



The MUNḌAKA-UPANIṢAD *of the*
ATHARVA-VEDA



SARVAMANGALA FOUNDATION

*Translated in the light of Śaṅkarācārya's explanation
by Āchārya Vidyābhāskar*

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Switzerland & United Kingdom

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PRIMARY TYPEFACES

Cormorant Garamond

EB Garamond

Goldenbook

Monlam

Sanskrit 2003

Trajan Pro 3

SPECIAL THANKS TO

J. Rentsch, T. Laufer, Julian M. Stuart,
Hima Bindu Rebelly, Milan Amin, Divya
Sagar Kaushik, B. Lustig, A. Prajapati,
Dr. Jaimin Shukla

— Āchārya Vidyābhāskar, publisher



SARVAMANGALA

मुण्डकोपनिषत्

The MUNḌAKA-UPANIṢAD *of the*
ATHARVA-VEDA



LORD BRAHMĀ, THE FIRST TEACHER

He taught the Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad to his eldest son Atharvan.

Indian sculpture of four-headed Brahmā @ Lotus Sculpture

मुण्डकोपनिषत्

The MUNDAKA-UPANIṢAD of the ATHARVA-VEDA

Śānti-Mantra

Prayer for Peace

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May we hear the Auspicious with our ears, o Devas, *luminous ones!* May we see the Auspicious with our eyes, o you who are worthy of veneration! With steady limbs and bodies may we live praising *you*, the *span of life* allotted to us by the Devas, *the luminous ones.*

Om Peace, Peace, Peace

ॐ स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।

स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May Indra of widespread renown *grant us* the Auspicious!
May the all-knowing *Nourisher* Pūṣan *grant us* the Auspicious!
May Tārṁṣya, *the divine Eagle* whose *chariot wheel* is invulnerable, *grant us* the Auspicious!

May Bṛhaspati, *the Teacher of the Gods*, *grant us* the Auspicious!

Om Peace, Peace, Peace

॥ प्रथममुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

First Muṇḍaka

Part One

ॐ ब्रह्मा देवानां प्रथमः सम्बभूव विश्वस्य कर्ता
भुवनस्य गोप्ता । स ब्रह्मविद्यां सर्वविद्याप्रतिष्ठामथर्वाय
ज्येष्ठपुत्राय प्राह ॥ १ ॥

Brahmā appeared as the first among the Devas,
the maker of all, the protector of the world.
He related the knowledge of Brahman, *Absolute Reality*,
the foundation of all knowledge,
to Atharvan, his eldest son.

अथर्वणे यां प्रवदेत ब्रह्माऽथर्वा तं
पुरोवाचाङ्गिरे ब्रह्मविद्याम् । स भारद्वाजाय सत्यवाहाय प्राह
भारद्वाजोऽङ्गिरसे परावराम् ॥ २ ॥

The knowledge of Brahman which Brahmā expounded to Atharvan,
that *Atharvan* formerly related to Angir,
who related it to Satyavaha Bhāradvāja,
who related it to Angiras: one after the other.

शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ ।
कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ॥ ३ ॥

Śaunaka, a great householder,
having approached Aṅgiras in the appropriate manner, asked:
'O exalted one, what is that by knowing which
everything is known?'

तस्मै स होवाच ।
द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म
यद्ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च ॥ ४ ॥

He replied to him:
'There are two *types of* knowledge to be known –
thus say the knowers of Brahman:
the higher and the lower.'

तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः
शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति ।
अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते ॥ ५ ॥

There the lower *knowledge* is
the Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda, the Atharvaveda,
Śikṣā (phonetics, primary education),
Kalpa (liturgy), grammar, etymology, metrics, *the knowledge* of the
stars.

And the higher [knowledge] is that by which one realises the unde-
caying [true nature of all beings].

यत्तद्रेश्यमग्राह्यमगोत्रमवर्ण-
मचक्षुःश्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम् ।
नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं
तदव्ययं यद्भूतयोर्नि परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ॥ ६ ॥

That which is invisible,
which cannot be held onto,
which has no root, no colour,
without sight and hearing, without hands and feet,
perpetual, becoming many *different sentient beings*,
all-pervading, exceedingly subtle *like space*,
that is the undecaying source of beings:
this the wise perceive [as the undecaying true nature of all].

