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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

ईशावास्य उपनिषत्
Isavasya Upanishad
Volume 2

The first two verses of ईशावास्य उपनिषत् *īśāvāsyā upaniṣat* which we just recited go together, they must be understood together. We saw the first verse in detail last time. In brief it says

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*

इदं सर्वं *idaṁ sarvaṁ* - All this, meaning यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् *yat kimca jagatyāṁ jagat*, everything including the minutest thing that exists in this ever-changing creation

इदं सर्वं *idaṁ sarvaṁ* - All this entire creation, including everything in this creation without exception

ईशावास्यं *īśāvāsyam* - is indwelt by, is enveloped by, is in and out permeated by ईश्वर *īśvar*, which means ईश्वर *īśvara* exists and that ईश्वर *īśvara* exists everywhere in this creation. Nothing in this creation, no object in this creation, no event in this creation, stands apart from ईश्वर *īśvara*. ईश्वर *īśvara* is IN everything that exists and everything that exists is in ईश्वर *īśvara*.

All Existence is Divine. That is ईश्वरज्ञानं *īśvar jñānam* - knowledge about परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*, knowledge to be known, knowledge to be understood, knowledge to be realized.

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा *tena tyaktena bhujñithā* - Cultivate that ईश्वरज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam* - That knowledge about परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*, by overcoming all obstructions to the realization of that knowledge. Enjoy life doing what has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* and enjoy life through renunciation - त्याग बुद्धि *tyāga buddhi* and संन्यास बुद्धि *sanyāsa buddhi*,

मा गृधः कस्य स्वित् धनं *mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svit dhanam* - Never covet, never crave for, never develop an attachment for the wealth of anyone, including that of yourself. That is the way to be. That is the road leading to total freedom, Absolute Happiness, Total Fulfillment in life. That is the content of the first verse.

Continuing the same theme, the second verse says:



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कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।

kurvanne veha karmāṇi jijī viṣecchataṁ samāḥ ।

एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥

evaṁ tvayi nānyathe to'sti na karma lipyate nare ॥

कुर्वन् एव इह कर्माणि *kurvan eve iha karmāṇi*

इह *iha* - in this world

कर्माणि कुर्वन् एव *karmāṇi kurvan eva* - only by doing कर्म's *karmas* as कर्म योग *karma yoga*

जिजीविषेत् शतं समाः *jijī viṣet śataṁ samāḥ* - May you desire to live a 100 years, may you desire to live a long and full life.

शतं समाः *śataṁ samāḥ* - The ॐ कार ॐ *kār*, the sound in any Vedic chanting indicates the need for the presence of Total God-consciousness with particular reference to whatever is being said. Therefore, in the context here, only when there is total God-consciousness at all times, any कर्म *karma* can become कर्म योग *karma yoga*.

Hence कुर्वन् एव इह कर्माणि जिजीविषेत् शतं समाः *kurvan eva iha karmāṇi jijī viṣet śataṁ samāḥ* means "desire to live in this world a long and full life with total God-consciousness at all times, always doing every कर्म *karma* as कर्मयोग *karma yoga*".

एवं त्वयि न अन्यथा इतः अस्ति *evaṁ tvayi na anyathā itaḥ asti* - There is no other way for you to live in this world, to be your true self and to be happy.

नरे कर्म न लिप्यते *nare karma na lipyate* - For such a person, actions do not stain, actions do not touch, actions do not bind. First of all, develop an outlook based on a true appreciation of real nature of all existence, recognizing all existence as ईशावास्यं *īśāvāsyam* - non-separate from परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Then, desire to live a long, full कर्म योग *kama yoga* way of life, working with zest and joy, dedicating all actions to the Lord, and enjoying the fruit of your actions as the very grace of God. That is the only way to live a sensible life in this world, there is no other way, asserts the Upanishad.

कुर्वन् एव कर्माणि *kurvan eva karmāṇi* - Only by performing actions - what actions should you perform?



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तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः *tena tyaktena bhujñithāḥ* - Perform the कर्म *karma* that has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*, which is the कर्म *karma* that has come to you naturally as a matter of duty at this time and place. That कर्म *karma* is indeed ईश्वर कर्म *īśvara karma* and in that कर्म *karma* there is no choice. How should you do that कर्म *karma*? With full appreciation of ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ* - with full appreciation of Divine presence in every कर्म *karma* as it comes, which means, recognize परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* in every कर्म *karma* and recognize every कर्म *karma* as the Glory of परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*.

