



# Philosophy of Education

of the

**Śrī Īsopaniṣad of the Yajur Veda**  
with references to Bhagavad-gītā

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# Philosophy of Education

Based on Śrī Īsopaniṣad of the Yajur Veda, with references to Bhagavad-gītā

## Introduction

### Defining “philosophy of education”

A philosophy of education is a description of principles upon which learning and teaching rest. It delineates what education is, its purpose, the relationship between education and society, the definition of the learner’s basic needs and identity, relationship between learners and teachers, and the process of learning.

### The purpose of articulating a philosophy of education

Every school’s materials and activities imply a philosophy of education. An articulated and applied philosophy of education can create a clear learning culture and environment for staff, parents, students, and community. One feature of schools with high achievement is that teachers discuss pedagogy and make clear links between their practice and educational theory. However, for many schools, their philosophy is never openly recognized or examined. Furthermore, it is probably true in a large number of schools that various implied or stated philosophies of education, some in direct conflict with one another, underlie the differing learning strategies, discipline procedures, and resources the staff employ. In addition, the actions of leaders and teachers may bear little resemblance to stated philosophies. In summary, it is rare for a school to have a unified theoretical philosophical base for all facets of its operations, rarer still for that unified philosophy to be public, and exceedingly rare for a clearly stated theory of philosophy to be practically evident in nearly all aspects of that school.

In order for a school to achieve its purpose, staff and parents must clearly know that purpose and how it can be achieved. Most importantly, school leaders who are most likely to accomplish their mission are those who frequently assess whether and to what extent the philosophy of education is evident in the materials, words, and behaviours of all school staff. The value of a school can be determined, at least in part, by how much it reflects on and lives its philosophy of education.

These are the major aspects of a school which should be based on its philosophy of education:

- Educational materials and resources
- Methods of teaching and learning
- Content of what is taught
- Goals and process of student discipline and training
- Methods and substance of teacher training
- Methods and substance of teacher and student assessment
- Relationships (student/teacher, teacher/parents, teacher/administrator, staff/government, etc.)
- Policies

## **Why this philosophy of education is based on the Śrī Īsopaniṣad of the Yajur Veda, and upon the Bhagavad-gītā of the Mahābhārata**

Since Īsopaniṣad is śruti, part of the Yajur Veda, the vast majority of those who consider themselves followers of Vedic religion<sup>1</sup> accepts the Īsopaniṣad as authoritative sacred literature. In his purports, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda relates many of the Īsopaniṣad's concepts to sections of the Bhagavad-gītā, a scripture that is also widely accepted among Hindus. Īsopaniṣad contains preliminary and advanced spiritual concepts in a relatively short work, easily be used as a basis for training teachers and staff in the school's philosophy. Because the essential concepts are fairly simple, anyone can grasp them in a short amount of time. It covers most of the major concepts necessary to a philosophy of education, and contains much specifically related to education.

### **How this document was created**

It might seem most reasonable to start with various aspects of education and then look in scripture to find support or condemnation. However, with such a process it is easy to be misled. It is possible to support almost any philosophy of education by using isolated sections of scripture. However, what appears to be supported in one place will again appear to be condemned in another. Also, what is ideal and "common sense" among educators changes radically with time. What was once accepted as standard educational practice is sometimes gradually considered abhorrent, only to have educators again discard current ideas and return to what they had rejected. Therefore, starting with an idea and then looking in scripture will only serve, in most cases, to make it appear that a philosophy currently in vogue represents scriptural tradition.

Nor would it be best practice to use only those parts of scripture that empirical research supports. Empirical research is flawed by definition<sup>2</sup>, and it is a rare study that has incontrovertible results. Even in such cases, generally various studies contradict one another, or have results that cannot be applied in a general way. While empiricism is useful as an adjunct to understanding, it cannot give us definitive truth.

So, rather than start with preconceptions, this project began with a thorough study of the Śrī Īsopaniṣad, with a view to finding all references related to education in both the mantras and Bhaktivedanta purports to those mantras (with some reference to the purports of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa). Relevant places where texts from the Bhagavad-gītā were cited in the purports were also noted. All the Īsopaniṣad references were then organized into categories normally dealt with in philosophies of education. A team of educators reviewed the work at several stages. By starting with scripture, it is hoped that this work comes closer to the original intent of the personified Vedas.<sup>3</sup>

Referencing the Bhaktivedanta purports in addition to Īsopaniṣad mantras allows this work to relate those mantras more clearly to education in general, and to how learning is understood at the time of this writing. There are, however, issues relevant to modern times that are not directly or indirectly addressed in Īsopaniṣad or Bhagavad-gītā, but could be included when describing a philosophy of education<sup>4</sup>. Because those issues need to be addressed through sometimes extensive extrapolation from scripture at best, it is best if they are handled separately as part of an individual school philosophy that is explicitly changeable document subject to current teaching trends and government initiatives.

## The Philosophy of Education

### **The purposes of education: benefits for individual learners**

Education prepares an individual learner in relation to God, the material creation, other living beings, and oneself.

The foremost purpose of education is to become attached to the Absolute Truth. By such attachment, one can remember Him at the time of death<sup>5</sup> which is the perfection of life.<sup>6</sup> In order to do this, one must practice during life.<sup>7</sup> And, in order to practice remembrance of the Supreme, a learner must regularly engage in one or more of the processes of loving devotion, which are hearing about God, Kṛṣṇa, chanting His glories, remembering him, serving His feet, worshipping Him, praying, becoming a servant of the Lord, being the friend of the Lord, and dedication of the self.<sup>8</sup> It is especially important to note that the Supreme Being is described in the Īsopaniṣad and Bhagavad-gītā as the best friend.<sup>9</sup> Because remembrance of Him is the ultimate goal of life, Bhagavān is also the ultimate goal of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Loving service to the Personality of Godhead is the central purpose of the process of knowledge described in both Īsopaniṣad's mantra ten and Bhagavad-gītā 13.8-12.<sup>11</sup> Īsopaniṣad clearly states in mantra sixteen that it is the form of the Supreme which is the top goal, a form that includes the localized aspect of Paramātmā and pervading Brahman. Indeed, in mantra sixteen the request is made that the light of Brahman covering the Lord's form be removed. The supremacy of the form of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa over the Brahman effulgence is also confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā.<sup>12</sup> Attachment to the Supreme Lord includes attachment to His devotees, especially those who act as teachers, or gurus.<sup>13</sup>

Attachment to the spiritual implies detachment from the material, the next goal of education. This detachment means using everything in the Lord's service, not inaction. Learners must, therefore, understand the definition of, and reaction to, action (karma), forbidden action (vikarma), and free action (akarma).<sup>14</sup> To accomplish this attachment and detachment, temporary material life and eternal spiritual life must be complementary subjects of education pursued parallel to each other.<sup>15</sup> One must know of all aspects of the material creation—science, geography, and so forth—alongside all details of the Supreme Being, learned in a way appropriate to the particular developmental stages of each learner.<sup>16</sup>



Education is not only for knowing the Supreme Lord and the nature of matter, but also for knowing oneself. Self-realisation operates on three levels. Learners come to know their individual identity as soul, of the same quality as the Lord, having a spiritual form as the Lord has a spiritual form.<sup>17</sup> Second, they also identify themselves as part of a society of God-conscious persons. That identification can be very broad, so as to encompass all those who, from whatever religious background, share a general conviction in the existence of a Supreme Being, and who dedicate their energy to His service. Group identification can also be more narrowly understood in terms of those whose spiritual beliefs and practices are similar to one's own.<sup>18</sup> Finally, education should help learners discover and develop their individual interests and aptitudes that make up their conditional, external identity.<sup>19</sup>

As learners mature they require specific training for a livelihood<sup>20</sup> in accord with the individual bodily and mental proclivities that constitute their material identity. In addition, education should prepare learners to enter the various stages of ashrama, such as marriage and retirement, with a view towards progressive spiritual development.

