

SIGNIFICANCE OF 'TENA TYAKTEN BHUÑJĪTHĀḤ MĀ GRDHAḤ KASYASVID DHANAM ('तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्')

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Īśāvāsyaopaniṣad, though very slender in its bulk, it teaches us the perennial philosophy of better living. The second *charaṇa* of the first shloka of this *upaniṣad* has practical interpretation of the part of the first verse with which this *upaniṣad*

There are various interpretations of this verse given by ancient as well as modern scholars. The review of those interpretations for underscoring the importance of its pragmatism is taken in this paper.

What this *upaniṣad* proclaims in its very first verse, is the truth that all the legitimate religions and philosophies in the world approve from time to time. Its universality lies in the strong ethical view expressed in it. The ethical rule, however simple it may seem, is extremely significant for the social, economic, and moral upliftment of human beings. The line 'तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम्।' when scrutinized under a more watchful eye, it opens before us the rainbow world of spiritual life & its prerequisites. It also states plainly how the gradual evolution of a materialistic person is possible by following these simple rules. In today's world of competitiveness, corruption and craving for more, this philosophy is more relevant than ever.

This is an attempt to compile quotations, interpretations asserting the same meaning as explained in the above-mentioned line of the verse. I try to show the relevance of this ancient teaching to the present times and more precisely to our lives which have been turned into mere 'waste lands' by our cravings and excessive materialism.

Īśāvāsyaopaniṣad is one of the principles *Upaniṣads*. It is the 40th chapter of *Vājasaneyī* text of *ŚuklaYajurveda*. This is the only *upaniṣad* which is an inseparable part of the Vedic text. Therefore it is the most valued one. It consists of only 18 mantras but is has always attracted the attention of ancient as well as modern scholars and the seekers after spiritualism.

VimalājiThakār, one of the realizedSaints of our day says that *Īśāvāsyā* should become universal prayer. It contains practical philosophy of man-making. This *Upaniṣad* should become a part of compulsory education in our school. This *Upaniṣad* shows the ultimate refinement of human consciousness.

Though the number of mantras in this *Upaniṣad* is very small each mantra is impregnated with deep meaning. There is something for everybody and everything for somebody. The *Upaniṣad* is named after the first word of the first mantra which reads as follows –

***Īśāvāsymidaṃ sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat /
Tena tyakten bhuñjīthāḥ mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasvidddhanam||*²**

This verse is translated by *Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan* as - (know that) all this, whatever moves in this moving world is enveloped by God. Therefore, find your enjoyment in renunciation; do not covet what belong to others.³

The precise meaning of each word has always remained to be a matter of debate among the scholars and therefore, can be a subject of special study. I've confined myself to the second line of this verse only. I think it is the part in which even a layman can get proper guidance for his moral & spiritual upliftment. It is practical as well.

Let us begin with the review of interpretation of this line of the *mantra* by the ancient and modern scholars.

According to *Ādya Śaṅkarācārya* '*tena tyakten bhuñjīthāḥ*' means the renunciation of the three cravings; for son, for money and for popularity. In other words, one should enjoy them (son, money and reputation, popularity) by renouncing the idea of a personal proprietary relationship to them. He gives two interpretations of the second half of the line *mā gṛdhaḥ* one of them is greed. Do not be greedy. May the wealth be yours or anybody else's, covet not for it. Uproot all the desire for it." In another interpretation he splits the second half of the mantra in further two parts– '*mā gṛdhaḥ*' and '*Kasyasvidddhanam*'. Covet not for wealth. Why? Whose indeed is wealth? It belongs to nobody. Because ultimate it is '*atman*'. Thus, recognizing its true nature, don't aspire for the illusory things.⁴

Maddhvācārya says, be content with what is given by the Supreme God. Do not seek anything from anyone else. The others, not being the masters of either themselves or anything else, cannot offer you anything on their own. The word '*tena*' is used twice by *Maddhvācārya*. The first '*ten*' means 'hence' and the second '*tena*' means 'by God'. He means '*tyakten*' as *datten*-given.

