**IKS Sem IV**

**Unit 1: Moral Stories in Indian Tradition**

**Story 1: Truth and Knowledge - Nachiketa's Story (Kathopanishad)**

Uddalaka Rishi was Arun's son. He was the best among all Vedic scholars. He gained great fame by performing food donations. Uddalaka Muni began a Vishwajit sacrifice. In this sacrifice, he resolved to give complete wealth to Brahmins.

Uddalaka Muni had a five-year-old son named Nachiketa. Uddalaka Muni had great affection for him. He had cows as wealth. Uddalaka Muni divided these cows into two parts. He kept the best milch cows for his son Nachiketa and began to give away the worn-out cows to the Brahmins.

Nachiketa, who was compassionate and followed moral principles, sat in his father's lap and began to contemplate after observing his father's inappropriate behavior. He thought: "The person who provides happiness to all living beings in this world will attain happiness in this world and the afterworld. This is the principle of all scriptures."

"My father has resolved to give old cows to Brahmins, but such weak cows will not bring them happiness. On the contrary, the Brahmins will be troubled by the worry of maintaining these cows. Therefore, my father who gives away old cows will also suffer pain. As the scriptures say, a person who causes pain to Brahmins will reach realms devoid of blissful happiness."

"I will prevent my father from donating these old cows so that he does not reach hellish realms. Why are the good cows my father kept for me not being donated? Why should he worry about me?"

"In this world, wealth like women, sons, cows, and gold become means of happiness in the afterlife. Wealth that does not lead to afterlife happiness is merely an iron chain that binds wealthy persons. I am my father's son, and therefore, according to scriptural principles, I am my father's wealth."

"If a father receives a cause for painful hell and the son does not remove that cause, then such a son is not truly a son, but equivalent to the father's excrement and waste. Therefore, I will tell my father to donate me as wealth."

Nachiketa repeatedly asked his father, "Just as these cows are wealth, I too am your son-wealth. To whom will you donate me?" Seeing Nachiketa's scholarly pride, Uddalaka Muni became angry.

Uddalaka said, "O Nachiketa! You are showing off your scholarship by disregarding my love. Therefore, I will donate you to Death, who destroys the entire world."

Hearing this, Nachiketa began to reflect. "How can my father speak words that would cause him pain, like an ignorant person? A wise person considers the pain of a son's death as the consequence of Brahmin slaughter. My father knows the scriptures, yet how is he giving away his son to death? This surprises me."

"My father has given me to Yama, and there is no harm to me in this. Instead, I will gain merit. Because the body that is born is surely destined to meet death."

"If I obey my father's command and die, there is no greater dharma (duty) than obedience. Therefore, in obeying the command, my welfare is certain. However, my separation will cause great sorrow to my father. My father cannot survive even a moment without me. Considering my father's sorrow, my heart is greatly troubled. My death does not cause me any distress."

"If I do not go to Yamaloka or go without faith, I will attain an inferior state. A disciple or son who, understanding some work contemplated in the mind of his father or guru, performs it faithfully without being told by the father or guru, is the best disciple or son."

"A disciple or son who performs a task spoken by the father or guru with faith is a medium disciple or son. A disciple or son who performs a task spoken by the father or guru without faith or does not perform it at all is an inferior son."

"My father has many sons and disciples. Among them, I will not attain an inferior state but will attain the best and medium state. Therefore, it is appropriate for me to obey my father's command."

"Even if I leave this world and go to Yamaloka, my going will not prove any reason for Yamaraja. But my going will cause immense sorrow to my father due to our separation. Therefore, my father has spoken the promise of giving me to the god of death solely out of his own sorrow. How loving my father is, embracing me repeatedly with tearful eyes. This means he is truly sorrowful about what has been spoken."

"Therefore, I will speak words to my father strategically so that he abandons his love. If my father falsifies his promise due to love, he will attain hell because of the sin resulting from it."

