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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

कठोपनिषत्
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जानाम्यहं शेवधिः इति अनित्यं न हि अध्रुवैः प्रप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत् ।

*jānāmyaham śevadhiḥ iti anityam na hi adhruvaiḥ prapyate hi dhruvam
tat ।*

ततो मया नाचिकेतश्चितोऽग्निः अनित्यैः द्रव्यैः प्राप्तवान् अस्मि नित्यं ॥ 2 – 10
tato mayā nāciketaścato'gniḥ anityaiḥ drvyaiḥ prāptavān asmi nityam ॥

कामस्य आप्तिं जगतः प्रतिष्ठां क्रतोः आनन्त्यं, अभयस्य पारं ।

kāmasya āptim jagataḥ pratiṣṭhām kratoh ānantyam, abhayasya pāram ।

स्तोमं महत्, उरुगायं प्रतिष्ठां, दृष्ट्वा धृत्या धीरः नचिकेतो अत्यस्त्रक्षीः ॥ 2 - 11
*stomam mahat, urugāyam pratiṣṭhām, drṣṭvā dhṛtyaa dhiraḥ naciketo
atyastrakṣiḥ ॥*

तं दुर्दर्शं गूढं अनुप्रविष्टं गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणं ।

taṁ durdarśam gūḍham anupraviṣṭam guhāhitam gahvareṣṭham purāṇam ।

अध्यात्मयोग अधिगमेन देवं मत्वा धीरः हर्ष शोकौ जहाति ॥ 2 – 12
adhyātmayoga adhigamena devam matvā dhiraḥ harṣa śokau jahāti ॥

एतत् श्रुत्वा संपरिगृह्य मर्त्यः प्रवृह्य धर्म्यं अणुं एतं आप्य ।

etat śrutvā samparigrhya martyaḥ pravṛhya dharmyam aṇum etaṁ āpya ।

स मोदते मोदनीयं हि लब्ध्वा विवृतं सद्य नचिकेतसं मन्ये ॥ 2 - 13
sa modate modaniyam hi labdhvā vivṛtam sadma naciketasam manye ॥

As we may recall, Lord यम *yama* is full of praise for Nachiketa's firm commitment to the pursuit of सत्यं *satyam* - Absolute Truth.

सत्यधृतिः बतासि त्वाद्दक् नः भूयात् नचिकेतः प्रष्टा *satyadhṛtiḥ batāsi tvaadrk naḥ bhūyāt naciketaḥ praṣṭā* - "Indeed, you have your will yoked to Truth. May the teachers of ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidya* have शिष्याs *śiṣyaas* - disciples totally committed to the pursuit of truth like you are". These are Lord यम's *yama's* words,



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

said in high appreciation of his extraordinary student Nachiketa who is in the pursuit of The Changeless and The Eternal, hidden in the world of change and death. Knowledge of the changeless is the only key to the knowledge of the changeful. Otherwise, the changeful will always remain a mystery.'

Having praised Nachiketa for his one-pointed love of truth, Lord यम *yama* now proceeds to say something about himself in the next two verses, again in praise of Nachiketa's devotion to सत्यं *satyam* - Absolute Truth. Lord यम *yama* says:

जानाम्यहं शेवधिः इति अनित्यं न हि अध्रुवैः प्रप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत् ।

jānāmyaham śevadhiḥ iti anityam na hi adhruvaiḥ prapyate hi dhruvam tat |

ततो मया नाचिकेतश्चितोऽग्निः अनित्यैः द्रव्यैः प्रप्तवान् अस्मि नित्यं 2 - 10

tato mayā nāciketaścito'gniḥ anatyaiḥ dravyaiḥ praptavān asmi nityam ||

जानामि अहं शेवधिः अनित्यं - इति *jānāmi aham śevadhiḥ anityam iti*

अहं जानामि *aham jānāmi* - I know

शेवधिः अनित्यं इति *śevadhiḥ anityam iti* - that शेवधि *śevadhi* is only अनित्यं *anityam* - transient existence

शेवधि *śevadhi* means treasure or wealth, which signifies not only material wealth which contributes to worldly pleasure and power, but also fruits of meritorious actions – कर्म फल *karma phala* of पुण्य कर्म *puṇya karmas*, which contribute to pleasure and power in the life after death also. In either sense, शेवधि *śevadhi* is कर्म फल लक्षणं *karma phala lakṣaṇam*. Therefore, शेवधि *śevadhi* simply means कर्म फल *karma phala*.

