

Katha Upanishad Section 1, Chapter 2

anyac chreyo anyad utaiva preyas te ubhe nānārthe puruṣam sinītaḥ/
tayoḥ śreya ādadānasya sādhu bhavati, hīyate'rthād ya u preyo vṛṇīte (1)

Yama speaks:

1. "One thing is the good and quite another thing is the pleasant, and both seize upon a man with different meanings. Of these whoso takes the good, it is well with him; he falls from the aim of life who chooses the pleasant.

śreyaś ca preyaś ca manuṣyam etas tau samparītya vivinakti dhīraḥ/
śreyo hi dhīro'bhīpreyaso vṛṇīte, preyo mando yoga-kṣemād vṛṇīte (2)

2. "The good and the pleasant come to a man and the thoughtful mind turns all around them and distinguishes. The wise chooses out the good from the pleasant, but the dull soul chooses the pleasant rather than the getting of his good and its having.

Vocabulary:

yogakṣema, m. sg. and pl. (in later language also m. du. and n. sg.) *the security or secure possession of what has been acquired, the keeping safe of property, welfare, prosperity, substance, livelihood* RV. &c. &c.

sa tvaṃ priyān priyarūpāmś ca kāmān abhidhyāyan naciketo `tyasrākṣīḥ/
naitām sṛṅkām vittamayīm avāpto yasyām majjanti bahavo manuṣyāḥ (3)

3. "And thou, O Nachiketas, hast looked close at the objects of desire, at pleasant things and beautiful, and thou hast cast them from thee: thou hast not entered into the net of riches in which many men sink to perdition.

dūram ete viparīte visūcī, avidyā yā ca vidyete jñātā/
vidyābhīpsinām naciketasam manye, na tvā kāmā bahavo lolupantaḥ (4)

4. "For far apart are these, opposite, divergent, the one that is known as the Ignorance and the other the Knowledge. But Nachiketas I deem truly desirous of the knowledge whom so many desirable things could not make to lust after them.

avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ, svayām dhīrāḥ paṇḍitam manyamānāḥ/
dandramyamāṇāḥ pariyanti mūdhāḥ, andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ
(5)

5. "They who dwell in the ignorance, within it, wise in their own wit and deeming themselves very learned, men bewildered are they who wander about round and round circling ¹ like blind men led by the blind.

na sāmparāyaḥ pratibhāti bālam pramādyantaṃ vitta-mohena mūḍham/
ayaṃ loko nāsti para iti mānī, punaḥ punar vaśam āpadyate me (6)

6. "The childish wit bewildered and drunken with the illusion of riches cannot open its eyes to see the passage to heaven: for he that thinks this world is and there is no other, comes again and again into Death's thralldom.

Vocabulary:

sāmparāya, mfn. (fr. sam-parāya) *required by necessity or calamity* VarYogay.; *relating to war or battle, warlike* MW.; *relating to the other world or to the future* ib.; m. *the passage from this world into another* Up. MBh. &c.; *need, distress, calamity* MBh.; *a helper or friend in need* ib. i , 723 (Nīlak.)

prati-bhāti, 2 P, *to shine upon* (acc.) Lāṭy.; *to come in sight, present or offer one's self to* (gen. or acc.) MBh. R. &c.; *to appear to the mind* (also with manasi), *flash upon the thoughts, become clear or manifest, occur to* (acc. or gen.) Up. MBh. &c

śravaṇyāpi bahubhir yo na labhyaḥ, śṛṅvanto'pi bahavo yaṃ na vidyuḥ/
āścaryo vaktā kuśalo'sya labdhā, āścaryo jñātā kuśalānuśiṣṭaḥ (7)

7. "He that is not easy even to be heard of by many, and even of those that have heard, they are many who have not known Him,—a miracle is the man that can speak of Him wisely or is skilful to win Him, and when one is found, a miracle is the listener who can know God even when taught of Him by the knower.

