

# *God in Indian Philosophy*

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## **Introduction**

In the pre-scientific period before the 17th century A.D. science and philosophy were not differentiated and men of genius concerned with understanding the universe, called philosophers, did both activities together. They formulated theories in physics, biology, psychology as well as speculated about the nature of the universe, God and soul. However, their primary concern was to examine the fundamental beliefs about universe, God and soul to see if they would stand logical scrutiny. The aim of philosophy is to lift foundational beliefs from their intuitional and / or traditional level to a level of critical understanding. It tries to clarify them and seeks to find out if they can be supported by reason. It is a method of logical analysis of concepts and rational evaluation of beliefs. So philosophers represent the reason at its best. With the invention of scientific method in the 17th century, sciences have their own men of genius in a separate category from philosophers, though both may join hands at the highest conceptual level. This is true of India, as it is of the rest of the human world. Indian geniuses in pre-scientific period were Indian philosophers. It is they who built up systems of beliefs concerning universe, God and man. The Indian genius is best represented by great thinkers of the schools of Indian philosophy - Buddhism, Carvaka, Jainism, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta and DevDarsana.

The ancient and medieval Indian philosophy is divided in two groups - orthodox and heterodox. There are schools of Indian philosophy which accept the authority of Vedas. They are called the orthodox schools. The six schools, namely, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta, constitute the orthodox philosophy. There are other schools of Indian philosophy which do not accept the authority of the Vedas. They are called heterodox schools. The three schools-Carvaka, Jainism and Buddhism-

constitute heterodox philosophy. These nine schools constitute the Hindu genius up to the medieval period. Except for Dev Darsana, the rest of Indian philosophers in modern period i.e. in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, only reinterpret, deepen or modify and reconstruct the Vedanta metaphysics. Thus the ten schools can be said to constitute the main types of Indian philosophy up-to date.

### **1. The Carvaka Darsana**

We will take heterodox schools for they are the oldest of the Indian schools of philosophies. Carvaka is one of the most ancient philosophies of India. Some go so far as to count it as the oldest and adduce, among others, the following reasons in support of their opinion. It is a fact that all other schools, in their respective systems, try to challenge the truths established by this school, thus admitting its priority. It is also a fact that the word 'Darsana' in its primary sense, means perception. In its second sense it means the Sastra which is as good an authority as perception, the scholars maintain that the word 'Darsana' originated with the followers of Brihaspati, the first founder of this school of materialism. This school is not only as old as Indian philosophy, but it also occupies an important place in Indian thought, so that Sankara, the master Vedantist, finds it necessary to meet the challenge of this school in his Brahma-Sutra.

This school regards the Universe as uncreated and self regulative in character. These fundamental tenets of this school are accepted by every one of the ten philosophies of India. Whereas this school regards matter as uncreated, some others regard souls also as uncreated. God as the creator of matter and souls is absent from schools of Indian philosophy.

The self-regulative character of the events in the universe is accepted by all other schools of Indian philosophy through their doctrine of Karma. Further this school admits two sources of knowledge-perception and inference. \*

*\*Earlier Carvakas deny the validity of inference but some later Carvakas like Puranda argue that inference is valid in regard to perceptual world but is not valid in regard to supersensible world. (Sinha, J.N. History of Indian Philosophy Vol 3 P. 239-40)*

These two sources remain the primary sources of knowledge also with many other Indian schools of philosophy like Nyaya, Vaishesika, Sankhya, Buddhist and Jain schools.

On the basis of this theory of knowledge, the school of Carvaka rejects God. God, by definition, is not given in perception. Again, no conclusion or inference drawn from our perceptions can establish the existence of God. All inference from perceptual experience admits of something perceptual. If I see smoke, I can infer fire, since in the past experience, it is found that these two go together. A causal link has been found between fire and smoke in the past and hence from smoke I can infer fire. But no such link has been perceived in the past, between events in the world and God. Hence we cannot infer the existence of God from events of the world. The Carvaka position is that since the existence of God cannot be established by man's rational way of grounding beliefs on perception and inference, God has no place in man's philosophy. No rational test verifiable by perception can be devised which can establish God, hence there is no God.

## **2. The Jain Darsana**

The Jain Darsana is the second heterodox school. This school claims hoary past. The Jainas recount the names of twenty-four teachers (tirthankaras) through whom their faith is believed to have come down from unknown antiquity. The first of these teachers was Rasabhadeva. The last was Vardhamana, also styled Mahavira. He is said to have lived in the sixth century B.C. during the time of Gautama Buddha. The teacher who immediately preceded Vardhamana was Paravanathe, who lived in the 9th century B.C. Paravanthe's predecessor Aristanemi is said to have died 84,000 years before Mahavira's Nirvana. This shows how atheism flourished in India from its pre-historic past and is native to our Indian genius.

The word 'Jina' etymologically means conqueror. It is the common name applied to the twenty-four teachers, because they have conquered all

passion (raga and dvesa) and have attained liberation. The Jainas do not believe in God. They adore the tirthankaras who were once in bondage but became, through their own efforts, free.

