



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

कठोपनिषत्
Katopanishad
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त्रिणाचिकेतः त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं, त्रिकर्मकृत् तरति जन्म मृत्यू ।

triṇāciketah tribhiretya sandhim, trikarmakṛt tarati janma mṛtyū ।

ब्रह्मजज्ञं देवमीड्यं विदित्वा निचाय्य इमां - शान्तिं अत्यन्तं एति ॥

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brahmajajñam devamīḍyam viditvā nicāyya imām - śāntim atyantam eti ॥

त्रिणाचिकेतः त्रयमेतत् विदित्वा य एवं विद्वांश्चिनुते नाचिकेतं ॥

trīṇāciketah trayametat viditvā ya evaṁ vidvāṁśchinute nāciketam ॥

स मृत्युपाशान् पुरतः प्रणोद्य शोकातिगो मोदते स्वर्ग लोके ॥

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sa mṛtyupāśān purataḥ praṇodya śokātigo modate svarga loke ॥

एष ते अग्निः नचिकेतः स्वर्ग्यो यं अवृणीथाः द्वितीयेन वरेण ।

eṣa te agniḥ naciketah svargyo yaṁ avṛṇīthāḥ dvitīyena vareṇa ।

एतं अग्निं तवैव प्रवक्ष्यन्ति जनासः तृतीयं वरं नचिकेतो वृणीष्व ॥

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etaṁ agniṁ tavaiva pravakṣyanti janāsaḥ tṛtīyam varam naciketo vṛṇīṣva ॥

As we may recall, for the second of the three वरs *varas* (a वर *vara* is a boon, which is a committed divine gift) of the three boons granted to him earlier by Lord यम *yama*, Nachiketa requested Lord यम *yama* to teach him a particular अग्नि विज्ञानं *agni vijñānam* - knowledge about an exalted यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - the Vedic Havan ritual, capable of leading one to स्वर्ग *svarga*.

Lord यम *yama* responded positively to Nachiketa's request and taught him all details about that अग्नि विज्ञानं *agni vijñānam*, including the method of erecting the alter for the Havan and all the associated वेद मन्त्रs *veda mantras* involved in the performance of the entire यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* properly, effectively and with full understanding. At the conclusion of his teaching, Nachiketa, on his part, repeated word for word with full understanding, all the वेद मन्त्रs *veda mantras*, and also all the other Havan details



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exactly as Lord यम *yama* had spoken. Lord यम *yama* was pleased at the extraordinary memory power and the sharp intellect exhibited by Nachiketa in learning that अग्नि विज्ञानं *agni vijñānam*. In appreciation of his श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and ability in gaining that knowledge, Lord यम *yama*, of his own accord, gave him another boon, in the form of naming that Vedic ritual as नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni*, meaning a यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - a Havan ritual named after Nachiketa. In addition, Lord यम *yama* gave Nachiketa a garland, a necklace set with colorful precious stones as a present. Following the above expression of appreciation for Nachiketa's श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and ability, Lord यम *yama* tells further the prior qualifications needed for a person to be able to reach स्वर्ग *svarga* - Heaven by performing the नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni* - Vedic Havan ritual - which he just taught Nachiketa. Lord यम *yama* says:

त्रिणाचिकेतः त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं त्रिकर्मकृत् तरति जन्ममृत्यू ।
triṇāciketaḥ tribhiretya sandhiṁ trikarmakṛt tarati janmamṛtyū ।
ब्रह्मजज्ञं देवमीड्यं विदित्वा निचाय्य इमां- शन्तिं अत्यन्तं एति ॥ 1 - 17
brahmajajñam devamīdyam viditvā nicāyya imām - śantiṁ atyantam eta ॥

Who can, and who will, go to स्वर्ग *svarga* - Heaven, after death? Lord यम *yama* says

त्रिणाचिकेतः तरति जन्ममृत्यू *triṇāciketaḥ tarati janmamṛtyū* - Anyone who is a त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa*, which means. anyone who has performed the नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni*, the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* which has just been taught by Lord यम *yama* to Nachiketa, anyone who has performed that यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, three times in one's life, each time with full knowledge, understanding and appreciation, which means with clear and complete knowledge and full conviction, such a person, तरति जन्ममृत्यू *tarati janmamṛtyū* goes to स्वर्ग *svarga* after death.

