



केनोपनिषत्
Kena Upanishad
Chapter 1 (Continued)
Volume 2

ओं केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः
केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति
चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥ 1 - 1

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यत्
वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।
चक्षुषश्चक्षुः अतिमुच्य धीराः
प्रेत्य अस्माल्लोकात् अमृता भवन्ति ॥ 1 - 2

न तत्र चक्षुर् गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः ।
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथा एतत् अनुशिष्यात् ॥ 1 - 3

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् अथो अविदितात् अधि ।
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तत् व्याचक्षिरे ॥ 1 - 4

Every Upanishad has its own style of communicating Upanishad knowledge and each style brings its own impact on an enquiring mind. The केनोपनिषत् starts with the words केन, which means "By Whom" or "By What"? Thus the Upanishad starts with an enquiry in the form of a series of questions, all of which are concerned with the nature of one's own self, which we generally take for granted.

Among the Upanishads, this is an advanced Upanishad in the sense that the students involved are advanced in their spiritual maturity. Therefore the very way the student asks the question points also to its answer, which is later confirmed and further enlightened by the teacher. We will see how the word केन which is used to raise a question, on reflection, points to the answer to the question, which indicates that the distance between the teacher and the student is a short one in terms of विद्यं - the flow



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

of Vedantic Knowledge. The Upanishad opens with this verse of questions from the student.

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः
केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति
चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति

We saw this verse in some detail last time. Briefly recalling those details,

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः - Wished by whom does the mind entertain thoughts. Willed by whom does the mind entertain specific thoughts. Wishing and willing, my mind moves from object to object. By what power does this mind movement take place?

केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः - Directed by whom, controlled by whom, does breathing take place methodically and spontaneously? By what power does breathing take place naturally by itself? By what power have I gained this level of maturity in my spiritual progress to be able to ask these questions?

केन इषितां वाचं इमां वदन्ति - By whose wish, by whose power is my organ of speech able to speak words?

चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति - Who is That Supreme Being by whose power my organs of perception and action are able to function as they do naturally. This live body functions naturally as it does. The question is केन - by whom are these functions ordered. कः देव - which Supreme Being is the power behind all these functions?

By the very words केन, कः देवः the spiritually conscious student recognizes the presence of the Supreme Being in one's own self, and is yet unable to reach That Supreme Being by the instruments of perception and action available to him. He needs help, and he seeks the help of the teacher in his endeavour to reach God.

In essence, he tells the teacher, "O! Teacher, looking at myself, I am simply amazed. I find that I am not only able to think, I am able to think of God. I am able to concentrate my mind exclusively on God-knowledge, and while I am doing so, I find that all my essential physiological functions are naturally taken care of, almost in spite of myself.

I am not only able to see and hear, I am able to enjoy the Glory of God in all forms and sounds. Thus I intuitively and intensely feel the presence of God in every fiber of my body. Still I am not able to reach God, see God, touch God, or think about God in



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concrete terms. In spite of my absolute conviction, I am not able to gain a firm grip on the Reality of God. O! Teacher, I need your help, please tell me. Am I correct in my intuition that God exists. If I am correct, what can you say about God, so that my intuition can gain a firm grip on the Reality of God and I can thus reach God?"

That is the student's question. This very question shows that any spiritually conscious person can intuitively feel the presence of God in one's own life. At the same time, this feeling alone cannot be fulfilling enough for the person. One naturally wants to realize God, because realization of God **is** Total Fulfillment in life.

While faith in God is necessary for Realization of God, faith in God is only an intermediate step in the process of realization of God. For such God realization, you need help, and when you are ready, you will certainly seek help. When you do seek help, our Upanishads are already waiting there to help you. That is the Nature of **विद्यं**, the flow of Upanishad knowledge.

Now, what is the Reality of God? What can one say about God by which one's intuitive knowledge can gain a firm grip on the reality of God? For that let us read the first line of the first verse again.