Mature knowledge of the Supreme Being, matter, and one's self will result in respect for all living beings, the inculcation of which is a prime purpose of education.<sup>21</sup> Learners need both a deep, heart-felt respect towards all, as well as training in external etiquette to behave as "ladies and gentlemen".<sup>22</sup> In order to have such respect, learners must refrain from violence towards others, including abstaining from eating meat, fish, and eggs. Education has to emphasise that all life forms are souls, equal in quality and value, inhabiting various bodies according to their desires and past deeds.<sup>23</sup>

While love for God and all living beings certainly is the root of good character, separate values and behaviours whose presence indicate the fruit of education also need to be explicitly taught.<sup>24</sup> For example, satisfaction with what one achieves honestly<sup>25</sup> eliminates cheating.

Learners need knowledge, practice, and values that enable them to keep healthy in all areas, such as emotional, mental, and physical.<sup>26</sup> Intellectual health involves practice in thinking critically and using logic appropriately.<sup>27</sup> Each learner should "become a scientist or philosopher and conduct research into spiritual knowledge."<sup>28</sup>

### **The purposes of education: benefits for society**

Having rightly educated citizens benefits society. For example, students who are trained in the way the Īsopaniṣad directs will perform perfect social, political, communal, and altruistic activities by dovetailing them with service to Kṛṣṇa.<sup>29</sup>

Those trained in the philosophy of Īsopaniṣad do not think in terms of their personal rights, but of duty and responsibility, knowing that if everyone fulfils proper responsibility, then the rights of all will naturally be respected. Learners know that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, and that each living being is given a quota of possessions and enjoyment. Each person should use his or her own quota in Kṛṣṇa's service, while never encroaching on the quota of others.<sup>30</sup> Having this value includes the practice of eating only vegetarian food, and first offering that food to the Lord.<sup>31</sup> The principle of acting out of duty, as an offering to God, is dominant in both the Īsopaniṣad and the Bhagavad-gītā, and would form the basis of any educational program based on those scriptures.

Learners will live lives of ecological responsibility when they truly imbibe the realisation that all belongs to Kṛṣṇa, and must be used with respect in His service. According to Bhagavad-gītā, this life includes a close relationship with cows and bulls.<sup>32</sup> Learners would, therefore, ideally have direct experiences with the land and cows as part of their education.

Īsopaniṣad teaches that a truly educated person sees the oneness of interest in all living beings—to serve the Supreme.<sup>33</sup> Thus, while various religions understand God in different

features, or to different degrees, the essence of all religions is self-realisation and realisation of God in all His features.<sup>34</sup> While a very neophyte practitioner of religion thinks God is only in a sectarian place of worship and quarrels with other religions, education is meant to bring people at least to the second stage of spiritual understanding, where one develops friendship with all other theistic persons. The ideal result of education is elevating learners to saintliness, where even the general distinction between theist and atheist in terms of “us” and “them” is absent—there is only love for everyone.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, the type of religious identification, nationalism, and sectarianism that causes enmity and even war is simply the result of spiritual ignorance.<sup>36</sup> Īsopaniṣad rejects such ignorant “religion” which is an anathema to genuine education

An education that facilitates the individual and societal goals Īsopaniṣad suggests deserves the support of all people.

### **The constitutional nature of the learner**

Learners are each individual souls who are part and parcel of God<sup>37</sup> and, therefore, naturally all-good. Although the soul is never equal to God in quantity,<sup>38</sup> it is of the same spiritual nature.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, like the Lord, each soul is an individual entity and has free will.<sup>40</sup> This individual nature ultimately manifests in the original, spiritual form of each living being that exists independently of the present material body and mind.<sup>41</sup> While the form of the Lord is always spiritual and is never material, individual souls can misuse their free will to become embodied in matter, with a body and mind that are machines covering the spiritual self.<sup>42</sup> These coverings constitute a conditioned nature which inclines the pure soul to unnatural materialism.<sup>43</sup>

In summary, a learner is part of the Lord’s marginal energy, and can live either in the spiritual or material nature. When under the shelter of the spiritual nature, a soul exhibits its natural, all-good qualities. When under the shelter of material nature, the soul appears to be inclined towards the dualities of self-centred desire and aversion.

### **Classroom management and discipline**

Discipline policy, education in values, classroom management, and any aspect of education which deals with the character and general behaviour of learners, all need to take the dual nature of learners into account. (That is, learners are all-good by spiritual constitution yet behave as if naturally inclined toward evil in the conditioned state.) Rules, procedures, accountability, and consequences are all necessary to control learners’ conditioned natures. Simultaneously, loving relationships and full nurture of spirituality are needed to nurture learners’ innate genuine natures. If teachers attempt only to redirect learners’ conditioned natures without awakening the true godly self, the materialistic aspects of conditioned nature will reassert themselves at another time, or in another form.<sup>44</sup> If teachers attempt only to nurture the spiritual without redirecting the conditioned nature, the process will most likely be slow and difficult.

On the side of redirecting conditioned nature, learners need training to restrict material sense enjoyment as far as possible.<sup>45</sup> The goal is self-control. Particularly, learners should be trained to abstain from illicit sex, intoxication, gambling, and the eating of meat, fish or eggs.<sup>46</sup> Discipline has the goal of gradually and progressively freeing learners from passion and ignorance—elevating them to goodness in which one is happy, enthusiastic and

automatically learns the science of God. Passion destroys detachment, and in ignorance one cannot know oneself and God.<sup>47</sup> While the goal is having learners who have internalized good character and behaviour, external consequences are also part of God's universal plan.<sup>48</sup>

There are attitudes and policies which have a dual effect, acting positively to revive learners' original, spiritual nature, and simultaneously controlling conditioned nature. The essence is to give learners guidance, encouragement, and examples in order for them to deliberately apply their free will to act in ways pleasing to the Lord.<sup>49</sup> Teachers who represent bona fide gurus relate to learners with great kindness to awaken the spiritual nature.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, teachers should command formal respect from the learner, not the casual friendship of equals, in order to control conditioned nature.<sup>51</sup>

Educational and discipline policies that specifically target the nurturing of the innate godly self of learners joyfully<sup>52</sup> involve both teachers and learners in the processes of bhakti-yoga. These processes should be incorporated as fully as possible into the learning system, both as distinct activities and part of the regular course of study.<sup>53</sup> When learning cannot be directly connected with the nine processes of bhakti, it can be God-centred and thus bring learners to an awakening of their real selves.<sup>54</sup>

