

Mundakopanishad

Mantra 3.2.10

तदेतद् ऋचाऽभ्युक्तम्-
क्रियावन्तः श्रोत्रिया ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः
स्वयं जुह्वत एकार्षिं श्रद्धयन्तः ।
तेषामेवैतां ब्रह्मविद्यां वदेत
शिरोव्रतं विधिवद्यैस्तु चीर्णम् ॥३.२.१०॥

tadetad ṛcā'bhuyuktam
kriyāvantaḥ śrotriyā brahmaniṣṭhāḥ
svayam juhvata ekarṣim śraddhayantaḥ.
teṣāmevaitāṁ brahmavidyāṁ vadeta
śirovratam vidhivad yaistu cīrṇam. (3.2.10)

tad etad -- this stipulation; *abhuyuktam* -- has been laid down;
ṛcā -- by a *mantra*; *vadeta* -- one must teach;
etām -- this; *brahma-vidyām* -- knowledge of Brahman;
eva -- only; *teṣām* -- to those people;
kriyāvantaḥ -- who do their duties;
śrotriyāḥ -- who have studied the Veda;
brahma-niṣṭhāḥ -- who are committed to the pursuit of Brahman;
svayam -- themselves; *juhvate* -- perform;
ekarṣim -- the *ekarṣi* ritual; *śraddhayantaḥ* -- with *śraddhā*;
yaish tu -- and by whom; *śiro-vratam* -- a ritual of carrying fire on the head; *vidhivat* -- according to stipulation;
cīrṇam -- is done

This stipulation has been laid down by a *mantra*. One must teach this *brahma-vidyā* only to those people who do their duties, who have studied the Veda, who are committed to the pursuit of Brahman, who themselves perform *ekarṣi* ritual with great *śraddhā*, and by whom the *śirovratam* is done properly.

Tadetad ṛcā abhuyuktam: this has been said by a *mantra*. The stipulation that is going to be said now, regarding imparting this knowledge to another person, is told by a *mantra*. *Ṛk* means a *mantra*. What is that stipulation? This knowledge is to be given only to those people who qualify as follows:

Kriyāvantaḥ: those who do the enjoined rituals. The interpretation of the word '*kriyā*' is based on the words that come later. *Kriyāvats* are generally interested in the results of *karma*. Here they are committed to the pursuit of Brahman. The commitment is only in terms of desire. They are *karma-yogins*, and do their *karmas* for the sake of *mokṣa*.

Śrotriyāḥ: those who have studied the Veda. Here the word '*śrotriyāḥ*' refers to those who belong to the *Atharvaveda* because the *upaniṣad* belongs to this Veda. Once they finish their studies, they perform the enjoined rituals, and thereafter they understand what exactly the *purṣārtha* is. Then they become *brahma-niṣṭhāḥ*: committed to knowing Brahman.²¹⁸

Śraddhayantaḥ: those who have *śraddhā* in the rituals that they do. With *śraddhā* they perform the fire ritual known as *ekarṣi*. *Ekarṣi* is the name for the *agnihotra* ritual in *Atharvaveda*. One who performs this particular ritual purely for the sake of *antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhi* qualifies for the teaching. *Svayam juhvati*: they do the ritual themselves, not by proxy.

Further, *yaiḥ cīrṇam śirovratam*: by whom this particular ritual known as *śirovrata* is done. It is a ritual in which one carries a pot of fire on the head.²¹⁹ The idea here is symbolic. The fire indicates light. One thereby reveals one's intention of seeking the light of knowledge. *Atharvaveda* enjoins this ritual. One who studies *Atharvaveda* will know this ritual. Others may not know about this ritual.

One should give this knowledge only to those who have commitment to Brahman and who either have done rituals and become *sannyāsins*, or have been properly doing rituals with *śraddhā*. In other words, a person free from the impurities of mind and committed to the pursuit of knowledge is fit to receive this knowledge. Even if one gives it to any other person, he will not receive it.

