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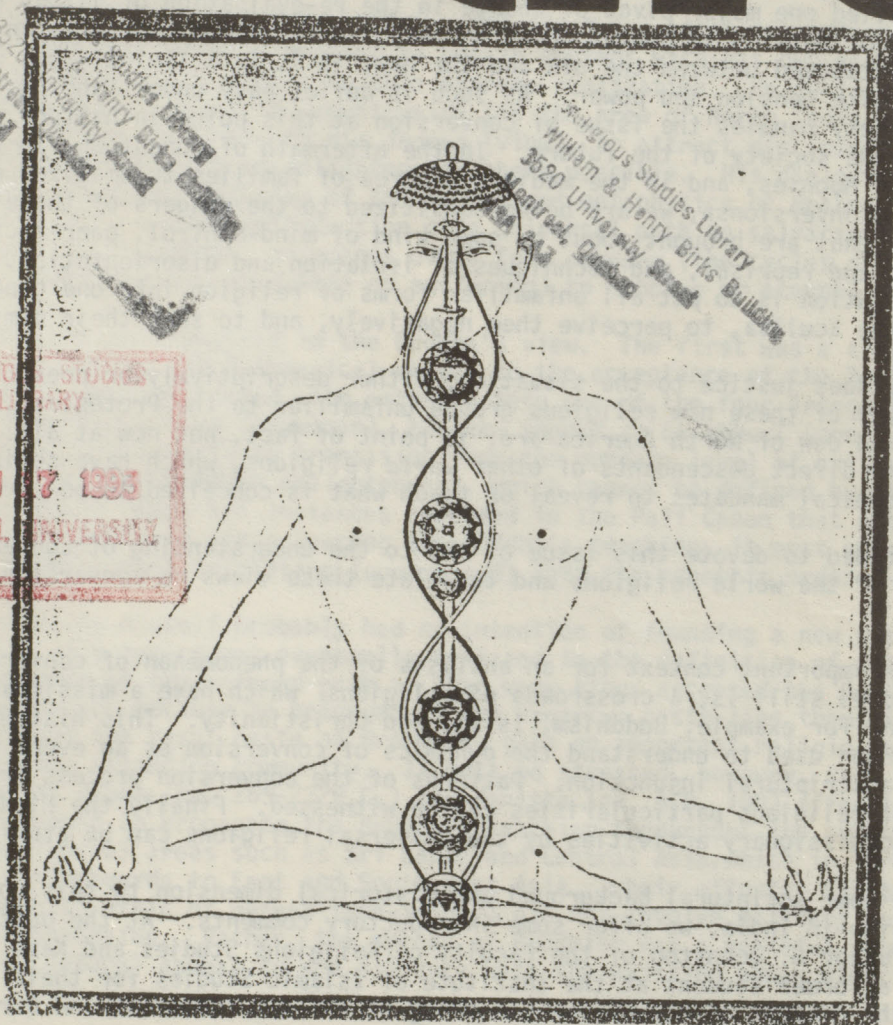
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*Conversion at the Crossroads:
India and North America*



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CONVERSION IN INDIA AND NORTH AMERICA: SOME REFLECTIONS

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As a society we have been «turning around» the issue of conversion. For some this has been a theoretical discussion; for others a psychological reality (for example, for those parents who have faced «losing» their child to an unfamiliar religious group); and for yet others, the turning around has been no less than a genuine spiritual rebirth. Indeed, the issue of conversion might be called one major pivot of change in the re-evaluation of values and the search for meaning in contemporary society. Because conversion as an event is juxtaposed between the old and the new, it is in a liminal zone which is fraught with tension and power. As such it defies easy understanding. Yet how our society handles the issue of conversion at this point in history will also shape the society of the future. In the aftermath of Jonestown, in the midst of the Moonies, and in the media exposures of families traumatized and divided by «conversions», we are being sensitized to the dangers of those conversions that are brought about by some kind of mind-control, peer tactics of pressure and reprisal, and techniques of isolation and disorientation. The easy solution is to put all unfamiliar forms of religion into one general category, the «cults», to perceive them negatively, and to seek their demise.

This hardly does justice to the situation, either descriptively or prescriptively. Many of these new religious groups unfamiliar to the Protestant, Catholic, and Jew of North America are, in point of fact, not new at all. They are the direct descendants of other *world* religions, which have scriptural and philosophical mandates to reveal or teach what is conceived to be the truth.

We have decided to devote this issue of ARC to the understanding of conversion in several of the world religions and to relate these views on conversion to India.

India is an important context for an analysis of the phenomenon of conversion. It was, indeed still is, a crossroads of religions which have a missionary orientation; for example, Buddhism, Islām, and Christianity. This historical context can be used to understand the dynamics of conversion as an event rather than just a scriptural injunction. Patterns of the conversion process irrespective of religious particularities can be witnessed. Finally the Hindu response to missionary activities by the universal religions can be studied.

To provide some scriptural background and historical dimension to this context of conversion in India, we offer some introductory comments. At the outset we thank Professor G. Johnston of the Faculty of Religious Studies and Kazi Siddiqui, a former student at the Institute of Islamic Studies for their lectures on the concept of conversion according to the New Testament and Qur'ān

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respectively (given in the course Phenomenology of Religion, 1979), which have been incorporated in part into the present survey.

The ultimate aim of these introductory reflections is to note some parallels between India and contemporary North America as crossroads of religions. Some thoughts on how our society might come to terms with the new religious pluralism will be offered.

Buddhism

Let us begin with Buddhism. The Buddha (563-483 B.C.) after his enlightenment struggled with the issue of whether to remain content with his own *nibbana* or whether he should bring others to this supreme realization. He decided on the latter and wandered about the countryside (in the area of North India around the city of Benares) to preach his *dhamma* (view), to attract disciples, and to instigate the experience of enlightenment where possible. His dialectic was two-fold: a negative criticism of the ethics and metaphysics of Brahmanical society and the positive introduction of a universal path to salvation that would allow *any* individual to «cross over» from *saṃsāra* (the cycles of reincarnation characterized by *dukkha* or suffering) to *nibbāna* or eternal peace.

Two transitions were implied in the Buddha's view. The first was a «lateral» transition from the old Brahmanical values to the acceptance of the Buddha's *dhamma*, which was correlated with entrance into one of the four categories: *upsaka* (layman), *upasikā* (laywoman), *bhikkhu* (monk), or *bhikkhunī* (nun). The second involved a «vertical» transition from the mundane level of existence in *saṃsāra* to the supramundane enlightenment, which cannot be defined by ordinary language. While there are instances recorded in the Pali Canon that *nibbāna* could be attained upon first hearing the Buddha's teaching, it most commonly occurred after formal initiation (*upasampadā*) into the monastic order (*saṅgha*).

While the Buddha himself probably had no intention of founding a new religion, his role in this regard was eventually realized in the definition of a *Buddha* as the «founder of the unfound path.» That many kings accepted the Buddha's teaching, perhaps because he belonged to the *kṣatriya* caste like themselves and criticized the rival caste of Brahmins, gave an important religio-political impetus to the expanding community. It must be stressed, however, that although kings such as Aśoka (ca. 269-232 B.C.) and Kaniṣka (ca. A.D. 100) effectively used their power to propagate the Buddha's teaching throughout the subcontinent and the peripheral areas such as Sri Lanka and Central Asia, which in turn became the springboards to East and South East Asia, their efforts, constrained by the Buddhist ethic of *ahiṃsā* (non-injury), did not involve military conquest or forced conversion. Rather, the spread of Buddhism was a peaceful process through the natural appeal to and alliance with the existing power structures.

Buddhism, therefore, can be termed a missionary religion, for it is universal in its appeal to all, it is self-conscious in its propagation following the model of the Buddha, and it is successful in its efforts as witnessed by the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia.

It should not surprise us, then, to encounter Buddhist «missionaries» in North America. One recent impetus for this activity can be traced to the Western contacts with Japan during the Occupation and its aftermath. Philip Kapleau and Thomas Merton for example, developed an interest in Zen which stimulated others in North America. At the same time the efforts of Buddhist groups to come to terms with the new global order resulted in a renewed appreciation and propagation of Buddhism as a «world religion.» Nichiren Shu Shu, with its world-wide organization is a case in point.

A second major impetus for the spread of Buddhism into North America was the displacement of Buddhists from Tibet after the Chinese takeover and the resulting search for a new homeland to protect the *dharma*. The migration of many Tibetans, monks and lay people, to North America instigated a flourishing of religious activity in the receptive new environment. The establishment of the Dharmadhatu centres by Chögyam Trampa may be cited as an example.

