

EDITORIAL

Because of the dust, smoke and fire of the communal tensions in the streets, we do not often see the fruits that the inter-religious harmony and living yield to us in the secret. Attempts have to be made to publicize such good results not only to smother the communal fire but also for the corrective growth of different religions. Time and again the tendency to suspect and even to hate the other religions raises its ugly head. Still, deep down in the heart, every religion appreciates the goodness and the godliness reflected in all other religions. It is this goodness that attracts one religion to the other. This attraction leads to interaction yielding good and wonderful fruits. Here in this number an attempt is made to show some examples how Hinduism appreciates and proclaims the goodness which it sees in other religions. Accordingly all contributors to this number are Hindus. Most of them came together to share their experiences in a scholarly seminar convened by the editors of the journal.

Bibhuti S. Yadav concentrates on one particular instance where Suddhadvaita school of Vedanta comes positively into contact with Buddhism. Vallabha assumed that Mahayana Buddhism terminated some of the fundamental evils in the Hindu thinking-total negation of the world to establish God as the one only substance. For Vallabha God is not a static substance, but a changing subject, not a silent monotonous God, but a God of difference. Vallabha has also a message to Buddhism: the changing world is a cipher of the changing Subject, God. Not preoccupying too much on the personal salvation, bodhisattva tries to eradicate the communal suffering and social indignity from the world. Vallabha too refused to go to heaven, preferring instead to celebrate the world, as unity in diversity, as *prapañca*, as the body of God. The thought of authentic unity in plurality occurred in Vallabha because of the challenge made by Buddhism on the ills of either/or logic in Hinduism. God lives through endless differences. Without falling into the extreme 'Hindutva' movements Hinduism has to urge its followers as a religious duty to commit themselves to the cause of the world as the cause of God and to dedicate themselves to eradicate the sufferings of the people in the world. The second article is dealing with the Hindu-Christian interactions which took place in India at the very beginning of Christianity. The first ever contact of Hinduism with Christianity was with the St. Thomas Christians. S.N. Rao gives a model as to how Hindus and St. Thomas Christians harmoniously involved themselves in the social, political, cultural and even religious transformation of the state of Kerala. The following two articles

are on the interaction between Hinduism and Islam. Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, taking stock of the Indian scenario, vehemently argues that both Hinduism and Islam, instead of attacking each other in the name of God, have to gather the common hidden humanistic currents in themselves to fight jointly against the common evils such as communalism, colonialism and carnal consumerism that threaten to destroy the very fabric of the society. N.S.S. Raman viewing Hinduism in the Islamic countries is doubly convinced that the true fundamental principle of love preached by both the religions cannot be achieved without having a sense of pluralism and tolerance. Kiran Ramchandran Nair tries to depict how Hinduism is on dialogue with the modern world through Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda calls for the collaboration among religions, since he sees a basic goodness in all religions. If the followers of these religions are charged with the basic goodness underlying their own religions, they will become saviours of our society today.

It seems that it is not by perceiving the good ideas about God in the different religions that the Hindus are fascinated by different world religions. They are attracted to the sublime values, divine as well as human, reflected in the lives of the followers of those religions. It is not enough that the good ideals are in the sacred books or are preached by the authorities of religion. The divine/human values have to be reflected in and testified by the members of each religious tradition. One may note that Hindus as a rule will appreciate a sage, saint or a mystic irrespective of the religion he professes. They are ready to acknowledge the good values in each religion. When the human values are ill-treated in any interreligious contact or encounter, the Hindu folks are skeptical about the veracity of those religions. Yes or no to the human values is the main reason for the conflict between Hinduism and other religions. Even within Hinduism the conflicts are visible when genuine values are neglected or not sufficiently taken care of.

Goodness of a religion preached by the living testimonies of its followers will be accepted and openly acknowledged by any other religions. In this context of search for authenticity no religion can win the admiration merely by preaching fool proof logically correct doctrines and dogmas or by performing religious rituals with meticulous fidelity. Goodness and excellence of one particular religion, if not reflected on the face of its followers, will not be appreciated by another religion.

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