

कठोपनिषद् Kāthopanīṣad

2.3.16

शतं चैका च हृदयस्य नाड्यस्तासां मूर्धानमभिनिःसृतैका ।
तयोर्ध्वमायन्नमृतत्वमेति विष्वह्हन्या उत्क्रमणे भवन्ति ॥ २।३।१६
śataṁ caikā ca hṛdayasya nādyastāsāṁ mūrdhānamabhiniḥsṛtaikā ।
tayordhvamāyannamṛtatvameti viṣvañnyā utkramaṇe bhavanti ॥ 2।3।16

Hundred and one are the nāḍis of the heart. Of them, one passes through crown of the head. Going through that nāḍi one attains immortality; but others lead (the departed) differently.

Śataṁ caikā ca hṛdayasya nāḍyaḥ:

It is said that there are many nāḍis in this body. This body is a whole network of nāḍis. In this there is one called the suṣumnā. This suṣumnā nāḍi is in the head and it is the one through which the prāṇa goes if the jīva happens to have enough puṇyā. This body is a launching pad, and this jīva is set in a particular direction that suṣumnā indicates. Then when the jīva departs it goes straight through the arcirādi mārga. The arcirādi mārga means the solar path and the jīva goes to Brahma loka. This mārga—the gati—is pointed out. And then the people, who don't have that kind of puṇyā, go all over. They achieve various yonis. Here the gati—the end is pointed out. A certain jivas travel after death to various ends.

Earlier Śruti said: atra brahma samśnute. Here a gati—a path through suṣumnā to Brahma loka as a result of Brahma Vidya is mentioned by Yama to Nachiketa. It implies that Brahma loka prāpti alone is the result of knowledge of Brahma vidyā and when one gains this knowledge which is unfolded here by Yama to Nachiketa, that Brahma vidyā will take him only to Brahma loka. A school of thought insists on this meaning of the mantra and their argument is that Brahma Vidya takes you to Brahma loka prāpti. This upāsaka has been meditating upon the saḡuṇa Brahman only. For them, there is no such thing as Ātma being Brahman and there is no equation here; there is only meditation enjoined by the śāstra. Self cannot be Brahman, and by knowledge one cannot get liberation. Brahman is jagat kāraṇam and He is Parameśvara and that Parameśvara is not the jīva. Jīva can only meditate upon Parameśvara. By that meditation he can go to a loka. Mere karma alone will take him to lokas. Karma with upāsana—meditation upon Brahman—will take him to Brahma loka. This is the argument of the Pūrva-mīmāṃsakās

Brahman is nirakta aśeṣa viśeṣa. It is that from which all the viśeṣas are born. That means it is saguṇa brahma upāsana. Pure knowledge is not gained by upāsana. It is knowledge of Ātma being Brahman which is free from all attributes. Because of this pratipatt, the avidyā kāma and karma knots are completely resolved. For him there cannot be any gati. It is already said that Brahman is accomplished here. Living one gains this knowledge of Ātma being Brahman. It is also said 'na tasya praṇāḥ utkrāmanti meaning, for a Vidwan, a wise person, the praṇa will not go out; they resolve here itself, meaning there is no travel for the jīvan muktaḥ. There is no travel for the person who is liberated and there is no return after death.

The next mantra talks about gati—travel. It is very clear that it is about the avidvān. Lord Yama is winding up the whole thing when he says 'etat anuśāsanam'. He has already given him one boon through which he taught him a particular ritual which can take him to svargādi loka or it can take him to Brahma Loka, if it is combined with meditation. If the ritual alone is performed, it can take him to svarga. If none of these are done, he will go all over.

Lord Yam had already taught the Śāstra. Afterwards he point out that the one who performs the ritual which he had advised to Nachiketa, become eligible to reach Brahma Loka. Therefore, those who are doing karma and meditation together, they are Brahma loka bhājaḥ.

Others do not go to Brahma Loka; they only remain within the saṁsāra. When one chooses to go to Brahma loka, there is every chance for him to be taught there by Brahmaji and thereby he would get mokṣa. Gati is prescribed for people who are eligible for Brahma loka and others who are for other lokas. For them gati is prescribed— gati uchyate and not for Brahmavit. In order to extol the Brahma vidyā phalam, it is said even if one went to Brahma loka and even if you are meditating on saguṇa Brahman, one will have gati whereas the one who has gained knowledge of Brahman, Sruti says martyaḥ amṛuto bhavati and atra brahma samaśnute. Then Nachiketas asked for Agnividya and it was given by Lord Yama.

