

SAMVARGA VIDYA

by

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om āpyāyantu mamāṅgāni vākprāṇaśckśuḥ śrotramatho
balaṁdriyāṇi ca sarvāṇi | sarvaṁ brahmaupaniṣadaṁ māhaṁ
brahma nirākuryāṁ mā mā brahma nirākarodani-
kāraṇamastvanikāraṇaṁ me'stu | tadātmani nirate ya
upaniṣatsu dharmāste mayi santu te mayi santu ||

|| om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||

Samvarga Vidya is the *vidya* that was taught by the sage Raikva and is contained in Chapter Four, Sections 1 to 3 of the Upanishad. It is the nature of the subject that is indicated by the word *samvarga*, which is actually the process of absorption. The knowledge of the all-absorbing one is the actual meaning of Samvarga Vidya. We are introduced into that which is all-absorbing. What is that? How is it taught? Let us see. The story is like this:

Section 1

jānaśrutir ha pautrāyaṇaḥ śraddhādeyo bahudāyī bahupākya
āsa sa ha sarvata āvasathān māpayāṁ cakre, sarvata eva
me'tsyantīti ||4.1.1||

There was a king called Janasruti who was supposed to be the great-grandson of the emperor perhaps called Janasruta. This Janasruti was a reputed ruler who was well known for his immense charity. He was a great giver and had

immense faith in the act of giving. And he used to give in plenty. He was very happy that he was in a position to give much in charity. What is more, he gave with great respect. His kitchen was always active. He used to have a lot of food cooked in his kitchen so that he might give it free to people. Such a king was he. He had built several rest houses everywhere. He must have been a very good man to do so much charity. He maintained not only rest houses, but also *choultries*, inns, etc., built everywhere with the feeling that people would come and stay there and eat food in his name. "They will eat my food," he used to say with great exaltation. Such a great king was, according to this Upanishad, not merely famous in the social or political sense, but also was an advanced soul inwardly. He was a highly religious person and spiritually well trained due to the purity of his mind, the goodness of his heart, and the great charities that he was doing. Thus, he was an exceptionally great person outwardly as well as inwardly.

atha ha haṁsā niśāyām atipetuḥ, tadd haivaṁ haṁso haṁsam
abhyuvāda: ho ho'yi bhallākṣa, bhallākṣa, jānaśruteḥ
pautrāyaṇasya samaṁ divā jyotir ātataṁ tan mā prasāṅkṣīṣ tat
tvā mā pradhākṣīd iti ||4.1.2||

The story tells us that perhaps on a hot summer night the king was sleeping on the terrace of his palace. He was lying on his couch and some swans were flying across the sky. One of the birds which was behind called to the one that was flying in front, "Oh, stupid one! Do not be careless." It used the word *bhallakṣa*. They say *bhallākṣa* means wide open-eyed, well-seeing. It is an ironical way of saying that you do not see things properly. "You have got big eyes, you can see well, but you are not seeing that some danger is ahead of you. Do not rush like this. There is the great king Janasruti just below you. His effulgence is rising to the skies and his glory is reaching up to the heavens, as it were. Do not cross this effulgence lest you should be burnt by this glory of his. He is such a great man and you are crossing him. Do not go

carelessly with your eyes closed.” This was what the bird behind told the one that was flying in front.

tam u ha paraḥ praty uvāca kam vara enam etat santaṁ
sayugvānam iva raikvam āttheti. ko nu katharṁ sayugvā raikva iti
||4.1.3||

But, that other one which was told like this retorted back: “You are referring to some Janasruti whose effulgence is rising up, which I should not cross! Who is this Janasruti? What sort of man is this that you are speaking of, as if he is as great as Raikva with the cart? You speak as if this man is so great that his effulgence is going to the sky and I shall be burnt by the greatness and glory of this man. Who is this gentleman? What is he in comparison with that Raikva with the cart?”

