

CHAPTER 5

CONCEPT OF ONENESS IN ATHARVAVEDIC UPANIŞADS

According to *Muktikopanişad Atharvaveda* has three principal Upanişads.¹ These three Upanişads are the *Muṇḍaka Upanişad*, The *Māṇḍūkya Upanişad* and the *Praśna Upanişad*. Śaṅkarācārya, the great commentator has commented on these three Upanişads. That is why, these three Upanişads are regarded as principal Upanişads. Here an attempt has been made to elaborate the concept of oneness as revealed in these three principal Upanişads.

(i) Concept of Oneness in Muṇḍaka Upanişad

The *Muṇḍaka Upanişad* belongs to the *Atharvaveda*. The term *Muṇḍaka* has been derived from the root *muṇḍ* which means 'to shave.' One who comprehends the teaching of the Upanişad, is shaved or liberated from error and ignorance. The *Muṇḍaka Upanişad* consists of three parts where each part is named as *Muṇḍaka*. All the *Muṇḍaka*'s or parts are sub-divided into two sections. This Upanişad gives us a clear picture of higher knowledge of the Supreme Being, i.e., *Brahman* and also the lower knowledge of the empirical world. According to this Upanişad, this phenomenal world springs from the Supreme *Brahman* and it clearly states that one can attain the highest knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, i.e., the Supreme *Brahman* through the realisation of the *Muṇḍaka* philosophy.

In the very beginning of this Upanişad, it is stated that among all the Gods, first of all, *Brahmā*, the creator of the world and also the protector of the world was manifested.² *Brahmā* taught the knowledge of *Brahman*, the foundation of all kinds of

1. MKU.,30
2. MU., I.1.1

knowledge to Atharvān, his eldest son. Atharvān told it to Āngir and Āngir passed it to Satyavāha Bhāradvāja and Satyavāha Bharadvāja handed it down to Āngiras³

Theosophy or *Brahmavidyā* is the ultimate knowledge by which one can attain the *Brahman*, the ultimate cause of this universe. *Brahmavidyā* is that through which the two aspects of *Brahman parā* and *aparā* are fully comprehended. This *Brahmavidyā* is the base of all kinds of knowledge. Therefore, Śaunaka the great householder, approaches Angiras respectfully and asks :

‘śaunako ha vai mahāśālo ’ngirasam vidhivadupasannaḥ papraccha/

*kasminnu bhagavo vijñāte sarvamidam vijñātam bhavatīti//*⁴

[Trans : O Lord, what is the Absolute *tattva* by knowing which we are able to understand the objects that are comprehended by audition, vision and inference, please tell me the secret.]

Angiras replies that two kinds of knowledge must be known. The knowers of *Brahman* say, ‘*dve vidye veditavye parā caivāparā ca*’.⁵

It means that there are two *vidyās-parā* and *aparā* ; the Higher Knowledge and the lower knowledge. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan states that, *aparāvidyā* is also a kind of knowledge. Its knowledge can not be said as higher knowledge or ultimate knowledge, i.e., *Brahmajñāna*. It may be regarded as *mithyājñāna*, i.e., the knowledge which is full of ignorance. The aim of this lower knowledge is also the Highest Reality but through this knowledge the Reality can be achieved in a partial or imperfect manner.⁶ Therefore, according to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* the four Vedas,

3. MU.,I.1.2

4. Ibid., I.1.3

5. Ibid.,I.1.4

6. Radhakrishnan, S., TPU., p.672

viz., The *R̥gveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmveda* and *Atharvaveda*, *Śikṣā* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ceremonial), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Chanda* (metre), *Jyotiṣa* (Astronomy) are the lower knowledge. *Parāvidyā* or Higher Knowledge means the knowledge through which the Imperishable *Brahman* is known.⁷ The *Parāvidyā* or *Brahmavidyā* is the source of all knowledge. By the knowledge of *Brahman* one can attain the Supreme, i.e., *Brahman*. That is why, the knowledge through which one can understand the knowledge of the Super Soul, Imperishable and Supreme *Brahman* is called *parāvidyā* or Higher Knowledge. In the sixth *mantra* of the first *Muṇḍaka* it is said :

‘yattadadreśyamagrāhyamagotramavarṇamacakṣuḥ śrotraṁ tadapāṇipādam/

nityam vibhum sarvagataṁ susūkṣmaṁ tadavyayaṁ yadbhūtayoniṁ paripaśyanti

*dhīrāh//*⁸

[Trans : Through the *parāvidyā* or higher knowledge the wise understands the real nature of Supreme which cannot be perceived and grasped, which is the source less element and also the attributeless, without eyes and ears, which has neither hands nor feet, which is everlasting, multiformed, which is present in everywhere, very subtle element, undiminishing and the root of all living beings.]

The *parāvidyā* or *Brahmavidyā* is the science of the Absolute, the science that claims to be the basis of all sciences. *Brahman* being the all abiding substance, pure-consciousness in essence, its science turns out to be the science of all sciences. Everything in this universe is perceivable through It. This consciousness or Reality, i.e., *Brahman* is one and unchangeable, indestructible, unaffected, unfettered beginningless, endless, devoid of growth and decay, immortal and fearless. It is the

7. MU.,I.1.5

8. Ibid.,I.1.6

very source of manifested world. The world comes from It, exists in It and returns to It. That is why, the Reality, i.e., *Brahman* is all pervading; there is nothing which lies outside the domain of *Brahman*. It is the root of all forces that are active in all creature, matters and God. Therefore, *Brahman* is the inner controller of this whole universe and all the creature exist within It.

This Ultimate Reality is the root cause of everything. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* describes the Absolute, i.e., *Brahman* is the original source substance (*yoni*) of all that has come into being (*bhūta*) in this world. All the visible things are real only for the invisible Supreme *Brahman*. This Reality, i.e. *Brahman* is not visible, because it is beyond the range of all the sense organs. Therefore, It is also beyond one's grasp. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says :

‘*na cakṣuṣā grhyate nāpi vācā nānyairdevaistapasā karmaṇā vā/*

jñānaprasādena viśuddhasattvastatastu taṁ paśyeti niṣkalam

*dhyāyamānaḥ//*⁹

[Trans : Neither through eyes nor through speech nor through other senses; He cannot be realized through austerity; not through *Karmas*; this bodiless *Paramātmā* can be seen by; whose senses and heart are pure; by contemplating and meditating; through purified heart and by the unblemished knowledge.]¹⁰

The Supreme *Brahman* is colourless, bodyless and therefore without any sense organs; It is thus sightless, hearingless, handless and feet less. It is all pervading, constant, and so on and so forth. This whole creation, i.e., all the animate and inanimate objects are *Brahman*.

9. MU.,III. 1.8

10. Eng. Trans. from Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.185

Brahman is having two *lakṣaṇas* - *taṭastha lakṣaṇa* and *svarūpa lakṣaṇa*. He is himself the creator of the world, he is the sustainer and destroyer and yet idleness (i.e., inactive) is His *taṭastha lakṣaṇa*. Again the characteristics of *Brahman* like existence, knowledge and infinity is His *svarūpa lakṣaṇa*.

It has been said in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* that *Brahman*, which is Imperishable, is the source of all things and beings. The *Upaniṣad* has clarified the *Brahman* as the source of all creation when it states :

‘*yathorṇanābhiḥ sṛjate gṛhṇate ca yathā pṛthivyāmoṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti/*

yathā sataḥ puruṣātkeśalomāni tathākṣarātsambhavatīha viśvam/’¹¹

[Trans : Just as a spider creates its cobweb and then swallows it; just as innumerable herbs sprout from the earth (automatically); just as the hairs grow on a living person; in the same way from imperishable; all things in the world grow.]¹²

Spider by itself or independently lack of any support spread out the threads, that are indeed non-different from its own body. As the herbs and trees grow inseparably from the earth, as the hair grows on the head and on the body of a living person, so, from the Imperishable *Brahman* arises the whole universe. All things and beings arise here from the imperishable *Brahman*. From the above discussion probably it can be said that the world is an illusory appearance of *Brahman*, which is the Highest Reality. *Brahman* controls everything in this universe and He is one without a second. The

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad again states :

‘*tapasā cīyate brahma tato ’nnamabhijāyate/*

11. MU.,I.1.7

12. Eng. Trans. from Aggawal, Keshoram., KK., p.158

*annātpṛāṇo manaḥ satyaṁ lokāḥ karmasu cāmṛtam//*¹³

[Trans : Through the penance in the form of *Saṅkalpa*, *Brahma* increases; from that comes food, from food gradually come vital airs, mind, truth (five elements) , all worlds (and *Karmas*); from *Karmas Amṛta*. (the inevitable result pleasure or pain) is born.]¹⁴

Tapas means instrument of self-controlling, which helps us to do some moral excellence and ultimately it leads us to the path of *Brahman*. It helps us to understand the real nature of *Brahman*, which is imperishable. From that imperishable comes food, i.e., *annam*. *Annam* (food) is derived from the root ‘*ad*’ in the sense of that which is eaten, i.e., enjoyed, means the unmanifested (*māyā*), that is common to all creature. From that unmanifested, i.e., from that food in a state of imminent manifestation was born *prānaḥ*, i.e., *Hiraṇyagarbha*, who is common to all the beings in the universe. He is the sum total of all the individuals and being common to all. From that *Hiraṇyagarbha* evolved *manaḥ*, from that mind or *manas* evolved *satyam*, the five elements like *kṣiti*, *āpa*, *teja*, *marut* and *vyoma*. They are called *satya*, i.e., the gross *sat* and the subtle *tyat*. From those five elements, which are called *satya*, the *lokāḥ*, i.e., the seven worlds, viz., *bhūlokaḥ*, *bhubarlokaḥ*, *svarlokaḥ*, *mahalokaḥ*, *janalokaḥ*, *tapalokaḥ* and *satyalokaḥ*; and *karmas*, i.e., works performed by men in the world, are produced. From *karmas* evolved *amṛtam*, immortality, the fruit of *karmas*. It is called immortality, since it is not destroyed as long as *karma* is not eliminated even in long long periods.

