

ऐतरीय उपनिषद् *Aitareya Upaniṣad*

Chapter 1, Section 2

We have seen the *loka* and *lokapāla sṛṣṭi* out of *ātmā* in the first *khāṇḍa* and we now move on to section 2.

ता एता देवताः सृष्टा, अस्मिन् महत्यर्णवे प्रापतन्
तमशनाया पिपासाभ्याम्, अन्ववार्जत् ।
ता एनमब्रुवन्, आयतनं नः प्रजानीहि ।
यस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठता अन्नमदामेति ॥१॥

tā etā devatāḥ sṛṣṭā, asmin mahatyarṇave prāpatan
tamaśanāyā pipāsābhyām, anvavārjat
tā enamabruvan, āyatanam naḥ prajānīhi
yasmin pratiṣṭhitā annamadāmeti (1)

tā etā devatāḥ sṛṣṭā, all these deities which manifested out of the *virāt deha*, *asmin mahati arṇave prāpatan*, they all fell into the huge ocean of *saṁsāra*. Here *arṇava*, ocean refers to the ocean of *saṁsāra*, *bhava sāgara*. All these *devatā-s prāpatan*, fell. Who fell? You cannot say human beings because they have not been created yet. The deities that have been created they fell. The point that is conveyed by this is *devatā-s* are also *saṁsāri*. We are not only in this dire situation. To give us company in our misery, these gods are also there. Śaṅkarācārya makes a special point here. He says that is why through *upāsana khāṇḍa*, *mokṣa* is not possible. *Upāsana* takes one to the higher *devatā sthāna*. You may become *Indra* by *upāsana*, you can become *Varuṇa* and you can even become *Hiraṇyagarbha*. Even those *devatā-s* are not free from *saṁsāra*. Therefore it is clear that going to higher worlds as *devatā-s* does not solve the problem. That is indicated here by saying, *tā etā devatāḥ mahatyarṇave prāpatan*.

The *upaniṣad* has said, *mahatī arṇava*, not just ocean, but a huge ocean. So *Śaṅkarācārya* feels some *saṁsāra varṇana*, description should be there. So he writes a beautiful commentary. He writes, that this ocean of *saṁsāra* is beginning-less, apparently has no end, the shore you cannot see, depth of the ocean again is difficult to know. You cannot find out where it is supported. The oceans are several miles deep, unfathomable. Ocean depths are even greater than Mount Everest! All these are applicable to *saṁsāra*. What are the waters of this *saṁsāra* ocean? The pain, sorrow caused by *avidya*, *kāma*, *karma*, ignorance, desire and action. Is it just waters? No! So many wild aquatic creatures are there. Diseases, old age, death and constant threat of death, these are the sharks in the ocean. Do we get some relief, rest? A little bit of joy, here and there, born from objects, once in a while when we contact sense objects, that little bit, *alpa sukha* is there. That is the little respite that we get. The huge waves of *saṁsāra* are the varieties of problems, constant problems caused by the disturbances in the mind because of winds of thirst for sense pleasures, desire and greed. It is a noisy *saṁsāra* with people crying in pain as they are thrown into all kinds of hell.

Is there any way out of this ocean? Can we reach the shore? *Śaṅkarācārya* says, yes, there is a small boat, a life boat is available. That is the boat of knowledge. The boatman is the *guru*. The food for the journey to take you across are virtues such as *satya*, truthfulness, *ārjava*, straight forwardness, *dayā*, compassion, *ahimsā*, non-injury, *śama*, mind control, *dama*, sense control, *dhṛti*, fortitude and so on. When you take to *jñāna mārḡa*, the nutrition for the path is all these virtues. What route should I take? *Satsaṅga*, company of good people, *sarvatyāga*, *vairāgya* or dispassion are the navigational route to be taken. The final destination, the shore is *mokṣa*, realization. This is an elaborate description of *saṁsāra* and into this *saṁsāra*, the *devatā*-s fell. Then what happened?

Tamaśanāyā pipāsābhyām anvavārjat, those *devatā*-s, *anvavārjat*, procured, were provided, associated with, joined with *aśanāyā pipāsābhyām*, hunger and

thirst. The Lord provided them with hunger and thirst. In *vedānta śāstra*, hunger and thirst represent *saṁsāra*. It is a technical expression. Often *mokṣa* is described as *aśanāyā pipāsādi varjitam*, without hunger and thirst and *saṁsāra* is described as *aśanāyā pipāsādi yuktam*. So *devatā*-s also have hunger and thirst. It is said otherwise in *Kaṭhopanīṣad*. There it is said that the *devatā*-s have transcended hunger and thirst. Here the *upaniṣad* says they are endowed with hunger and thirst. How do you reconcile the two? In *svargo loka* it is slower than here in this world. So it is relatively better, but they do have hunger and thirst. Unfortunately they did not have a body. So what did they do?

