

Gauri Shankar Gupta - *Deslușind misterele vieții. Știință modernă și înțelepciune antică*, “Vasile Goldiș” University Press, Arad, Romania, 2013

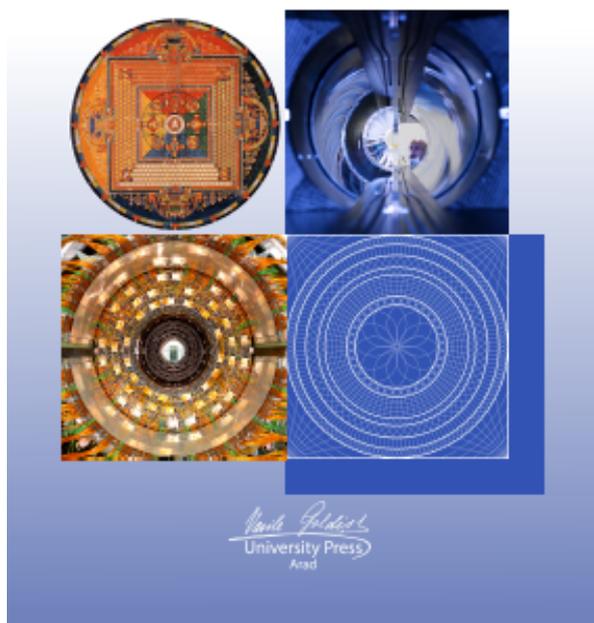
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Gauri Shankar Gupta

Deslușind misterele vieții
Știință modernă și înțelepciune antică



The translation from English to Romanian of the volume presented today, April 8, 2014, at “Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad constitutes an editorial premiere for Romania and an honor to the academic community of “Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad.

The message of this book is for us to learn from the past so as to have a prosperous future.

The entire volume has an exceptional scientific and philosophic value, providing us with knowledge on both the power of human intelligence and the mysteries of creation, by which the author and his book are included in the golden panoply of universal literature.

A particular merit of the book, due to the clarity of its style, is the fact that one can read it both in its entirety and each separate chapter!

In its content, the book promotes the Issue of Goodness, to the backdrop of an optimism based both on the results of science, and on the generally accepted moral and spiritual values of human behaviour.

It is a defender of culture in the age of the Internet.

**President of “Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad,
Prof. Dr. Aurel Ardelean,
Founding Rector**

An exceptional figure of universal culture, the author offers his readers practical solutions for finding new ways of understanding our identity and positioning, based on his profound knowledge of traditional wisdom, both Eastern and Western, providing hope in a better future.

The author of this book, Gauri Shankar Gupta, was born in a village in Rajakstan, India, and spent his childhood in the rural environment.

He obtained a master’s degree in Business Administration.

Following the remarkable results of His Excellency Gauri Shankar Gupta’s work, he has received numerous gold medals and awards of excellence.

He is a member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India.

In 1981 he joined the Indian Foreign Service, holding various positions in Belgium, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Mexico, France and the Philippines.

During his mission in France, he was an Alternate Member in the Executive Board of UNESCO. Gupta was the Ambassador of India in Mongolia, from 2003 to September 2006.

He then acted as Head of Administration in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs from October 2006 to February 2010. Then, he held the position of Ambassador of India in Hungary and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and currently he is the High Commissioner of India in Trinidad and Tobago.

The volume *Unraveling Mysteries of Life. Modern Science and Ancient Wisdom*, by Gauri Shankar Gupta – opens with a **Foreword** signed by Rector, Prof. Dr. Coralia Adina Cotoraci and University President, Prof. Dr. Aurel Ardelean, showing that „By reading the entire volume, which has an exceptional scientific and philosophical value, we come to know both the power of human intelligence and the mysteries of creation, through which the author, Gauri Shankar Gupta, and his book, *Unraveling Mysteries of Life. Modern Science and Ancient Wisdom* become part of the golden heritage of world literature”



In the **Preface** to the book (English language edition) Michael A. Cremona (Los Angeles, February 17, 2012) states that “In his fascinating book, Gupta demonstrates that the civilizations of ancient India and Greece were not without astonishing scientific and technological achievements.

