

YĀJÑASĀTRU. A Rākṣasa who fought against Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in the forest. Khara, Dūṣaṇa and Triśiras were the three Rākṣasas who declared war on Śrī Rāma. Yājñasātru was one of the twelve military commanders of Khara. Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa, Araṇya Kāṇḍa, 26th Sarga, mentions that the twelve heroes who were Khara's commanders were: - Śyenagāmī, Pṛthugrīva, Yājñasātru, Vihaṅgama, Durjaya, Karavīrākṣa, Paraṣa. Kālākārmuka, Meghamālī, Mahāmālī, Sarpāśya and Rudhirāśana.

YĀJÑASENA I. See under Pañcatantra.

YĀJÑASENA II. Drupada, the son of King of Pāṇḍala. (For more details see under Drupada).

YĀJÑAVĀHA. A warrior of Subrahmanya. There is a reference to him in Mahābhārata, Śalya Parva, Chapter 45, Verse 80.

YĀJÑAVALKYA. An ancient sage who was a profound scholar.

1) *General.* Purāṇas say that this sage spent the major part of his life at the court of King Janaka. He was also King Janaka's priest. In Agni Purāṇa, Chapter 16, it is mentioned that Kalki was Yājñavalkya's priest. Mahābhārata, Anuśāsana Parva, Chapter 4, Verse 51, mentions that Yājñavalkya was a "Brahmavādī son" of Viśvāmitra,

2) *Thousand cows.* Once King Janaka conducted a Yāga. At that time he wished to find out the most eminent among the sages. He promised to present a thousand cows to the sage who was a consummate scholar. A bag of gold coins was also tied to each horn of the cows. Janaka announced that the sage who claimed to be a consummate scholar might come forward and take the cows with him. No one among the numerous sages who were present, dared to come forward. Yājñavalkya, however, ordered his disciple to take the cows home with him. The other sages questioned his right to claim the cows. Yājñavalkya asserted his right to do so. One of the sages named Arthabhāga stood up and asked him the following question :—

Arthabhāga :—When a man who has not acquired divine knowledge dies, his "Jñānendriyas" (senses of knowledge) are also merged with it. How is it possible for him to accept another body afterwards? "Yājñavalkya :—Karma (action) becomes the cause of his re-birth."

Next Kahola and many other sages put various questions to him. The substance of their talk is given below :—

Kahola :—What have you to say about the invisible and omnipresent Brahman?

Yājñavalkya :—Your soul is the omni-present Brahman. The soul has no hunger or thirst, fear or desire, old age or death. Those who wish to know the soul, become sages after transcending love of wife, children or worldly riches. The two qualities essential for sages are scholarship and spiritual knowledge.

Gārgī :—Who is the warp and woof of everything?

Yājñā :—It is Brahman. Do not ask further; if you do, your head will be broken to pieces.

Āruṇī :—Who is he who exists within? (Antaryāmī).

Yājñā :—He who is contained in Jagat (the universe) without the knowledge of Jagat, he whose body is Jagat, he who controls Jagat as antaryāmī, he is within every one. He cannot be seen, but he sees. He cannot

be heard; but he hears. He is capable of thinking; but he is beyond our thoughts. He exists as one who sees, hears and thinks, in all creatures.

Gārgī :—I have two questions to ask. They are as sharp and pointed as two arrows. By what force is fixed that which is above Heaven, below the earth and that which is between them, like warp and woof?

Yājñā :—By the sky.

Gārgī :—By what force is the sky held in position like warp and woof?

Yājñā :—Under the command of God, the sun and moon do not deviate from their orbits. The sky and the earth remain in their respective places. Rivers run making the fields fertile. One who lives and works without the ability to know God does not obtain immortality. He who dies without knowing God is a Kṛpāṇa (spiritual bankrupt). On the contrary, he who knows God attains Mokṣa.

Śākalya :—How many gods are there?

Yājñā :—Thirtythree. They are—8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, 12 Ādityas, Indra and Prajāpati. The 8 Vasus are—Agni, Pṛthvī, Vāyu, Antarikṣa, Āditya, Dyau (Heaven), Candra and Stars. The 11 Rudras are the combination of the 10 jñānendriyas and the working of the mind. The ruling deities of the 12 months are known as the 12 Ādityas. They receive into them our lives and our Karmans (actions).

Yājñavalkya gave suitable answers to all other questions of Śākalya. At last, he asked Śākalya :—"Now I will ask you a question. Whom do the Upaniṣads describe? If you do not answer, your head will break." Śākalya could not answer it. He dropped down with a broken head. He asked the other scholars who had gathered there, if any of them wanted to ask him more questions. But no one came forward. All remained dumb. Then he continued :—"Fresh leaves sprout from a tree which has been cut. If the seed is destroyed, the tree does not grow out of it. How is it that a man is born again after his death?"

No one was able to answer that question. Thus after defeating all of them in argument, Yājñavalkya went home with the cows.

3) *In Janaka's court again.* On another occasion, Yājñavalkya went to see King Janaka. The King asked him whether he had come for getting cows or to ask abstruse question. The sage answered that he had come for both. Their conversation continued as follows :—

Janaka :—Jita Muni has said that "Vacana" (word) is Brahman or God. What is your opinion?

Yājñā :—It is correct. But did he say which is the body and abode of God?

Janaka :—No.

Yājñā :—In that case he has said only one-fourth about God. Vacana is god's body and sky, his abode. Brahman-vidyā depends on the word. The word is Parabrahman. Janaka was highly pleased. He decided to give a thousand bulls to the sage. But Yājñavalkya said that his father's principle was to give effective knowledge to the pupil and not to receive any dakṣiṇā (Payment) from him. Janaka again wanted Yājñavalkya to explain clearly what "Brahma Vidyā" means.

Yājñā :—Just as a person can reach his destination by walking or by travelling in a chariot or by sailing in a boat, in order to secure peace for the soul, you are depending on the Upaniṣads. But although one is