Nachiketa says: "From birth until now, I have never spoken a false word to you. Consider the truthfulness of our lineage. In your family, fathers, grandfathers, and other elders who died prematurely never spoke false words."

He then narrates examples of truthfulness:

- Indra, disguised as a Brahmin, received his skin from King Karna

- King Shibi gave his own flesh to a hawk to protect a dove seeking refuge

- Brahmins like Dadhyach (Dadhichi) who were truthful like merchants

"Just as the Sun God sends living beings' bodies towards death day by day, these beings experience repeated birth and death through virtuous and sinful karma. Having received this momentary body, beings should not commit sinful karma but embrace the truth."

"Even if you do not give me to death, my death is inevitable someday. Therefore, abandon your love and give me to Yamaraja, fulfilling your promise. By making your promise true, both our welfare will be served."

"If you overcome your love and falsify your promise, the sin from false words will cause you sorrow, and I will attain an inferior state by not obeying my father's command."

After hearing Nachiketa's words, the sorrowful Uddalaka Muni sent his son to Yamaloka to uphold the truthfulness of his words. Nachiketa went to Yamaloka with his physical body, through the power of his father's devotion, his own penance, and the purity of his mind.

The Yamadoots (messengers of death) said that Yamaraja was away. Therefore, the child Nachiketa stood at Yamaraja's door for three days without eating or drinking, waiting for him. He thought that if his father gave him to Yamaraja, and Yamaraja does not accept him, his father's words would be in vain. Thus, he remained on a fast.

Yamaraja, to test Nachiketa's patience, did not return home for three days. The all-knowing Yamaraja had instructed his messengers that if Nachiketa comes, they should give him various teachings and send him back to the earthly world.

Yamadoots: "O Nachiketa, why have you, a Brahmin child, come to this terrifying Yama's city?"

Nachiketa then narrated his story.

Yamadoots: "O Nachiketa, know that among the four types of living beings (jarayuja, andaja, sweadaja, udbhija), whether one is given to Yamaraja or not, Yamaraja does not accept any life without the completion of its lifespan. He accepts a life only when its lifespan is complete. Yamaraja is not here right now, so Nachiketa, go back to your home immediately."

The Yamadoots explained this to him many times, but Nachiketa did not move or go home.

Seeing Nachiketa's patience, Yamaraja returned home after three days.

Yamadoots to Yamaraja: "As you said, a Brahmin child has come as a guest. To pacify this guest, quickly obtain water in the form of Ardhapada (half a foot), etc., just as a great fire is pacified by water in the form of worship."

"Just as an unquenched fire burns all objects of a house, an unquenched guest fire burns all the possessions of a householder if the guest leaves disappointed from the door. Therefore, you who know the limits of all scriptures should satisfy this guest Brahmin."

Yamaraja, extremely frightened, approached the guest Brahmin.

Yamaraja: "O Nachiketa, you have stayed in our house for three days and nights without food or drink. This will bring us great sin. To remove this sin, I will grant you three boons."

Yamaraja said: "Ask for the boon you desire. If you wish to please me, may your welfare be fulfilled. I bow to you, and your boon will not cause me any distress."

Nachiketa: "I ask for three boons: first, for my father's satisfaction; second, for the knowledge of fire; and third, for the knowledge of the soul. O Yamaraja, just as I am here in your realm, free from all sorrow, calm-minded and free from anger, may my father also be free from all sorrow, mental anguish, and anger. When I return from Yamaloka to my father, may he not doubt me, but treat me as before with parental love."

Yamaraja: "O Nachiketa, when you return to the earthly world by my command, your father will love you as before and be free from sorrow, mental anguish, and anger. Seeing you returned from death's mouth, he will be at peace and eat and drink as before. In this way, your father will be free from sorrow, and you too will be free from sorrow."

Having received this first boon, Nachiketa then asked for the second boon related to the knowledge of fire.

Nachiketa: "O Yamaraja, the fire sacrifice of Chyavana, from the heavenly worlds up to Brahmaloka, gives authority to those in the upper worlds. Those who possess this authority do not fear anything from you - not old age, fever (illness), enemies, hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, or other afflictions. The inhabitants of heaven and other worlds always remain content."

