

The course on *Īśāvāsya-upaniṣad* comprises 12 lessons. A detailed description of the topics covered in each lesson is provided below.

Lesson 1: Introduction to 'Upaniṣad'

- Meaning of the term 'upaniṣad'
- The role of words (śabda) in communicating knowledge
 - How the Upaniṣad communicates through words
- Meaning of 'upa' and 'ni'
- Meanings of 'sad' as 'viśaraṇa', 'gati' and 'avasādana'
- Role of student and teacher
- What is śāstra?
 - Definition of śāstra
 - The five topics covered in the Vedānta-śāstra
- Is Upaniṣad a śāstra?
- The four Vedas
- Why the Upaniṣads are spread throughout the Vedas and not concentrated in one section
- Mantra, Brāhmaṇa and Āraṇyaka sections of the Vedas
- Location of the *Īśāvāsya-upaniṣad*

Lesson 2: Introductory Bhāṣya

- Mantras of the *Īśāvāsya-upaniṣad* appear in the saṁhitā section
 - Mantras of *Īśāvāsya-upaniṣad* are not to be used as an accessory for karma or upāsana, as they reveal the nature of the Self
 - Knowledge of the Self and karma are antagonistic to each other
 - The Ātman cannot be associated with karma
- The various effects of karma
 - Āpya
 - Utpādyā
 - Vikārya
 - Saṁskārya
- How every facet of knowledge revealed by the Upaniṣad is antagonistic to karma
- How every effect of karma is antagonistic to the nature of the Self

Lesson 3: Abidance in Knowledge (Mantra 1)

- By Īśā the entire world must be pervaded
 - Meaning of the term 'Īśā'
 - The method by which one must pervade the world
 - With the notion of the pratyagātman as the Self
 - With the understanding the world to be false
 - By understanding oneself (as the Self) alone appearing as 'all this'
- Meaning of the term 'jagat'
- The world is transcended with Paramārtha-bhāva:
 - By removing the notion of one being a kartā, bhoktā

- By knowing oneself as not one of the many, but as the very substratum of the world
- Meaning of the term 'tyāga' and the attitude of tyāga
- One must protect oneself with 'tyāga' by giving up ignorance of one's real nature
- Wealth refers to the three kinds of eṣaṇās one must be given up for sannyāsa
- The reasons why one should not covet anyone's wealth (or give up eṣaṇā)
 - Everything is the Self; there is nothing to covet
 - Wealth does not belong to anyone
 - Wealth is illusory

Lesson 4: Devotion to Karma (Mantra 2)

- The two paths enumerated in the Vedas
- The injunctions of the first and second mantras are meant for different classes of aspirants
- Why Jñāna is opposed to karma
- Mantra 2 is for those aspirants whose minds are extrovert and are not able to abide in the knowledge given in mantra 1
 - Why performance of nitya-karma is the only way for the ignorant
 - How performance of nitya-karma helps progress to jñāna
- The five kinds of actions to be performed for one is pravṛtti-mārga
- The attitude one must have towards performance of nitya-karma
- Nitya-karma is enjoined for an individual devoted to pravṛtti-mārga

Lesson 5: Mantra 3

- Meaning of 'slayers of the Self' and their destination
- Meaning of the term 'asūrya-loka'
 - Why is it called so?
 - Who goes to asūrya-loka?
 - Definition of a loka

Lesson 6: Nature of the Self – 1 (Mantras 4 & 5)

- Consciousness is stationary as well as faster than the mind as well as
- The contradictory qualities of Consciousness reconciled
 - The Self is free of all saṃsāra-dharmas because of Its all-pervasive nature, like space
 - The Self appears to have attributes because of upādhis
 - One standpoint is without adjuncts and the other is with adjuncts.
- Meaning of the term 'deva'
- Why the 'mind' and the 'indriyas' fail to reach the Self
- Consciousness is 'far' and 'near'
 - It is 'far' for the ignorant as It is not known to them
 - It is 'near' being one's own Self
 - It appears to have attributes of motion from the standpoint of ignorance
- Consciousness is inside and outside of all

- Consciousness is not just inside but being subtle it transcends and is all-pervasive
- 'Mātariśvan' and His functions

Lesson 7: Result of Self-knowledge (Mantras 6 & 7)

- Vision of the Self
- Result of Self-knowledge
 - One sees all beings superimposed on the Self (adhyastatayā)
 - One does not see anything distinct from the Self
- Example of ākāśa to indicate the nature of the Self
- Relation between śoka, moha and avidyā
- The knower of the Self hates none

Lesson 8: Nature of the Self – 2 (Mantra 8)

- The essential nature of the Self
- How Īśvara allocates duties to the beings responsible for Cosmic order

Lesson 9: Sambandha-bhāṣya to Mantra 9

- Upaniṣad differentiates jñāna- and karma-niṣṭhās
 - Mantra 1 is for seekers who have jñāna-niṣṭhā, having given up the eṣāṇā-traya
 - Mantra 2 is for those with desires and thereby advocating karma-niṣṭhā
 - The impossibility of the two niṣṭhās being applicable to one and the same person
 - The logic for the assertion as to why both niṣṭhās cannot be applicable to one and the same person
 - Śruti citations to establish the above
- Mantras 3 to 9 bestows the knowledge of the Self for those who are on the path of jñāna-niṣṭhā

Lesson 10: Karma and Upāsanā (Mantras 9–14)

- Meaning of the terms 'vidyā' and 'avidyā' in the context of mantras 9–11
 - Vidyā refers to upāsanā and avidyā to karma
 - Śruti citations to show the meanings of 'vidyā' and 'avidyā'
- Analysis of karma and upāsanā
 - The maximum result that can be attained through the performance of karma and upāsanā
 - There is no aṅga and aṅgin relationship between karma and upāsanā
 - Karma and upāsanā have avāntara-phala-bheda – distinct and separate results
 - One must perform karma and upāsanā together to maximise the results
 - By their performance one crosses death – *mṛtyurṅ tīrtvā*
 - Meaning of the expression '*mṛtyurṅ tīrtvā*'
- Analysis of sambhūti- and asambhūti-upāsanās

- The result that can be attained by sambhūti- and asambhūti-upāsanās when performed individually
- Sambhūti- and asambhūti-upāsanās have avāntara-phala-bheda – distinct and separate results
- One must perform them together to maximise the results
- Result of performing them together

Lesson 11: Prayers of the Upāsaka (Mantras 15–18)

- The prayers of the upāsaka at the time of death:
 - The upāsaka has performed karma and upāsanā all one's life
 - Prayers, at the time of death, are to remove any possible obstacles in seeking union with Hiraṇyagarbha
- Prayer to Āditya
- Prayer to Agni
- Meaning of 'satyadharma'

Lesson 12: Concluding Bhāṣya

- Combination of karma and jñāna is not possible
 - Impossibility of samuccaya, vikalpa or jñāna followed by karma
 - Difference between karma and jñāna with respect to their hetu, svarūpa and phala
- The literal understanding of vidyā as Brahma-vidyā is not possible
- The 'Upaniṣad' has also used vidyā in the context of both Brahma-vidyā and upāsanā