

कठोपनिषद् Kāthopaniṣad

(continued from January issue)

In the last mantra, it was said that by knowing That changeless Vastu, no other thing is desired by the discriminative person. By knowing that changeless Vastu, dhruva Vastu, how will one remain without desiring for adhruva Vastus or anitya viṣayas, for one always finds the anithya Vastus alone are useful. How can it be said 'na kiñcit anyat prārthayante? The next mantra gives the answer.

येन रूपं रसं गन्धं शब्दान् स्पर्शाश्च मैथुनान्
एतेनैव विजानाति किमत्र परिशिष्यते । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ३ ।

yena rūpaṁ rasaṁ gandhaṁ śabdān sparśāṁśca maithunān |
etenaiva vijānāti kimatra pariśiṣyate | etat vai tat ||

It is that by which form, taste, smell, various forms of sound and touch and various pleasures that are experienced. All are known by That alone. No object is left behind which is not illumined by the Ātmā.

In fact, it is the Ātmā that lights up jñātā jñeyam and jñānaṁ. Ātmā illumines everything. It knows everything (sarvam) and hence it is Sarvajña. Sarvam means jñātā jñeyam and jñānaṁ. Mere jñeyam is not sarvam minus jñātā and jñānaṁ. Mere jñānaṁ is not sarvam minus jñātā and jñeyam and jñeyam includes what is known and unknown. Unknown is known as unknown. Ātmā illumines all the three simultaneously. Therefore, Bhagavan is Sarvavit. He is Sarvajña. With māyā upādhi, He is Sarvavit. And the individual jiva is alpa vith. This is indeed what you asked for. This pratyagātmā is considered to be the ultimate end.

Yetat vai tat. This is indeed That. This is indeed what you asked for. This pratyagaātmā alone is considered to be the ultimate end.

There is an emphasis here that by the Ātmā alone one understands everything. This is something opposed to what people generally know. People do not recognize there is an Ātmā which is other than the body etc., distinct from that because of which everything is known. Sankara says it is well known in the world that there is Ātmā which is different from the body-mind-sense complex. The body-mind-sense complex is endowed with certain qualities like sound, touch etc., which means it is available for objectification by the senses. They are looked upon as Anātmā. They are available as objects for the senses and cannot have the status of being the Knower. In case the body-mind-sense complex have the qualities like form etc. and are able to see things and know itself also, then external objects also will be able to see themselves and also see other things. But it is not there at all. One sees the body etc. as well as the objects

outside like form etc. as Caitanya alone. Just as people understand that only fire burns when they see a red hot metal, this physical body enjoys certain sentiency and awareness because of the Chaitanya alone. The subtle body too, by itself is insentient like pot etc., but due to reflection of the chaitanya on it, it becomes a knowing entity. The insentient pot or the body will not be able to know itself. The pot is seen because of the presence of light. The body etc. are also seen because of the light, Chaitanya alone. Everything is being aware because of Ātmā alone and Ātmā is sarvajñaḥ. He knows all the three, namely, jñātā jñeyam and jñānam.

Though it is clear that physical body is insentient like a pot, why can't it be said that it is known because of the antaḥkaraṇa and it ought to be the Ātmā. This doubt is cleared in the next mantra.

स्वप्नान्तं जागिरितान्तं चोभौ येनानुपश्यति ।

महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥ २।१।४।

svapnāntaṁ jāgiritāntaṁ cobhau yenānupaśyati ।

mahāntaṁ vibhumātmānṁ matvā dhīro na śocati ॥ 2।1।4।

Having understood the great and all-pervading Ātmā, through which one sees the objects in both dream and waking states, a viveki does not grieve.

Svapnāntaṁ jāgiritāntaṁ cobhau yenānupaśyati: In dream a variety of objects are seen by the dreamer having a dream body, as even in the case of the waking condition. What obtains in dream and also in waking are both illumined by Ātmā. It is not illumined by the antaḥkaraṇa. If antaḥkaraṇa is the illuminator, Ātmā, then what obtains in the mind like various thoughts and objects cannot be seen. However, they are seen not only in the waking but also in the dream state. In dream, the entire dream is illumined. The dreamer, the dream knowledge and the dream objects are all illumined by one jyotisvarūpa ātmā. Ātmā illumines the jñātā jñānam and jñeyam; Kartā karma and kriya are all illumined by the chaitanya. That which obtains in the waking and dream state and that by which one comes to know, is distinct from all of them, namely, body, mind, senses etc.

Mahāntaṁ vibhumātmānṁ matvā dhīro na śocati: A man of discrimination who comes to know the limitless and all pervading Ātmā does not come to grief. 'Knowing' here implies knowing the self to be the limitless and all pervading and 'I' am indeed of that nature. The meaning of the word 'I' cannot be placed elsewhere. This alone is the real meaning of the word 'I'. Even though we use the word 'I' in hundred different versions, really speaking, there is no other meaning for the word 'I'. All others are all due to upādhi. Notions that I am a thinker, seer, hearer, walker, talker etc. are all incidental statuses assumed by the Ātmā due to upādhi. Knowing this true meaning of the word 'I, a dhīraḥ does not come to sorrow. Death is not there; limitation is not there, and therefore, all those causes of sorrow or limitations are limited and hence does not come to grief. He knows that jñātā jñeyam and jñānam are non-separate from him. All the duality is destroyed. As long as duality is there, one is in the hands of time, or in other words, in the hands of death alone. As long as nānātvaṁ or multiplicity is perceived, one is separate from everything else. That means he is space-bound, time-bound and vastu-bound person and he is in the safehands of Lord Death.