### How learning takes place within the learner

The Īsopaniṣad describes the general process of learning in several different ways, looking at the same phenomena from various angles of vision. Īsopaniṣad explains that learning is, in broad terms, both didactic and experiential. One must hear knowledge from authority,<sup>55</sup> and must also practically experience the truth of what one has heard.<sup>56</sup> Knowledge is ultimately revealed from within by the Lord, based on the degree of sincere effort of the learner.<sup>57</sup>

Looking at the process empirically, one learns through the senses, evaluated by the mind, with directions from the intelligence, and desire from the soul.<sup>58</sup> Guidance for this process comes from a teacher who is a bona fide guru,<sup>59</sup> without which learners may gain false knowledge, more dangerous than ignorance.<sup>60</sup> The principle of accepting a guru in order to gain genuine knowledge is at the core of Hindu educational philosophy.<sup>61</sup> Each bona fide guru is teaching the same truth, presented according to time, place, and circumstance as well as reflecting the individuality of the particular teacher. The learner needs to ask questions of the teacher in the spirit of inquisitiveness rather than challenge. The learner also needs to serve the teacher with all respect. A teacher who is a guru, or representing a guru, teaches through practical demonstration and personal example.<sup>62</sup>

It should be emphasised that learning is developmental, the stages of which can be described in several ways. Learners can progress from beginners, to intermediates, to full realisation (kaniṣṭha, madhyama, and uttama).<sup>63</sup> The stages



can also be described as beginning faith, association with a teacher and other sincere students, removal of misconceptions and bad habits, steadiness, enjoyment, attachment, ecstasy, and realisation of love of God (ādau śraddhā to premā).<sup>64</sup> Realisation of God may also progress from Brahman to Paramātmā to Bhagavān,<sup>65</sup> though it is preferable to develop a loving service attitude toward Bhagavan from the beginning.<sup>66</sup> Bhakti yoga can be achieved independently of other yoga process, yet some learners may progress through the stages of work dedicated to God (karma-yoga) to philosophical search for God (jñāna-yoga) to mystic success (dhyāna -yoga) to love for God (bhakti-yoga).<sup>67</sup>

### **A learner's qualifications for learning**

Sacred literature such as Īsopaniṣad and Bhagavad-gītā explain that attributes such as intelligence, creativity, and critical thinking are not sufficient for gaining wisdom that benefits individuals and society.<sup>68</sup> Good character is also essential. In fact, good character alone can lead to wisdom, whereas knowledge gained by those with bad character leads only to harm.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, learners with special needs can also gain full wisdom through having good character alone. Bhagavad-gītā 13.8-12 describes the attitudes, and behaviours of one with good character. This list is termed the “process of knowledge.” In other words, a learner who possesses these traits will be able to correctly understand sensory perception, use logic clearly, and be receptive to instructions from a genuine teacher. Or, a learner with these traits who has disabilities that affect sensory perception and logic can attract the Lord's mercy so that knowledge is revealed. Īsopaniṣad mantra ten indirectly states the necessity of good character traits in referring to the “culture of knowledge.”

These character traits can be organised into a learner's internal attitudes, dealings with others, and relationship with God. Internally, a qualified learner is concerned primarily with the spiritual over the material. Duties in relation to the body, family, and society are done to please God, and not with a view for material enjoyment separate from the Lord's service. Such a learner is tolerant under provocation, neither overwhelmed by material happiness nor distress. There is a taste for a secluded, calm and quiet place. These values are gained through realisation of scripture.

A learner of good character relates to others without duplicity, giving no anxiety to others by the body, mind, or words, and serving teachers with respect and humility. Religious activities are done for practical action rather than for name and fame.<sup>70</sup> Qualified learners seek to serve Kṛṣṇa continuously with rapt attention, free from personal motive.

It should be noted that in the Bhagavad-gītā's description of the necessary character to gain knowledge, humility is the first item.<sup>71</sup> One cannot learn when thinking one already knows. Nor can an arrogant learner form a respectful relationship with a teacher.

### **Qualifications of a teacher**

Teachers need the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to enable learners to achieve the individual and societal purposes of education. In this regard, the teaching of particular subjects often requires specific relevant qualifications, while rendering some general qualifications of lesser importance. However, teachers' character—behaviour that indicates values—affects learners for better or worse no matter what the subject. Therefore, any school which follows the educational philosophy of the Īsopaniṣad and

Bhagavad-gītā needs to think holistically about teachers' values, character, and behaviour. Certainly many modern schools' policies state that it is only teachers' values as exhibited during learning time that affect learners. Yet in the Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa explains that the mode of nature which dominates a person affects all areas of his or her life.<sup>72</sup> At least teachers should be predominantly in goodness, striving toward pure goodness; the modes of passion and ignorance are not acceptable in a teacher.

According to Īsopaniṣad, all teachers should have the quality of dhīra, or at least be striving to attain such a state.<sup>73</sup> A dhīra has no material hankering, lamentation, or illusion. He or she has realised knowledge, and has been trained in disciplic succession. In other words, a teacher who is a dhīra maintains the mood and practice of a learner with his or her own teacher.<sup>74</sup>

Teachers should be honest about their own convictions and struggles, willing to appropriately air doubts and discuss parts of scripture that are difficult to understand or apply.<sup>75</sup> Teachers who have a mood of honesty and inquiry are more likely to encourage that same mood among learners.

In summary, a teacher would need realised and practiced values of goodness or transcendence<sup>76</sup> as well as factual knowledge<sup>77</sup> and practical skills.<sup>7879</sup> He or she should be able to have good powers of discrimination<sup>80</sup> and a love for all living entities, especially the students.<sup>81</sup> A school that uses Īsopaniṣad and Bhagavad-gītā as the basis for its philosophy, should, therefore, include consideration of teachers' personal lives when deciding on qualifications. A teacher would also need to be able to practice the teaching and learning strategies exemplified in the Īsopaniṣad itself.



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### **How teachers teach: values, attitude, approach, basis**

Every classroom teacher who is dhīra is taking the role of a traditional guru,<sup>82</sup> or at least of assistant to a genuine guru. The relationship between learner and teacher is that of disciple and spiritual preceptor. A deep relationship of trust is the ideal learner-teacher relationship. Because “both blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned,”<sup>83</sup> teachers seek to command rather than demand respect, and to encourage learners in making autonomous and thoughtful choices.

A teacher who is a bona fide guru knows that advancement in knowledge is generally gradual, and progressive. Expert teachers understand a learner's current stage and instruct accordingly for natural progress to the next level. Both imitation by students of higher stages, and an artificial assumption by teachers that learners are at higher stages than their true understanding hinder learning and lead only to hypocrisy and cheating.<sup>84</sup> Learners' readiness needs to be determined in all areas of life—intellectual, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual

Teachers who take the role of guru are acting as the external representative of the Lord within the heart of the learners. It is ultimately the Supreme Being who gives all

knowledge, remembrance, and understanding,<sup>85</sup> with the teacher acting as the facilitator of that natural process.