For that also the phala has to be said. There are a hundred nāḍis and among these, one nāḍi is called suṣumnā. The upāsaka meditates upon this point which ensures his reaching the svarga loka. His praṇa goes through this point; in fact it becomes the launching point as it were. He

gains Brahma loka where he lives and enjoys the bhogas of the Loka. **Those who perform Nachiketa agni with upāsana will go to Brahma loka. Further-**

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः ।

तं स्वाच्छरारात्प्रवृहेन्मुञ्जादिवेधीकां धैर्येण ।

तं विध्याच्छुक्रममृतं तं विध्याच्छुक्रममृतमिति ॥ १७ ॥

aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo'ntarātmā sadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ ।

taṁ svāccharārātpurvāheṇmuñjādiveśīkāṁ dhairyaṇa ।

taṁ vidhyācchukramamṛtaṁ taṁ vidhyācchukramamṛtamiti ॥ 17 ॥

The Puruṣa, the indwelling Self, of the size of a thumb, is ever seated in the hearts of men. One should unerringly separate Him from one's body like a stalk from the Munja grass. im one should know as HHh. One should know Him as pure and immortal. One should know Him as pure and immortal.

This mantra gives the meaning of this entire Valli.

In the earlier Mantras the concept of the Supreme as a mere presence "in the shape of one's own thumb" residing in the centre of one's heart was discussed. To facilitate dhyana, size and shape were given to the Self. This is only for the purpose of providing the seekers with a prop for their mind at meditation.

Ātma lies hidden by the body, the organs and their activities. Here it is compared o the tender stalk within the muñjā grass. In order to take the muñjā grass, one has to separate it from the sheath with great care. One has to separate the Self from the body and the organs which are superimpositions on the Self. As one removes the sheath of the muñjā grass to get to the stalk, one has to reject the apparent self. One has to exercise his power of discrimination to the utmost to get to the real. Then only one discovers the Self and realizes that this Self is the common Self of all and becomes free.

मृत्युप्रोक्तां नाचिकेतोऽथ लब्ध्वा विद्यामेतां योगविधिं च कृत्स्नम् ।

ब्रह्म प्राप्तो विरजोऽभूद्विमृत्युरन्योऽप्येवं यो विद्ध्यत्ममेव ॥ १८ ॥

mṛtyuproktāṁ nāciketo'tha labdhvā vidyāmetāṁ yogavidhiṁ ca kṛtsnam ।

brahma prāpto virajo'bhūdvimṛtyuranyo'pyevaṁ yo viddhyātmameva ॥ 18 ॥

Nachiketa, having first become free from virtue and vice, as also desire and ignorance, by acquiring this knowledge imparted by Death, as also the process of yoga in its totality, attained Brahman. Anyone else too, who becomes a knower thus (like Nachiketa) of the indwelling Self attains Brahman.

Nachiketao'tha labdva, having attained—from Lord Yama, this knowledge of Brahman imparted by Lord Yama—as stated above; yogavidhiṁ ca kṛtsnam, and the process of yoga in its entirety, i.e. together with all its accessories and results. What happened to him after that? Brahma prāpto a'bhūt, (he, Nachiketas) attained Brahman, i.e. became free. How? By having already become virajah, free from virtue and vice; (and) vimrtyyuh, free from desire and ignorance, through the acquisition of knowledge. Not only Nachiketa, but anyah api, anyone else, too – becomes like Nachiketa (a knower of Brahman) by attaining the Self, existing in the context of the body, as one's own innermost reality in Its absoluteness, and not in any form other than the indwelling Self. He who knows adhyāt-mam eva, the Self that exisats in the context of the body—in the manner as described; who is an evam vit, a knower of this kind; 'he, too, having become virajah, (free from virtue and vice); becomes vimrtyyuh (free from desire and ignorance)—by knowing Brahman' – this (sentence) is to be added to complete the idea.

This valedictory prayer is uttered with a view to removing all faults of the disciple and the teacher through lapses resulting from inadvertence during the course of acquiring or imparting the knowledge.

सह ना ववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥

saha nā vavatu | saha nau bhunaktu | saha vīryaṁ karavāvahai |
tejasvināvadhītamastu mā vidviṣāvahai ||

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
इति काठकोपनिषदि द्वितीयाध्याये तृतीया वल्ली ॥

May He protect us both (by revealing knowledge). May He protect us both (by vouchsafing the results of knowledge). May we attain vigour together. Let what we study be invigorating. May we not cavil at each other. Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Here ends the third chapter of the second part of the Katha Upanishad.

Concluded.