

# Upanishad

## Katopanishad

In Katopanishad, we find a different metaphor, equally compelling. Religion is a means to steer individuals and community through a set of moral codes of conduct. All religions communicate and maintain their promulgation of moral codes and conduct through allegiance and practice of certain rituals. Hinduism is ripe with such rituals, the practice of “*Yagna*” being among the foremost. This ritual calls for worship to Fire God and a well described set of gifts or donations as acts of charity to the needy. Such *Yagna* fosters self-discipline, spirit of sacrifice, sharing with the needy. These are followed by intense reflection and introspection including the serious study of the Vedantic principles.

But in due course all religious rituals lose their sense of purpose. Blind allegiance to rituals often replaces purposeful and meaningful practices. Fear of the failings in life and the fear of death and the unknown nature of life after, often motivates many religious rituals. Katopanishad uses this decline in commitment and sense of purpose in religious practices as the backdrop, to raise several valid questions. In turn answers to these questions bring home [the essence of Vedanta](#).

The Katha Upanishad (Kāthopaniṣad) is one of the primary Upanishads, embedded in the last short eight sections of the Kāṭha school of the Krishna Yajurveda. Some authorities declare it to belong to the Yajur-Veda, others to the Sama-Veda, while a large number place it as part of the Atharva-Veda. The story is first suggested in the Rig-Veda; it is told more definitely in the Yajur-Veda; and in the Katha Upanishad it appears fully elaborated and interwoven with the loftiest Vedic teaching. The text presents a dialogue between an aspiring disciple, Nachiketas, and the Ruler of Death regarding the great hereafter.

<http://www.yoga-age.com/upanishads/katha.html>

Verse with Translation: [http://www.srimatham.com/uploads/5/5/4/9/5549439/katha\\_upanishad.pdf](http://www.srimatham.com/uploads/5/5/4/9/5549439/katha_upanishad.pdf)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkfJ9qpUQus>

Sahana Vavathu; Sahanau Bhunakthu; Saha Viryam Karavavahai

Thejaswin Ahitham Astu; Ma Vidvisha Vahai!

Om! Shanthi, Sganthi, Shanthihi !!

Let us be blessed: to live well together; eat and rejoice together; be courageous in our efforts; for glory in our effort and outcome; to see no difference (animosity or dislike) amongst us. Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

### Section1:

Once there was Vajasravasa desirous of the fruit of the religious sacrifice or Yagna. In this Yagna, we are told that he gave away all that he possessed. He had a son by name of Nachiketa.

Note:

“Nachiketa” means one who does not know or desirous of learning what he does not know!

This Upanishad starts with a direct contrast between ritual part of Veda (Karma Kanda) and the analytical reasoning part of Veda (Gnana Kanda).

As the gifts were being brought to the priests, faith entered Nachiketa and his thoughts. Although but a (mere) boy; he thought .....

Their water drunk, their grass eaten, their milk milked, their strength spent; joyless, are these cows being given away as gifts. What are those worlds, to which he, who presents such (cows) goes?

This Upanishad opens with the story of Vajasravasa, also called Aruni Auddalaki Gautama who gives away all his worldly possessions as part of the religious sacrifice (*Yagna*). However, his son Nachiketa sees that as the Yagna nears its end, the sacrifice as a farce, because all those worldly things being gifted now (all that is left over) are of no value to the recipients. The cows given away, for example, were so old that they had 'drank-their-last-water', 'eaten-their-last-grass' 'don't give milk', 'who are barren' .

Concerned, the son (realizing he was the only valuable possession left for his father) asked his father: "Dear father, to whom will you give me away?"

He repeated his question twice and then for a third time.

Father driven by anger replied: "To Death (Yama), I give you away."

Note:

Yama also means order, discipline and regulation.

Theology: Yama is the God of death in the Vedic pantheon of Gods. It is the order maintained by Yama (through his precise accounting of the good and bad of each person that maintains our life cycle).

Father Vajasravasa is performing the Yagna to escape the clutches of Yama to secure long life and a journey to heaven. Yet, in his anger he gifts away his very dear son to the same Yama, the God of death! This illustrates vividly the outcome of Rajasam (Bias) as a result of passion and uncontrolled attachment and anger!

First duty of the disciple is to anticipate the needs of the teachers and carry that out. The second (middle) is to do what you are asked to do. The third or the least is to ignore the command. Nachiketa wonders what is it he can do as the first duty to his father (previous teacher) and Yama – the God of death - the new teacher!