With such recognition, Sri Krishna says

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्य अध्यात्म चेतसा ।
mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sanyasya adhyātma cetasā ।
निराशीः निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वर ॥ (भ. गी. 3 - 30)
narāśiḥ nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigatajvara ॥

Dedicate all your actions to परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* having प्रसाद बुद्धि *prasād buddhi* with respect to fruits of all your actions, which means

- Welcome all the fruits of your actions, whatever they are, as the very Grace of परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*.
 - Let your mind be rooted in चिबेक बुद्धि *vivek buddhi* - discriminative knowledge and judgment, based on understanding, appreciation and enquiry.
 - Let not your mind be pushed by cravings, longings or expectations.
 - Let your mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* be ever free from the notion of mine. There is indeed nothing mine in this world.
 - Let your mind be free from any sorrow and distress; in performing one's duty there is no place for any sorrow or distress.
 - Perform your duty, do whatever you need to do at this time and place, and do it as well as you can - योगः कर्मसु कौशलं *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalaṁ*. That is कर्म योग *karma yoga*.
 - Perform कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga* and learn to live a life full of zest and joy in total God consciousness at all times.

Vedanta does not ask one to desire to live a full life of 100 years, if such life were to be lived in despair, distress and delusion. A long life is not meant for dissipation through



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entertainment, excitement and exhaustion. Vedanta holds before a human being a far greater purpose, namely, one of growth, maturity and realization by which every action leads progressively towards मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Absolute Happiness, Total Fulfillment in life. That is the significance of the words

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः *tena tyaktena bhujñithāḥ* - Enjoy life through renunciation.

The ultimate object of life is to gain मोक्ष *mokṣa*, which means transformation of man the mortal into man the immortal in this very life. How can you do that? The Upanishad says

कुर्वन् एव इह कर्माणि *kurvan eva iha karmāṇi* - Sri Krishna explains that by saying

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि *yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi* - That means put ईश्वर *īśvara* in everything. Conduct your life and enjoy your life in and through ईश्वर *īśvara*, because ईश्वर *īśvara* is the truth in everything and the truth of everything. Life and all its achievements become trivial when this truth of ईश्वर *īśvara* does not shine through them. The trivialities of life are trivial only when taken by themselves. Recognize ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ* in every one of your actions. Then even the most trivial aspects of life glow with purpose and significance.

When we understand this truth, a full life of zest and joy is possible. But in order to understand this truth, a spirit of enquiry is necessary. Our Rishis, the Enlightened ones, have conducted this enquiry and they have presented their results in the Upanishads. If we are ready for that knowledge, and if we can absorb that knowledge, we stand to benefit.

एवं त्वयि न अन्यथा इतः अस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे
evaṁ tvayi na anyathā itaḥ asti na karma lipyate nare

कर्म योग *karma yoga* is the only means by which you can become truly **free**. Actions are not bondages for a कर्म योगी *karma yogī*. For a कर्म योगी *karma yogī* action is a means for emancipation. Godliness is fulfillment of manliness and not its negation. One must first achieve human happiness before even striving for Divine Happiness. Human happiness is possible only through a life of सत्यं *satyaṁ* and धर्मं *dharmam* - Being truthful at all times, and living a life of propriety and gratitude in all actions.



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That is why सत्यं वद धर्मं चर *satyam vada dharmam cara* is the first वेद उपदेश *veda upadesa* for a human being. We do यज्ञ कर्म *yajna karmas* now and then. We perform Havans of various kinds in which we worship various देवता *devata*s - इन्द्र *indra*, वरुण *varuna*, वायु *vayu*, अग्नि *agni*, etc., the various functionaries of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*. By performing such यज्ञ कर्म *yajna karmas* we say Thank You to the various देवता *devata*s. By touching the देवता *devata* we also touch परमेश्वर *paramesvar*.

Whether I say thank you or not, the sun shines, the wind blows, the rain rains, and the earth moves. But by saying Thank you to सूर्य देवता *surya devata*, वायु देवता *vayu devata*, वरुण देवता *varuna devata* and भूमि देवता *bhumi devata*, for their functions in this creation, and by expressing my deep sense of gratitude to them, I realize the true nature of my own self and my own function in this creation. The moment I realize myself as ONE with this entire creation, I find a new zest, a new joy and a new enthusiasm in life, and I realize:

- to make others happy is also my happiness
 - to serve others and help them to achieve their life's fulfillment is also my fulfillment
- This realization is one of the essential teachings of our Upanishads.

