

## EDITORIAL

Liberation and freedom in opposition to alienation and bondage has become a pervasive theme in religion, art, literature, philosophy as well as in national and international politics. Liberation is now an equally fascinating theme in christian theology in the context of political struggles taking place in the developing countries. Freedom is the result of liberation and consequently it is something to be realized. It is the sublime perfection man always aspires to reach. In fact, one must know what freedom is in order to begin the task of working towards its realization.

World religions as well as contemporary humanistic psychologies have much in common in their search for liberating man from his bondage. Who has made man a prisoner? Who or what could liberate him? Are the solutions offered by religion and psychology complementary or in conflict? The studies in the present issue of the *Journal of Dharma* attempts to answer these and similar questions.

Freedom is a transcendental value which is never fully known and realized. Although it is a perfection available to the human experience, it is often seen as something yet to come, something to be realized. In the Sartrean way of thinking, freedom is not an attribute of persons at all but an *a priori* structure of reality. The age-old problem of the existence of a free will or the validity of the theory of determinism may have at present only an academic interest. But the reality of freedom cannot be reserved, as a psychic experience, for the leisurely study in the classrooms. The contemporary humanist psychologist Carl R. Rogers could not take any firm stand on this issue of freedom: "For some time I have been perplexed over the living paradox which exists in psychotherapy between freedom and determinism. In the therapeutic relationship some of the most compelling subjective experiences are those in which the client feels within himself the power of naked choice . . . . Yet as we enter this field of psychotherapy with objective research methods, we are, like any other scientist, committed to a complete determinism."<sup>1</sup>

The real question today we face is not whether the will is free but whether we are, or even whether we can be free. Contemporary philosophers,

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1. Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, (Boston : Houghton Mifflin Co. 1961), p. 142.

novelists and psychologists draw a picture of man who is psychologically out of touch with himself, who is cut off from the world of people and things and, in short, an alienated man. Is there a way out for man from his non-freedom in alienation.

Religion and humanistic psychologies have offered a number of ways to win over man from his despair, from his condition of non-freedom. A humanist would hold that in the achievement of a selfhood and an existence which is lived by an individual, through personal choices, for the sake of his own purpose, or end in life, we can arrive at some positive understanding and enjoyment of that human reality called freedom. What Karl Rahner, the great Catholic theologian, states about freedom comes much closer to the concept of A.H. Maslow's self-actualization and freedom. Rahner writes. "Freedom is never a mere choice between individual objects, but is the self-realization of man who makes a choice, and only within this freedom in which man is capable of realizing himself is he also free as regards the material of his self-realization."<sup>2</sup>

The understanding of man and his freedom in terms of his self-realization does not make very clear the true nature of religion and man himself. It is here we have to press religion or theology into service. In the Christian circles much of the attention has been directed toward the social and political implications of freedom, without sufficiently attending to the personal dimensions of it. In the final analysis no religion could subscribe to mere humanistic interpretation of freedom and alienation. The only genuine position a religion could adopt concerning freedom and alienation is that a proper understanding of freedom (liberation) can only be derived from the theological reflection on man's goal. Psychology or humanism cannot do this job for religion. A meeting of them, therefore, in all fields, religio-philosophical and socio-cultural, is a must.

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2. *Grace in Freedom*, pp. 223.