Divinity - Logical Investigations

Dr. N. Ushadevi

The principal task of a philosopher is to account for deriving an idea on the 'divinity' its nature and content in relation to the perceptible world. The all-embracing question of perception then is to explore the domain of divinity, if one such exists, and acknowledge the truth thereof to ascertain the nature and content of it. The philosophical interests developed through 'inquisition' may focus on some logical steps going back from the present context to its deepest level where no more deliberations are possible. Any psychological inquiry in this regard may end in certain palpable divinity or 'ultimate'. But a logical understanding will certainly expand this 'ground' to a deeper level of divinity. This is termed 'consciousness' in Advaita Vedanta. Reflection upon this surmounts to a concept of unity- unity that is higher and above the concept of Gods, the world or any perceptible being, presumably the highest.

The problem of philosophy is even stranger than expected as any 'proof' for the rationality of the concept of divinity cannot be generalized as the *prima facie* remains out of the reach of proof of the perceptual construction. Only an extension of the 'root' to an indeterminate 'something' as evidenced in logical construction is commensurable as it is not subject to any cognitive 'rules' but is the construer of all rules and everything that is 'is'. Multiplicity is simply alleged in that nevertheless it is devoid of such attributes. Usually such a 'something' beyond but within is 'proved' by its manifest 'iteration' either in totality or in part, for which the 'something' is under the guise of either proved or disproved. For, any field of

knowledge is not so consistent with regard to this 'something'. Many a times, it is 'silence' that makes the knowledge inconsistent for others whose interests are diverted towards it. The question that arises here is: does knowledge get exhausted before its consistency get approved?.

In this context, the logical approach discussed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* . as arguments between the great sage Yājñavalkya and his disciples including his wife, assumes significance. For, he makes efforts in his discourse with the learned colleagues to understand the unknown through a systematic logical negation of the gross to traverse into the subtlest. The subtlest is the ultimate divinity and the only Being who exists even after the dissolution of everything in the universe. That is, His manifestation gets dissolved into Him. From the Gods to the inanimate matter, everything is His manifestation itself. Ignorance is that which brings in the world. He proves that everything has its roots in this unknowable and all collapses into it. Ultimately He is the only knower. Nothing can be treated as 'alien' to this. The only problem in this regard is that we just do not know what is meant by the term 'Brahman' even though it is uttered. Name, form, attributes- all belong to its manifest form. The structure of 'that' is presumably the same as its counterpart- the manifest one, the highest cognizable one. Some philosophical thoughts apparently seems to be at odds with this idea. For, an unknowable entity cannot be the philosopher's rational concern which certainly is 'not' or 'nothing' or 'sunyata'. Even then, the more intractable problems concerning such a divine being are overcome by the notion of the 'necessity' or 'traceability' to an 'essence'.

At another level, the problem of divinity posed by the fact that what appears unknowable or unmanifest becomes knowable or manifest and that the distinction between the two creates problems in the form of the structural content of them- the unmanifest is purely consciousness while the manifest has associational ignorance that is the cause of the world. The situation becomes further complicated by what is called the 'locus' of ignorance. Whethjer it is in the unmanifest in its indistinguishable (anirvacaniya) form or it is in the manifest?

One of the principal tasks of the Br.Up. as the first Upaniṣad among all, seems to account for an idea of 'Brahman'- the unity of perception, a deviation from the natural deitification which acknowledges the various universal forces as the 'Reality'- a multiplicist foundational justification. A deeper level of reflection without relegating the authority of the natural deities of the Vedic tradition, helps to explore the 'near to'- conceptualization of the divinity in 'Brahman'. The world of experience is pictured as a manifestation of name, form and work of this entity- not a manifestation or transformation in completeness but a peculiar one- the 'self-manifestation'. This characteristic manifestation brings in no change to the totality of 'Brahman'. This well-founded doctrine of 'Brahman' is justified through its logical, sequential investigation starting from the world and leading to 'Brahman', the inquisive Himself returning to the state of 'Brahman'.

The whole arena of discourse and arguments about the 'essential constitution' in the Br.Up. bring forth the nature of divinity, the complexity of works reducible to knowledge, the relation between works, worship and knowledge and finally the knowledge of reality through argumentation.

