

EDITORIAL

On September 5, 1988 the birth centenary of S. Radhakrishnan, a philosopher-statesman from the East, who tirelessly struggled to bring about the meeting of the East and the West in all spheres of life, was celebrated all over India with a variety of programmes. He is foremost among many who believed that the future of religion consists in a free fellowship of faiths whereby mutual contacts of faiths will acquire a new spirit and a new life. Cold metal never mixes; only when thrown into the fire its hardness melts and it thus gives rise to a new alloy. It is an impressive phenomenon of our times that science is forcing us into a global unification of our earthly life. This meeting of differing cultures cannot stay neutral; hostilities have to grow into friendship, mistrust into trust and finally one has to find ways and means to reconcile ones way of thinking and believing with others. The present issue of *Journal of Dharma* takes up this problem of reconciliation between the conflicting interests in the religio-cultural context of the East and the West. A few articles in this number deal with what S. Radhakrishnan, a philosopher of synthetic or integral vision, has contributed on this issue of the union of the opposites.

One could think of starting the process of reconciliation from the highest point of religious experience, namely, mystical experience. The Catholic French school in comparative Religion, represented by such eminent scholars as Jacques Maritain, Olivier Lacombe, Louis Gardet, Henri de Lubac and Jean Danielou advocated a radical distinction between natural mysticism and supernatural mysticism, or a mysticism of immanence and of transcendence. It is often said that semetic religions stressed the latter and the Indic spiritualities the former. A question could be naturally raised whether this difference is merely in the epistemological order, or also in the ontological order. The Western Catholic tradition used to identify the natural with 'non-Christian' and the supernatural with the 'Christian' religions respectively. Today the theological thinking in the Christian circle has been so broadened its perspective as to challenge even the propriety of making the very distinction between the supernatural (inspired) and natural religion or mysticism.

We are heirs of a number of so-called irreconcilable dualities religious as well as philosophical traditions have bequeathed us. We find opposition between this worldly and other worldly affairs, tradition and modernity, reason and intuition, revelation and natural inspiration, male and

female and in a lot more other fields. Man's ability to make distinctions between various facets of his experience is certainly a mark of his genius, but to fail to see the wood in the discrete perception of the trees is to bring discredit to his very genius. Certainly the reflective minds will find a way out to take opposites together.

The dichotomy between earthly prosperity and religious detachment is a central theme in all major religions of the world. "You cannot serve both God and money" (Mt 6: 24). "Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy and robbers break in and steal" (Mt 6: 19). We are all well aware that an enjoyable earthly life is impossible without material development. But the religions come in the way of possessing wealth. It is interesting to note how according to Max Weber, the Calvinistic version of Protestant ethic was able to reconcile the opposing ideal of renouncing the earthly riches and the ideal of working for the development of material wealth. The opening article studies this issue from a sociological point of view.

The question of gender-equality in Indian culture and tradition is the central issue of another article. It has been the tendency of man to regard woman as inferior to him and as an object of amusement and pleasure. Woman is asked to look up on man as the meaning and justification of her existence. This idea could even lend support to the custom of burning widow (*sati*) on the pyres of their husbands.

In almost all present-day cultures we find one or the other form of discrimination between sexes. In Indian tradition we find laudatory as well as derogatory references to women. Even God is regarded as half man half woman. Manu declares that where women are honoured there the gods are pleased; where they are not honoured, all works become fruitless. Whatever be the positive and negative elements in the history in this regard, the men of our generation have to grow into the awareness that in all human beings, irrespective of their sex, the same drama of the flesh and the spirit, of finitude and transcendence, takes place.

The problem whether there is real opposition between natural and revealed religious experience and again between reason and intuition is discussed in this number in the light of the writings of Radhakrishnan. According to him experience of God seems to be the destiny of man on earth. This knowledge has to be attained through an inward intuition of

truth. Reason and intuition has to function in unison. In the words of Radhakrishnan, "intuition without reason is blind ; reason without intuition is ungrounded. Only when they are held in balance does man attain wholeness."

A serious block in the process of a healthy synthesis of tradition and modernity is the fatalistic attitude of a vast majority of people that there is a certain degree of inevitability with regard to tradition and its continuity in their every day life. But many are willing to admit that a blind loyalty to tradition is contrary to life. Complete loyalty to tradition is one thing and bondage to it is quite another. Being loyal to what is good in a tradition, one can also be free from any bondage to it. The conflict between the need of preserving the continuity with the past and the urge to break away from it for progress and development is a perennial feature of human history. The two currents of progress and conservation are intermingled, for they are the expressions of two dimensions of the one and the same human mind. We need great souls to guide as to discern what is dead and what is living in each tradition so that we could open ourselves in a healthy way to modernity.

Life need not be, or should not be, viewed as a constant process of conflict-resolution. But in man's collective endeavour to contain the psychic forces in dialectical relationship, both in the sacred and the profane or religious and secular spheres of his life, he makes genuine progress, and thus his life all the more rich.

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