The mood and goal of teachers are not simply the transmission of information, skills, or theoretical values. Rather, the focus is on experiential knowledge and personal transformation, especially on the spiritual level.<sup>86</sup>

Effective teachers strive to nurture the unique individual talents of each learner.<sup>87</sup> Each learner is valued for his or her abilities, and guided to use those God-given propensities for both spiritual and material benefit. The teacher should also be absorbed in offering everything to Kṛṣṇa in order to make all activities beneficial.<sup>88</sup> When learning and gaining knowledge are fully beneficial for learner and teacher, they are also a joy. Teachers, therefore, aim to have learning be a source of pleasure. Certainly teachers can make learning fun through strategies such as games and various educational activities. The essence of fun in learning, however, is to have Kṛṣṇa at the centre. Otherwise, there will be pain and lamentation.<sup>89</sup> For both teachers and learners to be happy and enthusiastic, teaching must be in goodness rather than passion and ignorance.<sup>90</sup>

### Learning strategies: skills and process by which teachers teach

A core learning strategy is revealed when looking at Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary to Īsopaniṣad's mantra fifteen. The mantra itself is a prayer to see truth through revelation. In his purport, Baladeva refers to the strategy for learning that is detailed in the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, which offers three broad categories of learning: *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nidhidhyasana*. *Śravaṇa* means hearing from a teacher. *Manana* means gaining intellectual insight or understanding by reflecting upon the subject. *Nidhidhyasana* means realisation and application in life. He then adds that one needs to pray to the Lord for His mercy in order to understand truth.

These four aspects of learning are found throughout the Īsopaniṣad. One must hear knowledge from a realised source,<sup>91</sup> or experience learning directly under a teacher's guidance,<sup>92</sup> and reflect on what one has heard so that it is understood.<sup>93</sup> Application of knowledge is essential,<sup>94</sup> as is praying for mercy and revelation of truth.<sup>95</sup>



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Teachers who follow this four-part strategy first expose learners to knowledge, whether through didactic or experiential means, or a combination. They then guide learners to reflect on and assimilate that knowledge. Assimilated knowledge is applied to life situations. During all stages of learning, teachers and learners ask for, and rely on, the Lord's mercy to reveal knowledge and truth.

The Īsopaniṣad mantras themselves demonstrate various learning strategies that can support the core of instruction. Some examples can be cited here. Repetition of words and ideas is shown in that mantras nine through eleven, when compared to mantras twelve through fourteen, have almost the same structure of words and ideas, except that nine through eleven deals with knowledge and ignorance, whereas twelve through thirteen deals with absolute and relative. Repetition of words is evident in the invocation and

mantra seventeen.<sup>96</sup> Comparing and contrasting are prominent in mantras four, five, nine, ten, twelve, and thirteen.<sup>97</sup>

The Īsopaniṣad as a whole first entices learners with promises of fulfilment of mundane desires for longevity and prosperity. Gradually the learner is brought to the platform of spiritual desires for loving service to Bhagavan. This moving from an appeal to conditioned desires to the natural soul's desires is a motivational strategy that is very effective in learning. For example, mantras two and eleven deal with mundane needs,<sup>98</sup> while mantras fifteen through eighteen deal with spiritual needs.<sup>99</sup>

Looking at other learning strategies used in Īsopaniṣad, there is a focus on application of knowledge in most of the mantras, especially prevalent in mantras one, two, six, and seven.<sup>100</sup> Mantras six, seventeen, and eighteen demonstrate having high expectations,<sup>101</sup> a strategy with much empirical research to support its effectiveness. Summarizing is evident in mantras four through seven,<sup>102</sup> with summarizing through definition in mantras five and sixteen,<sup>103</sup> and summarizing through problem/solution found in mantras one, two, and three.<sup>104</sup> Recognizing effort, which significantly increases learning, is part of mantra seventeen.<sup>105</sup> Homework and practice is implied in mantra fourteen.<sup>106</sup> Mantras nine through fifteen involve classification,<sup>107</sup> and mantras two, seven, eight, ten, eleven, and fourteen set clear objectives for learners.<sup>108</sup> Analogies are evident in mantras fifteen and eighteen.<sup>109</sup> The entire work of Īsopaniṣad presents things in a logical sequence.

### Assessing learning

The Īsopaniṣad is clear on what should be assessed in learning. First, learners should be able to demonstrate recall of factual knowledge with understanding.<sup>110</sup> While neither the Īsopaniṣad nor the Bhagavad-gītā give more than a very general description of what specific mundane informational content learners should know, the curricular requirements of most countries fit well within that general description. Moreover, Īsopaniṣad explains that learners need to be familiar with spiritual content. Second, in addition to content, learners should be able to demonstrate values and proper behaviours, which include an attitude of service and respectful social interaction.<sup>111</sup> A key value included in the assessment process is acknowledging the Lord as proprietor.<sup>112</sup> Learning must be properly applied or it is worse than ignorance; therefore, assessment should include whether and how the learner is applying what is taught.<sup>113</sup> The ability to think critically and have proper discernment must be assessed.<sup>114</sup> Learners' creative thinking should be an integral part of what teachers are measuring.<sup>115</sup> Effort should be assessed and acknowledged in addition to achievement, in all areas of instruction, and regardless of the kind of academic objective.<sup>116</sup>

It should be noted that modern society often assesses learning through remote, often computer-graded, exams that are mostly only capable of measuring quantitative learning. School staff who truly follows the Īsopaniṣad's philosophy of education need to remember that what is assessed and how it is assessed tend to drive what is taught and how. It is essential, therefore, to go beyond secular forms of assessment in order to preserve Īsopaniṣad's emphasis on spiritual realisation, values, character, and behaviour. Modern educators may question the ethics of assessing students' values and so forth, just as modern schools generally consider teachers' lives outside the classroom as irrelevant to

learning. But, character in goodness is both an essential element to enable learning, and a prime indication that learning has taken place.

Regarding establishing assessment levels, although both the Īsopaniṣad and Bhagavad-gītā give criteria for a standard level of achievement, especially in the spiritual domain, both those sacred literatures emphasise the gradual development of knowledge.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, students should be assessed both against a predetermined level of accomplishment and in terms of their individual growth.

There is little indication in Īsopaniṣad of a precise method of assessment, though the teacher's attitude and relationship to the learner is crucial, as discussed in the section on teacher qualification. One could not, therefore, make a strong scriptural case to either prohibit or endorse various assessment methods. However, if the only assessment procedures used in a school measure merely factual knowledge divorced from application and character development, such a program would be condemned by Īsopaniṣad.<sup>118</sup> Conversely, assessment policies that simultaneously take into account mundane knowledge, spiritual knowledge, application, values, character, and devotion to God, would be most in keeping with the teaching and spirit of Īsopaniṣad. Some may argue that values cannot be assessed. Yet, values are exhibited in measurable behaviour, the aggregate over time composing one's character. Certainly, assessment needs to genuinely measure both the individual and societal purposes for education—goals that take learners and teachers beyond the demands of a national curriculum.

## **Philosophy of Education: Summary & Brief Overview**

This explanation of the Philosophy of Education, derived from Śrī Īsopaniṣad and Bhagavad-gītā, represents eternal and unchanging principles.

