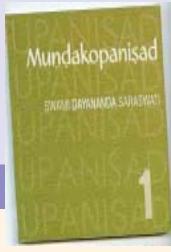




# मुण्डकोपनिषद् Mundakopanisad



(contd.. from last issue)

One is a seeker helplessly. One is not a seeker to remain a seeker always. One is seeking because one cannot but seek; because one is not satisfied being what he or she is. Therefore, one wants freedom from seeking. There is seeking on the part of jiva, but it is in the wrong places. One cannot say, "I am seeking here because tis is the only place available". A person lost her ring and was searching for it in the street. Somebody wanting to help, asked her,

"What are you searching for?"

Oh, I lost my ring."

"Where did you lose it?"

"Oh, I lost it in my house somewhere/"

"Then why are you searching here?"

"Oh, my house is all dark. Here there is light".

One has to search in the place where it is lost. One has to search where there is the sense of dissatisfaction or where satisfaction is sought.

Satisfaction is not an object of experience; it is just being oneself. Either one is satisfied or dissatisfied. So, the satisfaction is centred on 'I', even as dissatisfaction is. Therefore, 'I' alone has to have satisfaction. The subject, who is satisfied goes about searching for happiness. The very search itself confirms the notion about the subject—"I am dissatisfied. First, such a notion is accepted as a reality, and the one seeks satisfaction. Suppose one does an action stemming from a false problem, that only confirms the existence of the false problems and the problem begins to develop roots. Our own experiences point out that the notion 'I am dissatisfied', itself is perhaps wrong. Through the āpātata jñāna, a general knowledge, that one gets from the śāstra here and there and through paperbacks or whatever, there arises in the person, 'I am the solution', I should already be the solution because I cannot find myself a satisfied person regardless of the situation, unless I am that person. Further, if without depending on any situation I have to be satisfied, then that satisfaction should be the very nature of myself. May be the dissatisfaction is only a notion. Then ignorance about myself is the problem.

One is born ignorant, ignorant of the subject and the objects. One keeps on shedding ignorance about objects. Whatever knowledge one has is only about objects, meaning anything that one can objectify. This includes psychology also, because one observes the mind in psychology. So, if someone is ignorant about the subject originally, the ignorance cannot go just like that. One has to gain the opposite of it, the knowledge of the ignorance. The desire to be free is thus converted into a desire to know, either initially or a little later.

In the beginning itself, because of *āpātata jñāna*, one may have already converted the *mumukṣā*, desire to be free, into *jijñāsā*, desire to know. More often than not, in the beginning a lukewarm *mumukṣā* is there, but there is no *jijñāsā* at all. There is reason why there is a connection between the inquiry into *sāstra* and one's commitment to *mokṣā*. This connection is very important. When one is interested in *mokṣā*, why should one look into the *sāstra*? Even though the *sāstra* is external, its subject matter, the *vastu* is neither external nor internal. The *sāstra* is in the form of words, and it has to come from outside. So, when one looks into the *sāstra* one is surrendering to a means of knowledge and letting it operate upon oneself.

Even though one operates one's eyes and ears to look into the book or listen to the words, the will is not really involved in the process of operating them. To see an object one opens the eyes. Opening the eyelids is definitely an action. The closed eyes are open now, and the action of opening is born of will. If one wants to listen to somebody talking in the next room, one puts one's heart, soul and everything on that particular ear, left or right, depending upon where this conversation is going on. Initially one may will to know something and may place oneself in a situation where one can see, one can hear, and so on. The will is used there all right, because one decides to know a subject matter. Once the *pramāṇa* begins to operate—ears capable of hearing are there, the object sound is there—hearing takes place automatically, and the will is suspended. It is not a question of deciding to hear or not hear. There is no will involved in hearing.

When one opens one's eyes to see, one's will gets suspended automatically. What a beauty it is! When one looks up at the mountains outside, there is no will, it is suspended. When a sound is heard, the will is suspended. When a smell is picked up, the will is suspended. So, the result of the *pramāṇa* is accomplished when the will is automatically suspended. When the *pramāṇa* of Vedanta is in operation, one's will has to be suspended, because it is not automatic, coming as it does, from an external source. That is why one requires a healthy attitude towards the *sāstra pramāṇa* itself. You are listening to somebody, and naturally, you do not want to be taken for a ride. Some all the defence mechanisms come to the fore, the whole system gets tense. Since the words are coming from another source, to make it work like a *pramāṇa*,

one's will has to get suspended. That is where śraddhā is required. That śraddhā is something that is to be acquired and cultivated through more and more understanding of the nature of knowledge itself.

Understanding Vedanta is the same as understanding oneself, oneself being the subject matter. One does not make use of any deliberation here. One's will does not have any place whatsoever. This suspension of the will is a redeeming feature. This is so because, if the ahaṅkāra, the will is operating then, it will bring in wishful thinking in the operation of the means of knowledge. Then, the subject matter is not understood as it is. It is like a frightened person looking at the rope. The operation of pramāṇa is vitiated by one's own ego there. In seeing the rope, there is a fright. The fright is something that is centered on ahaṅkāra only. Fear does not belong to the liver or kidney. It belongs to ahaṅkāra. It is the ego that interferes and converts the rope into snake.

Will is necessary to perform an action and it has got to be maintained till the end. One continues with the action and achieves what one wants to achieve. In executing an action, will is the prime factor. In the situation of knowing, the pramāṇa is the prime factor. Will is not even a secondary factor in the operation of a pramāṇa. This is why we say there are two types of results. One is a result where the will is retained; the other is a result where the will is suspended. The former is the karma-phala which is the result of action performed, retaining one's will. The latter is jñāna phala or pramāṇa phala that takes place when one uses a means of knowledge without the involvement of one's will. When it comes to Vedanta the deliberate suspension of will has to be there for the reason mentioned above. If this is understood, then one must expose oneself to the śāstra to gain this knowledge.

Śaṅkara puts it this way in Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya (1.1.2 and 1.1.4). Knowledge is not kartṛ tantra, it is not centred on the agent 'I', the will. It is vastu tantra, centred on the vastu, the thing that one wants to know. Knowledge and the object of that knowledge are not two different things. If it is a flower, then one's perception should lead to the knowledge of the flower. Knowledge is exactly like the object perceived. If the object of knowledge in one's head is one thing, and the object outside revealed by the pramāṇa is quite another, then we say there is some defect in the pramāṇa. In the perception there is some defect.

Similarly, here, the vastu is ātman and the śāstra reveals ātman to be Brahman. But some people, who look into the same śāstra, come up with different ideas about the ātman. There are various schools of thought—ātmans are many, ātman is one and many, ātman is both inert and insentient, ātman is kartṛ and so on. So, even though the pramāṇa is in operation, there is some defect in the instrument of knowledge. Śāstra has got to be understood to convey exactly the same meaning that it wants to convey. That is where a teacher walks in.