

S. P. Kanai, *An Introduction to Dev Dharma*, 1969, pp. 176. *The Ethics of Devatma*, Moga, Dev Samaj Prakashan, 1974, pp. 350, Rs. 40/-; *The philosophy of Religion*, Lotus Publishers, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 480, Rs. 150/-.

Dev Atma (1850-1929) is the spiritual name of Shri Shiv Narayan Agnihotri, who founded the Dev Dharma. It is an attempt to apply the scientific method to religion. *An Introduction to Dev Dharma*, tries to show how Dev Dharma from Brahma Dharma, Vedic Dharma, Aurobindo Dharma, and the traditional religions such as Buddhism and Jainism.

*The Ethics of Devatma* stands apart from the monolithic image of modern Indian philosophy, which turned around the schools of Vedantism - Absolutistic or Theistic, with the total elimination of philosophers of dissent. In this book the reader will discover a new world of philosophy unexplored by writers on 19th century Indian philosophy. The philosophy of Devatma is extraordinarily simple. It is naturalistic, dialectical, scientific, evolutionary, developmental, optimistic, responsible, and altruistic. Devatma's is not a theistic ethics, it is naturalistic. Hence a clear dissent from the spiritualistic trend of contemporary Indian thought is markedly evident in every page of the book.

*The Philosophy of Religion* makes an attempt to bring out the philosophic and religious foundation of modern Indian naturalistic religion known as Devadharma. Religions are said to play a major role in securing world peace. But in concrete which religion can help man to prevent war, to remove his sufferings, to secure healthy interpersonal relations to meet the challenge of evil passions in him? According to the author none of the world religions, except *Devadharma*, the new naturalistic religion expounded by Dev Atma, can bring real peace to mankind. The theistic and absolutistic religions provide only runaway solutions by asking man to be detached, apathetic and indifferent to the problems of this world of *maya* and meditate on God and soul.

The book has seventeen chapters. The main purpose of the book is to give a detailed account of a naturalistic reconstruction in the philosophy of religion. There were philosophers in the West who worked on the assumption that there can be religion within the bounds of scientific method. Augustus Comte substituted 'Religion of Humanity' in the place of 'Religion of God'. John Dewey, Wieman, Huxley and S. Alexander also tried to

reconstruct the concepts of deity and soul in evolutionary and naturalistic terms. In India, a thinker who rose above the traditional intuitive and mystic approach to religion was Devatma. He took the path of reconstructing philosophy of religion on empirical and naturalistic premises as discovered by science of his time and his own investigations in the world of values. He scissored of the supernatural connotation of the concepts of deity, soul and *moksha* and placed them in naturalistic matrix and built a fresh magnificent edifice of evolutionary religion in scientifically verifiable descriptions and called it *Deva Dharma*. It claims superiority in its truth over the theistic and absolutistic religions for its unconditional commitment to scientific method of discovery and criterion of truth. Hence the book is very much polemic in character. Coming from a land of very strong spiritual tradition, the book offers some challenging material for serious and reflective reading.