

Mundakopanishad

Mantra 6

वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थः
संन्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले
परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥ ३.२.६ ॥

*vedāntavijñānasuniścītārthāḥ
sannyāsayogādyatayaḥ śuddhasattvāḥ.
te brahmalokeṣu parāntakāle
parāmṛtāḥ parimucyanti sarve. (3.2.6)*

*sannyāsa-yogāt -- by a life of karma-yoga;
yatayaḥ -- those who become renunciates;
śuddhasattvāḥ -- whose mind is free from the hold of rāga-dveṣas;
vedānta-vijñāna-suniścītārthāḥ -- for whom the knowledge gained from Vedanta is very well-
ascertained;
parāmṛtāḥ -- being not separate from Brahman; te -- they;
sarve -- all; parimucyanti -- become free from the sense of limitation; brahma-lokeṣu -- into Brahman;
parāntakāle-- at the time of the death of the subtle body*

For those who become renunciates having lived a life of *karma-yoga*, whose minds are free from the hold of *rāga-dveṣas*, the knowledge gained from Vedanta is very well-ascertained. Being not separate from Brahman, all of them are completely free from the sense of limitation and they resolve into Brahman at the time of the death of the subtle body.

Now the question addressed is, when wise people die away, will they come back again? The word 'they' cannot be used anymore with respect to them. There is only one Brahman. Even while they are alive, the plural word 'they' was purely figurative for them. There is nothing to bring them back once they die. The individuality is not there. They remain non-separate from Īśvara. From the standpoint of the other *jīvas*, they become the alter of prayer and worship. As long as they are alive as *jīvan-muktas*, they have this limited body-mind-sense complex, which they do not take as themselves. Therefore, they are free. After death also they continue to be free, free of the body-mind-sense complex.

From the standpoint of the *upādhi*, there is a difference between a wise person and Īśvara. It is similar to the difference a tree in a forest and the forest. The *upādhi* of Īśvara is total, while the *upādhi* of a wise person is individual and limited. But the difference in *upādhi* is *mithyā*. A wise person will have experience of pleasure and pain according to the *prārabdha*.

Since he is free, he can afford to have a limited body-mind-sense complex. His body is part of *īśvara-sṛṣṭi*, and hence it continues to exist till the *prārabdha* is exhausted. It is how *jīvan-mukti* is possible. Otherwise, everything will disappear in the wake of knowledge.

The *śāstra* tells us that a *jīva* is bound by *karma* and is subject to rebirth. One is accountable for one's *karma*. Finally, the *śāstra* has to talk about the release from rebirth with respect to a wise person. Otherwise, a wise person will be free, and at the same time will be subject to rebirth, which is a contradiction. The *śāstra* always rushes to talk about *videha-mukti*, freedom from the body. *Videha-mukti* means that after the body falls, there is no return. One who has this *videha-mukti* is called a *videha-mukta*. He was a *jīva-mukta* before. That is why the word '*videha-mukta*' is used.

Vedānta-vijñāna-suniścitārthāḥ.²⁰⁶ those who have clear knowledge of Vedanta. Vedanta is *śabda-pramāṇa*. It refers to words that reveal the oneness of the *jīva* and *Īśvara*. The knowledge born of the words of Vedanta that 'I am Brahman' is *vedānta-vijñāna*. The *artha*, object, of this knowledge, namely Brahman, is *vedānta-vijñāna arthāḥ*. One who ascertains Brahman very well through this knowledge is *vedānta-vijñāna-suniścitārthāḥ*. For him, clear knowledge has taken place. The term '*suniścitārthāḥ*' implies that there is an inquiry and analysis because doubts are to be eliminated.