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च
यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः सम्भवन्ति ।
यथा सतः पुरुषात् केशलोमानि
तथाऽक्षरात् सम्भवतीह विश्वम् ॥ ७ ॥

As a spider spins out and retracts *its thread*,
as plants grow in the soil,
as hair and body grow from a living person,
similarly everything here emerges from the undecaying.

तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म ततोऽन्नमभिजायते ।
अन्नात् प्राणो मनः सत्यं लोकाः कर्मसु चामृतम् ॥ ८ ॥

By the Tapas, the burning heat *of its own Awareness*
Brahman swells *like a seed about to sprout,*
like the joy of a father whose child is about to be born.
From this arises the nourishment, *the field of Samsāric experiences.*
From the nourishment *emerges* the cosmic Prāṇa,
mind, truth, the worlds, and the immortal *fruit* within the *sacred*
karmas.

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्य ज्ञानमयं तापः ।
तस्मादेतद्ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्नं च जायाते ॥ ९ ॥

This which is all-knowing, all-perceiving,
whose Tapas consists only of Jñāna, pristine awareness:
from it originates this Brahman *of the relative world,*
as well as name, form and nourishment.

॥ इति मुण्डकोपनिषदि प्रथममुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part One in the First Muṇḍaka.

॥ प्रथममुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

Part Two

तदेतत् सत्यं मन्त्रेषु कर्माणि कवयो
यान्यपश्यंस्तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा सन्ततानि ।
तान्याचरथ नियतं सत्यकामा एष वः
पन्थाः सुकृतस्य लोके ॥ १ ॥

Such is this truth:

Karmas such as the sacred fire ceremonies
which the wise beheld in the mantras *of the Vedas*,
are widespread among the trinity
of the sacrificers, the assistant-sacrificers and the reciters.
Always perform them if you desire the actual *fruit they bring*:
this is the path of good action for you in the world.

यदा लेलायते ह्यर्चिः समिद्धे हव्यवाहने ।
तदाऽऽज्यभागावन्तरेणाऽऽहुतीः प्रतिपादयेत् ॥ २ ॥

While the flame flickers
as the fire, *the conveyor of offerings*, is lit,
between the two offerings of ghee
one should make the āhuti, *the offerings*.

यस्याग्निहोत्रमदर्शमपौर्णमास-
मचातुर्मास्यमनाग्रयणमतिथिवर्जितं च ।
अहुतमवैश्वदेवमविधिना हुत-
मासप्तमांस्तस्य लोकान् हिनस्ति ॥ ३ ॥

One whose fire-sacrifice is devoid of various rituals such as the Darśa or new-moon ritual, the Paurṇamāsa or full-moon ritual, the Cātur-
māsya or four-month ritual, and the Āgrayaṇa rite, without serving
guests, without proper offerings, without rites such as the Vaiśvade-
va, without offering according to the proper instruction –
such a one ruins his entry to all the Lokas, the realms, up to the sev-
enth realm, *Bhūr-Loka up to Satya-Loka*.

काली कराली च मनोजवा च
सुलोहिता या च सुधूम्रवर्णा ।
स्फुलिङ्गिनी विश्वरुची च देवी
लेलायमाना इति सप्त जिह्वाः ॥ ४ ॥

The seven flickering tongues *of the sacred fire are called:*
Kālī, the black, Karālī, the gaping one, Manojavā, as fast as thought,
Sulohitā, exceedingly red, Sudhūmra-varṇā, of a fine greyish colour,
Sphuliṅginī, full of sparks, and Viśvarucī, the Devī loved by all.

एतेषु यश्चरते भ्राजमानेषु यथाकालं
चाहुतयो ह्याददायन् ।
तं नयन्त्येताः सूर्यस्य रश्मयो यत्र
देवानां पतिरेकोऽधिवासः ॥ ५ ॥

One who performs *the rites* within these resplendent *flames*
by offering āhutis at the proper time –
they lead him *along* the rays of the sun
to the sovereign dwelling of the one lord of all the Devas.

