

**Kathopnishad, commentry by Swami Chinmayanand**  
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**Introduction:**

**Kathopnishad, expounds a great truth, very simply, as to what happens to the soul after death.** It is in form of dialogue between the God of death (Yama) and Naciketas . Kathopnishad is a unique upnishad which starts with a katha (a story) of a young boy who is ready to face the Lord of death in his quest for truth to **know what lies beyond death.**

He asks the very pertinent and philosophical **question,**

**I-i-20: There is that doubt “when a man is dead” some say ‘He exists’ and some again say ‘He does not’. This I should like to know, being taught by thee,** this is the third boon, that I ask

**Ans by Lord Yama:**

**I-ii-21** “On this point even the gods have doubted in olden times. Verily the **subject is very subtle,** it is not easy to understand”, O Naciketas do not question about state of soul after death

In short, this teaching is an extravaganza (spectacular entertainment) of spiritual knowledge and meditation that guides a student step by step to the glorious state of immortality, peace and bliss

**Upnishad means Brahma- vidya or knowledge of Brahman.**

Katha explains Brahma-vidya most clearly, most vividly, and repeats essentials without making subject complicated. **It describes the pure Atman, which is Brahman, the only reality.** Atman is one’s own self, it is already attained, its attainment is nothing but to know.

**Disqualification for knowledge of Atman:** One who is indulged always in vicious actions, and desirous of various sensual enjoyments, and who has got no concentrated mind, can not attain Atman through knowledge.

**When the five senses and mind become controlled and intellect also become steady, then that stage is the highest, and that is called ‘yoga’** by the great yogis of the past. There is no possibility of realizing the Atman without *vairagya* , and without concentration of mind.

Never be satisfied by simply attending the hearing the Vedantik discourses.

Intellectual knowledge of the Atman is only first stage. Try to reach that final stage by performing continuously severe spiritual sadhna-s

Section 1 indicates **special qualifications demanded of a perfect student** of Vedanta in his coming to experience intuitively the absolute truth as his own self

These qualification are :

**1.Vivek,**the capacity to discriminate, between the Real and unreal, i.e firm conviction of the intellect that Brahman alone is real and phenomenal world is unreal

**2.Vairagya,** is the spirit of detachment from the enjoyment of fruits of action here and hereafter

**3.Sat sampatti** (*shatsampatti*), the six ethical perfections are

**sama**(*sham*): is the peaceful state of mind when it rests constantly upon contemplation , freed from agitations by its desires for sense objects

**Dama** (*dam*): is the self control by steering sense organs away from their sense objects

**Uparati**: is the self withdrawal i.e. that condition of thought waves in which they are free from the influence of external objects

**Titiksa** : is the capacity of the mind to cheerfully endure all sorrows and sufferings like heat and cold, pleasures and pains etc, without grudging , without struggling for redress and without feeling helpless

**Sraddha**: is the healthy attempt at a clear intellectual appreciation of the exact of the pregnant words of the scriptures as well as advice of the preceptor(Guru i.e. teacher)

**Samadhana** : is the state of poise and tranquility , I.e. the single – pointedness of the mind gained as a result of constant contemplation on the supreme and divine

**4.Mumuksuttva**: is the impatient and burning desire for liberation i.e. to realize self within , which is the self in all

I-i-29: **Question by Naciketas**: “ O Death! Tell us that in which men have this doubt, and **which is about the great passing beyond** (i.e. supreme life after death). Naciketas does not choose any other boon but that (concerning the soul) of which the knowledge is hidden (mysterious)”

### Chapter1-Section 2:

#### **Lord Death’s teaching on immortality....the comprehension and apprehension of the Eternal Reality**

Yama said:

I-ii-1 “*One is good, while the other is pleasant. These two having different objectives chain ( bind ) a man. Blessed is who, between these two, chooses the good alone, but he who chooses what is pleasant, loses the true end (goal)*”

Explanation: The statement, “**both these chain a man**” is very significant from the highest stand point of supreme goal. The path of pleasant abducts the pursuer often into the dangerous jungles of crimes and sins thereby insuring him for a long lease of painful existence as conscious being born in the lower wombs (yonis)

Similarly, too, a conscious following of the path of Good, with a desire to enjoy the fruits thereof, would be demanding for our selves a transfer into softer planes of consciousness, the world of Gods, wherein such people will have to take embodiments to live through the fruits of their meritorious acts.

