Preface

Upānīṣads form the foundation on which Vedānta, the most celebrated philosophical system of India, is established. Kaṭhopanīṣad, belonging to the Kaṭhaśākhā of the Krṣṇayajurveda, occupies a very important place in the Upānīṣadic literature because of its wonderful narrative style and profound philosophical ideas. It is in the form of a story in which Naciketas, a brahmin boy goes to the abode of Yama and asks questions about what exists after death. In the course of their conversation, Yama reveals to Naciketas the knowledge of the Self (Ātman). Unless one does not have the right knowledge of the Self, one will not have release (Muktī) from the chain of recurring births and deaths. Kaṭhopanīṣad, which belongs to an early period, describes the nature of the Ātman and the means to realize it. The Bhagvad ġītā and other Vedāntic texts
have adopted the ideas in that Upaniṣad and elaborated on them. The present thesis is the result of an attempt to bring to light the means and nature of Self-realization as dealt with in the Kaṭhopaniṣad so as to enable any interested person to understand the evolution of the concepts of Self and deliverance in Advaita Vedānta.

The thesis has seven chapters. The first is an introduction to the Kaṭhopaniṣad describing the background for the narration of the concept of Self by Yama to Naciketas. The second chapter explains the concept of Self. Eligibility for Self-realization is dealt with in the third chapter. The process of Self-realization finds a detailed description in the fourth chapter. Yoga, which is the most important means to the attainment of the Self-realization according to Kaṭhopaniṣad, is treated in the fifth chapter. The sixth chapter is a description of
the Self-realized. The last chapter is a conclusion based on the elaborate studies made in the other chapters.

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