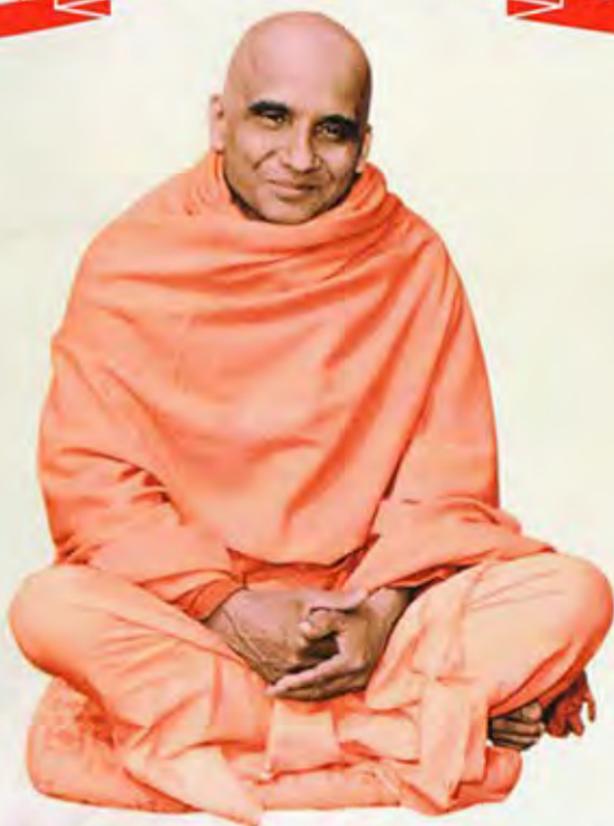




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# THE NEED FOR INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

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SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



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## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

The 25th of April 2022 marks the auspicious occasion of the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out booklets comprising the illuminating discourses of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj arrived at the holy abode of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in 1944, and remained here until his Mahasamadhi in November 2001. Swamiji Maharaj was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. "Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda," said Sri Gurudev.

Over the years, Swami Maharaj gave many profound and insightful discourses during Sunday night Satsanga, and on holy occasions such as Sri Gurudev's birthday, Sri Krishna Janmasthanami, Mahasivaratri, etc., and also during Sadhana Week and Yoga Vedanta Courses conducted by the Yoga

Vedanta Forest Academy of the Ashram. Sri Swami Maharaj always spoke extempore, spontaneously, without any preparation, and every discourse was fresh, unique, and divinely inspired. The audience was bathed in that stupendous unfathomable energy that radiated from Swamiji Maharaj during these discourses.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of Sri Swamiji Maharaj's discourses in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary.

The present booklet, '**The Need for Integral Knowledge**', Sri Swamiji Krishnanandaji Maharaj, alluding to various Upanishads, glorifies the Path of Knowledge.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

## THE NEED FOR INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE

### The Inward Urge

The world, as it appears, is found to be lacking in reality, and so, is unreal. Hence the need for the higher Light.

“What is That by knowing which this everything becomes known?”—Mund. Up., 1. 1.3.

“By which the Unheard becomes heard, the Unthought becomes thought, the Ununderstood becomes understood.”—Chh. Up., VI. 1. 3.

The knowledge of everything through the knowledge of One Thing implies that everything is made up of that One Thing. That the misconception of things being really made of differing natures has to be set aright is pointed out by the disgust that arises in clinging to the notion of the multiple permanence of beings and a passion for catching completely whatever that must exist. The growth of intelligence tends towards urging the individual to grasp the totality of existence at a stroke. This constructive impulse is inherent and is vigorously

active both in the instinctive mind and the scientific intellect. The individual is a consciousness-centre characterised by the imperfections of limitation, birth, growth, change, decay and death. Thought is objectified consciousness. The greater the objectification, the denser is the ignorance and the acuter are the pains suffered.

Truth does not shine as Truth, owing to the inner instruments, the clogging psychological modifications. The crossing the barrier of these limiting adjuncts seems to lead one to a vaster reality, greater freedom and fuller life. There is a common desire-impulse in every being to exist for ever, to know all things, to domineer over everything, and to enjoy the highest happiness. The statement of the Upanishads that the cognition of manifoldness is the path leading to self-destruction is adorned by the supreme exhortation that the perception of Unity leads to the exalted state of Immortality.

Every form of cogitation in spite of individualistic cravings that may try to obstruct it, flows, being impelled by an imperceptible power that moves towards the recognition of the indivisibility of existence, and a finding of oneself in the centre of its experience. The aspiration of every living being is to find rest in the blissful possession of eternal life, and

nothing short of it. The sorrow of phenomenal life is rooted in the clinging to relational living fed by the wrong notion that manifoldness is the truth. The joy of the immensity of everlasting life is partaken of by cutting the root of the tree of individual life with the axe of integrated wisdom. The march of the soul is from the false to the true, from the apparent to the real, from the shadow to the light, from the perishable to the ever-enduring.