Elaborating the nature of *Brahman* The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* again states :

‘ya sarvajñāḥ sarvavidyasya jñānamayaṁ tapaḥ/

13. MU., I.1.8

14. Eng. Trans. from Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.158

*tasmādetadbrahma nāma rūpamannaṁ ca jāyate//*¹⁵

[Trans : He who knows all and perceives all, whose penance is of the nature of knowledge – from him are born this Brahmā (the Hiraṇyagarbha), name, form and food.]¹⁶

The *Brahman*, which is without beginning and end and which is indestructible, apparently transformed into objects, and this is the process through which creation takes place. *Brahman*, the ultimate cause of the universe is *sarvajñaḥ*, i.e., he is the knower of all things. He is also ‘*sarvavit*’, i.e., He knows all things vividly. Brahman’s austerity made up of knowledge. From this Ultimate Reality, Brahmā, i.e., Hiraṇyagarbha was born and also from this Supreme Reality emerged the *nāmarupam*, i.e., colour and *annam* (food). *Brahman* is the Highest Reality and all these things and beings are within it.

The second *Muṇḍaka* also deals with the concept of *parā* and *aparā vidyā*, i.e., higher and lower knowledge. The second *Muṇḍaka* says that the lower knowledge has also great importance for comprehending nature of *Para Brahman* (*parāvidyā*). The *aparā* or the lower knowledge is the knowledge of the immanent, while *parā* or the higher is the knowledge of the transcendent and the immanent knowledge is the way to understand the transcendent knowledge. Three Vedas *Ṛg*, *Sāma* and *Yajur*, which are regarded as *aparāvidyā* deal with sacrificial rituals; and for truth and purity man must perform the sacrifices. Truth and purity always help us to go to the right way and helps us to realise the nature of the Supreme. Thus, *aparāvidyā* ultimately helps us to understand the nature of Ultimate Reality. The knowledge of *Brahman* which is Supreme Reality can destroy all our ignorance and actions. According to this

15. MU.,I.1.9

16. Eng. Trans. from Mahadevan, T.M.P., U., p.89

Upaniṣad due to ignorance man thinks that the path of ritual is superior. But according to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* ritualistic worship performed without knowledge can never lead to enlightenment. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* knowledge is supreme. It has been mentioned in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* that one should perform sacrifices for higher knowledge, i.e., *Brahmajñāna*. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says :

eteṣu yaścarate bhrājamāneṣu yathākālam cāhutayo hyādadāyan/

*tannayantyetāḥ sūryasya raśmayo yatra devānām patireko'dhivāsaḥ//'*¹⁷

[Trans : A man who performs sacrifices in the shining flames and offer oblations at the proper time, these (offerings) in the form of the rays of the sun lead him to the world, where the single lord of the Gods presides over all.]

Again,

'ehyehīti tamāhutayaḥ suvarcaṣaḥ sūryasya raśmibhīryajamānaḥ vahanti/

priyām vācamabhivadantyo'rcayantya eṣa vaḥ puṇyaḥ sukṛto

*brahmalokaḥ//'*¹⁸

[Trans : The shining oblations invite him with the words come come and carry the sacrificer by the rays of the sun worshipping him and saluting him with gratifying words : 'It is *Brahmalokaḥ* which you have attained through your good deeds.']

The single lord of the Gods' indicates here lord Indra. He who performs sacrifices properly and in right time, gets heavenly rewards. According to Rohit, Mehta, "Heaven is a state of mind. The mind projects its heaven as well as hell, and the heaven of the mind is just the opposite of earthly existence. The performance of sacrifices

17. MU., I.2.5

18. Ibid., I.2.6

helps one to arrive at a particular mood of the mind. In this mood man feels happy and relaxed. These sacrifices also help him to contact super-physical entities who help man to attain a frame of mind which he regards as heavenly.”¹⁹

The Upaniṣad again and again proclaims that one Supreme Being pervades all and as an all pervading reality He is one and non-dual. Therefore, Reality is one and the whole universe is surrounded by Him. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says that performing sacrifices without worldly attachment only can help human beings to understand the reality.

According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* *jñāna* or knowledge is the ultimate thing which makes our life free from bondage or it is the ultimate way to liberation, i.e., *Brahmaprāpti*. This *jñāna* (knowledge) can destroy all our ignorances. He who thinks himself as wise and learned, he cannot understand the reality. Hence they afflicted with troubles, go about like a blind man led by one who is himself blind.

Brahman, from which the individual souls issue like sparks from fire, is a changeless and constant reality, wherefrom everything in this universe is produced. He controls everything in this whole universe and he is present in the heart of every being. Human beings become liberated with the knowledge of *Brahman*.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* states that a disciple who is free from worldly enjoyments, whose mind is always free from worries and emotions, who controls his mind from external objects, can understand the Reality, i.e., the proper nature of *Brahman*. But at that time a disciple should be in contact with the preceptor and the disciple will have to take the idea from his *guru*. Because, a *guru*, who is well-versed in both the *aparā* and *parāvidyā*, i.e., the lower and higher knowledge, can alone be

19. Mehta, Rohit., TCU., pp.123-124

able to help a seeker to attain his goal. We fail to understand whether the knowledge gathered by us is true or false. Thus, a *guru* can decide it properly and help us to take the right path. Upaniṣad etymologically reproduces the meaning of sitting down near the teacher (*guru*) with totality, i.e., with full concentration and faith to receive the secret knowledge. Any deficiency in our direction of thinking, anything wrong in our basic conception, always confuse us from obtaining the Reality. A *guru*, the knower of *Brahmavidyā*, can help us to understand the Reality. In this regard Rohit Mehta says, “The discovery of Truth is not something which the guru gives and the pupil takes. The discovery of Truth comes only in moments of vigilance – and in this supreme act of vigilance the guru and the pupil must be together.”²⁰

Narrating the nature of Supreme which is none but *Brahman* itself, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* states that all these existing beings can prove the existence of *Brahman*, because their real nature is *Brahman* and without the concept of *Brahman* one cannot think anything in this universe. All things depend upon Him, i.e., *Brahman*. Keshoram Aggarwal states that, “Just as thousands of sparks of the same form and colour as that of the burning fire come out of it in all the four sides; in the same way at the beginning of the creation different types of beings – bodied and bodiless emanate from the imperishable Supreme Person and merge into the same at the time of final dissolution.”²¹ In reality the sparks are nothing but fire itself. In the same way all the beings existing here and arise from the same Reality are nothing but *Paramātmān* itself.

According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* *Brahman* is the transcendental reality. Without it our body is meaningless. Because every existing being’s heart is His

20. Mehta, Rohit., TCU., p.129

21. Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.169

residence. This is the nondual reality from which Agniḥ arises, whose fuel is indeed the sun. From Agniḥ comes Soma, from Soma comes Parjanya (cloud) and from Parjanya (cloud) originates the herbs and corns of the earth. In this way from that non dual reality the whole beings are produced. From that *Brahman* all the Gods, *Sādhyas* (celestials), human beings, beasts and birds, *prāṇa* (inhaling wind), *aprāna* (exhaling wind), rice and barley, penance, faith, truth, *brahmacarya* and *vidhiḥ*, i.e., rules of sacrifices are all emanated. *Saptaḥ prāṇaḥ*, i.e., seven *prāṇas* (life breaths) also spring from Him. According to Vedānta there are five *prāṇas*, viz., *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*. The reference of seven *prāṇa* is not found in any other Upaniṣad and other scriptures, Therefore, *saptaḥ prāṇaḥ* indicates some vital functions other than above mentioned five life breaths. According to Śaṅkarācārya, *saptaḥ prāṇaḥ*, i.e., seven life breaths mean the seven bodily orifices, viz., two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the mouth. From that Reality, which is called *Brahman*, come forth the seven flames, their fuel, the seven sacrifices, seven worlds, all mountains and oceans. From Him all the rivers of different forms flow out and also from this same reality, i.e., *Brahman* come all herbs and the juices (*rasa*). The inner reality, i.e., *Ātman* along with the all creature are seated in the different bodies nourished by the same juice (*rasa*).²²

Thus, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* describe *Brahman* as the Ultimate Reality of all creature. Nothing is found in this universe aside from this Reality. Knowing the *Brahman* as the Ultimate Reality of this universe which is one without a second, one can achieve the liberation.

The second part of the second *Muṇḍaka* explains this concept very

22. MU.,II.1.9

beautifully when it states :

*‘aviḥ samnihitam guhācaram nāma mahatpadamatraitatsamarpitam/
ejatprāṇannimīṣaṅca yadetajjānatha sadasadvareṇyaṁ param vijñānād yadvariṣṭham
prajanām//’²³*

[Trans : That which is, very close; the great one known as *Guhācara* (being seated in the cave of heart); whatever creatures there are – active, breathing and who open and close their eyes are established in it; you all know this; which is *Sat* and *Asat* both; worth choosing for all; superiormost; beyond intellect of all creatures.]²⁴

again,

*‘yadarcimadyadaṇubhyo ’ṅu ca yasmiṁllokā nihitā lokinaśca/tadetadakṣaram brahma
sa prāṇastadu vaṅmanaḥ tadetatsatyam tadamṛtam tadveddhavyam somya viddhi//’²⁵*

[Trans : That which is luminous; subtler than the subtlest; in whom all the worlds and inhabitants therein abide; that alone is the imperishable *Brahma* ; that alone is *Prāṇa*, speech and mind; that alone is truth and immortality itself; O good looking one that alone is the target to be aimed at; shoot at it.]²⁶

The omnipresent reality, who lives in the heart of each living beings is both existence and non-existence, manifest and unmanifest and is beyond our intellect. So, all creation are dependent on that consciousness. The great sage Aṅgiras says to Śaunaka :

*‘praṇavo dhanuḥ śaro hyātmā brahma tallakṣyamucyate/
apramattena veddhavyam śaravattanmayo bhavet//’²⁷*

23. MU., II.2.1

24. Eng. Trans. form Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.174

25. MU.,II.2.2

26. Eng. Trans. from Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.175

27. MU.,II.2.4

[Trans : The *Praṇava* (the syllable *Om*) is the bow. One's self indeed is the arrow. Brahman is spoken of as the target of that. It is to be hit without making a mistake. Thus one becomes united with it as the arrow (becomes one with the target).] ²⁸

Here the sage Aṅgiras says to Śaunaka that the syllable *Om* is the bow, our soul, i.e., *jivātman* is the arrow and *Paramātman* is the target. Just as a bow is the cause of the arrow's hitting the target; so, *Om* is the bow that brings about the soul's entry into the Imperishable (*Pramātman*). That person who is free from blunder and also free from worldly anxieties, who has control over his senses, can successfully reach his destination, i.e., *Brahmaprāpti* and he becomes one with the Imperishable. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* again states :

*'arā iva rathanābhau samhata yatra nādyah sa eṣo'ntaścarate bahudhā jāyamānaḥ/
omityevaṁ dhyāyatha ātmānaṁ svasti vaḥ parāya tamasaḥ parastāt//'*²⁹

[Trans : In the heart wherein, all nerves meet together like spokes in the hub of a chariot wheel; in the same heart the Lord manifold in different forms. So, meditating *Brahman* as *Om* one may cross the ocean of darkness and attain to the Supreme.]