Every कर्म *karma* is finite, and hence every कर्म फल *karma phala* is also finite, which means time-bound, transient in nature. Therefore

जानामि अहं शेवधिः इति अनित्यं *jānāmi aham śevadhiḥ iti anityam* means I know, whatever be the कर्म *karma*, the कर्म फल *karma phala* of that कर्म *karma* can only be अनित्यं *anityam* - transient, impermanent, not eternal in nature, because

न हि अध्रुवैः प्रप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत् *na hi adhruvaiḥ prapyate hi dhruvam tat*



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अध्रुवैः *adhruvaiḥ* meaning अनित्यैः *anityaiḥ* - through means which are transient in nature

तत् ध्रुवं *tat dhruvaṁ* - that which is eternal, that treasure called परमात्मा *paramātmā* - The Supreme Self

न हि प्राप्यते *na hi prāpyate* - certainly cannot be obtained

That which is Eternal cannot be attained through that which is transient. That which is Infinite cannot be attained through the multiplication of the finite. That which is Timeless cannot be reached by an endless extension of time. That which is Unconditioned cannot be had by an indefinite stretching of the conditioned. That is the meaning of न हि अध्रुवैः प्राप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत् *na hi adhruvaiḥ prāpyate hi dhruvaṁ tat*.

Lord यम *yama* says: I know that ध्रुवं *dhruvaṁ* -That eternal treasure called परमात्मा *paramātmā* - The Supreme Self, cannot be gained as a कर्म फल *karma phala* of any कर्म *karma*.

ततः *tataḥ*, ततः अपि *tataḥ api* - Even though I knew that already

मया नाचिकेताश्रितोऽग्निः अनित्यैः द्रव्यैः *mayā nāciketaścito'gñiḥ anityaiḥ dravyaiḥ*
नाचिकेताग्निः मया चितः *nāciketaagniḥ mayā citaḥ* - That exalted यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, हवन कर्म *havan karma* - now called नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketaagni*, which I taught you earlier, was performed by Me

अनित्यैः द्रव्यैः *anityaiḥ dravyaiḥ* - using objects and materials which are themselves transient in nature. Even though I knew very well that what is Eternal cannot be gained by any कर्म *karma*, still I performed नाचिकेताग्नि यज्ञ कर्म *nāciketaagni yajña karma*

What for would one do नाचिकेताग्नि कर्म *nāciketaagni karma*? Only to enjoy स्वर्ग कामा *svarga kāmās*, pleasures of heavenly life. Therefore, as a result of that यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*

प्राप्तवान् अस्मि नित्यं *prāptavān asmi nityaṁ* - I have gained this relatively permanent life of यम देव *yama deva* - Lord of Death.

Here नित्यं *nityaṁ* does not mean Absolute Eternity. It only means relative eternity, eternal relative to the life of a human being. This means that Lord यम *yama* has to



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

continue to do the job of Lord यम *yama* till the end of this कल्प *kalpa* - the present cycle of creation.

Lord यम *yama* says to Nachiketa "Even though I knew the limitations of कर्म *karma*, namely अध्रुवैः *adhruvaiḥ*, ध्रुवं न प्राप्यते *dhruvaṁ na prāpyate* - by means which are finite in nature, that which is infinite cannot be achieved, even though I knew that, still I performed the नाचिकेताग्नि यज्ञ कर्म *nāciketaagni yajña karma* when I was young, being attracted to the heavenly pleasures. Because of that यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* I got this याम्य पद *yāmya padaṁ* - the status of यम देवता *yama*, and I have to do my duties as the Lord of Death, till the end of this cycle of creation.

You are young. If you perform the नाचिकेताग्नि कर्म *nāciketaagni karma*, you can go even up to ब्रह्मलोक *brahmaloka* and enjoy all the pleasures of life in this संसार *samsāra* - in this transient world of existence. But you chose not to do that. You are wise, having recognized the significance of the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*, every other pursuit has no real value to you. For your age, your spiritual maturity is great indeed. Thus Lord यम *yama* praises Nachiketa.

