

कठोपनिषद् Kāthopanīṣad

न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसाभिक्लृप्तो य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ १ ॥

na sandrṣe tiṣṭhati rūpamasya na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaścanainam ।
hṛdā manīṣā manasābhiklṛpto ya etadviduramṛtāste bhavanti ॥ १ ॥
Asya rupam samdrse na tishtati. Na kascana enamcaksusa pasyati. Hrda manisa,
sa abhiklptah. Ye etat viduh amrtah bhavanti.

His form does not exist within the range of vision. No one beholds Him with the eyes. By controlling the mind with his intellect and by incessant meditation, He is revealed. Those who know this become immortal ones.

A calm and focused intellect is a must for ātmajñānam. Citta ekāgratā is the qualification and yoga is the means for that. Karma yoga and Samādhi yoga are mentioned in the Bhagavad Gītā for Citta śuddhi and Citta ekāgratā. Samādhi abhyāsa, as mentioned in the 6th chapter of the Gītā, is not possible without these.

In the last mantra, Puruṣa was said to be aliṅga, meaning devoid of all distinctive marks. If it is so, how is it possible to know this aliṅga Ātmā? - katham tarhi aliṅgasya darśanam upadhyate? It is said:

Ātmā which is sarva pramāṇa agocaram and hence aprameyam, fortunately happens to be Svaprakāśa Caitanyam which is always available in the mind as awareness principle but as awareness mixed with varieties of thoughts – vṛitti miśrita caitanya rūpeṇa sarvadā upalabhyate. Here Svaprakāśa Caitanyam and aprakāśa vṛtiḥ are both mixed together. Ātmajñānam is shifting the attention from aprakāśa vṛtiḥ to Svaprakāśa Caitanyam.

Thoughts come and go; Awareness is there all the time. I am not the thought, but I am the Awareness which is not part, product or property of the thought. Awareness is in and through every thought illumining it. Awareness is not limited by the boundaries of thought; It survives even after the thought is resolved. But the surviving Consciousness is not accessible—not because it is not there, but there is no medium for its manifestation. anabhivyakta rūpeṇa

caitanya rūpa aham sarvadā bhavāmi. Śruti says: 'whoever claims this, will claim immortality'.

Na sandṛṣe tiṣṭhati rūpamasya: The nature of Ātmā being what it is, it is not available as an object for senses. 'Sandṛṣe' is a Vedic expression meaning 'samdarśana viṣaye na tiṣṭati. It means Ātmā does not fall within the scope of sensory perception. Saccidānanda nature of Ātmā does not fall within the scope of sensory perception. It is indriya agocaram.

na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaścanainam: No one can see this Ātmā by the sense organ, eyes. Mention of 'eyes' in the mantra is made only suggestively. It is an upalakṣaṇa. It includes all other sense-organs. If eyes cannot see Ātmā, then all other sense organs also cannot objectify.

hṛdā manīṣā manasābhikṛpta

Since the Ātmā does not fall within the range of any sense organ, nobody can perceive the Ātmā with sense organs. Then how can one know that Ātmā? It is said: Hṛdā means hṛtsthā— By jahallakṣaṇa, Hṛdā means hṛtsthā. It points out to that which resides in the heart. Manīṣā means budhyā. Manīṣā is the name of buddhi. The word Manīṣā consists of two words: manaḥ and iṭ. Manaḥ is the extrovert mind and Īṭ is the controller. This word comes from the root iṣ and means 'to master'. Therefore, Manīṣā means the controller of the mind, the intellect, which rules over the mind. Such a masterly intellect pulls the mind from all other occupations at the time of Vedanta śravaṇam. With such a masterly, non-vacillating and one-pointed intellect, one has to know the Ātmā. Manasā - manana rūpa samyakdarśanena—with the help of a sharp intellect, right understanding takes place—and Ātmā is ābhikṛptaḥ— abhiprakāśitaḥ – revealed. Ātmā is revealed with the help of right understanding which is gained with the help of a right intellect.

ya etadviduramṛtāste bhavanti – Those who know it, te, they; amṛtaḥ bhavanti, become immortal.

In this manner, Ātmā is available for knowing. The person who knows this Ātmā to be Brahman claims immortality which is already his nature— śruti tam atmānam etat brahma ye viduḥ te amṛtā bhavanti. He is free from birth, death and saṁsāraḥ.

The message of this mantra is a focussed and non-vacillating intellect is a very important qualification, and for that yoga is talked about in the next two mantras.