



Mundaka Upanishad

UNKNOWN

Musean Translation

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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Mouseia's complete machine-assisted Musean translation, made directly from the Sanskrit, covering all three mundakas, six khandas and 64 verses, with the opening peace invocation, colophons and abbreviated closing invocation. Source-language review by GPT-6.1 Sol.

TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

THE WORK

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SOURCE

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GAPS AND UNCERTAINTIES

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Mundaka 1, Khanda 1

Om. Gods, may our ears hear what is good; worshipful ones, may our eyes see what is good.

With steadfast limbs and bodies singing praise, may we live out the life the gods allot.

May Indra, renowned of old, grant us well-being; may Pushan, who knows all, grant us well-being.

May Tarkshya, whose wheel is unharmed, grant us well-being; may Brihaspati grant us well-being.

Om. Peace, peace, peace.

Om. Homage to Brahman.

1.1.1 Om. Brahma arose first among the gods, maker of the universe, guardian of the world.

To Atharvan he imparted knowledge of Brahman, the foundation of all knowledge,
to his eldest son.

1.1.2 The knowledge of Brahman that Brahma declared to Atharvan,
Atharvan long ago declared to Angir.

Angir imparted it to Satyavaha Bharadvaja,
and Bharadvaja to Angiras: knowledge of the higher and the lower.

1.1.3 Shaunaka, a great householder, duly approached Angiras and asked,
“Revered one, what must be known for all this to become known?”

1.1.4 He answered him:

“Two kinds of knowledge must be known, as those
who know Brahman have always said: the higher and the lower.

1.1.5 “The lower is the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda,
phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, meter and astronomy.

The higher is that by which the imperishable is attained:

- 1.1.6 “What cannot be seen or grasped, without lineage, without color,
without eyes or ears, without hands or feet;
eternal, all-pervading, present everywhere, most subtle,
unchanging—the source of beings that the wise behold.
- 1.1.7 “As a spider sends out its thread and draws it in,
as plants spring from the earth,
as hair on head and body grows from a living person,
so from the imperishable this universe comes into being.
- 1.1.8 “Through ardor Brahman swells; from it food is born.
From food come life-breath, mind, truth, the worlds, and the enduring fruit of
deeds.
- 1.1.9 “From the one who knows all and understands everything, whose ardor is
knowledge,
are born this Brahman, name, form and food.”
Thus ends the first khanda of the first mundaka in the Mundaka Upanishad.

Mundaka 1, Khanda 2

- 1.2.1 This is the truth: the rites the seers discerned
in the sacred verses spread in many forms among the three Vedas.
Practice them faithfully, you who desire truth: this is your
path to the world of good deeds.
- 1.2.2 When the flame dances in the kindled fire that bears the offering,
place the offerings between the two portions of clarified butter.
- 1.2.3 If someone’s fire offering lacks the new-moon and full-moon rites,
the four-month observances, the first-fruits offering and hospitality;
if offerings go unmade, if the rite for all the gods is omitted, or the offering
is made against the rule, it destroys that person’s worlds through the seventh.

- 1.2.4 Kali, Karali and Manojava,
Sulohita and the smoke-colored Sudhumravarna,
Sphulingini and the divine Vishvaruchi:
these are the seven dancing tongues.
- 1.2.5 Whoever makes offerings among these blazing tongues at the proper time—
the offerings, taken up,
lead that person as the sun's rays to the place
where the one lord of the gods dwells.
- 1.2.6 "Come, come!" the radiant offerings call,
bearing the sacrificer on the sun's rays.
They honor him with loving words:
"This is your holy world of Brahma, won by good deeds."
- 1.2.7 Frail indeed are these rafts in the form of sacrifice,
with their eighteen supports, on which the lower work is said to rest.
Fools who delight in this as the highest good
return again to old age and death.
- 1.2.8 Living in the midst of ignorance,
thinking themselves wise and learned,
fools wander about, battered and bewildered,
like the blind led by the blind.
- 1.2.9 Dwelling in ignorance in many forms, the childish
imagine, "We have achieved our aim."
Because those devoted to rites do not understand, bound by attachment,
they fall in misery when their worlds are exhausted.
- 1.2.10 The deluded, judging sacrifice and public benefaction supreme,
know no other, higher good.
After enjoying their good deeds on heaven's height, they enter this
world again, or one still lower.
- 1.2.11 But those who dwell in the forest in ardor and faith,
peaceful and wise, living on alms,
pass, free of stain, through the sun's gate
to the immortal Person, whose Self does not decay.

