

## Mundakopanishad

### Mantra 3.2. 2

कामान्यः कामयते मन्यमानः  
स कामभिर्जायते तत्र तत्र ।  
पर्याप्तकामस्य कृतात्मनस्तु  
इहैव सर्वे प्रविलीयन्ति कामाः ॥३२२

*kāmānyaḥ kāmāyate manyamānaḥ*

*sa kāmabhirjāyate tatra tatra.*

*paryāptakāmasya kṛtātmanastu*

*ihaiva sarve pravilīyanti kāmāḥ. (3.2.2)*

*saḥ*-- that person; *yaḥ*-- who; *kāmāyate* -- desires;  
*kāmān* -- objects; *manyamānaḥ* -- thinking;  
*jāyate* -- is born; *tarta tatra* -- in those respective worlds;  
*kāmabhiḥ* -- with those objects; *tu* -- whereas;  
*kṛtātmanaḥ* -- one for whom everything has been achieved;  
*paryāpta-kāmasya* -- one who is fulfilled; *sarve* -- all;  
*kāmāḥ* -- desires; *pravilīyanti* -- dissolve; *iha* -- here;  
*eva* -- itself

That person who desires objects, thinking (about them), is born in those respective worlds with those objects. Whereas for a fulfilled person, for whom everything has been achieved, all desires dissolve here itself.

*Yaḥ kāmān manyamānaḥ*: one who thinks about objects of desire. *Kāmān* means objects of desire, known and unknown, *dr̥ṣṭa* and *adr̥ṣṭa*.<sup>182</sup> Anything that one can gain here is *dr̥ṣṭa*, while that which is totally unknown, like heaven, is *adr̥ṣṭa*. The desirability of objects is determined by each one's likes and dislikes. The value scale is subjective.

You think about objects, dwelling upon their attributes and glories. You imagine your life with those objects and invest in them emotionally. The objects have their own attributes, and you are interested in the attributes, not really in the objects. You want money because it has an attribute, buying power. Through the buying power you think you can achieve anything. You want to go to heaven because you think you will be free in heaven. There is an answer for every 'because' behind a want. You really value the answer, not the object. Thinking about the attributes<sup>183</sup> of an object, you desire it. So the word '*manyamānaḥ*' is a significant word.

*Saḥ kāmān kāmāyate*: he desires various objects. A desire becomes the cause for activity. Whatever be the desire, an appropriate action has to be done to fulfill the desire. Mere desire will not be enough. You have to infer the performance of action here. The action may be scripturally enjoined, or may be worldly. Sometimes it may be both. These actions become the means for gaining the desired objects.

Performing those actions, *saḥ kāmabhiḥ jāyate tatra tatra*: he is born among those objects.<sup>184</sup> If he desires heaven, he is born in the heaven where the heavenly objects will be there for him. He does not want to go to heaven just to be there. He wants to go to heaven because he wants to enjoy the heavenly pleasures. In whichever place the objects are available, in those places he is born. The enjoyment of results of action is possible only when the objects necessary for such an enjoyment are available in a place.<sup>185</sup> One is born in a place according to one's *karma-phala*. Again the person desires and performs actions. The repeated births continue without any end, until one gains self-knowledge.

*Paryāpta-kāmasya kṛtātmanaḥ tu*:<sup>186</sup> whereas, for the one for whom all the desires are accomplished, who is fulfilled because of knowledge. You become *paryāpta-kāma* only when you gain the knowledge of *ātman* being the whole. By fulfilling a desire you are not going to fix up your problems. Nor can you fulfil all the desires one by one, because they are endless. In the process, you will pick up a few more. You do not even know what new desires are there in store. For instance you did not have a desire to have a video camera a few decades ago because they did not exist at that time. As you come to know the existence of things you pick up new desires.<sup>187</sup>

You can fulfil all the desires simultaneously only when everything is non-separate from you. There is no desire to gain the self because it is already gained, like you do not desire for a nose because you already have it. If the self is all the objects, then the desires for all the objects cannot exist. Therefore, the desires for all objects are resolved for the wise person. Even if desires are there, they are non-binding and are glories of Īśvara. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "O Arjuna, in the human beings, I am in the form of desire that is in keeping with *dharma*."<sup>188</sup>

Desire for *mokṣa* is also a desire, but it is a desire that consumes all other desires. Fulfilling that single desire, you become *paryāpta-kāma*. Desire for *mokṣa* arises when you begin to question about yourself. If you get proper direction and guidance, you choose to know the self. Then you come to know that 'the desire is me and the desired object is also me.'