Islām

Like Buddhism, Islām is avowedly a missionary religion. Justification, however, is found in scripture as the revelation of the will of God and is not attributed to a religious leader who *chose* to propagate the way he discovered to the Truth.

The very word *Islām* means «submission to the will of God». Conversion entails the declaration before two Muslims: «I bear witness there is no God but Allāh and Muḥammad is his prophet»; a statement as to why one wants to convert, acknowledgement that it is conviction not force that prompts the conversion, and the subsequent performance of the Five Pillars incumbent on every Muslim. Conversion is thus *public*, submission to God (*islām*) and *private*, a feeling and belief that can be recognized by God alone (*īmān*).

Qur'ān 3:19 states: «Verily the religion with Allāh is Islām». This categorical statement indicates that only *one* way conforms to the will of God and that way is Islām. Because only one way is prescribed, it must be the dominant way of life among men so that the will of God can be fulfilled and a Muslim can fulfil his duties to God. Islām's expansion, and the resulting domination that once stretched from Spain to the Philippines can be attributed to this missionary orientation. Just as the prophets in the past invited people to the straight path, so the duty of every Muslim is *da'wah* or calling people to the path. Missionary activity ultimately is the responsibility of every Muslim. At the same time Qur'ān 2:257 states: «Let there be no compulsion in religion». While Muslims extend the invitation to follow this path, each person is to be given the freedom to choose. As a corollary, provisions are made for minorities in a Muslim society.

Such is the theoretical view, based on scripture, of conversion according to Islām. Salim Kidwai subjects this view to a historical assessment and discovers a complexity in the context of conversion to Islām that defies easy analysis; there is not always a one to one correspondence between scriptural injunction and the individual's interpretation of scripture. Because missionary activity was in the hands of *individuals*, many different approaches could emerge and «form» the historical event of conversion. The religio-political dimension of conversion in the liminal zone between the old and the new cannot be ignored. Kidwai points to the difficulty of scholarship to pierce through the polemics in order to reveal the historical truth in the interstices of religions. Ultimately, he argues, a convert must be understood with reference both to how he views his old self and what he intends to achieve through conversion to the new. This «new» is never just a religious dimension. It also involves a new social and political reality. The context of conversion could thus polarize a society significantly. Conversion is rarely a phenomenon limited to individuals. This point is a fundamental departure for any adequate hermeneutics of conversion.

Buddhism developed from *within* Indian society and eventually contributed to the polarization between the Bauddhas and «others» or in Hindu terminology the *āstikas* (those who accept the Veda) and the *nāstikas* (those who reject the Veda). Just as Buddhism was about to disappear as a major religion in the land of its birth (about the 12th Century A.D.), Islām entered India and once more challenged Brahmanical religion (which we now call Hinduism). The egalitarian appeal of Islām's concept of the «brotherhood of man» appealed to the low castes and outcastes by proffering an opportunity for dignity, for status (through participation in the ruling structure), and for economic gain (the hand-maiden of power and privilege). Islām could also exploit the old polarizations in the society: the Brahmanical-Buddhist tension. When Buddhists found their religion on the decline, they no doubt were attracted to Islām either through alliance or conversion. That both Buddhism and Islām were urban-based and included commercial classes made the attraction even stronger.

Lest we be accused of reducing religion to political, social and economic factors, let us remind the reader that attraction to conversion may also reside in an individual's personal quest for Truth or Salvation. The attraction of monotheism to those who are confused or theologically incapacitated by a plurality of gods is significant. Indeed the clarity and viability of the Five Pillars of Islam as the *act* of being a Muslim in the face of a plurality of rituals too has its attraction. Conversion as spiritual rebirth or theological quest is always an important factor for consideration, especially when an *individual's* rather than a *group's* conversion occurs.

Islām is a missionary religion and a world religion. Again, it should come as no surprise to find Islām in North America. Perhaps Islām first arrived in North America with the slaves, for there are some Blacks who claim a continuous tradition of being Muslim. With the search for identity among North American Blacks, the recognition that many slaves came from Muslim Africa prompted some

Blacks to turn to Islām as a way to recover their identity and to sever their connection with Christianity which they held responsible for slavery. The history of the Black Muslims and especially the conversion to Malcolm X is well-known. More recently, the racial connotations underlying the early Nation of Islām, which had their basis in the Black-White polarizations, and the deviation from some fundamental Muslim beliefs is beginning to give way to a redefinition of Islām according to fundamental precepts. Muslim immigrants to North America are contributing to this process of Islamisation among Blacks. Besides appealing to disadvantaged Blacks, Islām is attracting other disadvantaged groups. Prison officials, for instance, have noted the increased number of prisoners who have converted to Islām and who request a diet free from pork.

Here too, we cannot reduce the context of conversion to disadvantaged groups. For converts to Islām also include others who converted because of marriage or personal conviction. Thus, Muslim organizations have participants who are not Muslims by birth, but rather come from a cross-section of the population. Whereas the main preoccupation of the Muslim migrants to North America has been to protect and nurture the community as a minority in a pluralistic society, the duty of every Muslim to call people to the right path maintains an open door to Islām.

Christianity

The Christian understanding of conversion is rooted in the New Testament. The key term is *anōthen*, which is translated as «born again» in the King James version of the Bible and «born anew» in the Revised Standard Version. John 3 states that one must become God-born rather than woman-born. The spiritual-birth into the Christian life is the rebirth or God-birth. According to Mark 1:15, Jesus said: «Turn to God. Believe my good news which is this. God's new age is at your door». All the old hopes of Israel were considered fulfilled in this radical new message.

Turning to God involved belief and trust; it called for both the intellect and an experience. The event according to John 3:3-5 was inspired by God and marked with a sign from above, a gift from the divine.

Paul and John put a seal on the faith, which was baptism by water. The water symbolized the cleansing and revitalization found in the new life.

Thus the Christian conversion entails a «shaking up» of the total person. God both inspires this event and through it establishes a communion with man. With the event of coming face to face with God, one must face guilt, agony and remorse and then be acquitted by God. This dying to the old self and the rebirth as a new self in eternal communion with God signals the new age. Jesus said, «Come, follow me;» while this was taken literally at the time of Jesus, it was later understood figuratively.

The universal message of Christianity made salvation available to all. By the first century, Jesus was understood by Christians as the saviour of the world. Every Christian was to bring the good news to others. (Matt. 28:20).

Christianity like Islām and Buddhism spread from a small group of disciples throughout the world. This too was not accomplished apart from other factors. For the spread of Christianity cannot be separated from the imperialism first of Rome and later of the European powers. The complexities of this history, had we time to develop them, would reveal many parallels with the expansion of Islām. As always, conversion was in the liminal zone of the old and the new with all the tensions even atrocities that this could create.

Eastern Christianity (the Marthoma Church) arrived in India by the late second or early third century. Beginning in the 16th Century Western Christianity was introduced to the subcontinent with the imperialist powers: the Portuguese, the French, Dutch and British.

Like Islām and Buddhism earlier, Christianity with its response to human suffering and its universal means to salvation through being «born-again» in God must have appealed in India especially to those groups not eligible to be *dviḥja* or «twice-born» according to Hinduism.

Dr. Robert Stevenson in his article for ARC entitled *de Nobili's Mission in Madurai: A Case of Cultural Adaptation* provides a study of one Christian attempt to overcome the image of being a religion of the low or outcaste. de Nobili himself was born into an aristocratic family, which he later renounced when he became a Jesuit missionary. In India, when he encountered the high-caste Hindu view of the Portuguese Christians as meat-eating (and therefore impure) and of barbaric customs, he dissociated himself from the Portuguese and their converts and learned the religious and cultural idiom of the high-caste Hindus. He moulded his life-style and exposition of Christianity accordingly.

