣads mean an act of sitting down very close to a preceptor and submissively hearing his lesson. Gradually it comes to reproduce the meaning of implicit faith and finally truth of divine revelation.

Another meaning of the word 'Upaniṣad' is *rahasyam*. The knowledge of the Upaniṣad is very inaccessible and depth in its nature and hence this *brahmavidyā* (knowledge of supreme reality) is not mentioned everywhere or cannot be delivered to everybody. That is why it is *rahasyam* and the word Upaniṣad and the *rahasyam* submerged into one another. The Upaniṣads expound a doctrine or view which reveals the secret of an eternally happy or blissful life. Hence these are believed as secret sacred knowledge. The knowledge that found in the Upaniṣads is of a very higher class and has a very significant value. It is clearly mentioned in the Upaniṣads that the knowledge should not be provided to everybody. To obtain the knowledge of the Upaniṣads student must be endowed with qualitative characters. In the *Cbāndogya-Upaniṣad* it is said that this knowledge of *Brahman* should verily be explained by a father to his eldest son or to a worthy disciple, but to none else, even if a man offers the whole world with all its treasures the knowledge should not be delivered to him. The same is mentioned in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* also. There it is mentioned that the knowledge of *Brahman* should not be delivered to anyone other than the son or to a good disciple. In the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad* it is said that those, whose mind and senses are not subdued should not be permitted to acquire the knowledge of the *Brahman*. However, a son or a disciple also may not be fit for receiving the knowledge. In answering to the questions of Hanumāna, Lord Rāma says in the *Muktika-Upaniṣad* that the knowledge of *Upaniṣad* is very secret and should not be imparted to anybody without properly knowing him. Lord Rāma in the *Muktika-Upaniṣad* clearly discusses about

the people who are capable of receiving the knowledge of Upaniṣad and who are not. From the above discussion it is clear that the Upanisadic instruction are secret and hence are correctly known as *rahasyavidyā*.

Another definition of the word 'Upaniṣad' is forwarded by Oldenberg. According to him Upaniṣad means *upāsanā* which originally means adoration, i.e. reverential meditation on Brahman or *Ātman*.

### **Stop To Consider:**

The knowledge of the Vedānta i.e. Upaniṣads embodies the deepest philosophical speculation of the ancient seers. But in the later period the word 'Vedānta' came to mean one of the branches of ancient Indian philosophy like Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mimāṃsā, Vaiśeṣika, and Nyāya. On this point Dr. S. Radhakrishnan is of the view that, 'The Vedānta meant originally the Upaniṣads, though the word is now used for the system of philosophy based on the Upaniṣad'.

### **1.4 Number of the Upaniṣads:**

The number of the Upaniṣad is mentioned differently in different works, hence the exact number of Upaniṣads is not clearly known. Scholars differ on the total number of Upaniṣads. Some of the Upaniṣads are very ancient, but some are of recent origin. G.S. Sathale in his book *The Concordance of Upaniṣadic Sentences* says that though there may be many more, the number of Upaniṣads published so far is one hundred and eight. Among the 108 Upaniṣads *Īśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Chāndogya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Brahmabindu*, *Jābāla*, *Kaivalya*, *Śvetāśvataram*, *Haṅsa*, *Ārūṇika*, *Kauṣītaki*, *Maitrāyaṇi*, *Bṛhajjābāla*, *Mahānārāyaṇam* *Nṛsiṅhatāpanīya* are the more important ones. The *Muktika-Upaniṣad* lists 108 Upaniṣads. There are also counts that give a total number of Upaniṣads in excess of 108; Max Muller is aware of 170, and there are other counts in excess of 200 or even 300. Weber has fixed the total number of Upaniṣads at 235. S.C. Sen in his book *The Mystic Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* discusses about 1180 Upaniṣads, as stated in the *Muktika-Upaniṣad*. He accepts the view of the *Muktika-Upaniṣad* and says that the number of

Upaniṣads are 1180, but the total number of existing Upaniṣads are 123. In this regard V.S. Idaykidath, in his book *Upaniṣads on Education*, says, “Each branch of each Veda is having each Upaniṣad. Thus the total number of Upaniṣads is One Thousand One Hundred and Eighty.” He shows the numbers of branches connected to each Veda are 1180, which are as follows:

<i>Rgved</i> :	21
<i>Yajurved</i> :	109 (for <i>Śuklayajurveda</i> and <i>Kṛṣṇa-yajurveda</i> together)
<i>Sāmaveda</i> :	1000
<i>Atharvaveda</i> :	50

This is, in fact, discussed by the *Muktika-Upaniṣad*. It is stated there that as there were all together 1180 schools of the four Vedas so there ought to be as many Upaniṣads. But the number of the 108 Upaniṣads as given by this Upaniṣad is described as to be the essence of all the treaties of the class. These 108 Upaniṣads are classified according to the four Vedas in the following manner. 10 Upaniṣads coming under the *Rgveda*, 19 under the *Śukla-Yajurveda*, 32 under the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda*, 16 under the *Sāmaveda* and 31 under the *Atharvaveda*.

### SAQ

1. Discuss in detail the definition of Upaniṣad.  
.....  
.....
2. Write a note on the number of the Upaniṣads  
.....  
.....

### 1.5 Principal Upaniṣads :

Traditionally the principal Upaniṣads are accepted to be ten in total, which Śaṅkarācārya has commented upon. The *Muktika* canon of 108 Upaniṣads is headed by ten principal Upaniṣads. The first ten Upaniṣads of the *Muktika* canon are commented upon by 9th century scholar Śaṅkarācārya. These ten principal Upaniṣads are arranged according to the order of the *Muktika* canon as follows:

1. *Īśa*, (*Śukla Yajur Veda*)
2. *Kena*, (*Sāma Veda*)

3. *Kaṭha*, (*Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda*)
4. *Praśna*, (*Atharva Veda*)
5. *Muṇḍaka*, (*Atharva Veda*)
6. *Māṇḍūkya*, (*Atharva Veda*)
7. *Taittirīya*, (*Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda*)
8. *Aitareya*, (*R̥g Veda*)
9. *Chāndogya*, (*Sāma Veda*)
10. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, (*Śukla Yajur Veda*)

S.C. Sen in his book *The Mystic Philosophy of the Upanishads* asserts that there are thirteen Upaniṣads which may be regarded as canonical or authoritative. With the first ten Upaniṣads of the *Muktika* canon he adds the following – *Kauṣītaki*, *Śvetāsvatara* and *Maitrāyaṇa* or *Maitrī*.

According to Max Muller there are 12 principal Upaniṣads. In his book the *Sacred Books of the East* he added the *Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad* and the *Maitrāyaṇīya-Upaniṣad* to the ten principal Upaniṣads mentioned in the *Muktika-Upaniṣad*. Robert Earnest Hume includes the *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad* in the list of the twelve principal Upaniṣads. Hence he accepts thirteen as the principal Upaniṣads. Paul Deussen accepts the number of principal Upaniṣads as fourteen. He includes the *Mahānārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad* in the list of Hume's thirteen principal Upaniṣads. On the other hand William Beidler considers twelve as principal Upaniṣads. He includes *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad* and *Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad* in the list of the *Muktika* canon. But again he said that “of these twelve Upaniṣads we shall fully consider only ten of them, the other two shall be referred to only”. Radhakrishnan in his book *Indian Philosophy* says that among the 108 Upaniṣads ten Upaniṣads, commented by Śaṅkarācārya are the chief. But Radhakrishnan in his book *The Principal Upaniṣads* says, “Śaṅkara commented on eleven. *Īśa-Upaniṣada*, *Kena-Upaniṣad*, *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad*, *Praśna-Upaniṣad*, *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad*, *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad*, *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad*, *Aitareya-Upaniṣad*, *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* and *Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad*. He also refers to *Kauṣītaki*, *Jābāla*, *Mahānārāyaṇa* and *Prīṅgalopaniṣad* in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*. These together with the *Maitrī-Upaniṣad* constitute the principal Upaniṣads”. Swami Ranganathananda clearly accepts the first ten Upaniṣads of the *Muktika* canon as the

Principal Upaniṣads. But he also points it out that there are some scholars who accept eleven as principal Upaniṣads. With the first ten of the *Muktika* canon they include the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*, as they believe that the philosopher and commentator Śaṅkara (9th century) composed commentary of the *Śvetāśvatara* also. Swami Nikhilananda expressing his doubts says that the commentary of this Upaniṣad (*Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*) be possibly written by Śaṅkarācārya. V.S. Idyakidath also offers some points in his book *Upaniṣads on Education* that produces the same doubt. S.R. Talghatti in *Indian Thought*, edited by Donald H. Bishop, says that Principal Upaniṣads are thirteen in number; with he first ten of *Muktika* canon he includes –the *Śvetāśvatara*, the *Kauṣītaki* and the *Maitrī*. Hence scholars differ in their opinion about the exact number of the principal Upaniṣads.

### 1.6 Age of the Upaniṣads:

The Upaniṣads do not belong to a particular period of Sanskrit literature. One can not assign any exact date of the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads are generally dated later than the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas, though some are actually portions of he Brāhmaṇas. The oldest of them are certainly pre-Buddhistic and a few of them are after Buddha. It is likely that the Upaniṣads were composed between the completion of the Vedic hymns and the rise of the Buddhism. The accepted date for the early Upaniṣads are 1000 B.C. to 300 B.C. Some of the later Upaniṣads on which Śaṅkara has commented are post-Buddhistic. R.D. Ranade in his book *A Constructive Survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy* says that the Upaniṣadic age is somewhere between 1200 BC to 600 BC.

On the basis of the writing style, Paul Deussen in his book *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* arrange the Upaniṣads of earlier and later period on the following order :

1. Ancient Prose Upaniṣads: The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad*, *Aitareya-Upaniṣad*, *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad*, *Kena-Upaniṣad* (partly in prose)
2. Verse Upaniṣad: The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad*, *Īśa-Upaniṣad*, *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*, *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad*, *Mahānārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad*.



3. Later Prose Upaniṣads: The *Praśna-Upaniṣad*, *Maitrayanī-Upaniṣad*, *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad*.

Maurice Winternitz in his book *A History of Indian Literature* discusses about the age of the Upaniṣads. He says that the *Aitareya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, *Kauṣītaki* and *Kena* undoubtedly represent the earliest stage of development in the literature of the Upaniṣads. He further says that a few Upaniṣads belong to a period which is somewhat later, and probably pre-Buddhistic. In this category Winternitz includes *Kaṭha*, *Śvetāśvatara*, *Mahānārāyaṇa*, *Īśa*, *Muṇḍaka* and *Praśna*. According to Winternitz *Maitrāyaṇī-Upaniṣad* belongs to a considerably later period which must have been post-Buddhistic and the *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* also belongs to some later period.

