

highs of mystical experiences and their articulation. This is an area that ought to be explored further as a common creative component of the current global ethos.

The author comes close to these aspects especially in his assessments of St John of the Cross and Swami Govind Kaul. The two paths of the positive and the negative find a balance that is manifest in both the *fana*, annihilation, of the Sufis and the *shunya*, void, of the Buddhists. There are also voices that strike out a solitary path within the tradition. These voices enrich themselves by other traditions, but do not get smothered by them, especially in terms of languages. Dhar rightly points to the striking feature of Shams Faqir's poem, whose diction is basically Kashmiri and yet employs Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit words.

Though tangential, another refreshing chapter is on the poetry of Coventry Patmore, which has suffered undeserving neglect. Patmore's description of mysticism as the science of 'ultimates' opens up almost a comprehensive perspective for any study in this area. Especially significant are Dhar's comments on the erotic poetry of Patmore. We have here the naughty question: whether mystical poetry of love is actually disguised and often naked sexuality in words. Patmore was aware of this, but as Dhar shows he was too explicit in his articulation of passion. This aspect seems subject to the risk that Francis Thomson, quoted by Dhar, notes: 'I am too concrete and intelligible, I fear greatly lest what I have written may not do more harm than good by exposing divine realities to profane apprehension' (61).

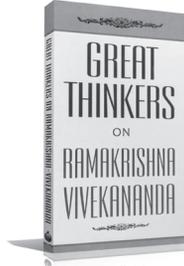
In effect, Professor Dhar's study not only illustrates the vitality of intercultural and multilingual dimensions of mystical poetry but also draws attention to its interconnections. However, he has left his exploration of T S Eliot's *Four Quartets* somewhat incomplete. He could have benefited from full-length studies of the presence of Indic literary and philosophical traditions in Eliot, which show enduring ways of balancing aspects of apparently varied traditions. Here it is not *samanvaya* but *samarasya* that is needed.

With its elegant translations of originals and

its introduction to mystical poets who are not widely known, *Mysticism across Cultures* remains an indispensable sourcebook. As such, it is a pioneering study.

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Great Thinkers on Ramakrishna Vivekananda

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Prophets need no testimonies, but only great minds can recognize greatness. The diverse impressions on great people of a prophet's greatness give a different dimension of these luminaries, which we missed with our superficial observation. The book documents the sublime and deep thoughts of great people worldwide on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. While some had the privilege of meeting these divine personages, others have been deeply influenced by their life and teachings.

A revised edition of the earlier book, this volume contains many new material like facsimiles of the tributes of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. While we come across many oft-quoted utterances, we also find many lesser known statements like those by the scientist Satyendra Nath Bose and writer Munshi Premchand. Some thoughts are truly remarkable. The observation by Mahendranath Sircar is a case in point: 'Vivekananda was the spirit of selflessness incarnated in flesh' (113). The source of each utterance has been given and biographical sketches of the thinkers have been appended. A study of this book reveals interesting information, like the similarity of the constitutions of the Ramakrishna Mission and the UNESCO. This book will inspire many to know more about Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and will be a handy reference for research scholars.

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