

EDITORIAL

O Lord of the Holy Word ! That was the first
beginning of the Word when the seers fell to naming each object.
That which was best and purest, deeply hidden within their hearts,
they revealed by the power of their love (*R̥gveda X. 71*).

The writers of sacred Scriptures are qualified here as “seers.” Impelled by love they revealed the “Word” to men. The apostle Peter in his second letter seems to say the same thing. He understands Christian Scriptures as the words spoken by men “impelled by the Spirit under divine influence” (2 Pet. 1:19). The letter to the Hebrews begins thus : “In the past God *spoke* to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets.” In the Scriptures the divine speaking or voice is represented as Word of God. But God’s speaking is not to be considered as something that just happened in the past; it is an ever-present reality.

The *logos* speaks or has to speak anew as the self-presencing of meaning-presentation dwelling within language. Dialogue, according to Martin Heidegger, helps to achieve the self-presencing of language or text of Scriptures. If the language of the Scriptures is the voice of Being, a voice which speaks not out of the past, but in the present as “presence” it must become incarnate through interpretation. Hermeneutics is the oracular self-revelation of *logos* through language. Hermeneutics is more than a conversation with texts; it is the reinstatement of the dialogical situation in which the *logos* can embody the speech of persons to each other.

This issue of *Journal of Dharma* presents some attempts to enter into dialogue with the Speaking God in World Religions. Dr George Chemparathy tries to understand Veda as Revelation. The biblical aspects of the non-Indian concept “Revelation” are defined : the content or record of God’s self-disclosure through his deeds and words in history, and the divine authorship of the Bible. For him biblical revelation always meant the Word of God; but Veda cannot be said to be the Word of God in the strict biblical sense. Puruṣottama Bilimoria analyses the concepts of *Śruti* and *apauruṣeya* in Hindu thought, and arrives at an interesting approach to religious Scriptures and Revelation. A word is a linguistic sign, pointing to or standing for a concept or some referent beyond its sign form. The word discloses or *reveals*. The most striking feature of *Śruti* (the Vedas) is *apauruṣeya*,

the non-personal nature of the “source”; subordinated to this is the feature of *anubhava* (direct experience).

John Allen Grimes sheds light on a serious dilemma: how do Scriptures derive their use from the day-to-day language of the world? The exact meaning of Scriptures cannot be determined without solving this problem. This brings the need of radical transvaluation of Scriptures into the limelight. Dr Nereparampil presents the Christian Scriptures as the “Word of God in the words of men.” Jesus is *logos*, the definite Word of God. This Word-made-flesh becomes the “text” of proclamation. The *logos*-Jesus-is an ever recurring event which creates a linguistic tradition of its own to express itself anew. It speaks always in relation to a concrete situation. This demands from the hearer response, decision and self-surrender.

Dr Theodore N. Swanson writes on the phenomenon of apocalyptic in the Jewish and Christian literature. This literature deals with revelation of hidden and mysterious knowledge provided by the “seers.” God’s victory over the forces of evil provides the central theme. A rich variety of literary types such as edifying stories, ethical exhortations and lamentations appear in these books.

The Buddhist monk Bhikshu Ham Wol, in his article, focuses our attention on the true nature of *koan* or *hua-t’ou*, the unique discipline of Zen Buddhism. The method of instruction of this school of thought is well-rooted in classical Buddhist *sūtras*. The *koans* are statements or actions made by Zen masters, revealing their holistic perception of reality. What attitude one should develop towards the Scriptures of other religions? Gandhian ideas on this issue have been studied by Dr Pushparajan. No religion can claim exclusive right to obtain revelation or capture truth, says the Indian sage. Every religion possesses it, hence all the religions are to be held in esteem. One’s attitude to various Scriptures should be sympathetic and respectful.

It may be appropriate to recall here the words of St Paul to Timothy: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

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