The Jainas hold that the Universe consists of animated (Jiva) and inanimated (Ajiva) substances and they are uncreated and eternal. Soul is one form of Jiva. The law governing the becoming and disappearance of things is the law of Karma. Jainas do not require God as a creator, for the Universe consists of Jiva and Ajiva substances which are eternal. They do not need God as governor, for the law of Karma is eternal and works automatically.

Jaina literature is strewn with criticism to show that all arguments to establish the existence of God are fallacious. We have no evidence, say the Jaina thinkers, that there was a time when there was no universe. For all we know, it has always been there. If so, the question of the creator of the universe does not arise.

Again, there is no evidence to establish the general principle that every thing is made. Apart from man's manufactured things, which is infinitesimal part of the universe, things come into existence and go out of existence by law of Karma. A forest tree is not made as table is made. It is not a conscious thing but still it grows in an organised pattern by itself without any conscious agent doing anything for it. It cannot be said that God is invisible working in a tree. This could be said after God's existence is established independently of such instances, otherwise the reasoning becomes circular. It is crude anthropomorphism to think that everything is made or grows by some conscious agency.

Jaina refutation of God belief is best given in details in the great Jaina text Mallisena's Syadvadamanjare (pp. 24-35) and Gunaratna's Tarkarahasyadipika. One can also profitably consult Saddarsana samgraha, and Saddarsana samuccaya, pp. 115-124 and Sastraidpka, pp 50-54 Prof. J.

N. Siahn summarizes their arguments in his book, *Indian Philosophy Vol. II*. PP. 266-273.

### **3. The Buddha Darsana**

The third heterodox school is Buddhism. There is no truth in the belief that Buddha was silent on the question of the existence of God. Buddha denied the authority of Vedas, challenged animal sacrifice, caste system and Brahmanic tyranny in denying knowledge to other castes. Such a crusader could not be supposed to be silent on issue of God, for, his whole philosophy repudiates the idea of God. Buddha holds to the universality of the law of change. When the law of change is universal, there can be no change less God. Buddha holds to the law of causation. When law of causation is universal, there can be no uncaused entity called God.

Buddha holds that there is no such thing as substance. All that exists is aggregate in ceaseless change. When there cannot be substance, there can be no God. Thus every major doctrine of Buddha cuts at the root of God. Buddha's eight-fold path of Nirvana contains no reference to meditation on or involvement with God.

Buddha's teachings are contained in Tripitakas or three baskets of teaching. These three canonical works are: Vinaya-pitaka which deals with rules of conduct; Suta-pitaka which contains sermons with parables; and Abhidhamma pitaka, which comprise Buddha's treatment of philosophic problems. It is important to note that there is no mention of God in any of these most authoritative texts of Buddha's teachings. The best repudiation of theism is to show that events-physical, social, moral and spiritual-are autonomous of God in their working. If I can explain the theft in my house by coming to know to the thief, the introduction of a ghost as an explanation is self-condemned. Buddha shows the Universe to be self-explanatory and thereby theism is self-condemned.

Ashvaghose is one of the greatest philosophers of Buddhism and the first systematic exponent of Mahayana school of Buddhism. He is the famous author of *Buddha Carita*, a work of great poetical excellence. In this authoritative book on the life and teachings of Buddha, he quotes the arguments which Buddha gave against belief in God.

One of the arguments of Buddha is that if God is omnipotent and all good, there can be no evil in the world. To say that God is omnipotent is to say that he is all the power there is and no power exists outside or besides him, and hence all movement of things and actions of men are His actions. Since he is all good, all actions are good. But there is evil in the form of the sea of suffering around us Hence there can be no God. Buddha argues against Brahman too. If Brahman is said to be out of relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any reasoning. Further, how can we know that anything unrelated to every other thing exists at all. The whole universe is a system of relations. We know nothing that is, or can be, unrelated. How can that which depends on nothing and is related to nothing produce things which are related to one another and depend for their existence on one another. After Buddha some of his greatest thinkers, like Nagarjuna, refute the arguments for the existence of God. Prof. J. N. Sinha refers to the following Buddhist literature refuting belief in God-  
Dhighanikaya Pathikasutta III: 1. Tevija-Sutta, Dhighanikaya, 1.12.15: Kevatta-Sutta 11, Majjhimanikaya;  
Brahmani mantikasutta 1.5.9: Samyuttan ikaya, Abhidarmakosavyakhya, pp. 171-174 and Pancastikaya Samayasara, p.62. One can as well consult P. Lakshmi Narasu's book: *The Essence of Buddhism* (p.456-57) and *Sarvasiddhanta Sarasamgraha*.

