

॥ केनोपनिषत् ॥

KENA UPANISHAD

*Know That Alone
as Brahman*

“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”

TEXT

38

Reflections by
SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA



Sandeepany's Vedanta Course

List of All the Course Texts in Chronological Sequence:

Text No.	TITLE OF TEXT	Text No.	TITLE OF TEXT
1	<i>Sadhana Panchakam</i>	24	<i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>
2	<i>Tattwa Bodha</i>	25	<i>Vakya Vritti</i>
3	<i>Atma Bodha</i>	26	<i>Advaita Makaranda</i>
4	<i>Bhaja Govindam</i>	27	<i>Kaivalya Upanishad</i>
5	<i>Manisha Panchakam</i>	28	<i>Bhagavad Geeta (Discourse --)</i>
6	<i>Forgive Me</i>	29	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
7	<i>Upadesha Sara</i>	30	<i>Amritabindu Upanishad</i>
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10	<i>Bodha Sara</i>	33	<i>The Mahavakyas, Panchadasi 5</i>
11	<i>Viveka Choodamani</i>	34	<i>Aitareya Upanishad</i>
12	<i>Jnana Sara</i>	35	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutras</i>
13	<i>Drig-Drishya Viveka</i>	36	<i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i>
14	<i>"Tat Twam Asi" – Chand Up 6</i>	37	<i>Jivan Sutrani (Tips for Happy Living)</i>
15	<i>Dhyana Swaroopam</i>	38	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
16	<i>"Bhoomaiva Sukham" Chand Up 7</i>	39	<i>Aparoksha Anubhuti (Meditation)</i>
17	<i>Manah Shodhanam</i>	40	<i>108 Names of Pujya Gurudev</i>
18	<i>"Nataka Deepa" – Panchadasi 10</i>	41	<i>Mandukya Upanishad</i>
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A NOTE ABOUT SANDEEPANY

Sandeepany Sadhanalaya is an institution run by the Chinmaya Mission in Powai, Mumbai, teaching a 2-year Vedanta Course. It has a very balanced daily programme of basic Samskrit, Vedic chanting, Vedanta study, Bhagavatam, Ramacharitmanas, Bhajans, meditation, sports and fitness exercises, team-building outings, games and drama, celebration of all Hindu festivals, weekly Gayatri Havan and Guru Paduka Pooja, and Karma Yoga activities.

This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

– The Author, 8th October, 2019, the Sacred Vijaya Dasami Day

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text
38



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“Know That Alone as Brahman”

Reflections

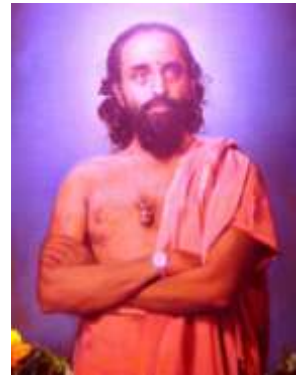
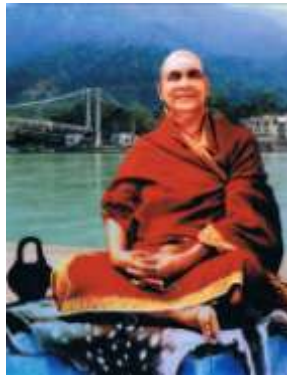
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on the Series of 14 Lectures by **Swami Tejomayanandaji**

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Adi Shankaracharya

Swami Sivananda

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Personal Dedication

1. To my Late Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhai Kapitan

who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;

2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj (1932-2019)

the Late President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;

3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)

for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;

4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji

my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.

KENA UPANISHAD

“Know That Alone as Brahman”

॥ केनोपनिषत् ॥
॥ साम वेद ॥

KENA UPANISHAD
4 Chapters, 34 No. Verses
Know That Alone as Brahman

INTRODUCTION TO KENA UPANISHAD

KENA UPANISHAD IS the 9th Chapter of the Talavakara Branch in the Sama Veda. The first eight chapters are concerned with the Karma and Upasana which fall under Apra Vidya. They belong to the Mantra Samhitas and the Brahmanas of the Vedas. Then follows the Brahma Jnana or Para Vidya portion which forms the subject of this Upanishad. Due to its subject matter, the Kena Upanishad is classified as an Aranyaka.

Guruji began the discussion with an introduction on the goals that people generally set for themselves. Among them, food, clothing and shelter are the most basic needs. Then come concerns of fear of losing them, so security becomes a need. Whatever has been acquired of the above three items has to be secured for as long as possible.

Karma, Prajaa and Dhan become the three kingpins around which life revolves. If more wealth (Dhan) is accumulated, then the basic needs are enhanced. Better quality of food and clothing is obtained. A competitive spirit is generated with those who have more. Then come the desire for power, position, status, pleasures, etc. They all give some degree of satisfaction but there is no end; always there is a desire for more. It is a never-ending thirst that is unquenchable.

Something is missing in such a life of desire. That missing element is spirituality, which teaches that man is more than his desires encompass. The real change man is looking for is to find the spiritual dimension of life. That will give him lasting satisfaction. The change he is required to make is to shift from his physical needs to the needs of his soul. That is when spiritual life begins. A change of heart is needed – not a heart transplant!

Spiritual life demands re-evaluating our needs in terms of the Spirit we really are. The Vedas provide for a smooth transition from worldly existence to a fully spiritual-oriented life. The jump cannot be made overnight. Therefore, the Karma and Upasana portions are prescribed. When these practices are done without any selfish desires, they help greatly to bring one to *Brahma Vidya* by which one may be liberated forever from the 'clutches of Samsara.'

The prescription is to do good actions and worship of the Divine in a graded series of spiritual exercises. Initially these are promoted with incentives such as heaven, and so on. But eventually the seeker is taught that even without such incentives, these practices bring their own good results of purifying the soul of man. That purity increases his ability to grasp subtle spiritual knowledge, and through that knowledge he can liberate himself.

Thus the same scriptures that at one stage say one should strive for heaven, also say at a more advanced stage that the desire for heaven has to be transcended.

This does not mean that the two paths follow each other and can be combined. Sri Shankaracharyaji emphatically denies the need to pursue them one after the other. He says, "There can be no marriage between these two paths as their fruits are totally different." The fruit of the one path has to be renounced before the other path can be followed.

Those in Apra Vidya can come to the higher level only after they realize from experience that all pleasures and actions have temporary results. Even by adding Upasana to Karma, there cannot be anything permanent. It is like adding a finite thing to another finite thing. The result also is finite. In Para Vidya, the result is the attainment of the Infinite, so it cannot be practiced in combination with the paths of Apra Vidya.

When the intensity of one's desire for God grows very strong, all other pursuits are automatically given up, even as when a person desirous of sleep gives up all activity to have a good sleep! So, too, the desire for God removes all other desires from the mind. Thus a seeker becomes well-established on the spiritual path.

It is at this point that the questions with which Kena Upanishad begins take on great relevance . . .



KENA UPANISHAD
“Know That Alone as Brahman”

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From: A. Krishna Yajur Veda & B. Sama Veda

INVOCATION PRAYERS

A. GENERAL INVOCATION: *from Krishna Yajur Veda*

ॐ सह नावतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु ।	ōṃ saha nāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।	saha vīryaṃ karavāvahai
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु ।	tējasvi nāvadhītamastu
मा विद्विषावहै ॥	mā vidviṣāvahai
॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः! ॥	ōṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ!

1	<i>om. saha nau avatu;</i>	<i>May He protect us both together.</i>
2	<i>saha nau bhunaktu;</i>	<i>May He protect us both.</i>
3	<i>saha veeryam karavaavahai;</i>	<i>May we attain vigour together.</i>
4	<i>tejaswi nau adheetam astu;</i>	<i>Let what we study be invigorating.</i>
5	<i>maa vidvishaavahai.</i>	<i>May we not cavil at each other.</i>
6	<i>om shantih, shantih, shantih!</i>	<i>Om Peace, Peace, Peace!</i>

This is a very common chant prior to the start of any study between teacher and students. It is universal in nature. It overcomes the main difficulties which stand in the way of grasping knowledge. The main points are:

i) To bring quietness, **peace and stillness** into the minds of teacher and student, so that the mind can be focused easily on the knowledge.

ii) To bring up the **correct attitude** that the student and the teacher should have in order to make the learning effective. The prayer is for an attitude of understanding and respect, and avoiding all useless debating and arguing.

iii) To promote a **vigorous intellect**, so that the Truth may be reflected upon from all angles and assimilated well into the mind in its true import.

During studies, it is vital that the ambience encourages these three to come to the fore. Teacher and student cannot exist without each other. Their harmony is crucial.

Both must put forth effort to grasp the knowledge. Both must look forward to the class. There must be joy in the learning process. The end result desired is clarity of understanding, without doubts, and abundance in the knowledge. The knowledge must be lived; this is not just an intellectual pursuit.

May teacher and taught come to love each other eternally. Let it not be just a business relationship. There should be no ill-will or disrespect between them.

B. PEACE INVOCATION:*from the Sama Veda*

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि । वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुःश्रोत्रम्— अथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि । सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदं । माऽहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां । मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोद् । अनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु । तदात्मनि निरते । य उपनिषत्सु धर्माः ते मयि सन्तु । ते मयि सन्तु । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥	ōm āpyāyantu mamāṅgāni vākprāṇaścakṣuḥ śrōtram athō balamindriyāṇi ca sarvāṇi sarvaṁ brahmaupaniṣadam mā:'haṁ brahma nirākuryāṁ mā mā brahma nirākarōd anirākaraṇamastvanirākaraṇaṁ mē:'stu tadātmani niratē ya upaniṣatsu dharmāḥ tē mayi santu tē mayi santu ōm śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ
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1	<i>om. aapyaayantu mama angaani, vaak praanah chakshuh shrotram, athah balam indriyaani cha sarvaani.</i>	i) Vigorous may my limbs grow; so, too, my speech, Prana (vital air), eye, ear, and the strength of all my senses!
2	<i>sarvam brahma upanishadam, maa aham brahma niraakuryaan maa maa brahma niraakarod-</i>	ii) All is Brahman of the Upanishads. May I never deny Brahman; may Brahman never spurn me.
3	<i>aniraakaranam astu, aniraakaranam me astu; tad aatmani nirate;</i>	iii) May there be <u>no denial</u> of Brahman; may there be <u>no spurning</u> by Brahman; may I take delight in that Atman;
4	<i>ya upanishatsu dharmah, te mayi santu, te mayi santu. om shaantih shaantih shaantih!</i>	iv) The virtues recited in the Upanishads – may they repose in me; may they repose in me! Om Peace, Peace, Peace!

