

*JABĀLA UPANIṢAD*

The *Jābāla Upaniṣad* belongs to the *Atharva Veda* and discusses a few important questions regarding renunciation.

## JĀBĀLA UPANIṢAD

1. *brhaspatir uvāca yājñavalkyam yad anu kurukṣetram devānām deva-yajanam sarveṣām bhūtānām brahma-sadanam. avimuktam vai kurukṣetram devānām deva-yajanam sarveṣām bhūtānām brahma-sadanam. tasmād yatra kvacana gacchati tad eva manyeta tad avimuktam eva, idaṁ vai kurukṣetram devānām deva-yajanam sarveṣām bhūtānām brahma-sadanam. atra hi jantoh prāṇesūktamamāneṣu rudraḥ tārakam brahma vyācaṣṭe, yenāsāv amrti bhūtvā mokṣi bhavati, tasmād avimuktam eva niṣeveta avimuktam na vimuñced evam evaitad yājñavalkya.*

1. Brhaspati said to Yājñavalkya, *Kurukṣetra* is for the gods, the resort of the gods and for all creatures it is the abode of Brahmā. *Avimukta*<sup>1</sup> is the *kurukṣetra* which is for the gods the resort of the gods and for all creatures the abode of Brahmā. Therefore, wherever one may go, one should think of it as such. It is only *avimukta*. It is *kurukṣetra* which is for the gods, the resort of the gods, and for all creatures the abode of Brahmā. There when the lives of living creatures go upwards, Rudra teaches the *tāraka mantra*. By it they become immortal and are liberated. Therefore meditate on *avimukta*. Do not give up *avimukta*, Yājñavalkya.

2. *atha hainam atriḥ papraccha yājñavalkyam, ya eṣo'nanto' vyakta ātmā taṁ katham ahaṁ vijānīyām iti. sa hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ so'vimukta upāsyo ya eṣo'nanto'vyakta ātmā so'vimukte pratiṣṭhita iti. so'vimuktah kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti. varanāyām nāśyām ca madhye pratiṣṭhita iti. kā vai varanā kā ca nāśīti, sarvān indriya-kṛtān doṣān vārayatīti tena varanā bhavatīti, sarvān indriya-kṛtān pāpān nāśayatīti tena nāśī bhavatīti. katamam cāsya sthānam bhavatīti bhruvor ghrānasya ca yaḥ sandhiḥ sa eṣa dyaur lokasya parasya ca sandhir bhavatīti, etad vai sandhim sandhyām brahma-vida upāsata iti, so'vimukta upāsya iti, so'vimuktam jñānam ācaṣṭeyo vai tad evam vedeti.*

2. Thereafter Atri inquired of Yājñavalkya, 'How can I know that self which is infinite and unmanifested?' Yājñavalkya said (in reply), meditate on *avimukta* (for) the self which is infinite and unmanifested is established in *avimukta*. (Atri then inquired) In what is *avimukta* established? (Yājñavalkya answered) It is established in the middle of *Varanā* and *Nāśī*. (Atri inquired) What is *Varanā* and what is *Nāśī*? (Yājñavalkya answered) As it overcomes all the faults done by the sense organs it is called *Varanā*; as it destroys all the evils done by

<sup>1</sup> *avimuktam sopādihikam.*

the sense organs it is called *Nāṣī*. (Atri asked) What is their abode? (Yājñavalkya answered) It is the meeting-place of the eyebrows and the nose. It is the meeting-place of the world of gods and (the world) beyond. The same meeting-place, the knowers of *Brahman* worship as *sandhyā*. So *avimukta* is to be meditated on. He who knows it gains the knowledge which makes for liberation.

3. *atha hainam brahmacāriṇa ūcuh, kim japyenā'mṛtatvam brūhīti, sa hovāca yājñavalkyah, śatarudriyeṇety etāny eva ha vā amṛtasya nāmāni, etair ha vā amṛto bhavātīti, evam evaitad yājñavalkyah.*

3. Once students of sacred knowledge asked (Yājñavalkya): Can we gain life eternal by the repetition of formulas (*mantras*)? Yājñavalkya said (in reply) By (meditation on) *śatarudriya* which are the names of eternal life, one becomes immortal.

