

## BOOK REVIEW

***Title: A PRIMAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION***

***Author: Arvind Sharma***

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***Reviewer: Helen Adekunbi Labeodan***

The term primal is very apt for the description of the religions to be discussed in this book; any other term would have been derogatory and would most likely not go down well with the owners of these religions. Arvind Sharma has been able to show that primal religions have survived despite all odds and that these religions' life ultimate purpose is the creation of a meaningful order through initiation of the celestial model, transmitted by myths and celebrated in rituals.

This book has shown and also corrected the notion that, though the primal religions belong to nonliterate cultures, it is not an indicative that they do not have a philosophy.

Sharma's attempt to examine the philosophy of religion in the light of primal religions is a bold academic step toward the right direction. He tries to incorporate the primal religious experience within the categories employed in the modern philosophy of religion discourse, irrespective of whether such categories or notion are found within the primal religions themselves. In essence, he tries to show if philosophy of religion can be done as it is done in other world religions like-Christianity.

In fourteen chapters, Arvind Sharma obviously made use of a wealth of world literatures extensively. Chapters one and two show a descriptive definition what primal religions are by nature, and their conceptual framework and understanding of God respectively, which extends into Chapters three and four apparently to provide arguments relating to theism.

Chapter five introduces the Problem of Evil as a more painfully devastating but not indissoluble problem in the primal perspective while Chapter six focuses on Primal Religious Traditional Concept of Revelation. Theories of faith are the focal points of chapter seven; while chapter eight discusses rational grounds for belief.

Chapters nine and ten picture patterns in thought systems and the uniqueness of religious language respectively. Chapter eleven poses the scientific problem of verification of the Vienna Circle for primal and other religious thought patterns.

Chapter twelve challenges the root of Conflicting Truth Claims of Different Religions while the last two chapters thirteen and fourteen focus on human destiny.

The conclusion is a summary of Alvind's accomplishment by undertaking the writing of this book. Alvind has taken up an arduous task in trying to show that primal religions can also enjoy world status in the field of philosophy of religion. In actual fact, primal religion do have its own philosophy; it takes only for the researcher to come and be part of the people, let his research be ethnographic, that is the only way the researcher can write convincingly about the religion, philosophy and culture of any people.

This book could be made richer if the author can take the pain to carry out an ethnographical research in the place of origin of these primal religions. This will enrich the book and it will be celebrated by owners of these so called primal religions. Sitting back in his home country and making use of books written by other authors (Mbiti, Dopamu, Idowu) is just not enough. In spite of all, this book is an indication that primal religions thus qualify as religion and they do possess a philosophy. This book will certainly begin an extensive discussion in the cross-cultural philosophy of religion.