As the modern world looks to the future for solutions to its problems, Gupta suggests that a look to the resources of the past may yield essential clues and helpful direction. By offering new ways of understanding who we are and where we are, based on his deep acquaintance with sources of traditional wisdom, both Eastern and Western, Gupta gives us hope of a better future.”

While talking **About the Book**, editor Péter Müller (Budapest, May 27, 2012) asserts that “The very rare and captivating feature of this book is that its language is pretty simple. He does not explain. He does not argue. He does not discuss. He does not agitate nor does he preach. He only teaches. In a way you cannot even realize. He does not want to convince, only speaks. Calmly and

precisely. Very simply, and in a sensible way with examples that even children would understand. This is the way he can tell what only few could for example: what God is Brahman.” ... “Life is eternally rich but not ‘complicated’. It is a miracle but not unrealizable and furthermore the Ultimate Truth is not incomprehensible but incredibly simple.”

In the volume *Unraveling Mysteries of Life. Modern Science and Ancient Wisdom*, the author approaches issues of human existence using philosophical means.

As the title suggests, **Part I** presents the preoccupations of modern science on: **Origin of the Universe; Power of the Empty Space; Cosmic Order; Cosmic Energy; Idea of Development; Human Health and Medical Sciences.**

In **Part II**, through ancient wisdom the author goes into the depths of the mysteries of life, with chapters on: **Who Am I; Mind and Intellect; Concept of Dharma; Law of Karma; Science of Maya and Path to Human Happiness.**

The depth of ideas and spiritual unrest present in the book are prefaced by two philosophical texts:

“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. If you realize that you have enough, you are truly rich.”

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

after which T. S. Eliot skeptically wonders: “Where is the Life we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”

In the content of the book, which opens with the “Origin of the Universe”, the author states: “Creation has been the greatest puzzle of all times. The mysteries surrounding the origin, the nature and the functioning of the Universe have been a subject of immense curiosity and fascination since antiquity”.

The mysteries on the origin, nature and functioning of the universe comprise a lot of unanswerable questions.

The Universe is the source and scene of our entire existence. The Planet originates in the Universe. The entire Universe is a miracle shrouded in mystery.

Vedic wisdom has answers to the puzzles of creation.

Vedic literature equates Universe to **Brahman**. The word is derived from the Sanskrit root “brih”, which means “to grow great, to enlarge or to spread like a net”. He is eternal, perfect, infinite, described in the Upanishads and defined as Universe. **Brahman** is the absolute truth. He created the perishable nature, then the **imperishable soul**, the entire universe and time. The cosmic order.

In Greek wisdom, we encounter evident similarities. Thus, in **Plato’s** (427 BC – 347 BC) *Republic*, the *Being* or *Demiurge*, similar to Brahman, is the eternal higher reality. Plato states that the Universe was created by divine craftsmanship.

In essence, ancient Greek wisdom on the origin of Universe is similar to Vedic thought.

The Universe is represented by God (Brahman in the Vedic writings), as the source and cause of all there is. As such, there are limits to human senses and intellect in knowing the mysteries of life.

In **Power of the Empty Space**, after the author speaks about the vital importance of space for human existence, he shows that “In fact this empty-looking space is the most intelligent part of our universe and a key to the creation”, as in the process of creation of the universe, space (or ether) was the first element created by Brahman.

After creating space, it was possible to create air, fire, water and earth. (Although the air cannot be seen, life would be impossible without it!).

As such, the existence of universe depends on this empty-looking space which surrounds us.

The Order of Creation is another fascinating moment in reading this book.

According to old Vedic writings explained in the “**Origin of the Universe**”, the entire creation – moving and non-moving, conscious or non-conscious – originates in one source. They call it Brahman.

“After the creation of the perishable nature, the Brahman with His internal energy created the non-perishable soul or spirit”. [1] The order in the Universe is attributed to Brahman, with the same conclusions as the science of the future.

Cosmic Energy is represented by the author through “fire as the source of cosmic energy”, “Sun as a visible symbol of fire”, “the Sun as the source of life”, “*Pranic energy*” (the Sanskrit word ‘prana’ is a combination between two syllables (*pra* and *na*) which together mean “force in constant motion”, that is, “breath” (a combination between energy and breath), “temperatures and human life”.

