



Muṇḍakopaniṣad Mantrā 7



(Continued from the last issue)

From the unmanifest, the world manifests. This is cyclic. Here we are talking about a given cycle. Before the manifestation, there must be a certain motion, some commotion is involved. That is pointed out here. The Sāṅkhyās say that before the creation there is some commotion in pradhāna, the cause, consisting of three guṇās—satva, rajas, tamas. They are in equilibrium in the unmanifest condition. That equilibrium gets disturbed due to some vibration and the creation starts. Here we ask, “How did it get disturbed? Who disturbed it?” Puruṣa, the conscious being, has nothing to do with pradhāna. Other than puruṣa nobody else was there. If pradhāna gets distributed on its own, then it should always be disturbed. How come the disturbance did not take place so far? Another section of the Sāṅkhyās, who accepts Īśvara disturbs the equilibrium.” Then what is the occasion for Īśvara to disturb it? Sāṅkhyās have no logical answer. But every one of them has to point out that before the creation there must be a disturbance in the unmanifest, and there was a disturbance.

It is like the factor that wakes you up in the morning from sleep. Why do you wake up in the morning? What makes you get up? While you were sleeping you did not have any agenda to wake up. In sleep you do not recognize anything. A person who is sleeping should be sleeping all the time, sleep being a pleasant experience. No. There is a karmic pressure working. One more day you have to live. You have to undergo the experiences that are brought about by the karma on a day-to-day basis. This is one model of explanation, the karmic model. You can also give a physiological model. The body had enough rest, and, of course, it is hungry in the morning. A physiological stimulation in the body wakes you up. A psychological explanation also is possible. But it is all finally karma only. Day-to-day karma has got to be exhausted.

Similarly, something happens before the creation. Whenever we say ‘creation’ you must take it as one cycle. It has no end. This creation is like the previous creation. The previous creation was like its previous creation. Thus every creation was

preceded by a creation. In between two creations Īśvara brings about dissolution, which is called pralaya. When one goes to sleep, one dissolves one's own individuality and ceases to experience any object. This dissolution is called laya, sleep. When the creation goes to dissolution it is called pralaya. After dissolution and just before creation, there must be another state, and that is said to be tapas in the śāstra. He saw, ¹ "He desired..he did tapas"²..these are the words used in other śrutis. They mean 'He was aware' of the entire knowledge, that is, he identified with the knowledge and became ready for creation. The nimitta, occasion, for the tapas is the karmas of all the beings that clamour to fructify. Tataḥ annam abhijāyate: the unmanifest world is born from that Brahman. Anna is food. Adyate iti annam, that which is eaten is called anna. Here it means, that which is going to be experienced by all the manifest jīvās later. The entire jagat that is devoured at the time of dissolution is anna. It refers to avyakta, the unmanifest. Anything with distinct features, anything that is created, is vyakta. That which is in a causal form, without distinct features is avyakta. If you take a seed, the entire tree is there in it. The tree has a number of distinct features like trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits and so on. But if you look into the seed, you do not see any of them. At the same time, you know that the tree has come from the seed alone. Given the time, place and atmosphere, all those features will manifest. The seed in vyakta, manifest form, is a tree. The tree in avyakta, unmanifest form, is a seed. Similarly, the causal form of this world called anna or avyakta is the upādhi of Brahman. It is also called māya. When the śruti says that anna is born, it means that Brahman identifies with this upādhi, identifies with the knowledge of avyakta which is going to be manifested later as jagat, and thereby, it becomes the potential cause for the creation. The avyakta has to be differentiated for others' perception, and this differentiation is called the creation or manifestation.

Annāt prāṇaḥ : from that anna is born prāṇa. Prāṇa is the name for the sūtrātman or Brahmaji, the creator. He is called hiraṇyagarbha also. Īśvara assumes the form of hiraṇyagarbha; at that level, a creation already has taken place. Hiraṇyagarbha means the one in whom is the entire knowledge of creation.³ He has the jñānaśakti icchā-śakti kriya and śakti. Jñānaśakti means the capacity to know and he has all the knowledge. Kriya-śakti means the capacity to create, sustain and dissolve the world. Iccā-śakti means the capacity to desire. These

¹ तदैक्षत । छान्दोग्योपनिषत् 6।2।3।

² सोऽकामय । स तपोऽतप्यत तैत्तिरीयोपनिषत् 2।6

³ हिरण्यं ज्ञानं गर्भे यस्य ।

capacities are unfettered measure in hiraṇyagarbha while in a human being they are limited.

