



1922

CENTENARY SERIES

2022

The Way and the Goal

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

THE WAY AND THE GOAL

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



Published by

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192

Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India

www.sivanandaonline.org, www.dlshq.org

First Edition: 2022
[2,000 copies]

©The Divine Life Trust Society

Swami Krishnananda Birth Centenary Series

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

Published by Swami Padmanabhananda for
The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, and printed by
him at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press,
P.O. Shivanandanagar, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,
Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India
For online orders and catalogue visit: www.dlsbooks.org

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 Janmasthan, 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 Way and the Goal**', comprises Sri Swamiji Krishnanandaji Maharaj's inspiring discourse on the supreme goal of life and the way to attain it.

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 WAY AND THE GOAL

The glorious vision of the Cosmic Form was magnificently described in the Eleventh Chapter; and towards its end it was also suggested that nothing but whole-souled devotion can be an appropriate means to this great achievement. Now the Twelfth Chapter commences with a query which immediately follows as a consequence of this suggestion.

This Great Being, the Supreme Absolute, is capable of attainment through utter self-transcendence alone, a sacrifice of the self in the All-Self. It appears that this experience is impossible of attainment unless the soul raises itself to the status of this Supreme Omnipresence. But this requirement on the part of the soul seems to be a practically impossible affair, and the only thing that appears to be available to the soul is humble devotion and surrender of itself to the Great Lord. Which of the two methods is to be preferred—a humble and simple surrendering of oneself to the Glory of the Absolute in utter childlike behaviour

of dependence, or a strenuous effort to rouse oneself to the Being of the Absolute itself, by communion of self with Self, in an impersonal merger of the individual in the All?

The Great Master is, indeed, very considerate in his reply, and gives an emphatic solution to the effect that in the light of the difficulties that are involved in the practice of an impersonal meditation on the Absolute, devotion to the very same Being in a personal relationship is to be regarded as the better way. Here, in this so-called preference of the one to the other, no comparison is involved. Generally, when we make a choice, a sort of comparison or contrast seems to be unavoidable, and a sense of inferiority is associated with that which is not preferred. But not so here is the case.

The love of God which the soul evinces in its aspiration for liberation is not in any way incompatible with the fire of the spirit which bursts forth in the form of a melting away of the self in the All, in a supreme immanence of impersonality. For those who are embodied, people who cannot avoid the notion of the body, those whose consciousness is lodged in a physical tabernacle, for such persons any kind of conception which is wholly impersonal is unthinkable. We as human beings cannot imagine

what utter impersonality is, because he who is a person cannot think of the impersonal. To be able to appreciate the significance of utter impersonality, one has to rise to the level of this capacity to appreciate. The feeble instrument of human individuality, which is the mind lodged in this body, cannot comprehend the lofty meaning of the spiritual impersonality of God. Such being the case, "I feel," says Krishna, "that devotion to the Supreme Person is preferable, and both these methods are paths that lead to the same goal."

Whatever be the method that we adopt will not matter much, inasmuch as the attainment is going to be uniform, and common in either case. An unnecessary subjection of oneself to torture under the notion of austerity, or *tapas*, while the body is not prepared for it, would be unwelcome on the spiritual path. Spiritual practice is not a mortifying suffering; it is not a sorrow that we are courting as a part of the requirement on the way. In fact, the growth of the spirit from the lower level to the higher is like the spontaneous expansion of the dimension of anything that grows in the world, and when there is a healthy growth of anything there is no pain involved in that process. The flowering of the bud is not a painful process, but the crushing of the bud

in order to make it blossom with force would be an unnatural effort. The spiritual practice in the form of meditation on God should be a spontaneity of the efflorescence of consciousness, and not any kind of painful pressure exerted upon the will, the mind, the feeling or the body. “Considering all these aspects,” says Krishna, “love of God as the Supreme Person is welcome, and to people in this world that is the only way possible.”

“Merge your mind and intellect in Me, and you shall abide in Me,” is the supreme admonition. A whole-souled absorption of all thought in God, to the exclusion of any other idea, is the highest spiritual practice. If it could be possible for any one of us to be aware of God’s Presence only, and nothing else, that would be the supreme blessedness; yes, if this could be possible, go ahead with it. This is the foremost instruction to Arjuna, and to everyone who is on the path.

