

spirit and philosophy of language; he is unable to face the core-problem, the metaphysical problem of the existence of God, not to speak of solving the problem. He stops short at examining the theistic reasoning without going further to examine its objective foundation. He is unable to find any absolute value for the theist way of regarding things because his philosophy prevents him from grounding it in the absolute.

A. Aranjaniyil.

*Kewal Krishan Mittal,*

**Materialism in Indian Thought,**

Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publications, 1974,  
336 pp; Rs. 50.00

A characteristic note of contemporary Indian philosophical thought is the growing awareness that sufficient emphasis has not been placed in the past on matter and the material world, especially in view of the urgent need for material progress in the modern world. Kewal K. Mittal, in this book, explores the reasons for this neglect and tries to reconstruct the specifically Indian type of 'materialism' that was part of the various schools of the Indian tradition.

In the recent past Indian philosophy has been almost identified with Vedanta and that too the spiritualist non-dualism of Sankara who made a negative attitude to the world his starting point. This was a sort of rationalization of the lack of material progress in India in order to avoid foreign ridicule and criticism, and also to link Indian philosophy to the classical philosophy of Plato, Plotinus and others. According to the author, the self-flattering preconception of Indian thought had a wider and truer understanding of life and of the world and this led to a certain lack of self-criticism. In the present awareness of the need to revindicate the importance of matter some have tried to accommodate matter within the framework of a spiritualist philosophy, while others consider materialism an independent system parallel to spiritualism. But to consider materialism a complete philosophy would be as erroneous as an exclusive emphasis on the spirit. To explain solely in terms of material conditions everything moral, religious and philosophical as Marxists do, will not be true to Indian philosophical history either. By materialism the author means only the empirical, realistic and rational acceptance of the world without seeking an escape from it in a transcendental intuitionism or idealism or phenomenism.

Mittal makes an extensive study of the ancient materialist schools of India comparing the opinions of various authors on this issue. There is no extant text of any ancient Indian materialist school. All that we know of such a materialist school are derived from the references to it by its critics who called it by various names like Chārvakas (eaters), Lokāyatas (worldly), and Nāstikas (nihilists) which were probably nicknames. The followers of this school seem to have accepted sense experience alone as a valid source of knowledge; thought everything to be made up of elements; regarded wealth and enjoyment alone as goal of men; denied after-life and the distinction between soul and body; and took consciousness as a product of combination of elements. Buddhists considered the system serious enough to be worthy of the study of 'brahmins', the wisemen. Charvakas, evidently, did not reject inference and reasoning. Though they rejected Scripture they did not exclude ordinary testimony. Charvaka ethics though anti-supernatural and this-worldly, considered happiness of the whole life-time the ideal of right living.

Examining the various stages and schools of ancient Indian thought the author finds that materialistic naturalism was an integral part of most of the schools. The Vedic thinkers generally derive the origin of the world from the splitting up of the primeval material principle, the cosmic egg, or the golden germ. The Vedic hymns constantly ask from gods material goods like children and cattle for a blessing; sacrifices were offered for this purpose. Though the Upanishads are generally about the constant search for the Atman, the absolute reality, there is also emphasis on the material world, the field of sense experience. They sometimes even identify Brahman with the material world. The author tries to show that both Jainism and Buddhism in spite of their non-naturalistic and spiritualistic ideals of liberation were realistically aware of the material aspect of man's life in the world. The orthodox systems of Indian philosophy, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta, are elaborately discussed in this context. There is no doubt that for all of them the final happiness of man is a suprasensuous one. But they all do also pay attention, in varying degrees, to man's mundane existence, the validity and value of sense experience, and its role in the attainment of man's final liberation. This is particularly true of Nyaya, Vaisesika and Samkhya schools which do not generally recognize a God, but attempt to explain man taking factors falling within man's experience. There is no definite condemnation of a life of pleasure, and surely there is a promise of emancipation for those who come to know the substance and categories of existence, the ways and means of knowledge, and the rules of debate. Though Samkhya presents Purusha as a detached and transcendental self, it ascribes predominance to Prakriti, the material principle. Some of the Mimamsa philosophers emphasize a spiritual experience of the word, especially of Scripture as the ideal. But the majority of them

maintain a common sense view of experience, of the objective world, of the knower and of knowledge itself. All knowledge, either direct or indirect is object-oriented. Vedanta, especially Sankara's non-dualism, affirms the word to be unreal may best justify the spiritualist label given to Indian philosophy in general. But Sankara's is only one school of Vedanta. Ramanuja strongly affirms the objective reality of the world as postulated by the nature of consciousness itself. All later Vedantins belong to one or other of the theistic schools, Saivism, Saktism and Vaishnavism all of which affirm the reality and coexistence of God, souls and the world. The world is a real creation of God.

What the author proves is that all systems and schools of Indian philosophy take proper note of the reality and value of the material world and its meaning for the experience and life of man. But, whether this much is enough to designate it as "materialism" remains doubtful. But the book, however, brings out and emphasizes a point that is often neglected in the study of Indian tradition.

J.B.C.

*William E. Phipps,*

**Recovering Biblical Sensuousness,**

London: The Westminster Press, 1975, 192pp; \$ 7.95

This volume is an attempt to discover some of the neglected aspects of the Biblical Religion. William Phipps sets out to show that, contrary to the opinions often held, the Bible does not emphasise the other-worldly at the expense of the natural. The goal of the authentic Christian personality development is shown to be the dynamic harmonization and humanization of the supernatural and natural, in all of their reciprocal relationship.

This book is divided into three major parts. Part one discusses two expressions of Hebrew holism: Dance in general and song in particular. Chapter one traces the history of religion and dance, and concentrates on how Semetic culture is related to the emotions and to the motions of the body. The concept of love is studied in what is perhaps the most interesting essay "the plight of song of songs", the most sensuous book in the Holy Scripture, where the author tries to show how the O.T. can enlighten the modern mind on the problems of relations of man and woman.

Part two, which centres on the N.T., examines certain important affectional themes related to the humanity of Jesus. "Aspects of Jesus' personality" offers some useful insights into the personality of Christ, showing how the Gospels present a full portrait of a fellow human being who could weep, laugh and love.