

# **“DEV DHARMA “**

(Science Grounded Religion)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **What Dev Dharma Can Offer You**

**S. P. KANAL**

**Delhi University**

## Science and Religion

Dev Dharma is not the only religion in the history of religion, just as experimental Physics is not the only physics in the history of Physics. All sciences and institutions have history, which means there have been changes in them. We can notice growth and development in them. We know how modern experimental Physics differs from the speculative Physics of Aristotle. The modern Physics so superior of Aristotelian Physics in its width and depth of knowledge. It is scientific in character, which means that its results are verified by the scientific method. The greatest discovery of man in the field of knowledge is the scientific method and the development of scientific instruments. It has yielded a harvest of knowledge, unimaginable to man before its discovery. Scientific knowledge is standard of true knowledge of whatever exists. Today all education is oriented to scientific knowledge. It is to be the blood of our blood and bone of our bones. We are to be saturated with it. It is irreplaceable by any other form of knowledge about the universe. This scientific knowledge is modifying all our social institutions. Religion as a social institution cannot be exception to it. If it is to survive as a crucial institution of society and play effective part in our life, it must be scientific. If there is conflict between science and religion, religion has to quit, for scientific truths cannot be rejected. There must, therefore, be no conflict between science and religion. But if religion holds on to God, the conflict between science and religion is unavoidable. Let us hear what the greatest physicist of the twentieth century. Einstein, says in his autobiography *Out of the Later Years* on this on this issue: "Though I have asserted above that in truth a legitimate conflict between religion and science cannot exist, I must nevertheless qualify this assertion once again on an essential point, with reference to the actual contentment of historical religions. This qualification has to do with the concept of God. During the youthful period of mankind's spiritual evolution, human fantasy created gods in man's own image, who by the operation of their will were supposed to determine, or at any rate to influence the phenomenal world. Man sought to alter the disposition of these gods in his own favor by means of magic and prayer. The idea of God in the religions taught at present, is a

sublimation of that old conception of the gods. Its anthropomorphic character is shown, for instance, by the fact, that man appeals to the Divine Being in prayers and pleads for the fulfillment of his wishes.

“There are decisive weaknesses attached to this idea in itself, which have been painfully felt since the beginning of history. That is, if this being is omnipotent then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also His work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an Almighty Being? In giving out punishment and rewards, He would, to a certain extent, be passing judgment on Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him?”

“The main source of the present-day conflicts between the spheres of religion and of science lies in this concept of a personal God. It is the aim of science to establish general rules which determine the reciprocal connection of subjects and events in time and space. The more a man is imbued with the ordered regularity of all events, the firmer becomes his conviction that there is no room left by the side of this ordered regularity for causes of a different nature. For him neither the rule of human nor the rule of divine will exists as an independent cause of natural events.”

“In their struggle for the ethical good, teachers of religion must have the stature to give up the doctrine of personal God, that is, give up the source of fear and hope which in the past placed such vast power in the hands of priests. In their labors they will have to avail themselves of those forces which are capable of cultivating the Good, the True, and the Beautiful in humanity itself. This is, to be sure a more difficult but an incomparably more worthy task.”

The idea of impersonal God, a Brahman, is no less unscientific. Here it is best to quote Buddha :

“If the world has not been created by Isvara, may not all existence be manifestation of the Absolute, the unconditioned, the unknowable behind all appearances?” Said the Blessed One to Anthapindika. “If by the absolute is meant something out of

relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any reasoning. How can we know that anything unrelated to other things exists at all? The whole universe as we know it, is a system of relations. We know nothing that is, or can be, unrelated. How can that which depends on things and is related to nothing produce things which are related to one another and depend for their existence upon one another? Again, is the Absolute one or many? If it be only one, how can it be the cause of the different things, which originate, as we know, from different causes? If there be as many different Absolutes as there are things, how can the latter be related to one another? If the Absolute pervades all things and fills all space, then it cannot also make them, for there is nothing to make. Further, if the Absolute is devoid of all qualities ('nirguna'), all things arising from it ought, likewise, to be devoid of quality. But in reality all things in the world are circumscribed throughout by qualities. Hence the Absolute cannot be their cause. If the Absolute be considered to be different from the qualities, how does it continually create the things possessing such qualities and manifest itself in them? Again, if the Absolute be unchangeable, all things should be unchangeable too, for the effect cannot differ in nature from the cause. But all things in the world undergo change and decay. How then can the Absolute be unchangeable? Moreover, if the Absolute which pervades all is the cause of everything, why should we seek liberation? For we ourselves possess this Absolute and must patiently endure every suffering and sorrow incessantly created by the Absolute." (Asvaghosa's Buddha-Charita).

The scientific mind needs a non-theistic and non-absolutist scientific religion. As Julian Huxley, the great biologist, puts it: "The belief of this religion... are not revelations in the supernatural sense, but are the revelations that science and learning have given us about man and the universe".

Dev Dharma offers us a scientific religion. Bhagwan Devatma, the founder of Dev Dharma thus states the method of his investigation in his autobiography, *Mujh Mein Dev Jiwan Ka Vikas*, Vol. I. chapter xvii: "After I abandoned the belief in God and came to develop perfect love for the scientific method for arriving at truth, I could accept only such knowledge as was proved correct by that method. Nothing remained worthy of belief merely because

it was ancient or modern, current or non-current, calamitous or non-calamitous, swadeshi or foreign. Whatever could be proved and tested as true by the scientific method, was alone worthy of acceptance for me, and an investigation into all that became the prime motive of my life". He further affirms it in chapter xxvi thus : "From this time, Vishwa Tattwa and Manush Tattwa formed the chief topic of my study. The canons of scientific method of investigation which were essential in all such studies acquired complete sway over my heart. The principles of experimental interrogation together with right logic had captured my heart to such an extent, that it became impossible for me to accept any knowledge merely on the basis of imagination or blind faith".

This shows how the founder of Dev Dharma holds with science that whatever be the source of a belief, its verification by the scientific method alone stamps it with truth. It holds with science that universe is self-sufficient and whatever occurs in Nature, Be it physical, chemical, biological, psychological, ethical or spiritual, has its explanations within Nature. We are not to look out of the world for disembodied existences like God or Purusha to explain the origin and occurrence of anything in it. Man, his body and soul, are both part and parcel of Nature in their origin, development and fulfillment. All ideals and values are grounded in man's nature. To sum up in the words of an American Philosopher, Santayana "Every thing ideal has a natural basis and everything natural an ideal development".

Dev Dharma is the religion that can claim to be scientific in spirit, for it openly accepts scientific method as necessary for truth discovery and verification in the field of religion. When it is said that Dev Dharma is scientific in spirit, it means more than that it rejects super-naturalism or it accepts the findings of science at any particular period. It means that like science it accepts that no belief is too sacred to be re-examined or re-evaluated or rejected. If new facts come to light which make that imperative, just as it is no loss to the prestige of science, it is to its glorification when it modifies any one of its theories to meet the demand of facts and truths, similarly, Dev Dharma holds it to be its glory that it permit its beliefs to be revised if scientific method so demands it.

No theistic religion, traditional or modern, makes this commitment to the scientific method. Therefore, Dev Dharma avoids

conflicts between science and religion for it accepts with it that scientific verification is necessary for a belief to be true. This is the first offering that Dev Dharma makes to modern man in search of a religion which does not compromise his scientific make up.

## **Evolution and Religion**

The second offering that Dev Dharma makes to modern man is that it offers him evolutionary vision in religious life. We owe this evolutionary vision to the patient and imaginative labours of thousands thousands of physicists, chemists, biologists, psychologists, archeologists and historians.

