

of them here: "...the authority of the universal Church should concede to the local Churches a greater liberty for solving these complex problems according to the real possibilities. This will also encourage a gradual pedagogy which corresponds to the whole context of the culture in question... No marriage should be declared invalid when it concerns a form that is socially approved and controlled and has proper sacramental intentions. The Church should meet with sympathy customs in their dynamism and be present to every serious marriage with the pedagogy of faith and morals."

"In order to judge what is humanly possible or impossible the knowledge, not only of man in the abstract or of the European, but of every man taken in his concrete historical context, is necessary. It is demanded of us as Europeans that we abandon the temptation to impose our mental; social and juridical structures on cultures for which they are not made and on men whom the Creator, Lord of history, has certainly not designed for such structures." (p. 163).

The book is attractively presented, a stiff-covered paperback. It has a detailed table of contents but no index and price is indicated. There is a large amount of bibliographical information in the footnotes but most of it refers to German and Italian publications.

John Lourdes Fernandes.

G. Gispert—Sauch,

Bliss in the Upanishads,

(An analytical Study of the Origin and Growth of Vedic Concept of Ananda),

New Delhi: Oriental Publishers and distributors 1977,
269+iv pp.

The formula Sat-Cit-Ananda for God lies at the very root of Indian thought. This book which is the doctoral thesis of the author submitted to the Faculty of Theology at the Institute Catholique of Paris is a study of the concept of *ānanda* in *Upanishads* in its various aspects. The book is divided into seven chapters and each chapter studies *ānanda* from different points of view.

In the introductory chapter the meaning and etymology of *ānanda* is discussed. The dictionary defines *ānanda* as bliss, happi-

ness, joy, enjoyment etc. But these translations fail to express the richness and depth of the Sanskrit word *ānanda*. *Ananda* is a composite word made up of the root “nand” and the prefix—“a”. It seems to suggest a dynamic aspect of interiorization. The word “nand” etymologically means to rejoice, to be refreshed, to be strengthened, especially by blessing or by uttering praise.

The study starts with the concept of *ānanda* in *taittiriya* tradition. It is analysed against the background of sacrificial ceremony. The piling the altar—*agnicayana* with its elaborate ceremonies and meaning is studied. The shape of the altar was that of a bird, with the body, head, two wings and tail. The shape of the altar suggests that it is a means of ascending into heaven, which is the abode of *ānanda*. The sacrifice is depicted as a means to attain the bliss or *ānanda*. The sacrifice is the means that leads the sacrificer into heaven. The whole of the building of the altar is represented as a symbolic journey to heaven.

As the study progresses the five elements or kosas of human person are enumerated. They are the *annamaya kośa*, the *prānamaya kosa*, the *manomaya kośa*, the *vijñanamaya kośa*, and the *ānanda maya kośa*. *Ananda* or bliss is in the innermost self of man. The reflection on the five kośas leads to the discovery of the blissful self beyond the realm of conscience that dwells in the innermost core of man.

“The central teaching of the *Taittiriya Upanisad* is that within the physical personality of man considered as the essence of food, there is another self which is the self of life or vital breath: “The former is filled by the latter which is unto the shape of man” and even more interior to it, there is another body of mind and after that the “body” of intelligence till we finally reach the body of bliss (pp. 62-63).

The speculation based on *agnicayana* gradually proceeds to the identification of bricks of the altar with individuals or cosmic realities. The sources of the text and the meditation on the *agnicayana* and the complex set of ideas that emerge from it show that we are in a context of religious experience, of an attempt of reaching mystically the totality of Being and of Bliss not now by the means of performance of a sacrifice but by means of an interiorised meditation. In the *Maitrayaniya Upanisad* the meditation is still close to a ritual. In the *Taittiriya Upanisad* it has been transferred from the ground of the altar to its cosmic dimension; and from there to the interior of the *purusa*, man. This meditation

leads one to the realization that "*Brahmavid āpnoti param*" the knower of the Brahman obtains the Supreme, and that the state of *ānanda* is truly transcendental.

