

EDITORIAL

Is it inevitable that man should articulate his experience of the deeper dimensions of the Real in terms of those realities which are intimate to him in his own self? Man measures his power to work by reference to the power he experiences in his own muscles or in those of a stallion. So, too, he tries to understand the felt need for God in his own being in terms of his own constitutive spiritual powers. For Feuerbach God is the sum total of all the auspicious perfections such as being, knowing and willing in man projected into infinity. Though, for St. Thomas Aquinas, God is not a projection of the spiritual essence of men into infinity, He is to be known in analogical terms with the perfections found in man and nature. Thus God is said to be fullness of Being, consciousness and Bliss (*Saccidananta*).

How far can this analogical investigation be stretched? Can we also find some basis in God for the male and female powers and characteristics found in human beings? There is an episode in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* where Purusha becomes a pair of male and female to create progeny for each and every species of animals. "He, verily, had no delight. Therefore he who alone has no delight. He desired a second. He became as large as a woman and a man in close embrace. He caused that self to fall into two parts. From that arose husband and wife... She thought "How can he unite with me after having produced me from himself? Well, let me hide myself. She became a cow, the other became a bull and was united with her and from that cows were born. The one became a male, the other a stallion. The one became a she-ass, the other a he-ass and was united with her; and from that one-hoofed animals were born... Thus, indeed, he produced everything whatever exists in pairs, down to the ants" (*Br. Up.* 1, 4, 3-4). Here the sexual polarity is conceived as adventitious to Godhead, and it is not at all taken to be in the very nature of God.

The feminine (womanly) share in the creative act of God had been the object of wild speculations from time immemorial. The *Theogony* of Hesiod conceives Uranus, the earliest supreme Greek god—a personification of the sky—as the father, and Gaea, a personification of the earth, as the mother of all gods as well as other creatures. This bisexual aspect in the ultimate creative force is evidently manifest in the fierce battle between Marduk and Thimath in the Babylonian

myths. Among the Rig Vedic gods, the combination of *dvāṅ-Prthvi* (heaven-earth) is regarded as the creative source of everything. Are these expressions purely mythological without any foundation in Godhead himself ?

Even after the clear emergence of the major world religions after the mythological period, conception of Godhead in terms of male and female qualities and powers did not disappear. Yahweh was Father, mother, friend and bridegroom for the Israelites. Rig Vedic hymns invoke Varuna and other great gods in so many sweet and tender words that a love relationship between a bride and bridegroom seems to exist here between God and his creatures. While in the Canticle of Canticles of Solomon, Yahweh is pre-eminently masculine, he is given a shifting role in some other books of the Bible as the pious sentiments of the devotee undergo changes. A similar situation arises as regards Christ's relation to the church and the Christian souls. If Christ is only a male-expression of the Divinity, will it not be possible to think of a female-expression of the Godhead also ? In this connection certain theological schools speak of the motherhood of Holy Spirit in the Trinity.

In the Saiva tradition in Hinduism *Śakti*, the creative force of Siva, cannot be easily freed from its motherly or feminine features. Even the contemporary phenomenon in Hinduism, namely, worship of *Guru* (Godmen) and "Mother" could be taken as a more vivid and practical expression of man's eternal search for finding feminine aspects in God. The present issue of *Journal of Dharma* is devoted to this special theological problem.

Prof. K. Krishnamoorthy in his article "Female Deities in the Rigveda" makes a survey to show that the Rigvedic idea of *devata* was comprehensive enough to provide equal room for male as well as female deities. Prof. Petro B. T. Bilaniuk's article is an attempt to rethink the mystery of Mary, the mother of God within the mystery of the Holy Spirit and to develop Mariology within the pneumatological context, for they are organically connected in the biblical, liturgical and mystical experience of the church. Prof. P. J. Jacob also takes up a subject related to Holy Spirit and in this case he examines the concept of the Motherhood of Holy Spirit in the early Christian writings of the Fathers.

The contention of Dr. William Madtha is that the Symbol of *Śakti* in Indian tradition reveals the tender, gentle, comforting,

reassuring, 'feminine' aspect in God. The study is arranged in a four-celled paradigm, namely, the mother, the spouse, the virgin and the *pietà*. The survey of Dr. W. M. Callewaert examines the experience of God described by the *bhakti* poets of the 'early Hindi' period, *i.e.*, a period between 12th and 17th C.A.D. The article by Dr. K. T. Kadan-kavil on Jung's concept of quaternity discusses his claim that psychologically at least opposites such as good and evil, male and female are united in one God.

God is ever a mystery to the religious mind. None of the enriching and ennobling human realities can be found wanting in God. Many of the recognized feminine qualities have a great appeal for the religiously nurtured God-seeker. Hence, is it not natural for a religious man to see some feminine aspects in his God? This is what, however, the religions positively testify.

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