

In the same Upaniṣad,<sup>1</sup> Yājñavalkya advises his wife Maitreyi by saying, 'That which is indestructible, that immutable Reality is the Self, my dear.'

By so saying, the Upaniṣad indicates the immutability of the Ātman. Destruction can only come to anātman. In the midst of change It is the changeless. It is the light of Consciousness in which all changes take place. That Consciousness has no involvement in the destruction.



पाषाणवृक्षतृणधान्यकडङ्कराद्या  
दग्धा भवन्ति हि मृदेव यथा तथैव ।  
देहेन्द्रियासुमन आदि समस्तदृश्यं  
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धमुपयाति परात्मभावम् ॥ ५६४ ॥

*pāṣāṇavṛkṣatrṇadhānyakḍṅkārādyā  
dagdhā bhavanti hi mṛdeva yathā tathaiiva,  
dehendriyāsamana ādi samastadr̥śyam  
jñānāgnidagdhamupayāti parātmabhāvam. (564)*

564. Just as stone, tree, straw, grain, husk and so on, are reduced to ashes when burnt, so too, the whole objective universe comprising the body, sense organs, prāṇas, mind and so on, are reduced to the supreme Self when burnt in the fire of Knowledge.

As long as it exists, a stone is a stone, a tree is a tree, a leaf is a leaf and so on, but when they are burnt, they all become nothing but ashes. The tongue of fire scorches the name, the shape, the quality and so on, of whatever it licks. What is left is only ashes.

Similarly, the whole world of objects, the body, sense organs, mind and so on, which are seen, felt and thought of, when enquired into, are found to be nothing but the Self. If the entire world of perceptions (the kṣetra), is burnt in the fire

<sup>1</sup> *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* – 14.5.14