

Mundakopanishad

Mantra 3.1.6

In the previous this *mantra*, *satya* was presented and talked about as an important means. There are two types of means, *asādhāraṇa-sādhana*, a particular means, and *sādhāraṇa-sādhana*, general means. Values like speaking truth are general means for gaining *ātman* is not the result of an action, but the result of knowledge. For the knowledge also there is a particular, unique means namely *śāstra-śravaṇa*, listening to the *śāstra*. If someone says, "In spite of doing *śravaṇa* I have not got the knowledge," that is because the person requires some general means. This equips one with what is called *adhikāritva*, eligibility. Among the general means, the value of speaking truth is singled out and praised very much in the following *mantra* because it implies everything else.

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं
सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।
येनाक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामाः
यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥ ३.१.६ ॥

satyameva jayate nānṛtaṁ
satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ .
yenākramantyrṣayo hyāptakāmāḥ
yatra tatsatyasya paramaṁ.nidhānam. (3.1.6)

satyam -- speaking the truth; *eva* -- alone; *jayate* -- wins;
na -- not; *anṛtam* -- untruth; *devayānaḥ* -- celestial being;
panthāḥ -- a path; *vitataḥ* -- is laid out ; *satyena* -- with truthfulness;
yena hi -- by which indeed; *rṣayaḥ* -- those who know;
āptakāmāḥ -- those who have fulfilled their desires;
ākramanti -- they go and claim; *yatra* -- where;
tat -- that; *paraman* -- the greatest; *nidhānam* --treasure;
satyena -- of truthfulness

The one who speaks truth alone wins, not the one who is untruthful. The path for the celestial chariot is laid with truthfulness. By this path indeed those who know, who have fulfilled their desires, go and claim that *brahma-loka*, where the greatest treasure of truthfulness is present.

Satyameva jayate:¹⁶⁰ truth alone wins. *Satya* is a value and *anṛta* is the opposite of it. They are purely in terms of a person's life as they are centered in a person. They themselves cannot win or lose unless expressed through a person. So *satya* should be read as *satyavādin*, one who speaks the truth.¹⁶¹ He alone wins, not the one who is untruthful. First, *satya* is in the form of discipline, later it becomes spontaneous. *Satya* is *upalakṣaṇa*, an indicator, for all other universal values. What stands for everything else of the same *jāti*, species, is called an *upalakṣaṇa*. How do you say *satya* wins? In the world it is very well seen that one who practices falsehood does not win.

One may say, "That is not true. Those who are untruthful win most of the court cases. The truthful ones win sometimes only." It is because one who is truthful generally things that truth will prove itself, and one need not do anything. So one becomes negligent and does not create a situation where one can prove that one is truthful. But the one who is untruthful has the problem of proving the untruth, so he builds up or crates all evidence very carefully. *Satya* has to be proven in a court of law; it does not prove itself. That is why a truthful person generally loses, and the untruthful gains. The truthful person can become an atheist later.

Really speaking, the untruthful person is punished by *anṛta* itself. Even through he thinks he has won, he really did not win anything, honestly speaking. Any crime itself is punishment. It creates a conflict within; that is a big punishment. Further, it attracts *pāpa*, which can fructify now or later. It is not a good bargain at all. Suppose, a person steals and gets a prison term, he is punished in three ways. Stealing causes fear and conflict. It is a psychological punishment. There is a judgment against him and the State puts him behind bars just to deter this kind of action. That is a punitive punishment. In addition to these two, he has to experience the result of his action of *pāpa* later in the form of painful situations. The *pāpa* is not exhausted by the State's punishment. It is Vedic punishment.

Pāpa is not like the State's punishment. Suppose there are two criminal cases against a person. For one he attracts three years of imprisonment, for the other he attracts four years of imprisonment. It means he has to stay in jail for seven years. But then the judge can say, "He will undergo the sentences concurrently." Then the three-year term is included in the four years. Therefore, he has to be in jail only for four years. But *pāpa* is active even if one has exhausted the State punishment. It is waiting there to give further pain later. So it is not a good bargain at all. *Anṛta* never pays.

