

Mundakopanishad

Mantra 3.1.2

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नः
अनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः
जुष्टं यथा पश्यन्त्यन्यमीशम्
अस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकह् ॥३.१.२॥

*samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagnaḥ
anīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ
juṣṭam yathā paśyanyanyamīśam
asya mahimānamiti vītaśokaḥ ॥3.1.2॥*

muhyamānaḥ -- being deluded; *nimagnaḥ* -- being sunk;
samāne vṛkṣe -- in the same tree; *puruṣaḥ*-- the person;
śocati -- grieves; *anīśayā* -- due to helplessness;
yadā -- when; *paśyati* -- one recognises; *anyam* -- the other one;
juṣṭam -- worshipful; *īśam* -- the Lord of all; *asya*-- his;
mahimānam-- glory; *iti* -- thus; *vītaśokaḥ* -- becomes free from grief

Being deluded and lost in the very same tree, the person comes to grief due to helplessness. When one recognises the other, which is worshipful, which is the Lord of all, and knows (all this as) his glory, he becomes free from grief.

Samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagnaḥ: the puruṣa is sunk in the same tree. In the tree, in the physical body, which is the same for both jīva and Īśvara, the *jīva*, like a dry but loaded bottle gourd¹³³ that sinks, gets drowned. If the inside is empty, the bottle gourd floats. The *jīva* is loaded inside with ignorance and its products such as doer ship, like and dislikes and so on. He is sunk with varieties of notions like, 'I am as good as the body, mind and senses.' All that one has to do is t make a single puncture, through *vicāra* inquiry. These notions require just one beam of light to disappear into thin air. They thrive in the darkness of ignorance. Because of these notions, one repeatedly takes birth and dies and in between gets connected with people--- relatives, in-laws and friends--- and disconnected also.¹³⁴ It is like the logs of wood floating in the ocean joining together at one time, and falling apart when a big wave dashes against them. Many generations are gone. People come and go. Even through one wants to hold on to people come and go. Even though one wants to hold on to people, one cannot. The holder himself is gone in the process.

Anīśayā śocati: he grieves helplessly. The *jīva* is *anīśa*, helpless in the body. He is not *īśa*, the master. There is no lordship here. Each person has this desire--- 'What is desirable should happen to me, and what is undesirable should not.' There is a prayer on the part of everyone for the fulfillment of this desire. If he does not pray to the Lord, he propitiates the local persons. He goes to those who are powerful in order to get things done. This longing is constant in everybody. But the desirables and the undesirables are endless. Again, it is not easy to get the desirable or to ward off the undesirable.

You find yourself incapable and helpless in gaining the desirable or avoiding the undesirable. You do not always get what you want. In fact, you always seem to get what you do not want. You do not want grey hair, but you get it. Either way you are helpless. This is what is called *anīśa*, helplessness.¹³⁵ Identified with the physical body, mind and senses, you cannot avoid the limitations in knowledge and power. Due to this helplessness you come to grief. It is the whole basis for your feeling of smallness and insignificance.

Whether you have something or do not have it, whether you gain something or not, the sense of, 'I am incapable' is always there. You cannot change the world totally because every change requires further change. You cannot change the order in the world. You cannot change anything--you learn it over a period of time.

'Rarely does anyone understand me.' It is another problem. Nor you are able to make yourself understood by others. Even the Lord seems to despair when he says, "Some rare ones understand me in essence."¹³⁶ So, if you feel you are not understood, it is understandable. It is the basic problem of a human being because he is self-conscious. The animals do not have the same degree of self-consciousness, and so they do not have the kind of problems that human beings have. But human beings can solve their problems. It is necessary to solve them because you are capable of being free from these problems in the wake of knowledge. You are born ignorant and continue to be ignorant, and due to ignorance you commit mistakes. So there is confusion and despair. You lament and grieve all the time. You are affected by varieties of grief.

Muhyamānaḥ: being deluded. A human being is deluded with reference to everything -- human pursuits are not clear, values are not clear, the means to achieve the ends are not clear and the realities are not clear. All this is due to *aviveka*. The deluded ones perform actions due to *aviveka*, gets worried and frustrated in various ways about things happening or not happening. How does one get out of it?