Tāḥ enamabruvan, so they told him, the Lord, we are all suffering from hunger and thirst, we are not able to do anything. So *āyatanam naḥ prajānīhi*, please give us an abode, here abode means a gross body. *Yasmin pratiṣṭhitā annam adāma iti*, we want such a body remaining in which we can eat well. Here *Ānandagiri* who has written notes on *Śaṅkara Bhāṣya* explains that hunger and thirst is not only for food and drinks, but it is the hunger for each sense organ, form and color for the eyes, sound for the ear and so on. So each *devatā* had hunger and thirst for its own respective *viśaya*.

ताभ्यो गामानयत्, ता अब्रुवन् न वै नोऽयम् अलमिति ।

ताभ्योऽश्वमानयत्, ता अब्रुवन्, न वै नोऽयम् अलमिति ॥२॥

tābhyo gāmānayat, tā abruvan, na vai no'yam alamiti

tābhyo'śvamānayat, tā abruvan, na vai no'yam alamiti (2)

When the *devatā* -s asked for a suitable body by which they can satiate their hunger and thirst, the Lord went to his workshop where he had models of several bodies. He first brought out, *tābhyo gāmānayat*, the body of a cow to them. What did they do? *Tāḥ abruvan*, they said to the Lord, *na vai naḥ ayam alam iti*, this body is not fit for us. We are not satisfied with what you brought us, we are not happy with it. Why? *Ānandagiri* gives a nice explanation. Cows have only upper teeth. So they cannot enjoy crunchy

snacks. So what did the Lord do? *Tābhyaḥ aśvam ānayat*, so the Lord brought a horse. Horses have both upper and lower set of teeth and so they can enjoy food better. The choosy *devatā*-s rejected that also. *Na vai no'yam alamiti*, this is not good enough.

ताभ्यः पुरुषमानयत्, ता अब्रुवन्, सुकृतं बतेति ।

पुरुषो वाव सुकृतम्, ता अब्रवीद्यथायतनं प्रविशतेति ॥३॥

tābhyaḥ puruṣamānayat, tā abruvan, sukṛtaṁ bateti

puruṣo vāva sukṛtam, tā abravīdyathāyatanam praviśteti (3)

The picky, picky *devatā*-s were not happy with the first two models that were brought. At last, the Lord brought the best one, *tābhyaḥ puruṣam ānayat*, a human body. For the sake of those *devatā*-s, the Lord brought the human body. Immediately the *devatā*-s responded, *tā abruvan*, they all said, *sukṛtaṁ bata iti*, *bata* is an exclamation mark! Indeed! Great! Wonderful! *Sukṛtam*, well done! This is the best physical body! The human body is supposed to be the most evolved one even according to Darwinian theory. Among all other species, the human body is the best. The intellect manifests in this form, speech is also possible and with all it is a complete physical form. Animals and birds make a few noises. We can communicate in well developed languages. Prose, music, poetry, drama, literature are all possible for humans. Why go even that far, only we can smile and laugh! Further human beings are supposed to be created in the image of the Lord himself! He is a miniature God! That is why he even gets the name *puruṣaḥ*. When you say *puruṣa sūktam*, there *puruṣa* is *Bhagavān*. *Sa va eṣa puruṣa annarasamayaḥ*. There *puruṣa* is *jīva*! *Īśvara* is *puruṣa*, *jīva* is also *puruṣa*.

So the *devatā*-s were very happy. They congratulated the Lord, well done! *Asadvā idamagra āsit. Tato vai sadajāyata. Tadātmānaggsvamkuruta. Tasmāt tat sukṛtam ucyata iti. Tasmāt tat sukṛtam ucyate*, so it is said it was well done! *Ānandagiri* writes that the Lord took personal care in the creation of human beings. So it is the best. So *sukṛtaṁ bata*, and that is why the *upaniṣad* says,

puruṣo vāva sukṛtam. Not only did the *devatā*-s say that, it is not their view alone, it is now accepted by the whole world. It is an universally accepted fact. *Sukṛtam bata* is not a private view, *puruṣo vāva sukṛtam* is an universally accepted fact. *Vāva* means indeed! So the physical body has arrived. Now the *devatā*-s are going to enter the *puruṣa śarīram*. So *Bhagavān* gives command here, which *devatā* should occupy which office. So *Īśvara tāḥ abravīt*, told them, what did he say? *Yathā āyatanam praviṣṭa iti, praviṣṭa*, enter *āyatanam*, the abode, *yathā*, as it is assigned to you. May you enter in such a way that it is all proper. After this command was given, each *devatā* picked up his/her bags and entered the assigned body.

