



## मुण्डक उपनिषत्

### Chapter 1

#### Section 1

#### Volume 5

6. यत् तत्, अद्रेश्यं, अग्राह्यं, अगोत्रं, अवर्णम्  
अचक्षुः श्रोत्रं, तत् अपाणिपादं ।  
नित्यं, विभुं, सर्वगतं, सुसूक्ष्मं,  
तत् अव्ययं, यत् भूतयोनिम्, परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ॥ 1 - 1 - 6

7. यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च,  
यथा पृथिव्यां ओषधयः संभवन्ति ।  
यथा सतः पुरुषात् केशलोमानि,  
तथा अक्षरात् संभवति इह विश्वम् ॥ 1 - 1 - 7

8. तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म, ततः अन्नं अभिजायते ।  
अन्नात् प्राणः, मनः, सत्यं, लोका कर्मसु च अमृतं ॥ 1 - 1 - 8

9. यः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।  
तस्मात् एतत् ब्रह्म, नामरूपं अन्नं च जायते ॥ 1 - 1 - 9

इति प्रथम मुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ।

These four verses go together, and they are the most important verses in this section. We have already seen the first two verses the last time. Now we continue.

That अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर is both the निमित्त कारणं - the efficient cause, as well as the उपादान कारणं - the material cause for this entire creation, is an extraordinary declaration of our Upanishads. We have talked about this briefly in भगवत् गीता Chapter 7 (verses 4-7). To unfold the essential content of this declaration is the primary purpose of Mundaka Upanishad.

As we saw last time, अक्षर ब्रह्मन् was indicated in verse 6 by two sets of words, namely अद्रेश्यं, अग्राह्यं, अगोत्रं, अवर्णम्, etc. on the one hand, and also by भूतयोनिम् and विभुं on the other hand, thereby indicating अक्षर ब्रह्मन् as both निर्गुण ब्रह्मन् - ब्रह्मन् with no



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qualities of any kind, and also as सगुण ब्रह्मन् - ब्रह्मन् including qualities of all kinds in this creation.

A brief reflection on the pointer word भूतयोनिम्, ब्रह्मन् as the ultimate cause for this entire creation, together with the three illustrations given by the Upanishad in verse 7, provides a basis to conclude that ब्रह्मन् can indeed be the material cause for this entire creation, but then, we still need to understand how that is practically possible.

Continuing our process of reflection, let us consider the pointer word विभुं which means विविध भवनशीलं - ब्रह्मन् is capable of being manifold in expressions, and appearances in forms, names, attributes and qualities, by virtue of Its अनन्त स्वरूपं.

Now, we must understand how One ब्रह्मन्, without Itself undergoing any change, can be अनन्तं ब्रह्मन्? In other words, how One निर्गुण ब्रह्मन् can be limitless सगुण ब्रह्मन् at the same time?

On further reflection, we recognize that the question "How One ब्रह्मन्, without Itself undergoing any change can give rise to this manifold creation" is essentially the same as the question "How can One clay material, without itself undergoing any change, can give rise to very many different looking pot-forms?" or "How can One cotton material, without Itself undergoing any change, give rise to very many different looking pieces of cloth?" In other words, what is the connection between "One" and "many", or, in the context here, what is the connection between निर्गुण and सगुण, with respect to the nature of ब्रह्मन्?

The answer is माया – The ब्रह्माश्रया माया, the infinite inherent power of ब्रह्मन्, inseparable from ब्रह्मन् Itself, That is the connection.

Now, it is clear that The One ब्रह्मन्, That अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, The One परमेश्वर, without Itself undergoing any change, by virtue of Its inherent माया power, is indeed the material cause for this entire creation of manifold forms, names, attributes and qualities. Being so, we can also reasonably conclude that The अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, by virtue of Its being भूतयोनिम् and विभुं, is also the निमित्त कारणं - the efficient cause, the instrumental cause for this entire creation. In the next verse, the Upanishad explicitly confirms that conclusion.