I-ii-2. “*Both the good and the pleasant approach the mortal man; the wise man examines them thoroughly and discriminates between the two; the wise man prefers the good to the pleasant, but the ignorant man chooses the pleasant for the sake of this body through avarice (extreme greed for wealth or material things) and attachment*

Expl: Life is a series of challenges. At each challenge two paths, as it were , are open to us to follow. On one side we are temptingly beckoned to playfully dance through a

seemingly well –lit *path of pleasant*, but the path ultimately leads to a dark cave of sorrow and endless death; and on the other side lies a quite un inviting path , ill used, winding and uphill, but that which ultimately leads us to the sunlit pasture lands and flowery-meadows of eternal living and happiness. This later path is called the path of Good

Man is his mind. As we cultivate and train the mind so shall we become. Tune our minds to the impermanent lower value of negativity and we become gross insensible two- legged animals. Train the mind to think and act in terms of the higher and permanent values of love, tolerance, mercy etc., and we get ourselves cultured and perfected to become signatories in our own appointments for the future.

There is no destiny beyond and above ourselves the architects of our future

**I-ii-3** O! Naciketas, thou hast renounced all these desires and pleasurable objects of oleasurable appearances, judging them by their real merits, thou has not accepted this road of wealthin which many mortals sink

I-ii-4. These two, ignorance and what is known as Knowledge, are wide apart and lead to different ends or goals, I believe Naciketas to be one who is desirous of knowledge , for, even many objects of pleasure have not shaken thee

Expl: The path of pleasant is the path of ignorance and the path of good is the path of knowledge

I-ii-5.The ignorant, who live in the midst of darkness but fancy themselves to be wise and learned, go round and round deluded in many crooked ways, Just as the blind being led by the blind

I-ii-6 The way to the hereafter is not apparent to the ignorant man who is childish, befooled by the glamour of wealth. “This is the only world,” he thinks “there is no other.” Thus he falls again and again under my sway ( i.e Lord Yama)

**Conclusion points 1-6:** The two paths: of knowledge and good; of ignorance and pleasure. Deluded by the passing joys men fall into cheap materialism and become slave to Death

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6. I-ii-9 .

explanation-The Atman is the Director of the intellect and the mind, it is obvious that these , being mere instruments, can not of themselves come to discover the energy behind them

Summary 7-11: The supreme reality is amazing and difficult to understand through study of books. A real guru is one with Brahman (who beholds no difference between one self and another). True disciple is one who has vairagya excelled the master

I-ii-12: The wise sage , renounces joy and sorrow by means of meditation on the inner Self , recognizes the ancient (puranam), who is difficult to be seen, is hidden in the cave of heart, dwells in the abyss (very deep hole), is lodged in the intelligence and seated amidst miserable surroundings indeed

Explanation-The Atman, is the spark of divine touch that vitalizes, controls and directs five sheaths ( i.e. gross body, vital air sheath, mind, intelligence, bliss sheath). As per Aryan concept, the cave of heart is seat of true Intelligence, and self realization is gained through a controlled application of a happy synthesis of both the head and the heart. The absolute can not be defined. "If God is defined God is defiled." God being infinite , the finite words of no language can express HIM.

The unborn, un decaying, deathless Atman can only be indicated by the word 'ancient or Puranam .The eye , being an instrument , can only see objects other than itself. In short, truth realization or Isvara darshan is not earned through the same process as those by which we see an object. Reality so deeply hidden can be experienced through Adhytma yoga- meditation on the inner self .

Meditation is the process by which a purified mind, and therefore, a highly concentrated mind, is brought to contemplate exclusively upon the nature of Atman through a total avoidance of the mind wandering into any other object of contemplation

8.I-ii-14, That is right, "I do not want , to know religious duties or merits or their results" said Naciketas **tell me that which is beyond Time and Causation** .Instruct me in the eternal Reality

question of naciketas:

"That which thou seest as other than virtue and vice- as right and 'unright', as other than cause and effect, as other than past and future-tell me that"

I-ii-15:Yama said:"The goal (word) which all Veda-s declare of ( praise ), which all penances proclaim , and wishing for which they lead the life of Brahmacharin, that goal (word) I will briefly tell thee. It is Om"

Briefly Yama says that the eternal absolute reality is fully symbolized in the word "Om"

Explanation: the word padam, though it looks so small, has 22 meanings such as , way, place, abode, state, foot-step, foot-prints, sign, word, a goal etc

I-ii-16. This word is verily Brahman alone, this word is also the highest , he who knows this word obtains verily, whatever( of the two) he desires

