



ईशावास्य उपनिषत्
Isavasya Upanishad
Volume 4

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद्वेवाः आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्षत् ।
तत् धावतः अन्यान् अत्येति तिष्ठत् तस्मिन् अपो मातरिष्वा दधाति ॥ 4

तदेजति तन्नैजति तत्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तद् सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥ 5

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानु पश्यति ।
सर्व भूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥ 6

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभृद्धिजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वं अनुपश्यतः ॥ 7

सः पर्यगात् शुक्रं अकायं अघ्नं अस्नाविरं शुद्धं अपापचिद्धम् ।
कविः मनीषी परिभूः स्वयंभूः यथातथ्यतः अर्थान् व्यदधात् शाश्वतीभ्य समाभ्यः ॥ 8

These 5 verses are for ईश्वर जपं, ईश्वर अनुस्मरणं - ईश्वर ध्यानं - contemplation on परमेश्वर to uplift one's बुद्धि and maintain one's बुद्धि steadily in Total God consciousness. We saw the first four verses in detail last time, now let us see the last verse.

Pointing out to आत्मा - The Self in every person, indeed in every जीव - in every being, the Upanishad says

सः पर्यगात् शुक्रं अकायं अघ्नं अस्नाविरं शुद्धं अपापचिद्धम्
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सः That आत्मा - The SELF in every person, in every जीव

11. पर्यगात् means परितः (सर्वतः) अगात् went all over -That आत्मा went all over this creation even before its manifestation in this cycle of creation (more about this matter



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we will see in Taittiriya Upanishad); therefore पर्यगात् - Atma went all over, means Atma is all over this creation, Atma is all-pervasive आत्मा is सर्वगतवान् which means that Atma is not confined to any person.

आत्मा - is in everyone and everyone is in That आत्मा only. Again

12. शुक्रं - That आत्मा is शुक्रं Self-Effulgent. That आत्मा is ज्योति स्वरूपं. It is All-Enlightenment. As the Gita says

आत्मा is ज्योतिषां अपि तत् ज्योतिः तमसः परं उच्यते ।

That आत्मा is the Light of all Lights. It is because of That आत्मा that the sun, the stars, the fire etc. are what they are. It is by That ज्योति स्वरूप आत्मा all our इन्द्रियs, mind and बुद्धि shine, meaning they gain the power to do what they are naturally endowed to do.

That ज्योति स्वरूप आत्मा is तमसः परं उच्यते . It is beyond darkness. It is not any way affected by any kind of darkness or ignorance. Ignorance itself is lighted up by That आत्मा only.

आत्मा is not opposed to ignorance. If I realize that I am ignorant, that knowledge itself is possible only by the blessing of that आत्मा.

As our Upanishads say (कठो 5-15, मुण्ड ॥-2-10)

तस्य भासा सर्वं इदं विभाति - This entire creation including everything in this creation is illumined by that ज्योति स्वरूप आत्मा - That is what is indicated by the pointer word शुक्रं. Again,

13. अकायं अघ्नं अस्नाचिरं - While आत्मा is in the शरीर - in the body of every person, That आत्मा Itself is अकायं - That आत्मा Itself has no शरीर. It has no body, consequently

अघ्नं - आत्मा is ever free from injury of any kind. No weapon can cause any injury to आत्मा, and also,

अस्नाचिरं - आत्मा has no muscles, ligaments, tendons, etc. - which exist in any gross physical body.



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The pointer words अकायं, अघ्नं and अस्नाचिरँ together indicate the total absence of any शरीर or शरीर qualities for the आत्मा. आत्मा is in every शरीर - but आत्मा itself exists independent of and uncontaminated by the शरीर of any जीव - any living being.

Every person - every जीव is an extraordinary combination of शरीर and आत्मा. This combination is called प्रकृति पुरुष लक्षणं or क्षेत्र क्षेत्रज्ञ लक्षणं about which we will talk in detail in भगवत् गीता. At this time it is enough to recall the fact that what we call शरीर - The body - is itself made up of three components, namely

- स्थूल शरीर - the gross physical body
- सूक्ष्म शरीर - the subtle body, occupying the gross physical body
- कारण शरीर - the causal body - which is the cause for the other two bodies

About the nature of these three शरीरs we will see later.

