

Isavasya
Upanishad
for Students

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EMESCO

Isavasya Upanishad

Invocation

The Vedic tradition sees the individual, *jīva*, not as an independently created entity but as an organic part of the whole and as intelligence not differentiated from the Supreme Reality, Brahman. The following invocatory mantra shows this.

ॐ । पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

*om । pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyate ।
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate ॥
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ।*

That is infinite, this is infinite; infinite emerges from the infinite; once the reality of this infinite is known, what remains is infinite.

This invocation is common for all the Upanishads belonging to the *śukla Yajurveda*. The mantra also appears in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (5-1-1) where Sri Shankara has commented on it elaborately. A portion of the commentary is reproduced here.

SB: पूर्णमदः । पूर्णम् = न कुतश्चित् व्यावृत्तं, व्यापि इत्येतत् ।

pūrṇamadaḥ । pūrṇam = na kutaścit vyāvṛttam, vyāpi ityetat ।

pūrṇam-adaḥ - That (Brahman) is complete;. *pūrṇam* - complete; *na vyāvṛttam* - not separated; *kutaścit* - from anything; *vyāpi* - all pervading; *iti-etat* - it means so. Brahman is not separated from anything, which means that It is infinite.

Shankara Bhashyam (SB) :

अदः इति परोक्षाभिधायि सर्वनाम, तत् = परं ब्रह्म इत्यर्थः ।

adaḥ iti parokṣābhidhāyi sarvanāma, tat = param brahma ityārthaḥ ।

adaḥ - The word ‘that’; *sarvanāma* - is a pronoun; *parokṣābhidhāyi* - that which refers to something remote (the Brahman). *tat* - that; *param brahma* - the Supreme Brahman; *iti-ārthaḥ* - it means so.

In the Vedantic texts the word ‘*tat*’ (meaning ‘that’) denotes Brahman, the Supreme Reality, the all pervading consciousness.

That Brahman is all pervading like the sky, without any recess, and not delimited by limiting factors like place and time. When this is so, there cannot be a world or a living thing apart from Brahman. This manifest world with names and forms is also the self-same Brahman available empirically. This too, in its original self (as Brahman) is complete, though in its limited self it is not all pervading.

SB: तदिदम् = विशेषापन्नं कार्यात्मकं ब्रह्म, पूर्णात् = कारणात्मन उदच्यते = उद्गच्छति इत्येतत् ।

tadidam = viśeṣāpannam kāryātmakam brahma, pūrṇāt = kāraṇātmana udacyate = udgacchati ityetaḥ ।

tat-idam - The self same Brahman; *viśeṣa-āpannam* - manifesting with features (names and forms); *kāryātmakam brahma* - the Brahman which is the effect (the manifest world or the individual self); *udacyate- udgacchati* - emerges; *pūrṇāt - kāraṇa-ātmanah* - from the causal Brahman, which is infinite; *iti-etat* - it means so.

This manifest universe (the individual self, *jīva*) emerges from that causal, infinite Brahman, and hence it is the effect, while being non-different from Brahman.

SB: यद्यपि कार्यात्मना उद्भिच्यते तथापि यत्स्वरूपं पूर्णत्वं परमात्म-भावम् तन्न जहाति पूर्णमेव उद्भिच्यते ।

yadyapi kāryātmāna udricyate tathāpi yatsvarūpam pūrṇatvam paramātma-bhāvam tanna jahāti pūrṇameva udricyate ।

yadyapi - Although; *udricyate* - it emerges; *kāryātmanā* - as the effect; *tathāpi* - even then; *pūrṇatvam* - infinitude; *yat-svarūpam* - which is its nature; *tat-na jahāti* - it does not give up; *udricyate* - it emerges; *pūrṇam-eva* - as the infinite only.

Although it emerges as the effect, it does not lose its infinite nature, and so emerges as the infinite only which is the nature of the causal Brahman.

SB: पूर्णस्य = कार्यात्मनो ब्रह्मणः, पूर्णम् = पूर्णत्वम्, आदाय = गृहीत्वा, आत्मस्वरूपैकरसत्वम्-आपाद्य विद्यया, अविद्याकृतं भूतमात्रोपाधि-संसर्गजम्-अन्यत्वावभासं तिरस्कृत्य, पूर्णमेव = अनन्तरम्-अबाह्यं प्रज्ञानघनैकरसस्वभावं केवलं ब्रह्म अवशिष्यते ।

pūrṇasya = *kāryātmano brahmaṇaḥ*, *pūrṇam* = *pūrṇatvam*, *ādāya* = *grhītvā*, *ātmasvarūpaikarasatvam-āpādya vidyayā*, *avidyākṛtam bhūtamātrapādhi-saṁsargajam-anyatvāvabhāsam tiraskṛtya*, *pūrṇameva* = *anantaram-abāhyam prajñānaghanaikarasasvabhāvam kevalam brahma avaśiṣyate* ।

pūrṇasya - Of the infinite; *kāryātmano brahmaṇaḥ* - the Brahman which is the effect; *pūrṇam* = *pūrṇatvam* - infinitude; *ādāya* = *grhītvā* - having realized; *vidyayā* - by knowledge; *ātma-svarūpa-eka-rasatvam-āpādya* - having realized it as essentially the same as Supreme Brahman; *anyatva+avabhāsam* - the apparent notion of separateness; *saṁsargajam* - arising out of the identification; *bhūta-mātra- upādhi* - (with the) limiting adjuncts of the beings; *avidyā-kṛtam* - (which is) the effect of ignorance of Atman; *tiraskṛtya* - having rejected; *pūrṇam-eva* - the infinitude alone; *anantaram* - that which has no recess; *abāhyam* - that which has nothing outside it; *prajñāna-ghana-ekarasa-svabhāvam* - that which is of the nature of a vast expanse of consciousness; *kevalam brahma* - Brahman which is the only One; *avaśiṣyate* - remains.

If one realizes the real nature of this universe, which is the effect of Brahman, as essentially the same as the all pervading Brahman with no recess and nothing external to it, and with such realization discards the notion of separateness from Brahman by proper