



Nachiketa: The Boy Who Chose Truth

Long ago, in the peaceful age of great sages, there lived a wise and respected ṛṣi named **Uddālaka Āruṇi**. He was known far and wide for his knowledge of the Vedas and for living a life of discipline and truth.

One day, the sage began a sacred **yajña** — a holy ritual where everything one owns is offered away with honesty and a pure heart. But as the ritual continued, something was not right. Without noticing, Uddālaka started giving away old, weak cows — animals that were no longer useful.

Nearby stood his young son, **Nachiketa**.

Though small in age, Nachiketa had a sharp mind and a sincere heart. He watched quietly, thinking deeply.

“If Father is giving away everything,” he wondered, “then what about me? To whom will he give me?”

With folded hands and a gentle voice, he asked,
“Father, to whom will you give me?”

There was no reply.

He asked again — softly. Still silent.

When Nachiketa asked the third time, the sage, tired and distracted, spoke without thinking,

“I give you to **Yama Dev**, the god of death.”

The words were heavy — yet Nachiketa did not cry.

He did not argue.

He only bowed.

He believed that words spoken by elders should always be respected.

With courage shining in his heart, the young boy set out alone toward the home of Yama Dev.

When Nachiketa reached there, he found the house silent. Yama Dev was away.

So the boy waited.

One day passed.

Then another.

Then a third.

No food.

No water.

No complaints.

Just patience and faith.

When Yama Dev finally returned, he was deeply moved to see a young child waiting so calmly at his door.

To make up for this hardship, Yama Dev said gently,

“My child, you have waited for three days. Ask for three boons.”

For the **first boon**, Nachiketa asked that his father’s anger be gone and that he welcome him home with love.

For the **second boon**, he asked to learn the sacred fire knowledge that leads to higher worlds.

Yama Dev gladly granted both.

Then came the **third boon**.

Nachiketa looked up bravely and asked,

“Some say the soul lives after death. Others say it does not. Please tell me the truth.”

Yama Dev tested him.

He offered gold.

A long life.

Kingdoms.

Pleasures and comforts.

But Nachiketa gently shook his head.

“These things fade with time,” he said softly.

“I do not want what ends. I want what is eternal. I want the Truth.”

Seeing the boy’s purity and courage, Yama Dev smiled with joy.

He taught Nachiketa the great secret of the **Ātmā** — the true Self that is eternal, fearless, and never dies.

Filled with wisdom and peace, Nachiketa returned home — not just as a child, but as a soul awakened by Truth.

Moral & Takeaways

- True wisdom begins with sincere questions
- Courage is not about age — it comes from the heart
- Pleasures are temporary, but Truth is eternal
- A pure heart receives the highest knowledge
- When we choose Truth, it always guides us forward