Radhakrishnan says that the *Aitareya*, *Kauṣītaki*, *Chāndogya*, *Kena*, *Taittirīya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* together with *Īśa* and *Kaṭha* belong to the eighth and seventh century BC. These are all pre-Buddhistic. These Upaniṣads represent the Vedānta philosophy in its original form and are the earliest philosophical composition of the word. The *Māṇḍūkya* is the latest of the pre-sectarian Upaniṣads. The *Atharvavedic* Upaniṣads are also of later date. The *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad* was composed prior to formulation of several philosophical theories.

The order of the *Muktika* canon of the principal Upaniṣads does not follow the exact chronological sequence of the Upaniṣads. The chronological arrangement of the Upaniṣads is a very tough work. According to R. D. Ranade the order of the thirteen principal Upaniṣads according to their chronological sequence should be as follows:

- I. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya*.
- II. *Īśa* and *Kena*.
- III. *Aitareya*, *Taittirīya* and *Kauṣītaki*.
- IV. *Kaṭha*, *Muṇḍaka* and *Śvetāśvatara*.
- V. *Praśna*, *Maitrī* and *Māṇḍūkya*.

Moreover S.C. Sen in his book *The Mystic Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* also attempts to divide the Upaniṣadic age into three chronological periods. According to him the earliest division may be called the *Āraṇyakopaniṣadic* period, the second division may be called the *Samhitopaniṣadic* period and the third or last division may be called the period of independent Upaniṣads. He

arranges the thirteen Upaniṣads according to their chronological order and respective periods as follows:

- A) The *Āraṇyakopaniṣadic* period: 1) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 2) *Chāndogya*, 3) *Aitareya*, 4) *Kauṣītaki*, 5) *Taittirīya*, (6) *Kena*.
- B) The *Saṃhitopaniṣadic* period: 1) *Kaṭha*, 2) *Śvetāśvatara*, 3) *Īśa*, 4) *Maitrāyaṇa* or *Maitrī*.
- C) The period of independent Upaniṣads: 1) *Muṇḍaka*, 2) *Praśna*, 3) *Māṇḍūkya*.

Some scholars arrange the Upaniṣads on the philosophy contained in them. For example Pandit A. Mahadevan Sastri in his books *Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣads*, *Śaiva Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta Upaniṣads* published by Adyar library arranges Upaniṣads according to the philosophy of those Upaniṣads.

### 1.7 A brief note on the principal Upaniṣads:

#### ***Īsopaniṣad***

The *Īsopaniṣad* is the fortieth *adhyāyā* of *Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā* of the *Śukla Yajurveda Saṃhitā*. The Upaniṣad gets its name from the first word of the very first verse, i.e., *Īśāvāsyam*.

It is one of the smallest Upaniṣads, but beautiful both in thought and expression. It consists of 18 two-line verses in a single chapter arranged in two parts, the first fourteen and the next four; covering a wide spectrum of philosophy, religion, ritualism and metaphysics in a concise manner.

The *Īsopaniṣad* refers to both the discipline of action and the discipline of knowledge. It deals with the problem of the material causality of the world and of man's relation thereto, the nature of the highest truth and the difference between reality and unreality and between knowledge and ignorance. The Upaniṣad delivers the doctrine that neither knowledge of the supernatural nor knowledge of the natural alone can be sufficient for true wisdom. The text discusses the nature of *karma* for the living entities, and it promotes a way of life of simple living, accepting only those things set aside for oneself and a culture of knowledge over ignorance. The reward for correct worship is given as a future life of eternity, bliss and knowledge. Verses nine to fourteen apply to those who cannot ascend the steep path of total renunciation. Some among them engage in the mechanical performance of sacrifices and rituals without understanding the deities behind

such action; and some devote themselves to meditation on the deities without the performance of appropriate rituals. According to the *Īśa-Upaniṣad*, the two disciplines should be harmonized.

The *Īśa-Upaniṣad* is significant amongst the Upaniṣads for its description of the nature of the Supreme Person as the controller (*Īśa*) behind this universe. The Upaniṣad gives a number of seemingly paradoxical descriptions of the Supreme. The last four verses of this Upaniṣad take the form of a series of prayers by the aspirant on his deathbed. Through his prayers he prays to lead his soul through the way of the Gods to *Brahmaloka*, from which he will attain Liberation.

### ***Kenopaniṣad:***

The *Kenopaniṣad* is also known as *Talavakāra* after its *Śākbā*. Nine chapters of the *Talavakāra Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* form the *Kena-Upaniṣad* or *Talavakāra-Upaniṣad*. The Upaniṣad derives its name from the first word *Kena*, meaning “by whom?”

It has four chapters, first two in verse and in the form of question and answers between the teacher and the taught. The other two in prose and are presented as an *Ākhyāyikā* or *Upākhyāna*.

The subject matter of this Upaniṣad covers the enquiry of the nature of the Supreme Spirit and the way to understand it. The main object of this Upaniṣad is to define the idea of *Brahman* as the one absolute spirit and to teach the knowledge of the oneness of *Ātman* and *Brahman*.

The first chapter states that the sense organs and the mind, which are material entities, cannot perform their functions intelligently without the help of *Ātman*, or Pure consciousness. *Ātman* itself cannot be comprehended by any of them, having detached the Self (from the sense organs) and renounced the world, the wise attain to Immortality. In the second chapter it is stated that if an un-illuminated person boasts that he has known *Brahman*, he really knows very little of it. But the truly wise man realizes that the infinite and attributeless *Brahman* can never be an object of knowledge. According to the instruction of the *Kena-Upaniṣad*, *Brahman* should be meditated upon as the Pure Intelligence underlying every mental state. Through the practice

of the proper spiritual disciplines, a seeker can realize *Brahman* in this very life. The third and the fourth chapters describe the inability of the finite senses to realize the infinite *Brahman*. Here the Upaniṣad describes a story of Vāyu, Agni and Indra, through which it is stated that one cannot even have a glimpse of the indwelling *Ātman* unless the evil passions are subdued. The important point is that the *Brahman* is not what can come within the scope of man's ordinary knowledge. The knowledge of the Self, described in the Upaniṣads, is eternal and self-luminous, but it remains veiled by *avidyā* or ignorance. On the destruction of ignorance the revelation of the Self immediately takes place. The means by which ignorance can be destroyed are described as –austerities, self-restraint, truth etc.

**SAQ**

1. *Īsoṇiṣad* belongs to which Veda?
2. What is the meaning of the term *vāsyam* in the first *mantra* of the *Īsoṇiṣad*.
3. What is the meaning of the term *Kena*?

***Kaṭha-Upaniṣad:***

The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* gets its name from a school named *Kaṭha* of the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajur-Veda*, to which the Upaniṣad belongs. Swami Nikhilananda says that the exact relationship of the *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* to the Vedas is a controversial subject, as some associate it with the *Sāma-Veda*, some with the *Yajur-Vada* and others with the *Atharva-Veda*.

The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* consists of two *adhyāyas* (parts/chapters), each of them containing three *vallīs* (creepers/sub-chapters).

The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* is also known as *Kaṭhakopaniṣad*. In this Upaniṣad a beautiful example of the intimate relationship between the teacher and the student, is shown very nicely; in which both of them are in communion with each other. The invocation recited by the teacher and the disciple at the beginning of their discourse reveals that there is a perfect understanding and co-operation between Nāciketā, a truly devoted and ardent seeker after truth, and Yama, the King of Death. Having satisfied with the moral and spiritual fitness of Naciketā for receiving *ātma-*

*jñāna*, Yama teaches him the great secret of immortality. Yama taught that the Self in man is none other than the Spirit behind the universe, which is described in the Vedas through the sacred symbol *Om*. This syllable *Om* is indeed *Brahman* and it is the highest goal and whosoever knows this syllable obtains all that he desires. The *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* repeatedly indicates the results of knowing the Ultimate Reality which is no other than the attainment of immortality. The Upaniṣad aims at inculcating the knowledge of *Brahman* or the necessity of union with God. In this Upaniṣad a clear exposition of the nature of the Self or Ultimate Reality which is emphatically declared as the indwelling Spirit of all beings. The true soul is described here as the inner essence of man which is never born, is ever eternal, and remains unaffected by death or destruction. This Upaniṣad is so important both in thought and expression in the sense that the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* frequently quotes its verses and is deeply inspired by its philosophy.

### ***Praśna-Upaniṣad :***

The *Praśna-Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Atharvaveda*. It is divided into six parts known as *Praśna*.

In this book six sage-philosophers ask various questions to sage Pippalāda, about the real nature of *Paramātmā*. Each of them asks one question to Pippalāda and answer(s) to it forms a chapter in the Upaniṣad. The answers to each of the questions are developed by Pippalāda, within a perspective of great depth. Instead of answering immediately, Pippalāda ask them to take up penance and *brahmacarya* for one year at his place. Upon completion of one year, pupils ask the sage, and then the sage answers their questions. The answers of the Pippalāda evolve a systematic philosophy on creation, human personality and the metaphysical principle in man. The practice of austerity, faith and chastity of body and mind are emphasized as special qualifications on the part of pupils seeking deep spiritual knowledge. At last, the six sages honored sage Pippalāda for his valuable words, saying him as their father who carries them over the infinite ocean of ignorance. The pupils who ask questions are— a) Sukeśān, the son of Bharadvāja, b) Satyakāma, the son of Śibi, c) Sauryāyaṇi, a descendant from the Ganga family, d) Aśvalāyana, a resident of

the Kośala, e) Bhārgava, of the country of Vidarbha, belonging to Bhṛgu Gotra, f) Kabandhī, the son of Katya. The ultimate cause of the world, the Supreme Being, the nature and power of the sound *AUM* and the relation of the Supreme to the constituents of the world are the subjects dealt with in this Upaniṣad. The teacher by removing all the doubts of the students enlighten them with supreme knowledge.

***Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad:***

The *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* is associated with the *Atharvaeda*. It contains three parts or *muṇḍakas*, each of which is subdivided into two sections or *khaṇḍas*; in total this Upaniṣad has 64 *mantras*. The word *muṇḍaka* is derived from the root word *muṇḍ* means to shave. The instruction given in this Upaniṣad has the sharpness of a razor; it cuts off a man's error and ignorance, like a razor. The name also suggests that this Upaniṣad is meant only for the shaven-headed *sannyāsins*, who renounce all the actions prescribed for householders and devote themselves to the cultivation of *Brahmavidyā* or the knowledge of *Brahman*.

It is a *Mantra-Upaniṣad*, i.e., it has the form of a *Mantra* (verse). But, though it is written in verse or *Mantras*, it is not, like other *Mantras*, to be used for sacrificial purposes. It teaches the knowledge of *Brahman*.