This was the conversation that went on between the two birds that were flying above. The king heard how he was referred to by the two birds, the one praising him and the other saying that he did not deserve the praise because there was someone who was greater than him.

yathā kṛtāya vijitāyādhareyāḥ saṁyanti, evam enaṁ sarvaṁ tad
abhisameti, yat kiñ ca prajāḥ sādhu kurvanti, yas tad veda yat sa
veda, sa mayaitad ukta iti ||4.1.4||

In the play of dice, there are numbers marked on each face of the dice, number 1 in one face, number 2 in another, number 3 in the third, and number 4 in the fourth one. Now in this play of dice whoever casts the highest throw is called *kṛita*. He wins all the other ones. Four includes three, two and one. So he who has won the fourth throw has automatically won the other three also. He need not go on winning the other three one by one. The other three are automatically included in the fourth one which he has won.

In a similar manner, all the virtues that people do anywhere in this world are included in the virtue of this great person called Raikva. His virtue is like an ocean which swallows up all the dribbles, rivulets and rivers of the little

virtues that other people do anywhere. So one can imagine what sort of person he must be. His goodness, greatness, virtue, righteousness is like an ocean which swallows all the other virtues of anybody, anywhere in this world.

We have got four ages called *krita*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali*. According to the traditional calculation of the calendar, *kali-yuga* - this present age in which we are living, sometimes called the iron age - is supposed to extend for 432,000 years. That is the duration of *kali-yuga*. Twice the duration of *kali-yuga* is the duration of *dvapara-yuga*. Thrice the duration is *treta-yuga*, and four times the duration is *krita-yuga*, which is the longest in duration. Its extent is such that it includes all the other *yugas* in it. So, in comparison with these four ages *krita*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali*, the dice numbers in the dice play also are called by the names *krita*, *treta*, *dvapara*, and *kali*. This is only by way of example.

The point that is made out here is that Raikva was a very great person and Janasruti, the king, was nowhere before him. He was nobody compared to that great man. This was a pointed insult to the king no doubt, who was hearing it. He was all along feeling very happy and legitimately proud that he was doing his best in giving charity and leading a good life. But he was encountered with this very unpleasant conversation that went on in the sky between the birds. So he passed a restless night thinking over this matter as to what sort of person Raikva would be, where he was, and whether he could see him. "What is the use of my charity, what is the use of my virtues, if all this that I do is nothing in comparison with others who are still greater than me?" - thus Janasruti was thinking in his mind.

tad u ha jānaśrutiḥ pauṭrāyaṇa upaśuśrāva, sa ha saṁjihāna eva
kśattāram uvāca, aṅgāre ha sa-yugvānam iva raikvam āttheti, ko
nu kathaṁ sa-yugvā raikva iti ||4.1.5||

yathā kṛtāya vijitāyādhareyāḥ saṁyanti, evam enaṁ sarvaṁ tad
abhisamaiti, yat kiñ ca prajāḥ sādhu kurvanti, yas tad veda yat
sa veda, sa mayaitad ukta iti ||4.1.6||

Kings wake up in the morning hearing the sounds of beautiful music and bards singing their glory. Janasruti when he woke up in the morning heard his glories being sung in his palace. On this particular morning he was not pleased. He was grieved, very unhappy, indeed. "What is the use of this praise?" thought he. He called his attendant, kśattā, and asked, "Do you praise me in the same way as one praises Raikva with the cart?" The idea was that the attendant should go and find out where that man was, and tell him that the king wanted him. That attendant asked, "Master, who is this Raikva? You ask me to go and search for him?" In a mood of irritation, as it were, the king simply repeated the very words he heard from the bird. "Just as the fourth cast in the dice includes every other cast, all the virtues of people are included in the virtues of this person. Whatever anybody knows, he also knows and what he knows, that only others also know. This is the greatness of Raikva. There is nothing which he does not know, and no one can know what he does not know. Such a person you find out." Well, very astounding indeed! The kśattā, the attendant, went in search of Raikva in all the cities and in all important places.

