



ईशावास्य उपनिषत्
Isavasya Upanishad
Volume 3

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कविः मनीषी परिभूः स्वयंभूः यथातथ्यतः अर्थान् व्यदधात् शाश्वतीभ्य समाभ्यः ॥ 8

The ईशावास्य उपनिषत् opens with the amazing declaration ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं

ईश्वर is everywhere, in everything, ever existent, all-pervading, all-conscious, ever conscious, limitless and पूर्ण - all inclusive. Still what needs to be understood, what needs to be appreciated, and what needs to be realized is, what exactly is the nature of that ईश्वर.

That ईश्वर is beyond the scope of words, and beyond the reach of mind, but that ईश्वर is बुद्धि ग्रह्यं - That ईश्वर can be recognized, can be reached by one's बुद्धि, चित्तेक बुद्धि - one's faculty of discriminative knowledge and judgment.

In order to help one to recognize That ईश्वर by one's बुद्धि, the Upanishad now proceeds to provide a series of pointer words in the next five verses, with the help of which one can gain a clear vision of that ईश्वर as It is.



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In Vedantic terminology the words ईश्वर, ब्रह्मन् and आत्मा are synonyms. They all refer to the same ONE ever-existent, all-pervading, all-conscious, ever-conscious, limitless, all-inclusive Supreme Being whom we call परमेश्वर or God.

With reference to Itself, That Supreme Being is ब्रह्मन्. With reference to collective existence of everything in this creation, That Supreme being is ईश्वर or परमेश्वर and with reference to any single individual in this creation, That Supreme Being is आत्मा - The SELF.

As we may recall the वेद महावाक्यः

प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म - Pure consciousness, Pure Awareness is ब्रह्मन्

अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म - The आत्मा, The SELF - The SELF in every self is ब्रह्मन्

ब्रह्मैवाऽहं अस्मि I am indeed ब्रह्मन्. I am indeed परमेश्वर. I am indeed आत्मा

Therefore the question "What exactly is the nature of that ईश्वर is the same as

- What exactly is the nature of ब्रह्मन् ?
- What exactly is the nature of आत्मा ?
- What exactly is the nature of "I" in myself?

In other words, the question about the exact nature of परमेश्वर is really a question about the true nature of oneself. More particularly

- What is it because of which I am what I am?
- What is it because of which I am unable to recognize what the Upanishad says I am?
- What is it I need to do to recognize my true nature as ब्रह्मन् Itself? and
- What exactly my बुद्धि needs to recognize in ब्रह्मन् as ब्रह्मन्?

That is precisely the question which essentially includes all other questions. To unfold the answer to this question is the purpose of all our Upanishads. Every Upanishad answers this question to the extent necessary in its own particular context. Integrating the essence of all Upanishads, भगवत् गीता answers this question fully, in all details, in a manner that is at once relevant and also which can be assimilated by every one who is interested and ready for this kind of knowledge, whatever may be one's immediate personal circumstances.



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But in order to gain a proper and clear understanding of the teachings of the **भगवत् गीता**, one needs the background knowledge of the essential message of at least a few Upanishads, and that is what we are trying to cultivate through our present Upanishad readings.

Pointing out the exact nature of That **ब्रह्मन्**, That **परमेश्वर**, That **आत्मा**, the fourth verse of **ईशावास्य उपनिषत्** says:

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद्धेवाः आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्षत् ।
तत् धावतः अन्यान् अत्येति तिष्ठत् तस्मिन् अपो मातरिष्वा दधाति ॥

In the above verse, the Upanishad provides several pointers to That **ब्रह्मन्** - that **आत्मा** - That **परमेश्वर** - all pointers unfolding the content of the Upanishad declaration **ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं - ईश्वर** is everywhere and in everything - means what?