But who can be so strong in one’s mind and intellect as to be able to entertain God-thought alone throughout the day and the night? So, if this kind of continuous contemplation on God is found to be impracticable, try your best to sit for meditation every day; take resort to *Abhyasa Yoga*, a daily tenacious effort to fix the attention of the mind

on God, notwithstanding that an entire absorption is not possible. Every day one should sit for one hour, two hours, or three hours, as the case may be, and see if the mind can maintain God-thought at least for these few hours, though not for the whole day. This is a second alternative and a teaching which is charged with a greater consideration and concession.

People there are who find that even this is difficult. One cannot concentrate on God even for an hour. "This is not for me," says the mind. Then, take to recitation, chanting, singing of the glories of God. Take the Name of God, be in a state of ecstasy when you think of Him even for a moment. Love Him wholeheartedly from the bottom of your heart. Let your daily routine be infused with divine devotion. Work as an instrument in the hands of God, and never forget for a moment the presence of this Supreme Parent.

But even here some difficulty is there. We cannot go on chanting the Name of God with zeal and feeling for a protracted period. We are busybodies, we are activists in temperament, we have a lot of work to do in the world, we are involved in the performance of duties of various types. Such is our present position. "Well," says the Lord, "It does not

matter; even that is good. But do not work with any motive, do not do any work with an expectation of fruits, because, while the performance of duty is incumbent upon you, the expectation of fruits vitiates the virtue, or the righteousness, of the action. The result of an action is not in your hands.” This is a subject which has been dealt with in larger detail in the earlier chapters, especially in the Third, and it will be touched upon once again in the Eighteenth Chapter. “You have the right to do, but you have no right to expect a particular result from what you do, because the consequence of an action is determined by various factors over which you have no control. Hence, surrender the fruits of your actions to God, and engage yourself in action in this world, perform your duties, go on with your vocations in the spirit of true Karma Yoga. And, be an ideal person. Hate not, love not.”

The concluding verses of the Twelfth Chapter go into details of the characteristics of a true devotee who lives in this world practically homeless, considering nothing as his own, not getting attached either positively or negatively to anything in the form of love or hate, and accepting anything that comes of its own accord, taking not any particular initiative, with no selfish interest involved, living

to the extent practicable a life of impersonality, not putting on a behaviour or conduct on one's side which will repel people or which will cause one's own self also to shrink away from others.

A significant and meaningful point is made out here when we are told that we should live in such a way that neither should we shrink away from anything, nor should others shrink away from us. This is not an easy affair; only a Godman can live like that. But while all this is hard enough, it is up to us to aspire for this ideal, at least, and to entertain this wish as our goal, in our hearts. Pleasure and pain, censure and praise are equal to this great soul, for he is rooted in God-Being, and it is the responsibility of God to take care of him; he is the greatest devotee. With this gospel the Twelfth Chapter concludes. The teachings of the Gita that follow further on take a different trend of approach altogether and detail certain philosophical aspects, and psychological points, which one comes across in the way of the practice, along the lines described in the earlier chapters.

Often, exponents of the Bhagavadgita have held that the last six chapters are something like an appendix to the central gospel which, for all purposes, concludes with the Eleventh, or the

Twelfth Chapter. There are others who think that the purely metaphysical or philosophical considerations are taken up for discussion in the last six chapters, while the more important practical side is emphasised in the earlier ones. Whatever it be, the last six are important enough in their own way, since they elucidate certain knotty issues which have been just touched upon here and there at different places in the earlier chapters.

The Thirteenth Chapter pinpoints its teaching on the principles known as *purusha* and *prakriti*—we may say, consciousness and matter, or we may still boil down these correlatives to what we know as subject and object. The relationship between these two is to be understood, and the whole of philosophical deliberation is nothing but this study of the relation between subject and object, seer and seen, consciousness and matter, *purusha* and *prakriti*. The *purusha* is the Soul of all beings, and God identifies Himself with this Soul, here in the form of the great Incarnation, Krishna. The Knower is the Subject. The Known is the Object, or the Field. The Field of the operation of consciousness is the whole of objective phenomena. The *kshetra* is this Field of operation; the operator upon this Field is the *kshetraja*. The Knower of the Field is

God Himself. The Atman, or the Self in all beings, which is present in all individuals, and is the subject in you and in me and in everything, is the Universal Subject at the same time.

