



## **THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD**

**SWAMI KRISHNANANDA**

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### **CHAPTER III**

#### **Seventh Brahmana**

#### **THE NATURE OF THE INNER CONTROLLER**

The question, that was put by Gargi Vacaknavi pertained to the various realms of existence, the different worlds which succeed, one after another, in different degrees of density, the succeeding ones pervading the preceding ones and being larger in extent than them; ultimately, the highest pervading principle being regarded as *Prajapati Hiranyagarbha*, beyond which there can be nothing conceivably more pervasive. Now this question of immanence of Reality is pursued further in a very important section of this Upanishad which is called the *Antaryamin Brahmana*. This Brahmana deals with the great subject '*Antaryamin*', or the Supreme Immanent Principle.

When Gargi got down and occupied her seat and did not put any further questions, another sage, Uddalka of renown, Aruna's son, (Aruni), got up from his seat and picked up the discussion with Yajnavalkya.

1. atha hainam uddalaka arunih papraccha: yajnavalkya, iti hovaca madresv avasama, patancalasya kapyasya grhesu, yajnam adhiyanah. tasyasid bharya, gandharva-grhita, tam aprcchama, ko'siti: so'bravit, kabandha atharvana iti. so'bravit patancalam kapyam yajnikams ca: vettha nu tvam, kapyam, tat sutram, yasminn (v: yena) ayam ca. lokah, paras ca lokah, sarvani ca bhutani samdrbdhani, bhavantiti. so'bravit patancalah kapyah, naham tad, bhagavan, vedeti. so'bravit patancalam kapyam yajnikams ca.

vettha nu tvam, kapyā, tam antaryaminam, ya imam ca lokam param ca lokam sarvani ca bhutani yo' ntarō yamayātīti. so'bravit patāncalāh kapyāh, naham tam, bhagavan, vedeti. so'bravit patāncalam kapyam yajnikams ca, yo vai tat, kapyā, sutram vidyat, tam cantaryaminam iti, sa brahma-vit sa loka-vit, sa deva-vit, savedavit, sa bhuta-vit, sa atma-vit, sa sarva-vit, iti tebhyo'bravit tad aham veda; tac cet tvam, yajnavalkya, sutram avidvams tam cantaryaminam brahmagavir udajase, murdha te vipatīsyātīti. veda va aham, gautama, tat sutram tam cantaryaminam iti. yo va idam kas cid bruyat, veda vedeti: yatha vettha tatha bruhiti.

*Atha hainam uddalaka arunih papraccha: yajnavalkya, iti hovaca:* First Uddalaka tells the very same story that was mentioned earlier, in connection with a few disciples of Patāncalā Kapyā, who went into the land of Madra and found the daughter of the owner of the house possessed by the Gandharva. Then he says: “We went to that place at night. Having moved to that place, for purpose of study and performance of our rites, we found that the wife of Patāncalā also was possessed by a Gandharva and was speaking something very strange.” *Madresu avasama, patāncalasya kapyasya grhesu, yajnam adhiyanah. tasyad bharya, gandharvagrhitā, tam aprcchama, ko' astti:* “We asked that spirit, ‘who are you?’ The spirit that was speaking through the personality of the wife of Patāncalā Kapyā answered. *So'bravit kabandha atharvana iti:* ‘My name is Kabandha, coming as a descendant in the line of Atharvana.’ *So'abravit patāncalam kapyam yajnikams ca:* It further continued speaking of its own accord without being queried by us. That Gandharva, the spirit, spoke to the owner of the house, the master of the house, Patāncalā and to us. We were all present there. And while he spoke, he put a question to us. That Gandharva himself put a question. He asked our master, *Vettha nu tvam, kapyā, tat sutram:* ‘O' great one who comes as a seer in the line of the sage Kapyā;’ *Yasmin (v: yena) ayam ca lokah, paras ca lokah, sarvani ca bhutani samdrbahani bhavantīti:* ‘Do you know the thread in which are strung, as if they are beads, all these worlds, and this world as well as the other worlds, and everything that is created?’ All the worlds all beings are strung in ‘a thread. ‘What is this thread? Do you know this thread,’ was the question. How can there be a thread which can contain, or hold together, all the worlds and all the beings? *So' bravit patāncalāh kapyāh, naham tad, bhagavan, vedeti:* Then that Master Patāncalā said: ‘I do not know this Sutra. This thread that you are speaking of, I am not aware of what it is about.’ *So' bravit patāncalam kapyam yajnikams ca. vetha nu tvam, kapyā, tam antaryaminam:* ‘Well, you do not know the thread. But do you know that Immanent Principle, the Antaryamin?’ ‘What sort of immanent principle you are speaking of?’ *Ya imam ca lokam param ca lokam sarvani ca bhutani yo'ntarō yamayātīti:* ‘I am speaking of that immanent Being, which controls internally, without being known to anyone, everything that is outside.’ This world and other worlds and all beings are regulated, restrained and controlled by something, internally, which is not known to anyone. Its existence is not known to anyone, and yet it controls everyone. ‘Do you know that Immanent Principle?’ That was another question which that Gandharva put to us when we were in that house. *So'bravit patāncalāh kapyāh, naham tam, bhagavan, vedeti:* The same reply

