

Second Muṇḍaka Section 1

Mantra 3

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणः मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।
खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥२॥१॥३॥
etasmajjāyate prāṇaḥ manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca.
kham vāyurjyotirāpaḥ pṛthivī viśvasya dhāriṇī. (2.1.3)

etasmāt- from this (Brahman) ; *jāyate* - are born ;
prāṇaḥ - the *prāṇa* ; *manaḥ* - mind;
sarvendriyāṇi - all senses and organs of actions;
kham - space; *vāyuḥ* -air; *rjyotiḥ* - fire;
āpaḥ - water; *ca* - and; *pṛthivī* - the earth;
viśvasya - of the entire world of life;
dhāriṇī - that which is the sustainer

From this Brahman are born *prāṇa*, the mind, all senses and organs of action, space, air, fire, water and the earth that sustains the entire world of life.

Etasmād jāyate prāṇaḥ manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca: from this is born the *prāṇa*, which consists of five-fold activities, the mind, the senses and the organs of action. In other words, all factors that constitute the subtle body are born from this *puruṣa* alone. For the earth an adjective '*viśvasya dhāriṇī*' is used which means 'that which sustains the entire life here.' The *prāṇa*, mind and senses here include the total also.

There is a particular order here in the enumeration of the five elements. If one analyses it, one can observe the order to be from the subtlest to the grossest. First to come out is the space, which has the least attributes. It cannot be touched and seen. From alone is available for sight and touch, and the space has no form. The eyes cannot see it. Space cannot be tasted and smelt. When every other attribute is negated, what is left out is sound, and therefore, sound is said to be the attribute of space.

The next element to manifest is air. Air is defined as that which blows. Air has sound which one can hear clearly when there is a cyclone etc. Air has the attribute of touch which can be felt. However, one cannot

see or taste or smell it. The smell in the air is nothing but molecules from the earth. One smells these suspended molecules in the air. One can objectify air through two sense organs, ear and skin.

Fire is the third element to come. It has sound which one can hear when there is a big conflagration. One can also touch fire. Its exclusive attribute is form. One can see fire. Fire is the first element in the order that has a form, and hence, one uses fire as a medium to invoke the Lord with a form. In Kerala, people invoke a deity in a simple flame of a lamp and offer worship. In some of the temples in Kerala, the lamp is the deity. Fire is closer to Īśvara, which is why the sun is worshipped as Īśvara.

Next to come out is water. Water is that which flows. There is sound in the flow of water. Water can be touched. It has form that can be seen. Its exclusive attribute is taste. Part of the definition of water is that it is odourless and tasteless, but it is a tasteless taste. It is the standard taste. The taste of the water is the original taste from which all other tastes are made. But water has no smell. Any smell in the water is because of the molecules from the earth it carries.

The earth is the last element to come out, and it is the grossest. It has all the five attributes. It has sound through which one gets to know what is there down below the earth's surface. Underneath there is lava. Whenever there is a crack on the earth, it comes out in the form of a volcano. When there is an earthquake, one can hear the sound. The earth is available for touch, sight and taste. Smell is the exclusive attribute of the earth.

The physical bodies made of the five gross elements are also born of the same *puruṣa*. The subtle bodies come out of subtle elements, and when the subtle bodies are born, the *jīvas* come into manifestation. *Jīvas* are recognised because of the presence of the subtle body. The subtle bodies are not independent of the *puruṣa*; they are also born of the same *puruṣa*.

It is very interesting to note that this physical body also is called *puruṣa* in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* when it says, "The body is born of food."²⁷ One does not have the sense of 'I' in the food that one eats. This is true with reference to all other elements also. All these are not 'I'.

²⁷ अन्नात् पुरुषः । तैत्तिरीयोपनिषत् 2.1)