Man is advised to be content with what is given by God. He is also advised not to seek anything from anyone else since none is independent and none can bestow anything on others. This advice is intended to eschew the greed and running after inferior people to satisfy the greed eschewing greed is stated here as a necessary prerequisite for spiritual knowledge.⁵

As said by *Uvaṭācārya* everything in this world is defined by the master – slave relationship, owner-owned relationship. This very proprietary relationship is to be renounced. This should be the first condition for any kind of enjoyment. Reject the consciousness of 'I' & 'mine'. In many respects he seems to support *Śaṅkarācārya*.⁶

The interpretation done by *Nārāyaṇācārya* is very much similar to that of *Śaṅkarācārya*. *Śaṅkarācārya* gives two meanings of '*Kasyasiddhanam*' of which *Nārāyaṇācārya* supports the first one and thinks it to be the only interpretation.⁷

Brahmānanda understands '*tyāga*' as renunciation, knowing oneself one with Brahman, one should renounce all those 'Worldly desires', '*Kāmyakarma-s*'. (All *karma-s* motivating you to gain worldly things). As all is *Ātman*, this wealth belongs to none. Knowing this, don't crave for anything that is worldly.⁸

Śaṅkarānanda rejects all identification with body or attachment with the material world and suggests to enjoy the union with God. *Śaṅkarānanda* suggests '*mā grdhaḥ kasyasiddhanam*' as preparatory measures for this renunciation of the world and the worldly.⁹

According to *Rāmacandra Paṇḍit* the real 'renunciation' is possible only when one loses all his interests in all worldly things. Fall is inevitable, if he is not free of all this interest. The only way to avoid this fall, or to arouse '*Vairāgya*' is *mā grdhaḥ kasyasiddhanam*. Rest of his interpretation resembles to that of *Śaṅkarācārya*.¹⁰

As stated by *Śrīkarācārya* as all this world is enveloped by God, it is fit to love and fit for enjoyment. Enjoy everything here as a grace of *Śiva*. Only 'God' is capable of giving this '*prasāda*'. Therefore, desire nothing from anybody else.¹¹

Rāmānujānuyāyī comments on this line, 'Renounce the world that creates the illusion of enjoyment. Knowing all pleasures to be ever changing and offering little joy, renounce them. Take food or do all necessary '*karmas*' for protecting the body which is the only means of piety for God. Don't store more wealth other than that is necessary for performing your duties assigned by the scriptures. Enjoy the things with God realization as the end. Don't reverse this process. When one's relationship is based on commercial grounds, one resembles more to beast than to human beings. One should get rid of the greediness one feels for wealth. It is what '*mā grdhaḥ kasyasiddhanam*' means.¹²

As said by Śrī Bhīmaśarmā God is all pervasive and has covered everything in this world. One should not have any unjust desire for the wealth belonged to the other. One should be satisfied with whatever that has been given to him by his fate / destiny. One should enjoy it only after giving its rightful share to those who are dependent upon him. To sum up the mantra, urges us to do our duties without any desire for fruits.¹³

The meaning made by Swāmī Śarvānanda is ‘by this renunciation (of the world) support yourself. Do not covet the wealth of anyone’ He explains that contemplation of this kind presupposes the renunciation of worldly life and desires pertaining to it. Renunciation helps one to realize the atman and attain the bliss born of it. Hence the *Sannyāsī* is asked to support himself by renunciation, in contrast to worldly men who support themselves by the satisfaction of desires. The *Sannyāsī* is to seek bliss in renunciation, not in wealth, which is the source of all worldly satisfaction. Do not covet the wealth belonging to you as well as to the others.¹⁴

Swāmī Prabhupāda has translated this line as ‘One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong’ is the meaning stated. He has explained this meaning further as one should therefore be intelligent enough to know that expect for the Lord, no one is the proprietor of anything; one should accept only the things which are set aside by the Lord as his quota. We should be satisfied with the things that have been very kindly set aside for us by him. We should always consider to whom the things that we possess actually belong.¹⁵

The meaning of the mantra according to *Sri Vedāntadeśikis*, ‘Whatsoever changeable is in this world, all this is fit to be indwelt by the Lord. With that (world) renounced enjoy, Covet not anyone’s wealth. Enjoy that group of unprohibited enjoyable things which is helpful in supporting the body (The only means to attain God) only after renouncing the world which was mistaken as enjoyable. ‘*mā gṛdhaḥ*’ here means ‘do not covet anybody’s wealth’ but here wealth presupposes all that is other than the Supreme self (*Anātman*).¹⁶