The very existence of Upanishads is an expression of such Realization.

Such is the content of the first two verses of ईशावास्य उपनिषत् *isavasya upanishat*, together with the preceding शान्ति पाठ *santi path*. This content is repeatedly authenticated in every other Upanishad. It is this content that is expanded in all details in the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gitā*, which indicate the extraordinary significance of these three verses for our spiritual development. These three verses for our spiritual development constitute the essence of all our Upanishads, all our Scriptures and the basis of all our Scripture Readings here at this temple.

Now let us continue with the Upanishads.

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *isavasyam idam sarvam* - All existence is Divine. That means one's essential nature is Divine. Life lived without the consciousness of one's Divine nature is indeed trivial. It is a life of darkness, ignorance, sorrow and distress. It is a life of spiritual blindness. Those who let themselves live in such spiritual blindness, they are really hurting themselves. So says the third verse of the Upanishad, which reads



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असुर्या नाम ते लोकाः अन्धेन तमसा आवृताः ।

asuryā nāma te lokāḥ andhena tamasā āvṛtāḥ ।

तन् ते प्रेत्य अभिगच्छन्ति ये के च आत्महनो जनाः ॥ 3

tan te pretya abhi gacchanti ye ke ca ātmahano janāḥ ॥

Those who let themselves live in such spiritual blindness are called आत्महनो जनाः *ātmahano janāḥ*.

आत्महनः *ātmahanah* means spiritual suicide. Those who destroy themselves, hurt themselves, by spiritual ignorance, ignorance about the true nature of oneself. Their mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* are weak and they have no सत्यं *satyaṁ* and धर्म *dharmaṁ* in their life. Therefore, the Upanishad says

ये के च आत्महनो जनाः *ye ke ca ātmahano janāḥ* - Those who let themselves live in such spiritual blindness, self-ignorance, whoever they are, whatever be their other qualifications,

ते लोकाः असुर्या नाम *te lokāḥ asuryā nāma* - their worlds of life are called worlds of असुर *asurās*, which means worlds of darkness, ignorance and delusion. Their planes of experiences, their fields of experiences, their objects of experiences, their physical, mental and intellectual dispositions, all these are verily embodiments of the worlds of असुर *asurās*.

असुर *asurās* are people whose personal qualities, values and dispositions are detrimental to one's own true progress in any पुरुषार्थ *puruṣārtha* - in any field of human endeavour, whether it is the pursuit of धर्म *dharma*, अर्थ *artha*, काम *kāma* or मोक्ष *mokṣa*. Such people depend entirely on external situations to find happiness. They are incapable of enjoying True Happiness, of discovering and being the best in themselves, because,

अन्धेन तमसा आवृताः *andhena tamasā āvṛtāḥ* - their worlds of experiences are covered by अन्धेन तमसा *andhena tamasā* - blinding darkness, which means ever increasing ignorance, sorrow and distress. They find themselves constantly being beaten by the ups and downs of their daily lives. They live that kind of life, not only now, but also

प्रेत्य च तान् (लोकान्) ते अभिगच्छन्ति *pretya ca tān (lokān) te abhigacchanti* - even after death, they fall into and reach the world of असुर *asuras*, meaning, when



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they depart from their physical bodies by virtue of their कर्मफलs *karma phalas*, they will inevitably fall into the wombs of those whose mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* are similarly governed by असुर *asura* qualities and dispositions. Consequently their life of self-degradation will continue, life after life, always going from bad to worse, as Sri Krishna says:

आसुरीं योनिमापन्नाः मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि
āsurīm yonimāpannāḥ mūdhā janmani janmani
मां अप्राप्य कौन्तेय ततो यान्ति अधमां गतिम् (G 16 - 20)
mām aprāpya kaunteya tato yānti adharmām gatim

Having got into the wombs of people having असुर *asura* qualities and dispositions, they remain as मूढाः *mūdhā* ignorant and deluded in every life, one after the other, accumulating more पाप *pāpa* and दुःख *duḥkha* for themselves. They never get an opportunity to uplift themselves. Having not gained सन्मार्ग विवेक *sanmārga viveka* – the good sense, the common sense to follow the path of धर्म *dharmam* and live a life of God consciousness, they push themselves downward into an endless succession of lower and lower wombs, life after life. That is the fate of those governed by असुर संपत् *asura sampat* – self-ignorance and spiritual suicide.

