

EPISTEMOLOGY IN KATHOPANIṢAD

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Supervisor

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Submitted by

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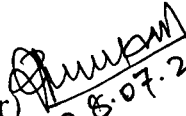


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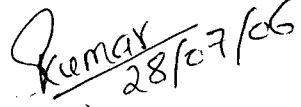
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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled “EPISTEMOLOGY IN KATHOPANIṢAD” by **Surjya Kamal Borah**, Special Center for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067, for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy is an original work, and has not been submitted so far, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any University. This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation and for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

(Supervisor) 
28.07.2006

Dr. Ram Nath Jha


28/07/06

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Dedicated to

My Ma

&

Papa

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SURJYA KAMAL BORAH.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ai.	:	Aitareya Āraṇyaka.
Ba.	:	Barāhopaniṣad
B. S.	:	Brahma Sūtra
B. S. Ś. B.	:	Brahma Sūtra Śāṅkara Bhāṣya
Bṛ.	:	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad
Cha.	:	Chāndogyopaniṣad
B. G.	:	Bhāgavat Gītā
Īśa.	:	Īśopaniṣad
Ka.	:	Kaṭhopaniṣad
Ka. Ś. B.	:	Kaṭhopaniṣad Śāṅkara Bhāṣya
Ke.	:	Kenopaniṣad
Mā.	:	Māṇḍukyopaniṣad
Muk.	:	Muktikopaniṣad
Mu. Ś. B.	:	Muṇḍakopaniṣad
N. M.	:	Nyāyamañjarī
P. D.	:	Pañcadaśī
Ṛg.	:	Ṛgveda
Śā.	:	Śāṅḍilyopaniṣad
Sā. K.	:	Sāṅkhyatattva Kaumudī
Śv.	:	Śvetāśvataropaniṣad
Tai.	:	Taittirīyopaniṣad
Tai. B.	:	Taittirīya Brāhmana
Tai. Ś. B.	:	Taittirīyopaniṣad Śāṅkara Bhāṣya
Up. S.	:	Upadeśa Sāhasrī
Vā. V.	:	Vākya Vṛtti
Vā. B.	:	Vātsyāyana Bhāṣya
V. P.	:	Vedāntā Paribhāṣā
V. S.	:	Vedāntasāra
Y. S.	:	Yogasūtra

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION OF 'DEVANAGARĪ ALPHABETS:

अ	A	ड	ḍa
आ	ā	ढ	ḍha
इ	I	ण	ṇa
ई	ī	त	ta
उ	U	थ	tha
ऊ	ū	द	da
ऋ	ṛ	ध	dha
ए	E	न	na
ऐ	Ai	प	pa
ओ	O	फ	pha
औ	Au	ब	ba
क	Ka	भ	bha
ख	Kha	म	ma
ग	Ga	य	ya
घ	Gha	र	ra
ङ	ṅa	ल	la
च	Ca	व	va
छ	Cha	श	śa
ज	Ja	ष	ṣa
झ	Jha	स	sa
ञ	ña	ह	ha
ट	ṭa		m̐
ठ	ṭha	:	ḥ

Preface

We have so many books discussing about the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy, but yet it has not come before us in a fully structured form. Again *Upaniṣadic* philosophy has its own metaphysics, epistemology and ethics, but except the metaphysical side, the other two have been always ignored by the philosophers of modern times. Thus, they take the *Upaniṣads* far away from reality or practical life of general people and make it as mystic one. But it is not so in its real nature. For such a reason, we choose this topic “Epistemology in *Kāthopaniṣad*”.

This proposed research work provides a comprehensive study of the underlying epistemological issues of the *Kāthopaniṣad*. We have attempted to bring out the process of knowing the reality and to establish the concept of integrated universe, the highest practical value of the *Upaniṣads* without disrupting its metaphysical stand of absolute monism. The first chapter is totally informative, giving an account of the historical and philosophical background of the *Kāthopaniṣad*, its relation to other thought systems and its significance within the *Upaniṣadic* literature. We have given an idea of our approach also in this chapter. The rest four chapters deal with the four constituents of epistemology- knower, object of knowledge, process of knowing and knowledge. Second chapter is an attempt to examine the concept of knower as in *Kāthopaniṣad*. Third chapter deals with the object of knowledge, which is noticeable in the three boons of *Naciketā*. In the fourth chapter we have discussed exclusively on the different process of knowing for the knowledge of respective object. The final chapter is about the different types of knowledge, revealed according to the object and process respectively. It also fulfills the final purpose of the *Kāthopaniṣad* establishing the unity between the individual self and *Brahman*.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION TO KATHOPANIṢAD

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO KAṬHOPANIṢAD

Introduction:

By tradition, we understand an association of thought or anything else, which collectively belong to a single centre. It is such a thing to which every individual is indebted in every phase of life. It is reflected in the society. Basically, the development of a civilization based on the intellectual proficiency of the people of that society. It is great to see that we have a very rich intellectual tradition of more than four thousand years. It's the most valuable heritage of India to which our thoughts belong. We meet different discourses on various aspects of knowledge, reality, up to such an extent that there is no undiscovered area to where human thought or imagination can move. It is the state of realization of the Ultimate Reality that the ancient seers provide to us.

Indian intellectual tradition starts with *Ṛgveda*. We have four *Vedas* and each *Veda* has four divisions-*Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇ*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad*. It can be said that Vedic seers arranged the *Vedas* to conform to the four stages of life. The *brahmacāri* studied the *Samhitā*, the householder followed the injunctions of the *Brāhmaṇas*, the forest-dweller practiced contemplation according to the *Āraṇyakas* and the *sanyāsin* was guided by the exalted wisdom of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Vedas* again fall into two distinct portions according to their theme-one dealing with the

performance of rituals (*karmakāṇḍa*) and the other mainly devoted to knowledge (*jñānakāṇḍa*). The *Upaniṣads* come under the second one.

Upaniṣads are called as *Vedānta*, i.e. the end of the *Vedas*. It is called so because they came at the end of the Vedic period or they were taught at the end of Vedic instruction. Winternitz, issuing another argue, says that it is because the later philosophers found in them the final aim of the *Veda*¹. As a branch of Vedic literature even these texts are regarded as breathed out by *Brahman* and only visioned by the Vedic seers². Whatever it is true or not, we can conclusively say that it is the highest knowledge of human mind speculation. Here, we would like to quote the remark of Schopenhauer from the book of S. N. Dasgupta. He says, "How does every line display its firm, definite and throughout harmonious meaning! From every sentence deep, original, and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. In the whole world, there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Oupanikhat. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my life."³ Dr. Gold Stuker says that the *Vedānta* is the sublimest machinery set into motion by oriental thought. In the book, "The Cultural Heritage of India", a passage about the greatness of *Upaniṣads* runs as follows, "The Upanisads represent the quintessence of the wisdom that is embedded in the Vedas, those marvelous records of the spiritual experience of man. They treat not of secular knowledge, which any science can teach, but of Brahma-Vidyā, the knowledge of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality of the Universe."⁴

¹ History of Indian Literature, Vol. I, pp.234

² The History and Culture of the Indian people, The Vedic Age, pp.47

³ A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol-I, pp. 40.

⁴ The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol.-I, pp. 349.

Meaning of the word *Upaniṣad*:

There is a great diversity concerning the meaning of the word "*Upaniṣad*". The word *Upaniṣad* is derived as *Up-ni-ṡad +kvip*. In the *Aitareya Āraṇyak*, the word *Upaniṣad* is used to mean sitting near. C.f. "*Viśwāmitram hyetadahāḥ śaṁsiṡyantam-indra upaniṡasāda!*"⁵ *Sāyaṇa* defines it as *brahmavidyā* or theosophy. The prefix, according to him, means "near", and nothing other than one's own self (which is *Brahman*) is nearer to a being⁶. But for an etymologically sound meaning, we have to discuss the opinion of the great authority *Śaṅkara*, which is accepted by the intellectual society. The word "*Upaniṣad*" is a combination of three words –*Upa-ni-sad*, where 'upa' means nearness, 'ni' means leading to knowledge and the root 'sad' has three meaning – to destroy, to reach or attain and to loosen⁷. He says that the word *Upaniṣad* denotes ultimate knowledge primarily and the books that deals with the knowledge of *Brahman* secondarily. *Śaṅkara*, in the beginning of his commentary of the *Kaṭhapaniṣad*, has given three explanations taking into consideration the three meaning of the root 'sad'. According to the first one – from the practice of which knowledge, a seeker of emancipation can get destroyed the seed of the world like ignorance, etc., that knowledge is called *Upaniṣad*⁸. Taking the second meaning he says that *Upaniṣad* is called *brahmavidyā* as it makes *Brahman* attainable to the *mumukṡu*⁹. *Kaṭhapaniṣad* also says – "*Brahma prāpto virajo 'bhūdvimṛtyuḥ*" (ka.2.3.18). Regarding the third meaning he says that *Agnividya* is also known as

⁵ Ai., 2.2.3.

⁶ Philosophical teachings in the *Upaniṣads*, pp. 2.

⁷ *Sāiderdhātoviśaraṇagatyavasādanārthasyopanipurvasya kvippratyayāntasya rūpamupaniṡaditi*. Ka. Ś. B. (intro.).

⁸ *Avidyādeḥ saṁsārbijasya viśaraṇād vināśanādityanen arthayogen vidyūpaniṡaducyate*. Ka. Ś. B. intro.

⁹ *Paraṁ brahmā vā gamayātīti brahma gamayīrtven yogād brahma vidyopanīṡad*. Ibid.

Upaniṣad as *Agnividyā* weakens such multitude of miseries like living in womb, birth, old age, etc¹⁰. *Kāthopaniṣad* also supporting this view says –“*Svargalokā amṛtatvaṁ bhajante*” (ka. 1.1.13).

Secondarily, *Upaniṣad* means the book that deals with the knowledge of *Brahman*. Though the above mentioned three meanings of the root *sad* cannot be correlated with the word *Upaniṣad* in the sense of “*granth*”(or mere book), yet as clarified butter is called life itself, where the word clarified butter means something which enhances life span, the word *Upaniṣad* also means the “*Upaniṣadgranth*” as it also serves the same purpose¹¹. *Kenopaniṣad* also gives the validity of the meaning of the word *Upaniṣad* as *brahmavidyā*.¹² Another supplementary, we can introduce here, is a traditional one from an unknown scholar. It is as follows-

*"Upanīyaṁ tamātmānaṁ brahmāpāstadvayaṁ yataḥ,
Nihantyavidyā tajaṁ ca tasmādupaniṣad bhavet.
Nihantyanarthamūlaṁ svāvidyā pratyaktayā param,
Nayatyapāstasaṅbhedamato vopaniṣad bhavet.
Pravṛtti hetun niḥśeṣāṁstanmūlocchedakatvataḥ,
Yato 'vasādayed vidyā tasmādupaniṣad bhavet."¹³*

Some scholars explain the word *Upaniṣad* as *upa* (near), *ni* (down), *sad* (to sit)- sitting down near. Disciples, sitting near the teachers, acquired knowledge or

¹⁰ *Garbhavāsajanmajarādyupadravavṛndasya lokāntare paunaḥpunyena pravṛttasyāvasādayitṛtven śaithilyāpaden dhātvarthayogādagnividyāpyupaniṣadityucyate. Ibid.*

¹¹ *Nanu copaniṣacchabdenādhyetāro granthamapyabhilapanti. Upaniṣadmadhīmahe 'dhyāpayāma iti ca. Evaiṁ naiṣa doṣo 'vidyādisaṅsārahetuviśaraṇādeḥ sadidhātvarthasya granthamātre 'sambhavādvidyāyāṁ casambhavāt. Granthasyāpi tādarthyena tacchabdatvopapatteḥ, āyurvai ghṛtamityādivat. Tasmādvidyāyāṁ mukhyayā vṛttyopaniṣacchbdo vartate granthe tu bhaktyeti. ibid.*

¹² *Upaniṣadam bho būhītyuktā ta upaniṣadbrāhmūn vā va ta upaniṣadbrūmeti. Ke. 4.7.*

¹³ *Upanisado me Kavyatattva, pp.2.*

discussed their doubts, which is noticeable in the style of the *Upaniṣads* like *Praśnopaniṣad*, *Kāthopaniṣad*, *Chāndyogopaniṣad*, etc. Max Muller takes the word to mean an assembly. He says, “The history and the genius of the Sanskrit language leave little doubt that Upaniṣad meant originally session, particularly a session consisting of pupils, assembled at a respectable distance round their teacher.”¹⁴ Deussen says, "According to Śaṅkara, the Upaniṣads were so named because they “destroy” inborn ignorance or because they “conduct” to Brahman. Apart from these interpretations justifiable neither on grounds of philology nor of fact, the word Upaniṣad is usually explained by Indian writers by "rahasyam" (i.e. “secret”, “Anquetils’, secretum legendum).”¹⁵ Oldenberg tries to derive the word *Upaniṣad* from “*Upāsanā*.”¹⁶ Harver¹⁷ co-relates the word *Upaniṣad* with the state of "*samādhi*" and accepts it as a mystic knowledge, getting through "*samādhi*". In *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of *Pāṇini* also, we have a *sūtra* “*jīvikopaniṣadādaupamyē*”, where the word *Upaniṣad* is used in the sense of mystic. In the *Upaniṣads* as well, we find the use of words like, “*iti upaniṣad iti rahasyam*” here and there. In the *Amarkośa* also, we find the meaning of the word *Upaniṣad* as follows—“*dharme rahasyupaniṣat syā dr̥tovatsare śarat, padam̐ vyavasita trāṇasthānalaksmāṅghri vastuṣu*”.¹⁸

Even after this long discussion, we can undoubtedly repeat that the most popular or well-accepted view is that of *Śaṅkarācārya*. Thus, the word *Upaniṣad* primarily means knowledge while in a secondary sense; it means the book that deals with the knowledge of *Brahman*.

¹⁴ The Sacred Books of the East (The Upanisads), vol. I, p.1 xxxi.

¹⁵ The Philosophy of the upanisads, pp.10

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 16

¹⁷ Vedic Sahitya ka Itihasa, pp.149

¹⁸ *Amarkośa*, 3.3.

Number of *Upaniṣads*:

A vast literature of the *Upaniṣads* has grown up amounting a large number. Concerning the number of *Upaniṣads*, scholars are of different opinions. The *Muktikopaniṣad* gives the number of the *Upaniṣads* as 108.¹⁹ Among them, ten belong to *R̥gveda*, nineteen belongs to *Śukla-Yayurveda*, thirteen belongs to *Kṛṣṇa-Yayurveda*, sixteen belongs to *Sāmveda* and thirty-one belongs to *Atharvaveda*. There are about 112 *Upaniṣads*, which have been published by the Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1917.²⁰ A collection of one seventy-nine *Upaniṣads* is published from Adyar Library, Madras. The number is two twenty three as per information in “*Upaniṣadvākya Mahākośa*”, published from Gujrat printing Press, Bombay. “Dara Shikoha published a collection of fifty upanisads as “*Oupnekh’atsamgrah*” in 1657 in Persian, which was also the first translation of *Upaniṣads*. The word *oupnekh’at* is a corrupted form of “*Upaniṣat*” as cerebral ‘s’ was in those days pronounced as guttural ‘kh’ and is still pronounced as such by some pandits of the old school”²¹. Maxmuller, in his “Sacred book of the East Series, volume-I, (MLBD,1965), has mentioned twelve *Upaniṣads* which includes the *Śvetāsvatar* and *Maitrāyaṇī* along with the ten principle *Upaniṣads*. Hume accepts Maxmuler’s twelve and *Kauṣītaki*. Radhakrishnan regards it as eighteen, i.e. thirteen of Hume and *Subāl*, *Jābāl*, *Paingala*, *Kaivalya* and *Vajrasuchika*. Though the number is large, but only fifteen to twenty *Upaniṣads* are available which are close to the Vedic recensions²². Traditionally, only ten or eleven *Upaniṣads* are regarded as principle or authentic, on which *Śaṅkarācārya* has

¹⁹ A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, pp. 28.

²⁰ A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, pp. 28.

²¹ The Sacred books of the Hindus, vol.. V, pp.7.

²² Upanisado me Kavyatattva, pp.2.

commented upon. These are *Īśa*, *kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāranyaka*.cf.-

Īśa-kena-Kaṭha-Praśna-Muṇḍa- Māṇḍūkya-Tittirah,
Aitareyam ca Chāndogyam Bṛhadāranyakam tathā. (Muk. 1.30)

These are canonical *Upaniṣads*. All other apocryphal *Upaniṣads* are sectarian. They appear to have been composed from time to time as occasion required. For example, Allopanisad, which was most probably written in the reign of Akbar or Shah Jahan under the patronage of Dara Shikoh, the account of it is given in the catalogue of the Adyar Library Vol. 1. p. 136, “The curious work as is well-known has been composed to serve Akbar’s idea of a world religion.”

The commentary of *Śaṅkarācārya* on *Śvetāsvataropaniṣad* is under doubt. But he has quoted *Śvetāsvatar* and *Kauṣītaki* in the commentary of *Brahmasūtra*. Whatever right or wrong, the above-mentioned ten *Upaniṣads* are unquestionably accepted by the scholars.

Time and division of the *Upaniṣads*:

It is not easy to determine a definite time for the *Upaniṣads*. Ranade fixes the upper and the lower limits of composition of the major *Upaniṣads* between 1200 and 600 B.C., and “the later *Upaniṣads* of the above canon”, according to him “may be seen to be dovetailed into the next period of Indian thought when Buddhism was germinating.”²³ Radhakrishana fixes the date of the early *Upaniṣads* as 1000 B.C. Macdonell says, “The earliest of the *Upaniṣads* can hardly be dated later than about 600 B.C., since some important doctrines first met with in them are presupposed by

²³ A Constructive Survey of the *Upaniṣadic* Philosophy, pp. 12.

Buddhism. They may be divided chronologically, on internal evidences, into four classes"²⁴. Among them, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya* and *Kauṣītaki* belongs to the oldest one. All these are in prose. *Kaṭhaka*, *Íśa*, *Svetāśvatara*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Mahānārāyaṇa*, which are metrical, belongs to the second class while *Kenopaniṣad* links between these two groups which is partly in prose and partly in verse.²⁵

The position and greatness of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* in the *Upaniṣadic* literature:

From the above-mentioned informations, it becomes clear that *Kaṭhopaniṣad* belongs to the second group in the chronological order. Among the ten principle *Upaniṣads*, *Kaṭhopaniṣad* comes only before the *Praśna* and *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* in the chronological order, as mentioned by R. D. Ranade.²⁶ According to Radhakrishnan, *Kaṭhopaniṣad* is not very antique. He says, "We find in it elements of the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga system. It also quotes freely from the other *Upaniṣads* and *Bhāgavad-Gītā*."²⁷ Within the *Upaniṣadic* corpus, it is one of the most beautiful and remarkable *Upaniṣad* in which the eternal truth is discussed in the form of a narrative. It has always been considered as one of the best, which can be easily comprehended through its popularity. In elevation of thought, depth of expression and beauty of its imagery no *Upaniṣad* is equal to the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*. It forms part of the *Kaṭha-sākhā Brāhman* of the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajurveda*. So, it is called *Kaṭhopaniṣad*. But some associates it with the *Sama-Veda*, some with the *Atharva-Veda*. It is also known as

²⁴ A History of Sanskrit Literature, pp. 191.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ A Constructive Survey of the *Upaniṣadic* Philosophy, pp. 12.

²⁷ Indian Philosophy, pp. 41-42.

Nāciketopakhyāna or *Nāciketas Upākhyāna*. It is divided into two *adhyāyas* of three *vallī* each. *Vallī* literally means creeper. A *vallī* is like a creeper is attached to the *śākhās* or branches of the *Vedas*. *Vallī* is used in the same sense as *parvam*, joint, shoot, and branch, i.e. a division. In *Amarkośa*, *vallī* is defined as follows-

Aprakāṇḍe stambagulmau vallī tu bratatirlatā,

Latā pratānini vīrud gulminyulapa ityapi. (Amarkośa, 2.4)

Kaṭhōpaniṣad is a metrical composition of 119 *mantras*. About its subject matter Swami Ranganathananda says, "Firstly, the story is told of how *Nāciketā* asked *Yama* three questions, the last of which related to profound metaphysics and spirituality. Secondly, on the basis of this third question the remaining five chapters expound a philosophy which conveys the essential spiritual message of all the *Upaniṣads*."²⁸ As *Upaniṣadic* literature is known as *adhyātmavidyā*, the subject matter of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* is also not other than *brahmavidyā* or the knowledge of *Brahman*. At the same time, it is the knowledge as well as the instrument of knowledge. The *Upaniṣad* sets out the communication of truth from *Yama* to *Nāciketā*. This *Upaniṣad* particularly unveils the mystery of death and in the course of it, expounds the whole *brahmavidyā*. Death is a great mystery for mankind of all time as it is not comprehensible through mere human intellect. Shakespeare's Hamlet, the great hero of the dramatic world, also becomes feared in the name of death. He says "death, the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns, puzzles the will." Every individual accepts such questions like what is death, what after death, etc. as untouchable mysteries. From such a point of view, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* is more close to the general people. Swami Ranganathananda also says, "No Philosophy can

²⁸ The Message of the Upanisads, pp. 269.

achieve depth without comprehending the meaning and significance of death.”²⁹ It is perhaps the most philosophical of the *Upaniṣads*.³⁰ Thus, this *Upaniṣad* carries the most profound philosophical speculations. Again, it starts with worldly pleasure and through *svargaloka*, finishes in the realization of the Ultimate Truth or *Brahman*. *Nāciketā*’s character draws all these three facets of human life. In the light of the immortality of the self, *Kāṭhōpaniṣad* presents a positive approach to death.

The most beautiful thing about this *Upaniṣad* is that it deals with a hard subject like *brahmavidyā* in a very lucid style, which is easily understandable even to a general reader. It is really its greatness as it has introduced both the empirical and transcendental reality so minutely and proficiently in a work that serves the purpose of *brahmavidyā* only. Here, we get a definite way of realizing Reality, i.e. *Brahman*. It traces through the zigzag movements of the soul from personal individuality through cosmic vision until it reaches the Absolute. Ranade rightly says, “The whole of the *Kāṭhōpaniṣad* is surcharged with lofty ideas about the immortality of the soul, as well as suggestions for the practical attainment of *Ātman*³¹.” R. D. Ranade, in this very book, also brings to our notice an important issue- the distinction regarding the realization of *Ātman* in various worlds. He says, “While we are dwelling in this body on earth, we can visualize the *Ātman* only as in a mirror that is contrariwise, left being to the right and right being to the left. In the world of fathers, we visualize the *Ātman* as in a dream, the image having a physical impression indeed, but being unreal. In the world of the Gandharvas, we are told, we see him as one sees a pebble under water, the image being true but retracted. It is only in the *Brahman* world, we are told, that we can distinguish the *Ātman* from the non-*Ātman* as light from shade, that is, we can

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 268.

³⁰ A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, pp.42.

³¹ A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic philosophy, pp. 20.

see the Ātman as in broad day light. This is a valuable contribution which the Kaṭhōpaniṣad makes to Upaniṣadic thought.”³² *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* clearly convey this message-

Yathā''darśe tathā''tmani

Yathā svapne tathā pitṛloke,

Yathā'psu parīva dadṛśe tathā gandharva-loke

Chāyātapayor iva Brahma-loke. (Ka. 2.3.5)

The final and the most prominent feature, that comes out from the experiment of the whole *Upaniṣad* is the clear picture of that time of India-the thrust for knowledge and the cultivation of the highest degree of knowledge. In this context, our observation will not be faultless if we do not mention the statement of the great scholar Max Muller on *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*. He says, “All these throws a bright light on the state of life and the state of thought in India, say three thousand yeas ago. For, although all this is poetry, we must remember that poetry always pre-supposes reality, and that no poets could have successfully appealed to human sympathy, unless they had struck chords which could vibrate in response.”³³ We have given an outline of the subject matter of this *Upaniṣad* as follows—

The first *vallī* of the first chapter starts with the offering of Nāciketā by his father to *Yama*, then the bestowing of three boons to *Nāciketā* by *Yama*. Regarding the third boon, *Yama* gives him temptations of worldly pleasure, but *Nāciketā* was determined. In the second *vallī*, granting him the third boon *Yama* expounds the secret of Ultimate Reality and also the symbolism of *Om*. Third *vallī* disclose the secret

³² A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic philosophy, pp. 20.

³³ The Vedant Philosophy, pp. 19.

knowledge of *Agni (Nāciketāgni)*, its relationship with the evolution of man, his inner soul and the relationship between soul, intellect, mind and senses.

First *vallī* of the second chapter deals with the relationship between the supreme reality, the divine creative Mother (*Aditi*) and the individual soul. Second *vallī* describes about what happens to man after death and immortality of the soul. It ends with the description of the nature of the eternal and its surpassing luminosity. The last *vallī* describes the totality of Reality as an eternal *Aśvattha* tree. The interrelationship of the senses, mind, the inner soul and Supreme Reality are described here. At last, the practice of *Yoga* through which one can attain the knowledge of Brahman is discussed here. This is the brief outline of the subject matter of *Kāthopaniṣad*.

