

## Mundaka

### Mantra 3

प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।  
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥ २ ॥ २ ॥ ४ ॥

praṇavo dhanuḥ caro hyātmā brahma tallakṣyamucyate.  
apramattena veddhavyaṁ śaravat tanmayo bhavet. (2.2.4)

praṇavaḥ -- omkāra; dhanuḥ -- is the bow; ātmā -- the self;  
hi -- indeed; śaraḥ -- the arrow; brahma -- Brahman;  
tallakṣyam -- its target (implied meaning);  
ucyate -- is said; apramattena -- without indifference;  
veddhavyam -- has to be understood; śaravat -- like the arrow;  
tanmayaḥ -- one with that (Brahman); bhavet -- one should become

Omkāra is the bow, atman indeed is the arrow and Brahman is said to be its target. It must be known without indifference. One should become one with that Brahman, like the arrow (with the target).

*Praṇavo dhanuḥ śaro hyātmā* : Om is the bow and the mind is the arrow. The lakṣya, target, of the mind is the implied meaning of Om that is Brahman. The chanted Om is the bow<sup>83</sup> and the mind that is chanting becomes the arrow.<sup>84</sup> The mind has to recognize the target which is the meaning of Om.

*Brahma tallakṣyam ucyate*: that target is called Brahman. The implied meaning of Om is Brahman. Between *Om* and Brahman, there is no *vācaka-vācya-sambandha*, relationship of a 'word' and the 'object' like the word 'pot' has a form to reveal and the word 'blue' has got a colour to reveal.

Brahman is revealed as the implied meaning of words like 'satya' 'jñāna' and 'ananta'. These words function similar to the word 'blue' in the phrase 'blue pot'. Both words are in apposition talking about one object. Similarly, the words 'satya', 'jñāna', 'ananta' and 'brahma' are in apposition revealing one *vastu*. But they do not have the adjective-substantive relationship that we see in 'blue pot'. There are not many Brahman making it necessary to qualify this Brahman as *satyaṁ brahman*, not unreal; *brahma*; as *jñānaṁ brahma*, not inert *brahma*; and as *anantaṁ brahma*, not limited *brahma*. The relationship is one of *lakṣaṇa-lakṣya-bhāva*, implier-implied. The word 'satya' etc., are *lakṣaṇas* for Brahman, the *lakṣya*. Here, one is not relating the meaning of these words to Brahman.

The implied meaning of Om is the consciousness which is Brahman. The knowledge gained here is immediate because it is the content of the knower. Brahman is the lakṣya of Om. It is the target for the mind to understand.

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*Apramattena veddhavyam:* Om has to be chanted without any indifference and with the understanding of the meaning. *Pramāda* literally means indifference or a kind of stupor. It is an inhibiting factor caused by one's thirst for external objects.<sup>85</sup> If the external objects are equally valuable, then the target becomes one of the things and one will miss the target. It is not that one is to avoid the longing here. The moment one thinks one has to avoid the thirst for objects, one is setting a trap for oneself--- 'I do not want to have any desire for any object.' One has to be alert to see everything as Om and that is *apramāda*. It implies that one has a mastery over one's way of thinking.

*Śaravat tanmayo bhavet:* may one become one with the target like an arrow. Just as an arrow that strikes the target becomes one with the target and no longer remains separate, similarly may one become *brahma-niṣṭha*. May one recognize oneself as Brahman. May one not have any doubt whatsoever with respect to this fact. *Śaṅkara* says, "By giving up the notion of 'I' in the physical body, may one have clear knowledge of oneness with Brahman, which is the implied meaning of Om." <sup>86</sup>

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83 प्रणव ओङ्कारो धनुः । यथेष्वासनं लक्ष्ये शरस्य प्रवेश-कारणं तथात्मशरस्याक्षरे लक्ष्ये प्रवेश-कारणमोङ्कारः । प्रणवेन ह्यभ्यस्यमानेन संस्क्रियमाणस्तदालम्बनः अप्रतिबन्धेनाक्षरे अवतिष्ठिते । यथा धनुषास्ते इषुर्लक्ष्ये । अतः प्रणवः धनुरिव धनुः । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

84 शरो ह्यात्मा उपाधि-लक्षणः ... स शर इव स्वात्मन्येवार्पितः अक्षरे ब्रह्मण्यतः । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

85 अप्रमत्तेन बाह्यविषयोपलब्धि-तृष्णा-प्रमाद-वर्जितेन सर्वतो विरक्तेन जितेन्द्रियेण एकाग्र-चित्तेन । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

86 यथा रस्य लक्ष्यैकात्मत्वं फलं भवति तथा देहाद्यात्म-प्रत्यय-तिरस्कारेण अक्षरैकात्मत्वं फलमापादयेदित्यर्थः । ( मुण्डक भाष्यम् )

to be continue....