
THE CONCEPT OF TEJOBINDU IN THE TEJOBINDU UPANISHAD- SILENCE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE QUEST FOR SELF- REALIZATION IN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS.

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ABSTRACT

Indian Knowledge Systems preserve a profound philosophical tradition that reflects deeply on the nature of consciousness, the human mind, and the ultimate reality underlying existence. Within this tradition, the *Tejobindu Upanishad* offers a distinctive metaphysical vision centered on the idea of *Tejobindu*, the luminous point that symbolizes both the origin of creation and the subtle essence of the self. The text suggests that the human being, though seemingly small within the vast universe, carries within itself a reflection of the same cosmic principle. It proposes that every individual possesses an inner potential that connects the limited self with the universal reality. This paper examines the philosophical significance of *Tejobindu* within the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems and explores its relationship with the nature of the mind, the discipline of silence (*mauna*), and the experience of *samadhi* or deep meditation. The *Tejobindu Upanishad* emphasizes that the mind plays a central role in shaping human experience. It acts both as the cause of bondage and as the pathway to liberation. Human emotions, reactions, suffering, and joy are closely linked to the movement of the mind. When the mind becomes calm through contemplation and inner discipline, the seeker begins to perceive the subtle inner light described as *Tejobindu*. The narrative of Raja Janak further illustrates this inward journey. Despite living amidst royal comforts, he chose to seek experiential truth beyond intellectual knowledge, reflecting the Upanishadic belief that genuine understanding arises through inner realization and silence.

KEYWORDS: IKS, Tejobindu Upanishad, Consciousness, Raja Janak, Silence, Self-realization.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian philosophical tradition has long engaged with fundamental questions concerning the nature of existence, consciousness, and the relationship between the individual self and the ultimate reality. Within this tradition, the Upanishads occupy a central place as texts that move beyond ritualistic practices and focus on inner inquiry and experiential knowledge. These texts reflect the intellectual and spiritual quest of ancient sages who sought to understand the essence of life through reflection, meditation, and dialogue. Their teachings form an important foundation of what is now recognized as the Indian Knowledge System, where knowledge is not merely theoretical but deeply connected with personal realization (Radhakrishnan, 1953).

The 108 Upanishads are not merely religious scriptures; they can be understood as profound philosophical guides that offer insights for humanity on how to live a meaningful and elevated life.

Through diverse forms of teaching; dialogues, metaphors, reflections, and narratives, the Upanishads illuminate essential aspects of human existence. They explore themes such as the awareness of nature, the functioning of the mind, the structure of human consciousness, and the deeper principles that govern life.

In a simple yet profound manner, the Upanishadic teachings explain concepts such as the law of karma and the continuous cycle of life and death. These ideas are often conveyed through stories, conversations between teachers and seekers, and symbolic illustrations that make complex philosophical truths accessible. Rather than imposing rigid doctrines, the Upanishads encourage inquiry, reflection, and self-discovery. Their purpose is to guide individuals toward greater awareness of themselves and their relationship with the universe, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of life and existence (Banerjee, 2020).

Among the various Upanishadic texts, the *Tejobindu Upanishad* offers a subtle and symbolic reflection on consciousness and the nature of ultimate reality. The human mind is often filled with countless thoughts, many of which revolve around the material aspects of life such as wealth, fame, possessions, and power. While these elements may help in sustaining life and maintaining social structures, they do not necessarily lead to a deeper understanding of existence or the true fulfillment of human potential. When the mind becomes constantly occupied with accumulation and external achievements, it often overlooks the deeper dimensions of life that bring clarity, balance, and inner contentment.

In this context, the teachings of the Upanishads serve as a timeless guide for individuals across generations. These texts encourage human beings to look beyond external pursuits and turn their attention inward, toward self-awareness and understanding. By reflecting on the

nature of the mind, consciousness, and the purpose of life, individuals begin to recognize their own inner strength and wisdom. Such awareness gradually transforms the way a person lives. Instead of running endlessly after accumulation and recognition, one begins to appreciate life more fully and consciously. The Upanishadic vision inspires individuals to live with greater understanding, accepting both the gentle and the difficult moments of life with balance and awareness. In doing so, a person grows not only in knowledge but also in character, rising as a more thoughtful and compassionate human being (Olivelle, 1998).