Referring to the authenticity of the originality of the *Kāthopaniṣad* Swami Sivananda says, “Some writers complain that *Kāthopaniṣad* is not the production of an original thinker or a seer as there is little connection between the thoughts or verses in some places as there is no progress from one idea to another, as there is neither arrangement nor connected sequence in some places and that it is a mere compilation. But this is a said mistake. The seers of the Upaniṣads had direct revelations during communion or meditation. They expressed their experiences. Their inspired thoughts were scattered in different *sākhās* or branches of the Vedas. In days of yore, the thoughts of the seers or their compositions were handed over orally from teachers to their disciples. The original composer, the compilers, the repeaters or lastly the writers of the Upaniṣads might not have taken care to arrange them in an orderly

manner. In some places, later compilers, copyists or printers might have corrupted the text. Hence, we find interpolation in some places.”³⁴

This *Upaniṣad* has become very popular not only in India but also everywhere in the world. It has been translated into many languages. It was first introduced to the knowledge of European scholars by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. It has won the appreciation of many English, French and German scholars also. Max Muller has said that the French, German, and English translators of the *Upaniṣads* regard this treatise as one of the most perfect specimens of the mystic philosophy and poetry of the ancient Hindus. It has been translated into German by Windishmann, by Poley. Dr. Weber has also written a commentary. Muir, Rignand, Gough and many others have translated this *Upaniṣad*.

From the above discussion, we can conclude that *Kāṭhōpaniṣad* deserves the most careful consideration of all who are interested in the growth of philosophical speculations in India. Here, we have given a list of traditional and modern works on *Kāṭhōpaniṣad*.

Traditional Commentators-

1. *Śāṅkarbhāṣya on Kāṭhōpaniṣad*, Gitā Press, Gorakhpur.
2. *Muddhvābhāṣya on Kāṭhōpaniṣad*, New Catalogous Catalogorum ,V. Raghavan , K. Kunjunni Raja et al. ed. Madrass, 1949.
3. Achintya Bhagwan, Swami, *Commentary on the Principal eleven Upaniṣads*, Nirnaysagar press, 1910.
4. Saṅkarānanda’s *Dipikā*, New Catalogous Catalogorum, V. Raghavan , K. Kunjunni Raja

³⁴ Principle Upaniṣads, part-I, pp.84-85.

- et al. ed. Madrass, 1949.
5. Rangarāmānuja's *Prakāsikābhāṣya*, ed. and tr. By K.C.Varadachari and D.T.Tatacarya, Sri Venkatesvar Oriental Series(Tirupati),1948.
 6. RāghavendraTirth , *Kaṭhopeniṣadkhandārth*, ed.T.R.Krishnacharya, Bombay, 1900.
 7. Balakrishnananda Sarswati, *Vivaraṇabhāṣya*, New Catalogous Catalogorum, V. Raghavan , K. Kunjunni Raja et al. ed. Madrass, 1949.
 8. Bhaskar Raja Diksita, *Commentary on Kaṭhopeniṣad*, , ed. Banaras, 1898- 99, New Catalogous Catalogorum.
 9. Upanishadbrahmayogin, *Commentary on Principal Upaniṣads* , ed. Adyar, 1350.
 10. Baldav Vidyabhushan, *Bhāṣya on Kaṭhopeniṣad*, ed. Calcutta, 1886.
 11. Amaradeva, *Maniprabhābhāṣya*, ed. in Ekadasopanishad, Bombay, 1937.
 12. Gattulal, *Bhāṣya on Kaṭhopeniṣad*, ed. by Hari Samkar Sastri, Bombay, 1942.

Works of the Modern Scholars—

1. Swami, Abhedānanda, *The Mystery of Death: a study in the philosophical and religion of the Kaṭhopeniṣad*, Ramkrishna Vedanta math, Calcutta, 1967
2. ALSDORF.L, *Contribution to the textual criticism of the Kaṭhopeniṣad*, Zeitschvitt der deutschen morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, Wiesbaden, 1950
3. Vohra, Ashananda, *Kaṭhopeniṣad ka sandesa (Hindi)*, 1947.
4. Awasthi, Brahmamitra, *Kaṭhopeniṣad*, with Hindi commentary, Indu prakasan, Delhi, 1969
5. Desai, M.R., *The Katha Upaniṣad: The story of Nāciketās*, Kolhapur, 1962
6. Von Glasenapp, Helmath, *Buddhism in the Kathaka- Upaniṣad: In Von Buddha ZU Gandhi*, Otto Harrasowitz, Wiesbaden, 1962

7. Kuppuswamy, B. , *The Psychological aspect of Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, Philosophical quarterly- 34, June 62.
8. Swami, Ranganathananda, *Our spiritual heritage:Katha Upaniṣad*, Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of culture, Calcutta.
9. Ray, Kumud Ranjan, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, Calcutta, 1962
- 10.Sastri, Surendradeva, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad Śāṅkarabhāsyasahita*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Baranasa.
- 11.Sen Gupta, Anima, *Katha Upaniṣad:Sāṅkhya point of view*. Moti Mahal, Kanpur, 1967
- 12.Vasantananda, devi, Ramchandra, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad (or the mystery of the mystic death)*, Madras, 1971
13. Betai, R.S., *Kaṭhōpaniṣad and the Vallaba Vedanta*, Indian philosophical and culture, Vrindaban.
14. Swami, Gnaneswaranda, *A talk on the Katha- Upaniṣad*, The Vedanta Kesari, Madras.
- 15.Guru Govinda, *Athavanopanisat-Kathakopanisat*, Gurukripa Granth Mala, Mysore, 1970
16. Helter, J. S., *The initiatory structure of the Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, History of Religions, University of Chicago. 1968.
17. Kodate, Yoshiro, *On the Kaṭhōpaniṣad –Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, Journal of Indian and Buddhist studies, Tokyo.

Rāmānuja, the propunder of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* school of *Vedānta* syatem, had not written any commentary on the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, but we have references from this *Upaniṣad* in the commentary of *Brahmasūtra*. S. S. Raghavachar says, “It is difficult to pick out passages from the Katha Upanishad as the ones that have received

interpretation from Rāmānuja. As a matter of fact, almost the entire Upanishad is expounded by him in the course of his commentary on the following sections of the Brahma-Sūtra: I.2.9; I.3.23; I.3.40; and I.4.1. The fundamental argument of the text is traversed in the commentary without omitting any important pronouncement. It is the considered opinion of T.S. Rawson who has written an exhaustive treatise on the Upanishad that Rāmānuja's interpretation is the best guide to its philosophy. Be that as it may, it is adequate for our purpose to note that it receives substantial elucidation."³⁵

Source of the story of *Yama* and *Nāciketā*:

It's a general quest of human mind to find out the source of anything. Vedic literature is just like a garland of different flowers, producing the same fragrance. It has a synthesis of ideas or stories either directly or indirectly. So obviously, a question is raised-is there any early evidence of the story of *Yama* and *Nāciketā*? Yes, we can have the germ of this story in the tenth *maṇḍala* of *Ṛgveda*. In the 14th *sūkta*, *Yama* has been described as the son of *Vivsvān*. There is a discussion of following the path of the ancestors in the seventh and the eighth mantra of 14th *sūkta*, which is clearly observable in the voice of *Nāciketā* of the original *Kāṭhupanishad*. There we find as follows-

“Prehi prehi pathibhiḥ pūrvyebhiryatrā na pūrvepitarah pareyuḥ,

Ubhā rājānā svadhayā madantā yamaṁ paśyāmi varuṇaṁ ca devam.

Sam gacchasva pitrbhiḥ sam yameneṣṭāpurtena parame vyoman,

³⁵ Sri Ramanuja on the Upanishads, pp. 10.

Hitvāvāyadyam punarastahi sam gacchasva tanvā suvarcā.” (Ṛg. X.14.78)

(You follow that particular path through which your ancestors have gone. Following this path, you see *Yama* and *Varuṇa*. You recognize them and with help of *Yama* finally get the Ultimate Reality. After realizing that Ultimate truth, renouncing all the bad habits, again come back to your own home,”- *yajamāna* or *sādhaka* says to his son.)

Taking a different source, *Sāyaṇācārya* points out the seed of *Nāciketopākhyāna* in the *sūkta* no. 125 of the tenth *maṇḍala*. All the seven mantras of this *sūkta* keeps a synthesis of *Nāciketopākhyāna*.³⁶ Seer of this *sūkta* is *Kumar Yamarāja* and God is *Yama*. We have just mentioned one mantra of this *sūkta*-

Yasmin vṛkṣe supalāśe devaiḥ saṅpibate yama,

Atrā no viśpatiḥ pitā purāṇā anu venati. (Ṛg. X.125.1)

Though these evidences are not enough to connect that the origin of the story of *Nāciketā* and *Yama* to the *Rgvedic* period, but it draws our attention definitely. After *Rgveda*, we get an almost similar story in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. It seems that the above-mentioned Vedic ideas are elaborated in the form of a story. This story starts with this mantra- “*Uśan have vājaśravasaḥ sarvavedasam dadau,*

Tasya ha nāciketā nāma putra āsa, ta ha kumār santam.” (Tai. B. 3.11.8)

Apart from it, we find such a similar story also in the *Anuśāsanparva* of *Mahābhārata* (106 *adhyāya*) with some differences. But between these two sources, the original *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* resembles to the story of *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. Yet, the original *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* comes to us with some specific changes-

³⁶ *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, Hindi tr. and ed. by Dr. Vijendra Kumar Sharma, pp.10.

- (1) In the Tai. B. story, *Nāciketā* gets the message from heaven to follow the path of getting *brahmavidyā* through *Yamarāja*. It reduces the greatness of *Nāciketā*, which is seen in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*.
- (2) Again, we find some unsocial answer of *Nāciketā* in response to the question of *Yama* in the story. Since *Nāciketā* had to wait for *Yama* for three days, *Yama* asked him that he had taken food or not. Then *Nāciketā* answered that he had taken *Yama*'s offspring, animals and good works (*punyakarma*) as food in three nights respectively. But the original *Kaṭhopaniṣad* gives us a totally different picture.
- (3) *Nāciketāgni* comes twice in the story. *Yama* teaches about it regarding the second and third boon, while in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, it comes only for the second boon i.e. that is the way to *svargaloka*.
- (4) We have information of an additional boon in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, offered to *Nāciketā* by *Yamarāja*, being delighted with his intellectual understanding.
Cf.-

“*Tamabravīt prīyamāṇo mahātmā*

Varam tavehādya dadāmi bhūyaḥ,

Tavaiva nāmnā bhavitā 'yamagniḥ

Sṛṅkām cemāmanekarūpām grhāṇ.” (Ka. 1.1.16)

- (5) According to the story, freedom from death and birth is obtained by peculiar performance of a sacrifice, while in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*; it is obtained by knowledge only. It is one of the great differences in its methodology.

Depending on the available evidences, we can come to a conclusion that the story of *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* keeps the resemblance with that of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*. We can accept it as the source of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*.

***Kaṭhōapniṣad* and its relation to *Gītā* and others:**

Although from the point of antiquity, both *Gītā* and *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* is not a same time product, which is distinctly noticeable from their style and language, yet both treatises keep similarity in their exposition of ideas. We can get a general idea that the subject matter of both is almost similar as they are counted within the *prasthānatrayī* of *Vedānta* system. Besides, a few verses from this *Upaniṣad* have been incorporated in the *Bhāgavad Gītā*. It is sometimes a part of a *mantra* or sometimes the whole *mantra* occurs as well as in both. Sometimes it is the internal meaning of a *mantra*. Cf.-

Śravaṇāyāpi bahubhīryo na labhyaḥ

śṛṇvanto 'pi vahno yaṁ na vidyaḥ,

Āścāryo vaktā kuśalo 'sya labdhā-

ścāryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ. (Ka. 1.2.7)

And we have in *Gītā*-

Āścāryavatpaśyati kaścideṇa

māścāryavadvadati tathaiva cānyaḥ,

Āścāryavaccainamanyaḥ śṛṇoti

śrutvāpyenaṁ veda na caiva kaścit. (B.G., 2.29)

Describing the nature of *Ātman*, *Kaṭhapaniṣad* says-

Na jāyate mṛyate vā vipaścit
nnāyaṃ kutaścinna babhūva kaścit,
Ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. (Ka. 1.2.18)

This mantra is found in *Gītā* with a slight change of words-

Na jāyate mṛyate vā kadaścit
nnāyaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ,
Ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. (B.G., 2.20)

Even after such similarities, both possess dissimilarity also in some aspects.

While *Kaṭhapaniṣad* describes body as a composition of twelve *tattvas*, *Gītā* says it nine³⁷. *Gītā* accepts that sense organs are subtler than the objects but the *Kaṭhapaniṣad* depicts just an opposite picture³⁸.

It is also a noticeable fact that *Kaṭhapaniṣad* keeps many recurrences and parallels with other *Upaniṣads* like *Bṛhadāranyaka.*, *Śvetāsvatara*, *Maitri*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Taittirīya*, etc. From the above discussion, we can conclude that *Kaṭhapaniṣad* purely maintains the harmonized Indian intellectual tradition. Only the following example will be ample in this connection which occur in *Rgveda* (4.40.5), *Vājsaneyī Samhitā* (10.24), (12.14), *Taittirīya Samhitā* (3.2.10.1), *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (6.7.3.11) in the same order-

³⁷ *Puramekādaśadvāram ajasyāvakraçetasah.* Ka. 2.2.1.

Navadvāre pure dehī naiva kurvanna kārayan. B. G. 5.13.

³⁸ *Indriyebhyaḥ parā hyarthā arthabhyaśca param manaḥ.* Ka. 1.3.10.

Inrdiyāni parānyāhurindriyebhyaḥ param manaḥ,

Manasastu parā buddhiryo buddheḥ parastastu saḥ. B. G. 3.42.

Haṁsaḥ śuciṣad vasurantarikṣasad-

hotā vediṣadatithir duroṇasat,

Nṛṣad varasadr̥tasad vyomasad

abjā gojā ṛtajā adrijā ṛtaṁ bṛhat. (Ka. 2.2.2)

In explaining the cosmological order, it keeps similarities with *Sāṅkhya* view-

Indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ mano manasaḥ sattvamuttamam,

Sattvādadhi mahānātmā mahato 'vyaktamuttamam. (Ka. 2.3.7)

The concept of *yoga* that is illustrated in *Patañjali's Yogasūtra* is not an independent idea. We find the discussion of *yoga* through out the Vedic literature. In this very *Upaniṣad* also, *Yama* has introduced *yoga* as the way to liberation as *Patañjali* has done later in the *Yogasūtra*. Later, it will be discussed in details.



Eschatology in *Kaṭhopeniṣad*:

If eschatology is understood as the study of the fate of the soul after death, then *Kaṭhopeniṣad* deserves a genuine position in this area. This *Upaniṣad* is also popularly known as a discourse on what after death, a dialogue with death, etc. A positive and optimistic approach towards death that has been reflected through out the ages from *Ṛgveda* to the *Upaniṣads* and lastly in the Indian philosophical systems, is cultivated also in the *Kaṭhopeniṣad*. For the great Indian thinkers, death is just a journey from mortal to immortal life. And it appears as the central theme of this particular *Upaniṣad*. Because, it is the third boon where *Nāciketā* wants to know about the soul after death³⁹ and *Yamarāja* explores it comprehensively. Paul Deussen

³⁹ *Yeyam prete vicikitsā manuṣye 'stītyeke nāyamasūti caike, etad vidyām anuśiṣtastvayā 'ham varāṇāmeṣa varastrīyaḥ. Ka. I.1.20.*

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also says, “Kaṭhōpanishad more specifically, pertains to this issue of life beyond death, contained in other Upanishads as well and characterized as eschatology.”⁴⁰

For an inquisitive human being, his life after death depends upon the path he chooses to carry on and what he concerns about himself. From the teachings of *Yamarāja*, an important aspect of eschatology, i.e. transmigration comes out, which is expressed in two facets-

1. *Preyas* or *Samsāra*, i.e. death after death.
2. *Śreyas* or Immortality, i.e. beyond death.

Here, *preyas* leads to a life of worldly pleasure where the souls are destined to die after each birth⁴¹. Even those who get the *svargaloka*- a heavenly abode, comes to the mortal life, i.e. under the chain of birth and death as soon as his fruits of good deeds are exhausted. Each soul takes a new birth according to his action or knowledge of the previous life⁴². And the one, who follows the path of *śreyas*, i.e. the right action towards desirelessness and ultimate satiation, ends his life with the realization of the self⁴³. Thus, starting from *Nāciketā*'s question to *Yamarāja* and finally establishing the immortality of the Self, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* deserves a high eschatological value. From this point of view, it assumes an extraordinary importance; since it is here that the eschatological knowledge is proclaimed to be the “highest good.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ The Philosophy of the Upanishads, pp. 52

⁴¹ The Message of the Upanishads, pp. 313.

⁴² *Yonimanye prapadyante śarīratvāya dehinaḥ,*
Sthāṇumanye 'nusamyanta yathākarma yathāśrutam. Ka. 2.2.7.

⁴³ *Anyacchreya 'nyadutaiva preyaste*
ubhe nānārthe puruṣaṁ sinūtaḥ,
Tayoḥ śreya ādadānasya sādhu bhavati
Hīyate 'rthādya u preyo vṛṇīte. Ibid., 1.2.1.

⁴⁴ A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic philosophy, pp. 87.

Language and poetic elements of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*:

As the *Upaniṣads* are the concluding product of the ancient thinkers of the large Vedic literary corpus and prior to the classical Sanskrit, their language possesses both the characteristics of Vedic and classical Sanskrit. The language of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* also has this nature though it is more akin to the classical than to the Vedic. Some examples of Vedic usage can be shown as follows-

1. In the word “*yacchedvānmanasī*”, we have *manasī* in place of *manasi*. *Manasī* is the form of dual number of the first and the second case ending. But in this context, singular form of the seventh case ending is desirable and it is *manasi*, not *manasī*. So, it is definitely a Vedic use.
2. Then the use of *itthya*, *manuṣyebhiḥ*, etc. also indicate the Vedic elements of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣadic* language.

We have already said that it is a metrical composition. It is very appealing because of its lucidity, simplicity, perspicuity and use of simple homely similes and metaphors. Concerning the issue of poetic elements, Dr. Krisna Kumar Dhavan, in his book “*Upaniṣado me kavya tattva*”, has done an exclusive discussion. *Śabdālaṅkāras* like *anuprās*, *yamaka*; *Arthālaṅkāras* like *upamā*, *rūpak*, *atiśayokti*, *dīpak*, *kāvyaṅga*, *nidarśanā*, etc. are beautifully used by the ancient seers. An example of *rūpak alaṅkāra* is given below-

Ātmānaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi śarīraṁ rathameva tu,

Buddhiṁ tu sārathiṁ viddhi manaḥ pragrahameva ca. (Ka. 1.3.3)

Uses of three gunas are also available here and there. An example of *prasāda guṇa* is given below-

Agniryathaiko bhūvanam praviṣṭo
rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva,
ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā
rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo bahiśca. (Ka.2.2.9)

The metres of the *Kaṭhopanīṣad* are almost Vedic, but these keep similarity with that of the classical. From these examples, we can evaluate that the language of this *Upanīṣad* deserves a peculiar charm from its liveliness, enthusiasm and pedantry. In a text full of Philosophical outfits, such a skillful use of expressive language in a dramatic appearance is quite uncommon.

Doctrine of *Māyā* in the *Kaṭhopanīṣad*:

The beginning of the prominent doctrine of the *Vedānta*, i.e. the doctrine of *Māyā* or the inevitable illusoriness of all human cognition, is significantly available in this *Upanīṣad*. Cf.-

Agniryathaiko bhūvanam praviṣṭo
rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva,
Ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā
rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo bahiśca. (Ka. 2.2.9)

Sūryo yathā sarvalokasya cakṣuḥ
na lipyate cākṣuṣairbāhyadoṣaiḥ,
Ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā
na lipyate loka duḥkhena bāhyaḥ. (Ka. 2.2. 11)

Ethical value of the *Kaṭhopanīṣad*:

In Indian intellectual tradition, knowledge is exchanged through a sincere effort of “*Guruśiṣhya-paramparā*”. It always keeps some great ethical value where *Kaṭhopanīṣad* attracts our notice. It carries out some significant features of ethical value, which are common in day-to-day life, reflecting the greatness of Indian society. And that is the concept of *Pañcamahāyajña*, one of the most beneficiary *saṁskāra* of *grhsthāśrama*. In the very beginning of this *Upanīṣad*, we find that *Vājaśravasaḥ* has performed “*sarvavedas yajña*”, wishing to attain the *svargaloka*. Here, the name *Vājaśravasaḥ* is very significant and from its derivational meaning we can get an indication of the “*bhūtayajña*”. *Vājaśravā* means who has become famous by giving away his food in charity and his son is *Vājaśravasaḥ*⁴⁵. “*Tāta kasmaimām dāsyatīti*” saying this *Nāciketā* has performed the “*pitṛyajña*”. *Nāciketā*’s father was offering the cows that were too old and useless. Neither could they calve nor could they ever give milk. So, *Nāciketā* was worried, thinking about the result of it. Hence, after due deliberation when he realized that his father was wrong, he offered himself at the alter of his great duties towards his father to save from going to the joyless world. Even, going to *Yama*, he prays his father’s happiness as the first boon⁴⁶. It is an imitable example of this kind. Again, we find the finest specimen of “*atithiyajña*” when the *Brahman* son *Nāciketā* is served by *Yamarāja* as we come through the following

verses-

Vaiśvānaraḥ praviśatyatithibrāhmaṇo grhān,

Tasyaitām śāntim kurvanti, hara vaivasvatodakam. (Ka. 1.1.7)

Tisto rātrīryadavātsīgrhe----- (Ka. 1.1.9)

⁴⁵ *Vājamannam taddānādīnimittam śravo yaśo yasya sa vājaśravā rūdhito vā. Tasyāpatyam Vājaśravasaḥ kila viśvajitā sarvamegheneje tatphala kāmaya mānaḥ. Ka. Ś. B. 1.1.1.*

⁴⁶ *Śāntasaṁkalpaḥ sumanā yathā syūdvīrmanyugautamo mābhi mṛtyo. Ka. 1.1.10.*

A wide exposition of *devayajña* is depicted in the second boon when *Nāciketā* asks *Yamarāja*, “*Sa tvamagniṃ svargyamadhyeṣi mṛtyo, prabūhi tam śraddhānāya mahyam.*”(Ka.1.1.13). *Yamarāja* describes the entire process that leads one to the heaven through the knowledge of the fire⁴⁷. Here, *devayajña* is not just a *Yajña* for a happy life, but also a medium of getting *brahmavidyā* that should be performed in *niskāmbhāvanā*. And finally, we get “*brahmayajña*” through out the entire *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*. It is basically an exposition of *brahmavidyā*. The ultimate goal of this *Upaniṣad* is also to make *brahmavidyā* available to the yearning people. Responding to *Nāciketa*’s third boon, *brahmajñānī Yamarāja*, deliberates the knowledge of *Brahman*. And it is the *brahmayajña* of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*. Actually, a glimpse of ethical preparation is unnoticeably running through out the whole *Upaniṣad*.⁴⁸

Finally, we can say in the voice of Swami Ranganathananda as follows-“Among the *Upaniṣads* the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* stands in a category all alone. It blends in itself the charm of poetry, the strength of philosophy, and the depth of mysticism; it contains a more unified exposition of the spiritual insight of *Vedānta* than is found in any other single *Upaniṣad*. Its appeal is heightened by the two characters that participate in its dialogue- young *Nāciketā* and old *Yama*. The *Upaniṣad* in its six chapters unrolls a fascinating picture of young pulsating life, inquisitive and fearless, knocking at the doors of death the terrible, and extracting from it wisdom which lies beyond life and death.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Lokādimagniṃ tamuvāca tasmai yā iṣṭakā yāvatīrvā yathā vā,*

Sa cāpi tatpratryavadad yathoktamathāsya mṛtyuḥ punarevāh tuṣṭaḥ. Ibid., 1.1.15.

⁴⁸ *Nāvirato duṣcaritānnāśāntonāsamāhitaḥ,*

Nāśāntamānaso vāpi prajñānenainamāpnuyāt. Ibid., 1.2.24.

⁴⁹ The Message of the *Upaniṣads*, pp. 268.