Nachiketa: I have heard from Vedic scholars that by the attainment of divine knowledge, one receives the primary immortality of Moksha and a secondary immortality of staying in various worlds like heaven until the final dissolution. You also know the nature of this divine principle. Therefore, please bestow upon me another boon of divine knowledge.

Yamaraja: O Nachiketa, I know the nature of the divine principle which is the means of attaining heavenly worlds. Therefore, I shall tell you about the divine principle in all its aspects. The divine principle is the cause of attaining and sustaining heavenly worlds. It is in the cosmic form. Just as fire resides in all pieces of wood, similarly, this cosmic divine principle is established in the three worlds. Yet, it is subtle or fundamentally a witness-soul.

Therefore, understand that this divine principle is situated in the cave of intelligence of wise people. It is the cosmic form born from Hiranyagarbha, all-knowing, extremely radiant. It is worthy of worship by all gods and demons. The authoritative person who understands this divine principle from a guru's mouth and performs sacrifices and worship according to their understanding, attains the peace of heavenly worlds and the peace of liberation.

After explaining the cosmic nature of the divine principle, Yamaraja further elaborated on its details, including the specifics of fire ritual bricks, mantras, and procedures. He then blessed Nachiketa, saying that henceforth, the Vedic scholars will know this divine principle as 'Nachiketa Agni' (Nachiketa's Fire).

Nachiketa: O Lord, please hear my third boon. I have heard from learned Vedic scholars that in this world, all living beings with four types of birth (born from womb, egg, sweat, and spontaneous generation) inevitably meet death after exhausting their destined karma. Whether death occurs today or after a hundred years, there's no fixed rule. But what is born must certainly die - even gods like Brahma must ultimately die.

So, regarding the nature of birth and death, there's a scriptural statement: "Death is certain for what is born, and rebirth is certain after death." Some theists consider the soul as real, while some atheists consider it unreal. Hearing these conflicting views about the soul's nature creates doubt in my mind. Therefore, please clarify and establish one definitive perspective about the soul's nature.

Thus, Nachiketa sought the third boon of obtaining self-knowledge.

Yamaraja: O Nachiketa, even the gods endowed with qualities like control and restraint cannot resolve the doubt about the nature of the soul. The truth and untruth of the soul (beyond the scope of mind and speech) are dharmic principles. These two principles are extremely subtle. Therefore, even wise gods cannot comprehend them. How can you, a child, be capable of determining the nature of the soul? Do not ask for the third boon of knowledge about this incomprehensible soul. Instead, ask for something else and free me from my truthful promise.

Nachiketa: O Yamaraja, great souls, learned persons, and even you have spoken about the incomprehensibility of the soul. Those who can teach about this hard-to-know soul, like you, are rare. Having received such a rare guru like you, I cannot remain without knowing this incomprehensible soul. Who in the three worlds will teach me if not you? No one is capable of teaching this incomprehensible soul in your absence. Therefore, if you have affection for me and your words are true, please grant me the third boon of attaining self-knowledge. No other boon is superior to the boon of self-knowledge.

Thereafter, although Yamaraja offered Nachiketa many tempting worldly possessions, Nachiketa did not ask for any boon other than self-knowledge. Seeing Nachiketa's intense dispassion, Yamaraja was greatly pleased. Recognizing Nachiketa as worthy of divine knowledge, he resolved to grant the third boon of self-knowledge.

Yamaraja: O Nachiketa, there are two types of fruits that beings can attain in this world and the next. One is the path of the good (Shreya), and the other is the path of pleasure (Preya). The wise speak of liberation-like happiness as Shreya, which is the subject of intelligent people's affection. The happiness related to worldly pleasures, which is temporary, is Preya - the preference of foolish people and is considered extremely inferior.

