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THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL PLURALISM AND WORSHIP- PATTERNS

"All things with God a changeless aspect wear" says Goethe as quoted in the caption of G. van der Leeuw's book, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*. It does seem that religion is experienced as bringing down to changeable man the experience of the immutable world. In the much-loved words of the Isā Upanisad, *isā vāsyam idam sarvam yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*—"whatever moves in this moving world must be covered by the Lord." The reality to which religion refers us is the 'unchangeable,' whether it be conceived as pure Transcendence, or as first Mover, or as divine Immanence, and it comes to man as a remedy for the sickness of constant evolution. The religious experience of mankind is thus generally a medium through which man holds to the permanent, the eternal and unchangeable, which he believes lies behind all the experiences of change. "All things with God a changeless aspect wear."

It is true that philosophic and theological trends, specially in recent years (process theology, etc.), endeavour to inject the idea of growth and change even into the transcendent pole of religion. But this mentality has not as yet, I believe, pervaded the ordinary religious consciousness and may as likely as not be rejected by it. Fundamentally, *dharma* is conceived as that which supports the world (*dhriyate loko'nena dharati lokam vā*) and the support is thought of as the unchanging prop of a changing reality.

However, God is only one pole of the religious experience. In the ancient and popular etymology of the word, religion 'binds' two realities: God and man. The second pole, man and the world, the universe, is obviously changing—*jagat* (world), an intensive form of the root *gam*, to go or *samsāra*, what flows (root *sr*) together or along. How then does this pole of change and variability

affect the religious consciousness? What is the dynamic relationship between the two poles of religion? We shall examine this in two separate perspectives: first the experience of variability along the course of history within a religion—the diachronic perspective; then experience of synchronic variability of the pluralism of cultures within the same religious experience at one particular time. The last part of this article will be devoted to a concrete case analysis of the conflict between the two poles in the situation of contemporary Indian Catholicism.

1. DIACHRONIC VARIABILITY

i. *The Eternal*

As it appears in its classical forms, religious consciousness affirms clearly that religious life partakes of the eternal character of God. The end-pole transforms the means. The religious structures, the beliefs, the cults 'become' eternal, if this expression makes sense. Groupings, castes, offices are conceived as deriving from a primaeval act of the Creator and, therefore, as expressive of the eternal nature of reality. Creeds express not only the immutable reality of God but also the inner reality of the world and of history as seen from the point of view of God. The cult itself, though in the realm of action and therefore closely bound with time, introduces the cyclic experience of time into man's ongoing awareness of changeability. The sacrifice structures the unconnected moments of time and makes a whole out of them, an eternal reality: *Samvatsaro yajnah prajapatih* (SB 1.2.5.13)—"the sacrifice is the year, is *prajāpati*." The temporal is made eternal by religion, and thus cyclic time is created.

This eternalizing function of religion is experienced also in the relative immutability of the liturgical structures. The sacrifice, the scriptures, prayer, etc. are always repeated in the same way and the same order. The system may be quite complex and even accommodate a number of alternatives, but the tendency is clearly towards uniformity.

Not everything is regrettable in this trend of religion to introduce the eternal into the life of man. For one thing, it frees him from the vertigo of constant change and from the tyranny of the passing moods and fashions. In a world where philosophies and cultural patterns are in constant flux, man can find a 'rock' where serenity and peace are possible. The fear of the unknown

and of the new are softened by the presence of the eternal in the midst of life. This explains why religious groups, even more than others, tend to resist change and to root themselves in the eternal. Since religion is the only sphere of life where man claims a living contact with the Absolute, man takes religion as his only protection against the threats posed by time and change.

But, on the other hand, religious life is endangered by this very trend. Life consists in change and any element of life that resists changes will tend to drift out of the living stream and cease to be a source of new energy. As if somehow conscious of this, religions have in fact accepted a good deal of newness in their history.

ii. *The Changing*

The second pole of religion is man. This explains not only the evident plurality of religions but also the less obvious growth and development discernable under the surface of unchangeability within all religious traditions. Some seem more at ease with variability than others. Thus it seems clear that the wisdom-religions emerging from India find change more easy to cope with, than the prophetic religions stemming from the Middle East. But this should not be made a universal and oversimplistic rule. For the Yoga tradition, for example, which is certainly a characteristic expression of the wisdom-religions, has remained remarkably uniform throughout the centuries; while even within the Christian tradition a strong prophetic movement like the Jesuit order, with all its stress on obedience and unity, has shown quite a remarkable flexibility and adaptability. So one cannot just attribute the acceptance or resistance to change to a simplistic division of religions into wisdom and prophetic. Many other elements seem to play a part in this area.