अग्निः वाग्भूत्वा, मुखं प्राविशत्, वायुः प्राणो भूत्वा, नासिके प्राविशत्,
आदित्यश्चक्षुर्भूत्वा, अक्षिणी प्राविशत्, दिशः श्रोत्रं भूत्वा, कर्णे प्राविशन्,
ओषधिवनस्पतयो लोमानि भूत्वा, त्वचं प्राविशन्, चन्द्रमा मनो भूत्वा, हृदयं प्राविशत्,
मृत्युः अपानो भूत्वा, नाभिं प्राविशत्, आपो रेतो भूत्वा, शिश्रं प्राविशन्, ॥४॥

agniḥ vāgbhūtvā mukhaṁ prāviṣat, vāyuḥ prāṇo bhūtvā nāsike prāviṣat,
ādityaścakṣurbhūtvākṣiṇī prāviṣat, diśaḥ śrotraṁ bhūtvā karṇai prāviṣan,
oṣadhivanaspatayo lomāni bhūtvā tvacaṁ prāviṣan, candramā mano bhūtvā
hṛdayam prāviṣat,
mṛtyuḥ apāno bhūtvā nābhīm prāviṣat, āpo reto bhūtvā śīśnaṁ prāviṣan (4)

Agniḥ vāgbhūtvā mukhaṁ prāviṣat, *agni devatā* entered the *mukham*, the mouth. The mouth is the *golaka*, the aperture for *vāk indriya*, speech and *agni* made that entry because *indriya* and *devatā* cannot be separated. In the same way, *vāyuḥ* having become one with *prāṇa śakti* entered the *nāsikā golaka*, the nostrils. Similarly *āditya devatā* becoming identical with *cakṣur-indriya*, *akṣiṇī prāviṣat*, entered the eyes. Then *dik devatā*-s having become one with *śrotrendriya*, entered the ears. Then *oṣadhivanaspatayaḥ*, all the *devatā*-s of plants and trees, *lomāni bhūtvā*, having become identical with hairs, again it is not the physical hair, but the *indriya*, the power, entered the skin. *Candramā mano bhūtvā*, *candramā* becoming one with the mind *indriya*, entered the heart. *Mṛtyuḥ apāno bhūtvā*, having become one with

apāna indriya, entered, *nābhiṃ prāviśat*, the navel. *Āpo reto bhūtvā śīśnam prāviśan*, the *ap devatā-s* identifying with *retas indriya*, the reproductive power, entered the *śīśnam*, reproductive organ. Now all of them have occupied their respective abodes. Then what happened?

तमशनापिपासे अब्रूताम्, आवभ्यामभिप्रजानीहीति ।
ते अब्रवीत्, एतास्वेव वां, देवतास्वाभजामि, एतासु भागिन्यौ करोमीति ।
तस्माद्यस्यै कस्यै च देवतायै, हविर्गृह्यते, भागिन्यावेव,
अस्यामशनायापिपासे भवतः ॥५॥

tamaśanāpipāse abrūtām, āvābhyāmbhiprajānīhīti
te abravīt, etāsveva vām, devatāsvābhajāmi, etāsu bhāginyau karomīti
tasmādyasyai kasmai ca devatāyai, havirgr̥hyate, bhāginyāveva
asyāmaśanāyāpipāse bhavataḥ (5)

Now what? *Aśanāpipāse tam abrūtām*, the hunger and thirst approached that Lord. You have to appreciate the imagination of the *Ṛṣi* and the *upaniṣad*. What did they both say? *Āvābhyāmbhiprajānīhi iti*, give us some place for us also! May you allot some location for us too. Then *te abravīt*, to them both, the Lord said, *etāsu eva devatāsu vām ābhajāmi*, I am allotting space for you along with the *devatā-s*. You two do not have separate room, but you can share the space. I am giving you livelihood along with them. So *etāsu bhāginyau karomi iti*, you also will be a shareholder of their food. Whatever is offered to them will belong to you also. So where is hunger and thirst? It is all over. Hunger and thirst lives in every *indriya-s* and with every *devatā-s*. So for example when the eye gets to experience a nice form and color, then the hunger and thirst related to that eye gets satisfied.

Tasmāt, therefore, *yasyai kasmai ca devatāyai haviḥ*, whatever offering is given to any *devatā*, *gr̥hyate asyāmaśanāyāpipāse bhāginyau bhavataḥ*, hunger and thirst become a *bhāginī*, shareholder or receiver of that offering. Here what do you mean by *haviḥ*, offering? It is not the ritualistic *havis*. What is meant is any sense organ enjoying any object, that is *havis* for that sense organ.

So sound is *havis* for the ear, fragrance is *havis* for the nose, emotions are the *havis* for the mind and so on. In the BMI chart, OET is the *havis* for BMI. With this the hunger, thirst creation, *devatā-s* entry and everything is over. The next *sṛṣṭi* is *anna sṛṣṭi*, food creation. That is the discussion in the next section. Remember, this is still in the realm of *adhyāropa*. So far in the first section we saw *loka* and *lokapāla sṛṣṭi*, in the second section we saw *puruṣa sṛṣṭi* and *aśanāyā/pipāsā sṛṣṭi*, and the sharing arrangements.