sa ha kśattānviṣya, nāvidam iti pratyeṃyāya, taṃ hovāca yatrāre
brāhmaṇasyānveṣaṇā tad enam arccheti ||4.1.7||

He could not find a man of that kind anywhere. Raikva with a cart could not be discovered. So he came back to the king and said, "I cannot find him." The king said: "You search for such great people in cities and marketplaces? You should go to such places where great men live. Such men as Raikva will not live in cities. Go to solitary places, temples, river banks and such other sacred spots - isolated, sequestered regions. There alone such great people stay. Where knowers of Brahman would live, you know very well. Go there and search."

so'ahastāc chakaṭasya pāmānaṃ kaṣamāṇam upopaviveśa, taṃ
hābhyuvāda, tvaṃ nu bhagavaḥ sa-yugvā raikva iti; ahaṃ hy

are; iti ha pratijajñe; sa ha kśattā, avidam iti pratyeyāya ||4.1.8
||

So this attendant went and after much searching found, in some corner of some village, one poor man sitting under a cart, scratching himself as if he had no other work to do, with no one around him, looking very strange indeed. Such a grotesque-looking person this attendant saw. He suspected this must be Raikva, as he was sitting near a cart. It was difficult to make out the connection between him and the cart. Might be that was his only property. There are some people who move about with carts. They have no other property except a cart. Or, it might be by chance that he was sitting near a cart, but there must be some connection between him and the cart. Otherwise he would not be referred to as 'Raikva with the cart'. So naturally the attendant concluded that it belonged to him, and he was the person whom he was searching for.

Humbly and reverentially this attendant sat near the gentleman and asked him, "Are you Raikva with the cart?" "Yes fellow, I am that," he said in a very callous and careless manner.

So the attendant came back and told the king, "I have found him. He is in a corner of that village." The attendant might have told the name of that particular village.

Section 2

tad u ha jānaśrutiḥ pauṭrāyaṇaḥ ṣaṭ-śatāni gavāṃ niṣkam
aśvatarī-rathaṃ tad ādāya praticakrame, taṃ hābhyuvāda
||4.2.1||

raikvemāni ṣaṭ śatāni gavāṃ, ayaṃ niṣko'yam aśvatarīrathaḥ,
anu ma etāṃ bhagavo devatāṃ śādhi, yāṃ devatāṃ upāssa iti
||4.2.2||

The king was very happy. He collected a lot of wealth and reverentially went to this great man sitting under a cart, scratching the eruptions on his skin. He took with him six

hundred cows, a gold necklace, and a chariot driven by mules. He addressed Raikva: "O Great One, here are six hundred cows, here is a gold necklace, here is a chariot driven with mules. Please accept these things and initiate me into the meditation on the deity whose worship you are performing, and on whom you are meditating. I want to be initiated into the great *vidya* which you possess, knowledge of that deity whom you have known." The great man was not pleased. He did not accept those gifts, nor was he prepared to give any initiation.

tam u ha paraḥ pratyuvāca, ahahāre tvā, śūdra, tavaiva saha gobhir astv iti; tad u ha punar eva jānaśrutiḥ pautrāyaṇaḥ sahasraṁ gavāṁ niṣkam aśvatarī-rathaṁ duhitaraṁ tad ādāya praticakrame ||4.2.3||

"O *sudra*, take back all these things, useless man," he said, as if he was not at all interested in them. "Get away from here. Take your cows, your chariot and gold necklace. Do not talk to me." This was what he said.