The nature of Shreya and Preya differs based on their essence, means, proof, and the qualities of the aspirant. The nature of Shreya (liberation) is the eternal, self-evident, blissful soul. The non-dual knowledge "I am Brahman" is the means to Shreya. The Upanishads and Vedanta are the proofs of Shreya.

A person equipped with the four spiritual qualifications - discrimination, dispassion, six spiritual treasures, and the desire for liberation - is the primary adhikari (qualified recipient) of Shreya. Even if one of these four qualities is present in a person, they are considered eligible for Shreya.

The path of self-knowledge eliminates the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, knowledge of the soul brings liberation. Just as a fish in water, bound by a meat-laden hook, experiences suffering at the moment of death, similarly, people pursuing worldly pleasures through sacrifices and actions, driven by desires for heavenly enjoyments, experience repeated cycles of birth and death, devoid of eternal happiness.

O Nachiketa, earlier I offered you wealth, women, sons, and other material possessions, but your mind did not waver. Therefore, I consider you worthy of self-knowledge and will grant you the third boon of spiritual wisdom. May more seekers like you approach me.

Nachiketa: Please explain to me the relationship with that Supreme Soul which you consider distinct from ritualistic actions, sacrifices, and prohibited karmas. The Soul that is different from the cause-and-effect world and transcends past, present, and future - reveals its nature to me.

Yamaraja: O Nachiketa, "OM" is the Supreme State, the Imperishable Brahman, the Highest. Those seekers who desire their ultimate wish attain this supreme state of "OM". Meditating on this Supreme Soul helps the seeker attain Brahmaloka. This is neither born nor dies, and nothing else is born from it. Even when the body is destroyed, the soul remains indestructible.

"It is not killed when the body is killed."

Moreover, the soul does not kill anyone, nor can anyone kill the soul. In the deep cave of the individual soul, this Supreme Soul resides in a form subtler than an atom and larger than the largest. Only selfless workers and desireless seekers can perceive this Supreme Soul through divine grace.

One who realizes this all-pervasive, eternal principle existing amidst the temporary, becomes liberated forever. This Supreme Soul spontaneously reveals itself to the qualified seeker. It personally selects the worthy recipient.

Consider the soul as the charioteer of the chariot (body), the body as the chariot, intelligence as the charioteer, and the mind as the reins. The senses are horses, and sense objects are the paths. The soul experiencing happiness and sorrow is the experiencer.

One with discriminative intelligence and a controlled mind, having an excellent charioteer (intelligence) and controlled horses (senses), does not wander in the cycle of birth and death but attains the Supreme State. Those with undiscriminating minds continue to be reborn.

The senses are superior to their objects, the mind is superior to the senses, intelligence is superior to mind and superior to intelligence is the Great Soul. The unmanifest power of the Divine is superior to the individual soul, the Supreme Person is superior to the unmanifest power, and nothing is superior to the Supreme Soul.

The Supreme Soul is the ultimate destination for everything. Though present in everyone, this soul principle is not automatically revealed but can be perceived only through subtle intelligence by those with profound vision.

The wise person should gradually dissolve the senses into the mind, the mind into intellect, intellect into the great principle of the soul, and the soul into the Supreme Soul.

"Rise, awaken, and learn from the greatest knowers. Understand the soul principle."

This path is as difficult as walking on the edge of a razor. This Supreme Brahman, which is beyond the soul and the truth personified, when known, liberates one from the mouth of death.

**Story 2: Dharma and Oneness - The Story of Yudhishthira and the Yaksha (From Mahabharata)**

The Pandavas were spending their last few months in exile when, due to a need for water, Yudhishthira asked his brothers to fetch water.

Nakula said: "I can see a lake nearby." Hearing this, everyone became quite happy.

Yudhishthira: "Brother, go quickly and bring water for us." Nakula immediately set off towards the lake.

When he reached the lake, he approached the cool and inspiring water to drink. Suddenly, he heard a voice from the sky.

The voice said: "You cannot drink this water or take it away unless you first answer some of my questions."