एह्येहीति तमाहुतयः सुवर्चसः
सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिर्यजमानं वहन्ति ।
प्रियां वाचमभिवदन्त्योऽर्चयन्त्य
एष वः पुण्यः सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोकः ॥ ६ ॥

Calling ‘come, come’,
these resplendent āhutis *personified as Goddesses*
lead the offerer along the rays of the sun,
saying lovely speech and honouring him:
‘This is your meritorious well-made path to
Brahmaloka, the realm of Brahmā.’

प्लवा ह्येते अट्टढा यज्ञरूपा
अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म ।
एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा
जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापि यन्ति ॥ ७ ॥

Although this is so,
these forms of sacrifice are *nevertheless* fleeting, unstable,
depending on the eighteen *attendees required for a correct ritual,*
and thus a lower type of karma –
the fools who delight in this as the Good
return again and again to old age and death.

अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः
स्वयं धीराः पण्डितं मन्यमानाः ।
जङ्घन्यमानाः परियन्ति मूढा
अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥ ८ ॥

Dwelling in the midst of ignorance,
considering themselves wise and scholarly,
the fools wander round and round in suffering –
like the blind led by the blind.

अविद्यायं बहुधा वर्तमाना वयं
कृतार्था इत्यभिमन्यन्ति बालाः ।
यत् कर्मिणो न प्रवेदयन्ति रागात्
तेनातुराः क्षीणलोकाश्च्यवन्ते ॥ ९ ॥

Dwelling in ignorance in various ways, the immature think
'we have accomplished everything there is to achieve'.
As they do not understand due to their *constant* desire *for rewards*,
they suffer,
falling from their *divine* realms
once the merit is exhausted.

इष्टापूर्तं मन्यमाना वरिष्ठं
नान्यच्छ्रेयो वेदयन्ते प्रमूढाः ।
नाकस्य पृष्ठे ते सुकृतेऽनुभूत्वेमं
लोकं हीनतरं वा विशन्ति ॥ १० ॥

Believing sacrifice and charity to be the highest,
the deluded do not understand any other Good.
Having enjoyed *their merit* at the summit of heaven
gained by goods, they enter this world or a lower one once more.

तपःश्रद्धे ये ह्युपवसन्त्यरण्ये
शान्ता विद्वांसो भैक्ष्यचर्या चरन्तः ।
सूर्यद्वारेण ते विरजाः प्रयान्ति
यत्रामृतः स पुरुषो ह्यव्ययात्मा ॥ ११ ॥

But they who practise Tapas
and Śraddhā, *dedication to vidyā, realisation,*
in the forest, *their senses and minds* calm, wise, living on alms –
free of the soot of *good and bad deeds,*
proceed by the doorway of the Sun, *the path indicated by the sun,*
to where the immortal Puruṣa, the *Awareness* of undecaying nature
dwells.

परीक्ष्य लोकान् कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणो
निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ।
तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्
समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥ १२ ॥

Examining the realms generated by karma,
one who is devoted to Brahman must attain *a state of* desirelessness:
the unmade is not *brought about* by something made.
In order to realise *the unmade, the unborn and unceasing,*
with firewood in hand he should approach a Teacher

who is well-versed in the Vedas
and who is established in Brahman, *Absolute Reality*.

तस्मै स विद्वानुपसन्नाय सम्यक्
प्रशान्तचित्ताय शमान्विताय ।
येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच
तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम् ॥ १३ ॥

To one who has thus aptly approached him,
whose mind is at peace,
from whom the afflicting emotions have receded,
who is endowed with composure *concerning the senses and outer expe-*
riences,
the Teacher who is a knower of Reality
should explain the knowledge of Brahman as it is –
that by which one knows the undecaying Puruṣa, *Absolute Awareness*.

॥ इति मुण्डकोपनिषदि प्रथममुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part Two in the First Muṇḍaka.

