

# कठोपनिषद् Kāthopanīṣad

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।

ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य न ततो विजुगुप्सते ॥ एतत् वै तत् ॥ २।१।१२

aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo madhye ātmani tiṣṭhati ।

īśāno bhūtabhavyasya na tato vijugupsate ॥ etat vai tat ॥ 2.1.12

The Puruṣaḥ, of the nature of the thumb, resides in the body. Knowing Him as the ruler of past and future, one does not want, by virtue of that knowledge to save the Self. This indeed is that.

*Aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ* That which is the most predominant among the fingers in the hand, without which there is no strength, and that which is away from the other four fingers is the thumb. Thumb gives strength to all the four fingers and still it is *asanga*. Puruṣaḥ is said to be of the nature of the thumb—*aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ*, meaning *aṅguṣṭa tulya puruṣaḥ*. He stands away and at the same time lends his own *satta* and *spurti* to the body-mind-sense complex. At the same time he is unconnected, unaffected by what happens in the body-mind-sense complex. He is called Puruṣaḥ because he fills up everything—the whole creation and pervades everything—*pūrṇam anena sarvam iti puruṣaḥ*.

*Madhye ātmani tiṣṭhati*: *Aṅguṣṭa tulya Puruṣaḥ* abides within the *śarīra*. He abides in the *buddi*. The *caitanya ātma* is recognized in the *buddi* alone. The whole *jagat* is recognized in the *buddi* and the *aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ Puruṣaḥ* is also recognized in the *buddi*.

The word *mātraḥ* can have another meaning. It could indicate *mānaṁ* which means *parimāṇam* or size. In order to turn the mind inward, *upasana*—meditation— is advised in the scriptures. The *upasaka* is asked to meditate on the space obtaining in the heart

*īśāno bhūtabhavyasya*: The One who is the Lord of Time, of past, present and future, the One who is in the form of time and the one who is not affected by time, will be collapsible in Him. He is not affected by time. *Aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo*

madhye ātmani tiṣṭhati means He indeed is You! Tat tvam asi! After gaining this knowledge, the scripture says, na tato vijugupsate. As said earlier, such an individual does not attempt to protect the Ātmā— gopāyituṁ na icchati— from any source. It is because no other source is available besides it. There is no desire for protecting the Ātmā from time or from anything. He is vimuktaḥ— liberated from fear of saṁsāra. Etat vai tat. This is what you have asked for Oh Nachiketa.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो ज्योतिरिवाधूमकः ।

ईशानो भूतभ्रव्यस्य स एवाद्य स उ श्वः । एतत् वै तत् ॥ २।१।१३

aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo jyotirivādhūmakah |

īśāno bhūtabhavyasya sa evādy sa u śvaḥ | etat vai tat || 2|1|13

The Puruṣaḥ, who is of the nature of a thumb, is like a light without smoke. He is the ruler of the past and future. He exists today, and He will exist tomorrow. This indeed is that.

The same aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣaḥ is like the flame without smoke— jyotirivādhūmakah. A jyoti which is free from a cloud of smoke is always bright, clean and steady. This Puruṣaḥ is śuddhacaitanya svarupaḥ, bereft of clouds of thoughts. Ātmā is always śuddha caitnya svarupaḥ. It is of the nature of pure awareness obtaining in the buddi. As said earlier, this Puruṣaḥ is īśāno bhūtabhavyasya—the one who is the Lord of past, present and future meaning the One who is in the form of kāla and desa and at the same time not really bound by them.

Ī Śāno bhūtabhavyasya : The Lord of time—the past, present and future—is Parameswara and who, like the smokeless flame, is devoid of the dharmas of the antaḥkaraṇa. It is to be noted here that antaḥkaraṇa viśiṣṭa ātmā is not equated to Īśvarā. What is equated to Īśvarā is adhūmakaṁ jyotiḥ iva puruṣaḥ. Puruṣaḥ is compared to smokeless flame or light. It indicates śuddhacaitanyam without the antaḥkaraṇa dharmāḥ. He is the one who abides in all beings not only now—sa evādy sa u śvaḥ—tomorrow. He will be the same tomorrow, meaning the Lord abides in all beings for all times to come. Etat vai tat. This is what you, Nachiketas, wanted to know. Seeing this Ātmā that is Brahman as something separate from everything else is to be negated, and this negation is again pointed out in the next mantra.

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं पर्वतेषु विधावति ।

एवं धर्मान्पृथक्पश्यंस्तानेवानुविधावति ॥ २।१।१४

yathodakam durge vr̥ṣṭam parvateṣu vidhāvati |

evam dharmānṣṭhakpaśyamstānevānuvidhāvati || 2|1|14

As even rain water from inaccessible height dispersed on lower hilly regions, the one who sees the selves differently runs after them only.

The rain water that lashes on the top of the mountains gets itself splattered totally. They get into many streams. Afterwards they get evaporated by the sun and absorbed by the ground and the plants. Similarly one who sees Ātmā—mentioned here as dharma—and the Jagat as separate—pṛthakpaśyan—from himself has only the lot of taking different types of śarīrās again and again like even the various streams that come down from the mountain top. Pṛthak darśanam is the cause for the whole problem. There is only One swarupa without a second which is Sat Chit Ananda and what is generally perceived is not true. If that is so, how then is it to be seen and known? Yama says:

यथोदकं शुद्धे शुद्धमासिक्तं तद्दृगेव भवति ।

एवं मुनेर्विजानत आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥ २।१।१५

yathodakam śuddhe śuddhamāsiktaṁ tadṛgeva bhavati |

evam munervijānata ātmā bhavati gautama || 2|1|15

Hey Gautama, as even pure water poured on pure water becomes verily the same, so also does become the Self of the man of knowledge who is given to deliberation on the Self.

Yathodakam śuddhe śuddhamāsiktaṁ tadṛgeva bhavati : Just as clean waters coming from the clouds fall into the pond of pure water becomes the same, muni, meaning manana śīlavān comes to appreciate the oneness of Jiv and Isvara. Bhashyakara, therefore, says rejecting all distorted logics that only confirm the bheda dr̥ṣṭi that is already known and also the kudr̥ṣṭi which is kutsitadr̥ṣṭi of the nāstikās, one should give heed to Veda which is comparable to the intensity of desire of thousands of parents for the goodness and wellbeing of their children—mātā piṭṛ sahasrebhyo’pi hitaiṣiṇā. One should take recourse to Mother Sruti, which is interested in the wellbeing of all tells people who are adhikaris meaning those who had given up their vanity of understanding—śānta darpaiḥ—to realize the unity of the Self.