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218 ब्रह्म-निष्ठाः अपरस्मिन् ब्रह्मणि अभियुक्ताः परं ब्रह्म बुभुत्सवः । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

219 शिरोव्रतं शिरस्यग्नि-धारण-लक्षणम् । यथाथर्वाणां वेदव्रतं प्रसिद्धम् । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

### Mantra 11

तदेतत् सत्यम्  
ऋषिरङ्गिराः पुरोवाच नैतदचीर्णव्रतोऽधीते ।  
नमः परमऋषिभ्यो नमः परमऋषिभ्यः ॥ ३.२.११ ॥

*tadetat satyam.*

*ṛṣiraṅgirāḥ purovāca naitad*

*acīrṇavrato' dhīte.*

*namaḥ paramaṛṣibhyo namaḥ*

*paramaṛṣibhyaḥ. (3.2.11)*

*tad etat* -- this; *satyam* -- truth; *ṛṣiḥ* -- sage;  
*aṅgirāḥ* -- Aṅgiras; *purā* -- before; *uvāca* -- said;  
*na* -- not; *etat* -- this; *acīrṇavrataḥ* -- one who has not done the ritual;  
*adhīte* -- studies; *namaḥ* -- salutation; *paramaṛṣibhyaḥ* -- to the seers of Brahman; *namaḥ* --  
salutation; *parama-ṛṣibhyaḥ* -- to the seers of Brahman

This is *satyam*. Sage Aṅgiras taught this once upon a time. One who has not done the prescribed ritual may not study this *upaniṣad*. Salutation to the seers of Brahman. Salutation to the seers of Brahman.

The *śruti* confirms once more that the Brahman, which is *akṣara* and which is the subject matter of *parā-vidyā*, is indeed *satya*. Aṅgiras taught this once upon a time and this statement is *satya*. Aṅgiras did teach this *vidyā* to his disciple Śaunaka. Similarly, a teacher should teach his student who has approached him properly which is why it is said '*purovāca*'. Every word used by the *śruti* has some significance.

Now, the teacher quietly adds, *naitat acīrṇavrataḥ adhīte*: one who has not done the prescribed ritual may not study this *upaniṣad*. Only a qualified person should study it. If others hear the sentence, 'Everything is Brahman,' they will give up *karma*. They will not understand Brahman either, and therefore, will fall from both pursuits.

*Namaḥ parama-ṛṣibhyaḥ, namaḥ parama-ṛṣibhyaḥ*: salutation to the great *ṛṣis* who have seen Brahman.<sup>220</sup> Those who have seen that exalted Brahman, are *parama-ṛṣis*. Those who have seen *mantras*, which are necessary for performing the rituals etc., are also *ṛṣis* are distinguished from them by the adjective '*parama*'. Salutation to all the *gurus* in the tradition starting from one's *guru*. Therefore, the words '*parama-ṛṣibhyaḥ*' is twice repeated here. The repetition is also meant to indicate the completion of the *upaniṣad*. It is how a text is closed. One also knows that the knowledge has been completely imparted. In the tradition they never stop the study, but repeat the first *mantra* to indicate starting all over again. So, *namaḥ parama-ṛṣibhyaḥ, namaḥ parama-ṛṣibhyaḥ*.

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220 परं ब्रह्म साक्षाद् दृष्टवतः ये ब्रह्मादयः अवगतवन्तश्च ते परमर्षयः । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

।इति तृतीयमुण्डके द्वितीयखण्डः ।

*iti tṛtīyamunḍake dvitīyakhandaḥ*

Thus ends the second section of third chapter.

*With this issue the Mundakopanishad transcribed talk of Pujya Swamiji is being concluded. From next issue onwards a new series, again a Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk on the topic 'Shraddha-bhakti-dhyana-yogad-avaihi', will start. This topic is from Kaivalyopanishad.*