One view:

As the plants like corn (*Sasyam Iva*) grow, die and are re-born, so too people (*Marthya*) are born and die over generations. Hence father should not grieve but send him away to keep his promise.

Another view:

As plants like corn (*Sasyam Iva*) grow, die and are re-born, so too are people (*Marthya*) over generations. Then why have this fear of birth and death? This needs to be learned. Hence Nachiketa feels that Yama will be the right teacher for this knowledge!

Vaisvanara (Fire God) takes Nachiketa to the abode of Yama.

Nachiketa accepts his father's gifting him to Death. He visits the abode of Yama. Nachiketa arrives, but Yama is not at home. Nachiketa as guest waits and remains hungry for three nights.

On his return Yama is advised to treat the guest – the Brahmin boy – like the fire entering the home and take care of his needs by giving him seat, water, food, etc.

Yama is further reminded that hope and expectation, companionship and joy, sacrifices and benefit of charitable work, children and cattle and all are taken away from a person of little understanding in whose house a Brahmin has to fast as he remains unfed.

āśā = the hope for a desirable thing which is attainable though unknown; pratīkṣa = expectation for something that is attainable and known; saṅgatam = the fruit derived from the association with spiritual people; sūnṛta = joy (in Vedic Sanskrit), iṣṭam = fruit produced by sacrifice, pūrtam = fruit resulting from such charitable works as planting gardens, etc. putra-paśūmśca = sons and cattle; sarvān etat = all this; (he) vṛikte = excludes (from) i.e. destroys ; puruṣasya alpa-medhasaḥ = from a person of little intelligence; yasya = in whose; gṛhe = house; brāhmaṇaḥ = a Brāhmaṇa; anaśnan = not-eating, fasting; vasati = abides.

Yama is apologetic for this dishonor to the guest. So he offers Nachiketa three wishes.

Note: While the story above is brief, it conveys many moral codes and commentary on Vedic principles and practices. For example:

- Prayer (*Yagna*) or any religious celebration should be performed leading to total non-attachment. But, if they are treated literally just to follow the traditions they can lead to the situation where even a learned scholar like Vajasravasa forgets the meaning of gift and donates his lifeless and useless cows as an act of charity.
- Vedic philosophy requires constant searching of what we learn, observe and their meaning. Even a young boy like Nachiketa is not precluded from challenging the orthodoxy (his own father) if he finds something out of place or incorrect.
- Gods are metaphors for ideal representation of human values and conduct. In that sense even the God of Death is not excluded when he violates the social ethics of being respectful for His guests (Treat your guest as God: *Athithi Devo' Bhava*). When his unannounced guest had to wait and remain hungry it was required of Yama to make amends for such error. By offering the young boy three of his wishes to be full filled, Yama met his moral obligation.
- *Athithi* means one who arrives without appointment (unannounced). Imagine the freedom, comfort, objectivity and the non-attachment required to show up anywhere without plan and prior arrangement? This non-attachment also reflects a state of mind that is “liberated” – like the breeze that merely flows and by its mere movement (unannounced) spreads the fragrance for all to enjoy.

### **Nachiketa' first wish:**

Yama is asked to discharge Nachiketa from the abode of death, back to his family so that his father could be calm, well-disposed, not resentful and be usual self. Yama grants this first wish immediately - Katha Upanishad. 1.1.10

Yama said: “Having, recognized you as before (your father) Auddālaki, the son of Aruna, will get over his anger and seeing you released from the jaws of death through my favor, he will sleep peacefully many a night.” 1.1.11.

- Being respectful of elders is an important Vedic injunction (Treat your parents as God: *Mathru Devo' Bhava*; *Pithru Devo' Bhava*). Nachiketa ensures he is respectful of this injunction.

### **Nachiketa's second wish:**

Nachiketa prefaces his request with the statement that he is aware that heaven is a place where there is no fear, no anxiety, no old age, no hunger, no thirst, no sorrow. 1.1.12. He then asks to be instructed as to the proper execution of fire ritual (*Yagna*) that enables a human being to secure heaven. 1.1.13.

Yama responds by detailing the fire ritual, including how the bricks should be arranged, and how the fire represents the creation of the world.

Nachiketa repeats the ritual from his memory. Pleased with this accomplishment Yama declares that this *Yagna* will thereafter be called the "Nachiketa fires".