The word '*sudra*' mentioned here has been a target of great discussion in the Brahmasutras as to whether *sudras* can be initiated into Brahma Vidya. This is one of the points discussed in the *sutras* of Badarayana and much has been made of it by commentators. *Sudra* means a low caste belonging to the fourth category of the social order. Can such a person be initiated into Brahma Vidya? Here is a context where the word *sudra* occurs, and afterwards the person is initiated also. Well, the argument is very long and prolonged and it is not of much use to us to go into the intricacies. But the interpreters make out that *sudra* does not mean a low-caste man, in this context. One who is sunk in grief is called a *sudra*. This is the etymological meaning drawn out from the word *sudra*. He was in great grief because he found that there was a person greater than him and his knowledge was very little compared to the knowledge of the other one. So he was sorrow-stricken and he rushed immediately in the direction in which he could get this knowledge. He was a king and a *kshatriya*. How could you call him a *sudra*? So *sudra* here does

not mean a low caste man of the fourth order, but is only a symbolic, metaphorical way of referring to that person, indicating that he came in sorrow, in search of knowledge. This point is irrelevant to our subject, but anyway I made mention of it because it has been discussed in great detail in the Brahmasutras.

The king was grief-stricken. He went again with a larger quantity of wealth. This time he came with new things. He came with one thousand cows instead of the previous six hundred, the gold necklace, the chariot driven with mules, and he brought his daughter also to be offered to Raikva.

There is something between the lines which the Upanishad is silent about. There is a sudden shift of emphasis to the main question, from the descriptions of the king coming to the great man with all these offerings. Raikva felt that there was some sincerity in the king and that he had done something which ordinarily a person would not do. He was trying to offer his daughter to him. No ordinary man would do that. So there must be some tremendous sincerity in this person. He had come here a second time. If he was not sincere, he would have got fed up and gone back. He was not like the rich man who went to Jesus Christ and who was asked to sell everything he had and come back, but never did come back, because he did not want to sell everything. Janasruti was a person who was very particular about the knowledge which he wanted to gain. So he made a proposal to offer that which ordinarily one would not offer. This was an occasion for Raikva to recognise the sincerity of this person.

taṁ hābhyuvāda, raikvedaṁ sahasraṁ gavām, ayaṁ niṣko'yam
aśvatarī-rathaḥ iyaṁ jāyāyaṁ grāmo yasminn āsse: anv eva mā,
bhagavaḥ śādhīti ||4.2.4 ||

“I have brought all these things. Will you kindly initiate me into the great deity on whom you are meditating, due to which you are so great that your glory is spreading to all the

corners of the world? Will you kindly give this knowledge to me?" This was the prayer of the king.

There was another greater man than this king Janasruti and that was Janaka, who offered even himself as a servant to the great sage Yajnavalkya who initiated him into Brahma Vidya. He offered the whole kingdom to the sage and he said, "Here I am as your slave." Such were our great kings in this country, who valued the wisdom of Reality much more than temporal wealth, renown, and greatness in this world. To that category belonged Janasruti also.

tasyā ha mukham upodgrhṇann uvācā: ahahāremāḥ śūdra anenaiva mukhenālāpayiṣyathā iti; te haite raikva-parṇā nāma mahāvṛṣeṣu yatrāsmā uvāsa sa tasmai hovāca ||4.2.5 ||

"With all this that you have brought before me as the means, you want me to speak! Well, I shall speak, recognising your honesty and sincerity of purpose," said Raikva. The king was highly pleased at this condescending attitude of the great master and he gave him a set of villages in charity. The king said: "O great one, this village, in which you are seated here, is yours. I give it as a gift."

It appears he gave several villages. Those villages are called Raikva-parna, after the name of this great man, Raikva, in the country of Mahavrisha. So Raikva became rich in one moment with land, gold, attendants, and whatnot. The king also became richer by becoming the disciple of the great Raikva. Now the initiation was given by Raikva, the great master to the disciple, King Janasruti, into the mystery of meditation on the all-absorbing Being. Because of the character of all-absorption, this great Being on which Raikva was meditating is called *Samvarga*. It is a peculiar Upanishadic term which implies the absorbent into which everything enters, that which sucks everything into itself. That is *Samvarga*. There is a great 'wind' that blows everything into itself. Into that Raikva initiated the king. This is not the ordinary wind that blows here. It is not an ill wind that does good to no one, but it is a tremendous 'wind', a

symbolic term used in respect of the great Reality on which Raikva was meditating. His meditation was on that which withdraws everything into itself, which blows over everything, and absorbs everything into itself. Raikva then spoke of this great knowledge to Janasruti.