“From the unreal lead me to the Real, from darkness lead me to Light, from death lead me to Immortality.” —Brih. Up., 1. 3. 28.

Everyone is marked by the general character of the struggle to become infinitely perfect. This Infinite Being is the highest Truth. This is the Goal of the life of all. The Upanishads stress in a hundred ways upon the need for this integral knowledge of Reality. There is nothing greater than or equal to the knowledge of the Atman. *Atmalabhat na param vidyate.*

“This Atman, which is free from evil, undecaying, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is Truth, whose will is Truth—That should be searched after, That should be known. He obtains all worlds and all desires who has known and who has realised That Atman.” —Chh. Up., VIII. 7. 1.

“Know That, the Brahman.”—Tait. Up., III. 1.

“For the sake of the knowledge of That, he should go, fuel in hand, to a spiritual preceptor alone, who is learned in the scriptures and established in Brahman.”—Mund. Up., 1. 2. 12.

### The Goal of Life

The purpose of life on earth is the realisation of this stupendous depth of the Being of all beings, without which life becomes a failure. “If one would know it here, then there is the true end of all aspirations. If one would not know it here, then great is the loss for such a person. Knowing it in every particular being, the wise, on departing from this world, become immortal” (Kena Up., II. 5). There is a severe reproach to those who do not attempt at and succeed in the realisation of Truth.

“Godless are those worlds called, with blind darkness covered over, to which, on death, those who are the slayers of the Self go.”—Isha Up., 3.

“He, who departs from this world without knowing That Imperishable Being, is wretched.”—Brih. Up., III. 8. 10.

The teacher of the Brahmavidya is praised in glowing terms.

“You, truly, are our father, who take us across to the blessed other shore of ignorance.” —Prashna Up., VI. 8.

The love for the Eternal is the essential passion that burns in the heart of all things. Beings know it not, and so they suffer. When we turn our face away from this one Reality, we open the door to self-imprisonment. No achievement, either on earth or in heaven, no greatness pertaining to the world of name and form, is worth considering. The love of life is based on the love of the Self.

“Not, verily, for the love of the all is the all dear, but for the love of the Self is the all dear.” —Brih. Up., II. 4. 5.

All actions are done for the sake of the Self, not for external persons and things. It is not the existence of joy in the object as such that brings pleasure to the individual enjoying it, but the cooling of the fire of craving that is brought about by its contact with a particular object which is specially demanded by that special mode of desire generated in the ego-consciousness. The satiation is caused by a temporary turning back of the mind to the Self. The whole of the happiness of the world is, thus, purely negative, an avoiding of the unpleasant, and not the acquirement of any real, positive joy. This

positive bliss is found only in the Self, the root of existence. The bustle of life's activity is a struggle to respond to the cry of the anxious ego which has lost itself in the wilderness of its separation from the Eternal Principle. The grieving self bound by fetters in the prison of life is ransomed by the knowledge of the non-dual nature of Existence.

### **The Great Abnegation and Search**

Truth is covered by a golden vessel. The individual is cheated by the appearances of the forms of nature. The lifting up of this vessel and uncovering the Truth is the task of the seeker of perfection. The fervour of a Nachiketas is expected in every spiritual aspirant. "Ephemeral things are these that are of the mortal! The vigour of all the senses they wear away. Even a long life is indeed very slight! Thine be the vehicles, thine the dance and the song!.... What there is in the great Beyond—tell me about that; nothing short of this does Nachiketas choose" (Katha Up., 1. 26, 29). The glorious aspiration for Truth which the characters of the Upanishads depict before us speaks of the grand perseverance of some of the souls in regaining the lost kingdom, in recovering from the disease of life, in centring themselves in conscious plenitude, the birthless

and deathless immeasurable Being. We hear of the admirable patience of the disciples in leading a hard and secluded life of absolute continence for years together for getting themselves initiated into this mysterious Truth of truths. Indra himself remained with Prajapati, as a pupil, for one hundred and one years, after which he got the initiation from his teacher. The nature of a total abnegation of the personal interests, a veritable destruction of oneself as it were, which is the prerequisite for the acquiring of Self-knowledge, reflects to us sufficiently the nature of the completeness of the Goal before us, of the freedom and joy that replaces the limited life of the individual.

Even Devarshi Narada's knowledge is regarded by Sanatkumara as "mere name", mere words. Narada gives a long list of the branches of knowledge in which he has specialised. He implores Sanatkumara to teach him.