Yama adds that along with "three Nachiketa fires", anyone who respects three bonds (with mother, father and teacher), performs three duties (rituals, studies and charity) and understands the knowledge therein would become free of sorrow. 1.1.13 to 1.1.19.

- Being mindful of the full spectrum of duties or obligations is another Vedic injunction. Here we see the immortal recognition of the holy fire in the *Yagna* being named after him, Nachiketa is also reminded of his obligations: social living that is conducive for the welfare of others (represented by parents and teachers), discipline that comes from religious practices (rituals) non-attachment as displayed through charities as well as acquiring knowledge and the understanding gained from that.

### **Nachiketa's third wish:**

20. "What happens after a person dies? Does he continue to exist in another form or not?

Some say he exists, others say he does not. I would like learn from you the truth on this matter. This is my third wish"

This question arises from the notions of heaven and hell and passage of souls through many births until it reaches Moksha (liberation).

Ramanuja and Madhva Acharya: Some say that the liberated jīva is in a state of divine communion with the Lord, others say it is free from all qualities like knowledge etc. Some say that it is one with Paramātmān, others say that it will experience Brahman forever. I would like to know your conclusion

- It is important to note that Upanishads address such modern day questions directly and forthrightly. The answer depends on our ability understand in-depth the message in our scriptures.

Yama is reluctant to give a straight "yes" or "no" answer.

He states that even Gods have doubt and are uncertain about that question, and urges Nachiketa to pick another wish

Nachiketa says that if Gods have doubt on that, then "Yama" as deity of death ought to be the only one who knows the answer.

Yama offers him all sorts of wealth and pleasures.

Whatever desires are hard to attain in this world of mortals, ask for all those desires at your will. Here are noble maidens with chariots and musical instruments: the like of them cannot be won by men. Be served by these whom I give to you. O Naciketas, (pray) ask not about death. 1.1.25.

Nachiketa refuses all that and states “Human life is short. Yama keep all the worldly wealth and pleasures yourself. Pompous wealth, lust and pleasures are fleeting and vain. They will be gone the moment you decide to take away the life!”

Material objects and pleasures are classified into seven categories of limitations:

1. alpa — their end results are trivial
2. asthira — they are transient and impermanent,
3. asukara — not easily obtained, they require much effort and are time consuming.
4. asukhāvasāna — ultimately ending in grief and disappointments.
5. dukhānvita — accompanied by disappointments and supported only by struggle.
6. anucitam — incompatible with our essential being (in conflict with laws of nature).
7. abhimāna-mūla — they're based upon a false sense of self and lead to further perpetuation of this delusive sense of identity.

Above can be used as a checklist for use as routine practice. This will help to return our thoughts and mind away from subjectivity (personal and impulsive) and towards Objectivity.

He insists on knowing the nature of Atman (Soul) and sticks to his question, "what happens after death?" 1.1.20 to 29.

**Note:** One should not miss the brilliance of the metaphor described in the story. All of us know that death is certain. With death comes the separation from everything we aspire for as material possessions, comfort, connections, relations, etc. This understanding makes it all the more relevant to truly comprehend what is “birth” and “death”? They are none other than biological aspects of any living being? Is there a heaven and hell other than a conjecture in our mind, a metaphor for our thoughts and their positive or negative perspective?

## Section 2:

Following verses of Katopanishad provides answer to Nachiketha’s question:

Yama:

There are two paths or choices available to everyone at any time. One path is the “good” (*Shreyas*). The other path is “pleasant” (*Priyam*). They lead to different outcome or effects. But, both of them have impact on us. One who chooses the “good” gains from that choice. One who chooses the “pleasant” loses the value of life as a human being. 2.1.1.

He who chooses the “Good” attains peace and lasting happiness. He who prefers the “Pleasant” is always lost in the details of life, unable to attain his purpose of enduring happiness and peace.

The wise are not deceived by the attractions of the Pleasant.

They choose the Good. Fools are snared into the mere pleasant and perish. 2.1.2.

O Nachiketas, after pondering all pleasures of the “pleasant” that seem delightful, have rejected them all. You have not gone onto the road of “pleasant” that leads to wealth, in which many mortals have perished. 2.1.3.

Wide apart are ignorance (avidya) and what is known as wisdom (vidya). They lead to divergent ends.

O Naciketas, I know you are eager for wisdom; for (even) many desirable pleasures did not distract you. 2.1.4.