iii. *Change and Changelessness in Hinduism and Christianity*

We shall now analyse a little more in detail the case of two typical histories. When we examine the long tradition of Hinduism we find in general a very high degree of variability, so that scholars are tempted to give separate identities to the various stages of this religious evolution: Vedism, Brahmanism, Hinduism. I do not think we need deny a basic identity and religious continuity between these stages, but often the threads of continuity are thin. I think that we can safely say that the whole pro-

cess of evolution was started off by a meeting of cultures. There is sufficient evidence to say that even the gradual change observable in the period covered by the Rigveda was consequent on the meeting of the Aryans with a well-established culture—be it proto-Dravidian, Harappian or tribal. The growth of a questioning attitude towards the Aryan deities, the search for more universal gods, the shift from the ritual towards the philosophical may well correspond to a change from a nomadic to an agrarian society, but this goes together with the challenge of a new cultural force.

In other cases the shift is much more radical and involves a practical rejection of the central religious symbols of the earlier age. This happens, for instance, when the sacrificial system of the Brahmanas and the Vedic deities associated with them fell into practical oblivion, even if they were never theoretically rejected. Under the impact of trends that find expression in the kingly sages of the Upanishads, and trends expressed by the Buddhist and Jain traditions as exponents of the Brahmanic movement, we come to a quite different picture of the Hindu civilization. The ancient gods and rites are largely forgotten, the few remaining being mostly concerned with the domestic ritual. How then could the tradition keep its sense of identity? In the past the worship pattern had been the distinctive characteristic of the race which could contemptuously speak of the *dāsyus* simply as *adevas*, or *ayaṅyus*, *avrata* (peoples without gods, without sacrifice, without laws). But now this ritualistic world could no longer serve as the point of reference for the Brahmanic society. It seems that the Centre of self-identification shifts from the theological and ritual to the biological and sociological structures. The *varnāśramadharmā* becomes all important now for the community. It could prove both more permanent and more secure, but also more accommodating than the old cultic identity. Many views and philosophies could now be accepted. New gods posit no threat. Hinduism becomes all-embracing and acquires its high degree of catholicity, at a price, though. The more the *sādhana-dharma* is open, the more rigid the *saṃāj-dharma* becomes. It is true that the law books will make ample provision for exceptions and be more accommodating as exemplified, in the chapters on *āpaddharma*. But it must all be within the framework of the biological identity and social structure. When a new movement from within or without rejects the existing social structure (Buddhism, Islam) or comes from a totally new racial stock (remotely related, it is true, but perceived purely as alien for ex-

ample, the British), the existing tradition cannot at first accept the new realities. They must be rejected. The centre of identity has been touched and the community reacts by self-reaffirmation. This leads to modern and contemporary Hinduism.

The negative reaction cannot be the last word. If one trend from within reacts to the new challenge through reaffirmation of the old identity, as in the case of *ārya-samāj*, another trend emerges that seeks the identity in new directions. In the measure in which it wants to accept the challenge, specially of modern civilization, and becomes itself missionary and universal (for example, Ramakrishna Mission and modern Guru movements) the centre of identity is shifted. It cannot be sought any longer in blood or social structure—though some movements like the Hare Krishna, do try to transplant the Hindu social order, moving it into their new civilization. This seems clearly a reversion to the past fixed gods, and rites (Krishna cult) and fixed society (castes) it can hardly hope to survive. The renewal movement of India, on the contrary, centre more and more on experience—and indeed the unitarian religious experience of Vedantic character—to discover the basic identity of the tradition.

In Christianity too we can trace various stages in the response of the group to new cultural situations, a response that implies the search for self-identity in the clash of one group with a new people or a totally new social situation. The early experience of Jesus took place in the cultural milieu of Palestine. Its spread to the milieu of the Greek culture and the Roman empire was accompanied with an elaboration of the credal formulations that were meant to encapsule the essence of the Christian existence. The creeds were not an escape from the challenges of the new philosophies: they rather formed the spearhead of a movement of synthesis between Greek thought and Hebrew experience.