I-ii-18 & 19: “The intelligent Atman is not born, nor does He die. He did not spring from any thing, and nothing sprang from him. This unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient , is not slain even when the body is destroyed”

If the slayer thinks “I slay,” and if the slain thinks , “I am slain” then both of them do not know well. This slays not nor is This slain

Explanation: The teacher is directly hinting at the divine spark that presides over the matter envelopments constituting our body, mind and intellect. All perishable finite things undergo modifications namely, birth, growth, disease, decay and death. The pot maker makes a pot. The pot is born. The unborn pot space knows no death. Similarly, the self or the Truth is never born and naturally never dies. The false ego-centric, through vulgar meditations and ignorant thinking, has moulded out a perishable body- mind and intellect equipment in which all pervading , eternal truth seems to be confined

10. I-ii-20: The Atman is subtler than the subtlest, and greater than the greatest, is seated in the cavity of heart of each living being. He , who is free from willing and wishing (desireless), with his mind and senses composed, beholds the majesty of the Self and becomes free from sorrow

I-ii-22. The wise man, who knows Atman as bodiless, seated firmly in perishable bodies, great and all pervading, does never grieve

I-ii-23. this Atman can not be attained by the study of Vedas nor by intelligence, not by much hearing. It is gained by him who chooses (prays to) this (Atman) alone. To him this Atman reveals its true nature

I-ii-24. But he who has not turned away from bad conduct, whose senses are not subdued, whose mind is not pacified, can never obtain Atman by knowledge

Summary 21-25: how then realize self; intellectually, scholarship , Erudition (having knowledge or learning), Study, all these by themselves in vain ( without success).But to the purified , tranquil, collected soul, the supreme soul is realizable in intimate experience. All other, irrespective of their position or status, are food for death

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### Section III:

The parable ( simple story used to illustrate moral or spiritual lesson) of chariot teaching the Adhyatma Yoga- yoking of the Individual Soul and the Supreme Soul.

In this section , we have famous and immortal metaphor of the chariot explaining the Atman and the Body

In the chariot sits the driver and the owner .

In the body stays the Parmatman , the self **and** the jivatman, the ego.

**The Jivatman = atman (self) and the Jiva (Ego)**

and the entire technique of Adhyatma Yoga is explained. It is declared 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. The shadow or reflection has no independent existence of its own . It exists only with reference to the light or the illuminated object.

The individual in his extrovert ness gazing on outwardly, views this shadow and identifies himself with it. The shadow represents the (i-ego), the samsarin , who suffers the mortal agonies of his physical pains, mental tortures, intellectual failures and spiritual bankruptcy. This shadow is called Jivatman and the light that causes it, the ‘I’ –Ego, the God Principle in us, is called Paramatman

I-iii-1: The two who enjoy the fruits of their good works being seated in the cavity of the heart, the Seat of the Supreme , the knowers of Brahmn call them shadow and light.....

Explanation- The fruits of action are enjoyed only by the individual soul (jivatmana), the “i-ego”. Dual number is used in the shlok. Because of the seeming co-existence of the Jivatman and the paramatman, the ‘false-i’ and ‘Real-I’, the delusory enjoyment of the fruits of actions, which is the lot of Jivatman , is coupled with the Witnessing-Eternal Light of intelligence, the Paramatman

I-iii-3,: Know the Atman as the lord of the chariot, who sits with in it and the body as the chariot. Know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as, verily (beyond doubt), the reins ( *string-lagam*)

I-iii-4: The sense (and the instincts ) they say , are the horses, and their roads are sense objects. The wise call Him the enjoyer (when he is ) united with the body, the sense and the mind.

Explanation-Without sense organs such as the ear, the eyes, the nose, the tongue and the skin, the body- chariot can not move. There is a purpose behind our taking up the bodies and coming here to live this mortal

existence. The individual ego centers take their individual embodiments and come to live under a set of circumstances, during fixed periods of time, to earn the experiences of living that fixed life. If our indriya-s are all shut up, the world outside rolls into nothingness so far as we are concerned. For example, in our deep sleep state we are not aware of the outer world at all, because, none of our sense organs functions for us during our deep sleep state. The supreme intelligence (in the mental lake), as conditioned by the body and mind is ego- centre (Jiva), which seems to enjoy and suffer the passing circumstances of this evanescent (tending to vanish like vapour) life, called samsara

