

I find the concept of Yam and the Yam Nachiket dialogue in कठोपनिषद् (kathopanishad) most fascinating. Nachiket is told by his father that he is being donated to Yam. Nachiket travels up to the abode of Yam and finding that Yam had gone out for some errand, keeps waiting outside his door for three days without food or drinks. This suggests that Yam, the God of Death, was not somebody beyond access. The same is also corroborated by the story of Savitri who could see and talk to him or the story of Kunti who could get a son Yudhishtir by inviting Yam.

Coming back the story of Nachiket, when Yam returns, his wife implores him to first pacify the Brahman - boy Nachiket who had fasted at their door steps for three days and if he became wrathful, might bring havoc on Yam. Yam quickly approaches Nachiket and asks for three blessings for the three nights spent at his door step. By first Nachiket asks for his fathers love and forgiveness and by second he asks for the normal enjoyments of life. For third blessing he wants to

know as to what happens to man after death. Yam tries to dissuade him from the third blessing by offering immortality and heaven - स्वर्ग ३ swarg. Nachiket gets the hint that the knowledge of after-death is more valuable than pleasures of heaven and immortality. He insists. In the end, as described in कठोपनिषद्, Yam teaches him about harnessing the fire of यज्ञ and through it to persuade truthfulness - सत्य, which includes the knowledge of life after death.

In the story of सत्यकाम जाबालि, the fire god Agni is impressed by undeterred truthfulness of सत्यकाम and finding him a good disciple, approaches him four times to give him the advanced knowledge of pursuit of truthfulness. In this story truth is considered equivalent of ब्रह्मज्ञान.

A prayer in माण्डूक्योपनिषद् Mandukupnishda states सत्यमेव जयते नानृतम्। ईशोपनिषद् uses two words विद्या- vidya and - अविद्या। अविद्या

refers to physical sciences needed for life while विद्या refers to the knowledge of life after death ईशोपनिषद् states that both the avidya and vidya are equally important. Avidya will carry a person beyond death whereafter the new journey will begin and vidya will carry the person to amrit. The prayer in ईशोपनिषद् says सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये - We shall get the knowledge of the religion of truth.

Along with mathematics the science of time measurement also progressed. There are good indications that the frames of reference for time measurement on earth and that in space were different. Some of these formulae are found in the writings of Rishi दीर्घतमस-Deerghatamas . His name is believed to have been derived from the fact that he spent more time in the dark depths of cosmos. The description of various gods and asur performing तपश्चर्या for thousands of years is another indication of the difference in the frames of reference for time measurement. According to a story Parvati did

तपश्चर्या for a thousand years before Shiva presented himself to her. Yet another frame of time - measurement, the life span of ब्रह्मदेव Brahmadev is of 100 days of which he has already lived 50 days. One day of his time is equivalent of one thousand महायुग on the earth. Each महायुग comprises 1728 thousand years of Satya Yug, 1296 thousand years of Treta Yug, 864 thousand years of Dwapar Yug and 432 thousand years of Kali Yug, thus totaling to 4320 thousand years. Thus the earth has already lived nearly 200 billion years. Modern science has estimated the age of some of its oldest rocks at 4-5 billion years.