The *Tejobindu Upanishad* also places considerable emphasis on the role of the mind in the spiritual journey. The text suggests that the mind itself becomes the determining factor in human experience. When the mind is restless and driven by desires, it binds the individual to the cycle of illusion and suffering. However, when the mind becomes calm through reflection and discipline, it opens the doorway to inner realization. In this sense, the mind is portrayed both as the source of bondage and as the instrument of liberation (Dasgupta, 1922).

Another important aspect of the teaching is the practice of silence (*mauna*). Silence in the Upanishadic context does not merely refer to the absence of speech but indicates a deeper stillness of the mind. When thoughts settle and the disturbances of the senses fade, the seeker becomes capable of perceiving a subtle inner presence. The sages describe this presence as a radiant point of light, the *Tejobindu*, which reflects the true nature of consciousness. The experience of this inner light is closely associated with the state of *samadhi*, where the distinction between the individual self and the universal reality gradually dissolves.

The narrative tradition surrounding Raja Janak provides an important illustration of this philosophical teaching. Janak, though a king surrounded by prosperity and authority, felt a deep inner longing for truth. His search for knowledge reflects the Upanishadic belief that intellectual explanations alone cannot satisfy the deeper quest of the human spirit. True understanding emerges only through direct inner experience. By turning inward and embracing silence and contemplation, Janak eventually realized the luminous essence within himself, recognizing that the individual self is not separate from the universal reality.

The concept of *Tejo* and *Bindu*

(Aiyar, 1914) From a reflective perspective, the idea of *Tejobindu* may also be understood in a way that resonates with scientific thinking. When the size of a human being is compared with the vastness of the known universe, the human presence appears almost like a tiny dot in the immense cosmic expanse. In Sanskrit philosophical language, such a point is described as a *bindu*, a dot so subtle that it may appear insignificant when placed beside the vast scale of the universe. Yet

the symbolism of *bindu* carries a deeper meaning in the Indian philosophical tradition. Although it appears small, the bindu is understood as a point that contains immense potential. It represents the idea that within this seemingly limited human existence lies a profound connection with the larger universe. The human being, though physically small in the cosmic order, possesses the capacity for awareness, reflection, and transformation.

In this sense, the concept of *Tejobindu* suggests that the same universal consciousness that governs the cosmos is also present within the individual. The tiny dot, therefore, is not merely a symbol of insignificance but of possibility. It reminds us that even within the smallest form lies the potential to understand the universe and shape one's life with greater awareness and wisdom.

The central concept of the text is *Tejobindu*, often described as a luminous point or radiant drop

that represents the source from which creation emerges. Although this point appears infinitesimal, it symbolizes the infinite essence of Brahman. The imagery of a radiant bindu suggests that the universe originates from a subtle principle of consciousness that remains eternal and untouched by the processes of creation and dissolution. The *Tejobindu Upanishad* is an ancient Sanskrit text belonging to the *Yoga Upanishads*, often associated with the *Krishna Yajurveda* (Gambhirananda, 1997).

This paper attempts to explore the philosophical significance of the concept of *Tejobindu* within

the framework of Indian Knowledge Systems. It examines how the Upanishadic teaching connects the nature of the mind, the discipline of silence, and the experience of *samadhi* in the process of self-realization. Through this exploration, the study seeks to highlight the continuing relevance of these insights in contemporary discussions on consciousness and inner awareness.

(Bhattacharya, 2015) The word *tejo* in Sanskrit refers to light, an illuminating force that sustains and awakens life. Just as the presence of the sun brings vitality to nature, allowing plants to grow and living beings to flourish, light represents the principle that nurtures and sustains existence. When sunlight spreads across the earth, life responds with movement, growth, and renewal. In its absence, the world appears still and lifeless. In a similar manner, the Upanishadic tradition suggests that human life also requires an inner illumination. This inner light is the awakening of awareness about one's own self. When such awareness arises, life begins to unfold in a deeper and more meaningful way. The individual starts to see beyond superficial pursuits and gradually understands the deeper purpose of existence. The concept of *Tejobindu* therefore represents the moment when

this inner light becomes visible within human consciousness.