I-iii-6: But he who has the right understanding, and has a mind always controlled, his senses are always controllable as the good horses of the charioteer

I-iii-7: And he who is devoid of proper understanding, thoughtlessness, and always impure, never attains that goal and gets into the round of birth and deaths

I-iii-8. But he who is intelligent, ever –pure and with the mind controlled, verily reaches that goal from whence none is born again

I-iii-9. The man who has Intelligence for his charioteer and the mind as the (well controlled) rein- he attains the end of the journey, that supreme place of Visnu (all pervading Atmana)

10. Beyond the senses are the sense-objects; beyond these objects is the mind; beyond the mind is the intellect; and beyond the intellect is the great self (Antahkaran or bliss sheath or deep sleep – state –of –consciousness)

11. Beyond the great (Mahat) is the unmanifested (Avyaktam). Beyond the Avyaktam (Prakrti) is the Purusa; beyond Purusa there is nothing; that is the end; that is the highest goal

12. The atman hidden in all beings reveals (itself) not (to all), but is seen (only) by seers of the subtle (vision) through sharp and subtle intellect

13. Let the wise sink his speech into the mind, the mind into the intellect and the intellect into the great Atman and the great Atman into the Peaceful Atman

14. **Arise, awake;** having reached the great (teachers) learn (realize that Atman). Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, difficult to cross and hard to tread- thus say the wise

15. He, who has realized that (Atman) which is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, and also without taste, without smell, without beginning, without end, beyond the Mahat (great), eternal and unchanging, is freed from the jaws of death

Explanation: Lord Death refuses to give Naciketa a direct reply in parliamentary yes or no-style, and thus skeptics and low atheists, not having the intellectual capacity of understanding the correct import of the very method of religion and religious teachings, quote such instances and cry that even the greatest of gurus have only succeeded in evading the questions directly asked by the ignorant seekers.

It was under a similar awkward situation that lord Buddha also had to keep mum when his disciples pointedly asked him if there was a God or not. Though Lord death is not directly answering his disciple , the answer is there in his words for the wise and the intelligent to grasp intuitively

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### **Chapter II, Section IV:**

The call of inner vision, leading to the recognition and attainment of Unity

II-iv-1: The self –existent (Brahma) created the senses with out going tendencies; therefore , man beholds the external universe and not he internal Self (Atman). But only some wise man desirous of immortality, with eyes averted (turned within and with his senses turned away) from sensual objects, sees the Atman within

Explanation: Those who are practicing higher Yoga of meditation, the sense organs are a curse, in as much as they refuse to be easily turned within . And without taking, at least once , an inward plunge , it is impossible for the *indriya-s* to cognize the divinity which is substratum every where for all objects

II-iv-2 ; The ignorant(child like) pursue the external pleasures(and so) they fall into snares of the widespread death. But the wise do not desire (anything)in this world, having known what is eternally immortal in the midst of all non-eternals

Explanation: The forgetfulness of our divine nature is Ignorance, it manifests itself in the mental pain as desires.

II-iv-3: That Atman by which man cognizes form, taste, smell, sounds, and the sexual joys...what is there unknowable to that Atman in this world? This is verily that (Atman thou hast wanted to know)

Explanation: That power with in each one of us, that is seer behind our eyes, the listener behind our ears, the smeller behind the nose, the taster in tongue, and he feeler in the skin, is the soul of man, the Atman, the Self. The Atman being thus the vital intelligence that presides over all sense instruments, since all our knowledge regarding the world of objects is only through the report of these five great agents. The life centre in us that controls and directs all our physical, mental and intellectual activities is the divine spark

of truth , the Self. It being eternal and infinite in its nature, It must necessarily be beyond the comprehension of language to to define It as such.

II-iv-4. “He, by whom the end of dream as well as waking is perceived- that all pervading real self- I am.” Knowing this the wise greaves not.

Expl: One and the same Consciousness illuminates for us not only the world of our waking state but it also lights up for us the experiences of our dream state. Lord Death explains that the dream world is also illuminated for us by the light of the same divine Intelligence that presides in us as our Real Nature. The goal of life , the highest achievement of man, is to get him self detached from false identifications of his body, mind and intellect, and come to rediscover himself to be nothing other than divine spark

II-iv-5: He who knows this Atman, the enjoyer of honey, the sustainer of life and the lord of the past and future, as very near....he fears no more thereafter. This is verily Ehat

Explanation: a perfected soul has reached the State of Desirelessness, he has no attachments with any particular objects of the world, and, naturally, there cannot be in him any sense of fear. He has no attachments even with his body

Summary 3-5: The Self is here indicated as the Principle of Knowledge because of which all knowledge of perceptions and experiences is possible. Knowing meaning realizing this Self, **the knower escapes all fears**

**II-iv-9:** And that , from which the sun rises, and into which it merges, on that, all the Devata-s depend and no one goes beyond. This is indeed That.