Divinity- the Probability and Contingency:

The contingent question that usually haunts one is: does there exist a reality in certainty? One can hardly think of a 'certainty' in the case of the Reality in the phenomenal level of existence. The 'probability' condition can be the most appropriate ascription to the 'Reality', for, in such a probabilistic case only, there can be a complete identity- the totality represented by the 'One'. That very character of distinguishing is lacking in this so-called Absolute. Hence it is difficult to state the exact nature of this. It is significant that it is impossible to ignore anything in this universe constituted by 'beings' from the totality. Only certain predilections or prejudices can be formulated based on possible subjective evidences available in 'intuitive' process.the scriptures themselves reveal: 'then was not anything before here: this was indeed developed by Mrtyu'1. here the distinction between whatever is distinguishable with name and form is the implication of the statement. It does not pose any insoluble dilemma like that of a 'void' before creation as it refers to death as enveloping all that is enveloping something. Further, if there is complete voidness, how can the effect (the universe) come into existence? Here the Upaniṣad tries to unravel the existence of cause which is neither non-existence nor existence as such. This is the characteristic expression of the Divinity that shines forth in the whole universe. Again, it is also the only probabilistic possibility for the insufficiency of knowledge of theat divinity. It is also pointed out: 'the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Himself'claiming complete non-difference between the knower and the known by which the chance for separate existence for the knower is totally rejected. Further it is clarified that the cause is indestructible whereas

the effect represents its converse kind, ie, mortal. The appropriate nature of the 'divinity' has to be captured through the process of inference alone whereas perception and such pramanas can end in the 'being' only as a nearness to Reality.

Now, there arises this question: why Brahman alone can be considered as the 'divinity'? According to the Upaniṣads, Brahman alone shines even when all other lights such as the sun, moon and stars were absent. But there is no sensibility as it is beyond all perceptible fields. But the question of the measures that keep the indeterminate (anirvacaniya) Brahman aloof from mystical nature necessitates a proper answer. This can be availed from the argumentative discourse between Gargya and Ajatasatru2. The sage Gargya expresses his ideas on Brahman that the Upaniṣad calls as imperfect. The real nature of Brahman is disclosed by Ajatasatru as the subtlest of all and for an understanding of its nature, the Upaniṣad reveals that it necessarily requires a disciple who firmly believes in the existence of Brahman as well as a teacher preceptor who possesses a complete knowledge of Him.

Gargya begins the question in this way: I adore as Brahman the spirit who abides in the sun'. He replies that those who adore Him will excel all beings but not know Brahman. Ajatasatru denies this. Following this, Gargya tells: I adore as Brahman the spirit who abides in the moon. Ajatasatru answers that such a person who adores the moon as Brahman will be produced day by day and again reproduced and such a person also cannot know Him. For the question: Brahman as the spirit abiding in lightning, Ajatasatru tells that he will become glorious and his offsprings will also become glorious. Again Gargya goes on telling that 'I adore as Brahman the

spirit who abides in ether, wind, fire, waters, looking glass etc. quarters, noise, shadow etc.' these are explained as imperfect knowledge by Ajatasatru. Those who adore the above mentioned principles will attain their attributes alone and they never can have the knowledge of Brahman. They will be produced or born again in this world till they attain the knowledge of Brahman.

To another deliberation by Gargya: 'I adore as Brahman the spirit who abides in the soul', Ajatasatru denies him the complete knowledge of Brahman as he and his offspring become possessed of a soul in this world and continuing their existence here forever. Gargya could not proceed further. Ajatasatru reveals that Brahman extends beyond these; Brahman is not comprehended by such a knowledge. To see Brahman in the universe as such and such is one thing or the other shows the insufficiency of knowledge regarding Brahman. But when these things are seen in a different way, ie. When Brahman is brought into the picture, a new experience takes place and everything becomes Brahman. The differentiated concerns of name, form, work etc. will not arise thereby. This is the unique state in which the 'beings' merge into the totality.