॥ द्वितीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

Second Muṇḍaka

Part One

तदेतत् सत्यं
यथा सुदीप्तात् पावकाद्विस्फुलिङ्गाः
सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः ।
तथाऽक्षराद्विविधाः सोम्य भावाः
प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापि यन्ति ॥ १॥

Such is this truth:

As from a blazing fire
sparks of the same *fiery* nature are emitted by the thousands,
likewise, O moon-like one, manifold beings
originate from the undecaying *Awareness*,
and there they *ultimately* return.

दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः स बाह्याभ्यन्तरो ह्यजः ।
अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रो ह्यक्षरात् परतः परः ॥ २ ॥

This *undecaying Awareness*
is the divine, unshaped Puruṣa present within and outside,
the unborn, beyond Prāṇa –
it is the non-mind, the utterly pristine, beyond even the highest un-
manifest.

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।
खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥ ३ ॥

From this *undecaying Awareness*
Prāṇa, the mind and all the senses emerge,
as well as space, air, fire, water and the earth that upholds all.

अग्नीर्मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यौ
दिशः श्रोत्रे वाग् विवृताश्च वेदाः ।
वायुः प्राणो हृदयं विश्वमस्य पद्भ्यां
पृथिवी ह्येष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥ ४ ॥

Agni is its head, its eyes are the sun and the moon,
the directions *of space* are its ears,
its speech are the well-known Vedas,
the wind is its breath,
its heart is everything,
out of its feet the earth *is born* –
this is the Ātman, *the true nature* within all beings.



AGNI, THE GOD OF FIRE

The Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad says Agni is the symbolic head of Awareness.

Ancient Nepali Artwork in Private Collection @ Himalayan Art Resources

तस्मादग्निः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः
सोमात् पर्जन्य ओषधयः पृथिव्याम् ।
पुमान् रेतः सिञ्चति योषितायां
बहीः प्रजाः पुरुषात् सम्प्रसूताः ॥ ५ ॥

From this *undecaying Awareness*
is *born* the *world of Fire* whose fuel is the Sun,
whence is illumined the Moon *inducing* the rainwaters,
whence the plants on the earth *arise*,
and *nourished by them* a man offers *his sacred seed* into a woman –
thus manifold living beings are brought forth
from Puruṣa, *Awareness*.

तस्मादृचः साम यजूषि दीक्षा
यज्ञाश्च सर्वे क्रतवो दक्षिणाश्च ।
संवत्सरश्च यजमानश्च लोकाः
सोमो यत्र पवते यत्र सूर्यः ॥ ६ ॥

From this *undecaying Awareness*
arise the *verses of the R̥gveda*, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Yajurveda*,
the injunctions, sacrifices, all the rituals and gifts,
the *ritual calendar* year, the sacrificer,
and the realms where the Moon purifies and the Sun *is radiant*.

तस्माच्च देवा बहुधा सम्प्रसूताः
साध्या मनुष्याः पशवो वयांसि ।
प्राणापानौ व्रीहियवौ तपश्च
श्रद्धा सत्यं ब्रह्मचर्यं विधिश्च ॥ ७ ॥

From this *undecaying Awareness*
the Devas are brought forth in multiple *groups*,
the Sādhyas, *divine beings*, humans, animals, and birds,
the Prāṇa and Apāna *life-breaths*, corn and barley,
Tapas, Śraddhā, *confidence in realising the purpose of life*
truthfulness *which hurts no one*,
Brahmacarya and the rule *of conduct*.

सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्
सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः ।
सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा
गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ॥ ८ ॥

From this *undecaying Awareness*
emerge the seven senses *of perception*
with their seven lights, their objects, as fuel,
their sevenfold offerings, the cognitions,
these seven dwellings where the senses move –
residing in the cave *of the heart*,
allotted *by the undecaying Awareness* are these seven,
seven *in each being*.

अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वेऽस्मात्
स्यन्दन्ते सिन्धवः सर्वरूपाः ।
अतश्च सर्वा ओषधयो रसश्च
येनैष भूतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ॥ ९ ॥

From this *undecaying Awareness*
arise all the oceans, the mountains and the manifold rivers that flow.
From this *arise* all the plants and the *manifold* taste
by which this inner Ātman dwells amidst the *five* elements.

पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां
सोऽविद्याग्रन्थि विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥ १० ॥

Puruṣa, *Awareness*,
is this entire world, karma and the Tapas *of knowledge*.
It is the ultimate immortal Brahman, *Reality*.
One who realises this present in the cave *of the heart*,
unravels the knot of ignorance here, *O moon-like one*.

॥ इति मुण्डकोपनिषदि द्वितीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part One in the Second Muṇḍaka.

॥ द्वितीयमुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

Part Two

आविः संनिहितं गुहाचरं नाम
महत्पदमत्रैतत् समर्पितम् ।
एजत्प्राणन्निमिषच्च यदेतज्जानथ
सदसद्वरेण्यं परं विज्ञानाद्यद्वरिष्ठं प्रजानाम् ॥ १ ॥

The Great Goal is clearly present,
stirring in the cave *of the heart* –
in this everything is completely settled *as the spokes in a wheel*,
whatever moves, breathes and blinks:
know this to be *the true nature of both* existence and non-existence,
the choicest, beyond the understanding of beings, the most excellent.

यदर्चिमद्यदणुभ्योऽणु च
यास्मल्लोका निहिता लोकिनश्च ।
तदेतदक्षरं ब्रह्म स प्राणस्तदु वाङ्मनः
तदेतत्सत्यं तदमृतं तद्वेद्व्यं सोम्य विद्धि ॥ २ ॥

The luminous, which is smaller than the smallest *particles*,
in which the worlds and *all* the worlds' residents are settled,
this is this undecaying Brahman,
this is Life, this is Speech and Mind,
this is Reality, the immortal:
that is to be pierced *with Awareness*.
Pierce it, *O moon-like one!*

धनुर् गृहीत्वौपनिषदं महास्त्रं
शरं ह्युपासा निशितं सन्धयीत ।
आयम्य तद्भावगतेन चेतसा
लक्ष्यं तदेवाक्षरं सोम्य विद्धि ॥ ३ ॥

Picking up the bow of the Upaniṣads, the great weapon,
and loading the arrow *of the discerning mind*
sharpened by Upāsanā, *sustained contemplation* –
drawing back *the bow-string by withdrawing the senses and the concep-
tual mind from their usual objects*,
with Awareness completely converged upon the nature *of the target*,
pierce the target, O moon-like one: the undecaying *Reality!*

प्रणवो धनुः शारो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यं शरवत् तन्मयो भवेत् ॥ ४ ॥

OM is the bow, the arrow is the *relative, conditioned sense of self*,
Brahman, *Absolute Reality*, is called the target.
The target should be pierced by one who is *completely* undistracted:
he should remain merged with it like an arrow *that has hit the target*.

यस्मिन् द्यौः पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षमोतं
मनः सह प्राणैश्च सर्वैः ।
तमेवैकं जानथ आत्मानमन्या वाचो
विमुञ्चथामृतस्यैष सेतुः ॥ ५ ॥

That wherein the sky, the earth and the atmosphere are woven,
as well as the mind together with all the Prāṇas, *the life-breaths, the instruments of perception, and so forth* –

realise that one Ātman alone.

Give up all other words *related to lower knowledge*.

This is the bridge to the immortal.

अरा इव रथनाभौ संहता यत्र नाड्यः ।

स एषोऽन्तश्चरते बहुधा जायमानः ।

ओमित्येवं ध्यायथ आत्मानं स्वस्ति वः

पाराय तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ६ ॥

In the heart where the Nāḍīs, *the subtle channels*, are assembled
like spokes on the nave of a chariot wheel,
this *Awareness* abides within,
seemingly arising in manifold ways
as different states of mind, emotions, and the like.

Meditate on the Ātman as ‘OM’.

May your *journey* to the other shore of the darkness of *ignorance*
be auspicious, *free of all obstacles*.

