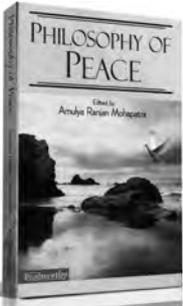


REVIEWS

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



Philosophy of Peace

Ed. Amulya Ranjan Mohapatra

Readworthy Publications, B-65,
Mansa Ram Park, Near Nawada
Metro Station, New Delhi 110 059.
Website: www.readworthypub.com.
2011. 124 pp. ₹ 495.

Humankind in the twenty-first century has everything but peace. Technology has enlarged and enriched our material life and has also intensified the turmoil in our minds. Humans have learnt to travel in outer space, though life in peace on earth is a terrible problem. The book under review, which is a compilation of articles of *Vedanta Kesari* from 1986 to 2007, published from Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, seeks to address this problem.

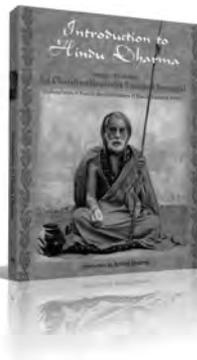
Twelve thought-provoking and scholarly articles from renowned and erudite authors have been included in this book. The authors are Swamis Sridharananda, Ananyananda, Bhavyananda, Prabuddhananda, Mridananda, Tripurananda, and Jitatananda, Dr Karan Singh, Dr Sampooran Singh, A R Mohapatra, R R Divakar, and Justice A N Ray. The subject of peace is dealt with by them from different perspectives: individual, family, social, national, and international spheres. All of them voice the same opinion, that peace can be attained only if we turn our gaze inwards and develop faith in the ultimate guiding principle of the universe.

The gist of the ideas presented is as follows: A mind at peace is in an intense state of awareness. This awareness is beyond the state of knowledge, memory, or experience. The actions resulting from such a state of awareness will impart peace. The key to world peace is an awareness to be perceived at all moments, that all life is indivisible. World peace implies a holistic vision for the solutions of social, economic, environmental, and

political problems. At the individual level cultivation of dispassion and discernment helps in maintaining peace of mind. Identification with the body-mind complex and the ego causes turmoil in the mind. By freeing oneself from the egoistic feeling of 'I and mine' one attains peace. Vedanta teaches that each of us has an unchanging core. Somehow one has to turn within to this core, which is free from all turmoil, and become established in it. There must be constant, conscious, and deliberate efforts to detach ourselves from the 'winds and tempests' and remain in our own centre. An ethical and moral life coupled with sadhanas like prayer, meditation, worship, kirtan, japa, and seva helps in this inward journey. This returning to the zone of calmness is the secret of peace and well-being. Unflinching faith in God is one of the best means for attaining peace. Philosophy and law should join hands to establish international laws, which would bring about a peaceful coexistence of all nations, politically, economically, and socially.

The book offers not only different perspectives of the philosophy of peace but it serves as a guide to show the methods towards realizing peace. It makes for informative and inspiring reading. The price is quite high but the production is excellent.

Dr Chetana Mandavia
Professor of Plant Physiology,
Junagadh Agricultural University



Introduction to Hindu Dharma

Sri Chandrasekharendra
Saraswati Swamikal; ed.
Michael Oren Fitzgerald

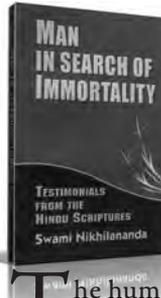
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 41
U A Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar,
Delhi 110 007. Website: www.mldb.com. 2010. xxi + 145 pp. ₹ 695.

‘When were we separate? We are always together.’ When the great saint Ramana Maharshi says this about Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamikal, one gets an idea of the latter’s greatness. One of the great Hindu religious leaders of the last century, the swami’s pure life and depth of scholarship was his greatest message to humankind. The 68th pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, Kanchipuram, the swami lived a century dedicated to the preservation and propagation of Hindu ideals and practices. The present book is a painstaking labour of love displaying a selection of the swami’s discourses in Tamil, which have been translated into English, edited, and topically arranged. The editor deserves special commendation for this marvellous work which has been culled from a transcript of more than 6,500 pages.

The basic precepts and practices of Hinduism are outlined in the book. Beginning with the concept of religion in general, the swami takes us through the principles of the Vedas. He explains the system of *varnashrama*, caste, and its place in modern society. He also explains the basics of *nyaya*, logic, and elaborates on the importance of the Puranas. Rituals form an integral part of Hinduism, but many modern Hindus are sceptical about their relevance. The swami explains the rationale behind these rituals and classifies them according to the different ashramas, stages of life. Karma as a means to attain peaceful meditation is insightfully described. The swami beautifully relates common ideas of goodness to the concept of dharma. Besides, he dilates on the role of the state in upholding religion. Many miscellaneous utterances of the swami have been given at the end of the book, enhancing the presentation. Elaborate notes, a glossary, and an index make for a comfortable reading.

An Indian edition of the original American book, this volume has an elegant layout design. It is also a pictorial biography, as different phases of the swami’s life have been captured in high quality photographs. There is a scholarly introduction by Arvind Sharma of McGill University. This book is a treasure for students of Hinduism and admirers of the swami.

Swami Narasimhananda
Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata



**Man in Search of Immortality:
Testimonials from
the Hindu Scriptures**

Swami Nikhilananda

Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004. Website: www.chennaiamath.org. 2009. viii + 152 pp. ₹ 35.

The human quest, in order to conquer death, has led to the development of religion, philosophy, humanities, and also science. Death humbles humanity and mocks at all its illusions of power. Everything crumbles before this inevitability. This quest taken up by great sages and saints finally led to the discovery of the true human nature as being beyond the body and the mind. The renowned author traces the concept of immortality in various religions and gives numerous testimonials from the Hindu scriptures. In five articles Swami Nikhilananda shows the eternal nature of the soul, its three states, and the real nature of Being.

Lucidly written, the book brings modern motifs to elucidate traditional beliefs. An appendix of quotations from the Bhagavadgita and Upanishads and an index adds to its value. The book helps one assert that death is but a phase in the jiva’s path and that one becomes immortal by ultimately knowing the Atman. An Indian imprint of the original American edition, this slim volume is helpful to all spiritual seekers and students of Indian philosophy.

Swami Narasimhananda
Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata



**Alasinga Perumal:
An Illustrious Disciple
of Swami Vivekananda**

Swami Sunirmalananda

Ramakrishna Math. 2012. 342 pp. ₹ 75.

There are many types of perfections, but Swami Vivekananda is a rare form of an all-round perfection. Swamiji is also a prototype of a perfect human. A self-effacing and dedicated servitor who identifies with such a spiritual colossus is also rare. This was Alasinga Perumal, the brightest star among the super disciples and devotees of