

EDITORIAL

Placed on the planet of the earth and yet constantly striving to go beyond the course of the planet, man finds himself a strange composite of time and transcendence. He cultivates the earth and transforms its face. Settled down on the banks of the rivers for easy cultivation, he gradually gave rise to communities which gave him culture in return. In course of time Thames and Tiber, Nile, Rhein, Indus and Tigris became centres of world civilizations. But we also see in history river Jordan where people gathered to get purified from their sins, Ganges where millions still bathe, pray and make sacrificial offerings. Water was not a means of earthly cultivation alone. It was used also to cultivate one's mind, to beautify one's inner self. Cult which gave mankind culture further led him to religious cult. Man's primordial relation to earth was only the beginning of his capacity to relate with the outer world. Far beyond the measure of his outer world was the invisible world of eternal realities. This unseen world of reality took him to myths, mysteries and gods and to those events which took place in the beginning. "Let us do what gods did in the beginning", he said. He did it. He enacted the story of the beginning. He remembered what happened in the beginning. His remembrance (*Anamnesis*) was by doing, by acting it out. Cult became mystery cult and religious worship. Man became a cultic animal.

Cultures grew up in the cool shade of this religiosity. For his ritual worship he built temples with magnificent art and architecture. The place of worship was at the same time a meeting place of all fine arts. Arts found their cherished abode in the temple. After building the house of God man enthroned in it the sculptured statues of his gods. He painted their stories on the temple walls. Then he wrote poems and lyrics and composed music for his liturgical prayers. The religious cult was immensely productive and cultures blossomed to their fullest bloom.

Though gods of his adoration changed as he viewed reality from different angles, and consequently one ritual-form gave way to another, yet the head and heart of the religious man was always in the planet of gods, and he lived in the company of Jupiter and Venus, Indra and Rudra and so on. Thousands of gods found their abodes on earth. Every cosmic force had their divine protector, preserver and controller. The planet of earth, the

habitat of man, was not simply an isolated planet. It was related to numerous other planets and to the personified divine powers invisibly abiding in each of them. The rhythm was not simply physical cosmic rhythm, but essentially included also the acosmic rhythm of the spirit (*Dharma*) and the integration of all the forces, cosmic or acosmic, into the ultimate interior centre of man himself (*Yoga*). Life which moved from cult to culture and from culture to religious cults simultaneously moved from external rhythm of the universe (*Rta*) to internal rhythm of human relationships (*Dharma*) and through *dharma* to *yoga*. *Yoga* was the culmination of religion, the union of the individual self with the Divine Self soul with God.

Then came the period of secularization. Many gods fell down from their exalted alters. Man white-washed the walls of his temples and churches. New forms of art and architecture developed. Humanistic poems and secular musics were composed. Civilization lost its theocentrism. Man appeared on the throne of God; the sin of the paradise was repeated. In this secular culture man worshipped himself, his world and his enormous achievements. He struggled for liberation and became a slave of licentiousness. He wanted freedom from political threat and became a slave of untold armoury and weaponry. In this newly emerged values, many, especially the young, found themselves terribly confused and sought new ways of cult, culture and religious realization. They rejected traditional religious values and ways of life and sought rhythm and harmony in certain strange cultic forms such as mantras, *tantras* and various kinds of hippy communes. But this novelty seems to be short lived. The young are still seeking: what is cult? Where does culture lead us to? Is religion essentially cultic even in a secularized society?

It is in this world situation that we bring this number of *Journal of Dharma* putting together several contributions on cult, culture and religion. We begin our discussion with Prof. James Lewis' reflection on "The Scholarship of Cult and the Cult of Scholarship." Every form of cult presupposes certain amount of religiosity and today in spite of all-pervading secularity, studies on religion are getting wide popularity. Dr. George Seidel from Martins College leads us to a 'prologomena of religious studies.' Cult takes us to myth, mysteries and gods. Very often gods are personifications of psychic archetypes. Dr. Robert Brockaway presents the "New Polytheism and James Hillman's Archetypal Psychology." Whether of psychic or philosophic origin gods take man to the other world, to a sacred time and a sacred space. This is what happens when man celebrates feasts

and festivals. Dr. V. F. Vineeth presents the dynamics of Hindu Festivals and their cults of celebration. Though ancient and enormously rich with the lore of timeold myths and mysteries the Hindu religion is ever new and creative. Swami Abhiramananda takes us to different aspects of contemporary Hinduism. It is the youth who are mostly radically affected by the onslaught of new cults, cultures and religiosities. Many of them miss religion and seek it in various cultic and cultural forms and rediscover in a very deeply personal way. Miss Caroline McKenzie, herself a young woman from England who has lived many years in India, gives us an outline of what is happening in the youth of today with regard to their vision and experience of religion in her article entitled "Youth and New Vision of religious experience." Dr. Emeka Onwurah and Dr. Nirmal Minz offer studies on the impact of modern culture on African traditional religions and tribal India respectively. The discussion ends with a review of the International Seminar on Religion and Culture held in Bangalore in March 1986.

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