What we call "creation" is an endless cycle of manifestation, unmanifestation and remanifestation; appearance, disappearance and reappearance. The immediate cause for such creation is माया, abiding in ब्रह्मन्. Since ब्रह्मन् has no beginning, माया, also has



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no beginning, and consequently, creation also has no beginning. When we talk of creation then, we are only talking about one segment in this never ending cycle, each of which involves creation, continued existence, and ultimate dissolution. Naturally therefore, a question arises, namely "what is the efficient cause for each and every segment in this cycle of creation?"

The Upanishad says, that सत्यं-ज्ञानं-अनन्तं ब्रह्म, That अक्षर ब्रह्मन् Itself is also the efficient cause for each and every segment in this never ending cycle of creation.

This is how the Upanishad communicates that message through a series of pointer words

तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म, ततः अन्नं अभिजायते ।  
अन्नात् प्राणः, मनः, सत्यं, लोका कर्मसु च अमृतं ॥ 1 - 1 - 8

तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म

ब्रह्मन्, That ब्रह्मन्, The सत्यं-ज्ञानं-अनन्तं ब्रह्म - pointed out earlier as अक्षरं in verse 6 That अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, तपसा चीयते swells with joy, by knowledge.

With reference to ब्रह्मन्, तपस् is ज्ञानं - knowledge. The word चीयते means हर्षेण वर्धते, swells with joy (in the sense when something desirable happens to a person, that person swells, filled with joy). Therefore, ब्रह्म तपसा चीयते literally means That अक्षर ब्रह्मन् swells with joy by knowledge.

Now, what does that mean? ब्रह्मन् Itself is चित् स्वरूपं - ज्ञान स्वरूपं - आनन्द स्वरूपं - All knowledge Itself, Supreme Joy Itself. There is nothing to add more knowledge or more joy to ब्रह्मन्. When that is the case, ब्रह्म तपसा चीयते means what?

To understand this statement, we must briefly recall how the Taittiriya Upanishad unfolds the origin of creation.

सो कामयत ।  
बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति ।  
स तपोऽतप्यत ।  
स तपस्तप्त्वा ।  
इदं सर्वम् असृजत । etc.



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We have seen these words already in detail. Before any creation can take place, there must naturally be some act of initiation to create, on part of the efficient cause involved; for ब्रह्मन्, that act of initiation to create is simply seeing the creation, in all its details as it was before, in the previous cycle, and as it will be, in the new cycle yet to come. Such seeing by ब्रह्मन् by virtue of Its ज्ञान स्वरूपं - All knowledge Nature, is called ईश्वर कटाक्ष, which is what is indicated by the word तपसा "seeing by knowledge all the details of the creation yet to come".

By such seeing, what happened? सः अकामयत - ब्रह्मन् desired. What did ब्रह्मन् desire?

बहुस्यां प्रजायेय इति - May I manifest Myself as many in My अनन्त स्वरूपं - in MY limitless forms and names in the new creation yet to come. That desire of ब्रह्मन्, That ब्रह्मकाम, That Will of परमेश्वर has ब्रह्मलक्षणं, which means, That Will of परमेश्वर, by Its very nature, has ब्रह्मानन्द स्वरूपं - Supreme Joy Itself. Being so, That Will of परमेश्वर to manifest Itself as many, is Itself ब्रह्मन्'s initiation to create this manifold universe. By such initiation, That ब्रह्मन्, in Its ब्रह्मानन्द स्वरूपं, has already penetrated, in and out, of this entire creation including every Being in the creation even at its incipient state before Its manifestation as creation. It is That ब्रह्मानन्द स्वरूपं that is indicated by the word चीयते in the verse here, One ब्रह्मन्, swelling with joy as many in the creation yet to come. Such swelling with joy is easily understandable from a simple example.

You sow a seed under the soil and sprinkle some water over it. The seed swells before it sprouts. That swelling is joy for the seed, as the very plant itself with all its leaves, branches, flowers, fruits, etc., yet to come. Similarly, the ईश्वर कटाक्ष, the will of परमेश्वर, the desire of ब्रह्मन्, to manifest Itself as many is swelling with joy for ब्रह्मन्, as the very creation itself, in all its details, yet to come.

It is That swelling with joy for ब्रह्मन् that is indicated by the word चीयते.

Therefore, तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म means: Through तपसा, ज्ञानेन, through Its inherent ज्ञानस्वरूपं - All-knowledge nature, ब्रह्म चीयते, That ब्रह्मन् swells with joy of Its own forthcoming manifestation as the manifold creation Itself, thereby initiating the process of creation yet to come. Then what happened?