The Peace Invocation gives an auspicious start to the study. It invokes 'Peace' without which the mind is not in a fit state to be enlightened. A mind in turmoil cannot have grasping power to understand the subtle truths. Every Upanishad is preceded by a Peace Invocation.

A healthy body is a pre-requisite for the ideal life that is promoted by the Upanishads. Hence, the seers always invoked strength in the body, Pranas and the mind at the start of their study. This shows that the philosophy taught did not clash with holding a healthy attitude of respect towards the body and its functions. Vedanta is not an 'other-worldly' pursuit.

In the words **Te Mayi Santu**, the student says, "Please let this be with me", at least now while I am studying. The student realizes that his imperfections are present and, therefore, prays to be free from their grip on him at least for these few hours. This method is recognized as very effective in removing one's defects.

Chapter 1, 8 Verses

The Nature of BRAHMAN

THE DISCIPLE QUESTIONS THE GURU

Verse 1.1: *The Disciple's Questions*

ॐ केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः । केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥ १.१ ॥	ōṃ kēnēṣitaṃ patati prēṣitaṃ manaḥ kēna prāṇaḥ prathamah praiti yuktaḥ kēnēṣitāṃ vācamimāṃ vadanti cakṣuḥ śrōtraṃ ka u dēvō yunakti ॥ 1.1 ॥
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		The Disciple Asks:
1	<i>kena ishitaṃ patati preshitaṃ manah,</i>	By whom willed and directed does the mind alight upon its objects?
2	<i>kena praanah prathamah praiti yuktaḥ;</i>	Commanded by whom does the main vital air proceed to function?
3	<i>kena ishitaam vaacham imaam vadanti,</i>	By whose will and direction do men utter speech ?
4	<i>chakshuh shrotram kah u devah yunakti.</i>	The eyes and the ears – (towards their objects) what intelligence directs them?

Within this verse are found the clues which tell us who is the eligible seeker on this spiritual path. From the questions we can deduce the background of the questioner. We also deduce what he is wanting in life. There is a vacuum in him that seeks to be filled with something more lasting than what the world can offer.

1 The questioner (disciple) has clearly passed the stage of wanting a superficial solution to life's problems. He is in search of a deeper solution, a more lasting solution. He is not interested in the objects of perception, but in that source which motivates his mind to desire them.

2 He is also not interested in a mere explanation of the functions of the forces of life, but wants to know who their Supreme Commander is.

3-4 He is not interested in the physical organs of action and their various functions. By speech we are expected to assume that all other organs of actions are included. Similarly, by eyes and ears, all the organs of knowledge are included. He is also not interested in knowing all the details about all these ten sense organs of knowledge and action, but in that which enables them to know.

It is clear from these questions, that something deeper than the superficial is the subject matter that is sought. Not the science of biology, not physics or chemistry, nor psychology or psychiatry is the subject that is to be explored, but it is the science of the Spirit of man that is being sought.

Points Raised in the Shankara Bhashya:

1. Is Mind a Controller or is it Controlled? An objector poses the possibility that the mind need not have anything to control it, as it can well be its own controller. The Bhashya's reply to this is why would the mind then want to think of things that are harmful to it? If it controlled itself, it would not entertain anything *harmful* to itself, but it is everyone's experience that it does. That shows that there is something else (Vasanas) influencing or instigating it and something else (Chetana or Consciousness) that is enlivening or illuminating it.

When the same reasoning is applied to all the other questions raised, it makes it clear that the questions are more fundamental than they appear. They are actually asking "**Who am I?**", the 'I' being the controller. Are we these Upadhis (the conglomerate of body, mind and intellect) or are we the Consciousness that enlivens them? This question seeks to know the truth about 'I'.

2. Is Mind Dependent? Another possibility is raised by an objector: Is there something in whose mere *presence*, the mind, etc, starts functioning? Underlying this objection is the belief that Consciousness cannot have its own will. So it is posited that It can 'permit' the Upadhis to function by its very presence, like a King in whose presence the other ministers and subjects do their functions. Thus, although the student is asking by whose will or direction the Upadhis are functioning, it really means "**In whose Presence?**"

In this manner, Sri Shankaracharya raises the level of these questions. He probes and positions, as it were, their depth in our mind. The ultimate implication of these questions is: "If there is such a Controller, then I want to realize it – how do I go about doing that?" That is what seems to be at the back of these apparently innocent looking questions. Seen from the spiritual context, it is a deeply probing question.

The Teacher is being called upon to give a fitting answer to it. If the Teacher also sees the question in the depth suggested by Sri Shankaracharya, then we can expect a really enlightening answer. The Teacher has to enlighten the student, not push him further into bondage. The Kena Upanishad is the enlightened Rishi's reply to an enlightenment-seeking student. The first verse thus launches the text towards this Unknown Target, and every student, with his attention fully rivetted to the Rishi's lips, prepares himself for a deeply absorbing intellectual journey into the Unknown.

In the very next verse, we have a perfect lift-off . . .

Verse 1.2: The Guru Introduces the Idea of Self

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्	śrōtrasya śrōtram manasō manō yad
वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।	vācō ha vācaṁ sa u prāṇasya prāṇaḥ ।
चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीराः	cakṣuṣaścakṣuratimucya dhīrāḥ
प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति	prētyāsmāllōkādamṛtā bhavanti
॥ १.२ ॥	॥ 1.2 ॥

		The Guru answers:
1	<i>shrotasya shrotram, manasah manah yad,</i>	<i>It is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the Mind;</i>
2	<i>vaachah ha vaacham, sa u praanasya praanah,</i>	<i>It is the Tongue of the tongue, and also the Life of life;</i>
3	<i>chakshushah chakshuh; atimuchya dheeraah,</i>	<i>It is the Eye of the eye. The brave and wise, having <u>transcended</u> “I-ness”,</i>
4	<i>pretya asmaat lokaat amritaah bhavanti.</i>	<i>rise above the world of <u>sensual life</u>, and become Immortal.</i>

The answer at first glance appears to be a play of words – meaningless, evasive and taking the questions at surface level. But the Teacher has good reason to reply in this manner. The Self is not something that has its own agenda which it has to execute through an individual by directing his thinking, feeling and acting processes, as a puppeteer.

Nevertheless, the Teacher has to get across a very difficult point about the Self, which is hard to grasp by the intellect. He has a real difficulty to explain It to the student as it is not an object that can be easily described like any other object. The Self is the essence of all beings. How is the Teacher going to bring out this fact, except by beginning in this apparently vague and intriguing manner?

Self – An Object or Subject?

1-3a The initial standpoint of the student is sure to be that Brahman is an ‘object’. How does the Teacher achieve to shift this standpoint? The teacher uses an ingenious grammatical device. He interweaves the 2nd case (Accusative form) with the 1st case (Nominative form). The former is used for external objects like **Shrotram** (Ear) and **Vaacham** (Speech); whereas the latter is used for internal subjects such as **Manah** and **Praanah**. By interweaving these two cases, the teacher sets up a debate in the student’s mind as to what Brahman could be – is He an object or a subject?

Thus, by building into the very grammar itself, a vibrant alternating movement from object to subject, over the first two lines, the Teacher holds the student in doubt on whether Brahman is an object or a subject. The student is made to consider the strong possibility that Brahman could well be of a subjective nature. Why should he be thinking of Him only as an object? Why is he restricting his intellect in this preconceived manner?

This is an amazingly skillful and rare usage of grammar to brace the intellect of the student for a very tricky analysis. So much for the first difficulty of the Teacher.

Self – Dictatorial or Democratic?

There is another difficulty faced by the Teacher. The Self's role is not strictly as the supreme Director or Controller. That is not what the Teacher wants to get across. He also wants to bring out the fact that the "self-will" in each individual is a co-director in the operations of the mind and senses. In a sense, the individual soul does have freedom, and is not just a puppet in the hands of Brahman. How does the Teacher get this point across?

An attempt is made in the second half of the verse to reflect the true situation that pertains to controllership of one's mind. It may be true that the very Presence of the Self makes everything happen, but that certainly is not intended to imply that the individual will is null and void, or that the individual soul (Jeeva) goes 'scot-free' of any blame. As long as the Jeeva is under the delusion that it is independent of the Self, so long it has to take the full Karmic responsibility for all the actions done in that state of ignorance.

The Ego (Jeeva) and the Self

3b-4 It is only when the individual raises his sense of "I" beyond the reach of the Ego, that he experiences the Self as the "Supreme Controller". Once he identifies with this higher Self then he is declared to be Immortal, meaning 'ever in control'. Until then, as the Ego, he thinks he is in control until death rudely snatches away that control from him.

In effect, the verse draws our attention to the important relationship between the Self, the true Controller, and the Ego, the pseudo-controller. The Teacher gets the idea across that only if this latter sense of "I-ness" and the sensual life surrounding it are transcended will the Truth really be known and identified with, not otherwise.