Brahman is the one hub into which are fitted all the sub-systems. So, meditating *Brahman* as *Om* one can be able to realise the nature of Supreme, i.e., *Brahman*. Because, *Om* is the sound that represents the one reality. On this regard *Śruti* says, *'tasya vācaka praṇava'*,³⁰ *'omiti ekākṣaram Brahma'*,³¹ *'om tat sat'*,³² *'omiti ātman'*,³³ *'omitidaṁ sarvam'*,³⁴ *'omkāra evedaṁ sarvam'*,³⁵ etc.

28. Eng. Trans. from Mahadevan, T.M.P., U. p.94

29. MU., II.2.6

30. YS., I.27

31. ŚBG., VIII.13

32. Ibid., XVII.23

33. TU., I. 8.1

34. Ibid

35. CU., II.23.3

Whose knowledge is not conditioned by the space and time, who is the highest being of this universe and controller of vital forces and body of all living beings, is seated in the *Brahmalokaḥ* by the name of *Parama Vyoma*. *Brahmalokaḥ* or *Brahmapura* is the city of *Brahman*. This is the abode of the Supreme Reality, i.e., *Brahman*. The city of *Brahman* is constantly illuminated. The city of *Brahman* therefore, indicates the lotus of the heart. The *Brahman* is called *Manomaya* because He pervades all minds. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, the wise man through *vijñāna* (spiritual knowledge) completely comprehend the nature of *Parabrahman*, who is regarded as everlasting happiness and Supreme Bliss. After realising the proper nature of *Brahman* the state of a human being is described in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* thus :

‘*bhidyate hr̥dyagranthiśchidyante sarvasamśayāḥ/*

*kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi tasmindr̥ṣṭe parāvare//*³⁶

[Trans : After knowing Supreme Person who is effect as well as cause Himself, in reality; the knot of the heart of the *Jīva* is unravelled; all doubts are cut asunder and the actions good as well as evil get perished.]³⁷

In this whole universe the only one and real thing is *Paramātman* (*Brahman*). He is both the cause and effect. After realising this (i.e., *Brahman*) all our doubts are solved, all actions good and bad get dissipated. In this stage *jīva* is free from all actions and ultimately he is one with the Supreme, i.e., *Brahman*.

The shining being is the greatest as well as the self of all. It is taintless and partless.³⁸ It is free from all ignorance and the illuminator (*jyotiḥ*).³⁹ The *ātmaavid*, i.e.,

36. MU., II.2.8

37. Eng. Trans. from Aggawal, Keshoram., KK., p.179

38. MU.,II.2.9

39. Ibid

the knower of self only can understand the nature of *Brahman*.⁴⁰ The *Brahman* is the ultimate cause and everything existing here are its modification. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says that the sun does not manifest there, i.e., In *Brahmalokaḥ*; nor the moon, nor the stars, and there the lightings do not shine. Everything shines by the light of that ever shining light. This world is visible only for this Ultimate Reality.⁴¹

The first section of the third *Muṇḍaka* explores the mysteriousness of the ultimate truth, i.e., *Brahman* and oneness of Individual self and the Supreme Self :

‘dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte/

tayoranyaḥ pippalam svādvattyanasṅannanyo abhicākasīti//’⁴²

[Trans : The individual soul and the Supreme Power always remain together dwelling in the same body, like two birds sitting on the same tree. One of them eats sweet fruits of different types and other looks only without eating any kind of fruits.]

Here the two birds indicates *jivātman* (individual self) and *Paramātman* (Supreme Self). Here the description of the two birds points out that they are two in appearance only. Actually these two are one. They are always united and are understood by the same name and these two are sitting to the same tree (body). Therefore, apparently they appear to be two, but actually they are one. The two exist together. Thus, the eating and the witnessing are simultaneous. It is the one consciousness that witnesses everything, surrounding the whole universe and it sees everything as taking place within itself, as activated by itself. When the individual self understands the nature of Supreme Self, he realises himself as I am this one, who is the self of all and existing in every being; and I am not the other deceptive self delimited by conditions and

40. MU.,II.2.9

41. Ibid.,II.2.10

42. Ibid, III.1.1

enchantment by *abidyā* (ignorance). At that time these two are inseparable and existing as one without a second.⁴³

Everything existing here, i.e., all the living beings are *bhūtas*. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says that *Brahman* is the breath shining forth in all beings. He is indeed the life that shines forth through all beings. The *puruṣa*, i.e., *Brahman* which is ultimate, is the *Prāṇa* of all *prāṇas* (*prāṇasya prāṇaḥ*).

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* gives attention to the practice of truth, which is considered as the main door for realization of Supreme Being, i.e., *Brahman*, which is the Ultimate Reality of this universe is the truth, because the self within the body is perceptible through constant practice of truth. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* states :

satyena labhyastapasā hyeṣa ātmā samyagjñānena brahmacaryeṇa nityam/

antaḥśarīre jyotirmayo hi subhro yaṁ paśyanti yatayaḥ kṣīṇadosāḥ//⁴⁴

[Trans : By truthfulness, by austerities, by right knowledge and by ceaseless abstinence is that Self to be gained. He whom the sinless ascetics behold is pure and like a light within the body.]⁴⁵

For attaining the real (i.e., *Brahman*) we must have to choose the right path (*satya panthā*). Because, real can help us to attain the real. This Upaniṣad advises to realise the Supreme, i.e., *Brahman* following the path of *satya* or truth, *tapas* or penance and *brahmacarya*. The Upaniṣad says, '*tapasā cīyate brahma*',⁴⁶ '*tapo brahma*',⁴⁷ '*satyena panthāvitato devayānaḥ*',⁴⁸ '*yasmin viśuddhe vibhavatyēṣa ātmā*',⁴⁹ etc.

43. MU.,III.1.2

44. Ibid, III.1.5

45. Eng. Trans. from Sarma, D.S., TUA.A., p.93

46. MU.,I.1.8

47. Ibid,II.1.10

48. Ibid,III.1.6

49. Ibid, III.1.9

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* appeals all to practice austerity to attain the knowledge of *Brahman*. According to this Upaniṣad, *Brahman* is the truth of the truth. Therefore, the Upaniṣad suggests us to follow the path of truth. It again says that a truthful person alone wins not a liar. The Upaniṣad says :

‘*satyameva jayati nānṛtaṁ satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ/*

yenākramantyrṣayo hyāptakāmā yatra tatsatyasya paramaṁ nidhānam/’⁵⁰

[Trans : Truth alone wins, and not untruth. By truth is laid the path called Devayāna, by which the desireless seers ascend to where exists the supreme treasure attainable through truth.]⁵¹

The practice of truth means to learn the principle into practice to lead a disciplined life. It encourages man to think rightly, to speak rightly and to do things in a right manner. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* one should not diverge from truth which helps us to achieve the ultimate victory. One should practice truthfulness in thought and action. It gives a man faith, fearlessness and freedom. For building a morally strong character and right conduct, the practice of truth is very very important. Because moral or ethical discipline is the foundation of the true knowledge. Man can not attain his goal without the moral and ethical discipline. So, man must try to tread on the right path (*satya mārga*), which can help him to achieve his goal. According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, a seeker of *Brahmavidyā* must follow the path of truth. The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* says in this regard that truth consists of a disciplined life which consists of doing the right things like right conduct, right sleep, right wakefulness, right food, right relaxation, right action and right thinking. In this way, the truthfulness in life can help us to realise the proper nature of Supreme, i.e.,

50. MU., III.1.6

51. Eng. Trans. from Gambhirananda, Swami., (Vol.II) E.UP., p.146

Brahman. R.G. Desai rightly states, “The truth is the spark which engulfs everything as a blazing fire. The spark does not exist by itself, it is part of the blazing fire.”⁵²

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says :

‘*yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre’s tam gacchanti nāmarūpe vihāya/
tathā vidvānnāmarūpādvimuktaḥ parātparam puruṣamupaiti divyam//*’⁵³

[Trans : As rivers, flowing down, become indistinguishable on reaching the sea by giving up their names and forms, so also the illumined soul, having become freed from name and form, reaches the self-effulgent Puruṣa that is higher than the higher (Māyā.)⁵⁴

According to the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, one who comprehends the nature of Supreme *Brahman*, becomes *Brahman* himself. But at the same time, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says that power of strength is the most important thing in human life for attaining the Supreme Being. That is why the *Upaniṣad* says :

‘*nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyo na ca pramādāttapaso vāpyaliṅgāt!*’⁵⁵

Through this *mantra*, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* clearly says that for realising the nature of *Ātman* or *Brahman* power or energy is very very essential.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* gives the message of self control and to become morally strong through the practice of *Brahmacarya*. The practice of *Brahmacarya* can change our personality also. Finally, *Brahmacarya* helps a man to realise the nature of

52. Desai, R.G., UAWI., p.37

53. MU., III.2.8

54. Eng. Trans. from Gambhirananda, Swami., E.UP., (Vol.II), p.162

55. MU., III.2.4

Supreme *Brahman*. He who understands the nature of Supreme, i.e., *Brahman*, becomes *Brahman* himself. That is way the Upaniṣad states :

‘*brahmavidyām sarvavidyāpratiṣṭhām*’⁵⁶

‘*etadyo veda nihitam guhāyam so ’vidyāgranthim vikiratītha somya*’⁵⁷

‘*tadā vidvānpuṇyapāpe vidhūya nirañjanaḥ paramam sāmīyamupaiti*’⁵⁸

‘*sa yo ha vai tatparamam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*’⁵⁹

The knowledge of the Supreme Self, i.e., *Brahman* or realisation of Supreme Being is the result of non-separateness with *Parama Brahman*. Distinctness is the root of doubt, violence, hatred, disbelief, and jealousy. But the concept of oneness helps to bring universal peace and brotherhood which gives us a good environment to live peacefully.