4. *atha hainam janako vaideho yājñavalkyam upasametyo-vāca, bhagavan, samnyāsam (anu) brūhīti. sa hovāca yājñavalkyah; brahmacaryam parisamāpya grhī bhavet, grhī bhūtvā vanī bhavet, vanī bhūtvā pravrajat, yadi vetarathā brahmacaryād eva pravrajat, grhād vā vanād vā. atha punar avratī vā vratī vā snātako vā asnātako votsannāgniko vā yad ahar eva virajet tad ahar eva pravrajat, taddhatke prājāpalyām eveshīm kurvanti, tad u tathā na kuryād āgneyīm eva kuryāt. agnir ha vai prāṇah prāṇam eva tathā karoti. traidhātavīyām eva kuryāt, etayaiva trayo dhātavo yad uta sattvam rajas tama iti. ayam te yonir rtviḥ yato jātaḥ prāṇād arocathāh, tam prāṇam jānan agna ārohathāno vardhaya rayim, ity anena mantrenāgnim ājighret, eṣa ha vā agner yonir yaḥ prāṇah prāṇam gaccha svāhety evam evaitad āha. grāmād agnim āhrtya pūrvavad agnim āghrāpayet. yad agnim na vindet apsu juhuyāt, āpo vai sarvā devatāḥ sarvābhyo devatābhyo juhomi svāhety, juhvodhrtya prāśnīyāt sājyam havir anāmāyam mokṣamantraḥ trayyaivam vadet, etad brahma, etad upāsītavyam, evam evaitad bhagavann iti vai yājñavalkyah.*

4. Once Janaka (King) of Videha approached Yājñavalkya and said, 'Venerable Sir, teach me about renunciation.' Yājñavalkya said: After completing the life of a student, let one become a householder; after completing the life of a householder let one become a forest dweller; after completing the life of a forest dweller, let one renounce, otherwise (if a suitable occasion arises) let one renounce even from the state of a student or from the state of a householder or from that of a

forest dweller. Whether one has not completed the injunctions or completed the injunctions, whether he is a student or not, even if he has not completed the sacrificial rites, on whatever day he has the spirit of renunciation, that very day let him renounce (and become a recluse). Some, indeed, perform the *prājāpatya* sacrifice. One need not do this but should only perform the fire sacrifice. Fire is life and one performs the life sacrifice thus: (He makes the fire take the form of life, or merge into its original source, life). Then he should also perform the *traidhātavīyā* sacrifice. The three elements represent the three qualities *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (which are to be burnt). He should inhale the fire (smoke) by uttering the following *mantra* (verse), 'O Fire, this life who is the source of your birth and from whom, having sprung forth you shone. Knowing this you climb up to life and then make my wealth (spiritual wealth) increase.' He who is life is the source (material cause) of fire. O Fire, you assume the form of life, your source. (As for one who has not performed the fire sacrifice: having taken the fire from the village (i.e. any house in the village), he should inhale the fire as mentioned before. If he is not able to get the fire, he should perform the sacrifice in the water. For water represents all the gods. So uttering this *mantra*: 'I offer unto all the gods,' he should perform the sacrifice, he should take the sacrificial remnant with ghee, which cures all diseases. He should utter the *pranava* (which leads to release), which represents (the substance of) the three Vedas). This is *Brahman*. It should be meditated upon. 'Even so is it, Revered Yājñavalkya,' said Janaka.

*avratīn*: one who has not performed the prescribed rites even as *vratīn* is one who has performed the rites.

*snātaka*: one who has completed the ceremonies relating to Vedic studies even as *asnātaka* is one who has not completed the ceremonies. *that very day he may renounce*: *Mahā-nirvāna Tantra* says: One should not enter the stage of a recluse giving up an old father and mother or a devoted wife or an infant son.

*mātaram pitaram vṛddham bhāryām caiva pativratām śiṣumś ca tanayam hitvā nāvadhūtāśramam vrajat.* VII. 7.

He who becomes a monk, giving up father, mother, child, wife, kinsmen and relatives becomes a great sinner.

*māṣṇ pīṣṇ śiṣūn dārān svajanān bāndhavān api yah pravrajeta hitvaitān sa mahāpātakī bhavet.* VIII. 18.

Cp. also:

*adhitya vidhivad vedān putrāṁś cotpādya dharmataḥ  
iṣṭvā ca śaktito yajñair mano mokṣe niveśayet.*

'Having studied the Vedas according to rule, having produced sons, in conformity with dharma, having performed sacrifices to the best of one's ability, let one set one's mind on release.'

*anadhitya dviḥ vedān, anulpādya tathātmanān,  
aniṣṭvā caiva yajñaiś'ca mokṣam icchan vrajaty adhaḥ.*

'Any twice-born individual who desires release without having studied the Vedas, without having produced sons and without having offered sacrifices, goes down below.'

These verses are quoted in Vācaspati's *Bhāmātī*, I. I. I.

*prāṇa*: life. Here it is not individual breath. It is the *sūtrātman*, the soul or the material cause of the world.

*tridhātaviya*: in this sacrifice three sacrificial cakes *purodāśa*, are used, representing the three *guṇas*.

