

Book Review

AN INTEGRATED THEORY OF THE EARTH, by S. R. N. Murthy, Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore (1987), 127 pp.

The concept of the universe emerging out of a primordial egg is no different from the modern theory of the universe starting off with a big bang 15,000 million years ago. The Vedic seers had arrived at a concept which regarded *the universe as one, and all the variety that we see around us as but different manifestations of a supreme power*. They thus perceived a central truth behind both animate and inanimate existence, and considered that the universe represented the gradual unfolding of the creative power inherent in the primordial substance. The philosophy of Hinduism had thus anticipated the basic theory of biology and physics.

Our ignorance of the subject of early Indian thought is colossal. Because of this ignorance, Indian philosophical thought is dismissed as without substance, chaotic and even barbaric. It may be that there is nothing to learn from present day India but there is undoubtedly much to learn from the ancient texts of the Indian philosophers, if only we make an earnest attempt to study and understand them. A study of the early texts and evaluation in the light of modern perception is long overdue.

S. R. N. Murthy in the booklet under review has attempted to give a glimpse of the type of knowledge stored in the ancient texts. He points to the 38 and odd names by which earth is designated and their relevance to the modern concept of the earth surrounded by envelopes of atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere. He quotes a few verses from the *Rg Veda* noted for their beauty and grandiose conception and wealth of observation of natural processes.

The book emphasizes the need for finding out the 'wellsprings of our own existence'. The author has made a general survey but what appears necessary today is a study in depth of the Vedic theory of the earth and its evaluation in the light of modern concepts. The author who in addition to being an experienced geologist, is also well-versed in Sanskrit and is acquainted with the ancient texts in original is eminently qualified to undertake such a study. Citation of original text with English translation followed by a commentary would be necessary.

Indian geo-scientists should recognize the fact that they are heirs to a tradition which is one of the oldest and which has probed into every conceivable natural phenomenon. It is our duty to explore the roots of our ancient civilisation. This will be possible if we first abandon the idea that our ancient lore is all myth and fantasy and approach the study with a genuine feeling of reverence and understanding. The present text could form an introduction to a more detailed study which must follow sooner or later.

B. P. RADHAKRISHNA

When you are in the right, you can afford to keep your temper, and when you are in the wrong, you cannot afford to lose it.

G. E. LORIMER