In this way, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* gives the message of universal love and brotherhood through the knowledge of one Supreme Being. By suggesting the messages for realising the proper nature of the Supreme Being in various *mantras*, the Upaniṣad conveys the message of love, universal brotherhood and equality.

(ii) Concept of Oneness in Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Atharvaveda* which is shortest among all the Upaniṣads and consists of twelve *mantras* only. The Upaniṣad is so called because the composer of this Upaniṣad is sage Māṇḍūkya Gauḍapāda, the teacher of Govindapāda, who was the teacher of Śaṅkarācārya, wrote a *kārikā* on this Upaniṣad

56. MU., I.1.1

57. Ibid, II.1.10

58. Ibid, III.1.3

59. Ibid, III.2.9

about two hundred and fifty verses. It is known as *Gauḍapāda kārīkā*. This Upaniṣad has explained very beautifully the theory of non-dualism. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* says that the whole world is nothing but *Brahman* itself. According to this *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, *Om* is the symbol of *Brahman* and by the realisation of greatness of *Om* one can realise the greatness of *Brahman* also. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes the syllable *Om* and *Brahman* as one and same. Saying the statement, ‘All this world is *Brahman*, this individual self is also *Brahman*’, the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* gives the message of unity in diversity.

At the very beginning, the Upaniṣad says :

‘*omītyetadaḥsaramidaṁsarvaṁ tasyopavyākhyānaṁ*

bhutaṁ bhavadbhaviṣyadīti sarvamoṅkāra eva/

yaccānyat trikālātītaṁ tadapyoṅkāra eva/’⁶⁰

[Trans : *Aum*, this syllable is all this. An explanation of that (is the following). All that is the past, the present and the future, all this is only the syllable *Aum*. And whatever else there is beyond the threefold time, that too is only the syllable *Aum*.]⁶¹

According to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* all in this universe is *Om* and there is no difference between *Om* and *Brahman*. In the above mentioned *mantras* of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the sacred word *Om* and *Brahman*, the Ultimate Reality of this whole universe have been used as synonymous. So, *Om* stands for *Brahman* and is both the cause and effect. Therefore, according to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, all in this universe is nothing but *Omkāra* only. *Om* is considered to be an apt symbol of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is all-inclusive, in the same way *Om* is also all-inclusive. When

60. Mā.U.,1

61. Eng. Trans. from Radhakrishnan, S., TPU., p.695

we are trying to pronounce *Om*, we touch all points in our mouth from where sound is produced. Therefore, *Om* is called ‘*śabda brahman*’, i.e., the *śabda* or sound represents the Supreme *Brahman*. According to this Upaniṣad, the world around us is not real. It is the knowledge which can destroy our ignorance. When the phenomenal world is negated, there is only the substratum left – that is *Om* or *Brahman* or *Ātman*. “The syllable *Om* is made up of three elements : *A*, *U*, and *M*. *A* is the root sound. It is produced from the back of the throat. *M* is the final sound, because it is produced by the closed lips. And *U* is the sound produced in between. Sound is nothing but an expression of something that exists, and *Om* represents all sounds. So, this *Om* stands for *Brahman*. It stands for everything , for the whole universe.”⁶²

Om is the instrument for realising the nature of *Brahman* or *Ātman*. No amount of discussion can give us the perfect knowledge about Ultimate Reality or *Brahman*. But the meditation of *Om* is the main door to realise the proper nature of Supreme *Brahman* which is everywhere and everything of this whole universe. Thus, *Om* which is also known as *Brahman* or *Ātman* consists of three letters *A*, *U*, *M*, which are the symbols of the ordinary states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. According to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, a person who contemplates on *A* he contemplates on the whole universe, which guides him to *viśva* and to *virāt* level, i.e., *viśva* on individual level and to *virāt* on the cosmic level. Again this Upaniṣad states that a person who contemplates on *U*, he contemplates on subtle universe and it guides him to *taijasa* and to *Hiraṇyagarbha*, i.e., *taijasa* on the individual level and to *Hiraṇyagarbha* on the cosmic level. Again contemplation on *M* leads a person to the causal state to *prājña* and *Īśvara*. Thus, this Upaniṣad gives us easy methods of realising the nature of Ultimate Reality, i.e., *Brahman*. R.G. Desai states in this regard

62. Lokeshwarananda, Mā.U., p.7

that- “Om is said to be an eternal mantra and the mother of all other mantras. It is a basic sound vibration which electrifies the whole body and soul. Apart from clearing the voice, it purifies the whole system. Under the guidance of an able guru, it can make one’s whole being vibrant. Any person who practises the right way can acquire a resonant, persuasive voice. What is needed is scientific research on OM, a mantra which has appealed to the people of India for centuries.”⁶³ The *Śrimadbhagavadgītā*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, *Praśna Upaniṣad*, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* have discussed the importance of *Om* and maintained that the Supreme *Brahman* is known by means of *Om*. According to the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, by meditating on *Om*, all these elements are identified with the Ultimate Reality. All the designated things in this universe depend for their designation on something else, all that we see is depend on the syllable *Om*. Thus, the syllable *Om* is assumed to be equal with Supreme Being, i.e., *Brahman*. The *Śrimadbhagavadgītā* says :

‘omityekākṣaram brahma vyaharanmāmanusmaran/
yaḥ prayāti tyajandeham sa yāti paramām gatim//’⁶⁴

[Trans : He who leaves the body and departs uttering the one Indestructible Brahma, OM, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal.]⁶⁵

In the *Praśna Upaniṣad* Pippalāda tells his disciple Satyakāma about the nature of *Om*. He says that *Om* is both the lower knowledge (*aparāvidyā*) and higher knowledge (*parāvidyā*). By meditating *Om* one may reach both the lower and higher knowledge. The reference of this fact is elaborated by G. Gispert Sauch, S.J. thus, “If one is satisfied with a partial meditation one gains the lower worlds which remain

63. Desai, R.G., UAWI., p.103

64. ŚBG, VIII.13

65. Eng. Trans. from ŚBG., Gitapress Gorakhpur., p.101

within the transmigration circuit. If one does a meditation of the syllable as a whole, in its totality, one reaches that “Which is tranquil (*sāntam*), unaging (*ajaram*), immortal (*amṛtam*), fearless (*abhayam*), the supreme (*param*).”⁶⁶ When one engages in meditation on the Supreme Reality with a view to realise the self, he should meditate on *Om*. The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* says that a person who utters the single syllable *Om* remembering the eternal *Brahman* at the time of death, he goes to the highest goal. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* also states :

‘*omityevam dhyāyatha ātmānam svasti vaḥ parāya tamasah parastāt*’⁶⁷

[Trans : Meditating on *Om* one may cross the ignorance, which is full of darkness, and attains the Supreme *Brahman*.]

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* also says :

‘*vahneryathā yonigatasya mūrtirna dṛśyate naiva ca liṅganāśah*/

sa bhūya evendhanayoniḡṛhyastadvobhayaṁ vai praṇavena dehe’⁶⁸

[Trans : As the form of fire when latent in its source is not seen and yet its seed is not destroyed, but may be seized again and again in its source by means of the drill, so it is in both cases. The self has to be seized in the body by means of the syllable *Aum*.]⁶⁹

Yama also tells to Naciketa that the letter *Om* is the *Brahman* and this is the Supreme. A person by worshipping this very letter *Om* as *Brahman*, fulfils his desires. Therefore, *Omkāra* is the best among all means to realise the Supreme *Brahman*.

66. S.J., G Gispert- Sauch, BIU., p.125

67. MU.,II.2.6

68. ŚU., I.13

69. Eng. Trans. from Radhakrishnan. S., TPU., p.717

In this way perhaps it can be said that *Om̐kāra* the symbol of *Brahman*, i.e., Ultimate Reality is non-different from *Brahman*. The *Om̐kāra* is the *Parama Brahman* itself. It is the past, present and future; and that which is beyond these three times and different from these is also *Om̐kāra*. Therefore, *Om* is all this.

Elaborating the nature of oneness among individual self and Supreme Self, the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* states :

‘*sarvaṁ hyetadbrahmāyamātmā brahma so ’yamātma catuspāt*’⁷⁰

[Trans : All this is *Brahman*, this individual self, i.e., *Ātman* is also *Brahman*; this *Ātman* (*Brahman*) has four legs.]

Here the Upaniṣad says that, the individual self and Supreme Self are one and same. There is no difference between them. Therefore, the individual self is nothing but *Paramātman* itself. The unborn and immortal element which is not to be confused with our body, life, mind and intellect, and the inner self of man is non-separate from *Brahman*. In this regard the concept of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁷¹ and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* has been rightly stated by S. Radhakrishnan- ‘Verily this whole world is *Brahman*,’ and also ‘This soul of mine within the heart, this is *Brahman*.’ ‘That person who is seen in the eye, He is *Ātman*, that is *Brahman*.’⁷² The microcosm and macrocosm are one and same.