There is a need for an inquiry, though not as a rule. A rule is something that one has got to do. In order to know, one must have a *pramāṇa*. To know the *ātman*, one must have the *śabda-pramāṇa*. These are rules. That one must do *vicāra* in order to know *ātman*, is not a rule. *Vicāra* is not a *pramāṇa*. It is a necessity only when there are doubts, because the *śāstra* says that one has to do *vicāra* to eliminate doubts, if any. Doubts are many. In fact, before one listened to Vedanta one did not have many doubts. The only doubts was with respect to what one should do. Now, one has a new set of words and new facts after listening to Vedanta, and the mind may be full of doubts. Again, even if one may not have any doubts, one may still be confused as to how can *ātman* be Brahman. The resolution of doubts takes place only by *vicāra*. So *vicāra* is not a rule, but it is a necessity. One whose knowledge is free from doubts and error is referred to here as *vedānta-vijñāna-suniścitārthāḥ*.

They are *yatayaḥ*, renunciates. By convention *yati* means a *sannyāsin*. The one who has removed self-insignificance is called *yati*. A *sannyāsin* who has done that is called *yati*. The literal meaning of the word '*yati*' is one who makes efforts. Not that others do not make efforts. Even though lot of people make efforts, the *yati*'s effort here is to pursue knowledge by renouncing everything else. It is just the opposite of what one may think about 'having a lot of activities'. So it is said, *sannyāsa-yogāt-yatayaḥ*: because of the pursuit of knowledge, they are renunciates.

One may also take the word '*sannyāsa*' as renunciation of results of action. One whose mind is free from *rāga-dveṣas* due to grief due to *karma-yoga* is also a renunciate. He is not interested in any results like heaven when he does action, but wants only purity of mind. Renunciation is common in both the *sannyāsin* and *karma-yogin*. The former renounces *karmas* while the latter *karma-phalas*. Therefore, *sannyāsa-yoga* can mean both *sannyāsa* and *karma-yoga*. Otherwise, the meaning of the word '*sannyāsa*' can be taken as renunciation of actions after a life of *karma-yoga*. Renunciation of actions is not due to disenchantment but due to discernment.

Te parāntakāle parāmṛtāḥ parimucyanti sarve: at the time of the death of the subtle body, being non-separate from Brahman, they become free from rebirth. The word '*antakāla*' literally means at the end of one's life meaning at the time of death. Lord Yama is always around, and the moment he looks at someone, that is *antakāla*. When it takes place for a *jīvan-mukta* it is called *parāntakāla*.²⁰⁷ At the time of death, the individual leaves this physical body for good, unlike in the dream. In the dream he leaves the physical body by assuming a dream body, undergoes experiences, and comes back to the physical body. As long as breathing is going on, he will come back. If the *prāṇa* leaves, it means he has left this body behind for good. The body will not get up, and the survivors have to remove it and perform the obsequies. It is called *antakāla*. After leaving the physical body behind, an ignorant person travels to other worlds to experience the results of his *karmas*, and is reborn. In the case of a wise person, there is dissociation from the subtle body also and it perishes here.²⁰⁸ Therefore, a *jīvan-mukta*'s death is called *parāntakāla*. There is no causal body for him because the ignorance has already been destroyed. He remains as Brahman.

Since his accumulated *karmas* were burnt due to knowledge, his *prārabdha-karmas* were exhausted through experience and he had no new *karmas* to his credit due to absence of doership, his subtle body does not travel, and it dissolves here. So wise people *parimucyanti*,²⁰⁹ get totally freed from bondage. It is not a temporary release from bondage like going to heaven, which is also called *mokṣa*, but the consistent happiness is in different degrees. It is not the real *mokṣa*, because they will return from heaven. Freedom for good, in which there is no further birth, is called *mokṣa*.

How did they become free? *Parāmṛtāḥ santah:* being Brahman that is free from mortality.²¹⁰ *Para* means the most exalted Brahman. *Amṛtā* means that which is free from time. Those by whom this Brahman, which is *para* and *amṛta*, is recognised as their self are called *parāmṛtāḥ*. The recognition takes place by *vedānta-vijñāna*. The result of recognition is total release, which takes place at *parāntakāla*. The word '*amṛta*' points out that they do not come back. Living, they are liberated. At the end, the *śāstra* has to talk about the *videha-mukti* to complete the teaching.