The imperfectness of knowledge is revealed by Ajatasatru by turning attention to the three states of sleep, waking and dream. He tells: when the spirit whose nature is knowledge is in deep sleep, then the ether in the midst of the heart drawing in together with the knowledge of the senses, their actual knowledge manifesting the respective objects will be slept therein. 'in this state, life is drawn in, speech is drawn in, ear is drawn in, the mind is drawn in'. The implication here is that the intellect withdrawn from the objects and turns inside towards the soul. All the senses are retrieved off their

functions. Hence one could not know of anything. All the arteries (72000 in number) 3 which proceed from the heart everywhere to the body returns into the nature of soul functionally and he is in profound sleep enjoying bliss. But in the state of dream, he is turned outwards (objectivity). He proceeds to higher and lower places and the senses are directed to fulfill his desire. The process is elaborated beautifully in the verse 1.20 of Br.Up.'as the spider proceeds along with its web, as little sparks produced from fire, so proceed from that soul all organs, all worlds, all the Gods, all beings'. The nearest conception of Him is this that 'He is the truth of truth. The organs are the truth, He is the truth of truth'.

The one Brahman is He who produces the whole universe and who is the 'essential constituent' of whatever is produced in the world and into that which everything returns. There is a mere reference of Brahman, not its real nature. The definition of His nature ceases where it is told: 'everything is Brahman'. Still there seems a lack of complete knowledge of Him. Further whatever is produced from Him is said to be constituted of the five elements that are differentiated through name and form. This name and form are declared as 'truth' (satya). For this same reason, Brahman is 'satyasya satyam' (truth of all accepted truths). Perceiving this world as one thing of name and form and to think of it without references to the latter (name and form) as another without such distinction is peculiarly reflected in this truth.

The situation then becomes more complex. Why then are the elements called God or truth? The possibility of two truths makes the conception of Brahman more difficult. The nature of the elements which are the so-called truth is to reveal the subject or to show the

nature of what has formand what is that which has no form. On account of this having the twofold nature- one without form (subjective content) and one that has form . the elements can be said as consisting of effect and cause in one for which they are called truth. Similar is the case with the organs (pranah).

The Upaniṣadic intention is that a complete understanding of Brahman is not possible, or it is simply a probability. So it puts the view forward that the 'truth' belongs to that which has name and form with its subject as effect and cause knowable as 'truth'. This contingent truth is claimed to be in identity with the 'Brahman' and hence Brahman is called the truth of truth. There is no fault in this twofold elaboration of Truth, for, what is knowable and justifiable through the perceptive mode of the mind is the truth itself. Whatever is inferred as the subject of this truth is only probabilistic and not certain as there is no destruction in that unique identity of knower, knowable and knowing process. 'To know' requires 'something' to be known and also it has one who is desirous to know. Only in the case of one that has distinctive knower or known, one can affirm the 'truth'. But the truth of truth cannot be denied altogether for it is certain that the one and the only 'one' that remains after everything is lost in identity. Affirmation can be made for such an existence through 'sruti' only. This is also favored by the fact that every effect has a cause and if name and form are the effects, these are traceable to this cause- the prima facie which is none other than Brahman.

Now, the insoluble dilemma of the unchangeability of Brahman is a 'truth affirmation' on this highest 'divinity'. Anything that changes or that is represented by name and form is not the absolute. Hence the notion of divinity has to be understood in such a way that

it is solely determined by the 'unchangeability' factor. If the 'divinity' is affected in a substantive way, then it cannot remain the same in different beings as 'essence'. The sruti unequivocally declares that it is never changeable and the 'identity' cannot be questioned by any means. The idea that despite all kinds of transformations by name and form, the 'identity' of the essence is unaffected and it ever shines without losing or gaining anything- ever in fullness (purnamadah purnamidam). This is the certainty over 'divinity' and the probability of its knowability is marked through 'knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Himself' and hence except sruti, there is no justification for its existence. Now the crucial question is: how does the Br.Up. extend the conceptualized Brahman (as truth) to the imperceptible reader? In the third Brahmana of the third chapter of Br.Up. there is a clear discourse on this subject. In the absence of the clearest and strongest evidences except sruti statements, neither it is easy to believe in the absence of the so-called Brahman (indeterminate), nor is it possible to accept it as the sole reality- the Absolute. But the scriptural text of Br.Up. III.3 exposes the nature of Brahman with subjective conditions like sameness, nearness etc. this will be in complete accord with subjectively contingent and objective necessitation. Here one can get the knowledge of the Reality though in insufficiency of reason for determining that 'indeterminate' (anirvacaniya). This is the peculiarity of the Upaniṣad in exposing the nature of Brahman which otherwise is unknown. This is the duality in 'oneness'.

