

Satasloki

Sloka 11

श्रेयः प्रेयश्च लोके द्विविधमभिहितं काम्यमात्यन्तिकं च
काम्यं दुःखैकबीजं क्षणलवविरसं तच्चिकीर्षन्ति मन्दाः।
ब्रह्मैवात्यन्तिकं यन्निरतिशयसुखस्यास्पदं संश्रयन्ते
तत्त्वज्ञास्तच्च काठोपनिषदभिहितं षड्विधायांच वल्ल्याम्॥११

11. There are two paths open to man in this world, the path that leads to fulfillment of worldly desires and the path to liberation. The first, fulfillment of desires, is the sole source of all sorrow and becomes insipid in no time. Only people lacking in discrimination take to this path. The other path leads to the attainment of Brahman, the imperishable source of infinite bliss. Wise men of discrimination resort to this path. Thus is it stated in the Kathopanishad which consists of six sections.

This is the gist of Kathopanishad, I.ii.2. The first path results in the continuous chain of birth and death, with all its attendant sorrows. People who are intent only on enjoying worldly pleasures choose this path. Even pleasures in heaven after life on this earth fall under this category. By performing various rites prescribed in the Vedas a person may go to heaven, but sojourn there will also come to an end when the results of the actions or rites performed are exhausted. The person will then be born on this earth again. No permanent happiness can be attained by following this path. The second path leads to liberation from Samsara or the continuous cycle of birth and death and consequently to eternal, supreme bliss. Those who know the superiority of this path are not attracted by the pleasures of this earth or even of heaven. They strive only for liberation.