The subject matter of this Upaniṣad is to teach the highest knowledge, the knowledge of *Brahman*, which cannot be obtained either by sacrifices or by worship, but by such teaching only as is imparted in the Upaniṣad. With its beautiful style, lucid metres, serious wording, and lofty feelings each *mantra* of this Upaniṣad gives joyous reading. This Upaniṣad divides all knowledge into two categories. The knowledge that leads to Self Realization is called *Parā-Vidyā* or Divine Knowledge and everything else is called *Aparā-Vidyā* or Knowledge of material world. By means of the Higher Knowledge or *Parā-Vidyā* one realizes the Imperishable Truth. This Upaniṣad expounds the greatness of *Parā-Vidyā*. The lower knowledge or *Aparā-Vidyā* includes the teachings of all the Vedas (the sections dealing with rituals and sacrifices) and their auxiliaries; it endows a man with knowledge of the manifested universe and enables him to enjoy material prosperity on earth and happiness in heaven. The

*Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* is notable as the source of the phrase *satyameva jayate*, the national motto of India, appearing in the national emblem having four lions. The Upaniṣad discloses the order of the creation; viz, from *Brahman* is produced food, and from food, life mind, existence, the worlds, works and immortality.

The second chapter of the first *Muṇḍaka* deals with rituals which, when rightly carried out, enable their performers to go to heaven after death. But is also pointed out that after the fruit has been enjoyed they return to earth. Even life in *Brahmaloka*, which some fortunate souls may attain through worship of *Saguṇa Brahman*, does not constitute true Immortality. Neither by sacrifice nor by worship of the Deity can one transcend relativity. The aspirant for Immortality must therefore obtain the knowledge of *Brahman*, by means of which, alone, can ne conquer time, space and death. The second *Muṇḍaka* describes *Brahman* in sublime poetry as the source of all things. It gives a spiritual interpretation of creation, the universe, man, nature and action. As a discipline for attaining the Knowledge of *Brahman*, meditation on *Aum*, the symbol of Supreme Wisdom, is prescribed. The third *Muṇḍaka* states that the individual soul is separated from *Brahman* through ignorance. Through the knowledge of its oneness with *Brahman* it rediscovers its innate greatness and overcomes grief. The Upaniṣad further speaks that the Supreme Self can be realized only through the practice of truthfulness, inner strength, self-control and total renunciation, which is the highest knowledge.

**SAQ**

1. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* belongs to which Veda?

.....  
.....

2. Why it is called *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* ?

.....  
.....

***Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad:***

The *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Atharva-Veda* and named for the sage teacher *Māṇḍūkya*. The *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* is one of the shortest Upaniṣads, it consists of twelve verses. Ācārya

Gauḍapāda, teacher of Govindapāda, who was the teacher of Śaṅkarācārya, has explained this Upaniṣad in two hundred and fifty verses, popularly known as *Gauḍapāda Kārikā*, which constitute the first systematic exposition of Advaita Vedānta.

The Upaniṣad delivers the theory of the four states of consciousness. It says that the knowledge of *Brahman* covers four states of phenomenal experience. It devotes itself entirely to the explanation of the spiritual - syllable *AUM*. The word *AUM* is used in this Upaniṣad as a symbol of *Brahman*. It consists of three letters i.e. A, U, M and they are the symbols of the ordinary states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. But transcending these three states is also a kind of undifferentiated Pure Consciousness – called the fourth, e.g. *turīya*. These four states are known as *Vaiśvānara*, *Taijasa*, *Prajnā*, and *Turīya* respectively. The teacher for this Upaniṣad says that the individual soul is bound by the first three states referred to above. The individual soul should make an endeavour to achieve the state of *Turīya* by overcoming all other states. In the state of *Turīya* the individual soul can enjoy eternal peace and eternal happiness of the non-dual soul. This Upaniṣad says that *AUM* when meditated upon in the proper way, it becomes helpful for one for the realization of *Brahman*. This Upaniṣad is treated as one of the most important one among the principal Upaniṣads. Nowhere in the Upaniṣads was the self treated with as much brilliance and force as here. One of the four great principal sentences of *Mahāvākyas ayamātmā Brahma* (this Self is *Brahman*) is uttered in this Upaniṣad.

Regarding the value and importance of *Maṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* the *Muktika-Upaniṣad* holds a very significant comment. The latter says that for those who are desirous of liberation, the study of only one Upaniṣad, i.e. *Māṇḍūkya*, will be sufficient. Thus is the *Muktika-Upaniṣad* top most position amongst the Upanisadic treaties has been given to *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad*.

### ***Taittirīya-Upaniṣad:***

The *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* is associated with the *Taittirīya* school of the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda*. The seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* form the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* and this Upaniṣad is also found in the collection of the *Atharva-*



*Upaniṣads*. The *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* is so named because it is a part of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*. The word *Taittirīya* comes from the name *Taittiri*, a sage well versed in the knowledge of this Upaniṣad.

The *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* is divided into three sections or *vallī*s, i.e. –the *śikṣā vallī*, the *brahmānanda vallī* and the *bhṛgu vallī*. The first chapter has twelve section, which have altogether twenty-nine verses; the second chapter has nine sections and the same numbers of verses; the third chapter has ten sections which have altogether fourteen verses. In total the Upaniṣad has fifty-two verses.

The *śikṣā vallī* deals with the discipline of *śikṣā* (which is the first of the six *Vadaṅgas*). It is concerned with the science of phonetics and pronunciation. This *vallī* contains the mystical utterances of the sage *Triśaṅku* and his realization of the unity with *Brahman*. Moreover, this *Vallī* also contains the instructions with which a student used to be discharged from the house of his teacher at the end of his education.

The second chapter, i.e. *brahmānanda vallī* of this Upaniṣad is famous for its doctrine of the ‘five sheaths’ of the self – food, breath, mind, intellect and bliss. The human personality is said to be constituted of five sheaths, of which the innermost is the sheath of pure bliss, which is the seat of *Brahman*. Thus, in this Upaniṣad also the ultimate reality of *Brahman* is identified with the innermost essence of man. The special feature of the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* lays in its emphasis on the nature of *Brahman* as pure bliss from which everything proceeds, which sustains everything and to which everything ultimately returns.

The third chapter of *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* gives the story of *Bhṛgu* and *Varuṇa*. It tells about how *Bhṛgu* slowly arrives at a knowledge of *Brahman* in five embodiments.

### ***Aitareya-Upaniṣad:***

The *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* is taken from the second *Āraṇyaka* of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* of the *R̥g-Veda*, where it constitutes the 4th to 6th chapters. The Ṛṣi of *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* and *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* is *Aitareya Mahīdāsa*, the son of *Itarā*, a śūdra woman wife of *Brāhmin Mahīdāsa*. Śaṅkarācārya asserts that this Upaniṣad teaches the self-knowledge which is the goal of life.

The *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* is divided into three chapters; the first is having three sections called *khaṇḍas* and others are having only one each.

In the first chapter of the text, *Ātman*, the inner self, is portrayed as divine creator. In the second chapter, the three births of the *Ātman* are described. The third chapter deals with the qualities of the Self or *Brahman*. It contains one of the most famous expressions of the Vedānta, *prajñānam Brahma*, which is one of the *Mahāvākyas* – the great principal sentence. This Upaniṣad teaches that through real knowledge, one gets away from the process of transmigration and attains immortality. The sage Vāmadevas cited as an instance of one who has thus attained immortality.

### ***Chāndogya-Upaniṣad:***

The *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* is one of the oldest of the Upaniṣads and the second biggest among the ten Principal Upaniṣads. The *Sāma-Veda* includes the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa*, consisting of ten parts; of these, the last eight constitute of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. The last eight parts which constitute the Upaniṣad may be broadly divided into two sections. The first consists of five parts, deals with *upāsana*, or ritualistic worship with emphasis on meditation. The second section, of three parts, discusses certain fundamental doctrines of the Vedānta philosophy; viz. the Vedāntic dictum *tat tvam asi* (treated as *Mahāvākya*) or that thou art, the doctrine of *Bhumā* or Infinity, and the doctrine of *Ātman* (Self). The eight chapters of the text consist of one hundred and forty four sections called *khaṇḍas*. The word *Chāndogāḥ* means one who sings *Sāmaveda* and thus the name *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* was also derived.

The central teaching of the Upaniṣad is the identity of the *Ātman* and the *Brahman*. The references on the *Upaniṣad* of the five celestial fires etc are presented in an attractive style in this Upaniṣad. The *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* begins with the description of the glories of the sacred word *Aum* as the *udgītha* which is considered to be the purest expression of the highest God equivalent to *Brahman*. The second part of the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* glorifies the *Sāma-Veda* – whatever is good is *sāman*, which leads to various results. The third chapter of this Upaniṣad

opens with the glorification of the sun, which is identified with *Madhu* and the knowledge of it is known as the *Madhu-vidyā* (the sweets of all knowledge). The same *vidyā* is also expounded through *Gāyatrī*, which has been chosen, out of several metres, as the means of acquiring the knowledge of *Brahman*. In the fourth chapter the story of Jānaśruti and Raikva shows that goodness without wisdom cannot help a man in achieving the highest goal of life – the spiritual illumination; and the essential qualification required of a disciple is to receive proper instruction from the teacher who is a realized soul. This Upaniṣad says that the status of a *brāhmin* is determined by character rather than by birth. It is demonstrated in the story Satyakāma Jābāla and his truthful mother in the fourth chapter. The Upaniṣad expounds the *Agni-vidyā* and the story of Upakosala Kāmalāyana to show that both faith (*śraddhā*) and austerity (*tapas*) are essential on the part of the student for achieving the highest knowledge in life. The famous story of the Uddālaka and Śvetaketu is found in the sixth chapter of this Upaniṣad. The whole of the sixth chapter of the *Chandogya-Upaniṣad* consists of the teaching of Uddālaka to his son Śvetaketu and the teaching is known as *Sad-vidyā*.

### ***Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad:***

It is the longest, most famous and one of the oldest of all the Upaniṣads. This is the *Brhat* (greatest) among Upaniṣads both in size and theme. It belongs to the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* of *Śukla-Yajurveda*. Of the two versions of the text viz *Mādhyanadina* and *Kāṇva*, Ācārya Śaṅkara accepted the latter and also by successors. Ācārya Śaṅkara gives an explanation to the significance of the name assigned to this text as – this Upaniṣad is having six chapters and it is *āraṇyakam* - forest text; because it is disclosed in the forest and *brhat*–greatest in size. Considering these two aspects it is *Brhadāranyakam*. The name *Brhadāranyaka* means “great forest book”.