Our approach:

Paul Deussen, the great European scholar, has done a great job exercising an unparalleled philosophical discussion on the Upanishads, the greatest authoritative mystic literature about the undiscovered reality of the universe, in his book "Philosophy of the Upanishads". In this very book, he says, " The Upanishads undoubtedly have great historical and comparative value, but they are also of great present-day importance. No one can thoroughly understand the workings and conclusions of the mind of an educated Hindu of today who does not know something of the fountain from which his ancestors for centuries past have drunk, and from which he too has been deriving his intellectual life. The imagery under which his philosophy is conceived, the phraseology in which it is couched and the analogies by which it is supported are largely the same in the discussions of today as are found in the Upanishads and in Śaṅkara's commentaries on them and on the Sutras. Furthermore, although some elements are evidently of local interest and of past value, it is evident that the monism of the Upanishads has exerted and will continue to exert an influence on the monism of the West, for it contains certain elements which penetrate deeply into the truths which every philosopher must reach in a thoroughly grounded explanation of experience."⁵⁰ This passage shows us the nature of the *Upaniṣadic* literature as well as its present day relevance. In a time of technological dependence, peoples are in a race of artificial life. But it is a fact beyond time that you cannot live out of the unified structure of nature. It is also scientifically proved. And in such a situation, trying to make a self-identity is nothing but a futile exercise. But it is important to know the real nature of oneself. Whenever one tries to know the self-

⁵⁰ Philosophy of the Upanisads, pp.5.

identity in the right way, finally gets the Ultimate Reality as one not in a individual form as Paul Deussen writes about the monism of the *Upanishads*. This monism is not other than the concept of *Brahman* or *Ātmā*, which has been incorporated through out the whole *Upaniṣadic* literature. It is a firm belief that those who are not aware of his consciousness or real nature and remained happy with the material gains, cycled from one birth to another as even *Kāthopaniṣad* says-

Anupaśya yathā pūrve pratipaśya tathā'pare,
sasyamiva martyaḥ pacyate sasyamivajāyate punaḥ. (Ka. 1.1.6)

Without taking any stand of any particular philosophical system, we can say that consciously or not, every individual wants a detachment from the life full of sorrow. But it depends on the way of life that an individual follows. A man of wisdom always follows the right way in this process of self-realization. C.f.-

Śreyaśca preyaśca manuṣyametaḥ
tau samparītya vivinakti dhīraḥ,
śreyo hi dhiro'bhi preyaso vṛñṭe
preyo mando yogakṣemād vṛñṭe. (Ka. 1.2.2)

And this particular *Upaniṣad*, contains some special discussion on this process of realization or the road to the Brahman. And we have already said that this realization is not other than the real knowledge of Self or Ultimate Reality. Thus, it fulfills the norms of an epistemic study. Through it, we can justify our research topic - "Epistemology in *Kāthopaniṣad*." Epistemology in *Kāthopaniṣad* is somewhat confusing in a bird's eye view. Because, epistemology in relation to a discussion where we have the germs of philosophical speculations only, not a full-fledged development of any system of thought, is not so common. Besides, finally it has been

established on the *Kāthopaniṣad* also that the knower, the knowable object and the knowledge are same in the state of realization. Only R. D. Ranade in his book, "A Constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy" uses the word epistemology to indicate the process of self-realization. But he is in view that as the knowledge of Brahman in the technical meaning of the word 'knowledge' is not possible, it is just a mystic realization.⁵¹ Epistemology is the study of process through which knowledge comes into existence. *Vātsyāyana* and *Jayantabhāṭṭa*, presenting an epistemological model, are in opinion that an object can be philosophized through the analysis of knower, knowable object, process of knowing and knowledge⁵². And regarding the *Kāthopaniṣad*, we find that *Ātmā* is the object. There is a competent person as knower who follows a particular process and finally he gets the real knowledge, which is called the realization of Self or *Brahman*.

The last *mantra* of the *Kāthopaniṣad* conceptualizes the whole idea clarifying all the four epistemological constituents distinctly.⁵³ Here, *Nāciketā* is the knower, *Ātmā* is the object of knowledge, process is the *Yogavidhi*, after due deliberation on *Brahman* by a teacher like *Yama*. Knowledge is *Brahmavidya*. We have discussed all these four aspects of an epistemological study in four chapters respectively. In this *Upanisad*, we have indications of three layers of reality; so our study will be confined to the same. But the first two are only supplementary to a better understanding of the final one. No one is born as liberated. Because a liberated person becomes free of

⁵¹ A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, pp. 198.

⁵² *Evaiṅ ca yaducyate pramātā pramāṇaṅ prameyaṅ pramītirīti catasṣṣuvidhāsu tattvamparisamāpyate.* N. M., 1.1. 3, pp. 29, Vā. B., I.1.1.

⁵³ *Mṛtyuproktāṅ Naciketo 'tha labdhvā
vidyāṃ etāṅ yogavidhiṃ ca kṛtsnam,
Brahmaprāpto virajo 'bhūd vimṛtyuḥ
anyo 'preyaṅ yo vid adhyātma meva.* Ka.2.3.18.

birth and death cycle. So, anyone born in this world first gets the knowledge of this visible world and after finding everything impermanent, changes the direction of vision. Only then, through the practice of Yoga, realization of Self is possible. As we make our behaviour according to the experience or knowledge of the world external, we have to start our journey to the core or inner world from the world of experience. The negation of these first two layers means knower's identification with the last one. Thus the discussions about this world and the *svargaloka* make the sense of *brahmaloka*. So, though our final aim of this work is to bring out the epistemology of the knowledge of *Brahman* or Pure Consciousness, we will consider the other two also in relation to it.

Chapter II

CONCEPT OF KNOWER

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Who is a knower in an epistemic study?

Epistemology as a separate field of study is purely a contribution of *Nyāya* system to Indian Philosophy. It comprises of four constituents- a knower who will acquire the knowledge, an object that is to be known, a process of knowing that is to be followed by the knower unavoidably and finally it is the knowledge which is apprehended like- *aham̐ ghatam̐ jānāmi* (I know the pot), which we have already mentioned in the introductory chapter quoting *Vātsyāyana*, the great thinker of Indian Intellectual Tradition. We can show it in the following way-

Knower (*Pramātā*) → Process of knowing (*Pramāṇa*) → Object (*Prameya*) →
Knowledge (*Pramā*).

Thus, in the epistemological study, knower is one of the important constituents of knowledge process. It gets involved in the process and also behaves as per the acquirement of knowledge. From the very first day of our life, our behaviour starts. So, we can say that every human being is a knower in his day-to-day life experience. When we think of knower in terms of knowledge process, the following characteristics come out-

1. Knowing process starts from the knower. It fully depends upon the intention of the knower.
2. A thing has to get connected with the knower to make itself an object of knowledge.

3. Knower involves his organisms or different faculties in the knowing process.
4. Produced knowledge always belongs to the knower either in the form of the relation of identity or as a property of *Ātman* of the knower.

In this way, the whole process proves the knower as the only conscious factor i.e. the doer, subject, and perceiver. In a monistic metaphysical approach of *Upaniṣadic* background, epistemology makes the knower, the designated organic body of name and form, more important than the *Ātman* or Self, till the true nature of the Self is not revealed.

Knower as represented in the *Kāṭhōpaniṣad- Jīva caitanya* or *Sākṣī caitanya*?

When we turn to *Kāṭhōpaniṣad* to find out the concept of knower, it demands a specific discussion to clarify that whether it is *jīva caitanya* or *sākṣī caitanya*. It is a fact that the final goal of the *Kāṭhōpaniṣad* is to display the methodology of realizing one's inner-self as *Brahman* or the unity between them and to establish the unity, it demonstrates an apparent division between the individual self and *Brahman*. The following *mantra* gives us a clear division of *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*. Cf.-

Ṛtaṁ pibantau sukṛtasya loke

guhāṁ praviṣtau parame parardhe;

Chāyātapau brahmavido vadanti

pañcāgnayo ye ca trinācikeīāḥ. (Ka.1.3.1)

It means- the two who enjoy the fruits of their good deeds, stay being seated in the cavity of the heart, the Seat of the Supreme. They are compared to light and shade by the one who knows *Brahman*, the one who worships the five fires and the one who

performs the *Nāciketas Agani* three times. *Śaṅkara* also in his commentary says that who is the obtainer, what is to be obtained, who is the knower and what is to be known- to discuss all these things, description of the two types of *Ātmā* is done here.⁵⁴ The significant use of dual number in the word “*pivantau*” refers to *jīvātman* and *paramātman* who enjoy the fruits of their good deeds. Swami Chinayananda in his commentary says, “To introduce these two factors, the *Ātmā* (Self) and the *Jīva* (Ego), we have here, in the very opening stanza of this *Vallī*, a declaration unanimously made by all the realized saints of knowledge and endorsed by the faithful householders- *paṇḍita*-s. All of them declare that though the body seems to be controlled and directed by these two factors, one of them is but the shadow replica of the other.”⁵⁵ Again he says, “-----The individual in his extrovertness gazing on outwardly, views this shadow and identifies himself with it. The shadow represents the (I-ego), the *saṁsārin*, who suffers the mortal agonies of his physical pains, mental tortures, intellectual failures, and spiritual bankruptcy. This shadow is called the *jīvātmān* and the light that causes it, the ‘I’-Ego, the god principle in us, is called the *Paramātman*.”⁵⁶ Thus, these two, we can say as finite self of man – the *jīva* and the infinite Self of the Universe-*Ātman* or *Brahman*. Swami Ranganāthānanda also says, “In the first verse, Yama refers to *buddhi* or intelligence of man as a cave in which are the finite self of man – the *jīva* or soul and the infinite Self of the universe- the *Ātman* or *Brahman*. These two are described as *chāyā* and *ātapa*, shade and light, respectively. Brahman is the light of all lights, the *jīva* or finite soul is Its reflection in the *buddhi* or intelligence.”⁵⁷ By defining the enjoyer in us also in later *mantras*, the

⁵⁴ *Evam ca prāptiprāpyagantrgantavyavivekārtha dvāvātmānāvunyasye*. Ka. Ś. B., 1.1.3.

⁵⁵ Kathopaniṣad-a dialogue with death, pp. 131.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 132.

⁵⁷ The message of the Upaniṣads, pp. 397-398.

śruti is definitely making a differentiation between the two entities of us: one- the true principle, the non-doer and non-enjoyer; and the other is the doer or enjoyer, the delusion created conditioned *Ātman*.⁵⁸ Besides this, there are more instances regarding this division. Whenever *Yama* says with reference to the real nature of *Ātman* and the future of those who don't know about it, he simply points out to this division.

But as we are trying to give an epistemic structure of this methodology, it is our primary job to certify the concept of knower at first. Though *Nāciketā* is maintained as a representative of knower, it is not clear that who is the knower—is it *jīva caitanya* (individual self) or *sākṣi caitanya (Brahman)*? Though the *Kāthopaniṣad* has not used any term particularly to designate these two, we have used it for clarity. Now, we have to exercise about their specific characters to maintain the knowership.

This very mantra yet again gives us an idea that *jīva caitanya* is the knower of the *Kāthopaniṣad*. The mantra says that both *jīvātman* and *paramātman* is the enjoyer of the fruits of their good deeds. But it is *jīvātman*, who is basically attached to the worldly enjoyment, not *paramātman*, because it has nothing to do with this world. Swami Ranganathananda also discussing this point says, “Brahman being the all and present everywhere, has no journey to perform. But the finite *jīva* has a journey to perform, the journey towards fulfillment, the journey to the infinite, which takes him through the discipline of actions which produce their fruits invariably. The verse, however, attributes such a journey to Brahman also, since it refers to the two- the *jīva* and Brahman – as enjoying the reward of good and bad deeds by using the verb *pivantau-* enjoy- in the dual number. This is just a figure of speech, says Śaṅkara in

⁵⁸ *Ātmendriya manoyuktam bhoktetyāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ. Ka., 1.3.4.*

his comment on the verse.”⁵⁹ Śaṅkara also says in his commentary that there are two drinkers of truth, i.e. the results of work which is called truth because of its inevitability. Of these two, one enjoys the fruit of work, and not the other. Still both are called enjoyers, because of association with the enjoyer, on the analogy of the expression ‘the possessor of the umbrella’.⁶⁰ When a king with his retinue moves out in a procession with umbrellas, people say, ‘*Cchatriṇaḥ yānti*-people with umbrellas are going,’ though most of the people in the procession do not possess umbrellas.⁶¹ *Kāthopaniṣad* itself clarifies this stand through the following *mantra*-

Indriyāni hayānāhuḥ viṣayānsteṣu gocarān,

Ātmendriya manoyuktān bhoktetyāhurmanīṣiṇaḥ. (Ka.1.3.4.)

Here, *Kāthopaniṣad* declares that the real entity in us, which seems to experience the joys and sorrows in life, is not *Ātmā*, the all-witnessing consciousness, but the conditioned *Ātmā*. The Supreme consciousness as conditioned by the body, mind and the sense organs, is the ego-centric (*jīva*), which seems to enjoy and suffer the worldly life. Thus, *jīvātman* is established as the knower not *paramātman*. There we have a term “*madhvadaḥ*” in the *Kāthopaniṣad* for knower. *Madhvadaḥ* means the enjoyer of honey, where honey stands for the good fruits of meritorious acts performed by the egocentric *jīvas*.⁶² According to the literal meaning of the *mantra*, the *Ātman*, pure consciousness, is said to be here as the eater of honey. But if we try to understand it literally, would go against its metaphysics of absolute monism. *Ātman* which is pure consciousness, one without a second, how can be the enjoyer and enjoying separately

⁵⁹ The message of the Upaniṣads, pp. 397-398.

⁶⁰ *Ṛtānī satyamvaśyamībhāvītvātkarmaphalaṁ pivantau, ekastatra karmaphalaṁ pivati bhunkte netaraḥ, tathapi pāṭṣambandhātpibantau ityucyate cchatriṇyāyena. Ka. Ś. B., 1.3.1.*

⁶¹ Eight Upaniṣads with the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, Translated by Swāmi Gambhīrānanda, vol.I, pp. 161.

⁶² *Ya imānī madhvadaṁ veda ātmānānī jīvam antikāt, Iśānānī bhūtabhavyasya na tato vijugupsate. Etad vai tat. Ka., 2.1.5.*

from the eternal enjoyer? So, we have to understand it in terms of *Kāthopaniṣadic* assessment and thus here, the *Upaniṣad* calls the *Ātman* as an enjoyer of the fruits of the good acts only in its conditioned aspects. And this is the stand for *jīvātman* as a knower. *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* also gives us a similar definition- “*Antaḥkaranāvacchinnaṁ caitanyaṁ pramāṭṛcaitanyaṁ.*”⁶³ It is clearly mentioned in the *kāthopaniṣad* while describing human personality, consisting of the body, the sense organs, mind, intellect and the soul with the beautiful imagery of chariot where *Ātman* is the master of the chariot, which is united with other faculties.⁶⁴ Thus, it is not other than the *jīvātmā*.

We have more evidences to establish the knower-ship of *jīvātmā*. *Yama* in his conversation repeatedly says that discriminating or abstracting the self from others, i.e. the body or the gross material world, any *sādhaka* can get the knowledge of *Brahman*. From it we get the picture that there is a state where the mortal does not discriminate the self and this is the stand of *jīvātmā* as a knower.⁶⁵ *Dhīraḥ* or a competent knower of *brahmavidyā* who knows the *Ātman* as bodiless, all pervading and supreme, seated firmly in perishable bodies, do not grieve. It means the competent knower at first do not know the real nature of his inner self or *Ātman* who after due deliberation gets the knowledge.⁶⁶ He who knows *Brahman* or *Ātman* in its true nature, no more goes to the cycle of birth and death. He becomes immortal. So, the aspirant or the knower will be definitely someone who face death and birth. And it

⁶³ Vedānta Paribhāṣā, pp. 13.

⁶⁴ *Ātmānaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi śarīraṁ rathameva tu, Buddhiṁ tu sārathiṁ viddhi manaḥ pragrahameva ca.* Ka. 1.3.3.

⁶⁵ *Etacchrutvā samparigrhya martyaḥpravṛhya dharmyamaṇumetaṁpāya, Sa modate modanīyaṁhi labdvā vivṛtaṁ sadma Nāciketaṁ manye.* Ibid., 1.2.13.

⁶⁶ *Aśarīraṁ śarīreṣu anavastheśvavasthitam, Mahāntaṁ vibhum ātmānaṁ matvā dhīro na śocati.* Ibid., 1.2.22.

is he, who is not aware of his innerself, behaved himself as an enjoyer. The following mantra also clearly shows that *jīvātman* is the knower-

Yastvavijñānavān bhavati amanaskaḥ sadā 'śuciḥ,

Na sa tat padamāpnoti saṁsāraṁ cādhigacchati. (Ka. 1.3.7.)

“He who is impure, thoughtless and devoid of intellectual discrimination can never realize the self and is ever stuck in the cycles of birth and death.”

Here, the qualities like impurities, thoughtlessness, devoid of intellectual discrimination, etc. are suitably applicable to *jīvātman* only. So, he is the knower.

Yama to clear the unity between the individual self and the *Paramātman*, indirectly supports our stand of knowership of *jīvātman* here and there in the *Kaṭhopeniṣad*. This idea has been repeated again and again by the statement- “*Etadvai tat*”. One of them is mentioned here-

Yathodakam śuddhe śuddham āsiktam tādrgeva bhavati,

Evam munervijānata ātmā bhavati Gautam. (Ka. 2.1.15.)

We have already contextually discussed and also will be discussing by taking the reference from *Kaṭhopeniṣad* that a realized one remains no more to the birth and death circle. So, definitely it is *jīvātman*, who tries to make himself realized as he wants to be free from that circle as in the case of *Nāciketā*. At last, the representation of *Nāciketā* as a knower is the highest proof in support of *jīvātman* as knower.

Knower as per his mood of conduct to the object and final knowledge:

Now, it is established that *jīva caitanya* or *jivātman* is the knower in relation to any kind of object as well as knowledge whether it is empirical or transcendental.

And we will discuss later about the concept of object and knowledge as propounded in *Kāthopaniṣad*. But one thing is very clear from the three boons of *Nāciketā* that *Kāthopaniṣad* maintains a concept of three-layer reality. So, the knower of those respective realities will be definitely somewhat different from one another not in physical appearance but in their standard of understanding about the final goal. It means knower is different depending on their aim and approach, set up by their understanding.

We have two types of knower within *jīvātman*, corresponding to their final goal - one who desires for worldly pleasure as a result of his final knowledge and the other who yearns for the knowledge of *Brahman* or self-realization, which results his immortality. *Yama* has cleared this point in the following *mantra*--

Anyacchreyo 'nyadutaiva preyaste

Ubhe nānārthe purūṣaṁ sinītaḥ,

Tayoḥ śreya ādadānasya sādhu bhavati

hīyate 'rthādya u preyo vṛṇīte. (Ka. 1.2.1)

In the next *mantra*, he makes it clearer. He says that both the good (*śreyas*) and the pleasant (*preyas*) path of life approach a human being. The intelligent, examines both the courses with judicious discrimination. The one with penetrating perceptiveness chooses the good to the pleasant path. The unintelligent prefers and selects the pleasant path of acquisition of material goods and the preservation thereof, for the sake of the growth and protection of the body.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *Śreyaśca preyaśca manuṣyametaḥ*
tau samparītya vivinakti dhīraḥ,
Śreyo hi dhiro 'bhi preyaso vṛṇute
preyo mando yogakṣemād vṛṇīte. Ibid., 1.2.2.

Again *Yama* gives a very clear distinction between these two, from the point of object and knowledge, the knower wants to follow. Cf.-

Parācaḥ kāmānanuyanti bālāḥ

te mṛtyoryanti vitatasya pāśam, show

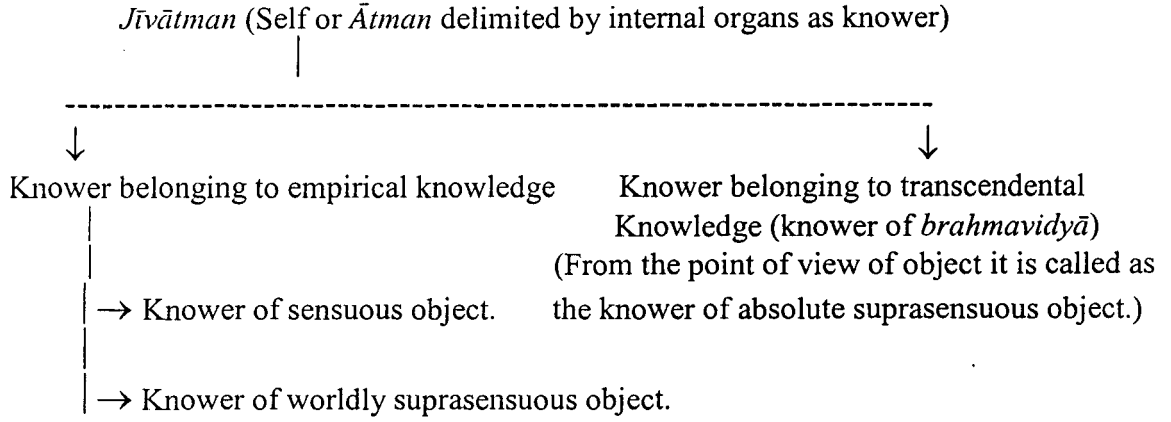
Atha dhīrā amṛtatvaṁ viditva

dhruvam adhruveṣviha na prārthayante. (Ka. 2.1.2)

The ignorant people is ever seeking and trying to possess, or is full of desires for the gross objects. He is enamoured and attracted by the objects of the sense-organs and is ever pursuing them. The internal desires, which are beyond the sense-organs, would have been the opposite of gross desires. But the wise turns his vision inward and experiences the eternal essence in the bewildering finitude. The *dhīra* or the one, who is endowed with impregnable wisdom, knows of the destructibility of the gross seen world. They do not desire those perishable objects, which result a short time pleasure. They follow the path of wisdom and immortality. Thus, from the point of final knowledge, we have two types of knower –

1. Knower belonging to empirical knowledge and
2. Knower belonging to transcendental knowledge.

But from the point of view of object as in *Kaṭhapaniṣad*, Knower belonging to empirical knowledge has two appearances- knower of sensuous object and knower of worldly suprasensuous object. We can demonstrate the whole idea as follows-



As a result, we can conclude the concept of knower in three categories for our discussion, as it is more capable of giving an unambiguous picture of what we are going to examine-

1. Knower of sensuous object.
2. Knower of worldly supra-sensuous object
3. Knower of absolute supra-sensuous object.

We have already mentioned that *Nāciketā* is our primary concern for this epistemic study. Now, we will try to evaluate the above-mentioned three types of knower in the light of *Nāciketa*.

In *Nāciketā*'s character, we can visualize the differentiation between the knowers within *jīvātmanā*. We know that *Nāciketā* was given three boons by *Yama* and among them first two boons are related to empirical knowledge while the third one with transcendental. When *Nāciketā* asks his father's happiness, calmness of mind, which is free from anger, anxiety⁶⁸, he symbolizes the knower of first category. As a knower, *Nāciketā* choosing his first boon, revealing the tender human side of his

⁶⁸ *Śāntasāṅkalpaḥ sumanā yathā syād
vītamanur Gautamo mā'bhi mṛtyo,
tvatprasṛṣṭāni mā'bhidet praṭīta
etat trayānāni prathamāni varam vṛṇe.* Ibid., 1.1.10.

character. And, having secured the peace of mind of his father, he turned to heaven. Thus, when he asks about *agnividyā* with a purpose to know the means to *svargaloka*⁶⁹ he stands for the knower of second category. Apparently, the results of the both are definitely perishable or enjoyable only for a short period. When he asks for the third boon i.e. the truth beyond death, *Nāciketā* promotes himself to the third category of knower. *Yama*'s complementary statement, where he says about *Nāciketā* that the gateway to the temple of truth is wide open for him, establishes *Nāciketā* as the true aspirant of *Brahmavidyā*.⁷⁰ Again, *Yama*'s statement before giving *brahmavidyā* to *Nāciketā*, shows that *Nāciketā* is accepted as a deserving student for it.⁷¹ Thus we get three categories of knower where *Nāciketā*'s character is a fine symbolic specimen representing the whole mankind. In the behaviour of every individual, we can have such kind of temperament according to the mood of conduct for the final goal.⁷²

Pre-requisites for a knower of different categories:

We have already demonstrated three categories of knower as explained in the *Kāthopaniṣad*. But here a question arises- how the same *jīvātman* turns into different stages to be the knower of different objects? The answer is that though basically

⁶⁹ *Sa tvamagniṁ svargyamadhyeṣi mṛtyo
prabrūhi taṁ śraddadhānāya mahyam,
svargalokā amṛtatvaṁ bhajante
etat dvitīyena vṛṇe vareṇa. Ibid., 1.1.13.*

⁷⁰ *Vivṛtaṁ sadma Nāciketasaṁ manye. Ibid., 1.2.13.*

⁷¹ *Vidyābhīpsinaṁ Nāciketasaṁ manye
na tvā kāmā bahavo 'lolupanta. Ibid., 1.2.4.*

*Yāṁ tvamūpaḥ satyadhṛtīrbatāsi
tvādṛṇi no bhuyānnūciketahaḥ praṣṭā. Ibid., 1.2.9.*

⁷² *Śreyaśca preyaśca manuṣyametaḥ
tau samparītya vivinakti dhūraḥ,
Śreya hi dhiro 'bhi preyaśo vṛṇite
preyo mando yogakṣemād vṛṇite. Ibid., 1.2.2.*

Jīvātman (knower) is one, yet the differentiation comes due to its specific nature, which is shaped through his standard of understanding of life and the surroundings. As a bound soul, whenever one comes to the cycle of birth and death, he automatically turns into a knower through his day-to-day behaviour as the self-existent (*Brahmā*) created the senses with outgoing tendencies. But at that time he remains as a knower of worldly objects only.⁷³ Then he can turn himself into a knower of heavenly abode improving his qualities and making himself eligible for that job as we see in case of *Nāciketā*'s father in the very first *mantra* of the *Kāthopaniṣad*- "*Uśan ha vai vājaśravasaḥ sarvavedasaṁ dadau*". Then one can go for the third category of knower through a proper way with a strong determination. To become a knower of *Brahmavidyā*, one has to practice some moral code of conduct to ensure such personality and has to re-arrange his thinking faculty to intensify the yearning for that Ultimate knowledge. As *Kāthopaniṣad* aims to give the message of a knower of *Brahmavidyā*, other two categories are only the two steps for the confirmation of the third one.