Lord यम *yama* continues his praise of Nachiketa.

कामस्य आप्तिं जगतः प्रतिष्ठां क्रतोः आनन्त्यं अभयस्य पारं ।

kāmasya āptim jagataḥ pratiṣṭhām kratoh ānantyam abhayasya pāram ।

स्तोमं महत् उरुगायं प्रतिष्ठां दृष्ट्वा धृत्या धीरः नचिकेतो अत्यस्त्राक्षीः ॥ 2 - 11

stomaṁ mahat urugāyam pratiṣṭhām drṣṭvā dhṛtyā dhīraḥ naciketo atyastrākṣīḥ ॥

दृष्ट्वा *drṣṭvā* - Having seen, having taken into account, having analyzed fully the scope and limitations of the entire world of pleasures available in ब्रह्मलोक *brahma loka*

The ब्रह्मलोक *brahmaloka* and the pleasures available in ब्रह्मलोक *brahma loka* are indicated by six pairs of words here, namely कामस्य आप्तिं *kāmasya āptim*, जगतः प्रतिष्ठां *jagataḥ pratiṣṭhām*, क्रतोः आनन्त्यं *kratoḥ ānantyam*, अभयस्य पारं *abhayasya pāram*, स्तोमं महत् *stomaṁ mahat*, उरुगायं प्रतिष्ठां *urugāyam prataṣṭhām*



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

कामस्य आप्तिं दृष्ट्वा *kāmasya āptim dṛṣṭvā* - Every काम *kama* desire is only for the experience of some worldly pleasure संसार सुख *saṁsāra sukha* which is always विषय सुख *viṣaya sukha* - an experience of pleasure, depending on some object or situation in life. The highest of all संसार सुखs *saṁsāra sukha* is ब्रह्मलोक सुख *brahma loka sukha*, which is the end of all of one's objective desires. Therefore the end of all काम *kama* desires, विषय सुख *viṣaya sukha*, is the experience of ब्रह्म लोक सुख *brahma loka sukha* which Nachiketa could have got if he had wanted.

Therefore कामस्य आप्तिं दृष्ट्वा *kāmasya āptim dṛṣṭvā* means, having analyzed the scope and limitations of all विषय सुखs *viṣaya sukhas* available in ब्रह्मलोक *brahma loka*, and

जगतः प्रतिष्ठां दृष्ट्वा *jagataḥ pratiṣṭhām dṛṣṭvā*

जगतः *jagataḥ* means the entire creation for which आश्रय *āśraya*- the abode is हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇyagarbha* - which is totality of all that exists in this creation in both its subtle and gross forms.

Beyond हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇyagarbha* what exists is only अव्यक्त *avyakt* - the Unmanifest ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Therefore जगतः *jagataḥ*

प्रतिष्ठां दृष्ट्वा *pratiṣṭhām dṛṣṭvā* means having analyzed the scope and limitations of all that exists in हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇyagarbha* - the entire creation, in both its subtle and gross forms, and

क्रतोः आनन्त्यं दृष्ट्वा *kratoḥ ānantiyaṁ dṛṣṭvā*

क्रतु *kratu* is हिरण्यगर्भ उपासन *hiraṇyagarbha upāsana* - ritualistic worship of हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇyagarbha*, whose कर्म फल *karma phala* is ब्रह्मलोक *brahma loka* which is आनन्त्यं *ānantiyaṁ* - relatively endless in terms of time (ब्रह्म लोक *brahma loka* disappears only at the end of the कल्प *kalpa* - the present cycle of creation). Therefore, क्रतोः आनन्त्यं दृष्ट्वा *kratoḥ ānantiyaṁ dṛṣṭvā* means having analyzed the scope and limitations of हिरण्यगर्भ उपासन कर्म *hiraṇyagarbha upāsana karma* and

अभयस्य पारं दृष्ट्वा *abhayasya pāraṁ dṛṣṭvā* - अभयस्य पारं *abhayasya pāraṁ* is that which is beyond Fearlessness. Within the संसार *saṁsāra* - this manifest ever-



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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

changing creation, if one wants to get away from fear, it is only ब्रह्म लोक *brahmaloka* which disappears only at the end of the कल्प *kalpa*. Therefore

अभयस्य पारं दृष्ट्वा *abhayasya pāraṁ dr̥ṣṭvā* - having analyzed the scope and limitations of the Fear-free world available in ब्रह्मलोक *brahmaloka*, and

स्तोमं महत् दृष्ट्वा *stomaṁ mahat dr̥ṣṭvā*

स्तोमं *stomaṁ* means praiseworthy and

महत् *mahat* means अनेक विशिष्ट गुण संहितं *aneka viśiṣṭa guṇa saṁhatam*-endowed with various desirable virtues and powers.