The exoteric Dualism

The Br.Up. III. 3 starts with the discussion on the two modes of Brahman. These two modes are : one that has form and

the other that has no form; the one that is mortal and the other that is immortal; again the one which is the finite and the other that is the infinite; and the one that is existing and the other beyond it. If these are the two modes of Brahman in its manifestation, then absolute Brahman is certainly beyond that, for, the Absolute is without any mode. Any difference cannot be perceived in the Absolute. In the next verse it is said: what has form in what is different from the ether and air and this is mortal, finite and visible. The essence of what has form, mortal, finite and visible- that being which is the cause of heat in the Sun; for, He is the essence of what exists. Further it is said: that which has no form in the air and the ether, which is immortal, infinite and the beyond. The essence of this is the spirit who abides in the whole universe. It is called Purusa or Hiranyagarbha. This essence is the 'Divinity'. The Upaniṣad here limits the conceptualization to the Purusa. Brahman is what is beyond these modes and this necessitates the inevitability of the concept of a 'beyond'. In this type of argument, the Upaniṣad aims that there is absolutely one 'cause' indeterminate, and it is beyond any sensibility. In this case, a critique can limit his speculation to the negative mode and thereby brings the conflicting idea that the negative mode implies 'nothingness' (sunyata). But the Upaniṣad assumes that it is the 'essence' of all these and is a unique identity- the truth of truth. By elaborating 'essence as the ground of existence' the Upaniṣad clearly reveals that the divinity is not restricted to the absolute only, but for its two modes also. For, Purusa is the highest perceptible divinity and through Him only it is possible to conceive the imperceptible Absolute.

Now the Upaniṣad focusing on the nature of the Soul, corroborates the relation of Brahman to this. It says: what has form

is different from air and ether, in the midst of the body. This is said as mortal, finite and existing. The essence of this is the eye, for, this is the essence of what exists. That which has no form is the ether, the air in the midst of the body and is immortal, infinite and beyond. The essence of this is the spirit (purusa) in the right eye. Further it states that the form of this spirit is as cloth dyed by turmeric, as the smoky colour of the sheep wool, as the red color of the Indragopa in Sanskrit, bright color of the fire flame or the white color of the lotus. The modifications of this spirit are like the lightning that shines forth at one moment. The glory of him who thus knows shines forth at one moment.

The Upaniṣad takes one, at this stage into the domain of Brahman where it discloses that 'He (Brahman) is not this, not this'. By negation, it tries to define Brahman as that which is known, which has name and form, action, quality etc. is not that. There is no distinction in that. Any definition of it in the form of name, form etc. relegates the divinity to a lowest level which It never be. With respect to the soul that is in the midst of the body, the organs are the truth and the truth of truth is the soul.

According to the Upaniṣad (Br.U.II.iv.14) 'where there is duality as it were, there sees another' (individual soul distinct from the supreme self) there smells another another thing, there speaks another of another thing there minds another , there knows another, another thing. But how does one to whom all has become mere soul (Atma). How should he know him by whom he knows, this all; how should he know the knowledge? The particular context of duality/ multiplicity is the alluding premise of the individual soul that is infected with the ignorance. Further, according to the Upaniṣadic

view, since every effect requires a cause, there is no effect without cause. Ignorance brings in the cause-effect duality. If all is soul or Brahman, there will not be any cause or effect. To the question how can one know the knower?, it can be said that the knower has no distinction of knowledge and known and hence the knowledge of Brahman is not possible.

The sruti further explains the relation between the soul and Brahman. Br.Up. II.v.1 (also Chand. 3.1.5). The earth (matter) is honey for all beings and for the earth all beings are honey. The earth provides nourishment for all beings and these beings are changed into its very substance. It is mutual dependence of support and the supported. This implies no difference between them- all are the same Brahman. In the same way, the Purusa residing in the body is honey for all beings and all beings are honey for him. So this soul is immortal and it is Brahman. The similar arguments in case of water, fire, air, Aditya, the quarter the moon, lightning, thunder, ether, justice, truth etc. prove that all is soul that is Brahman. In III.v.15, it is disclosed that this soul is verily the lord of all beings, the king of all beings. As all spokes are fastened in the naval and the circumference of the wheel, thus also all beings, all Gods, all organs, all souls are fastened in the soul (see also Mund. 2.2.6). this is the categorical assertion of the highest divinity- the Brahman as this is all. Again in the verse 19, it is said: 'it is Brahman who has neither a Before nor an After, nor a beside nor a without, this is the soul, the Brahman, the perceiver of all. So Brahman is declared as the highest divinity'.