By the words अकायं, अघ्नं, अस्नाचिरँ, the Upanishads point out that आत्मा is free from all three bodies. What is called an individual जीव - an individual living being, is an aggregate of आत्मा, कारण शरीर and सूक्ष्म शरीर none of which is available for perception; and what is called an individual person is an aggregate of आत्मा, कारण शरीर, सूक्ष्म शरीर and स्थूल शरीर.

Thus, without a gross physical body, an individual living being is a जीव, and with a gross physical body, the same living being is an individual person. From the aggregate of an individual person, when all the three शरीरs are dissociated by Knowledge, what remains is only pure आत्मा, uncontaminated by the qualities and limitations of all the three शरीरs.

Similarly from the aggregate of an individual जीव, when both सूक्ष्म शरीर and कारण शरीर are dissociated - by knowledge again, what remains is pure आत्मा which is pure जीव, uncontaminated by the qualities of the two शरीरs. Thus pure जीव and pure आत्मा are identical, which means जीवात्मा and परमात्मा are ONE and The SAME.



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That is how the pure जीव which is अकायं, अघ्नं, अस्नाविरै is also the pure आत्मा which is अकायं, अघ्नं, अस्नाविरै, the "ॐ" indicating the All-pervading परमेश्वर, The ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, अकायं, अघ्नं, अस्नाविरै indicates That ब्रह्मन् - That परमेश्वर That आत्मा is pure जीव totally free from कारण शरीर and सूक्ष्म शरीर. Continuing, the Upanishad says: That आत्मा is

14. शुद्ध - Pure - Pure Enlightenment - free from darkness - ignorance of any kind, free from all object limitations; again

15. अपापविद्धम्- Totally free from पाप any form of obstruction to आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-Knowledge because, आत्मा Itself is आत्मज्ञानं. Again,

16. कविः means सर्वस्य दृष्टा. आत्मा is the seer of everything - witness of every event in this creation

17. मनीषी - आत्मा is All-Knowing - Omniscient Supreme Being

18. परिभू : means परितः (सर्वस्य) भवति इति - आत्मा manifests itself as all in this creation by its own power. आत्मा is transcendent

19. स्वयंभू : - स्वयं भवति इति स्वयंभूः - आत्मा is Self-Existent - It is not created by anyone, आत्मा is self existence itself.

20. यथातथ्यतः अर्थान् व्यदधात् शाश्वतीभ्य समाभ्यः - आत्मा is That which has व्यदधात् blessed शाश्वतीभ्य समाभ्यः - all the Eternal Divine Functionaries - all the Devatas such as सूर्य देवता, वायु देवता, चरुण देवता, अग्नि देवता, etc., अर्थान् their respective powers - their respective duties in this creation

यथातथ्यतः - duly in accordance with the laws of nature as ordained by Itself - by परमेश्वर Itself

This Universe is ruled by the Eternal Laws of परमेश्वर. परमेश्वर is the Lord of all the Eternal Laws of Nature. परमेश्वर is ultimately the Law of all Laws. All the देवताs obey the laws of परमेश्वर and maintain order in this creation.



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Such is the nature of that ब्रह्मन् - That परमेश्वर - That आत्मा. Such is the nature of "I" the nature of That SELF in every self. That is what is indicated by the Upanishadic Declaration; ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं - That is what that needs to be realized.

Thus in the above five verses, the Upanishad has provided a series of 20 different - simple -looking and yet far-reaching pointers to enable one to gain a full vision of That ONE all-pervading all-inclusive ब्रह्मन् - परमेश्वर - आत्मा in this ever changing creation in one's own ever-changing self.

Gaining That Full Vision of परमेश्वर is indeed gaining पूर्ण ज्ञानं - Totality of Knowledge, which is the very content of the Upanishadic Message ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं , That पूर्ण ज्ञानं - indicated by the expression ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं involves two kinds of knowledge, namely ईश्वर ज्ञानं and इदं सर्वं ज्ञानं .

