

Book Review

VEDANTA FOR MODERN WORLD

Swamy Parthasarathy, Sri SIIM Research Press, New Delhi, First Edition, February, 2014, ISBN: 978-81-926745-3-7, Rs. 550/-.

It was a great pleasure to listen to Dr. Swamy Parthasarathy in the XV Annual International Conference at ICE Academy, Birmingham, United Kingdom, as a Chief Guest of the Inaugural Session on August 5, 2014. The extempore speech with so much of depth was a treat to the ears.

Swamiji's book 'Vedanta for Modern World' presents the ancient philosophy of Vedanta. A philosophy which articulates the eternal principles of life and living. We need to learn and practice the techniques of living. So the role of Vedanta in our daily life has a great significance. Vedanta helps us unfold ourselves. Discovering the true nature of our inherent being is the divine and if we really discover it there will be absolute peace and bliss in our lives.

The book 'Vedanta for Modern World' is chapterised among three sections. In Section-I, Introduction to Vedanta is depicted in the essence of life, code of living, exigency of action, strength of emotion, light of wisdom, etc. In section-II, we get the connotation of Practical Vedanta where human composition, self-analysis, the states of consciousness, four yogas, renunciation, meditation, the state of self realization are discussed in line with the philosophy of this book. In section-III, the essence of Vedanta exposes the exact nature of the terrestrial world.

Vedanta is the base of our religion. It is the systematic knowledge which gives us the true insight into life. Vedanta presents concentration, consistency, and cooperation to get prosperity in life.

The author has propounded the origin of the world that is unknown to the masses. People wish to know the unknown origin. People enquire, people question. People are satisfied with the ready answer that God is origin, some people are not satisfied. Mystery can be solved by the known factors.

Mind is very powerful to solve mysteries. The five categories of human beings fall under three broad mental conditions-'Restless mind', 'Imperfect mind', and 'Perfect mind'. Restless mind and Imperfect mind always go for mental agitation whereas Vedanta would help us to reach the Perfect mind which provides the discipline in mind. Disciplined mind will lead us to life of peace and bliss. So daily study of Vedanta will help us perfect mind and systematic life.

This book depicts the knowledge of Vedanta and inculcates the elements of right living in our physical, mental, and intellectual personalities. Our actions must develop a spirit of service. Our emotions become chastened with love and other positive emotions. Our thinking is rendered clear and divine. If we maintain these disciplines through daily study and reflection on the sublime truths of life, our lives will be ideal lives.

The mental temperament of human beings, known as gunas in Sanskrit, are of three types. Each has a distinct character of its own. A human is composed of all three gunas. They are: Tamas Inactive, Rajas Active and Sattva Trans-active. Tamas is a condition of laziness and sleep. A person steeped in

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tamas lives a dull, inactive life. Rajas is the state of passionate, desirous, and agitated thoughts which leads a person to his involvement in the affairs of the world. Sattva is the state of thoughts in equanimity, serenity, and objectivity. If satva is predominant to a person, the person becomes poised, mature, and contemplative.

The author has propounded that action is the symbol of life. The law of life proclaims that none can remain without performing activity. Our action must be like a river overcoming all obstacles, and we should not stop till we reach to the ocean. Bhagavad Gita also highlights the necessity of action. Human activities fall broadly under three categories based upon the manner in which they are performed. They are: Action performed with selfish desire, Action with unselfish desire, and action without desire.

In the light of wisdom the nature of human beings falls under two broad classifications. The aggressive and the passive. The aggressive are those who use their intellect in life's activities. While the passive operate from the level of their mind. Each of these can be classified as good or bad. Aggressively good persons are rare in category. They are inherently virtuous, divine. He uses his intellect to plan and programme his course of life for the benefit of one and all. The epic Mahabharata presents a picture of passive and aggressive nature of human beings. Pandavas were distinct for their passive goodness whereas Kauravas in their aggressive badness. Sri Krishna was a personification of aggressive goodness.

Human beings are separated from Godhead, the supreme Self by vasanas. Vasanas manifest as thought and desires. The union of our individual self with the supreme self is yoga. The shastra scripture has prescribed four yogas for the eradication of vasanas: Bhakti Yoga, Gnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Hatha Yoga. These four spiritual disciplines that have been designed to suit the four distinct categories of humans.

This book explains about the meditation that is the highest spiritual practice. It requires pre meditative preparation. The principle underlying meditation is: As you think so you become. Thinking is conscious thought force. The most powerful word symbol 'OM' is used for meditation by spiritual seekers.

A self realized person can discover *atman*. *He manifests divine characteristics*, displays exceptional power, bears universal love, and possesses boundless knowledge.

Selfish activity has a limited power. If we work with ego and egocentric desires, if our actions are directed towards personal gains, our work becomes limited.

There are three schools of thought which explains the relation between a human being and God. They are known as 'Dvaita Dualism', 'Advaita Monism' and 'Vishishta Advaita' Qualified-monism.

To sum this book emphasized a self realized person is one with God. He revels in absolute peace and bliss. He becomes a beacon for the rest of the world to follow and steer their lives towards evolution.

We strongly recommend this book for all those who want to live life in a meaningful manner with purpose.

– Ajay Kr. Singh

– Durlav Sarkar