The *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* contains six chapters; chapter one, two and four have six parts each and chapter three has nine parts, chapter five has fifteen and chapter six has five parts respectively. In total there are a number of forty-seven chapters, called *brāhmaṇas*. The Upaniṣad has three hundred and thirty-

eight verses. Sureśvarāchārya, in his illuminating explanations (*vārttika*) on Śaṅkara's commentary, has pointed out the harmony between the different parts of the Upaniṣad. He has arranged the Upaniṣad in three divisions (*kāṇḍas*) : the *Madhukāṇḍa*, the *Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa* or *Munikāṇḍa* and the *Khilakāṇḍa*. The *Madhukāṇḍa* covers the first and second chapters of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, the *Yājñavalkyakāṇḍa* or *Munikāṇḍa*, the third and fourth chapters, and the *Khilakāṇḍa* covers the fifth and the sixth chapters. The first *kāṇḍa* contains the revelation of the principal *Advaita* doctrines and is called *upadeśa* (teaching); the second furnishes logical arguments (*upapatti*) showing the soundness of the *upadeśa*, and the third deals with certain forms of meditation (*upāsana*), by means of which the aspirant experiences what is laid down in the *upadeśa*.

One of the best expressions of the philosophical idealism of the Upaniṣads is found in this Upaniṣad in the famous discourse between the great philosopher *Yājñavalkya* and his wife *Maitreyī*. The doctrine of the indescribability of the Absolute, i.e., “*neti, neti*” (not this, not this), is made famous by the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* is generally recognized as the most important of all the Upaniṣads. It speaks of two forms of Reality, visible and invisible, mortal and immortal, empirical and transcendent. It makes an improvement upon the *Taittirīya* view of the self by treating it not merely as pure bliss but also as pure consciousness. This Upaniṣad says that the Self is the dearest of all things and only through the Self is anything else dear. Another *Mahāvākya* *aham Brahmās*, meaning ‘I am *Brahman*’, is attributed to this Upaniṣad.

### **1.8 Summing up :**

In conclusion it can be said that the Upaniṣads are a valuable part of the profound and vast Vedic literature. The great thinkers of the east and the west searching for knowledge have held fast to conviction that the Upaniṣads have profound teaching to impart to the whole mankind. It provides wisdom to inculcate values for leading an enlightened way of life. Hence Upanisadic message is relevant to the man's needs and demand for all ages.

### 1.9 Sample questions :

1. Define Upaniṣad. Name the principal Upaniṣads related to the four Vedas.
2. Give a brief note on the number of Upaniṣads.
3. Write a note on the principal Upaniṣads.
4. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* belongs to which Veda? Why it is called *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*? Write a note on the contents of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*.

### 1.10 References :

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## UNIT - VI

### The Muṇḍakopaniṣad : The Text

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Text
- 2.4 Prose order
- 2.5 Translation
- 2.6 Exposition/Notes
- 2.7 Summing up
- 2.8 Sample Questions
- 2.9 References

#### 2.1 Introduction

The contents of the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* is discussed in the 1st unit. This Upaniṣad is widely read both in the East and in the West and is considered as one of the most perfect specimens of the mystic philosophy of the ancient Hindus. The knowledge of the self is here described in a lucid style. Like some other Upaniṣads, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* gives its instruction in the form of a dialogue between a disciple and his preceptor.

#### 2.2 Objectives

This unit will help you to

- Read the actual text
- Render the prose order of the verses
- Find out the meanings of the verses
- Penetrate deep into the purport of the text.

#### 2.3 मुण्डकेपनिषत् (Text)

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

**प्रथममुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ।**

ॐ ब्रह्मा देवानां प्रथमः सम्बभूव-विश्वस्य कर्ता भुवनस्य गोप्ता  
स ब्रह्मविद्यां सर्वविद्याप्रतिष्ठामथर्वाय ज्येष्ठपुत्राय प्राह ॥ १ ॥

अथर्वणे यां प्रवदेत ब्रह्माऽथर्वा ता पुरोवाचाङ्गिरे ब्रह्मविद्याम्  
स भारद्वाजाय सत्यवहाय प्राह भारद्वाजोऽङ्गिरसे परावराम् ॥ २ ॥

शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ ॥  
कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ॥ ३ ॥

तस्मै स होवाच । द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म  
यद्ब्रह्मविदो विदन्ति परा-चैवापरा च ॥ ४ ॥

तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदो ऽथर्ववेदः शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो  
ज्योतिषमिति । अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते ॥ ५ ॥

यत्तद्रेश्यमग्राह्यमगोत्रमवर्णमचक्षुः श्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम् ।  
नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मतदव्ययं यद्भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ॥ ६ ॥

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः सम्भवन्ति ।  
यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि तथाऽक्षरात्सम्भवतीह विश्वम् ॥ ७ ॥

तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म ततोऽन्नमभिजायते ।  
अन्नात्प्राणो मनः सत्यं लोकाः कर्मसु चामृतम् ॥ ८ ॥

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।  
तस्मादेतद्ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्नं च जायते ॥ ९ ॥

**प्रथममुण्डके द्वितीय खण्डः ।**

तदेतत्सत्यं मन्त्रेषु कर्माणि कवयो यान्यपश्यंस्तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा सन्ततानि ।  
तान्याचरथ नियतं सत्यकामा एष वः पन्थाः सुकृतस्य लोके ॥ १ ॥

यदा लेलायते ह्यचिः समिद्धे हव्यवाहने ।  
तदाज्यभागावन्तरेणाहुतीः प्रतिपादयेत् ॥ २ ॥

यस्याग्निहोत्रमदर्शमपौर्णमासमचातुर्मास्यमनाग्रयणमतिथिवर्जितं च ।  
अहुतमवैश्वदेवमविधिना हुतमाससमांस्तस्य लोकान्दिह नस्ति ॥ ३ ॥

काली कराली च मनोजवा च सुलोहिता या च सुधूम्रवर्णा ।  
स्फुलिङ्गिनी विश्वरुची च देवी लेलायमाना इति सप्त जिह्वाः ॥ ४ ॥

ऐतषु यश्चरते भ्राजमानेषु यथाकालं चाहुतयो ह्याददायन् ।  
तं नयन्त्येताः सूर्यस्य रश्मयो यत्र देवानां पतिरेकोऽधिवासः ॥ ५ ॥

एहोहीति तमाहुतयः सुवर्चसः सूर्यस्य, रश्मिभिर्यजमानं वहन्ति ।  
प्रियां वाचमभवदन्त्योऽर्चयन्त्य एव वः पुण्यः सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोकः ॥ ६ ॥

प्लवा ह्येते अदृढा यज्ञरूपा अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म ।  
एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापि यन्ति ॥ ७ ॥

अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डित मन्यमानाः ।  
जङ्घन्यमानाः परियन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥ ८ ॥

अविद्यायां बहुधा वर्तमाना वयं कृतार्था इत्यभिमन्यन्ति बालाः ।  
यत्कर्मिणो न प्रवेदयन्ति रागात्तेनातुराः क्षीणलोकाश्च्यवन्ते ॥ ९ ॥

इष्टापूर्तं मन्यमाता वरिष्ठं नान्यच्छ्रेयो वेदयन्ते प्रमूढाः ।  
नाकस्य पृष्ठे ते सुकृतेऽनुभूत्वा इमं लोकं हीनतरं वा विशान्ति ॥ १० ॥

तपः श्रद्धे ये ह्युपवसन्त्यरण्ये शान्ता विद्वांसो भैक्ष्यचर्यां चरन्तः ।  
सूर्यद्वारेण ते विरजाः प्रयान्ति यत्रामृतः स पुरुषो ह्यव्ययात्मा ॥ ११ ॥

परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान्ब्राह्मणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ।  
तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥ १२ ॥

तस्मै स विद्वानुपसन्नाय सम्यक्प्रशान्तचित्ताय शमान्विताय ।  
येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम् ॥  
इति प्रथममुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥ इति प्रथममुण्डकम् ॥

### द्वितीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः

तदेतत्सत्यं यथा सुदीप्तात्पावकाद्विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्राशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः ।  
तथाऽक्षराद्विधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापि यन्ति ॥ १ ॥

दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः सबाह्याभ्यन्तरो ह्यजः ।

अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रो ह्यक्षरात्परतः परः ॥ २ ॥

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।

खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥ ३ ॥

अग्निर्मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यौ दिशः श्रोत्रे वाग्विवृताश्च वेदाः ।

वायुःप्राणो हृदयं विश्वमस्य पद्भ्यां पृथिवी ह्येष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥ ४ ॥

तस्मादग्निः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः सोमात्पर्जन्य ओषधयः पृथिव्याम् ।

पुमानेतः सिञ्चति योषितायां बह्वीः प्रजाः पुरुषात्सम्प्रसूताः ॥ ५ ॥



तस्माद्दृचः साम यजूषि दीक्षा यज्ञाश्च सर्वे क्रतवो दक्षिणाश्च ।  
संवत्सरश्च यजमानश्च लोकाः सोमो यत्र पवते यत्र सूर्यः ॥ ६ ॥  
तस्माच्च देवा बहुधा सम्प्रसूताः साध्या मनुष्याः पशवो वयांसि ।  
प्राणापानौ व्रीहियवौ तपश्च श्रद्धा सत्यं ब्रह्मचर्यं विधिश्च ॥ ७ ॥  
सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात् सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः ।  
सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ॥ ८ ॥  
अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वेऽस्मात्स्यन्दन्ते सिन्धवः सर्वरूपाः ।  
अतश्च सर्वा ओषधयो रसश्च येनैष भूतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ॥ ९ ॥  
पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।  
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायांसोऽविद्याग्रन्थिर्विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥ १० ॥  
इति द्वितीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः

### द्वितीयमुण्डके द्वितीय खण्डः

आविः सन्निहितं गुहाचरं नाम महत्पदमत्रैतत्समर्पितम् ।  
एजत्प्राणनिर्गमिषच्च यदेतज्जानथ सदसद्वरेण्यं परं विज्ञानाद्यद्वरिष्ठं प्रजानाम् ॥ १ ॥  
यदर्चिमद्यदणुभ्योऽणु च यस्मिंल्लोका निहिता लोकिनश्च ।  
तदेतदक्षरं ब्रह्म स प्राणस्तदु वाङ्मनः ।  
तदेतत्सत्यं तदमृतं तद्वेद्भ्यं सोम्य विद्धि ॥ २ ॥  
धनुर्गृहीत्वौपरिषदं महास्त्रं शरं ह्युपासानिशितं सन्दधीत ।  
आयम्य तद्भावगतेन चेतसा लक्ष्यं तदेवाक्षरं सोम्य विद्धि ॥ ३ ॥  
प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।  
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्भ्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥ ४ ॥  
यस्मिन्द्यौः पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षमोतं मनः सह प्राणैश्च सर्वैः ।  
तमेवैकं जानथ आत्मानमन्या वाचो विमुञ्चथामृतस्यैष सेतुः ॥ ५ ॥  
अरा इव रथनाभौ संहता यत्र नाड्यः  
स एषोऽन्तश्चरते बहुधा जायमानः ।  
ओमित्येवं ध्यायथ आत्मानं  
स्वस्ति वः पाराय तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ६ ॥  
यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्यैष महिमा भुवि ।  
दिव्ये ब्रह्मपुरे ह्येष व्योमन्यात्मा प्रतिष्ठितः ॥  
मनोमयः प्राणशरीरनेता प्रतिष्ठितोऽन्ने हृदयं सन्निधाय ।  
तद्विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीरा आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति ॥ ७ ॥  
भिद्यते हृदय ग्रन्थिस्थिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः  
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥ ८ ॥  
हिरण्मये परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम् ।  
तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिस्तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः ॥ ९ ॥  
न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं  
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं

तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ १० ॥  
ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद्ब्रह्म पश्चाद्ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण ।  
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥ ११ ॥  
इति द्वितीयमुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

**SAQ :**

1. Write the benedictory verse of the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* with its meaning.
2. To whom Aṅgirā narrated Parā and Aparā Vidyā?