Explanation: The sense organ, ear, is declared to be presided over by Akash(space), similarly the instrument eye to be presided over by the visible light, the Sun. Thus the mantra clearly declares that all the five great elements depend entirely upon the Supreme Self , the pure existence. The deities of the five sense organs , “the Gods” depend upon the supreme Reality, the Pure Consciousness, as the spokes of wheel upon the hub

**II-iv-6-9 summary:** Shows that the one Lord who entered the human heart as the Self, is also the Universal self, from which all creation has sprung

**II-iv-10:** What is indeed here(visible as world) the same is there(invisible as Brahman); and what is there, the same is here. He proceeds from death to death who beholds here difference (between Brahman and the world)

Explanation: If the statement is beyond grasp of our understanding, it is only because the statement relates itself to a standpoint which is too high for our mind and intellect to soar up in their fat grossness

**II-iv-11:** By mind alone could this (Brahman) be obtained (realized); then there is no difference here at all. He, who sees any difference , goes from death to death

Explanation: **Meditation** is the process by which the mind soaring over the summit of spiritual enquiries loses itself into nothingness. The mind rises up up to a new faculty called intuition, which is the instrument with which the seeker ultimately cognizes the Self, then there is no difference here at all

**II-iv-12:** The person (Purusa) of the size of a thumb, resides in the middle of the body. Lord of the past and the future, and henceforward (after knowing Him) fears no more. This is indeed That

II-iv-13: That person , of the size of thumb, is like flame without smoke, lord of the past and future. He alone is even today , and will verily tomorrow. This is verily That

12-13 summary: the self for purpose of meditation for an early seeker, is described as a “thumb-sized person” dwelling in the heart. It is only to provide the meditator with a prop to develop his concentration during the early stages of his practices. When a sadhak has developed his power of concentration , he enters , by degrees, into higher stages of meditation

II-iv-14: Just as water , rained on (high) mountain ridges, runs down the rock scattering on all sides, so does he, who beholds the attributes as different, runs after them only(at all times)

Explanation: the supreme wisdom and power which is in man gets scattered and flows in a thousand dripping rivulets down the Mount of Ignorance to get itself lost in its downward transit. If only we could conserve the total water fall on the top of hill with a powerful and well engineered dam and direct the flow of water through one single determined channel, we could get out of it a lot of useful work. Similarly , if man could, through his discrimination , control wasteful flow of energy , conserve it and direct it intelligently into the positive channels of right living and high thinking, he could easily get out of this very same inner equipment, the power and glory of a God upon this earth

II-iv-15: as pure water poured into pure water becomes the same only , so becomes the Atman of the thinker(sage) who knows this, (Unity of the Atman)O! Gautam

14-15summary: The perfect identity of the individual self with the universal self is emphasized through metaphors. Perception of this unity leads to the one which is beyond death. Man minus his ego; God plus ego is man is God

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### **Chapter 2-Section V:**

The inner soul-immanent (philosophy of mental act: occurring entirely within the mind) yet transcendent (Beyond and outside range of human experience or understanding)

II-v-1: **This body of eleven gates** is indeed of the unborn even minded Self. Having meditated upon this (the seeker) grieves not and the liberated one is ever liberated indeed. This is verily (beyond doubt) That

Explanation: City of eleven gates- The body with its eleven opening-gates is meant here by the city. We have altogether seven openings in head, three openings in the trunk and eleventh one is the subtle aperture called brahma-randhra, at the crown of the head, famous in yoga- sastra .

The comparison of the body with a city is quite appropriate in as much as we have gates, gate keepers, their controllers, a palace and a king, under whose order all the servants carry out their appointed duties very systematically and very regularly, both in the city as well as in the body. The sense openings are the gates; the presiding deities are the gate keepers; the mind, the controller; and the Purusa or Atman, the king

II-v-2: explanation: Purus in its wider aspect as Lordly one presiding over all functions in every form. List of living organisms and forms in Universe:

Abja (born in water) in the form of Konch, mother of pearl, shell, fish, insects, all aquatic animals. Goja (born of the earth) in form of corns, grains, plants, trees, herbs etc. Adrija (born of mountains) in form of rivers, springs, rivulets

II-v-3: He (Brahman) sends the prana upward and throws the Apana downward. All Deva-s worship , That Adorable One, seated in the centre

Explanation: He, the Atman , is the one who maintains the flow of the different vital airs through our body and maintains it alive and active its death . there are five principal kinds of vital energy, because of which the physical body functions.