was given by us. 'We cannot understand what this Immanent Principle means.' We have never seen such a thing nor heard about it. *So'bravit patancalam kapyam yajnikams ca*: Then he told us: 'You people do not know either of these things. You do not know that thread in which everything is strung, nor do you know this Immanent Principle which controls everything from within. But the one who has this knowledge (of this Sutra, or the thread, and that Immanent Principle), he alone can be regarded as a knower of Truth, and nobody else.' 'Who is the knower of Reality?' 'That person who has comprehended this Immanent Principle and knows this thread in which everything is strung, that person can be regarded as a knower of Reality. He is a knower of Brahman - *sa brahma-vit*. And he is a knower of all the worlds at one stroke - *sa loka-vit*. He is a knower of all the gods, the celestials, at the same time - *sa deva-vit*. He is the knower of the content of every Veda. He is a real knower of the Veda - *sa veda-vit*. He is the knower of the inner structure of every created being at the same time - *sa bhuta-vit*. And he is the knower of the Self of everything - *sa atma-vit*. Well; in short, he is the knower of everything - *sa sarva-vit*. *sa brahma-vit, sa loka-vit, sa deva-vit, sa veda-vit, sa bhuta-vit, sa atma-vit, sa sarva-vit*: Such a person, alone, can be regarded as all-knowing.' 'What person?' 'The one who knows the Immanent Principle and the thread in which all the worlds are strung together.' "

*Tebhyo'bravit tad aham veda; tac cet tvam, yajnavalkya, sutram avidvams tam cantaryaminam. brahmagavir udajase, murdha te vipatisyatiti*: Now Uddalaka tells Yajnavalkya: "Yajnavalkya! We were told by this Gandharva what this thread was because we did not know about it. He explained it all. We also learnt the nature of the Immanent Principle from this very Gandharva. That is how I know both these things. I know the thread; I know the Immanent Principle. Now, do you know also? Yajnavalkya; I put this question. Without knowing an answer to this question that I put to you, if you drive these cows home, your head will fall." This, he tells Yajnavalkya himself.

Yajnavalkya replies: "Why do you speak like this? I know what you are speaking about. *Veda va aham, gautama, tat sutram tam cantaryaminam iti*: Gautama (that is Uddalaka), I know this thread and the Immanent Principle."

Then Uddalaka says: "What is the use of merely saying 'I know'. Anybody can say 'I know, I know'. Tell me what you know. What is it that you know? *Yo va idam kas cid bruyat, veda vedeti: yatha vettha tatha bruhiti*: As you know, you let me know what it is that you know."

Yajnavalkya's reply to this question is the famous Antaryamin Brahmana.

