

कठोपनिषद् Kāthopaniṣad

अरण्योर्निहितो जातवेदा गर्भ इव सुभृतो गर्भिणीभिः ।
दिवे दिवे ईड्यो जागृवद्भिर्हविष्मद्भिर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः ॥ एतत् वै तत् ॥ २।१।८

araṇyornihito jātavedā garbha iva subhṛto garbhīṇībhīḥ ।
dive dive īdya jāgṛvadbhirhaviṣmadbhirmanuṣyebhiragniḥ ॥ 2।1।8

The sacrificial fire lodged in the two pieces of wood is well protected as even the foetus is protected by the pregnant woman, and the Agni invoked every day by the alert people is but this Brahman.

In good old days, the ritualists used to have two blocks of wood. One is adho araṇi or lower araṇi and the other one is uttarāraṇi or the araṇi that is kept above. When there is churning, sparks of fire come out and this is used to perform the ritual. This is what is said in the mantra as araṇyornihitaḥ jātavedāḥ. The word jātavedāḥ is a synonym for Agni.

This Agni is well protected as even the foetus is protected by the pregnant woman—garbha iva subhṛto garbhīṇībhīḥ. The pregnant woman takes care of what she eats and drinks—agarhita annapānabhojanādīnā yathā garbhaḥ subhṛtaḥ. She avoids foods that produce gas etc. in the stomach and takes in only that which is conducive for pregnancy.

The least complicated vaidika karma is nitya agnihotra and the most complicated karma is aśvamedha. Agnihotra is a simple ritual but the fire has to be maintained always and should not be allowed to die. Those who perform nityāgnihotram do not light up fire every day. The fire that was lit is not allowed to die away at all. It is always kept alive. They are supposed to offer oblations in the mornings and evenings. That Agni has to be invoked and worshipped everyday—dive dive īdyaḥ stutyaḥ vandhyaśca—jāgṛvadbhiḥ jāgaraṇaśīlavadbhiḥ apramattaiḥ—by the people who are very alert.

Anything offered by—haviṣmadbhiḥ—the people who are given to this oblations is called haviṣ. Agni is the courier who carries all the oblations and delivers to all the Devatas. That is why Agni is called Havyavāhana—the one who is the carrier of haviṣ that is offered. That Agni is generally looked upon by the Karta as some one separate. But it is said that Agni is nothing but Virat. That Virat is non-separate from Parameśvarā and He is indeed you.

Etat vai tat: That Brahman which you asked for is indeed this Agni and is non-separate from Brahman.

Further,

यतश्चोदेति सूर्योऽस्तं यत्र च गच्छति ।
तं देवाः सर्वे अर्पितास्तदुनात्येति कश्चन । एतत् वै तत् ॥ २।१।९

yathaścodeti sūryo'staṁ yatra ca gacchati ।
taṁ devāḥ sarve arpitāstadunātyeti kaścana । etat vai tat ॥ 2।1।9

It is That from which the Sun arises and unto which it sets, and it is That from which all the Devatas come and go back. No one ever transcends It. This is indeed That.

Yataśca yasmāt Hiranyagarbhāt Parameśvarāt prāṇādudeti Sūryaḥ : It is that because of whose mandate the Sun arises every day and because of whose orders alone the Sun sets. It is from Him all the Devas have come and unto Him all of them go back. No one goes beyond that. No one has his being beyond that. Everyone has his being in Para Brahman only. It is born of that, sustained by that and goes back to that.

Therefore you are not away from Brahman. You don't stand apart from that. Even when you are having body, you are Brahman. Even when you are with your mind, you are Brahman. Even when you are seeing the world, you are Brahman. Never you are away from Para Brahman. He has said everything now. There is nothing else which is apart from Brahman why because all that you see is Brahman; the seer is Brahman; the sight also is not separate from Para Brahman. Devatas also are not separate from Brahman. Agni, Indra, Varuna and other devatas are not separate from Brahman.

Etat vai tat: This is what you wanted to know. This is the One that is beyond dharma and adharma.