तरति जन्ममृत्यू *tarati janmamṛtyū* literally meaning "crosses birth and death". Such crossing, however, is not in an absolute sense, but only in a relative sense.

Crossing birth and death in an absolute sense means gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*, which is not the result of any कर्म *karma*. Gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* is possible only through gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahmajñānam*, आत्मज्ञानं *ātmañānam* - Self Knowledge.



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Here, Lord यम *yama* is talking about कर्म फल *karma phala* of a कर्म *karma*. Therefore, here तरति जन्ममृत्यू *tarati janmamṛtyū* simply means "goes to स्वर्ग *svarga* - goes to heaven". Therefore,

त्रिणाचिकेतः तरति जन्ममृत्यू *triṇāciketah tarati janmamṛtyū* - anyone who is a त्रिणाचिकेतः *triṇāciketah* goes to Heaven after death.

But, for one to be a त्रिणाचिकेतः *triṇāciketah* requires for that person to be well-brought up, well educated, well behaved and well disciplined with respect to one's basic values, knowledge and duties in daily life in accordance with Vedic tradition as indicated by the two Upanishad words त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं *tribhiretya sandhim* and त्रिकर्मकृत् *trikarmakṛt*. Only such a person will have the required mental disposition to perform the नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni* ritual, with clear knowledge and full conviction, which is necessary for the successful performance of the नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni* ritual.

Now we must understand what is indicated by the two words त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं *tribhiretya sandhim* and त्रिकर्मकृत् *trikarmakṛt*.

त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं *tribhiretya sandhim* - This expression refers to the process of one's growing up in one's formative years of life.

त्रिभिः *tribhih* means " with the three"

एत्य *etya* means प्राप्य *prāpya* - gaining

सन्धिं *sandhim* means सम्बन्धं - *sambandham* proper connections, relationships or associations. Therefore

त्रिभिः : एत्य सन्धिं *tribhih etya sandhim* means, gaining one's basic values of life through proper connections with the set of three. According to our scriptures, there are three such sets of three. They are

मातृ-पितृ-आचार्य-सम्बन्ध *mātr-pitr-ācārya-sambandha*, वेद-स्मृति-शिष्ट सम्बन्ध *veda-smṛti-śiṣṭ sambandha* and/or प्रत्यक्ष-अनुमान-आगम सम्बन्ध *pratyakṣa-anumāna-aagama sambandha*

मातृ-पितृ-आचार्य सम्बन्ध *mātr-pitr-ācārya-sambandha* - gaining one's sense of values, knowledge, discipline and duties for daily life through proper relationships with one's mother, father and the teacher in the formative years of one's life. For example, for a boy up to the time of उपनयनं *upanayanam* which means up to about age 7 or 8,



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the mother is the primary teacher. After उपनयनं *upanayanaṁ*, up to the age of about 10 or 12, until the boy goes to गुरुकुल *gurukul*, the father is the primary teacher, and after the boy goes to the गुरु कुल *gurukul*, at the गुरु कुल *gurukul*, the teacher-student family - the आचार्य *ācārya* - the गुरु *guru* is the primary teacher for the boy. That is the Vedic tradition for proper upbringing.

वेद-स्मृति शिष्ट सम्बन्ध *veda-smṛti-śiṣṭ sambandha* - means gaining one's sense of basic values in life through studying the Vedas and the Upanishads and also the स्मृति *smṛti*, which is exemplifying the knowledge of the Vedas and Upanishads, together with cultivating proper associations with the learned and wise people in the society who have already been well-brought up in the Vedic tradition indicated above

प्रत्यक्ष अनुमान - आगम सम्बन्ध *pratyakṣa-anumāna-aagama sambandha* means gaining one's sense of basic values in life by one's own self-effort through direct personal worldly experience followed by reflection and inference, supported by studies of the Vedas and the Upanishads as प्रमाण *pramāṇa*, as the means of knowledge governing all of one's actions in daily life.

In all the above three modes of one's upbringing, what is essentially accomplished is the assiduous cultivation of an abiding life-long शिष्य-शिक्षक भाव सम्बन्ध *śiṣya-śikṣaka bhāva sambandha* - a natural mental disposition of an attitude of student-teacher relationship conducive to gaining clarity of knowledge and commitment to propriety in daily life. In order to sustain that mental disposition throughout one's life, it is also necessary for one to be a त्रिकर्म कृत् *trikarma kṛt*.

