

# SELF KNOWLEDGE

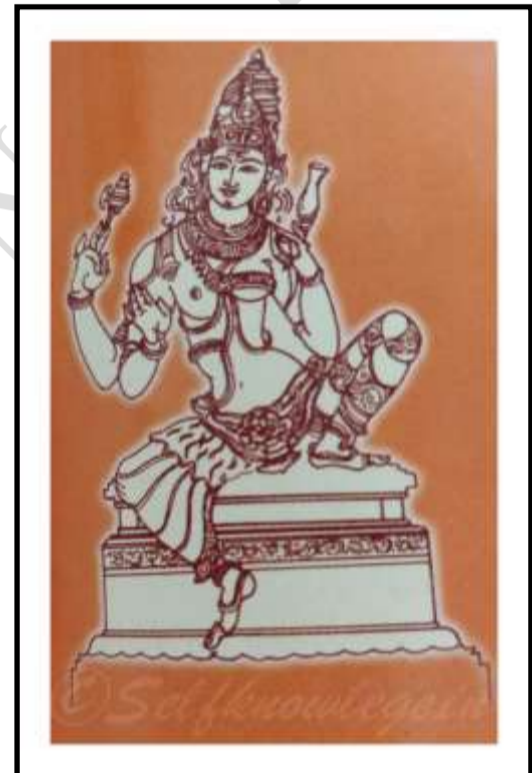
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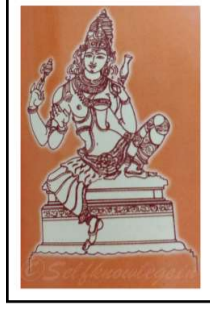
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वागर्थाविव संपृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये।

जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ॥ १-१

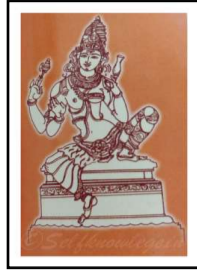
**In order to gain mastery in expressing the word and its meaning, I worship the Primeval Parents of the Universe, Parvati and Parameshvara, who are as inseparable as the word from the meaning.”**

**- Raghuvamsam (Kalidasa)**

न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा नान्यैर्देवैस्तपसा कर्मणा वा ।  
ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वस्ततस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ॥

**“ The Self is not grasped by eyes or words, nor perceived by the senses, not revealed by rituals or penance. When the understanding becomes calm and refined , then one realizes Him , the Absolute.**

**-Mundakopanisad**



## THE ULTIMATE HUMAN HERITAGE

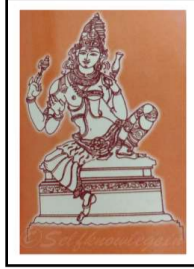
### Swami Suddhananda

If the ignorance of any kind is universal, the knowledge of the same must also be universal. Since ignorance is not exclusive to 'a' man, 'a' race, sex, colour or nationality, there is nothing exclusive about any knowledge. Knowledge in all its aspects must be available for all and let the man choose out of total freedom. There cannot and should not be any restrictions whatsoever for approaching or gaining any knowledge.

All of us know that we are ignorant of the creation around of which we are a part, but not many of us know that we are also ignorant about our own Self. We can be conscious of the world, our body and our thoughts, but we do not understand and are therefore ignorant about the nature of all that exist in the creation, the body and the thoughts.

Let us therefore see the different levels or facades of ignorance.

- a) When I say, I am ignorant about the world, definitely it must never mean that I am not conscious of the world.
- b) What it means is, I may be conscious of the world, for example the mountain, but may not know that mountain is the Himalayas as somebody has named it and I am not conscious of the name.
- c) When I say I am not conscious of the name, I am not announcing that 'I am not conscious' - I am always conscious, but not 'of' the name at this moment.
- d) So here the ignorance means, I am conscious of the 'name' that is given, I am conscious of the 'object' that is named, but I am not conscious of the 'association' of that name with the corresponding object.
- e) So, what it means is 'I am always conscious' but not conscious of the association of the name with the object.
- f) That is how I can be ignorant of many languages, except may be the mother tongue, describing the same object.



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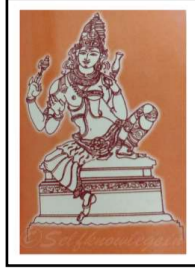
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g) What it means is 'I am conscious' of the many languages while hearing the words as mere sounds without being able to associate that name with the object.

Thus I can be generally 'conscious' and be generally 'ignorant' about many things in the world because of the names. The same principle can be applied to 'Self'. Until the name 'I' or 'aham' is given, we will not 'feel' ignorant. We feel ignorant, though conscious, about any object because we have not yet associated it with name. That is why, stupidly a botanist knowing all names may feel superior to a man of the jungle who may know all the plants and their usage but no names.

Similarly everybody is t conscious, but until that sense of being, the consciousness (both names) are named in so many words or 'I' etc., nobody feels ignorant about himself! How funny! I say 'I am conscious' and 'I am ignorant' in the same breath. This 'is' true, in the matters of an objective knowledge, but not in case of the 'I' - the Self.