यदेवेह तदमुत्र यदमुत्र तदन्विह ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति । २।१।१०

yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha ।
mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyumāpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati । 2।1।10

What is here is indeed there; what is there, is likewise here. He who sees as though there is difference here, goes from death to death.

Yadeveha tadamutra: What is here in this body, is indeed in the samaṣṭi śarīra—in the Hiranyagarbha śarīra. That which is in the jīva upādhi is in the samaṣṭi upādhi. The one who obtains in the āditya maṇḍala is the same in the jīva upādhi. The vastu that obtains in the upādhi is the vastu of the Lord and also is the vastu of the individual. That means both the individuality and the Lordship are upādhi dharmas. The bheda is there only for the aviveki. In fact, there is no real bheda. It is because it is there in the Para Ātmā. Para Ātmā is Parameśvarā. Parameśvarā is everything. Everything includes my body, mind and senses also. Where is the separation? There is no duality at all.

Yadamutra tadanviha: What is in this body is included in the Hiraṇyagarbha śarīra. But when what is there is not here, there can be a problem. You, the jīva becomes a viśeṣa— adjective, or attribute to the Param Brahma. Viśiṣṭādvaitins say that Mahāviṣṇu or Nārāyaṇā is endowed with all the absolute virtues and one of the guṇas, qualities, is you. When you are a quality of Para Brahma, how can it be kalyāṇaguṇa? You are full of all the problems. Even if you have some bad qualities, it will not affect Him because He is like a ocean. If there are guṇas, who is the guṇi? Between the guṇa and the guṇi, the attribute and the substantive, what is the sambandha, connection? If you say, guṇa makes the guṇi, then guṇi makes the guṇa. If the substantive is without the quality then the substantive without the quality cannot be ; he should independent of the qualities. If He is kalyana guṇa sampannaḥ all the guṇas are intrinsic to Bhagavan. Then when the guṇas are destroyed, He will be destroyed. If the guṇas are only superimposed upon Him, then there is no guṇa-guṇi sambandha. Therefore, that sambandha is only superimposed; it is ādhyātmika sambandha. Even though it looks very nice, it does not stand enquiry. ‘You are included in Īśvarā but Īśvarā is not you. This is the whole of Viśiṣṭādvaita. He is the one qualified by the viśeṣanas. Jīvas are —viśeṣanas— adjectives, to Īśvarā. This is their argument and it is eliminated here when he says, yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha. What is there is indeed here. That means there is no difference whatsoever.

A person who is completely deluded because of ignorance, avidyā, of the Vastu does not know which is the real Vastu and and the difference between jīva and jīva, Īśvarā and Isvara. There is no real difference between jīva and jīva and Īśvarā and Īśvarā. Jīva is the Ātmā, the other jīva also is the same Para Ātmā, and Īśvarā also is the same Para Ātmā; Jīva – jīva bheda is not there; jīva-īśvarā bheda is not there; the same jagat also is not separate from Him. Jagat being mithya cannot remain independent of Parameśvarā. Therefore jīva-jagat bheda also is not there. Jīva-Īśvarā bheda also is not there. Īśvarā-jagat bheda also is not there. jīva-jada bheda also is not there. Jadam also is Chaitnya Ātmā alone. Jada is only nāma and rūpa. What is there is only One Vastu and that Vastu is Satyam Jñānam Anantam Brahma.

Due to avidyā everything is possible. Because of ignorance one takes the body-mind-sense complex as Ātmā and everyting else is separate. Thus the person sees them as manifold things— nānā iva paśyati. He will say, ‘I am other than the Para Ātmā’. Parameśvarā is other than myself. Thus one understands.

Sa mṛtyormaraṇānmaraṇam mṛtyum punaḥ punaḥ janma maraṇabhāvam āpnoti: Such an individual goes from death to death. He will die. Afterwards he will die. He is brought back and then he will die. Why not we say one janma to another janma? The one who looks upon this as different— bhinnamiva paśyati—he goes from death to death. Therefore, one should perceive thus: ‘I am indeed Brahman which is homogenous consciousness and which pervades everything through and through like space. This is the meaning of the whole section.

(To be Continued...)