Therefore स्तोमं महत् दृष्ट्वा *stomaṁ mahat dr̥ṣṭvā* means, having analyzed the scope and limitations of all the praiseworthy and desirable virtues and powers available in ब्रह्म लोक *brahma loka*, and

उरुगायं प्रतिष्ठां दृष्ट्वा *urugāyaṁ pratiṣṭhāṁ dr̥ṣṭvā*

उरुगायं *urugāyaṁ* means that which is praised in all the वेदाः *vedās* as the most fulfilling end for all of one's efforts and desires. Therefore उरुगायं प्रतिष्ठां दृष्ट्वा *urugāyaṁ pratiṣṭhāṁ dr̥ṣṭvā* means having analyzed the scope and limitations of the fulfillment of all of one's efforts and desires, praised in the Vedas as कर्म फल *karma phala* of Vedic rituals

धृत्या धीरः नाचिकेतः अत्यस्त्राक्षीः *dhṛtyā dhīraḥ naaciketaḥ atyastraakṣīḥ*

नाचिकेतः *naaciketaḥ* - O! Nachiketa

धीरः *dhīraḥ* - you being a बुद्धिमान् *buddhimaan* - a wise person

धृत्या *dhṛtyā* - with firm resolve

अत्यस्त्राक्षीः *atyastraakṣīḥ* - you chose to reject the entire world of pleasures available in संसार लोकs *saṁsāra lokas*, seeking only आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self Knowledge

अहो बत आश्चर्यं *aho bata āścaryaṁ* - you are a wonder. Your wisdom is extraordinary



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

So says Lord यम *yama*, praising Nachiketa's firm commitment to the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self Knowledge. Before we go to the next verse, we must stop briefly to reflect on what the Upanishad is communicating here.

Lord यम *yama*, while he was a young person, performed नाचिकेताग्नि कर्म *nāciketāgni karma*, and as a कर्म फल *karma phala*, gained the status of यम *yama* - The Lord of Death, shining as यम धर्म राजा *yama dharma rājā*, as the very Lord of धर्म *dharma* - Justice, and as the master of self discipline, as his very name यम *yama* indicates. But then, the same Lord यम *yama* is now ब्रह्मविद्याचार्य *brahma vidyācārya* - which means he is a ब्रह्मवित् *brahmavit* - a knower of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, a ज्ञानी *jñānī* one who has gained मोक्ष *mokṣa* and one who is श्रोत्रिय *śrotriya* and ब्रह्मनिष्ठ *brahma niṣṭha* - one who is well versed in उपनिषत् *upaniṣat* knowledge and one who is already a Self-realized person.

Now we must understand the connection between the status of यम *yama* and that of ब्रह्म विद्याचार्य *brahma vidyācārya*. Lord यम *yama* has been talking about प्रेयस् *preyas* and श्रेयस् *śreyas*, प्रेयस् *preyas* - is the pursuit of transient pleasures of worldly life and श्रेयस् *śreyas* is pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* which is Absolute Happiness - Total Fulfillment in Life.

We must understand that our वेदाः *vedās* are not against the pursuit of प्रेयस् *preyas*. Every person being कर्म *karma* born, naturally starts only with प्रेयस् *preyas*, and that is why the कर्मकाण्ड *karmakāṇḍa*, which deals with प्रेयस् *preyas*, comes first in the Vedas. The कर्म काण्ड *karmakāṇḍa* of the Vedas tells us that one's pursuit of प्रेयस् *preyas* should be within the bounds of धर्म *dharma*, as indicated by the words सत्यं वद *satyaṁ vada*, धर्मं चर *dharmaṁ cara*, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः *svādhyāyāt mā pramadaḥ*, which is the surest means for gaining wisdom in daily life.