### **What should individual learners achieve?**

- In relation to God:
  - Love and attachment for the personal form of God, Bhagavān and all His natural representatives, including those who teach about Him
  - Realised knowledge of God
  - Service to Bhagavān in nine-fold bhakti
  - Mood of knowing that Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa is the best friend
  
- In relation to The World:
  - Discrimination between ordinary action, forbidden action, and free action
  - Use of the world of matter in Bhagavān's service, without personal attachment
  - Knowledge of the details of the material creation.
  
- In relation to Others:
  - Respect and love for all living beings, in all species of life.

- In relation to Self:
  - Understand and experience oneself as the eternal soul, distinct from body and mind
  - Participate in the greater faith community
  - Develop individual talents and inclinations, according to one's sva-dharma, to prepare for future occupations and family responsibilities

### **How will educated people benefit society?**

- Service:
  - Contribute through social, political, communal, and altruistic activities dovetailed with service to Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa
- Non-violence:
  - Adhering to a diet of vegetarian food offered to Kṛṣṇa
- Character:
  - Satisfaction with what one achieves honestly
  - Harmony with environment and animals, especially cows and bulls
- Peace and Harmony:
  - Vision of oneness of interests of all living beings, to be connected with the Supreme
  - Appreciation for the essence of all religions, to love God

### **How are learners disciplined?**

- Learners are inherently all-good souls, part of Kṛṣṇa, and this nature should be encouraged through
  - Loving relationships with teachers who demonstrate great kindness
  - Teachers and learners engaging in nine-fold bhakti as distinct activities and as part of all learning
  - Using in Kṛṣṇa's service any learning that cannot be directly connected with the nine-fold processes of bhakti
- Materially conditioned learners exhibit a strong tendency toward materialism and self-centeredness, and this nature should be controlled and re-directed through
  - Teachers commanding respect
  - Bringing learners progressively to mode of goodness
  - Guiding learners to internalize self-control
  - Using appropriate external consequences to foster internal responsibility

### **How do learners learn?**

- Hearing from authority
- Examples of others
- Demonstration

- Direct, practical experience
- Progressively and developmentally
- By developing good character, the most important basis of learning

### **What are teachers' qualifications?**

- Factual knowledge and practical skills in the subjects taught
- Good powers of discrimination
- Representative of bona fide guru
- Love for all living beings, especially the learners
- Skill in teaching strategies
- Skill in student character formation
- Situated in or progressing toward the mode of goodness
- Mood of honesty, inquiry, and introspection

### **What are teachers' attitudes toward learning?**

- Develop a deep relationship of trust between student and teacher
- Encourage learners' autonomous and thoughtful choices
- Command respect
- Teach appropriately for learners' developmental stage in all areas: intellectual, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual
- Focus on learners' experiential wisdom and spiritual transformation
- Maintain their self-concept as continuing learner from their own teacher

### **What learning strategies are used?**

- Four aspects, where students
  1. Receive learning from authority and/or from direct experience
  2. Reflect on the learning
  3. Apply and assimilate the learning
  4. Depend on Kṛṣṇa's mercy, though prayer, for realisation and proper use of the learning
- Other strategies that teachers use include:
  - Repetition
  - Comparing and contrasting
  - Going from immediate felt needs to deep needs
  - Applying knowledge, skills, and values
  - Having high expectations
  - Summarizing
  - Recognizing effort
  - Homework and practice
  - Setting clear objectives that learners understand
  - Use of analogies
  - Presenting in a logical sequence

## How is learning assessed?

- Against a predetermined level of achievement  
*And*
- In terms of individual growth/progress
  
- With care that one is specifically assessing the desired learning

## What is assessed?

- Factual knowledge
- Values and proper behaviours
- Respectful social interaction
- Attitude of service
- Application of learning
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Proper discernment
- Effort

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<sup>1</sup> Vedic religion can be defined as philosophy and practices based on the sacred writings called the “veda” which include the four Vedas, Vedanta sutra, puranas, Mahabharata, etc. Vedic religion can also be called sanatana dharma

<sup>2</sup> There are six problems with empiricism: 1) Relativity of light of reason, or what is obvious to one person may not be to others or may not be truth at all, 2) Theory-laden perception, or that observation is not neutral but is based on prior bias, 3) Underdetermination of theory by evidence, or that there are many stories that will fit evidence rather than evidence suggesting only one explanation, 4) Duhem-Quine Thesis and Auxiliary Assumptions, or the fact that there is rarely absolute causation because there may be other unconsidered factors, 5) Problem of induction, or that induction is not absolute, just probable, and it is very difficult to calculate probability, and 6) Social nature of scientific research, or what we perceive is affected by what is socially acceptable by our particular group and time

<sup>3</sup> “Regarding your first question, who is the speaker of Isopanisad? The speaker is the Vedas personified. In the Vedic age a disciple heard from the Spiritual Master messages which were coming down in disciplic succession, so a disciple, whatever he heard from his bona fide Spiritual Master, would recite. The Vedic mantras are known as Sruti, to hear from authoritative source and then repeat it, chanting. So there is no question of who wrote it, it is said that no human being has compiled them. Later on, before the beginning of Kali Yuga, all Vedic mantras were written in books, most of them were done by Srila Vyasadeva Mahamuni and his different disciples.” (Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda’s Letter to: Citsukhananda -- Los Angeles 28 April, 1970 0

<sup>4</sup> Such as multi-culturalism and intercultural education, do we educate for students to fit in with modern society or for an ideal society, kind of sex education needed, should teaching be thematic or systematic, educating the disabled and the gifted

<sup>5</sup> Let this temporary body be burnt to ashes, and let the air of life be merged with the totality of air. Now, O my Lord, please remember all my sacrifices, and because You are the ultimate beneficiary, please remember all that I have done for You, *Īsopaniṣad* mantra 17

<sup>6</sup> And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt, *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.5

<sup>7</sup> Unless one is accustomed to devotional practice, what will he remember at the time of death, when the body is dislocated, and how can he pray to the almighty Lord to remember his sacrifices? Sacrifice means denying the interest of the senses. One has to learn this art by employing the senses in the service of the

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Lord during one's lifetime. One can utilize the results of such practice at the time of death, Īsopaniṣad mantra 17, Bhaktivedanta Purport

<sup>8</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad Mantra seventeen

<sup>9</sup> I am the goal, the sustainer, the master, the witness, the abode, the refuge, and the most dear friend. I am the creation and the annihilation, the basis of everything, the resting place and the eternal seed, Bhagavad-gītā 9.18, and The Personality of Godhead ... who has been fulfilling everyone's desire since time immemorial, Īsopaniṣad Mantra eight.

<sup>10</sup> By all the Vedas, I am to be known, Bhagavad-gītā 15.15

<sup>11</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>12</sup> there is no truth superior to Me, 7.7, and I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, 14.27

<sup>13</sup> The consciousness and vision of genuine gurus is described in Īsopaniṣad Mantras Six, Seven, and Eight.