Next the concept of *ānanda* is studied against the background of creation. Brahman created this universe out of himself as a result of his desire to be manifold. After creation the creator entered into it. Creation is a transition from the unmanifested form to the manifested form. *Ananda* is here identified with the cosmic principle. *Ananda* is seen as a transcendental principle. It is seen as the final goal of man's journey at the time of death; it is also the goal of asceticism.

Further the concept of *ānanda* is studied in relation to deep sleep. In deep sleep one experiences Brahman in its pure essence. The state of sleep is the junction of this world and the other world. When man stands at this junction he sees the two of them. "Thus it is that the consideration of the condition of sleep as an anticipation of the life of liberation leads to the conception of soul as pure light of knowledge without duality of subject and object and at the same time to the acceptance of Bliss as being of the purest essence of ātman" (p. 110).

The discourse between Ajātā-Satru and Bālāki throws some more light on the concept of sleep. Accordingly, there are two kinds of sleep. The first one is *svapna* in which the person moves in a state of dream. In this state *vijnānāmaya purusa* walks at will in the body. The second is *susupta* or deep sleep. In this experience one has the sense of reaching the acme of bliss or perhaps of being overpowered by bliss. "The ultimate ātman found in its purity in the state of profound sleep and which in its purity enjoys the highest imaginable bliss is the Brahman, which has been sought all through this discussion" (p. 113).

Kauṣītaki Upanisad explains sleep as a process of unification of senses with their objects within the one central reality in man which is *prāna*. The experience of deep sleep is the one that comes nearest to the serenity of absolute Bliss. So this experience is used as a means to explain the infinite nature of *ātman*.

The Chāndogya Upanisad's reflection on deep sleep tells us that Brahman consists of bliss. The concept of *ānanda* is also examined in relation to sexual pleasure. The close relationship between the *ānanda* derived from erotic activity and final *ānanda*, the supreme goal of man, is an oft-repeated and deep-rooted idea in Indian thought. "...the experience of *ānanda* in the union of

sexes becomes a means to grasp, be it in a faint manner, the supreme experience of one who goes back to the first source of his personality, to that ultimate metaphysical core where suppressing all effusion of being into outer forms, he finds behind the activity of a conceptual mind, the experience of Being in its fullness, that is the experience of *ānanda*" (p. 144).

Ananda is seen as the totality of domestic happiness. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upanisad* 6.4.2-3 teaches that female sexual activity is a true sacrifice. The *Upanisad* shows heaven as the abode of *ānanda*. *Soma* is the drink of gods. It is identified with immortal essence judged by its origin and effect. *Ananda* is considered to be the result of *soma* drink. This drink is the source of immortality. Immortality and Bliss are identical in Rgvedic thought. *Ananda* is the characteristic of immortality, life after death. In the final analysis *ānanda* is liberation which is nothing but the union with the Absolute. *Ananda* is the state of final and total liberation.

The meditation on Ch. Up. 7. 23.1 leads us to the conclusion that *ānanda* is the fruit of fullness or totality. In Indian philosophy and theology Being is considered as the source, as fullness, as completeness and as plenitude.

So the concept of *ānanda*, as it is presented in various *Upanisads*, finally follows very closely the line of Vedanta philosophy. It is considered to be the ultimate goal to be obtained by an individual. The author deserves to be specially complimented on his bringing into focus the core of Indian vision of liberation as a standing invitation to eternal happiness.

Kuriakose Puthenmanayil

Ary A. Roest Crolius,

**The word in the Experience of Revelation,
In Quran and Hindu Scriptures,**
(Documenta Missionalia—8), Roma: Universita Gregoriana
Editrice, 1974, 273+xiii pp.

The importance of dialogue between the different religions of the world for a better and fuller understanding of God, man and the world, is being increasingly recognized today by the Church.