- 1.2.12 Having examined the worlds built by deeds, a Brahmin
should turn away: what is unmade cannot be won by what is made.
To understand that, let him approach a teacher,
fuel in hand, learned in scripture and firmly rooted in Brahman.
- 1.2.13 To the pupil who had approached rightly,
whose mind was peaceful and who possessed calm,
the wise teacher faithfully imparted that knowledge of Brahman
by which one knows the imperishable Person, the truth.
Thus ends the second khanda of the first mundaka in the Mundaka Upanishad.

Mundaka 2, Khanda 1

- 2.1.1 This is the truth:
as sparks from a blazing fire
spring forth by the thousands, each like the fire,
so, dear one, from the imperishable come beings of many kinds,
and into it they return.
- 2.1.2 Luminous and formless is the Person, within and without, unborn,
without breath or mind, pure, beyond the imperishable, beyond the highest.
- 2.1.3 From him are born life-breath, mind and all the senses,
space, wind, light, water and earth, the bearer of all.
- 2.1.4 Fire is his head, the moon and sun his eyes,
the directions his ears, the revealed Vedas his voice.
Wind is his breath, the universe his heart; from his feet
comes earth. He is the inner Self of every being.
- 2.1.5 From him comes the fire whose fuel is the sun;
from the moon comes rain, and plants upon the earth.
The man pours seed into the woman:
from the Person countless creatures are born.

- 2.1.6 From him come the verses, chants and sacrificial formulas, initiation,
sacrifices, all rites and offerings to the priests;
the year, the sacrificer, and the worlds
where Soma flows and where the sun is.
- 2.1.7 From him the gods are born in many forms,
the Sadhyas, human beings, beasts and birds;
the in-breath and out-breath, rice and barley, and ardor,
faith, truth, celibacy and the sacred rule.
- 2.1.8 From him arise the seven life-breaths,
the seven flames, the seven fuels, the seven offerings,
and these seven worlds where the life-breaths move,
resting in the cave, set there seven by seven.
- 2.1.9 From him come the oceans and all the mountains;
from him flow rivers in their many forms;
from him all plants and their sap,
by which the inner Self abides among the elements.
- 2.1.10 The Person alone is all this: action, ardor, Brahman, the highest immortal.
Whoever knows him hidden in the cave
unties the knot of ignorance here, dear one.
Thus ends the first khanda of the second mundaka in the Mundaka Upanishad.

Mundaka 2, Khanda 2

- 2.2.1 Manifest, close at hand, moving in the cave:
this is the great abode where all is held—
whatever moves, breathes and blinks. Know this,
being and nonbeing, worthy of desire, beyond understanding, highest for
creatures.

- 2.2.2 What shines, what is subtler than the subtle,
in which the worlds and their inhabitants are set,
is this imperishable Brahman: life-breath, speech and mind.
It is truth, it is immortal, it is the mark to pierce. Pierce it, dear one.
- 2.2.3 Take up the bow, the Upanishad's great weapon,
and set upon it an arrow sharpened by meditation.
Draw it with a mind absorbed in that being,
and pierce the imperishable as your mark, dear one.
- 2.2.4 Om is the bow, the Self the arrow, Brahman the mark, as it is said.
Pierce it without distraction; become one with it, like an arrow in its mark.
- 2.2.5 In whom heaven, earth and the space between are woven,
along with mind and all the life-breaths—
know that one alone as the Self; let go
of other words. This is the bridge to immortality.
- 2.2.6 Where the channels meet like spokes in a chariot's hub,
there he moves within, appearing in many forms.
Meditate on the Self as Om. May you cross in safety
to the farther shore beyond darkness.
- 2.2.7 The one who knows all and understands everything, whose glory is here on
earth—
this Self is established in the space within Brahman's radiant city.
Formed of mind, leader of life-breath and body,
he rests in food, dwelling close to the heart.
Through understanding, the wise behold him:
the immortal that shines, whose form is joy.
- 2.2.8 The heart's knot breaks, all doubts are cut away,
and one's deeds are exhausted when that which is high and low is seen.
- 2.2.9 In the highest golden sheath is Brahman, stainless, without parts.
It is pure, the light of lights, known to those who know the Self.