**तृतीय मुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः**

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सरवाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।  
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्ति अनश्रन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥ १ ॥  
समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः ।  
जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥ २ ॥  
यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।  
तदा विद्वान्पुण्यपापे विधूय निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति ॥ ३ ॥  
प्राणो ह्येष यः सर्वभूतैर्विभाति विज्ञानन्विद्वान्भवते नातिवादी ।  
आत्मक्रीड आत्मरतिः क्रियावानेष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ॥ ४ ॥  
सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।  
अन्तः शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यतयः भीणदोषाः ॥ ५ ॥  
सत्यमेव जयति नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।  
येनाक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामा यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥ ६ ॥  
बृहच्च तद्विव्यमचिन्त्यरूपं सूक्ष्माच्च तत्सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति ।  
दूरात्सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च पश्यत्स्वहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ॥ ७ ॥  
न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा नान्यैर्देवैस्तपसा कर्मणा वा ।  
ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वस्ततस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ॥ ८ ॥  
एषोऽगुरात्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यो यस्मिन्प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश ।  
प्राणौश्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां यस्मिन्विशुद्धे विभवत्येष आत्मा ॥ ९ ॥  
मनत्मा सविमाति विशुदुसत्तः कामयते यांश्च कामान तंतं लोकं ।  
यं तं लोकं जयते तांश्च कामांस्तस्मादात्मज्ञं ह्यर्चयेद् भूतिकामः ॥ १० ॥  
इति तृतीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः

**तृतीयमुण्डके द्वितीय खण्डः**

स वेदैतत्परमं ब्रह्म धाम यत्र विश्वं निहितं भाति शुभ्रम् ।  
उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामास्ते शुक्रमेतदतिवर्तन्ति धीराः ॥ १ ॥  
कामान्यः कामयते मन्यमानः स कामभिर्जायते तत्र तत्र ।  
पर्याप्तकामस्य कृतात्मनस्तु इहैव सर्वे प्रविलीयन्ति कामाः ॥ २ ॥  
नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ॥ ३ ॥  
नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाऽप्यलिङ्गात् ।  
एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वांस्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्म धाम् ॥ ४ ॥  
सम्प्राप्यैनमृषयो ज्ञानतृप्ताः कृतात्मानो वीतरागाः प्रशान्ताः ।  
ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्त धीरा युक्तात्मानः सर्वमेवाविशान्ति ॥ ५ ॥  
वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः सन्न्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।  
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥ ६ ॥  
गताः कलाः पञ्चदश प्रतिष्ठा देवाश्च सर्वे प्रतिदेवतासु ।  
कर्माणि विज्ञानमयश्च आत्मा परेऽव्यये सर्व एकीभवन्ति ॥ ७ ॥  
यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।  
तथा विद्वान्नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ ८ ॥  
स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति मास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति ।  
तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥ ९ ॥  
तदेतदृचाऽभ्युक्तम् —  
क्रियावन्तः श्रोत्रिया ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः स्वयं जुह्वत एकर्षिं श्रद्धयन्तः ।  
तेषामेवैतां ब्रह्मविद्यां वदेत शिरोव्रतं विधिवद्यैस्तु चीर्णम् ॥ १० ॥  
तदेतत्सत्यमृषिरङ्गिराः पुरोवाच नैतदचीर्णव्रतोऽधीते ।  
नमः परमऋषिभ्यो नमः परमऋषिभ्योः ॥ ११ ॥  
इति तृतीयमुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः  
ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिरिति शान्तिः ।  
इत्यथर्ववेदीया मुण्डकोपनिषत्समाप्ता ॥

## 2.4 Prose order प्रथममुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः

विश्वस्य कर्ता, भुवनस्य गोप्ता ब्रह्मा देवानां प्रथमः संवभूव । सः सर्वविद्या-प्रतिष्ठां ब्रह्मविद्यां  
ज्येष्ठपुत्राय अथर्वाय प्राह । (I.i.1)  
ब्रह्मा अथर्वणे याम् प्रवदेत अथर्वा तां ब्रह्मविद्याम् अङ्गिरे पुरा उवाच । सः भारद्वाजाय  
सत्यवहाय प्राह ! भारद्वाजः परावरां अङ्गिरसे (आह) । (I.i.2)  
महाशालः शौनकः विधिवत् उपसन्नः अङ्गिरसं प्रपच्छ ह वै— भगवः कस्मिन् नु विज्ञाते  
इदं सर्वं विज्ञातं भवति इति । (I.i.3)  
तस्मै सः उवाच – इति हस्म ब्रह्मविदः वदन्ति द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये यत् परा च एव अपरा  
च । (I.i.4)  
तत्र ऋग्वेदः, यजुर्वेदः, सामवेदः, शिक्षा, कल्प, व्याकरणम्, निरुक्तं, छन्दः ज्योतिषम्  
इति अपराः । अथ यया तत् अक्षरम् अधिगम्यते (सा एव) परा । (I.i.5)  
तत् यत् अद्रेश्यम्, अग्राह्यम्, अगोत्रम्, अवर्णम्, अचक्षुः श्रोत्रम् तत् अपाणिपादम्, नित्यं,  
विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तत् अव्ययं यत् भूतयोनिं धीराः परिपश्यन्ति । (I.i.6)  
यथा उर्णनाभिः (तन्तून) सृजते गृह्णते च, यथा पृथिव्याम् ओषधयः सम्भवन्ति, यथा सतः  
पुरूषात् केशलोमानि (जायन्ते) तथा इह अक्षरात् विश्वः सम्भवति । (I.i.7)  
तपसा ब्रह्म चीयते ततः अन्नम् अभिजायते, अन्नात् प्राणः, मनः सत्यम् लोकाः कर्मसु

अमृतं च। (I.i.8)

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् यस्य तपः ज्ञानमयम् तस्मात् एतत् ब्रह्म नाम रूपम् अन्नं च जायते।  
(I.i.9)

### प्रथममुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः

तत् एतत् सत्यम् - मन्त्रेषु कवयः यानि कर्माणि अपश्यन् तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा सन्तानि,  
(यूयं) सत्यकामाः नियतं तानि आचरथ। सुकृतस्व लोके एषः वः पन्थाः। (I.ii.1)

यदा हि समिद्धे अर्चिः लेलायते, तदा आज्यभागौ अन्तरेण आहुतीः प्रतिपादयेत्। (I.ii.2)

यस्य अग्निहोत्रम् अदर्शम् अपौर्णमासम् अचातुर्मास्यम् अनाग्रयणम् अतिथिवर्जितम् अहुतम्  
अवैश्वदेवम् अविधिना हुतं (भवति) तस्य आसप्तमान् लोकान् (इदम्) हिनस्ति। (I.ii.3)

काली कराली च मनोजवा, सुलोहिता सुधूर्मवर्णा, स्फुलिङ्गिनी, देवी विश्वरूची च, इति  
लेलायमानः सप्तजिह्वाः। (I.ii.4)

भ्राजमानेषु एतेषु यथाकालं च यः चरते, एताः आहुतयः सूर्यस्य रश्मयः तम् आददायन्  
(तत्र) नयन्ति, यत्र देवानां एकः पतिः अधिवासः। (I.ii.5)

सुर्वचसः आहुतयः एहि एहि इति, एषः वः पुण्यः सुकृतः ब्रह्मलोकः - इति प्रियां वाचम्  
अभिवदन्त्यः अर्चयन्त्यः तं यजमानं सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिः वहन्ति। (I.ii.6)

एते हि अष्टादश यज्ञरूपाः प्लवाः अदृढा येषु अवरं कर्म उक्तम्, ये मूढाः एतत् श्रेयः  
अभिनन्दन्ति ते पुनः एव जरामृत्युम् अपियन्ति। (I.ii.7)

अविद्यायाम् अन्तरे वर्तमानाः (अपि) स्वयं धीराः पण्डितमन्यमानाः मूढाः जङ्घन्यमानाः  
(सन्तः) अन्धेन नीयमानाः यथा अन्धाः परियन्ति। (I.ii.8)

अविद्यायां बहुधा वर्तमानाः वालाः वयं कृतार्थः इति अभिमन्यन्ति, यत् रागात् कर्मिणः न  
प्रवेदयन्ति तेन क्षीणलोकाः आतुराः (सन्तः) च्यवन्ते। (I.ii.9)

प्रमूढाः इष्टापूर्तं वरिष्ठं मन्यमानाः अन्यत् श्रेयः न वेदयन्ते, ते सुकृते नाकस्य पृष्ठे अनुभूत्वा  
इमं हीनतरं वा लोकं विशन्ति। (I.ii.10)

ये हि शान्ताः विद्वांसः भैक्षचर्यां चरन्तः अरण्ये तपः श्रद्धे उपवसन्ति ते विरजाः (सन्तः)  
सूर्यद्वारेण तत्र प्रयान्ति यत्र सः अमृतं अव्ययात्मा पुरुषः (अस्ति)। (I.ii.11)

कर्मचितान् लोकान् परीक्ष्य ब्राह्मणः निर्वेदम् आयात् (यतः) कृतेन अकृतः न अस्ति तत्  
विज्ञानार्थं सः समित्पाणिः (सन्) श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठं गुरूम् एव अभिगच्छेत्। (I.ii.12)

सः विद्वान् सम्यक् प्रशान्तचित्ताय रामान्विताय उपासत्राय तस्मै येन सत्यम् अक्षरं पुरुषं  
वेदं तां ब्रह्मविद्याम् तत्त्वतः प्रोवाच। (I.ii.13)

### द्वितीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः

तत् एतत् सत्यम्, यथा सुदीप्तात् पावकात् सरुपाः विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्रशः, प्रमवन्ते सोम्य,  
तथा अक्षरात् विविधाः भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र च एव अपियन्ति। (II.i.1)