This study reveals several of the perennial problems of religions new to an area. For instance: How can sufficient accommodation with the indigenous culture be achieved to ensure acceptance but simultaneously how can the particularity of the new religion be protected to ensure its existence? To put it simply, de Nobili thought he was successful, Rome did not. (i) Any person who converts combines in himself the old and the new. While the event of conversion may dramatize the change, it can never be complete, for religion can never be separated from culture and the total experience of man. Thus each convert really represents in and through the change a new religious expression. A Buddhist becomes an *Indian* Buddhist, a Muslim an *Indian* Muslim and a Christian an *Indian* Christian. The religions take on the Indic imprint to the extent that the «parent» religions may sometimes want to disown their offspring or urge a normative rebirth to orthodoxy. Kidwai points to this issue in the Hinduization of Islām with the *Ismā'īlīs* and the resulting tensions with the «straight» path of orthodoxy. The issue also surfaces constantly in discussions

of Indian Christianity. «Should the God of the Old and New Testament be called Brahman?» Should Jesus be called an *avatāra* (incarnation) when *avatāra* to the Hindu signifies *multiple* incarnations?

This kind of problem is not confined to the Indian context. The religions new to North America have the same dilemma. What should be the point of accommodation to the North American milieu? Almost all the «new» religions decry the materialism and immorality of the West. They offer a transition to spirituality and morality, using the age-old duality of old and new, lower and higher to dramatize the difference and to instigate conversion. But the resulting synthesis in the convert is something yet new to reckon with. Questions of sexual liberation, women's liberation, etc. pose conflict with the «new» religions' traditional values. The freedoms of our society negate the converts' ability to or desire to conform. Conversions are often temporary. Because the appeal is usually to adolescents with their cognate biological and psychological agenda for change, the experience is generally short-lived and the individual moves on to other experiences. Those who remain with the «new» religion sufficiently long begin to reinterpret it and in and through themselves *mould* it to society. Hence we speak of North American Buddhism, North American Islām. Indeed, North American Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism have been viewed in contra-distinction to the religions as practised elsewhere. Just as there is an Indic process at work in India, so there is a North American process of acculturation.

Similarly, just as religions like Buddhism, Islām, and Christianity appealed primarily to the disadvantaged, so the world religions «new» to the North American continent initially appealed to the disadvantaged or marginal groups who have rejected or have been rejected by the society, e.g. the Blacks, the convicts, the beats, the hippies, the drug-users, or more generally, the «disillusioned» adolescents who are searching for a new set of values and a new life style in contra-distinction to that of their families. And just as de Nobili tried to enhance the image of the new religion (Christianity) by assimilation to the cultural patterns of the higher castes, so we find that the religions new to North America have begun to shake off their initial images created by the marginal groups such as «hippy» and to insist on middle class, clean-cut, images to conform to the prevailing normative behaviour that is culturally respectable. In this way the «new» religions hope to gain status within the majority and to eliminate the image of «weird», which is an insult to their integrity and long history of being «world» religions.

Hinduism

You may be wondering why this entire discussion which is focused on the context of conversion in India has developed without discussion of the concept of conversion in Hinduism. After all, as a crossroads of religions, Hinduism certainly had to come to terms with the *reality* of conversion. It may strike you that the opening paragraph of Alaka Hejib's article *A Possible Hindu Perspective on Conversion* for this issue of ARC states unequivocally that

conversion was never a category for Hinduism; it was neither expressed ritualistically nor discussed theoretically. Put simply, one was *born* a Hindu; traditionally one could not convert to Hinduism because of the inseparable association of Hindu identity and caste and sub-caste identity. Hinduism, consequently was not missionary-oriented either by scriptural ordinance or by a religious leader's instigation to spread «the good news» or teach the path to salvation. The key question, then, becomes: how did and how does Hinduism *cope* with the aggressive missionary activity of other religions such as Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity which influenced her history and at times politically and economically dominated the subcontinent?

The answer, of course, is complex. We can simply point to some of the factors involved that contributed to Hinduism's capacity to provide a continuous tradition from the 18th Century B.C. to the present.

- 1) *Exclusiveness and privilege.* In the Vedic Period (ca. 1700 B.C. to 500 B.C.) the Aryan migrants to India preserved their identity which rested upon their Aryan genealogy. All Aryans by their birthright engaged themselves in a relationship with the Vedic deities, ritual participation, and enlightenment (if so desired). Over the centuries the Vedic Aryan community reinforced its identity by a system of education that involved precise memorization and recitation of its religious and poetic inheritance. While this initial exclusiveness must be understood in part as the defense mechanism of a minority group in a hostile new environment, it also entailed expectations of cultural and intellectual refinement. When the Aryans achieved their domination of the subcontinent, they maintained the eligibility for their circle with this same criterion of birth and sophistication, which Professor Hejib points to in her discussion of *dvi*ja, the twice-born.

The indigenous inhabitants were given their place, albeit «lower» in the social structure, and, although assimilation between the two groups gradually occurred, the early racial distinction was never totally eliminated. Quite simply, the *dvi*ja had little active interest in the religion of the non-Aryans. This exclusiveness helps to account for the common indifference of the *dvi*ja to the conversion of *śūdra* and *pāṇcama* (outcastes) to religions such as Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. Conversely, we can understand the appeal of these religions to the unprivileged. The assimilation of low or outcastes to the new religions reinforced the image of both as *mleccha* or *barbara*, that is, «uncivilized» and impure in the eyes of the *dvi*ja. They were not initially considered a challenge; conversion therefore was a non-issue.

- 2) *Knowledge and dialectics.* Intellectual openness characterized the Brahmanical (Hindu) perspective. The hermeneutical principles derived from the ancillary branches of learning were to be used skilfully to derive and to sustain one's understanding of scripture and reality.

Within the Aryan circles debates were held and the most convincing interpretation was duly acknowledged. This intellectual dynamism and progressive refinement gave the Brahmins an important weapon in their «dialogues» with different views put forward by other religions. If temporarily defeated according to their assessment, they simply borrowed, integrated, refined the opponent's position and tried to be one step better. In response to the ethical critique of the Buddhists, for example, the Brahmanical tradition gradually substituted *pūjā* for animal sacrifice and made vegetarianism a norm in contradistinction to the Buddha's middle way which allowed meat to be eaten by the monk (if the animal was killed by the layman, and if the monk had no knowledge that the meal was especially prepared for him). In response to the principle of equality forwarded by the universal religions, they duly recognized the *ātman* (soul) within all, insisted that the *saṃnyāsin* renounce all caste identity before serious pursuit of liberation and refused to give *dvija* status automatically to Aryans without *upanayana*, education and refinement (see A. Hejib's article). Status within the hierarchy was thus to be earned and that alone was to ensure universal respect.

- 3) *Sympathetic pluralism.* Given the Vedic pantheon of many gods and the social reality of many groups with differing ideologies, customs, and languages, the Brahmanical tradition came to terms early with plurality. The basic position was to acknowledge all gods, all paths to liberation, indeed all classes (*sāmānya*) of any entity. The corollary of this initial stance of sympathetic pluralism was to admit the human capacity for preference which might be defined by regional or family tradition, personal proclivity, or assessment of quality. Because each person represented a different identity, the hierarchical assessments would differ accordingly. (Professor Hejib utilizes this principle of personal preference in her attempt to discover scope within the *Gītā* for a Hindu view of conversion.)

Thus the various categories in Hinduism could always accumulate new items, e.g. into the category of *avatāra* (incarnation) were placed many gods of the indigenous peoples, the Buddha, and even Jesus. Into the category of *mārga* (path to salvation) were placed the religious activities of the different religions, and into the category of *Īśvara* (personal god) were placed the Christian's god, the Muslim's god, etc. By the principle of addenda to different classes, new religious expressions could be incorporated and by the principle of preference the Hindu view was sustained both in its particularity and in its deep structure.

- 4) *Caste rigidity.* The «new» religions in India nonetheless did provide sufficient challenge with their religious, political, and economic incentives that more stringent means were needed to prevent conversion. Could it be that the development of caste rigidity that paralleled the political dominance of Buddhism, Islām, and Christianity was a conservative

act to prevent conversion? Through the prevention of intermarriage and interdining, mobility was confined. Through the insistence that one's own *dharma* (identity) was preferable to another's, desire for change was stilled. And through the concept of a better rebirth, patience with the existing order was exercised. Caste rigidity was probably Hinduism's defence against the conversion.

Once again a basic question should be in the mind of the reader: What about the many Hindu gurus who have established their *āśrama* (religious communities) and *sampradāya* (religious lineages) in North America? If Hinduism did not advocate conversion, indeed tried to prevent it, how can we account for the contemporary scene of the devotees of Bhaktivedānta Swamī (the Hari-Krishnas), Chinmayānanda, Shri Chinmoy, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, and others?