Where do they get the total release? *Brahma-lokeṣu:* in *brahma-loka*. *Brahma-loka* is not a place here. Brahman itself is the *loka* because it is of the nature of experience. Consciousness is the self-revealing experience. If at all there is experience, that consciousness alone is the experience. Every other experience is strung in that experience. When it is repeatedly emphasised that *ātman* is not a matter of experience, the statement has to be understood properly. It means *ātman* is already experiences all the time. It does not mean it is outside experience, it is the very content of every experience. It does not need to be experienced because it is *ātma-svarūpa*, it is experience itself. Experience is to be understood as a *mahā-vākya-lakṣya*. There is no experience without consciousness being there. When one listens, the experience of listening is *ātman*. It is non-separate from *saccidātman*. That is why *ātman* is called the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear and so on. Brahman is therefore called *loka*, a field of experience.²¹¹ Brahman is exalted because everything is experienced due to Brahman.

The word '*brahma-lokeṣu*' is in the plural because every wise person is Brahman. The plural is from the standpoint of individuals who seek and gain Brahman,²¹² not because of the plurality of Brahman.

The word '*sunīcitārthāḥ*' is in the plural, and therefore *brahma-loka* is in plural form. Those who have gained this knowledge are many.²¹³ It means it is possible for anyone to gain this knowledge. What is necessary is a pure mind and exposure to the words of Vedanta.

Each one has to gain this knowledge. It is not that if one person gets liberation, then everybody will be liberated, as propounded by some people. Their argument is, 'Brahman is one without a second. All the *jīvas* are nothing but one Brahman. If one *jīva* gains liberation then all should gain liberation. If one *jīva* gets out of *prakṛti*, all of them should be out of *prakṛti*.' This thesis is due to the thinking that the *jīva* is literally bound. If the bondage is real, and it is gone in one place, it is gone everywhere. There is only one *jīva*, as Brahman is said to be one. Therefore, if one person gets liberation, all get liberation. Since bondage is not real, this thinking is wrong.

The fact here is that one does not get liberation. One is already liberated. If one is already liberated, all are already liberated. But all do not think so. If one person recognises that fact, he becomes free. Everyone has to recognise that fact to become free. Therefore, each one has to get individually liberated.

206 वेदान्त-जनित-विज्ञानं वेदान्त-विज्ञानं तस्यार्थः परमात्मा विज्ञेयः । सोऽर्थः सुनिश्चितः येषां ते वेदान्त-विज्ञान-सुनिश्चितार्थाः ।
(मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

207 संसारिणां ये मरण-कालः ते अपरान्ताः तानपेक्ष्य मुमुक्षूणां संसारावसाने देह-परित्याग-कालः परान्त-कालः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

208 सूक्ष्म-शरीर-भङ्ग-कालः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

209 परि समन्तात् प्रदीप-निर्वाणवत् घटाकाशवच्च निर्वृत्तिमुपयान्ति । ...न देशान्तरं गन्तव्यम् अपेक्षन्ते । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

210 परामृताः परम् अमृतममरण-धर्मकं ब्रह्मात्म-भूतं येषां ते परामृताः । जीवन्त एव ब्रह्म-भूताः परामृताः सन्तः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

211 सर्वं लोक्यते अनुभूयते अनेन इति लोकः ।

212 साधकानां बहुत्वात् ब्रह्म एव लोकः ब्रह्म-लोकः एकोऽप्यनेकवद् दृश्यते प्राप्यते वा ।

अतो बहु-वचनं ब्रह्म-लोकेषु इति । ब्रह्मणि इत्यर्थः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

213 बहवो ज्ञान-तपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः । (भगवद् गीता 4.10)

to be continued....

Quotes from Pujya Swamiji's Diary – 1968 April

- * Life is for the living. Death is for the dead. Living I die if I miss the here and now.
- * Dead I will live if I have my being in the past and future, and there and yonder. Is it living ?
- * 'That' is 'this' when there is a 'that' beyond 'that'. 'This' is 'that' when there is a 'this' closer to 'this'. Is there a 'this' which never becomes 'that' ? With the 'this' that is ever 'this' can I ever conceive a 'that'?
- * If one is 'this', is there any meaning in one's struggle to become 'that'.
- * I am this-here-now. That-there-was is beyond my scope.