

## ईशावास्यम् इदम् सर्वम्

(Based on a talk by Pujya Swamiji to students of the longterm course at Anaikatti)

There are many sentences in the उपनिषद् s on सन्न्यास. If you look at the words in such sentences, they not only talk about सन्न्यास, they also talk about your attitude towards everything and your lifestyle. In this sentence (which we will be discussing) a कर्मयोगी is also addressed through very intelligently placed words .

There are two well known recensions of the शुक्ल-यजुर्वेद today. The माध्यन्दिन-शाखा of the शुक्ल-यजुर्वेद is popular and is taught and used for all rituals in North India. In South India there is another recension of शुक्ल-यजुर्वेद called कण्व-शाखा. The style of chanting in these two शाखाs (recensions) is very different. The शुक्ल-यजुर्वेद contains two important उपनिषद् s – बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् and ईशावास्य उपनिषद् . ईशावास्य is one उपनिषद् which is in the संहिता portion (also called the मन्त्र-भाग ) of the Vedas. This उपनिषद् is at end of the संहिता and is therefore called वेदान्त.

The ईशावास्य उपनिषद् opens with the sentence – ईशावास्यम् इदम् सर्वम् . This sentence looks like a विधि-वाक्य (because of the word वास्यम् ending in a कृत्य-प्रत्यय), but it is more a plea than a mandate. In matters dealing

with statement of facts, i.e. the knowledge of realities, you cannot give a विधि- a विधि is a mandate. The उपनिषद् asks you to understand and recognize a reality – “Be one who sees everything in this world including your body mind complex as ईश्वर”, “May this entire world be recognized , be seen as ईश्वर”. ईशा वास्यम् = आच्छादनीयम् – May you cover the entire जगत् – both known and unknown with the vision of ईश्वर.

जगत् चतुर्दशसु भुवनेषु यत्किञ्चित् कर्यकारणात्मकं जगत् चराचरलक्षणम् ईश्वररूपमेवेति बुद्धिः करणीयेत्यर्थः fourteen भुवन s i.e. spheres of experience among which the earth is one. Whatever you perceive on this earth, and whatever you hear about *bhuvanas* and different types of beings, may they all be covered by your बुद्धि , in your vision, as one reality as ईश्वर. “Cover” means you have to see in your vision the entire जगत् , which includes whatever you see (objectify) – whether it is one object, a 100 objects, or a segment of the जगत् – ईश्वर बुद्ध्या आच्छादनीयम् – it should be covered with vision that all this is ईश्वर . This statement of the उपनिषद् is addressed to all because ईश्वर being everything, one has to know this to be totally objective.

With this vision, every object and every situation is ईश्वर. Every situation is त्यक्त , given, by the lord, the कर्मफलदाता, and is given to you according to your प्रारब्धकर्म and all other relevant factors. Therefore it is ईश्वरप्रसाद. For a सन्न्यासी it is said - यदृच्छालाभ सन्तुष्टः meaning he is contented, pleased, with whatever comes on its own accord. But then whatever comes is a result of कर्म done either now or in the past, in this life or in past lives. You have brought कर्मफल with you and it is getting unfolded every moment. You are listening to class and suddenly come a series of sneezes – this is कर्मफल – this disturbs the person and his or her neighbours too! There must be some connection – past, present, everything is included in the order of कर्म. कर्म is very difficult to define but it is (surely) there and getting unfolded. कर्म getting unfolded is life. Your own कर्म being done now also unfolds as your experiences. Current कर्म is also involved, as is past कर्म, all are mingled in a complex network.

तेन ईश्वरेण (or तेन कारणेन) त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः - ईश्वर being everything, you do not create anything. Accept what is given to you by ईश्वर, the lord (manifest as the order of कर्म) gracefully, as भगवत्-प्रसाद. You take care of your self , protect your environment, protect your family – because everything is ईश्वर. The उपनिषद् has told you to visualize , to see the whole thing as ईश्वर – because the whole thing is ईश्वर.