#### **4. Sankhya & Yoga Darsana**

Thus all the three ancient heterodox schools of Indian philosophy reject the idea of God. We now consider orthodox schools. They all accept the

authority of Vedas (except Ramanuja) and yet reject God. Let us first take Sankhya. It is the oldest orthodox school. It was founded by Kapila in 500 B.C. It holds that the Universe consists of prakriti and purusa. The world of embodied existence that we know is the result of the evolution of prakriti due to the presence of purusa near it. Prakriti, the primordial matter, is constituted by three elements : Sattva is that aspect of primordial matter which contains the potential for intelligence; rajas for energy; and tamas for mass or inertia. In the state of avyaktas, there was equilibrium. When this equilibrium was disturbed, the world, as we know it, evolved. Our buddhi (intelligence) ahamkara (ego-consciousness), mana (mind) the five jnanendriyas or sense organs, the five karmendriyas or motor organs, etc. are evolved from Prakriti. Thus Sankhya contains serious potentials for a materialistic philosophy. No wonder Sankara persistently characterised it as but Acetana-karana-Vada, the doctrine of an unconscious first cause and looked upon it as his main philosophical rival.

And prakriti is, in its intrinsic nature, inanimate. It is clear that Sankhya school considers evolution of living and intelligent beings from inanimate power of matter.

In the Sankhya-Karika it is definitely stated that God's existence cannot be proved. In a later work entitled Sankhya Parvachana, arguments against the existence of God are given. One of the arguments in this work is that knowledge of causal relation is possible only through experience. It is only through observation that we know what is the cause of a particular event. Speculation in the absence of experience can never know the cause of an event. For example, by mere speculation we cannot know what is the cause of cancer. By intense research we may observe the cause responsible for cancer. When that happens, we will be able to say what is the cause of cancer, what is its nature or characteristics. There is no repeated observation of God creating the universe. Hence, Logic does not permit us to

assert on pure speculation, in the absence of all observation or experience, that God is the cause of the universe for never have two been observed in the relation of cause and effect. When we consider Sankhya, we necessarily consider Yoga school, too.

Sankhya means the philosophy of right knowledge (Sanyak Khyati or jana) . The system is predominantly intellectual and theoretical. Yoga as the counterpart of Sankhya, means action or practice and tells us how the theoretical metaphysical teaching of Sankhya might be realized in actual practice. The Yoga system is rightly regarded as applied Sankhya. All the doctrines of Sankhya school on cosmology, physiology, psychology and Moksha are adopted by the Yoga system. It accepts the Sankhya view of the Universe as consisting of purusa and prakriti which are both uncreated and eternal. It also accepts that the world of embodied existence is result of evolution due to association of prakriti with purusa. This evolution is autonomous and no agency of God is required to explain it. When Sankhya metaphysics is accepted, Yoga has no logical warrant to introduce God. It has no philosophic justification to introduce God. The idea of God, far from being organically interwoven in the Yoga system is only loosely associated. In the Yoga sutra the passages that treat of God stand disconnected, and are in direct contradiction to the contents and aim of the system. God neither creates the Universe, nor does he rule it. He does not reward or punish the actions of men and the latter does not regard union with Him (at least according to the older doctrine of the Yoga) as the supreme object of their endeavour. God is only a 'particular soul' not essentially different from the other individual souls which are co-eternal with Him" Innumerable Purusas and Prakriti, all eternal and absolutes, are there to limit him. Why did Yoga school introduce God? Prof. R. Garbe thus explains it: "The object of Yoga system in inserting a personal God into Sankhya is mainly to satisfy the theists and to facilitate the propagation of the theory of the Universe

expounded in the Sankhya. Dr. Radhakrishnan holds the same view". He says' "We cannot help saying that Yoga philosophy introduced the concept of God just to be in the fashion and catch the mind of the public".

## **5. The Nyaya - Vaisesika Darsana**

We take the next two schools - Nyaya and Vaisesika together for they hold to the same view of the universe, God and soul. Vaisesika propounds its theory of the universe and Nyaya concurs with it. Nyaya school's interest is logic rather than metaphysics. These two schools do not have long antiquity like other schools. They took birth sometimes near 300 or 200 B.C. Gautam is the author of Nyaya Sutra and Kanada of Vaisesika-Sutra. Gautam was nicknamed Akaspada and it means 'eye-footed', one whose eyes are directed on to the feet. This nickname was given because of the empirical attitude of the author and the school. Kanada means 'atom-eater'. The Vaisesika school was atomistic and thus the name of the author is significant. It is quite probable that the author may have adopted this name.

It is true that the concept of atom is found in the philosophy of Jainas, Vaisesikas, Santrantrikas and even the Mimamsakas gave support to it. But it was not, even in their own eyes, so vital for their system as it is for Nyaya-Vaisesikas. They hold that atoms are the uncreated and eternal entities and all composite things including the bhutas - earth, fire, air-are composed of them. Besides atom, space and time, mind (manas), souls, are uncreated and eternal substances. The world is formed according to the Adrsta of the soul. Adrsta is the latent force generated in an individual's soul by his virtuous and vicious actions. Our happiness and misery must have causes and these are past adrasta. Diversity of effects implies diversity of causes. Our varying lot cannot be traced back to common causes like God or Nature. Our specific happiness and misery is due to our specific disposition or potency produced by the specific good or bad acts.