<sup>14</sup> Īsopaniṣad Mantra Two and Bhagavad-gītā 3.9-16

<sup>15</sup> learn the process of nescience and that of transcendental knowledge side by side, Īsopaniṣad mantra 11

<sup>16</sup> One should know perfectly the Personality of Godhead Sri Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental name, form, qualities and pastimes, as well as the temporary material creation with its temporary demigods, men and animals. When one knows these, he surpasses death and the ephemeral cosmic manifestation with it, and in the eternal kingdom of God he enjoys his eternal life of bliss and knowledge, Īsopaniṣad mantra 14

<sup>17</sup> Please remove the effulgence of Your transcendental rays so that I can see Your form of bliss. You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the sun, as am I, Īsopaniṣad mantra 16

<sup>18</sup> Whenever such a devotee assembles with similar devotees, they have no engagement but the glorification of the Lord's transcendental activities, Īsopaniṣad mantra 16, and The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me, Bhagavad-gītā 10.9. Particularly note the Sanskrit word, parasparam—meaning “among themselves”

<sup>19</sup> A conditioned soul has to act for double functions—namely for the maintenance of the body and again for self-realization. Social status, mental development, cleanliness, austerity, nourishment and the struggle for existence are all for the maintenance of the body. The self-realization part of one's activities is executed in one's occupation as a devotee of the Lord, and one performs actions in that connection also, Bhaktivedanta purport to Īsopaniṣad mantra 17, and According to the three modes of material nature and the work associated with them, the four divisions of human society are created by Me, Bhagavad-gītā, 4.13

<sup>20</sup> Care of the body and mind is necessary for self-realization, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad Mantra eleven and one should use one's occupation in Kṛṣṇa's service, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad Mantra Two, and: From the age of five years, [a student] ... is trained ...to understand the values of life along with taking specific training for a livelihood, Bhaktivedanta purport, Srimad Bhagavatam 2.7.6

<sup>21</sup> One who always sees all living entities as spiritual sparks, in quality one with the Lord, becomes a true knower of things. What, then, can be illusion or anxiety for him? Īsopaniṣad Mantra seven

<sup>22</sup> One should become a perfect gentleman and learn to give proper respect to others, Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad Mantra ten and Bhagavad-gītā, 13.8-12

<sup>23</sup> When a sensible man ceases to see different identities due to different material bodies and he sees how beings are expanded everywhere, he attains to the Brahman conception, Bhagavad-gītā, 13.31

<sup>24</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad Mantra ten and Bhagavad-gītā, 13.8-12

<sup>25</sup> Īsopaniṣad Mantra One

<sup>26</sup> Economic development is meant for good health, Bhaktivedanta purports Īsopaniṣad Mantra eleven, and: One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that sort of work will not bind him to the law of karma, Īsopaniṣad mantra 2

<sup>27</sup> One must distinguish between knowledge, false knowledge, and ignorance, Īsopaniṣad Mantras nine and ten, and: One must distinguish between what is absolute and what is relative, Īsopaniṣad Mantras twelve and thirteen, and: One should become a philosopher, Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad Mantra ten

<sup>28</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>29</sup> When altruistic activities are executed in the spirit of Sri Īsopaniṣad, they become a form of karma-yoga, Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra two, and Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not to be given up; they must be performed. Indeed, sacrifice, charity and penance purify even the great souls, Bhagavad-gītā 18.5, and The completeness of human life can be realized only when one engages in the service of the Complete Whole. All services in this world -- whether social, political, communal, international or even interplanetary -- will remain incomplete until they are dovetailed with the Complete Whole. When everything is dovetailed with the Complete Whole, the attached parts and parcels also become complete in themselves, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad Invocation.

<sup>30</sup> Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong, Īsopaniṣad mantra one.

<sup>31</sup> A human being is therefore required to recognize the authority of the Supreme Lord and become His devotee. He must offer everything for the Lord's service and partake only of the remnants of food offered to the Lord. This will enable him to discharge his duty properly, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra one, and The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin, Bhagavad-gītā 3.13

<sup>32</sup> go—of cows; rakṣya—protection, Bhagavad-gītā, 18.44

<sup>33</sup> One who always sees all living entities as spiritual sparks, in quality one with the Lord, becomes a true knower of things, Īsopaniṣad mantra seven

<sup>34</sup> The path of religion is actually meant for self-realization, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra eleven

<sup>35</sup> The kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is in the lowest stage of realization. He goes to a place of worship, such as a temple, church or mosque, according to his religious faith, and worships there according to scriptural injunctions. Devotees in this stage consider the Lord to be present at the place of worship and nowhere else. They cannot ascertain who is in what position in devotional service, nor can they tell who has realized the Supreme Lord. Such devotees follow the routine formulas and sometimes quarrel among themselves, considering one type of devotion better than another. These kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs are actually materialistic devotees who are simply trying to transcend the material boundary to reach the spiritual plane. Those who have attained the second stage of realization are called madhyama-adhikārīs. These devotees observe the distinctions between four categories of being: (1) the Supreme Lord; (2) the devotees of the Lord; (3) the innocent, who have no knowledge of the Lord; and (4) the atheists, who have no faith in the Lord and hate those in devotional service. The madhyama-adhikārī behaves differently toward these four classes of person. He adores the Lord, considering Him the object of love; he makes friends with those who are in devotional service; he tries to awaken the dormant love of God in the hearts of the innocent; and he avoids the atheists, who deride the very name of the Lord. Above the madhyama-adhikārī is the uttama-adhikārī, who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee does not discriminate between an atheist and a theist but sees everyone as part and parcel of God, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra six

<sup>36</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>37</sup> The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts, Bhagavad-gītā 15.7.

<sup>38</sup> Although fixed in His abode, the Personality of Godhead is swifter than the mind and can overcome all others running. The powerful demigods cannot approach Him. Although in one place, He controls those who supply the air and rain. He surpasses all in excellence, Īsopaniṣad mantra four.

<sup>39</sup> You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the sun, as am I, Īsopaniṣad mantra sixteen and the Lord and the living entities are one and the same in quality, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra sixteen.

<sup>40</sup> Every part and parcel of the Complete Whole is endowed with some particular energy to act according to the Lord's will. When the part-and-parcel living entity forgets his particular activities under the Lord's will, he is considered to be in māyā, illusion. Thus from the very beginning Śrī Īsopaniṣad warns us to be very careful to play the part designated for us by the Lord. This does not mean that the individual soul has no initiative of his own. Because he is part and parcel of the Lord, he must partake of the initiative of the Lord as well. When a person properly utilizes his initiative, or active nature, with intelligence, understanding that everything is the Lord's potency, he can revive his original consciousness, which was lost due to association with māyā, the external energy, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra four.

<sup>41</sup> Let this temporary body be burnt to ashes, and let the air of life be merged with the totality of air. Now, O my Lord, please remember all my sacrifices, and because You are the ultimate beneficiary, please remember all that I have done for You, Īsopaniṣad mantra seventeen, and For the soul there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain, Bhagavad-gītā 2.20.

<sup>42</sup> Such a person must factually know the greatest of all, the Personality of Godhead, who is unembodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without veins, pure and uncontaminated, the self-sufficient philosopher who has been fulfilling everyone's desire since time immemorial, Īsopaniṣad mantra eight and Here is a description of the transcendental and eternal form of the Absolute Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord is not formless. He has His own transcendental form, which is not at all similar to the forms of the mundane world. The forms of the living entities in this world are embodied in material nature, and they

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work like any material machine. The anatomy of a material body must have a mechanical construction with veins and so forth, but the transcendental body of the Supreme Lord has nothing like veins. It is clearly stated here that He is unembodied, which means that there is no difference between His body and His soul. Nor is He forced to accept a body according to the laws of nature, as we are. In materially conditioned life, the soul is different from the gross embodiment and subtle mind. For the Supreme Lord, however, there is never any such difference between Him and His body and mind. He is the Complete Whole, and His mind, body and He Himself are all one and the same, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra eight.

