

Second Muṇḍaka Section 1

Mantra 8

सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्
सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्तहोमाः ।
सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणाः
गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ॥ २. १.८ ॥
sapta prāṇāḥ prabhavanti tasmāt
saptārciṣaḥ samidhaḥ saptahomāḥ.
sapta ime lokā yeṣu caranti prāṇāḥ
guhāśayā nihitāḥ sapta sapta. (2.1.8)

tasmāt - from that; *prabhavanti* - are born;
sapta prāṇāḥ - the seven apertures;
sapta arcīṣaḥ - the seven flames;
sapta samidhaḥ - the seven fold objects;
sapta homāḥ - seven types of oblations; *ime* - these;
sapta lokāḥ - seven *lokas* in the form of apertures;
yeṣu - in which; *prāṇāḥ* - these flames;
caranti - light up the sensory world;
guhāśayāḥ - (they) resolve into the *buddhi*;
nihitāḥ - are placed; *sapta sapta* - in groups of seven

From that Brahman are born the seven apertures on the face, the seven flames, the seven-fold objects and the seven types of oblations. These seven worlds in the form of apertures in which these flames light up the sensory world and resolve into *buddhi*, are placed in groups of seven.

Continuing the description of the manifestation of *puruṣa*, this *mantra*, in a poetic way, describes the interaction of the mind, sense organs and

the related sense objects, because of which knowledge takes place. The entire triad is a movement in the total mind of the *puruṣa*.

Sapta prāṇāḥ prabhavanti tasmāt: seven *prāṇās* come from that (Brahman). *Prāṇāḥ* here means *indriya-golakas*, apertures for sense organs. There are seven apertures on the face—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one tongue— from where the senses operate. All the five senses are thus included in the number seven. The *śāstra* is not committed to the number seven here, but it is committed to point out all these are from Īśvara alone.

Sapta arcīṣaḥ: the seven flames. *Arcis* here means a flame.⁴² The apertures are the loci of the *ṛttis*, the functions of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. These *ṛttis* are like the flames. Like the beams of light coming out through the holes of a pot in which a lamp is kept, and illumining the objects on their ways, so too, the flames of awareness coming out of the seven apertures light up various objects. But the awareness in every perception is the same. The objects of awareness vary; the eyes light up forms and colours, the ears light up the sound and so on. These flames of awareness are also from Īśvara. It is following Īśvara's order that the eyes are able to see, ears are able to hear and so on. Some eyes do not see and some ears do not hear; that also follows the order.

Sapta-samidhaḥ: the seven sacrificial twigs. The seven flames are to be fed with fuel. The fuel here is the respective objects of the senses. The *sapta-samidhaḥ* are the seven-fold objects.⁴³ In fact, objects are only five-fold. The number seven is purely based upon the *golakas*, the physical points of cavities. If you close your left eye, you can see with the right eye and if you close your right eye, you can see with the left eye. Both the eyes bring in the colours and forms. So too, both ears can bring in the sounds separately. The sense objects are called the sacrificial twigs because they are as though offered to the seven flames as oblations when perception takes place.

⁴² सप्तार्चिषः दीप्तयः स्वविषयावद्योतनानि । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁴³ सप्त-समिधः सप्त-विषयाः । विषयैर्हि समिध्यन्ते प्राणाः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

Sapta homāḥ: the seven rituals. *Homa* is the act of offering oblations unto the fire. Unto these seven-fold flames, the seven-fold objects are offered.⁴⁴ The objects are seven types of oblations. When the oblations are offered unto the fire, the knowledge of the objects takes place simultaneously. Therefore, they are called seven *homas*.

Then, *sapta ime lokāḥ yeṣu (prāṇāḥ) caranti* : these are the seven apertures⁴⁵ in which the seven flames (sense organs) that light up the sensory world, move around. In order to eliminate the possibility of the error of taking the *prāṇas* as vital air instead of apertures, this sentence has been said.⁴⁶

The seven flames resolve in the mind at the time of sleep, and come out on waking up. In dream also they resolve in the mind. They are, therefore, called *guhāśayāḥ*.⁴⁷ *Guhā* means mind or *buddhi*. *Nihitāḥ sapta sapta*: in every human body, Īśvara places these seven apertures. There may be exceptions to this general rule, with some people having less than seven, but exceptions do not make the rule.

The given and giver are identical, so there is nothing outside the fold of Īśvara.⁴⁸ It being so, all that is here is Īśvara. Knowing that Īśvara, everything is as well known. It is the idea in the background all the time.