- 2.2.10 There the sun does not shine, nor the moon and stars;
these lightning flashes do not shine there—much less this fire.
All shines after that one shining light;
by its radiance all this is lit.
- 2.2.11 Brahman, immortal, is before us, Brahman behind, Brahman to the south and
north,
below and above, spread everywhere. Brahman alone is all this universe, the
highest.
Thus ends the second khanda of the second mundaka in the Mundaka
Upanishad.

Mundaka 3, Khanda 1

- 3.1.1 Two fair-winged birds, inseparable companions, cling to the same tree.
One eats its sweet fig; the other, not eating, watches.
- 3.1.2 On that same tree a person sinks,
grieving in helplessness, bewildered.
But on seeing the other, the beloved Lord,
and his greatness, that person is freed from grief.
- 3.1.3 When the seer sees the golden-colored
maker, the Lord, the Person, the source of Brahman,
then, knowing, shaking off good and evil,
stainless, the seer attains the highest equality.
- 3.1.4 He is the life-breath that shines through every being.
The wise one who knows this does not boast.
Delighting in the Self, rejoicing in the Self, active in deeds—
this is the foremost of those who know Brahman.
- 3.1.5 Through truth, through ardor, this Self is attained,
through right knowledge and constant celibacy.
Within the body, radiant and pure,
he is seen by those who strive, their faults worn away.

- 3.1.6 Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood.
By truth the path of the gods is laid out,
along which the seers, their desires fulfilled, advance
to the highest dwelling place of truth.
- 3.1.7 Vast, luminous, beyond thought in form,
it shines, subtler than the subtle.
Farther than the far, yet close at hand here—
see it here, hidden in the cave.
- 3.1.8 Not by the eye is it grasped, nor by speech,
nor by other powers, by ardor or by deeds.
Through the clarity of knowledge, one's being purified,
one beholds that partless one
in meditation.
- 3.1.9 This subtle Self must be known through the mind,
into which life-breath has entered in five forms.
The minds of creatures are wholly woven with life-breaths;
when the mind is purified, this Self shines forth.
- 3.1.10 Whatever world a person of purified being envisions,
whatever desires that person desires,
that world and those desires are won.
Therefore let one who seeks prosperity honor the knower of the Self.
Thus ends the first khanda of the third mundaka in the Mundaka Upanishad.

Mundaka 3, Khanda 2

- 3.2.1 That knower knows the highest Brahman, the abode
in which the universe is set and shines in purity.
The wise who worship the Person without desire
pass beyond this seed of birth.

- 3.2.2 Whoever broods upon desires and longs for them
is born through those desires, here and there.
But for one whose desires are fulfilled, whose Self is made whole,
all desires dissolve here itself.
- 3.2.3 This Self is not attained through exposition,
through intellect or through much learning.
It is attained by the one this Self chooses;
to that one the Self reveals its own form.
- 3.2.4 This Self is not attained by one who lacks strength,
by carelessness, or by austerity without its proper mark.
But the wise one who strives through these means—
that one's Self enters Brahman's abode.
- 3.2.5 Having attained him, the seers are satisfied with knowledge,
their selves made whole, free of attachment and at peace.
Reaching the all-pervading from every side, those steadfast ones,
their selves united, enter into all.
- 3.2.6 Certain of the meaning through knowledge of the Vedanta,
the ascetics, purified through the discipline of renunciation,
in the worlds of Brahman, at the final end,
all are freed completely, having attained the highest immortality.
- 3.2.7 The fifteen parts return to their foundations,
and all the powers to their corresponding deities.
Deeds and the Self formed of understanding:
all become one in the supreme, imperishable.
- 3.2.8 As flowing rivers in the ocean
disappear, giving up their names and forms,
so the knower, released from name and form,
reaches the luminous Person beyond the highest.
- 3.2.9 Whoever knows that highest Brahman
becomes Brahman itself; in that one's family no one is ignorant of Brahman.
Such a one crosses beyond grief and evil; freed
from the knots within the cave, such a one becomes immortal.

3.2.10 This is declared in a sacred verse:

“Those who practice the rites, learned in scripture and rooted in Brahman,
who faithfully offer to Ekarshi themselves—
to them alone should one impart this knowledge of Brahman,
to those who have duly fulfilled the vow of the head.”

3.2.11 This is the truth the seer Angiras

declared long ago. No one who has not fulfilled the vow studies this.

Homage to the highest seers. Homage to the highest seers.

Thus ends the second khanda of the third mundaka in the Mundaka
Upanishad.

Thus ends the Mundaka Upanishad of the Atharvaveda.

Om. May our ears hear what is good.

Peace.

Om. Peace, peace, peace.