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः । - केन इषितं केन प्रेषितं मनः पतति । Wished by whom, and willed by whom does my mind entertain thoughts? Now, what is "wishing" and "willing"? That is also a thought entertained by a Mind. That means that there is another mind which makes thoughts possible for my mind. Now what is that another mind?

Whatever that is, that is the mind of my mind. That is indeed the answer to the question **केन** - By whom. That Supreme being - That God, about whom we are talking, **does exist**, and that is

The Mind of my mind

The Mind of all minds

The प्राण of all प्राणs

The वाक् इन्द्रिय of all वाक् इन्द्रियs

The eye of all eyes

The ear of all ears

That Supreme Being, That God, That **देवता** of all **देवता**s **is**. That God does exist, and all **इन्द्रिय**s, all organs of perception and action in the Universe derive their powers only from that God. That is indeed the answer to the question **केन**, "By Whom" **कः देवः** "Which Supreme being". This answer, which emerges directly from the question itself, is confirmed by the teacher in the next verse. The teacher says



श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यत् वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।
चक्षुषश्चक्षुः अतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्य अस्माल्लोकात् अमृता भवन्ति ॥

1 - 2

This verse is an extraordinary verse in our scriptures. It is a complete answer to the questions raised in the first verse. What is said here is not only the essential teaching of the entire Upanishad, it is also the essential teaching of all Upanishads. Let us now try to understand what it says.

To the question केन - By whom कः देवः Which Supreme being - or Is there a Supreme Being, the teacher replies:

यत् . . . सः meaning यत् त्वया पृष्टः सः - The ONE about whom you are asking , THAT IS - (what That is the teacher is going to say)

By saying THAT IS, the teacher confirms the student's intuition about the existence of That Supreme Being as the overriding cause of all causes - **That Supreme being does exist.** That is the first message. Then what can one say about that Supreme Being? The teacher says

That Supreme Being **is** (*not has*, but **is**)

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं - The ear of the ear

मनसः मनः -The Mind of the mind

ह - indeed

वाचः वाचं - The Word of the word.

The वाक् इन्द्रिय of the वाक् इन्द्रिय - The organ of speech of the organ of speech

उ - amazingly also

प्राणस्य प्राणः - The Prana of the prana - the Breathing of the breathing.

चक्षुषः चक्षुःच - also the Eye of the eye

That Supreme being is the ONE which is all. That Supreme being, about which we are talking, That is unlike any इन्द्रिय, that is unlike any organ of perception or action.

That is not an ear. That is not a mind. That is not an organ of speech That is not a प्राण.
That is not an eye. That is not an इन्द्रिय of any kind.



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At the same time, That is all ears, all minds, all प्राणs, all eyes, and indeed all इन्द्रियs in ONE. That is the ONE source from which all इन्द्रियs derive their powers to function as they do.

That इन्द्रिय of all इन्द्रियs is not an object possessed by a Supreme Being. That is Supreme Being Itself. That Supreme Being Itself is the subject. That Supreme Being has none of the limitations of any of the इन्द्रियs. That Supreme Being is Limitlessness Itself, is Formlessness Itself, is all Forms in ONE, is all Powers in ONE, is all Powerfullness Itself.

That Supreme Being is in every self.

Such is the nature of that Supreme Being which our Upanishads refer to by various pointer words such as ब्रह्मन्, आत्मा, परमेश्वर, पुरुष, नारायण, etc. In chapter 13 of the भगवत् गीता, Sri Krishna gives the same message in the following words.

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखं ।
सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ G 13 -13

सर्वेन्द्रिय गुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रिय विवर्जितम् ।
असक्तं सर्वं भृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ G 13 -14

तत् तिष्ठति -That Supreme Being, That ब्रह्मन् exists, exists at all times, unmoving and immovable, in everything. How?