In these systems there is no room for God. The original texts of these schools have no reference to God. It shows that they thought the universe and the human life could be explained without the hypothesis of God. To quote: "The Vaisesika-Sutras, Nyaya-Sutras, the treatises upon which the two schools are founded, contain no mention of God. Since they, moreover, assert the eternal and uncreated nature of both soul and matter and conceive the fate of the individual in harmony with the universal Indian view as the result of his good and evil deeds in the present or earlier existences, there can be no doubt of the original atheistic character of both systems. Sankara supports the same view. In his commentary on the Vedanta-Sutra he holds that God has no place in these systems.

The later thinkers of these systems seem to have lost grip over the autonomous character of the law of Karma and regressed to social or political concept of law. They thought Adrsta, being unconscious, needs guidance of a conscious agency and so admitted God in their system, hardly realizing that of the law of Karma and God guiding the working of the universe cannot logically go together. The two are logically inconsistent.

On the top of it, according to them, it is soul in bondage, i.e. embodied soul which could have consciousness. In the Moksha state soul is absolutely unconscious. If so, God as eternally free, is eternally unconscious. Hence God cannot be the conscious agency, for he is eternally debarred from performing the function of conscious guide of adrsta due to his eternally liberated state.

Even when these later thinkers of these schools unnecessarily admit God, it has none of the characteristics attributed to God. Their God is not a creator. Both atoms and souls are uncreated and eternal . God is not even the efficient cause. Adrsta is the eternal efficient cause. God cannot interfere in the working of the adrasta of the individual souls. God is just a soul among

souls. In the Moksha stage there is no difference between God and human soul.

Thus in the philosophy of these schools, God is a redundant addition. It is not integral part of their metaphysics, for the state of Moksha, the highest spiritual state is not defined as perfect vision of Lord God, which would be the case when theism is taken seriously.

## **6. Mimamsa Darsana**

The last two schools of orthodox philosophy are Mimamsa and Vedanta. These two schools not only accept the authority of Vedas, but are founded on them. Their philosophy is the direct interpretation of the Vedas and the Upanisads. Mimamsa interprets the Vedas and Vedanta school interprets the Upanisads.-

Mimamsa school is a fanatic Vedic school. It considers Vedas to be not only authoritative but also eternal and perfect. And yet this school rejects God. It means you can believe in Vedas and be an atheist. The thinkers of this school, Kamarila Bhatta and Prabhakara are among the top Indian thinkers of orthodox philosophy. Had the ghost of Islam and Christianity not frightfully loomed large on the Indian horizon in the 19th century, Swami Dayanandji might as well have followed Mimamsa school in an atheistic interpretation of the Vedas.

The Mimamsa school holds that the world is self-existent. It has neither a beginning nor an end. So it does not require a creator. As for the individual things coming into existence and going out of existence, nothing more is to be assumed than what is actually observed. For example, the mundane parents rather than extra-mundane God, are the cause of children. Why assume anything more than what is observed, to explain events? The atoms and souls are uncreated and eternal and the law of Karma in the form of apurva, guides the movement of things and the action of human beings. This law is autonomous and self-propelled. The giant thinkers of Mimamsa,

Sabare, Kumarila Bhatta and Prabhakara, refute the arguments of later Nyaya Vaisesika with force and effect. One of their (Nyaya-Vaisesikas) arguments is that just as pot needs a potter to make it, God is needed to make the world. Kumarila Bhatt argues that the whole argument rests on the instance or udaharana of potter making the pot. If the potter is the real cause of the pot, God is not the cause of the pot. So with many other instances. So events are not caused by God. If God is the cause of the pot, then potter is not the cause of the pot. So Nyaya-Vaisesika have to renounce either their conclusion or the instance on which it is based, for the instance clearly goes against the conclusion.

Kumarila extended his argument against conception of creation as advocated by Vedanta. According to it, Brahman or pure consciousness is the ultimate reality and creation is due to the indescribable ignorance called Maya. But Maya, argued Kumarila, is conceived to be as unreal as a dream and as such could not create anything. Besides, what could be the cause of the creative activity of Maya itself? It could not be eternal, for in that case creation itself will be so; nor could the activity of Maya be created by the Brahman which was ever pure consciousness; The reader is invited to the Mimamsa literature especially: Sabare's Mimamsa-Sutra IX 1.6.10; Kumarila's Slokavarttika. (Sambandaksepa-parinara vada-Verses 41-119) Salikanatha's Prakarana-panjika; and Jha's Purva Mimamsa in its sources 44-47 for detailed refutation of theism by the Mimamsa school.

## **7. The Vedanta Darsana**

The final orthodox school to deal with is Vedanta. There are two main schism under it-the Visistadvaita Vedanta of Ramanuja and the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara.

All the Vedantins, including Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and others reject the arguments given for the existence of God. They hold that God's existence cannot be proved.