त्रिकर्म कृत् *trakarma kṛt* - means one who does properly and diligently all the three kinds of कर्म *karmas*, namely यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, दान कर्म *dāna karma* and तपस् कर्म *tapas karma* every day throughout one's life. As Sri Krishna says in the भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā*

यज्ञ दान तपः कर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यं एव तत् 18 -5
yajña dāna tapaḥ karma na tyājyaṁ kārya ṁ eva tat

The यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, दान कर्म *dāna karma* and तपस् कर्म *tapas karma* each one of them is कर्म *karma* to be done by everybody, every day, all through one's life. They should never be given up. That is the Vedic mandate, the teaching of the Vedas and the Upanishads.



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- ✚ यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is any form of ईश्वर उपासन *īśvara upāsana* - worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which includes all of one's duties arising from one's station in life.
- ✚ दान कर्म *dāna karma* is maintenance of a charitable disposition, a disposition of giving and a willingness and readiness to help others in need in whatever way one can.
- ✚ तपस् कर्म *tapas karma* is maintenance of a constant disposition of personal discipline at all the three levels – काय तपस् *kāya tapas*, वाक् तपस् *vāk tapas* and मानस तपस् *mānas tapas* - discipline at the body level, speech level and mind level. Reading one's scriptures every day like वेद अध्ययनं *veda adhyayanam* is also part of one's तपस् कर्म *tapas karma*.

All the three kinds of कर्म *karmas* must be done with proper attitude, namely सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च *saṅgam tyaktvaa phalāni ca*- totally giving up all मम बुद्धि - *mama buddhi* egoistic notions and also totally giving up all desires and expectations for the fruits of actions. That is the लक्षण *lakṣaṇa* of one who is a त्रिकर्म कृत् *trikarma kṛt*. Therefore,

त्रिणाचिकेतः त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं त्रिकर्म कृत् तरति जन्ममृत्युं *traṇāciketah trabhiretya sandhim trikarma kṛt tarati janma mr̥tyū* means, any person who is already well brought-up and well educated in the Vedic tradition, and who has also been performing one's यज्ञ *yajña*, दान *dāna*, तपस् कर्म *tapasa karmas* daily, diligently and properly. If such a person performs the नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni* ritual three times, each time with clear knowledge and full conviction, that person goes to स्वर्ग *svarga* after death, so says Lord यम *yama*.

Our scriptures talk about several स्वर्ग लोक *svarga lokās*, such as गन्धर्व लोक *gandharva loka*, देव लोक *deva loka*, इन्द्र लोक *indra loka*, etc. all the way up to ब्रह्म लोक *brahma loka* - the abode of ब्रह्माजी *brahmāji* - the creator, in terms of different levels of शान्ति *śānti* and आनन्द *ānand* - peace and joy one experientially enjoys.



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Lord यम *yama* now goes on to say how a त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa* described above can gain such ब्रह्मलोक शान्ति *brahma loka śānti* - can gain the peace and joy of ब्रह्मलोक *brahma loka*, even while still living in this world by combining the कर्म *karma* of नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni* Havan ritual together with उपासन *upāsana* - meditation on the विराट्- पुरुष *virāṭ - puruṣa* invoked in the अग्नि देवता *agni devatā* of the Havan alter.

ब्रह्मजज्ञं देवमीड्यं विदित्वा निचाय्य इमां शान्तिं अत्यन्तं एति ॥

brahmajajñam devamīdyaṁ viditvā nicāyya imāṁ śantiṁ atyantam eti ॥

The त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa* described above, even while he is performing the नाचिकेताग्नि यज्ञ कर्म *nāciketāgni yajña karma* Havan ritual ब्रह्मजज्ञं देवं ईड्यं विदित्वा *brahmajajñam devam īdyaṁ viditvā* - knowing, recognizing - how? through the words of the Vedas and the Upanishads as प्रमाण *pramāṇa* - means of knowledge, so knowing and recognizing, what? देवं ईड्यं *devam īdyaṁ* - the अग्नि देवता *agni devatā* that is being worshipped in the Havan alter, is ब्रह्मजज्ञं *brahmajajñam*, परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself as विराट् *virāṭ*, the cosmic creation, the entire universe manifested in the समष्टि रूप *samaṣṭi rūpa* - totality of all forms and names.