Julian Huxley thus describes the evolutionary vision : “ Let me try to continue this new vision, as briefly as possible. On the basis of our present understanding, all reality is in a perfectly valid sense one universal process of evolution. The single process occurs in three phases – first, the inorganic or cosmic, operating by physical and to a limited extent chemical interaction, and leading to the production of such organizations of matter as nebulae, stars and solar systems; in our galaxy this phase has been going on for at least six billion years.”

“In the rare places where matter has become self-reproducing, the inorganic has been succeeded by the organic or biological phase; this operates primarily by the ordering agency we call natural selection, and leads to the production of increasingly varied and increasingly higher organizations of matter, such as flowers, insects, cuttle-fish and vertebrates, and to the emergence of mind and increasingly higher organization of awareness. On our planet this has been operating for rather under three billion years.”

“Finally, in what must be the extremely rare places (we only know for certain of one) where, to put it epigrammatically, mind has become self-reproducing through man’s capacity to transmit experience and its products cumulatively, we have the human or psychological phase. This operates by the self – perpetuating but self-varying and (within limits) self-correcting process of cumulative learning and cumulative transmission, and leads to the evolution of

increasingly varied and increasingly higher psychological products, such as religions, scientific concepts, labour-saving machinery, legal systems, and works of art.”

“Our pre-human ancestors arrived at the threshold of the critical step to this phase around a million years ago; but became fully human and psychological evolution began to work really effectively, only within the last few tens of thousands of years. During that short span of evolutionary time, man has not changed genetically in any significant way, and his evolution has been predominantly cultural, manifested in the evolution of his social system, his ideas, and his technological and artistic creations.

“The new framework of ideas on which any new dominant religion will be based is to be evolutionary and humanist. For evolutionary humanism gods are creations of man, not vice versa. Gods begin as hypothesis serving to account for certain phenomena of outer nature and inner experience. They developed into more unified theories, which purport to explain the phenomena and make them comprehensible; and they end up being hypostatized as supernatural personal beings capable of influencing the phenomena. As theology develops, the range of phenomena accounted for by the god-hypothesis is extended to cover the entire universe, and the hypothesis is extended to cover the entire universe and the gods became merged in God.

“However, with the development of human science and learning, this universal or absolute God becomes removed further and further back from phenomena and any control of them.”

Dev Dharma is evolutionary in its vision. It looks on human soul as product of evolution. It awakens man to the consciousness that he is inseparable from the physical and the biological conditions of life. It makes him feel one with the physical and the biological aspects of the universe, in which it has its origin and continued existence. He is an ansh (part) of all the four kingdoms: The physical, the vegetable, the animal and the human. He is to seek his harmony with them through service of four kingdoms. Dev Dharma awakens man to the truth that his fulfillment and highest evolution is in the service of four kingdoms. This religious perspective can be possible to an evolutionary religion for an evolutionary religion can alone give this paramount

importance and respect to the physical, the biological, and the social environments of man. Evolutionary religion gives as much importance to the relation of man to his physical, biological and social environments, as a theist gives to the relation of man to God. For the theist, God is the source of man's life, his continued existence, his destiny. For evolutionary religion, Nature is the source of man's life, his continued existence and his destiny. Evolutionary religion replaces God by Nature's evolutionary process and thus substitutes solid facts to build the spiritual life of man.

The evolutionary aspect of Dev Dharma can be best illustrated by quotations from the autobiography of the Founder of Dev Dharma. He writes, "I who was Brahmvasi, now became Vishvasi. During the days of my God-belief, I did believe Nature to be a reality but I believed it as a creation of God; and deemed God to be the most essential Being, considering him my one and only supreme relation and all in all. I did see Nature then but not as it really is. Nature which I had erroneously believed to be my secondary relation, now became, in the light of truth, my primary relation. I saw the immense grandeur of Nature. It had never appeared to me as real and as true as now. I had never before discovered that close relationship with it which I felt now. I realized that betterment or degrading of life rested primarily on the nature of one's feelings or heart attractions for the various related existences in Nature.

