

कठोपनिषद्  
Kaṭhōpaniṣad

नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानमेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।  
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥ २।२।१३।  
nityo'nityānām cetanaścetanānameko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān ।  
tamātmastham ye'nupaśyanti dhīrāsteṣām śāntiḥ śāśvati netareṣām ॥ 2|2|13 ।

He, the Eternal among non-eternals, the Intelligence in the intelligent, who, though One, fulfills the desires of many..those wise men who perceive Him as dwelling in their own Self, to them belongs Eternal Peace and to none else.

Nityo'nityānām - anityānām vināśinām madhye yaḥ nityaḥ - When everything around and about you is falling apart, there is only one thing that survives and it is nitya Ātmā. Everything else falls apart. One's body falls apart. Every day things are changing. Time itself is changing. Time destroys anything that is within its scope very quickly. Names and forms are changing. For all these changes, Ātmā remains the same—kūṭasthaḥ.

Cetanaścetanānam – Conscious beings are many. Beginning from Brahmājī to all conscious beings, the one who lends consciousness is the cetana Ātmā as even agni lends its capacity to burn and give heat to water—agni nimittamiva dāhakatvam. Our body, mind and senses become capable of perception, knowing etc. because of consciousness borrowed from Ātmā.

Eko bahūnām—He is One among the many meaning He is the truth of all the so called many. He is One—eakaḥ, all-knowing and Almighty— sarvajñaḥ sarveśvaraḥ.

Yo vidadhāti kāmān—He is sarvajñaḥ sarveśvaraḥ. He is the One who bestows the object of one's desire. He dispenses the fruits of one's actions— karma phalaṁ vidadhāti. He is One; He has to give to different types of karma phalās the infinite number of jīvās who perform different types of karmas. To dispense the different types of phalas to different types of jīvās with ease and facility— anāyāsenā, He must naturally be sarvajñaḥ sarveśvaraḥ.

Ye dhīrāḥ tam atmastham anupaśyanti – Dhīrāḥ—Those who have viveka and vairāgya— nivṛtta bāhya vṛttayaḥ— perceive Him as dwelling in their own Self— ātmāsthām ‘anupaśyanti’. They alone attain eternal peace—teṣāṃ sāntiḥ śāśvati—and not others who are not of this type.

तदेतदिति मन्यन्तेऽनिर्देश्यं परमं सुखम् ।

कथं नु तद्विजानीयां किमु भाति विभाति वा ॥ २।२।१४

tadetaditi manyante’anirdeśyam paramam sukham ।

katham nu tadvijānīyām kimu bhāti vibhāti vā ॥ 2।2।14

They (the sages) perceive that indescribable, Highest Bliss as ‘This is That’, ‘How shall I know That? Does it shine (of Itself) or does It shine by another light?

This paramam sukham is the nature—svarūpa—of Ātmā. It is complete freedom from duḥkha. It is indescribable—anirdeśyam. It is beyond the range of speech and mind of ordinary people. Those who are free from three predominant desires, namely, desire for loka, desire for vitta and desire for progeny, come to know It directly as “It is myself”— etat iti manyante. Even though the Śruti mentions sukha tāratamyam of the various upādhis, its whole aim is to point out the svarūpa of the Ātmā. Sukha tāratamyam is mentioned to indicate the vairāgya tāratamya. The more dispassionate one is, more will be his self-satisfaction. The more self-acceptance is there, more fullness comes out. The more self rejection is there, more unhappiness will be his lot. Therefore, the whole trick is in self-acceptance by which one gains maturity, and then by jñānam one owns the Whole, the Ātmā.

A jijñāsu should ask the question, ‘how shall I know That?’— katham nu tadvijānīyām. He should do vicāra—enquiry to know how to make it as his own. He should enquire, ‘does It shine by Itself or does It shine by another light?’— kimu bhāti vibhāti vā. Ātmā is self-effulgent and needs no other light to light itself. When the clouds move away, the sun that comes out from behind the clouds needs no other light to enable us to see it. Similarly when the veiling caused

by self-ignorance is removed, the self-effulgent Ātmā comes to shine by itself, needing no other light to illumine It.

Answer to this question is given in the next mantra.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति २।२।१५।

na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratāraḥ nemā vidyuto bhānti  
kuto'yamagniḥ ।

tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti  
2|2|15 ।

The sun does not shine there, nor does the moon, nor do the stars, nor the lightning shine and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light, all these shine.

In the previous mantra it was said how the seeker should enquire—*katham nu tadvijānīyām* and how he should enquire and come to know Ātmā. Now the Śāstrā says further that it is not a matter for one to really know as an object and because of this alone you see sun, moon, star etc.. Even though the sun which illumines everything, it does not illumine Brahmātmā much less the moon and the stars. Even the flashy lightnings—*vidhyutaḥ*—do not illumine It. When the sun and the moon and the stars have no chance of illumining It, what to talk of this small flame that I hold in my hand—*kuto'yamagniḥ*. In the sun, there is no need for a torch to illumine it!

Tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ—Brahmātmā alone shines; everything else shine after It. All that shine here like sun, moon etc. are shining because of Ātmā alone. The fact that the entire jagat is available for our understanding shows that there is a light and that light is not lighted up by anything. It is self-effulgent and self-evident. The very existence of the jagat proves the existence of the *svaprakāśa* Ātmā. The very existence of the jagat also proves the self-existent Ātmā. The knowledge of the jagat reveals the self-effulgent Ātmā which is self-existent. Ātmā shines by itself and shines in various forms.