In this way, the Reality, who is in this body, is also in the sun. It is the same self (*Ātman*), the same *Brahman* (the Ultimate Reality). Thus, the Reality is one and without a second. Almost all the Upaniṣads bring the idea of non dual *Brahman*. According to them, the individual self and Supreme Self are one and same and all

70. Mā. U.,2

71. Radhakrishnan,S.,TPU., p.77

72. Ibid

these things and beings surrounding us is nothing but *Brahman* itself. These *mantras* of the Upaniṣads prove the idea about oneness :

‘*puruṣa evedaṁ sarvaṁ yadbhūtaṁ yacca bhavyam*’⁷³

‘*sarvataḥ pāṇipādaṁ tatsarvato ’kṣīsiromukham!*’⁷⁴

‘*eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā!*’⁷⁵

‘*tadetatsatyam tadamṛtaṁ tadveddhavyam somya viddhi!*’⁷⁶

The Ultimate Reality is one and without a second. The individual self is *Brahman* itself. *Brahman* is everything and everywhere in this universe. According to Padmajā Sen, “The world is only a vivarta and appearance of *Brahman* and as an absolute appearance it is at once real and unreal. It is real as being the manifestation of the *Brahman*, and unreal as being alienated from *Brahman*.”⁷⁷

Brahman is the ultimate cause of this universe and He is all in all. It includes everything in it. All things come out from It and also return to It at last. *Brahman* is underlying all things, but in itself indescribable. This Reality is the soul of the world, the source of all things and is eternal. The non-dual *Brahman* is worshipped as *uktha* in the Ṛg, Agni in the *Yajur* and the *Mahāvratā* in the *Sāma*.⁷⁸ The real essence of the Reality is one. “We make sacrifices to the ultimate Lord of the Universe who runs through every particle of this Universe, the whole existence, and who is blissful and indescribable.”⁷⁹

73. ŚU.,III.15

74. Ibid,III.16

75. Ibid,VI.11

76. MU.,II.2.2

77. Sen, Padmaja., ASAC., p.21

78. Srivastava, AK., GFTP., p.6

79. Ibid

The Ultimate Reality, i.e., *Ātman* or *Brahman* is independent reality and is distinct from other things. It has its own individuality and liberty. It is not limited by any principle and absolutely unique in its nature. Swami Vivekananda states that the Ultimate Reality which is known as *Ātman* or *Brahman* is *eternal*, eternally pure, the almighty, the all merciful, the all knowing, formless, omnipresent and partless reality. According to Śaṅkarācārya the Ultimate Reality, i.e., *Brahman* and *Ātman* are identical. *Ātman* is self-luminous consciousness. Śaṅkarācārya proclaims that the *Ātman* is pure intelligence, pure blessedness and pure being, which is one for all.⁸⁰

From the above discussion, probably it can be said that the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣadic view ‘This self is *Brahman*’ has been supported in almost all the Upaniṣads and by most of the Indian thinkers. Sometimes in our life, we feel that the world is real, and some time we think that the individual self and the Supreme Self is completely different things. It happens on account of our ignorance or *avidyā*. In reality, there is nothing but one Reality that surround the whole and that is the real thing. This Reality is acosmic (*niṣprapañca*), qualityless (*nirguṇa*), indeterminate (*nirviśeṣa*), and indescribable (*anirvacanīya*). It is one and devoid of all kinds of duplication. That is why, Swami Ranganathananda says in this context, “Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular ... Consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown; that there is only one thing and that, what seems to be a plurality, is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing produced by a deception (the Indian *Maya*.)”⁸¹

Elaborating the identification of Individual self and Supreme Self and the essential oneness of *Brahman* and *Ātman*, the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad states that this

80. Dasgupta, S.N., AHIP., (Vo.I) p.438

81. Ranganathananda, Swami., PVASV., p.5

Ātman has four legs. They are *viśva*, the waking state, *taijasa*, the dream state; *prājñā*, the state of dreamless sleep and *turīya*, the state of spiritual consciousness. The Upaniṣad says :

*‘jāgaritasthāno bahiḥsprajñāḥ saptāṅga ekonaviṁśatimukhaḥ sthūlabhugvaiśvānaraḥ
prathamah pādah//’*⁸²

[Trans : The first quarter is Vaiśvānara whose sphere (of action) is the waking state, whose consciousness relates to things external, who is possessed of seven limbs and nineteen mouths, and who enjoys gross things.]⁸³

The Upaniṣad explains the four states of the Consciousness, i.e., *Brahman*. The first leg of *Brahman* is *vaiśvānara*. It is called *vaiśvānara* because “He leads all creatures of the universe in diverse ways to the enjoyment of various objects, or because he comprises all beings.”⁸⁴ Śaṅkarācārya says :

*‘viśveṣāṁ narāṅām anekadhā nayanād vaiśvānaraḥ; yad vā viśvaś cāsau naraś ceti
vaiśvānaraḥ; vaiśvānara eva vaiśvānaraḥ//’*⁸⁵

Vaiśvānara means *viśva* and *nara* – that is, all beings. The whole gross world is his body (*śarīra*) similar to the embodied soul in its wakeful state (*jāgrata avasthā*) whose knowing power permeates the outer world. The seven *lokas*, viz., *bhūlokaḥ*, *bhubarlokaḥ*, *svarlokaḥ*, *mahalokaḥ*, *janalokaḥ*, *tapolokaḥ* and *satyalokaḥ* are its parts. The five sense organs, viz., *netram*, *śrotram*, *ghrāṇam*, *rasanam* and *tvak* ; the five *karmendriyas*, viz., *vāk*, *pāni*, *pāda*, *pāyu* and *upastha* ; the five *prāṇas* (*pañca prāna*), viz., *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna* and finally the four aspects of

82. Mā.U.,3

83. Gambhirananda, Swami, E.UP., (Vol.II), p.176

84. Radhakrishnan, S., TPU., p.695

85. Ibid

mind (*antakaraṇa*), viz., *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahankāra* – these nineteen cosmic agents are his nineteen mouths. These nineteen in number grasp the sense objects and is the enjoyer of the gross world. It is manifested in the outer gross world. This *vaiśvānara* of pantheistic nature is the first leg of the *Brahman*.

Gauḍapāda in his *kārikā* (*Gauḍapāda kārikā*) says that when the individual is awake and conscious of this world, he is called *viśva*. Gauḍapāda describes him as *vibhuḥ*, all pervasive. In this state we see everything around us and we take everything through our sense organs. Therefore, our consciousness is outward (*bahisprajña*),⁸⁶ i.e., in this state we are conscious of the external world and enjoy this gross physical world (*sthūlabhuk*).

The second stage of the *Brahman* is described in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* thus:

‘*svapnasthāno ’ntaḥprajñāḥ saptāṅga ekonaviṁśatimukhaḥ*

praviviktabhuk taijaso dvitīyaḥ pādaḥ!’⁸⁷

[Trans : The second part is Taijasa whose place is in the dream state, who beholds the internal objects, who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who experiences the subtle objects.]⁸⁸

The second leg of *Brahman* is described in this *mantra*. *Taijasa* is the second quarter, whose sphere (of activity) is the dream state. It possesses seven limbs and nineteen mouths and enjoys subtle objects. Regarding dreaming state, Śaṅkarācārya, the great commentator states, “The senses are at rest, but the common sensory proceeds to

86. Lokeswarananda, Swami., Mā U., p.24

87. Mā.U., 4

88. Eng. Trans. from Mahadevan, T.M.P., U., p.100

work, and the images, painted upon it like pictures on a canvas, simulate the outward objects of the waking experiences. The common sensory is set in motion in this way by the illusion, the desires and the retributive fatality, which cling to the soul through all its migrations. The individual sleeping soul is styled *Taijasa*, the sum of sleeping souls in their invisible bodies is *Hiraṇyagarbha*.⁸⁹ In the dreaming state the presiding *jivatman* of the subtle body has seven subtle limbs and nineteen subtle mouths. The seven subtle *lokas-bhū*, *bhuva*, *sva*, *maha*, *jana*, *tapa*, and *satya* are its seven limbs. The five sense organs- *netra*, *śrotra*, *ghrāṇa*, *rasan* and *tvak* ; the five *karmendriyas* – *vāk*, *pani*, *pāda*, *pāyu* and *upastha* ; the five *prāṇas*- *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna*, *samāna* and the four *antakaraṇas*, viz., *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta* and *ahaṅkāra*, nineteen in number – accompanied with that is the subtle body of *Brahman*, which is in the form of the subtle world. *Hiraṇyagarbha* is the *Ātmā* of it (the subtle body-mind complex), who is the controller of the subtle world. That shining and subtle *Hiraṇyagarbha* is the second leg of *Brahman*.

The third state of *Brahman* is described in the *Māndūkya Upaniṣad* as :

‘*yatra supto na kaṁcana kāmam kāmāyate na kaṁcana svapnam paśyati tatsusuptam/
susuptasthāna ekībhūtaḥ prajñānaghana evānandamayo hyānandabhuk cetomukhaḥ
prājñāstrīyaḥ pādaḥ*’⁹⁰

[Trans : In which stage; the person sleeping ; desires not any object ; dreams not any dream; that is sleeping state; one who has the dissolving stage of the universe, i.e., the causal stage which is akin to deep slumber, as his body; who is alone in an undifferentiated stage; who is alone the solidified knowledge; bliss itself; effulgence

89. Edward, Gough., TPOU., p.70

90. Mā.U.,5

as his mouth; enjoyer of the bliss; conscious par *excellence* is the third leg of Brahma.]⁹¹

The Upaniṣad says that blissful *prājñā* is the third leg of *Brahman*. In this stage a sleeping person neither desires any enjoyable object nor does he experience any dream. It is known as sleeping stage. Gough Edward has observed that, “Dreamless sleep is that state in which the sleeper desires no desire and sees no dream. The third quarter is the soul in the state of dreamless sleep, being one in itself, a mass of cognition, pre-eminent in bliss, with fruition of beatitude, having thought as its inlet, and of transcendent knowledge.”⁹² In this state, i.e., when a person lies in the dreamless sleep there is a sense of oneness. There is only consciousness, undifferentiated consciousness, consciousness that is not particularised. In this state both the body and the mind remain in rest, but there is consciousness. In this way, in *viśva*, i.e., in the first state of *Brahman*, the self enjoys all gross things, whereas in the *taijasa* state, it enjoys those in a subtle manner, according to its desires. But, in the *prājñā* state, the self enjoys only bliss. In this way, there are the three kinds of enjoyment, which have been described in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* in a very beautiful manner.