(सः) दिव्यः पुरुषः हि अमूर्तः सवाह्याभ्यन्तर, हि अजः अप्राणः, हि अमनाः, शुभ्रः हि  
अक्षरात् परतः परः। (II.i.2)

एतस्मात् प्राणः मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि खं वायुः ज्योतिः आपः विश्वस्व धारिणी पृथिवी च  
जायते। (II.i.3)

अस्य मूर्धा अग्निः, चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यो, दिशः श्रोत्रे, विवृताः वेदाः च वाक्, वायुः प्राणः

हृदयं विश्वम् अस्य पद्भ्यां पृथिवी, एषः हि सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा । (II.i.4)  
सूर्य यस्य समिधः (सः) अग्निः तस्मात् सोमात् पर्जन्यः (तस्मात्) पृथिव्याम् ओषधयः  
च लोकाः (जाताः) यत्र सोमः पवते यत्र सूर्य (तपते) (II.i.6)  
तस्मात् च बहुधाः देवाः सम्प्रसूताः, साध्याः मनुष्याः पशवः वयांसि, प्राणापानौ, व्रीहियवौ  
तपः च श्रद्धा सत्यम्, ब्रह्मचर्यं विधिः च (सम्प्रसूताः च) (II.i.7)  
तस्मात् सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति, सप्त अर्चिषः सप्त समिधः सप्त होमाः इमे सप्त लोकाः येषु  
सप्त सप्त निहिताः गुहाशयाः प्राणाः चरन्ति । (II.i.8)  
अतः सर्वे समुद्राः गिरयः च (उत्पन्नाः) अस्मात् सर्वरूपा सिन्धवः स्यन्दन्ते, अतः च  
सर्वाः ओषधयः रसः च येन हि एषः अन्तरात्मा भूतैः तिष्ठते । (II.i.9)  
पुरुष एव इदं विश्वं, कर्म तपः यः एतत् परामृतं ब्रह्म गुहायां निहितं वेद सोम्य, सः इह  
अविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरति । (II.i.10)

### द्वितीयमुण्डके द्वितीय खण्डः

(ब्रह्म) आविः, सन्निहितं गुहाचरं नाम, महत् पदम् अत्र (यत्) एजत्, प्राणत्, निमिषत्,  
यत् एतत् समर्पितं यत् सत् असत् वरेण्यं वरिष्ठं प्रजानां विज्ञानात् परं (तत्) जानथ ।  
(II.ii.1)  
यत् अर्चिमत् यत् अणुभ्यः अणु च यस्मिन् लोकाः लोकिनः च निहिताः तत् एतत् अक्षरं  
ब्रह्म सः प्राणः तत् उ वाक् मनः तत् एतत् सत्यं तत् अमृतम् सोम्य तत् वेद्ध्यं विद्धि ।  
(II.ii.2)  
औपनिषदं महास्त्रं धनुः गृहीत्वा उपासानिशितं शरं सन्धयीत, सोम्य, धनुः आषम्य  
तद्वावगतेन चेतसा लक्ष्यं तत् अक्षरम् एव विद्धि । (II.ii.3)  
प्रणवः धनु, आत्मा हि शरः, ब्रह्म तत् लक्ष्यम् उद्यते, अप्रमत्तेन वेद्ध्यं (ततः) शरवत्  
तन्मयः भवेत् । (II.ii.4)  
द्यौः पृथिवी अन्तरिक्षं च सर्वैः प्राणैः सह मनः च यस्मिन् ओतं तम् एकम् आत्मानम् एव  
जानथ अन्याः वाचः विमुञ्चथ, एषः अमृतस्य सेतुः । (II.ii.5)  
रथनाभौ अराः इव यत्र नाड्यः संहताः (सन्ति) (तत्र) सः एषः बहुधा जायमानः अन्तः  
चरते, आत्मानं ओम् इति एवं ध्यायथ, तमसः परस्तात् पाराय वः स्वस्ति (अस्तु) ।  
(II.ii.6)  
यः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् भुवि यस्य एषः महिमा, एष आत्मा हि दिव्ये ब्रह्मपुरे व्योम्नि  
प्रतिष्ठितः । (II.ii.7)  
मनोमयः प्राणशरीरनेता हृदयं सन्निधाय अन्ने प्रतिष्ठित, धीराः विज्ञानेन तत् परिपश्यन्ति,  
यत् आनन्दरूपम् अमृतं विभाति । (II.ii.8)  
तस्मिन् परावरे दृष्टे अस्य हृदयग्रन्थिः भिद्यते, सर्वसंशयाः धिद्यन्ते, कर्माणि क्षीयन्ते च ।  
(II.ii.9)  
हिरण्मये परे कोशे विरजं निष्कलं ब्रह्म (अस्ति), तत् शुभ्रं तत् जोतिषां ज्योतिः यत्  
आत्मविदः विदुः । (II.ii.10)  
तत्र सूर्यः न भाति न चन्द्रतारकम् इमाः विद्युतः न भान्ति, अयम् अग्निः कुतः, भान्तं तम्  
एव सर्वम् अनुभाति तस्य भासा सर्वम् इदं विभाति । (II.ii.11)  
इदम् अमृतं ब्रह्म एव पुरस्तात्, ब्रह्म पश्चात्, ब्रह्म दक्षिणतः उत्तरेण च (तत्) ऊर्ध्वम् अधः  
च प्रसृतं इदं ब्रह्म एव इदं विश्वम् वरिष्ठं एव । (II.ii.12)

### तृतीयमुण्डके प्रथम खण्डः

सयुजा सरवाया द्वा सुपर्णा समानं वृक्षं परिष्वजाते तयोः अन्यः स्वादु पिप्पलम् अति  
अन्य अनशनन् अभिचाकशीति । (III.i.1)  
पुरुषः समाने वृक्षे निमग्नः अनीशया मुह्यमानः (सन्) शोचति, (सः) यदा अन्यं जुष्टम्  
ईशं पश्यति, अस्य महिमानम् इति वीतशोकः ( भवति) । (III.i.2)  
यदा पश्यः रूक्मवर्णं कर्तारं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ईशं पुरुषं पश्यते तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय  
निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यम् उपैति । (III.i.3)  
यः सर्वभूतैः विभाति एषः हि प्राणः विद्वान् विजानन् अतिवादी न भवते, एषः आत्मक्रीड  
आत्मरतिः क्रियावान्, एषः ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः । (III.i.4)  
एषः ज्योतिर्मयः शुभ्रः हि आत्मा अन्तःशरीरे नित्यं सत्येन तपसा सम्यक् ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण  
लभ्यः यं क्षीण-दोषाः यतयः पश्यन्ति । (III.i.5)  
सत्यम् एव जयते, न अमृतं विततः देवयान पन्थाः सत्येन (लभ्यः) येन आप्तकामाः  
ऋषयः (तत्रः) आक्रमन्ति, यत्र सत्यस्य तत् परमं निधानम् । (III.i.6)  
तत् वृहत् दिव्यम् अचिन्त्यरूपं तत् सूक्ष्मात् च सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति, तत् दूरात् सुदूरे अन्तिके  
च इह पश्यत्सु इह एव गुहायां च निहितम् (अस्ति) । III.i.7)  
(तत्) चक्षुषा न गृह्यते वाचा अपि न, अन्यैः देवैः न, तपसा कर्मणा वा (न), ज्ञानप्रसादेन  
विशुद्धसत्वः ततः (साधकः) ध्यायमानः तं निष्कलं पश्यते । (III.i.8)  
एषः अणुः आत्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यः यस्मिन् प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश प्राणैः प्रजानां सर्व  
चित्तं ओतं यस्मिन् विशुद्धे (सति) एषः आत्मा विभवति । (III.i.9)  
विशुद्धसत्वः यं यं लोकं मनसा संविभाति यान् च कामान् कामयते (सः) तं तं लोकं  
जयते तान् च कामान् (लभते) तस्मात् भूतिकामः आत्मज्ञं हि अर्चयेत् । (III.i.10)

### तृतीयमुण्डके द्वितीयखण्डः

सः एतत् परमं धाम ब्रह्म वेद, यत्र विश्वं निहितं (अस्ति), (यत्) शुभ्रं भाति, ये अकामाः  
धीराः हि पुरुषम् उपासते ते एतत् शुक्रम् अतिवर्तन्ति । (III.ii.1)  
यः कामान् मन्यमानः कामयते सः कामभिः तत्र तत्र जाचते, पर्याप्तकामस्य कृतात्मनः तु  
सर्वे कामाः इह एव प्रविलीयन्ति । (III.ii.2)  
अयम् आत्मा प्रवचनेन न लभ्यः न मेधया बहुना श्रुतेन न, एषः यम् एव वृणुते तेन एव  
लभ्यः, तस्य एषः आत्मा स्वां तनुं विवृणुते । (III.ii.3)  
अयम् आत्मा वलहीनेन न लभ्यः प्रमादात् न च अलिङ्गात् तपसः वा अपि (न) यः तु  
विद्वान् एतैः उपायैः यतते तस्य एषः आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम । (III.ii.4)  
एनं संप्राप्य ऋषयः ज्ञानतृप्ताः कृतात्मानः वीतरागाः प्रशान्ताः ( भवन्ति), युक्तात्मानः ते  
धीराः सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य सर्वम् एव आविशान्ति । (III.ii.5)  
वेदान्त-विज्ञान-सुनिश्चितार्थाः सन्न्यासयोगात् शुद्धसत्त्वाः ते सर्वे यतयः परामृताः परान्तकाले  
ब्रह्मलोकेषु परिमुच्यन्ति । (III.ii.6)  
पञ्चदशकलाः प्रतिष्ठाः गताः ( भवन्ति) सर्वे देवाः च प्रतिदेवतासु (गताः भवन्ति) कर्माणि  
विज्ञानमयः च आत्मा सर्वे परे अव्यये एकीभवन्ति । (III.ii.7)  
यथा स्यन्दमानाः नद्य नामरूपे विहाय समुद्रे अस्तं गच्छन्ति तथा विद्वान् नामरूपात् विमुक्तः  
परात् परं दिव्यं पुरुषम् उपैति । (III.ii.8)

यः ह वै तत् परमं ब्रह्म वेद सः ब्रह्म एव भवति अस्य कुले अब्रह्मवित् न भवति (सः)  
शोकं तरति पापमानं तरति गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यः विमुक्तः (सन्) अमृतः भवति । (III.ii.9)  
ऋचा तत् एतत् अभ्युक्तं (ये) क्रियावन्तः श्रोत्रियाः ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः (पुरुषाः) श्रद्धयन्तः  
स्वयम् एकर्षिं जुह्वते यैः तु विधिवत् शिरोव्रतं चीर्णं तेषाम् एव एतां ब्रह्मविद्यां वदेत ।  
(III.ii.10)  
पुरा ऋषिः अङ्गिराः तत् एतत् सत्यम् उवाच अचीर्णव्रतः एतत् न अधीते परमऋषिभ्यः  
नमः परमऋषिभ्यः नमः । (III.ii.11)

## 2.5 Translation

### INVOCATION:

OM, MAY WE, O Gods, hear with our ears what is auspicious!  
May we, o worshipful gods, see with our eyes what is good! May  
we, strong in limb and body, sing your praise and enjoy the life  
allotted to us by Prajapati!