“I am the Knower in all fields, and not merely in one field.” The Atman in my body is not confined to this body only; it is the Atman uniformly present in all other bodies, also. And, so, there is a necessity to understand the distinction between the Knower of the Field, the Field, the nature of Knowledge, and the Goal of Knowledge. These are the themes of the Thirteenth Chapter. The subject who is the individual percipient, or the conscious observer of things, is the conglomerate psychophysical complex. This body constituted of the five gross elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether, and animated by the mind inside, working with the instrument of the intellect, filled with desires, is the subject proper.

Here is a reference made to the Samkhya cosmological principles when, by suggestion, the principles of *ahamkara*, *mahat (buddhi)* and the *avyakta (prakriti)* are indicated. With these and the five elements, the cosmic structure is complete. These very same principles, along with the ten sense organs and the mind, constitute the individual. This individual complex, which is physical as well

as psychological at the same time, mind and body inseparably related, is the individual percipient, the empirical knower. A knower is one who has knowledge; and what is correct knowledge, or right knowledge, or proper knowledge, and what is the opposite of it, is also mentioned further on.

In this categorisation of the various components of correct knowledge, some sort of system or order appears to have been followed. In the beginning, virtues such as humility, unpretentiousness, etc., are mentioned, which are supposed to be the endowments of the student, a *brahmacharin*, a disciple working and studying under a Guru. For, together with this requirement of ethical qualities, we are told that one should be endowed with the requisites of servicefulness to the Guru, the Master, the Teacher. Purity of thought, purity of word and purity of deed is again emphasised. Detachment, at the same time, is pointed out once again as an indispensable. Gradual withdrawal from external entanglements of every kind, culminating in the perception of the transiency of all things, the perishability of all objects, devotion to God, and the recognition of the existence of an eternal Reality behind all phenomena—all this is supposed to be knowledge. Perhaps, there is some subtle reference

made to the various stages, or the Ashramas—Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa—impliedly, in the suggestive verses.

Every character, conduct, behaviour, action and outlook that is going to tend towards the acceptance of God's ultimate supremacy, perfection and absoluteness is to be considered as knowledge, and everything else is ignorance. To move towards God, and to feel an aspiration for God-realisation is knowledge, and ultimate or final knowledge is the conviction that God alone is, and nothing else ever can be. And if our understanding varies from this conclusion, we are in a state of ignorance. Here is the substance, the character of right knowledge.

That which is to be known is the object of knowledge. We have many things in this world which we consider as objects of knowledge. We have the branches of learning, the sciences, the arts and all the apparatus of scholarship. We are curious to know many things, and we regard various themes and subjects taught in the schools, colleges and universities as the objects of knowledge. But, according to the Bhagavadgita, in this particular context, the object of knowledge is the Supreme Reality. An unreal thing cannot be regarded as an object of right knowledge. If the object is unreal,

the knowledge of it cannot be real, and inasmuch as we are speaking here about right knowledge, true knowledge, real knowledge, we are also concerned with the corresponding reality of the object.

“I shall speak to you about the Supreme Goal, the object of knowledge,” says the Teacher. This object of knowledge is not in any particular place. This is the peculiarity of this Great Object. Everything that we know, or anything that we are supposed to know in this world, is in some place and at some time; it is not everywhere. But this Supreme Object is everywhere, and it is not only at some time. It has neither past, nor present, nor future. It is timeless eternity. It is not in one place, because it envelops all things, and in a majestic epic language the verses speak here of the Omnipresent Almighty as having hands and feet and heads and eyes and ears everywhere, grasping everything, knowing everything and comprehending all things through every means, at once, instantaneously, timelessly, here, and now. Undivided, yet appearing to be divided; existing at all times, yet appearing to manifest itself occasionally; free from the shackles of qualities and attributes of every kind, yet animating every quality and character and property. Beyond the reach of all things is it, and yet is seated as the self

within the hearts of everyone. It is moving and also unmoving. It is the light behind even the Sun itself. The brightness of the Sun is the shadow cast by the Glory of the Absolute. One may wonder where this wondrous Light is. It is inside us, we are carrying it wherever we go, and yet we seem to be groping in darkness holding this lamp of wisdom and eternal brilliance within ourselves. We have here a concise presentation of the characteristics of the Object of knowledge, which is God-existence, expressed in a stimulating diction of poetic power.

