

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.

But quite often what happens under the name of "the theology of non-Christian religions" takes the form of pronouncing judgements on other religions. A true dialogue demands a sincere effort to listen to each other's listening to the Word of God. The present book is an attempt to understand the Muslim and Hindu experiences of the Word, as revealed in the Quran and the Hindu Scriptures. The book is a demonstration to the reader of what it means to listen to another's experience of the Word. Hence the author calls his study "an exercise in listening" (p. 1).

In the introduction, he gives a brief survey of the theological thinking on the place of non-Christian religions in God's plan of salvation. All religions, though subject to man's sin and culpability, stand under the influence of God's grace, and they are existentially directed towards a hearing of God's Word. It is from this point of view that the author proceeds with his study of the two religions.

The book comprises three long chapters. Chapter one deals with the Spoken Word in the Quranic experience of revelation (pp. 17-79) and the chapter two with the Written Word in the Quranic experience of revelation (pp. 80-155). The third chapter is concerned with the Word in the Hindu Scriptures (pp. 156-240). In the Conclusion, he explains the mutual relation of these two types of revelation of the Word with reference to the Christian revelation (pp. 241-253). All the works that have served him in this study are given in the bibliography (pp. 257-269).

The aim of this study is to understand the way man hears the Word, based on his perception of the way God speaks to him. It is not so much the content of the divine Word as the form and function of the Word spoken and heard that interests the author.

The Word in the Quranic revelation has two dimensions: the Spoken Word and the Written Word. The Spoken Word has three aspects: it is experienced as a call, address (*qawl*) by God and for carrying out a mission (*kalimat*) by virtue of God's order (*Amr*). According to the Quranic revelation God is not only He who speaks but also He who writes, assisted by "Noble ones" or "Emissaries". The word "kitab" is used in the Quran (more than 250 times) to refer to that which is written by God, and it is a symbol of God's knowledge of the entire history of mankind, past and future. The Spoken Word and the Written Word are harmonized in the conception of revelation as Quran, i.e. a Re-

citation. Through the Recitation the Written Word (Scripture) becomes a Word that can be heard.

Coming to the Word in the experience of revelation in Hindu Scriptures, the author explains the various forms and functions of Word in the Vedas, in the Upanishads, and in the Bhagavad Gita. In the Vedas the Word is primarily a ritual Word with a sacral power, which, according to the Upanishads, can be heard through dialogue and meditation, which in the Bhagavad Gita becomes the highest Word of personal God to be listened to in love and loyalty.

Thus, this book is a detailed study of the function and meaning of the Word in these two religions, supported with numerous references to the sources, and other scholarly works. In order to be accurate in his understanding and interpretation of the key-notions concerning the Word, he has approached them philologically and historically. This book is an example in listening to another's experience and can serve as a guide for those who undertake similar tasks. I would very much have liked the author to add another chapter on the Word in the Christian experience of revelation and specify the points of its convergence or difference from the Hindu or Muslim revelation. I say so, because the book is written in the context of inter-religious dialogue, and such an addition would have contributed to make the discussion in this area more comprehensive and lively.

S. Joseph Varanath.

J. Mattam,

Land of the Trinity.

(A study if the modern Christian approaches to Hinduism),
Bangalore: T P I, India, 200 pp.

The Church today, is aware that she is called to be a partner in dialogue with other religions "to achieve a deeper understanding of the Gospel's newness and of the fullness of revelation". The Church in India, too, following the pattern of the universal Church, is entering a new era of dialogue. The possibilities are being explored for a meeting of religions in areas of religious scriptures, philosophy, theology, spirituality and so on. And the book "Land of Trinity", is a rich and remarkable contribution to this line of approach.