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* states that *prājñā* is the lord of everything, the protector of everything and also controller of everything. The *prājñā* is omniscient, i.e., all knowing and all seeking. All things arise from him and also merge into him. He is *antaryāmi*, i.e., indwelling spirit. It is the essence of everything and living in the heart of every beings. He is *sarvasya yoniḥ*, i.e., he is the cause of every things and

91. Eng. Trans. from Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., pp.199-200

92. Edward, Gough, TPOU., p.70

beings. Everything comes from the same source. There is only one single entity that is common to all of us.⁹³

Regarding the fourth leg of *Brahman* the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* says :

*‘nāntaḥprajñam na bahiḥprajñam nobhayataḥprajñam na prajñānaghanam na
prajñam nāprajñam / adṛṣṭamavyavahāryamagrāḥhyamalakṣaṇamacintyama-
vyapadesyamekātmapratyayasāram prapañcopaśamam śāntam śivamadvai-tam
caturtham manyante sa ātmā sa vijñeyaḥ//’⁹⁴*

[Trans : Not cognising the internal objects, not cognising the external objects, not cognising either, not being a mass of sentience, not cognising and not not-cognising, invisible, incapable of being spoken of, not capable of being grasped, not having any identifying mark, unthinkable, unnamable, the essence of the knowledge of the one self, that into which all phenomena get resolved, tranquil, blissful, non-dual - such they consider as the fourth (part). He is the self. He is to be known.]⁹⁵

The Upaniṣad has declared that the Self can be seen in four states (*pādas*), viz., *viśva* (the waking state), *taijasa* (the dream state), *prājñā* (the deep sleep state) and *turīya* (pure consciousness). The last *pāda*, i.e., *turīya* is the real nature of the Self. The attributeless, formless and undifferentiated aspect is stated to be the fourth leg of *Brahman*. In above *mantra*, the Upaniṣad gives the nature of *Para Brahman*, who is non-dual. That is the real thing, which is *acintyam*, *agrāhyam*, *avyapadeśyam*, *prapañcopaśamam*, *śāntam*, *śivam* and *advaitam*. In the *Gaudapāda-kārikā*, Gaudapāda says, “Turīya is described [by the wise] as : one without a second, always the same, all pervasive [as water in a wave], the ultimate negation of the phenomenal

93. Mā.U.,6

94. Ibid.,7

95 . Eng. Trans. from Mahadevan, TMP., U., p.101

world, self-luminous, pure consciousness, Para Brahman, who alone is able to remove suffering totally. [Suffering ends when one is able to realize one's identity as Para Brahman.]⁹⁶ Thus, this (*turīya*) is our real state and the knowledge of this state is very important.

In this way there are the four stages of *Brahman*. According to this Upaniṣad, *turīya* is, infact our own self. Our ultimate aim of life is also to know the self. If we know the nature of *Ātman*, we see oneness in the whole creation and realise that there is only the Self and nothing else.

According to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the partless *Om* is *turīya*. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes *turīya* state as *amātra*, i.e., partless. It is *Om* itself and it is also the self, i.e., it is *Para Brahman* itself. It is formless, beyond of mind and speech, attributeless, formless, and *avyavahāryaḥ*, i.e., beyond empirical relations. It is one without a second. There is nothing different from It. This non-dual *Brahman* cannot be said as couple. Because, we cannot say that here is one *Brahman* and there is another. It is only one and there is nothing beyond it. It is constant Reality and it never decays. He who knows it, assimilates his self with that Supreme Self, i.e., he becomes one with the Supreme *Brahman*.⁹⁷

Gauḍapāda in his *Gauḍapāda-kārikā* says that *Om* is both higher (superior) and lower (inferior) *Brahman*. Higher *Brahman* is Supreme, i.e., *Para Brahman*. It is qualityless, i.e., *nirguṇa*. Lower *Brahman* is *apara Brahman*, which is manifested as this universe. But, when this universe is negated by the knowledge (*jñāna*) there is only *Brahman* (one without a second) in the whole. He is unaffected and always the same. Thus, *Para Brahman* and *apara Brahman* are same and one. It is the beginning,

96. Lokeswarananda, Swami., Mā.U., p.49

97. Mā.U.,12

middle and end of everything. According to Gauḍapāda, *mātrā* derived in the sense of that by which anything is measured, signifies dimension; but, *Brahman* cannot be determined by anything and is duality less. Therefore, *Brahman* is *amātrāḥ*, i.e., partless.⁹⁸

In this way, the four legs of integral *Brahman* are three gross, subtle and causal – attributed form and the fourth attributeless and bodiless form, the Supreme Reality, the soul of all beings.

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes the *Ātman* or *Brahman* as peace. The Upaniṣad suggests that through the realisation of *Ātman* one gets peace, i.e., attains *Brahman*, the Ultimate Peace. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* gives the message of kindness, compassion, affection and co-operation among the people. It brings out the idea of oneness. The Upaniṣad says that human being is nothing but *Brahman* itself. Human beings are the creation of *Brahman* and there is no difference among them. They all are equal and the same.

(iii) **Concept of Oneness in Praśna Upaniṣad**

The *Praśna Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Atharvaveda*. It is the one the most popular Upaniṣads among the principal ten Upaniṣads. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* contains six sections in the form of six questions put to a *ṛṣi* by six disciples searching the knowledge of Ultimate Reality, i.e., *Brahman*, which is the Ultimate Cause of the whole creation. That is why, this Upaniṣad is known as the *Praśna Upaniṣad*. This Upaniṣad guides the investigator from known to the unknown, manifest to the unmanifest and grossly material to the supremely spiritual.

98. Lokeswarananda, Swami., Mā.U., pp.81-85

The first section of the *Praśna Upaniṣad* deals with this question asked by Kabandhi Kātyāyana, the great grandson of Kātya to Pipplāda, the expert of spiritual knowledge, expecting that he will tell everything :

‘atha kabandhī kātyāyana upetya papraccha bhagavankuto

ha vā imāḥ prajāḥ prajāyanta iti//’⁹⁹

[Trans : After completion of one year, Kabandhi, the son of Kātya approaches his *guru* Pippalāda and asks, ‘venerable sir, from whom all these creature, mobile and immobile come into view ?]

In this *mantra ṛṣi* Kabandhī Kātyāyana asks his *guru* Pippalāda that how and where from the whole multiform creation has come?, i.e., from what particular cause these whole creation has come into existence and who controls it and how ?

Hearing this interesting question from Kabandhī Kātyāyana, *guru* Pippalāda replies :

*‘tasmai sa hovāca prajākāmo vai prajāpatiḥ sa tapo ’tapyata sa tapastaptvā sa
mithunamutpādayate / rayiṁ ca prāṇaṁ cetyetau me bahudhā prajāḥ kariṣyata
iti//’¹⁰⁰*

[Trans : To him he said : Prajāpati desired to have offspring; he performed penance. Performing penance, he produced the pair, namely, wealth and life, in the hope that these two would procure him variety of offspring.]¹⁰¹

Pippalāda states that Prajāpati with a desire to make creation, performed *tapas*, and after performing penance Prajāpati created a couple of *rayi* and *prāṇa* thinking that

99. PU.,I.3

100. Ibid, I.4

101. Eng. Trans. from Mahadevan, T.M.P., U., p.75

these two, i.e., *rayi* and *prāṇa* will produce various types of creation. *Rayi* means power or energy and *prāṇa* means the vital principle of life ; and it is only by the association of *prāṇa* and *rayi* that the creation runs smoothly. Ṛṣi Pippalāda states that this visible world, which surrounds the whole of us has been made through the alliance of *rayi* and *prāṇa*. They cannot be separated from one another. Pippalāda states :

*‘ādityo ha vai prāṇo rayireva candramā rayirvā etatsarvaṃ yanmūrtam cāmūrtam ca
tasmānmūrtireva rayiḥ//’*¹⁰²

[Trans : *Prāṇa* which is the vital principle of our life is actually the sun which is also the indispensable principle of all living beings; and *rayi* (which is the energy and shape) is moon indeed. All that is visible and non-visible is *rayi* indeed. Therefore, all the tangible or touchable are nothing but *rayi* itself.]

The directly manifesting principle sun is *prāṇa*, as only this contains excessively the consciousness that provides life to all. The sun is solidified form of that subtle living force. The moon is regarded as the *rayi* because it includes the *tanmātrās* of the elements, which cherish the gross elements. Therefore, the entire elements get their sustenance from this lunar energy. The sun (*prāṇa*) and moon (*rayi*) are always penetrating in every limbs of our body; and the life force or energy are directly related to the sun and the other blood, body, tissue, etc., are directly related to the moon.

It is very remarkable that Prajāpati who created a couple named *rayi* and *prāṇa*, thinking that these two will produce creatures for him, but these two are one without a second. They are nothing but Prajāpati himself who has become the couple. They are looking two from the stand point of superiority and inferiority. That Reality,

102. PU.,I.5

who presides the whole universe and who is pure consciousness in essence, that Reality is one without a second. Swami Muni Narayana Prasad has remarked that, “Our direct experience of that Reality is in the form of I-consciousness, the consciousness that is conscious of itself. The Real is called *sat* and consciousness *cit*; thus *sat* is *cit* in essence. Consciousness does not remain inert, it is always in some functional state, wanting to see for itself what potentials are hidden within itself. This urge incessantly transforms itself as everything, as all the world, actualising the contentment of self-expression (*ānanda*). This is comparable to the satisfaction felt by children in their play of creating and destroying many things for the sheer joy of it. Prajāpati’s desire for offspring is nothing but this inner urge.”¹⁰³

In this way, The *Praśna Upaniṣad* describes Prajāpati as the Ultimate Reality of this whole creation and that Prajāpati is non-dual. The sun and the moon which are the symbols of *prāṇa* and *rayi* are nothing but Prajāpati itself. Pippalāda states :

‘*saṁvatsaro vai prajāpatistasyāyane dakṣiṇam cottaram ca tadye ha vai tadiṣṭāpūrte
kṛtamityupāsate te cāndramasameva lokamabhijayante/ta eva pūnarāvartante
tasmādete ṛṣayaḥ prajākāmā dakṣiṇam pratipadyante/eṣa ha vai rayiryah
pitṛyāṇaḥ*’¹⁰⁴

[Trans : Verily, Prajāpati is the year. It has two paths, the southern and the northern. Now those who dedicate themselves to deeds like sacrifices and public benefactions win only the world of the moon. The certainly return again. Therefore the ṛṣis desiring offspring resort to the southern path. This, which is called the path of the dead ancestors, is the wealth.]¹⁰⁵

103. Narāyana Prasad, Swami Muni., PU., pp. 28-29

104. PU., I.9

105. Eng Trans. from Mahadevan, T.M.P., U., p.76

Through the above *mantra* Pippalāda suggests that *saṁvatsaraḥ*, i.e., year is nothing but Prajāpati itself. It emerges from Prajāpati. It has two paths - *dakṣiṇāyanam* (southern) and *uttarāyanam* (northern). “The six months of southern solstice in which the sun moves in the southern hemisphere, are its south side portions and the other six months of northern solstice are his northern portions.”¹⁰⁶ According to the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, the southern path is the material path where we perform acts with selfish desires. These are of two kinds, viz., *iṣṭa* and *pūrta*. The *iṣṭa* is related with the acts of ceremonial piety, observances of Vedic ritual and the later to acts of social service and public good.¹⁰⁷ Elaborating the nature of northern path *guru* Pippalāda states :