The word ब्रह्मजज्ञं *brahmajajñam* is a combination of three words: ब्रह्म *brahma* is the Unmanifest परं ब्रह्म *param brahma*, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar* described in the भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā* as पुरुषोत्तम *puruṣottama*; ब्रह्मज *brahmaja* is हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇyagarbha*, the entire creation in its undifferentiated, unmanifest form, born of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*

ब्रह्मजज्ञं *brahmajajña* is विराट् *virāṭ* - the entire creation manifested in the undifferentiated form born of हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇyagarbha*

परमेश्वर-हिरण्यगर्भ-विराट् *parameśvar-hiraṇyagarbha-virāṭ* that is the sequence in the process of creation. It is that विराट् समष्टि रूप जगत् *virāṭ samaṣṭi rūpa jagat* - the totality of the entire creation that is invoked and installed (प्रातिष्ठा *prātiṣṭhā*) in the अग्नि देवता *agni devatā* in the नाचिकेता अग्नि *nāciketā agni* Havan कर्म *karma* through वेद मन्त्र *veda mantras*.



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While performing that Havan कर्म *karma*, that यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* with full knowledge and conviction, the त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa* - the performer of the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* realizes that what he is worshipping in the Havan altar is indeed That विराट् -परमेश्वर *virāt-parameśvar* in the form of the entire creation.

विदित्वा *viditvaa* - so realizing and at the same time

निचाय्य *nicāyya*- meaning आत्मभावेन निचाय्य *ātmabhāvena nicāyya*

Meditating on that विराट् *virāt* as one's own self, which means totally identifying oneself with that विराट् *virāt*, there is no distance between the meditator and the meditated, such meditation is निचाय्य *nicāyya*. With such meditation during यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, when the meditator performs the oblation in the अग्नि *agni* saying अग्नेः स्वाहा *agneḥ svāhā*, meaning, for that विराट् *virāt* this is the oblation, what happens is, the अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* - the ego in the meditator is resolved and disappears into the अग्नि *agni*, leaving the meditator with शुद्ध अन्तःकरणं *śuddha antaḥ karaṇam* - purity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. As a result the meditator doing the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*

इमां शान्तिं अत्यन्तं एति *imāṁ śāntim atyantam eti* - एति *eti* gains, *please note the present tense here*

इमां शान्तिं *imāṁ śāntim* - इमां स्वबुद्धिं प्रत्यक्षां शान्तिं *imāṁ svabuddhiḥ pratyakṣāṁ śāntim* - this directly experienced शान्तिं *śānti* - peace and joy which is also

अत्यन्तं शान्तिं *atyantam śāntim* - abiding, long-lasting शान्तिं *śānti*. This शान्तिं *śānti*, peace and joy, can be experienced as long as one's total identification with विराट् *virāt* is there in one's अन्तःकरणं *antaḥ karaṇam*, mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. Since विराट् *virāt* lasts till the end of this cycle of creation, which is indeed a very long time, this विराट् शान्तिं *virāt śānti* will also last for a very long time. So it is अत्यन्तं शान्तिं *atyanta śānti* - abiding, long-lasting शान्तिं *śānti*. The कृकार शब्द *kāra śabd* in इमां शान्तिं *imā śānti* indicates gaining such शान्तिं *śānti* through one's total identification with विराट् *virāt* is indeed a Divine Blessing.



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Such इमौ शान्ति *śānti* is ब्रह्मलोक शान्ति *brahma loka śānti* peace and joy obtainable in ब्रह्मलोक *brahma loka*. It can be enjoyed by a त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa* even during his life time in this world of human beings through the combined result of नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni*, यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, and विराट् उपासन *virāṭ upāsana* during that यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. Such is the glory of नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni* taught by Lord यम *yama* to Nachiketa.