Nakula paid no attention to the voice from the sky. He was extremely thirsty. He reached the lake's edge and eagerly drank the cool water. Immediately, Nakula died.

The other Pandavas waited for a long time, but Nakula did not return. Yudhishthira sent Sahadeva to search for Nakula. Sahadeva reached the lake and saw his brother's body on the ground. Seeing this scene shocked him. But he was so thirsty that he rushed to the water like Nakula. He also heard the same warning voice. But Sahadeva was just like Nakula. He ignored the warning, drank the water, and met the same fate as his brother.

Yudhishthira then sent Arjuna and Bhima in turn. None of them returned. After waiting for a long time and growing suspicious, Yudhishthira walked towards the lake. He quickly arrived and was shocked by the scene he witnessed. He saw all of his brothers dead.

Seeing this scene, Yudhishthira was stunned. He wondered: "How did this happen? There are no signs of a fight. It's impossible to believe that these four brothers died without defending their lives. Clearly, some deceit is at play. What could be the reason?"

Grief-stricken, Yudhishthira was almost mad. His restless eyes fell on the cool water, and he remembered their thirst. Unable to shed tears, his throat was choked and dry. As he approached the lake's surface and prepared to drink water, he heard a voice from the sky.

Voice: "It was said that he should not drink water without answering some questions."

Yudhishthira stopped from drinking water. He looked around to see where the voice was coming from.

Voice: "I saw your brothers coming one by one. I forbade them from drinking water, but they did not listen. They drank water and died. I am the Yaksha and the owner of this lake."

Yudhishthira, his voice hoarse with emotion, asked: "Who are you, Yaksha? Are you one of the Rudras? Are you the leader of the Maruts? Who are you, who has destroyed these powerful beings with a single stroke? My brothers are unconquerable. No one, not even the gods, could defeat them. But you have killed them all. They weren't even given a chance to fight for their lives. God, I am overwhelmed by great fear and your praise. I am curious to know who you are, who has put my brothers in this state. I am astonished by your power. Please reveal yourself. I wish to bow to you."

The Yaksha appeared before Yudhishthira. His appearance was truly magnificent.

Yudhishthira bowed to the Yaksha, praising his power.

Yudhishthira: "I am honored that you have appeared. I am grateful that you accepted my request."

Yaksha: "Your brothers did not listen to me. I tell you the same. I own this lake. You cannot drink this water until you answer my questions."

Yudhishthira: "Master, I will not disrespect you by ignoring your words. You say this lake is yours, so I have no right to touch the water unless you permit me. I agree to your conditions. You can ask me any questions. I will try to answer them. I will use my best abilities to provide answers that will satisfy you."

Then the questions and answers began.

Yaksha: When is it possible for a person to always have their companion by their side?

Yudhishthira: With a steady mind.

Yaksha: How can one achieve this steady mind?

Yudhishthira: By serving the elderly.

Yaksha: A person enjoys all sensory pleasures. Is he intelligent? The world has a high opinion of him, and he is quite popular. Despite breathing, it is said that he is not living. Why?

Yudhishthira: Although a person may breathe, if he does not give anything to the gods, guests, servants, and ancestors, he is not considered living.

Yaksha: What is heavier than the earth?

Yudhishthira: A mother's weight.

Yaksha: What is higher than the sky?

Yudhishthira: A father.

Yaksha: What is faster than the wind?

Yudhishthira: The mind is more swift than the wind.

Yaksha: What is more numerous than grass?

Yudhishthira: The thoughts arising in a human mind.

Yaksha: What is the best abode of good qualities?

Yudhishthira: Generosity.

Yaksha: And of happiness?

Yudhishthira: Good conduct.

Yaksha: What is the most valuable wealth?

Yudhishthira: Knowledge.

Yaksha: What is the best gain?

Yudhishthira: Health.

Yaksha: What is the supreme happiness?

Yudhishthira: Contentment.

Yaksha: What is the highest duty in the world?

Yudhishthira: Staying away from evil.