For the time being, Guruji asked us to keep in mind that "the Ear of the ear" and the "Mind of the mind", etc, is really the Atman, which is our very own Self, and that when we recognize that fact, then, yes, certainly we shall become Immortal. The verse thus indicates that there is something in the ego-sense and the life of sensuality which prevents us from seeing our essential Immortality. For the time being that defect has to be acknowledged.

Thus, although the charge of vagueness may be there, it is justified at this early stage. The student has to be taken step by step from his standpoint towards that of Truth.

Verse 1.3a : *Beyond the Senses and Mind*

न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग्गच्छति नो मनः ।
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यात् ॥ १.३.१ ॥

na tatra cakṣurgacchati na vāggacchati nō manaḥ |
na vidmō na vijānīmō yathaitadanuśiṣyāt ॥ 1.3.1 ॥

1	na tatra chakshuh gacchhati,	The <u>eye</u> does not go <u>there</u> ;
2	na vaag gacchhati na manah;	Nor <u>speech</u> ; nor the <u>mind</u> ;
3	na vidyah na vijaaneemah,	We have no overall <u>knowledge</u> (of That), nor know It in all its <u>details</u> ;
4	yathaa etad anushishyaat.	How can we give instructions about it?

Brahman Cannot Be Known Through the Senses

1-2 These Padas distinguish Brahman from the realm of the senses or mind. It tells us that the Self (Brahman) is not an object which can be reached by our sense organs. There can be no **Pratyaksha Pramana** (sensory means) of knowing It. This is the problem in trying to explain it with words.

The student may feel at this point, “Then what is the point in enquiring about a Brahman who does not exist and cannot be known?” This is ruled out by the Teacher’s tone of the certainty that Brahman exists. Just because the senses cannot pick it up does not mean that it is not there.

The Teacher Has No Words to Explain Brahman

3-4 The Teacher is telling the student honestly, “Look, you have to be patient in getting the answer. This is not something that is easily taught like any other subject such as chemistry or mathematics. I cannot explain it to you in terms of atoms and molecules. [Here Guruji made a joke of this and said there is no such thing as ‘Atman Sulphate’ to make you understand it chemically!] It is not going to be easy to put across to you an understandable explanation. You also need to realise my difficulty.”

So, does the student decide to go to another teacher? Guruji again quipped that he may do so, just as people go to another doctor for a second opinion. Guruji said there was a man who asked his doctor if he could get a second opinion. The doctor said, “Yes, all right, come back at 4.00 pm.”

Sri Shankaracharyaji emphatically states that “Brahman is to be known only through such a traditional instruction from the preceptors and not through argumentation, study, intelligence, great learning, austerity and sacrifices, etc.

Verse 1.3b : *Beyond the Known and Unknown*

अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि ।
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद्व्याचक्षिरे ॥ १.३.२ ॥
anyadēva tadviditādathō aviditādadhi |
iti śuśruma pūrvēṣāṁ yē nastadvyācākṣirē ॥ 1.3.2 ॥

5	<i>anyad eva tad vijitaat</i>	<i>That is surely distinct from the known;</i>
6	<i>atho aviditaat adhi;</i>	<i>And again, from the unknown, It is above.</i>
7	<i>iti shushruma poorveshaam,</i>	<i>Thus have we heard from the Preceptors of</i>
8	<i>ye nah tad vyaacha-chakshire.</i>	<i>the past who taught That to us.</i>

Brahman is Neither Known Nor Unknown

5 The Teacher’s “beyond the known” really means that he does not know it as an object in the ordinary sense in which things are normally known; it cannot be explained.

6 His “beyond the unknown”, means that Brahman is beyond those things which in ordinary life are considered to be ‘unknown’ or ‘unseen’, such as the thoughts in another’s

mind or invisible phenomena like electromagnetic waves. The Teacher is certain of Its existence but he cannot describe It in terms of common knowledge.

The Place of FAITH in Spiritual Life

7-8 For this reason, the Teacher now asks the student to resort to what he himself had resorted to when he was a disciple. He accepted the words of his Guru on Faith. Following the teaching with faith, he arrived at the direct experience of the Truth. This indicates that his faith was justified as it helped him to get started and eventually it grew into a firm conviction of the Truth. The Teacher is indirectly asking the disciple to have the same faith that he himself once had.

This is not a blind faith. The Teacher's own realization gives him the confidence to suggest the same path to his disciple: "You will have to take recourse in Faith; I assure you that you will not be dissatisfied."

However, the Teacher finds a way to explain Brahman in a negative way, by telling him what Brahman is not. This is done poetically in the next five verses.

BRAHMAN – "NOT WHAT PEOPLE WORSHIP HERE"

WE NOW HAVE FIVE meditational verses on the Self within. They are all pointers to Brahman, which is always beyond the reach of any of our physical or mental equipment. Each of these five verses ends on the note that Brahman is "not that which people worship here." This line refers to the Karma Kanda and Upasana Kanda forms of worship which are practised to attain certain desired goals through legitimate means.

The Bhashya says that these verses were prompted by an objection from a Poorvapakshi. The Poorvapakshi is a person who holds a view that is contradictory to the Vedantic view. His objection has the aim of drawing out an explanation to clarify the Vedantic view.

The Poorvapakshi asks: "How can the Self be Brahman? Is not the Self the entity which we know to undertake Karma and Upasana practices in order to get higher births in better worlds? The Self is subject to birth and death, and seeks the Grace of the Gods such as Vishnu, Shiva, Indra or Hiranyagarbha, any of whom could well be Brahman, but not the limited Self. It is reasonable to say that the worshipper is different from the worshipped, the all-mighty Gods (Brahman)."

The Poorvapakshi believes his limited personality – that which is termed the **Jeeva** in Vedanta – to be the Self. He puts forward the case that the Jeeva cannot be Brahman by any stretch of the imagination.

In this connection, an important point is noted by Pujya Gurudev: These verses are not intended to raise a controversy with those who are engaged in Karma and Upasanas on some symbolic form of Brahman. Scriptures are our loving Mother, and guide us beyond form into the Formless. They direct our mind from a lower Sadhana to a higher Sadhana, which is fully consistent with the spirit of the *Vedas*. However, when the existence of Brahman is questioned, then in defence the Truth has to be forcefully put forward. In the process, it becomes necessary to differentiate Vedantic Sadhana from all other Sadhanas. This is not intended to disturb those who still feel the need to do the other Sadhanas.

Verse 1.4: Brahman – Illuminator of Speech

यद्वाचाऽनभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ १.४ ॥

yadvācā:'nabhyuditam yēna vāgabhyudyatē |
tadēva brahma tvam viddhi nēdam yadidamupāsātē || 1.4 ||

1	yad vaachaa anabhyuditam,	What speech cannot reveal,
2	yena vaak abhudyate;	But what reveals speech;
3	tad eva brahma twam viddhi,	Know That alone as Brahman,
4	na idam yat idam upaasate.	And not this which people worship here.

Verse 1.5: Brahman – Illuminator of Mind

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ १.५ ॥

yanmanasā na manutē yēnāhurmanō matam |
tadēva brahma tvam viddhi nēdam yadidamupāsātē || 1.5 ||

5	yat manasaa na manute,	What one cannot feel with the mind ;
6	yena aahuh manah matam;	But because of which they say the mind feels;
7	tad eva brahma twam viddhi,	Know That alone as Brahman,
8	na idam yat idam upaasate.	And not this which people worship here.

Verse 1.6: Brahman – Illuminator of the Eye

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षूँषि पश्यति ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ १.६ ॥

yaccakṣuṣā na paśyati yēna cakṣūṃṣi paśyati |
tadēva brahma tvam viddhi nēdam yadidamupāsātē || 1.6 ||

9	yat chakshushaa na pashyati;	What cannot be seen by the eye ;
10	yena chakshoo-gmshi pashyati;	But by which the eyes are able to see;
11	tad eva brahma twam viddhi,	Know That alone as Brahman,
12	na idam yat idam upaasate.	And not this which people worship here.

Verse 1.7: Brahman – Illuminator of the Ear

यच्छ्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रमिदं श्रुतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ १.७ ॥

yacchrōtrēṇa na śṛṇōti yēna śrōtramidaṁ śrutam |
tadēva brahma tvam viddhi nēdaṁ yadidamupāsate || 1.7 ||

13	<i>yat shrotrena na shrinoti;</i>	<i>What cannot be heard by the ear;</i>
14	<i>yena shrotram idam shrutam;</i>	<i>But by which the ears are able to hear;</i>
15	<i>tad eva brahma twam viddhi,</i>	<i>Know That alone as Brahman,</i>
16	<i>na idam yat idam upaasate.</i>	<i>And not this which people worship here.</i>

Verse 1.8: Brahman – Illuminator of the Prana

यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ १.८ ॥

yatprāṇēna na prāṇiti yēna prāṇaḥ praṇīyatē |
tadēva brahma tvam viddhi nēdaṁ yadidamupāsate || 1.8 ||

17	<i>yat praanena na praaniti;</i>	<i>That which one breathes not with his breath;</i>
18	<i>yena praanah praneeyate;</i>	<i>But by which breath is breathed;</i>
19	<i>tad eva brahma twam viddhi,</i>	<i>Know That alone as Brahman,</i>
20	<i>na idam yat idam upaasate.</i>	<i>And not this which people worship here.</i>

1-2 The first two lines of each verse have the same significance.

3-4 Similarly, the last two lines are repeated in each verse for emphasis, to show the Truth beyond all forms of worship, as already explained at the start.

Speech includes many factors such as tongue, throat, breath, sounds, letters, words and sentences – none of which are Brahman. The main point being put across here is that Brahman is not the manifestation but the support of all that is manifested. This remark applies to all the five verses.

A villager went to a city and saw all the dazzling lights there. He was puzzled as to what caused the lights. Was it the bulb? – No. Was it the filament in the bulb? – No. It was the electricity that flowed through the filament. Similarly, we have to go past the externals, even the idols, to get to the Source behind the whole world spectacle.