Such a person is *kṛtātman*, one who is free from ignorance and therefore has accomplished all that is to be done.<sup>189</sup> You cannot be a *paryāpta-kāma* unless ignorance is gone. If the word '*kṛtātman*' is understood as one whose mind is no longer under the spell of *rāga-dveṣa*, then the meaning of *paryāptakāmasya kṛtātmanaḥ* is, 'being a *kṛtātman*, he becomes *paryāpta-kāmaḥ*.'

*Tasya iha eva sarve kāmāḥ pravilīyanti* : for him, here itself all the desires are resolved. He knows that he is complete, *pūrṇātman*, and in the wake of this knowledge, all the desires are dissolved. There is no need for him to do any action or go to places. This is the result called *mokṣa*. One has to become the *akāmāḥ*, *mokṣa-kāmāḥ* to gain this result.

*Kāma*, desire, implies a choice. Desires may arise in your mind without your choice, but you need not go along with every desire. You choose to follow only a given desire. The choice is there with you--- to choose either *mokṣa* or something else. Even though you have chosen *mokṣa*, you may have a number of other desires to fulfil in order to achieve the main desire. All those desires subserve your main desire for *mokṣa*. It is not that one who is *mokṣa-kāma* should not be interested in anything else. His main desire is to gain knowledge in order to gain *mokṣa*. He does not desire freedom, but a free 'I'.

You think "I am not free" and you want to be free. If you are really bound, you can never be free. If you are not bound, then the sense of bondage is purely notional, born of self-ignorance. You are seeking freedom for yourself. The freedom centred on the self is already an accomplished fact, and you have to know the self to gain that freedom. Freedom is not the object of desire here. The 'free self' is the object of desire. So you have to choose the self. You also have to do everything that is necessary to gain this knowledge, like the study of grammar and so on. Mere study of grammar cannot give you *mokṣa*, but it does not mean study of grammar is useless. It is here you commit a mistake.

When a person wants to cook, he has to prepare the fire because fire alone cooks. But he may be cleaning the place of cooking, cleaning the vessels, cutting the vegetables or picking stones from the rice. He may place the pot on the fire and do something else in the kitchen. All these are included in the act of cooking. You cannot define what exactly is the act of cooking. That is why the action of cooking is *mithyā*. When you are removing the wrapper, you are not eating candy. You are removing the wrapper. But your eating candy includes removing the wrapper. Every action is like that. Really speaking, you cannot say which action produces which result. In every action a series of actions are involved, and no one action produces the result. After the series of actions, some result is there; therefore you cannot apportion the result to a particular action in the series. Yet you always talk about that result in terms of a given action. For cooking, fire is the main means and everything else is secondary. Similarly, knowledge is the primary means for *mokṣa*. Anything that helps you gain knowledge is secondary means. First, you have to choose to know.

Sometimes, even without choice knowledge can take place. Suppose, you have the right means of knowledge at your disposal and the object of knowledge is exposed to it, even if you do not want to know, you will necessarily know, like picking up smell. But here, *ātman* will not accidentally appear itself because it is already appearing as the knower.

The fact is that it is always Brahman. It is not going to reveal itself any more than it has done. So, you have to choose to know here, and in order to know the *ātman*, you have to choose the right means of knowledge. You have to choose between the words of the *karma-kāṇḍa* and those of the *upaniṣad*. Further, you have to choose the right teacher. All these are choices. Thereafter, *ātman* will reveal itself.

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182 दृष्टादृष्टेष्ट-विषयान् कामयते । (मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

183 मन्यमानः तद्गुणांश्चिन्तयानः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

184 कामभिः कामैः धर्माधर्म-प्रवृत्ति-हेतुभिः विषयेच्छा-रूपैः सह ।(मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

185 यत्र यत्र विषय-प्राप्ति-निमित्तं कामाः कर्मसु पुरुषं नियोजयन्ति तत्र तत्र तेषु तेषु विषयेषु तैरेव कामैः वेष्टितः जायते ।  
(मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

186 परमार्थ-तत्त्व-विज्ञानात् पर्याप्त-कामः आत्मकामत्वेन परि समन्ततः आप्ताः कामाः यस्य यस्य पर्याप्त-कामस्य ।  
(मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

187 The lectures on *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* were delivered at a time when the laptop computer was not yet popular, hence the reference to the video camera.

188 धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ । ( भगवद् गीता 7.11)

189 कृतात्मनः अविद्या-लक्षणाद् अपररूपाद् अपनीय स्वेन परेण रूपेण कृतः आत्मा विद्यया यस्य तस्य कृतात्मनः ।  
(मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

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Editor.