Gradually new challenges appeared from outside the newly-formed Mediterranean Christian culture: they first came from the North (the 'barbarians') and later from the South (Islam). Both were in part military challenges, though Islam was much more than that: in reaction, the social structures of Christendom were strengthened and Christians identified themselves in relation to such structures—the papacy, the clerics, monks, and liturgical celebration.

The challenge of the Renaissance and the Reformation marked the transition from the mediaeval man secure in his closed world

of Christendom in his 'island of Europe,' to a global understanding of man and life. There had been a coincidence of an inner break-up of the social fabric with the discovery of other worlds, either in antiquity through the new interests in the classics, or in other parts of the globe through the geographic discoveries in Africa, the America and Asia. This explosion of the world would make Catholic Christianity recoil in self-defence and close its ranks. Self-identity would now be preserved through stress on 'law and order' in the community, and on the value of obedience. What was important is what distinguished the community from the new worlds that were arising—often the superficial elements, the "marks of the caste", one might call them—Latin in worship, fish on Fridays, a fixed pattern of sacramental practice. It had to be the aspects in which we differed that were important. The search for identity was really a search for the *differentia specifica*. There was real danger, not always avoided, of losing one's grasp of the essential element of Christianity just for the sake of differentiation. The result could be a right set of doctrines and practices in a topsy-turvy and irrational order of importance. In seeking to keep its soul Catholicism could well lose it.

Catholic Christianity has entered a new era from the middle of this century, an era characterized by a greater attention given to pluralism, **both within and without**. The second Vatican Council was a pivotal period of this new awareness. It took the attention away from what was 'characteristically Catholic' but superficial (Latin, abstinence, pious devotions), and called the faithful back to the basic understanding of the Christian life—the message and work of Jesus, leading us on to a fuller acceptance of and sympathy with the world at large. This has meant entering fully into the ecumenical movement, itself in search of the core of the Christian identity.

The whole community, however, has not followed this pattern of adaptability to the new circumstances; for this is a path that demands not only mature theological leadership but also the courage to take risks, and the strength to surrender one's own securities to the uncertainties of an open ended enterprise—in Christian terminology, a deep spirit of faith. Not a few, even today, react negatively and tend to revert to a self-affirmation in terms of the traditional distinguishing marks of the group. We shall come back to this phenomenon later.

However, ecumenism is only one half of the movement set in motion by the admission of the reality of pluralism in the Christian

consciousness. Ecumenism seeks the basic elements of faith that bind Christians together. Today the community is called to discover those elements of human and specially religious existence that bind all men together: in other words, what is human and universal should find its rightful place at the core of the Christian identity. The *genus* cannot be sacrificed to the *differentia specifica*. And here lies the heart of the present-day problem: while it is relatively easy to go back to the roots of the Christian faith that one share with fellow Christians and yet preserve one's identity—for in theory Catholic Christianity has always affirmed the primacy of those common elements—it is much more difficult, and, possibly another story altogether, to put the common elements of the human or even religious life at the heart of one's Christian faith. Christians have always found their identity precisely in the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Can they find it now, instead, in the commonness of human nature or of the human awareness of transcendence? If so, will they not cease to be Christians and become one of the many humanistic groups adrift in our cosmopolitan cities? The efforts of the best Christian theologians today seem to be directed towards a search for lines of convergence between what is specifically Christian and what is human. The commonness of our human existence and religious consciousness is included as an important element in the specific adherence to Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. The evolutionism of Teilhard, the Christology of Rahner, the ecclesiology of Bonhoeffer, all these point towards this convergence of the human and the Christian. We may expect that from these efforts a new sense of identity will emerge, which will be meaningful in our new situation of pluralism.

iv. *The question of identity*

One might ask whether this communal effort to keep one's identity is after all a truly religious attitude. Both the Hindu and the Christian traditions seem to condemn it: *abamkāra* is considered the source of evil, for "unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it cannot bear fruit". Does not the higher religious call of man demand that we totally break down the walls of denominations and, consequently, all structures of dogmas and stable creeds? Does the way to the Absolute and Universal not pass through the denial of all absolutes in this life and the free acceptance of variability? Do we not have to reject precisely the possibility of self-identity?