Lord यम *yama* performing नाचिकेताग्नि कर्म *nāciketāgni karma* is only part of his pursuit of प्रेयस् *preyas* - pursuit of transient pleasures in life. One must first get some degree of stabilization, a degree of quietude of mind in one's pursuit of प्रेयस् *preyas*. Only then can one gain the mental disposition necessary for analyzing the scope and limitations of all pursuits of प्रेयस् *preyas*. That is why Sri Krishna says:



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

न बुद्धि भेदं जनयेत् अज्ञानां कर्म सङ्गिनाम् ।

na buddhi bhedaṁ janayet ajñānāṁ karma saṅginām ।

जोषयेत् सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान् युक्तः समाचरन् ॥

(G 3-26)

joṣayet sarvakarmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran ॥

The wise man must never create confusion in the minds of people who are committed to कर्म *karma* for the sake of enjoying the results of कर्म *karma*. On the other hand, the wise man must create joy, enthusiasm, and commitment to excellence in action in the minds of such people, by himself doing all his own actions as well as he can, with the greatest joy and enthusiasm.

When one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, is sufficiently mature, then one realizes that all pursuits of प्रेयस् *preyas* yield only that which is अनित्यं *anityam* - transient, which has no Absolute Reality and That which is Absolutely Real can be gained only through the pursuit of श्रेयस् *śreyas*. It is That realization which is pointed out by the मुण्डक *muṇḍaka* Upanishad:

परीक्ष्य लोकान् कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणः निर्वेदं आयात्, नास्ति अकृतः कृतेन

parīkṣya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇaḥ nirvedaṁ āyāt, nāsti akṛtaḥ kṛtena

Analyzing all of one's worldly experiences, the one who is awake to Absolute Reality realizes नास्ति अकृतः कृतेन *nāsti akṛtaḥ kṛtena* - The uncreated Being - The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - cannot be the result of any action.

Lord यम's *yama's* message here is also the same: अध्रुवैः ध्रुवं न प्राप्यते *adhruvaiḥ dhruvaṁ na prapyate* - By means, which are finite, That which is Infinite cannot be reached. When Lord यम *yama* became mature enough to follow through that message, his path of life naturally changed from the pursuit of प्रेयस् *preyas* to that of श्रेयस् *śreyas*. He sought ब्रह्मविद्या *brahmavidyā* from his father विवस्वान् *vivasvān*, who was himself a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, and progressively through श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं *mananam*, निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam*, कर्म योग *karma yoga*, ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga*, ज्ञान लक्षण ईश्वर भक्ति *jñāna lakṣaṇa īśvara bhakti* and ज्ञान निष्ठा *jñāna niṣṭhā*, Lord यम *yama* ultimately became a ज्ञानी *jñānī* Himself. That is how Lord यम *yama* evolved into a ब्रह्मविद्याचार्य *brahma*



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

vidyācārya, while still being the Lord of death – यम देवता *yama devata*. Lord यम's *yama's* father, विवस्वान् *vivasvān* himself became a ब्रह्मविद्याचार्य *brahma vidyācārya*, having gained ब्रह्मविद्या *brahmavidyā* knowledge directly from Sri Krishna Himself in one of His earlier incarnations, so says Sri Krishna in the भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā*

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवान् अहं अव्ययं (G 4 – 1)
imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ proktvān ahaṁ avyayaṁ

Therefore, such opportunity to gain ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* Knowledge, directly from Sri Krishna Himself, is always open to every one of us through the भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā*.

Within the past few years, we have heard Sri Krishna's teachings in the entire भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā*, in a series of 157 short scripture readings at this Temple. By reading one or two every day, all these 157 scripture readings, repeatedly with devotion to Sri Krishna, and श्रद्धा *śraddhā* in ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā*, one can listen to Sri Krishna's teachings in the entire भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā*, every day, loud and clear. By so doing, one will discover more and more about oneself every day, and spiritual progress within oneself will take place naturally, by the very Grace of **Sri Krishna**.

Now we return to the Upanishad.