na nareṇāvareṇa prokta eṣa suvijñeyo bahudhā cintyamānaḥ/
ananya-prokte gatiḥ atra nāsty aṇīyān hy atarkyam aṇu-pramānāt (8)

8. "An inferior man cannot tell you of Him; for thus told thou canst not truly know Him, since He is thought of in many aspects. Yet unless told of Him by another thou canst not find thy way there to Him; for He is subtler than subtlety and that which logic cannot reach.

naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā, proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭha/
yāṃ tvam āpas satyadhṛtir batāsi tvādṛṅ no bhūyān naciketaḥ praṣṭā (9)

¹ Doubtful reading.

9. "This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning, O beloved Nachiketas; only when told thee by another it brings real knowledge,—the wisdom which thou hast gotten. Truly thou art steadfast in the Truth! Even such a questioner as thou art may I meet with always."

Vocabulary:

āpaneyā, 1) āpane-yā; 2) āpanīyā (misreading); 3) apa-nī (apaneyā, misreading in apa-);

preṣṭha, mfn. (superl. fr. priya) *dearest, most beloved or desired* RV.

jānāmyaham śevadhīrity anityam na hyadhruvaiḥ prāpyate hi dhruvaṃ tat/ tato mayā nāciketaś cito'gnir anityair dravyaiḥ prāptavān asmi nityam. (10)

Nachiketas speaks:

10. "I know of treasure that it is not for ever; for not by things unstable shall one attain That One which is stable; therefore I heaped the fire of Nachiketas, and by the sacrifice of transitory things I won the Eternal."

Vocabulary:

śevadhī, m. (L. also n.) 'treasure-receptacle', *wealth, treasure, jewel* RV. &c. &c.; *treasury, an inexhaustible quantity* (of good or evil); *one of the nine treasures of Kubera* MW.

kāmasyāptim jagataḥ pratiṣṭhām krator ānantyaṃ abhayasya pāram/ stoma- mahad uru-gāyam pratiṣṭhām dṛṣṭvā dhṛtyā dhīro naciketo 'tyasrākṣiḥ (11)

Yama speaks:

11. "When thou hast seen in thy grasp, O Nachiketas, the possession of desire and the firm foundation of this world and an infinity of power and the other shore of security and great praise and wide-moving firm foundation,² wise and strong in steadfastness thou didst cast these things from thee."

Vocabulary:

uru-gāya, mfn. *making large strides, wide-striding* [fr. gā Nir. ii , 7 also according to Sāy., 'hymned by many, much-praised', fr. gai] RV. AV. VS. TBr. &c.; (said of Indra, Vishnu, Soma, and the Aśvins) *spacious for walking upon, wide, broad* (as a way) AitBr.; n. **wide space, scope for movement** RV. ŚBr. KaṭhUp.

² Or, "and great fame chanted through widest regions,".

ānantya, mfn. (fr. an-anta Pāṇ. 5-4, 23) *infinite, eternal* MBh. &c.; *bestowing infinite reward* ĀrshBr.; n. *infinity, eternity* ŚBr. Mn. Yājñ. MBh. &c.; *immortality, future happiness* MBh. &c.

taṁ durdarśaṁ gūḍham anupraviṣṭaṁ guhāhitaṁ gahvareṣṭham purāṇam/
adhyātma-yogādhighamena devaṁ matvā dhīro harṣa-śokau jahāti. (12)

12. "Realising God by attainment to Him through spiritual Yoga, even the Ancient of Days who has entered deep into that which is hidden and is hard to see, for he is established in our secret being and lodged in the cavern heart of things, the wise and steadfast man casts far from him joy and sorrow.

etac chrutvā samparigṛhya martyaḥ pravṛhya dharmyam aṇum etam āpya/
sa modate modanīyaṁ hi labdhvā vivṛtaṁ sadma naciketasam manye (13)