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ततः अन्नं अभिजायते

ततः *tataḥ* - Then, अन्नं अभिजायते food is born, naturally, spontaneously. That means, following the desire of ब्रह्मन् to manifest Itself as many in the creation yet to come, the unmanifest माया, the inherent power of ब्रह्मन्, spontaneously becomes ready for manifestation as the creation itself. That spontaneous readiness of माया is the unmanifested अन्नं, food, for the creation yet to come. That अन्नं is born. Then what happened?

अन्नात् प्राणः अभिजायते - From That अन्नं, from that spontaneous readiness of माया for manifestation as the creation itself, प्राणः अभिजायते - प्राणः is born, naturally, spontaneously.

Here प्राण is a pointer word for हिरण्यगर्भ, the totality of knowledge and power for all created existence, which means, from that प्राण alone from that हिरण्यगर्भ alone, emerges all created beings, this entire universe of forms and names and attributes. That shows That हिरण्यगर्भ is indeed the ब्रह्मा, The Creator.

Thus, we understand that हिरण्यगर्भ and ब्रह्मा are identical, and the words प्राण, हिरण्यगर्भ and ब्रह्मा, The Creator, all refer to the same One परमेश्वर.

Being so, That परमेश्वर as हिरण्यगर्भ, as the totality of knowledge and power for all created existence, as ब्रह्मा, as the creator for this entire universe of forms, names and attributes, is in every being in this creation as सूत्र - as the thread running through all created beings, keeping them all together as One, in Itself, as परमेश्वर Itself.

As Sri Krishna says: (G 7-7)

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥

All beings in this creation are strung in Me, The परमेश्वर, as rows of gems in a string. That सूत्र is परमेश्वर Itself manifested as The Creator, by the power of माया, the inherent power of परमेश्वर Itself.

From that प्राण, The हिरण्यगर्भ, The ब्रह्मा, The Creator (now starts the creation itself)



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मनः, सत्यं, लोकाः कर्मसु च अमृतं अभिजायते - All these are born, all these emerged in that sequence, naturally and spontaneously. What are they?

मनः - The समष्टि सूक्ष्म अन्तः करण - the entire internal organs of perception in their subtle forms, which are together called the cosmic mind, comprising volition, deliberation, doubt, decision, etc. Following That मनः, emerged

सत्य - सत् is that which is manifest, and त्यत् is that which is subtle. सत् and त्यत् together is सत्यं, as we may recall from Taittiriya Upanishad, "सच्च त्यच्चाभवत्". Therefore, सत्यं here refers to all the पञ्चमहाभूतs, the five great elements - आकाश, वायु, अग्नि, आपः and पृथिवी, all of them in that order, both in their subtle and gross forms resulting from their mutual interactions, and then came लोकाः - all the worlds, together with all worldly experiences in this entire universe. According to the Vedas, there are seven लोकs constituting the "higher regions" starting with the earth and above the earth, and seven लोकs below the earth constituting the lower regions in this universe.

The लोकs in the higher regions are: भूः (the earth), भुवः, सुवः, महः, जनः, तपः and सत्यं (or ब्रह्म लोकः ) and those in the lower regions are अतल, वितल, सतल, रसातल, तलातल, महातल and पाताल. Generally speaking the लोकs in the higher regions (including the earth) are together called स्वर्गलोक, and those in the lower regions are together called पाताल लोक. All these 14 लोकs together constitute the entire universe. Briefly, one can call all these 14 लोकs together as अपर लोक, the world of objects, forms, names, and experiences. All these worlds evolved from पञ्चमहाभूतs the five great elements, namely the space, the air, the fire, the water and the earth, and their mutual interactions.

In all these worlds, beings are born with their own individual उपाधिस - body vehicles, and they do कर्मs of various kinds. Thus, from all these worlds

कर्मसु अभिजायते - कर्मs are naturally born, and since each and every कर्म has its own कर्मफल, the result of कर्म

अमृतं च अभिजायते - कर्मफलs are also naturally born. Here कर्मफल is indicated as अमृतं, which means "Immortal", not in an absolute sense, but in the sense of continuity.



