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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

केनोपनिषत्

Kena Upanishad

Chapter 1

Volume 1

Vedanta is a Teaching Tradition. It has maintained the flow of Vedantic Knowledge through thousands of years. Flow of any kind of knowledge is the integral expression of four distinct components: The Teacher, the student, the knowledge itself and the method of communicating that knowledge.

When each one of these components is extraordinary, the result is also extraordinary. Such is the case with respect to the Vedantic tradition.

Here, the teacher is extraordinary because not all teachers can impart Vedantic Knowledge. One should be proficient in both ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* and योग शास्त्र *yoga śāstra* in order to be able to teach Vedantic Knowledge. The student is extraordinary because not all students are mature enough to seek Vedantic knowledge. The knowledge itself is extraordinary because It is ever ancient, and at the same time, It is ever new.

The method of communicating That Knowledge is also extraordinary, because the subject involved is beyond the scope of words and beyond the reach of mind, but it can still be grasped by the intellect. Consequently, the result is also extraordinary because it leads to perennial Flow of Vedantic knowledge and ultimately to Total Fulfillment in life.

Such is the extraordinary nature of this Vedantic tradition. It is indeed so extraordinary that even after thousands of years of uneven history, we can assemble here at this Temple of Knowledge and recognize the roots of our common heritage, and draw strength and inspiration from the wisdom of our forefathers through the words of the Upanishads.

Let us together take time today to *think* about this *flow* of Vedantic knowledge through generations of mankind.

Just *think* about it.

Even the very thought of it uplifts you closer to the best in yourself. Even the very thought of it is a form of ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvar dhyānam* - ईश्वर उपासन *īśvar upāsana* - a meditation on परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*. This kind of meditation is an essential part of Vedic education for cultivating Upanishadic Knowledge in oneself. This form of



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

## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

meditation - meditation on the flow of Vedantic knowledge is called **संहित उपासन** *samhita upāsana*.

**संहितं** *samhitam* means integration of several components . When such integration uplifts your mind and brings and sustains God-consciousness in you, it is called **संहितं** *samhitam*. A meditation on **परमेश्वर** *parameśvar* arising from **संहितं** *samhitam* is called **संहित उपासन** *samhita upāsana*. This particular **संहित उपासन** *samhita upāsana* arises from an appreciation of **विद्यं** *vidyam* - flow of **ब्रह्मविद्या** *brahma vidyā* - flow of Upanishadic knowledge. Please listen to what the Taittiriya Upanishad says on this **उपासन** *upāsana*.

अथाधि विध्यम् । आचार्यं पूर्वं रूपं ।  
*athādhi vidhyam | ācārya pūrva rūpaṁ |*  
अन्तेवास्युत्तररूपं । विद्या सन्धिः ।  
*antevāsyuttararūpaṁ | vidyā sandhiḥ |*  
प्रवचनं सन्धानं । इत्यधि विद्यम् ॥  
*pravacanam sandhānam | ityadhi vidyam ॥*

अथाधि विद्यम् *athādhi vidyam* (अथ अधि विद्यम् *atha adhi vidyam*) - Now meditate upon **विद्यं** *vidyam* - flow of **ब्रह्मविद्या** *brahma vidyā* - flow of Upanishad knowledge. How do you meditate upon Flow of Upanishad Knowledge? The Upanishad says,

**आचार्यं पूर्वं रूपं** *ācārya pūrva rūpaṁ* - First **think** about the extraordinary teacher. The teacher comes first because when you are ready for this knowledge, the teacher is already there.

**अन्तेवास्युत्तररूपं** *antevāsyuttararūpaṁ* (अन्तेवासी उत्तर रूपं *antevāsī uttara rūpaṁ*) - Then **think** about the extraordinary student. If at any time you **think** and decide that you must seek this knowledge, you are already extraordinary yourself. Then **think** about yourself.

**विद्या सन्धिः** *vidyā sandhiḥ* - Then **think** about the extraordinary knowledge which connects the teacher and the student.

