

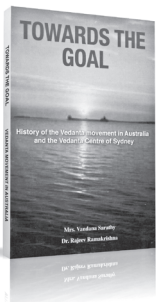
‘To him [Vallabha], the Supreme Experience of Illimitable Bliss consists only in the direct knowledge and immediate experience of Puruṣottama and participation in His Eternal Sport’ (32). Discussing in detail the ‘means’ of attaining deliverance, Dr Narain points out that more than instruments like karma and jnana, it is devotion that marks the sure unfailing path towards deliverance in Vallabha’s philosophy. Devotion to Sri Krishna forms the vital springs of this philosophy—it is to live constantly in the consciousness of Sri Krishna.

‘The real nature and character of “service” to Lord Kṛṣṇa is always mental; it is only for its achievement that physical and monetary service has to be resorted to during the preliminary stage leading to purified mental state of unhampered loving contemplation of the Divine Person, called *Bhakti*, which ultimately leads to the true knowledge of Puruṣottama’s nature (*svarūpa*) and immortality and freedom of man’ (63).

Dr Narain then takes us to the concluding movement of his text, detailing various levels of devotion according to Vallabha as well as the theory and practice for each level. In this connection the games of Sri Krishna in Vrindavan are relevant to the modern man also—though they belong to the distant past, they continue to be enacted in the devotee’s heart. The omnipotent and omnipresent Krishna continues to bless such devotees externally and internally, drawing them away from the world and its objects. The Delight of Existence alone becomes the Reality. Avoiding academic dryness, *The Doctrine of Bhakti in Vallabha Vedānta* is an erudite book of philosophy to understand a major pathway to God opened by the Bhakti movement.

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Towards The Goal

Mrs Vandana Sarathy and
Dr Rajeev Ramakrishna

Chitkala Centre, 12 A Fletcher Avenue, Blackehurst, NSW 2221, Australia. 2009. vi + 123 pp. Australian Dollars 10.

Swami Vivekananda wanted the message of Vedānta to gradually percolate global consciousness. This book is an account of the Vedānta movement in Australia. Mrs Elsie Picket did the pioneering Vedānta work and later Swami Ranganathananda was instrumental in consolidating the subsequent opening of a centre of the Ramakrishna Mission in Sydney in 2000.

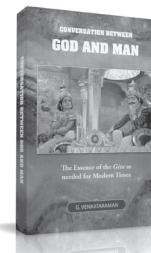
The book starts with brief introductions to Vedānta, Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, and traces the origin of the Ramakrishna movement. The parents of the authors, Dr and Mrs Ramakrishna were key figures in the spread of the message of Vedānta in Australia. They hosted the swamis frequently visiting the continent before the opening of a centre of the Order.

The book, after describing the development of the Vedānta movement in Australia, ends with a hopeful note for its future. The appendices contain brief biographical sketches of Swami Ranganathananda, Swami Damodarananda, Swami Sridharananda—present head of the Vedānta centre in Sydney—Mrs Vilma Spencer, Dr B Ramakrishna, and Mrs Kanaka Ramakrishna. Containing valuable photographs, this is an engaging historical account for admirers of the Vedānta movement. The words of H W Longfellow at the end of the book, reflect the tempo of the movement: ‘Still achieving, still pursuing’.

Swami Narasimhananda

Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata

BOOKS RECEIVED



Conversations between God and Man

G Venkataraman

Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, Prashanti Nilayam, Anantapur 515 134. Website: www.srisathyasai.org.in. 2009. xii + 244 pp. ₹ 60.

‘The essence of the Gita as needed for modern times’ by a physicist deeply interested in spiritual verities.