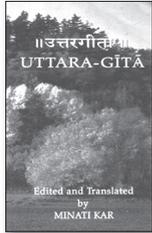


discusses the spiritual, philosophical, and nationalist strands of Swamiji's poetry, examines the themes of 'renunciation' and 'detachment' around which he weaves several of his poems, compares his metaphysical thought as well as his monistic articulations with that of classical metaphysical poets of the West and shows how his compositions are so very 'Indian' in their symbolism, imagery, and structure.

Though the text could have been helped with better copy-editing, it is a seminal work on Swami Vivekananda that makes for absorbing reading. The author reminds us that 'there is a lot of research to be done on the poetic technique, symbolism, and the use of semiotics in his poetry'. Scholars definitely need to heed this cue.

Swami Satyamayananda

Acharya, Probationers' Training Centre
Belur Math



Uttara-Gitā

Ed. and trans. Minati Kar

Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Kolkata 700 029. E-mail: rmic@vsnl.com. 2007. xvi + 88. Rs 40.

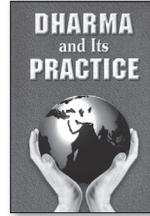
Uttara-gita is one of the three *Krishna-gitas*, the other two being the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Anu-gita*. The present book is a lucid translation of the text of the *Uttara-gita*. The text consists of a hundred and twenty-two verses spread over three chapters. The first chapter discusses the nature of the Atman using numerous simple imageries. The concepts of *śabda-brahman*, *pañcakośas*, *pañcīkaraṇa*, and the theory of evolution and dissolution of the world based on the primal sound 'Om' have been discussed. Verses nineteen to twenty-two bring home the point that there is no need for scriptures once the aspirant realizes the ultimate Reality, Brahman. This reminds one of Sri Ramakrishna's metaphor that once the contents of a letter are known there is no further use for the letter. The second chapter describes the yogic chakras, the regions of the body where they are located, and the planes of consciousness that they relate to. The final chapter summarizes the characteristics of an illumined soul.

Though brief, the *Uttara-gita* clearly explains the nature of the Atman and the method to realize it, primarily through yoga. This book serves as a supplementary text to the *Bhagavadgita*. It is a text that inspires aspirants to intensify their spiritual practices.

A Sanskrit commentary on the main text ascribed to Gaudapadacharya has also been provided. A glossary of Sanskrit terms would come in handy for those unacquainted with Indian philosophy as would the details of the seven yogic chakras taken from Tantric texts. This slim volume should be a welcome reading for all students of Indian philosophy and should act as a guide for spiritual aspirants.

Swami Narasimhananda

Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata



Dharma and Its Practice

A Vedanta Kesari Presentation

Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai
600 004. E-mail: srkmath@vsnl.com.
2008. vi + 218 pp. Rs 50.

The 1984 annual issue of *Vedanta Kesari* was a symposium on 'Dharma and Its Practice', which has in turn become this handy book. Most of the articles are authored by experienced writers or speakers who have been exposed to different world cultures. The subject matter is diversely accessed, mainly from Indian scriptures—where the concept of dharma is dealt with *in extenso*—and sporadically sprinkled with examples from other traditions.

The proper understanding and practice of dharma is considered in almost all the articles as the key to attaining integration and avoiding self-destruction at personal, social, or national levels. However, if the purpose of this book is to reach the Indian youth, who are going to live in a challenging nation that is slowly taking a leading role in different fields and where the means for effecting good or evil are reaching the population in massive doses—from cellphone to weaponry, from education to freedom of action—then injection of greater dynamism by including articles discussing contemporary ethical problems would definitely have been welcome. This consideration aside, a particularly lucid rendering of the topic is the article 'Dharma: Eternal, Universal and Vital', by Swami Sastrananda.

The book in general contains valuable material for those who wish to study dharma, especially for teachers or speakers who have to frame diverse presentations for young audiences, the segment of the population that is increasingly insisting on knowing in convincing and appealing ways what is right and what is wrong, who dictates so, and why and how is one to follow dharma and avoid adharma.

PB