The teachings of the *Tejobindu Upanishad* convey this insight through the narrative of Raja Janak. Although Janak initially lived amidst royal power, wealth, and the responsibilities of kingship, he eventually realized that material achievements alone could not satisfy the deeper search for truth. This realization led him toward introspection and spiritual inquiry. Through contemplation and inner discipline, he discovered the subtle *bindu* of *tejas*, the radiant source of awareness within himself. With this realization, Janak came to be remembered in the philosophical tradition as a noble and enlightened ruler, illustrating how inner awakening can transform human life (Rao, 2019).

3. Mind as Bondage and Liberation

Within the philosophical framework of the *Tejobindu Upanishad*, the mind occupies a central place in the journey of human experience. The mind plays a central role in shaping human experience. It is often the source of suffering, regret, and inner conflict. At the same time, it holds the possibility of peace and clarity. In many philosophical traditions, the mind is described as the doorway to both heaven and hell. When the mind is disciplined and understood, life becomes harmonious and meaningful. When it remains restless and uncontrolled, it can create confusion, anxiety, and dissatisfaction within the individual (Radhakrishnan S. &., 1957). The body, by its natural design, continues its functions without conscious effort. It breathes, digests food, circulates blood, and performs countless biological processes according to the laws of nature. These activities continue steadily, largely unaffected by our emotional states. However, the mind constantly interferes with our experience of life by drawing attention away from the present moment and into endless streams of thought. Human beings often find themselves living not in reality but in their thoughts. One thought gives rise to another, forming an unending chain that occupies the mind. These thoughts can take many forms, ranging from desire and anger to worry, regret, greed, and tension (Travis, 2010).

At times the mind produces thoughts that serve no useful purpose, yet the process continues without pause. In this sense, the mind functions like a factory that continuously generates thoughts throughout the day and night, across the entire span of life (Feuerstein, 2001).

Learning to quiet this constant activity of the mind becomes an important step toward inner balance. When the mind is allowed to rest and become still, the individual begins to experience a deeper sense of peace and awareness. In many philosophical traditions, this state of mental stillness is considered a significant achievement and an essential step toward understanding the true nature of life.

The sages repeatedly emphasize that the mind itself becomes the determining factor in whether an individual remains bound to worldly illusions or moves toward liberation. In this sense, the mind is not merely an instrument of thought but a powerful force that shapes perception, understanding, and ultimately the direction of life.

The Upanishadic teachings suggest that when the mind becomes restless and absorbed in desires, attachments, and sensory distractions, it binds the individual to a cycle of dissatisfaction and confusion. Thoughts driven by ambition, fear, or constant comparison keep the mind outwardly engaged. In such a state, the deeper dimension of consciousness remains hidden. The individual becomes identified with temporary experiences and loses awareness of the inner self (R., 2005).

At the same time, the same mind holds the possibility of freedom. The Upanishads do not view the mind as an obstacle that must be destroyed; rather, they see it as something that must be understood and refined. When the movements of the mind gradually become calm through reflection, discipline, and meditation, it begins to reveal a different quality of awareness. A quiet mind becomes transparent, allowing the seeker to perceive the subtle presence that lies beyond ordinary thought.

This teaching is expressed clearly in the well-known Upanishadic statement that the mind alone is the cause of both bondage and liberation. The difference lies in its direction. A mind that constantly moves outward remains trapped in the changing world, while a mind that turns inward begins to recognize the deeper reality within (Joshi, 2016). In the context of the *Tejobindu Upanishad*, this inward movement leads the seeker toward the realization of the luminous essence described as *Tejobindu*. When the turbulence of thought subsides, the individual becomes aware of the subtle light of consciousness that exists beyond mental activity. In this way, the transformation of the mind becomes the bridge between ordinary human experience and the realization of the eternal self (Wallace, 2007).

4. Silence (*Mauna*) as a Path to Inner Knowledge

In the teachings of the *Tejobindu Upanishad*, silence (*mauna*) occupies a significant place in the process of inner realization. The sages suggest that knowledge of the highest truth cannot be attained merely through discussion, argument, or intellectual study. While scriptures and teachings can guide the seeker, the actual experience of truth unfolds only when the mind enters a state of deep stillness. Silence therefore becomes not only a discipline but also a doorway to inner knowledge (Easwaran, Tomales).