Abiding in the midst of ignorance, wise in their own self-esteem, thinking themselves to be learned, but in reality are fools. They wander painfully like blind led by the blind. 2.1.5.  
What lies beyond [death] is not apparent to the blundering simple-minded persons. They are deluded by the glamour of wealth and the “pleasant”. They think that this world as perceived by them alone exists and there is no other. In this web of thinking, he falls again and again under my (Yama’s) sway. 2.1.6.

That (Athman) cannot even be heard of by many. Many others even upon hearing about Athman do not comprehend That. Very rare is one who can teach about Athman. Very few are skillful who understands (It) when they are taught. Rare is one who knows Him (Athman), when instructed by the skillful. 2.1.7.

That [Athman] cannot be truly understood when taught by an inferior person, as It is conceived of in many ways. When taught by one who is fully Self-realized, there is no further dispute with regard to it. For it cannot be known by argument, being subtler than an atom. 2.1.8.

Not by reasoning is this knowledge attainable, dearest. But taught by another, it is well understood. You have obtained it, holding fast to truth. May we find, Naciketas, other inquirers like you. 2.1.9.

I know that wealth is impermanent. The eternal is not attained through impermanent things. By sacrificing impermanent things and performing the Nachiketa Sacrifice, I have reached the imperishable goal. 2.1.10.

Even Nachiketas despite his willingness to walk away from all material objects of pleasure (such as wealth, etc.) thinks that heaven is a place to be reached through Nachiketas Fire. Yama attempts to steer Nachiketas to further thinking and reflection as noted below:

Having examined patiently the consummate fulfillment of desire, the support of the universe, the final end of meditation, the other shore where there is no fear, the great expanse that is praiseworthy, the far-stretching, the foundation of life, O wise Naciketas, you have steadfastly renounced. 2.1.11.

Goal that we are seeking, the foundation for life: Great expanse - the far stretching - that is praiseworthy can be understood in three levels:

- The joy in life and the fulfillment of desires.
- Heaven: The goal that is sought after through prayer and rituals (Yagna); where there is no fear of birth and death, sickness or sorrow.
- Understanding that everything is enabled by Brahman (*Sarvam Brahma Mayam*)

Nachiketas rejected the first choice by refusing all the pleasurable objects given to him.

Then he is questioning the traditional path of prayers and Yagna (including Nachiketas Fire Yagna) to reach heaven. We know that Nachiketas is questioning this option, because he is asking “What happens after “death”, even though he has been taught Nachiketas Fire as the pathway for heaven after this life.

At this point, Yama had no choice but guide Nachiketas to the Philosophic reality – the third option above. We see more teaching towards this in the next verse. One can think of first two bullets as “Pleasant” and the last bullet as the path towards “good” – the two paths discussed above.

Concentrating the mind on the life giving force, man should realize the divine character of his own Soul or Spirit within and its inherent freedom. The Spirit lodged within oneself is unperceived because of the perplexities of joy and grief and attachment to worldly objects. Like the waves on the ocean surface hides or distracts our attention from the calm deep ocean that supports the waves.

When one realizes the divine Spirit within himself, all the confusion of joy and grief disappears. 2.1.12

Hearing this knowledge that I am teaching you (comprehending the knowledge of Brahman), separating the essence and realizing the subtle, one rejoices the true knowledge of the Self. I know that such an experience is wide open to you O Nachiketas. 2.1.13.

Nachiketas:

Tell me about that which you see beyond Dharma and Adharma, beyond cause and effect, beyond past and future. 2.1.14.

Yama:

That goal which is declared in Vedas, which all the disciplines such as meditation proclaim, this is the thought (understanding) reached by those seeking the knowledge of Brahman; seeking which people live religious life. I shall describe it by a single syllable — AUM 2.1.15.

This syllable is the Self. This syllable, indeed, is the highest knowledge; knowing this syllable, whatever anyone desires will, indeed, be his. 2.1.16.

This is the best (of all) means. This pathway is the highest; knowing this path one revels in the blissful realm of the Supreme. 2.1.17.

You are not born, nor do you die. You did not come from anything else, nor were you made out of something other than yourself. You are unborn, eternal, everlasting and always existed. You are not slain, though the body is slain. 2.1.18

Note: This verse is identical to B.G. Verse 2.20

na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin nāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ  
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato yaṃ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre

The enlightened person – inner person, soul or Dehinam is neither born nor dies at any time. Such a person has no beginning (such as birth), end (death) or return. Hence the person is unborn, eternal, permanent and ancient (transcends through time or generations). Thus, when the body is slain, the person is not slain.