Section 3

vāyur vāva samvargaḥ, yadā vā agnir udvāyati, vāyum evāpyeti,
yadā sūryo'stam eti vāyum evāpyeti, yadā candro'stam eti
vāyum evāpyeti ||4.3.1||

Raikva said: "There is this great cosmic air or wind which is an absorbent of everything. Everything is absorbed into it, everything rises from it, everything is maintained in it, and everything goes back into it. When the fire subsides, it goes into it. It is absorbed into this great wind that absorbs everything into itself. It is on this *vayu*, the great deity, that I am meditating."

When you blow a lamp, where does the flame go? No one knows where it goes. That it is not the ordinary wind which is spoken of here, is clear from the fact that Raikva refers to it as an absorbent of even the sun himself. The sun cannot be absorbed by the ordinary wind. He says even the sun is absorbed when he moves in any particular direction, or sets. His rising in one place is equal to setting in another place. So the point is: what is it that makes the universe rotate or revolve in this manner? It is here referred to as cosmic 'wind' that blows in particular directions, compelling the planets, the stars and the sun to direct their courses in a given manner. Due to the fear of this Being, they are moving in a symmetrical fashion. The planets move around the sun, the sun is rushing towards the Milky Way, and so on and so forth. This is what we hear even in our modern scientific parlance. The fire burns due to fear of It and the rain falls due to fear of It. The sun also shines due to fear of this all-absorbent Air. Death performs its duty due to fear of It. This is the controlling central government, as it were, which is the object of meditation. The sun sets into It. If the sun and the

moon rise and set and move in their orbits and maintain their position in a perfect manner, it is all due to this great Being, the absorbent of everything which, by its very existence, controls the movements of all things.

yadāpa ucchuṣyanti, vāyum evāpiyanti, vāyur hy evaitān sarvān saṁvṛṅkte, ity adhidaivatam ||4.3.2||

When the water dries up, it goes there. It is this Being which absorbs the water into itself and makes water vanish into nothing, as it were. From the objective universal side, this is how the great deity, the cosmic air which blows everything into itself, is described.

Now from the internal microcosmic side also, it is being described.

athādhyātmaṁ: prāṇo vāva saṁvargaḥ, sa yadā svapiti prāṇam eva vāg apyeti, prāṇaṁ cakṣuḥ, prāṇaṁ śrotraṁ, prāṇam manaḥ, prāṇo hy evaitān sarvān saṁvṛṅkta iti ||4.3.3||

Just as in the universal it is called air which absorbs everything into itself and dries up every effect into itself as the cause, so in the individual also it works in a similar manner, and it is called *prana*. When you go to sleep the mind is withdrawn by the action of the *prana*. The *prana* draws the mind into itself. The speech and the senses are all drawn into it. Every organ, whether it is eye, or ear, or any other which operates in the waking condition, is also withdrawn. All these are regulated by this Supreme Principle which works as *prana* inside. It controls everything and draws everything into itself. So it works outside and also inside. It is the *brahmandand* the *pindanda*. It is the macrocosm and also the microcosm.

tau vā etau dvau saṁvargau, vāyur eva deveṣu, prāṇaḥ prāṇeṣu ||4.3.4||

These are the two great absorbents in the whole cosmos. Inwardly it is the *prana* that works as the absorbent of all effects into itself, and outwardly it is air, the cosmic *prana*, the *sutratman*, *hiranyagarbha* which absorbs everything into

itself. These two have to be brought together in conjunction in this meditation, as is the case with the Sandilya Vidya to which we have made reference earlier. The inward and outward have to come together in meditation and be envisaged as one single Reality. Among the gods it is *vayu* and among the senses and the internal functionaries it is the *prana*. This is the initiation.

The initiation is now over and Janasruti must have understood the import of it, as we are told nothing further as to what happened to him later on.