The change in the Hindu attitude can be traced to the 19th Century. Stimulated by Western interest in Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy (which caused a reawakening to the great literary and religious accomplishments of Indian Civilization and struggling to overcome the demoralization of Islamic and Colonial rule, Hindu leaders began to rethink the definition of a Hindu. Perhaps Hinduism was to provide the world with spiritual leadership? If the *ātman* (soul) was common to all men and if the Supreme Reality was Brahman (or a supreme personal god such as Kṛṣṇa) then Hindu *darśana* (views) could not be territorially limited. Swami Vivekānanda's historic visit to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1873 and his lectures throughout the continent were enthusiastically received by Westerners. The pilgrimage of gurus to North America had begun. Conversion was introduced into the Hindu perspective, although its feasibility was and is today not universally accepted by Hindus.

Conversion in this context is caught in the liminal zone between «old» Hinduism and «new» Hinduism. Just recently, for example, the Jan Sangh (a Hindu conservative party) introduced a bill to Parliament to prevent any religious activity in India to induce conversion. Presumably this bill was designed to stop the conversion activities of non-Hindus but would not extend to Hindu proselytism outside the subcontinent.

Here too we discover a parallel in North America. In Ontario recently, there was a legal attempt to curtail the proselytizing activity of the «cults». The resultant decision protected the concept of religious freedom, which had been a key reason for migration to North America and one of the enshrined rights of man. The continent of freedom continues to acknowledge plurality of religions despite the current anxiety of the majority.

Perhaps some principles of how to cope with, if not to enjoy this plurality can be gleaned from the Hindu majority's response to «new» religions in India. Briefly, then, the following are suggestions:

1. Pride in one's own identity and constant reinforcement through remembering and reliving the past with its complex and rich history. Responsibility for the preservation of the tradition to be instilled in the young.

2. Reinforcement of family-based religious life to prevent compartmentalization of religion and its exclusive association with one place (church/synagogue) and time (Sunday/Sabbath).
3. Reinterpretation of the simplistic dichotomy of «old» self and «new» self or materialism and spiritualism by the concept of *growth in spirituality* concomitant with constant integration of each prior stage. The development of different values for different stages of life to provide acceptance of basic differences between the generations, variety, challenge, and growth. Conformity to a *set* of religious values for all to be replaced by religio-social values for each stage that would culminate in an *integral* rather than a *uniform* religious life.
4. Integration of the religious tradition with new theories of cosmology and new knowledge in other fields to make it intellectually accountable.
5. Dialectical agility that is not defensive but seriously accepts external criticism and the proselytism of other traditions, as a way to mature and refine the tradition and at the same time to preserve its «idiom». Discovery of the scope in the tradition for change through creative hermeneutics.
6. Appreciation and enjoyment of the plurality already existing within the tradition - historically, ritualistically, theologically, and mystically - to make the discovery of alternative paths, when the need is perceived, a possibility without leaving the religion.
7. Sympathetic pluralism, involving respect for difference and at the same-time recognizing reasons for preference; e.g. direct revelation through scripture, historic and family identity, etc.
8. Reintegration of marginal groups through constant communication and reflection.

Finally, we suggest:

Integration of the «new» religions in North America into national and local ecumenical organizations to provide communication and to develop codes of proselytism to ensure that there is no recourse to mind-control, force, or any other unworthy means of conversion.

Footnote:

- i. Kenneth Cragg has said that «the purpose of the Christian Mission is not cultural displacement. It is the presentation of Christ as Saviour with-in every culture.... conversion is not *migration*, it is the personal discovery of the meaning of the universal Christ within the old framework of race, language and religion (*The Call of the Minaret*, 1956 P.).

This is a relatively new mode for Christian thought about mission and conversion, very different from 19th Century missionary imperialism.

RECENT GRADUATES

Awards during the 1980-81 session:

B.A. *Birks Award*: Danielle Macbeth

First Class Honours: Danielle Macbeth

University Scholar: Danielle Macbeth

Distinction: Donna Jean-Louis (Major)

B.Th. *Great Distinction*: Brian Allan

Scarlet Key Award: Brian Allan

University Scholar: Brian Allan

First Class Honours: John Bannerman

University Scholar: John Bannerman

Neil Stewart Prize: Ian Fraser

Great Distinction: William G. Johnston

Birks Award: Elizabeth Muir

First Class Honours: Elizabeth Muir

McGill Alumnae Society Prize: Elizabeth Muir

University Scholar: Elizabeth Muir

Great Distinction: James Patterson

Distinction: Judith Vaclavik

M.A. *Birks Award*: Walter Parr

S.T.M. *Birks Award*: Ian Smith

Degrees awarded at the Fall Convocation in November 1980 are as follows:

B.Th. Bryan Patterson

Ph.D. Richard Virr

Canada Council Fellowships were awarded to: Richard Cooper, Morny Joy (renewed), Celia Rabinovitch, Andrew Rippin (Islamic Institute), Danielle Macbeth.

McConnell Fellowship: Elizabeth Muir.

CONVERSION TO ISLAM: A SURVEY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

SALIM KIDWAI

I

Allāh, says the Qur'ān, «...drew forth, from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): 'Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?' They said, 'Yea! We do testify!' This, lest you say on the Day of Judgement, 'Of this we were never mindful'» (VII:172). Mankind, therefore, before it was created, had acknowledged Allāh; consequently, every human being is born a Muslim: «Seek they other than the religion of Allāh, when unto Him submitteth whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him they will be returned» (III:83). The Qur'ān categorically states that every one is innately a Muslim. The non-Muslims are those who refuse to acknowledge that they have forgotten their pledge to Allāh and have strayed from the right path. This path had been illumined time and time again by God through his Prophets: Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses and Jesus (III:136, XXXIII:7). After each Prophet, men had either corrupted or forgotten Allah's revelation. This necessitated the sending down of another Prophet to the people.

Muhammad was the last of the prophets that Allāh sent. Thus mankind was offered the final choice for salvation. This entailed the acceptance of Allāh as the one and only God and the agreement to live according to Allāh's revelation, which was reiterated for the last time in the Qur'ān. Muhammad's task as the final prophet was to lead the erring back into the fold. More than once Allāh asked him to warn people: «Lo! religion with Allāh is al-Islām. Those who (formerly) received the Scripture differed only after knowledge came unto them, through transgression among themselves. Whosoever disbelieveth the revelations of Allāh (will find that) Lo! Allāh is swift in reckoning» (III:19). Muhammad is instructed to «Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation and reason with them in the better way» (XVI:125).

Conversion in Islam would therefore be akin to the realization by human beings that they had made a mistake and the concomitant reaffirmation of their original pledge to Allāh, which they had made when they had been drawn from the loins of Adam.

II

But the growth of the Muslim community, which was to include within a century of Muhammad's death adherents from three continents, was not simply prompted by mankind's consciousness of its deviation and self-correction. The process of conversion was soon to become inseparable from the larger process of Islamization, a process which had more to do with the historical evolution of economic, political and social forces than with the increasing number of people «seeing the light».

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The Prophet's mission, like the mission of individual Muslims, was to spread the Word of God. Muhammad's first activities, after he began receiving divine revelations, was to convince those around him in Mecca that there was only one God. The early converts were those who sincerely believed that Muhammad was the messenger of God and who were willing to face social ostracism and persecution for the sake of their new-found faith. Muhammad preached extensively on occasions such as the gathering of the various tribes at the time of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. His success in his missionary activity is indicated by the resulting persecution of him and his followers. This persecution led to their eventual, though temporary, exile from Mecca. What had prompted this persecution and exile was not just Muhammad's attack on the religion of the Quraysh but also its economic implications. Religion and trade were intertwined for the Meccans. Muhammad's preachings threatened the basis of the prosperity of the Quraysh. At the same time Muhammad's religion had begun to acquire political overtones, which were to effect the process of conversion.

When Muhammad and the early Muslims found refuge in Medina, they did not insist on the conversion of local Jews before making a formal alliance with them. The Medinan Jews were accepted within the *ummah* (the community) but allowed to adhere to their own religion. With the increasing military strength of the Muslims and the resultant military victories, however, the situation was soon reversed. Similarly in the case of other tribes, Muhammad did not always insist on conversion as long as they accepted his leadership. In the alliances made in the early period the political benefits often superceded the religious demands. The tribes usually were not interested in Muhammad's religion but only in his qualities as a leader.