ईश्वर ज्ञानं is सत्यं ज्ञानं - Knowledge of the absolute, independent, never-changing Reality. In Vedantic terminology, That सत्यं ज्ञानं is simply called विद्या meaning ब्रह्म विद्या. इदं सर्वं ज्ञानं is माया ज्ञानं or मिथ्या ज्ञानं knowledge about the inherent Infinite Power of परमेश्वर, manifested as this entire ever changing creation.

All objective knowledge, knowledge about every field of arts, sciences engineering, technology, research, development, business, etc; all such objective knowledge is माया ज्ञानं. No objective knowledge, known or unknown, has any independent existence, because ब्रह्माश्रया माया - every objective knowledge, ultimately depends on ब्रह्मन् सत्यं - That which is Absolutely Real - That which is changeless. In Vedantic terminology, all objective knowledge is called अविद्या - meaning **not** ब्रह्मविद्या.

Thus विद्या refers to knowledge of changeless Reality - Absolute SELF - आत्म ज्ञानं and अविद्या refers to knowledge of the changeful Universe - all objective knowledge. विद्या - and अविद्या together constitute पूर्ण ज्ञानं - Totality of Knowledge.

The Upanishad talks briefly about the need and the Means for gaining such पूर्ण ज्ञानं in the following two sets of verses. The first set of three verses is concerned with विद्या and अविद्या.



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अन्धन्तमः प्रविशन्ति ये अविद्यां उपासते । ततो भूय इव ते तमः ये तु विद्यायाँ रताः ॥	9
अन्यदेव आहुः विध्यया अन्यत् आहुः अविध्यया । इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नः तत् विचचक्षिरे ॥	10
विद्यां च अविद्यां च यः तत् वेद उभयँ सह । अविध्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्या विध्यया अमृतं अश्नुते ॥	11

The Upanishad says

ये अविद्यां उपासते -Those who worship अविद्या, those who are committed to the pursuit of objective knowledge,

अन्धन्तमः प्रविशन्ति -they enter into blinding darkness, which means they push themselves into total ignorance of Absolute Reality - total ignorance of सत्यं ज्ञानं

तु - On the other hand

ये विद्यायाँ रताः - Those who simply entertain themselves in the language of ब्रह्मविद्या - Upanishadic knowledge, neglecting the prior cultivation of the necessary discipline of objective knowledge

ततः भूय इव ते तमः - It is as if they push themselves into darkness which is even more intense than blinding darkness, which means even greater ignorance of सत्यं ज्ञानं Knowledge of Absolute Reality.

Why? Because without the prior discipline of objective knowledge, pursuit of ब्रह्मविद्या cannot be fruitful and it may even lead to mis-leading and self-destructive ends. Thus neither the pursuit of objective knowledge by itself, nor the pursuit of Upanishadic knowledge by itself can bring you any enlightenment on पूर्ण ज्ञानं - Totality of Knowledge, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं Knowledge. Because,

अन्यत् एव आहुः विद्यया अन्यत् आहुः अविद्यया

विद्यया अन्यत् एव आहुः - What is achieved by ब्रह्मविद्या -Self-knowledge is quite a different thing and

अविद्यया अन्यत् एव आहुः - What is achieved by अविद्या - objective knowledge is yet another thing



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In the pursuit of पूर्ण ज्ञानं - Totality of Knowledge ब्रह्म विद्या - Self-Knowledge and अविद्या - objective knowledge have very different functions. This is not simply a matter of opinion, says the Teacher

इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नः तत् विचक्षिरे - So, we the Teachers have heard from the wise people who have gained पूर्ण ज्ञानं and explained that difference to us, in the following manner says the Teacher.

विद्यां च अविद्यां च यः वेद उभयं सह - The person who knows, who clearly understands and appreciates both विद्या and अविद्या - both Self-knowledge and objective knowledge, together

अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा - through the discipline cultivated in the pursuit of objective knowledge in depth, crosses and overcomes मृत्यु - The world of death, which means that that person gains clarity of understanding of the complexities of the world of changes. That person realizes the cause-effect relationships of the world of changes, both in its unmanifest and manifest states, the world of माया and by so realizing विद्यया अमृतं अश्नुते - by ब्रह्म विद्या - by the help of the Upanishadic knowledge, that person gains Immortality, gains the knowledge of the Changeless Reality behind and beyond the world of changes. That person gains पूर्ण ज्ञानं - Totality of Knowledge, gains ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं ज्ञानं .