Yaksha: What is that which, if controlled, does not lead to regret?

Yudhishthira: The mind.

Yaksha: By renouncing what does a person become dear to all?

Yudhishthira: By giving up pride.

Yaksha: By renouncing what does a person become wealthy?

Yudhishthira: By renouncing desires.

Yaksha: What can be renounced without grief?

Yudhishthira: Anger.

Yaksha: By renouncing what does a person become happy?

Yudhishthira: By giving up greed.

Yaksha: What is dharma? Who created it?

Yudhishthira: Absence of anger is dharma. Virtuous people create dharma.

Yaksha: What is the significant characteristic of forgiveness?

Yudhishthira: Forgiveness includes tolerating enmity.

Yaksha: What is gentleness?

Yudhishthira: Gentleness of the heart (peace).

Yaksha: Can you tell me which enemy is invincible?

Yudhishthira: Anger.

Yaksha: Who is considered honest?

Yudhishthira: One who wishes well for all beings.

Yaksha: Who is dishonest?

Yudhishthira: One who is not compassionate.

Yaksha: What is pride?

Yudhishthira: The awareness of being the doer or enjoyer in life.

Yaksha: What is laziness?

Yudhishthira: Not fulfilling one's duties.

Yaksha: What is wickedness?

Yudhishthira: Speaking ill of others.

Yaksha: What is gained by one who always speaks pleasant words?

Yudhishthira: Being universally loved.

Yaksha: What is the most astonishing thing in this world?

Yudhishthira: Day after day, creatures go to the realm of death, yet those left behind believe they are eternal and immortal. What could be more astonishing than this?

Yaksha: I am amazed by your conduct. I know that Bhima is dear to you. Arjuna is someone on whom you rely to achieve victory in war. For many years, he has been preparing himself for this. Why did you not choose between Bhima and Arjuna? Bhima had killed all of Dhritarashtra's sons. Bhima is dear to you because of his strength and terrifying nature. Why did you not ask me to revive him? Why did you not ask me to revive Arjuna? Why did you choose Nakula?

Yudhishthira: Rather than abandoning dharma, I would give up my body. I want to show the world that I will never abandon dharma. My father had two wives: Kunti Devi and Madri Devi. I wish for the children of both mothers to remain alive. I am Kunti's son, and Nakula is Madri's son. I love both my mothers equally. I want to please one mother's heart without making the other mother's heart sad. So, if one of my brothers is to be brought back to life, it can only be Nakula.

The Yaksha was greatly pleased by Yudhishthira's nobility. He said: "You are great. I have never seen anyone like you. Therefore, I am very happy to give life to all your brothers."

The moment the Yaksha uttered these words, all the brothers seemed to wake up from a deep sleep. Their thirst, hunger, and fatigue disappeared. Yudhishthira repeatedly embraced his brothers. Tears were flowing from their eyes. He bowed at the Yaksha's feet and said: "God! I wish to know who you are. You are not a Yaksha. No Yaksha knows the subtle nuances of dharma like you. You are a god who has come from the sky. You seem very dear to us. Perhaps you are our father Pandu. Whoever you are, you must reveal yourself to us. I am eager to know who you are."

The Yaksha shed his magnificent form. He stood resplendent in his natural form. Smiling at Yudhishthira, he said: "I am your father Dharma. I wanted to see you and talk to you. I am very pleased with you. You could conquer the world with the help of your brothers. But what brings me joy is that you have already conquered my empire: the empire known by the name of righteousness. Your victory makes physical conquests pale and meaningless. Future generations will remember your great name.

"In the fourth era of Kali Yuga, when people merely utter your name, they will be dear to me. Four names will achieve this greatness: King Nala of Nishadha, your name, Sita (Lord Rama's wife), and the fourth name, Sri Krishna, who is dear to all of you.

"I saw the firewood stolen from a Brahmin. I wanted to bring you to this lake. Now you can return this firewood. I will give you other boons. Your twelve-year exile is over. The last and most difficult year is approaching. You have all worn the cloak of dharma. I assure you that by my grace, no one will be able to recognize you at any time."