Political pragmatism took precedence over religious allegiance, that is, until Muhammad's military power was so firmly established that the emergence of a Muslim state was deemed possible. Only then did conversion to Islām become the «price» for the economic benefits to be accrued from alliance with the Muslims. For example, the conversion of most of the Meccans and quite a few Bedouin tribes was subsequent to their political submission. This would suggest that they decided to become Muslims in order to participate positively in the new society. Conversion in this context might not have entailed a dramatic or traumatic change. Allāh as a God had been known to the Arabians and the traditional pilgrimage to the holy shrine in Mecca was incorporated into the new religion. Furthermore, Muhammad's emphasis on trade and its expansion due to his policies must have attracted the commercially-minded individual. Thus the ease with which the religious outlook of the Arabians could be redefined and the economic and political incentives available made conversion an easy and worthwhile activity. The tenuous nature of many of these early conversions, however, is evidenced by the attempts of some tribes to secede after Muhammad's death. Bloody *ridda* wars were needed to bring them back into the fold.

While the general pattern of the early Muslim acquisition of power involved political domination and subsequent conversions, it is important to note that alliance with groups who differed in faith were frequently made and such groups continued to practice their religion.

III

After the Prophet's death, Islām witnessed unparalleled expansion and success. The resultant empire was larger than that of Rome at its height. With military success, Muslim communities appeared in as diverse areas as northern Africa, Spain and coastal southern India. It is not suggested that conversion to Islam paralleled Islam's military expansion. Forcible conversions were never a consistent part of the policies of Muslim rulers although conversions in an area very often followed the presence of military generals there. The Muslims were ready to deal with non-Muslim subjects. The *shari'ah* provides for the existence of non-Muslims within a state. Military conquest therefore did not necessitate forcible conversions. In fact, with Muslim expansion into areas dominated by alien religions, forced conversion might have resulted in political failure. Hence aggression was no doubt mitigated by pragmatism, especially with regard to religion. The history of the expansion shows that underlying tensions between Arab Muslims and non-Arab converts often erupted. Hence conversion came at a much slower pace than political or military success.

The men who controlled the political direction of the Muslim community after the Prophet were aware of the economic factors that had contributed to the success of the early Muslims. Initially, Islam as a religion had been intimately connected to the maintenance of a successful trade system. For example, Abu Bakr, the first caliph, knew that trade was an important concern, and that it was not necessary that those who contributed positively to this system be Muslims. Once the Muslims expanded out of the peninsula into areas with other economic resources, different aspects of the economy were utilized, for example, land revenue and taxes. Here again, as in the case with trade, consideration of economic benefits took precedence over the religious pre-occupations of the Muslim rulers and administrators. Administration of the newly conquered territories was left in the hands of erstwhile administrative personnel who were non-Muslims: the Church structure in Egypt, the Byzantine officials in Syria and the *dihqāns* in Iran. The use of an administrative structure manned by non-Muslims to maintain political authority was not considered contradictory to the religion of the new rulers,

Nevertheless, the number of Muslims continued to grow. This process was the result of a number of factors, only the outlines of which can be given in this survey. There were, of course, aspects of the new religion which must have attracted people to it. The basic uncomplicated monotheism of Islām could have appealed to adherents of religions where either the religion lacked structure and cultivation or where the religion had become complicated, incomprehensible, and overly burdened with ritualism. Though many Muslim writers suggest that these were the real cause for conversions, other writers

often stress the opposite. The most commonly heard explanation, which has almost become a cliché in terms of explaining historical causation, is that most conversions were made forcibly through the military strength of the Muslims. There are many facets to this theory: from outright persecution to the withholding of economic and social benefits from non-Muslims. The imposition of *jazyah* or poll-tax, levied on non-Muslims is a commonly cited example. 'Umar II (717-20 A.D.) had insisted that village heads be chosen only from among Muslims. He is also credited with the formulation of laws which were humiliating to the Christians and the Jews. Under al-Hakim, a ruler in Egypt, people were offered the choice either to convert or to go into exile. Usually, a non-Muslim's word was not considered reliable in a *qāḍī's* court. Though cases of persecution and discrimination, which would have offered incentives to convert, can be documented extensively, it must be pointed out that the record of persecution by the Muslims of non-Muslims is probably comparable to some other religions.

Adhering to the religion of the rulers must have been considered an advantage for the inhabitants of the newly conquered territories. Incentives for conversion were openly offered. Officers of the Sassanian army were given high posts in the Muslim armies if they converted. Control of state institutions also helped conversions. The Ottoman system known as the *Devshirme* collected boys from the population and brought them up as Muslims. The attraction of participation in successful military campaigns might have prompted the Berbers of North Africa to convert and to join the campaigns in Spain.

A pattern is visible in the growth of the Muslim community. Except for the Bedouins of Arabia and the Berbers in the Maghreb, Muslims tended to be urban dwellers. This has prompted von Grunebaum to assert that in Islām it is considered meritorious to migrate to towns because it is only in urban settings that Islām can best be practised. In the early period of military expansion, Arab armies were segregated into garrison towns such as Kufa and Basra. These soon expanded into major administrative and trade centers. The local populations of the surrounding areas were encouraged to move into these towns to participate in the economic activities and to offer their services and goods. Contact with the Arabs and the dissemination of the Arabic language led to conversions. Traders, more cosmopolitan in their outlook than the peasants, were receptive to the new religion with its universalistic overtones. These traders proved to be one of the main disseminators of Islām into areas not accessible to Muslim armies. It was because of trade and traders that areas as far apart as central and eastern Africa, the western coast of India and the East Indies became Muslim.

Moreover, there were the missionaries, mostly *sūfis*, who are credited with the spreading of Islām. The *sūfis* or the mystics of various orders are often considered to be the prime agents of the process of conversion. Their simple and uncomplicated view of religious life and their contact with local populations helped in this process. But missionary activity in Islām was very different from its counterpart in Christianity because even though Islām is a

proselytising religion, it possessed no organized structure for missionary work. Proselytism, therefore, was the work of the individual believer who considered it his duty to spread Islām. Though individual missionaries were active and often successful, their contribution to the «peaceful» spread of Islām has been exaggerated.

We can only generalize about the reasons why individuals converted to Islām. These reasons varied from time to time and from area to area. As factors and forces they were as diverse as the character of the various Muslim peoples that exist today. The case that best illustrates the inadequacy of our knowledge regarding the process of conversion to Islām is India. The sub-continent has the largest Muslim population, by far, in the world. All the factors mentioned above have been advanced as possible explanations for the existence of Muslims in India, but cannot satisfactorily explain the process or extent of conversion.

IV

The theory of forcible conversion in the case of India is very popular. Because of its political overtones and implications and because of the developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has been greatly exaggerated. There is evidence, based partly on the fanatical rhetoric of medieval Muslim chroniclers, of instances where «Islām or Death» was offered as an ultimatum to the «infidels». Historically, more authentic examples are also available, such as Tipu Sultan's persecution of the Hindus of the Malabar in the eighteenth century. The weakness of this hypothesis, however, should be obvious when we consider that even after more than five centuries of effective Muslim rule, Muslims continue to be in a minority. In centres of political power such as Delhi or Agra, Muslims never formed a majority of the population. The most casual study of Indian history reveals that the Muslim rulers, far from acting as religious zealots, were more than willing to compromise the fundamentals of their faith to maintain effective political control of their kingdoms. It is ironical that one of the reasons that Timur, whose armies wrecked havoc on the Delhi Sultanate, gave for destroying another Muslim kingdom was that the rulers of Delhi were no longer good Muslims because of the compromise they had made with the religion of their subjects. Furthermore, there is little evidence of reconversion to Hinduism by Muslims, who had converted as a group. If force had originally caused the conversion, we would expect to find re-entry to Hinduism. This is rarely the case.

Incentives were obviously offered to Hindus to convert, but here again, the extent and effects often have been exaggerated. The most commonly cited example is that of *jizyah* or poll tax, which non-Muslims were often made to pay. But in a feudally based political system, which thrived on extracting all the surplus from the populace, it was irrelevant whether money was collected on a religious pretext or not. Similarly, being a Muslim was not always considered essential for employment with the state. The Muslim rulers of India had to depend on non-Muslims to man their administration and to form the bulk of their armies.

The oppression of the caste-system might have led those at the bottom of the hierarchy of Hindu society to turn to Islām in order to escape their disadvantageous position. There is some evidence to prove this. What has been termed the «Urban Revolution» theory for explaining the success of the Muslims in India insists, with some truth, that those castes which were never allowed to live within the city limits could now do so with the Muslims, and therefore they must have supported the newly arrived conquerors. Other service groups who found employment or clientele with the new ruling élite must also have found it advantageous to convert.