1. "Nature is one and all its departments or kingdoms are closely bound up to one another."  
"All the three kingdoms—i.e. vegetable, animal and human -- owe their origin and existence to the inanimate world. All these kingdoms form so many inter-related organs of this vast machinery of the universe. Their mutual relation is extremely intimate and inseparable."
2. "Man is part of Nature."
3. "All the various existences in Nature become better or worse according to the kind of relationship with other parts of Nature. The supreme ideal of the life of man consists in establishing higher harmonious relation with nature by means of deevatva or forces of higher life."
4. "Moksha of man consists in getting freedom from the slavery to all dissolutionary courses of life in relation to

the various kingdoms of Nature. The supreme goal of life consists in gradually getting such moksha and evolving higher forces of soul-life.... establishing thereby the evolutionary harmonious relation with all the kingdoms”.

## Morality and Religion

The third offering of that Dev Dharma makes to religion is that it makes moral life central to it. It is not beliefs, however noble, that can save man. It is life achieved that makes a man religious which contributes to his moksha. Dev Dharma, therefore, does not lay exclusive emphasis on faith in some deity or avtar. It awakens man to the realization that the first condition to be religious is to build moral life. What are the fundamentals of moral life? Let us quote Einstein again. He says, “ A person who is religiously enlightened appears to me to be one who has, to the best of his ability, liberated himself from the fetters of his selfish desires and is pre-occupied with thoughts, feelings and aspirations to which he clings because of their super-personal value. It seems to me that what is important is the force of this super-personal content and the depth of the conviction concerning its overpowering meaningfulness, regardless of whether any attempt is made to unite this content with a divine Being, for otherwise it would not be possible to count Buddha and Spinoza as religious personalities.”

How are the super-personal values to be defined? Einstein gives an example of it thus : “From standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know that man is here for the sake of other men; above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a Day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labours of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received. My peace of mind is often troubled by the depressing sense that I have borrowed too heavily from the work of other men.”

Dev Dharma is the only religion that has been in earnest to systematically build the moral life of man. It holds that man has his benefactors in the human, the animal, the plant and the physical kingdom of Nature. Hence, man's first moral sadhan is to realize his relation with the existents of the four kingdoms, to develop feelings of respect, appreciation, gratitude, and service and higher harmony in relation to them. It is the only religion that has divided the year into sixteen parts, in each one of which a 'Dev-Dharmi' is to awaken himself to deepen and strengthen his relation with the particular class of benefactors concerned, through the feelings of respect, appreciation, gratitude, and service to them. It calls upon its disciples to realize their debt of gratitude to, for example, parents and to serve them. And this sadhana lasts for a whole month. Again similar sadhanas are to be done in relation to brothers and sisters, partner of life, one's ancestors, the dear departed ones, community and country and mankind. But man is not to stop with his human relations. He must similarly establish his relation of respect, appreciation, gratitude, service, and harmony towards existences of the animal, vegetable and the inanimate worlds. This is as comprehensive an ethics as can be conceived. Man's morality is not limited to man. It is not limited to the living world. It extends to the inanimate world. All relations of man with any existences in Nature involve moral relations.

The fourth volume of Dev-Shastra, the highest scripture of Dev-Dharma, devotes 264 pages in laying down duties and prohibitions in relation to all the four kingdoms of Nature. It is illuminating to quote some commandments to highlight the evolutionary perspective of Dev-Dharma in the moral field : "It is imperative for a sadhak taking to the spiritual exercises in relation to the inanimate world that he should realize the inanimate relation of his personality with the inanimate world" ; and "he should realize the need to get freedom from every evil conduct in relation to it and to evolve higher feelings in relation to it." Similarly, it declares that a sadhak taking into the spiritual exercises in relation to the vegetable kingdom should realize his very intimate relation to the vegetable world.... and he should realize the truth that just as a man harms his soul by undesirable conduct in relation to some fellow human being or animal, in the same way he harms his soul by improper conduct towards a plant or a tree. The recognition that moral relationship extends to the physical and

the vegetable worlds, is possible to evolutionary perspective. No other religion in the world holds that we have moral duties towards the physical and the vegetable worlds because of our intimate, inseparable, and evolutionary relationship with them.