13. "When mortal man has heard, when he has grasped, when he has forcefully separated the Righteous One from his body and won that subtle Being, then he has delight, for he has got that which one can indeed delight in. Verily I deem of Nachiketas as a house wide open."

anyatra dharmād anyatrādharmād anyatrāsmāt kṛtākṛtāt/
anyatra bhūtāc ca bhavyāc ca yat tat paśyasi tad vada (14)

Nachiketas speaks:

14. "Tell me of That which thou seest elsewhere than in virtue and elsewhere than in unrighteousness, elsewhere than in the created and the uncreated, elsewhere than in that which has been and that which shall be."

sarve vedā yat padam āmananti tapāṁsi sarvāṇi ca yad vadanti/
yad icchanto brahmacaryaṁ caranti, tat te padam saṁgrahaṇa bravīmi:
om ity etat (15)

Yama speaks:

15. "The seat and goal that all the Vedas glorify and which all austerities declare, for the desire of which men practice holy living, of That will I tell thee in brief compass. OM is that goal, O Nachiketas.

etaddhy evākṣaram brahma, etaddhy evākṣaram param/
etaddhy evākṣaram jñātvā yo yad icchati tasya tat (16)

16. "For this Syllable is Brahman, this Syllable is the Most High: this Syllable if one knows, whatsoever one shall desire, it is his.

etad ālambanaṃ śreṣṭham etad ālambanam param/
etad ālambanaṃ jñātvā brahma-loke mahīyate (17)

17. "This support is the best, this support is the highest, knowing this support one grows great in the world of the Brahman.

na jāyate mriyate vā vipaścin nāyaṃ kutaścin na babhūva kaścit/
ajo nityaḥ śāsvato'yam purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre (18)

18. "The Wise One is not born, neither does He die: He came not from anywhere, neither is He anyone: He is unborn, He is everlasting, He is ancient and sempiternal: He is not slain in the slaying of the body.

hantā cen manyate hantuṃ hataś cen manyate hatam/
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṃ hanti na hanyate (19)

19. "If the slayer think that he slays, if the slain think that he is slain, both of these have not the knowledge. This slays not, neither is He slain.

aṅor aṅīyān mahato mahīyān, ātmāsya jantor nihito guhāyām/
tam akratuḥ paśyati vīta-śoko dhātu-prasādān mahimānam ātmanaḥ (20)

20. "Finer than the fine, huger than the huge the Self hides in the secret heart of the creature: when a man strips himself of will and is weaned from sorrow, then he beholds Him; purified from the mental elements he sees the greatness of the Self-being.

āsīno dūraṃ vrajati, śayāno yāti sarvataḥ/
kastam madāmadaṃ devam mad anyo jñātum arharti (21)

21. "Seated He journeys far off, lying down He goes everywhere. Who other than I is fit to know God, even Him who is rapture and the transcendence of rapture?

aśarīraṃ śarīreṣu, anavastheṣv avasthitam/
mahāntaṃ vibhum ātmānam matvā dhīro na śocati (22)

22. "Realising the Bodiless in bodies, the Established in things unsettled, the Great and Omnipresent Self, the wise and steadfast soul grieves no longer.

nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo na medhayā, na bahunā śrutena/
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṃ svām (23)

23. "The Self is not to be won by eloquent teaching, nor by brain power, nor by much learning: but only he whom this Being chooses can win Him; for to him this Self bares His body.

nāvirato duścaritān nāśānto nāsamāhitah/
nāśānta-mānaso vāpi prajñānenainam āpnuyāt (24)

24. "None who has not ceased from doing evil, or who is not calm, or not concentrated in his being, or whose mind has not been tranquillised, can by wisdom attain to Him.

yasya brahma ca kṣatram ca ubhe bhavata odanaḥ/
mṛtyur yasyopasecanaḥ ka itthā veda yatra saḥ (25)

25. "He to whom the sages are as meat and heroes as food for his eating and Death is an ingredient of His banquet, how thus shall one know of Him where He abides?"