

Uddalaka was a great rishi. He had a son by name Svetaketu.

After giving him the sacred thread at the proper age, the rishi called him one day and said, "Svetaketu, proceed to the house of a guru and living there as a student, learn the Vedas well; for, there is none in our family who is not learned in the Vedas."

As directed by his father, Svetaketu went to a gurukula or the ashrama of a guru and studied the Vedas under the guru. He returned home when he was twenty-four years of age, a proud scholar. He thought that there remained little else for him to know.

His father was a shrewd man. He at once knew that his son's head was swollen with pride. He wanted to correct him.

One day he called him and said, "Son, I think you feel you have mastered all knowledge on the face of the earth; but, have you ever learnt that knowledge, by which we can hear what is not heard; perceive what cannot be perceived, and know what cannot be known?"

Svetaketu was a trifle upset. He asked humbly, "Sir, won't you tell me what that knowledge is? Seeing that his son was coming round, the father said, "My dear, let me explain myself fully. When, for instance, you know one clod of Clay, you can know all that is made of clay. When you know a nugget of gold, you can know all ornaments made of gold, because the essence of it is gold. When you know a nail-cutter, you can know all that is made of iron, the truth being that all of them are iron. The only difference is in their names and forms. That is the knowledge I am talking about." Svetaketu said, "Sir, my venerable gurus did not perhaps know it.

Had they known, why would they have not taught it to me? Please teach it to me." '

Uddalaka said, "All right. I shall teach you;- listen. In the beginning of creation, O child, the Sat or True Being alone existed. It had neither equal nor second. It thought, 'Let me multiply myself and create beings.' He first created Tejas or fire god. The fire god wanted to multiply himself. He created the water god. That is why whenever anybody weeps or perspires, water comes out. The water god wanted to multiply himself and created the food god. Then the True Being thought, 'I have now created these three gods. Now I shall enter them as Jivatma and assume name and form!'

'Later on, the True Being thought, 'I shall now make each of them enter into the other.' "Having thus entered them with His living spirit, It assumed names and forms like Agni, Indra etc. The True Being made them enter into one another, again. O child, now learn what each became thereafter. Whatever was fire showed as red. Whatever was water showed as white and whatever was food showed as black. Thus you will see the

word Agni vanishes in fire. This change has only been in name. The three primary forms Tejas, Apas or water and Annam or food are the only true forms.

The red colour of the Sun is Tejas; its white colour is water; its black colour is the food or the earth. Thus the name Aditya for Sun should vanish. It is only a conventional name. "You have now learnt from me, child, how every deity and element is descended from the three primary forms of the True Being.

"He or the Sat alone is all-name, because every name is His name.

He alone is all-power, because every power is His. All the forms that belong to others are reflections of His form. He is the only one without an equal or second. He is the best of all. He being the Chief, He is called Sat or the True Being. Knowing Him we know everything else. When a man sleeps soundly, he comes into contact with the Sat. When man dies, his speech merges in the mind, the mind in his breath, his breath in the fire and the fire in the Highest God, the True Being. Thus the soul or Jiva-Atman is deathless. All the universe is controlled by the Sat. He pervades it all. He is the destroyer of all. He is full of perfect qualities. O Svetaketu, you are not that God.

Svetaketu asked, "Sir please teach me more."

Uddalaka said, "The bees, my child, collect the honey from different flowers and mix them in the hive. Now, honeys of different flowers cannot know one from the other.

"My child, the rivers that run in the different directions rise from the sea and go back to the sea. Yet the sea remains the same. The rivers, while in the sea, cannot identify themselves as one particular river or another. So also creatures that have come from Sat know not that they have come from that Sat, although they become one or the other again and again."

Uddalaka then asked his son to bring a fig fruit. When he did so, Uddalaka asked him to break it. He broke it.

Uddalaka: "What do you see in it?"

Svetaketu "I see small seeds."

Uddalaka "Break one of the seeds and say what you see."

Svetaketu "Nothing Sir."

Uddalaka: "You are unable to see the minute particles of the seed after breaking it.

Now, the big fig tree is born out of that essence of that particle. Like that, the True Being is the essence of all creation. " Uddalaka asked his son to bring some salt and put it into a cup of water and bring the cup next morning.

Svetaketu did so.

Uddalaka: "You put the salt into the water in this cup. Will you take the salt out?"

Svetaketu "I am unable to find the salt; for it has dissolved."

Uddalaka "Taste a drop from the surface of this water." Svetaketu "It is saltish."

Uddalaka "Now taste a drop from the middle of the cup."

Svetaketu "It tastes the same, saltish."

Uddalaka: "Now taste a drop from the bottom."

Svetaketu "It is saltish all the same."

Uddalaka "Now child, you do not see the salt, although it is certainly in the water. Even so, the True Being is present everywhere in this universe, although you do not see Him. He is the essence of all, and the desired of all. He is known to the subtlest intellect."

Svetaketu became humble thereafter, and became a great rishi himself in course of time. This is a story from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

<http://www.balagokulam.org/kids/stories/uddalaka.php>

Exercise : Students to think and give examples on how Omni present Sat / God can be experienced.