Acharya Ramanuja in his 'Sri Bhasya' 1 refutes all the arguments given to prove the existence of God. For example, we take one of his refutations. The later Nyayakas school's pet argument is that a thing, like a pot, which is made of parts, needs a maker. The world is made of parts, like atoms. So we need God to make the world. Acharya Ramanuja asks whether God produces the effect with his body or without body. He cannot do it without a body, for no bodiless being can act or cause a thing to be made. If God has a body, it is either permanent or non- permanent. If God's body is permanent, it means something made of parts is eternal. If we admit this, we might as well admit the world to be eternal and then we do not need God. If God's body is not permanent, who makes God's body? Besides, God cannot be the cause of his body, for bodyless being cannot act. We cannot say that God assumes body by means of some other body, for it leads to infinite regress. Acharya Ramanuja rejects possibility of knowledge of God by yogic perception. He, like Kumarila Bhatta, rejects the view that God's knowledge is possible through Yoga. He holds that yogic experience is nothing but imagination kindled by perception. If it goes beyond objects previously perceived, it is source of error. Thus Acharya Ramanuja holds that the belief in God cannot be proved by reason nor can it be verified in yogic experience. It is to be accepted on faith. There is God. for Vedas say so. It means that belief in God is outside philosophic tests, for philosophy is concerned to judge beliefs on rational grounds. Sankara, too, holds that God's existence cannot be proved. All attempts to do so end in failure. The cosmological proof, e.g. can prove only a finite creator and a finite creator is

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\* *Thibant, George, Sacred Books of the East, vol 48, English translation of Ramanuja's Sri Bhasya. Criticism of the proofs of the existence of God: 1.1.3, p. 162-173.*

no creator. Otherwise too, Sankara holds God to be as much Maya as the jagat. His philosophy cannot be called theistic. Sankara, however, holds that impersonal universal consciousness is alone real. Acharaya Ramanuja has hard things to say about Sankara's Brahman. "Sankara's method, according to Ramanuja, leads him to a void which he tries to conceal by a futile play of concepts. His nirguna Brahman is a blank, suggesting to us the famous man of Orlando, which had every perfection except the one small defect of being dead." Sankara like Ramanuja falls back on Sruti and thus leaves his vocation as a philosopher to accept what is unwarranted by rational inference.

### **8. Dev Darsana**

In the recent times there has been in general no new philosophies. Says Prof. N.V Narvana in his beautiful book, Modern Indian Thought : "No new schools have risen in the modern age comparable to the Sankhya. The Vaisesika, the Mimamsa and other ancient schools. Generally speaking metaphysical systems have remained what they were in the middle ages."

Generally speaking, this statement is true. There has been only one independent system builder in philosophy in the 20th century in Indian philosophy. He is Devatma. It is in true tradition of Hindu genius that his philosophy is atheistic. His atheism follows from understanding the nature of force. Force is self active. Every entity is matter-force unit. Therefore, every entity is under ceaseless change. There are non living forces; there are living forces; there are conscious forces. The force of the steam engine is non-living. But the force in a plant is living, the force in an animal of higher order is conscious force. The force in man is self-conscious force. These forces are entity bound and hence the universe is pluralistic. God cannot be said to be one of the forces, for none of the entities we know has the character of being all-knowing, all-good, all-powful. All these entities together do not constitute a single entity and therefore sum of forces is not a force.

Like earlier Indian thinkers, Devatma shows that neither perception nor inductive reasoning can establish God's existence. He , like other Hindu geniuses, like Kumarila Bhatta and Acharya Ramanuja, regards yogic experience of God as sheer fancy 2\*

### **9. Grounds for Atheism in Indian Philosophy**

The reader may ask why Indian philosophy is atheistic? There are six factors which are responsible for it. (i) All the schools of Indian philosophy except Sankara's Vedanta, hold that matter (in the form of bhutas like air, fire, water, earth, or pudgala, or atoms) space, time and souls are uncreated and eternal. Indian philosophy is essentially free from the absurd idea of creation out of nothing.

If matter and souls are uncreated and eternal, there can be no creator.

(2) If there is a God, he can at best be a maker. If so, he must be limited by the existence of matter and souls. If human souls are uncreated and eternal, they limit God's Sat or Power over them. God cannot destroy them. A limited God is contradiction in terms.

(3) Further as a maker, God can be conceived only as an organiser and regulator of the movements of things, their coming together or separating, their birth and death.

God cannot be a maker either. Making is a case of doing something. But according to Indian philosophy soul in its pure state of freedom, is not a doer. It is prakriti that is the doer. Activity pertains to body, mana, raga and dvesa.

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2\* *Devatma's refutation of theism is given in his Mujh Mein Devjiwan ka Vikas (Hindi) Ch. 23 and Isvara (Khuda) Ka Jhoota Yakin aur uske bahut Bure aur Khaufnak nateeje (Urdu), Lahore, 1906. Also consult Nirishvarvada-Ek Adhyayana (Hindi- a full length and comprehensive rejection of the arguments for the existence of God, by his disciple Prof. S.P.Kanal.*

(4) Now, activity of prakriti is governed by the grasp of Karma. Indian genius in philosophy had an early grasp of the law of Karma as autonomous and self-regulative. Every action that we do generates potency which in course of time bears fruits. It is the actions and actions alone that automatically determine the nature and intensity of potency that will bring forth fruits in course of time. According to early and medieval Indian thought the world is structured and our souls are embodied to suit the Karma of past life of the souls. This grasp of the law of Karma eliminates the need for regulator of the movements of things and behaviour of men. It is repugnant to Indian philosophy that God awards and punishes us for our deeds. This power belongs to the law of Karma, and our life is determined by the nature of our desires and deeds. The later Nyaya-Vaisesika philosophers who introduce God in their philosophy, also hold that Adrsta (law of Karma) determines the fruits of action. God is not the efficient cause of the fruits of our deeds. His position is that of a man who makes audible the thought of a dumb person. In fact Nyaya-Vaisesika philosophy had the least reason to introduce God for according to them, a disembodied mukta lacks consciousness. If God is as unconscious as the Adrsta, how can he enlighten Adrsta in its working?