## Spirituality and Religion

A man must go beyond morality to enter the world of spirituality. What is spirituality? First, it is knowledge of soul, its origin, nature and the laws of its change, growth and development and death. Dev-Dharma offers scientific knowledge of soul. It is wrong to identify spiritual knowledge with the super-natural beliefs about soul, as it is foolish to identify knowledge of Physics with the animistic Aristotelian Physics. Soul is part of the natural world. To think of it as having its origin outside the evolutionary process in Nature is to deny the incontrovertible facts of evolution. Man has evolved from the life-forces in the animal kingdom. How can this be denied? Human soul is life-force like life-forces in the animal kingdom. Its distinct name is in view of certain evolved powers it has, which are different from the life-forces of the animal world.

Dev-Dharma teaches the scientific truth that human soul is part of Nature. It is under the law of change, of growth and decay. It grows under certain conditions, just as our body grows under certain conditions. It decays under certain conditions as body decays under certain conditions. It gains in vitality and vigour when it develops altruistic motivations. It loses in vitality and health when it develops low-loves and low-hates which make it think and do harm to others. Spiritual knowledge is knowledge of the laws of the life and death of soul. It is clear from this account that it is wrong to identify Dev-Dharma with morality only. In spite of its insistence on developing altruistic motivation towards all relations as the meaning of morality, it enlightens the soul to see its origin, its nature, and the conditions of its life and death. The Founder of Dev-Dharma says :

“The true knowledge of

1. The nature and constitution of the soul organism;
2. The nature of those soul forces which are called low-loves and low-hates and of those soul diseases and soul

degradation which these low-loves and low-hates generate in man ;

3. The nature of the most deplorable, destructive and undue-misery-producing consequences of soul degradation ; and
4. The nature of the true moksha (freedom) and the process, based on the immutable laws of the Nature, by which any fit soul can get that moksha or freedom from his soul-degrading inner forces and the absolute necessity of the evolution of that blessed higher life which is generated by awakening in human soul of the various psychic forces called higher-loves or altruistic feelings and its most blessed fruits and their attainment ;

Means in fact the knowledge of true Religion.” \*

However, we do not become religious in life when we merely know the spiritual truths about soul. This knowledge must turn into spiritual wisdom. A man is religious if he thinks and acts in terms of the good of his soul, just as a man loves health when he thinks and acts in terms of good of his body. The Founder of Dev-Dharma makes this explicit. He says :

“So long a man... possesses no true desire or deep longing :

1. to get true freedom from various kinds of low-loves of sensual pleasures, egotism, wealth, property, children etc., and their resultant low-hates, false faiths, perverted vision, falsehoods and various forms of other degrading evil deeds;
2. to obtain true purification from their evil effects ;
3. to evolve unselfish and higher or altruistic forces, for the service of others ; and
4. does not get true satsang (higher environment or society) and perform true sadhanas (devotional exercises) which may help him in the attainment of the above three things ;

he does not enter the world of true Dharma-Raj (Higher Life) and he does not become a truly religious or Dharmic soul.”

Dev-Dharma is spiritual not only in the sense that it awakens one to the consciousness of the reality of his soul and its laws of growth but it provides the conditions or the source to

attain to its fulfillment in the form of moksha (freedom) and vikas (progress). It provides the true seeker of the evolution of his soul rapport with Devatma (i. e. the Founder of Science Grounded Religion), which besides giving the spiritual aesthetic experience of the highest beautiful soul, helps to liberate him from low-loves and low-hates and to cultivate noble altruistic forces which constitute the true destiny of human soul.