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!

### *Muṇḍaka, First Khaṇḍa*

OM. Brahma, the maker of the universe and the preserver  
of the world, was the first among the devas. He told his eldest  
son Atharva about the knowledge of Brahman, the foundation of  
all knowledge. (I.i.1)

The knowledge of Brahman about which Brahmā told  
Atharva, Atharva in olden times told Aṅgir, Aṅgir, taught it to  
Satyavaha, belonging to the clan of Bharadvāja, and the latter  
taught it, in succession, to Angiras. (I.i.2)

Śaunaka, the great householder, approached Angiras in the  
proper manner and said: Revered Sir, what is that by the knowing  
of which all this becomes known? (I.i.3)

To him he said, two kinds of knowledge must be known -  
that is what the knowers of Brahman tell us. They are the Higher  
knowledge and the lower knowledge. (I.i.4)

Of these two, the lower knowledge in the *R̥g-Veda*, the *Yajur-  
Veda*, the *Sāma-Veda*, the *Atharva-Veda*, Śikṣā (phonetics), Kalpa  
(rituals), Vyākaraṇam (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chandas  
(metre), and Jyotis (astronomy); and the Higher knowledge is  
that by which the Imperishable Brahman is attained. (I.i.5)

By means of Higher knowledge the wise behold every-where  
Brahman, which otherwise cannot be seen or seized, which has  
no root or attributes, no eyes or ears, no hands or feet; which is

eternal and omnipresent, all-prevading and extremely subtle, which is imperishable and the source of all beings. (I.i.6)

As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow on the earth, as hair grows on the head and the body of a living man – so does everything in the Universe arise from the Imperishable. (I.i.7)

Brahman expands by means of austerity and from it primal matter is produced; from matter, Prāṇa from Prāṇa, mind from mind, the elements from the elements, the worlds thence work and form the works, their immortal fruits. (I.i.8)

From Him who knows all and understands everything, whose austerity consists of knowledge - from Him, the Imperishable Brahman, are born Brahmā, name form and food. (I.i.9)

### ***First Muṇḍaka, Second Kāṇḍa***

This is the truth : The sacrificial works which were revealed to the ṛsis in the hymns have been described in many ways in the three Vedas. Practise them, being desirous to attain their true results. This is your path leading to the fruits of your works. (I.ii.1)

When the fire is well lighted and the flames flicker, let a man offer his oblations in the space between the two portions of melted butter. (I.ii.2)

Where Agnihotra, darśa and Puruṣamāsa sacrifices are not performed, where Caturmāsya sacrifice is not performed, where sacrifices are not held at the beginning of the autumn season, where guests are not honoured properly where vaiśyadeva rites are not performed – on that place if Yajamāna performs Agnihotra sacrifice he is annihilated along with his ancestors. (I.ii.3)

Kālī, Karālī, Manojavā, Sulohitā, Sudhumravarṇā, Sphulinginī and the luminous Viśvaruchi – these seven, flickering about, form the seven tongues of the fire. (I.ii.4)

A man who performs the sacrifices when these flames are shining, and offers oblations at the right time, is carried by these oblations on the rays of the sun to where dwells the sole sovereign of the gods. (I.ii.5)

The luminous oblations say to the sacrificer : ‘Come hither! come hither! and lead him on the rays of the sun, worshipping him all the while and greeting him with the pleasant words: This is the holy heaven of Brahmā, earned by your good deeds. (I.ii.6)



But frail indeed are those rafts of sacrifices, conducted by eighteen persons, upon whom rests the inferior work, therefore they are destructible. Fools who rejoice in them as the Highest Good fall victims again and again to old age and death. (I.ii.7)

Fools, dwelling in darkness, but wise in their own conceit and puffed up with vain scholarship, wander about, being afflicted by many ills, like blind men led by the blind. (I.ii.8)

Children, immersed in ignorance in various ways, flatter themselves, saying: we have accomplished life's purpose. Because these performers of *karma* do not know the truth owing to their attachment, they fall from heaven, misery-stricken, when the fruit of their work is exhausted. (I.ii.9)

Ignorant fools, regarding sacrifices and humanitarian works as the highest, do not know any higher good. Having enjoyed their rewards on the heights of heaven, gained by good works, they enter again this world or a lower one. (I.ii.10)

But those wise men of tranquil minds who live in the forest on alms, practising penance appropriate to their stations of life and contemplating such deities as Hiranyagarbha, depart, freed from impurities, by the path of the sun, to the place where that immortal person dwells whose nature is imperishable. (I.ii.11)

Let a brahmin, after having examined all these worlds that are gained by works, acquire freedom from desires; nothing that is eternal can be produced by what is not eternal. In order that he may understand that Eternal, let him, fuel in hand approach a guru who is well versed in the Vedas and always devoted to Brahman, (I.ii.12)

To that Pupil who has duly approached him, whose mind is completely serene, and whose senses are controlled, the wise teacher should indeed rightly impart the knowledge of Brahman, through which one knows the immutable and the true *puruṣa*. (I.ii.13)

### ***Second Muṇḍaka, First Khaṇḍa***

This is the Truth: As, from a blazing fire, sparks essentially akin to it fly forth by the thousand, so also, my good friend, do various beings come forth from the imperishable Brahman and unto Him again return. (II.i.1)

He is the self-luminous and formless *puruṣa*, uncreated and existing both within and without. He is devoid of *Prāṇa*, devoid

of mind, pure, and higher than the supreme Imperishable. (II.i.2)

Of Him are born *Prāṇa*, mind, all the sense-organs, *ākāśa*, air, fire, water, and earth, which supports all (II.i.3)

The heavens are His head, the sun and moon, His eyes; the quarters, His ears; the revealed Vedas, His speech; the wind is his breath; the universe, His heart. From His feet is produced the earth. He is, indeed, the inner self of all beings. (II.i.4)

From Him comes the Fire (i.e. the heaven) whose fuel in the sun : from the moon comes rain; from rain, the herbs that grow on the earth; from the herbs, the seminal fluid which a man pours into a woman. Thus many living beings are born of the Puruṣa. (II.i.5)

From Him have come the Ṛk, the Sāman, the Yajus, the Dikṣā, all sacrifices, the Kratus, gifts, the year, the sacrificer and the worlds which the moon sanctifies and sun illumines. (II.i.6)

By Him are begotten the various devas, the *sādhyas*, men, cattle, birds, and also *prāṇa* and *apāna*, rice and corn, penance, faith, truth, continence and law. (II.i.7)

From that Puruṣa arise seven sense organs, seven action related to sense organs, seven objects, seven knowledge related to objects and seven *prāṇa*. (II.i.8)

From Him come all the oceans and the mountains; from Him flow rivers of every kind; from Him have come, as well, all plants and favours, by which the inner self subsists surrounded by the elements. (II.i.9)

The Puruṣa alone is verily the universe, which consists of work and austerity. O my good friend, he who knows this Brahman – the Supreme and the Immortal, hidden in the cave of the heart - cuts asunder even here the knot of Ignorance. (II.i.10)

### ***Second Muṇḍaka, Second Khaṇḍa***

The radiant Brahman dwells in the cave of the heart and is known to move there. It is the great support of all; for in it is centred everything that moves, breathes, and blinks. O disciples, know that to be your self - that which is both gross and subtle, which is adorable, supreme, and beyond the understanding of creatures (II.ii.1)

That which is radiant, subtler than the subtle, that by which all the worlds and their inhabitants are supported – that, verily, is the indestructible Brahman, that is the *prāṇa*, speech, and the

mind. That is the true and that is the Immortal. That alone is to be struck. Strike it, my good friend. (II.ii.2)

Take the Upaniṣad as the below, the great weapon, and place upon it the arrow sharpened by meditation. Then having drawn it back with a mind directed to the thought of Brahman, strike that mark, o my good friend – that which is the imperishable. (II.ii.3)

Om is the bow; the *ātman* is the arrow; Brahman is said to be the mark. It is to be struck by an undistracted mind. Then the *ātman* becomes one with Brahman, as the arrow with the target. (II.ii.4)

In Him are woven heaven, earth and the space between, and the mind with all the sense-organs. Know that non-dual *ātman* alone and give up all other talk. He is the bridge to Immortality. (II.ii.5)

Just like the arrows of the chariot, heart is also enriched with veins and on the deepest place of the heart the soul exists. Considering that the soul is on one should meditate on this. Oh the disciple! may you be able to across the darkness of ignorance without any obstacle. (II.ii.6)

He moves about, becoming manifold, within the heart, where the arteries meet, like the spokes fastened in the nave of a chariot wheel. Meditate on *ātman* as om. Hail to you! may you cross beyond the sea of darkness.