"Bhagavan, such a one, merely learned in sacred lore, I know not the Atman. It is already heard by me from people like you, Bhagavan, that he who knows the Atman crosses over sorrow. Such a one, Bhagavan, I am in sorrow. May Bhagavan take me, who am such a (sorrowful) one, across, to the other shore of sorrow." —Chh. Up., VII. 1. 3.

Even the highest intellectual perception belongs only to the realm of relativity. No human being can claim to be omniscient and so he has no occasion to rejoice at his profits or grieve at his losses here. The real is not this; the attainment of That alone can liberate the soul from sorrow. Even death is not a bar in the process of the realisation of Truth. Death is a reshuffling of consciousness to adjust and adapt itself to a different order of life. The love for the knowledge of the Self cares not for such insignificant phenomena as the birth and the destruction of the body. The need for the higher illumination is more serious a matter than the birth and the death of the overcoat, and the quest for the Absolute should be undertaken even sacrificing the dearest object, fearless of even the greatest pain and loss that may have to be encountered in the world. It is a mistake to be interested in the different forms of perception, in the various categories of relative experience. Nothing is worth a moment's notice except the realisation of Brahman. The most pleasant, the sweetest joy derived through contact of the subject and the object is only a womb of pain; it has to be rejected for the sake of the Bliss that is true in the absolute sense.

“The good is one thing and the pleasant is another... Both the good and the pleasant come to a man. Examining the two, the wise man discriminates and chooses the good rather than the pleasant; the dull-witted man chooses the pleasant and falls short of his aim.” —Katha Up., II. 1, 2.

The desire-centres shift themselves from one object to another and the pleasure-seeker is left ever at unrest. The chain of metempsychosis is kept unbroken and is strengthened through additional desires that foolishly hope to bring satisfaction to the self. Living in the midst of ignorance and darkness, conceited, thinking themselves learned, the deserted individuals seek peace in the objects of sense that constantly change their forms and natures. The objective value in an object is an appearance, created by the formative power of the separative will to individuate and multiply itself through external contact. The nature of that which is perceived is strongly influenced by the nature of that which perceives. The moment the form of the desire is changed the object also appears to change itself to suit the requirements of the centre of consciousness that projects forth the desire. Whatever we want, that alone we see and obtain. Nothing else can exist in the objective universe corresponding to an

individual's experiences than what is demanded by the individual in its present stage of self-evolution in order to effect the necessary transfigurations in itself for the purpose of the realisation of a higher consciousness of existence. A knowledge of this fact of life makes one wake up from his slumber and strive to reach the culmination of experience where further transcendence of states ceases.

### Unity Behind Diversity

Becoming the object seems to be the aim of the subject in its processes of desireful knowledge. The greater the proximity of the object to the subject, that is, the lesser the distance between the subject and the object, the greater is the happiness derived; whereby we are able to deduce that the least distance, nay, the loss of distance itself in a state of identity, a state of infinite oneness, where things lose their separateness, where perception and relatedness are no more, where the subject and the object coalesce and mere "Be"-ness seems to be the reality, should be the abode of supreme bliss. This consciousness-mass is the one integration of knowledge where it is no more a means of knowing but the essence, the existence and the content in itself. The Upanishads are keen about turning our attention to this truth.

“Arise! Awake! Obtaining men of wisdom, know (it).” —Katha Up., III. 14.

“Those who know this become immortal; but others go only to sorrow.” —Brih. Up., IV. 4. 14.

Therefore, the imperative “Know Thyself.” The Svetasvatara Upanishad is emphatic that only “when men roll up space, as if it were a piece of leather, will there be an end of sorrow without the knowledge of the Divine Being” (VI. 20). It further affirms that there is nothing more to be known than this essence of the Self, nothing is there higher than this, nothing greater ever existent. There is no other way for going over there—*na anyah pantha vidyate ayanaya*—than to know that Purusha who shines like the sun beyond the realm of the darkness of ignorance. To know Him is to be saved. Not to know Him is death.

The ordinary man of the world has his mind and senses turned extrovert. Childish, he runs after external pleasures and walks into the net of death which pervades all created things. The wise, however, knowing the Immortal, seek not that Eternal Being among things fleeting here. Some blessed one turns his gaze inward and beholds the glorious light of the Self. This Self is dearer than the dearest of things, this Self is nearer than the nearest. If one

would speak of anything else than the Self as dear, he would certainly lose what he holds as dear. One should adore the Self alone as dear. He who adores the Self alone as dear does not lose what he holds as dear. The Self is Imperishable.