Above all, one hears of the egalitarian principles of Islām which contributed to the propagation of the religion. The concept of the brotherhood of man must have attracted the lower castes. But this theory presumes that the practice of Islām matched its preachings. Though less oppressive than Hindus for those at the bottom of the social scale, Islām did not free the new converts from the discriminations they had allegedly tried to escape. Caste and social stratification among Muslim groups is as widespread as among Hindus.

Muslim missionaries too were active in India. Though they have been successful in some areas, they cannot be credited for converting most of the people who eventually did convert. Missionaries succeeded in Sindh though the methods that they often adopted did not always conform with the strict monotheistic principles of Islām. Ismā'īlī missionaries in Sindh referred to 'Alī as a reincarnation of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. In Bengal the Sūfi missionaries developed a reputation as «warrior saints» who instigated movements of peasants against oppressive landlords or governors. A factor which needs further investigation is that areas such as Sindh and Bengal, which did see large scale conversions, both had sizeable populations of Buddhists. Social and religious tensions within the Indian society before the arrival of the Muslims need to be understood better before we can understand conversions to Islām in India.

Although no clear picture of the rate or process of conversion to Islām can emerge at the present state of our knowledge, certain basic questions can be raised. A factor which needs to be defined more precisely is: when did most of the conversions to Islām occur in India? It has been presumed automatically that they must have happened under the rule of Muslim kings. This is not completely accurate. Accounts and records of early British administrators and writers indicate that conversions still might have been taking place in the nineteenth century, long after effective Muslim political authority had waned. The waning of this authority might have thrown the administration of property rights in land into jeopardy, thereby making it advantageous for people to swear adherence to Islām whose laws regarding inheritance benefited certain individuals or groups.

Also, the study of conversions has been limited largely to the perspective of Muslim sources or those sources illuminating the Muslim aspect of socio-political situations. This is a direct outcome of the presumption that

conversions occurred mostly in the period from the thirteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century. Persian and Urdu sources have to be studied along with sources in Sanskrit and in the vernaculars. It is imperative to understand what conversion entailed for the Hindu or the Buddhist. What was the convert giving up and why? Conversion is a two-fold process. The convert is not just accepting a new corpus of religious beliefs and practices. He is also giving up, either actively or passively, another set which are indigenous to him. Conversion to Islām, like conversion in general, cannot just be studied from one angle. The convert cannot be studied only as a Muslim, an identity that he has but recently acquired. He has to be understood first as a member of the religion from which he has converted. Only by understanding what he is leaving behind or rejecting can we understand why he abandoned the security of a system that he had inherited. Without understanding what he is giving up and why, we will never really understand what he intended to achieve through conversion.

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DE NOBILI'S MISSION IN MADURAI: A CASE OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION

ROBERT STEVENSON

In reading the history of Christian missions to foreign lands, one expects to find resistance and difficulties arising out of the local religious traditions that are being directly challenged. What is striking however, is that, while cultural and social factors are also obstacles to the conversion process, all too often these factors have not been recognized. There has frequently been a lack of understanding and appreciation of the foreign society and culture and of their interaction with the religious life. This reflects in a missionary attitude that seeks to convert not only spiritually, but socially and culturally as well, a kind of «jingoistic Christianity», if that is not too strong a phrase.

It may be objected that to look back and criticize is all too easy, particularly with all the vastly improved resources of information and analysis provided today by anthropology, sociology, the history of religions, communications, technology, and so forth. But it is not at all certain that the problem has been eliminated in modern times, and the fact remains that alongside, and in contrast to the jingoistic attitude there have been outstanding examples of missionaries who have realized the need for a sensitive understanding of the religion, the language, and the whole lives of those to whom they sought to bring the Gospel. Of this, the early history of the Portuguese Catholic mission in India and the case of Roberto de Nobili in particular provide an illustration.

The Portuguese arrived by ship in India at the end of the fifteenth century. Their king had authority from Rome, through several papal bulls, to possess and rule all their conquests of newly discovered lands in the Orient, to destroy the plague of Islam and make Christian pagan lands. The propagation of Christianity was thus intimately linked in their minds with military and political dominance and hostility towards Muslims. These were scarcely conducive to tolerance, sensitivity, or mutual understanding. The Portuguese base at Goa, some 300 miles south of Bombay, was made a bishopric in 1534. Over the next few years the area was «Christianized», Hindu temples were destroyed and their property handed over to Christian religious orders.

Francis Xavier arrived in Goa in 1541 and established there the St. Paul College, a training school which was to supply missionaries to India and the East for the next century. The spread of missions in India did not accelerate much as a result of Xavier's efforts and, as we shall see, results were not encouraging until after the arrival of Roberto de Nobili in 1605.

De Nobili (1577-1656) came of a wealthy, noble, Roman family with a distinguished history of military and ecclesiastical service. He was a determined

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young man who had had to overcome serious family opposition before renouncing his title and wealth in order to become a missionary in the Society of Jesus. His arrival in Goa, after a journey of thirteen months and a shipwreck, was followed by a training period at St. Paul's. He was then posted south to Cochin and in 1607 was sent to the southeast coast of India to work with the Parava pearl fishermen, many of whom were Christian, and to learn Tamil. In less than a year he was taken inland to join the mission at Madurai. The leader of that mission was Gonçalo Fernandez, an ex-soldier turned Jesuit, with half-a-century's experience of India. The community he had served in Madurai for eleven years consisted of some one hundred Paravas and not a single local convert. The ruler of Madurai had made it very clear to Fernandez that he would tolerate no discussion of Christian doctrine, let alone proselytization.

In order to discover what lay behind the obstacles to the mission work and to improve his Tamil, de Nobili cultivated the mission's Hindu school teacher. In retrospect what he found out about Hindu attitudes to Europeans is almost comic. De Nobili learned about *varṇa*, the fourfold, socio-religious class system on which Indian society was based. It consists of four classes, distinguished by heredity from one another mainly as to status, occupation, marriage and commensality. There were many other rules, duties and obligations also designed to preserve the distinction and purity of the classes. Infraction of class rules could lead to expulsion, or loss of caste. This brings us to a fifth social group, the outcastes, the lowest of the low, who existed beyond the range of acceptable society. Their occupations and customs rendered them not only polluted but polluting. They were prohibited entry to Hindu temples and to the homes of class Hindus. The sight of them, their very breath, could pollute a member of the upper classes.

In observing the Portuguese, de Nobili learned, the Hindus of Madurai had concluded that, since they ate beef, drank wine, bathed infrequently, dressed strangely and followed no recognizable class rules, they were outcastes. Worse than that the vast majority of the Portuguese did not even realize their vile status; they would not behave like outcastes towards caste Hindus and, because they were strong and well armed, the Hindus could not force them to do so. They were said by some to eat dead horses or to kidnap and eat children. In sum, these indecent and corrupt «Parangis», as the Portuguese were called, were regarded by the caste Hindus with contempt, disgust and some fear.

Fernandez was aware of some but certainly not all of the abhorrence attached to the name Parangi by the Hindus. Secure in the superiority of his own culture and religion, he even accepted the name with some pride and invited Hindus to become Parangis, to follow the Parangi path. One may imagine the reaction to such an invitation! And Hindus who did convert in those times were expected to adopt European dress and diet and other customs, even to change their names - in short to break caste. To become a Christian, then, meant to be ostracized forever from family, friends and society.

As a result of these discoveries, de Nobili determined to separate himself from the Parangi label and to bring Christ to the Hindus in terms they could understand and accept. He decided that he should concentrate his efforts on the highest classes since they would provide the lead for the lower. He explained that in his own country he was not a Parangi but a *kṣatriya* (one of the class of rulers, noblemen and warriors in the Hindu system). He went to live in a house separated from the mission and proceeded to arrange his household and customs according to the Hindu *kṣatriya* style.

Learning of the highly respected Hindu *śaṁnyāsa* (religious ascetic) way of life, he gave up his *kṣatriya* image and began to emulate the more religious image of the *śaṁnyāsi*. He gave up meat, eggs and wine, limited himself to one meal a day of rice, fruit and herbs. He shaved his head, exchanged his black cassock for the *śaṁnyāsi*'s ochre robe, wore wooden sandals (leather was polluted), carried a *śaṁnyāsi*'s water bowl and staff. He even devised his own sacred thread (the *yajñopavīta*) worn by Hindus of the three highest classes, though he later discarded it when he learned that Hindu *śaṁnyāsīs* do not wear it. De Nobili's was made of three gold strands, symbolizing the Holy Trinity, and two white, representing the body and soul of Christ. To the thread he attached a cross.