⁴⁴ सप्तहोमाः तद्विषय-विज्ञानानि । 'यदस्य विज्ञानं तज्जुहोति' (महानारायणोपनिषत् 25.1)
इति श्रुत्यन्तरात् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁴⁵ सप्त इमे लोका इन्द्रिय-स्थानानि । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁴⁶ प्राणा एषु चरन्ति इति प्राणानां विशेषणमिदं प्राणापानदि-निवृत्त्यर्थम् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁴⁷ गुहायां शरीरे हृदये वा स्वाप-काले शेरते इति गुहाशयाः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

⁴⁸ यानि च आत्मयाजिनां विदधां कर्माणि कर्मफलानि च । अविगुषां च कर्माणि तत्साधनानि कर्म-फलानि च सर्वं चैतत्परस्मादेव पुरुषात् सर्वज्ञात्प्रसूतमिति प्रकरणार्थः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

Mantra 9

अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वे
अस्मात् स्यन्दन्ते सिन्धवः सर्वरूपाः ।
अतश्च सर्वा ओषधयो रसश्च
येनैष भुतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ॥ 2 .1 .9.
ataḥ samudrā girayaśca sarve
asmāt syandante sindhavaḥ sarvarūpāḥ.
ataśca sarvā oṣadhayo rasaśca
yenaīṣa bhūtaistiṣṭati hyantarātmā. (2.1.9)

ataḥ - from this; *sarve* - all; *samudrāḥ* - oceans;
ca - and; *girayaḥ* - the hills and the mountains (are born);
sarvarūpāḥ - of all forms; *sindhavaḥ* - the rivers;
syandante - they flow; *asmāt* - from this;
ca - and; *ataḥ* - from this; *sarvāḥ* - all;
oṣadhayaḥ - the plants and trees; *ca* - and;
rasaḥ - the nourishing capacity;
yena hi - because of which; *eṣaḥ* - this;
antarātmā - subtle body; *tiṣṭate* - stays;
bhūtaiḥ - surrounded by elements

From this Brahman all oceans, hills and mountains are born. All the rivers in various forms flow from this Brahman. And from this Brahman are born all the trees and plants and their capacity to nourish. Because of this nourishing capacity, the subtle body stays in the physical body consisting of elements.

Ataḥ samudrāḥ girayaśca sarve: from this *ātman*, the *puruṣa* who is Parameśvara, the oceans, from the Pacific to Atlantic, and the hills and the mountains came. *Giri* is a hill. The word '*ca*' in the word '*girayaśca*' includes the *parvatas*, mountains too.

Asmāt syandante sindhavaḥ sarva-rūpāḥ: all forms of rivers flow from this Parameśvara. All forms of rivers include streams - small and big. The water of each river has its own quality, depending upon where it is

flowing. The rivers are *aneka-rūpāḥ*, in various forms. They have different names such as Gaṅgā, Godāvarī and so on. All these varieties of flowing rivers are from Īśvara alone. Here, one must recognise the Īśvara-*niyati*, the order because of which water finds its own level and goes towards the ocean, and the ocean does not cross its limits. The water that is born in the form of rivers and oceans, as well as the order in their functioning is Īśvara.

Ataśca sarvāḥ ośadhayo rasaśca:⁴⁹ from this Brahman all the vegetation and its nourishing capacity came. All the different plants and trees which produce food, which are medicinal, which are nourishing, which give only shade, which only flowers to please one's eyes, which also make themselves available for building works and so on, are born from the same *puruṣa*. The plants and trees have the innate capacity to nourish the body with all the ingredients like minerals, etc. Everyone requires various nutrients in the food which is called *rasa* here. *Rasa* also means taste which is already included in the *prāṇa* and, therefore, *rasa* here means nourishment. The *rasa* in the *ośadhis* is also from Īśvara alone.

Yena bhūtaiḥ tiṣṭate hi antarātmā: sustained by these nutrients alone, the subtle body obtains in the midst of the five elements.⁵⁰ The word, 'bhūtas,' five elements, refer to the physical body which is the *kārya* of the elements. *Ātman* identified with the subtle body is called *antarātmān*. The *puruṣa* exists in the form of subtle body, making the physical body alive. Not only does the *puruṣa* stay in the physical body, but also, he stays in the *jagat* which is made of the same five elements. It means he is the one who sees, hears, smells, tastes and touches through the individual senses as well as the total senses. He is the one who nourishes. He is the one because of whom there is *prāṇa* in the physiological system, and therefore assimilation.

Concluding the section, the *śruti* says,

⁴⁹ पुष्णामि चौषधीः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः इति भगवद् गीता । (15.13)

⁵⁰ येन रसेन भूतैः पञ्चभिः स्थूलैः परिवेष्टित एष तिष्ठते तिष्ठति ह्यन्तरात्मा लिङ्गं सूक्ष्मं शरीरम् ।
(मुण्डक भाष्यम्)