It is further suggested that by going to the source of things we know the essential nature of things, even as by grasping the drum or the beater of the drum we grasp the sound produced by the drum. The turning back from the network of name and form to the original Truth-Consciousness is what is instructed about through various similes and illustrations. "This is the Veda that the Brahmanas know. Thereby I know whatever is to be known" (Brih. Up., V. 1. 1.). Many of us are mere childish wisecracks who are sunk variously in the manifold nescience and proudly think that we have accomplished our aim (*vide* Mund. Up., I. 2. 9.)! The man of the world, busy with the play-toys of his insane dream, forgets to look within into the Antaryamin-Atman which controls all the manifested forms outside. This Atman is the great Unity, and therefore the highest Freedom, for

"Verily, from duality arises fear." —Brih Up., I. 4. 2.

## The Realisation of Oneness in the Spirit

One must go beyond all that causes duality, even the intellect, and take resort in the transcendent silence. "One should not play too much upon words, for it is mere weariness of speech." "The Brahmana should, knowing Him, renounce learning, and stand childlike and silent." The intellect is the seat of egoism, and the highest learning is only *apara vidya*, not above the phenomena of nature. The intellect has no light of its own, independent of the Self, any more than the moon has any light other than that of the sun. Consciousness gets diffused through the distractive intellect and creates the perception of multiplicity. "Dismissing all other words, He alone is to be meditated upon and known, the bridge to Immortality."

Further, it is erroneous on the part of an individual to take seriously the many forms of perception. These forms float in Truth even as bubbles in the ocean. They cannot exist apart from the ocean of Truth. There is a beautiful enunciation in the Chhandogya Upanishad as to how the desire of the perfected soul gives rise to whatever it wants. "Whatever end he is desirous of attaining, whatever desire he desires, merely out of his will it arises. Possessed of it he glories" (VIII. 2. 10). The names

and forms of the world are the effects of the piled up desire-impressions of all the manifested and the unmanifested individuals that inhabit it. Since destruction of all desires brings about destruction of all forms in the state of Self-realisation, the forms are unreal, being dependent on the desire-impulses of the collective perceiving consciousness. It is idle to be pleased with the business of life, however charming it may appear to the deluded individual. The misery of humanity is rooted in the ignorance of Truth, and true civilisation, culture or renaissance of any kind meant for the betterment of man cannot lose sight of the fact that no perennial peace is going to reign over the earth as long as the minds of men are caught in the whirlpool of attraction to the multifarious and steeped in the ignorance of the Reality which is common to all. There is no purpose in art or science, in cleverness of intellect or skill in any branch of knowledge, if its dance is only within the prison-house of the physical consciousness. Even the highest psychic achievement is not outside the range of relativity, and psychology is as good as physical science in the face of spiritual knowledge. The mightiest feat falls short of the true, and the pride of human intelligence is humiliated when the Upanishads say that the Absolute eludes all

understanding and the mind turns back from it, unable to reach it. The human being has not explored even the mental region, which is so vast that it mocks at the futile efforts of the selfish individual to bring it under his control. The deceived soul fears death of its body, death of what it considers as dear. It loves objects which do not promise real satisfaction. It is true culture which aims at grasping the supreme Truth, no matter how much of the world is to be sacrificed in its pursuit. Every bit of gain in the realm of Truth involves a loss—if at all it is a loss—in the world of experience. The dream-objects have to vanish if waking experience is to be had. The glorious life is to dawn upon earth the moment individuals begin to live in the consciousness of the basic substratum of the Infinite Reality which is not only metaphysical but also metapsychical. The Upanishad declares that for them who depart hence without having realised the Truth, the Atman of all, there is no freedom in all the worlds, they are heteronomous, pitiable, and they wander in perishable lands. Every true civilisation, if it is not meant to deceive itself, has to gird up its loins for Self-realisation. The spiritual aspirants are not, as it is commonly supposed, some queer type of people who have strayed away from the general intelligent

humanity. On the other hand, they are the cream of the whole of mankind. The value of a person is nothing if he does not aspire for the realisation of the Eternal Good, the Good not merely of this or that class of men, but of the entire universe. All are here so that they may perfect themselves absolutely, for which men are endowed with intelligence, and without which their intelligence has no substance in it. Perfection is Absolute-Experience, *brahma-anubhava*, the Consciousness of Reality.

Truth does not shine as Truth, owing to the inner instruments, the clogging psychological modifications. The crossing the barrier of these limiting adjuncts seems to lead one to a vaster reality, greater freedom and fuller life. There is a common desire-impulse in every being to exist for ever, to know all things, to domineer over everything, and to enjoy the highest happiness. The statement of the Upanishads that the cognition of manifoldness is the path leading to self-destruction is adorned by the supreme exhortation that the perception of Unity leads to the exalted state of Immortality.

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