By this time, Lord यम *yama* is fully convinced that this young boy Nachiketa's श्रद्धा *śraddhā* in ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidyā*, श्रद्धा *śraddhā* in आत्म ज्ञानं *aatma jñānaṁ* is firm, pure and genuine. Therefore, he is now ready to begin his discourse on the nature of आत्मा *atma* and the means of gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *aatma jñānaṁ*. In order to draw Nachiketa's total attention to his forthcoming discourse, Lord यम *yama* introduces the topic as follows.

तं दुर्दर्शं गूढं अनुपविष्टं, गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणं ।
taṁ durdaśaṁ gūḍhaṁ anupaviṣṭaṁ, guhāhitaṁ gahvareṣṭhaṁ purāṇaṁ ।
अध्यात्मयोग अधिगमेन देवं मत्वा, धीरः हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥ 2 - 12
adhyātma yoga adhigamena devaṁ matvā, dhiraḥ harṣaśokau jahāti ॥



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तं देवं मत्वा धीरः हर्षशोकौ जहाति *taṁ devaṁ matvā dhiraḥ harṣaśokau jahāti*
देवं *devaṁ* here refers to चैतन्य स्वरूपं ज्योतनात्मकं देवं आत्मानं *caitanya svarūpaṁ jyotanātmakaṁ devaṁ ātmānaṁ* - The आत्मा *atma*, whose very nature is चैतन्य स्वरूपं *caitanya svarūpaṁ* - Pure Consciousness, ज्योतनात्मकं *jyotanātmakaṁ* - Self-effulgent, देवं आत्मानं *devaṁ ātmānaṁ* - Divine Self. That is the nature of आत्मा *atma*. Therefore,

तं देवं मत्वा *taṁ devaṁ matvā* means, knowing the nature of that आत्मा *atma*, recognizing That Divine Self as It is.

धीरः *dhiraḥ* - a बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān* - a wise person

हर्षशोकौ जहाति *harṣaśokau jahāti* - gives up, transcends, both elation and sorrow

Recognizing आत्मा *ātmā* - The Divine Self as It is, a wise person transcends both elation and sorrow.

Describing आत्मा *ātmā* - The Divine Self in every self, Lord यम *yama* says "That आत्मा *ātmā* is

दुर्दर्शं *durdarśaṁ* - difficult to be seen or known. Why?

अतिसूक्ष्मत्वात् *atisūkṣmatvāt* - because it is extremely subtle. आत्मा *ātmā* cannot be seen or known as an object, but it can be subjectively experienced as the experiencer's own self by, in, and through every pulsation of action, knowledge and awareness - प्रतिबोधविदितं *pratibodhaviditaṁ*, as we have seen in केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat*.

Further,

गूढं अनुप्रविष्टं *gūḍhaṁ anupraviṣṭaṁ* - being hidden in the depths of one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*, आत्मा *ātmā* remains a secret, beyond the reach of one's own sense perceptions.

गुहाहितं *guhāhitaṁ* - still आत्मा *ātmā* is available for recognition in one's own बुद्धि गुहा *buddhi guha*, the cave of one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*. Not that आत्मा *ātmā* is located in one's बुद्धि, but आत्मा *ātmā* is available for recognition only in one's own बुद्धि *buddhi* - Pure Reason. (ब्रह्मपुरि *brahmapuri* region of one's own बुद्धि *buddhi* मु. उ. *mu. u. 2* - 2- 7)



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

गह्वरेष्ठ *gahvareṣṭha* - the बुद्धि *buddhi* - the Pure Reason by which आत्मा *ātmā* can be recognized is hard to reach, because the बुद्धि *buddhi* is not pure, being contaminated with राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* impurities - impurities of likes and dislikes.

गूढं अनुप्रविष्टं *gūḍham anupraviṣṭam*, गुहाहितं *guhāhitam* and गह्वरेष्ठं *gahvareṣṭham* are the reasons why आत्मा *ātmā* is दुर्दर्शं *durdarśam* - difficult to be seen or known.

तं पुराणं देवं (आत्मानं) मत्वा (ज्ञात्वा)

taṁ puraāṇam devam (ātmānam) matvā (jñātvā)

Knowing that पुराणं *puraāṇam* Eternal, देवं आत्मानं *devam ātmānam* - The Divine Self. How does one know That Eternal Divine Self?