(5) When God is neither the creator nor the maker, nor the regulator, what function can he discharge in explanation of the Universe? Perhaps God could serve as the ideal inspirer for human soul to realize its perfection, as Aristotle's God does in Aristotle's philosophy. God cannot discharge this function in Indian philosophy for each human soul is as perfect as God in its intrinsic nature. Human soul is not to become something what it is not. It is

perfect in all respects. It is not touched by the drama of human suffering and evil. The suffering and evil do not belong to it, but to the empirical self.

(6) Indian philosophy is essentially soul-centred rather than God-centred. This becomes clear through the study of the doctrine of Moksha. Out of the ten schools of Indian philosophy, one only considers Moksha to be a state in the likeness of God or, 'a presence before God' or 'oneness with God'. Indian philosophy over-whelmingly considers Moksha primarily as the disembodied and painless state of self-gathering without reference to God. Even later Nyaya-Vaisesikas who accept God give him no place in the state of Moksha. Similarly, when Yoga school smuggles in God for purpose of popular esteem, it uses God as a means of concentration. It gives it no place in the state of Moksha. Moksha is a state of self-gathering for it. Hence highest spiritual life, of Moksha is unrelated to, unconcerned with and independent of God.

### **10. Summing up**

It is time to draw the conclusion, which an impartial thinker cannot avoid, that Indian philosophy has no place for God.

1. There are ten types of Indian Schools of Philosophy up-to-date. Four of them are heterodox schools- Carvaka, Buddhism, Jainism and Dev Sarsana. All of them openly deny the existence of God.

2. There are six schools- Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisasika, Mimamsa and Vedanta, which accept the authority of vedas; Sankhya and Yoga and Nyaya-Vaisasika, each group has the same metaphysics. So there are four orthodox metaphysics: Sankhya and Mimamsa are atheistic, are non theistic. Their systems are autonomous of God and the introduction of God by late Nyayakas is gratuitous and this God is a doll-like God who like the Queen of England has no power and exists at the mercy of traditional sentiment. He can as well be asked to quit. God of Yoga has only pragmatic value and not truth value. He is a means to an end, but not part of the end of Moksha. In the state of Moksha he is no more to be found. The Vedanta school-

Ramanuja and Sankara take God and Brahman seriously but it is matter of faith with them and not matter of philosophy. They admit that no arguments can establish the existence of God.

## **11. The Glorious Tradition**

Thus we have a glorious tradition of atheism and non theism combined with highest spirituality stretching back to thousands of years, beginning in prehistoric times with Jainism and extending to this day in Dev Darsana.

It is time we return to our native genius for atheism, and wholeheartedly accept Dev Darsana 3\* which like Jainism and Buddhism not only makes religion autonomous of God but also eschews all forms of super-naturalism and gives a complete naturalistic reconstruction of it. Dev Darsana enthrones the scientific method of inquiry as true for religion, for there is no world outside and beyond the natural order studied by physical, biological, social and psychological sciences and yet it opens out the highest spiritual life open to man.

Notes:

1. Shastri, D.N. A Short History of Indian Materialism, Sensationalism and Hedonism, p. 4-5
2. Chatterjee S.C. and Datta D.M. , An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p73.
3. Sharma, C.D., A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, p150

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*DEV ATMA (1850-1929), whose legal name was Shh Satyanand Agnihotri, was born at Akbarpur, District Kanpur (U.P.) He had his education at Thomson Engineering College, Roorkee and then settled at Lahore (now in Pakistan). He became Acharya of Brahmo Samaj and rose to be a leader of matchless eloquence for social and religious reform.*

*Later on, he established his own society of Dev Samaj (1887) and devoted himself to write his Dev Darsana, that is, Naturalistic Philosophy of Religion, in his great works, The Dev Shastra (four volumes) and Mujh Mein DevJivan Ka Vikas (two volumes).*

4. Hastings, James, Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics, vol XII, p831-32
5. Sharma CD. ACritical Surve of Indian Philosophy, p 174
6. Hastings, James, Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics, vol XII  
p. 831
7. RadhakrishananS., Indian philosophy, vol II, p 371
8. Hastings, James, Encyclopaedia of Religion & Philosophy p. 281
9. Sharma CD. .ACritical Servey of Indian Philosophy, p 281
10. Radhakrishanan., Indian Philosopohy, vol II, p. 683.