‘*athottareṇa tapasā brahmacaryeṇa śraddhayā vidyayātmānamanviṣ-
yādityamabhijayanta/etadvai prāṇānāmāyatanametadamṛtamabhayametatpa-
rāyaṇametasmānna punarāvartanta ityeṣa nirodhaḥ..//*’¹⁰⁸

[Trans : But those who seek the Self by *tapas*, *brahmacarya*, faith and knowledge, they attain the world of the sun by the northern path. That verily is the abode of *prāṇas* ; that is the immortal; that is fearlessness; that is the final goal from where there is no return.]¹⁰⁹

According to the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, month verily is Prajāpati.¹¹⁰ The dark fortnight is His *rayi* and brighter fortnight is His *prāṇa*. Therefore, the seers perform sacrifices in the brighter fortnight and other common people in the other fortnight. Swami Muni Narayana Prasad suggests that, “The brighter fortnight represents wisdom; actions performed in its span are those befitting this wisdom. A man of

106. Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.118

107. Radhakrishnan, S., TPU., p.653

108. PU., I.10

109. Eng. Trans. from Narayana Prasad, Swami Muni., PU., p.40

110. PU., I.12

wisdom views himself, as a transient manifest form that appears and disappears in the beginningless and endless creative self-unfoldment of the one eternal Reality. He sees himself filled with this Reality, even as a wave is filled with ocean. Whatever he happens to do as a part of this self-unfoldment of Reality, which we called nature, will be for the benefit both of himself as well as the total flow of life. Those *iṣṭa karmas* natural to the wisdom context, are a reflection of the brighter aspect of life.”¹¹¹

It is found to be observed that in *Praśna Upaniṣad*, every month has been taken as an appearance of *Parama Brahman*, the Highest Reality, which is known as *Prajāpati* in *Praśna Upaniṣad*. The fifteen days of dark fortnight have been regarded as the right portion of *Prajāpati* known to be the *rayi* (the cause of gross elements); and the other fifteen days of the bright fortnight are known as the left portion of *Prajāpati*, which is the Ultimate Reality of this whole universe. The fifteen days of the bright fortnight, which is left portion of *Prajāpati*, is known to be the *prāṇa*, the main source of every living beings and indwelling form of *Paramātman*. Thus, *prāṇa* and *rayi* are nothing but *Prajāpati* itself.

Illustrating the nature of Ultimate Reality, i.e., *Prajāpati*, the *Praśna Upaniṣad* says ;

‘*ahorātro vai prajāpatistasyāhareva prāṇo rātrireva rayiḥ prāṇam vā ete
praskandanti ye divā ratyā saṃyujyante brahmacaryameva tadyadrātrau ratyā
saṃyujyante*’¹¹²

[Trans : The pair of day and night is *Prajāpati*; the day thereof is *Prāṇa* and night is *Rayi* ; those who copulate during daytime; they really weaken their vital force and those who copulate during night; this copulation is *Brahmacarya* itself.]¹¹³

111. Narayana Prasad, Swami Muni., PU., pp.48-49

112. PU., I.13

113. Eng. Trans. from Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.121

In this *mantra*, day and night, i.e., the period of one day and one night (one solar unit of time) is imagined to be the Supreme Reality, i.e., Prajāpati. It has been mentioned in the earlier *mantras* that Prajāpati, which is regarded as the Ultimate Reality of this whole universe is *samvatsaraḥ*, i.e., the year itself, Prajāpati is the month and here prajāpati is mentioned by day and night. The above *mantra* says that, day indeed is *prāṇa* (life) and the night verily is *rayi* (matter). The day is *prāṇa*, which is essential source and life giver to all, self shining, wholly pure in nature and the night is regarded as *rayi*, the form of gross enjoyments. According to the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, they who join in sexual intercourse during the day, do not reach the goal and waste this inestimable life. But those who join in sexual intercourse during the night, this copulation is *Brahmacarya* itself.

Elaborating the nature of Prajāpati, the Ultimate Reality of this whole universe, the *Praśna Upaniṣad* states in its fourteenth *mantra* of first *adhyāya* that :

‘*annaṁ vai prajāpatistato ha vai tadretastasmādimāḥ prajāḥ prajāyanta iti*’¹¹⁴

In this *mantra*, food (*anna*) is described as Prajāpati, the Ultimate Reality of this universe. From that food, i.e., *anna*, formed the semen, which is the origin of all creature. When these semen is deposited in a woman, all the beings are born from her. Therefore, food is nothing but Prajāpati itself, who is surrounding the whole.

According to the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, Prajāpati is *Brahman* understood in the context of creation. One who knows Prajāpati, becomes Prajapati itself and feels oneness with Prajāpati, the Ultimate Reality.

The second *adhyāya* of the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, deals with this question put by

114. PU., I.14

ṛṣi Pippalāda :

*‘atha hainam bhārgavo vaidarbhiḥ papraccha, bhagavankatyeva devāḥ prajāṃ
vidhārayante, katara etatprakāśayante, kaḥ punareṣām variṣṭha iti//’¹¹⁵*

[Trans : Then Bhārgava of the Vidarbha country asked him (Pippalāda) : Venerable sir, how many powers support the created world ? How many illumine this ? And who, again, among them is the greatest ?]¹¹⁶

Hearing this question from Bhārgava, *ṛṣi* Pippalāda replies that :

*‘tasmai sa hovācākāśo ha vā eṣa devo vāyuragnirāpaḥ pṛthivī vaṅmanaścakṣuḥ
śrotraṃ ca/te prakāśyābhivadanti vayametadbā-ṅamavaṣṭabhya vidhārayāmaḥ//’¹¹⁷*

[Trans : The great Pippalāda spoke to him : decidedly the ether is that God; and then wind, fire, water, earth, speech (motor organs), eyes and ears (sensory organs) and lastly the mind (inner senses) also (are gods) they all started exhibiting their powers and saying; it is we who sustain this body through our support.]¹¹⁸

Pippalāda states that *prāṇa* is the ultimate force and above from ether, wind, fire, water, etc., which maintains and illumines our body. Narrating the glory of *prāṇa*, which is nothing but Prajāpati itself, Pippalāda states :

*‘eṣo’gnistapatyeṣa sūrya eṣa parjanya maghavāneṣa vāyureṣa/
pṛthivī rayirdevaḥ sadasaccāmṛtaṃ ca yat//’¹¹⁹*

This *mantra* says that *prāṇa* which is Prajāpati itself, burns as a fire, he is also the sun, again he is the cloud, he is verily the Indra (Maghavān) and also the wind, earth,

115. PU., II.1

116. Eng. Trans. from Radhakrishnan. S., TPU., p.656

117. PU., II.2

118. Eng. Trans. from Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.123

119. PU., II.5

rayi (the gross elements) and the Gods. This *prāṇa* is being and non-being and immortal too. According to Śaṅkarācārya, in this *mantra*, the term *ṣad* indicates *murtam* (formed) and *aṣad* means *amūrtam* (unformed).¹²⁰ Pippalāda again says that as spokes are well fixed on the hub of a chariot wheel, similarly all *mantras* of *Ṛg*, *Yajus* and *Sāma*, the *yajña* (sacrifice), the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Kṣatriyas*; during the time of existence of the world are established in *prāṇa*.¹²¹ In this way, everything apparent in this world originate from *prāṇa*, which is nothing but Prajāpati itself. He is the Ultimate Cause of all existing beings. According to the *Praśna Upaniṣad*, *prāṇa* is the only support of all beings. Having shown the importance of *prāṇa* the *Praśna Upaniṣad* states :

‘devānāmasi vahnitamaḥ pitṛṇām prathamā svadhā/

ṛṣīṇām caritam satyamatharvāṅgirasāmasi//¹²²

indrastvam prāṇa tejasā rudro’si parirakṣitā/

tvamantarikṣe carasi sūryastvam jyotisām patih//¹²³

Pippalāda says that *prāṇa* is the sacredmost fire for Gods. Again it is *prāṇa*, which is the very first *svadhā* for fathers. This *prāṇa* is the truth (Reality) and eternal wisdom of the seers. Pippalāda again says that this *prāṇa* is Indra (the king of heaven, this *prāṇa* is the Rudra, the universal destroyer at the time of dissolution, and also he is Surjya, the *jyotisām patih*. It is the *prāṇa*, who preserves the creation in a proper way and this *prāṇa* is the lord of luminous bodies, such as moon, stars and fire. In this way, the *prāṇa* is seen as chief among all the Gods and it is the basic vital function that keeps all other functions alive. Thus, this *prāṇa* is the chief of all, whose apparent

120. Radhakrisnan. S., TPU., p. 656

121. PU., II.6

122. Ibid., II.8

123. Ibid. II.9

but unreal forms constitute this world. Explaining the majesty of *prāṇa* Pippalāda asserts:

‘prāṇasyedaṃ vaśe sarvaṃ tridive yatpratiṣṭhitam/

māteva putrānrakṣasva śrīśca prajñāṃ ca vidhehi na iti//’¹²⁴

[Trans : Whatever there appears in the world; whatever there is in the heaven; is all under the control of *Prāṇa*; O *Prāṇa*, protect us as mother protects her sons; bestow upon us the splendour and the talent.]¹²⁵

The Upaniṣad announces that all things in this earth as also all things that exist in heaven are under the control of the *prāṇa*. This *prāṇa* is protecting us as the children are protected by the mother. Therefore, it is verily the *prāṇa* which maintains the body. Apart from this *prāṇa*, there is no other power or energy which can be able to carry the body. All the sense organs are effective only for the command of *prāṇa*. Swami Muni Narayana Prasad says in the this context - “Everything in this world, and in all the worlds, is not merely animated by *prāṇa* but is a manifest appearance of *prāṇa*. Heaven, or a world hereafter, if any, also has existence derived from *prāṇa*.”¹²⁶

The third chapter of the *Praśna Upaniṣad* deals with this question asks by Kausalya Āśvalāyana :

‘atha hainaṃ kausalyaścāśvalāyanaḥ papraccha vagavankuta eṣa prāṇo jāyate

kathamāyātyasmiñśarīra ātmānaṃ vā pravibhajya katham prātiṣṭhate kenotkramate

katham bāhyamabhidhatte kathamadyātmaniti//’¹²⁷

124. PU.,II.13

125. Eng. Trans from Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.128

126. Narayana Prasad, Swami Muni., PU., p. 82

127. PU.,III.1

[Trans : O' Lord what is the source of *prāṇa*, which is the ultimate source of all, how does it enter into this body, how again does he dwell by dividing himself, in what way does it depart, how does it maintain itself outside the body, how does it maintain itself inside?]