You can go to Gurudev. No one can recognize your true form. Yudhishthira was overflowing with joy. He had met his father. He bowed at his father's feet. He repeatedly kissed his father's feet. He placed his head on both of his father's feet and wept uncontrollably. Then, composing himself slightly, he said: Master, I do not want anything else in life. I have seen your blessed form. I have seen my father. I am grateful and accept whatever blessings you want to bestow. But Lord, I want one more blessing. I wish for you to grant me one more boon. Dharma said: What do you want? I will give you whatever you desire. Yudhishthira said: Lord, grant me a boon so that I can conquer my six terrible enemies. These six enemies are attachment (moha), anger (krodha), greed (lobha), the eagerness to possess, pride (ahamkara), and jealousy (irshya). Kindly bless me so that my mind is always guided towards truth. I do not want anything else in this world.

Dharma smiled at Yudhishthira and said: Dear son, what you seek is not something that needs to be given to you! You have already conquered these enemies long ago! O virtuous one, rise from here and be happy. Your sorrow will soon disappear. I am on your side. Victory will be where I am. Wherever Shri Krishna is, I am always there. As long as you remember me, nothing can harm you. I wish for your welfare.

His twelve-year exile had come to an end. Now Gurudev had one challenging year left to spend. They knew that Duryodhana would make all efforts to discover their location and send them for another twelve years of exile. Compared to the other twelve years, this year was especially fearsome for the Pandavas. But they would not give up. The assurance given by Dharma, the presiding deity, infused new life into the Pandavas' hearts. They became engrossed in discussing the plan of living incognito.

**Story 3: Selfless Attitude and Sacrifice - The Story of King Shibi (From Vishnu Purana)**

After bathing in the Narmada, travelers reach the status of gods and kings. On the banks of the Narmada River is King Nahusha's sacrificial ground. On this very land, Bhargava Chyavan Rishi was filled with anger towards Indra. He had immobilized Indra here and married King Nahusha's daughter Sukanya.

From there, they went to the banks of the Saraswati River in the sacred land of the Kurus, where divine sages and royal sages had performed Saraswat sacrifices. From there, they visited the Vipasha (Beas) River, the holy Kashmir region, a residence of great sages, near the gateway of the Manas mountain, passing through the Bhrigu Tanga mountain, and arriving near the Jala and Upajala rivers on the banks of the Yamuna, in the Uttara Desha (Kashi city) where the king of Uttara had performed such sacrifices that he surpassed even Indra. In matters of donation, his name was revered just like Karna's.

This great soul, Uttara, meaning King Shibi (son of Madhavi, daughter of Yayati), was to be tested by Indra and Agni, who took the forms of a hawk and a pigeon respectively, arriving at the king's sacrifice.

A pigeon, trembling from the hawk's pursuit, took refuge in King Shibi's lap. Then the hawk said to the king: Give me my prey. You are a great virtuous person, so how can you disregard dharma? Hand over the prey hiding in your lap.

The king replied that the pigeon has taken refuge at his feet, he has given assurance of safety, how can returning it be considered his sin? O king, I too survive on prey like all other creatures. If my food is taken away, I will die of hunger, and my family will perish. By trying to save one pigeon, many lives will be lost at your hands. A dharma that causes harm to another dharma is not dharma but adharma.

O truthful and brave king, the true dharma is that which causes no opposition. When two dharmas clash, one must choose a path that minimizes harm.

After much debate between the king and the hawk, neither backed down. The hawk then said that if the king cares so much for the pigeon, he should cut off flesh from his own body equal to the pigeon's weight.

King Shibi agreed and began cutting flesh from his body, weighing it against the pigeon. As he continued, the pigeon's weight kept increasing. Eventually, the king himself sat on the scale opposite the pigeon.