It is like the electrical energy that illuminates all electrical bulbs. But when the bulb is broken or destroyed, the electrical energy remains and illuminates other bulbs in the circuit.

A battery may get discharged and hence become not useful, but the electrical energy is alive and well

If you think you slay someone, or that you will be slain by someone, you are wrong in both cases. The Soul neither slays nor is slain. 2.1.19

Note: This verse is identical to B.G. Verse 2.23

nainaṃ chindanti śāstrāṇi nainaṃ dahati pāvakaḥ

na cainaṃ kledayanty āpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ

The inner person (Soul: Dehinam) cannot be harmed by weapons, burned by the fire or wet by the water or dried by the wind. Such a person is never harmed, wet or dry.

Such a person is eternal, present everywhere, permanent and remains unchanged with time.

Subtler than the atom, greater than the greatest, the Soul (Athman) resides in the hearts of all living beings. He who makes himself desire less and has cast off his grief beholds the greatness of the Spirit within him. 2.1.20

This realization can come only from inside one's own heart spring with purity of resolve and earnestness of spirit. It does not come by study or learned discussions. It comes to one whose Self yearns for realization, and whose mind has turned away from the perturbations of duality (good/bad, like/dislike, etc.) and has learnt to subdue itself and to be at peace with the world around. 2.1.23, 24

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## Section 3:

3. Know the Self as the lord of the chariot and the body as the chariot, know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as the reins.
4. The senses, they say, are the horses; the objects of enjoyment the paths. The person associated with the body with the senses and the mind, the enlightened ones declare as the enjoyer.
5. The senses of one who has no insight, whose mind is always unrestrained, are out of control, as unruly horses are for a charioteer.
6. However, one who has insight, whose mind is always restrained; his senses are under control, as good horses are for a charioteer.
7. One, who has no insight, who has no control over the mind (and is) ever impure, reaches not that goal but returns to saṁsāra.

Samsara = Life of constant perturbations thanks to the duality of like/dislike, etc. It is being tossed around by the waves on the surface of the ocean.

Samsara – life of happiness/sorrow, etc. – is joyful and entertaining for the surfer who has learned to ride the waves. Good surfer knows the waves are supported by the stable deep ocean. They also know that the surface waves are governed by the prevailing winds. They also know that along with them in the waves are other people visible to us and sea animals invisible to us, but all co-existing.

In other words a good surfer knows the distinction between the cognitive (waves, wind, objects, motion, etc.) as well as the incognitive enablers (deep ocean, wind current, life, etc.) This is analogous to an enlightened person who is aware of the cognitive as well as the incognitive enablers and their interconnected existence (Brahman).

8. One, however, who has insight, who has controlled the mind and is ever pure, reaches that goal from which one is not born again.



With a controlled mind one can then restrain the senses and cultivate discipline. One's action will then become "pure" which means beneficial for all other beings. "Indeed, you should act, bearing in mind the welfare of the world". (Gita 3:20).

Such an individual becomes fit for achieving the highest goal.

9. One who has insight for the driver of the chariot and controls the rein of the mind, reaches the end of the journey, that supreme abode of the all-pervading Vishnu.

**THE ORDER OF PROGRESSION TO THE SUPREME:**

10. Beyond the sense-organs are the objects and beyond the objects is the mind; beyond the mind is the understanding and beyond the understanding is the Great Self

The journey of life can be safely completed, and the Supreme world of Vishnu reached only if one keeps a watchful control over the senses. 3.3.

*The body is like a chariot to which the senses are yoked like horses. Mind like the reins, enable the charioteer, viz., the understanding, to hold the horses (i.e.) the senses in check. The Soul rides on the chariot, and the road is the world of objects over which the senses move. If the reins are not held firmly and wisely, the senses, like vicious horses, will get out of control and the chariot will not reach the goal, but will go round and round in cycles of births and re-births.*

*Any person of wisdom who controls his mind, his senses will be like good horses driven by a good driver.*

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If the man is wise, and controls his mind, his senses will be like good horses driven by a good driver. 3. 4, 5 to 9



Figure 20.5.