Let us start with ignorance about the world. I am walking on the earth through my body, to experiencing the sounds, touches, forms, tastes and smells with my thoughts within. But I do not feel ignorant until some pain m or trouble begins. The trouble can begin in the world around when a n volcano erupts, a cyclone lashes, a flood inundates, the drought or disease devastates. Suddenly the man wants to understand 'the nature' of the world where, in a seemingly innocent universe such powers are hidden and are unleashed without human intervention. The same principle is in the body, the thoughts and the emotions. If the natural disasters are inherent in the nature, diseases are inherent in the body and the emotions of all kinds seem to be inherent at a subtle level of thoughts. The encounter with natural disasters triggers the probing into the nature of the creation as even the disease, ill health trigger the probe into the nature of the body. This probe into the natural elements, trees, animals etc. provide us an insight into the functioning of the creation around. That knowledge, whoever may discover it, belongs to the whole world, the entire humanity. Though the sun, the wind and the water are gross, the rain and the cyclone are visible, the process of evaporation, cloud formation, the play of the wind and the heat are not visible to the eyes.



## THE ULTIMATE HUMAN HERITAGE

Swami Suddhananda

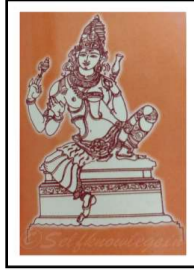
So also in the body. The body is visible. The food is visible. But the method of digestion, the enzyme, the disease, the virus are invisible. Hence those are understood with the extension of power to the machines through the sense organs and the body. A machine may have a leg to stand and a lens is an extension of the eyes - be it a microscope, a telescope or a periscope. Here the naming is inevitable as the discoveries are not natural phenomena. Somebody must investigate to discover and that investigation, discovery must be named at different stages for the next generation to follow the steps and to duplicate the test and to further improve upon it. The more the discoveries, the more the naming, the more becomes the ignorance when we won't know the names, the principles and the names associated with the principles.

Thus we can be,

- a) ignorant of a 'name'
- b) ignorant of an 'object' or 'principle'
- c) ignorant of the association

Therefore we can have

- a) the information (familiarity) of a name
- b) the information of the object or principle
- c) the knowledge -associating the name with the principle or the object



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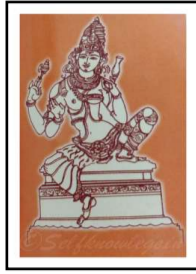
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Depending upon the ignorance, information or the knowledge about the creation and body, the man may pick up an identity such as 'I am ignorant', 'I am informed', 'I am knowledgeable' etc., with so many subtle divisions at all the three levels. That leads to comparison and contrast and therefore to superiority and inferiority, less or more informed, ignorant or knowledgeable or least or most informed, ignorant or knowledgeable. This identity is at the level of the thoughts, with the 'I' thought playing the hero and the villain. It is the hero when it drags every condition to itself and is a villain when it falls a victim of an identity, the prisoner of its own making.

When thus, the thoughts become troublesome because 'I' is troubled, the enquiry into the thoughts and emotions begin. When this probe begins into the inner landscape, we discover that there is no emotion inherent in the object as even there is no indigestion in the food or the ignorance inherent in the object.

All along I am 'conscious' of all different perceptions and thoughts. And the 'I' builds upon the thoughts to create emotions of likes, dislikes, desires, etc. to make the object desirable, likeable or disliked. From that emotion, the further built up is greediness to repeat an experience or anger that prevents the experience. The 'I' builds it all and gains more identities like, 'I desire', 'I am angry', 'I am greedy', 'I am dissatisfied', 'I am lonely' etc. in addition to 'I am ignorant, informed, uninformed or knowledgeable'.

Thus the 'I' owns up the relative ignorance of the objective world and the ignorance about one's own Self where the 'I' is tormented or confused by so many identities. We must understand that the relative knowledge will not take away the Absolute or Self ignorance, as even Self knowledge will not remove the relative ignorance.



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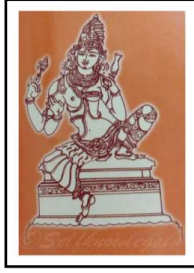
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The Self-knowledge is easy to gain as it is ever present as the 'consciousness' itself and we are always using the word 'I am conscious' of every thought, body or object. A little exploration into inner landscape is essential. There are already many thoughts there as mere impressions or as knowledge and information of different kinds. Those explorers, the ancient Rishis, have charted the landscape elaborately and well. The names have been given to different emotions and ultimately to be one's own Self. To be one's own Self, one need not perceive an object, speak a word or think a thought. Yet, because of the prior conscious and unconscious involvement with thoughts, speech and perceptions, different names are given to emotions, moods and thoughts of various kinds.

Thus, the 'I' assuming the role of 'the knower' owns up all relative knowledge and ignorance to feel suffocated and sometimes elated by different roles. Each identity adds to the ignorance of the 'I'. The 'I' itself is a product of ignorance and then it grabs all thoughts to pick up many roles. Therefore, the answer to the question of the real identity of 'I', becomes really confusing when instead of understanding the meaning of the word 'I', the first role, we answer with another role or set of roles.