Therefore, the **Sun**, as a visible symbol of the fire element, constitutes the center of life and consciousness. The entire solar system gravitates around the Sun. Heat, light and energy are its fundamental properties. No movement can be conceived without energy.

The **Idea of Development**, with all the questions it asks: What is development? How do we measure it? What are the yardsticks? What is human development? etc., starts with a quote for **Socrates**, who said: „ He is richest who is content with the least, for contentment is the wealth of nature”. [2]

Another word of wisdom, this time from Plato, opens the chapter on “**Human Health and Medical Sciences**”: “The greatest mistake physicians make is that they attempt to cure the body without attempting to cure the mind; yet mind and body are one and should not be treated separately”. [3]

Health is the most important aspect of our day-to-day existence.

The balance between body, mind and soul is the key to good health.

Medicine is miraculous: our body has over 100 million cells; there are over 100 million neurons in our brain; each second, 1.5 million blood cells are destroyed in our body.

Thousand of miracles occur in our body each day, in constantly harmonious way, inducing a self-healing process.

In this modern era, biological and medical sciences have developed a multitude of new technique and **thousands of drugs**.

Causes of disease (body ailments) are multiple:

- The inherited genes are the first element of health. The quality of genes depends on the parents, fetal growth during pregnancy, the nourishment provided by the mother, the quality of air and water. After birth, the quality of food, water and air ensures health nourishment through a well-balanced diet with whole grains, fruit, milk and dairy products and vegetables – which are easily assimilated by the body.

The human being is made of physical body, human mind and soul – “healthy mind in a healthy body”. Human breath or prana, absorbs cosmic energy and transforms it into body energy, **clean air therapy** being well appreciated.

The causes of disease (which can diminish the self-healing process) include: insufficient nutrition; excessive emotions; nervous breakdowns; hypertension; negative thinking. Any imbalance is a cause of disease.

Modern health sciences offer new diagnostic techniques, surgical techniques, new drugs, which have led to a veritable drug industry (which may be harmful to health...).

Overspecialization has increased the distance between illness and treatment.

Excessive and routine prescription of antibiotics weakens the immune system of the body. The increase in the number of ill people constitutes a profit for pharmaceutical companies and physicians, but (out of interest) this is never mentioned.

Illness has become a source of stress and depression, both for the ill and for their families.

This is why, the author says, new practices must be complemented by **ancient medical practices**.

Our ancestors understood that the **human body** is an indivisible whole, consisting of: body, mind, consciousness and soul. Thoughts and emotions have amazing powers in self-determination.

Ancient medical practices were based on analyzing the constitution of the human body, on the medical value of plants, herbs, minerals and detailed surgical techniques.

Health is defined by balance (in the body) between mind, senses and soul – in an optimal state.

According to ancient writings (since 1500 BC), the human body is a reflection of the universe or cosmos. In Christianity, man is seen as a microcosmos.

Fundamental elements constituting nature and human body are: space, air, fire, water and earth. Ether / space is represented by hearing; air by touch; water by taste; earth by smell.

In addition, the human body has 4 subtle elements: mind, intellect, ego and soul.

All illnesses of the body result from the imbalance between them. Some factors influencing health can be: the rain season, insufficient sleep, foods, hot air, daytime sleep, sweets (in excess), springtime (!).

Thus, human suffering increases due to the precarious state of health.

Disease can be prevented through healthy living and correct thinking, as well as by capitalizing on the heritage of ancient medical practices to benefit humanity.

These findings conclude the first part of the book.

Part II of *Unraveling Mysteries of Life. Modern Science and Ancient Wisdom* continues, in the chapter **Who Am I**, to delve deeper into the knowledge of human being through a “new analysis of the human body, senses, intellect, mind and soul” – which constitute the essence of this chapter. Scientific explanations are provided to prove the existence of the human soul.

Today, the most influential answers to the question “Who am I?” come from modern science, and the answers modern science gives are somewhat materialistic. We all perceive ourselves as conscious individuals, but, according to modern cognitive science, consciousness is nothing but a byproduct of the biochemical activity in the brain. Matter, if arranged in a sufficiently complex way in the brain, produce consciousness. Thus, matter is essential. At the time of death, when the brain’s biochemical activity of the brain ceases, consciousness ceases as well.