**Chariot and the passenger:** Body, Mind and Intellect

**Horses:** Sense organs (through which observations are gained)

**Reins:** Connectors (*Guna*): Knowledge, Ignorance and Bias

**Tension through the reins:** Equilibrium states of Tranquility, Turbulence and Inertial.

**Charioteer:** Reflective mind that discriminates between

Subjectivity Vs. Objectivity;  
Non-attachment

**Brahman:** The enabler (laws of nature); the Soul, Consciousness  
(*Dehinam*)

**Road:** The journey of life.

**Above is a famous metaphor often quoted from Vedanta.**

10. Beyond the sense-organs are the objects and beyond the objects is the mind; beyond the mind is the understanding and beyond the understanding is the Great Self. 3.10.
11. Beyond the Great Self is the Unmanifest; beyond the Unmanifest is the Purusha (that which fills the universe). Beyond that Purusha there is nothing higher. That is the end (of the journey); that is the final goal. 3.11.
12. The Self, though hidden in all beings, is not apparent. But can be conceived by those subtle seers, through their sharp and subtle intelligence. 3.12.
13. One endowed with intuitive wisdom should restrain speech in mind; the mind should be merged into the intellect. The intellect should be merged into the Collective Self. That, one should then merge into the Tranquil Self. 3.13.
14. Arise, awake, having obtained your boons, realize (them). Sharp as the edge of a razor and hard to cross, difficult to tread is that path (so) sages declare. 3.14.
15. One is freed from the mouth of death by discerning that (Paramātmān – through meditation) which is devoid of sound, beyond touch and without form, un-decaying, which is likewise, tasteless, eternal, odorless, without beginning & without end, distinct from mahat (jīva), ever constant. 3.15.
16. Relating and hearing this eternal anecdote of Naciketas, taught by Death, an intelligent person is glorified in the world of Brahma. 3.16.
17. Whoever shall arrange the recitation of this supreme secret before an assembly of Brahmanas after purification, or devoutly at the time of the ceremonies for the dead, this will prepare (him for) eternity. 3.17.

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## Section 4:

The self-existent Spirit worked its way out from within and thus the openings of the mind are directed outwards, (viz.) the sense organs. Therefore men's thoughts ever tend outwards.

But the few, who have true understanding, turn their mind inwards and realize the Self within. Those without understanding, who do not control themselves and pursue external pleasures fall into the widespread net of Birth and Death.

Those of steady mind, realizing what is truly lasting, do not turn their thoughts to such transient pleasures. 4. 1, 2

The sacred fire is well concealed in the wood like a child is well concealed in the womb of the mother. The soul is contained in the body like the fire is contained and concealed in the wood. Fire manifests in the shape according to the thing that is burning. Now it is a flame in the lamp, the fire in a furnace, the fire in the forest in accordance to where it is

manifested. The fire by itself is one and the same. So also, the Soul is one and the same though manifest as different embodiment in which it abides for the time being. 4. 8, 9.

What is here is there, and what is there is here; (i.e.) things and beings seem various but are indeed, one Being. We are liberated when we perceive this oneness. We go from death to death if we perceive differences. It is the mind that by enlightenment can overcome the notion of differences and have a vision of the transcendent Oneness of all. 4. 10,11.

The rain falling on the hill divides itself and flows down the hill-sides in many torrents. The ignorant man sees manifolds in beings and is confused and he runs after the manifolds. 4. 14.

The rain which pours down from the clouds in the sky reaches the ocean through many streams. Similarly the worship or prayer to the many forms of Gods reaches that single Supreme Self. --- Adi Sankara

If water is poured into water, it becomes one and the same. Thus it is with the Self of the man of understanding who sees unity in manifolds. 4. 15.

*The Supreme Self or the Universal Consciousness is the cause and the foundation for everything. The air dissolved in water evolves as air bubbles, which grow and reside in the water and then dissolve in the larger body of air in the atmosphere. Everything in the universe evolves and exists as distinct entities and finally integrates back into the Supreme Self. Verse 8. Athma Bodha*

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## Section 5:

They say that the Indefinable Spirit of Supreme Bliss is this light within me. How can I make out whether this Spirit within me shines by itself or shines by the reflected light from the Universal Spirit?

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्र नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनुभा सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ १५ ॥ 5.14.

**The sun does not furnish the light there, or the moon or the stars; or these flashes of lightning born of the cloud; how can the light of these sacrificial fires illuminate that light?**

**The SELF (*Brahman*) shines and all else shine as a result.**

**Everything in the universe reflects but That light.**

5.15.