The five principal kinds of prana-s are called 1. prana, when cosmic power manifests through the work of the lungs and respiratory organs; 2. Apana, when it works in colon and bladders; 3 .samana, when it works through the digestive system 4. dana, when it works through larynx and produces voice and 5. Vyana, when it expresses through the blood circulation

II-v-4: When this Atman, who dwells in the body, is separated from the body, He is freed from this body, what remains here (in this body) ? This verily (beyond doubt) is That

Explanation: when the Atman departs from a body , all activities of that physical body seemingly depart with the Atman. On death there remains practically nothing upon which we may glorify that empty shell, the dead body!!

II-v-5: Not by Prana , not by Apana, does any mortal live; but it is by some other, on which these two depend, that men live

Explanation: The indriya-s , the limbs of the body, the mind and intellect are all parts of the body assembly which exists only for the sake of Purus in it. The body in itself has no freedom to act as it lasts, while the Purusa can walk out of in all freedom at the time of death

II-v-6: Well now, O! Gautam, I will explain thee the mysterious ancient Brahman, and (also) **what happens to the soul after death**

Explanation: In this particular mantra , the word Atman is used to the ego center and not the Self. When the body perishes , the Divine spark, or the life center , that presided over the body while it lived, undergoes no change but eternally remains the same. The death and the consequent departure from the body at the time of death , and feeling of having entered a new form at the time of birth, are both delusory ideas of ego-centre . The supreme self reflected in the mind –intellect is, the jiva or ego. This ego-idea leaves its ideas of ‘i-ness’ and ‘my-ness’ with the dead body, each ego –centre comes to develop its sense of ownership and possession with another body form. Lord Yama will explain to us what happens to the jiva with all vanities of “i-ness” and “my-ness”, when t leaves one ody to perish and enters the womb to take another birth

II-v-7: Some souls enter the womb to have a body, others go to the plants just according to their work and according to their knowledge

Explanation: Te ego-centre, after death of the body, remains intact in the form of an “idea” until it comes again to fix the relationship with another form. That which helps the “floating –ego” to choose its next rendezvous (a meeting planned at a certain time and place or tryst) is the sum total of the reaping it has to make with “new form” in the new field of things and circumstances

II-v-8: The Purusa who remains awake shaping (all sorts of) objects of desires (into dreams) even while we asleep – verily, that is pure, the Brhaman, and that is immortal. In that rests all the worlds and none can transcend That. This verily is That (which you asked for)

Explanation: The intelligence, that reigns within us , illuminates for us the world of waking state, the world of dream state and that of the sleep state, without itself ever undergoing any of these experiences

Summary 1-8: The Lord of the city-of –body is also immanent (philosophy of mental act: occurring entirely within the mind) Lord of the world. He is eternal Brahman as well as the Atman. He is subject to transmigration determined by the jnana and karma of the equipments through which He expresses Himself

II-v-9: Just as fire, after it has entered the world, though one, assumes different forms according to the shape it enters, so does the eternal Atman, of all living beings, though one, takes a form according to each shape it enters and also (in itself it exists) beyond them

Explanation: the electric current that passes through a fan, a bulb, a refrigerator and a heater is certainly the same, although, because of difference in instruments through which it passes, it manifests itself differently as air, light, cold, heat etc. The Atma-tattva, similarly remains the same, in spite of the different make-up of the different minds that It comes to function through

II-v-10: Just as air, after it has entered the world, though one, assumes different forms, according to the shape it enters, so the internal atman of all living beings, though one, assumes forms, according to each shape it enters, and (in itself it exists) beyond them (also)

Explanation: Whether it be a horse or man or a fig tree, all live on same vital air, oxygen

II-v-11: just as the Sun, the eye of the whole world is not contaminated by the defects of the external eye, so being the Innermost essence in all beings, Atman is not contaminated by external sorrows of the world

Explanation: Atma is not tainted by the miseries of the world, arising from the kama and karma of the ego-centric individuals living the delusions of their own ignorance

9-11 summary: he is the inner self of all beings. This antaratman- like air and fire –is immanent “enwrapped in every form”. He is also at once transcendental: none can fully describe him. Like Sun, he, while illuminating all, is not touched by the imperfections of any

II-v-12: (That) One (supreme) ruler, the soul of all beings, who makes His one manifold...those wise men, who perceive him as existing in their own Self, to them belongs eternal happiness, and to none else.