A saint was once asked: “How is it that people get visions of idols?”

The saint gave a very thought-provoking reply: “On such occasions it is not the Lord who becomes conscious in the inert stone idol; it is the devotee who becomes fully awakened and gives up his unconscious state to see Consciousness in the idol!”

The Mind: A special point here is that the mind is capable of projecting anything but not Brahman. Even the word 'Brahman' is not Brahman. Brahman is the Pure Consciousness which supports the mind and makes it function.

Ramdas Swami had said, "Think of the Unthinkable without becoming a thinker." By this is meant that we should become thought-free. Whatever can be thought of is not Brahman. Hence, the mind, whose objects are thoughts, cannot know Brahman; it is because of Brahman that the mind thinks.

We are struck by one thing in these verses: the Teacher never gives up trying to enlighten the disciple. If one way of explaining does not succeed, he tries another . . . and another, until he gets the Truth through to the disciple.

Thus ends the First Chapter in which the probing questions asked by the student have been answered by indicating Brahman as being the inner Self of man, beyond the senses and mind, neither the known nor the unknown, and all-pervading.

In the next Chapter the Guru checks out what his disciple has understood so far.

॥ इति केनोपनिषदि प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

|| iti kēnōpaniṣadi prathamah khaṇḍah ||

Thus Ends the First Chapter of the Kena Upanishad



Chapter 2, 5 Verses

Subtlety of “KNOWING” Brahman

Verse 2.1: *Did the Student Understand?*

यदि मन्यसे सुवेदेति दहरमेवापि
नूनं त्वं वेत्थ ब्रह्मणो रूपम् ।
यदस्य त्वं यदस्य देवेष्वथ नु
मीमाँस्येमेव ते मन्ये विदितम्

॥ २.१ ॥

yadi manyasē suvēdēti daharamēvāpi
nūnaṁ tvaṁ vēttha brahmaṇō rūpam ।
yadasya tvaṁ yadasya dēvēṣvatha nu
mīmāṁsyēmēva tē manyē viditam

॥ 2.1 ॥

0		The Preceptor says:
1	yadi manyase suveda iti,	If you think, “I know That well enough,” –
2	daharam eva api noonam twam vettha brahmanah roopam;	it is only a <u>little expression</u> that you understand as being the form of Brahman;
3	yat asya twam, yat asya deveshu;	the little expression of your body, or of that seen in the Gods.
4	atha nu, meemaamsyam eva te	It means that the real Brahman is <u>still to be ascertained</u> by you.
5	manyē viditam.	Disciple: “I think I do know Brahman!”

Prior to this verse, the Teacher must have put out a feeler to find out how much his students have understood of the lesson he has just taught. One of them, we may deduce, said, “Oh, I know Brahman well enough.” Gururji compares this response to our usual greeting formalities – someone asks, “How are you?” and the other person automatically says “Fine, thank you!” without even thinking.

The Teacher knows the danger of a theoretical understanding being taken as the final realisation! Students can become over-confident of their knowledge. The Bhashya elaborates greatly on this point, but the essence of it is to curb the tendency to mistake theory for direct experience.

1 The wise Teacher, suspecting that this is what has happened in the student concerned, warns him of this danger. Brahman is his own Self. If he really understood, he would have said, “Yes, indeed, I now understand who I am!” He would not have used the third person (That), as though Brahman were an object outside him!

2-3 Hence, the Preceptor is justified in curtailing the student’s over-confidence. He tells him he has only understood the limited expression of Brahman which is this body; or, at most, he has only understood the greater but still limited expression of Brahman as seen in the Devatas. The Deities are still a limitation in comparison to the Infinite Being that is Brahman. **4** The student is therefore asked to go and do more reflection.

Objection: Are There Many Forms of Brahman?

When the two limited expressions of Brahman are mentioned, the Poorvapakshi brings up his expected objection. The Bhashya answers this by saying that Brahman in association with the Upadhis is also Brahman but in a limited way. In man the limitation is his body, mind and senses. In the Devatas, the limitation may be less but it is nevertheless still there. The Gods worshipped by devotees are limited expressions of Brahman, seen through the eyes of man.

5 And so the student is sent back to his seat of meditation, to reflect more on the Truth. When he returns after due reflection and contemplation (Manana and Nididhyasana), he gives his experience in the same words as before, “I think I do know Brahman.”

The Teacher smiles at him. He can now see that the theory has been converted into practical experience, although the words used are the same. Actual realisation has dawned and the illumined student comes with a glow on his face with even greater confidence than earlier. None could be more pleased than the Teacher!

The student explains himself in the next verse...

Verse 2.2: *The Student Proclaims the Truth*

नाहं मन्ये सुवेदेति नो न वेदेति वेद च ।
यो नस्तद्वेद तद्वेद नो न वेदेति वेद च ॥ २.२ ॥

nāhaṁ manyē suvēdēti nō na vēdēti vēda ca |
yō nastadvēda tadvēda nō na vēdēti vēda ca ॥ 2.2 ॥

0		The Disciple continues:
1	<i>na aham manye suveda iti,</i>	<i>I do not think that I know <u>It</u> well enough;</i>
2	<i>nah na veda iti veda cha;</i>	<i>Not that I do not know; I know, and I do not know.</i>
3	<i>yah nah tat veda tad veda,</i>	<i>He amongst us who knows It, knows It only as such:</i>
4	<i>nah na veda iti veda cha.</i>	<i>Not that I do not know; I know, and I do not know.</i>

Guruji's opinion of this Mantra was full of compliments for it. *He said it was not just the most beautiful in the Kena Upanishad, but in the whole of Upanishadic literature!* The poetic excellence and simplicity of the verse itself qualifies it perfectly for Guruji's award!

The verse brings out many of the finer points of Indian spiritual tradition:

- i) the glory of the open relationship between the Guru and disciple;
- ii) the determination of the student to succeed through obedience to his Master;
- iii) the honesty of the disciple in his self-assessment;
- iv) the strong fellow feeling and respect among the students themselves; and
- v) the universal validity of spiritual experience.

The Bhashya further praises the boldness of the student's declaration, the strength he derives from following the traditional system of receiving knowledge from his Guru, and the strength he derives from reasoning and personal realization. It also acclaims his originality of expressing in his own words the same idea told to him by his Guru.

Now, the Teacher himself confirms the same attitude expressed by the student, in the following verse . . .

यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम् ॥ २.३ ॥

yasyāmatam̐ tasya matam̐ matam̐ yasya na vēda saḥ |
avijñātam̐ vijānatām̐ vijñātamavijānatām̐ ॥ 2.3 ॥

0		The Guru Confirms:
1	<i>yasya amatam tasya matam,</i>	<i>He understands It who feels he knows It not;</i>
2	<i>matam yasya na veda sah;</i>	<i>And he understands It not who feels he knows It;</i>
3	<i>avijnaatam vijaanataam,</i>	<i>It is unknown to the master scholar;</i>
4	<i>vijnaatam avijaanataam.</i>	<i>But known to the one who admits he does not know.</i>

3-4 These two attitudes are being described in this apparently contradictory verse. The one who merely has a scholastic approach to this subject, is very hasty in declaring that he knows the Truth, but in reality he does not understand it at all. The one who truly understands is too modest to declare that he knows the Truth.

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Verse 2.4: The Truth is Explained

प्रतिबोधविदितं मतममृतत्वं हि विन्दते ।
आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यं विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ॥ २.४ ॥

pratibōdhaviditam matamamṛtatvaṁ hi vindatē |
ātmanā vindatē vīryaṁ vidyayā vindatē:'mṛtam ॥ 2.4 ॥

1	<i>pratibodha-viditam matam,</i>	<i>He who intuits It in every <u>modification of the mind</u>,</i>
2	<i>amritatvam hi vindate;</i>	<i>Indeed, he attains Immortality.</i>
3	<i>aatmanaa vindate veeryam,</i>	<i>Through the Atman he obtains <u>real strength</u>,</i>
4	<i>vidyayaa vindate amritam.</i>	<i>And through knowledge, he attains Immortality.</i>

The Bhashya brings out the obvious objection that the previous verse is bound to generate: “If the wise person also is said not to know Brahman, then what is the difference between him and the totally ignorant person?” To explain this we have this verse.

In this verse, that by which we can differentiate a knower of Brahman from a totally ignorant person is given. The differentiating factors are:

- i) Seeing the Self in all thoughts;
- ii) inner Atmic strength;
- iii) divine knowledge; and
- iv) immortality.

These are all deep, inner qualities. Externally, such a sage will appear to be no different from the ignorant one.

1 Regarding the Self’s presence in all thoughts, this is best explained by the following quote from the Bhashya:

“The Self that encompasses all ideas as Its objects, is known in relation to all these ideas. Being the witness of all cognitions, and by nature nothing but the power of Consciousness, the Self is indicated by the cognitions themselves, in the midst of cognitions, as pervading them all. There is no other door to Its awareness.

“Therefore, when Brahman is known as the innermost Self of cognitions then It is known, i.e. It is realized. Only by accepting Brahman as the witness of all cognitions can it be established that It is by nature a witness that is not subject to all the modifications of mind; that It is eternal, pure in essence, the Self, and unconditioned; that It is one in all beings.”

Through every thought the Self is known. The equation in Physics is:

PERCEPTION = OBJECT + LIGHT

Similarly, the equation in Metaphysics, the thought world, is:

THOUGHT = OBJECT OF THOUGHT + PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

In every thought, the constant component is Consciousness, and the changing component is the object of thought. It is the nature of the mind to be drawn always to the changing component, towards anything that *moves*. The constant part is taken for granted and goes unnoticed. Yet, it is the latter which makes things known to us. In the absence of light we cannot see any object. So too, in the absence of Consciousness we cannot think.

The verse tells us that when we are able to fully give our attention to the constant, ever-present Consciousness, then we also become constant and ever-present, i.e. we attain immortality, for we are that Consciousness.