Taking *Naciketā*'s character into consideration, we can analyze the deserving qualities of these three categories of knower. Every category requires some pre-requisites to designate the knower from the others. We will discuss as per *Kāthopaniṣadic* concept about the all-possible pre-requisites here.

The first one is just a human being who runs after joy and happiness available through worldly objects. It requires no extra qualities to get maintained. We born in this phenomenal world as a knower of this type. It is just a flow of human psychology, which provokes the human epistemology. One takes birth and automatically starts to

⁷³ *Parañcikhāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūḥ tasmāt parañ paśyati na antarātman*. Ibid., 2.1.1.

gain the transient knowledge of this phenomenal world. If we observe any child, we can search out this point very effectively. Child gathers experiences through his basic instinct. *kāthopaniṣad* shows the composition of our body with the imagery of a chariot where we find that our senses make contact with the external world in a natural way and get the knowledge of the gross-world. C.f.-

Indriyānī hayānāhuḥ viṣayāmsteṣu gocarān,

Ātmendriya manoyuktam bhoktetyāhur manīṣiṇaḥ. (Ka. 1.3.4.)

In case of *Nāciketā* also, when he asks *Yama* for his first boon which is related to worldly pleasure, *Yama* did not require any pre-condition like impurities of mind, *śraddhā*, etc.

Concerning the second one, we have two examples before us from *Kāthopaniṣad*—*Nāciketā*'s father (who performs *yajña* desiring to go to heaven) and *Nāciketā* himself when he asks for the second boon. In the very first *mantra* of the *Kāthopaniṣad* we have come to know that *Nāciketā*'s father is doing a *yajña* desiring to go to heaven. It means, he is aware of the knowledge of the *svargaloka* or heavenly abode and the way to heavenly abode. Thus, it is proved that he possesses the qualities of being knower of such kind of knowledge. Again, in response to *Nāciketā*'s second boon, *Yama* told him about *agnividya* through which he can go to *svarga*.⁷⁴ Thus, from the both situations it becomes clear that the knower must be a competent sacrificer. He should have the knowledge of three *Nāciketā*'s *agni* sacrifice. And in case of a sacrificer, the qualities like sincerity, faith, devotion and impurity are presupposed which are accountable in *Nāciketā*'s character.

⁷⁴ *Lokādimagṇim tamuvāca tasmai yā iṣṭaka yāvātīrvā yathā vā,
Sa cāpi tat pratyavadad yathoktam athāo 'sya mṛtyuḥ punarevāha tuṣṭaḥ.* Ibid., 1.1.15.

Now, we are going to discuss regarding the knower of *brahmavidyā*. It is the real knower of the *Kāthopaniṣad* fulfilling its final purpose. In case of the first two boons, we see that *Yama* requires no pre-condition, but as for the third boon, *Nāciketā* had to be appeared in exams in front of *Yama*. It means it required a certain minimum level of intellectual and emotional evolution for being the recipient of this knowledge. *Yama* says that even the *devatās*, living in *svargaloka*, previously doubted about the existence of *Ātma* after death; but they were not capable of knowing this Ultimate Truth. It means- the qualities, *devatās* keep, are not enough for being a knower of *Ātmā*. When *Yama* says - “*Āścaryo vaktā kuśalo’sya labdhā, āścaryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ*”, it is overstated that the knower as well as the teacher of *brahmavidyā* are very rare to be found. But when we examine *Nāciketā*’s personality in the light of his dialogues with *Yama* to find out the pre-requisites of a knower of *Brahmavidyā*, the picture comes out. The compatibility of *Nāciketā* is unquestionable as it comes to us from his visionary statements regarding what is good and what is pleasant. From the very beginning, he has shown his great understanding and unequivocal thirst for knowledge. We can ascertain the pre-requisites, which are mostly ethical value of a human life, as follows-

1. Non-attachment and indifference towards worldly objects as compared to the ordinary people.⁷⁵ *Yama*, praising this attitude, also says that he believes *Nāciketā* as one who is desirous of knowledge, for even many objects of

⁷⁵ *Śvobhāvā martyasya yad antakaitat
sarvenadriyāṇāṃ jarayanti tejala,
Api sarvaṃ jīvitam alpam eva
Tavaiva vāhās tava nr̥tya gūte. Ibid., 1.1.26.*

pleasure have not shaken him.⁷⁶ He was not allured by the temptations and the glamour of the immediate pleasant.⁷⁷

2. Enormous perceptivity and ability to opt between good or bad. *Nāciketā*'s intellectual integrity is blown up through his understanding, determination⁷⁸ and discriminative power between *śreyas* and *preyas*.⁷⁹ In the beginning, when his father gives useless *dāna*, he quickly realized its wrong direction and took necessary precaution for him. It is not other than his power of knowledge.
3. Complete absorption in one thought or one pointed yearning for the Ultimate truth or *mokṣa*. *Nāciketā*'s intense desire for the achievement of *brahmavidyā* is unparalleled.⁸⁰
4. The qualities of the second type of knower like sincerity, faith, devotion and purity are also desperately required. *Nāciketā* has an unwavering and unquestioning faith on *guru* or the scriptures. He is devoted to his duty as a son or as a student, sincere in every business of life with a purified mind.

⁷⁶ *Sa tvam priyān priyarūpānīṣca kāmān
abhidhyāyan naciketo 'tyasrākṣīḥ,
Naitān śrīkāmī vittalayānāvāpto
yasyānī majjanti bahavo manuṣyāḥ.* Ibid., 1.2.3.

⁷⁷ *Na vūtena tarpaṇīyo manuṣyo
lapsyāmahe vittal adrākṣam cettvā,
Jīviṣyāmo yāvadī śīṣyasi tvam
Varas tu me varaṇīyaḥ sa eva.* Ibid., 1.1.27.

⁷⁸ *Anupaśya yathā pūrve pratipaśya tathā 'pare,
Sasyamiva martyaḥ pacyate sasyamivājāyate punaḥ.* Ibid., 1.1.6.

⁷⁹ *Ajīryatām amrtānām upetya
jīryan martyaḥ kvadhāḥ sthāḥ prajānam,
Abhidhyāyan varṇa rati pramodān
atidīrghe jīvite ko rameta.* Ibid., 1.1.28.

⁸⁰ *Yasminnidam vicikitsanti mṛtyo
yat sāmparāye mahati brūhi nastat,
Yo 'yam varo gūḍham anupraviṣṭo
nānyam tasmānnacikeketa vṛṇīte.* Ibid., 1.1.29.

If we try to evaluate these pre-requisites of a knower of *Ātman* in the light of other popular concept, we will not face any inconsistency between these two. As *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad* defines an aspirant as *Śānta*, *Dānta*, *Uparata*, *Titikṣu* and *Samāhita*.⁸¹ *Śānta* means a person who ceases himself from the activities of the external organs while *Dānta* from the activities of the internal organs. *Uparata* means free from all desires and *Samāhita* means one-pointed. According to *Vedāntasāra*, the *sādhana-catustaya* are- discrimination between the permanent and the transient, renunciation of the fruits of action in this world and in the other, the six treasures of *Śama* etc. and the desire for emancipation.⁸² According to *Śaṅkara*, an aspirant has to calm his mind, has to be victorious over his senses, should have least bad habits, obedient, and should have an immense desire of emancipation.⁸³ All these definitions have been covered up in our discussion.

Significance of the term *Dhīraḥ*:

Dhīraḥ is a very significant term in Indian intellectual tradition. In Vedic literature, it is a very common usage. But it is not the earlier phase of Vedic corpus, this term gets its highest grade of validity; it is the *Upaniṣads* or *Vedānta* where “*Upāsana*” becomes more prominent in attaining the highest fulfillment of the human life. Most of the principal *Upaniṣads* have used this term to designate the “knower of *Brahman*”. For example- ‘*dhīrāḥ pretyāsmāllokādamṛta bhavanti*’(Ke.2.13.); ‘*Iti śuśrum dhīrānām*’(Iśa,10); ‘*Uddhāsmādukthavidhīrastiṣṭhati*’(Bṛ.5.13.1); ‘*Tadvijñānena paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ*’(Muṇḍ. 2.2.7). *Kāthopaniṣad* also contains much

⁸¹ Bṛ. 4.4.23.

⁸² *Sādhanāni-niyānityavastuvivekehāmutrārthaphalabhogavirāgaśamādiṣaṭkasampattimumukṣutvāni*. V. S. 15.

⁸³ *Praśāntacittāya jitendriyāy ca prahīnadoṣāya yathoktakārīṇe, Guṇānvitāyānugatāya sarvadā pradeyemetatsatataṁ mumukṣave*. Up. S., 16.72.

more references on this term comparing to the others. The references are-‘*Tau samoarītya vivinakti dhīraḥ*’, ‘*śreyo hi dhīro bhivṛnite*’(1.2.2); ‘*Tamātmasthaṁ ye nupaśyanti dhīraḥ*’(2.2.12/13, *Kaṭha.*/6.12 Śweta.); ‘*Indriyānām pṛthagbhāvam----- matvā dhīro na śocati*’(2.3.6); ‘*Dhṛtyā dhīraḥ----- atyasrākṣī*’(1.2.11); ‘*Dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti*’(1.2.12); ‘*Ātmānam matvā dhīro na śocati*’(1.2.22/2.1.4); ‘*Kaściddhīraḥ pratyagātmānamaikṣat*’(2.1.1); ‘*Atha dhīrā amṛtatvaṁ veditvā*’(2.1.2). In all those references, one thing is clear that ‘*dhīraḥ*’ is a terms which indicate a state just before the realization of *Brahman* or who perceives Him as existing in his own self. *Dhīraḥ* is one who knows well about the separateness of the senses and appearances and disappearances to be other than the self or one who being realized as *Brahman* through the *adhyātmyoga*, renounces joy and sorrow. He is one who desires of immortality and with eyes averted from sensuous object, sees the *Ātman* within. He knows what is eternal and what is non-eternal. What clearly *dhīraḥ* means in *Kaṭhopaniṣad* is become fix by its antonym *mandah*.⁸⁴ We can translate both the terms as wise and ignorant. Thus *dhīraḥ* means one who is qualified by all those pre-conditions desirable for being a knower of *Brahman* with a discriminative power between *śreyas* and *preyas* or good and pleasure. Man is free to choose *preyas* or *śreyas*, yet, from the point of view of means and ends; *śreyas* and *preyas* approach man in a mixed-up form, as it were, in a form difficult to discriminate by a man of poor understanding. But the *dhīraḥ* can discriminate between them and through the *śreyas* path acquire the knowledge of *Brahman*.

⁸⁴ *Śreyo hi dhīro bhi preyaso vṛṇīte,*
Preyo mando yogakṣemād vṛṇīte. Ka. 1.2.2.

Chapter III

OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

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What is an object?

If we talk on object in general, it is something that has objectivity and is acquirable or knowable in its physical and transcendental state. When we discuss it within the frame of epistemology, it simply means the metaphysical reality as accepted by the different philosophical systems, according to their own way or vision of explaining the structure of the Universe.

Object as in *Kaṭhoapniṣad*:

Upanisadic philosophy also has its own metaphysics as well as epistemology. When we turn to this particular *Upaniṣad* i.e. *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, the concept of object comes to us in its own way. As a human being, our experiences start from this colourful world. In case of *Upaniṣadic* philosophy also, though it's all about *Brahman* or Ultimate Reality, yet the sages could not deny the experiences of the day-to-day life or a life of consummated worldly happiness. As a result, we get discussions about objects in different levels.

Kaṭhopaniṣad discloses a concept of reality in two layers- empirical and transcendental. Again empirical has two layers- sensuous and suprasensuous. Thus, we can consider broadly the concept of reality in three layers, which is exclusive in the three boons of *Nāciketā*. These are-

1. Reality belonging to this visible world (Sensuous world),
2. Reality belonging to the *svargaloka* (Suprasensuous world) and

3. Reality belonging to *Brahman* or *Ātman*. (Transcendental state).

The first two realities belong to empirical whereas the last one is the transcendental. Actually, there is only one Reality i.e. the transcendental. The empirical reality is just a reflection of that Ultimate Reality. It is true in relation to ignorance only, but in relation to *Brahman* it is false. Propounding *brahmavidyā*, Reality as *Brahman* is the main concern of the *Kaṭhopanīṣad*. Thus, when we discuss these three types of metaphysical realities in terms of epistemology, they are called object. Accordingly, we get three types of object as well in *Kaṭhopanīṣad*. In relation to a knower, knowledge and the process of knowing, these objects can be designated as worldly sensuous object, worldly suprasensuous object and absolute suprasensuous object. Among these, the first two- worldly sensuous object and worldly suprasensuous object belong to empirical realities while absolute suprasensuous object belongs to transcendental reality. It can be called as non-worldly object as it is beyond all the worldly objects.

Now, we will discuss all these three types of object in details as propounded in the *Kaṭhopanīṣad*. First of all, references related to worldly sensuous object will be discussed. It is one, which is knowable through direct experience. Particularly, the first chapter of the *Kaṭhopanīṣad* keeps more references of this kind. In the very first *mantra*, we come to know that *Nāciketā*'s father, being desirous of heaven, gave away all that he possessed. "All that he possessed" indicates nothing other than sensuous object. Because after two *mantras*, it becomes clear that he gifted the cows to the *Brāhmins* or the Revered ones.⁸⁵ Again in the first boon asked by *Nāciketā* to *Yama*, have the references of purely sensuous objects. At this point, *Nāciketā* encashes the

⁸⁵ *Pitodakā jagdhatṛṇū dugdhadohā nirindriyāḥ*. Ka. 1.1.3.

boon in favour of his father. He says, “ oh death! (Let my father) *Gautama* became free from anxiety, of a calm mind and be free from anger towards me. He should recognize me (as his son) and discuss things with me, when I go back from you.” Here, the words like anxiety, calm, anger are products of sensuous objects. Further, *Nāciketā* himself is also treated here as an object to his father’s emotional outburst.

Again, whatever temptations *Yama* offered to *Nāciketā* as an exchange to his third boon, are all worldly sensuous objects. *Yama* himself says, “ You may ask for all the objects of this world.”⁸⁶ Sons and grandsons with hundred years of age, any number of cattle heads, elephants, horses, gold, a very big territory on earth, etc. all are examples of sensuous objects.⁸⁷ It becomes more clear when we consider it through the relation of an enjoyer as a knower and objects as the things to be enjoyed. Because, such a picture is come out from *Yama*’s statement when he says, “ If you want all your desires in the world fulfilled and you want to be the enjoyer of the same, please ask for those.”⁸⁸ Thus, sensuous object can be defined as those things to be enjoyed by an enjoyer or experiencer through sense-object contact.

Now we proceed to the worldly suprasensuous object. It is called suprasensuous because it cannot be cognized through sense-object contact. They are not able to capture it. It is beyond the limitation of sense organs. But it comes within the diary of empirical reality because of its temporal existence. Such an object is

⁸⁶ *Ye ye kāmā durlabhā martyaloke*
sarvān kāmānīschandataḥprārthayasva,
Imā rāmāḥ sarathāḥsatūrya
Na hīdrśā lambhanīyā manuṣyāḥ.
Ābhirmatprattābhīḥ paricārayasva. Ibid., 1.1.25.

⁸⁷ *Śatāyuṣaḥ putra pauṭrān vṛṇīṣva*
bahūn paśūn hasti hiraṇyam aśvān,
bhūmermahad āyatanān vṛṇīṣva
svayaṇ ca jīva śarado yāvad icchasi. Ibid., 1.1.23.

⁸⁸ *Mahābhūmau naciketas tvam edhi,*
kāmanān tvā kāmabhājanī karomi. Ibid., 1.1.24.

pointed out in the *Kāthopaniṣad* in relation to the *Nāciketā*'s second boon where he asks about the means to go to *svargaloka*. Objects like *svarga*, *dharma*, etc., which are not visible come under this category. When *Yama* says, "You may ask for all the objects of this world and also the objects which are very difficult for the worldly people to obtain"⁸⁹, here the objects, which are very difficult for the worldly people, indicate towards the worldly supra-sensuous objects like *svarga*, etc. All other objects are attainable with less effort, but the worldly suprasensuous objects are hard to attain, as it requires a proper instruction from a revered teacher and the knowledge of sacrificial ceremonies.

Svarga as an object, we have to clarify its nature. *Nāciketā*'s statement before asking about the means of attaining *svaraga*, gives us an idea of the nature of *svargaloka*. According his statement, *svaraga* is one where exists fear of nothing, no one is afraid of old age due to the absence of Death and where having crossed both hunger and fear, one rejoices, going beyond all sorrow.⁹⁰ It means there has no fear of any kind of the three- *ādhidaivika*, *ādhibhautika* and *ādhyātmika*. In *Sāṅkhya-tattva Kaumudī* also we get a similar definition of *svarga*, originally quoted in the *Tantravārttika* as follows-

Yanna duḥkhena sambhinnam na ca grastamanantaram,

*Abhilāṣopanāna tatsukham svalpadāspadam.*⁹¹

But the noticeable point is that when *Nāciketā* says, "there is immortality"; it does not mean that it is the absolute truth. Because, if the attainment of *svarga* is immortality,

⁸⁹ ----- *durlabhā martyaloke*

sarvān kāmāniśchandataḥprārthayasva, Ibid., 1.1.25.

⁹⁰ *Svarge loke na bhayam kiñcanāsti*

na tatra tvam na jarayā bibheti,

Ubhe tīrtvā śnāyāpipāse

śokātigo modate svargaloke. Ibid., 1.1.12.

⁹¹ *Sāṅkhya-tattva Kaumudī*, Kārikā 1 (Tikā).

then what about *Brahman*? In reality, when he requests *Yama* to teach him the secret of the rituals by which the performer can reach immortality, it is not to be construed as the true goal and aim of life as it will go against the fundamentals of absolute monism. Swami Chinmayananda also says, “ *Karma* (selfless work) cannot procure, for the performer, the supreme Goal of life, for, if the Supreme were to be a product achievable through an action, then it would be a thing made or ‘born’ and, as such, it shall be finite. The infinite or the Eternal God Principle or Truth cannot be a product or the result of an action or actions done. Thus the word ‘immortality’ here is used in a relative sense; compared with the daily deaths in life, the longer periods of existence for each ego-centric in the higher planes of the Heavenly Regions is the ‘immortality’ (Amṛtatvaṁ) mentioned here.”⁹² *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* also designates *svarga* as ‘*anantaloka*’. Śāṅkara also writes his commentary on the word ‘*anantalokāptim*’ as ‘*svargaloka phalaprāptim*’.⁹³ Thus, *svarga* means a higher plane of consciousness or heavenly abode or a mental state where there is no fear, and an abode where the normal woes and worries don’t make the person unhappy. There is mortality also. They return to the mortal life as soon as merits of their previous deeds becomes exhausted.

Now, the last one is the absolute supra-sensuous object. Absolute suprasensuous means something that lies beyond the realm of the intellect or the sense-organs. It is beyond comprehension through mental faculties, beyond recognition through visual faculties, beyond thoughts, definition, deduction, imagination or speculation. This object, which is also the final object of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, is centralized in the third boon of *Nāciketā* when he says-

⁹² *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*-a dialogue with death, pp. 29.

⁹³ Ka. Ś. B. 1.1.14.

Yeyam prete vicikitsā manūṣye,

astītyeke nāyam astīti caike;

Etad vidyām anuśiṣṭastvayā 'haṁ,

varāṇām eṣa varas tṛtīyaḥ. (Ka.1.1.20)

This question of *Nāciketā* refers to *Ātman* as he says, “Some say it exists and some say it does not exist when a man dies.” It is a fact that all the parts of a body are perishable except *Ātman*. The dead body is visible, no one doubt it. This doubt is purely referring to that conscious *tattva* which gives life to a body, i.e. *Ātman* as it does not come within the purview of worldly knowledge. As well, *Ātman* as an object is established through the statements of *Yama* to *Nāciketā*. We just need to mention only one mantra in support of it-

Aśarīraṁ śarīreṣu anavastheśvavasthitam,

Mahantaṁ vibhum ātmānaṁ matvā dhīro na śocati. (Ka.1.2.22)

This transcendental Reality or *Brahman* or *Ātman* can be regarded as an object from the point of view of empirical reality only. Wherever there is a knower, there must be an object. In such cases, this transcendental reality is also an object for the knower of *Brahmavidyā*.

Even after these arguments, we think it is necessary to clear the position of *Ātman* as an object once again with reference to others also. It's a fact that *Ātman* is the only Reality. So, it's very contradictory to establish the division of the same entity or Ultimate Reality as knower, known and knowledge with their combining factor, process of knowing.

Like other *Upaniṣads* *Kāṭhōpaniṣad* also says that *Ātman* is unknowable in his essential nature. Many are not able to even hear it while some having heard do not able to comprehend it.⁹⁴ But it does mean that it is ever unknown. If it is so, then what about *Yama*, *Yājñavalkya* or modern times seers like *Aurobindo*, *Vivekananda*, *Ramakrishna*, etc. Thus, its unknowability means that it's not like other worldly objects to be known through a process, used for the ordinary knowledge. Ranade also says, “ Epistemologically, we are told in various passages of the Upanishads, it would not be possible for us to know the Self in the technical meaning of the word “knowledge”.⁹⁵ Again, taking in support Kant's view on Reality as consisting of God and the Self, he says that the *Upanishadic* answer is that it is true that God and the Self are unknowable, but they are not merely objects of faith, they are objects of mystical realization. Then, again, the *Upanishads* do not regard the Self as unknowable in the agnostic sense of the word, for example, in the sense in which Spencer understands it. Rather, it is “unknowable” from the standpoint of philosophic humility.⁹⁶

The question of unknowability arises from another aspect also. As the Self of all, Brahman is the eternal Subject of knowledge⁹⁷ and thus he cannot be an object of knowledge to another except Him. On this point, taking *Yājñavalkya*'s reference, *Ranade* says, “ Granted that the Self is the eternal knower of objects, granted also there is no other knower of him, would it be possible for the knower to know himself?

⁹⁴ *Śravaṇāyā 'pi bahubhīryo na labhyaḥ
śṛṇvanto 'pi bahavo yaṁ na vidyuḥ. Ka. 1.2.7.*

⁹⁵ A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, pp.198.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ *Na jāyate mṛyate vā vipaścīt
nnāyaṁ kutaścīna babhūva kaścīt,
Ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. Ka. 1.2.18.
Naiva vācā na manasā prāptuṁ śakyo na cakṣuṣā,
Astīti bruvato 'nyatra kathaṁ tad upalabhyate. Ibid., 2.3.12.*

This very subtle question was asked of *Yājñavalkya* in another passage of the *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad*, and here again we see the brilliant light, which the sage *Yājñavalkya* throws on the problem. It is possible, he says, for the knower to know himself. In fact, Self-knowledge or Self-consciousness is the ultimate category of existence. The Self can become an object of knowledge to himself.⁹⁸ It is also the stand of *Kāthopaniṣad* –what *Yama* says to *Nāciketā* regarding the process of knowing that Self-realization is not other than the process of introspection or a inward journey in search of own self. Ranade also says, “ Introspection is psychological process corresponding to Self-consciousness as a metaphysical reality. Self-consciousness is possible only through the process of introspection. The Self is endowed with the supreme power of dichotomising himself. The empirical conditions of knowledge are inapplicable to the Self. The Self can divide himself into the knower and the known.”⁹⁹ Thus, the problem of unknownableness as well as its objectivity is solved.

In addition, from the first half of the *Nāciketā*'s third boon, its absolute suprasensuous nature is also established. Furthermore, this nature of *Ātman* is prominently justified in so many mantras in the following manner-

1. *Yama* says that even *devatā* , who is endowed with divine qualities are unable to know *Ātman*. It definitely indicates to an absolute suprasensuous nature.¹⁰⁰
2. The Self is subtler than the subtlest, greater than the greatest and is beyond argumentation. It is seated in the cavity of heart of each living being. So, It's definitely of a nature of suprasensuous.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, pp.199-200.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.200.