Explanation: The self is source of the light which, at the interception of the mental prism, seemingly disperses Itself into the variegated band of innumerable names and forms, which constitute the jagat. Wise men who have come to realize their self, are the real men of bliss and not others

II-v-13: He, the eternal among non eternal, the Intelligence in the intelligent, who, though one, fulfills the desires of many...those wise men who perceive Him as dwelling in their own Self, to them belongs Eternal Peace and to none else

II-v-14: They (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?”

Summary 12-14: the supreme eternal Truth reveals within, as the inner Self , and the wise realizing It in his heart attains enduring peace and bliss. How is such a vision possible: self is all knowledge and as such to reach It , is to know It-experience it

II-v-15: The sun does not shine there, nor does the moon, nor do the stars, nor the lightning , and much less the fire. When He shines , everything shines after him, by His light, all these shine

Expl; shows how is the existence principle that lends, to every other object, their existing illumination. So no other 'light' can illuminate the light, in all lights

### **Section VI:**

#### **The path of Adhyatma Yoga further elaborated**

II-vi-1: This is the ancient Asvattha-tree (pipal tree) whose roots are above and branches (spread ) below. That is verily the Pure, that is Brahman, and that is also called the Immortal. In that rest all the worlds, and none can transcend It. Verily this is That

Explanation: The Upanishad wants us to understand only the simple fact that the finite world , the Asvatthah, is itself rooted in Truth and maintains itself from the nourishment drawn from the Absolute Truth.

II-vi-2; This whole universe evolved from the Brahman, moves (vibrates) in the prana (in the highest Brahman).The Brahman is a great terror, like an uplifted thunderbolt. Those who know this become immortal

Explanation: there is a immutable law that governs the movement of the stars, planets etc. Every thing is schedule to happen according to some strict commands. This mantra , on the whole , indicates that the source of all manifestations is not an inert non existencebut the ultimate source of all lives is an active and dynamicexistence, which, in its nature, is pure Intelligence Itself

II-vi-3: For fear of Him the Fire burns; for fear of Him shines the sun; for fear of Him do Indra, vayu and death , the fifth, proceed (with their respective functions)

Explanation: had it not been for this eternal fear for the supreme authority of the transcendental Reality, we could not have any science text books, as for that matter , life itself would have been impossible. Sun, Fire, Indra, Vayu and death are all working with a beautiful team spirit

Summary 1-3: The famous comparison of the world with the papal tree. The roots of the Brahman – the unseen nourisherand sustainer of the phenomenal world

II-vi-4: If here – in this life –one is able to comprehend Him (Brahman) before death of the body, (he will be liberated from the bondage of the world), if not, then one has to take a body (again) in the worlds of creation  
Explanation: having woken up from the dream of ego centric agonies into the waking state of the knowledge of the Self , the God man will not and need no more repeat the to and fro –swinging between the arcs of birth and death

II-vi-5: (Brahman is seen) in the Self as (one sees oneself) in the mirror; in the world of manes(fore fathers), as (one perceives one self) in dream; in the world of Gandharva-s (divine nymphs) as (one's reflection) as is seen in the water ; and in the world of Brahman, (as distinctly separated) as light and shade

Explanation: Just as our experiences of the waking world are not as our experiences in dream world, so too, there can be other planes of consciousness where in different degrees of experiences can be our lot. Thus we have the *pitralok (the world of manes)* where the individual as mind-and-intellect-equipment and not a physical body.naturally , the experiences gained by the subtle body must be different from our own experiences here, inasmuch the body with its demands, cravings, pains and joys will colour our experiences to give us , on the whole, a different life

II-vi-6: A wise man knowing separateness of the existence of senses and their appearance and disappearance to be other than the self, grieves no more for them

Explanation: All our sorrows in life are due to lending our self to the misunderstanding that we are ego-center and thereby becoming victims to all our demands, intellectual assertions and sense appetites

II-vi-7: Beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect, beyond the intellect is the real Atman, superior to great Atman is the unmanifest (Prakrti)

