

# कठोपनिषद् Kāthopanīṣad

(2<sup>nd</sup> Adhyāya, Third Valli)

यदिदं किं च जगत्सर्वं प्राणे एजति निःसृतम् ।  
महद्भयं वज्रमुद्यतं ये एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ २।३।२।

2. This whole universe evolved from the Brahman move (vibrates) in the Prāṇa (in the highest Brahman). That Brahman is a great terror, like an uplifted thunder-bolt. Those who know this become immortal.

This entire jagat – including any small little thing in it – moves – ejati. Each one does its job. Vāyu moves and it does its job. When prāṇa is there, the entire jagat that is seen moves. Each one carries out its job. There is an order in the creation. The entire jagat moves because of the order of Prāṇa. Brahman, being the source of activity of even the vital force (Prāṇa), is figuratively referred to by the word Prāṇa.

Mahadbhayam: (a great terror) – There is an immutable law that governs the movement of the stars, planets etc. Nothing in the universe happens haphazardly. There is a constancy in the working of all the laws of nature. Everything happens according to some strict commands; as though there is a very severe law maker and a strict maintainer of these laws. In the same way, this jagat seems to exist and function so diligently and readily as though the Master of Laws is standing right behind them with a raised whip.

Those who come to know this jagat kāraṇam Brahma which is the witness of our own activity, will become immortal. There is no question of death, and therefore, there is no question of janma-maraṇa cycle. If one is within the cycle, he has to pray that he should get out of this cycle. After jñānam this prayer itself has no relevance. Once he understands that he is not in the cycle of birth and death, there is no question of getting out of it. Such persons become immortal.

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः ।  
भयादिन्द्रश्च वयुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥ ३ ॥

3. From fear of Him the Fire burns, for fear of Him shines the Sun; for fear of Him do Indra, Vayu and Death, the fifth, proceed (with their respective functions).

From the foregoing we understand that there is a Cause for the jagat, and that is Brahman. We find there is order and no one particular law or any phenomenon here ever transcends its nature. That is why science is possible. There is an order in this creation. The laws are there. From this we understand that all the Devatas perform their jobs as they are mandated. From this we also understand the cause for the fear of a Niyantā, the controller. Fire burns; it is never cool. The sun shines and goes on sending out energy and heat. It is because of Īśvarā's mandate alone— bhayāt tapati sūryaḥ. Indra also does his job. Vāyu performs his allotted job of moving always and never getting caught up in one place. The Lord of Death does His job according to the mandate.

The whole universe is well perpetuated only because of the laws governing the universe are functioning perfectly. The survival of the world presupposes the maintenance of the laws; maintenance of the laws presupposes the orderly functioning of the Devatas, and if all the Devatas are perfectly functioning, there must be a Yajamana for all the Devatas. We can therefore infer a controller of all the Devatas. Suppose there is no ultimate God controlling the presiding deities like a person with a weapon to punish, perfect functioning of the deities will not happen

Each one of them is functioning in a certain order. From this we understand there is a mandate. Since there is a mandate, we understand there is a nimitta kāraṇam. We call this nimitta kāraṇam as Īśvarā and worship Him. We worship Him who is in the form of order, the cause for the order.

इह चेदशकद्वोद्धं प्राक्शरीरस्य विस्त्रसः ।  
ततः सर्गेषु लोकेषु शरीरत्वाय कल्पते ॥ ४ ॥

If here (in this life) one is able to comprehend Him (Brahman) before the death of the body, he will be liberated from the bondage of the world; if one is not able to comprehend Him, then he has to take a body again in the worlds of creation.

After talking about Brahma svarūpam as nimitta and upādana kāraṇam in the first three mantras of the valli, in this fourth mantra, jñānam is talked about as mokṣa kāraṇam

Before the fall of the physical body, if one is qualified and capable of knowing the Vastu, he is liberated. If one is not qualified, he cannot come to know. He has to assume new body again and again until he becomes a qualified

person. If before the fall of this body one is not able to know the Ātmā, then he is qualified to assume a body in one of those lokas. In any other place other than Brahma loka, he will not have a very clear vision of Ātmā. He will be only committed to bhoga or enjoyment due to puṇya or papa. In Naraka loka there is only the experience of dukha. In svarga loka, there is only sukha bhoga. Only in this world there is sukha and dukha and there is a chance for viveka. Experiences of sukha and dukha are important because without these experiences one will never question what he is doing. Viveka is possible only here. In Brahma loka, of course, one will have better clarity but it is difficult to get—dushpraapyam.

यथादर्शे तथात्मनि यथ स्वप्ने तथा पितृलोके ।  
यथाप्सु परीव ददृशे तथा गन्धर्वलोके छायातपयोरिव ब्रह्मलोके ॥ ५ ॥

5. As (one sees) in a mirror, so (Brahman can be clearly seen) here within one's own Self; as in dreams so in the world of the forefathers; as in water, so in the world of Gandharvas; as in light and shade, so in the world of Brahman.

If one is able to see the reflection of oneself in a mirror clearly, there is no problem. Similarly if there is viveka buddhi, the Ātmā is seen clearly. Ātmā is invariable. Chaitanya is invariable. Various vṛttis are variable. The invariable vastu is the adīṣṭāna. All the vṛttis and the vṛttigata viṣayas are depending upon this Caitanya alone. Just as one is able to see the reflection of one self clearly in a mirror that is clean, if there is viveka, the Ātmā, the invariable is known. We have certain experiences which we get through our sense organs, mind and intellect when they come in contact with the available world of sense objects. Just as our experiences of the waking world are not the same as our experiences in our dream world, so too there can be other planes of consciousness wherein different degrees of experiences can be our lot. We have the pitṛloka (the world of the manes) where the individual has only the mind-and-intellect equipment and not the physical body. Naturally, the experiences gained by the subtle body must be different from our own experiences here. Similarly the experiences of the world of the Gandharvas and in the plane of consciousness called the Brahma Loka must be different from those in other worlds

*To be continued..*