The True Affirmative A Priori- Divinity:

The contingent question to be analysed is: how can it be possible to affirm the a priori ? as far as finite beings are concerned,

it is difficult to understand completely the 'a priori' for that finite being transcends into the 'a priori' or Brahman. Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself. As indicated earlier, such a knowledge of 'a priori' requires a distinction between knower and known which is not in the a priori. This is the peculiarity of proposition in the Upaniṣads that 'a priori' is affirmed by such words as 'not this, not this'. Whatever is known is not in principle the truth. Whatever is beyond is affirmed as the truth of truth. The Upaniṣad maintains that a complete individual notion corresponding to a particular notion on the a priori needs attributes (name and form). Whenever such a notion is used for affirmation of the a priori, it means that this notion is only about that which is conceived as Purusa (Hiranyagarbha). It is only a probabilistic affirmation of what is true, as the Upaniṣad maintains, is that which is the negative of this. Such an argumentative affirmation can be found in the Br.Up. III.1.3. An analysis of this viewpoint is taken up here. The conversation between the sage Yājñavalkya , the knower of Brahman and the Brahmanas of the Kurus and the Pancalas who challenge the sage in the court of the king Janaka of Videha.first of all, it was Hota Asvala who asks Yājñavalkya : all this is pervaded by death, all this is subject to death. By what means overcoming the grasp of death is the sacrifice liberated? Yājñavalkya replies- 'By speech which is fire in the shape of the priest called 'hota'. The speech of the sacrificer is verily the hota. This speech is verily the fire, this fire is the hota, this is liberation, this is absolute liberation.' Here it can be said that liberation is the attainment of the the state of speech or the deity of fire. In the next verse Asvala asks: All this is pervaded by day and night, all this is subject to day and night. By what means overcoming the

grasp of day and night is the sacrificer liberated? Yājñavalkya replies: By the eye which is Aditya in the shape of the priest called Adhvaryu and this is liberation in its absolutistic sense. The next question is: all is pervaded by the light and dark halves of the lunar months. By what means, then, is the sacrificer liberated? The reply was: by the vital breath in the form of the Udgata. Asvala further asks: the atmosphere is without foundation, as it were, by what approach does man approach the place of heaven? Yājñavalkya says that by the mind which is the moon in the shape of the priest, called Brahman. The mind of the sacrificer is verily Brahman. This is liberation and this is identity with Brahman whereby the knowledge of Brahman is had.

The nature of Brahman is further elaborated by Yājñavalkya in a question by Usasti. The latter asks: do explain to me that Brahman who is witness and present , that soul which is within every being, that soul which breaths by the breath, in this soul which is within every being, that which descends by the descending air, is the soul which is within every being. That which goes everywhere by the air going everywhere as the soul which is within every being, further that which ascends by the ascending air within every being is this Brahman.

In the next verse, Yājñavalkya denies knowledge appertaining to Brahman. He says: thou couldst not behold the beholder of the beholding, hear the hearer of the hearing, mind the minder of the minding, know the knower of the knowing. This is the soul within every being, everything different from it is transient. Therefore the soul which is Brahman itself cannot be defined as such and such like

'this is a jar' etc. any definition of Brahman is contradictory to its nature and hence Brahman is indefinable (anirvacaniya). The terms such as beholder, hearer, minder etc. only refer to the effect (that is the manifest one) and not the cause. Yājñavalkya further explains the nature of Brahman as: the soul which conquers hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age (senility) and death. This was in reply to Kahola's question about the knowledge of Brahman (Br. III.V.1). Yājñavalkya makes it clear that only to a renouncer of the world the knowledge of Brahman occurs. Therefore it is said: know the soul that which is within every being as the supreme Brahman.