5. *atha hainam atriḥ papraccha yājñavalkyam prcchāmi tvā  
yājñavalkya ayajñopavitī katham brāhmaṇa iti, sa hovāca  
yājñavalkyaḥ, idam evāsyā tad yajñopavitam ya ātmāpaḥ  
prāśyācamyāyam vidhūḥ parivrājakānām, virādhvāne vā anāsake  
vā apām praveśe vā agni praveśe vā mahā-prasthāne vā, atha  
parivṛād vivarṇavāsā munḍo'parigrahaḥ śucir adrohī bhairkṣaṇo  
brahma-bhūyāya bhavātīti, yady āturaḥ syān manasā vācā sam-  
nyaset, eṣa panthā brahmaṇā hānuvittas stenaiti samnyāsī  
brahmavid ity evam evaiṣa bhagavan yājñavalkyaḥ.*

5. Then Atri enquired of Yājñavalkya. On being asked how one who does not wear the sacred thread can be (treated as) a Brāhmaṇa, Yājñavalkya answered, this alone is the sacred thread of him that purifies himself by the offering and sipping water. This is the procedure for becoming a recluse. (For one who is weary of the world but not yet fit to become a recluse the following are prescribed), he may choose a hero's death (by following the path of the warrior in the battlefield), he may fast unto death, throw himself into water or enter fire (burn himself to death) or perform the last journey (walk on unto death). Then the wandering ascetic who (puts on) orange robes, who is shaven, who has non-possession, purity, non-enmity, lives on alms, obtains the state of *Brahman*. If he is diseased he can renounce by mind and speech. This is not to be done by one who is healthy. Such a renouncer becomes the knower of *Brahman*, so said the venerable Yājñavalkya.

*upavīta*: the sacred thread is a cotton thread of three strands running from the left shoulder across the body to the right hip.

It is first placed on the youth by the teacher at the ceremony of initiation. It is the outward and visible symbol of the *sūtrātman*, the thread-spirit on which all the individual existences are strung like beads and by which all are inseparably linked to their source.

Among the ancient Iranians as among the Parsees to this day, at the age of 15, a boy or a girl is admitted to the community of the Zoroastrians by being girt with the sacred thread.

*āturaḥ*: diseased. When one is about to die he may renounce by mind or speech. It is unnecessary to go through the ceremonies.

This passage seems to justify suicide, in certain conditions.

6. *tatra parama-hamsā nāma saṁvartakārūṇi śvetaketu durvāsa  
rbhu nidāgha jaḍa-bharata dattātreyā raivataka prabhṛtayah,  
avyaktalingāḥ avyaktācārāḥ anunnattā unmattavad ācarantās  
tridandam kamandalum śikyaṁ pātram jalapavitram śikhām  
yajñopavitam ca ity etat sarvaṁ bhūsvāhety apsu parityajy  
ātmānam anvicchet. yathā jātarūpadhāro nirgrantho niṣparigrahas  
tat-tad-brahma-mārgē samyak sampannah śuddha-mānasah prāṇa-  
samdhāraṇārtham yathokta-kāle vimukto bhairkṣam ācaran udara-  
pātreṇa labhālābhayoh samo bhūtvā śūnyāgāra-devagṛha tṛṇa-  
kūṭa-valmika-vrksamūla-kulāśālāgnihotra-gṛha-nadīpulina-giri  
kuhara-kandara-koṭāra-nirjhara-sthandīleṣu teṣu aniketa vāsyā-  
prayatno nirmamaḥ śukladhyānaparāyaṇo' dhyātma-niṣṭho' śubha-  
karma-nirmūlanaparah samnyāsena deha-tyāgam karoti, sapara-  
ma-hamsa-nāma parama-hamsa nāmeti.*

6. Saṁvartaka, Āruṇi, Svetaketu, Durvāsa, Rbhu, Nidāgha, Jaḍa-bharata, Dattātreyā, Raivataka and other rare *paramahamsas*. They are of unmanifested natures, of unmanifested ways of life, seen (to others) to behave like mad men though they are in no way mad. They renounce *tridanda*, *kamandalu*, tuft of hair and sacred thread and all that in water with the words *bhū svāhā* and seek to know the Self. Assuming the form they had at birth, without any bonds, without any possessions, they must tread well the path of *Brahman*. With a clean mind (or a pure heart), for the sake of maintaining life, they must fill at fixed times the vessel of their stomach with the alms obtained, treating gain and loss as equal. They must live in places like a deserted house or a temple or a shrub or an anthill, the root of a tree, a potter's house, fireplace, a sandbank in a river, hill, cave, hollow of a tree, stream in a deserted place. Without effort, without self-sense, intent on meditation established in the higher self, keen on removing the (effects of) evil deeds,

they give up their bodies by the method of renunciation. Such is a *parama-haṁsa*. Such is a *parama-haṁsa*.

*tri-danda*: monks carry three staves tied together. It is the sign of triple control of thoughts, words and deeds.

*kamandalu*: a water-jar used by ascetics.

The knower of dharma who wears no signs should practise its principles. M.B. XIV. 46. 51.

*Vasiṣṭha Smṛti* says: 'His signs are not manifest nor his behaviour,'  
*tasmād aliṅgo dharmajñō 'vyaktaliṅgo 'vyaktācāra iti.*

### PAIṆGALA UPANIṢAD

This Upaniṣad belongs to the *Sukla Yajur Veda* and is in the form of a dialogue between Yājñavalkya and his pupil Paiṅgala. Some of the important questions such as meditation on the Supreme, the nature of release, are discussed in it.