¹⁰⁰ *Devairatrāpi vicikitsitam purā,*
Na hi suvijñeyamaṇuṣa dharmah. Ka.1.1.21.

3. Its nature is full of contradiction. Sitting he travels far, again lying he goes everywhere. Such a contradictory nature cannot be an object of sensuous perception.¹⁰²
4. Its form is not to be seen and no one beholds Him with the eye. It cannot be reached by speech or by mind. It is revealed to him who says, "It exist".¹⁰³

Thus, it can be concluded that keeping such absolute suprasensuous nature, *Ātman* cannot be an object of knowledge. Because in transcendental reality, there is no difference among the knower, object, and knowledge. But It is an object in relation to empirical reality, because a knower has always an empirical existence. It is only after the knowledge of *Brahman*; *Ātman* never remains as an object.

Establishment of the final object of the *Kaṭhopanīṣad*:

It is a fact that *Ātman* is the final object of the *Kaṭhopanīṣad* in relation to its final purpose of expounding *brahmadevīyā*. But, here is a general query- while *Kaṭhopanīṣad* accepts three types of object then how can we prove *Ātman* as the final object? Is there any specific nature, which can raise a question on the issue of existence of empirical objects? Or it is already understood that three objects are

¹⁰¹ *Aṅgīyān hyatarkeyamaṅupramāṅāt*. Ibid., I.II.8.

Naiṣā tarkeṅa matirāpaneyā,

proktāo 'neynaiva sujñānāya preṣṭha. Ibid., I.II.9.

Aṅoranīyān mahato mahīyān,

ātmāsya jantornihito guhayām. Ibid., I.II.20.

¹⁰² *Āsīno dūraiṅ vrajati śayāno yāti sarvataḥ*. Ibid., 1.2.21.

¹⁰³ *Na sandrṣe tiṣṭhati rūpamasya,*

Na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaścanainam. Ibid., 2.3.9.

Naiva vācā na manasā prāptuṅ śakyo na cakṣuṣā,

Astīti bruvato 'nyatra kathaiṅ tad upalabhyate. Ibid., 2.3.12.

respectively connected with the concept of three-fold knower. But as the knower is basically one, and the differentiation is only a strategic intellectual understanding, so also, is there any relation corresponding to the three-fold division of object? If it is so, then what is the philosophy behind it? Their differentiation in three categories means they have distinct nature featuring their separate existence. And the monistic value of this *Upaniṣad* does not allow this differentiation. That's why, there must be a synthesis regarding their real nature that fulfill the criteria of being one and the same with *Ātman* or the final object. To prove it we have to justify the nature of the objects in all the three layers. This justification is possible only through the proper analyzing of the dialogues between *Yama* and *Nāciketā*.

Yamarāja's continuous trying to dissuade *Nāciketā* from asking the question about what after death or about *Ātman* and testing *Nāciketā's* caliber, honesty of purpose and intellectual integrity by throwing more temptations and all allurements of worldly grandeur within his easy grasp, shows a distinction between the objects of empirical level and transcendental level. Then, *Nāciketā's* statement shows that either sensuous or suprasensuous it may be, objects of empirical reality are of transient nature, they even wear of the energy and vigour of all the sense-organs of a being. All these objects will be destroyed in a relative moment. They have no eternal value. They will only weaken the sense-organs which are going to partake in the enjoyment of the object concerned. They are not conducive towards the attainment of the truth beyond all.¹⁰⁴ Human being is never satisfied with wealth or other worldly objects. Whatever amount a man has, it does not matter to him; but he always remains

¹⁰⁴ *Śvobhāvā martyasya yad antakaitat
sarvenadriyāṇāṃ jarayanti tejah,
Api sarvaṃ jīvitam alpam eva
Tavaiva vāhūs tava nr̥tya gīte.* Ibid.,1.1.26.

unhappy thinking of gaining more and more than he has. Moreover, when *Nāciketā* says that no decaying mortal who knows the perishability of this world, having reached the presence of and company of the imperishable and immortal divine like *Yama*, wants to ask any boon regarding wealth or long life, as there has supreme truth to know from him,¹⁰⁵ it indicates to an object like *Ātman* which is the only eternal reality.

A human being is a natural mortal being limited by time and death. They always run after a life of happiness and pleasure. But when he imagines that his real nature is self-effulgent, imperishable, immortal, he will be ever yearning for that and making all endeavours to achieve it. And it is possible only through the knowledge of *Ātman*,¹⁰⁶ which is the only eternal Reality behind this plurality.¹⁰⁷ And, it is also proved that all other than *Ātman* is of transient nature. *Yamarāja* himself declares about the transient nature of the objects empirical when he says- “*Jānāmyaham śevadhīr ityanityam*” (Ka.1.2.10) or

Sa tvam priyānpriya rupāṁśca kāmān

abhidhyāyan naciketo'tyasrākṣiḥ,

Naitārṅkām vittamayīm avāpto

yasyām majjanti bahavo manuṣyāḥ. (Ka.1.2.3)

¹⁰⁵ *Ajīryatām amṛtānām upetya*
jīryan martyaḥ kvadhaḥ sthaḥ prajānam,
Abhidhyāyan varṇa rati pramodān
atidīrghe jīvite ko rameta. Ibid., 1.2.28.

¹⁰⁶ *Na hyadhruvaiḥ prāpye hi dhruvaṁ tat.* Ibid., 1.2.10.

¹⁰⁷ *Nityo 'nityānām cetanaścetanānām*
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān,
Tamātmastham ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ
teṣām śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām. Ibid., 2.2.13.

In reverse, *Ātman* is established as the eternal object from his statement in explaining the result of the knowledge of It.¹⁰⁸ *Nāciketā*'s stand in focusing on the worldly objects as transient and his unstoppable desire for the knowledge of *Ātman* can be alone sufficient to establish *Ātman* as eternal and Ultimate Truth.¹⁰⁹ When *Yama* offered *Nāciketā* all possible worldly temptations and told him not to ask about *Ātman*, it creates curiosity about *Ātman* regarding Its objectivity, which finally ends up with its eternal nature. This eternity is portrayed more distinctly in various *mantras*-

Na jāyate mṛyate vā vipaścit

nnāyaṁ kutaścinna babhūva kaścit,

Ajo nityaḥ sāsṁvato 'yaṁ purāṇo

na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. (Ka. 1.2.18)

Hantā cenmanyate hantuṁ hataścenmanyate hatam;

Ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate. (Ka.1.2.19)

Aśarīraṁ śarīreṣu anavastheśvavasthitam,

Mahantaṁ vibhum ātmānaṁ matvā dhīro na śocati. (Ka.1.2.22)

Now, the question is, besides Its eternal nature what type of logic does *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* maintain to establish *Ātman* as the final object? In support of this statement we can produce the following arguments-

¹⁰⁸ *Aśabdāṁ asparśāṁ arūpāṁ avyayāṁ tathā 'rasāṁ nityāṁ agandhavat ca yat, Anādyanantaṁ mahataḥ paramādhruvaṁ nicāyā tanmṛtyumukhātpramucyate.* Ibid., 1.3.15.

¹⁰⁹ *Yasminnidāṁ vicikitsanti mṛtyo, yat sāmparāye mahati brūhi nastat.* Ibid., 1.1.29.
Anyatra dharmādanyatrādharmaṁ anyatrāsmāt kṛtākṛtāt, ānyatra bhūtācca bhavyūcca yat tat paśyati tad vada. Ibid., 1.2.14.

1. The effect of a perishable object is also perishable. The effect of the knowledge of *Ātman* is not perishable which is also the purport of *Brahmavidyā*.¹¹⁰
2. In one *mantra*, *Yama* indicates *Ātman* as the most glorious object when he says that many people do not even get a chance to hear of the knowledge of *Ātman*, many people having heard it, cannot understand it.¹¹¹ He also says that even the *devatās* living in *svargaloka* are not aware of this knowledge. The principle of this knowledge is extremely subtle. So, it is the final object of the *Kaṭhapaniṣad*.
3. *Yama* himself declares the worldly objects as perishable. Verily, the eternal is never attained by the non-eternal. Here, the eternal is *Brahmavidyā* or the knowledge of *Brahman*, which is the final knowledge of the *Kaṭhapaniṣad*, also can be found through the eternal object *Ātman* only.¹¹²
4. Again, there is a problem in establishing *Ātman* as the final object because though the *Kaṭhapaniṣad* says about the transient nature of the worldly objects, yet we are accepting its limited existence as real. So, it is somewhat contradictory to accept *Ātman* as the final object even after accepting the partial reality of others. But its answer is also in *Kaṭhapaniṣad* as it says that all other objects are not other than *Ātman*. It is manifested as manifold world

¹¹⁰ *Nityo 'nityānāṃ cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnāṃ yo vidadhāt kāmān,
Tamātmasthaṃ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ
teṣāṃ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣāṃ.* Ibid., 2.2.13.

¹¹¹ *Śravaṇāyā 'pi bahubhīryo na lābhyaḥ
śṛṅvanto 'pi bahavo yaṃ na vidyaḥ,
Āścāryo vaktā kuśalo 'sya labdhā
āścāryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ.* Ibid., 1.2.7.

¹¹² *Jānāmyahaṃ śevadhira ityanityaṃ
na hyadhruvaiḥ prāpyate hi dhruvaṃ tat,
Tato mayā Nāciketaścīto 'gniḥ
anītyairdravyaiḥ praptavānasmī nityam.* Ibid., 1.2.10.

or world of plurality.¹¹³ All this is *Ātmā* and the phenomenal world is nothing but *Brahman*. Its only due to *avidyā*, we see the difference within *Ātman*.¹¹⁴

5. Nothing remains unknown after the knowledge of *Ātman*. So, it is the final object-

Yena rūpaṃ rasaṃ gandhaṃ sparśāṃśca maithunān,

Etena iva vijānāti kim atra pariśiṣyate. (Ka. 2.1.3)

6. Having realized what is immortal in this mortal world, the wise don't desire anything in this transient world. That immortal *tattva* is *Ātman*, only through which

Kāthopaniṣad executes its final aim of *Brahmavidyā*.¹¹⁵

7. This *Ātman* is considered sometimes as *Agni*, *Prāṇa*, etc., which also support the theme that all the objects are not other than *Ātman*.¹¹⁶ So, it is the final object.

8. This *Ātman* is the lord of the past and the future. He is like light without smoke. He is verily today and will be tomorrow.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ *Agnir yathaiko bhuvanaṃ praviṣṭo
rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva,
Ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā
rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo bahiṣca. Ibid., 2.2.9.*

¹¹⁴ *Yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha,
Mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyumāpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati. Ibid., 2.1.10.
hamsaḥ śuciṣad vasur antarikṣasad
hotā vediśadatithirduroṇasat,
Nṛṣad varasad ṛtasad vyomasad
abhjā gojā ṛtajā adriṣā ṛtambrhat. Ibid., 2.2.2.*

¹¹⁵ *Parācaḥ kāmān anuyanti bālāḥ
te mṛtyor yanti vitatasya pāśam,
Atha dhūrā amṛtatvaṃ viditvā
Dhruvam adhruveṣvīha na prārthayante. Ibid., 2.1.2.*

¹¹⁶ *Aranyor nihito jātavedā
garbha iva subhṛto garbhīṇibhiḥ,
Dive dive ūḍyo jāgrvadbhiḥ
haviṣmadbhir manuṣyebhir agniḥ. Ibid., 2.1.8.*

¹¹⁷ *Anguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo jyotiriva adhūmakalḥ,
Īśāno bhūtabhavyasya sa evādyā sa u śvaḥ. Ibid., 2.1.13.*

9. *Nāciketā*'s continuous pressure on *Yama* to give lesson about *Ātman* also supplements It as the final object.¹¹⁸
10. *Yama* syas that he, who has realized *Ātman* with the qualities like *aśabda*, *asparśa*, *avyayam*, etc. and which is beyond death, which is eternal and unchanging, is freed from the jaws of death.¹¹⁹
11. Finally, the last mantra of the *Kāthopaniṣad* keeps a clear indication about *Ātman* as the final object when it says about the result of the knowledge of *Brahman* to the knower *Nāciketā*. It says that *Nāciketā*, having been so instructed by Lord Death in this knowledge and in the whole process of *Yoga*, became free from all impurities and death, and attained *Brahman*. Cf.-

Mṛtyuproktāṁ Nāciketo 'tha labdhvā

vidyām etāṁ yogavidhiṁ ca kṛtsnam,

Brahmaprāpto virajo 'bhūd vimṛtyuḥ

Anyo 'preyaṁ yo vid adhyātma meva. (Ka. 2.3.3)

The arguments, we have mentioned above with reference to the *Kāthopaniṣad*, profoundly establish *Ātman* as the final object of it.

¹¹⁸ *Yasminnidam vicikitsanti mṛtyo
yat sāmparāye mahati brūhi nastat,
Yo 'yaṁ varo gūḍham anupraviṣṭo
nānyam tasmānacikeketa vṛṇṇite. Ibid., 1.1.29.*

¹¹⁹ *Aśabdam asparśam arūpam avyayam
tathā 'rasaṁ nityam agandhavat ca yat,
Anāḍyanantaṁ mahataḥ paraṁ dhruvaṁ
nicāyy tan mṛtyu mukhāt pramucyate. Ibid., 1.3.15.*

Chapter IV

PROCESS OF KNOWING

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What is a cognitive process?

Formerly dealing with the terms- knower and object of knowledge, now we are going to discuss the process through which a relation is established between the object and the knower, which finally produces knowledge of that particular object and it is called as cognitive process. As objects are different according to their nature, the process of knowing is also verily different. Here, we will use the term epistemological realism to mean the cognitive process, which includes the outer world activities like sense-object contact, sacrifices, etc. where the goal is to find out the highest pleasure of life; and epistemological idealism to assign the cognitive process which includes the internal world activities like purification of the mind, control of the sense-organs, faith in *śruti* and *guru*, practice of the *yoga*, etc. where the goal is to find the real nature of oneself. We have used the terms- epistemological realism and epistemological idealism in our discussion as Paul Deussen has also used these terms in a parallel meaning in his book “The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads.” *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* distinctly points out to a cognitive process regarding its final objects when *Nāciketā* says that the sages perceive that indescribable highest bliss as “This is That. How shall I know That? Does it shine (of itself) or does it shine by another light?”¹²⁰

¹²⁰ *Tadetaditi manyante anirdeśyaṃ paramaṃ sukham,
Kaṭhaṃ nu tad vijānīyāṃ kimu bhāti vibhāti vā. Ka., 2.2.14.*

Two different dimensions of this cognitive process as explained in the *Kaṭhapaniṣad-Śreyas and Preyas*:

We have already discussed three types of objects- sensuous object, worldly suprasensuous object and suprasensuous object, among which first two are worldly and the third one is beyond the world. The entire *Kaṭhapaniṣad* also discusses the epistemological issues in these two layers. And the two different dimensions of this cognitive process-*preyas* and *śreyas*, which we are going to discuss, respectively related to these two layers. So, their respective process of cognition is also different. *Preyas* is like an outward journey of the cognitive process for worldly pleasure and *śreyas* is like an inward journey of the cognitive process, starting from the detachment from the outer world to the final realization of the Self.

Śreyas and *preyas* are two very significant terms in *Kaṭhapaniṣad* in relation to human approach that an individual can follow. Both these terms are very technical. *Śreyas* and *preyas* otherwise good and pleasant, carry the same concept of value as that of *vidyā* and *avidyā* of the *Upaniṣadic* tradition. As *Isopaniṣad* says, “*Avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā vidyayā mṛtamaśnute*”, *Kaṭhapaniṣad* itself declares that *vidyā* and *avidyā* are wide apart and lead to different ends or goals. To one who is desirous of *vidyā*, achieve the immortality and the other goes to the cycle of birth and death.¹²¹ This discussion, in relation to *śreyas* and *preysa* in the *Kaṭhapaniṣad*, clearly indicates the parallel idea. *Yama* now identifies *śreyas* with *vidyā*, knowledge and *preyas* with *avidyā*, ignorance.¹²² *Kaṭhapaniṣad* says that the path of pleasant and the path of good

¹²¹ *Dūramete viparīte viśūcī
avidyā yā ca vidyeti jñātā,
vidyābhīpsinaṁ naciketasam manye
na tvā kāmā bahavo lolupanta.* Ibid.. 1.2.4.

¹²² The message of the Upaniṣads, pp.299.

are both eternally different from each other, since they diverge to reach two different points or destinations, which in their very nature are as opposing as light and darkness. The path of pleasant is the path of ignorance (*avidyā*) and the path of good is the path of knowledge (*vidyā*).¹²³ *Abhyudaya* for *preyas* and *Niḥśreyasa* for *śreyas* are two commonly used terms in *Vedāntic* tradition.

Śreyas and *preyas* can be interpreted from the point of ethics, epistemology and metaphysics also. From the point of view of ethics, they have relative value concerning different situations. While using these in terms of *Kāthopaniṣadic* assessment, *preyas* indicates purely a materialistic ethics while *śreyas* indicates purely a spiritualistic one. If we explain these terms in relation to materialistic world, they can be evaluated in a comparative mood. If the former stands for the worse, the later will stand for something better than the worse- whatever a mass agreeable option or an action of highly valued in comparison to *preyas* will be *śreyas*. Swami Chinmayananda, with an ethical indication, says, “ Dharmarāja classifies all actions, with reference to their fruits, into two divisions. The fruits of actions can be of two kinds: those contributing to the ephemeral joys in life and those leading to the Immortal Bliss in the beyond.”¹²⁴ Ranganathananda also giving an explanation from the ethical point of view says that the term *preyas* means that which is pleasant, immediately attractive; the term *śreyas* means that which conduces to true welfare, which is ultimately beneficial. Ethics and religion divide all objects and experiences into these two categories.¹²⁵ Regarding the result of one who goes with the pleasant path, Ranganathananda says, “He remains a biological organism and misses his spiritual direction and goal. *Preya* is therefore is below ethics. Ethics begins with

¹²³ Kathopanishad-a dialogue with death, pp.69.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp.62.

¹²⁵ The message of the Upaniṣads, pp.292.

parting from *preya* and entering the path of *śreya*; from then on, man ascends from the organic to the mental, and thence to the spiritual, dimensions of his being, liberating the value of humanness in the process, to rise, in the end, step by step to the full stature of his true selfhood.”¹²⁶

But the question is that from the epistemological point of view, what are these? What are their specific natures? Are they object, process of knowing or knowledge? The answer is that they are not one of these, but all of these. In a word, it is a wholesome concept where all these three are included. At one time, it indicates an object; other time it is the process of knowing or knowledge itself.

Yama before starting his discourse on the process of knowing clearly differentiates between *preyas* and *śreyas* with reference to the *Kāthopaniṣadic* final goal.¹²⁷ Here, *Yama* enunciates about the value of choice, that a man can follow any of the two paths in his life. Either he can take the path that leads him towards *śreyas*, which means the right and the path of the good, or towards *preyas* that takes an individual towards immediate pleasure but ultimate pain. *Gītā* also elaborates that the first one, brings immediate happiness and profit and more attractive, but finally leads to a life of disaster.¹²⁸ Whereas the other though involves some initial destitution, finally leads to wholesome ultimate welfare.¹²⁹

Leading to different ends, they both bind man. One, who goes with the pleasant, becomes bound with sensory stimulation and loses his final goal. And the

¹²⁶ Ibid, pp.293.

¹²⁷ *Anyacchreyo 'nyadutaiva preyaste
ubhe nānārthe puruṣaṁ sinītaḥ,
Tayoḥ śreya ādadānasya sādhu bhavati
hīyate 'rthādya u preyo vṛṇūte. Ka.1.2.1*

¹²⁸ *Viṣayendriyasamyogādyattadagre 'mṛtopamam,
Pariṇāme viṣamiva tatsukhaṁ rājasam smṛtam. B. G. 18.38.*

¹²⁹ *Yattadgre viṣamiva pariṇāme 'mṛtopamam,
tatsukhaṁ sattvikam proktamātmabuddhiprasādajam. Ibid., 18.37*

other gets bound with liberation.¹³⁰ In this context, *Sinitaḥ* is a very significant term from the highest standpoint of the Supreme Goal, which means bondage. Ranganathananda states, “ This bondage arises from the impelling force of desire within man which makes him resort to the one or the other, according to the constitution of his mind. They lead to different ends so that if he chooses one of them he is far away from the other.”¹³¹

Bondages of the *śreyas* path are-

- (a) Personally chosen attachment.
- (b) It is the choice of the wise.
- (c) This bondage takes one towards freedom.
- (d) Ends with the realization of Brahman.

Bondages of the *preyas* path are-

- (a) It is the attachment caused by the sense-organs.
- (b) It is the choice of the ignorance.
- (c) This bondage is a natural flow.
- (d) It leads to the cycle of birth and death.

In the next *mantra*, *Kāthopaniṣad* expresses the idea that each individual or knower is approached by *preyas* and *śreyas* and they try to capture his attention and interest. A knower is free to choose one of them. It depends on what type of understanding a knower possesses. As they are opposite in nature one cannot take the both at the same time. When one chooses *preyas*, *śreyas* goes far away from him and the same thing happens in case of *śreyas* also. So, the wise implementing his discriminative power carefully examines the two and chooses *śreyas*; but the ignorant,

¹³⁰ *Ubhe nānārthe puruṣaṁ sinītaḥ*. Ka. 1.2.1

¹³¹ The message of the Upaniṣads, pp.295.

motivated by worldly pleasure and unable to discriminate, chooses *preyas*.¹³² Śāṅkara also says –

Dehohamityeva jaḍasya buddhiḥ

Dehe ca jīve viduṣastvahaṃ dhīḥ;

Vivekavijñānavato mahātmano

Brahmāhamityeva matiḥ sadātmani. (Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, verse/160)

Thus, both terms are very significant in interpreting the ideas within *Kaṭhapaniṣad*.

From the above discussion, we can make the following differences between the two-

1. *Preyas* demands freedom of the sense-organs while *śreyas* demands freedom from the sense-organs.
2. *Preyas* means spiritual blindness while *śreyas* means spiritual awareness.
3. *Śreyas* leads one towards immortality while *preyas* leads one towards the cycle of birth and death.
4. *Śreyas* means right action while *preyas* means pleasant action.
5. *Śreyas* is a journey towards *Yoga*; *preyas* is a journey towards *bhoga*.
6. Besides, for an epistemological study, it becomes clear that *śreyas* is related to Self or *Ātman* while *preya* is related to empirical world or in another way *śreyas* is related to the knowledge of non-duality or integrated reality while *preyas* is related to the knowledge of duality or fragmented one.

¹³² *Śreyaśca preyaśca manuṣyametaḥ
tau samparītya vivinakti dhīraḥ,
Śreya hi dhīro 'bhi preyaśo vṛṇṇite
preyaśo mando yogakṣemād vṛṇṇite.* Ka. 1.2.2.

Preyas and *śreyas*, though from a metaphysical point of view can be regarded as objects, but from the epistemological aspect they are just a concept or idea. It is not the *sādhana* or *sādhya*. The words good or pleasant indicate that they are not nouns but adjectives, which are used to denote the values of a noun. Adjective is not an object of knowledge alone or process of knowing but a relational concept. Therefore, we are treating them only as technical terms to indicate the whole idea- from confirming an object to the knowledge of that object, regarding their respective concerns. *Śāṅkara* also in his commentary of this mantra put forth a similar explanation.¹³³ For example- When a man who chooses *preyas*- clinging to pleasure, does sacrifices and finally gets *svargaloka* or wealth etc. Here, we cannot say that *preyas* means only *svarga* or process of attaining *svarga* or the result of the achieving *svarga*. Because, all these three are relational. One cannot exist without another. So, we cannot say that only the object or process or knowledge deviates one from the real goal, it is the whole idea or circumstances.

Thus, when *Kāthopaniṣad* states that *preyas* leads pleasure, it indicates the result of the whole idea or circumstances. Knowledge being produced creates pleasure or pain. *Preyas* does not mean pleasure also; this final feeling is beyond the function of *preyas*. Thus, *preyas* is the *sādhana* for pleasure. So, is the case of *śreyas*. It leads to *niḥśreyas* or ultimate state. It is also the whole idea from taking Self as an object and finally getting the knowledge of it. As soon as the knowledge of Self is realized, the function of *śreyas* is finished. Then, it is all about *Brahman*- no *preyas* or *śreyas* are there for the knower.

¹³³ *Satyam svāyatte tathāpi sādhanataḥ phalataśca mandabuddhīnām durvivekarūpe satī vyāmiśrībhūte iva manuṣyametaḥ puruṣamāītaḥ prāpnutaḥ śreyaśca preyaśca.* Ka. Ś. B. 1.2.2.