As de Nobili increasingly looked and behaved like a class Hindu, he began to make friends with Hindus and to have theological conversations with them. The real turning point came when he persuaded a Brahmin to teach him Sanskrit and the scriptures and to explain them. No missionary had ever achieved this before. De Nobili was then able to adapt arguments from their own scriptures to demonstrate to Hindus the truths of Christianity. A skilled debater and teacher he even challenged, from within, Hindu claims to salvation. He learned of an old and partially lost Hindu path to salvation and claimed to have returned it to India. Those who chose to learn it had to take his initiation and become his disciples.

These two or three years were not ones of smooth and steady progress. The severity of de Nobili's ascetic life and diet, the constant study of Sanskrit and the Vedas, and endless hours of debate with the Indians were physically exhausting. But he also faced hostility and resentment from his fellow Christians as well as from the Hindus. Of the latter, the Brahmins were the most dangerous to de Nobili. He had penetrated their learning, his skill in Sanskrit and Tamil and in debating their religious doctrines was gaining him respect and popularity. As a result of this threat to their position and power, the Brahmins challenged and slandered de Nobili on several occasions in the hope of having him expelled or imprisoned: he was called an atheist, or anti-Hindu, or a Turk, or an outcaste, or an enemy of the state, a teacher of false doctrines, and so forth. To defend himself was nerve-racking, but he was ultimately vindicated in each case.

As for de Nobili's fellow Christians, Fernandez had been discreetly sent on a mission when de Nobili began his «hinduization.» Upon his return Fernandez was indignant and angry at de Nobili's surrender to superstition and degrading

Indian customs. He wrote to the Jesuit superiors on the coast asking that de Nobili be ordered to stop his dangerous practices. This intensified de Nobili's difficulties, for he had been hard put to obtain permission for his methods in the first place. Through about fifteen of his years in the field he was constantly plagued by attacks on and demands to explain and justify his unorthodox methods, methods that were also assumed, of course, to reflect unorthodox doctrine. He was investigated and his converts questioned. At one time he was forbidden to baptize converts and he was recalled to Goa for humiliating treatment and questioning. Ultimately, his case was referred to Rome where, in 1623, the Pope ruled in his favour.

What de Nobili won with this decision was approval for his converts to continue certain practices, formerly rejected by the missionaries as unchristian, that would allow them to preserve caste in Hindu eyes and prevent ostracism from their own society. De Nobili had long argued on the basis of his detailed study of Hindu religion and society for converts to be allowed to continue four basic customs:

- 1) The Brahmins' hair style of shaven head with a tuft at the back, since, he claimed, it was a social and not a religious symbol of the upper class.
- 2) The receiving and wearing of the *yajñopavīta* thread, which were primarily social, and only secondarily religious customs.
- 3) The *tilaka* or forehead mark, if it were made with sandal paste. Religious sectarian *tilakas* were made with different substance according to the sect. Sandal paste was common to all Hindus for bodily adornment and therefore not of religious significance for any sect.
- 4) Ablutions prior to religious exercises, since among Hindus these were a matter of hygiene and not a part of the rites prior to which they were performed.

With these concessions, and with Christian doctrine being taught to them in more sympathetic terms (de Nobili not only used Hindu references but revised the Tamil translations of Christian doctrine in terms more sympathetic to the Indian context), conversion from Hindu to Christian was no longer so traumatic. The results were obvious. In Madurai, where Fernandez had not made a single convert in eleven years, de Nobili had fifty converts in eighteen months. When he retired in 1644, there were over four thousand. His methods were carried on after his death in 1656, past the end of the century, when the community numbered 150,000.

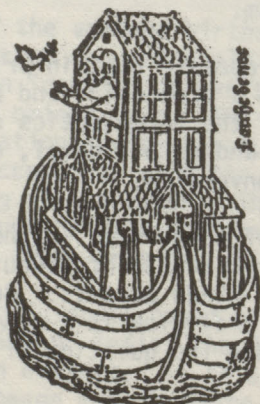
Shortly thereafter, however, the old criticisms gained strength once more. The Faith was being deformed and perverted by too many local concessions to heathen custom; and the methods of adaptation originated in India by de Nobili were finally terminated by papal decree.

Criticism of de Nobili has continued to this day, from Christians and Hindus alike. Did his enthusiasm for mission not bias his interpretation of the *varna* system and its symbols as primarily social? Was not his claim that Christian teaching is the ancient, lost, Indian path to salvation opportunism rather than adaptation to the Indian context? Is it not deceitful for a Christian in *saṁnyāsi* guise to be tunnelling at Hindu foundations from within? And how can the maintenance of caste be upheld by one who supposedly adheres to an egalitarian Christian faith?

Yet one finds in de Nobili a love for his work and his charges, a respect for the depth and subtlety of Indian philosophy, and a sensitivity to and understanding of Indian social values and customs. Surely Christian missions would be better founded on a basis of sensitive adaptation than on any descendant of the jingoistic Christianity that helped bring the Portuguese to India in the first place.

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A POSSIBLE HINDU PERSPECTIVE ON CONVERSION (SOME «INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES» ABSTRACTED FROM THE GITA).

ALAKA HEJIB

Conversion, be it voluntary, persuasive or forced, is basically a foreign concept to Hinduism. The form or the elements of conversion may, however, be unearthed from the history of Hinduism or from Hindu reflection on phenomena that may be analogous to conversion. Any discussion of conversion in Hinduism must be related to the context of the caste-system. In the social structure of the caste-system, «upward mobility» of the Hindus was rendered impossible. The philosophical traditions represented by different communities (*sampradayas*) also enjoyed a hermetically sealed protection, thus causing immobility across the spectrum of sects. This has been the general picture of Hindu society for centuries. Birth is a singular factor exclusively responsible for blocking the entrance to or exit from the caste system. Despite this formal rigidity of the Hindu caste system, some scholars regard Hinduism as a missionary religion owing to its historic spread outside India. Whether the spread of Hinduism into South-east Asia is due to the missionary zeal of the Hindus or is a result of the process of assimilation with the incoming Hindus is hard to determine with precision.

It would be helpful at this point to note two meanings of *conversion*: 1) a change of allegiance from one caste, religious sect or religion to another, 2) a change of mind or heart (*metanoia*) which may or may not involve a change in religious allegiance.

As stated above, conversion in the first sense is not possible, i.e. from one caste to another or one sect to another. However, there is a scope for the second type of conversion in Hinduism.

In this essay, I wish simply to extrapolate certain principles of interpretation on the issue of conversion as a «concept», and not as a (Hindu) phenomenon. I restrict the source of the hermeneutics of conversion to the Bhagavadgītā since mine is a fresh, and rather novel, attempt to seek and identify the Hindu perspective on conversion.

As a brief background to the topic of conversion in the context of Hinduism, I wish to clarify certain of the basic tenets of Hinduism. Every Hindu is a Hindu because he (or she) is born of Hindu parents. But religion is not as significant or «telling» as is caste. Religion is a «given», caste is a «distinguishing factor» for the Hindus. The question of identity demands the context of caste.

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Every Hindu is a «śūdra» at the time of birth. This will probably shock our readers. The word 'śūdra' is well-known as a caste-name signifying the fourth (presumably the lowest) of the four castes. That is true. But it is also true that until the investiture is performed for an individual at a stipulated age, s/he is regarded as 'śūdra'. Here the word 'śūdra' connotes an «unmarked» human being, a person without «status» or «identity». Being (born) a Hindu without having a caste-identity is having no identity at all, according to traditional Hinduism.

Let us take an example of a child born of Hindu brahmin parents. The child is Hindu, yet till the age of six, merely a 'śūdra'. Since the parents have undergone the brahmanical investiture (i), the child receives the brahmanical initiation, which makes him (or her) «twice-born». The initiation ceremony causes the «second birth» or a «ritual birth» by which the child is officially entitled brahmin. If a child of brahmin parents receives no ritual initiation, s/he is regarded as 'śūdra' for all religious or ritual purposes. For example, a non-initiated boy is not respectfully invited on festive occasions for a meal, though he is a son of brahmin parents. In orthodox society, the lack of initiation, with the result of no «sacred thread» and ignorance of the «twilight worship», is indeed an embarrassment to both the child and his parents. (ii)

Thus, it is through initiation that one acquires an opportunity to strive for one's «identity». Formerly, the initiation marked the beginning of a specific programme for the child's education. Therefore, in the absence of initiation, that is, «second birth», a child is without any direction. This can be seen as the clear beginning of the symbolic 'śūdrahood'. The brahmins, kṣatriyas (warrior caste), and the vaiśyas (merchant caste) therefore have their caste-orientation given to their children at the time of their «second birth».