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद् यस्यैष महिमा भुवि ।

दिव्ये ब्रह्मपुरे ह्येष व्योम्नात्मा प्रतिष्ठितः ॥

मनोमयः प्राणशरीरनेता

प्रतिष्ठितोऽन्ने हृदयं सन्निधाय ।

तद् विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीरा

आनन्दरूपममृतं यद् विभाति ॥ ७ ॥

The all-knowing, the all-comprehending,
whose magnificence is *widespread* in the world:
such is the Ātman settled in the luminous city of Brahman
in the space *within the heart lotus*.

The one that consists of mind (manomaya),
the one who guides the Prāṇa-body (the subtle body),
and is established within *the body made of food* (annamaya),
having established the heart in it –
this the wise fully behold through Awareness,
this immortal one which radiates forth in the form of bliss.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥ ८ ॥

The knot of the heart is cut through,
all doubts are severed,
all karmas subside,
when one perceives this *Reality*
which is both the higher and the lower.

हिरण्मये परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम् ।
तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषं ज्योतिस्तद् यदात्मविदो विदुः ॥ ९ ॥

In the golden highest sheath
is the unsoiled, partless Brahman.
It is the radiant light of lights:
this is what the knowers of the Ātman, *the true nature*, know.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ १०॥

Neither the sun shines there, nor the moon,
nor the stars, nor these lightnings, how much less this fire –
everything shines after this shining one.
By its luminosity all this is illumined.

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद् ब्रह्म पश्चाद् ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण ।
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥ ११॥

Only this immortal Brahman is in front of everyone,
Brahman is behind everyone,
Brahman is to the right and to the left.
Spread out below and above is only this Brahman.
This entire universe is simply this choicest Brahman.

॥ इति मुण्डकोपनिषदि द्वितीयमुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part Two in the Second Muṇḍaka.

॥ तृतीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

Third Muṇḍaka

Part One

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥ १ ॥

Two birds, inseparable companions, dwell in the same tree (the body).

Of the two, the one (the relative state of consciousness) enjoys the tasty fruit (saṁsāric experiences), while the other (the absolute state of consciousness) watches without eating.

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनिशया शोचति मुह्यमानः ।
जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य
महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥ २ ॥

Upon the same tree
the *one* Puruṣa, *the relative state of consciousness*, is downcast,
deluded, grieving on account of misery –
when he beholds the other, the lord venerated *by all*,
realising his magnificence *as his own*:
he is then released from sorrow.

यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं
कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय
निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति ॥ ३ ॥

When the seer beholds the golden-hued *self-luminous* maker,
the lord, Puruṣa, the source of *the lower manifest* Brahman –
then shaking off both vice and virtue,
stainless, the knower reaches the utmost equality, *nondual awareness*.

प्रणो ह्येष यः सर्वभूतैर्विभाति
विजानन् विद्वान् भवते नातिवादी ।
आत्मक्रीड आत्मरतिः क्रियावा-
नेष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ॥ ४ ॥

This is the Life that shines forth as all beings:
realising this the knower no longer talks *in condemnation of others*.
Enjoying within himself, delighting within himself
with *his* conduct *rooted in awareness, meditation, detachment and so forth* –
such is the choicest among the knowers of Brahman.

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा
सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।
अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो
यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः ॥ ५ ॥

This Ātman is ever attainable
through Satya, Tapas, complete awareness and Brahmacharya:
It shines vividly within the body as the pristine –
this the sages perceive
with all their faults *such as anger, etc.* subsided.

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं
सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।
येनाऽऽक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामा
यत्र तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥ ६ ॥

Truth alone triumphs, not untruth.
By truth the path of the Devas is laid out –
by which the Ṛṣis advance, with their desires accomplished,
to where this ultimate treasure of truth *is realised*.

बृहच्च तद् दिव्यमचिन्त्यरूपं
सूक्ष्माच्च तत् सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति ।
दूरात् सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च
पश्यन्त्विहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ॥ ७ ॥

The vast, the luminous, of inconceivable nature,
more subtle than the most subtle, shines forth:
it is farther away than the farthest
and is also close at hand –
the wise behold it here in the *cave of the heart*.

