



English translation of Kena Upanishad

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English translation of **Kena Upanishad**

by
Swami Nikhilananda

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Kena Upanishad

Chapter I

1

The disciple asked: Om. By whose will directed does the mind proceed to its object? At whose command does the prana, the foremost, do its duty? At whose will do men utter speech? Who is the god that directs the eyes and ears?

2

The teacher replied: It is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of speech, the Life of life, and the Eye of the eye. Having detached the Self from the sense-organs and renounced the world, the Wise attain to Immortality.

3-4

The eye does not go thither, nor speech, nor the mind. We do not know It; we do not understand how anyone can teach It. It is different from the known; It is above the unknown. Thus we have heard from the preceptors of old who taught It to us.

5

That which cannot be expressed by speech, but by which speech is expressed—That alone know as Brahman, and not that which people here worship.

6

That which cannot be apprehended by the mind, but by which, they say, the mind is apprehended—That alone know as Brahman, and not that which people here worship.

7

That which cannot be perceived by the eye, but by which the eye is perceived—That alone know as Brahman, and not that which people here worship.

8

That which cannot be heard by the ear, but by which the hearing is perceived—That alone know as Brahman, and not that which people here worship.

9

That which cannot be smelt by the breath, but by which the breath smells an object—That alone know as Brahman, and not that which people here worship.

Chapter II

1

The teacher said: If you think: "I know Brahman well," then surely you know but little of Its form; you know only Its form as conditioned by man or by the gods. Therefore Brahman, even now, is worthy of your inquiry.

2

The disciple said: I think I know Brahman.

The disciple said: I do not think I know It well, nor do I think I do not know It. He among us who knows the meaning of "Neither do I not know, nor do I know"—knows Brahman.

3

He by whom Brahman is not known, knows It; he by whom It is known, knows It not. It is not known by those who know It; It is known by those who do not know It.

4

Brahman is known when It is realised in every state of mind; for by such Knowledge one attains Immortality. By Atman one obtains strength; by Knowledge, Immortality

5

If a man knows Atman here, he then attains the true goal of life. If he does not know It here, a great destruction awaits him. Having realised the Self in every being, the wise relinquish the world and become immortal.

Chapter III

1

Brahman, according to the story, obtained a victory for the gods; and by that victory of Brahman the gods became elated. They said to themselves: "Verily, this victory is ours; verily, this glory is ours only."

2

Brahman, to be sure, understood it all and appeared before them. But they did not know who that adorable Spirit was.

3–6

They said to Agni (Fire): "O Agni! Find out who this great Spirit is." "Yes," he said, and hastened to It. Brahman asked him: "Who are you?" He replied: "I am known as Agni; I am also called Jataveda." Brahman said: "What power is in you, who are so well known?" Fire replied: "I can burn all—whatever there is on earth." Brahman put a straw before him and said: "Burn this." He rushed toward it with all his ardour but could not burn it. Then he returned from the Spirit and said to the gods: "I could not find out who this Spirit is,"

7–10

Then they said to Vayu (Air): "O Vayu! Find out who this great Spirit is." "Yes," he said, and hastened to It. Brahman asked him: "Who are you?" He replied "I am known as Vayu; I am also called Matarisva." Brahman said: "What power is in you, who are so well known?" Vayu replied: "I can carry off all—whatever there is on earth." Brahman put a straw before him and said: "Carry this." He rushed toward it with all his ardour but could not move it. Then he returned from the Spirit and said to the gods: "I could not find out who this Spirit is,"

11–12

Then the gods said to Indra: "O Maghavan! Find out who this great Spirit is." "Yes," he said

and hastened to It. But the Spirit disappeared from him. Then Indra beheld in that very region of the sky a Woman highly adorned. She was Uma, the daughter of the Himalayas. He approached Her and said: "Who is this great Spirit?"

Chapter IV

1

She replied: "It is, indeed, Brahman. Through the victory of Brahman alone have you attained glory." After that Indra understood that It was Brahman.

2

Since they approached very near Brahman and were the first to know that It was Brahman, these devas, namely, Agni, Vayu, and Indra, excelled the other gods.

3

Since Indra approached Brahman nearest, and since he was the first to know that It was Brahman, Indra excelled the other gods.

4

This is the instruction about Brahman with regard to the gods: It is like a flash of lightning; It is like a wink of the eye.

5

Now the instruction about Brahman with regard to the individual self: The mind, as it were, goes to Brahman. The seeker, by means of the mind, communes with It intimately again and again. This should be the volition of his mind.

6

That Brahman is called Tadvana, the Adorable of all; It should be worshipped by the name of Tadvana. All creatures desire him who worships Brahman thus.

7

The disciple said; 'Teach me, sir, the Upanishad.'

The preceptor replied: "I have already told you the Upanishad. I have certainly told you the Upanishad about Brahman."

8

Austerities, self-restraint, and sacrificial rites are Its feet, and the Vedas are all Its limbs. Truth is Its abode.

9

He who thus knows this Upanishad shakes off all sins and becomes firmly established in the infinite and the highest Heaven, yea, the highest Heaven.

— Kena Upanishad —