The message of the Upanishads is this. Self-ignorance, spiritual suicide brings only ever increasing distress and delusion in daily life. If one thinks "Well all my problems are only as long as I live, and when I die, all my problems are solved", the Upanishad says, "No", the problems are **not** solved by death of the body. If you are ignorant now, you are not going to be enlightened after death. After death also you will continue to be ignorant, and you will continue to suffer life after life.

Please realize that fact now itself while you are still living. It is never too late to take action **now**

- to live a life of सत्यं *satyam* and धर्म *dharmam*
- to live a life of God consciousness and कर्म योग *karma yoga* and
- to cultivate ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* – spiritual knowledge

Through understanding, enquiry and contemplation, learn to realize

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं ।



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īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ ।

पूर्ण अदः पूर्ण इदं पूर्णात् पूर्ण उदच्यते ।

pūrṇaṁ adaḥ pūrṇaṁ idaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇaṁ udacyate ।

The realization of That Knowledge is possible only through the human body, even though it involves a long period of कर्म योग *karma yoga* way of life and continued physical, mental and intellectual discipline. That is why the Upanishad says:

जिजीविषेत् शतं समाः *jijiviṣet śataṁ samāḥ* - Desire to live a long 100 years of God-conscious life, because you need all that period of endeavour to reach the Goal of मोक्ष *mokṣa* and enjoy ब्रह्मानन्द *brahmānandaṁ* - Absolute Happiness, Total fulfillment in this very life. This body is the best and the only equipment we have to gain That State of मोक्ष *mokṣa*, That state of ब्रह्मानन्द *brahmānanda*. If one does not make use of one's body-mind-intellect equipment for the above purpose, one is only missing one's golden opportunity to uplift oneself and that is spiritual suicide, says the Upanishad.

Again and again our Upanishads exhort us to turn our attention to the Realization of the Divine nature of Oneself, indeed of all existence, by properly utilizing the God-given equipment, namely one's own body, mind and intellect. The Upanishads implore us to make the best use of our own natural faculties to uplift ourselves through ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidya*. That is the call of our Upanishads, and it is expressed so forcefully in the कठोपनिषत् *kathopanishat* which says,

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत ।

uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata ।

क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्ग पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥

3 - 14

kṣurasya dhārā niśitā duratyayā durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti ॥

उत्तिष्ठत *uttiṣṭhata* - Arise, get up

जाग्रत *jāgrata* - Wake up from the sleep of self-ignorance, turn towards ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*

प्राप्य वरान् *prāpya varān* - Seek help from the proper people. You need help. Get the best help you can

तत् *tat* (ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidya*) निबोधत *nibodhata* - Get yourself educated in ब्रह्म विद्या *brahma vidya* clearly, definitely and beyond doubt.



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तत् पथः *tat pathaḥ* - The path leading to ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* is दुर्ग *durgam*
- very difficult to tread.

दुरत्यया *duratyayā* - It is very difficult to overcome obstacles on the way

निशिता क्षुरस्य धारा *niśitā kṣurasya dhārā* - The path leading to ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* is sharp, like the edge of a razor, which means, one can easily get discouraged, frightened or misled through lack of understanding or lack of enquiry.

कवयो वदन्ति *kavayo vadanti* - That is the warning from the wise people who have successfully reached the goal.

The road leading to Enlightenment ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, ईश्वरज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam*, आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge is full of difficulties. It is neither easy to tread nor easy to cross. It requires not only knowledge, both objective knowledge and spiritual knowledge, but also discipline and sustained efforts. It also requires that one must constantly be on one's guards to protect oneself from discouragement, misunderstanding, fear and fanaticism.

Therefore this life is your golden opportunity to uplift yourself to the greatness in action and greatness in Being. That is indeed the purpose of life. Do not waste your time any more. Wake up from self-ignorance. Seek help and get yourself educated in ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidya*. At the same time, beware of pitfalls. Be on your guards, says the कठोपनिषत् *kāthopaniṣat*. Essentially that is the Message of the third verse of ईशावास्य उपनिषत् *īśāvāsya upaniṣat*.

असुर्या नाम ते लोकाः अन्धेन तमसा आवृताः ।

asuryā nāma te lokāḥ andhena tamasā āvṛtāḥ ।

तन् ते प्रेत्य अभिगच्छन्ति ये के च आत्महनो जनाः ॥

3

tan te pretya abhigacchanti ye ke ca ātmahano janāḥ ॥

We will continue with this Upanishad next time.