As said by Swāmī Śhivatattvānanda, ‘All is His and in this spirit one should renounce all that is temporary, changing and false. He interprets ‘*mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam*’ as the total rejection of the I- ness, of the pride. Let there be all those earthly things, we need not reject them. We have to renounce an attachment with them, our worldly attitude of possessing them.¹⁷

According to *Paramahansa Prajñāneśwar Yati*, one should enjoy the things rejected by God, the master and live by them only. Do not covet. Don't expect any charity or donation from anybody.¹⁸

SadāśivśāstrīBhide has stated the meaning of this line as 'All that is created is enveloped by God. Live by whatever things you receive from by god by appropriate means. Don't covet others' wealth. Here 'God given things' mean the things we possess by our fate.'¹⁹

As stated by *Harikṛṣṇadās Goyandakā* 'Keeping eyes on God in every thing one should enjoy them. Knowing that these enjoyable things belong to none, one should not get attachment to them. The enjoyment underlines this renunciation of all attachment with objects. Worship the universal God with your duties. The enjoyable objects should be enjoyed only for performing duties properly. They belong to none. But, man by sheer mistake, entangles himself with them through attachment. All is His, hence, must be properly used for His grace.'²⁰

Kṛṣṇājī Prabhākar Khādilkar said, God doesn't abstain you from enjoyment. The essence of His existence is joy. He leads you from joy to joy. What He expects from you is obedience and righteous behaviour. Enjoy the objects in accordance with His order & with the heart grateful for His grace.²¹

According to *Vinobā Bhāve*, God is the creator of this life and universe. Enjoy the objects of enjoyment allotted to you with an inward dedication to him. Don't covet anybody's wealth. Knowing the all-pervading presence of God, one should adopt an attitude of an ascetic. This makes one free from jealousy.

This mantra contains the essence of the Vedic Religion. It states acknowledging the all-pervading presence of God, living life in the attitude of as ascetic and feeling no jealousy for others' enjoyment.²²

The **review of different interpretations** of '*Tena tyakten bhuñjīthāḥ mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam*' by various ancient and modernscholars, underline the importance of renunciation in material and spiritual life. The review of the *mantra* unfolds before us the various dimensions of renunciation and our desired attitude towards wealth. Those dimensions are as follows –

Dimensions of '*Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ*'

- Freedom from attachment
- Abandoning the ego i.e. I – consciousness
- Renouncing the world after knowing its ever-changing, temporary and false nature

- Renouncing the idea of personal proprietary relationship with the objects of enjoyment given by God.
- Renouncing desire of worldly things.
- Rejecting identification with body and attachment with the material world.
- Losing interest in worldly things to safeguard spirituality.
- Renunciation as pre-requisite for self-realization.
- The objects of enjoyment to be used for the protection of body.
- Gratefulness to God and constant awareness of His presence.
- Enjoying life by inwardly dedicating to God.

Dimensions of 'mā grdhaḥ kasyasvidddhanam'

- Don't covet.
- Don't be greedy.
- Wealth as the grace of God.
- Rejection of the commercial ground of our relationship, which is unworthy of human being.
- Living happily with the quota permitted by destiny.
- God as proprietor who owns all things we use.
- Wealth should be rejected because it doesn't contain supreme self.
- Expect no charity or donation from anybody
- Freedom from jealousy for other's enjoyment

Though there are many dimensions of '*Tenatyaktenbhuñjīthāḥmāgrdhaḥkasyasvidddhanam*' as it is listed, more or less, all of them emphasize the need of renunciation. This renunciation is a necessary condition for spiritual progress. The ultimate aim of spiritual progress is indicated by the understanding of '*Īśāvāsymidaṃ sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat*'. This shall transform all your relationships and spiritualize every moment of your existence. But this is a very long way to go. Once a person determines to tread on this path all further things follow in the mathematical manner.

It is very difficult for common man to develop a liking for spirituality. The other half of the line '*mā grdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam*' guides the common man at this juncture. All the dimensions referred above directly or indirectly prepare a common man for renunciation of the worldly things& desires in a gradual manner.