In the Upanishadic understanding, silence is not simply the absence of speech. It refers to a deeper

quietness in which the constant movement of thoughts gradually settles. The human mind is often filled with distractions, desires, and endless streams of ideas that keep attention focused on the outer world. When the mind remains in such a restless state, it becomes difficult to perceive the subtler dimensions of consciousness. The practice of *mauna* helps the seeker withdraw from this constant mental activity and turn inward (Taimni, 1961).

(Newberg, 2009) The imagery used in the Upanishadic tradition often reflects this inward journey.

One may imagine a seeker sitting in a quiet cave, far removed from the noise of the world. In such a place, where external disturbances are absent, the senses gradually become calm and the mind begins to settle. What initially appears to be emptiness slowly reveals a different experience. In the depth of silence, the seeker becomes aware of a subtle presence, a radiant point of awareness that shines quietly within.

This inner light is described in the *Tejobindu Upanishad* as the luminous essence of consciousness.

It is not something that can be seen with the physical eyes or grasped through ordinary perception.

Rather, it becomes visible when the mind is free from agitation. Silence thus becomes a method through which the seeker approaches the deeper reality of the self. The discipline of *mauna* also

reflects a broader principle within Indian philosophical thought: true knowledge arises from inner experience. Words and concepts can only point toward truth; they cannot fully contain it. By entering into silence, the seeker gradually moves beyond intellectual understanding and begins to encounter knowledge in a direct and personal way. In this sense, silence becomes not a withdrawal from knowledge but a deeper way of discovering it (Brown, 2003).

5. Raja Janak's Quest for Realization

The philosophical teachings of the Upanishads are often illustrated through narratives that reveal how wisdom is realized in lived experience. Among these figures, Raja Janak stands as an important example of a seeker who, despite possessing worldly power and prosperity, longed for a deeper understanding of life. His journey reflects the Upanishadic idea that the pursuit of truth is not limited by social position or external responsibilities, but is ultimately an inward quest of the human spirit (Olivelle, *The early Upanishads*, 2004).

Janak was known as a powerful king, surrounded by wealth, comfort, and authority. Yet the achievements of the outer world did not satisfy the deeper questions that arose within him. The responsibilities of kingship could not silence the inner search for peace and meaning (Sharma,

2000). This restlessness led him to seek guidance from sages and spiritual teachers who possessed knowledge of the self and the nature of ultimate reality.

According to the philosophical tradition, Janak approached these teachers with sincere questions about the nature of the soul and the truth that lies beyond the changing world. While he listened carefully to their explanations, he gradually realized that intellectual understanding alone could not fulfill the deeper longing of the heart (King, 1999). The Upanishadic tradition often emphasizes that true knowledge is not simply something that can be heard or memorized; it must be realized through personal experience.

Recognizing this, Janak turned toward the path of inner discipline. Despite his position as a king, he sought moments of solitude and reflection in which he could withdraw from the constant movement of the outer world. Through contemplation and silence, he began to direct his attention inward. This inward journey gradually revealed a deeper dimension of awareness that had remained unnoticed amidst the noise of worldly life (Srivastava, 2018).

In this state of inner stillness, Janak is said to have realized the subtle essence described in the *Tejobindu Upanishad* as the luminous point of consciousness. This realization transformed his understanding of existence. He recognized that the true nature of the self is not confined to the body or the changing experiences of life. Instead, it is connected to a deeper and eternal reality.

The story of Raja Janak therefore conveys an important message within the Indian philosophical tradition. It suggests that the search for truth requires courage, sincerity, and the willingness to move beyond the comforts of familiar life. Even those who possess great power or knowledge must eventually turn inward if they wish to understand the deep nature of existence. Through his quest, Janak demonstrates that the realization of truth is ultimately a journey of inner awakening rather than outward achievement (Feuerstein, The yoga tradition).

6. Samadhi and the Dissolution of Duality

(Bryant, 2009) In the spiritual vision presented in the *Tejobindu Upanishad*, the state of *samadhi* represents the culmination of the seeker's inward journey. It is described as a condition in which the restless activity of the mind subsides and awareness becomes absorbed in its own deep nature.