<sup>43</sup> The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance, Īsopaniṣad mantra three, and All living entities are born into delusion, bewildered by dualities arisen from desire and hate, Bhagavad-gītā 7.27.

<sup>44</sup> Even a man of knowledge acts according to his own nature, for everyone follows the nature he has acquired from the three modes. What can repression accomplish? Bhagavad-gītā 3.33 and Bhaktivedanta purport on the same: Unless one is situated on the transcendental platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he cannot get free from the influence of the modes of material nature.

<sup>45</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra eleven

<sup>46</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra eighteen

<sup>47</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra thirteen

<sup>48</sup> The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance, Īsopaniṣad mantra three, and One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that sort of work will not bind him to the law of karma, Īsopaniṣad mantra two.

<sup>49</sup> When a person properly utilizes his initiative, or active nature, with intelligence, understanding that everything is the Lord's potency, he can revive his original consciousness, Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra four

<sup>50</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Bhagavad-gītā 4.34

<sup>51</sup> He [Arjuna] offers himself to Kṛṣṇa as a disciple. He wants to stop friendly talks. Talks between the master and the disciple are serious, Bhaktivedanta purport, Bhagavad-gītā 2.27

<sup>52</sup> This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed, Bhagavad-gītā 9.2

<sup>53</sup> All the facilities suggested in this mantra can be easily obtained by constant contact with the personal feature of the Absolute Truth. Devotional service to the Lord consists essentially of nine transcendental activities: (1) hearing about the Lord, (2) glorifying the Lord, (3) remembering the Lord, (4) serving the lotus feet of the Lord, (5) worshiping the Lord, (6) offering prayers to the Lord, (7) serving the Lord, (8) enjoying friendly association with the Lord, and (9) surrendering everything unto the Lord. These nine principles of devotional service -- taken all together or one by one -- help a devotee remain constantly in touch with God. In this way, at the end of life it is easy for the devotee to remember the Lord, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra seventeen.

<sup>54</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra two, and If you cannot practice the regulations of bhakti-yoga, then just try to work for Me, because by working for Me you will come to the perfect stage, Bhagavad-gītā 12.10.

<sup>55</sup> One must hear submissively from a dhīra [sober, learned and realised person] in order to attain actual education, Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra ten.

<sup>56</sup> It is clearly mentioned in this sixth mantra that one should "observe," or systematically see. This means that one must follow the previous ācāryas, the perfected teachers. Anupaśyati is the exact Sanskrit word used in this connection. Anu means "to follow," and paśyati means "to observe." Thus the word anupaśyati means that one should not see things as he does with the naked eye but should follow the previous acaryas, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra six, and This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed, Bhagavad-gītā 9.2 [note the Sanskrit word pratyakṣa, which means direct sense perception.]

<sup>57</sup> As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly, Bhagavad-gītā 4.11.

<sup>58</sup> Above the senses is the mind, and above the mind is the intelligence, and above the intelligence is the soul, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra nine.

<sup>59</sup> The wise have explained, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten [note the Sanskrit term dhīra] and one must hear submissively from a dhīra in order to attain actual education, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

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<sup>60</sup> Those who engage in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance. Worse still are those engaged in the culture of so-called knowledge, Īsopaniṣad mantra nine, and One must approach a bona fide spiritual master, Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra nine, and One who has not undergone the training of a dhīra cannot be an instructive leader, Bhaktivedanta purports, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten.

<sup>61</sup> Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth, Bhagavad-gītā 4.34.

<sup>62</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>63</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra six

<sup>64</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra eighteen

<sup>65</sup> Brahman is the aspect most easily perceived by the beginner; Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is realized by those who have further progressed; and Bhagavān realization is the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra fifteen

<sup>66</sup> Bhagavad-gītā 12.5

<sup>67</sup> Bhaktivedanta purports, Īsopaniṣad mantras nine and fifteen

<sup>68</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra twelve

<sup>69</sup> Those who engage in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance. Worse still are those engaged in the culture of so-called knowledge, Īsopaniṣad mantra nine, and This mantra offers a comparative study of vidyā and avidyā. Avidyā, or ignorance, is undoubtedly dangerous, but vidyā, or knowledge, is even more dangerous when mistaken or misguided. This mantra of Śrī Īsopaniṣad is more applicable today than at any time in the past. Modern civilization has advanced considerably in the field of mass education, but the result is that people are more unhappy than ever before because of the stress placed on material advancement to the exclusion of the most important part of life, the spiritual aspect, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra nine.

<sup>70</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>71</sup> amānitvam—humility

<sup>72</sup> Bhagavad-gītā chapters fourteen, seventeen and eighteen detail various aspects of life and how they are differently affected by various modes.

<sup>73</sup> This mantra states that the instructions of vidyā (knowledge) must be acquired from a dhīra. A dhīra is one who is not disturbed by material illusion. No one can be undisturbed unless he is perfectly spiritually realized, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>74</sup> “One can become a dhīra only by submissively hearing from a bona fide spiritual master.” Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>75</sup> This is my doubt, O Kṛṣṇa, and I ask You to dispel it completely. But for You, no one is to be found who can destroy this doubt, Bhagavad-gītā 6.39 and Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, first of all You ask me to renounce work, and then again You recommend work with devotion. Now will You kindly tell me definitely which of the two is more beneficial? Bhagavad-gītā 5.1

<sup>76</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantras six, seven, and eight

<sup>77</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantras eleven and fourteen

<sup>78</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantras one, two, and three

<sup>79</sup> The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the material mode of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world, Bhagavad-gītā 3.37, and Bhaktivedanta purport: When a living entity comes in contact with the material creation, his eternal love for Kṛṣṇa is transformed into lust, in association with the mode of passion. Or, in other words, the sense of love of God becomes transformed into lust, as milk in contact with sour tamarind is transformed into yogurt. Then again, when lust is unsatisfied, it turns into wrath; wrath is transformed into illusion, and illusion continues the material existence. Therefore, lust is the greatest enemy of the living entity, and it is lust only which induces the pure living entity to remain entangled in the material world. Wrath is the manifestation of the mode of ignorance; these modes exhibit themselves as wrath and other corollaries. If, therefore, the mode of passion, instead of being degraded into the mode of ignorance, is elevated to the mode of goodness by the prescribed method of living and acting, then one can be saved from the degradation of wrath by spiritual attachment.