Process of knowing empirical objects of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*:

Kaṭhōpaniṣad conceptualizes the process of knowing of the final object by discussing the worldly process of knowing or epistemological realism, because it is the first step to go for the epistemological idealism. The process of knowing of the empirical objects is based on our treatment of the three dimensional concept of knower and object as propagated in the *Kṭhōpaniṣad*. When we start to discuss about the process of knowing object in terms of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, our attention first goes to the imagery of chariot. It is very significant because, through this analogy *Yama* is trying to give an idea of two different types of journey to *Nāciketā*, which can be performed by a knower. *Śaṅkara* also in his commentary of this mantra says that the imagery of chariot is depicted as an instrument for *Jīvatmā* to achieve the goal of liberation as well as *saṁsāra* which are endowed with *vidyā* and *avidyā* respectively.¹³⁴ There is a similar comparison in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (2.9) also. The analogy of the chariot is, as such, most picturesquely depicted in the *Gītā* also where the five surging horses are like the senses and Supreme intelligence *Kṛṣṇa* as the intelligent factor, *Arjuna* as the master, etc.

(a) Process of knowing sensuous object:

Through the imagery of chariot *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* describes the *Ātman* as the Lord or Master of the chariot, the mind merely as reins and the intellect as the charioteer.¹³⁵ In this analogy, the Self is the master of the chariot means Self is the

¹³⁴ *Tatra y upadhikṛtaḥ saṁsārī vidyāvidyayoradhikṛto mokṣagamanāya saṁsāragamanāya ca tasya tadubhayagamane sādhanō rathaḥ kalpyate- tatra tamātmānamīrtapaṁ saṁsāriṇaṁ rathinaṁ rathasvāminaṁ viddhi jānīhi. Ibid., 1.3.3.*

¹³⁵ *Ātmanaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi śarīraṁ rathameva tu, Buddhiṁ tu sārathiṁ viddhi maṇḥ pragrahameva ca. Ka.1.3.3.*

witnessing faculty. It is functionless but like a chariot without a master, the absence of master creates the absence of the whole process of knowing, because *Ātman* or Self is the only conscious factor in the body chariot or among the entire functioning faculty. So, it is the lord of our body. Body is the unconscious factor that moves with the help of other. The pure discriminating intellect is the charioteer. Intellect has the power of discrimination between good or bad. It is the intellect, which has the capacity of deciding.¹³⁶ The body of the individual is the chariot and the reins with which the intellect guides the movement of the body are the mind. The mind has a mixed nature of *saṅkalpa vikalpa*.¹³⁷ Mind is unable to decide what to do. Like the reins mind is the controller of the sense-organs. Sense-organs follow to where the mind allows.

Continuing the analogy, it says that senses are the horses and their roads are the sense-objects. The wise call the *Ātman* as the experiencer when it is united with the body, the senses and the mind.¹³⁸ The sense-organs are always tempted to go outside as the horses have a designation of moving fast in any direction. *Kāthopaniṣad* puts that they have a natural tendency to go to their respective objects.¹³⁹ Without these such as the ears, the eyes, the nose, the tongue and the skin, the body chariot cannot move. It is obvious that the instruments through which we can procure the experiences of the outer world are the five sense-organs. If our sense-organs terminate to function, the outer world will keep no meaning for us. It will turn into nothingness. Their roads are the sense-objects. That means the five sense-organs have different objects such as colour, taste, sound, touch and smell. We acquire the

¹³⁶ *Buddhirnāma niścayātmikntakaraṇavṛttiḥ*. V. S., 65.

¹³⁷ *Mano nāma saṅkalpavikalpātmikāntaḥkaraṇavṛttiḥ*. Ibid., 66.

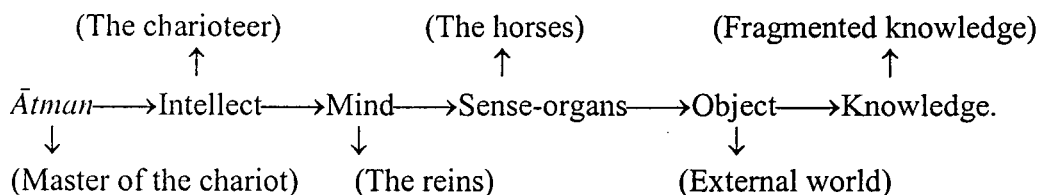
¹³⁸ *Indriyāṇī hayānahurviṣayāṅsteṣu gocarān, Ātmendriyā manoyuktāṅ bhoktyetyāhurmanāṣiṇaḥ*. Ka. 1.3.4

¹³⁹ *Parāñcikhāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūstasmātparāñpaśyati nāntarātman*. Ibid., 2.1.1.

knowledge of this whole phenomenal world in the form of these objects as they may be available or may become the object of sense-organs to be the object of knowledge.

From these two *mantras*, we get the clear picture of the process of getting knowledge of sensuous objects where the knower does not need anyone's concern. Whenever man is awake, his sense-organs begin to dwell in the objects of the world around him. These sense-organs make contact with the external world and are the instruments that produce knowledge from the world back to the mind and to the intellect.

The framework of perception, which is available at present in a broad explanation, taking into consideration of every faculty with utmost care, is faithfully originated in the *Upaniṣadic* literature and among those *Kathopaniṣad* gives us a short description of it. In the following way, we can show the process-



Here, *Ātman* is the witnessing consciousness, which is connected with the internal organs (intellect+mind, sometimes it is called as mind only). Internal organs stay connected with the sense-organs. And the sense-organs which are described here as horses, go out and get connected with their respective objects. Object means the external world here. After sense object contact, the mind takes the shape of the object to be known and finally knowledge is produced. The mind is the intermediate agent between the intellect and the sense-organs which are the only medium of contact with the world.

(b) Process of knowing worldly suprasensuous objects:

We have already discussed about the nature of the supra-sensuous worldly object in the previous chapter. It is apparent from the discussion that process of knowing suprasensuous objects are different from the sensuous ones. And as *svarga* is the worldly suprasensuous in nature, its process of knowing will be different from the final object also. In its case, verbal testimony is the only proof for its existence and attainment of the knowledge of *svarga* by verbal testimony is followed by sacrificial acts. When *Nāciketā* says that there is no fear of old age, no hunger, no thirst, only joy and happiness¹⁴⁰, it is proved that it is not his own statement about the nature of *svarga* but the repetition of one who is aware of it. Existence of an object is one thing and the attainment of that object is another thing. Existence of an object is not directly related to a knower, because when we talk about the process of attaining that object, its existence is our pre-supposition. But this existence approved by verbal testimony is the provocative factor in the process of attainment. Thus, at first verbal testimony gives us the statement of existence. Secondly, it is also the verbal testimony telling the knower about the process of attainment. *Nāciketā*, in his second boon, asks *Yama* about the means of attaining *svargaloka* and *Yama* replies that he knows about the knowledge of fire, which is the only means of attaining heavenly abode. He also impels him to know that this same *agnividyā* and the fire is the support and strength of the universe and is seated in the secret cavity of the heart.¹⁴¹ Here, we see that *Yama*,

¹⁴⁰ *Svarge loke na bhayaṃ kiñcanāsti
na tatra tvam na jarayā bibheti,
Ubhe tīrtvā śnāyāpipāse
śokātigo modate svargaloke.* Ibid., 1.1.12.

¹⁴¹ *Pra te bravāmi tadu me nibodha
svargyamagniṃ naciketah prajānan,
Anantalokūptimatho pratiṣṭām
Viddhi tvameva nihitaṃ guhāyām.* Ibid., 1.1.14.

whose statement is verbal testimony, before giving *Nāciketā* the knowledge of fire, trying to make faith, says about the greatness of the *agni*. *Śaṅkara* says that the words “*prabravīmi*” and “*nibodha*” both are used to indicate the fixation of the knower on the subject.¹⁴² In the very next mantra, *Yama* explains to *Nāciketa* about the knowledge of fire and also about the various kinds of bricks, how many bricks are required and how they are placed and used in various combinations and permutations.¹⁴³ We know from the sacrificial culture of the Vedic tradition that *agni* is inseparable from sacrifice. As for instance, when *śruti* says “*Yayet Svargakāmaḥ*”, it says that sacrifice is the means of *svargaloka*. But as without *agni* no sacrifice is possible, it is the *agni* which takes one to the *svargaloka*. So, when it is said that it is the knowledge of fire, it indirectly means the sacrificial act. Thus, *Kaṭha* does not provide us an explicit discussion on this process, but *Yama*, in this *mantra*, tells about the sacrificial process in brief to *Nāciketā*. Finally, *Yama* says that he who realizes and comprehends the knowledge of the cementing bricks, their number and the mode of usage also and performs the three *nāciketaḥ agni*, transcends the fetters of death whilst still alive and rejoices in the divine heaven.¹⁴⁴

Thus, though we get nothing in details, yet we can frame it through the following statement that—it is the preceptor or *guru* who shows the path to go with the sacrifice. His words are the means of this attainment i.e. the words endowed with action. So, the means of attaining *svargaloka* can be said as a sacrificial journey co-joined with verbal authority.

¹⁴² *Prabravīmi tannibodheti ca śiṣyabuddhisamādhānārtha vacanam.* Ka. Ś. B., 1.1.14.

¹⁴³ *Lokādimagniṃ tamuvāca tasmai yā iṣṭakā yāvatīrvā yathā vā.* Ka.1.1.15.

¹⁴⁴ *Triṇāciketastrayametadvidītvā
ya evaṃ vidvāṃścīnute,
Sa mṛtyupāsān purataḥ praṇodya
śokātigo modate svargaloke.* Ibid., 1.1.18.

The limitations of logical reasoning in acquiring the knowledge of *Brahman*:

As soon as the Self is established as the final object as well as the Ultimate Reality, there definitely arise the question of acquiring the knowledge of it. We see in the whole *Upaniṣadic* tradition that seers spent their whole life in search of this truth. We generally get the knowledge of objects of this world through a process with an outward tendency where sense-organs, mind and intellect play the role of vision. The Ultimate truth is not a theme that can be reached or understood by a play of the intellect. Mere reasoning can cover only the frontiers of the world of objects. But the ultimate truth lies extended beyond the frontiers of the intellect and the mind. Since the *Ātman* is the conscious factor in the functions of intellect and the mind, it is obvious that these, being mere instruments, cannot of themselves come to discover the reality behind them.

Kāthopaniṣad says that it cannot be known through the ways useful for the ordinary knowledge of worldly objects. The Self is beyond the sphere of sense-organs. His form is not to be seen; hence no one can see Brahman with the eyes.¹⁴⁵ The intelligent and the all-pervasive principle, which is professed by *Yama* as the Ultimate of the multiversity, is not an object of demonstration or empirical understanding. We have discussed about the respective nature of different objects. Since the knowledge of the *Ātman* is contrasted with the reality of experience as the realm of ignorance, it cannot be gained by mere logical reasoning.¹⁴⁶ Again, *Ātman* or Self is the only eternal entity, beyond time and space; and all this is bound to death. As both are contradictory how is it possible to prove the existence of the eternal

¹⁴⁵ *Na sandṛśe tiṣṭhati rūpamasya na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaścanainam.* Ibid., 2.3.9.

¹⁴⁶ *Naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā.* Ibid., 1.2.9.

through non-eternal ways? *Kaṭhopanīṣad* says that the eternal is never attained by the things non-eternal.¹⁴⁷

In another *mantra*, it is said that *Ātman* or Self neither can be attained by the study of the scriptures or theoretical knowledge of the *Vedas* nor by great intelligence. It cannot be realized by hearing great discourses.¹⁴⁸ It shows that mere memorizing of the knowledge of the *Vedas* or hearing from the gurus is not the way of realizing *Brahman*.

Paul Deussen also, discussing the issue of logical reasoning in the attainment of *Ātman* says, “The former glimpses of that nearest of known facts, the self, showed the thinkers of the Upanishads that the path they had been following, the path of realism, had logically led them to an unsatisfying conclusion. The unity for which they had been searching as if it were something outside of and apart from the self. For there still remains the stubborn dualism of self and not-self, however deeply the two might be set into a monistic frame which should embrace them both in an external grasp. Epistemological idealism must henceforth be the path travelled in order to reach the goal of an absolute unity.

This was a wonderful discovery, intuitions of which had flashed out here and there, but which was forced upon them for adoption by the limit which they had reached along the line of epistemological realism.”¹⁴⁹ Here, Paul Deussen has clarified that epistemological realism is not able to realize *Brahman* to us. It is the epistemological idealism, which makes us possible the realization of *Brahman*. And it

¹⁴⁷ *Jānāmyahaṁ śevadhīrityanīyaṁ
na hyadhruvaiḥ prāpye hi dhruvaṁ tat.* Ibid., 1.2.10.

¹⁴⁸ *Nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena.* Ibid., 1.2.23.

¹⁴⁹ The Philosophy of the Upanishads, pp.42.

is not the view of the *Kāthopaniṣad* only but the single proved view of the whole *Upaniṣadic* tradition.

Process of knowing absolute suprasensuous object of the

Kāthopaniṣad:

Realization of the Ultimate Reality is the final purpose of the *Upaniṣadic* Philosophy. In the language of Swami Vivekananda we can say, “ The Hindu does not want to live upon words and theories. If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous existence, he wants to come face to face with them. If there is a soul in him, which is not matter, if there is an all-merciful human soul, he will go to Him direct. He must see Him, and that alone can destroy all doubts. So the best proof of a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God, is: “ I have seen the soul; I have seen God.” And that is the only condition of perfection. The Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realizing – not in believing, but in being and becoming.”¹⁵⁰

Now, the question is about the process of knowing or process of realization. How much important of accepting the reality of this world till the realization of *Brahman* or how the worldly *pramāṇas* are just the steps to reach the real object is very significant. In this context, Śāṅkara in his commentary on *Brahmasūtra* and also in *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* by Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, the following verse has been quoted-

Dehātmapratyayo yadvat pramāṇatnena kalpitaḥ,

Laukikam tadvadevam pramāṇāntvā ’maniścayāt.

(V. P., p.6 and B. S. Ś. B., 1.1.4.)

¹⁵⁰ Complete works, vol.1, pp.13.

Though the object *Ātman* is transcendental yet the process of knowing it is purely worldly. But the limitation of logical reasoning gives us the reason to follow a path different from it. And this path is not other than the epistemological idealism as in the language of Paul Deussen.

Having discerned a clear vision of the ultimate goal, the knower proceeds to the particular way that leads to the coveted end. *Kaṭhapaniṣad* describes this path as sharp, like the edge of a razor, being severely difficult to cross.¹⁵¹ As a result, very less people strive to attain it and among striving persons one realizes Brahman.

If we try to evaluate this process of knowing, developed in the *Kaṭhapaniṣad*, we find that first of all there is no explicit way of attaining the knowledge of *Brahman* like perception, inference, verbal testimony, etc. Verbal testimony is the only proof to establish the existence of *Brahman*. The role of verbal testimony in case of suprasensuous object is already discussed in the process of worldly suprasensuous object. So, extending that discussion in this context, we can say that through verbal testimony, the knower can get the knowledge about the nature of Brahman and the process of realizing it. But getting knowledge and realizing *Brahman* are two totally different things. *Kaṭhapaniṣad* itself says that *Ātman* or self neither can be attained by the study of the scriptures or theoretical knowledge of the Vedas nor by great intelligence. It cannot be realized by hearing great discourses.¹⁵² *Ātman* or Self is not a product, it is the only metaphysical reality and the true nature of the knower or the individual self. So, it cannot be attained like a product but by a self-process. It is called the process of self-realization i.e. a process of knowing one's ownself. It is

¹⁵¹ *Kṣurasya dhārā niṣitā duratyayā durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti. Ka., I.3.14.*

¹⁵² *Nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena.
Yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām. Ibid., I.2.23.*

almost an individual process of the knower after getting the verbal testimony from a *guru* regarding *Ātman*. Verbal testimony plays the role of an anchor. At first, it is the statement of a realized *guru* or an authoritative person or *śruti* passages which give the knower the ground to move forward in a specific way for realization. The knower memorizes the belief that *Brahman* exists which is the foundation stone for realization. Thus, verbal testimony is followed by a self-process, which can be called as an inward journey, a journey from the external world to one's innerself. Hence, verbal testimony does two different jobs- one from the point of view of communicative aspect and the other from the point of view of intensifying the self-aspect of the knower. The authoritative statement, made by a *guru*, generates knowledge in the mind of a knower and through constant contemplation gets purified. Then, through this purified mind, knower realizes the transcendental object or sees the oneness in many.¹⁵³ When *Kāthopaniṣad* says “*Naiva vācā na manasā prāptum śakyo na cakṣuṣā*”, it does not contradict our stand about mind as the instrument of realizing, because the mind, indicated here, is not of a realized one but of the one who sees duality as reality. Here, we make an attempt to organize the scattered ideas of the process of self-realization as discussed in the *Kāthopaniṣad*.

Generally, in the *Upaniṣadic* literature, the above-mentioned self-process or the process of self-realization works in two ways. One is *Yogic* method and the other is method of knowledge which is comprises of *Śravaṇa*, *Manana* and *Nididhyāsana*. The *Yogic* method is repression of the modifications of the *citta* and the method of knowledge is by observation, speculation and analysis.¹⁵⁴ The second one consists of the contemplation on the *Mahāvākyas* and other advanced methods while the other

¹⁵³ *Manasaivedam ptavya ne nānā'sti kiñcan*, Ibid. 2.1.11.

¹⁵⁴ *Dvau kramau cittanāśasya yogo jñānam munīśvara*,
Yogastu vṛttinirodho jñānam samyagnvekṣaṇam. Śū. 1.41.

consist of *yoga* like *yama*, *niyama*, etc. *Vidyāranya* also in this context says that the mind can be pacified through two methods- firstly by observing equanimity towards the opposite phenomena of life and secondly by practicing *Prāṇāyama*, *Pratyāhāra*, etc. The former is quicker whereas the latter is time taking.¹⁵⁵

Kāthopaniṣad is also not far away from this explanation. When the last *mantra* says that *Nāciketā* having being so instructed by *Yama* or Lord Death in this knowledge (*Brahmavidyā*), and the whole process of *yoga*, the two terms “*vidyāmetān*” and “*Yogavidhi*”, unquestionably we can co-relate with the idea of two-fold process of realization what we have said before.¹⁵⁶ These two methods are- the method of *yoga* and the method of knowledge under the guidance of a Guru. In *Barāhopaniṣad*, the yogic path, which is longer, is known as ant’s way and the way of knowledge, which is shorter, is known as bird’s way.¹⁵⁷

Guidance of a guru:

All the *Upaniṣads*, each and every scripture, dealing with this inner science have bestowed optimum importance on seeking refuge beside an enlightened soul, otherwise called a guru.¹⁵⁸ Whatever it is the Yogic realization or the realization through knowledge, it is the *guru* who guides the aspirant or the knower in following the right way in the right direction. To follow any of these ways, the basic and initial requirement is to humbly approach a realized *guru* for guidance in his way to

¹⁵⁵ *Jivanmuktiviveka*, pp. 156.

¹⁵⁶ *Mṛtyuproktān Nāciketo 'tha labdhvā
vidyām etān yogavidhiṁ ca kṛtsnam,
Brahmaprāpto viraḥo 'bhūd vimṛtyuḥ
anyo 'preyaṁ yo vidadhyātameva.* Ka. 2.3.18.

¹⁵⁷ *Śukaśca vāmadevaśca dve śrī devanīrmite, Śuko vihaṅgamaḥ prokto vama devaḥ pipīlikā.*
B.U.4.36.

¹⁵⁸ *Mysticism and the Upaniṣads*, pp. 59.

realization. And this contains the value of verbal testimony in terms of realization. In *Kaṭhōpaniṣad-Nāciketā* approaches *Yama*, in *Chāndogyopaniṣad-Nārada* goes to *Sanatkumār*, *Satyakām* to *Gautama*. In *Gītā* also, *Arjuna* approaches *Kṛṣṇa*. *Śaṅkara* also says that the knowledge of *Brahman* should not be searched independently even by the person well-versed in the scriptures.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the role of a *Guru* is established as indispensable.

Kaṭhōpaniṣad also has laid massive importance on the importance of *guru*. Here, a *guru* has been named as “*Ananya*” or a person who is identified with *Brahman* and does not notice duality. As a result, the knowledge, imparted by him, is nothing other than his own experience and the path shown, is the same that he has already followed. Therefore, there is no possibility of getting confused. *Yama* assures *Nāciketā* against all doubts and perplexity.¹⁶⁰ Again the same idea is conveyed when *Yama* says- “*Naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭā*”,- the knowledge cannot be attained by argumentation; it is well understood when taught by a teacher who beholds no difference. The knowledge of what? “*Yām tvamāpaḥ*”, which you have obtained i.e. the knowledge of *Brahman*, which *Nāciketā* have obtained from *Yama*. Saying about the finding of a real *guru* and a competent student as wonder, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* emphasizes the stand that without a *guru*, self-realization is impossible.¹⁶¹

Now, we will discuss these two processes in reference to *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*. At first it is the *yogic* process.

¹⁵⁹ *Śāstragyo 'pi svātantreṇa brahmajñānānveṣaṇaṁ na kuryāt*. Mu. . Ś. B. I.2.12.

¹⁶⁰ *Ananyaprokte gatiratna nāsti*. Ka.1.2.8.

¹⁶¹ *Āścaryo vaktā kuśalo 'sya labdhā 'ścaryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ*. Ibid., I.2.7.

The Yogic way:

“The ant’s way is perfectly scientific uplift of physical and psychic conditions of aspirants from a mundane level to the divine state in a slow and steady process. It is the less hazardous way, which has a stabler chance of attainment of the goal. It is the way of *yoga*. *Yoga* finds a vital place in the *Upaniṣads*, more explicitly in later ones. But the major eleven *Upaniṣads* have been less descriptive, though highly suggestive in this regard. Stray stanzas, found here and there are like scattered jewels spread hither and thither.”¹⁶² Popularly, *Yogasūtra* gives us the definition of *yoga* as “*Yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ*.” And, this *yoga* consists of eight steps, known as *aṣṭāṅgayoga*. These eight steps are- *Yama*, *Niyam*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyama*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*.¹⁶³ *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* also defines *yoga* in its own way as –

Yadā pañcāvatiṣṭante jñānāni manasā saha,

Buddhiśca na viceṣṭati tāmāhuḥ paramām gatim.

Tām yogamiti manyante sthirāmindriyadharaṇām,

Apramattastadā bhavati yogo hi prabhavāpyayau. (Ka.2.3.10/11)

(When the five sense-organs are silenced along with the mind and when the intellect ceases to function, that state is called as the highest, the supreme, transcendental state. The firm control of the senses is regarded as *Yoga*. After this control, the *Yogin* becomes free from all the vagaries of the mind, for the *Yoga* is subject to growth and decay.)

In another *mantra*, when *Yama* says- “*Adhyātmayogādhiḡamena devaṁ matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti*”, the word ‘*adhyātmayoga*’ can be explained in support of *Yogic* way. *Adhyātmayoga* “is the process by which a purified mind, and therefore, a

¹⁶² Mysticism and the *Upaniṣads*, pp.64.

¹⁶³ *Yamaniyamāsana-prāṇāyamaḡpratyāhāradhāraṇādhyānasamādhayo 'ṣṭāvaṅgāni*. Y.S.2.29.

highly concentrated mind, is brought to contemplate exclusively upon the nature of the *Ātman* through a total avoidance of the mind wandering into any other object of contemplation.”¹⁶⁴ Here, we are trying to evaluate the *Kaṭhōpaniṣadic* statements in the order of eight-steps of *yoga*. It is not necessary to be available of all the eight-fold steps in *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, yet it is able to provide us a clear picture of this process.

Yama:

Yama means to cease. *Patañjali* regards *yama* as non-violence, truthfulness, and abstinence from theft, continence and non-acceptance of gift.¹⁶⁵ *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* also gives us such a full-fledged idea when it says that if one does not refrain from bad conduct, senses are not pacified, mind is not concentrated or one’s mind is not calm and tranquil, he can not realize Brahman.¹⁶⁶

Niyama:

Patañjali defines *niyama* as purification, satisfaction, penance, study and continuous thinking about *Iśvara*.¹⁶⁷ *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* also repeatedly says about purification of mental impurities, absence of desire for procuring more, study of the scriptures, continuous thinking on *saguṇa* *Brahma* etc. in so many passages in a scattered way. *Tapas*, leading a life of *Brahmacārin* for purification is also here.¹⁶⁸ Purification of intellect comes so many times.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*-a dialogue with death, pp. 92.

¹⁶⁵ *Tatrāhiṅsāsatyāsteyabrahmacaryāparigrahāyamāḥi*. Y. S.2.30.

¹⁶⁶ *Nāvīrato diścaritānnāsānto nāsamāhitaḥ*,

Nāsāntamānīso vāpi prajñānenainamāpnuyāt. Ka. 1.2.24.

¹⁶⁷ *Śaucasantoṣatapaḥsvādhyāyeśvaraprañidhānāni niyamāḥ*. Y.S. 2.32.

¹⁶⁸ *Sarve vedāyat padamāmananti*

tapānsi sarvāṅi ca yat vadanti,

Yadicchanto brahmacaryāṃ caranti

Tat te padam saṅgrahaṇa bravīmyomīyetaḥ. Ka. 1.2.15.

