

Mundakopanishad

Mantra 3.2.8

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रे
अस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।
तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः
परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ ३.२.८ ॥

*yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre
astam gacchanti nāmarūpe vihāya.
tathā vidvān nāmarūpādvimuktaḥ
parātparam puruṣamupaiti divyam.(3.2.8)*

yathā -- just as; *nadyaḥ* -- the rivers;
syandamānāḥ -- flowing; *astam gacchanti* -- they disappear;
samudre -- in the ocean; *vihāya* -- giving up;
nāmarūpe -- their names and forms; *tathā* -- so too;
vidvān -- the knower of *ātman*; *vimuktaḥ* -- becomes free;
nāmarūpāt -- from name and form; *upaiti* -- gains;
divyam -- that which is of the nature of consciousness;
parāt param -- which is superior to *māyā*.

Just as the rivers flowing in various directions disappear in the ocean, giving up their names and forms, so too, the knower of *ātman* becomes free from name and form and gains Brahman, which is of the nature of consciousness and is superior to *māyā*.

Yathā syandamānāḥ nadyaḥ: just as the rivers flowing down. The various river like Gaṅgā and Yamunā flow downward to reach the ocean. Some rivers join other rivers and travel together to get to the ocean, just like Yamunā joins the Gaṅgā that is flowing towards the ocean. One cannot argue that Yamunā does not go to the ocean. Through Gaṅgā it goes to the ocean. All of them have a commitment to reach the ocean. They do not want to be separate from the ocean; they want to be the ocean. They know very well where they are heading. If they know the west coast is nearer, then they will flow to that side. They do not want to travel longer than necessary. They are not like the *samsārins*. They do not have wanderlust. All of them, having reached the ocean, *astam gacchanti*: disappear there. They give up their individuality.

How do they disappear? *Nāmarūpe vihāya*: by giving up their name and form. Previously also, as water, they were never separate from the ocean. They were different from the ocean only in name and form. If they were enlightened with the knowledge that 'I am water,' then enlightened they move towards the ocean to fulfil their *prārabdha-karma*. If they were not enlightened, still they reach the ocean and give up their individual name and form. But they come back again. The idea conveyed through this illustration is only this much-- they reach the ocean giving up their individuality, their name and form. The form includes its own history and its own terrain through which it flows.

Tathā vidvān nāma rūpāt vimuktaḥ: similarly, one who knows the *ātman* becomes completely free from name and form. Already he was free from name and form, as he did not take the name and form as *ātman*. Now, he gives up that name and form also. Then he does not come back. Where does he go? He does not go anywhere. *Parāt paraṁ puruṣam upaiti*: he gains the self that is beyond even the unmanifest, that is *māyā*. *Parāt paraṁ* means greater than the unmanifest, the undifferentiated. Gaining or reaching is only figurative here. Already he is that self.

The word '*divya*' means pure consciousness.

The word '*para*' if used alone will indicate that which is neither limited by time and space, nor is it an object. If that word is used twice, then the first '*para*' will refer to only *avyakta* or *māyā*, which is the cause of the world. It is similar to the use of the word '*akṣara*' which generally indicates only Brahman. But if it is said '*akṣarāt paraḥ*' then that *akṣara* will be *avyakta* or *māyā*. One has to look at the context to determine the meaning.

A question may arise here. If the wise person gives up the name and form, how do we worship him in a particular form? A wise person who has given up the body does not have a name and form, which is why we worship him. His particular name and form becomes the altar for worshipping *Īśvara*.

Now, the teaching is concluded. The conclusion is very interesting.

to be continued...