**प्रवचनं सन्धानं** *pravacanam sandhānam* - Then **think** about the extraordinary method of Upanishadic Teaching by which the teacher-student knowledge integration is brought about, then finally



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

## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

इत्यधि विद्यम् *ityadhi vidyam* (इति अधि विद्यम् *iti adhi vidyam*) - think about the result, namely, the perennial flow of  
ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* - ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvar jñānaṁ* from generation to generation and the ultimate result, मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total Fulfillment in Life.

That is संहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana* on विद्यं *vidyam* - Meditation on the *flow* of Upanishad Knowledge. With this Meditation, with this **thought** in our minds let us commence our readings on केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat* from साम वेद *sām veda*.

As we already know, every Upanishad starts with a शान्ति पाठ *śānti pāṭh* - Peace Invocation, which prepares the mind for the adventure of enlightening thoughts ahead. The केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat* starts with two Peace Invocations as follows.

ओं सहना ववतु । सहनौ भुनक्तु । सहवीर्यं करवावहै ।  
*om sahanā vavatu | sahanau bhunaktu | sahavīryaṁ karavāvahai |*  
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥  
*tejasvi nāvadhītamastu mā vidviṣāvahai ||*  
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥  
*om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||*

ओं आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि । वाक् प्राणश्चक्षुः  
*om āpyāyantu mamāṅgāni | vāk prāṇaśchakṣuḥ*  
श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ।  
*śrotramatho balam indrayāṇi ca sarvāṇi |*  
सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदम् । माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्याम् ।  
*sarvaṁ brahmopaniṣadam | māhaṁ brahma nirākuryām |*  
मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोत् । अनिराकरणं अस्तु । अनिराकरणं मे अस्तु । तदात्मनि निरते य  
*mā mā brahma nirākarot | anirākaraṇaṁ astu | anirākaraṇaṁ me astu |*  
*tadātmani nirate ya*  
उपनिषत्सु धर्माः ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ॥  
*upaniṣatsu dharmāḥ te mayi santu te mayi santu ||*  
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥  
*om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||*



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

These two Peace Invocations when taken together have a special significance. They arise directly from the संहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana* which we talked about. Together they constitute an Upanishad in themselves. This Upanishad is called संहित उपनिषत् *saṁhita upaniṣat* - a spontaneous expression, arising from Meditation on विद्यं *vidyaṁ* - flow of Upanishadic knowledge. The context is the following. Here is the teacher, qualified and willing to teach. Here is the student, qualified, ready and eager to learn. The knowledge involved is difficult to communicate and it is even more difficult to absorb. The establishment of विद्यं *vidyaṁ* - flow of this knowledge, is full of obstacles, known and unknown. Yet, विद्यं *vidyaṁ*, by its very nature, has to take place. That is possible only by the Grace of God. Realizing this, the teacher and the student (or students) together seek the Grace of God in the following words:

ओं *om* - uttering the ओं कार ध्वनि *om kār dhvani* - the sound ओं *om* in unison, reverentially seeking the grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* with ज्ञान लक्षण ईश्वर भक्ति *jñāna lakṣaṇa īśvar bhakti* - which means feeling the presence of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* everywhere in one's शरीर *śarīra* - all thoughts, all words, all actions, naturally and spontaneously flowing into, merging into and disappearing into the Ocean of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, with such ज्ञान लक्षण ईश्वर भक्ति *jñāna lakṣaṇa īśvar bhakti*, the teacher and the students together say the following prayer seeking the Grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* for the success of the flow of Upanishad knowledge.

सहना वचतु *sahanā vavatu* (सह नौ अवतु *sahanau avatu*) - May the Lord protect us all, together; may the Lord uplift us, together, from every kind of obstacle to our joint endeavour.

सह नौ भुनक्तु *saha nau bhunaktu* - May the Lord bring nourishment to all of us together. Here the nourishing food is Upanishad knowledge. An undigested knowledge is as harmful as undigested food. Therefore, may the Lord give us the ability to assimilate this knowledge together. Let us seek the Grace of God to understand and appreciate what we have set out to study.

सह वीर्यं करवावहै *saha vīryaṁ karavāvahai* - May this study inspire us to greatness in action. How can one be inspired to greatness in action?

- आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यं *ātmanā vindate vīryaṁ* (Ke U 2 - 4) - Only by realizing that the source of greatness in action is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself
- वीत-राग-भय-क्रोधः *vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ* (G 2-56) - Only by being free from the hold of the forces of likes and dislikes, from fear and anger



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

- उपैति शान्त रजसं ब्रह्म भूतं अकल्मषं *upaiti śānta rajasaṁ brahma bhūtaṁ akalmaṣaṁ* (G 6-27) - Only when one is totally free from false values, only when one is in peace with oneself; only when one recognizes the true nature of oneself
- कर्मणि अकर्मयः पश्येत् *karmaṇi akarmayaḥ paśyet* - Only when one sees परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in all actions, only then one is inspired to greatness in action
- सहवीर्यं करवावहै *sahavīryaṁ karavāvahai* - May this study inspire all of us to such greatness in action.

तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु *tejasvi nāvadhītam astu* - (तेजस्वि नौ अधीतं अस्तु *tejasvi nau adhītaṁ astu*) - O! Lord, may this study bring Enlightenment to all of us. When does one become a तेजस्वि *tejasvi* - an enlightened person? The Gita says,

सर्वभूतस्थं आत्मानं सर्वभूतानि च आत्मनि *sarva bhūtasthaṁ ātmānaṁ sarva bhūtāni ca ātmani* (G 6-29) - Only when one recognizes in oneself the "I" of all beings and at the same time, one recognizes all beings in the "I" of one's own SELF.

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति *yo māṁ paśyati savatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati* (G 6-31) - Only when one sees परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in everything that exists in this creation and at the same time one sees everything in this creation in the same परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, only then one becomes a तेजस्वि *tejasvi* - an Enlightened person.

तेजस्वि नौ अधीतं अस्तु *tejasvi nau adhītaṁ astu* - May this study bring such Enlightenment to all of us.

मा विद्विषावहै *mā vidviṣāvahai* - May this study never give rise to any kind of द्वेष *dveṣa* - intolerance, jealousy or hatred among us. O! Lord, by thy Grace let us all be free from any kind of द्वेष *dveṣa* so that we are fit for ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* - Upanishad knowledge.

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥*

नमस्कार *namaskār* to ओं *om*, That शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् *śabda rūpa pratyakṣa brahman*. That शान्ति स्वरूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् *śānti svarūpa pratyakṣa brahman*, That सत्य स्वरूप *satya svarūpa* - ज्ञान स्वरूप *jñāna svarūpa* - आनन्द स्वरूप प्रत्यक्ष



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

## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

ब्रह्मन् *ānand svarūp pratyakṣa brahman*. नमस्कार *namaskār* to that ब्रह्मन् *brahman* again, again and again.

Thus the first **Peace Invocation** ends with a prayer for the Union of Hearts in Peace and Harmony among all the participants in this adventure of ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* - seeking realization of Upanishad knowledge. Since this Peace Invocation is concerned with the flow of Upanishad knowledge, this is the शान्ति पाठ *śānti pāṭh* that is most frequently used in connection with the study of any Upanishad knowledge, any time, anywhere.

The second शान्ति पाठ *śānti pāṭh* in this Upanishad is already a familiar one. We have seen it in detail in our earlier Scripture Readings. For our purpose today, let us briefly recall its contents. This Peace Invocation is a prayer at an intensely personal level.

ओं आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि *om āpyāyantu mamāṅgāni* । वाक् प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि *vāk prāṇaścakṣuḥ śrotram atho balam indriyāṇi ca sarvāṇi* - O! Lord, let me enjoy good health so that all parts of my body may serve me well in the pursuit of Upanishad knowledge through this study.

सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदम् *sarvaṁ brahmopaniṣadam* -That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* revealed by the words of the Upanishads is सर्वं *sarvaṁ* -Everything, including myself. I want to realize my identity with That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in this very life. That is my goal.

माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्याम् *māhaṁ brahma nirākuryām* - May I never reject that ब्रह्मन् *brahman* simply because I have not yet been able to realize that ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in myself due to my own shortcomings. Let me not give up Upanishad studies in despair.

मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोत् *mā mā brahma nirākarot* - Let That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* never reject me. May the grace of that ब्रह्मन् *brahman* be ever with me in my endeavors.

अनिराकरणं अस्तु *anirākaraṇaṁ astu* - Let there never be any rejection on the part of the Lord. Let me enjoy the grace of God at all times.

अनिराकरणं मे अस्तु *anirākaraṇaṁ me astu* On my part also, let there never be any rejection of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* due to my own shortcomings. Let my love for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, let my love for Upanishad knowledge be ever-steady, sure and firm, because

तदात्मनि निरते *tadātmani nirate* - I am sincere in my devotion to ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, in my commitment to Upanishad knowledge.



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

## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

य उपनिषत्सु धर्माः ते मयि सन्तु *ya upaniṣatsu dharmāḥ te mayi santu* -  
Whatever moral values and virtues are necessary for gaining Upanishad knowledge,  
may those moral values and virtues be with me.

ते मयि सन्तु *te mayi santu* - Let me repeat my prayer. May those moral values and  
virtues ever be with me.

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः *om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ* - नमस्कार *namaskār* to ओं  
ब्रह्मन् *om brahman*

Thus ends the संहित उपनिषत् *saṁhita upaniṣat*. This Upanishad cum-Peace  
Invocation sets the mood for the study of केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat* which follows.

This Upanishad contains four short chapters. The first two chapters constitute the  
section on ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* - Pure knowledge. The last two chapters constitute the उपासन  
*upāsana* section for this Upanishad. The उपासन *upāsana* section takes the form of a  
story for reflection and contemplation on Upanishad knowledge. We start with chapter 1.  
In continuation of the mood set in Peace Invocation, the Upanishad opens with a set of  
questions from a student. The student wants to know:

ओं केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः

*om keneṣitaṁ patati preṣitaṁ manaḥ*

केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।

*kena prāṇaḥ prathamah praiti yuktaḥ ।*

केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति

*keneṣitāṁ vācamimāṁ vadanti*

चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

1 - 1

*cakṣuḥ śrotraṁ ka u devo yunakti ॥*

Uttering the word ओं *om* - the word of auspiciousness with an attitude of reverential  
devotion to ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* - Upanishad knowledge, the student asks the  
following set of questions:

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः

*keneṣitaṁ patati preṣitaṁ manaḥ*

केन इषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः

*kena iṣitaṁ patati preṣitaṁ manaḥ*

केन इषितं, केन प्रेषितं मनः पतति



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

## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

*kena iṣitam, kena preṣitam manaḥ patati*

इषितं *iṣitam* - means to wish, to be able to wish

प्र इषितं *pra iṣitam* is प्रेषितं *preṣitam* - means to wish something specific, i.e. to will

केन इषितं *kena iṣitam* - wished by whom

केन प्रेषितं *kena preṣitam* - willed by whom

मनः पतति - *manaḥ patati*

The mind falls on objects.

The mind lands on objects.

The mind entertains thoughts.

Please note that there are three questions here.

केन इषितं मनः पतति *kena iṣitam manaḥ patati* - Wished by whom, the mind entertains thoughts

केन प्रेषितं मनः पतति *kena preṣitam manaḥ patati* - Willed by whom the mind entertains specific thoughts and (the third question is)

इषितं प्रेषितं मनः *iṣitam preṣitam manaḥ* - Wishing and willing, my mind moves from object to object - केन *kena*? By what power this mind movement takes place?

That is the first line in the Upanishad. We will come back to this line a little later. Now the second line.

केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः *kena prāṇaḥ prathamah praiti yuktaḥ* - Here again, there are three questions

केन युक्तः प्रथमः प्राणः प्रैति *kena yuktaḥ prathamah prāṇaḥ praiti*

केन युक्तः *kena yuktaḥ* - Impelled by whom, directed by whom

प्राणः *prāṇaḥ* - refers to all physiological functions in the body

प्रथमः प्राणः *prathamah prāṇaḥ* - the foremost physiological function, namely breathing

प्रैति *praiti* = प्रकर्षण एति *prakarṣeṇa eti* - गच्छति *gacchati* - Breathing goes on naturally. Breathing takes place naturally, spontaneously, methodically without any apparent effort on my part. Therefore

केन युक्तः प्रथमः प्राणः प्रैति *kena yuktaḥ prathamah prāṇaḥ praiti* means, directed by whom, controlled by whom this breathing takes place methodically and spontaneously. One can read this line in another way also.



