

Vimala Thakar

Blossoms of Friendship,
Motilal Banarsidass,
Delhi, 1975, 101 pp. Rs. 12.00

The book under review is a collection of Ten Talks by Miss Vimala Thakar and Two discussions conducted by her with young friends from the West at Mount Abu in India, in 1973. The contents of this book revolve around the point that human life is a constant search for authentic existence; and the lion-share of the book is devoted to an explanation of the complex psycho-physical factors which help man in his enquiry. The author's method is analytic, not dogmatic and authoritarian. True to the title of the book, the lectures contained in this volume have blossomed out of the friendship of a few fellow-enquirers.

The opening chapter makes a thorough analysis of the human psyche in its relation to cognition, attention, awareness and concentration. In the subsequent chapters these complex factors of the human psycho-somatic mechanism are analysed from the point of view of spiritual life. Far from making a treatise on human psychology, the author's intention is to remove the hurdles in the path of a spiritual enquirer. The concluding chapter makes a passionate call for authentic and genuine enquiry.

Chapter 11 gives a comprehensive analysis of such relevant concepts as Teacher, Master, *Guru*, *Sishya* etc. Miss Thakar's view on "*Guruship*" and its role in spiritual enquiry is a breakthrough. The author states: "an enquirer has never to hunt for a *Guru*." The whole stress is laid upon free, open, and levelheaded enquiry.

..."In spiritual life and where there is genuine enquiry, the first step is the last."

Meditation is becoming a global fashiion, if not a mania. But very often the seeker of spiritual peace is baffled and lost in the forest of many spiritual methods, techniques. *Gurus* and *Mahari-shis*. Miss Thakar would advise them not to be puzzled by these innumerable "ways and paths." Enquiry is all that matters. But one wonders what the author really means by "authentic enquiry." Even though Miss Thakar asserts that it is a "comprehensive approach", her explanation of the "how" is rather thin. Another difficulty which the reviewer came across while reading the book is the lack of systematic presentation of the material. In fact, the book suffers greatly from editorial handicaps.

What fascinates the reader most is the highly personalistic approach of sharing one's thoughts well highlighted in the book. These lectures are the fruit of deep meditation, mature reflection and creative imagination.

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