1. Seeing the Self in Thoughts: Guruji gave us another example from the writings of Swami Vidyanaraya: Clouds gather in space; the space does not gain anything thereby. Then, the clouds release their water as rain; again the space does not lose anything thereby. In the same way, Consciousness, like space, is unaffected by what the *content* of the thought is. It simply enlivens the thought and enables it to manifest.

The transference of our attention from the changing to the unchanging is the heart of spiritual enlightenment. This shift is a giant leap: from Plurality to Oneness; from mortality to immortality; from the limited finite to the unlimited Infinite; from the realm of fear to absolute fearlessness!

Guruji then humorously gave as a simile his own example of baldness (quoted here with all due respects, and acknowledging his humility). He said: “Baldness is like Brahman; hair is like Maya. When Maya goes away, then Brahman shines forth in all its glory!”

“Once we know the Changeless, then we are comfortable with every change,” concluded Guruji.

One elderly man once told Guruji, “Old age is the best age – because the foolishness of youth is not there!”

4. Immortality: This Atman is Consciousness itself, not that it has Consciousness as its quality. That is the basis of the immortality we attain through realizing the Self. The immortality does not mean living for eternity. That would be an undesirable immortality. No one would want that! Immortality comes from one’s own Self. It is not created or gained.

An interesting observation was made by Guruji in connection with immortality. However much we try to hold on to the world (in our foolish attempt to live forever), it will slip away from us. But with Brahman it is just the opposite – however much we try to escape from Him, He just will not let us go!

Thus immortality is not a continuity in worldly existence, but being established in Brahmic Consciousness. When we drop the world, we become immortal.

The verse may be summed up by the word *Jivanmukti*. It speaks of liberation while we are living. When we give up our attachment to possessions, we discover in ourselves the spring of Eternity – it lies in our own Self. In the deepest sense, we as Consciousness are the Subject and we as ‘worldliness’ (not world) are the Object.

The verse may also be viewed as *Videhamukti* – liberation from the body. When the Self is attained, we are forever free from the body, free from all body-consciousness. That is true ‘Death’; it happens once and for all; it is the death of bondage forever. There is no more rebirth for such a liberated soul.

Verse 2.5: The Truth is Glorified

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति
न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ।
भूतेषु भूतेषु विचित्य धीराः
प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति

iha cēdavēdīdatha satyamasti
na cēdihāvēdīnmahatī vinaṣṭiḥ |
bhūtēṣu bhūtēṣu vichitya dhīrāḥ
prētyāsmāllōkādamṛtā bhavanti

॥ २.५ ॥

॥ 2.5 ॥

1	<i>iha ched avedeet atha satyam asti,</i>	<i>If one knows That here, in this world, then the true purpose of life is <u>gained</u>;</i>
2	<i>na chet iha avedeet mahatee vinashtih;</i>	<i>If one does not know (That) here, then very great is the <u>destruction</u>.</i>
3	<i>bhooteshu bhooteshu vichitya dheeraah,</i>	<i>The one Atman in all beings – seeing That, the wise ones</i>
4	<i>pretya asmaat lokaat amritaah bhavanti.</i>	<i>rise above the world of <u>sensual life</u>, and become Immortal.</i>

Continuing the theme we closed with in the previous verse, this verse expresses the urgency and importance of the spiritual life once more.

1 The Teacher is moved to utter this inspiring verse which raises our consciousness from worldliness to divinity. He makes an earnest call to man to take seriously to the spiritual path. He makes us eager to acquire the precious spiritual knowledge by which we can raise ourselves out of suffering and attain the “true end” of human life – eternal happiness and freedom.

2 The Rishi earnestly beckons mankind to heed his call – “Arise! Awake!” He is convinced that it is the only way to the complete fulfillment of life’s purpose. If it is not attained, then there is the grim prospect of endless suffering which he calls ‘**Mahatee Vinashti**’, meaning “very very great destruction”.

Futility and Dangers of Worldly Life:

3 The **Dheerah** is one who wisely spurns all temptations of this world and surrenders to the Lord. Guruji, who is to us students an exemplary Dheerah himself, was moved to speak to us in touching words, filled with great compassion for our own spiritual well-being.

He spoke of the children today who are living in a virtual world of movies and computer games. Their lives are so distorted by such influences that they are in danger of losing even the little reality there is in this already ‘unreal’ world! Movies have become their world. It is adding unreality to unreality! There is so much to be done to help these children from such a fate. If spiritual knowledge is brought to them, it is the greatest service we can do for them.

Guruji also spoke very strongly about the suffering of material existence. He said even going to Heaven is only another form of Duhkha or suffering. We have to come back to this world from there. Then what to speak of the miseries of Hell! It is best to escape from this cycle once and for all. That is the greatest of all human aspirations.

Living in false dreams, people begin to wonder why their dreams are shattered. They are making needless demands to secure themselves with comfort and pleasure. It is not possible in this world. Such dreams are bound to be shattered. They cannot persist in this world. Great, great destruction awaits those who do not turn to this Knowledge of the Self.

4 The Teacher now fittingly concludes the Chapter by bringing us back to the same words that he expressed when he began to answer the disciple's questions in verse 1.2. The whole subject is officially concluded by returning to the start.

॥ इति केनोपनिषदि द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

॥ iti kēnōpaniṣadi dvitīyaḥ khaṇḍaḥ ॥

Thus Ends the Second Chapter of the Kena Upanishad



Chapter 3, 12 Verses

An Illustrative STORY

THE HUMILIATION OF THE GODS

THE STORY BELOW ILLUSTRATES how the sense of 'Doership' in us steals away our natural state of humility and fills us with a false pride. In the story, which is about a battle which the Gods won over the Demons (Devas vs Asuras), the strange thing is that it is the Gods who became filled with pride over their victory. They did not credit their victory to the Lord but 'stole' all the glory for themselves.

To teach them a lesson, the Lord, who is the Supreme Controller of every thought and action of ours, brought about an incident which humiliated the Gods, killed their pride and restored them to their divine status.

The Rishi writes it in very concise terms, which in its own way brings out the subtle humour of the events. Were it a Purana, the story would have run into 20-30 pages as every frown and feeling would have been included. Here, in the briefest manner, leaving much to be added by our own imagination, the Rishi presents his richly entertaining story.

Verse 3.1: *The Cause of All Pride*

ब्रह्म ह देवेभ्यो विजिग्ये तस्य ह ब्रह्मणो विजये
देवा अमहीयन्त , त ऐक्षन्त

अस्माकमेवायं विजयो, ऽस्माकमेवायं महिमेति ।

॥ ३.१ ॥

brahma ha dēvēbhyō vijigyē tasya ha brahmaṇō vijayē

dēvā amahīyanta, ta aikṣanta

asmākamēvāyaṁ vijayō:'smākamēvāyaṁ mahimēti | || 3.1 ||

0		The Preceptor said:
1	<i>brahma ha devebhyah vijigyē; tasya ha brahmanah vijaye</i>	Brahman once won a <u>victory</u> for the Gods. That victory certainly belonged to Brahman.
2	<i>devaah amaheeyanta, te aikshanta asmaakam eva ayam vijayah, asmaakam eva ayam mahimaa iti.</i>	But the Gods became elated and thought: "To us belongs this <u>victory</u> , to us belongs all the glory and greatness."

Verse 3.2: The Lord Appears as a “Spirit”

तद्धैषां विजज्ञौ तेभ्यो ह प्रादुर्बभूव
तन्न व्यजानत किमिदं यक्षमिति ॥ ३.२ ॥

taddhaisāṃ vijajñau tēbhyō ha prādurbabhūva
tanna vyajānata kimidaṃ yakṣamiti ॥ 3.2 ॥

3	<i>tat eshaam vijajnau, tebhyah ha praaduh babhoova;</i>	<i>Brahman, knowing their <u>vanity</u>, appeared before them.</i>
4	<i>tat na vyajaanata, kim idam yaksham iti.</i>	<i>But they did <u>not</u> understand who that Adorable Spirit was.</i>

AGNI GOES TO MEET BRAHMAN

Verse 3.3: Agni is Sent on a Mission

तेऽग्निमब्रुवज्जातवेद
एतद्विजानीहि किमिदं यक्षमिति तथेति ॥ ३.३ ॥

tē:'gnimabruvañjātavēda
ētadvijānīhi kimidaṃ yakṣamiti tathēti ॥ 3.3 ॥

1	<i>te agnim abruvan, jaataveda</i>	<i>They said to Agni thus: “O All-knowing One!</i>
2	<i>etad vijaaneehi kim etad yaksham iti, tathaa iti.</i>	<i><u>Find out</u> for us who this adorable Spirit is.” Agni agreed.</i>

Verse 3.4: Agni Meets the “Spirit”

तदभ्यद्रवत्तमभ्यवदत्कोऽसीति
अग्निर्वा अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीज्जातवेदा वा अहमस्मीति ॥ ३.४ ॥

tadabhyadravattamabhyavadatkō:'sīti
agnirvā ahamasmītyabravījjātavēdā vā ahamasmīti ॥ 3.4 ॥

3	<i>tat abhyadravat, tam abhyavadat, kah asi iti;</i>	<i>Agni hastened to the Spirit. The Spirit asked him, “Who are you?”</i>
4	<i>agnih vaa aham asmi iti abraveet, jaatavedaa vaa aham asmi iti.</i>	<i>Agni replied: “Don’t you know who I am? I am verily the <u>Omniscient</u>.”</i>

Verse 3.5: Agni Proudly Proclaims His Powers

तस्मिंस्त्वयि किं वीर्यमिति-
 अपीदं सर्वं दहेयं यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति ॥ ३.५ ॥

tasminstvayi kim vīryamiti-
 apīdaṁ sarvaṁ dahēyaṁ yadidaṁ pṛthivyāmiti ॥ 3.5 ॥

5	<i>tasmin twayi kim veeryam iti;</i>	The Spirit asked him, "What power resides in thee?"
6	<i>api idam sarvam daheyam, yat idam prithivyaam iti.</i>	Though (a Deity), Agni replied: "I can <u>burn</u> whatsoever there is here on Earth."