As a result of *puṇya* accumulated over a period of time in many births, one is shown the way to get out of this drowning situation by a very compassionate guru.¹³⁷ The guru tells him, "You are not the *bhoktṛ*, experiencer. *Bhoktṛtva*, the states of being and experiencer, is only incidental. It is not the reality. The reality is *ātman*, the *caitanya*." Following this path of inquiry, *yadā anyam īśam paśyati vīta-śoko bhavati*: when one recognizes oneself as not separate from the other, the Lord, one becomes free from sorrow, free from the sense of smallness. Everybody wants to be that Lord. If the Lord is other than oneself, then one will definitely feel small and insignificant. One will never be free from sorrow if there is a second person. Looking at a happy person, an unhappy person is not going to be happy. The fact is that there are not two birds here. There is only one bird which is always free; the *bhoktā* bird is *mithyā*. In the *mithyā* there is *satya*, and the *satya* is pointed out by this imagery.

The other bird is called *juṣṭaḥ*, sought after.¹³⁸ Your love for lordship is always there. You do not like to be *anīśa*, to be a wanting and insignificant person. The only significant person in the world is *Īśvara*, but you never suspect that you can be that *Īśvara*. So *Īśvara* becomes an object of worship and seeking. You get to know that there is an *Īśvara* by seeing others seeking him--- going to a teacher, getting the knowledge, living the life set out by the *śāstra* and so on. The preceding generation has set the track for the succeeding generation to follow. You think, "Perhaps it is the way." It is a general understanding gathered from society, or from the paperbacks written by people who have followed the track to some extent.

The lifestyle of renunciate also shows that there is something here in this life to be accomplished. Children observe the kind of respect that *sannyāsin* gets when he visits the house for *bhikṣā*, and they come to know in general that a *sannyāsin* is seeking God. By being born in this tradition, you get an insight and some knowledge about overcoming your helplessness through the knowledge of Īśvara.

This is the only way to solve the problem of helplessness. When you feel helpless, you always will and need to seek help from outside. The helpless individual cannot think that he or she can be totally free from being helpless. An insight about the Lord as the one who is worshipped and sought after becomes very important. That is why the word '*juṣṭam*' is very significant here.

When you recognise the identity between you and Īśvara, you discover that everything is your glory only, *asya mahimānam iti*. The whole jagat is your glory, including the mind and senses, doership and enjoyership, the actions and the results of actions and so on. It means there are not two ātmans here, but only one.

The *śuruti* first presents *jivātman* and *paramātman* as separate beings in order to distinguish them from one another. Afterwards, *jivātman* is swallowed as *mithyā* in the wake of knowledge. If it is not swallowed, then it is a dangerous knowledge. It will create a split in the person. Already one has enough splits inside; one does not want any more.

Everything that is here is Īśvara's glory, only when it is *mithyā*. If the subject-object relationship is true, then it is not a glory; it is only a dharma. If the fire is hot, it is not the glory of fire; it is its nature. Glory is something like a feather that you wear on your cap. The cap must be free of feathers. If a feather is part of it, then you do not add it as a new glory--it does not become 'a feather in your cap'. It is not always a glory to have feathers on your cap. A glory should be something without which one can exist. Only then it becomes a glory. Your nature is self-evident and self-effulgent consciousness that is independent of everything. Everything is an 'as though' addition, and therefore, is glory. When you recognize Īśvara's glory in this way, then you are free from sorrow. Such a person has found his or her fulfillment.

What is said in the above two *mantras* is confirmed in the mantras that follow

133 भोक्ता जीवः अविद्या-काम-कर्म-फल-रागादि-गुरु-भाराक्रान्तह् अलाबुः इव सामुद्रे जले निमग्नः निश्चयेन देहात्म-भावमापन्नः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

134 अयमेवाहम् अमुष्य पुत्रः अस्य नप्ता कृशः स्थूलह् गुणवान् निर्गुणः सुखी दुःखी इत्येवं-प्रत्ययो नास्त्यन्योऽस्मादति जायते म्रियते संयुज्यते वियुज्यते सम्बन्धि-बान्धवैः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

135 न कस्यचित् समर्थोऽहम् पुत्रो मम विनष्टह् मृता मे भाया किं मे जीवितेन इत्येवं गीन-भावोऽनीशा । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

136 मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः । (भगवद् गीता 7.3)

137 कदाचिदनेक-जन्मसु शुद्ध-धर्म-सञ्चित-निमित्ततः केनचित्परम-कारुणिकेन दर्शित-योग-मार्गः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

138 This is derived from the root *jus*, to devote, with the past passive participle suffix '*ktah*' added to it in the sense of karma, object. The word means worshipful or loved.

to be continued....