Present-day trends in religious thinking move definitely on this direction. But I feel that it is the easy path that ultimately avoids the difficulty by a return to the primaeval state of undifferentiation, and that will ultimately prove impossible to man whom evolution leads towards an ever deepening self-consciousness. The way does not seem to lie in the direction of a regression to the alpha point of evolution, or in a return to a universal religious *pralaya*—these can only be destructive solutions. To us the way seems to lie in the deepening of our faith-consciousness. The universal will be recovered inside, not outside, the concrete and particular. Denying one's ego and dying in the ground are necessary, but these are vital processes of transformation of the seed into a promising and fruitbearing plant, not its destruction and immersion into the humus of undifferentiation. The God who calls us is the Lord of creation: and growth can only come through affirmation, however great the part of sacrifice in this affirmation.

2. SYNCHRONIC PLURALISM

In the above section, we started reflecting on how two different religious traditions have coped with the problem of mutability and growth within their own history. The reflection could be further pursued and the analysis would perhaps yield important lines of orientation, which we have not exploited. But even the short analysis we have made has led us to the problems of simultaneous or synchronic pluralism within each of the traditions. We now continue this reflection and see such pluralism affects the religious worship.

Modern pluralism is not a totally new experience. More perhaps than Europe, India has experienced for centuries, even before Islam, the coexistence of different trends within its culture. The process whereby the religious consciousness and worship patterns have been affected by this pluralism has often been analysed. There has normally been a process of give and take between the new trend and the earlier ones. We thus think of the Vedic gods taking on epithets that originally belonged to other gods. We may think also of the transfer of the exploits and myths of one *avatāra* on to the others, or of the use of Tantrism in the *Trika* of Kashmir. In all these cases, at a greater or lesser depth there is the transfer of the characteristics of some deity to the gods of another tradition. The pluralism of cults tends to level out, so that often at the end the gods merge into one.

This phenomenon is not unknown in other religions, though prophetic religions may offer a greater resistance to it. Some of the myths of the Babylonian cults, like the struggle of Marduk and Ti'amat, ends up as the garments of the God of the Exodus and of the Covenant, and the Assyro-Babylonian silent celestial writings "inscribed in the stars and decipherable to the wise man" finds its way into Psalm 19. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is presented to us both as the early O.T. *dabar* and as the *sophia* of the later period; but he also assumes the fulfilment of the myth of Herakles (1 Jo. 2.13-14) and, in later Christian art, is presented like the Buddha in India on the model of the Greek philosopher or orator. In popular Christian piety Jesus, the Son of God, often puts on the garments of the Father, not just by the fact that he is worshipped as God, which indeed orthodoxy has always demanded, but specially by his being addressed, not uncommonly, as father most merciful, creator, etc. And so also the attributes of the Son are cross-predicated to the other persons.

At quite a different level, we have also the acceptance of pluralism in the various cults or traditions of Mary within Roman Catholicism for Mary is known by different titles such as Our Lady of Mount Carmel; Guadalupe, Rosary, Lourdes, etc., etc. Each of these cults has its own history and character, and yet the specific devotions, prayers and spiritual orientations of the one are often transferred to the others, so that each includes all the others.

A question may now be asked whether this syncretistic tendency is a sign of health and growth or of decay in religion. I think that a deeper analysis of various cases will reveal two types of assimilation. One we may call the 'diffusion' pattern, wherein the borrowing by one cult of the elements of others is accompanied by a diminution of its sense of identity. This process is a search for a new universalism by people for whom the older loyalties no longer have any meaning. This is the kind of "melting pot syncretism" prevalent, for instance, in the Mediterranean world of the early centuries and condemned long ago by G.K. Chesterton as the faith "going to pot" (cf. *The Everlasting Man*, Part II, ch.1). This, we surmise, was the reason why the Vedic gods lost their identity. A deep change in the religious consciousness of a people, a real mutation, is what this syncretism announces. Though it is a universalism that has a great intellectual appeal, in terms of religious vitality it seems ultimately sterile. This seems also to have

been the syncretism of the Akbar-type, and the strong desire to form a new religion out of the best elements of all those that are available is a recurring phenomenon in the history of culture. We think that an empirical study of the movements and their performance in history would rather support the strong prophetic strictures of the Old Testament on this mentality.