When '*Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*' says 'don't covet', it abstains us from any unjust desire for the wealth that belongs to the others. Automatically it encourages us to earn money in a proper

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and makes us give up desire for more. It purifies our approach towards wealth, when we begin to look at it as grace of God. We become happier and more satisfied when we learn to feel contented in whatever is permitted to us by fate or destiny. By shaking the commercial foundation of all our relationship, this *Upaniṣad* teaches us an easy way to perform *karma* in the right spirit. The *Upaniṣad* asks us not to expect any charity and donation from anybody and tries to purify us more and more. When we look at God as proprietor, the total drive behind our '*karma*' changes. This attitude frees us from jealousy because now we learn to live happily and contentedly with whatever is permitted to us by destiny. Thus, this simple rule can act miracles if properly understood and practised.

Now the questions still remain are why should we turn to spirituality? Why to become spiritual? Why shouldn't we covet others' wealth? Why should the seers of this *Upaniṣad* give so much importance to this as to place it in the very first *Mantra*?

Desire for wealth creates so many problems. Because money gives you power to buy. It gives you name & fame, It is an important means for buying all the pleasures, or enjoyments we are running after. It gains you social position. Thus 'money' plays a vital role in strengthening the pride, ego or I-consciousness of man. This I-consciousness itself is duality and the reason for all our sorrow. This I-ness makes us forget the truth '*Īśāvāsymidaṃ sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat.*' This illusory incompleteness begins to crave for completion. This craving leads us to various desires. Thus the stronger the desire for wealth, the farther shall you be from God as well as from the goal of life. The seers of this *Upaniṣad* insist on accepting only that which God has given us as quota.

Therefore, one has to abandon the desire for worldly things. Because they lead you to more enjoyment and more sorrow thereby. The great sage, *Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa* too spoke of abstaining from woman & wealth.

The Bible and the religious literature of Buddha too agree with this. Bible declares in the ten commandments "Thought shalt not steal" "Thought's halt not covet thy neighbour's wife nor his man servant or his maid servant nor his ox nor his ass nor anything that is thy neighbour's."²³

Lord *Buddha* in his *Dhammpada* says, "men driven on by craving run about like a hunted hare fast bound in its fetters they undergo suffering for a long time again and again."

²⁴ Buddha calls 'stealth' a physical sin and 'covetousness for others' wealth as psychological sin. In his ten orders, the 10th order reads, "I shall obey the order to abstain from gold and silver i.e. money." In his *Aṣṭāṅgmārga* Lord *Buddha* speaks of *samyak ājīva* i.e., to earn
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money in a rightful and moral way. In his *āryasatyā* he speaks of 'Craving' as the root cause of all sorrow. Craving makes one seek pleasure and is never satiated. One of the cravings he speaks about is craving for enjoyment of the objects of pleasure.²⁵

Thus, the legitimate religions and philosophies do agree with what this '*Mantra*' proclaims. This ethical rule, however simple it may seem, is extremely important for social, economic and moral upliftment of human being. The line '*Tena tyakten bhuñjīthāḥ mā gr̥dhaḥ kasyasvidghanam*', as stated before, unfolds before us various possibilities of spiritual progress. It also shows how gradual evolution of a materialistic person is possible through the observance of this simple rule. The world today, faces so many social, economical & moral problems. It has become highly competitive. Commercialization of everything has given a great boost to our carvings. Corruption is rampant. Naturally, this is the high time when the world should turn back and see what our ancestors have guided us.

Thus the *Mantra* shows an eternal path of human welfare. It gives us the right attitude we should take about wealth. The accumulation of wealth few hands presupposes that many hands shall be empty.

We can sum up the whole practical guidance offered by the *Mantra* as follows

- ❖ Desires are many and repetitive and can never be fully satiated.
Wisdom lies not in seeking more and more means of enjoyment but in knowing the temporariness of enjoyment. It is necessary to restrain.
- ❖ One should look at money not as a means of buying enjoyment but as a necessity for sustaining the body which helps you to seek God.
- ❖ This attitude automatically puts restraint on excessive enjoyment of things.
- ❖ The objective of life is God-realization. Vimala Thakar says, "One should earn enough to fulfil his basic needs. This pursuit of money should not blind you to the goal of your life". It teaches us where to put limit to our cravings.
- ❖ It is possible for common man to purify his mind by following this simple but valuable rule. Proper attitude towards earning money can inculcate in him the divine values like lack of greed, covetousness and jealousy; Magnanimity of heart; physical as well as psychological restraint; Decline of ego or I-consciousness, the root cause of all sorrows; purification of mind; progress towards total renunciation; detachment and the progression of faith in God.

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