Brahmarshi Daivarata.

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He is now 80. He hails from Gokarn; a sea side place of pilgrimage on the Arabian Sea in the Karwar district of Mysore State. The deity in the hoary temple there is Mahabalesvar, with a pauranic story about it. A number of brahmin families there have continued to preserve the tradition of vedic studies and of priestly duties inspite of modernism which has invaded every nook and corner of India.

Sri Devaratji looks a Rishi with his majestic grey beard, simple dhoti and the orthodox style of wearing unsewn clothes. His broad forehead is adorned with a triple dash of grey ashes and a thumbful of Kunkum in the middle. He is neither tall nor short in stature but bears a square body which has served him will in performing all conceivable austerities including three-week fasts, and going through all Hathayogie-processes including Vajroli, to which Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a witness. Dr. Rajendra Prasad has devoted a page and a half in his autobiography to Daivaratji whom he first met in Nasik. When Dr. Prasad became the denizen of Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi Daivaratji used to stay with him whenever he visited the capital.

As is not very rare with great savants in the ancient style Daivaratji is not merely a vedic scholar but is acquainted with all the Vedangas, Yogas, Tantra Sastras, Ayurveda, Jyotisha, dancing, music and so on. He knows more than half a dozen Indian languages and can fluently make public speeches in Sanskrit, Kannada (his mother tongue) Hindi, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil. He knows Konkani, Nepali and
Daivaratji’s greatest drawback is perhaps his ignorance of English, which has certainly come in the way of his getting proper recognition by the English-dominated Universities and elite in our country. The late Dr. Vasudev Agarwal of Benares Hindu University once said that Daivaratji deserves to be nominated a National Professor for life.

Howsoever orthodox this Rishi may look, he has a very modern outlook on life. He can beat anybody in the observance of rituals and performance of Yajnas. He is often a consultant when such Yajnas are performed. But he can travel anywhere for days without any strictness about ceremonial purity of bath, food (he is of course a vegetarian), routine observance of daily poojas and so on. He keeps a daily diary. He affirms that women have a right to vedas and a Harijan has equal spiritual rights with any Brahmin. During his absence from his Gokarn ashram, it is his wife Shraddhaa who keeps the agnihotra with proper mantras.

But in what does the challenge of Daivaratji, the direct disciple of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni and the close acquaintance of Raman Maharshi, consist? In three things; 1) he has not studied anything regularly when he was serving for years Tembe Maharaj, the Yogi and his Guru Ganapati Muni. Niskamaseva, including cooking, was the role he was playing. Daivaratji declares that it is the sheer grace of the Guru which had made him what he is today. 2) He is not a Vedajna of the ordinary type who can only recite vedas faultlessly, but know very little of their meaning. He knows all the four vedas by rote and can quote parallels even if a single word or expression is mentioned. He can cogently explain and interpret the Vedas, Vedangas, Upanisads the Brahmasutras, the Geeta and prove their consistency and the running thread of the triple meaning, the superficial, the deeper one
concerning the forces and the spiritual meaning in all of them. 3) Under trance, when performing Tapas along with his Guru at Paduvet for sixteen days, he had daily revelation of new Vedic Mantras (450 in total number). The Guru took those down which he could listen distinctly and completely. He admired them and wrote an incisive and interpretative commentary, which itself is a great piece of Sanskrit literature.

The Mantras along with the commentary have now been published with English translation by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. The volume is called Chandodarshana. Mahamahopadhyaya D. V. Potdar of Poona wrote to me that after the Samhitikarana of the Vedas, two thousand years ago, nothing of this calibre and quality has appeared in India, namely Chandodarshana.

Chandodarshana is before the public of India for more than two years. I do not want more praise or blind admiration such as is bestowed on miracles or something extraordinary. We blindly and quickly believe that everything of religion, philosophy, Vedas, Shastras in India have happened only in the past and in Kaliyuga there can be nothing new. Kulapati K.M. Munshi however, when he saw Chandodarshana and met Daivaratji, exclaimed “Thank God, Bharat Mata has not yet gone barren”.

What is necessary, however, is evaluation, not a casual one by review here and there but a thorough evaluation by Universities both of Chandodarshana text as well as commentary and of the author of the text who is fortunately still living. Let me for a moment invoke in India the spirit of exploration and investigation which is abroad in western country, whether it is physics or psychology, economics or sociology. It should not escape our alert minds if we claim to be an ancient nation and yet one which wishes to catch up with the present world.