

## The spirituality of India

Judged properly, India (*Bharatha-desa*) is the holiest of all countries. The meaningful *Vedic* sacrificial rites (*yajna*) and devotional practices (*yoga*) that originated in India, as well as the way of life followed by its people, are not found in any other country or in the history of any other people. Such intensive cultivation of the spirit, such supremely useful spiritual literature, arose out of the experiences of the people of this country! It holds the very first place in this field.

The four *Vedas*, the six principal systems of philosophical vision (*darsanas*), the eighteen epics (*Puranas*), and the commentaries (*bhashyas*) of the great adepts of theory and practice all arose in India. Also, the disciplines and methods of spiritual practice expounded by the great souls (*mahatmas*), who have answered questions like the following. What is meant by life? What is the meaning of God? What transformations in the individual soul (*jivi*) take place on death?

No other place is so congenial for sages (*rishis*) and great souls as this country. Here, people have tasted the entire gamut of spiritual bliss. This country played the chief role in spreading the doctrine of nonviolence (*ahimsa*) taught in Buddhism —the land that gave birth to Buddha is India. When the spiritual experience, the essence of the scriptures of the eternal religion (*sanathana dharma*) of this sacred land is being treasured by other countries, what about the fate of those who do not realize its worth but are engaged in squeezing the essence out and making it dry?

So arise, all ye who aspire to take up the spiritual discipline. Immerse yourselves in actual practice! Strengthen your faith! Cultivate it! Make peace your secure possession! Saturate your lives with bliss! Enjoy the vision of the supreme bliss of the Self (*Atma-rama*)! Arise and delay not!