It would also seem that this form of syncretism is the result of the imperialistic experience, where all the peoples need to be reduced to an easily manageable unity and one single structure. It works on the basis of easy homologations which when analysed turn out to be in reality 'imperial edicts' forbidding diversity and reducing the empire to a single pattern. That is why it appears strongly at the acme of the Roman Empire, as it does in the Moghul Empire, and in the 19th century Victorian era. It appears to be a liberal attitude, but in reality it is the denial of individuality. In the philosophical world it is the reduction of being to the minimum conceptual structure of reality by an artificial and ultimately false abstraction.

But there is another form of syncretism that proceeds not from the weakening of faith but from its strength. This syncretism is based on the refusal to make of religion the security blanket for a group, or the fortified citadel of a caste, and the refusal also of a protectionist attitude towards one's gods. It is the "syncretism" of the great mystics, who are able to reach universalism not by an abstraction to the least common denominator but by a contact with the real of the real (*satyasya satyam*). In this attitude other religious traditions are not seen as threats or rivals but as challenges to grow and develop. The growth is from within, impelled by the connatural force of one's faith. Such would be the syncretism of great minds like Gandhiji's who, firm in his re-discovered faith, could confidently appeal to other traditions to build up the new Hindu consciousness. This attitude is also discernible in the last documents of the second Vatican Council, where the church appears far more confident of the faith by which it lives and far more open to other traditions than was the case in the beleaguered mentality that found expression in the Syllabus or even in the first Vatican Council. It is the openness of the healthy organism. It need not fear contact with the surrounding world; nor on the other hand need it become something else by being in contact with it, but grow through it. It operates through its inner force.

The first kind of syncretism seems to lead to modernism in the worst theological sense of the term, and ultimately to indifferentism and secularist mentality. The second, which we could label "inculturation" syncretism, grows through dialogue and affirmation.

Identity, Change and Caste

The new openness of the official Catholic position as expressed in Vatican II, for all its limitations and hesitations, expresses a growth in the spirit of faith which can rightly be attributed to the Spirit of God. We must, in this last part, discuss why it meets with such resistance from a wing of the Catholic Church in India. Similar reflections could probably be made about parallel and, indeed, more extremist movements abroad, but I shall limit my reflections to the Indian situation.

The decisive move in the late sixties towards an adaptation or inculturation of the Christian worship to the main trends of Indian culture has met with the indifference and unconcern of a large section of the believers, and with a strong emotional opposition by a smaller group. I speak more specifically about the latter. One can interpret this reaction in many ways: as the expression of the will of this group to remain faithful to its ancient traditions; as an expression of narrow-mindedness and pettiness of a minority group; or as an expression of the fear of being absorbed or dominated by the larger group, or again as showing clearly that faith enters so deeply into the cultural life of the people, that it is not possible to touch one without changing the other—and it is this change in faith that the minority group would resist.

Evidently, all these factors and others must be taken into account in a study of this reaction. One thing is certain: there are in it sociological and theological factors at play; if we forget the former, we may not be able to understand sufficiently the nature of the protest and so turn to sterile polemics; if we overlook the theological issues we shall also be baffled by the conflict and miss the opportunity of arriving at a clearer understanding of the essence of a faith. For what is at stake is not merely particular ways of worshipping God, but the very understanding of religion itself.

Let us first take the sociological factors. I have already mentioned one point in this connection, self-evident but made clearer in the controversy: faith and culture may not be the same

but they are intimately connected. It is possible for the faith to take on, through centuries of evolution, new cultural expressions; but this operation cannot be accelerated artificially. Cultural life has a rhythm that cannot be forced. We may argue at length as to whether the culture of the Christian community of India is authentic or borrowed and superficial, but it has to be conceded that it is the vehicle of a faith. This union of faith and culture cannot be deplored: but if it is turned into an identification, then we fall into parochialism.

Another sociological factor is specifically Indian. It derives from the fact that Indian society is based by and large, on the sociological grouping that stands midway between the family and the state. In a general way this grouping is the caste (in the sense of *jāti*), which alone among intermediary groups is interested in the whole individual and family, and not just in some part of his activity (as political parties or trade unions might be). In important and critical periods of life, like births, marriages, deaths, family difficulties, migrations to cities, etc. generally the "caste" or sub-caste proves the most helpful grouping, and gives support to the unprotected individual or family.