**Note:** Above is the verse chanted during the Deepa Aradhana (Offering light through lamp and its illumination) in any Hindu prayer service. The concept may be that while rituals like lighting the candle at the altar are very important, the meaning and significance behind them as described in the verse above should be remembered and internalized.

The Soul, Athman, Brahman, Laws of Nature .... Is the enabler. It (They) enable all that we recognize such as the shining sun, brilliant moon, twinkling stars, lightning (and thunder) in the clouds and the light illuminating the idol we worship. Our prayers to the almighty for this understanding and comprehension of the Universe and its existence; for understanding of who we are as part of this Universe and how we exist.

Merely to know is not enough to escape from the tangle of illusion. Faith and discipline in life are necessary. The illusion arises not so much from ignorance as from attachments. Enlightenment

comes with detachment, not with learning. This is the main teaching to which all the schools of Hindu Philosophy ultimately revert and on which they lay the greatest emphasis. The discipline and meditation that serve to help the Soul to detach itself from the material things of the world or cognitive is called Yoga.

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## Section 6:

1. With the root above and the branches below (stands) this eternal fig tree. That (indeed) is the pure; that is Brahman that indeed is called immortal. In it all the realms rest and nothing whatsoever transcends it. This, verily, is that. 7.1.
2. All this universe, whatever here exists, emerges from and moves in prāṇa (*Brahman*). (It is) the great fear (like) the upraised thunderbolt. They that know that become immortal.
3. Through fear of Him, fire burns; through fear (of him) the sun gives heat; through fear both Indra (the lord of the gods) and wind and Death, the fifth, rapidly move on their own.
4. If One is able to realise (Him) before the body falls away [one would be freed from suffering]; [if not] one becomes fit for embodiment in the worlds of being.
5. As in a mirror, so [is Brahman seen] in one's self, as in a dream – so in the world of the ancestors; as [an object] is seen [reflected] in water – so in the world of the gandharvas; as shade and light in the world of Brahma. 7.5.
6. Knowing the separate nature of the senses, which originate separately (from the various subtle elements) and also knowing that their rising and setting are separate, the wise one does not grieve.
7. The mind is superior to the sense-organs; above the mind is its essence (intelligence); beyond the intelligence is the great Self (jīvātma); beyond that is the un-manifest (Paramathma - Antaryami).
8. Beyond the unmanifest is the Purusha (*Brahman*), all-pervading and without any identifying mark whatever. By knowing whom, a person is liberated and achieves deathlessness.
9. Not within the field of vision stands this form. No one sees Him with the eye. By heart, by intuitive thought, by mind apprehended, they who know Him become immortal.
10. When the five cognitive senses together with the mind cease (from their normal activities) and the intellect itself does not stir, that, they say, is the highest state.
11. This, the steady control of the senses is considered to be Yoga. Then one becomes undistracted since Yoga comes and goes.
12. Not by speech, not by mind, not by sight can It be apprehended. How can It be comprehended except by one who says, 'It is'?
13. It should be apprehended only as existent [conditioned - Cognitive] and then [realized - Subtle] as It really is [unconditioned - Incognitive]. Of these two aspects, the real nature of the Self that has been known as merely existing becomes favorably disposed.
14. When all desires which nestle within the heart fall away, then a mortal becomes immortal and even here attains *Brahman*.
15. When all the knots that fetter the heart are cut asunder, then a mortal becomes immortal. Thus far is the teaching.

16. A hundred and one are the nadis of the heart [chakra]; one of them [sushmuna] leads up to the crown of the head [sahasrāra chakra]. Going upward through that, one becomes immortal; the other [channels] going in various directions lead to repeated rebirth.
17. The person of the size of a thumb, the inner Self, abides always in the hearts of all people. Him one should draw out unerringly, from the body, as (one may do) the stalk from the reed. Him one should know as the pure, the immortal, yea, Him one should know as the pure, the immortal.
18. Then Nachiketas, having gained this knowledge declared by Death and the whole teaching of Yoga, attained *Brahman* and became freed from passion and death. And so may any other who knows this in regard to Spirituality.

Swami Tejomayananda talks on Katopanishad:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZatxPDVR-dw>

Katopanishad Chanting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkfJ9qpUQus>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k298Jt0CPA>