

both intellectual and experiential relevance. That is precisely why the Indian tradition insists on the coming of different prophets in different epochs. Scholars of the order of M Sivaramkrishna and Jeffery D Long bring this flavour to the reading of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

This hardbound book is generously priced and printed on good quality paper. The readers are sure to benefit immensely from these thoughtful essays.

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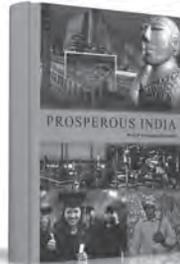
**The Rainforest or  
From Protozoa to God**  
Parimal Mukhopadhyay

Mother Publishing, 41/A Beniatola  
Lane, Kolkata 700009. 2011. vi + 94  
pp. ₹ 200.

When a book has a fancy title and the back cover reads ‘This book may change your world’, you are intrigued, to say the least. The curiosity only deepens when you learn that the author is a former professor of the Indian Statistical Institute, a premier academic institution of India. The author’s note at the end—it should have been in the beginning—promises to keep the treatment brief, precise, and free from any theological, religious, or dogmatic presumptions. With the mind thus conditioned, when setting out to devour the book, the reader is in for a big disappointment. Throughout the book the author refers to classical theological or religious themes like karma, consciousness, soul, and prayer. One is at a loss at the author presuming that everyone would believe in rebirth. Further, the slim volume is full of obvious truisms and is replete with definitions of different words like chemistry, astronomy, and biology. Name dropping has been resorted to, to give the sound of authenticity but not only is this purpose not fulfilled, errors like writing ‘Steven Hawking’ instead of ‘Stephen Hawking’ betrays lack of seriousness and professional copy-editing. It is difficult to situate this book and one starts questioning the very need for such a publication. Concepts of brain, mind, dreams, and consciousness are casually referred to, avoiding any serious thought on the scientific understanding on these issues, which

is painful to the reader. While every attempt to trace spirituality in nature is commendable, there needs to be depth to such an approach. The present book lacks both purpose and depth. It is nothing more than a pointer to thinking beyond the established constructs and is another example of how a profound thought can be marred at the hands of inefficient writers and editors.

PB



**Prosperous India**

Prof. P Kanagasabapathi

Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan  
Trust, No 5, Singarachari Street,  
Triplicane, Chennai 600 005. 2013.  
160 pages. ₹ 100.

A refreshing feature of *Prosperous India* is the optimistic tone of the author which springs from his unshakeable faith in the native genius of the common man in India. Thanks to its own time-tested systems, ‘India remained the most prosperous nation in the world for the longest period in history, with sustainable systems that enabled social peace and higher achievements, till the interference of the Europeans’ (5). Mark the important point. History also records innumerable assaults by Islamic hordes who repeatedly ravished India’s wealth—Mahmud of Ghazni invaded her sixteen times; Ulugh Khan’s robbing temple after temple in South India is a tale too deep for tears—but she remained rich; and hence the recurring attacks by avaricious invaders. India became poor only when the British traders entered her sacred land.

Calling upon an array of Indian and foreign scholars to stand witness to his thesis, Prof. Kanagasabapathi says that in agriculture Indians were second to none and knew how not to waste. Indeed, the Greek historian could write that ‘famine has never visited India, and that there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food’ (21). Nor did India lag behind in science, technology, social systems, and political governance. For centuries India glowed almost in all facets. Then came the British traders. The tragedy that happened not long after has been documented by Dadabhai Naoroji in his *Poverty and Un-British Rule in*