त्रिणाचिकेतः त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं त्रिकर्मकृत् तरति जन्ममृत्यू ।

triṇāciketaḥ tribhiretya sandhiṁ trikarmakṛt tarati janma mṛtyū ब्रह्मजज्ञं
देवमीड्यं विदित्वा निचाय्य इमौ शान्तिं अत्यन्तं एति ॥

brahma jajñam devamīḍyaṁ viditvā nicāyya imāṁ śantiṁ atyantam eti ॥

Let us remember this verse. It is a very important verse because it covers the essential content of the entire कर्मकाण्ड *karma kāṇḍ* of the Vedas.

In the next verse, Lord यम *yama* summarizes his teachings on अग्नि विज्ञानं *agni vijñānam* sought by Nachiketa as follows

त्रिणाचिकेतः त्रियमेतत् विदित्वा य एवं विद्वाश्चिनुते नाचिकेतं ।

triṇāciketaḥ triyametat viditvā ya evaṁ vidvāścīnute nāciketam ।

स मृत्यु पाशान् पुरतः प्रणोद्य शोकातिगो मोदते स्वर्गलोके ॥ 1 - 18

sa mṛtyu pāśān purataḥ praṇodya śokātigo modate svargaloke ॥

त्रिणाचिकेतः *triṇāciketaḥ* - The one who has performed the नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni* Havan ritual three times, each time with clear knowledge and full conviction

त्रयं एतत् विदित्वा *trayaṁ etat viditvā* - knowing fully, recognizing fully the mode and significance of all the three details involved in the design, construction and operation of the Havan alter as indicated earlier, namely

या इष्टका यावतीः वा यथा वा *yā iṣṭakā yāvatiḥ vā yathā vā* - the nature of the bricks involved, the number of such bricks needed, and all the techniques and वेद मन्त्र *veda mantras* involved, in getting the Havan alter fit for performing the oblations. By calling attention to these three details, Lord यम *yama* emphasizes the importance of



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these details for the ultimate success of the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* to yield the desired result.

For example, building the Havan Alter for the नाचिकेताग्नि यज्ञ कर्म *nāciketāgni yajña karma* is not simply a matter of collecting some bricks and arranging them according to convenience. The whole process here is a scripturally ordained one. Elsewhere it is stated that the Havan Altar for this यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* involves a total of 720 bricks, each to be purified and subsequently sanctified by वेद मन्त्रs *veda mantras* and carefully arranged in a prescribed manner. The sanctifying वेद मन्त्रs *veda mantras* are different for each brick. All these details are to be very strictly followed even before commencing the oblation and उपासन मन्त्रs *upāsana mantras*. Therefore त्रयं एतत् विदित्वा *trayaṁ etat viditvā* means recognizing fully the mode and the significance of all the above details, the one who performs the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* and also

यः एव विद्वान् चिनुते नाचिकेतं *yaḥ evaṁ vidvān cinute nāciketam* - विद्वान् *vidvān* here is the त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa* - the performer of the नाचिकेताग्नि *nāciketāgni*, who also (आत्म रूपेण) चिनुते (*ātma rūpeṇa*) *cinute* does the Upasana, which means, who also meditates on the विराट् अग्नि *virāṭ agni*, totally identifying oneself with the विराट् *virāṭ* invoked into the अग्नि देवता *agni devatā* as pointed out earlier

सः *saḥ* - that person

मृत्युपाशान् पुरतः प्रणोद्य *mṛtyu pāśān purataḥ praṇodya*

प्रणोद्य *praṇodya* - being released from मृत्यु पाशान् *mṛtyu pāśān*, all bondages to death, all obstructions to gain identity with विराट् *virāṭ*

पुरतः *purataḥ* - even before the death of the physical body

शोकातिगः (सन्) *śokātigaḥ (san)* -having become one who has crossed, who has become free from sorrow and distress of all kinds

मोदते स्वर्गलोके *modate svargaloke* - enjoys the Peace and Joy of स्वर्गलोक *svargalok*. स्वर्गलोक *svargalok* here is ब्रह्मलोक *brahmalok*.

That त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa* enjoys the peace and joy of ब्रह्मलोक *brahmalok* even before the death of his physical body. Such is the glory and power of नाचिकेताग्नि यज्ञ



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कर्म *nāciketāgni yajña karma* when combined with चिराद् उपासन *virāt upāsana* during the performance of the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*.

