



Muṇḍakopaniṣad



Prayer

For the study of upaniṣads belonging to Atharvaveda, like Muṇḍakopaniṣad, we chant the following prayer:

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः । भद्रं पश्येमाक्षिभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाꣳसस्तनूभिः । व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ।
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

bhadrām karṇebhiḥ śruṇuyāma devāḥ । bhadrām paśyemākṣhabhir yajatrāḥ ।
sthiraīraṅgaistuṣṭuvāṁsastanūbhiḥ । vyaśema devahitaṁ yadāyuh ।
svasti na indro vṛiddhaśravāḥ । svasti naḥ pūṣā viśvavedāḥ ।
svasti nāstārksyo ariṣṭanemiḥ । svasti no bṛihaspatirdadhātu ।
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ।

devāḥ - Oh Gods! karṇebhiḥ - with our ears; bhadrām - auspicious; śruṇuyāma - may we listen; yajatrāḥ - Oh yajatrāḥ - Oh Yajatras; ākṣibhiḥ - with eyes; bhadrām - auspicious; paśyemā - may we see; sthiraīḥ - with healthy; aṅgaiḥ - organs; tanūbhiḥ - by the bodies; tuṣṭuvāṁsaḥ - praising; yadāyuh - the full life span; devahitaṁ - for the good of the devas; vyaśema - may we engage; vṛiddhaśravāḥ - exalted (famous); indraḥ - God Indra; naḥ - to us; svasti - (dadhātu) - (may give) well being; viśvavedāḥ - the all-knowing; pūṣā - sun; naḥ - to us; svasti (dadhātu) - (may give) well being; ariṣṭanemiḥ - one for whom there are no obstacles in movement; tārkṣyaḥ - Garuda; naḥ - to us; (svasti dadhātu) - (may give) well-being; bṛihaspatiḥ - Brihaspati; naḥ - to us; svasti - well being; dadhātu - may give; om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ - let there be peace, peace, peace.

‘Oh Gods! May we always hear with our ears what is auspicious. Oh Yajatras! May we always see with our eyes what is auspicious. May we live, with healthy limbs and bodies, our full life span, praising the devatas and doing good to please them. May Indra of great fame, the all knowing and nourishing Sun,

Garuda, the one who knows no obstacles in his flight and Brihaspati, the protector of our intellect bless us with well-being and auspiciousness. Let there be peace through freedom from obstructions from three sources’.

Bhadraṁ karṇebhiḥ śruṇuyāma devāḥ: May we listen to what is the most auspicious, what is meaningful, what is truthful with our ears. May we have the opportunity to listen to the sāstrā which is talking about the truth. But mere opportunity to listen to the śāstrā is not good enough. Without śraddhā one would not take seriously what one listens to. So, may we also have śraddhā in listening to the sāstrā. Even when we listen with śraddhā, the sāstrā blesses us only when we understand it. Therefore, let us also understand it. It is not a prayer for listening with ears! May we listen to what is auspicious, what is truthfully sacred, what would free us from saṁsāra, the life of becoming. Let us have the opportunity to listen to such sāstrā with śraddhā.

Bhadraṁ paśyemākṣibhīryajatrāḥ: May the yajatrās, the devas who are the recipients of praise, protect us. Devas are Īśavara viewed from different standpoints. Yajatrās are a type of devas who help those who praise them. You pray to them to cross saṁsāra. May we see with our eyes things that are conducive for mokṣa. May our eyes help us see Īśavara who is the most auspicious. But how can you see Īśavara? The Śruti, says, “Everything is Īśvara. Therefore, you have to see more than what the eyes see. You have to see with your buddhi. That means ‘May we have the knowledge with the help of which we will see everything as Īśvara’.

Bhadraṁ śruṇuyāma and bhadraṁ paśyema can be taken in a relative sense also. In that case it will mean ‘May we not always see the defects in people, but see the virtues in everyone’. There are some virtues in everyone. We have to see those virtues and not the defects all the time. The buddhi has to be so saintly that it is able to see only the good in people. If it always sees the defects in everybody, it will be complaining about everyone. May we therefore see good in people and be at peace with ourselves. In other words, we must enjoy good qualities like sympathy, compassion, understanding, love, sharing, giving and friendliness. Only when we have these qualities do we see auspiciousness, not otherwise. So, the prayer really means ‘May we have all good qualities’.

Sthirairāṅgaiḥ tuṣṭuvāṁśaḥ tanubhi vyasema deva-hitam yadāyuh: May we engage ourselves with healthy limbs all our lifetime praising the devatās. May we live a life following the dhrama established by the Vedas or devas. May we please the devas by such a life. May our actions please the devas. Our entire life has to be lived like this.

Svasti na indro vṛddha-śravāḥ: May Indra who is the exalted one, who deserves all praise, give us well-being. Svasti na pūṣā viśva vedāḥ: May the all knowing Lord Sun do good to us. The Sun stands for Íśvara, the all-knowledge. Let us enjoy the grace of Íśvara by invoking Him as the Sun. What will we get by this grace? Íśvara being all-knowledge, we will be blessed with knowledge. The prayer here is: Let our buddhi become bright so that we can understand Íśvara.

Svasti naḥ tarkṣyo ariṣṭa nemiḥ: May Tarkṣya, Garuda, do good to us. Garuda, who also stands for Íśvara, has no obstacles in his flight. As Garuda flies in the sky without any obstacle, in the same way, may we gain Íśvara without any obstacle. Svasti no brahaspatirdadhātu: May Bṛhaspati do good to us. Bṛhaspati is the teacher of Indra. He is the presiding deity of the intellect. Vākpati is his other name. Let the grace of this teacher of teachers be with us.

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ: Om is the name of the Lord. The prayer is 'Oh Lord, let there be peace'. Here the peace that is talked about is freedom from obstacles. Let there be freedom from obstacles. The obstacles may come, but even as they rise may they resolve, and not disturb our pursuit. There are three types of obstacles viz. ādhidaivka ādhibhautika and adhyātimika. Ādhidaivka obstacles are those centered on factors over which one has no control. They are in the form of natural events like a heavy downpour, lightning, earthquakes and so on causing disturbance to one's pursuit of studies. Ādhibhautika obstacles arise from fellow human beings and other life forms. These are external forces over which you have no immediate control. The third source of obstruction is adhyātimika, centered on one's body-mind-sense-complex. Any physical or mental illness would be a major obstacle. This is a prayer to maintain good health and also a good mind. So, let there be no obstruction from the forces over which we have no control, or no immediate control. The invocation of śānti three times is for resolving these three types of obstacles, not for invoking three types of śānti. The word śānti also means nivṛtti, freedom. When someone is suffering because of prārabdha-karma, we take efforts by way of prāyascita-karma, expiatory action, which neutralises the adverse effect of past karma. This is known as śānti-karma. It may be a ritual or a prayer which one has to do. Prayer also is a śānti-karma, an action meant to ward off obstacles.

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