<sup>80</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantras nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen

<sup>81</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantra six and seven

<sup>82</sup> A teacher who is heavy with knowledge and realization of truth

<sup>83</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Bhagavad-gītā 4.34

<sup>84</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra six

<sup>85</sup> sarva-bhūtesu—in every living being; ca—and; ātmānam—the Supersoul, Īsopaniṣad mantra six, and Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra eighteen, and I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness, Bhagavad-gītā 15.15

<sup>86</sup> Anupaśyati, Īsopaniṣad mantra six, and pratyakṣa, Bhagavad-gītā 9.2 and paśyāmi—I may see, Īsopaniṣad mantra sixteen,

<sup>87</sup> Every part and parcel of the Complete Whole is endowed with some particular energy to act according to the Lord's will, Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra four, and Kṛṣṇa has given everyone something extraordinary and to serve Kṛṣṇa with one's extraordinary talent means successful life, Bhaktivedanta letter to: Sukadeva — Calcutta 17 4 March, 1973

<sup>88</sup> Execute his activities in relation with īśāvāsya, the God-centered conception, Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra two.

<sup>89</sup> What, then, can be illusion or anxiety for him?, Īsopaniṣad mantra seven, and The real center of enjoyment is the Supreme Lord, who is the center of the sublime and spiritual rāsa dance. We are all meant to join Him and enjoy life with one transcendental interest and without any clash. That is the highest platform of spiritual interest, and as soon as one realizes this perfect form of oneness, there can be no question of illusion (moha) or lamentation (śoka), Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra seven.

<sup>90</sup> Bhaktivedanta purport, Īsopaniṣad mantra thirteen

<sup>91</sup> iti śuśrūma dhīrāṇām, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten

<sup>92</sup> eva—only; anupaśyati—observes in a systematic way, Īsopaniṣad mantra six, and anupaśyataḥ—of one who sees through authority, Īsopaniṣad mantra seven

<sup>93</sup> vijānataḥ—of one who knows (this term indicates realised knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge), Īsopaniṣad mantra seven, and paryagāt—must know in fact, Īsopaniṣad mantra eight

<sup>94</sup> This is one of many examples: Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong, Īsopaniṣad mantra one

<sup>95</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantras fifteen-eighteen

<sup>96</sup> Invocation: repetition of pūrṇam, and mantra seventeen: repetition of krato smara

<sup>97</sup> Mantra four and five contrast seeming opposite qualities of the Lord, as He is fixed but swift, walks but doesn't walk; Mantras nine, ten, twelve, and thirteen compare the nature and results of knowledge/ignorance and relative/absolute

<sup>98</sup> Mantra two: living for hundreds of years; Mantra eleven: enjoying immortality

<sup>99</sup> Mantras fifteen through eighteen are prayers for revelation and service to the Lord

<sup>100</sup> Mantra one: living with one's quota; Mantra two: living without accruing karmic reactions; Mantras six and seven: seeing everything in relation to Krishna

<sup>101</sup> Mantra six: living without any hatred; Mantra seventeen: that all sacrifices will be counted as done for the Lord; Mantra eighteen: all hindrances to spiritual life removed

<sup>102</sup> Mantras four and five: summary of the seeming contradictory nature of the Lord; Mantras six and seven: summary of the vision and consciousness of a God and self-realised soul

<sup>103</sup> Mantra five: summary definition of God as one with seeming contrary qualities; Mantra sixteen: summary of definition of God as primeval philosopher, etc.

<sup>104</sup> Mantras one-three: summarize the process of material entanglement and liberation through describing the cause and effect of pious work, impious work, and liberated work

<sup>105</sup> Mantra seventeen asks that all sacrifices done in life be considered having been done for the Supreme, thus acknowledging effort regardless of result

<sup>106</sup> Mantra fourteen states that one should know both the spiritual and material, which would involve much individual study and practice

<sup>107</sup> Mantras nine through fifteen: classifying what is knowledge or ignorance, and what is the absolute and what is relative

<sup>108</sup> Mantra two: live long and without karmic reactions; Mantra seven: seeing equally; Mantra eight: knowing Krishna's qualities; Mantra ten: the different results from knowledge and ignorance; Mantras eleven and fourteen: knowing matter and spirit, in detail

<sup>109</sup> Mantra fifteen: analogy of Lord's effulgence to a covering; Mantra eighteen: analogy of Lord to power of fire

<sup>110</sup> Only one who can learn the process of nescience and that of transcendental knowledge side by side can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death and enjoy the full blessings of immortality, Īsopaniṣad

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mantra eleven, and One should know perfectly the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental name, form, qualities and pastimes, as well as the temporary material creation with its temporary demigods, men and animals, Īsopaniṣad mantra fourteen.

<sup>111</sup> the culture of knowledge, Īsopaniṣad mantra ten, and Bhaktivedanta purport to Īsopaniṣad mantra ten: As advised in Chapter Thirteen of the Bhagavad-gītā (13.8-12), one should culture knowledge in the following way:

- (1) One should become a perfect gentleman and learn to give proper respect to others.
- (2) One should not pose himself as a religionist simply for name and fame.
- (3) One should not become a source of anxiety to others by the actions of his body, by the thoughts of his mind, or by his words.
- (4) One should learn forbearance even in the face of provocation from others.
- (5) One should learn to avoid duplicity in his dealings with others.
- (6) One should search out a bona fide spiritual master who can lead him gradually to the stage of spiritual realization, and one must submit himself to such a spiritual master, render him service and ask relevant questions.
- (7) In order to approach the platform of self-realization, one must follow the regulative principles enjoined in the revealed scriptures.
- (8) One must be fixed in the tenets of the revealed scriptures.
- (9) One should completely refrain from practices which are detrimental to the interest of self-realization.
- (10) One should not accept more than he requires for the maintenance of the body.
- (11) One should not falsely identify himself with the gross material body, nor should one consider those who are related to his body to be his own.
- (12) One should always remember that as long as he has a material body he must face the miseries of repeated birth, old age, disease and death. There is no use in making plans to get rid of these miseries of the material body. The best course is to find out the means by which one may regain his spiritual identity.
- (13) One should not be attached to more than the necessities of life required for spiritual advancement.
- (14) One should not be more attached to wife, children and home than the revealed scriptures ordain.
- (15) One should not be happy or distressed over desirables and undesirables, knowing that such feelings are just created by the mind.
- (16) One should become an unalloyed devotee of the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and serve Him with rapt attention.
- (17) One should develop a liking for residence in a secluded place with a calm and quiet atmosphere favorable for spiritual culture, and one should avoid congested places where nondevotees congregate.
- (18) One should become a scientist or philosopher and conduct research into spiritual knowledge, recognizing that spiritual knowledge is permanent whereas material knowledge ends with the death of the body.

<sup>112</sup> Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong, Īsopaniṣad mantra one.

<sup>113</sup> Those who engage in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance. Worse still are those engaged in the culture of so-called knowledge, Īsopaniṣad mantra nine

<sup>114</sup> Īsopaniṣad mantras nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen

<sup>115</sup> In order for individuals to apply the principle of mantra two, they would, in many cases, need to think creatively

<sup>116</sup> O my Lord, please remember all my sacrifices, and because You are the ultimate beneficiary, please remember all that I have done for You, Īsopaniṣad mantra seventeen.

<sup>117</sup> Bhagavad-gītā 12.8-12, 6.43-45, and Bhaktivedanta purport Īsopaniṣad mantra six

<sup>118</sup> Those who engage in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance. Worse still are those engaged in the culture of so-called knowledge, Īsopaniṣad mantra nine.