न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा
नान्यैर्देवैस्तपसा कर्मण वा ।
ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्व-
स्ततस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं
ध्यायमानः ॥ ८ ॥

It is neither grasped by the eye, nor by speech,
nor by the other senses, nor by austerity, nor by any action:
only through the serene clarity of awareness
one whose mind is pure perceives this part-less one
while meditating.

एषोऽणुरात्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यो
यस्मिन् प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश ।
प्राणैश्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां
यस्मिन् विशुद्धे विभवत्येष आत्मा ॥ ९ ॥

This Ātman subtle *like space* is to be known through awareness
in the body where the fivefold Prāṇa *life-force* has entered:
the awareness of every being is suffused by these Prāṇas –
When this *awareness* is utterly pristine, the Ātman reveals itself.



BUDDHA AFTER ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT

Like the Upaniṣad, Buddha taught the path of meditation.

Tibetan Artwork, 1600-1699, Rubin Museum of Art @ Himalayan Art Resources

यं यं लोकं मनसा संविभाति
विशुद्धसत्त्वः कामयते यांश्च कामान् ।
तं तं लोकं जयते तांश्च कामां-
स्तस्मादात्मज्ञं ह्यर्चयेत् भूतिकामः ॥ १० ॥

Whichever realm one whose being is pure
aspires to with the mind *for himself or for others*,
whichever desires he desires *for himself or for others*,
he accomplishes that realm *and* those desires –
therefore one who desires well-being
should venerate a knower of the Ātman.

॥ इति मुण्डकोपनिषदि तृतीयमुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part One in the Third Muṇḍaka.

॥ तृतीयमुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

Part Two

स वेदैतत् परमं ब्रह्म धाम
यत्र विश्वं निहितं भाति शुभ्रम् ।
उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामास्ते
शुक्रमेतदतिवर्तन्ति धीराः ॥ १ ॥

A Teacher of such wisdom

knows the ultimate Brahman, *Awareness*,
the abode in which the universe is settled,
shining forth luminously:
the desireless wise ones who venerate such a person
cross beyond this seed *of rebirth*.

कामान् यः कामयते मन्यमानः
स कामभिर्जायते तत्र तत्र ।
पर्याप्तकामस्य कृतात्मनस्तु
इहैव सर्वे प्रविलीयन्ति कामाः ॥ २ ॥

One who mulls over and wishes for *the fulfilment of manifold* desires
is born wherever *they take him* together with those desires.
But for one who has accomplished all wishes,
who is self-accomplished,
all desires dissolve right here.

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥ ३ ॥

This Ātman cannot be gained by study,
nor through the ability to retain *book knowledge*,
nor by much learning.
One who seeks it *within*, by him it is attained.
To him the Ātman reveals its own nature.

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो
न च प्रमादात् तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् ।
एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वान्-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ॥ ४ ॥

This Ātman cannot be gained by one who has no strength,
where there is pramāda, negligence,
nor *is it attained* through Tapas without renunciation –
the Ātman of the *discerning* knower
who strives with these upāyas, methods,
enters the abode of Brahman, *Reality*.

सम्प्राप्यैनमृषयो ज्ञानतृप्ताः
कृतात्मानो वीतरागाः प्रशान्ताः
ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीरा
युक्तात्मानः सर्वमेवाविशन्ति ॥ ५ ॥

The R̥ṣis, having wholly attained *this realisation*,
are gratified by Jñāna, Awareness,
self-accomplished, with their desires dissolved,
completely at peace –
attaining the All-Pervading everywhere,
the wise, *with* their minds ever yoked *in samādhi*,
merge into the all.

वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः
संन्यासयोगाद् यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले
परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥ ६ ॥

Having gained complete certainty
in the Reality known through the conclusion of the Vedas,
having become sages of *inner* pristine nature
through sannyāsa-yoga, *the yoga of renunciation*,
at the utmost final moment
with the supreme immortal *as their very own nature*,
they are all completely released in the Brahmaloкас, the realms of
Brahman.