In ancient times, initiations into mysteries of this kind were not regarded as mere teachings in the ordinary sense. One would be surprised in modern times at the very easy way in which the Supreme Knowledge was communicated to people by the great masters through such simple instructions as this. Even if we hear these things one thousand times, we are not going to be benefited by it. The point is, how it is taught, who teaches, and to whom it is taught. What is taught of course we know very well. But the other factors should not be ignored. The receptive capacity of the disciple, the intellectual calibre that is behind it, the need felt for this knowledge by the individual concerned, and the circumstances which govern the entire process of initiation are more important factors than a mere parrot-like repetition of the words. Initiation is not mere utterance of words. It is a communication of an energy, a force. It is the will of the Guru, as it were, entering into the will of the disciple, where both have to be on the same level. Otherwise, there cannot be initiation. This is a short initiation, the meaning of which cannot be clear outwardly by mere reading the words thereof. But, it is a fund of wisdom taking the mind deep into the mysteries of creation and the Reality as such, into which the great Raikva, the so-called poor man, initiated the great King Janasruti Pautrayana, about which another story is mentioned here which we shall now take up.

There was a *brahmacharin* who was a great meditator on the *Samvarga*, a practitant who worshipped this great deity,

into the knowledge of which Raikva initiated King Janasruti. This *brahmacharin*, who was a disciplined student of this *vidya*, a great meditator and a seeker who felt that he had practically identified with the deity on account of the depth of his meditation, one day went about begging for food. He happened to go to the abode of two renowned persons. At the time of his approach, they were just being served their meal. So he asked for food from those two persons who were sitting for their meal, but they turned a deaf ear to this man's asking. No food was given. They kept quiet as if nothing was happening. This is an anecdote once again introducing us into another aspect of the same Samvarga Vidya.

atha ha śaunakam ca kāpeyam abhipratāriṇam ca kākśasenim
pariṣyamāṇau brahmacārī bibhikṣe, tasmā u ha na dadatuḥ
||4.3.5||

The Upanishad says that two great men, Saunaka and Abhipratarin, were about to sit for their meal, and a celibate student who was practising meditation in the Samvarga Vidya approached them and begged for food. They would not give food to this person who asked for alms. Now, observing that he was not being given food and these great men were about to ignore his very presence altogether, the *brahmacharin* made the following statement in their presence.

sa hovāca: mahātmanaś caturo deva ekaḥ kaḥ sa jagāra
bhuvanasya gopāḥ. taṁ, kāpeya, nābhipaśyanti martyāḥ
abhipratārin bahudhā vasantaṁ. yasmai vā etad annam, tasmā
etanna dattam iti ||4.3.6||

The *brahmacharin* said: "You, gentlemen, great ones, who are about to take your lunch here, Saunaka and Abhipratarin, please listen to what I am saying. There is one great god who swallows up four others. Who is this god? He is the protector of all the worlds. No one beholds the presence of this great god. O Saunaka and Abhipratarin, you two great ones do not realise that all the food of this world belongs to this god, and it is to this god that you have refused food."

This is literally what the *brahmacharin* said. Here, something else seems to be in his mind when he made the statement. He was a great meditator, no doubt, and a meditator in an advanced stage. He was practically identical with the deity on which he meditated. He had in him the power of the deity, and to a large extent, he could do whatever the deity can do. Now this deity is the Universal Being, the great *Samvarga*. And when the worshipper who had through meditation identified himself with the deity asked for food, it was as if God himself was asking for food. It is as if the deity was asking for alms.

“The entire food of all creation belongs to that Deity only, and when It is asking for the food which belongs to It by right, you great men do not give it! So you understand the consequences of your action. You have done a great offence in ignoring my presence. You did not at all listen to what I am saying. You have not given me the food I asked for and you are keeping quiet as if nothing is happening. Now be prepared for the consequences of this ignorance on your part in regard to this great Deity,” said the *brahmacharin*.