When you say “Everything is ईश्वर”, who is ईश्वर? You keep mentioning जीव and ईश्वर. Is ईश्वर another person? Are there two

entities - one called ईश्वरात्मा and another one called जीवात्मा ? No, there is only one आत्मा. Then, what do you mean by आत्मा इदम् सर्वम् - इदम् = “this world which I perceive” is there and I (आत्मा) am there too – how do you account for this world if you say there is only one? This is where भाष्यम् comes alive, comes to help. आत्मनि on this आत्मा, this नाम-रूपात्मकम् जगत् - is superimposed – like a pot is superimposed upon the clay. Therefore you have to say ईश्वरः इदम् सर्वम् , ईश्वर being the जगत्कारणम् That is at one level - ईश्वरः इदम् सर्वम् , we need that. What is given by ईश्वर, please take it as प्रसाद . It is an attitude which is very good, for one’s growth. This is the प्रसाद-बुद्धि I have been talking about. The second level is अहम् इदम् सर्वम् . therefore त्यक्तेन = त्यागेन , तद् ज्ञानम् पाल्येथाः - न कर्मणा न प्रजया त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वम् आनशुः - by clean renunciation, can mean सन्न्यास or सन्न्यास-बुद्धि. त्यागेन भुञ्जीथाः - प्रसादबुद्ध्या live our life – because next line is मा गृध कस्यस्विद् धनम् - covet not anybody’s wealth. Why? because you can covet only when you can keep something as yours. This coveting, this greed, is the worst thing to happen to a person. Desire is ok, ambition is ok. But to fulfil ambition one is willing to do anything – that is greed. A begging person has a desire for a new begging bowl. A corporate person desires another corporation – he wants to buy it out. What is the difference in desire? Desire is common. There is no greed. He has one bowl already – and steals the bowl of another beggar – both of them were sleeping on the railway platform. The other person’s bowl, was a better bowl, a steel bowl and this fellow stole it – I will say that

is greed. This corporate head has to more than a hundred people working for him, manipulates the market to buy another corporation and makes people sell all the shares – the price of that share drops and he buys the shares and brings the corporation under his control. This manipulation is really greed. Greed can manifest in the form of getting an extra bowl or an extra corporation, but greed is the same. This is coveting. The upanishad says मा गृध कस्यस्विद् धनम् - Covet not anyone's wealth.

Or the sentence “मा गृध कस्यस्विद् धनम् “ can be understood differently - After all wealth belongs to ईश्वर, the धातु ईश = ऐश्वर्ये – the one who lords over. Therefore, if all that is here ईश्वर, कस्यस्विद् धनम्, to whom does the wealth belong for you to covet from another? because the other person also does not own it.

The entire culture of this country is based on this sentence – “ ईशावास्यम् इदम् सर्वम्”. This is the vision of our culture. In keeping with this vision in this culture is your day-to-day life – the worship, the prayer – all based on this vision. The dance, music – all based upon this. How did this person, living in a remote location, uneducated living in the mountains and forests - say “सब भगवान् है “ meaning everything is ईश्वर? They may not know the profundity of it but they know that ‘All that is here is ईश्वर’. They can do पूजा (worship) to the earth, to

a tree, to a river, to a mountain, to a stone, to a cow, and a mouse associated with lord गणेश. Animals are associated with देवता s – associated with lord गणेश is a mouse. Really funny – गणेश figure is big , mouse is small – but in the lord there is nothing big or small. Peacock is associated with सुब्रमण्यस्वामी. Tiger, lion, elephant - associated – many animals are associated with one deity or another. ईशावास्यम् इदम् सर्वम् . – everything is ईश्वर - This statement is made by a villager who has not had any formal education. How did this vision (that everything is ईश्वर ) reach that person? By वृद्ध-व्यवहार - that is through elders in society, it has been communicated from generation to generation.

भाष्यकार says त्यागेन भुञ्जीथाः - everything being ईश्वर – by ईश्वर बुद्धि you have to give up your “मम बुद्धि”. You cannot have ईश्वर बुद्धि along with मम बुद्धि, मम शरीर, मम गेहम् - My body, My mind, My house. Therefore मा गृध – do not covet and सन्न्यासेन भुञ्जीथाः – protect this by a life style of सन्न्यास. In fact लोकेस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा - one lifestyle is engaging in activities and role playing with an attitude of कर्मयोग and the other is a lifestyle of सन्न्यास a life committed exclusively to the pursuit of knowledge. The lifestyle of कर्मयोग is pointed out in the next verse (the 2<sup>nd</sup> verse) in the ईशावास्योपनिषद्-कुर्वन्नेव इह कर्माणि जिजीविशेत् शतं समाः . भाष्यकार points out the द्विविधा निष्ठा. This mantra helps see what is प्रसाद-बुद्धि, कर्मफल as प्रसाद and that helps a lot in understanding sastra.