



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

ईशावास्य उपनिषत्
Isavasya Upanishad
Volume 1

Today we begin our Readings on Upanishads starting with ईशावास्य उपनिषत्

This Upanishad is from Yajur Veda. Every Upanishad is a Student-Teacher dialogue. We may not know who the student is and who the teacher is but we do know that the Teacher is a ब्रह्मचित् - an Enlightened person, and the student is a मुमुक्षु - one who is sincerely committed to the pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं, ईश्वर ज्ञानं, आत्म ज्ञानं Knowledge about परमेश्वर - Knowledge about ONESELF.

As usual, the Upanishad opens with a शान्ति पाठ - Peace Invocation, chanted by both the student and the Teacher. The Peace Invocation in this Upanishad is a familiar one.

ओं

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्ण एवावशिष्यते ॥
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

We have already seen this शान्ति पाठ in detail. In brief, it says

पूर्ण अदः - The true nature of That ब्रह्मन्, The ब्रह्मन् manifested in the sound ओं, the true nature of that ब्रह्मन् is पूर्ण Total Fullness - All inclusiveness
पूर्ण इदं - The true nature of this creation and everything in this creation is also पूर्ण, is also ब्रह्मन्
पूर्णात् पूर्ण उदच्यते - From That पूर्ण ब्रह्मन् - All inclusive ब्रह्मन्, arises this entire creation of Forms and names, which is also ब्रह्मन्. That is सत्यं - Eternal Truth.

All our experiences in this ever-changing world of plurality must be understood in this light of that eternal truth. Just think about this. A bubble rises on a sheet of water, plays on the surface of water for a few moments, and then disappears. Where did the bubble come from, and what was its nature and where did it go. From water it came, and having come, it is still water, and unto water it disappears at the end.



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The real nature of that momentary existence, called "bubble", is water. Similar is the real nature of this entire creation. From ब्रह्मन् it came, it is still ब्रह्मन् while it exists, with countless forms and names, and unto ब्रह्मन् it ultimately disappears.

पूर्णस्य पूर्ण आदाय पूर्ण एव अवशिष्यते - All changes in this creation are only transient appearances in Forms and Names. This entire creation is ONE with ब्रह्मन्, is inseparable from ब्रह्मन्, is ब्रह्मन् Itself, which is The Absolute Reality of all existence. That is the Message of the above Peace Invocation, which is an overview of the Upanishad Itself that follows.

Now the Upanishad begins. The student is listening. The teacher says:

ॐ ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं
यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः
मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम्

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि
जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति
न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥

These two verses go together. The topic of discussion is जीव-जगत् and ईश्वर. Everywhere around us we see this ever changing creation, and we also see all changes being controlled by the so called Laws of Nature, which themselves do not change. It is obvious that all this creation must have a creator, the creator must have existed even before this creation, and the creator must wield all the Laws of Nature. It is that creator, whom we call ब्रह्मन् or God.

The very existence of this creation is proof enough for the existence of ईश्वर

Now, the question is : Where is that ईश्वर ? The Upanishad declares: ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं

इदं सर्वं - All this, meaning

यत्किञ्च-यत् किञ्चित् -जगत्यां जगत् - everything including the minutest thing that exists in this ever changing creation.



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इदं सर्वं - all this. All this creation, including everything, without exception, in this ever changing creation, is ईशावास्यं - indwelt by ईश्वर, enveloped by ईश्वर, and, in and out permeated by ईश्वर.

Therefore, where is ईश्वर ? ईश्वर is everywhere in this creation. Nothing in this creation, no object in this creation, no event in this creation stands apart from ईश्वर.

The नारायण सूक्तं in Rig Veda and also in Yajur Veda, expresses the above Eternal Truth in this manner:

यच्च किञ्चित् जगत् सर्वं दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि वा ।
अन्तर्बहिश्च तत् सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः ॥

Whatever is seen or heard by any means of perception, in this entire universe - ईश्वर exists - in and out - in all of them without exception - which means:

- ✓ ईश्वर is सर्वगतः - all pervading and all-inclusive
- ✓ ईश्वर is in everything, and everything is in ईश्वर.
- ✓ ईश्वर is both the efficient cause (निमित्त कारणं) as well as the material cause (उपादान कारणं) for this entire creation.

Gaining that knowledge about ईश्वर, realizing that ईश्वर ज्ञानं, is indeed the very purpose of life, because that knowledge leads one to मोक्ष - Total Freedom and Absolute Happiness, ultimately, realization of that knowledge in one's own life, is indeed मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life.

Now, the next question is, what is it that one should do to gain that knowledge, to realize that knowledge? The Upanishad says:

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्य स्वित् धनम्

What one should do is:

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः - This is an extraordinary expression which unfolds itself in three ways - please listen.



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तेन means तेन कारणेन - For that reason. Which reason? ईश्वर Is all-pervading and all-inclusive; That is Eternal Truth; the realization of that knowledge has extraordinary consequences to one's everyday life – for that reason.

भुञ्जीथाः - cultivate assiduously ईश्वर ज्ञानं, through
श्रवणं - listening and understanding the words of the Upanishads,
मननं - reflecting on the Message of the Upanishads, and
निदिध्यासनं - absorbing the content of Upanishad knowledge, by
त्यक्तेन - overcoming all obstacles to gaining and realizing That ईश्वर ज्ञानं

In view of the extraordinary significance of ईश्वर ज्ञानं to one's everyday life, and the overriding purpose of life itself, you must take immediate steps to cultivate ईश्वर ज्ञानं - God consciousness, by overcoming all obstructions to that endeavor. How to do that we will see as we progress. That is one meaning.

