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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ RELIGION

RSDF Chronicle 1: Facilitating Access to Sacred Information

Dr. Sekokotla
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Religio-Spiritual Development Foundation Chronicle 1 is a curious work, unifying in intent and informative in practice. A comprehensive, purposeful gloss on religions from various regions, traditions, cultures, and orientations, the book avoids Christian conventions.

Author "Skox" Sekokotla aims to demonstrate what different faiths have in common and what connects them in the fundamentals of their belief systems. Beginning by describing God as TUDB (The Ultimate Divine Being), he lays out the structure of both monotheistic and polytheistic religions, including Hinduism, Islam, paganism, African primal religions, gnosticism, Judaism, and Christianity. He discusses concepts such as scripture, evil, pain, and spiritual striving in fundamental terms to clarify the distinctions among different approaches to worship and connecting with God, TUDB.

On the negative side, the book's manifesto is not altogether clear, though it contains a great deal of absorbing, useful information. Roughly 70 percent of the text is quotation, sewn together with the thread of Skox's explanation. It would flow much better and be far more cogent if he stated the concepts in his own voice and reduced the supporting text by half (or more). Skox's dedication to accurate and thorough denotation is commendable, but his insistence in citing sources immediately, rather than using footnotes, disrupts the logical progression of his arguments. Sometimes Skox's command of English grammar is a bit lacking, but it's never egregious or terribly distracting.

In the prelude, Skox warns the reader, "This informative book is somewhat a loaded manuscript that reviews religio-spiritual affirmations in an uncompromising manner.[…]This book is not written by puppets of conventional sectarian religio-spiritual vanguards." How one responds to this "warning" may depend on whether he or she finds audacity compelling or insulting. Earlier in the prelude, Skox explains, "The living beings are goddess, demideities (angels and demons), spirits and souls who vary in the forms in which they are incarnated.[…]The variegated incarnations of the souls could be studied as animal sciences, plant sciences, microbiology, entomology, acarology." Surely this must be one of the most pervasive and intriguing rosters of sentient entities composed. (Acarology is the study of ticks and mites.)

There is an undeniable freshness and vitality often woven into *RSDF Chronicle I*. Skox seeks to supply incisive, explicative information while sharing his noticeably divergent worldview that assumes no intrinsic superiority over Western culture—all of which makes for intriguing, compelling reading. Anyone with the patience to stick with the quirky (and intelligent) writing will come away with some stimulating thoughts.

CHRISTOPHER SODEN (June 17, 2013)

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