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

## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

प्रथमः प्राणः प्रैति *prathamah prāṇah praiti* - My breathing takes place naturally by itself

केन *kena* - By what power is this happening? Again,

युक्तः केन - I am a युक्तः *yuktaḥ*. I have been watching my spiritual progress over the years. I recognize that I have now grown up considerably compared to what I was before. I am now a युक्तः *yuktaḥ*

युक्तः *yuktaḥ* means विनियतं चित्तः *viniyataṁ cittah*. My mind is now totally absorbed in ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* - Upanishad knowledge, and also

निसृष्टः सर्व कामेभ्यः *nispṛhaḥ sarva kāmehbyah* - My mind is free from any longing or craving for sense objects. Thus I am now a युक्तः *yuktaḥ*. My mind has grown to that level of maturity. I feel it, I appreciate it, I enjoy it. Now

केन *kena*? - By what Power has my mind been able to reach that level of maturity?

That is the second line in the Upanishad. Now we go to the third line.

केन इषितां वाचं इमां वदन्ति *kena iṣitaṁ vācaṁ imāṁ vadanti*

केन इषितां *kena iṣitaṁ* - By whose wish, by whose orders

इमां वाचं वदन्ति *imāṁ vācaṁ vadanti* - this वाक् इन्द्रिय *vāk indriya* this organ of speech speaks words. How come I am able to speak. By whose power are human beings able to speak words. That is the third line

Now the last line in the Upanishad

चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति *caḥṣuḥ śrotraṁ ka u devo yunakti*

कः देवः *kaḥ devaḥ* - Which Divine Being

युनक्ति *yunakti* - makes it possible so that

चक्षुः श्रोत्रं *caḥṣuḥ śrotraṁ* - my eyes are able to function as eyes, and my ears are able to function as ears, which means my organs of perception and action are able to function as they do naturally.

I have heard elsewhere that each organ of perception and each organ of action has its own देवता *devatā* - the presiding deity or law of nature. I know, for example that

- the देवता *devatā* for मनः *manaḥ* Mind is चन्द्रमा *candramā* Moon
- the देवता *devatā* for वाक् *vāk* (organ of speech) is वह्नि *vahni* Fire
- the देवता *devatā* for चक्षुः *caḥṣuḥ* (eyes) is सूर्य *sūrya* - The Sun



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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

- the देवता *devatā* for श्रोत्रं *śrotram* (ears ) is दिक् *dik* - the आकाश *ākāś* - the space above, etc.

My question is not about देवता *devatā* for any particular इन्द्रिय *indriya*. My question is

कः देवः *kaḥ devaḥ* - who is That Supreme being who is the देवता *devatā* of all देवताs *devatās*, who is the power behind all the इन्द्रियs *indriyas* taken together?

The verse ends with the sound उ *u* which is just an exclamation mark in Vedic language. This verse is really a Meditation verse. As you may recall, we started this Upanishad with a meditation on विद्यं *vidyam* - flow of ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā*. That meditation continues.

In this verse the meditation is on ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvar jñānam* - Knowledge of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. If one is ready for ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvar jñānam*, anything in nature, any situation in life, is a good enough starting point to start an enquiry on the nature of existence. Here the starting point is one's own self, and the enquiry is the most direct one.

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः  
*keneṣitam patati preṣitam manaḥ*  
केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।  
*kena prāṇaḥ prathamah praiti yuktaḥ ।*  
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति  
*keneṣitam vācamimām vadanti*  
चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥  
*cakṣuḥ śrotram ka u devo yunakti ॥*

That is the enquiry. We will reflect on the content of this enquiry and continue with the Upanishad next time.