

Mundakopanishad

The *Mundakoupaniṣad* is now complete. The teacher seems to feel that he has taught enough after seeing the student's situation. Very rarely, is it due to the teacher's situation. The student will never say, 'it is enough,' but the teacher says, 'enough.' Looking at the response of a student to the teaching, an adept teacher will be able to figure out whether the student understands or not. He can find out when the student seems to be relaxed, when he gets tense and so on. In a crucial topic, if he is relaxed, then he must understand. When one starts teaching, one understands all these things.

Here, Śaunaka seems to understand, and the teacher now is in a mood to conclude. In conclusion, generally, either one sums up what one has said, or presents the result of knowledge and praises the result. It is called *phala-śruti*. At the end there is always *phala-śruti*. After summing up, the *phala-śruti* is given here. There is also some description about the one who gains this knowledge. The first *mantra* says that a *mumukṣu* can gain *mokṣa* by worshipping the *ātmajñā*. As one wants, so one gets.

Mantra 3.2.1

स वेदैतत् परमं ब्रह्म धाम
यत्र विश्वं निहितं भाति शुभ्रम् ।
उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामाः
ते शुक्रमेतदतिवर्त्तन्ति धीराः ॥३.२.१॥

*sa vedaitat paramam brahma dhāma
yatra viśvam nihitam bhāti śubhram.
upāsate puruṣam ye hyakāmāḥ
te śukrametadativarttanti dhīrāḥ (3.2.1)*

saḥ -- that person; *veda*-- knows; *etat* -- this;
brahma -- Brahman; *paramam* -- the greatest;
dhāma -- the abode; *yatra* -- in which;
viśvam -- the entire world; *nihitam* -- is placed;
śubhram-- bright; *bhāti* -- is self-revealing; *te* -- those;
dhīrāḥ -- discriminative people;
hi akāmāḥ -- free from seeking limited ends;
ye -- who; *upāsate* -- worship; *puruṣam* -- the knower of *ātman*; *ativarttanti* -- cross; *etat* -- this; *śukram* -- repeated births

The knower of *ātman* knows this Brahman which is the greatest abode, in which the entire world is placed, and which is self-revealing. Those who are discriminative and are free from seeking limited ends, who worship the knower of *ātman*, cross this *saṁsāra* of repeated births.

Sa etat brahma veda: that knower of *ātman* knows this Brahman. What does he know about Brahman? He knows Brahman as *paramam dhāma*, the greatest abode, gaining which one never comes back. It is the abode gaining which there is nothing more to gain. It is the ultimate destination which is one's home, where one is relaxed for good, and where all one's desires are as good as fulfilled.

Brahman is the greatest abode because it *yatra viśvaṃ nihitam*, where the entire *jagat* is placed. It is never away from the *jagat*. *Yat śubhram bhāti* : it reveals itself all the time as pure consciousness. When you are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, doing or experiencing anything, it reveals itself as the seer, hearer, smeller, taster, toucher, doer or experiencer. Or, it reveals itself as what is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched, done, and experience. But still, it is *śubhram*, untouched by anything. The word '*bhāti*' gives this *mantra* the meaning of a *mahā-vākya*. *Bhāti* here means Brahman shines. *Ātman* alone, however, shines by itself, while everything else shines after it. It means Brahman and *ātman* are identical.

Further, *ye akāmāḥ:* those who have no desire for any *loka* or any objects in a *loka* ¹⁸⁰ For a seeker, *kāmas* are the problem. A person seeking fulfilment of *kāmas* is chasing, fighting with shadows. There is no *puruṣārtha-niścaya*, clarity with reference to what one wants in life. Once the desire for *mokṣa* is there, then that person begins living his or her life.

Te pusuṣam upāsate: such people approach the *ātmajñā* and worship him. Either they listen to him and gain this knowledge, or they worship him to gain the eligibility for this knowledge. They seek his grace, not for some job promotion or a trip to heaven, but for gaining *mokṣa*. They find in him something that makes him what he is. They ask him for that knowledge. One may not get it even if one is worshipping him daily, doing varieties of service, unless one asks for it. He will not teach if he sees that one is interested in limited ends. Those who seek knowledge are called *dhīrāḥ*, discriminative. The blessing of the wise person for them is in the form of teaching.

Te śukram etad ativarttanti: they cross the seed that causes birth. They no longer become the product of a seed. It is a very nice way of saying that they cross *saṃsāra*. If a *mumukṣu* goes to an *ātmajñā* he is released. It is a bold statement. The *śāstra* is very definite about it, which is why the *Chāndogyaopaniṣad* says, "The one who has a teacher knows."¹⁸¹ The teacher will take care of all the requirements. All that the seeker needs is the capacity to discern. Then there is no let or hindrance in gaining the knowledge. So if one is desirous of *mokṣa*, one should seek the guidance and blessings of the *ātmajñā*.

The primary means for *mokṣa* is *jijñāsā*, the desire to know. The desire for freedom has to get converted into a desire for knowledge by a process of discriminative inquiry about the various means and ends. There is no accidental *mokṣa*. You cannot stumble upon yourself; you have to choose *mokṣa*. You are already free, and so you have to choose to know this fact. Your choice of *mokṣa* is not based upon any reasoning expect that there is no other real human end. All that can be gained by any other pursuit is included in any other pursuit. This kind of *viveka* is necessary for choosing *mokṣa*. It will take care of everything else.

180 ह्यकामाः विभूति-तृष्णा-विर्जिताः मुमुक्षवः सन्तः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

181 आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद (छन्दोज्योपनिषत् 6.14.2)