II-vi-8: and verily beyond un manifest (Prakrti) is the all pervading Purusa devoid of all distinctive marks, knowing whom the creature (the knower) is emancipated and attains immortality

Explanation: The purusa or the subtlest of the subtle factor in us , is explained here as vyapak(all pervading) and alinga( without distinctive characteristics, properties etc)

Summary 6-8: In this onward pilgrimage , the seeker crosses the senses and instincts, mind, reason , the great soul, the un manifest to reach the innermost essence –the Purusa-the self. This ends the liberating vision, the attainment of immortality

II-vi-9: His form is not to be seen .No one beholds Him with the eye. By controlling the mind, by the intellect and incessant meditation He is revealed. Those who this (Brahman) become Immortal

Explanation: This mantra is explaining to us the last leap with which the seeker , during his meditations, crosses over the frontiers of his mind and intellect and reaches the Land of Truth. When the mind is silent , the intellect gains an inner peace. An intellect , thus , in complete peace itself dies away or disappears leaving behind , a newly born potency called ‘intuition’. It is this intuition that a seeker comes to realize his Self. Intuition is nothing but “the capacity to know the knowledge”, the Self becoming aware of Itself

II-vi-10: When the five organs of knowledge are at rest together with the mind, and when the intellect ceases functioning (becomes calm) that state they call the highest

Explanation: it is state of *Samadhi*. When the five sense organs are perfectly controlled , naturally mind is devoid of almost 90% of its activities. What little field , the mind has now to get itself agitated in, is constituted of its stored away memories and self created imaginations. When even these agitations are controlled , we reach the state explained in the mantra, the state when the sense organs are at rest along with mind. Even this is not sufficient. For, at this state, the intellect will be throbbing, though of course it will be very feeble, with its own ideas and ideals

II-vi-11: The firm control of the senses they regard as Yoga. Then the yogin becomes free from all vagaries of the mind; for the Yoga is subject to growth and decay

II-vi-12: (The self ) can not be reached by speech ,nor by mind, or nor by the eye. How can it be realized otherwise than from those who say, that “It exists”

II-vi-13: the self is (first) to be realized as existing and (then ) as It really is. Of these (aspects), the real nature of the Self that has been known as merely existing, becomes evident to the seeker

Summary 9-13: The vision of the Self is not an outward possessing (gaining) but an inward discovery (realizing). The sense and the mind withdrawn from their objects, the reason ends its striving, at that moment, when all our powers are thus held in tranquil control, we completely turn within and realize the Self in us

II-vi-14: When all desires that dwell in the heart are destroyed, then the mortal becomes immortal, and he attains Brahman even here

II-vi-15. when all knots of the heart are destroyed here (even while a man is alive ), then the mortal becomes immortal. This much alone is the instruction (of all Upanishad-s)

Explanation: Hridayagranthi (the knots of the heart)- This is a philosophical concept entertained by the Vedantins. According to them the avidya (nescience-Ignorance (especially of orthodox beliefs) ), meaning, the self forgetfulness of man of his true eternal nature, is the cause of all his continued delusions and super impositions. Thus, avidya in the spiritual plane is itself the 'desire' in the mental plane, which , again, are themselves modified into 'action' in the outer world of objects."Every action has its reaction" and thus, in order to reap the reactions, the egocenters escape from their present forms through the backdoor of death, only to re enter in newer forms through the front gates of birth! The bonds of avidya(nescience),kama(desire) and karma(action) are together called the knots of the heart in vedantik philosophy

Summary 14-15: Thus all knots of the heart are broken asunder, and the seeker desiring out the self , rediscovers the Self not in him but the Self that is his entire and only nature

II-vi-16: Hundred and one are the nerves of the heart; of them one (sushumna ) penetrates the crown of the head. Going upwards through that (nerve) one attains Immortality. The others (departed) lead differently  
Explanation: a cumbersome and exhaustive explanation of this mantra is required, we may by pass it .

II-vi-17: he Purusa of the size of a thumb, the Inner Self, is ever seated in the heart of all living beings. One should draw Him out from one's own body with steadiness, as one draws the pith (central stalk) from a reed (rush grass) . Know Him as pure , the Immortal, yes , know Him as the pure immortal

II-vi-18: naciketas, 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; and so will attain any other too who knows thus the Inner self

### **Prayer in the end and start of study by the teacher and disciple:**

Let him protect us both. May He bless us with bliss of knowledge . Let us exert together. May what we study, be well studied, may we not hate (quarrel with) each other. Om Peace! Peace!! Peace!!!