By this the *brahmacharin* meant that he himself was the deity manifest there in an embodied form. So it was a kind of threat he administered to the two persons who were about to take food by themselves without giving it to him who had asked for the same. Well, the consequences were serious, no doubt, if what he said was correct. They would be finished if the deity was wrath with them. This was, of course, the intention behind the enigmatic remark made in a threatening way by the *brahmacharin* who was refused food. After the *brahmacharin* spoke like this, Saunaka, one of the two who were seated there, got up.

tad u ha śaunakaḥ kāpeyaḥ pratimanvānaḥ pratyeyāya ātmā
devānām janitā prajānām, hiraṇya-damṣṭro babhaso’nasūriḥ:
mahāntam asya mahimānam āhuḥ, anadyamāno yad anannam
atti iti vai vayaṁ brahmacārin, idam upāsmahe, dattāsmāi
bhikṣām iti ||4.3.7||

Saunaka approached the *brahmacharin* and replied: "You are saying that food has been refused to the great deity, the all-pervading one. Listen to what I have to say on this. You are speaking like this because you are under the impression that you are a meditator on the *Samvarga* and that we know nothing about it. You made a remark that we are ignorant of the presence of this great god to whom all the food belongs. Then what is it that we are meditating on? I will tell you. There is a great Soul, the Self of all beings, the source and essence of all the gods, the creator, the progenitor of all things. He is the one who eats through the mouth of knowledge itself. It is not an ordinary mouth with physical teeth and physical tongue. He has teeth which are shining with the lustre of knowledge. It is the essence of knowledge which is the essence of His being and He swallows all things. He is a great devourer. There is nothing in creation which He cannot devour. Everything is food for him and He consumes it through his own being, not through any external instrument. He is the wisest of all existences. His glory is great indeed. He cannot be eaten or swallowed by anybody, or not even affected in the least by anyone, or contacted and contaminated by any other in any manner whatsoever. But to Him everything is food. He eats non-food also, not only the ordinary food. The eaters themselves are eaten up by Him. This is what we are meditating upon." Having made this remark he told his servants, "Please give this boy food."

This conversation conceals something very interesting. Its meaning is very hard to comprehend. We can however follow the interpreters and the commentators and make out, to some extent, the sense implied in this conversation. The implication of this discourse between the two parties seems to be that from the point of view of the *brahmacharin* it was wrong on the part of the other two persons to ignore his presence altogether and pay no heed to his request for food, especially as it was well-known that he was no ordinary person, having attuned himself to the cosmic deity. That was his point of view. The point of view of the others who retorted in reply seems to be that they were not so ignorant

as he imagined them to be. But, what is the point in refusing food to him? There must be some reason behind it. There is a meaning which we have to read into the words of the scripture to understand the reason. What we are told is that they merely wanted to test the *brahmacharin* to find out his depth of knowledge and the stuff out of which he was made. So they gave a reply which suggested that they possessed a knowledge, perhaps comparatively superior to his own knowledge.

In what way was it superior? This superiority is only suggestive and it is not openly stated. *Samvarga* is cosmic as well as individual, as it has been told in the earlier *mantras*. As the cosmic counterpart it is *vayu*, and as it functions in the individual it is *prana*. Now, the four great ones who were swallowed up by the god, as the *brahmacharin* pointed out, are the other lesser deities - the fire, the sun, the moon and the water who are all comprehended in the being of *vayu*, *hiranyagarbha*, the Supreme Reality. In the individual aspect also He is devourer of four things that are inferior to the *prana*, namely eye, ear, mind and speech. It is possible for such a meditator to have a mistaken notion that the cosmic is different in some way or other from the individual, or at least that there is a line of demarcation between the universal and the particular. In spite of the fact that the two are one, there seems to be a suggested difference between the outer and the inner, *vayu* and *prana*. But in the meditation that Saunaka and his friend practised, this difference seems to be obliterated completely, because they seem to be contemplating on that Being who has not this suggested difference between the outer and the inner, the cosmic and the individual, but is one single Reality. This can be the implication of the reply given by Saunaka to the *brahmacharin*.