2. *sa hovaca vayur vai, Gautama, tat sutram; vayuna vai, Gautama, sutrenayam ca lokah paras ca lokah sarvani ca bhutani samdrbdhani bhavanti, tasmad vai, Gautama, purusam pretam ahuh, vyasramsistasasyanganiti; vayuna hi, Gautama, sutrena samdrbdhani bhavanti. evam etat, yajnavalkya, antaryaminam bruhiti.*

*Sa hovaca vayur vai, Gautama, tat sutram; vayuna vai, Gautama, sutrendyam ca lokah paras ca lokah sarvani ca bhutani samdrbdhani bhavanti:* “O’ Gautama (Aruni, Uddalaka); the Supreme Vital Force of the cosmos can be regarded as the thread on which everything is strung, because all bodies, whatever be their structure, are formed in the mould of this Vital Energy. It is this Vital Force of the cosmos that has taken the shape of all these forms, whether they are the forms of the world or are the forms of individual beings. Outside, the very same Energy looks like the world, and inside, as a content thereof, it looks like individuals. It is the subtle constitutive Essence of the whole universe. It cannot be designated by any other name than an ethereal Being, like ‘Vayu’, wind, air.” And these days, you may say, it is something like electricity, something subtler than that, Prana, Vital Energy. What other word can you use to designate it, or call it ? That universal Vital Force is the thread. It is a thread in the sense that it is the power which holds all bodies in proper positions. And every body, individual or otherwise, is strung on this thread in the sense that everything is a form taken by it, and therefore, controlled by it. So, you will not find a place where this is not, and you will not find anything operating unless it Wills. It is His Will and His Action that appears outside as the action of people.

*Tasmad vai, Gautama, purusam pretam ahuh vyasramsitasasyanganiti; vayuna hi, Gautama, sutrena samdrbhani bhavantiti. evam etat, yajnavalkya, antaryaminam bruhati:* When a person is alive, why does that person look whole and complete and integrated? And why is it that when something happens at the time we call death, there is dismemberment of the body and parts of the body get dislocated and hang loosely without being held firmly? What is the cause? The cause is that “this Vital Force was holding the limbs of the body in unison and harmony when the body was alive.” What we call life is nothing but the operation of this universal Energy through a particular body. When the particular function through this individual body does not take place, the Energy withdraws itself. There is then no sustaining power left in the building-bricks of the body. So the bricks collapse. There is, therefore, the return of the constituents of the physical body to their sources. They cannot be held in the form which they were assuming when the body was alive. So the body of an individual is nothing but a form assumed, or taken by certain elements. And it begins to function by the action of this Vital Energy. When this action of the Vital Energy is withdrawn, it is called death, or demise of the individual. So, we say that the parts of the body of a dead person get loosened and they are not able to perform the functions that they were doing earlier, merely because this principle is absent.

That, is the thread which controls everything, individual or cosmic. “Well,” Uddalaka says, “yes! I have to admit that it is very right. This is the thread in which the worlds and the individuals are strung together. This answer is very correct. I appreciate your reply to my query, but now, what about the Immanent Principle? What is that Immanent Principle? Answer that. Let me hear from you, what it is.”

The Immanent Principle is the Antaryamin, the one that controls everything from within. It is a very peculiar something, whose existence cannot be known for reasons which will be obvious, as we go further. Yet, nothing can be more powerful than that. That which is most powerful and capable of controlling everything is that which cannot be observed by anything, or seen or known. What is that? That is what we call the internal Reality of the cosmos. That we call the Antaryamin, the Immanent Reality.

3. yah prthivya tisthan prthivya antarah, yam prthivi na veda, yasya prthivi sariram, yah prthivim antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.