While ordinary experience is shaped by constant mental movement and sensory engagement, *samadhi* introduces a different dimension of consciousness; one marked by stillness, clarity, and unity. In everyday life, human perception is guided by distinctions. The mind separates the observer from the observed, the subject from the object, and the individual from the surrounding world. These divisions create the sense of individuality that shapes human identity. However, according to the Upanishadic sages, such distinctions arise primarily from the restless functioning of the mind. When thoughts continually move outward toward objects and experiences, they reinforce the perception of separation.

The practice of meditation gradually changes this condition. Through sustained contemplation and discipline, the fluctuation of the mind begins to slow down. As attention turns inward, awareness becomes less occupied with external objects and more attentive to its own nature. In this quiet state, the boundaries that once seemed firmly established begin to soften (Forman, 1999).

The Upanishadic tradition describes several stages of meditative absorption, each representing a deeper level of inward awareness. In the higher states of *samadhi*, the distinction between the seeker and the object of meditation gradually disappears. The individual consciousness becomes absorbed in a deeper reality that transcends ordinary duality. This experience is not described as an intellectual realization but as a direct and transformative awareness (Travis F. &, 2000).

Within the framework of the *Tejobindu Upanishad*, this state of absorption reveals the luminous essence symbolized by the *Tejobindu*. When the mind becomes completely still, the seeker encounters the subtle presence of the inner light that lies beyond the fluctuations of thought. At this moment, the individual recognizes that the self is not separate from the universal reality.

(Josipovic, 2014) The dissolution of duality is therefore not a philosophical concept alone but an experiential insight. The seeker no longer perceives existence in terms of division between the inner and the outer, the individual and the cosmic. Instead, there arises a sense of unity in which all distinctions fade into a deeper awareness. Through the state of *samadhi*, the teachings of the Upanishads point toward the realization that the true nature of the self is identical with the ultimate reality. The luminous point of consciousness, once sought through contemplation, is revealed as the very essence of one's own being.

7. Relevance of *Tejobindu* Philosophy in Contemporary Consciousness Studies

The philosophical insights presented in the *Tejobindu Upanishad* continue to hold meaningful

relevance in contemporary discussions on consciousness and human awareness. In recent decades, scholars from various fields, including philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and contemplative studies, have shown increasing interest in understanding the nature of consciousness (Chalmers, 1996). While many modern approaches attempt to explain consciousness through neurological processes and cognitive functions, the Indian philosophical tradition offers a different perspective by placing consciousness at the very foundation of existence.

The idea of *Tejobindu* reflects this perspective clearly. The Upanishadic sages describe the origin of the universe not in terms of material elements but as emerging from a subtle field of consciousness symbolized by the luminous point. This understanding resonates with contemporary debates that question whether consciousness is merely a byproduct of physical processes or a fundamental aspect of reality itself. The Upanishadic view suggests that awareness is not secondary but primary, and that the outer world unfolds from a deeper inner principle (Wallace B. A., 2007).

Another important contribution of the *Tejobindu* philosophy lies in its emphasis on direct experience as a means of understanding consciousness. Modern scientific research increasingly explores practices such as meditation and mindfulness to study their effects on mental clarity, emotional balance, and cognitive functioning. The *Tejobindu Upanishad*, written centuries earlier, already emphasizes the importance of meditation, silence, and inner discipline in realizing the deeper nature of the mind. By calming the fluctuations of thought, the seeker becomes capable of observing consciousness more directly (Rao K. R., 2011). The teaching that the mind can function both as the cause of bondage and the pathway to liberation also holds relevance in contemporary psychological thought. Modern psychology often recognizes that patterns of thought influence emotional states and personal behavior. Similarly, the Upanishadic teaching suggests that when the mind becomes restless and outwardly focused, it creates confusion and dissatisfaction. When the same mind is guided toward reflection and awareness, it becomes a tool for clarity and inner freedom (Varela, 2016).

Furthermore, the symbolism of *Tejobindu* offers a philosophical framework for understanding the relationship between the individual and the universe. In contemporary discussions on

consciousness, questions often arise about the connection between individual awareness and the larger cosmos. The Upanishadic insight that the microcosm reflects the macrocosm proposes that human consciousness is not isolated but part of a larger universal reality (Josipovic Z. , 2019).