The Nature of **ब्रह्मन्** - The nature of **परमेश्वर** - The nature of **आत्मा** is

1. अनेजत्

It is Unmoving - It does not move, because it is All-pervading and Ever-Existent. It is, as Gita says - **येन सर्व इदं ततं**. It is already everywhere. There is no place it is not. Therefore there is no place it can move into, which means that It is not bound by time and space. It is Unchanging and Unchangeable

Being **अदः** (as **पूर्ण अदः**) it is the I in everyone. I am **अनेजत्**. As **आत्मा**, I am unmoving. My thoughts move, my memories move, but they all move in my consciousness, in my awareness. But "I" as **आत्मा**, "I", as Pure awareness ever remain unmoving, Unbound and Infinite. That is the nature of I -The Self, The **आत्मा**, The **परमेश्वर**, The **ब्रह्मन्**. Further,

2. एकं

It is ONE. **आत्मा** is ONE. It is not that I have one **आत्मा** and you have another **आत्मा**. There is only ONE **आत्मा**. There is no other **आत्मा**. There is nothing that is separate



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from आत्मा. आत्मा is all-inclusive, It is पूर्ण. The Ultimate Reality - The absolute reality of all existence is ONE and Indivisible - एकं and That is आत्मा The परमेश्वर The ब्रह्मन्.

Thus the pointer word एकं indicates आत्म- ब्रह्म- एकत्व-विज्ञानं - Realization of the identity of आत्मा - the SELF- and ब्रह्मन्, आत्मा -The SELF and परमेश्वर and आत्मा - The SELF and the जीव जगत् - the ever changing entire creation - and That is ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं. Further,

3. मनसः जवीयः

That आत्मा is जवीयः faster, मनसः than the mind. That आत्मा moves faster than the mind. Please note आत्मा is अनेजत् Unmoving, and at the same time, It is मनसः जवीयः, It moves faster than the mind. How? Because It is all-pervading and ever existent ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं

By the time the mind lands on something, आत्मा is already there in that something, because आत्मा is all-pervading and limitless. There is something in my mind and something beyond my mind that is true only with reference to my mind and that is not true with reference to the Limitless आत्मा. Thus we see there is no contradiction between statements अनेजत् - Unmoving and मनसः जवीयः faster than the mind. That is the Nature of आत्मा. Again,

4. नैनद्धेवाः आप्नुवन् पूर्वं अर्षत्

न एनत् देवाः आप्नुवन् पूर्वं अर्षत्
एनत् देवाः न आप्नुवन् -The देवs cannot overtake एनत् - That ब्रह्मन् because एनत् पूर्वं अर्षत् - That ब्रह्मन् has already reached the object which is sought to be reached by any of the देवs.

Let us understand this statement properly. The देवs are the functionaries of परमेश्वर. The देवs in our body are our sense organs including the mind and बुद्धि - the faculties of hearing touching, seeing, tasting and smelling and also all the faculties of our mind and बुद्धि. These are the देवs, the Divine faculties in our body.



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The sense faculties cannot overtake ब्रह्मन् because any object which is reached by any of these sense faculties is already there even before one hears, or one feels, or one sees, or one tastes, or one smells or one perceives by one's mind and बुद्धि the presence of the object. And the object itself remains non-separate from ब्रह्मन्.

Therefore even before any of the sense organs, including mind and बुद्धि recognizes the presence of an object, एनत् पूर्वं अर्षत् - ब्रह्मन् is already in that object, by virtue of the fact ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं. ईश्वर is everywhere, and no object is away from ईश्वर. Further,

5. तत् धावताः अन्यान् अत्येति तिष्ठत्

तत् तिष्ठत् - That ब्रह्मन् stands still and at the same time धावतः अन्यान् अत्येति - That ब्रह्मन् overtakes others, meaning the sense organs running after various sense objects and sense experiences.

The Unmoving आत्मा overtakes the ever-moving sense organs which run after various sense objects and sense experiences. Earlier, it was pointed out that the sense organs cannot overtake ब्रह्मन् . Here it is pointed out that ब्रह्मन् overtakes the sense organs by ITS very nature, namely ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं.

Again, तत् धावतः अन्यान् अत्येति तिष्ठत् provides another vision of आत्मा

तत् - The आत्मा

धावतः - Itself moving

अत्येति - causes the movement of

अन्यान् - others which exist in this creation. For example, the air moves because there is something behind the air which enables it to move.

