

कठोपनिषद् Kāthopanīṣad

Sruti talks about the Vastu again and again because what is being said is not easily understood. One does not become ārudah—getting loaded in the buddhivṛtti. The buddhivṛtti has to undergo necessary change to eliminate the ignorance and that vṛtti vyāpti does not take place properly. Therefore, there is always doubt about why it does not take place. He says even though the person is a mumukṣu and a viveki, still buddhi has got varieties of arguments against what the Sruti says because of which the antaḥkaraṇa, the mind is taken away from jñānam. Because of the varieties of arguments advanced by different contenders, the mind is taken away from jñānam. Even though it is presented properly by pramāṇa, it is not properly understood. Sruti is unfolding only the Ātmā ekatva vijñānam; Sruti has got tātparya or a commitment to point out that differences perceived are due to upadhi and the Non-dual Ātmā is one and the same.

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।

एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥ २।२।९

agniryathaiko bhuvanaṁ praviṣṭo rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo babhūva ।

ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo bahiśca ॥ 2।2।9

As the One Fire, after it has entered the world, though one, takes different forms according to the thing it burns, so does the Eternal Ātmā, of all living beings, though one, takes a form according to the form. He enters and is (in itself) outside all forms (also).

Agniryathaiko bhuvanaṁ praviṣṭo: Agni is one; it is potentially everywhere. Fire obtaining on this earth—bhuvanaṁ praviṣṭaḥ—takes different forms according to the material it burns. In terms of each form of the object that is burnt, the fire assumes a new form. Even though the fire is only one, it appears in different forms because of the objects of burning. It assumes the very form of the dāhyam. A candle flame is entirely different from a torch. Each has got a form.

Ātmā being the most subtle is in every deha. It is in prāṇa inside and outside. The mind's pervasiveness is more, and therefore, the subtlety is also more—

sukṣmataram manaḥ because it can move to places without the body moving anywhere. Ātmā which is the adhiṣṭānam of the mind also is atisukṣma—subtlest and hence sarvagataḥ—all pervasive. In all the beings, it is one—ekaḥ.—sarvabhūttāntara Ātmā ekaḥ. Then again, ekaḥ san, being one, it becomes many. It becomes as though many in various forms—sarvadehamprati praviśtatvāt pratirūpaḥ bhabhūva. Having entered into every deha, it appears in many forms. The sūkṣama śarīra is the one that determines the individuality. From its own stand point Ātmā is one and the same alone. From the standpoint of sūkṣama śarīra alone, there are different beings.

As one agni with refernce to upādhi appears in different forms, Eka eva Ātmā appears as though many Ātmās, with reference to different dehas. If it became many, then the question is does it not become a vikāri, does it not undergo any change? No. ākāśavat bahiśca -like even the ākāśa, the space, outside. It enters into every form, meaning, it obtains in every form such as the body etc. and appears as though there is one here and one there, but at the same time, it stands outside, bahiśca, meaning transcends all the nāma rūpa. It does not undergo any change from its own stand point. It transcends all the forms. No form transcends the Ātmā. Ātmā transcends all forms.

Previously it was said no form transcends the Ātmā. Now it is said that it is true but Ātmā transcends all forms. Previously we have seen na atyeti kaschana iti. No object transcends the Ātmā because, nāma rūpa being mithyā depends for its sattā and sphūrṭi entirely upon this Ātmā. No object transcends the Ātmā whereas the Ātmā transcends all of them. Ātmā atyeti sarvam whereas Ātmānam na kinchit atyeti iti—Nothing transcends the Ātmā while Ātmā transcends everything. From this statement itself we can stretch it to prove satyam and mithyā. 'Bahiśca' is a very significant word here because by saying bahiśca, it stands as it was before; even now, it has not undergone any change, even though it obtains in the physical body etc. It does not undergo any change—yathā agniḥ. Fire is the same whether it appears in this particular form or in another form. Fire is the same and it is one. Similarly Ātmā is ekaḥ. Ekaḥ alone is the meaning of the example. Ekaḥ Ātmā; Agni ekaḥ. Agni appears in many forms; Ātmā appears in many forms. That is all the example.

वायुयथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभुव ।

एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥ २।२।१० ।

vāyuryathaiko bhuvanaṁ praviṣṭo rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo babhuva ।

ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo bahiśca ॥ 2।2।10 ।

Vayu-air, being one, having entered into the world, assumes separate forms in respect of different shapes. Similarly, the Self in all beings, though one, assumes a form in respect of each shape; and (yet) It is outside.

Here is another beautiful comparison to explain the same one-ness of Truth that was indicated in the previous Mantra. In stead of Fire, Lord Yama is explaining the same Truth with the example of Vayu.

Vayu in the physical body pervades in different forms as prāṇa, apāṇa, samāna, vyāna and udāna. These are the various forms in which prāṇa expresses itself. Similarly Ātmā, being one, assumes different forms and shapes,—rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo babhuva. The Lord says, the prāṇa, being one, becomes different—bhinnah—because of the upādhi. Prāṇa, the vayu is the same, but obtaining in the sarira, it assumes different forms of its own and looks as though it is many. Similarly

Ekastatha sarvabhūtaantaraātmā: the antarātmā, the pratyagātmā, is said to be the innermost essence in all beings. By saying that Ātmā, the self is innermost, its ati sūkṣamatvam alone is pointed out as 'inner'. Really speaking, there is no inner Ātmā or outer Ātmā; there is only one Ātmā, but then we are constrained to say inner Ātmā, because the anātmā, the deha, is taken to be the ātmā or prāṇa is taken to be the Ātmā. Similarly, manah, buddhih, or chittam is taken to be the Ātmā. Ajñānam is also taken to be Ātmā, when we say 'I am ignorant'. Since anātmā is taken to be the Ātmā, we have to say 'inner Ātmā' by drk drsya viveka. The word 'inner Ātmā' must be properly understood. By saying eka, that is completely negated—Ekah san sarvabhūtāntarātmā. It refers not only to the Ātmā of a wise person. The Ātmā of an ignorant person is the same. It is the same in all, and yet it transcends—bahiśca—all.