सर्वम् आवृत्य तिष्ठति - Indwelling, permeating, enveloping all beings in this creation, that all-pervading nature of ब्रह्मन् is far beyond one's comprehension, because

सर्वतः पाणि पादं -That ब्रह्मन् is all-hands and all-feet in all beings, everywhere in this creation.

सर्वतः अक्षिशिरो मुखं - That ब्रह्मन् is all eyes, all heads, all mouths in all beings everywhere in this creation

सर्वतः श्रुतिमत् लोके - That ब्रह्मन् is all ears in all beings in this creation

सर्वेन्द्रिय गुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रिय विवर्जितम् - Without any इन्द्रिय whatsoever, That ब्रह्मन् shines through all the इन्द्रियs and all their गुणs in all beings in this creation.

असक्तं सर्वं भृक् चैव -That ब्रह्मन् while remaining uninvolved, unbound and independent, sustains everything in every being in this creation.



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निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च -That ब्रह्मन्, while having no qualities or attributes, indwells, permeates, envelopes and sustains all qualities and attributes in all beings in this creation.

Such is the nature of that ब्रह्मन्, that Supreme Being. It is That ब्रह्मन् that is referred to as पुरुष in पुरुष सूक्तं by the words

सहस्र शीर्षा पुरुषः । सहस्राक्ष सहस्रपात् ।

and also as Narayana in नारायण सूक्तं by the following words

सहस्र शीर्षं देवं विश्वक्षं विश्वशंभुवम् ।
विश्वं नारायणं देवं अक्षरं परमं पदम् ॥

These verses again convey essentially the same message as the Gita verses cited above, which is also the message of the Upanishad here.

That Supreme Being - That ब्रह्मन् - That आत्मा - which is the power behind all sense organs, all functions of one's body, mind and intellect, is the innermost core of every person. As the SELF - That ब्रह्मन्, That आत्मा **can be realized** and the means for such realization is to diligently cultivate the ability to distinguish It from the body - body parts and body functions (विचेक बुद्धि).

The senses deal with mortal, perishable things of the objective world, while That Supreme Being, That ब्रह्मन्, That आत्मा - That SELF is the Eternal subject, changeless and Immortal. Therefore the Teacher adds:

अतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्य अस्माल्लोकात् अमृता भवन्ति

अतिमुच्य धीराः -The wise people who realize that truth about one's true identity with ब्रह्मन्

प्रेत्य अस्मात् लोकात् - get automatically uplifted and released from all the ignorance-born experiences in this ever-changing world. And,

अमृता भवन्ति - they become Immortal, through the Enlightenment of आत्म ज्ञानं - SELF Knowledge, which means that they gain मोक्ष - Total fulfillment in life through self realization.



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Thus the second verse **Of केनोपनिषत्** unfolds the existence and nature of **ब्रह्मन्** in oneself and in every self.

The first two verses of **केनोपनिषत्** preceded by the **सँहित उपासन** which we talked about last time is called **सँहित ब्रह्मोपनिषत्** - An Enlightenment on **ब्रह्मन्** - The **परमेश्वर** - the **आत्मा** - The Self, arising from a Meditation on **ब्रह्मविद्या** flow of Upanishadic knowledge. This **सँहित ब्रह्मोपनिषत्**, which includes **ध्यानं** on **विद्यं** - Meditation on **विद्यं**, followed by the two Peace invocations and the first two verses of **केनोपनिषत्**, is an appropriate vehicle for contemplation on **ब्रह्मन्** through meditation on **ब्रह्मविद्या**.

Let us now continue with the Upanishad.



