

तं दुर्दर्शं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं
गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणम् ।
अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं
मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥१२॥

एतच्छ्रुत्वा संपरिगृह्य मर्त्यः
प्रवृह्य धर्म्यमणुमेतमाप्य¹ ।
स मोदते मोदनीयं हि लब्ध्वा
विवृतं सद्म नचिकेतसं मन्ये² ॥१३॥

अन्यत्र धर्मादन्यत्राधर्माद्¹ अन्यत्रास्मात्कृताकृतात् ।
अन्यत्र भूताच्च² भव्याच्च यत्तत्पश्यसि तद्वद ॥१४॥

सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति
तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद्वदन्ति¹ ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति
तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीमि ॥

ओमित्येतत् ॥१५॥

एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम् ।
एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ॥१६॥

एतदालम्बनं श्रेष्ठमेतदालम्बनं परम् ।
एतदालम्बनं ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥१७॥

न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिन्
नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित् ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥१८॥

हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुं हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥१९॥

¹² The primeval one who is hard to perceive,
wrapped in mystery, hidden in the cave,
residing within the impenetrable depth—
Regarding him as god, an insight
gained by inner contemplation,
both sorrow and joy the wise abandon.

¹³ When a mortal has heard it, understood it;
when he has drawn it out,
and grasped this subtle point of doctrine;
He rejoices, for he has found
something in which he could rejoice.
To him I consider my house
to be open, Naciketas.

[NACIKETAS?] ¹⁴ Tell me what you see as—
Different from the right doctrine and from the wrong;
Different from what's done here and what's left undone;
Different from what has been and what's yet to be.

[DEATH?] ¹⁵ The word that all the Vedas disclose;
The word that all austerities proclaim;
Seeking which people live student lives;
That word now I will tell you in brief—
It is OM!

¹⁶ For this alone is the syllable that's *brahman*!
For this alone is the syllable that's supreme!
When, indeed, one knows this syllable,
he obtains his every wish.

¹⁷ This is the support that's best!
This is the support supreme!
And when one knows this support,
he rejoices in *brahman*'s world.

[DEATH] ¹⁸ The wise one—
he is not born, he does not die;
he has not come from anywhere;
he has not become anyone.
He is unborn and eternal, primeval and everlasting.
And he is not killed, when the body is killed.

[The dialogue between Naciketas and Death appears to end here.]

¹⁹ If the killer thinks that he kills;
If the killed thinks that he is killed;
Both of them fail to understand.
He neither kills, nor is he killed.

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयान्
 आत्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम् ।
 तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको
 धातुप्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः¹ ॥२०॥

आसीनो दूरं व्रजति शयानो याति सर्वतः ।
 कस्तं मदामदं देवं मदन्यो ज्ञातुमर्हति ॥२१॥

अशरीरं शरीरेषु¹ अनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम् ।
 महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥२२॥

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
 न मेघया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
 यमेवैष वृणुते तेन¹ लभ्यस्
 तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते² तन्न³ स्वाम् ॥२३॥

नाविरतो दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।
 नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनामाप्नुयात् ॥२४॥

यस्य ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च उभे भवत ओदनः¹ ।
 मृत्युर्यस्योपसेचनं क इत्या वेद यत्र सः ॥२५॥

॥ इति द्वितीया वल्ली ॥

ऋतं पिबन्तौ सुकृतस्य¹ लोके
 गुहां प्रविष्टौ परमे परार्धे ।
 छायातपौ ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति
 पञ्चाग्नयो ये च त्रिणाचिकेताः ॥१॥

²⁰ Finer than the finest, larger than the largest,
 is the self (*ātman*) that lies here hidden
 in the heart of a living being.
 Without desires and free from sorrow,
 a man perceives by the creator's grace
 the grandeur of the self.

²¹ Sitting down, he roams afar.
 Lying down, he goes everywhere.
 The god ceaselessly exulting—
 Who, besides me, is able to know?

²² When he perceives this immense, all-pervading self,
 as bodiless within bodies,
 as stable within unstable beings—
 A wise man ceases to grieve.

²³ This self cannot be grasped,
 by teachings or by intelligence,
 or even by great learning.
 Only the man he chooses can grasp him,
 whose body this self chooses as his own.

²⁴ Not a man who has not quit his evil ways;
 Nor a man who is not calm or composed;
 Nor even a man who is without a tranquil mind;
 Could ever secure it by his mere wit.

²⁵ For whom the Brahmin and the Kṣatriya
 are both like a dish of boiled rice;
 and death is like the sprinkled sauce;
 Who truly knows where he is?

VALLĪ 3

Knowers of *brahman*, men with five fires,
 and with the three fire-altars of Naciketas,
 They call these two "Shadow" and "Light,"
 the two who have entered—
 the one into the cave of the heart,
 the other into the highest region beyond,
 both drinking the truth
 in the world of rites rightly performed.

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रया बद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥१२॥
यच्छेद्वाङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद्यच्छेज्ज्ञान आत्मनि ।
ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत्¹ तद्यच्छेच्छान्त² आत्मनि ॥१३॥

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत¹
प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया
दुर्गं पथस्तत्कवयो वदन्ति ॥१४॥

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं
तथारसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।
अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं
निचाय्य तन्मृत्युमुखात्प्रमुच्यते ॥१५॥
नाचिकेतमुपाख्यानं मृत्युप्रोक्तं सनातनम् ।
उक्त्वा श्रुत्वा च मेधावी ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥१६॥

य इमं परमं गुह्यं श्रावयेद् ब्रह्मसंसदि ।
प्रयतः श्राद्धकाले वा तदानन्त्याय कल्पते ।
तदानन्त्याय कल्पत इति ॥१७॥

॥ इति तृतीया वल्ली ॥

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयंभूस्
तस्मात्पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षद्
आवृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥११॥

पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बालास्
ते मृत्योर्यन्ति विततस्य पाशम् ।
अथ¹ धीरा अमृतत्वं विदित्वा
ध्रुवमध्रुवेष्विह² न प्रार्थयन्ते ॥२॥

Higher than the person there's nothing at all.
That is the goal, that's the highest state.

- 12 Hidden in all the beings,
this self is not visibly displayed.
Yet, people of keen vision see him,
with eminent and sharp minds.
- 13 A wise man should curb his speech and mind,
control them within the intelligent self;
He should control intelligence within the immense self,
and the latter, within the tranquil self.
- 14 Arise! Awake! Pay attention,
when you've obtained your wishes!
A razor's sharp edge is hard to cross—
that, poets say, is the difficulty of the path.
- 15 It has no sound or touch,
no appearance, taste, or smell;
It is without beginning or end,
undecaying and eternal;
When a man perceives it,
fixed and beyond the immense,
He is freed from the jaws of death.
- 16 The wise man who hears or tells
the tale of Naciketas,
an ancient tale told by Death,
will rejoice in *brahman's* world.
- 17 If a man, pure and devout, proclaims this great secret
in a gathering of Brahmins,
or during a meal for the dead,
it will lead him to eternal life!

VALLĪ 4

The Self-existent One pierced the apertures outward,
therefore, one looks out, and not into oneself.
A certain wise man in search of immortality,
turned his sight inward and saw the self within.

- 2 Fools pursue outward desires,
and enter the trap of death spread wide.
But the wise know what constitutes the immortal,
and in unstable things here do not seek the stable.

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