*Yah prthivya tisthan prthivya antarah:* That principle is inside this very earth, internal to the earth. Outside is the body of the earth, but inside is this principle which holds the earth in unison as a compact completeness. But the earth does not know its existence - *yam prthivi na veda*. The earth and anyone on it cannot know that the principle exists even though it is the cause of the very existence of the earth. *Yasya prthivi sariram:* The whole earth is the body of this principle, as it were. The principle is embodied in the form of this earth. *Yah prthivim antaro yamayati:* Internally seated in the very heart of the earth is this principle working. *Esa ta atmantaryamy amrtah:* This is your own Self. It is the immortal Being. This Atman which is your own Atman, which is your own Self is the internal Ruler, the principle that controls all things. And it is the only thing that can be called immortal. Everything else is mortal. Everything moves around it, as a wheel moves round the hub. The hub does not revolve with the wheel. Even so, everything resolves as if mounted on a machine but this does not revolve. When everything is active, this is not active. Where everything is restless, this is full of rest. When everything is visible as an object, this is not seen by anybody. When everything is transient, this is permanent. While everything has a goal to reach, this itself is the goal of everyone. Such is the Immanent Being. This is the Antaryamin, or the internal ruler of everyone - earth, water, fire, air, ether; everything that is external everything that is internal also, like the physical organs, etc.

4. yo'psu tisthann, adbhyo'ntarah, yam apo na viduh, yasyapah, sariram, yo'po'ntaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy am tah.
5. yo'gnau tisthann, agner antarah, yam agnir na veda, yasyagnih sariram, yo'gnim antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
6. yo'ntarikse tisthonn antariksad antarah, yam antariksam na veda, yasyantariksam sariram, yo' ntariksam antara yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
7. yo vayau tisthann vayor antarah, yam vayur na veda, yasya vayuh sariram, yo vayum antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.

8. yo divi tisthann divo'ntarah, yam dyaur na veda, yasya dyauh sariram, yo divam antaro yamayati, esa ta atmantaryamy amrtah.
9. ya aditye tisthann-adityad antarah, yam adityo na veda, yasyadityah sariram, ya adityam antaro yamayati, esa ta atmantaryamy amrtah.
10. yo diksu tisthann, digbhyo'ntarah, yam diso na viduh, yasya disah sariram, yo diso antaro yamayati, esa ta atmantaryamy amrtah.
11. yas candra-tarake tistams candra-tarakad antarah, yam candra-tarakam na veda, yasya candra-tarakam sariram, yas candra-tarakam antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
12. ya akase tisthann akasad antarah, yam akaso na veda, yasyakasah sariram, ya akasam antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.

Now this passage goes on saying that the water Principle like the Earth Principle, is also controlled in its action by this inner Ruler, and the Water Principle cannot know it, because it is its body. Likewise, all the elements are controlled by it. The Fire Principle which is above the Water Principle, and the Atmospheric Principle which is in turn above it and above which you have got the heaven, then after that you have got the sun, then there are the quarters, or the disas, the various directions, then the moon, then space and everything that you can think of in your mind - all these are repeatedly asserted to be the body of the internal Ruler.

13. yas tamasi tisthams tamaso' ntarah, yam tamo na veda yasya tamah sariram, yas tamo'ntaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
14. yas tejasi tisthams te jaso'ntarah, yam tejo na veda, yasya tejah sariram, yas tejo'ntaro yamayati, esa ta atmantaryamy amrtah ity adhidaivatam, athadhibhutam.

This description of the Antaryamin, or the internal Ruler, is given from three stand-points - the transcendent, or the Adhidaivika description, the physical, or the objective, known as the Adhibhautika, and the internal or the subjective, known as the Adhyatmika. All the gods, all the celestials are controlled by this principle. All the elements are controlled by this principle. And every individual being also is controlled by this principle.

15. yah sarvesu bhutesu tisthan, sarvebhyo bhutebhyo'ntarah, yam sarvani bhutani na viduh, yasya sarvani bhutani sariram, yah sarvani bhutani antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah ity adhibhutam; athadhyatmam.

