

## PERSPECTIVE

yoga sadhguru

A few years ago, when I was interviewed by an American magazine, I was asked, "Who is the most significant person in the West to have worked for human consciousness?"

Without hesitation, I replied, "Charles Darwin."

The journalist said, "But Charles Darwin is a biologist!"

I said, "Yes, but he was the first to tell people in this part of the world that it is possible to *evolve*; that life can move from one dimension of existence to another."

Charles Darwin talked of biological evolution about 150 years ago in the West. Adiyogi, the first yogi, explored a parallel line of enquiry almost 15,000 years ago in the East. According to the trajectory that he explored, the earliest forms of life were aquatic. Later, they turned amphibious and then terrestrial. Gradually, beings emerged that were half man-half animal, who morphed in time into dwarf-like human beings. When the first full-fledged human beings came forth, they were ruled by volatile impulses and emotions. Later, they learnt to restrain their tempestuous instinctual and emotional life, and grew more stable and equanimous. In the next stage, they learnt to transmute their primal urges and emotions into sweetness and ecstasy. Still later, they transcended this unconscious world of impulses and emotions altogether and turned meditative. The human being of the future, said Adiyogi, will be a fully conscious, extraordinarily capable being, endowed with the ability to explore the deepest mysteries of the universe.

The 10 stages that he delineated offered not merely a biological but an existential template. This was later absorbed into the popular religious culture of the subcontinent as the 10

# Democratic system of self-knowing

avatars or manifestations of life.

Unlike biological evolution which happens over time without our conscious participation, spiritual evolution can happen much more rapidly, Adiyogi asserted, if it is undertaken consciously. All it takes is willingness.

Down the centuries, mystics have explored fragments of human consciousness. They have found one doorway here, one doorway there. But nobody has explored *every possible doorway to human consciousness*. No one did it before Adiyogi. And no one has needed to do it since. His work remains alive for those who have the eyes to see it. His work began nearly 15,000 years ago, and centuries later, it is still alive. You cannot kill it.

He was the first to propound that we could use each and every point in our body as a pathway to freedom. His legacy is not a single method. He offered instead a mind-boggling plurality of ways to reach the ultimate.

Nothing was excluded. And no one was excluded. This prodigious system of self-knowing called 'yoga' offered a path for everyone – people of all backgrounds and persuasions, of every cultural, social, moral, ethical and ideological context. That makes him

the ultimate spiritual democrat.

He was also the first to expound spirituality as a science, not a faith (for his exposition occurred prior to the birth of any religion); as a tool, not a tenet; as a device, not as dogma. He offered technologies for transformation that have endured not because of enforcement, but because of their sheer efficacy.

To make our lives effective in any sphere of life, we turn to science and technology. But when it comes to well-being, we turn to belief, to fanciful philosophies and ideologies. What we need urgently today is a living technology, a way that works.

Adiyogi lived 15,000 years ago. But today, finally, the world seems ready to embrace the highly refined, non-sectarian science of yoga he offered. A science that can withstand the spirit of scepticism and logical enquiry. A science that is tailored to suit minds that are more questioning than they have ever been before.

It is clear that Adiyogi does not belong to the past. He belongs to the future. **S**

*Sadhguru, a yogi, is a visionary, humanitarian and a prominent spiritual leader (www.ishafoundation.org)*

