

## *EDITORIAL*

The opposition and tension between modernity and tradition, reform and revival is a constantly recurring phenomenon in the history of world religions. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a number of such conflicting movements in Hinduism in India. In religion and philosophy, as in her political development, India was passing through a new era in her history. The British domination and the need for a religious revival pressed the educated to come forward to retrieve what had been neglected in the religio-cultural heritage of India and to reform some of the traditional practices. This is certainly not the story of Hinduism alone; other religions also have gone through similar movements. Evidently this is not a contemporary phenomenon; it has been ever-present in the history of all religions.

The reform and revival movements seem to have a time bound mission and after reaching a certain phase, they have usually faded out. The reformers usually took an extreme position subscribing to the belief that even those elements which are well-established and integrated into the culture could be easily eliminated from practising them. They were certainly justified in asking to re-examine whether some of the traditional practices are worth preserving. But what happened was that the reformist worked on the theoretical belief in the equality and brotherhood of all men and they failed to provide a strong basis for a transformation of society so that it may fall in line with their ideology in actual practice. Their ideology lacked a proper understanding of the religio-social reality and a genuine understanding of the mechanism and processes of social transformation. Consequently, the movements were confined to small minority of the elite and thus they failed to make any real or lasting impact on the people at large in a religious community.

The revival movements in religious traditions are also fraught with weaknesses and inner contradictions. For instance, the Arya Samaj established by Dayananda Saraswati (1828-1883) eventually turned out to be a militant group. A revivalist movement makes the members of its group a closed sect, and opposed to all outside influences. For the Arya Samaj, the Vedas became the absolute norm of religious life. It was a norm already codified in definite forms. An approach of this kind inevitably leads towards a glorification of the past and give rise to a dream to live and practise today the values of yesterday.

Such movements will have no intellectual dynamism. These will contribute nothing to a new synthesis except, perhaps, new interpretation of the past tradition. While attributing supreme value to a single religious tradition, it tends to be 'exclusivist' and closed to all other religious values.

A student of the history of the various religious movements that came up to modernize the religious practices or revive and preserve old traditions, would certainly agree that only an openness to a happy combination of the revival of the genuine ancient religious values and the reform of the unhealthy traditions can produce a long standing effect in the socio-religious life of man. This craving for modernity coupled with a love for the preservation of tradition is a tendency which will be with man as long as mankind continues to practise one or the other form of religion. The present number of *Journal of Dharma* examines how this tendency is being expressed in certain specific religious situations. The articles constitute a few of the papers presented in the Inter-faith Seminar on "Religions in their Re-making" held at Dharmaram Pontifical Institute, Bangalore, from October 31 to November 2, 1980. The article of Dr. Manickam, however, was not presented in the Seminar.

Was St. Paul a member of two major world religions, namely, Judaism and Christianity? Did he ever convert himself from Judaism to Christianity or was Christianity a natural fulfilment of Judaism for him? Will all religions find their fulfilment in a cosmic religion? These are a few questions Dr. J. Pathrapankal discusses in his article "The Polarity of Law and Freedom in Pauline Religion." History testifies that the Roman Catholic Church was always very cautious and discreet in matters relating to the modernization process in the Church. Fr. Ignatius Hirudayam examines in his article the evolution of Catholic consciousness in absorbing new values, especially since the Vatican Council II. Johannine Christology reveals a high degree of theologizing. Had there been any influence from the gnostics in this process? Or, rather, who influenced whom in the evolution of the theology of the Logos? Dr. Antony Edanad examines these questions in his article "The Emergence of the Gnostic Challenge to Johannine Logos."

Though Islam is known for its faithfulness to its original form, the modernization process is not found wanting in its history. Thus Dr. Peter Antes presents the Iranian religious evolution and revolution as an Islamic example of religions in their re-making.

The *Upanishads* indeed constituted a revolt against the accepted concepts of heaven, the benevolent gods, the malevolent *karma*, and the normal goals of man, namely, pleasure and profit, comprehended in the *tri-varga* ideology of *purushartha*. They rejected the vedic world-view as irrelevant to man's destiny. But the *Purvamimamsa* gave a philosophic defence of the world-view of the *Brahmanas*. Sankara, the great advaitin, however, reverted to the monistic position of the *Upanishads*. He also developed a scheme of ethical and religious life in man's sojourn on earth and Dr. Jacob Kattackal shows how *advaita* practically accepts the need of an ethical code for man.

The next two papers, however, do not deal with any particular religious traditions. All the religious traditions are the expressions of a fundamental religious experience. From the standpoint of the Indian analysis of human consciousness, Dr. Ouseparampil discusses whether the basic religious experiences can be expressed adopting some new unexplored avenues of approach. Obviously what Nietzsche taught was no 'religion' in the narrow sense of the term. But has it not got all the aspects of a religion? Dr. G. Njarakunnel examines the question in his article "Religion Beyond Religions in Nietzsche."

Dr. Manickam, in his article, "Theologizing in India" invites his fellow-religious thinkers to extricate themselves, each one from the limited confines of their theological world, and try to evolve a common medium of communication through which both Hindus and Christians could express their specific religious experience for their mutual benefit. This form of remodelling of religion is the result of a well-calculated, informed and consciously adopted programme of action.

It is certainly amazing to see how religious experiences get solidified and structuralized and how they take new turns to undo these structuralizations, for a better organization and consolidation. The opposing tendency found in the human psyche for constituting structures and at the same time transcending the constituted boundaries is actively operative even in the religions of man. Will it not be very much like a dream to imagine that there would come a time when religious will not feel within themselves the pull and tension of modernity and tradition? This tension might well be the divine design for man's religions.

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