¹⁶⁹ *Yastu vijñānavān bhavati samanaskaḥ sadā śucih,*

Sa tu tat padamapnoti yasmad bhūyo na jāyate. Ibid., 1.3.8.

Pratyāhāra:

Literally, *Pratyāhāra* means withdrawal. It is a practice in which *yogi* retains the senses from the objects so that the senses follow the nature of the mind.¹⁷⁰ *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* also contains much more references on it. In one *mantra*, it says- merge the speech in the mind, it means all the organs of action and of knowledge have to be brought under perfect control of the mind. It means the detainment of the organs from their natural tendency of going outside or to their objects and the taking of an inward journey into mind. The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, going further says that the mind should merge into the intellect, intellect into the Great *Ātman* (*Hiranyagarbha*) and the Great *Ātman* into the Peaceful *Ātman*.¹⁷¹

These are external components of the *yogic* process. Now, we are going to discuss the rest three, which are more intimate and deserve an intense practice.

Dhāraṇā:

Confinement of the mind in a place is *dhāraṇā*.¹⁷² The place might be the navel, the heart or any outward object. *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* says its place as the deep cavity of the heart.¹⁷³

***Dhyāna* or Meditation on *Om*:**

Kaṭhōpaniṣad shows the way of *dhyāna* or meditation as a most vital step for the aspirant. *Dhyāna* has been defined by *Patañjali* as that state of mind, where

¹⁷⁰ *Svaviśayāṅsaprayoge cittasya svarūpānukāra ivendriyāṅgāṃ Pratyahāra. Y.S. 2.54.*

¹⁷¹ *Yacchedvāṅ manasī prājñāḥ tad yacchej jñāna ātmani,*

Jñānamātmani mahati niyacchet tad yacchechānta ātmani. Ka.1.3.13.

¹⁷² *Deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā. Y.S. 3.1.*

¹⁷³ *Taiḥ durdaśaiḥ gūḍamanupraviṣṭaiḥ
guhāhitaiḥ gahvareṣṭaiḥ purāṇam,
Adhyātmayogādhiḡamena devaiḥ
matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti. Ka. 1.2.12.*

barring all other thoughts, there is a constant flow of one thought only.¹⁷⁴ The *Maṇḍalabrāhmaṇa Upaniṣad* also says “*sarvaśarīreṣu caitanyaikatānatā dhyānam*”. Meditation, describing as an unavoidable step on the way of self-realization, *Vidyāranya muni* says that just as a treasure, buried underground is available only by digging, so also a direct knowledge of the self is possible only through *dhyāna*. The hidden treasure of Self is achieved by delving deep into one’s own consciousness with the help of the spade of meditation.¹⁷⁵

Like other *Upaniṣads*, the mystic expression “*Om*” and the meditation there upon, has secured a highly significant place in the *Kaṭhōpaniṣadic* spiritual practice. This observation of the *Upaniṣad* shows what a great quantum of effort might have been put in by Vedic seers in discovering and identifying this symbolic word representing the Ultimate Reality in its absolute static as well as eternal dynamics and getting expressed most cardinally in the *Vedas*.¹⁷⁶ Ranade also says, “The actual means of meditation which a Spiritual Teacher imparts to his disciple is described unanimously in the *Upaniṣads* as being the symbol *Om*. It is also to be noticed that *Om* is described as not merely the supreme means of meditation, but the goal to be reached by the mediation itself. The *Om* occupies in Indian philosophy the same position, which the *logos* occupies in Christology”.¹⁷⁷ *Om* is the manifested world, the past, present, future and anything beyond it. It is *Brahman*.¹⁷⁸ A direct confirmation of this supposition comes from the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* where *Om* has been regarded as a summary word or syllable uttered by all the *Vedas* as well as aimed at to be

¹⁷⁴ *Tatra pratyayaikatānata dhyānam*. Y.S. 3.2.

¹⁷⁵ *Yathāgādhanidherlabdhau nopāyaḥ khaṇanāṁ vinā, mallābhe 'pi tatha svātmacintāṁ muktā na cāparaḥ*. P.D. 9. 153.

¹⁷⁶ *Vedic Symbolism*, pp. 559.

¹⁷⁷ *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, pp. 244-245.

¹⁷⁸ *Omītyetadkṣaramidam sarvaṁ tasyopavyākhyānam bhūtam bhavadbhaviṣyaditi sarvamoṅkāra eva. Yaccānyat trikālāṁtām tadapyoṅkāra eva*. Mā.1.

comprehended by means of different kinds of *tapas* and observance of self-continenence, *brahmacarya*.¹⁷⁹ Concerning this *mantra* Ranade says that the symbol in short, stands for both the means and the end of spiritual life.¹⁸⁰

Kaṭhōpaniṣad says that *Om* is the most glorious and the greatest support of the knower and this is the most unique mental support towards self-realization or the realization of the *Ātman*. The one, who knows *Om* as the only sustaining power and the protector of the Universe, becomes adorable in the *brahmaloka*.¹⁸¹ Here, the word “*ālambana*” is very significant. It means that *Om* is the most unique mental assistance in collecting all the thoughts and other mental faculties and converging them there into one-pointed focal point from which mental energy can flow, unhampered by even the general mental inhibitions aberrations. And this “*ālamabana*” takes us towards our ultimate goal, which is the only worthwhile object to achieve in life. *Gītā* also says-

Omityekākṣaram Brahma vyāharanmāmanusmaran,

Yah prayāti tyajandeham sa yāti paramāṅgam. (B. G. 8.13)

Patañjali also says that repetition of *praṇava* and the development of its truth leads one to the attainment of the inner self and absence of impediments.¹⁸²

In the context of meditation, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* gives us additional information about the *Saguṇopāsanā*. Between the two views of Reality as existence and non-existence, the knower should first meditate upon *Ātman* as existence. Existence here

¹⁷⁹ *Sarve vedā yat padamāmananti
tapānsi sarvāṅl ca yat vadanti,
Yadicchanto brahmacaryam caranti*

Tat te padam saṅgrahaṇa bravīmyomityetat. Ka. 1.2.15.

¹⁸⁰ A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, pp.245.

¹⁸¹ *Etadālambanam śreṣṭham etadālambanam param,
Etadālambanam jñātvā brahmaloke mahīyate. Ka.1.2.17.*

¹⁸² *Tajjapastadarthabhāvanam. Y.S. 1.28.*

Tataḥ pratyakcetanādhigamo 'pyantarāyābhāvaśca. Ibid., 1.29.

means the conditional aspect of *Ātman* and the non-existence means the non-dual *Ātman*. Then he should confirm the essential nature of this conditioned *Ātman* as attributeless. One who meditates as such, the essence of Reality, which is Pure Consciousness, is revealed to him.¹⁸³ *Śaṅkara* also gives a similar explanation.¹⁸⁴

Samādhi:

The most important and the final phase of the *yogic* process is *samādhi*. When the meditation itself having the manifestation of the object of meditation remains in the mind and it becomes as if devoid of its cognitional character, due to the coming in of the real nature of the designed object, then it is called *samādhi*.¹⁸⁵ *Kathopanīṣad* says it with a slight differences that when the five sense-organs, which are the means of cognition and perception, along with the mind stay at rest and when the intellect ceases to function, that state is called the highest.¹⁸⁶ That means the attainment of that highest or transcendental state is called *samādhi* where our entire functioning faculty stop their operation and only the object of meditation remains in the mind of the knower. Swami Chinmayananda's explanation is relevant in this context. He says, “Here we have the clearest exposition as far as language and intellect can go, of that State of Eternal Auspiciousness experienced, when the soul meets the Soul (*samādhi*).” Again, “The *Upanīṣad* wants us to reach a state where the sense-organs,

¹⁸³ *Astītyevopalabdavyaḥ tattvabhāvena cobhayoḥ,
Astītyevopalabdīṅasya tattvabhāvaḥ prasīdati.* Ka. 2.3.13.

¹⁸⁴ *Astītyevātmopalabdavyaḥ satkārya buddhyādyupādhiḥ. Yadā tu tadrahito 'vikriya Ātmā kāraṇīca
kāraṇavyatirekeṇ nāsti 'vācārambhaṇam vikāro nūmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam' (Chā. 6.1.4) iti
Śrutestadā yasya nirupādhikasyāloṅgasya sadasadādipratayaviṣayatvavargitasyūtmanaḥ tattvabhāvo
bhavati.* Ka. Ś. B. 2.2.13.

¹⁸⁵ *Tadevārthamātranirbhāsam svarūpaśunyamiva Samādhi.* Y.S.3.3.

¹⁸⁶ *Yadā pañcāvatiṣṭante jñānāni manasā sah,
buddhiśca na viceṣṭati tāmāhuḥ paramām gatim.* Ka. 2.3.10.

the mind and the intellect are all at rest. And this state is defined by the *śruti* as the state of vitally experiencing the Supreme Absolute Reality, the Self.”¹⁸⁷

Method of knowledge:

The alternative path of the mystic realization, which is known also as bird’s way, is the path of knowledge. Unlike the *yogic* path, it is not a combination of physiological and psychological activities, but is purely psychological in nature. Like the *yogic* way, it also stresses the need of a competent preceptor and a capable disciple.¹⁸⁸ This path has mainly three steps - *Śravana*, *Manana* and *Nididhyāsana*, leading ultimately to the final state, i.e. realization or liberation.¹⁸⁹ “The triple course, consisting of śravaṇa, manana, and nididhyāsana, is the direct approach to Nirguṇa Brahman with no meditating means. It is a steep, straight away without any curve or slope or resting place. It does not befit all seekers of Libearation, earnest though they be. Only the most qualified spiritual aspirants (*uttama adhikāris*) are capable of following it.”¹⁹⁰

In *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* no direct mention of *śravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* are meet with. But we can get enough references implying such an idea for the knowledge of *Brahman*. The most distinct reference that gives us the closest proximity of such an idea is- “*Etacchrutvā samparigṛhya martyaḥ pravṛhya dharmyam -aṇumetamāpya.*” The literal meaning of this line is that the mortal being, having heard and grasped well the subtle principle (the self), abstracting the virtuous *Ātman* and attain it. But when we evaluate it to synthesize the idea of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, we get a clear picture of such a

¹⁸⁷ Kaṭhōpaniṣad-a dialogue with death, pp. 251-252.

¹⁸⁸ Mysticism and the Upaniṣads, pp.84.

¹⁸⁹ *Ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ.* Br. 4.5.6.

¹⁹⁰ Methods of Knowledge, pp.288.

process with a same value of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. In *Śaṅkara's* commentary also, such an idea is reflected where he says that *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* as the means of self-realization has been imparted to *Nāciketā* by *Yama* through the words '*śrutvā*', '*samparigr̥hya*' and '*pravṛhya*' respectively while the self-realization by the word '*āpya*'.¹⁹¹ Swami Chinmayananda also says, “ In this stanza Lord Death, therefore, says that a seeker who has attentively heard and understood intellectually the indications given in the last stanza can come to an intimate experience of this life centre within him, if he properly meditates upon the pregnant significances of the last stanza. Having known the Real Essence in us to be the immortal and all-pervading Pure Intelligence, we shall have all our false and delusory identifications with our body-mind-intellect equipment rolled off in our true attachment with the Truth Principle in us.”¹⁹²

Besides, in *Kāthopaniṣad*, the necessity of a realized *guru* and a competent student is strongly emphasized. If a *guru* is not to hear, then what else? So, we can put forth this argument in favour of our stand that *Kāthopaniṣad* admits the way of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. As well when *Kāthopaniṣad* Says “*Uttiṣṭhata, jāgrata prāpya varān-nibodhata*”, it definitely indicates that be free from the worldly attachment and go to the *guru*, learn about and realize *Ātman* which carries the similar idea of *śravaṇa* tradition. In a mantra, the statement follows as – “*Naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā proktān-yenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭa*”. Here also we find an indication of such a tradition. Knowledge of *Brahman* can be imparted by one who is aware of the meaning of the *śruti* and after hearing about the knowledge of *Brahman*, what is

¹⁹¹ *Tacchrutvācāryaprasādātsamyagātmaabhāvena parigr̥hyopādāya martyo maranadharmā dharmūdanapetaṁ dharmyaṁ pravṛṣyodyamya pṛthakṛtya śarīrādeḥ aṇuṁ sūkṣmametamātmānam āpya prāpya sa martyo vodvānmodate modanīyaṁ harṣaṇīyamātmānaṁ labdhvā.* Ka. Ś. B. 1.2.13.

¹⁹² *Kāthopaniṣad*-a dialogue with death, pp. 95.

produced in the form of sentential meaning to the knower, leads him to self-realization. Finally, the representational knower *Nāciketā* also at the beginning hear to *Yama* about *brahmavidyā*, contemplates upon it and finally meditating on this truth without any doubt, gets the self-realization. Hence *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* strongly holds the practice of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* as a process of self-realization.

Śravaṇa:

Śravaṇa means audition or hearing. The aspirant or the knower is required to acquire a perfect knowledge of *Brahman* and his identity with him. The *guru* or the one, who has already realized *Brahman*, conveys this message to the knower. In *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* also, we see that *Yama*, in all the times, has tried to give this truth to *Nāciketā*. But as the *Mahāvākyas* of other *Upaniṣads* serve this purpose more effectively than the other teachings, *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* has no such *mahāvākyas*. However, we have a technical statement, “*Etad vai Tat*” which is available in most of the mantras conveying the message “This is verily That”. It is strong enough to support our analysis of this path.

Manana:

The second step is *manana* or contemplation. It is hundred times more important than *śravaṇa*.¹⁹³ Hearing the words of the preceptor generates no result, unless and until it is translated into action. Contemplating on the words of the teacher is the most important step. In order to establish the identity between the individual self and *Brahman* after hearing, the knower has to reflect on the teachings incessantly

¹⁹³ *Śruteḥ śatagunaṁ vidyānmananaṁ mananādapi, Nididhyāsaṁ lakṣaḡaṇamanantaṁ nirvikalpakaṁ. Vivekcuḡāmaṇi, 364.*

in his mind. This vehement and continuous deep thinking is called *manana*. *Vidyāraṇyamuni* says that analyzing the advice of the *guru* through the logical reasoning to arrive at the possibility of its validity is the act of *manana*.¹⁹⁴ When we start to discuss about *manana* in relation to *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, we have no *Mahāvākya* here. But the analyzing of the deeper meaning or idea from the words of *Yama* on *brahmavidyā* and finally getting the right meaning is *manana*. Here, we will try to evaluate the sentence “*Etada vai Tat*”- to a better explanation of *manana* in the light of the *Mahāvākyas* like- *Tat tvam asi*, etc.

To get the meaning of a sentence, we have to analyze it, depending on its significative powers, because a word can give more than one meaning and it is our duty to bring out the actual meaning, contextually relevant, without any contradiction. In the earlier *Vedāntic* texts, significative power is of three types- *mukhyavṛtti*, *guṇavṛtti* and *lakṣaṇāvṛtti* as in the *Pañcaprakriyā*. But in the later *prakaraṇa* texts like *Vedāntasāra*, *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, etc. we have only two significative powers- primary and implied. Primary is same as *mukhyavṛtti*¹⁹⁵ while implied is same as *lakṣaṇāvṛtti* which also includes *guṇavṛtti* within its purview.¹⁹⁶

“*Etad vai Tat*”- in this sentence we have three words- *Etad*, *Vai* and *Tat*. ‘*Etad*’ means this, here, especially as pointing to what is nearest to the speaker. ‘*Tat*’ means just opposite to ‘*Etad*’. ‘*Vai*’ as explained by Monier Williams, means a particle of emphasis and affirmation generally placed after a word and laying stress on it. It is translatable by ‘indeed’, ‘truly’, ‘certainly’, ‘verily’, ‘just’, etc.¹⁹⁷ Thus, the

¹⁹⁴ *Yuktyā sambhāvitavānusandhanāni mananantu tat*. P.D. 1.53.

¹⁹⁵ *Padārthaśca dvividhaḥ-śakyo lakṣyaśceti. Tatra śaktirnāma padānāmartheṣu mukhyāvṛtti.*
V. P. pp. 93.

¹⁹⁶ *Gauṇyapi lakṣitlakṣaṇaiva. Yathā ‘siṅho mānavaka’ ityatra ‘siṅha’ śabdavācyasambandhikrauryādisambadhena mānavakasya pratītiḥ.* Ibid., pp.96.

¹⁹⁷ Monier Williams, A Sanskrit-English dictionary, pp. 1020.

literal meaning of this sentence is “This is verily That.” If we observe in our day-to-day life also, the pronouns ‘This’ and ‘That’ are used to indicate objects where one is nearer to us than the other. The nearer one is indicated by ‘This’ and the further one is by ‘That’. Therefore, in the context of *brahmavidyā*, the term ‘This’ is used to indicate the individual Self (*aparokṣatvādiviśiṣṭacaitanyam*) and ‘That’ to indicate Supreme Self (*parokṣatvādiviśiṣṭacaitanyam*). Swami Chinmayānanda says, “Naturally, it becomes evident that the Self, which is the core of ourselves being the most intimate part in us, is rightly indicated by the term “this.”¹⁹⁸ Again, “Here the *Upaniṣad* says, “this is that”: meaning the individual-self is the Supreme Self. Besides this *Vedāntik* interpretation of the one-ness of the individual Self and the Total-Self, we met here, accepting the dramatic background of the *Upaniṣad*, explain the passage as “that is the Ātman thou hast wanted to know”- about which even Gods are puzzled.”¹⁹⁹ Till now, the word meaning of the terms “This”, “Vai” and “That” in the statement “*Etad vai Tat*” have been explained to show that they stand for the individual-Self, Supreme Self and their mutual identity. But as the entire statement is indicative of the Oneness of “This” and “That”- a total identity between the individual Self and Supreme Self, we have to go for further analysis.

The literal meaning in the manner of the sentence ‘the blue lotus’ does not fit in with the statement “*Etad vai Tat*”. In the sentence ‘the blue lotus’, ‘blue’ is the blue colour and meaning of the word ‘lotus’ is the flower called lotus. They both exclude other colours and other objects respectively. Thus, these two words mutually stand in the relation of qualifier and qualified. This interpretation of this sentence, since it does not contradict any other means of knowledge, is acceptable. But in the statement

¹⁹⁸ Kāthopaniṣad-a dialogue with death, pp. 179.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 179.

“This is verily That”, “That” is the consciousness associated with remoteness, etc. (*parokṣatvādiviśiṣṭacaitanya*) and “This” is the consciousness, associated with immediacy, etc. (*aparokṣatvādiviśiṣṭacaitanya*). Being contrary ideas, they cannot be qualifier and qualified through a direct meaning. This interpretation involves a contradiction with direct perception and other means of knowledge and so inconsistent.²⁰⁰

Sarvajñātman also in his work “*Pañcaprakriyā*” says that “*Mukhyavṛtti*” is indeed prohibited in respect to the *pratyagātman* (the Supreme Self within us all) on account of the fact that (in case of the *pratyagātman*) mundane things such as relation (*śaṣṭhī*), quality (*guṇa*), activity (*kriyā*), universal (*jāti*), or convention (*rūḍhi*), which are the basis for *mukhyavṛtti*, don’t exist. Indeed, there is no possibility of relation and the rest existing in the *pratyagātman*, of which all qualifications have been prohibited, according to the *śruti* passage, “Not this, not this”, and which is beyond the range of speech and mind, where by *mukhyavṛtti* would be applicable.”²⁰¹ Therefore, it has been said, “ What is meant by the sentence ‘thou art that’ is not arrived at, either through its ‘sequence of meaning’ or as ‘qualified by something’. The real meaning of the sentence, according to scholars, is an absolute homogeneous principle or pure consciousness.”²⁰²

How the great statement discard the two qualified meanings (*vācyārtha*) and reveals the identity can be shown as such also. The statement “*Etad vai Tat*”, has three words; “*Etad*” and “*Tat*” means *jīva* and *Īśvara* and “*vai*” means clearly the idea of their total identity with each other. Here, *Īśvara* is qualified by omniscience, known

²⁰⁰ *Pratyakṣādīpamāṇa-virodhādvākāyārtho na saṅgacchate*. V. S. 157.

²⁰¹ Language and Release, pp. 48-49.

²⁰² *Saṁsargo vā viśiṣṭo vā vākāyārtho nātra sammataḥ, akhaṇḍaikarasatvena vākāyārtho viduṣūṁ mataḥ*. Vā. V. 38.

by indirect knowledge, omnipotent and *Jīva* is qualified by doership, enjoyership, joy, sorrow, etc., known by direct knowledge. Thus, direct meaning of “*Etad*” and “*Tat*” are not adequate to clearly serve and bring out the full significance of them “*vai*” which suggest the identity between these two. As the direct meaning of *etad* and *tat* contradicts their total identity, we must consider the depth meaning of these terms and recognize “*Etad*” as the witnessing consciousness and “*Tat*” as the Supreme *Brahman*. And, it is possible only through the suggestive import of the terms.²⁰³ Now, it has been already established that primary meaning has nothing to do anything with this great statement. We have to go for deeper meaning depending on its secondary significative power. So, implication is the only way to derive the actual meaning. When the direct meaning (*vācyārtha*) is not sufficient to bring out fully the pregnant import of the scriptures, the suggestive meaning (*lakṣyārtha*) is taken by the intelligent student everywhere.²⁰⁴ Now, we will discuss how *lakṣaṇā* brings out the actual purport of this statement. *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* gives us two types of division of *lakṣaṇā*. In the first type, it is of two kinds- *Kevalalakṣaṇā* and *Lakṣitalakṣaṇā*. In the second type - it is of three kinds. And this second type is the only acceptable division in books like- *Vedāntasāra*, *Pañcaprakriyā*, etc. These three kinds of *lakṣaṇā*(implication) are- *Jahallakṣaṇā*, *Ajahallakṣaṇā* and *Jahadajahallakṣaṇā*.

***Jahallakṣaṇā*:**

When the direct meaning of a sentence is discarded in order to get the indirect meaning, it is called *Jahallakṣaṇā*. For example, “*Gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ.*” The direct meaning of this sentence is that the village of the cowherds is in the Gaṅgā, which is

²⁰³ *Mānāntaravirodhe tu mukhyārthasyūparigrahe, mukhyārthenāvinābhute pratītilakṣaṇocyate.*

Ibid., 47.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 76.

impossible. Here, the word *Gaṅgā* discards its direct meaning and implies “the bank” thereby conveying the meaning that the village of the cowherds is on the bank of *Gaṅgā*. But in the sentence “*Etad vai Tat*”, the contradiction is involved in one part only, viz. as regards immediacy or remoteness etc. But the other part, viz. Pure Consciousness, is identical and does not involve in any contradiction. So, it should not be abandoned. Hence, in case of this sentence, *Jahallakṣaṇā* is not admissible.

Ajahallakṣaṇā:

Ajahallakṣaṇā is one, where the direct meaning of a sentence is not discarded but also hints the implied meaning. As for instance, “*Śoṇaḥ dhāvati*” which literally means “the red is running”, the word “red” does not discard its meaning but hints at the implied meaning of “a red coloured horse”. But in the sentence “*Etad vai Tat*”, the literal meaning, conveying an identical consciousness associated with remoteness, immediacy, etc. is self-contradictory. Hence, it is impossible to get the meaning without discarding any part of it. So, *Ajahallakṣaṇā* is inadmissible.

Jahadajahallakṣaṇā:

When one part of the direct meaning of a sentence is discarded and another part is retained, it is a case of *Jahadajahallakṣaṇā*. For example, in the sentence “This is that Devadatta”, the association of time and place with “This” and “That” are eliminated from the sentence but the person called Devadatta retains its meaning. Likewise, in the great sentence “*Etad vai Tat*”, the contradictory factors of remoteness and immediacy, omniscience and partial knowledge, etc., associated with “*Tat*” and “*Etad*” respectively, is discarded and Pure Consciousness, which is common to both, is accepted. Hence, the real meaning of that great sentence is derived by applying this last form of *lakṣaṇā*.

This is the function what a knower should follow in the time of *manana*. After getting this identity, the knower will proceed to the next step, i.e. *nididhyāsana*.

Nididhyāsana:

When, not even a speck of doubt remains about the identity of the individual self with Brahman, the knower meditates on this truth and nothing else. This deep absorption in the Brahman as one's own self is called the *nididhyāsana*.²⁰⁵ This meditation is not like that of the symbolic one. The knower does not meditate on the self as *Brahman* but aims to apprehend it as *Brahman* by repudiating all limiting adjuncts superimposed on it. Taking reference from *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad*, Swami Satprakashananda says, "It is to be noted that the term '*nididhyāsana*' in this context does not mean the kind of meditation (*dhyāna*) that is usually practiced with a symbol. It is more like a process of knowledge or right apprehension."²⁰⁶ In case of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, it may be the meditation on the truth i.e. the unity of an individual self and *Brahman* or *Nāciketā*'s one pointed meditation after getting free from all doubts in relation to Brahman and the phenomenal world with due contemplation.

This meditation culminates in the *Samādhi* as in the *Yogic* process. Then he gets realized.