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः

भुञ्जीथाः - means enjoy life. Enjoy this world of plurality. This world is the very Glory of परमेश्वर. Enjoy this Glory of परमेश्वर. That is what human life is meant for. Enjoy life, not by exhausting yourself in frivolous activities, but by doing

तेन त्यक्तेन - तेन ईश्वरेण त्यक्तेन - what has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर. Therefore,

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः - Enjoy life by doing what has been left for you to do by God.

As the Gita says

नियतं कुरु कर्मत्वं 3-7

Do what has come to you as your duty at this time and place. There is no need for you to run after everything that catches your fancy from time to time. There is no need for you to be propelled into action by your राग-द्वेष forces, forces of likes and dislikes. But just do - तेन त्यक्तेन - what God has left for you to do at this time and place. You just use your body, mind and intellect for what they are really intended, namely, to do what has been left for you to do by ईश्वर.

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः - has another meaning. Enjoy life through renunciation



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तेन त्यक्तेन - By renouncing the fruits of all कर्मs (सर्व कर्मफल त्याग), and ultimately renouncing all actions themselves, which means giving up all notions of Doership and Enjoyership in all actions, which is सर्व कर्म सन्यास. By such त्याग and सन्यास,

भुञ्जीथाः - Enjoy life in this world

True enjoyment of life lies only in such renunciation, such त्याग and सन्यास. By such renunciation, you uplift yourself to a far higher level of Enjoyment in life, ultimately to पूर्ण आनन्द which is the state of Being Your Absolute SELF, BEING ONE with परमेश्वर Itself.

कर्म is a bondage only if it is propelled by the thirst for the fruit of actions. On the other hand, कर्म becomes a means for gaining मोक्ष - Total Freedom and Absolute Happiness when कर्म is done as a यज्ञ - as an offering to परमेश्वर. Such offering itself is परमेश्वर.

यज्ञो वै विष्णुः says the Upanishad. Therefore, with ईश्वर अर्पण बुद्धि - with the attitude of total dedication to परमेश्वर, DO whatever you need to do, as an offering to the Lord. That is कर्म योग सर्व फल त्याग, which ultimately leads to सर्व कर्म सन्यास - total freedom from all notions of Doership and Enjoyership in actions, which Itself is मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life.

Therefore remember the three meanings for

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः

1. Cultivate ईश्वर ज्ञान - God consciousness, by overcoming all obstacles to the realization of knowledge about परमेश्वर
2. Enjoy life in this world, doing what has been left for you to do by ईश्वर and
3. Enjoy life through renunciation - त्याग and सन्यास, by dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर, renouncing the fruits of all actions, and ultimately giving up all notions of Doership and Enjoyership in actions.

Further, the Upanishad continues



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मा गृधः कस्य स्वित् धनं

मा गृधः - Never covet, never crave for never wish for, never develop an attachment for
कस्य स्वित् धनं - the wealth of anyone. Wealth includes wealth of all kinds

कस्य स्वित् - means "of any one". The term anyone includes oneself as well as others.
Therefore

मा गृधः कस्य स्वित् धनं means never covet, never crave for, never develop an
attachment for the wealth of anyone, including the wealth of yourself.

That one should not covet or crave for or develop an attachment for the wealth of others
is only commonsense ethics. What the Upanishad says here is far more than that. You
should not develop any attachment even for the wealth you are blessed with at this
time, which means, *do not entertain any notion of ownership even with respect to any
wealth you may possess*, because there is no such thing as exclusive ownership.
Ownership is purely a notion based on an erroneous understanding of one's relationship
to an object. One is no more than a trustee for any wealth that one may be blessed with
for the time being.

To be bound to any sense of ownership of any wealth, any object, is only to isolate
oneself from That All-pervading All-inclusive ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर.

Thus we must understand that entertaining a sense of ownership of one's possessions
is also a form of covetous nature. Covetous nature, whatever be its form, can never
uplift a person. One has to uplift oneself to recognize परमेश्वर in oneself and to enjoy
life, gain freedom and be happy.

The world is nothing but Blissful ब्रह्मन्, and one is fortunate to be born as a human
being to be able to enjoy this world of plurality in a true sense. It is only when one's eyes
and ears, and indeed all organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि are
purified by Renunciation - त्याग and संन्यास, that the true vision of the world will unfold
itself as waves and waves of Bliss of ब्रह्मन्

The experience of That Vision is the True Joy of Life, True Zest in Life, True Fulfillment
in life, and That is what is indicated by the Upanishad words मा गृधः कस्य स्वित् धनं .

ॐ ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्य स्वित् धनं ॥



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All Existence is ईश्वर - All Existence is Divine. Cultivate ईश्वर ज्ञानं - Knowledge about ईश्वर, by overcoming all obstructions to the realization of that knowledge. Enjoy life doing what has been left for you to do by ईश्वर. Enjoy life through Renunciation - त्याग बुद्धि and सन्यास बुद्धि. Never covet, by thought, word or deed, what rightly belongs to, what is legitimately possessed by anyone, including yourself. Live a life of सत्यं and धर्म - Total God consciousness with the attitude of total dedication of all actions to परमेश्वर. That is the way to be, **that** is the road leading to Total Freedom - Absolute Happiness. So says the first verse of ईशावास्य उपनिषत्. We will see the second verse next time.