अध्यात्मयोग *adhyātma yoga* - अधिगमेन ज्ञात्वा *adhigamena jñātvā*

Knowing आत्मा *ātmā* - The Divine Self, by reaching That Self through अध्यात्मयोग *adhyātma yoga* - contemplation on ब्रह्मन् *brahman* as प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* - as one's innermost Self, as indicated by the words of Kenopanishad which we may recall here:

अथ अध्यात्मं, यत् एतत् गच्छति इव च मनः अनेन च एतत् उपस्मरति अभीक्ष्णं सङ्कल्पः
Ke 4 - 5

atha adhyātmaṁ, yat etat gacchati iva ca manaḥ anena ca etat upasmarati abhikṣṇam saṅkalpaḥ

In the अध्यात्मयोग *adhyātma yoga* mode of contemplation on ब्रह्मन् *brahman* as प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* - as The Divine Self in oneself, the mind is totally withdrawn from all external objects, and directed towards ब्रह्मन् *brahman* as if it is continuously trying to reach ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. By doing so, the mind continuously remembers ब्रह्मन् *brahman* always trying to bring ब्रह्मन् *brahman* closer and closer to the vision of one's बुद्धि *buddhi*. Thus The आत्मा *ātmā*, The Divine Self in oneself reveals Itself continuously in one's बुद्धि *buddhi*, simultaneously with every pulsation of the contemplating mind - प्रतिबोधविदितं *pratibodhaviditam*, as the Upanishad says. More about अध्यात्मयोग *adhyātma yoga* we will see later in this Upanishad and in the भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā*. Thus, knowing आत्मा *ātmā* - The Divine Self within oneself,



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

धीरः हर्षशोकौ जहाति *dhīraḥ harṣa śokau jahāti* - a wise person transcends both हर्ष *harṣa* and शोक *śoka*, elation and depression.

By knowing आत्मा *ātmā*, how does one transcend हर्ष *harṣa* and शोक *śoka*?

By knowing आत्मा *ātmā*, one becomes आत्मा *ātmā*. आत्मा *ātmā* is not an object, आत्मा *ātmā* is oneself. By knowing yourself, you become your True Self, you recognize your True Self, which is beyond any हर्ष *harṣa* or शोक *śoka*, elation or depression. You become the very embodiment of पूर्ण *pūrṇam*, meaning पूर्ण आनन्दं *pūrṇa ānandaṁ*, ब्रह्मानन्दं *brahmānandaṁ*, which is the स्वरूप *svarūp* of आत्मा *ātmā* and That is your own true nature. Further,

एतत् श्रुत्वा संपरिगृह्य मर्त्यः, प्रवृह्य धर्म्यं अणुमेतमाप्य ।

etat śrutvā sampariḡṛhya martyaḥ, pravṛhya dharmyaṁ aṇumeta māpya ।

स मोदते मोदनीयं हि लब्ध्वा, विवृतं सद्य नचिकेतसं मन्ये ॥

2 - 13

sa modate modanīyaṁ hi labdhvā, vivṛtaṁ sadma naciketasam manye ॥

After listening attentively to That, namely

एतत् वक्ष्यमाणं आत्मतत्त्वं तत्, प्रसन्न, आचार्य मुखात् श्रुत्वा

etat vakṣyamāṇaṁ ātmatatvaṁ tat, prasanna, ācārya mukhāt śṛtvā

After listening attentively to a discourse on the truth about आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self, from an आचार्य *ācārya* - a well-qualified teacher, who is also pleased with the attitude of the student seeking such knowledge (such listening is श्रवणं *śravaṇaṁ*)

संपरिगृह्य *sampariḡṛhya* - meaning, संयक् आत्मभावेन परिगृह्य *saṁyak ātma bhāvena pariḡṛhya*

This is मननं *mananaṁ* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanaṁ* After firmly grasping that knowledge, after gaining the certainty of the knowledge that ब्रह्मन् *brahman* is प्रत्यगात्मा *pratyagātmā*, that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्मन् *satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ brahman* is indeed the true nature of oneself, मर्त्यः *martyaḥ* - a human being, a person

प्रवृह्य धर्म्यं अणुं एतं प्राप्य *pravṛhya dharmyaṁ aṇuṁ etaṁ praapya*



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

धर्म्यः धर्मात् अनपेत्तं *pravṛhya dharmyam aṇum etaṁ praapya* is धर्म्यं *dharmyam* That which is non-separate from धर्म *dharma* at all times, the Self-Existent, Self-Effulgent आत्मा *ātmā* which sustains everything in this creation

प्रवृह्य धर्म्यं *pravṛhya dharmyam* separating, discriminating, distinguishing such आत्मा *ātmā* from one's शरीर *śarīra* - body, etc.