Brahman, identified with the total subtle universe, is called Brahmaji or hiraṇyagarbha. Brahman does not modify to become the subtle universe, but māyā or avyakta modifies to become this subtle universe. Brahman is changeless. Associated with this subtle universe, Brahman is known as Brahmaji. Brahman first becomes Brahmaji so that he can create. Once Brahmaji has come into existence, then the creation can start. There is an order here.

Prāṇāt manaḥ satyam lokāḥ: from Brahmaji all minds, all the five elements and all the worlds are born. Manaḥ is part of hiraṇyagarbha alone. Satya is virāṭ, the physical world. The five elements and elementals are not separately mentioned here. Satya includes these five elements and the elemental world. Everything being born of Brahman, the satya of everything is Brahman. At this level satya is what is empirically true. Lokāḥ refers to all fourteen worlds—bhūḥ bhuvāḥ and so on. In the worlds, human beings, devas and so on come into being. Then human beings do varieties of karmas. These karmas are also born from the same Brahmaji. When a person is born, all his good and bad karmas are born with him.

Karmasu ca amṛtam : from the action the results are born. With reference to karma there is phala, the result of karma. All the various results—birth, pleasure, pain and so on—are born of action. The result of action is called amṛta. You cannot exhaust karma phala except in the form of experiences, or by knowledge that you are not the kartṛ, the agent of action. The result of action is called amṛta. You cannot exhaust karma phala except in the form of experiences, or by knowledge that you are not the kartṛ, the agent of action. Karma-phala standing in your account should necessarily fructify in terms of experience—pleasant and unpleasant. Even though karma-phala is finite, until it is experienced it does not come to an end. So, it is called amṛta. The context makes the meaning of the words clear. Here the context being creation, amṛta cannot mean limitless in terms of time. This karma-phala also is born of Brahman only. Brahman alone is born as the physical world, and is born in the form of karma and karma-phala. Therefore, the whole thing is Brahman. This is further explained later.

Let us understand here why the śāstra does not maintain a certain order with reference to this 'so-called' creation. The Taittirīyopaniṣad says: "From that Brahman, which is this self, space was born. From the space, air was born and so on"⁴ All the five elements came first, and afterwards oṣadhi, vegetation (including food) came, and finally physical bodies came. In Chāndogyopaniṣad⁵ it is pointed out that from Brahman, which is 'sat', the three elements, fire, water, and earth, came. Here, in this upaniṣad, elements do not come into the picture at all, even though they are referred to as satya in this mantra. Similarly, in some other upaniṣads, the order of creation is presented a little differently. The śāstra does not maintain the same order because it is only interested in revealing everything is Brahman and not in the order of creation. Brahman is both the intelligent and material cause. Therefore, nothing is separate from Brahman. What has come is mithyā, the unborn cause is Brahman, the satya. You are that Brahman. You are everything. That revelation is necessary because you think that you are one among the many, and weighed down by the world that is too vast. For your own well-being, the truth of 'you' is revealed. This is the teaching. This is called sampradāya, the tradition. The śāstra is committed to unfolding the non-dual nature of Brahman. It is neither interested in the order of creation nor in showing how the world comes about, whether by a big bang, or a bigger bang and so on. It is not interested in what has come because nothing has come. It is only interested in pointing out that the effect, the jagat, is not separate from the cause, Brahman. In fact, it is Brahman. If the effect and the cause are one and the same, the effect is mithyā. The details of creation have no meaning when creation is dismissed as mithyā. Whether you know the details or not, it is mithyā. All that you know is good enough.

To be continued...

⁴ तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मनः आकाशः सम्भूतः। आकाशाद्वायुः। तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् २।१।

⁵ तत्तेजोऽसृजत तदपोऽसृजत ६।२।३ ता अन्नमसृजन्त - ६।२।४