The conversation between Gargi and Yājñavalkya is aimed to reveal the subtlest of all essence- the Brahman. Gargi in her attempt to assess Yājñavalkya of his knowledge of Brahman starts with the question: 'O'Yājñavalkya , all this (earth) is woven and revowen on the waters, upon what then are the waters woven and revowen '? the reply was: 'on the wind'. Progressively Gargi asks about the wind, on the atmosphere, worlds of Gandharvas, worlds of Aditya, worlds of the moon, of the stars, of the Gods, of Indra and Prajapati. Till this the answers stop at Brahman. Then the final question was: 'on what then are woven and revowen the worlds of Brahman'? Yājñavalkya cannot proceed further. He tells: 'do not ask an improper question, for, this cannot be decided with the help of argument but by Sastra alone'. He informs her that she had asked about the supreme deity which is not to be questioned. This is an argument forwarded to negate all the five elements till the soul is realized, which is said to be infinite and subtle.

In Br.Up. III.7.1, Uddalaka argues with Yājñavalkya about the Inner Ruler, the thread by which this world and the other world and all beings are bound together. Yājñavalkya replies: 'The wind O'Gautama (one of the priests) is the thread.'. then he goes on to tell about the Inner Ruler: 'He who dwelling in the earth is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, who within rules the earth, is thy soul, the Inner Ruler, immortal'. Next he proceeds with that 'He who indwelling in the waters, fire, atmosphere, wind, heavens, sun, the quarters, moon and stars, the ether, the darkness, the light, all elements who do not know him is the Inner Ruler immortal'. Again He who is indwelling in the vital air, speech, eye, ear, mind, skin is said to be the Inner Ruler, the immortal. He who is dwelling in knowledge, within knowledge, whom knowledge does not know, whose body is knowledge, who from within rules knowledge, is the soul, the Inner Ruler, immortal. He who is dwelling in the seed ruling the seed is the Inner Ruler immortal. 'Unseen he sees, unheard he hears, unminded he minds, unknown he knows. There is none that sees but He there is none that hears, that minds, but He. He is the soul, the Inner Ruler, the immortal'. 'whatever is different from Him is perishable'. This is the true nature of Brahman expressed by negative expressions. It supports the 'anirvacaniyata' of Brahman.

Gargi again argues with Yājñavalkya about the knowable mode of Brahman with the strong intention of defeating him. The first question starts like this: 'what is above heavens, what is beneath the earth, what is between and what is these two- heaven and earth, and what is called the past, present and future- upon what is all this

woven and revowen'? the answer was 'ether'. The replies to these questions affirm the truth that Brahman in the ether is the truth of all. Yājñavalkya says: 'It is called by the Brahmanas (those who know Brahman)the indestructible one'. It is not if a gross body, it is not subtle (also Prsno. V.4.9 AND Mund. I.5), not long, not wide, not red like fire, not viscid like water, not shadow, not darkness, not air, not ether, not adhesive, not taste, not smell, not eye, not ear, not speech, not mind, not light, not life, not entrance (unapproachable), not measure, not within, not without. It does not consume anything, nor does anyone consume it. In this verse, Yājñavalkya affirms the truth (Brahman) through negatives which points out the fact that Brahman is devoid of attributes (Katha.III.15, Mund. I.6).

What is to be noted strangely here is that all the negatives may approve of the non-existence as 'beyond'. Even then what warrants attention is that these negatives cannot be said as complete non-existence. For, Yājñavalkya says in a reply to Gargi: 'by the command of this indestructible (being) the sun and the moon are upheld in their position' (see also katha. 6.2, Tai. 2.8) by the command of this indestructible being, heavens and earth stay together; minutes, hrs., days and nights, the half months, the months, the seasons, the years stay upheld in their places, the eastern rivers flow from the snowy mountains to the eastern quarter, the western to the western quarter; and the others as ordained for them. By this command, men praise the giver, gods, follow the sacrifice and forefathers the oblation.'

In the next verse, Yājñavalkya clarifies that this is the true 'divinity'. He further says that whoever is ignorant of this

indestructible being, and performs offerings in this world, adores the Gods and practices austerities even many thousands of years, consumes at last the fruits of his actions. Such a person departs from this world, becomes a miser, again. But those who know this as the highest indestructible being and depart from this world are true Brahman. All the divinity is 'Brahman' only and gods are not truly divine.

