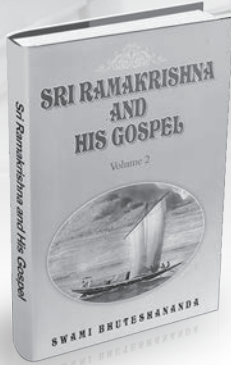


Book Reviews

FOR REVIEW IN THE VEDANTA KESARI,
PUBLISHERS NEED TO SEND US TWO COPIES OF THEIR LATEST PUBLICATION.



SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS GOSPEL VOL 2
by Swami Bhuteshananda.
Trans by Swami
Vimohananda and Dharitri
Kumar Das Gupta.

Published by Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata - 700 014. E-mail: mail@advaitaashrama.org, 2007, Hardbound, pp.552, Rs.125

Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, the 12th President of the Ramakrishna Order, conducted weekly Bengali classes on the "Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita" (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) for nearly a decade. These classes were transcribed in Bengali and brought out in book form in seven volumes. These have been translated into English and published in three volumes.

The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna has an almost stenographic record of various conversations with Sri Ramakrishna. It also gives vivid descriptions of the environment and people, which brings the scene to life in the mental eye of the reader. This, combined with the lively and illuminating words of Sri Ramakrishna makes the book exceptional.

To fully grasp the context and spirit of the conversations in the Gospel, it is necessary for the reader to have some knowledge of the social conditions of that time, some background about the people involved in the conversation, some insight into the philosophy or spiritual practice being discussed, scriptural references to the teachings, etc. These are very beautifully fulfilled by Swami Bhuteshanandaji in these books.

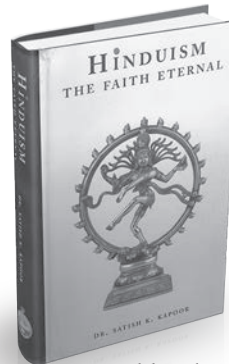
The flow of the narration follows the flow of the Gospel. So there is a repetition of topics, like in the Gospel. However, every time the same topic is dealt with, it is fresh and the reader gets additional insight, like in the Gospel. The flow is fluid and spontaneous. Not every word in the Gospel is

discussed. Thus, this is not a commentary on the Gospel. Only the topic being discussed, with some important quotations from the Gospel, is explained. However, the flow of topics is maintained. The explanations are very deep and comprehensive.

Swami Bhuteshanandaji brings in incidents from the lives of various people, whom he has met, to explain the discussions in the Gospel. This helps the reader to see how the topics in the Gospel are applicable to today's life. He also brings in quotations from Gita, Upanishads, Bhagavata, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Chandi and other Hindu scriptures and stotras to match with the ideas discussed by Sri Ramakrishna. This has the great value of bringing in the scriptural authority for the teachings in the Gospel.

Reading this book is very helpful to have a deeper understanding of The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.

GOKULMUTHU.N, BANGALORE



HINDUISM THE FAITH ETERNAL
by Dr. Satish K. Kapoor.

Published by Advaita Ashrama, 5, Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata - 700 014. E-mail: mail@advaitaashrama.org, Hardbound, pp.528, xxi, Rs.360.

Swami Shuddhidananda and Satish K. Kapoor have done the nearly impossible. They have in one affordable volume introduced The Faith Eternal in all its heteroglossic majesty to the English speaking world.

The genius of the author, Satish K. Kapoor, is evident through two examples. In pp185-86, Kapoor traces the origins of Kauai Aadheenam. This is no small feat. It is very difficult to clearly contextualize Hindu movements of such importance within two pages. In page 188 Kapoor mentions