“Well, anyway we have tested you. You are a good boy; take food.” This seems to be the final conclusion of Saunaka who told the servant to give him food. Or, it may be that there is no such implied meaning. Their intention might not be to suggest that there is some defect in the meditation of the

brahmacharin. Perhaps it was merely a kind of examination that they conducted in respect of him. Whatever it is, the whole section is a glorification of Samvarga Vidya and also a *phalasaruti*, making out that the exalted effect of this meditation is identity with the deity. One becomes possessed of the same power as is possessed by the deity. He becomes self-confident, and whatever is subject to the domain of the deity is subject to the rule and will of this meditator also. He becomes a superior person in every manner as the deity itself is. This is in the form of a sequel, a glorifying conclusion of the section dealing with Samvarga Vidya In this Upanishad.

tasma u ha daduḥ; te vā ete pañcānye pañcānye daśa santas tat
kṛtaṁ, tasmāt sarvāsu dikṣv annam eva daśa kṛtaṁ, saiṣā virāḍ
annādī, tayedam sarvaṁ dṛṣṭam, sarvam asyedaṁ dṛṣṭam
bhavati, annādo bhavati ya evaṁ veda, ya evaṁ veda ||4.3.8||

So they gave him food. Now follows a very complicated passage. It is peculiarly archaic, as many of the *mantras* in the Vedas and the Upanishads are. I give you merely the literal translation of what it is. This five and the other five make ten. This is the enigmatic meaning of this sentence. This is called the *kṛita*. Therefore, food comes from all the ten directions. The *virātis* the eater of everything. Whatever it sees, it eats. The food itself is the eater of food. This is the effect that follows in respect of anyone who knows this secret.

Now, what do we make out of this? We cannot make out any sense if we read it literally like that. But it has a significant mystical meaning. The five are the eater and five are the eaten. The eater is *vayu* cosmically, the absorber, the supreme deity into which everything enters. The other four are the articles of diet for this supreme deity. According to some it is fire, sun, moon and water. If we do not want it to be so complicated, we may say that they are the four elements - ether, fire, water and earth which are absorbed into this Supreme Absorber. Inwardly the *prana* is the eater, and the food is the sense-organs, speech, eye, ear and mind. So the

four items which are regarded as food or which are the eaten, together with the eater, constitute the five. The five in the macrocosm and the five in the microcosm make ten. And this is the *krita*.

Here, *krita* is another difficult word. As we said earlier, it is the name of a cast of dice in a game. There are numbers inscribed on this cast and they are four, three, two and one. Now if you add up these numbers, four, three, two and one, they make ten. So it is said that even as all the numbers together on the dice make number ten, likewise, outwardly and inwardly, this deity together with the stuff that is eaten by it constitutes ten.

Another very interesting word that is mentioned here is *virat*. In the Veda, *virāt* is a metre which has ten letters. So there is a comparison introduced here between the metre *virat* having ten letters, and the number ten which has association with the deity as the eater of food and the eaten, and also the total number in the *krita*, the dice cast which is ten. Or, in a more general way, it means *virat*, the cosmic Person, is the All-Being, the most comprehensive Reality to which everything is food. In the *virāt* you cannot say which is the eater and which is the eaten. There is no object-subject difference in the *virat*. Food flows from all directions to the *virat* and in the form of the *virat*. The *virat* is the name that we give to the all-comprehensive Reality where subject-object distinction cannot be made, as it is no more. The seer and the seen are indistinguishable. There is no difference between the eater and the eaten. The eaten itself is the eater, and the eater is the eaten. We can look at it either way. Whatever perceives is the stuff that is eaten, and whatever is eaten is also that which perceives. One who knows this mystery also becomes like this. What is this mystery will be clear to anyone who has read and understood these passages.

Here we conclude the Samvarga Vidya with which we also conclude our study of the ChhandogyaUpanishad. We

have covered practically every essential point in the prominent sections of the Chhandogya Upanishad.