Thus the ignorance about the 'I' continues as the 'I' gets wedded to many different roles instead of looking at or 'being' the source of 'I'. This insight is Self knowledge where one discovers one's own Self without a name or a form. Everybody must be made to be aware of himself/herself.

There are many kinds of secular knowledge and religious beliefs and philosophies of different hues talking about the world, the individual and the God. Most of them leave the human child half way which is more dangerous than ignorance. At least in ignorance, one is unconscious, unaware of the limitation and bondage. But when with information of both secular and religious kind, we leave the individual with a strong individuality without the insight into his own nature, such an informed person, empty within, creates a lot of suffering for himself and others around.



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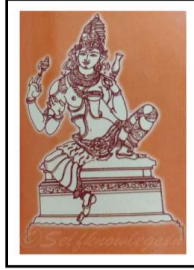
Swami Suddhananda

**There is no ignorance in the Self. Nor there is any knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term which is associated with a thought and the object through sense perception. Nobody is away from it to be led into it. Nobody is away from it to reach it. There is not even ignorance to be removed 'by' the knowledge. It 'is' the Awareness itself, but the name 'I' seems to have forced itself into identification with all thoughts, body and the world around to a great extent. Hence the enquiry into the nature of 'I' begins from the reverse direction of the objects, body, sense organs and thoughts to clearly see that none of these have the basis for the name 'I'. And the distance between the thought 'I' and what it stands for is non-existent. When thus a teacher apparently leads the student from the known to the knowable unknown, the student must give attention to the landmarks he has crossed 'to reach' his own Self. And there to his great relief and surprise he finds that he was, is and will be there all along.**

**There can be elaborate discoveries in every point. If an explorer of deep seas or continents can add to the geography, the historian can maintain the authentic record of incidents. A physiologist can deal with the body, a physicist with physical principles, a chemist with chemical compounds and the list is endless. Similarly, one who knows all the details about the 'I' at all relative levels and at the absolute level is 'the wise' one, who has the general awareness of everything as 'the Awareness' is the nature of all. But the special attributes of all are known to different explorers at different levels.**

**We need them all to enrich our lives to the fullest. If we need to know about the world, to live a very comfortable life at the level of the body, we need to know ourselves to be happy with ourselves and that too happens to be a source of absolute freedom, immortality.**





## THE ULTIMATE HUMAN HERITAGE

Swami Suddhananda

Today's world has all the information at its disposal. Let not humanity deny itself the blessing of any knowledge by considering it as alien. As even we enjoy the products of science without and bothering about the caste, creed, sex, race, belief or nationality of the physicist or chemist, so also let us enjoy the blessings of the Self-knowledge that introduces us to ourselves at both absolute and relative levels, without bothering about the borders within which it is discovered and nourished.

The children of the earth must inherit the heritage of man and not only that of a race, sex, nation or belief. Only when all things or information are available at our disposal we can make a better choice. And the education should be all about making choices and therefore the knowledge must be clear about the chooser, the 'I', so that 'a' role does not hijack and decide for all other roles. One must see one's own Self and that is the ultimate human heritage!

-OM-

### IN CONVERSATION

**Student :** How would you explain a need and a necessity?

**Swamiji:** A need or a necessity is something without which man cannot live. A luxury is something we should have the freedom to do with or without. If we know the true nature- the I- living itself is a luxury because we gain the freedom to live with or without the body and mind. The right thinking is to identify how many necessities we can convert into luxuries.



## **SNIPPETS OF WISDOM**

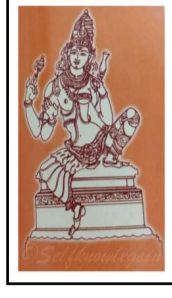
**A single brick is not a wall , a single thought is not an emotion , but a build -up of many thoughts is. Therefore if you are continuously conscious of every thought there is no question of you ever succumbing to an emotion or be overwhelmed by it .**

## **CHILDREN'S CORNER**

**Once upon a time, there was a beautiful rose plant in a garden. One rose flower on the plant was proud of its beauty. However, it was disappointed that it was growing next to an ugly cactus. Every day, the rose would insult the cactus about its looks, but the cactus stayed quiet. All the other plants in the garden tried to stop the rose from bullying the cactus, but the rose was too swayed by its own beauty to listen to anyone.**

**One summer, a well in the garden dried up and there was no water for the plants. The rose slowly began to wilt. The rose saw a sparrow dip its beak into the cactus for some water. The rose then felt ashamed for having made fun of the cactus all this time. But because it was in need of water, it went to ask the cactus if it could have some water. The kind cactus agreed, and they both got through summer as friends.**

**Never judge someone by the way they look.**



## SUBHASHITANI

यः पठति लिखति पश्यति  
परिपृच्छति पंडितान् उपाश्रयति ।  
तस्य दिवाकरकिरणैः नलिनी  
दलं इव विस्तारिता बुद्धिः ॥

**One who reads, writes, sees, inquires, lives in the company of learned,  
his intellect expands as the lotus petals expands due to the rays of sun.**