This verse completes Lord यम's *yama's* teaching on अग्नि विज्ञानं *agni vijñānam* to Nachiketa.

We must understand here that the शान्ति *śānti* - peace and joy obtained by a त्रिणाचिकेत *triṇāciketa* by the combination of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* and चिराद् *virāt* Upasana is only अनुभव शान्ति *anubhava śānti*, which means शान्ति *śānti* gained by a कर्म *karma*. Even though it is an exalted शान्ति *śānti* gained by an exalted कर्म *karma*, it is still bound by time, which means that it is not the eternal स्वरूप शान्ति *svarūp śānti*. It is not मोक्ष. It is not ॐ शान्ति. It is not सत्य स्वरूप-ज्ञान स्वरूप-अनन्त स्वरूप शान्ति *satya svarūp-jñāna svarūp-ananta svarūp śānti* which is obtainable only through आत्म ज्ञान-ब्रह्म ज्ञान-ईश्वर ज्ञान *ātma jñānam-brahma jñānam-īśvara jñānam*.

Now, concluding his response with respect to Nachiketa's request for his second boon, Lord यम *yama* tells Nachiketa:

एष ते अग्निः नचिकेतः स्वर्ग्यो यं अवृणीथाः द्वितीयेन वरेण ।

eṣa te agniḥ naciketaḥ svargyo yaṁ avṛṇīthaḥ dvitīyena vareṇa |

एतं अग्निं तवैव प्रवक्ष्यन्ति जनासः तृतीयं वरं नचिकेतो वृणीष्व ॥

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etaṁ agniṁ tavaiva pravakṣyanti janāsaḥ tṛtīyaṁ varaṁ naciketo vṛṇīśva ||

नचिकेतः *naciketaḥ* - O! Nachiketa

एषः स्वर्ग्यो अग्निः ते (तुभ्यं) *eṣaḥ svargyo agniḥ te (tubhyaṁ)* -This अग्नि विज्ञानं *agni vijñānam* - this knowledge about that यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* that leads to स्वर्ग - Heaven, is for you, is now yours

यं अवृणीथाः द्वितीयेन वरेण *yaṁ avṛṇīthāḥ dvitīyena vareṇa*

यं *yaṁ* - which knowledge,

अवृणीथाः *avṛṇīthāḥ* - you asked for

द्वितीयेन वरेण *dvitīyena vareṇa* - by your second boon



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The knowledge that you asked for as your second boon has now been given to you in full. Moreover, hereafter

एतं अग्निं तव एव प्रवक्ष्यन्ति जनासः *etaṁ agniṁ tava eva pravakṣyanti janāsaḥ*

जनासः *janāsaḥ* - People in the world

एतं अग्निं प्रवक्ष्यान्ति *etaṁ agniṁ pravakṣyanti* - will talk about this

अग्निं विज्ञानं *agniṁ vijñānaṁ* knowledge about this यज्ञं कर्म *yajña karma* gloriously

तव एव *tava eva* means तव नाम्ना एव *tava nāmnā eva* - by your name only, which means henceforward, this अग्निं विज्ञानं *agni vijñānaṁ* will become well-known in the world as नाचिकेताग्निं *nāciketāgni* - the अग्निं विज्ञानं *agni vijñānaṁ* named after Nachiketa. This additional boon I am giving you of my own accord, in appreciation of your श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and ability with respect to this अग्निं विज्ञानं *agni vijñānaṁ*.
Now,

नचिकेतः *naciketaḥ* - O! Nachiketa

तृतीयं वरं वृणीष्व *tṛtīyaṁ varaṁ vṛṇīśva* - Please ask for the third boon that I granted you.

Thus Lord यम *yama* reminds the boy Nachiketa to ask for the third boon. The reason is obvious. Lord यम *yama* feels that he is obliged in terms of his own conduct to give Nachiketa the third boon which he still owes to Nachiketa. Until the third boon is given, Lord यम *yama* is not free from his own obligations. Lord यम *yama* calls upon Nachiketa to ask for his third boon as he likes.

Nachiketa is ready to ask for his third and the final boon, which he asks in the next verse. Before I conclude, I would like to say: Let us not get impatient with the details of Nachiketa's story. The Upanishad is not just telling us a story. The Upanishad is communicating a message, which we will see next time.