Satyavādin always, finally, wins. He need not win at all. He has already won by the very speaking of the truth. That he did not yield to anything else is the victory. He stood by the truth even through he knew he would lose out in the world. He did not loose himself in the process. That is a great victory. It is the real victory. He should enjoy that victory. He is the one who is going to get the treasure called *mokṣa*. The *śāstra* makes it clear in the next sentences that the *satyavādin* finally prevails.

Satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ: the path to *brahma-loka* is laid out buy the value of speaking truth. The one who speaks truth alone can gain Brahman. That path is called *devayāna*,¹⁶² a path by which the celestial chariot moves, and takes one to *brahma-loka* where the treasure of *mokṣa* lies.

Yena ṛṣayaḥ ākramanti : by which path alone the sages gain that destination. The *ṛṣis* are those¹⁶³ who follow *dharma*, who are free from presentation, deception, exploitation of the helpless, vanity and falsehood, all of which are the modifications of *anṛta*. One can avoid them only when one is free from greed for worldly objects. The compromise comes because of the undue value that one has given to things like name, money power, etc. Having gained the path of *satya*, the *ṛṣis* have become *āpta-kāmāḥ*, those whose desires remain fulfilled. One has to construe here that they gain knowledge thereafter, and then become *āpta-kāmāḥ*. Or one can take the word '*āpta-kāmāḥ*' in a relative sense. They are free from the hold of *rāga-dveṣa*.

Tat paramam nidhānam satyasya: that is the place of great treasure, the ultimate end called *mokṣa*. The ultimate end of the path of *satya* exists only in the *buddhi*. A path is always connected to a destination that is to be accomplished. The destination is called *nidhāna* here because a treasured thing is there.¹⁶⁴ Suppose, one strikes a gold mine under the earth. It is a *paramam*. The gold mine is not really gold. One will find only a streak of gold somewhere in the goldmine. But here, what one finds is solid gold. It is therefore called *nidhānam*, the greatest treasure. There cannot be any better treasure than Brahman. Gaining this, one feels fulfilled. Gaining every other treasure makes one more unfulfilled, but gaining this treasure makes one *kṛtakṛtya*, all that is to be done, remains done by him. Again, in this gain all gains are included.

The *śāstra* consciously talks here in the language of gain of a treasure, because people always have a value for that. Brahman is the greatest treasure. People want knowledge; knowledge of Brahman is the greatest knowledge. People want freedom from the fear of death; it is *amṛta*, immortality. Here the imagery like a chariot, treasure and so on is used by the *śāstra*.

The whole thing is a very conscious teaching. These imageries generally lead a person to think that the thing to be accomplished is away from oneself in time and space, that one has to get into the chariot and reach a destination avoiding all obstacles on the path. If the words of the *śruti* give rise to any such wrong ideas, those ideas have to be negated.

The following *mantra* negates some of the concepts about Brahman. In each *mantra* the *vastu* is unfolded through different words, negating any misconceptions in the process. It is the style in the teaching of Vedanta.

160 The root 'ji' takes *parasmaipada* affixes, except when it is preceded by the prefixes *vi* and *parā*. The usage *jayate* instead of *jayati* is therefore *chāndasa*, Vedic usage.

161 न हि सत्यानृतयोः केवलयोः पुरुषानाश्रितयोः जयः परजयाऽ वा सम्भवति । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

162 देवा यान्ति अनेन पथा इति देवयानः ।

163 ऋषयो दर्शनवन्तः कुहक-माया-शाठ्याहङ्कार-दम्भानृत-वर्जिताः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

164 निधानं पुरुषार्थ-रूपेण निधीयते इति निधानं वक्तते । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

To be continued.....