We know what is right knowledge and the individual percipient. The relationship between the Knower and the Known is the crux of the whole matter of perceptual psychology. We do not know which influences what, whether the subject influences the object or it is the other way round. In fact, there is no question of one influencing the other, or one standing below or above the other; they are on a par one with the other, because one flows into the other, and the one is impossible without the other. The subject cannot be without the object, and vice versa, because the subject and the object, *purusha* and *prakriti*, are the two arms of one uniform Omnipresence. God works through two hands, as it were, the *purusha* and *prakriti* of

the Samkhya philosophy. And the subject and the object we are speaking of, consciousness and matter, are not two different things, they are the two modes of one seamless being.

Here the Bhagavadgita is going head and shoulders above the dualistic philosophy of Samkhya dogmatism. The *purusha*, which is pure impersonal consciousness, featureless transparency, works, or rather appears to work, through the medium of *prakriti* which is constituted of the three *gunas*, or properties, known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Now, again, we are to mention something about this in the Fourteenth Chapter, which is devoted entirely to a discussion of the nature of these *gunas*, the strands of *prakriti*, the Field of action.

Pure equilibrium, harmony, luminosity, are the characteristics of *sattva*; distraction, activity, dissipation, division are the characteristics of *rajas*; inertia, stability, fixity, lethargy, sleepiness, are the characteristics of *tamas*. The individual is a component of all these qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We are not free from them at any time. Sometimes the one preponderates; and at other times the other. We pass through various moods in our lives, sometimes dejected and melancholy are we, sometimes we are spirited and active and run

about, and sometimes we are sublime and sober and enlightened in our outlook. But we do not maintain this attitude throughout the day and night, inasmuch as, like the spokes of a wheel that moves, which go up and down with the motion of the wheel, the properties of *prakriti* do not maintain a single position always. They move with the evolutionary process of the cosmos and, with this evolutionary process, we are also dragged as contents of this vast universe. Hence it is that we are not in any particular mood at all times.

In the progression of the soul in its aspiration and travel to the Supreme Being, it has to transcend the lower for the sake of the higher. It may appear, for all practical purposes, that we have to rise from *tamas* to *rajas*, and from *rajas* to *sattva*, though this is not a mathematical movement or a travel along a beaten track. There is a commingling of qualities, and we are not always, entirely, in one state alone. We are not hundred percent *tamasika*, hundred percent *rajasika* or hundred percent *sattvika* ; all these things are present in us always. Yet, there is a tentative need to apply ourselves for the purpose of a routine of practice, which takes the shape of self-transcendence from *tamas* to *rajas*, and from *rajas* to *sattva*.

Those who are *tamasika* preponderatingly are lethargic, stupid, idiotic, incapable of thinking properly, and sleepy, gluttonous, etc. Those who are *rajasika* are restless, passionate, full of desires, run about here and there, never finding peace in themselves, and not having a moment of rest. Those who are *sattvika* are the people of knowledge, sedate in behaviour, calm and judicious in judgement, and these are the aspirants who are religious and spiritual.

People who pass away from this world at the time of the preponderance of one quality or other have a corresponding experience after death. Those who die when the quality of *sattva* preponderates go to the higher regions, the realm of angels, paradise, Svarga-loka, as we call it. Those who are *rajasika*, if they die in that condition, come back to the mortal world of restless activity. *Tamas* drags one down to the nether regions, to the lower realms of suffering and unconsciousness.

These *gunas* are rotating and revolving perpetually like a wheel, and they never rest in themselves in a state of harmony at any time. The whole universe is constituted of these *gunas*, the substance of *prakriti*; inside and outside only these are present. These are the building bricks of the cosmos. And one who is

able to visualise, unattached, the presence of these characters of *prakriti*, who cognises the fact that the whole world is a drama played by these properties, who remains as a witness of this entire play enacted in the arena of experience by the *gunas*—such a person who stands above them, unaffected, who has transcended the *gunas*, who has gone above the operations of *prakriti*, is the one that is fit to enter into the bosom of Brahman, the Absolute.

This Great Being, the Supreme Absolute, is capable of attainment through utter self-transcendence alone, a sacrifice of the self in the All-Self. It appears that this experience is impossible of attainment unless the soul raises itself to the status of this Supreme Omnipresence. But this requirement on the part of the soul seems to be a practically impossible affair and the only thing that appears to be available to the soul is humble devotion, and surrender of itself to the Great Lord. Which of the two methods is to be preferred,—a humble and simple surrendering of oneself to the Glory of the Absolute in utter childlike behaviour of dependence, or a strenuous effort to rouse oneself to the Being of the Absolute itself, by communion of self with Self, in an impersonal merger of the individual in the All?

—SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION