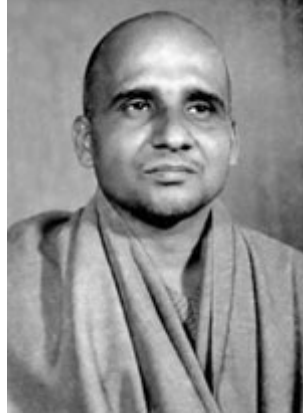




THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

Discourse-50 (31 May 1977)

RECAPITULATION

CONCLUSION

The Brihadaranyaka is a great Upanishad. The secret of life is revealed in it in various stages. It is a great meditation by itself, and it is an exposition of the internal meaning of the Vedas; it is real Vedanta. The other Upanishads are expository in their nature; in fact we shall find that what is in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is all-in-all. What is here, is elsewhere; and what is not here, is not anywhere.

Here is the foundation of Indian culture, we may say, which lays down that life is to be envisaged as a completeness and never merely in its partial aspects. The great message of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in every one of its passages is that our sorrows are due to a partial vision of things and we cannot be happy as long as we are unable to entertain a total vision of anything. When we look at an object, we have only a limited vision of that object. When we look at our own selves, too, we have only a finite vision about our own selves. When we look at the world astronomically, physically, biologically, or chemically, we do not, even then, have a complete view of things. The Upanishad tells us that everything has an external character, an internal nature and a transcendent reality. None of these can be ignored in the evaluation of that thing. When we ignore any aspect, then it cannot be called an insight into the nature of the thing. The plumbing into the reality of any object would be to enter into the basic essence of it, so that we shall realise in the end that the reality of anything is the reality of everything. If we can know one thing, we have also known everything, and we cannot know any single object in this world, ultimately, unless we know the whole of creation. There is no such thing as real knowledge which is partial; any true knowledge is complete, it is integral, it is totality of experience, and knowledge is experience. One of the points stressed here is that knowledge is to be a

complete vision, and not a partial look; the other point is that knowledge is not information, it is not a function of the intellect, it is not a ratiocination of the understanding; but it is direct experience. Knowledge and experience are identical. That which has not become part of our being, cannot be called our knowledge. Knowledge is Being. This is the final message of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.