For Christians, as for some other minorities, the Church performs, largely, the functions of the caste, in the broad sense of the term. It stands as the all-embracing protecting intermediary group functioning between the family and the nation at large. Converts, who have "lost" or "renounced" their caste, naturally transfer to their new community the expectations of their former membership. We submit, therefore, that much of the reaction against the adaptation of worship to different culture is really the fear of being deprived of the "maternal" function of the caste. For the caste—apart from the invisible bonds of blood which in this case are no longer dominant—distinguishes itself by external signs respected by the community at large. These cannot be lightly interfered with, lest the identity and cohesiveness of the group should perish. Thus there are subconscious values and meanings in rites that touch the very core of existence.

The conflict within the church between the official policy of inculturation and the minority that vocally resists it, is due in part to the fact that those who promote an adaptation of worship-patterns to our pluralistic situation have failed to realize the social function of the symbols as bearers of self-identity, which, in the case of Christians, act as guarantees of the "caste's"

protective role. The official line rightly refuses to agree that the Church at large is a "caste", but no other provision is made to fill up the role of the intermediary grouping. The majority of the people seem to need a sort of "caste"—not again in the traditional rigid way, which includes untouchability and hierarchical gradation, but as a larger extension of the kin relationships. Individuals can, of course, exist outside the caste—celibates, like old *sannyasis*, have traditionally done so. The majority of people cannot.

3. THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUE

However the theological awareness of the Christian Churches rejects this identification of the community of faith with the quasi-caste grouping. The Church, and, in fact, the faith itself is "Catholic", and contrary to what many people think, "Catholic" is not a denominational term to denote a specific community among Christians. Catholic is a theological term, in fact the very opposite of denominational as it connotes openness and universality. It does not primarily denote a geographical concept of world-wide extension: the Church was "Catholic" at Pentecost, when it was still limited to the cenacle where all the believers were a handful of Semites from Jerusalem or the Diaspora. Catholicity is the expression of an attitude of acceptance of all human values, of reflecting in the world the presence of Jesus Christ, the universal Man, the second Adam, mankind itself.

Thus the community cannot be bound or circumscribed by any particular culture or group or caste. The decision of the so-called "Council of Jerusalem" reported in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 15 was a great moment of the awareness by the Church of the meaning of Catholicity. It decided not to be bound to any culture, not even the mother culture of Judaism in which Christ himself had lived. The community had a right to feel at home anywhere.

This does not mean, however, that circumcision was to be forbidden to Jewish Christians. It meant that it could not be imposed on the others. Thus the catholicity aimed at is not the abstraction of keeping away from all cultural identifications, but of admitting them all, of finding expression with them all without being bound to any of them. An abstract form of 'catholicity' would not be catholicity, for it would not be 'incarnational': it

would be not a faith lived multifariously, but a product or an idea marketed all over the world, like Cococola empire. What theologically must be characteristic of the Christian faith is its ability to be at home in all cultures, including religious cultures. Recent and not so recent writers have spoken of the possibility of thinking and talking in terms of 'Hindu Christians', 'Buddhist Christians', 'Muslim Christians', where the adjective would not denote so much the original community of the believer, but the actual religious and social culture in which he lives and expresses his Christian faith. The expressions could equally be inverted: "Christian Hindus", "Christian Buddhists", "Christian Muslims". These are the lines on which theologians at least tend to think. Whether it makes sense or not to sociologists and believers of other religions remains to be seen.

It may be, ultimately, that the dynamics of cultural pluralism as it evolves slowly through dialogue and through a mature openness to the values of change will work along the lines of a cultural an doctrinal pluralism within each tradition. Without at all reducing all the religious traditions to one common denominator, keeping the distinctiveness of each, there may emerge different groups that will integrate the central insights and inspiration of another tradition in their dominant religious affiliation and commitment. This may mean, sociologically, that the religious community, while accepting a plurality of groupings within itself, will be less identified with the protective role of the caste—group and become if anything more expressive of the universal brotherhood of man in their relation to the ultimate goal of existence. How the sociological subgroups will then interact remains still to be seen. Inversely, a still unsolved question will be the way in which the various religious traditions will find their identity and recognize themselves in the pluralistic world of the mid-twentieth century. But then religions have a tradition of trust in a stronger Power that directs their growth, and it may be that they are today more than ever called upon to make an act of faith in the Transcendent pole of their very lives.