### **LITERATURE ON ATHEISM IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY**

The reader may be curious to know how Western philosophy has dealt with the question of the existence of God. In Western philosophy the arguments for and against the existence of God have played much larger part than in Indian philosophy. As pointed out earlier, Indian philosophy is soul-centred and not God-centred . Since Indian philosophy held that matter and souls are uncreated and and their movements and behaviour are governed by the law of Karma, they did not need to postulate God for understanding the Universe. The Western philosophy was too much tied to Christianity and therefore God occupies a central place in their philosophy. However, since Western philosophy has been primmarily rationalistic, there has been a very detailed and trenchant criticism . We offer a sample of the vast literature on the subject for readers interested to know the truth about theism.

1. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion : This is a classical book by the greatest English philosopher, David Hume. It is not surpassed in detailed demolishing of the arguments for establishing the existence of God.
2. Critique of Pure Reason of Kant is another master piece which has exposed the falsity of all arguments given for the existence of God. His criticism of ontological argument for the existence of God is his best contribution.

3. *The Essence of Christianity*, by Ludwig Feurbach, one of the greatest German philosophers, has been the most influential book on atheism.

4. *Some Dogmas of Religion* by Mac Taggart offers philosophy criticism of the arguments for the existence of God.

5. Walter Kaufmann's book, *Critique of Religion & Philosophy*, makes an excellent reading for atheism.

6. *The Non Religion of the Future* by J.M. Guyan. There is something refreshing brought out in the rejection of the belief in God.

7. *Scientific Outlook* by B. Russell.

8. *Religion & Science* by B. Russell; and

9. *Why I am not a Christian* by B. Russell.

Russell has the gift of clear, witty and striking way of presenting his thought and therefore his above noted books are the best introduction to the literature on atheism.

10. *God & Philosophy* is a recently published work by the British philosopher. A Flew. It makes excellent reading of modern criticism of theism.

11. All arguments for the existence of God are very effectively criticised in *Encyclopedia of philosophy*, edited by Edward Paul.

12. *The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis* is an essay by famous logical positivist, Rudolf Carnap, in which he shows how the notion of supernatural entity outside the natural order of things, like God, is not false, but "God belief is absurd".

13. *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, edited by Antony Flew, contains fifteen articles which bring out the fallaciousness and absurdity in the belief in God, miracles and visions.

14. *The Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Basil Mitchell, contains a large number of essays which show how the theological statements are non-cognitive and what alternative interpretation can be given for them.

15. God & Evil, edited by Pink, contains articles which bring out clearly that existence of evil disproves existence of God.

16. Niriswarvada-EkAdhyayan (in Hindi) by Prof. S.P Kanal (Dev Samaj Prakashn, Chandigarh) is most comprehensive statement of Western thought on atheism.

## **LITERATURE OF DEV DHARMA**

English Translation of Works by the Most Worshipful Author of Dev Dharma and Founder of Dev Samaj.

### **1. Atma Katha**

A succinct but inspiring silver jubilee address of the master, flashing out the various aspects of his life and achievements in the social and spiritual service of mankind. A 'must' book for all travellers on the path of spiritual life. English translation by Principal PV. Kanal pp. 66

### **2. Four Fundamental Truths about Soul**

It is an epoch- making book in the history of world thought about the origin, nature and destiny of human soul. It offers a new naturalistic interpretation of moksa and vikas of human soul. English translation by Principal PV. Kanal pp.93

### **3. The Fundamental Distinction between the Believers of One, True Science Grounded Religion and Believers of False Religions.**

It spotlights the difference of beliefs of traditional religions and Dev Dharma about Nature, Human soul, Religion and Worshipful Being. It is the briefest and clearest presentation of the differences between Dev Dharma and other faiths of the world. English translation by Rev. Bhai Mohan Devji, pp. 48

#### **4. Peace among Mankind**

It offers the altruistic principles, duties and prohibitions as a discipline for peace among mankind. It offers a charter of peace, and is translation of a section of Dev Shastra, Part IV. English translation by Prof. S. P. Kanal, pp. 24

#### **5. The Philosophy of Vegetarianism**

It is a section of The Dev Shastra, Part IV, translated in English, with an introduction in relation to it are stated in detail. It presents a charter for giving citizenship to the animal world. This translation was presented to the animal world. This translation was presented on the occasion of the 15th World Vegetarian Congress.

English translation by Prof. S.P. Kanal, PP. 23

#### **6. The Dev Shastra**

The opus magnum of the philosophy and religion of Dev Dharma. **Part-I** : The first part deals with philosophy about universe. It deals with the nature of the universe, the characteristics of the laws of Nature, the process of evolution leading to emergence of man, Devatma and Dev Dharma. First English translation by Dr. H.V Sonpar pp. 96 **Part-II** : The second part deals with the theory of knowledge. It details the sources of knowledge the conditions of obtaining knowledge and criteria of judging the truth of a belief. It excludes all super-naturalism in interpretation of knowledge as the first part eschews all supernaturalism in interpretation of the Universe. Dev Shastra makes new history in the world of religion. First English translation by Prof. S.P. Kanal, PP. 100 **Part-III** : The third part deals with human personality. It gives a naturalistic origin to human soul, and naturalistic interpretation to the evil and good in man. It gives detailed analysis of human motivation which, under the sway of the principle of pleasure,

deviates man into evil and untruth, leading to diseased state of soul and its ultimate extinction if the evil causes remain unchecked. It provides scientific method for the cure of soul from the diseased state caused by indulgence in untruth and evil. It re defines spiritual life as the health of the human soul to consist in development of altruistic feelings, inter-personal and infra-human relations, more so in rapport with Dev-Atma which can checkmate tendencies to deviate into untruth and evil in thought and conduct in all relationships.