*Yah sarvesu bhutesu tisthan:* In all beings, this is seated. *Sarvebhyo bhutebhyo'ntarah:* He is internal to all beings. He is internal to you; internal to

me. Though one individual is outside the other, one is exclusive of the other, this principle is interior to all. Each individual may be regarded as an object to the other but this persists in existing as the internal Reality of every individual. While it is internal to me, it is internal to you also, despite the fact that you are external to me and I am external to you. So the externality of ourselves as personalities, or individuals, does not, in any way, affect the internality of this Reality. So all the external manifestations, notwithstanding, *this*, remains as a Supreme internality. Every being is controlled by it. *Yam sarvani bhutani na viduh: Yet no one can know it - yasya sarvani bhutani sartram, yah sarvani bhutani antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah ity adhibhutam; athadhyatmam.*

16. yah prune tisthan pranad antarah, yam prano na veda, yasya pranah sariram, yah pranam antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
17. yo vaci tisthan vaco'ntarah, yam van na veda, yasya vak sariram yo vacam antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
18. yas caksusi tisthams caksuso'ntarah, yam caksur na veda, yasya caksuh sariram, yas caksur antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
19. yah srotre tisthan srotrad antarah, yam srotram na veda, yasya srotram sariram, yah srotram antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
20. yo manasi tisthan manaso'ntarah, yam mano na veda, yasya manah sariram, yo mano'ntaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
21. yas tvaci tisthams tvaco'ntarah, yam tvan na veda, yasya tvak sariram, yas tvacam antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.
22. yo vijñane tisthan, vijñanad antarah, yam vijñanam na veda, yasya vijñanam sariram, yo vijñanam antaro yamayati, esa to atmantaryamy amrtah.

*Atha adhyatmam:* Now, internal organs are described. The *Prana* that we breathe, the breath within, is also the function of this Reality within. The *Prana*, the speech (*Vak*), the eyes (*Caksu*), the ears (*Srotre*), the mind (*Manas*), the intellect (*Vijñana*) and all the things you call as your own, in this individual body - all these are but formations of this one Being. It appears as the celestials when you visualise it from the transcendental level; it appears as the universe outside when you visualise it from the external point of view, and it appears as the individuals when you conceive it as the visible bodies of Jivas. There is no separate group of gods, or celestials, other than this. There is no world or universe outside this. And there are no individuals, external to it. No gods, no world, no individuals! All these three sets of apparent reality are only the manifestations or rather appearances of this one Supreme Being.

The term internal has a very special sense in this context. Just as we are inside a hall, we may wrongly imagine that this Reality is internal to the bodies of

individuals, worlds etc. It is not located “inside” in that spatial sense or in a temporal sense. It is a philosophical concept or a metaphysical one. It is a highly intricate concept which cannot be absorbed into the mind, inasmuch as the mind usually thinks in terms of space and time. Whenever we speak of ‘inside’, we mean ‘inside’ in space. But this is not a spatial insideness. It is a spiritual existence, a condition of consciousness which is called “internal” because it cannot be regarded as an object of observation. You cannot observe consciousness; you cannot observe your own self; you cannot observe your own understanding or your awareness. You cannot even think it, because even thinking is a spatial activity of the mind. So, in that sense it is internal. It is the Reality. It cannot be seen because it is necessary, for the act of seeing. Without its operation, without its Being, without its existence, nothing can be seen. You cannot think; you cannot hear; you cannot understand, unless That is there. So, how can you apply this yardstick or measuring rod of perception to that Reality which is the Cause of even your perception, hearing, understanding etc.?

23. yo retasi tisthan retaso'ntarah, yam reto na veda, yasya retah sariram, yo reto'ntaro yamayati, esa ta atmantaryamy amrtah: adrsto drasta, asrutah srota, amato manta avijnato vijnata. nanyti'to'sti drsta. nanyo'to'sti srota nanyo'to'sti manta, nanyo'to'sti vijnata: esa to atmantaryamy amrtah: ato'nyad artam. tato hoddalaka arunir upararama.

*Esa ta atma:* In short, this is the Atman. What we call the Antaryamin, or the Immanent Reality, is the Atman, the Self. When we say it is the Self, we mean it is Consciousness. We mean both things in the same, sense. It is an awareness which cannot be the object of another awareness. Therefore, it is not capable of being seen. *Adrsto drasta:* This Reality is the unseen Seer of all beings. You cannot see it, but it sees you. It sees everyone, but no one can see it - *adrsto drasta. Asrutah srota:* It can hear everything, but no one can hear it. *Amato manta:* You cannot think it, but it can think you. *Avijnato vijnata:* You cannot understand it, but it can understand you. *Nanyo'to'sti drasta:* There is no other Seer but that. *Nanyo'to'sti srota:* There is no hearer other than that. *Nanyo'to'sti manta.* There is no thinker but that. *Nanyo'to'sti vijnata:* There is no understander but that. So, if anyone thinks, it is that which thinks; if anyone hears, it is that which hears; if anyone sees, it is that which sees. If anyone understands anything, it is not you or I that understand, it is that which understands. If anyone does anything, it is that which does.

*Esa ta atmantaryamy amrtah:* “This is the Self; this is the internal Ruler; this is the Reality. This is immortal, O' Uddalaka. Everything else is useless. Other than this, nothing has any sense or meaning - *ato nyad artam.* This is the, only Being that is worthwhile considering and approaching and realizing.” *Tato hoddalaka arunir upararama:* The question is answered beautifully, and the Antaryamin has been described. Uddalaka holds his speech and occupies his seat. He has nothing else to say.

## **Eighth Brahmana**

### **THE UNQUALIFIED BRAHMAN**

Then Gargi gets up once again - the same lady who put questions and was asked to keep quiet and not ask further questions. She is not yet satisfied and again gets up. Now she puts more serious questions than the ones she put earlier.

1. atha ha vacaknavy uvaca, brahmana bhagavantah, hanta, aham imam dvau prasnau praksyami; tau cen me vaksyati, na vai jatu yusmakam imam kas cid brahmodyam jeteti. prccha gargiti.

*Atha ha vacaknavy uvaca, brahmana bhagavantah, hanta, aham imam dvau prasnau praksyami:* “Learned men; now I am going to put two questions to this sage. If he is able to answer these two questions of mine, none of you is going to defeat him in argument - *tau cen me vaksyati, ma vai jatu yusmakam imam kas ca brahmodyam jeteti.* There is no use arguing with him afterwards, if he is capable of answering these two questions that I am going to put now.” *Prccha gargiti:* “Ask, Gargi,” says Yajnavalkya.

2. sa hovaca: aham vai tva, yajnavalkya, yatha kasyo va vaideho va ugra-putrah, ujjyam dhanur adhijyam krtva, dvau banavantau sapatna-ativyadhinau haste krtva upottisthet, evam evaham tva dvabhyam prasnabhyam upodastham, tau me bruhati. prccha gargi, iti.

Now, she addresses Yajnavalkya directly, and says: “Yajnavalkya; now I cast two questions upon you, as if they are piercing arrows. As if a learned archer, an expert warrior come from Benaras or some kingdom of Videha may string his bow and tie two arrows, pointed and pain-giving, likewise I dart two pointed arrows of questions upon you, just now. Be prepared for them - *dvau banavantau sapatna-ativyadhinau haste krtva upottisthet, evam evaham tva dvabhyam prasnabhyam upodastham, tau me bruhti.*” *Prccha, gargi, iti:* Yajnavalkya says: “What are these two piercing questions?”

3. sa hovaca: yad urdhvam, yajnavalkya, divah, yad avak prthivyah, yad antara dyavaprthivi ime, yad bhutam ca bhavac ca bhavisyac ceti acaksate; kasmims tad otam ca protam ceti.

Now, Gargi takes up this point and speaks - *sa hovaca. Yad urdhvam, yajnavalkya:* “Yajnavalkya; that which is above the heaven; *yad avak prthivyah:* that which is below the earth; *yad antara dyavaprthivi:* that which is between the earth and the heaven; *ime, yad bhutam ca bhavac ca bhavisyac ceti acaksate:* that which is identical with whatever was, identical with whatever is and also identical with whatever will be; *kasmims tad otam ca protam ceti:* in what is this peculiar thing rooted and founded? Is there a basis or a foundation or

a support or a substratum for this peculiar thing I am speaking of? This strange something which is above, as well as below as well as between things, that which was in the past, that which is in the present, and shall be in the future, there is something like that, if there is something like that, on what is it founded as if there is a support?”

