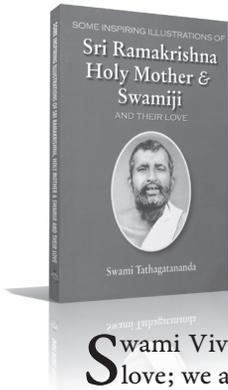


REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



Some Inspiring Illustrations of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother & Swamiji and Their Love

Swami Tathagatananda

Ramakrishna Mission Institute of
Culture, Golpark, Kolkata 700 029.
Website: www.sriramakrishna.org.
2011. xii + 159 pp. ₹ 75.

Swami Vivekananda says: 'The great dream is love; we are all going to love and be loved, we are all going to be happy and never meet with misery, but the more we go towards happiness, the more it goes away from us. Thus the world is going on, society goes on, and we, blinded slaves, have to pay for it, without knowing.' The whole world is seeking for love, for it is its nature, but is obtaining misery. When those who give up this seeking material love turn towards divine love, they find the real meaning of life. Every avatara has intensely loved humanity, and this love is what draws people to them.

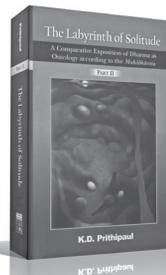
During Holy Mother's last illness one of her attendants who was moved to tears seeing her suffering resolved not to allow her to give initiation to all and sundry. Coming to know of this the Holy Mother said with a smile: 'Why do you say so? Do you think that the Master came only to take rasagollas?' Prophets and divine incarnations come to relieve the burden of the poor and lowly, of reprehensible and wayward souls. Moreover, the succour their saving acts bring is not confined to the persons immediately present but becomes a powerful beacon of light for generations and generations to come.

Several stirring incidents in the lives of the Holy Trio illustrating their love and compassion for common people and, in some cases, for even 'bad' people are presented in this book. Though most of the material is to be found in

the standard biographies of the Holy Trio, the author has done well in collecting and presenting them in a way that cannot but convince the reader of the great ocean of mercy that we have in Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda. In recollecting their mercy we regain our strength and courage to face the inner battle.

Br Shantichaitanya

Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama
Vrindavan



The Labyrinth of Solitude

K D Prithipaul

Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, P O Box 5715, 54 Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi 110 055. Website: www.mrmlbooks.com. 2012. Part I, xvi + 546 pp; Part II, vii + 671 pp. ₹ 3,000.

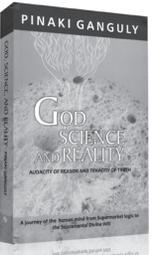
Every sadhaka has to travel a long silent road alone, with only dharma as guide, in order to realize the ultimate Truth. No failures should thwart one's progress, but one must muster heroic courage to keep moving. Somewhere down the road one realizes that all the joys and sorrows, pains and pleasures of life have been part of the ontological freedom one seeks. This 'labyrinth of solitude' is a necessity through which one must traverse before one can reach the Truth.

Bred in an intellectual and practising tradition, the author explores layers of dharma, with its meanings and influences, from the ancient to the present. He juxtaposes and contextualizes this concept based on the Mahabharata and relates it to the problems of life vis-à-vis social strata. The work analyses philosophical concepts, readings, and rereadings in a novel way. The sceptre and solace of dharma are depicted and the political

interpretation in the Indian Constitution is traced. The solitude of dharma has indeed been brought out from the labyrinth of the Mahabharata. This one-stop solution to the anomalies in defining dharma would prove valuable to academics and general readers alike.

There are a total of forty-nine chapters in the two volumes. The learned author, after a long career of teaching philosophy and religion, has turned to writing and has many books to his credit.

Swami Narasimhananda
Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata



God, Science, and Reality

Pinaki Ganguly

Books Way, 86A College Street
(YMCA Building), Kolkata 700 073.
Website: www.booksway.in. 2012.
xxiii + 279 pp. ₹ 495.

This book is a religio-philosophic-scientific brew concocted through a blend of five ingredients: atheistic scepticism, scientific questioning, mathematical logic, philosophic enquiry, and faith-bound spiritual quest. The overriding flavour of the mix is, however, a faith-bound spiritual quest grounded in ancient wisdom. The majority of today's books normally deal with their themes in a monologue style, with the authors articulating their thoughts in an uninterrupted manner and with no interlocutor to question and doubt. *Science, Religion, and Reality* is a refreshing departure from the usual monologue style presentation of thoughts. It is cast in the dramatic setting of an intellectual debate and discussion with the main speaker interacting with other four learned interlocutors on a variety of subjects. The participants in the scholarly and wide-ranging discussion are an atheist, a scientist, a mathematician, a philosopher, and a sage possessing ancient oriental wisdom. The sage leads and almost dominates the lively discussions through his masterly expositions and convincing clarifications. Absorbing, the book is a virtual cauldron of clashing ideas, fermenting thoughts, and bold speculations.

The Prologue offers a peek into the exciting vistas of knowledge ready to unfold. The author makes it clear that by the term 'God' in the title he means 'spirituality'. Is science and spirituality perpetually at loggerheads and working at cross-purposes? Or are they partners in the common adventure of unveiling the face of Reality, albeit with different methods? The author says: 'I got introduced to Sanskrit verb-based semantics which I used as a tool to integrate Science and Spirituality. It was then that I understood that both had combined to unveil the face of reality. Ancient wisdom and modern methods have to hold each other's hands' (4).

There are six major sections, which have subsections that deal with the various questions that come up during the course of the conversations. The overall flow of reason is in the form of a nestled circle. The six major sections are: 'The Atheist's God', 'Nature-Man-Science', 'Mechanism of Knowledge', 'Architecture of Religion', 'The Master's Plan', and 'The Light of Perfection'. Another key feature that enhances the value of the book is the author's liberal use of diagrams to clarify essential points. For example, the six major sections of the book are presented in the form of six smaller circles that themselves make, by their close juxtaposition to each other, a bigger circle called 'Circle of Reason'. A brief chapter entitled 'Confluence at Ganges' may be considered an epilogue. The five doughty debaters disperse with mental clarity and spiritual illumination, buoyed up by the sage's suggestion to continue later on their penetrating analysis and discussions on the banks of the Ganges.

Pinaki Ganguly is a scholar of scientific as well as religious inclinations. The book is the excellent result of his rigorous and prolonged research and profound meditation on the ultimate issues of existence, that is of 'God, Light, Freedom, and Immortality', to borrow Sri Aurobindo's intuitive and envisioned terms. The bibliography, glossary of Sanskrit terms, and index add to the value of the book. *God, Science, and Reality* is a gold mine of wisdom and a must-read for modern people seeking transcendental knowledge.

N Hariharan
Madurai