Inclusion of attaining svargaloka in the epistemology of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*:

While *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* establishes *Ātman* as the final object, what is the necessity of describing *svargaloka* as an object to be achieved in this journey? One

²⁰⁵ *Tābhyaṃ nirvicikitsē'rthe cetasaḥ sthāpitasya yat, Ekātānatvamētaddhi nididhyāsanamucyate.* P. D. 154.

²⁰⁶ *Methods of Knowledge*, pp.288.

thing is clear that the three boons of *Nāciketā* is equally important and if we take this world as the ground or starting point and the *brahmvidyā* as the final goal in the journey, then the mention of this resort (*svarga*) definitely carries some significance. Thus, it also proves that in the process of knowing of the final object, the knowledge of *svarga* also functions as an instrument. Without reaching *svargaloka*, we cannot go on towards immortality or self-realization. We get three important information when *Yama* says- *Anantalokāptimatho pratiṣṭām viddvi tvametaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyām.*

- This fire is the means of attaining heaven.
- Fire is the support and the strength of the Universe.
- It is seated in the secret cavity of the heart of the learned, which gives an indication of fire as *Ātman*.

Here, fire clearly indicates the ritualistic activities. But, unconsciously there is a message that fire is not all about sacrifice. It has something to do with the final goal of the journey of human being. This fire can be the symbol of Self or *Ātman*, meditating on which one can be liberated. Chinmayānanda says in his commentary, “ There is a declaration that the outer fire is to be considered as the vital heat energy in the performer’s own heart. Thus, though *Kaṭha* begins with the ritual religion of the *Brāhmaṇā*-s, it does not stop there; as every other *Upaniṣad* it pushes the thought and the technique further. It is hinted at here that the sacrifice in itself is not all; its significance is to be subjectively realized by the performer-for his final and eternal liberation.”²⁰⁷ Later, the *Upaniṣad* makes it very clear that for the attainment of the knowledge of *Brahman*, knowledge of *svarga* is necessary.²⁰⁸ All the penances are performed for the purification of the mind and intellect through which only, the

²⁰⁷ Kaṭhopeniṣad-a dialogue with death, pp. 31.

²⁰⁸ *Tapāṁsi sarvāṇi ca yadvadanti.* Ka. 1.2.15.

realization of *Brahman* is possible. Here, *tapas* means all severe and conscious practices of self-control. *Tapas* is the endurance of pain, the suffering and mortification, a *sādhaka* is willing to bear during and at the end of his *sādhanā* towards personal self denial which is considered necessary for the attainment of the highest goal- *Om, Atman* or the Self. We can also call the purifying religious austerities as *tapas*.²⁰⁹ That means sacrifice, etc. through the function of purifying *cittu*, make itself an instrument for the knowledge of *Brahman*. As soon as the purification of the internal organ is performed through such activities, the knower's inclination moves towards liberation.

Thus, sacrifices are essential for crossing the bridge of this world to reach the imperishable Supreme *Brahman*.²¹⁰ It is supported by other *śruti* passages also- "*Tametaṁ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti yajñena dānena tapasa'nāśakena*" (Br. 4.4.22). From our day-to-day life also we can say that experience of the previous deeds, either it is wrong or right, we have done, is the ground for our highest activities. If we don't know the nature of a thing, we cannot determine its result or productivity. So, we have to know from an experienced authority about it. So is the case of *svargaloka*. Thus, it is established that the inclusion of the attainment of *svargaloka* in the epistemology of self-realization is not discardable.

²⁰⁹ kaṭhapaniṣad-what after death, pp.170.

²¹⁰ *Yaj seturījānānāmakṣaram brahma yatparam, Abhayanī titīṣyatānī pāram nāciketānī śakemahi. Ka.1.3.2.*

Chapter V

KNOWLEDGE

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The concept of knowledge in a cognitive process:

Knowledge is the basis of all practical activities of a knower in relation to object. It inherently refers to an object that is known and it always belongs to a subject that knows. There can be no knowledge existing independently by itself without implying a knower and a thing known. When we say that I have the knowledge of a particular object, it means we have all the information about that particular object as what really it is. Knowledge is the revelation of the objective world to a subject. It is a subjective phenomenon representing the world of reality.²¹¹

Knowledge in *Kāthopaniṣad*:

Explaining knowledge from the Upaniṣadic point of view, Paul Deussen says, “Knowledge --- not ‘much learning,’ but the understanding of metaphysical truths— was the impelling motive of the thinkers of the Upanishads. Because of the theoretical importance of knowledge in that period of speculative activity, and also because of the discrediting of the popular polytheistic religion by philosophical reasoning, there took place in India during the times of the Upanishads a movement similar to that which produced the sophists in Greece, namely, a re-adjustment of the accepted ethics and a substitution of philosophic insight for traditional morality.”²¹² Accordingly, knowledge in *Kāthopaniṣad* means the understanding of the metaphysical reality or

²¹¹ The Basic Ways of Knowing, PP. 72.

²¹² Philosophy of the Upanishads. PP.58.

truth as propagated in different layers. In the first chapter, where we have already established three layers of realities- sensuous, worldly suprasensuous and suprasensuous, of which the first two are conditional reality while the third one is the Ultimate Reality. Consequently, according to the different objects and their respective cognitive process, their results will be also different. Therefore, the concept of knowledge will be also different. But the nature of the knowledge of conditional realities is same. So, we have here only two layers-worldly and non-worldly or empirical and transcendental. In this chapter, we make our discussion in relation to these two layers. Regarding these, *Kathopaniṣad* has beautifully established two different concepts of knowledge as absolute knowledge and rational knowledge. Some scholars say these two as higher knowledge and lower knowledge respectively. But from the point of view of non-dual *Brahman* or the final purpose of the *Kathopaniṣad* we can say these as integrated and fragmented knowledge. Now the question is what is integrated and what is fragmented?

(a) Integrated knowledge:

In a sentence, integrated knowledge means the knowledge of *Brahman*. In case of this knowledge, where *Ātman* or Self is the object, which is also the inner self of the knower, it cannot be a knowledge of practical value, as we use in our day-to-day life. In such a condition, *Ātman* will be a product achievable through an action or then it would be a thing made or born. Knowledge (of *Brahman*) in the *Upaniṣadic* parlance does not mean “to know” merely but has a much deeper significance. “To know” (*Brahman*) in fact means a realization of the non-dual *Brahman*, a total transformation of the personality. It can be categorised as indirect and direct.

Acquiring the knowledge of *Brahman*, as “*Brahman* exists” is one thing and the knowledge of *Brahman* as the realization of the unity of individual self and *Brahman* is another thing. *Vidyāranya muni* says that to know the existence of *Brahman* is indirect knowledge, whereas one’s identification with *Brahman* by eradicating one’s previous identification with the impure mortal body is the direct knowledge.²¹³ We are discussing here about the second type, which is the final goal of *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* otherwise liberation or emancipation. *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* clearly says that the notion of the unity of the self is the final stage of knowledge. It describes this state as “*parama padam*”, “*parā gatih.*”²¹⁴ Śāṅkara also in his commentary of this *Upaniṣad* says that the realization of the *Ātmatattva* as non-dual or integrated form is the highest limit of knowledge.²¹⁵ Gītā also says it as “*paramām gatim*”.²¹⁶

When knowledge comes in a uniform, when one sees unity in diversity, i.e. non-difference with *Brahman*, it is called integrated knowledge. It is the knowledge in the form of the unity of the individual self and *Brahman*. In other words, it is the realization of the sole Reality. There remains no duality. Śreyas leads one to this knowledge. It is not produced, it is realized. It is an outcome of inward speculation. It comes in the form of ‘*Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi*’.

When one gets the knowledge as one, his attachments and desires end up and the sense-organs which have the natural tendency of an outward journey, becomes motionless. This stage of realization of non-duality is the integrated knowledge. *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* constantly says about this integrated knowledge. Through the

²¹³ Asti brahmeti cedved paroḥsajñānameva tat, Ahaṁ brahmeti cedved sāḥsātākāraḥ sa ucyate.
P. D., 6.16.

²¹⁴ *Vijñānasārathiryastu manaḥpragrahvān naraḥ,
So ‘ddhvanaḥ pāramāpnoti tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam.* Ka., 1.3.9.
Puruṣānna paraṁ kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatih. Ibid., 1.3.11.

²¹⁵ “*Jñānasya hyeṣā parā niṣṭhā yadatmakaitvavijñānam.* Ka. Ś. B., 1.2.8.

²¹⁶ *Avyakto ‘kṣaraityuktastamāhuḥ paramām gatim.* B. G., 8.21.

previously discussed cognitive processes, when the knower becomes fully aware of the real nature of his innerself, then there remains no difference at all.²¹⁷ Clarifying this concept it further says that as the pure water poured into pure water becomes the same i.e. remains the same without developing any new properties, similarly, the one who knows of this unity between the individual self and the *Brahman*, his self becomes one with the *Brahman*.²¹⁸ This mantra reasserts the oneness of the Divine Presence in man and the Totality of Divinity that pervades everywhere. Other *śruti* also says that when to the man of realization all beings becomes the very Self, then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for that seer of oneness.²¹⁹

At this moment the individual realizes his own real nature as Pure Consciousness. With this self-realization, he experiences his oneness with the all-pervading and immortal Truth. When pure water is poured into pure water there can be only be pure water alone. Similarly in realizing oneself to be the eternal Factor, one at once realizes his own oneness with the One that alone is the One. The individual-self is the Supreme Self.²²⁰ When the knower realizes the non-dual nature, nothing exists to become an object of thought to him. Since there is nothing to be known, it is stated that there is no perception of any object then. The cycle of existence ceases because liberation- the fruit of right knowledge immediately follows, after the self-realization. There remains no distinction between the knower, knowing object and the knowledge. *Śruti* also says, “*Ekena vijñānena sarvaṃ vijñātaṃ bhavati.*” *Śaṅkara* also supporting this view says that the vision of the absolute

²¹⁷ *Manasaivedamāptavyaṃ neha nānāsti kiñcana.* Ka., 2.1.11.

²¹⁸ *Yathodakam śuddhe śuddham ūsiktam tādṛgeva bhavati, Evaṃ munervijānata ātmā bhavati Gautama.* Ibid., 2.1.15.

²¹⁹ *Yasminsarvāṇi bhūtānyātmaivābhūdvi jānataḥ, Tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka ekatvamanupaśyataḥ.* Īśa., 7.

²²⁰ *Kathopanishad-a dialogue with death,* pp. 204.

Reality is devoid of the distinction of knowledge, known and knower.²²¹ In the *Brahma-Sūtra* also, Śāṅkara says, “ Existence is consciousness; consciousness is existence; there is absolutely no difference between the two.”²²²

This absolute knowledge or real nature of *Brahman* is beyond language. Language is unable to express the essential nature of that Pure Consciousness as the modern Physics views about the essential nature of this universe. We can remind here the great *Śruti* – “*neti neti*” (Br. 2.3.6). In the same way, *Kāthopaniṣad* also talks about the nature of absolute knowledge or *Brahman* as *aśabdām*, *asparśam* etc.²²³ Thus it is the realization of the integral nature or the integral nature itself.

(b) Fragmented knowledge:

Fragmented knowledge is the knowledge of this world as it is, in the multiple forms. Wherever there is duality, there is fragmentation. Fragmented knowledge is an outcome of external activities. *Preyas* leads one to this knowledge. It is produced in the form of ‘I know the pot’, ‘I know Hari’, etc. The world in its fragmented structure gives space to our sense-organs for movement. It creates the intensity of the attachment and desire. So, the *Jīva*, enjoys the pleasure, comes from the outward movement of the sense-organs. But in reality, there is no diversity. Whatever is here visible as the world, the same is there as *Brahman* and what is there, the same is here. Only the ignorant people see this diversity and get the knowledge in the fragmented form. And he, who does not see the essential unity and sees disparity, moves in the

²²¹ Yattu Brahmaṇo vijñānam tatsavitṛprakasavadagnyuṣṇatvavaccha Brahmasvarūpavyatiriktam svarūpameva tat. Tai. Ś. B., 2.1.

²²² Sattaiva bodhah bodha eva ca satta, nanayoh parasparavyavrttirasti, B.S. Ś. B., 3.2.21.

²²³ Aśabdāmasparśamrūpamavyayam
tathā rasam nityamagandhavacca yat. Ka., 1.3.15.
Anyatra dharmādanyatrādharmāt anyatrāsmāt kṛtākṛtāt,
Anyatra bhūtācca bhavyācca yattat paśyati tad vad. Ibid., 1.2.14.

cycle of birth and death.²²⁴ As the water that rains on the highest peak goes down the peak, scattered in various ways and directions, similarly, the one who is ever watching the qualities and attributes of objects, is ever running after objects all the time seeing them as different from the Self.²²⁵ Thus it is the knowledge of the visible world concerning the separate existence of every object.

Any epistemological study shows that as soon as knowledge is produced, behaviour of the knower starts accordingly. So, we can get a clear picture of the nature of these two different concepts of knowledge, examining the statements of the *Kaṭhapaniṣad* regarding the nature of the knower, after getting the respective knowledge.

Nature of a knower of integrated knowledge after realization:

1. A realized knower gives up joy and sorrow. As soon as the knower realizes the integral nature of the universe, there remains no duality and in such a situation, where is the possibility of feeling joy and sorrow? *Kaṭhapaniṣad* repeatedly mentions references in this context- “*Matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti*” (1.2.12/13), “*Akratuḥ paśyati vītaśokau dhātuḥ prasādānmahimānamātmanaḥ*” (1.2.20), “*Mahāntaṁ vibhumātmānaṁ matvā dhīro na śocati*” (1.2.22).
2. He, who reaches that highest goal, from where there is no return to the world, is a realized one.²²⁶ The Supreme Goal is the realization of our identity with *Brahman*. With this true identification, the false identifications with the mind-

²²⁴ *Yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha.*

Mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyumāpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati. Ibid., 2.1.10.

²²⁵ *Yathodakam durge vṛṣṭam parvateṣu vidhāvati,*

Evam dharmān pṛthak paśyan tānevanuvidhāvati. Ibid., 2.1.14.

²²⁶ *Sa tu tatpadamāpnoti yasmātd bhūyo na jāyate.* Ibid., 1.3.8.

intellect equipments, the ego sense totally end. Birth and death belong to the ignorance- created sense of ego; when it is ended forever in the knowledge of our Real Nature, the chain of birth and death also end. Gītā also says that attaining *Brahman* one never return to this world.²²⁷

3. He, who has realized the *Ātman*, becomes free from the jaws of death.²²⁸ “There is no doubt, indeed, that no other fear in life is so common to all as *the dread of death*. Here the word “death” is to be understood not in its limited aspects of men and beings breathing their last leaving their forms on the surface of the globe to perish and decay. ‘Death’ is used here in its widest scope bringing within its embrace all the finiteness in the world of matter.”²²⁹
4. Having known what is eternally immortal in this mortal world, the wise don’t desire anything in this transient world.²³⁰ After realization, there remains nothing second. So, the natural tendency of the sense-organs to go outward and the desire for enjoyments of the objects of this world and the next come to an end.
5. *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* says that the *Ātman* by which a man cognizes sound, touch, colour, taste and smell and their dualistic contacts and joys, what is there in this world which is unknowable to that *Ātman*?²³¹ This statement gives us a reason to sum up the concept of integrated knowledge as non-dual and also the non-difference between the knower, knowable objects and knowledge. Because, “what is there unknowable” is also possible only in this respect.

²²⁷ *Yadgatvā na nivartante taddhāma paramaiṃ mama*. B. G., 15.6.

²²⁸ *Anādyanantaṃ mahataḥ paraṃ dhruvaṃ
nicāyā tanmṛtyumukhāt pramucyate*. Ka.1.3.15.

²²⁹ *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*-a dialogue with death, pp. 164.

²³⁰ *Atha dhīrā amṛtatvaṃ viditvā dhruvamadhruveṣviva na prārthayante*. Ka.2.1.2.

²³¹ *Yena rūpaṃ rasaṃ gandhaṃ śabdān sparśāca maithunān, Etenaiva vijānāti kimatra pariśiṣyate*.
Ibid., 2.1.3.

6. Having realized, the knower does not grieve and is liberated.²³²
7. The wise who perceives the *Ātman* who is the controller, the soul of all beings and manifest as manifold, eternal among the non-eternals, the intelligence in the intelligent, fulfills desires of many though one, as existing in his own Self, the eternal happiness belongs to him.²³³ Here “the eternal happiness” means liberation, because no other happiness can be eternal.
8. One who knows *Brahman* becomes immortal.²³⁴ Those who know the highest *Brahman*, the Source of All Life, the substratum for the eternal play of change, to be the Vital Factor in themselves, they shall attain immortality.
9. If one, in this life, is able to comprehend *Brahman* before the death of the body, he will be liberated from the bondage of the world.²³⁵
10. *Nāciketā*, the representational knower, realizing his inner-self becomes free from all impurities and death and attained *Brahman*.²³⁶ That means a knower of this knowledge gets immortality and becomes *Brahman*.

Nature of a knower of fragmented knowledge:

1. The knower, who doesn't attain that goal, gets into the round of births and death.²³⁷ “Attain that goal,” means the attainment of the knowledge of

²³² *Anuṣṭāya na śocati vimuktaśca vimucyate.* Ibid., 2.2.1.

²³³ *Eko vaśī sarvabhūtāntarātmā
ekam rūpaṁ bahudhā yaḥ karoti,
Tamātmasthaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ
teṣāṁ sukhaṁ śāśvatam netareṣāṁ.* Ibid., 2.2.12.

*Tamātmasthaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrāḥ
teṣāṁ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣāṁ.* Ibid., 2.2.13.

²³⁴ *Yu etad vidurmṛtāste bhavanti.* Ka.2.3.2.

²³⁵ *Iha cedaśakad boddhuṁ prāk śarīrasya viśtrasaḥ.* Ibid., 2.3.4.

²³⁶ *Mṛtyuproktāṁ Naciketo 'tha labdhvā
vidyām etāṁ yogavidhiṁ ca kṛtsnam,
Brahmaprāpto virajo 'bhūd vimṛtyuḥ
anyo 'preyaṁ yo vid adhyātma meva.* Ibid., 2.3.18.

Brahman or self-realization. So, the indication is to the knower of a fragmented knowledge who accepts the world as it is.

2. The childish, ignorant people follow their sense-organs and pursue external pleasures, and thereby fall into the widespread trap laid down by death.²³⁸ We have already said that he who follows their sense-organs and runs after worldly objects acquires the fragmented knowledge. And such a knower of fragmented knowledge is trapped by death.
3. In this life, if one is not able to comprehend *Brahman* or integrated knowledge, before the death of the body, he has to take a body again in the world of creation.²³⁹ Knowledge is of two kinds only. So, unable to comprehend the integrated knowledge means able to comprehend only fragmented knowledge. And, such a knower after departing from his present manifestation will have to take up yet another form and come back to this wretched plane of limitations and finiteness.

Thus, we get two types of knowledge –

- (a) Fragmented knowledge- the knowledge produced from the worldly objects in the form of ‘I know the pot’, etc. through a sense-object contact.
- (b) Integrated knowledge- the knowledge that arises from the realization of one’s own self in the form of ‘I am Brahman’. And this is the final knowledge of the *Kāthopaniṣad*.

²³⁷ *Na sa tatpadamāpnoti sarīśārāṇi cādhiḡacchati.* Ibid., 1.3.7.

²³⁸ *Parūcaḡ kāmānanuyanti bālāḡ
te mṛtyoryanti vitatasya pāśam.* Ibid., 2.1.2.

²³⁹ *Iha cedaśakad boddhuṇi prāk śarīrasya viśtrasaḡ,
Tataḡ sargeṣu lokeṣu śarīratvāya kalpyate.* Ibid., 2.3.4.

In case of fragmented knowledge, the individual being goes on identifying himself with the mortal body with limited capabilities and powers. He feels happy and unhappy with the corporal comforts and discomforts he receives and travels in the cycle of birth and death.

In case of integrated knowledge, the individual being discriminates between self and non-self, which finally results in his emancipation. The knower feels that he is the *Ātman*, which is self-effulgent, quite and equanimous. The knower realizes the identity between his inner self and *Brahman*. He feels all the names; forms and activities are nothing but *Brahman*. Ignorance being the cause of bondage, knowledge naturally is the cause of freedom. Such a knower becomes immortal and gets liberation.

CONCLUSION

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It is just only an effort to bring out the concept of epistemology, adopted by the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* to know the reality whatever it is empirical or transcendental. But as it develops its philosophical speculation to the direction of absolute monism, its epistemological issues are raised in relation to Ultimate Reality or *Brahman* only where the issues related to empirical reality or external world, are only to clarify the issues of the Ultimate One. We have tried to expound the “Epistemology in *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*” within our available sources. From this discussion, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. This widely studied *Upaniṣad* is very clear in explaining the reality of this world and beyond. It shares much more parallels and recurrences of ideas and texts with other *Upaniṣads*, Indian philosophical systems, *Gītā*, etc. which stratifies its authenticity in its exploration of philosophical speculation.
2. The central issue of the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* is the *Nāciketā*'s quest for truth-whether man survives after death or not? So, it is the surest indication that the search for truth has turned from the world of external nature to the world of internal nature. Thus, primarily it is the epistemology of Pure Consciousness.
3. The three boons, asked by *Nāciketā* are very significant in relation to our discussion as they represent the three layers of reality, which is basically one.
4. *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* follows the style of dialogue or *guru-śiṣya pamamparā*, which helps us to identify the concept of knower and the importance of a *guru* for right knowledge in it. We have made a division of knower in three types in

relation to their respective object of knowledge and the pre-requisites, they hold.

5. *Kāthopanīṣad* has explained its metaphysical stand broadly in three layers- sensuous worlds, suprasensuous world and beyond world, of which the first two are subject to merge into the third one i.e. the Ultimate Reality. Thus, objects can be divided only as- eternal and non-eternal or worldly and non-worldly.
6. Objects are known subjectively through different processes. We get a process of sensory perception for the external world while a sacrificial act enhanced by verbal testimony for worldly suprasensuous object. And for the attainment of the final object, the process of *yoga* and the triple cause- *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* have been introduced with a proper guidance of a guru. The process of attaining the final object is not so explicit in *Kāthopanīṣad*, but we have made an attempt to synthesize the available materials with special reference to other *Upanīṣads* and secondary text. In two layers, the processes can be shown as following.

In case of empirical-

**Knower→ knowing process (external ways like *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* etc. for which sense-object contact is required, sacrificial ceremonies guided by a *guru*)
→ Objects (external world)→Knowledge (worldly, which creates results of temporal nature and binds soul in the birth cycle).**

In case of transcendental-

Knower→ knowing process (*Yoga, Upasanā, tapas or śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana*)→ **object (Ātman)**→ **knowledge (realization of Ultimate Reality)**

7. *Śreyas* and *preyas* are two approaches, a human being can follow, choosing one of them. They lead to different goal through different experiences. *Śreyas* is used for the actions of highest value while the *preyas* is used for the lower value. From the point of view of knowledge, *śreyas* is the vision of integral nature of the universe whether *preyas* is the normal vision of plurality of the universe as it is. The vision of integrated nature of the universe is not an act of perception but a process of realization. Therefore, *Kāthopaniṣad* says that *Ātman* cannot be known through the logical reasoning but by realizing the unity of the individual self and *Brahman*.
8. The concept of integral universe is same as that of the modern physics. It is a fact that the real nature of this universe is in an energy form. Though we see the external world in various forms, essentially they are one in nature. Variations are only a transformation of the real nature i.e. energy. But Science is unable to explain the nature of this energy through language. This is the stand of the *Kāthopaniṣad* also. *Brahman* is the sole Reality; the world is nothing but *Brahman*. Due to ignorance, we see the many in One. But the nature of this Ultimate Reality is beyond language. An aspirant can only realize it.
9. *Upaniṣads*, which represent the highest human intellect of the Indian intellectual tradition and the backbone of the most Indian philosophical systems, are treated as some impractical documents of an old and superstitious society in this era of technology. A very few people are aware of the

underlying philosophy of the *Upaniṣads*. But as a matter of fact, *Upaniṣads* are the most intense review of human life. They have great practical value in the individual level as well as the mass level. *Upaniṣads* give us a picture of a life of high profile personality. How can we get the success in our life in the right direction -*Kāthopaniṣad* shows us through the epistemological discussions. It can be a necessary prelude to an understanding of life in depth and, through that, to a total philosophy of life. And in the mass level, it gives an idea of an integral society or universe where the vision of an individual turns into oneness in place of manyness. There remains no discrimination in any aspect of a society if every individual tries to identify himself with everything else.

After doing the study on epistemology in *Kāthopaniṣad*, we feel that the whole *Upaniṣadic* literature demands a study from this point of view as they can come more close to the general people and practical life. A single text based study can not give us the details discussion of the *Upaniṣads* as they share the same ideas synthetically. So, our attempt is like an infant in this field. It has just open up a door of a new approach. More prominent research works are required to make it perfect in the proper way in the coming days.

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