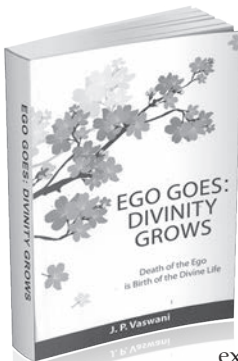
the Aghoris and comments rightly that “Majority of them [Aghoris] do not trace their lineage to any of the four hierarchical orders among the Hindus and are outside the *varna* system.” Satish Kapoor does not miss commenting on any aspect of the *sanatana dharma*. Kapoor’s research on women is worthy of being made part of women’s studies curricula the world over. After all, Hinduism’s truths are self-evident and thus, universal. This is the passage which both law-framers in our country and patriarchal satraps would do well to memorize (sic): ‘Female foeticide was not in vogue in ancient India. . . The girl. . . was invested with the sacred thread. . . the girl could choose to be a life-long student of the sacred texts [and remain single or choose to marry].’ (334)

It is doubtful whether Wendy Doniger will ever cite this single-volume self-contained encyclopedia, but both the author and the editor show their cosmopolitanism by citing Doniger for the status of women in ancient India (339).

Hinduism: the Faith Eternal should be gifted to fanatics, especially those who hate women and humanity in general. Musa Cerantonio will do well to read this book.

Swami Shuddhidananda has fulfilled his mandate well as an editor. The annotated references at the end of each chapter; the thoughtfully selected appendices, the glossary and the select bibliography at the end of the book are meticulously done. Not a single diacritical mark is wrongly used or missed.

_____ PROF SUBHASIS CHATTOPADHYAY, KOLKATA



**EGO GOES:
DIVINITY GROWS**

by **J. P. Vaswani.**

Published by Gita Publishing House, 10, Sadhu Vaswani Path, Pune – 411 001. E-mail: gph@sadhuvaswani.org Pages 136. Paperback. Price not mentioned.

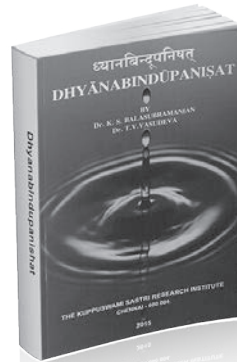
Sri Ramakrishna explains two states of ego, the ‘ripe’ and ‘unripe’. Sankaracharya retained the ‘ego of knowledge’ and Chaitanyadeva, the ‘ego of devotion’.

‘Ego Goes: Divinity Grows’ by Dada Vaswani is a study of the most common malady, the human

ego. The revered author has analysed the subject from various angles and his wisdom will serve as a useful lesson to the present generation. Ego, defined as the opinion one has about him/herself, needs to be handled with utmost care. After explaining with anecdotes and stories the book helps to realize that unrestrained ego will not let Divinity in.

Attention is drawn to our ‘obsession with the physical body’ that keeps us in bondage. The ego acts like a behemoth preventing rational thinking, ‘. . . like a cataract that blocks the inner vision’. The guru becomes the surgeon to remove the block. Often ‘. . . the sense of separation, the sense of exclusion and isolation, is what makes the ego a negative force’. The remedy is to realise that we are ‘an intrinsic part of a larger whole. . .’. Learn to ‘Be in the world but not of the world’. The selflessness of Urmila in Ramayana, taking over her husband’s *nidra* for fourteen years to enable him to serve Rama and Sita uninterrupted, is remarkable. She was also a symbol of humility.

_____ P. S. SUNDARAM, MUMBAI



DHYANABINDUPANISAT

by **Dr. K.S. Balasubramanian and Dr.T.V. Vasudeva.**

Published by The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, No.84, Thiru Vi. Ka. Road, Mylapore, Chennai – 600 004. E-mail: ksrinst@gmail.com, 2015, paperback, pp.60 + x Rs. 50.

The book mainly focuses on ‘dhyana’ (meditation) and the other essential features associated with it. A transliteration of the Sanskrit texts in Roman script has been provided for the benefit of those who are keen in knowing the text through the script. The text commences with the greatness of Meditation on Brahman, the Highest Reality, which act alone can alleviate all afflictions accrued in this world. ‘Bindu’ means a ‘drop’ or a ‘point’, but in Saiva and Sakta traditions it represents ‘sakti’ or consciousness. The subtle and all-pervasive nature of Brahman is described and yoga of meditation enables the aspirant to realize that Ultimate Self which transcends human comprehension otherwise.