उभयं is God-Realization arising from the holy confluence of the ever-flowing objective Knowledge with the limitless ocean of spiritual knowledge. Such God-realization is possible only through अविद्या and विद्या together, objective Knowledge and Upanishad Knowledge together.

Through the cultivation of the discipline and the depth of objective knowledge, one gains the ability to understand the ever-changing nature of the material world and through the simultaneous cultivation of the discipline and the depth of Upanishad Knowledge, one gains the ability to realize that all the changes taking place in the material world are only different manifestations of That one unchanging Ever Existent ब्रह्मन्. Such simultaneous cultivation of these two human abilities is the function of विवेक बुद्धि which ultimately makes a person बुद्धिमान् - a wise person fit for gaining मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in Life.



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For gaining such चिदेक बुद्धि, a daily life of सत्यं and धर्मं rooted in God-Consciousness is necessary, about which the Upanishad says in the second set of three verses,

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति ये असंभूतिं उपासते ।
ततो भूव इव ते तमः ये उ सम्भूत्याँ रताः ॥ 12

अन्यदेव आहः सम्भवात् अन्यत् आहुः असंभवात् ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नः तत् विचक्षिरे ॥ 13

सम्भूतिं च विनाशं च यः तत् वेद उभयं सह ।
विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भूत्याँ अमृतं अश्नुते ॥ 14

As you may notice, these three verses are exactly the same as the previous three verses, except that the word विद्या is replaced by the word सम्भूति, and the word अविद्या is replaced by the word असंभूति or विनाश. सम्भूति refers to changeless ब्रह्मन् and असंभूति or विनाश refers to the same ब्रह्मन् indicated by a variety of Forms and Names subject to change. The subject matter here is Mode of Worship of परमेश्वर, and subsequent God-Realization by an individual.

The Upanishad says: Those who worship परमेश्वर through Forms and names ONLY, without understanding and appreciating That which is behind and beyond those Forms and Names, such people are pushing themselves into ignorance on the true Nature of परमेश्वर.

On the other hand, those who entertain themselves with the notion of Worship of परमेश्वर, deliberately avoiding and dissociating all Forms and Names with परमेश्वर, such people are pushing themselves into even greater ignorance on the true nature of परमेश्वर.

Neither of the above two kinds of people understand or appreciate the Knowledge communicated by the Upanishad Declaration ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं. Neither the one who limits the worship of परमेश्वर to certain Forms and Names only, nor the one who deliberately avoids and dissociates all Forms and Names in the worship of परमेश्वर,



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can gain the true vision of परमेश्वर, because if you think that you cannot see परमेश्वर in a blade of grass, in a lump of clay or in a piece of stone, you can never see परमेश्वर anywhere, in anything, and certainly not in something that is Formless, Unknown or unknowable. Only when you see the same परमेश्वर in everything that exists, Form or no Form, known or unknown and at the same time see all existence in the same परमेश्वर, ईश्वर ज्ञानं, God Realization is possible, so says the Upanishad.

The above six verses expound the philosophy of पूर्ण ज्ञानं - Totality of Knowledge - The Total Vision of परमेश्वर, leading to the unity of all that is comprehensible, and also all that is beyond comprehension - the Unity of the world external, and the world internal.

The Upanishad tells us that to concentrate our attention only on the external world and neglect the inner world of आत्मा is as good as pushing oneself into blinding darkness (अन्धं तमः). On the other hand, to neglect this world which we can see, touch and handle, and to become involved only in the incomprehensible world within is as good as pushing oneself into even greater darkness.

What is needed is to understand and appreciate that Reality is ONE, untouched by limitations such as the outer and inner - Not-Self and the SELF - many and ONE - and we must learn to conduct our life in the light of this all-embracing knowledge. If the many and the ONE are indeed the Same Reality, then all modes of worship, all modes of work, all modes of struggle are paths for Self-Realization. Then there is really no distinction between the sacred and the secular, religion and science.

Such is indeed the Teaching of ईशावास्य उपनिषत्

With this Teaching, the Knowledge part of the Upanishad is over. There are four more verses in this Upanishad and they are mainly for meditation and contemplation. We will complete this Upanishad next time.