Seeing the king's unwavering dedication, the hawk revealed his true form, saying: O king, I am Indra. I came to test your generosity. Agni is here with me in the form of a pigeon. The more flesh you have sacrificed, the more your fame will spread across the universe. Whenever the topics of donation and dharma are discussed, the world will remember you.

**Story 4: Dispassion and Intelligence - The Story of King Janaka and Sage Yajnavalkya**

**(From Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)**

King Videha Janaka was seated on his throne. At that time, Sage Yajnavalkya arrived.

Janaka: O Revered Sage Yajnavalkya! What is the purpose of your arrival? Have you come with the desire to obtain cattle or with the desire to discuss subtle questions?

Yajnavalkya: O King! I have come here for both purposes. O King! We have come to hear from any learned person what they might have said about Brahman.

Janaka: Shitala's son Jitva has said that 'Speech itself is Brahman'.

Yajnavalkya: Just as one speaks after being educated by parents and guru, Jitva has said that 'Speech is Brahman', because one who is stammering (speechless) - can such a person obtain the benefit of Brahman? Has Jitva shown you the refuge or status of speech?

Janaka: No.

Yajnavalkya: This teaching is one-legged or incomplete.

Janaka: Then please show us the complete understanding.

Yajnavalkya: Speech itself is the abode of Brahman, meaning the body, and space is its establishment. One should worship it with understanding (wisdom).

Janaka: What is understanding (wisdom)?

Yajnavalkya: Speech itself is understanding (wisdom). O King! Through the power of speech, knowledge of relatives and connections is gained, as well as knowledge of Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda. Through this speech, knowledge of history, Puranas, Upanishads, sciences, verses, sutras, explanations, interpretations, sacrificial rites, offerings, feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, this world, the next world, and knowledge of all beings is obtained. O King! Essentially, speech is Brahman. Those who know this, speech does not abandon such learned persons. Such learned individuals are honored by every living being and sit among the gods as divine beings.

Janaka: For the sake of this knowledge (as a gift), I offer you a thousand cows, from which elephantine, massive bulls are born.

Yajnavalkya: My father believed that one should not accept gifts from a disciple or inquirer without providing complete education (knowledge). (When a disciple would be satisfied after obtaining the desired knowledge, he would himself insist on giving guru-dakshina. The guru would not accept the gift before fulfilling their responsibility.)

Yajnavalkya: Tell us what any learned person has said about Brahman.

Janaka: Udanka, Shulka's son, told me that 'Prana (life breath) is Brahman'.

Yajnavalkya: Just as one speaks after being educated by parents and guru, Udanka has said that 'Prana is Brahman', because nothing can be done without prana. Has he (Shulbayana) spoken about the abode (body) and refuge of prana?

Janaka: No.

Yajnavalkya: This is also a one-legged or incomplete teaching.

Janaka: Then you explain this knowledge completely.

Yajnavalkya: Prana's body is prana itself, space should be its establishment. Pleased with prana, Janaka asked: What is this pleasantness?

Yajnavalkya: Due to prana's desire (pleasantness), even those unworthy for sacrifice are made to perform sacrifices, and donations are obtained from those unfit for donation. Because we like this, wherever we go, we feel the fear or anxiety of death. O King! All this happens for prana. Therefore, O King! Understanding that prana is Brahman, those who act never abandon prana. The pleasantness of prana is not just about being dear or beloved. Prana, that is, the companion of Brahman, never leaves. Such a person becomes a deity and sits among the gods.

(The story continues in this manner, exploring similar philosophical discussions about various aspects like eye (chakshus), ear (shrotra), mind (manas), and heart (hridaya) as potential manifestations of Brahman, with King Janaka offering cows as dakshina and Yajnavalkya providing deeper spiritual insights.)

The story concludes with Yajnavalkya providing Brahmavidya (knowledge of Brahman) to King Janaka, who becomes satisfied.

The story emphasizes that when a wise person, knowing the self as non-doer, non-experiencer, and detached, remains separate from action, they achieve the understanding of being one with Brahman, obtaining a state beyond virtue and vice due to self-realization.