He who knows all and understands all, and to whom belongs all the glory in the world – He, *ātman*, is placed in the space in the effulgent abode of Brahman. He assumes the forms of the mind and leads the body and the sense. He dwells in the body, inside the heart. By the knowledge of that which shines as the blissful and immortal *ātman*, the wise behold Him full in all things. (II.ii.7)

The fetters of the heart are broken, all doubts are resolved, and all works cease to bear fruit, when He is beheld who is both high and low. (II.ii.8)

There the stainless and invisible Brahman shines in the highest, golden sheath. It is pure, It is the lights of lights; It is that which they know who know the self. (II.ii.9)

The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, not to speak of this fire. When He shines,

everythin shines after Him; by His light everything is lighted.  
(II.ii.10)

That immortal Brahman alone is before, that Brahman is behind, that Brahman is to the right and left. Brahman along pervades everything above and below; this universe is that supreme Brahman alone. (II.ii.11)

### ***Third Muṇḍaka, First Khaṇḍa***

Two birds united always and known by the same name, closely cling to the same tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit, the other looks on without eating. (III.i.1)

Seated on the same tree, the *jīva* moans, bewildered by his impotence. But when he beholds the other, the lord worshipped by all, and His glory, he then becomes free from grief. (III.i.2)

When the seer beholds the self-luminous creator, the lord, the Puruṣa, the progenitor of Brahmā, then he, the wise seer, shakes off good and evil, becomes stainless, and reaches the supreme unity. (III.i.3)

He indeed is *prāṇa*; He shines forth variously in all beings. The wise man who knows Him does not babble. Revelling in the self, delighting in the self, performing actions, he is the foremost among the knowers of Brahman. (III.i.4)

This ātaman, resplendent and pure, whom the sinless *sannyāsins* behold residing within the body, is attained by unceasing practice of truthfulness, austerity, right knowledge, and continence. (III.i.5)

Truth along triumphs, not falsehood. By truth the path is laid out, the way of the Gods, on which the seers, whose every desire is satisfied, proceed to the Highest Abode of the Truth. (III.i.6)

That Brahman shines forth, vast, self-luminous, inconceivable, subtler than the subtle. He is far beyond what is far, and yet here very near at hand. Verily, He is seen here, dwelling in the cave of the heart of conscious beings. (III.i.7)

Brahman is not grasped by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the other senses, nor by penance or good works. A man becomes pure through serenity of intellect; thereupon, in meditation, he beholds Him who is without parts. (III.i.8)

That subtle *ātman* is to be known by the intellect here in the body where the *prāṇa* has entered fivefold. By *ātman* the

intellects of men are prevailed, together with the senses. When the intellect is purified, *ātman* shines forth. (III.i.9)

Whatever world a man of pure understanding envisages in his mind and whatever desires he cherishes, that world he conquers and those desires he obtains. Therefore let every one who wants prosperity worship the man who knows the Self. (III.i.10)

### ***Third Muṇḍaka, Second Khaṇḍa***

He, the knower of the self, knows of the self, knows that supreme abode of Brahman, which shines brightly and in which the Universe rests. Those wise men who, free from desires, worship such a person transcend the seed of birth. (III.ii.1)

He, who, cherishing objects, desires them, is born again here or there through his desires. But for him whose desires are satisfied and who is established in the self, all desires vanish even here on earth. (III.ii.2)

This *ātman* cannot be attained through study of the Vedas, nor through intelligence, nor through much learning. He who chooses *ātman* - by him alone is *ātman* attained. It is *ātman* that reveals to the seeker its true nature. (III.ii.3)

This *ātman* cannot be attained by one who is without strength or earnestness or who is without knowledge accompanied by renunciation. But if a wise man strives by means of these aids, his soul enters the abode of Brahman. (III.ii.4)

Having realised *ātman*, the seers become satisfied with the knowledge. Their souls are established in the Supreme Self, they are free from passions, and they are tranquil in mind. Such calm souls, ever devoted to the self, behold everywhere the omnipresent Brahman and in the end enter into it, which is all this. (III.ii.5)

Having well ascertained the self, the goal of the Vedantic knowledge, and having purified their minds through the practice of *sannyāsa*, the seers, never relaxing their efforts, enjoy here supreme Immortality and at the time of the great end attain complete freedom in Brahman. (III.ii.6)

The fifteen kalās with whom the body is formed merge into their own forms where from these are originated, all the sense organs merge into their respective deities, *jīvātman* will all the deeds and knowledge acquired by mind and intellect merge into Brahman and thus *jīvātman* and *prarmātman* become united. (III.ii.7)

As flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their names and forms, so a wise man, freed from name and form, attains the *Puruṣa*, who is greater than the Great. (III.ii.8)

He who knows the Supreme Brahman verily becomes Brahman. In this family no one is born ignorant of Brahman. He overcomes grief; he overcomes evil, free from the fetters of the heart, he becomes immortal. (III.ii.9)

A Ṛg-verse declares : This knowledge of Brahman should be told to those only who have performed the necessary duties, who are versed in the Vedas and devoted to Brahman, and who full of faith, have offered oblations in the Ekarshi Fire and performed, according to rule, the rite of carrying fire on the head. (III.ii.10)

Thus the seer Aṅgiras declared this truth in olden times. A man who has not performed the vow should not read it. Salutation to the great seers. (III.ii.11)

## 2.6 Select expositions/Notes :

Mantra No. (4) का नाम परा का वा अपरा ?

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्य इति परा चैवापरा च - अत्र परा नाम परमात्मविद्या। इयं परा विद्या उच्यते यया तद्वक्षमाणविशेषणमक्षरमधिगम्यते प्राप्यते। अपरा एव धर्माधर्मसाधनतत्फलविषया। ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदो अथर्ववेद इत्येते चत्वारो वेदाः शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं धन्दो ज्योतिषमिति अङ्गानि षडेषा अपरा विद्या।

Mantra No, 6

अक्षरं कीदृशम्? अद्रेश्यम् अदृश्यं सर्वेषां बुद्धीन्द्रियाणाम् अगम्यमित्येतत्। अग्राह्यं कर्मेन्द्रियाविषयमित्येतत्, अगोत्रमनन्वयमित्यर्थ, न हि तस्य मूलमस्ति येनान्वितं स्यात्, अवर्णम् वर्ण्यन्त इति वर्णा द्रव्यधामो स्थूलत्वादयः शुक्लत्वादयो वा, अविद्यामाना वर्णा यस्य तदवर्णमक्षरम्। अचक्षुश्रोत्रं चक्षुश्च श्रोत्रं च नामरूपविषये करणे सर्वजन्तुनो ते अविद्यमाने यस्य तदचक्षुश्रोत्रम्। तद् अपाणिपादं कर्मेन्द्रियरहितमित्येतत् यत एवमग्राह्यमग्राहकं चातो नित्यमविनाशी, विभुं विविधं ब्रह्मादिस्थावरान्तप्राणिभेदैर्भवतीति विभुम् सर्वगतं व्यापकम् सुसूक्ष्मं शब्दादिस्थूलत्वकारणरहितत्वात्, तदव्ययम् नापि व्ययः संभवति सर्वात्मकत्वात्, भूतयोनिं भूतानां कारणं पृथिवीव स्थावरजङ्गमानां कारणम्।

### SAQ

1. Write a note on Akṣara in the light of bhāṣya of Saṅkara.
2. Describe Brahman as narrated in the 1st Muṇḍaka.

Mantra No. (I.i.8)

तपसा ज्ञानेनोत्पत्तिविधिज्ञातया भूतयोन्यक्षरं ब्रह्म चीयत उपचीयत। एवं सर्वज्ञतयासृष्टिस्थितिसंहार शक्तिविज्ञानवत्तयोपचितत्ततो ब्रह्मणोऽन्नमद्यते भुज्यते

इत्यन्नमव्याकृतं साधारणं संसारिणां व्याचिकीर्षितावस्थारूपेणाभिजायते उत्पदयते । अत्रात् प्राणो हिरण्यागर्भो अविद्याकामकर्मभूतसमुदायवीजाङ्कुरी जगदात्मा अभिजायते । तस्मात् च प्राणात् मनो मनआख्यं संकल्पविकल्पसंशय-निर्णयाद्यात्मकमभिजायते । ततोऽपि संकल्पद्यात्मकान्मनसः सत्यं स्ताख्यमाकाशादिभूतपञ्चकमभिजायते । तस्मात् सत्यात् भूतपञ्चकाद् सप्तलोका, तेषु कर्माणि, कर्मसु च निमित्तभूतेष्वमृतं कर्मजं फलम् ।

### Stop to Consider :

The word *tapas* in the text also denotes the intense thinking which precedes any creative act. Here the word means knowledge regarding the future creation. When there arises in Brahman the desire for creation forthwith in becomes endowed with omniscience, that is to say with the knowledge and capacity of creating, preserving and destroying the universe. Thus Brahman appears to increase in size, like a seed before it splits and the sprout comes out or like a father dilating with joy before begetting a son. In this stage the attributeless Absolute becomes known as *saguṇa* Brahman.

The Upaniṣads describe Brahman as having two aspects, the one devoid of any qualifying characteristics (*nirviśeṣa*) and the other endowed with qualities (*saviśeṣa*). The former is called also the Supreme Brahman (Para Brahman) while the latter is called inferior Brahman (Apara Brahman). When Brahman is said to be devoid of qualifying characteristics, means that the Supreme Brahman can not be pointed out or described by any characteristic signs. It is not to be comprehended by means of any attributes or indicative marks. For this reason it is called the unqualified (Nirguṇa) and unconditioned (Nirvikalpa) Brahman. It is devoid of any limiting adjuncts (nirupādhi). The Inferior Brahman, on the other hand, can be described by certain characteristic signs and recognised by virtue of His attributes and proper marks.

Mantra No. (I.ii.7)

अस्मिन् मन्त्रो ज्ञानरहितं कर्म असारं दुःखमूलमिति निन्दयते । एते हि अष्टादश अष्टादशसंख्यकाः षोडशात्विजः पत्नी यजमानश्चेत्यष्टादश यज्ञरूपा यज्ञस्य रूपाणि यज्ञरूपा यज्ञनिवर्तका प्लवाः विनाशिनः अदृढा अस्थिरा येषु अवरं कर्म केवलं ज्ञानवर्जितं कर्म उक्तम् । अतस्तेषामवरकर्माश्रयाणामष्टादशानाम दृढतया प्लवत्वाप्लवते सह फले तत्साध्यं कर्म । यत एवमेतत्कर्म श्रेयः श्रेयः करणमिति येऽभिनन्दन्त्यक्षिहृष्यन्त्य-विवेकिनो मूढा अतस्ते जरां च मृत्युं च जरामृत्युं किञ्चित्कालं स्वर्गे स्थित्वा पुनरेवापि यन्ति भूयोऽपि गच्छन्ति ।

### **Stop to Consider :**

The eighteen persons who conduct the sacrifice are themselves liable to destruction. As curds or milk kept in a pot are destroyed when the pot is destroyed, so also the results of the sacrifices come to an end because the eighteen persons who perform them are mortal.

### **Mantra (II.i.3) :**

एतस्मात् अक्षरात् पुरुषानामरूपवीजोपाधिलक्षिताज्जायते उत्पद्यतेऽविद्याविषयो विकारभूतो नामधेयोऽनृतात्मकः प्राणः एवं मनः सर्वाणि चेन्द्रियाणि विषयाञ्चैतस्मादेव जायन्ते । खमाकशं वायुरन्तर्वाह्य आवहादिभेदः, ज्योतिरग्निः आप उदकं, पृथिवी धरित्री विश्वस्य सर्वस्य धारिणी, एतानि च शब्दस्पर्शरूपरस गन्धोत्तरोत्तरगुणानि पूर्वपूर्वगुणसहितान्येतस्मादेव जायन्ते ।

### **2.7 Summing up**

In this unit we have studied all the three chapters. The first chapter comprises various matters like ritual, ethics and metaphysics. The second chapter is much concerned with ritualistic symbolism. The last chapter contains more mystic and metaphysical matters. This Upanishad is remarkable for bringing out the concept of Parabrahman and Aparabrahma.

### **2.8 Sample questions**

1. Write a note on the contents of the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*.
2. Discuss the परा and अपराविद्या as depicted in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*.
3. Define Brahman. Discuss the concept of Brahman in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*.

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