अणुं एतं *aṇum etaṁ* (आत्मा *ātmā*) That आत्मा *ātmā* is अणुं *aṇum*, सूक्ष्मं *sūkṣmam*, सूक्ष्मतमं *sūkṣmatamaṁ* - extremely subtle

एतं *etaṁ* (आत्मानं *ātmānam*) प्राप्य *praapya* gaining recognition of that आत्मा *ātmā*. Therefore

प्रवृह्य धर्म्यं अणुं एतं प्राप्य *pravṛhya dharmyam aṇum etaṁ praapya*

clearly understanding That आत्मा *ātmā* is separate from one's शरीर *śarīra* - body, etc and gaining recognition of that extremely subtle आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self as It is,

सः मर्त्यः *saḥ martyaḥ* - that person, who is now an enlightened person, even though he continues to wear the same physical body (which is subject to death on conclusion of his प्रारब्ध कर्म *praarabdha karmas*) that wise human being

मोदते *modate* rejoices. *What is there for him to rejoice?*

मोदनीयं हि लब्ध्वा *modanīyam hi labdhvā* having certainly gained मोदनीयं *modanīyam* - That which is Supreme Blissful Joy, what he is enjoying now is ब्रह्मानन्दं *brahmānandaṁ*, आत्मानं *ātmānam* - The आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self, whose very nature is ब्रह्मानन्दं *brahmānandaṁ*, परमानन्दं *paramānandaṁ* - Supreme Joy which is अक्षय सुखं *akṣaya sukhaṁ* - Absolute Happiness which is never subject to change.

सः ब्रह्मयोग युक्तात्मा सुखं अक्षयं अश्नुते (G. 5 – 21)

saḥ brahma yoga yuktatmā sukhaṁ akṣayaṁ aśnute

as Sri Krishna says in the भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā*, which means

आनन्दं लब्ध्वा आनन्दी भवति *ānandaṁ labdhvā ānandī bhavati*

आनन्द *ānand* is the स्वरूप *svarūp* of आत्मा *ātmā* - Gaining Supreme Happiness, one becomes Supreme Happiness Itself. That is the result of श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

mananam, and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* of ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidyā* which Lord यम *yama* is going to talk about.

विवृतं सद्य नचिकेतसं मन्ये *vivṛtam sadma naciketasam manye*

सद्य *sadma* means ब्रह्म भवनं *brahma bhavanam* The abode of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

विवृतं *vivṛtam*, अपावृत द्वारं *apāvṛta dvāram* - That ब्रह्म भवनं *brahma bhavanam* whose gates are wide open. Therefore,

विवृतं सद्य नचिकेतसं *vivṛtam sadma naciketasam* means, for you, Nachiketa, the doors of the ब्रह्म भवनं *brahma bhavanam* - the abode of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* are wide open, because you are qualified for ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-Knowledge.

मन्ये *manye* - so I think. "I consider you as eminently well qualified for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-Knowledge" says Lord यम *yama* to Nachiketa.

With the above statement from Lord यम *yama*, the scriptural context for कठोपनिषत् *kāthopaniṣat* has now been fully established. What follows is pure Vedanta in the traditional form, a meaningful question from a जिज्ञासु *jijñāsu* - a student committed to the pursuit of ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidyā*, followed by an adequate answer to that question from an आचार्य *ācārya* who is a श्रोत्रिय *śrotriya* and ब्रह्म निष्ठ *brahma niṣṭha*, a Self-realized ज्ञानी *jñānī*. Here the जिज्ञासु *jijñāsu* is Nachiketa, and the ब्रह्म विद्याचार्य *brahma vidyācārya* is Lord यम *yama*, and the discourse on ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidyā* is कठोपनिषत् *kāthopaniṣat*, commencing from the next verse, which we will take up next time.