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Because, until one experiences the fruits of actions, they continue to remain in one's account. The कर्मफलs are never written off, unless one gains मोक्ष.

That means, by कर्म, one cannot eliminate कर्मफल. कर्मफल will disappear only when one recognizes oneself as अकर्ता - "I am not the doer of any action" Such recognition takes place only when one gains आत्म ज्ञान - Self Knowledge. That is the content of the verse.

8. तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म, ततः अन्नं अभिजायते ।

अन्नात् प्राणः, मनः, सत्यं, लोका कर्मसु च अमृतं ॥

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This verse confirms explicitly that अक्षर ब्रह्मन् as परमेश्वर, as ब्रह्मा, as हिरण्यगर्भ, as प्राण, is indeed the निमित्त कारणं, the efficient cause, the instrumental cause for this entire creation, which is the main purpose of this verse.

Thus the verses 7 and 8 taken together unfold clearly that अक्षर ब्रह्मन् as परमेश्वर is indeed both the निमित्त कारणं, as well as the उपादान कारणं, the efficient cause as well as the material cause for this entire creation, for this entire universe of forms, names and experiences, thus establishing the identity between निर्गुण ब्रह्मन् and सगुण ब्रह्मन्, and, there is, in fact, no contradiction between that which is indicated by the pointers अद्वैतं, अग्राह्यं, अगोत्रं, अवर्णम् etc. and That which is also indicated by the pointer words भूतयोनिम् and विभुं in verse 6.

Summing up again all that is said in verses 6, 7 and 8 on अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, the Upanishad says:

9. यः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।

तस्मात् एतत् ब्रह्म, नामरूपं अन्नं च जायते ॥

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यः उक्त लक्षणः अक्षरः - That अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, as indicated in verses 6, 7, and 8, is सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् - both सर्वज्ञः and सर्ववित्. सर्वज्ञः means The One who knows everything in this creation; generally सर्ववित् means the One who knows everything in this creation, in all details.



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This is an important difference. Generally speaking, a wise person is only a सर्वज्ञः. He or she knows, for example, that ब्रह्मन् alone is सत्यं and everything else is only a मिथ्या - a transient appearance ever subject to change, but only परमेश्वर and also ब्रह्मऋषिः, the त्रिकाल ज्ञानीs are both सर्वज्ञः and सर्ववित्. They know both सत्यं and मिथ्या with respect to every object in existence, in all details of its past, present and future. Therefore the Upanishad says: यः अक्षरः सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् सर्वज्ञः सर्ववित् - That अक्षर ब्रह्मन् is both सर्वज्ञः and सर्ववित्. Further, That अक्षर ब्रह्मन् is One यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः, for whom तपस् is only ज्ञानमयं - ज्ञानस्वरूपं - All knowledge Nature.

That means, in the creation of this entire universe, there is no effort involved. There is no कर्म involved on the part of ब्रह्मन्. The entire process of creation is natural and spontaneous, an expression of ब्रह्मन्'s ज्ञानस्वरूपं - All knowledge Nature, and knowledge is power.

तस्मात् - From That अक्षर ब्रह्मन्

एतत् ब्रह्म जायते - this ब्रह्म, this manifestation of ब्रह्मन्, namely प्राण, the हिरण्यगर्भ, the ब्रह्मा, the creator is born, and also

एतत् नामरूपं अन्नं च जायते - this entire universe of names and forms, and also food for their continued sustenance and growth, are born.

By including हिरण्यगर्भ in the above statement, the सूक्ष्म शरीर - the subtle body in every name and form, and food also are naturally included in the process of creation. Once the gross forms are created, they need food for their sustenance and growth, and hence all food for them is also born. Here the word अन्नं - food, is the all-inclusive matter for sustenance and growth, and continued evolution of the entire created universe, which obviously includes the entire human, animal and plant kingdom, all areas of objective knowledge and also Self-knowledge in the forms of Vedas and Upanishads.

Thus we understand इदं सर्वम् अक्षरं ब्रह्म एव - this entire creation is nothing but अक्षर ब्रह्मन्.

इति प्रथम मुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ।

This concludes the first section of the first chapter of Mundaka Upanishad. We will continue next time.