

Second Muṇḍaka Section 1

Mantra 4

The *śāstra* unfolds the nature of the *ātman* as *nirvikalpa*, that which is free from the knower-known-knowledge division, as *amūrtaḥ*, formless, as *śuddha caitanya*, pure consciousness and so on. It is the only way to recognise what is non-dual. You also have to recognise that ‘everything else’ is the same *ātman*, but of a different order of reality. Initially you dismiss the *jagat* to discover the truth. Therefore, you bring it back and redefine it to understand it as something non-separate from the truth. In fact, the entire *jagat* is indeed that Brahman only. Anything that is here is a *viśeṣa*, a seeming attribute for Brahman, because there is nothing that is separate from Brahman. Here, some people commit the mistake of taking them as real attributes for Brahman. They are only incidental attributes.

The teacher here continues to say that everything is this Brahman alone, and now he discusses it in detail. Why does it have to be told in detail? Śāṅkara answers that a subject matter that is first presented in brief and then in detail is easy to understand. First, you grasp in a nutshell what is presented briefly. Then, in the details you understand all the implications that are involved. It is the style of teaching.²⁸

From the *akṣaram brahma* endowed with the *māyā upādhi*, *hiranyagarbha* was born. Brahman viewed from the standpoint of the subtle universe is called *hiranyagarbha*. From that *hiranyagarbha* the physical world is born. The same Brahman viewed from the standpoint of the physical universe is called *virām*. Even though between the *akṣara* and the *virām*, *hiranyagarbha* is there, yet the *virām* is born of *akṣaram brahma* alone.²⁹ The one who appears in many forms is called *virām*. This *virām* is presented here in a poetic form because you cannot cover the entire physical universe.

²⁸ संक्षेपतः परविद्या-विषयम् अक्षरं निर्विशेषं पुरुषं सत्यं दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः इत्यादिना मन्त्रेण उक्त्वा पुनस्तदेव सविशेषं विस्तरेण वखन्व्यमिति प्रवृत्ते संक्षेपभविस्तरस्त्रो हि पदार्थः सुखाधिगम्यो भ्रवति सूत्रशाष्योस्त्रिवदिति । (मुण्डक शाष्यम्)

²⁹ योऽपि प्रथमजात् प्राणाद् हिरण्यगर्भाजायते अण्डस्यान्तर्विराट् सः तत्वान्तरितत्वेन लक्ष्यमाणोऽपि एतस्मादेव पुरुषाज्जयते एतन्मयश्च इत्येतदर्थमाह । (मुण्डक शाष्यम्)

Virām is a person. Then he must have a body with head, mind, senses, *prāṇa* and so on. The *śruti* herself talks about *virām* in his cosmic form. Even though it is purely for visualisation, the idea here is that this *jagat* is non-separate from *Īśvara*. The following *mantra* makes it very clear.

अग्निर्मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यौ ।
दिशः श्रोत्रे वाग्विवृताश्च वेदाः ।
वायुः प्राणो हृदयं विश्वमस्य
पद्भ्यां पृथिवी ह्येष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥ २. १. ४ ॥

agnirmūrdhā cakṣuṣī candrasūryau
diśaḥ śrotre vāgviṣṭāśca vedāḥ.
vāyuhḥ prāṇo hṛdayam viśvamasya
padbhyām pṛthivī hyeṣa sarvabhūtāntarātmā. (2.1.4)

eṣaḥ - this (*virām*); *sarvabhūtāntarātmā* - self of all beings;
hi- indeed; *etasmāt* - of this (Brahman); *jāyate* - is born;
asya - his; *mūrdhā* - head; *agniḥ* - heaven; *cakṣuṣī* - eyes;
candrasūryau - are the moon and the sun;
śrotre - ears; *diśaḥ* - quarters; *vāk* - his speech;
viṣṭāḥ - well-known; *vedāḥ* - Vedas; *prāṇaḥ* - *prāṇa*;
vāyuhḥ - the air; *hṛdayam* - mind; *viśvaḥ* - the world; *ca* - and;
padbhyām - his feet are; *pṛthivī* - earth

This *virām* who is the self of all beings, is indeed born of Brahman. His head is heaven; his eyes are the sun and the moon; his ears are the quarters; his organ of speech is the well-known Vedas; his *prāṇa* is air; his mind is the world and his feet are the earth.

Agnirmūrdhā : the head is heaven. *Agni here* does not mean the fire that we know. In a particular form of meditation called *paścāgni-vidyā*, heaven is looked upon as *agni*. Here the word 'agni' means the effulgent heavenly world.³⁰ The head of *Īśvara* in his cosmic form is heaven. Standing on the earth when we look at *Īśvara*, heaven is his head. It means no world is beyond him. All the *locas* above form his head.

Cakṣuṣī candra-sūryau : his eyes are the moon and the sun. we require a pair of eyes to perceive colour and form properly. During the day we see in the light of the sun, and during the night we see in the light of the moon. The sun and the moon are *Īśvara's* infrastructure for our eyes

³⁰ असौ वाव लोको गौतमाग्निः (छन्दोग्योपनिषत् 5.4.1) इति श्रुतेः। (मुण्डक श्राध्यम्)

to function. These two luminaries on which our eyes depend for sight are the Lord's eyes.

Diśaḥ śrotre : his ears are the quarters. *Diśaḥ* means all the four quarters – east, west, north and south. They represent the space. The sound is attributed to space. Our ears depend upon space to hear any sound, and therefore, the quarters representing space are his ears.

Vāg vivṛtāśca vedāḥ : the four Vedas are his speech. *Vivṛtāḥ* means well-known.³¹ It qualifies the word 'vedāḥ'. The Vedas are well-known as scriptures that reveal various means and ends. The Vedas are his words.

Vāyuh prāṇaḥ : the air is his *prāṇa*. He does not have nostrils and lungs, rather, the air on which our *prāṇa* depends upon is his *prāṇa*. The cosmic factors on which the individual's senses depend upon are Īśvara's instruments. This is how it is to be understood.

Hṛdayam viśvam asya: his mind is the world. The world is called *viśva*, that which is known through different types of cognition. The world of names and forms is understood in our minds only. At a given time we can think of one object, but for the Lord, the entire *viśva* is his mind, his knowledge. Śaṅkara gives here.³² a beautiful explanation. In deep sleep there is no *viśva*; it has resolved in the mind. When the mind is active, *viśva* is there and, therefore, this *viśva* is the manifestation of the mind alone. The entire *viśva* is the Lord's mind, his knowledge. *Padbhyām pṛthivī* : his feet alone are earth. The earth which supports one's feet is his feet. My God, this is God! This is 'you'!

That *virām* alone is *sarva-bhūtāntarātmā*, the self in all beings. Not only is he the whole creation, he is the *caiyanya* behind the whole creation. He is, indeed, in all beings as seer, hearer, thinker and knower, and he is the basis of all beings. There is nothing outside this *puruṣa*. Therefore, any *upādhi* is non-separate from the *puruṣa*. The *puruṣa* is *satya* and the *upādhi* is *mithyā*. We have to separately state this all the time.

³¹ विवृता उद्घाटिताः प्रसिद्धाः । (मुण्डक श्राव्यम्)

³² सर्वं ह्यन्तः-करण-विकारमेव जगन्मन्स्येव सुषुप्ते प्रलय-दर्शनात् ।
जागरितेऽपि तत एव अग्नि-विस्फुलिङ्गवद् विप्रतिष्ठानात् । (मुण्डक श्राव्यम्)