

## EDITORIAL

"The Human Person: Philosophical and Religious Perspectives" is the theme of this number of the *Journal of Dharma*. The articles in this issue were presented and discussed at the 1995 session of the Association of Christian Philosophers of India (ACPI).

The theme needs neither introduction nor apology. Belonging as it does to the core of the philosophical and theological concerns of today (and not just of today), it has evident repercussions in a number of related fields, from ethics to inter-religious dialogue, from psychology to the East-West encounter. As is evident from the papers that follow, we looked at this central topic from a rich variety of perspectives – philosophical and religious, Eastern and Western-and tried to integrate the valid insights of the various views into the necessarily incomplete and partial understanding that each of us possesses.

The engaging level of discussion that followed each paper cannot, of course, be duplicated in print, but the papers, I believe, are consistent units within themselves without the need for further comments or introduction.

I am happy to acknowledge the gracious offer of the *Journal of Dharma* to once again publish our papers. This is a partnership that we at the ACPI treasure. I must, however, add that neither the *Journal's* interest, nor the ACPI 'umbrella' implies an official endorsement of any view presented in the articles. The positions are the responsibility of the individual writers, and must (like all academic writing) be judged on their intrinsic merit.

We have the following papers from the Indian tradition: Professor Thomas Manickam treats of the Samkya-Gita perspectives, taking us back to the original texts and clarifying central themes that have influenced much philosophical and religious thinking. Professor Srinivasa Rao's "short note" on the Vedanta insights looks at the question of identity and self-knowledge. Jaina and Buddhist contributions to the question, including comparative reflections with Hinduism, are the topic of Dr. Vincent Sekhar's piece. Professor

Richard De Smet looks at the meaning of the person from a comparative (East-West) point of view, adding to the usual academic fare some striking inscriptions from the time of Ashoka. The very valid perspective of a people generally overlooked by professional philosophers—the adivasi groups of India — is highlighted by someone who has lived among them, namely, Doctor Johnson Vadakumchery. Turning Westwards and in the direction of further inter-religious understanding, we have the article on the concept of the human being in Islam (and more precisely in its sacred texts) by Professor George Koovackal. The next piece, Professor Gregory D'Souza's study on the insights of the mystics, throws light on this theme from both Christian and an inter-religious angle.

Coming to Western philosophy, John Locke's concept of the person is explained by Professor S.W. Bakhle, together with further reflections by current analytic philosophers. Professor Joe Mannath's paper on "Love as the Key to Understanding the Person" presents the insights of personalism. A challenging and growing branch of psychology, explicitly linked to philosophy and religion, is the field of John Alexander's paper.

There certainly are hundreds of other equally deserving and influential positions we have not had the time and the competence to explore. We intend the present fare to be only an appetizer. May it lead you to further discoveries on this fascinating theme: the mystery and the puzzle that we human beings are.

**Joe Mannath**  
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