Each object in this creation has got its own attributes, its own functions, its own गुणs and these गुणs have their home only in आत्मा. The Nature of आत्मा is, as Gita says, निर्गुण गुण भोक्तृ च That आत्मा, while Itself having no qualities or attributes, indwells, permeates and sustains all qualities and attributes in all beings in this creation.



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That is how निर्गुण ब्रह्मन् is also समस्त कल्याण गुण सम्पन्न ब्रह्मन्. The attributeless ब्रह्मन् is also the abode of all countless Divine, Auspicious, Enlightening and Uplifting natural qualities of various objects and events in this creation.

The कल्याण गुण विशेष in every object in this creation is the very manifestation of ब्रह्मन्. It is ब्रह्मन् Itself which is what that needs to be recognized.

We may recall from ब्रह्म उपासन in तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत् कर्मणि हस्तयोः गतिरिति पादयोः, etc.

The natural ability of the hands to move while doing any कर्म, the natural ability of the feet to move while walking, etc., these are the कल्याण गुण विशेषs of the hands, feet, etc., which means that when the hand moves, आत्मा moves causing the hand to move. When the feet move, the आत्मा moves, causing the feet to move. Thus

तत् धावतः - The आत्मा Itself moving

अत्येति अन्यान् - The आत्मा causes the movements of others such as hands, feet, etc.

That is how जगत् becomes जगत्यां जगत् - the entire creation becomes the ever moving creation.

As Air, ईश्वर moves; as Fire ईश्वर burns; as Water ईश्वर quenches, etc. All the way there is ईश्वर and there is only ईश्वर and nothing else. That is ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं. At the same time, तत् तिष्ठति - That ईश्वर stands still, remaining for ever the same, from Its own stand point ईश्वर remains अनेजत् - unmoving.

The सत्-चित्-आनन्द-स्वरूप आत्मा never moves. At the same time, every movement that takes place in this creation, never being away from ब्रह्मन् is Itself ब्रह्मन्, is Itself आत्मा, is Itself परमेश्वर. That is the meaning of तत् धावतः अन्यान् अत्येति तिष्ठत्.

6. तस्मिन् अपो मातरिष्या दधाति

तस्मिन् (सति) - That being the Truth of this entire creation, namely that every natural phenomena in this creation is never away from आत्मा - तस्मिन् सति - That being the case,



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अपः मातरिश्वा दधाति - Water sustains air; air sustains water, etc. Everything in this creation sustains everything else in this creation, as ordained by परमेश्वर. परमेश्वर is the ONE who makes up the clouds as the clouds, the rain as the rain, the earth as the earth and everything else as it is. Each doing its proper function in this creation as ordained by परमेश्वर - each finds its own total fulfillment in ईश्वरज्ञानं God-consciousness - That is ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं.

In the next verse the Upanishad gives another Vision of the same Knowledge ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं. Pointing to That ब्रह्मन् again, the Upanishad says:

तदेजति तन्नैजति तत्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।

तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥

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7. तदेजति

तत् एजति - It moves - The ब्रह्मन् moves, and at the same time

तन्नैजति - तत् न एजति - It does not move - It ever remains Unmoving

With reference to thought - It moves. With reference to time - It moves. With reference to air, etc. - It moves but with reference to Itself, It ever remains unmoving, because It is ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं, It is already All-pervading and All-Inclusive.

Is this statement a repetition of what has already been pointed out? Yes, but it is on a different plane of understanding. It has different dimensions, here the movement is with respect to distance.

8. तत्दूरे

तत् दूरे - It is remote - ब्रह्मन् is remote, ब्रह्मन् is far away, and at the same time,

तद्वन्तिके - तत् उ अन्तिके - It is indeed very near - ब्रह्मन् is indeed very near; उ surprisingly near. It is the nearest. There is nothing nearer. For the person who is ignorant of ब्रह्मन्, for the person who is ignorant of the true nature of oneself, ब्रह्मन् is far away, ईश्वर is far away - आत्मा is far away from oneself. On the other hand, for the person who has ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Knowledge of ब्रह्मन्, there is really no distance between oneself and आत्मा - oneself and परमेश्वर and oneself and ब्रह्मन्.