4. sa hovaca, yad urdhvam, gargi, divah, yad avak prthivyah, yad antara dyavaprthivi ime, yad bhutam ca bhavac ca bhavisyac cety acaksate, akase tad otam ca protam ceti.

Then Yajnavalkya says: “Gargi! This is strung in a subtle ethereal principle. You cannot call it by any other name. That ethereal principle has not the distinction of pervasion of objects. It is subtler than that which pervades. And that which you are speaking of as what is above and what is below and what is between and what is the past, present and future, that is rooted in some undifferentiated something. That undifferentiated reality can be designated as ether. It is not the physical ether; it is an unmanifest ether - *avyakrita akasa*.”

5. sa hovaca, namas te'stu, yajnavalkya, yo ma etam vyavocah: aparasmāi dharayasveti. prccha, gargi, iti.
6. sa hovaca, yad urdhvam, yajnavalkya, divah, yad avak prthivyah, yad antara dyava-prthivi ime, yad bhutam ca bhavac ca bhavisyac cety acaksate: kasmims tad otam ca protam ceti.

“Well; very true! What is this Avyakrita Akasa? That also must have some basis. Yajnavalkya, I am very much satisfied with your answer,” says Gargi - *namas te'stu, yajnavalkya. Yo ma etam vyavocah: aparasmāi dharayasveti. prccha, gargi, iti*: “Now I put you a further question, consequent upon this answer of yours.”

7. sa hovaca, yad urdhvam, gargi, divah, yad avak prthivyah, yad antara dyavaprthivi ime, yad bhutam ca bhavac ca bhavisyac cety acaksate akasa eva tad otam ca protam ceti; kasmin nu khalv akasa otas ca protas ceti.

“This principle which you call unmanifest ether, the undifferentiated background of that which is everywhere, (As a matter of fact, Gargi is referring to the very same “Sutra” of which Uddalaka spoke earlier. This “Sutra”, or the thread in which everything is strung, is that which is above and below and between and it is the past, present and future. It is rooted in something. That something is an indescribable, unmodified and homogeneous substance, they call it Avyakrita) in what is that rooted? Has it also some foundation?”

8. sa hovaca, etad vai tad aksaram, gargi, brahmana abhivadanti, asthutam ananu, ahrasvam, adirgham, alohitam, asneham acchayam, atamah, avayv anakasam, asangam, arasam, agandham, acaksuskam asrotram, avak,

amanah, atejaskam, apranam, amukham, amatram, anantaram, abahyam;  
na tad asnati kim cana, na tad asnati kas cana.