Here in this *mantra* we find six questions put by Āśvalāyana to sage Pippalāda - (i) How the *prāṇa* is born? (ii) How does it enter into this body ? (iii) How again does he dwell by dividing himself ? (iv) While migrating from one body to the another how does it go out? (v) How does it maintain itself outside the body and (vi) how does it maintain itself inside? Pippalāda replies that, just as the shadow exists only because of the *puruṣa*, in the same way, this *prāṇa* is also inseparable from *Brahman*, the Highest Reality.¹²⁸ While answering the third question of the disciple, the teacher cites an example that as a king appoints his entrusted persons to look after the affairs of various villages, towns, and regions and accordingly appointed persons also perform their activities, similarly *prāṇa* also propels the *apāna*, *vyāna* and *samāna*, etc. and sends those to various parts of the body to do their respective functions. The reference of this fact has been elaborated by R.G. Desai in the following manner - “Just as a king directs his officer to look after designated regions, Prana delegates various functions to subdivisions. Main breath is seated in the eyes, ears, nose and mouth. The medial breath is located in the middle of the body and the lower breath is located in the lower organs.

The Atman is seated in the heart there are hundred and one nerves, and each nerve has a hundred branches and each branch has seventy – two thousand sub branches through which Prana pulsates.”¹²⁹

128. PU.,III.3

129. Desai, R.G., UAWI., p.97

Pippalāda states that knowing the origin of *prāṇa* (how and where from *prāṇa* comes), its entrance to the body, its omnipotent, omnipresence and its external and internal (i.e. physical and spiritual) appearance, one can achieve the immortality or liberation.

The fourth section of the *Praśna Upaniṣad* deals with this question put by Gārgya Sauryāyaṇī to ṛṣi Pippalāda :

*‘atha hainaṁ sauryāyaṇī gargyaḥ papraccha bhagavannetasminpuruṣe kāni svapanti
kanyasmiṅ jāgrati katara eṣa devaḥ svapnānpaśyati kasyaitatsukhaṁ bhavati*

kasminnu sarve saṁpratiṣṭhitā bhavantīti//’¹³⁰

[Trans : Venerable sir, what are they that sleep in this person ? What are they that keep awake in him ? What god is it that sees dreams ? Whose is this happiness ? In whom are all these established ?]¹³¹

Pippalāda answers very beautifully of these esoteric questions that, when the sun sets, the rays of the sun get merged into it and become differentless from the sun, in the same way, all the sense organs become unified in the Supreme Being during the somnolent stage (*svapnāvastā*). At the same time Pippalāda says that just as several birds (in the evening) resting on the tree, in the same way, all the sense organs wing towards the Supreme Power. Pippalāda suggests that in the dream state the mind sees all that it has seen during wakefulness. It pictures all that it has heard, that all it has felt, it experiences the same objects perceived in different places. Seen and unseen, heard and unheard, perceived and non-perceived, the mind sees all when it is in the dreaming state. R.G. Desai has explained this Praśna Upaniṣadic fact in a very beautiful manner - “The five elements, ten senses, mind, ego, the manifest and the

130. PU.,IV.1

131. Eng. Trans. from Mahadevan, T.M.P., U., p.82

unmanifest, the sense objects like touch, taste, sight, smell and sound, intelligence and all it understands, the heart and what it feels, light and what it lights, and all that sustains it. All these are regulated by the supreme being.”¹³²

According to Pippalāda, the *Ātman* which is the seer (*draṣṭā*), the toucher (*spraṣṭā*), the hearer (*śrotā*), the smeller (*ghrātā*), the taster (*rasayitā*), the thinker (*mantā*), the ascertainer (*boddhā*) and the doer (*kartā*) is seated in the imperishable Supreme Soul or *Paramātman*.¹³³ Pippalāda maintains that, he who knows the shadowless, the bodiless, the colourless, pure and imperishable Supreme Being, attains the immortality. Knowing the real nature of *Brahman* the seeker becomes one with *Brahman* the Ultimate Reality.

The fifth chapter of the *Praśna Upaniṣad* makes an attempt to deal with the term *Om* and it is considered as the symbol of *Parabrahman*. Pippalāda says that *Omkāra* is the imperishable term. It represents total *Brahman*. In this context Rohit Mehta has suggested that, “OM is a word of three letters. It covers a sound range starting from the root of the tongue to the closing of the lips. In this range, the three letters are uttered successively. But in this uttering of the word, the articulate sound is only between the first and the third- it is a range where the tongue moves between its root and the lips. Thus in the three letters of the word OM, A and M remain inarticulate – it is only the U which represents the articulate sound.”¹³⁴ According to Pippalāda, *Om* is both *para* and *apara Brahman*. *Brahman* (the Ultimate Reality), the indestructible, everlasting, invisible, unconceivable principle of all the existing forms is regarded as *Para Brahman*, and *Brahman* as occurring in all the destructible, momentary and perceptible elements in this universe is known to be *apara Brahman*.

132. Desai, R.G., UAWI., p.99

133. PU.,IV.9

134. Mehta, Rohit., TCU., p.110

Pippalāda asserts that he who meditates on the first *mātrā* (A) or measure, is illumined thereby and comes quickly to this world after death. While explaining this view Keshoram Aggarwal has rightly observed that, “The person meditating upon *Oṅkāra* as one of its three aspects ‘*bhūḥ*, *bhubaḥ* and *svaḥ*’ – is if attracted by ‘*bhūḥ*’ the worldly riches, worships the ‘*bhūḥ*’ aspect of *Virāt*, he after death comes directly to this world led towards its goal. The first *Mantra* of *Oṅkāra* is in the form of the *Ṛgveda* and has its connection with the earthly world. Therefore, through its meditation, the *Mantras* of *Ṛgveda* lead the striver to the human body.”¹³⁵ Pippalāda maintains that, he who meditates on the first two *mātrās*, i.e., *A* and *U*, attains the region of the moon. Having experienced greatness in the lunar world, he returns again in this world. Keshoram Aggarwal has explained this *Praśna Upaniṣadic* fact very beautifully and commented - “If the striver worships the two syllable *Oṅkāra*, i.e., if he worships the ‘*bhūḥ*’ and ‘*bhubaḥ*’ aspects of *Virāt* with a desire to achieve the luxury in these two regions then he goes to the lunar world pertaining to mind. The *Mantras* of *Yajurveda* lead him upwards to the lunar world in the intermediary region. He enjoys comforts in the perishable heaven and when the virtues of his worship come to an end, he again comes back to the mortal world.”¹³⁶ But, he who meditates on all the three letters (*A*, *U*, *M*) as a single being becomes unified in the sun. After that, through the *mantras* of *Sāmaveda* he uplift himself to the *Brahmaloka*. Then he perceives that the Ultimate Reality, i.e., *Brahman* resides in his own body. In this state he is non-different from *Brahman*, i.e., he becomes one with the Supreme *Brahman*.

In the sixth chapter of the *Praśna Upaniṣad* Sukeśā Bhāradvāja asks the great

135. Aggarwal, Keshoram., KK., p.143

136. Ibid, p.144

ṛṣi Pippalāda :

‘*atha hainam sukeśā bhāradvāja papraccha bhagavanhiraṇyanābhaḥ kausalyo
rājaputro māmupetyaitam praśnamapṛcchat/soḍaśakalam bhāradvāja puruṣam
vettha, tamahaṁ kumāramabruvaṁ nāhamimaṁ veda yadyahamimamavediṣam
katham te nāvakṣyamiti samūlo vā eṣa pariśuṣyāti yo ’nṛtamabhivadati
tasmanñārḥāmyanṛtam vaktum/sa tūṣṇīm rathamāruhya pravavrāja/taṁ tvā pṛcchāmi
kvāsau puruṣa iti//’*¹³⁷

[Trans : Venerable sir, Hiraṇyanābha, the son of Kosala, approached me and asked ‘Bhāradvāja, do you know the *puruṣa* of sixteen *kalās* ? I replied, I know him not. Now I ask you the same question, who is the *puruṣa* with sixteen *kalās* and what are these *kalās*?]

Ṛṣi Pippalāda explains the nature of *puruṣa* of sixteen *kalās* and says that this *puruṣa* is seated within our body. Pippalāda again states that the *pañca-indriyas*, i.e., ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose; the *pañca-tanmātrās*, i.e., sound, touch, form, taste and smell; and the *pañca-mahābhūtas*, i.e., space, air, fire, water and earth and the *manas* are the sixteen *kalās* of this *puruṣa*, who is the Ultimate Reality of this whole universe. According to Pippalāda those sixteen *kalās* are present in our body also, as the Supreme Reality resides in our body. The reference of this fact has been described by R.G. Desai thus - “Just as rivers that flow meet the ocean and merge into it and lose their identity, the individual being loses his identity in the universal spirit. The supreme spirit is like the nave of a wheel to which all the spokes are attached. Once one knows this fact, he becomes immortal.”¹³⁸

137. PU., VI.1

138. Desai, R.G., UAWI., p.101

From the above discussion, perhaps it can be said that the *Praśna Upaniṣad* describes Prajāpati as the Ultimate Reality of this whole universe. As the one sun illumines the entire universe, in the sameway Prajāpati, the immanent and transcendent Reality illumines the whole. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* again and again suggests that *brahmacarya* or continence should be performed in human life for attaining the Absolute. Like the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, the *Praśna Upaniṣad* also gives attention to truthfulness of life. Because according to this Upaniṣad everything in this world is fully established in truth or *satya*, and by the path of truth or *satya* one can achieve the Ultimate Reality. According to the *Praśna Upaniṣad* all the things and beings surrounding us are the outcome of that Ultimate Reality. Therefore, there is no difference between man and other existing beings. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* advises us to think for other peoples also. One should think for the prosperity, happiness and success of others existing in the same society, which will help us to build a harmonic society, where the feeling of humanity will be found in each and every people.