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं - There is no distance between the creator and the creation. There is no distance between I and myself. Further



9. तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य

तत् अन्तः अस्य सर्वस्य - It is within all this, meaning, It is within everything in this creation; ब्रह्मन् is, ईश्वर is, आत्मा is, in every thought, in every memory, in every event, and indeed in every being in this creation, and at the same time

तद् सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः - तत् तु सर्वस्य अस्य बाह्यतः - Surprisingly also, It is outside of everything in this creation. Inside and outside are only with respect to objects in this creation. From Its own standpoint, आत्मा is, ईश्वर is, ब्रह्मन् is, - everywhere, in and out of every object in this creation, and That is ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं

As Sri Krishna says (G.13-15)

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानां अचरं चरमेव च

The आत्मा is outside of all beings in this creation, and also inside of all beings in this creation, whether the beings are immobile or mobile, insentient or sentient, which means that That आत्मा, That परमेश्वर, That ब्रह्मन् remains undivided by the beings in this creation, whatever they are, just as space remains undivided by all the objects in space.

In the next two verses the Upanishad gives another vision of the same Knowledge - ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं - unfolding the identity of the Infinite in Man and the Infinite in God. It is the awareness of such Identity that uplifts a person from all pettiness and trivialities of life. The Upanishad says

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति । सर्वं भूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥	यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद्विजानतः । तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वं अनुपश्यतः ॥
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10. यः तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मनि एव अनुपश्यति The one who sees clearly all beings in one's own self, and, at the same time

सर्वं भूतेषु आत्मानं च अनुपश्यति - sees clearly oneself in all beings, for that person,

ततः - then, meaning, on realization of that अभेद ज्ञानं Knowledge of Identity,

न विजुगुप्सते that person does not and cannot entertain any असूय - any revulsions for anybody or anything, because the one who sees clearly all beings in one's own self and



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at the same time sees clearly oneself in all beings, that person sees only the Glory of परमेश्वर everywhere and such a person cannot entertain any असूय.

असूय is the tendency to find fault with others due to enmity, anger, hatred, jealousy, intolerance, etc. असूय is a corrosive quality and it is self destructive.

Total absence of असूय is a pre-requisite for कर्म योग, which means that only a कर्म योगी can see clearly all beings in oneself and also oneself in all beings; and such अभेद ज्ञानं - knowledge of non-separation, knowledge of Identity, is an expression of appreciation of the Upanishadic message ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं . Further,

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूत् विजानतः

यस्मिन् विजानतः - When a person comes to realize that

सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूत् - all beings have come from आत्मा only, which means, पूर्णात् पूर्णम् उदच्यते

एकत्वं अनुपश्यतः - When a person realizes ONENESS of आत्मा in all beings, for that person

तत्र - when that realization takes place

को मोहः कः शोकः - Where is delusion or confusion, where is distress or sorrow, which means that there is no delusion or distress for that person because that person is an enlightened person.

For that person who realizes unity in all existence and perceives all beings as his own self, there can be no delusion or sorrow which is again another vision of the Upanishadic message - the Eternal Truth ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं .

ब्रह्मज्ञानं - knowledge Of ब्रह्मन् - is सर्वात्म भावः - Realization of आत्मा - The SELF as the SELF of all. Such realization is the supreme source of strength for a human being.

We must understand that Vedanta does not deny differences, but all the differences are only superficial. Deep down these superficial ever-changing differences, is the never-changing Unity - The Unchanging Atma, indicated by the Upanishadic message ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं

In the next verse, the Upanishad gives another Vision of the same message, another vision of आत्मा through another series of pointer words



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सः पर्यगात् शुक्रं अकायं अग्रणं
अस्नाविरुँ शुद्धं अपापविद्धम्
कविः मनीषी परिभूः स्वयंभूः
यथातथ्यतः अर्थान् व्यदधात् शाश्वतीभ्य समाभ्यः

We will see this verse next time.