

EDITORIAL

Born in time and bent to timelessness, man is a mystery ever explored anew and yet never explained fully. The exploration of this mystery to which history bears witness has pulled man in both directions, reducing him to a mere moment in time or raising him above time to absolute timelessness. He has been explained as a pure being-in-the-world, thoroughly earthbound and timebound; but his meaning has also been explored in his being which is above time and temporalities. Setting his goal on productivity and growth man has laid emphasis on his temporal dimension. But elaborating man's aspirations for *nirvāna* and *moksha* he has also shown his transcendence over matter and the process of his becoming in matter, his taste for the immaterial and yearning for what is not in time. Time is the experiential aspiration of a timeless being to become temporal and timelessness is the essential aspiration of a timebound being to become eternal. Time and timelessness, temporality and eternity meet in the consciousness of man, creating inner tensions, leaving him all the more aspiring and dynamic.

Being temporalised man is in an existential predicament, the essence of which is to grow in time and to grow towards timelessness. Time is thus the very law of his being, the manner of his becoming. Time is nothing but the experience of man's becoming; it is the very locus of his becoming. As becoming it implies the future and the past within it and always tends to be more than what it really is. Time is structurally ordained to a sort of timelessness: aeon or eternity, *moksha* or *nirvāna* as the case may be.

Structured in time but always transcending it man makes history that is at the same time temporal and transtemporal. Man is the only animal who can make a meaningful history which is the story of his becoming. As he transcends time he transforms his own history, always unveiling the dimensions of his timelessness in the very process of his temporalisation. He is time and timelessness together, or, as one might say, the seed of eternity growing in time.

In this number of *Dharma* we are making a study of the temporal and the transtemporal character of man. The discussion is opened by Professor Ninian Smart of the University of Lancaster with his scholarly article on *nirvāna* and timelessness. De-

fining *nirvāna* as a cooling off, a quenching of the fire of *tanha* Smart enters deep into the concept of timelessness implied in the Buddhist *nirvāna*. A serious attempt is made to make the negative notion of *nirvāna* understandable. Through *nirvāna* man is permanently liberated from the impermanence of his being and his liberation, when fully attained, is without a "where" or "when" and thus could rightly be termed as *nirvāna* without substrate. However, Smart delves into the problem of "knowing" *nirvāna* and daringly compares it with the "foretaste of the beatific vision",

Professor T.M.P. Mahadevan of Madras University continues the discussion with an analysis of the physical, psychological and metaphysical aspects of time. Having glanced through the different notions of time in Indian systems, Mahadevan focusses on the advaitic notion of time and timelessness. Time is indeterminable but its purpose is "to serve as the gateway to reality". Time, as the pre-eminent image of Brahman, Mahadevan maintains, can be "our friend inducting us to eternity".

The relation between time and eternity is explored further by Dr. J. Pathrapankal of Dharmaram College from a Christian standpoint. Any study of time and eternity against the biblical background would make it necessary that one understands Hebrew and early Christian thought. Accordingly Pathrapankal begins his study with an analysis of biblical word-clusters referring to time and eternity. Fundamental to this Christian approach is the conviction that in Jesus of Nazareth a definitive and decisive event has taken place which affects both time and eternity. Time now takes a new dimension and becomes salvific through which man discovers the meaning of his existence. But the ultimate task of man, says Pathrapankal, is to live in his own time (*kaïros*) and to open himself to eternity, a task that carries with it certain prophetic impatience for the simple reason he has to combine time and timelessness in his day-to-day life.

Dr. Bibhuti S. Yadav of Temple University finds in the human consciousness of time and timelessness a happy convergence of Indian Upanishadic thought and the contemporary Western phenomenology. Starting with the Upanishadic transposition of time category into space, contrasting *svarga* and *loka*, heaven and earth, he shows that consciousness of the self manifests a reality outside the concerns of metaphysics, discerned only in the encounter of the ego with death, finding its liberation and fulfilment in timeless Being that is pure consciousness.

Any philosophical and theoretical study of time and timelessness has a philological dimension which also needs careful research. Our survey section, therefore, includes a philological study of several terms denoting time. Dr. Luke of the Calvary Philosophical Institute in his article "Indo-Iranian Terms Denoting Time" presents a studied analysis of the Indo-Iranian terms of time, such as *samaya*, *kāla*, *yuga*, *kalpa*, *muhu* and *zrvan*. In this study Dr. Luke skilfully brings in insights from comparative Indo-European philology.

Our discussion section of this number presents the contrast and complementarity between the Western and Eastern efforts to transcend time and reach the timeless through intuition. Professor George Nordgulen of Eastern Kentucky University, shows his preference for the Western approach which finds intuition as the culmination of logical reasoning, contrasting the approach of Hartshorne with that of Radhakrishnan. It is more consistent, more practical and related to the actual situations and problems of life.

Professor John B. Chethimattam, responding to the same problem shows that East has approached the situations and the problems not through the Aristotelian intentionality structure of analysis and synthesis, but through an inverse logic of detachment and silence, called *avita seshavadanumāna* (the negative inference a-posteriori), looking at things from a higher angle. The Eastern approach is not less practical, nor less logical, but shows an integral vision that transcends the subject-object dichotomy.

We do not think that this study on time and timelessness presented in this number is exhaustive; but we believe that it has shed some light on this problem and hope that it will stimulate further discussion.

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