Verse 3.6: The Humiliation of Agni

तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतद्दहेति ।
 तदुपप्रेयाय सर्वजवेन तन्न शशाक दग्धुं
 स तत एव निववृते
 नैतदशकं विज्ञातुं यदेतद्यक्षमिति ॥ ३.६ ॥

tasmai tṛṇaṁ nidadhāvētaddahēti |
 tadupapṛēyāya sarvajavēna tanna śasāka dagdhum |
 sa tata ēva nivavṛtē
 naitadaśakaṁ vijñātuṁ yadētadyakṣamiti ॥ 3.6 ॥

7	<i>tasmai trinam nidadhau, etad daha iti,</i>	Brahman placed a blade of grass before him, saying, " <u>Burn</u> it!"
8	<i>tat upapreyaaya sarva-javena, tat na shashaaka dagdhum;</i>	Agni <u>blew fire</u> at it with all his power, but found it <u>impossible</u> to burn it.
9	<i>sah tatah eva nivavrite,</i>	So he <u>returned</u> to the Gods and reported:
10	<i>na etat ashakam vijnaatum, yat etat yaksham iti.</i>	"I simply failed to find out who that adorable Spirit is."

VAYU GOES TO MEET BRAHMAN

Verse 3.7: Vayu is Sent on a Mission

अथ वायुमब्रुवन्वायव्-
 एतद्विजानीहि किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति ॥ ३.७ ॥

atha vāyumabruvanvāyav-

ētadvijānīhi kimētadyakṣamiti tathēti

|| 3.7 ||

1	<i>atha vaayum abruvan, vaayo</i>	The Gods then said to Vayu : “O Lord of the Wind!
2	<i>etad vijaaneehi kim etad yaksham iti, tathaa iti.</i>	<u>Find out</u> for us who this adorable Spirit is.” Vayu agreed.

Verse 3.8: Vayu Meets the “Spirit”

तदभ्यद्रवत्तमभ्यवदत्कोऽसीति

वायुर्वा अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीन्मातरिश्वा वा अहमस्मीति

|| ३.८ ||

tadabhyadravattamabhyavadatkō:'sīti

vāyurvā ahamasmītyabravīnmātariśvā vā ahamasmīti || 3.8 ||

3	<i>tat abhyadravat; tam abhyavadat, kah asi iti;</i>	Vayu hastened to the Spirit The Spirit asked him, “Who are you?”.
4	<i>vaayuh vaa aham asmi iti abraveet, maatarishvaa vaa aham asmi iti.</i>	Vayu replied, “Don’t you know who I am? I am verily Matarishva, (Treader of the skies).”

Verse 3.9: Vayu Proudly Proclaims His Powers

तस्मिँस्त्वयि किं वीर्यमिति-

अपीदं सर्वमाददीय यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति

|| ३.९ ||

tasmiṁstvayi kim vīryamiti-

apīdaṁ sarvamādādīya yadidaṁ pṛthivyāmiti

|| 3.9 ||

5	<i>tasmin tvayi kim veeryam iti;</i>	The Spirit asked him: “What power resides in thee?”
6	<i>api idam sarvam aadadeeya, yat idam prithivyaam iti.</i>	Though (a Deity), Vayu replied: “I can <u>blow away</u> everything whatsoever there is on Earth.”

Verse 3.10: The Humiliation of Vayu

तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतदादत्स्वेति

तदुपप्रेयाय सर्वजवेन तन्न शशाकादतुं

स तत एव निवृत्ते

नैतदशकं विज्ञातुं यदेतद्यक्षमिति

|| ३.१० ||

tasmai tṛṇaṁ nidadhāvētaḍāḍatsvēti
 tadupapṛēyāya sarvajavēna tanna śasākāḍatum
 sa tata ēva nivavṛtē
 naitadaśakam vijñātum yadētadyakṣamiti || 3.10 ||

7	<i>tasmai trinam nidadhau, etad aadatswa iti,</i>	<i>Brahman placed a blade of grass before him, saying, “<u>Blow</u> this away!”</i>
8	<i>tat upapreyaaya sarva-javena, tat na shashaaka aadaatum;</i>	<i>Vayu <u>blew</u> at it with all his power, but he found it <u>impossible</u> to move it.</i>
9	<i>Sah tatah eva nivavrite,</i>	<i>So he <u>returned</u> to the Gods and reported:</i>
10	<i>na etat ashakam vijnaatum, yat etat yaksham iti.</i>	<i>“I simply failed to find out who that adorable Spirit is.”</i>

INDRA HIMSELF GOES TO MEET BRAHMAN

Verse 3.11: *Indra Himself is Sent*

अथेन्द्रमब्रुवन्मघवन्-
 एतद्विजानीहि किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति || ३.११ ||
 athēndramabruvan-
 maghavannētaḍvijānīhi kimētaḍyakṣamiti tathēti || 3.11 ||

1	<i>atha indram abruvan, maghavan</i>	<i>The Gods then said to Indra: “O Chief of the Gods!</i>
2	<i>etad vijaaneehi; kim etad yaksham iti, tathaa iti.</i>	<i><u>Find</u> out for us who this adorable Spirit is.” Indra agreed.</i>

Verse 3.12: *Indra’s Strange Meeting With Umadevi*

तदभ्यद्रवत्तस्मात्तिरोदधे
 स तस्मिन्नेवाकाशे स्त्रियमाजगाम बहुशोभमानामुमाँ
 हैमवतीं ताँहोवाच किमेतद्यक्षमिति || ३.१२ ||
 tadabhyadravattasmāttirōḍadhē
 sa tasminnēvākāśē striyamājagāma bahuśōbhamānāmumāñ
 haimavatīm | tāñhōvāca kimētaḍyakṣamiti || 3.12 ||

3	<i>tad abhyadravat, tasmaat tirodadhe.</i>	<i>Indra hastened towards the Spirit, but the Spirit disappeared from his view.</i>
4	<i>sah tasmin eva aakaashe striyam aajagaama, bahu-shobhamaanaam umaam haimavateem</i>	<i>In that very spot, a heavenly Goddess did he behold, the extremely charming Uma, daughter of the snowy Himavan.</i>
5	<i>taam ha uvaacha, kim etad yaksham iti.</i>	<i>He asked Her, “Who could this Adorable Spirit be?”</i>

॥ इति केनोपनिषदि तृतीयः खण्डः ॥

|| iti kēnōpaniṣadi tṛtīyaḥ khaṇḍaḥ ||

Thus Ends the Third Chapter of the Kena Upanishad



Chapter 4, 9 Verses

The Story Interpreted

THUS ENDS THE ILLUSTRATIVE story. The moral of the story is that we should always acknowledge that we are only instruments in the hands of God. The moment we think that we are responsible for all the deeds we do, pride enters our hearts. “Pride goeth before a fall,” goes the proverb. The fall of man is due to his arrogance in not acknowledging that all glory belongs to the Lord.

What we have seen in the story of the pride of the Gods, happens in our own case as the individual Jeevas. We also forget that it is God who is the Supreme Controller of this body and mind. Every thought and act is due to Him. We should never claim ‘doership’ to ourselves. That is the working of our Ego and, if left unchecked, it builds up into arrogance.

Verse 4.1: *Umadevi Reveals the Truth*

सा ब्रह्मेति होवाच, ब्रह्मणो वा एतद्विजये महीयध्वमिति
ततो हैव विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति

॥ ४.१ ॥

sā brahmēti hōvāca , brahmaṇō vā ētadvijayē mahīyadhvamiti
tatō haiva vidāñcakāra brahmēti

॥ 4.1 ॥

0		The Preceptor continues the above story:
1	<i>saa brahma iti ha uvaacha, brahmanah vai etad vijaye maheeyadvam iti;</i>	<i>Uma exclaimed, “I am Brahman, indeed! Through Brahman’s victory alone, have you gained this greatness!”</i>
2	<i>tatah ha eva vidaanchakaara brahma iti.</i>	<i>From that <u>utterance</u> alone did he (Indra) learn that, “This Adorable Spirit is Brahman!”</i>

The Bhashya makes a special point of mentioning that this knowing of Brahman is not Aparoksha or the direct experience which is had by God-realised sages. It is the indirect knowledge obtained via conversation with Uma. Only when Uma uttered the fact of who She was, did it strike Indra who the “Adorable Spirit” really was.

A second circumstance about this incident is that Uma did not enquire about Indra’s power as She had done in the case of Agni and Vayu. Perhaps She sensed that Indra did not come full of pride as the other two did, and so She was more amenable. She bestowed upon Indra Her beatific Divine Vision as the Divine Mother, and introduces Indra to Her Lord, the Pure Brahman Himself.

At this point, the urge in us is aroused to know the mystic meaning of the Vision.

Verse 4.2: Source of the Devas' Power

तस्माद्वा एते देवा	tasmādvā ētē dēvā
अतितरामिवान्यान्देवान्—	atitarānivānyāndēvān
यदग्निर्वायुरिन्द्रस्ते	yadagnirvāyurindrastē
ह्येनन्नेदिष्ठं पस्पर्शुः	hyēnannēdiṣṭhaṁ pasparśuh
ते ह्येनत्प्रथमो विदाञ्	tē hyēnatprathamō vidāñ
चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ ४.२ ॥	cakāra brahmēti 4.2

3	<i>tasmaat vaa ete devaah, atitaraam iva anyaan devaan;</i>	<i>Therefore, verily these Gods surpassed greatly (excelled) the other Gods;</i>
4	<i>yat agnih vaayuh indrah te hi enat nedishtham pasparshuh,</i>	<i>For, they – Agni, Vayu and Indra – indeed, approached <u>nearest</u> to the Spirit,</i>
5	<i>te hi enat prathamaah vidaanchakaara brahma iti.</i>	<i>and because they were <u>the first</u> to learn that, “This adorable Spirit is Brahman!”</i>

Even though Agni and Vayu displayed some pride before the Adorable Spirit, nevertheless they had the good fortune to hold a conversation with the Spirit. That is reason enough to qualify them to surpass the other Gods in excellence. Indra is included in this grouping of those fortunate to have have had a conversation with the Divine Mother.