गताः कलाः पञ्चदश प्रतिष्ठा
देवाश्च सर्वे प्रतिदेवतासु ।
कर्माणि विज्ञानमयश्च आत्मा
परेऽव्यये सर्वे एकीभवन्ति ॥ ७ ॥

With the fifteen aspects reverted back to their sources,
with all the senses gone back to their respective Devatās,
the karmas and the Ātman consisting of consciousness
all merge as one in the ultimate undecaying *Reality*.

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽ
स्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।
तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः
परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

Even as the flowing rivers
reach their conclusion in the ocean,
giving up *their* name and form,
thus the knower, freed from name and form,
reaches the luminous Puruṣa, *Awareness*, beyond the beyond.

स यो ह वै तत् परमं ब्रह्म वेद
ब्रह्मैव भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति ।
तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो
विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥ ९ ॥

One who realises this ultimate Brahman
truly is Brahman.
There shall be none in his family who is not a knower of Brahman.
He crosses grief, he crosses evil.
With the knots in the cave *of his heart* released,
he is immortal.



THE GREAT YOGĪ MILAREPA

He composed 100,000 songs about Awareness, reminiscent of the Upaniṣads.

Tibetan Artwork, 1700-1799, Rubin Museum of Art @ Himalayan Art Resources

तदेतदृचाऽभ्युक्तम् ।
क्रियावन्तः श्रोत्रिया ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः
स्वयं जुह्वत एकार्षि श्रद्धयन्तः ।
तेषामेवैतां ब्रह्मविद्यां वदेत
शिरोव्रतं विधिवद् यैस्तु चीर्णम् ॥ १० ॥

That has been expressed by this R̥g verse –
Those who have the *right* conduct of *meditation*,
who are students of the Vedas,
who are firmly settled on Brahman, *Reality*,
who themselves offer to the One Seer with dedication,
who have aptly performed the Śirovrata *vow*:
only to such *students* should one relate this knowledge of Brahman.

तदेतत् सत्यमृषिरङ्गिराः
पुरोवाच नैतदचीर्णव्रतोऽधीते ।
नमः परमऋषिभ्यो नमः परमऋषिभ्यः ॥ ११ ॥

Such is this truth which the R̥ṣi Aṅgiras formerly related.
No one *should* study this who has not performed the Vrata, *the vow*.

Obeisance to the great R̥ṣis,
Obeisance to the great R̥ṣis.

॥ इति मुण्डकोपनिषदि तृतीयमुण्डके द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥

Thus ends Part Two in the Third Muṇḍaka.

॥ इत्यथर्ववेदीयमुण्डकोपनिषत्समाप्ता ॥

Thus ends the Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad.

Śānti-Mantra

Prayer for Peace

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May we hear the Auspicious with our ears, o Devas, *luminous ones!* May we see the Auspicious with our eyes, o you who are worthy of veneration! With steady limbs and bodies may we live praising *you*, the *span of life* allotted to us by the Devas, *the luminous ones.*
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

ॐ स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May Indra of widespread renown *grant us* the Auspicious!
May the all-knowing *Nourisher* Pūṣan *grant us* the Auspicious!
May Tārṣya, *the divine Eagle* whose *chariot* wheel is invulnerable, *grant us* the Auspicious!
May Bṛhaspati, *the Teacher of the Gods*, *grant us* the Auspicious!
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

PRAYER *to* GODDESS SARASVATĪ *to*
INCREASE *our* INTELLIGENCE



GODDESS SARASVATĪ, THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE PERSONIFIED

Ancient Nepali Painting of Goddess Sarasvatī © Himalayan Art Resources

PRAYER to GODDESS SARASVATĪ to
INCREASE *our* INTELLIGENCE

ॐ नमस्ते शारदे देवि काश्मीरपुरवासिनि ।
त्वामहं प्रार्थये नित्यं विद्यादानं च देहि मे ॥

om namaste śārade devi kāśmīra-pura-vāsini |
tvām ahaṁ prārthaye nityaṁ vidyā-dānaṁ ca dehi me ||

Om Obeisance to you, O Goddess Śāradā,
You who are like the Full-Moon in Autumn,
You who dwell in the Region of Kāśmīr!
I ever beseech you: Grant me the gift of knowledge!