“This foundation is nothing but the Absolute. Beyond that, there can be nothing. That is the immaculate Absolute,” says Yajnavalkya. *Etad vai tad aksaram*: “It is imperishable. You cannot go on answering questions, like this indefinitely until you get exhausted of description. The final point of all answer to every question is the imperishable Reality. That is the last resort of all thought, all speech and all definition. The great ones say, this is *Aksara - etad vai tad aksaram, gargi. Brahmana abhivadanti, asthulam*: It is not gross, therefore, it cannot be visualised. It is not subtle, because to call it subtle would be to distinguish it from the gross. It is inseparable from that which is called the gross. Therefore, I cannot call it subtle also. It is not gross because it is not visible as an object; it is not subtle because it is not different from the gross. So it is not gross, not subtle - *asthulam, ananu. Ahrasvam, adirgham*: You cannot call it long; you cannot call it short, because it is not in space. When it is not in space, how can you measure it and call it, of this length, of this measure and that length etc.? So I cannot call it, of this measure or that measure. Neither it is short nor long. It has no distance, no dimensions. *Alohitam*: It cannot be called as possessed of any colour, because colour is the perception of the eyes. It is an object. And it is already ruled out as being an object of any kind. So it has no colour. It has no connection with anything - *asneham*. It cannot be associated with anything; it cannot be related to anything. It stands by itself. It cannot be regarded as the cause of anything, also. It does not cast a shadow. It is not the light, as we generally speak of. It is not sunlight, because sunlight casts a shadow. It does not cast a shadow. It is light by itself - *acchayam. Atamah*: It is not darkness also, because it sees everything. It is the utmost brilliance that you can think of. It is not space; it is not air; it is not water; it is not earth; it is not an object; it is not individual; it is not you; it is not me - *avayu anakasm. Asangam*: It stands by itself. It has no space. You cannot grasp it through the senses of taste, sight, hearing etc. - *arasam. Agandham, acaksuskam asrotram*: It has no eyes; it sees everything. It has no ears; it hears everything. *Avak*: It has no speech, but it speaks, and all the languages are known to it. *Amanah*: It has no mind; it thinks all things. *Atejaskam*: It cannot be called brilliance also, ultimately. You call it Light of lights. The ultimate conception of Reality is light. It is not even Light if you designate it as the light which you think of in your mind. It is not a light that shines upon something; it is a Light that stands by its own Self. *Apranam*: It has no *Prana*; it does not breathe. It is not an individual being. *Amukham*: It has no mouth. It has no organs. It has no measure of any kind, sensory or psychological - *amatram*. It is not inside; it is not outside - *anantaram abahyam*. If you say “inside”, it means that it is not “outside”. If you say “outside”, it means that it is not “inside”. So, neither is this definition applicable to it nor that. It has no inside and outside, merely because it is not in space and not in time. It does not consume anything - and it is not consumed by anyone. *Na tad asnati kith cana. na tad asnati kas cana*: Neither it wants anything, nor is wanted by anybody. Nothing is an object to it, and it is not an object to anyone. Such a mysterious thing is the ultimate Reality of even that foundation, unmanifested substratum of

the all-pervading principle. This is the *Para Brahman*; this is the Absolute; this is All.”

9. *etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, suryacandramasau vidhrtau tisthatah; etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, dyavaprithivyau vidhrte tisthatah; etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, nimesa, muhurta, ahoratray ardhama, masa, rtavah, samvatsara iti. vidhrtas tisthanti; etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, pracyo' nya nadyah syandante svetebhyah parvatebhyah, praticyo'nyah, yam yam ca disam anu; etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, dadato manusyah prasamsanti; yajamanam devah, darvim pitaro'nvayattah.*

“By the command of this Being, everything functions in this world, O Gargi. It is not a command like that of a boss, by word of mouth, or even by gesture. Its command is merely its Existence. It merely is, and orders by the very Being that it is. It does not act in the way in which others act. Its action and its Being are identical, so we cannot use such epithets as action, thinking, speaking etc. in regard to it. We do not know how to describe it. *Etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, suryacandramasau vidhrtau*: If the sun does not fall on your head, and if the moon is following its own course in the orbit, if these stellar regions are held together in their proper positions, it is because of the Existence of this Being. *Etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, dyavaprthivyau vidhrte tisthatah*: The earth and the heaven and the intermediary atmosphere are held together in position on account of the Existence of this Being. *Etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, nimesa, muhurta, ahoratray ardhama, masa rtavah, samvatsara iti. vidhrtas tisthanti*: All this distinction that you call in time, as year and month and day and night etc. and hours and minutes and what not - all these distinctions assume a meaning on account of the operation of this Being in a very subtle manner. *Etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, pracyo'nya nadyah syandante*: The rivers flow in different directions because of the operation of this Being only. Everything conducts itself in its proper course, in harmony with the law of this Being, and if that were not to be, there would be complete chaos. *Svetebhyah parvatebhyah, praticyo'nyah, yam yam ca disam anu; etasya va aksarasya prasasane, gargi, dadato manusyah prasamsanti; yajamanam devah, darvim pitaro'nvayattah*: When you do a charitable act, it is said that it is a good act. Why is a charitable act, a good act? Because of the law of this Being that operates. Otherwise, there can be nothing called goodness. When you worship divine beings, celestials, we say it is a devotional act. Why is it a devotional act? Because of the law of this Being that acts. When you offer libations to ancestors, it is regarded as an auspicious rite because of the reward that comes out of it. And the reward of any action is possible only because of the inexorable Law of this Being that is the Supreme Absolute.”