Two encounters are glorified in this verse:

- i) The nearness to the Spirit is seen as a special good fortune.
- ii) Being among the first to recognise the Spirit is also considered as being a merit.

Clearly there is a hierarchy that emerges through the verse. After Brahman comes Prakriti or Maya, the Divine Mother. The Deities follow thereafter.

Verse 4.3: Source of Indra's Power

तस्माद्वा इन्द्रो—	tasmādvā indrō:
ऽतितरामिवान्यान्देवान्—	'titarānivānyāndēvān
स ह्येनन्नेदिष्ठं पस्पर्श	sa hyēnannēdiṣṭhaṁ pasparśa
स ह्येनत्प्रथमो विदाञ्—	sa hyēnatprathamō vidāñ
चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ ४.३ ॥	cakāra brahmēti 4.3

6	<i>tasmaad vaa indrah, atitaraam iva anyaan devaan;</i>	<i>And therefore, indeed, Indra excels the other Gods;</i>
7	<i>sah hi enat nedishtham pasparsha, sah hi enat prathamah vidaan- chakaara brahma iti.</i>	<i>For he approached nearest to the Spirit, and he was the first to realise that, “This adorable Spirit is Brahman!”</i>

Indra, the Lord of the Heavenly worlds, is here specially marked out as the most outstanding among the Gods, as it was he that was granted the Divine Vision of the Mother. The others came to know of it through him, indirectly.

The Upanishad now teaches us about the glory of Brahman with two illustrations. The first one is an example from the Macrocosm (the Samashti or cosmos), and the second is an example from the Microcosm (the Vyashti or individual):

Verse 4.4: Macrocosm – The “Flash of Lightning”

तस्यैष आदेशो , यदेतद्विद्युतो व्यद्युतदा ३*
 इतीन् न्यमीमिषदा ३ , इत्यधिदैवतम् ॥ ४.४ ॥
 tasyaiṣa ādēśō | yadētadvidyutō vyadyutadā 3* |
 itīn nyamīmiṣadā 3 | ityadhidaivatam ॥ 4.4 ॥

*Extra 'A'kar is used in the sense of comparison

7	<i>tasya esha aadeshah;</i>	<i>This is an illustration of Brahman:</i>
8	<i>yad etad vidyutah vyadyutada-aa-aa-aa (3);</i>	<i>He is like the splendour of lightning, which shines forth like a flash (elongated 'aa');</i>
9	<i>iti innyameemishada-aa-aa-aa (3);</i>	<i><u>Or</u>, He appears within the twinkling of an eye;</i>
10	<i>iti adhidaivatam.</i>	<i>This is with reference to the Cosmic Powers.</i>

Lightning is, indeed, one of Nature’s wonders. It reminded Gururji of a little boy. Seeing a sudden flash of lightning, the boy called out to his father, “Look, Daddy, God has just taken our photograph!”

One Simile or Two?

7 The illustration taken from nature is from the macrocosmic aspect.

Two similes are considered here, although some texts combine them and consider it as one simile. Since a flash of lightning happens in “the twinkling of an eye”, the two similes may be considered as one. It is unimportant whether they are taken separately or combined. Both similes convey the same message of the flashing appearance of Brahman. Both are also examples to be interpreted at the macrocosmic level.

The Bhashya favours the two-simile interpretation. It cites the repetition of the extended ‘aa’ 3 times as indicating that the second is an independent simile.

8 i) **Vyadyutada-aa-aa-aa**, This is the first simile, like a “flash of lightning”. The flashing appearance of the Supreme Brahman has to be meditated upon. It is there now, and not there a split second later – just as Brahman. We see only glimpses of the lightning flash; at most times it remains unmanifest to us.

This beautifully illustrates the power and glory of Brahman. The extended ‘aa’ 3 times, is a Vedic tradition used whenever Brahman is experienced. The aspect emphasized by the simile is the flashing appearance of Brahman before the Gods in the above story.

9 ii) Nyameemishada-aa-aa-aa, This is the second simile, like a “single wink of the eyelids”. Considered as a simile on its own, the winking of the eye carries a special message which the lightning does not. A wink can be a deliberate action to convey a message. When a person winks at another, an underlying secret message is conveyed. In this case, a wink from Brahman is perhaps hinting at the special mission He had of curbing the pride of the Gods, as if He were saying with a wink, “Now see, I’ll teach these Gods a good lesson!”

Guruji used these similes as an example of the poetic heights reached by the Rishi who composed the Upanishad. Earlier, we have already seen what Guruji regards as the best verse (2.2) in the whole of Upanishadic literature. Guruji's literary eye is indeed very acute to pick up such minute details which most of us are likely to pass by without notice.

Verse 4.5: *Microcosm – the “Flash of Thoughts”*

अथाध्यात्मं यदेतद्गच्छतीव च मना
 ऽनेन चैतदुपस्मरत्यभीक्ष्णं सङ्कल्पः ॥ ४.५ ॥

athādhyātmaṁ yaddētagacchatīva ca manō:
 'nēna caitadupasmaratyabhīkṣṇaṁ saṅkalpah ॥ 4.5 ॥

11	<i>atha adhyaatmam yat etad, gacchhati iva cha manah;</i>	Now with reference to the individual , the Jeeva: i) The mind seems to want to go always to It;
12	<i>anena cha etad upasmarati, abheekshnam sankalpah.</i>	ii) The mind repeatedly tries to remember It; iii) The thought of Brahman switches on-off rapidly.

11a Adhyaatmam: “Jeeva”, at the individual level. This is the Microcosmic level. The mind itself is taken to resemble a lightning flash within the individual. There are three ways in which we see this happening in the mind:

11b i) Restlessness is the nature of the mind. Due to that, the hidden urge in the mind is always to find rest in Brahman. That is the only place where it can have a rest.

12a ii) There are two components to every thought, the Aham and the Idam Vrittis. The mind's built-in urge to remember Brahman could be the operation of the Aham Vrittior "I"-thought, which is the fixed component of every thought, and which always accompanies the variable Idam Vritti, the thought of the object.

12b iii) In the mind, our thoughts come and go like flashes of lightning. Every thought contains in it the stamp of Brahman as Consciousness, or the knowing principle. This happens moment to moment, unceasingly, in the normal course of the waking state.

The Flashing Thought – A Case of Illumination?

If thoughts can arise so rapidly, they can disappear just as rapidly. The disappearance of thought is necessary for illumination to occur. Thus illumination itself can be represented by the simile of the flashing of thought in the mind – it comes in a split second, as long as it takes for thought to flash out of one's mind! In meditation, the Brahmakara Vritti is the single thought by which we 'think' of Brahman. This is the closest that we can humanly

approach God with our mind. What happens thereafter is beautifully expressed by Guruji as follows:

“We can do that much with human effort. Thereafter, we just have to turn towards God, face Him in total surrender, pray for His Grace – and patiently WAIT. He will then *pull our mind* and get it absorbed in Him! Although the mind cannot reach It, mind can make itself available to be ‘pulled’ by Brahman. The mind then dissolves or disappears. In other words, we have to make the effort to withdraw from the world and face Brahman; then by His gracious compassion He draws us to Him!”

Guruji called this Adhyatma Upadesha. The Lord’s Grace brings the illumination.

Even in ordinary life we experience something that resembles the above. When the mind thinks continuously of one thing, and then suddenly lets it go, we experience a blankness of the mind upon which we are forced to pay attention. In respect to God, the Adhyatma Upadesha is very similar, though the feeling accompanying the latter is intense longing for God, whilst in the former it could be any intense attachment.

A DISCUSSION ON UPASANAS

The Place of Upasanas in Kena Upanishad

Verses 4.4 and 4.5 represent three Upasanas or methods of meditating on Brahman using similes. They are ways in which one can bring one’s mind to a focus. The Bhashya has something to say about the place of these Upasanas in this Upanishad:

Question: *Why are these Upasanas being given after Brahma Jnana, and not, as we would expect, before it?*

Answer: The reason given by Sri Shankaracharyaji is this: Yes, it is usual to first go through the Upasana stage and then, being prepared by it, take Brahma Jnana to move forward. However, there are all varieties of seekers. No fixed rule can be drafted for all cases. In the case of some seekers, when they are sitting with their Guru in the serene atmosphere of his Ashram, an intense longing arises in them for God. Of course, it may be temporary, but it is enough to enable the knowledge to flow in with little impediment from the mind.

In such a case, the Brahma Jnana comes without the prior preparation. Some time later, such a seeker may find the need to do the Upasana to help keep intact the knowledge he has received. This is a possibility, and explains the situation we find in *Kena Upanishad*.

Further to this Guruji adds: If Brahma Jnana has been given and the person finds it difficult to apply it to himself, then the Upasanas help him to practice it on “God’s Body”. That helps to take the seeker’s mind away from himself and to something outside his Ego.

The Principle Behind Upasana

Guruji took some time to explain the principle upon which the effectiveness of Upasana rests. Vedanta has always encouraged its students to practice Upasanas because it strengthens them (or raises their potential) to pursue Vedantic Sadhana with greater zeal. Upasanas have the ability to train the mental powers of the seeker so that he can do Vedantic Sadhana more efficiently.