In this way, the philosophy of *Tejobindu* contributes to ongoing interdisciplinary discussions about consciousness, perception, and self-awareness. Although expressed through symbolic language, its insights continue to inspire reflection in both spiritual traditions and modern intellectual inquiry.

The teachings remind us that the exploration of consciousness is not limited to external observation but also requires an inward journey into the depths of human awareness.

8. Practical Connection with Modern Day Life

Although the teachings of the *Tejobindu Upanishad* arise from an ancient spiritual tradition, their insights remain meaningful in the context of modern life. Contemporary society is often characterized by constant activity, technological distractions, and increasing mental pressure. In such an environment, the Upanishadic emphasis on self-awareness, mental discipline, and inner silence offers valuable guidance for maintaining balance and clarity in daily life (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

One of the central teachings of the *Tejobindu Upanishad* is that the mind becomes the cause of both bondage and liberation. This idea finds clear relevance in modern psychological understanding. Many of the challenges people face today, such as stress, anxiety, and emotional imbalance, are closely connected with the restless activity of the mind. Continuous exposure to information, social media, and professional pressures often keeps the mind in a state of constant stimulation. The Upanishadic approach suggests that cultivating awareness of one's thoughts and learning to quiet the mind can help individuals regain inner stability (Davidson, 2008).

The practice of silence (*mauna*) also has practical value in modern life. Silence does not necessarily require complete withdrawal from society; rather, it can be practiced through moments of reflection and mindfulness within daily routines. Short periods of quiet contemplation, meditation, or mindful breathing allow individuals to step away from mental noise and reconnect with their inner awareness (Goleman, 2017). Such practices have increasingly been recognized in contemporary wellness programs and psychological therapies as effective methods for improving mental well-being.

The story of Raja Janak provides another practical lesson. His life demonstrates that spiritual

awareness does not require abandoning worldly responsibilities. Even while fulfilling the duties of leadership, Janak remained engaged in the search for inner truth. This example encourages individuals today to integrate reflection and self-awareness into their professional and personal lives rather than viewing them as separate paths (Wallace B. A., *The attention revolution*, 2012).

Furthermore, the symbolism of *Tejobindu* reminds individuals that the search for meaning ultimately begins within. In a world where success is often measured through external achievements, the Upanishadic perspective emphasizes inner growth, self-understanding, and harmony of the mind. Recognizing the presence of deeper awareness within oneself can guide individuals toward more thoughtful decisions, compassionate relationships, and a balanced approach to life. Thus, the teachings of the *Tejobindu Upanishad* are not limited to philosophical discussion alone. They offer practical insights that can help modern individuals cultivate clarity, emotional balance, and a deeper sense of purpose in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

The philosophical reflections presented in the *Tejobindu Upanishad* offer a profound insight into the nature of consciousness and the inner journey of human realization. Through the symbolic idea of *Tejobindu*, the text presents a vision in which the origin of existence is understood as a subtle and luminous principle of awareness. This radiant point represents not only the source of the universe but also the essence that resides within every individual. The Upanishad invites the seeker to look beyond external appearances and discover the deeper reality present within one's own consciousness. The teachings of the text emphasize that the mind plays a decisive role in shaping human experience. When the mind remains absorbed in desires and distractions, it binds the individual to the constantly changing world. However, when it becomes calm through reflection, meditation, and discipline, it gradually reveals the deeper dimension of the self. In this process, silence (*mauna*) emerges as an important path toward knowledge. Silence allows the seeker to move beyond the limitations of words and thoughts and encounter the subtle presence of inner awareness.

The narrative associated with Raja Janak further illustrates that the realization of truth requires sincerity, courage, and a willingness to look beyond worldly achievements. His journey shows that true knowledge is not merely intellectual but experiential, arising through inward contemplation and insight. Ultimately, the philosophy of *Tejobindu* reflects a central idea of the Indian knowledge tradition: the unity between the

individual self and the universal reality. By turning inward and quieting the mind, the seeker begins to recognize the luminous essence that connects the microcosm of human consciousness with the vastness of the cosmos. This insight continues to hold relevance for contemporary discussions on consciousness and the deeper search for meaning in human life.

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