First English translation by Prof. S.P. Kanal, PP. 200 **Part-IV** : Man stands in the network of relationship and it is in his conduct in these inter-personal and infra personal relationships that defines his moral and spiritual excellences and achievements. This part of the Dev Shashtra throws flood of light on the specific principles of conduct and inner feelings and thoughts that should guide an individual in his relation to his parents, children, partner in life, clan, community, nation and mankind no less in relation to the animal, plant and inanimate worlds. It gives concrete guidance of how to cultivate truthful Translation by Prof. Kanal in cooperation with Shri K.L. Vohra, PP. 200

Works by Principal PV. Kanal, an apostle of Dev Dharma:

## **7. Devatma**

It contains a most graphic and gripping biography of Shri Satyanand Agnihotri, author of Dev Dharma and founder of Dev Samaj, whom his followers call Bhagwan Devatma; history of Dev Samaj movement which heralds the greatest revolution in the religious world; a concise but complete exposition of the philosophy of Dev Dharma which challenges world thought; 25 photographs of Bhagwan Devatma and various persons and places connected with him 3rd edition, cloth-bound, pp. 728

## **8. My Bhagwan-What I Saw of Him**

This records anecdotes from the life of the Master, Bhagwan Devatma. These anecdotes offer a relief from the boring and intellectually annoying miracles attributed to saints. The anecdotes highlight new kind of spiritual life and behaviour of Devatma.

Cloth-bound, pp. 138

### **9. What Worked These Miracles**

It delineates in perfect English idiom the evolutionary Naturalism of Devatma as expounded in Dev Shastra, Part-I. It offers insight on the origin of man, moksha, vikas and the new spiritual life open to him through Dev Dharma. pp. 54

### **10. Fundamentals of Moral & spiritual Life**

It offers new geography on moral and spiritual life of man. It is refreshing for its new and subtle presentation of moral and spiritual values, pp. 65

### **11. Altruism**

It is a saga which covers all aspects of moral life.

"These instructions are as ennobling as solacing"-The Amrita

Bazar Patrika, Calcutta. "Their influence as moral teachings go as far as any teaching can go."

the Guardian, Madras. "It is useful to parents and teachers"- The' Bombay Chronicle, Bombay, pp. 752

### **12. My Story**

(Autobiography of Revered Sh. PV. Kanal Ji) This is the story of a boy who fought for his education during his days of poverty, of an iconoclast who preached and practised social reform with ruthless passion, an athiest who led battles for freedom of thought, a devotee who sings in every page with fulness of heart the glory of his Master for shaping his life from his boyhood, pp. 318

### **13. Mental Equipment for Married Life**

(A sacred text for married life)

"It analyses in a light conversational style, the factors which lead to frustration in married life and offers excellent advice on how to deal with these difficulties and impediments"- The Tribune. Chandigarh. "A profound and timely book"-The Pioneer, Lucknow. "A commendable volume judged by any count"-The Indian Nation, Patna. "It is rewarding reading"-The Sunday Standard.

23rd reprint, cloth-bound. pp. 133

Works by Prof. S.P. Kanal, B.A. Hons. (Lond), Reader in philosophy, University of Delhi.

### **14. An Introduction of Dev Dharma**

"Queries about the exact nature and philosophy of Dev Dharma are very convincingly and cogently answered. The book is truly inspiring. Students of comparative study of religions will find it informative and educative"- Pioneer, Lucknow 2nd edition, cloth-bound, pp. 176

### **15. The Ethics of Devatma**

This book is the first statement of the philosophy of Devatma in the philosophic idiom in the context of Eastern and Western philosophy. It covers the philosophy of nature, the theory of knowledge, the theory of human soul, the ethics of moksha and vikas. It is a clear, precise, and illuminating publication in eloquent and inspiring language.

### **16. Naturalism in Modern Indian Philosophy**

It corrects the wrong impression that Indian thought is Brahmanism. It presents Dev Atma's Naturalism in inspiring language, pp. 32

### **17. Unity of Religions**

It examines the traditional approaches to the unity of religions and shows how evolutionary interpretation of 'unity' can meet the challenge. It provokes the reader to new thinking on the whole problem of the unity of Religions, pp. 34

**18. What Dev Dharma Can Offer You?**

It is a brief statement of what distinguishes Dev Dharma from other religions of the world. It considers the relation of religion to science, evolution, morality and spiritualism, pp.16