Upasana, i.e. worship of Brahman by superimposing Him upon a form, is based on a scientific principle. Just as fire can be known only as fire, so also knowledge of an object

should be known as that object only. If we wish to know about form, the Pramana or proper means is the eye. If we wish to know a Mantra, the means is the ear. The senses can bring the information immediately. Using this principle, the Upasaka (one who practises Upasana) superimposes the qualities of Brahman on the idol he is worshipping, and raises his mind through such superimposition.

There are many known cases of devotees actually experiencing these qualities when engaged fervently in their devotions towards their idols. Guruji said that the scriptural rules regarding idols have to be followed rigidly to get the best results. There are codes in the Shastras of how idols should be made and then sanctified (*Praana Pratishtha*, “given life”). If followed correctly, idols can certainly have the necessary effect of cultivating the desired qualities in the Vedantic student.

An Important Summary of the Upasanas

To clarify the whole purpose of these verses, the Bhashya gives the following summary:

“In the macrocosmic context, Brahman has the attribute of revealing Itself quickly like lightning and winking. In the microcosmic context, It has the attribute of manifesting Itself simultaneously with all the modifications of the mind (thoughts). This is the instruction about Brahman through these analogies.”

Instead of using form as in idols, sound can be used as in the Name of the Lord. The following verse deals with using a Name to represent Brahman. It is another form of Upasana, the fourth one in Kena Upanishad.

Verse 4.6: “*Tadvanam*” – the Adorable Brahman

तद्ध तद्वनं नाम । तद्वनमित्युपासितव्यं ।
स य एतदेवं वेदाभि हैनं,
सर्वाणि भूतानि संवाञ्छन्ति ॥ ४.६ ॥

taddha tadvanam nāma tadvanamityupāsitavyam
sa ya ētadēvam vēdābhi hainam,
sarvāṇi bhūtāni samvāñchanti ॥ 4.6 ॥

1	<i>tat ha tadvanam naama,</i>	That (Brahman) is well-known as ‘ <i>Tadvanam</i> ’;
2	<i>tadvanam iti upaasitavyam;</i>	the name ‘ <i>Tadvanam</i> ’ is to be worshipped;
3	<i>sah yah etad evam vedaabhi ha enam,</i>	“ <i>This is He</i> ” – knowing Him to be thus,
4	<i>sarvaani bhootaani sam-vaanchhanti.</i>	All human beings <i>love Him</i> extremely.

1 Here is given one of the Upanishadic names for Brahman, for use in Upasana on Brahman. It is not so well-known in modern times. The name has an interesting origin. *Vanam* means “that which is most adorable”; *Tad* means “That”. What is it that is most

been given and some Upasanas have been given in this chapter. But as to details regarding facing difficulties along the way or even preparing oneself for this attainment nothing has been said. Hence, the student is justified in asking, “Is there anything more still to come?”

iii) **Independence of Brahma Vidya**: Yet another deeper meaning suggested by Sri Shankaracharyaji is that the student is asking the Teacher, “Is Brahma Vidya as you have explained independent of any other practice in taking us to the goal which is Brahman? Is it a theory which requires another practice or other practices to go with it?”

“Or, even if Brahma Vidya leads us to a result independently, is that result an end in itself, or is that only a stage towards a goal that is further than it? In other words, is there another stage after Brahma Vidya which will take us to the final goal?”

Considered this way, the question takes on the complexion of the true enquiring spirit which the Upanishads are known for. The search for knowledge in the Upanishadic Rishis is relentless. They were spiritual scientists who probed very deeply into their respective fields. Brahma Vidya, being the knowledge that takes us to the ultimate achievement of man, is certainly worthy of such in-depth probing.

Sri Shankaracharyaji thus teaches us that nothing in the Upanishads should be taken lightly. In order to extract the full meaning of terse verses such as these, a proper analysis has to be done to ascertain the parameters affected by the enquiry.

Verse 4.8: *The Edifice of Brahma Vidya*

तस्यै तपो दमः कर्मैति प्रतिष्ठा
वेदाः सर्वाङ्गानि सत्यमायतनम् ॥ ४.८ ॥

tasai tapō damah karmēti pratiṣṭhā vēdāḥ sarvāṅgāni
satyamāyatanam ॥ 4.8 ॥

1	<i>tasyai tapah damah</i>	<i>Of that (knowledge), austerity, self-restraint and</i>
2	<i>karma iti pratishthaa;</i>	<i>dedicated work – these are the <u>foundations</u>;</i>
3	<i>vedaah sarvaangaani,</i>	<i>the Vedas are its <u>limbs</u>;</i>
4	<i>satyam aayatanam.</i>	<i>and Truth is its <u>abode</u>.</i>

The Guru’s reply here justifies the deeper meanings of the previous verse. In accordance with the second of the above interpretations, the Guru answers that there are some practical aids to Brahma Vidya.

The implication is that *Brahman Vidya is indeed independent* of any other means. Knowledge is the only factor that will eliminate Ignorance. However, what is being acknowledged here is that in practice, it is greatly aided by three other factors:

i) **Tapas-Dama-Karma** – Foundation of Brahma Vidya:

1-2 Tapas is austerity, Dama is self-restraint, and Karma stands for dedicated work or Karma Yoga. Upon these three acting as the foundation, the edifice of Brahma Vidya can rest firmly. These three represent all the Niyamas. They may not be part of Brahma Vidya, but Brahma Vidya cannot stand without them.

Austerity provides the strength and capacity to the seeker; Dama frees him from the external temptations of sense objects so that he can devote himself one-pointedly to the spiritual pursuit; and Karma Yoga frees him from the bonds of past Karma which has to be worked out, i.e. it stands for the purification process that clears all Karmic debts.

ii) **Vedas – Support to Brahma Vidya:**

3 The true relationship between the “secret knowledge” of the Upanishads and the larger body of knowledge, namely the Vedas, is indicated. The Vedas are to be seen as the limbs of the Upanishads, feeding the Upanishads, as it were. Gururji called it the “Publicity Wing” of the Upanishads. The vast majority of people will find lots of interest in the Karma and Upasana Kandas (portions) of the Vedas, but these portions are only to draw people towards the Upanishads, which is what the Rishis really want to teach to mankind.

The Upanishads are the Brahma Vidya portion, whilst the rest of the Vedas are certainly accessories which lead people to Brahma Vidya in due course of time.

iii) **Truth – the Residence of Brahma Vidya:**

4 A sound foothold in morality is what Truth stands for. It includes all the Yamas, namely, Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. These mean non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and absence of greed or hoarding. Again, although these are not considered as part of Brahma Vidya, the latter has no ‘home’ without them.

Yet another way to view this verse is this:

**The SEED of Brahma Vidya needs the WARMTH of Tapas-Dama-Karma;
found in the WOMB of Truth; and nourished by the MOTHER of the Vedas;
to produce the CHILD of spiritual illumination!**

Verse 4.9: *The Phala Stuti – the Fruits of Brahma Vidya*

यो वा एतामेवं वेदापहत्य पाप्मानम्
अनन्ते स्वर्गे लोके ज्येये, प्रतितिष्ठति प्रतितिष्ठतीति ॥ ४.९ ॥

yō vā ētāmēvaṁ vēdāpahatya pāpmānam
anantē svargē lōkē jyēyē pratitiṣṭhati pratitiṣṭhateeti || 4.9 ||

1	<i>yo vaa etaam evam veda,</i>	<i>Verily, he who knows It thus,</i>
2	<i>apahatya paapmaanam;</i>	<i>all his sins are destroyed;</i>
3	<i>anante swarge loke jyeye,</i>	<i>And in the limitless, heavenly and highest realm,</i>
4	<i>prati-tishthati, prati-tishthateeti.</i>	<i>Is he established – yes, there he is certainly established!</i>

It is a formality in Upanishadic literature to always draw the attention of the reader to the fruits or benefits of what has been taught. This encourages the reader to begin the practice at once. It also serves as a tribute to the knowledge conveyed.

1 The fruits of Brahma Vidya are:

i) **The Destruction of Sin:**

2 Paapa is sin or demerit, caused by Ignorance. The process is:

- a. from Ignorance we get erroneous notions;
- b. from these notions arise false desires;
- c. desires cause us to do erroneous, selfish actions;
- d. such actions cause Paapa or sinful tendencies in us.

This entire chain is broken up and destroyed by Knowledge.

ii) **Limitlessness or Immortality:**

3a Attaining immortality means being freed from the cycle of births and deaths, or this endless worldly existence. This can go on forever if we do not acquire knowledge and come out of it. Brahma Vidya ends this chain of births and deaths.

iii) **The Attainment of the Highest Realm:**

3b The state of being in union with Brahman, our true identity, instead of being in ego-consciousness, is a state described as Absolute Bliss. In brief, this is due to the absence of all duality in that state. It is an independent state of happiness.

In the text the word **Swarga** is used. Usually that would be translated as “heaven”. However, that word is qualified by **Ananta**, meaning endless. Heaven is never endless; one always returns from there when merits are exhausted. Therefore, Ananta Swarga together can only be taken to mean Brahman.

4 To be established in this state, in the limitless, infinite Brahman, is the true Goal of this human birth. It is the greatest fruit of spiritual life.

Thus ends the Kena Upanishad, an Upanishad in which yet another aspect of Brahma Vidya is focused on – the aspect of attaining Brahman through beholding Him in every thought and object in the world. By focusing on the spiritual essence of all creation, one arrives at the Truth. This is the special message of Kena Upanishad.

॥ इति केनोपनिषदि चतुर्थः खण्डः ॥

|| iti kēnōpaniṣadi caturthaḥ khaṇḍaḥ ||

Thus Ends the Fourth Chapter of the Kena Upanishad

॥ इति केनोपनिषत् ॥

|| iti kēnōpaniṣat ||

Thus Ends the Kena Upanishad



॥ ॐ तत् सत् ॥

Om Tat Sat!