If you are looking for a religion which is scientific in content and spirit, evolutionary in its vision on life and universe, moral in its detailed duties in all different relationships, and spiritual in its knowledge and true source of salvation and evolution of one's soul to the limit of its capacity, Dev-Dharma is and can be your only choice.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Spirituality and Religion

A man must go beyond morality to enter the world of spirituality. What is spirituality? First, it is knowledge of soul, its origin, nature and the laws of its change, growth and development and death. Science Grounded Religion offers scientific knowledge of soul. It is wrong to identify spiritual knowledge with the super-natural beliefs about soul, as it is foolish to identify knowledge of Physics with the animistic Aristotelian Physics. Soul is part of the natural world. To think of it as having its origin outside the evolutionary process in Nature is to deny the incontrovertible facts of evolution. Man has evolved from the life-forces in the animal kingdom. Human soul is life-force like life-forces in the animal kingdom. Its distinct name is in view of certain evolved powers it has, which are different from the life-forces of the animal world.

Science Grounded Religion teaches the scientific truth that human soul is part of Nature. It is under the law of change, of growth and decay. It grows under certain conditions, just as our body grows under certain conditions. It decays under certain

conditions as body decays under certain conditions. It gains in vitality and vigour when it develops altruistic motivations. It loses in vitality and health when it develops low-loves and low-hates which make it think and do harm to others. **Spiritual knowledge is knowledge of the laws of the life and death of soul.** In spite of its insistence on developing altruistic motivation towards all relations as the meaning of morality, it enlightens the soul to see its origin, its nature, and the conditions of its life and death. The Founder of Dev-Dharma says :

“The true knowledge of

1. The nature and constitution of the soul organism;
2. The nature of those soul forces which are called low-loves and low-hates and of those soul diseases and soul degradation which these low-loves and low-hates generate in man ;
3. The nature of the most deplorable, destructive and undue-misery-producing consequences of soul degradation ; and
4. The nature of the true moksha (freedom) and the process, based on the immutable laws of the Nature, by which any fit soul can get that moksha or freedom from his soul-degrading inner forces and the absolute necessity of the evolution of that blessed higher life which is generated by awakening in human soul of the various psychic forces called higher-loves or altruistic feelings and its most blessed fruits and their attainment ;

means in fact the knowledge of true Religion.” \*

However, we do not become religious in life when we merely know the spiritual truths about soul. This knowledge must turn into spiritual wisdom. A man is religious if he thinks and acts in terms of the good of his soul, just as a man loves health when he thinks and acts in terms of good of his body. The Founder of Dev-Dharma makes this explicit. He says :

“So long a man... possesses no true desire or deep longing :

1. to get true freedom from various kinds of low-loves of sensual pleasures, egotism, wealth, property, children etc.,

- and their resultant low-hates, false faiths, perverted vision, falsehoods and various forms of other degrading evil deeds;
2. to obtain true purification from their evil effects ;
  3. to evolve unselfish and higher or altruistic forces, for the service of others ; and
  4. does not get true satsang (higher environment or society) and perform true sadhanas (devotional exercises) which may help him in the attainment of the above three things ;

he does not enter the world of true Dharma-Raj (Higher Life) and he does not become a truly religious or Dharmic soul.”

Dev-Dharma is spiritual not only in the sense that it awakens one to the consciousness of the reality of his soul and its laws of growth but it provides the conditions or the source to attain to its fulfillment in the form of moksha (freedom) and vikas (progress). It provides the true seeker of the evolution of his soul rapport with Devatma (i. e. the Founder of Science Grounded Religion), which besides giving the spiritual aesthetic experience of the highest beautiful soul, helps to liberate him from low-loves and low-hates and to cultivate noble altruistic forces which constitute the true destiny of human soul.

If you are looking for a religion which is scientific in content and spirit, evolutionary in its vision on life and universe, moral in its detailed duties in all different relationships, and spiritual in its knowledge and true source of salvation and evolution of one's soul to the limit of its capacity, Dev-Dharma is and can be your only choice.

\*\*\*\*\*