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

संहित ब्रह्मोपनिषत्

For contemplation on ब्रह्मन् through meditation on ब्रह्मविद्या

ओं

अथाधि विद्यं । आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् ।
अन्तेवास्युत्तर रूपं । विद्या सन्धिः ।
प्रवचनसन्धानं । इत्यधि विद्यम् ॥

ओं सहना वचतु । सहनौ भुनक्तु । सहवीर्यं करवाचहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषाचहै ॥
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

ओं आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि । वाक् प्राणश्चक्षुः
श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ।
सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदम् । माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्याम् ।
मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोत् । अनिराकरणं अस्तु । अनिराकरणं मे अस्तु । तदात्मनि निरते य
उपनिषत्सु धर्माः ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ॥
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

ओं केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यत् वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।
चक्षुषश्चक्षुः अतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्य अस्माल्लोकात् अमृता भवन्ति ॥
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

What is it that makes the ear hear, eyes see, mind think and every other इन्द्रिय - organ of perception or action function naturally as it does? That was the question.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

That which makes the ear hear is the Ear of the ear, that is also the Eye of the eye, That is also the Mind of the mind, and That is also the इन्द्रिय of all इन्द्रियs. That was the answer.

The question was a direct one but the answer did not appear to be equally direct. Why? The Teacher explains.

न तत्र चक्षुर् गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः ।
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथा एतत् अनुशिष्यात् 1 - 3

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् अथो अविदितात् अधि ।
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तत् व्याचक्षिरे ॥ 1 - 4

The answer could not be any more direct because That about whom the student is asking is not subject to objectification by any sense organ, mind or intellect. For any communication, there should be a common reference point. There is no such reference point with respect to आत्मा or ब्रह्मन्, because

न तत्र चक्षुः गच्छति - The eyes do not go there. That is not an object which the eye can see. That is free from any form. The eyes are incapable of reaching ब्रह्मन्. So also are the organ of speech, the mind and any other इन्द्रिय.

न वाग् गच्छति न उ मनः गच्छति - The organ of speech cannot go there, and indeed the Mind also cannot go there. Brahman is beyond the reach of words and beyond the reach of mind. ब्रह्मन् is unlike anything else that exists. That cannot be defined or explained by words. That cannot be compared with anything else that exists in creation. That is beyond the capability of the mind to enquire.

न विद्मः - We the Teachers do not know IT any other way. Without having been unfolded by our teachers as the Ear of the ear, Eye of the eye, Mind of the mind, etc., we do not know ब्रह्मन् any other way. We do not know ब्रह्मन् as an object projected or imagined by our mind. Even after grasping That knowledge about ब्रह्मन् as unfolded by our teachers.

यथा एतत् अनुशिष्यात् तत् न विजानीमः We do not know any better way by which That knowledge can be communicated by a teacher to a student.



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Now we go to the next verse

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् - That ब्रह्मन् is other than everything that is known or knowable.

अथो meaning अथ उ - But then again

तत् अविदितात् अधि - That ब्रह्मन् is above the unknown. That ब्रह्मन् is different from all that is known, and at the same time, That ब्रह्मन् is other than the unknown.

इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां - It is in this manner that we - The Teacher, have heard about ब्रह्मन् from all our previous Teachers. In this succession of teachers (गुरु परंपर) on ब्रह्मविद्या no one could improve on the method of communicating knowledge about ब्रह्मन् which

ये नः तत् व्याचक्षिरे - Those Teachers taught us, the students, until we grasped the message. The eyes do not reach ब्रह्मन्, so are the organs of speech, mind or any other इन्द्रिय. Without the help of our teachers who unfolded the knowledge about ब्रह्मन् as the Ear of the ear, the Eye of the eyes, the Mind of the mind, we do not know about ब्रह्मन्. Even after gaining that knowledge about ब्रह्मन् as unfolded by our teachers, we do not know any better way by which That knowledge could be communicated by a Teacher like myself to a student like yourself.

ब्रह्मन् is different from all that is known in this creation. That does not mean that ब्रह्मन् is unknown, because ब्रह्मन् is more than the unknown, and It is other than the unknown. It is in this manner that we, Teachers, have heard about ब्रह्मन् from all our previous teachers who have taught us that knowledge about ब्रह्मन्, until our intellect could grasp that knowledge - so says the teacher in the above two verses.

We will see these two verses again next time.