Again, the true nature of Brahman is revealed in III.8.11 : 'although unseen He sees, unheard He hears, unminded He minds, unknown He knows'. So He is the knower of the known and it is existence unknowable or imperceptible. This is the kind of peculiar affirmation of the imperceptible truth through negatives that is exhibited by the Upaniṣads. Yājñavalkya then goes on to tell the priests or Brahmanas (knower of Brahman): highly respect this (my word) about the truth and acquit yourself towards him (Yājñavalkya) with salutation. This is the highest unconquerable truth.

Divinity in Symbolic Correlates:

In the context of 'Brahman', the highest divinity being imperceptible and unknowable, the focus will be shifted to the symbolic correlates of this being- the perceptible, knowable Absolute, divinity- 'Gods'. Brahman as revealed in the Upaniṣad manifests as 'Prajapati' and he creates the symbolic correlates through which the knowledge and realization of divinity can be had. In the III.9.1, Vidagdha (priest) argues with Yājñavalkya regarding the nature of Gods. Vidagdha asks about the number of Gods to which Yājñavalkya replies as 3306 based on the evidence from Nivit of

the Vaisvadeva (sastra). Again Yājñavalkya reduces it to 33, 3, 2 and finally to the 'one'. This is the succession of Gods. This is the nature of Gods from subtler to subtler levels. The 33 Gods are described as- 8 Vasus, 11Rudras, 12 Adityas with Indra and Prajapati. The Vasus are- the fire, the earth, the wind, the atmosphere, the sun, the heavens, the moon and the stars. These are called Vasus because everything is founded on these. The Rudras are- 10 organs (pranah) in man, and the soul. When they leave this body after death, they weep (rodayanti). So they are called Rudras. About the Adityas- these are the 12 months of the year. Because these take all the age of man and the fruits of his actions, these pass adadanayati and are called Adityas. Indra is the cloud (lightning) and the sacrifice is said to be the Prajapati.

Next, Vidagdha asks about the six Gods. Yājñavalkya replies that 'the fire (agni), the earth, the wind, the atmosphere, the sun and the heavens are these six'. In the next level comes the 3 Gods- the three worlds (earth-fire as one, atmosphere and wind as second and heavens and Aditya as the third). It is revealed that within these three, all the Gods are comprehended. 'food and life' are described as the two Gods. The 'one' God is the 'Life' and this is called Brahman and this is what is beyond (III.9.9).

Yājñavalkya indicates that through these Gods, the highest divinity can be comprehended. For, 'whoever knows that Spirit (Purusa), whose abode is the earth, whose place of sight (loka) is the fire, whose light is the mind- as the highest locality of every soul, is in truth the one who knows'. He is the absolute divinity. He

is the spirit who abides in the body. Further Yājñavalkya clarifies that the soul which is neither this, nor that, nor aught else, is intangible, for, it is not to be laid hold of, it is not to be dissipated, it is without contact, for it does not come into contact, it is not limited, it is not subject to pain nor destruction. There are 8 abodes of the soul, eight places of sight, eight deities and eight purusas. Whoever understands those purusas in their diversion as eightfold and again in their union has overcome the world. It is Brahman who is knowledge and bliss, the highest aim of the giver of wealth of that one who abides in Him and knows Him. Thus through the symbolic correlates of the divinities, the knowledge of Brahman can be had.

The aim of these arguments in the Upaniṣad is that by symbolizing the Reality, it is easy to become aware of the character of every dimension in it. From gross to subtle levels each attribute of the divinity is affirmed and also its existence. What is symbolized in the cosmic dimension of the absolute- as the ruler immortal and dwelling in everything. And there is penile negation of these attributes in the divine being, but not a negation that it is non-existence or nothing. A symbolic awareness means an effort to discern the union of all their symbolic representations. From 3306 Gods to 33, to6, to 3, to 2, finally to 'one'. Here the difference between different dimensions of Reality as (upon what all these are interwoven from heavens to earth) and their mutual dependence is made explicit. It is also said when not able to understand the 'one' as the soul or the absolute divinity, one may absolutize only what is symbolized as God and thus ignore the higher dimension of the indestructible and he may then could not depart from this world, acquiring and storing

the effects of actions. Whoever knows this indestructible being neither as symbolic nor as any correlate thereof, the attributes depart from this world and becomes Brahman Himself.