

## BOOK-REVIEW

Satyavan P. Kanal *Nirishwarvada EK Adhayain* (Deva Samaj Publicarions, Mega, Punjab, 1973 ) pp. 240, Rs. 15/-.

Professor Satyavan P. Kanal is the author of a number of books in English and Hindi. *Nirishwarvada* is an exposition of atheism in Indian and Western philosophy. This book, written in simple and lucid Hindi, makes a very pleasant reading because the general impression is that Indian philosophy is theistic.

*Nirshwarvada* is written from the point of view of the philosophy of Devadharma. And to understand *Nirishwarvada* it is essential to understand the philosophy of Devadharma. Devadharma is an atheistic religion which regards scientific method as the only way of acquiring knowledge. Professor Kanal says in *Nirishwarvada* that scientific method (P 127) "is the only method which can establish the existence of something external".

Professor Kanal tackles the problems of existence of God from all possible angles. He divides the book into four parts. In the first part he deals with the history of atheism and shows how Indian philosophy is essentially atheistic. We wish that the account had been more detailed on this topic. This shortcoming is more glaring with regard to Western philosophy where he limits his study of atheism to Existentialism and Analytic philosophy. Professor Kanal offers a new interpretation of Indian philosophy. According to him, Indian philosophy is soul-centred and not God centred. He shows that out of the six orthodox schools, in the first five, moksa is not identification with God. Consequently Professor Kanal concludes that God is a minor key in Indian philosophy. The study of these schools shows that, in the original sutras, either God is not mentioned or arguments are presented to refute his existence Thus Nyaya and Vaisesika, in the original sutras, do not mention God nor do we find a mention of God in the original texts of the Sankhya. And Yoga is more of a discipline of the body. Moreover the

fact that it is associated with Sankhya shows that the aim of life is not identification with God. Thus in Indian Philosophy, God is either not mentioned or arguments are advanced to refute His existence.

The II part deals with the historical arguments with regard to the existence of God. Each argument is dealt with at full length and the criticisms are offered in detail; throughout the common reader is kept in view. The technical language has been rendered into everyday language. The author accepts the philosophical position that existence of God can neither be proved nor disproved. But since the theists have tried to prove the existence of God consequently he claims that his arguments are valid against the theists.

The III part deals with the method and broad conclusions of science. Scientific method has been so far the best method for acquiring knowledge. The theists themselves accept scientific knowledge as a true model of knowledge. Professor Kanak has shown that scientific knowledge does not make room for the acceptance of God. This is so because the essence of scientific method is verification and the existence of God cannot be verified. All arguments, according to Professor Kanak, either proceed from empirical facts or from the analogy of empirical facts to the supernatural. But no empirical fact requires for its explanation, the acceptance of a fact other than empirical. Analogical argument is ordinarily very weak but it becomes logically useless when we proceed from the natural to the supernatural.

Part IV tackles with question of the origin and the persistence of belief in God. Here the theories of Freud and Feuerbach, which show primarily the emotional root of the belief in God, are discussed. The origin of belief, in the existence of God, is explained in terms of men's frustrations in life. It is held that since man has certain frustrations which are beyond his tolerance he seeks refuge in God. The reason for the persistence of this belief, according to Professor Kanak, is our primitive mode of thinking. Man has not yet developed the scientific outlook. And the scientific outlook will result in the disappearance of the belief in God.

This book is the first full length study of the atheistic case in Hindi literature. It deals with the subject of God from the

historical, logical, scientific and sociological points of view. Thus it can claim an important place in literature on atheism in terms of its comprehensiveness. It is recommended both for the students of philosophy as well as for the layman.

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#### BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

- Sai Baba and the Hindu Theory of Evolution :**  
C. Balasingham, Macmillan & Co. 1974, pp 72 Rs. 18/-
- Jainism :** Colatta Caillata and Others, Macmillan & Co. 1974, pp 92 Rs. 10/-
- Principia Axiologica :** G. Sukumaran Nair, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1969, pp 96, Rs. 10/-
- Linguistic Philosophy and Other Essays :** S. H. Divatia Good Companions Publishers, Baroda, 1975, pp 132 Rs. 27-50
- The Swami and the Comrade :** A Hindu - Marxist Dialogue, K. K. Roy, Intertrade Publication, ( India ), Calcutta, 1974, pp 193 Rs. 64/-
- Pre-Sankara Advaita Philosophy :** Sangam Lal Pandey Darshan Peeth, Allahabad, 1974, pp 478, Rs. 80/-