So what are we really? According to the vision highlighted above, we are machines made of molecules. Not only that, but we are machines made of molecules and in competition with one another for survival.

Through questions the author examines on the human behavior and existence in his exciting book, we outline the portrait of a true citizen of the world.

The author is very well informed on the issues and challenges faced by human society in the 21st century. He has vast knowledge on modern science and intellectual developments. Nevertheless, he also knows the wisdom of the past. Moreover, this knowledge is not narrow, being based not only on the vast reservoirs of India’s Vedic tradition, but also on the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers. Gupta thus has the training to address an international audience of intellectuals, theologians and political leaders, regarding the nature of modern issues and the path to practical solutions. The solutions presented by Gupta are based on the best that modern science and ancient wisdom have to offer.

The chapter on **Mind and Intellect** analyzes the functioning of the human mind and intellect, their powers and limits, as well as their role in human behavior.

In **Law of Karma**, the law of action and reaction, the author analyzes its functioning and complexities through examples from our daily life, seeking to answer questions referring to human suffering; on destiny or providence, the laws governing human action etc.

Maya Science is a chapter examining the ancient Indian concept of **maya** (a Sanskrit word composed of two syllables “ma” and “ya” (“ma” means “no” and “ya” means “that”, thus “not what you think” or “not what you perceive”)) to explain the nature and functioning of the world and the way in which creativity is determined by **maya**.

“The physical world around us is neither stable nor permanent. It is in ceaseless motion driven by the magical tricks of *maya*. *Maya* is a power of Brahman created to put all worldly activities in an ‘auto-pilot mode’. It is a veil of ignorance giving rise to illusion.

The veil of ignorance is a natural attribute in all living beings arising from the three attributes of physical nature: **goodness, passion and darkness**. These three attributes bind the human soul into human entity and give rise to desires.” [4]

Thus, the wisdom of the science of **maya** is an important step towards understanding the true nature of the world, the magical functioning, the nature of human desires, the role of desires in the creation of *maya* and the purpose of human life.

Path to Happiness is the last chapter in the book, which opens with two philosophical dictums on happiness:

“The secret of happiness, you see, is not found in seeking more, but in developing the capacity to enjoy less”.

Socrate

„Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence”.

Aristotel

The chapter tries to find out whether happiness can be attained following the current life style, suggesting that the wisdom of our ancestors can offer us some suggestions to attain real and long-lasting happiness in life.

In simple words, happiness can be described as a state of contentment. The first and most important requirement for an individual seeking long-lasting happiness – the author says – it to maintain his body in a very good state of health. The body is the host of our soul. It is the vehicle of our journey through life. An important step in our path to happiness is constituted by understanding the limits of human senses.

Although the body is the host of the soul, the existence of the body depends entirely on the **soul**, which is immortal.

This exceptional book, *Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence*, by His Excellency Mr. Gauri Shankar Gupta ends with the author’s **Acknowledgements, Glossary of Words and Bibliography**.

In his **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**, the author confesses: “The mysteries of life have been a perennial source of curiosity. Like many others, I have been contemplating on these riddles of creation, too. Therefore, the journey culminating to this book has been the most enchanting and enriching experience of my life.” [5]

Due to the Author’s extremely clear and concise style, the book is a unitary whole but, at the same time, each chapter can also be read separately.

By way of conclusion, we can assert that the message of this book of universal and contemporary philosophy is for us to learn from the past, so as to have a prosperous future. The wisdom of building on mankind’s scientific and cultural accumulations of the past and treasuring the inexhaustible wealth of human intelligence by knowledge of the two cultures – Indian and Greek – may contribute to the natural and spiritual progress of current society, in the new civilization of humanity.

References

[1] Gauri Shankar Gupta, *Deslușind misterele vieții. Știință modernă și înțelepciune antică*, Ed. “Vasile Goldiș” University Press, Arad, 2013, p. 116

[2] Idem, p. 177

[3] Idem, p. 201

[4] Idem p. 373 – 374

[5] Idem p. 425