From this understanding of the «second birth» or the initiation for the first three castes, one can abstract the principle of *adhikara* (the eligibility or privilege) of acquiring an identity of one's own with stipulated guidelines, opportunities, and general orientation. The «second birth» marks not only the commencement of one's educational career but, in fact, the overall construction of one's own identity in accordance with the given sets of values and points of emphasis in the building of character. There is a subtle and decisive difference between the values of different castes (though it is difficult to discern the «caste» values apart from the «Hindu» values).

Since the distinction of individuals based on caste consideration has been abolished by the Constitution of India, the dynamics of the caste-system have become flexible rather than extinct. It is still a socio-religious reality because the question of lineage and heritage is akin to the inheritance of caste. Caste may be immaterial for the politico-economical arena of an individual's life, but it nevertheless is a source of one's religious values. The four castes are in a way four filters through which Hindu values have come down to Hindu society. Therefore, for the understanding and the cultivation of one's

identity, one has to examine these values which are still caste-values, no matter how much one detests the word «caste». Apart from the castes, there is no Hindu religion, at least to the popular mind.

It is, however, possible to abstract the categories of knowledge, physical strength and economic gain as the three chief life concerns that are derivative of the caste orientations. Now, if an outsider were to «enter» Hinduism, he or she would have to choose one of the three general caste identities. This is not merely to acquire knowledge, physical strength or economic gain as such through the choice of caste. A caste entails much more than these considerations of subsistence. Caste is *the* religious category. Unless one has a caste, one would not know what kind of religious orientation one is opting for. For the «born» Hindus, there is no choice. The bundle of their traditional «caste-values» is given to them and they cannot unload them (though this might seem pretty easy to many Hindus). To outsiders wishing to «convert» to Hinduism, there is a choice of caste, i.e. a set of religious values. Without such a choice, one would be left with too many packages, mixtures and bundles of confusing and contradictory values and understandings of life within the Hindu context itself.

Now, the question is: why would anyone want to convert to Hinduism? Reasons may be various. The Gītā's analogue or counterpart to «conversion» would be: «anyone wanting to take refuge in Kṛṣṇa.» Here I warn the readers not to take the word Kṛṣṇa in the literal sense, i.e., a Hindu god. «Kṛṣṇa» stands for any «Supreme Reality» that appeals to those who need orientation toward the attainment of that Reality. The words «Gita» and «Kṛṣṇa» are simply to be understood respectively as «a scripture» and a «Supreme Reality» according to a certain path of truth. The Gītā talks about the four kinds of individuals who think of turning to Kṛṣṇa: *ārta* (the afflicted), *jijñāsu* (the curious or inquisitive), *arthārthī* (seekers of some mundane benefit) and *jñānī* (aspirants of knowledge). (iii) Can we identify these four types as the basic categories of those who wish to embrace Hinduism (or any religion for that matter)?

Those who turn to Hinduism with one of these four basic motives, succeed in gaining exactly the fruit of their struggle. As Kṛṣṇa says: *ye yathā māṃ prapadyant tāṃs tathāiva bhajāmy aham*. («those who turn to me in whatever way they choose, to them I serve precisely in the same way»). (iv)

The Gītā also offers as many as eighteen *yogas* or ideologies to choose from to suit one's temperament, capacity, motive, belief (or lack thereof), philosophical orientation or stage of development. One avails oneself of an appropriate *yoga*. All *yogas* are equal in value and lead to the same goal of Perfection.

Thus, if one belongs to one of the above-mentioned categories of potential subjects for an ideology other than one's own, to him, Kṛṣṇa appeals in the following words: *sarvadharmān parityajya mām eva 'saraṇaṃ vraja*. «Having abandoned all ideologies come to me alone!». (v)

Kṛṣṇa refers to Himself only as Perfection Incarnate and not in terms of any exclusive ideology as such. Therefore, Perfection as the Realization of Ultimate Reality is the goal of the individual who uncommonly cultivates an awareness of and an aspiration for Perfection-- be it on account of affliction, curiosity, mundane motives or philosophic quest.

Kṛṣṇa also refrains from «disorienting» those who, unlike the majority, wish to attain perfection. For this reason, He disdains no-one. In effect, one can choose any of the available paths and start the journey toward perfection. The Gītā has a clear warning: *na buddhibhedam janayed ajñānām....* «One must not cause disorientation of those who do not know (what the proper course of action should be)». Hence: *joṣayet sarvakarmāṇi....* «one should promote all courses of action». (vi)

The Gītā recommends adherence to the practice of one's own *dharma*. The word *svadharma* in the Gītā III.35 probably ought not to be understood parochially as one's own religion. Though, in the traditional framework, it refers to the *dharma* (duty) of one's own caste; the expression *svadharma* may also be interpreted as «one's own characteristic identity». The verse may therefore be understood thus: «Though inferior, 'one's own identity' is always better than the well-practised identity of another.» (*sreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt*). (vii)

The Gītā also discusses occasionally the topic of *prakṛti*-- «the core of an individual's personality»: «Since even a wise person acts in accordance with his *prakṛti*, (as) all creatures follow nature, why undergo repression?» (viii)

In accordance with this logic, an individual may be encouraged to seek his «true *prakṛti*» by selecting the ideology that is conducive to the discovery of what he really is; or even of what he wants to be.

Finally, Gītā IV.7 and 8 may be relevant to what the Gītā's basic attitude toward the emergence and establishment of *dharma* (whether individual or communal) is.

«Whenever there is decline of the *dharma* and upsurge of *adharma*, I take birth.

«For the preservation of the good people and destruction of the evil-doers, and for the establishment of *dharma*, I take birth in every age.» (IV. 7-8).

Just as, according to IV.7 and 8, Kṛṣṇa undertakes the task of creating and preserving the *dharma*, an individual might model his life on this act of Kṛṣṇa. In the spirit of these two verses, one is guided to undergo «second birth»; if it be necessary, in order to protect oneself from the evil direction of one's life. Whenever one feels a decline of one's religiosity or simply is «not feeling right about oneself» according to one's own standards of rightness then one has to «procreate» oneself as it were. This «self-procreation» may take place from time to time (*yuge yuge*) if there is such need. In this case,

the need for «transformation of character» necessitates «second birth» (or even «continual rebirths») through adoption of the ideology that is suitable for the respective stage in the course of the discovery (or development) of one's own *prakṛti* (identity). This may be close to «conversion».

Although the *Gītā* does not speak of the phenomenon of conversion *per se*, it recognizes the need of discovering one's own identity and of the possibility of choosing and adopting a suitable ideology. It refers to continual transformation in order to generate *dharma* and warns against disorientation or religious schizophrenia (*buddhibheda*). These ideas as abstract extrapolations from the text of the *Gītā* may enable us to reflect on the concept of conversion and to speculate as to how the ancient Indian philosophers would have viewed it.

The Hindu reaction to conversion may be viewed speculatively from two perspectives: 1) Hindu ritualistic Dharma, and 2) the Hindu philosophical attitude. Since the concept of ritual purity and auspiciousness is caste-bound, the «outsiders» or «non-Hindus» could never be welcomed in the «inner circle». Among various possible reasons, «ritual impurity» designated outsiders as *mleccha* or *barbara* (uncivilized people). Thus, ritualistically, conversion to Hinduism is categorically denied to outsiders.

Philosophically, however, as we examined in a few sample references from the *Bhagavadgītā*, the scope for conversion is theoretically available. The need, appropriateness and goal of «conversion» are indeed recognized in essence. In short, one might conclude by declaring that the *Gītā* recognizes the goal of discovering one's own identity through metamorphosis by means of embracing different paths of perfection.

This theoretical recognition may provide the scope for authentic conversion to any of the Hindu ways of perfection.

Footnotes:

- i. Women ceased to have «second birth» ritual (at the latest) by the first century A.D. Instead, marriage (of course to the person of the same caste) entitles them to be «twice born».
- ii. Nowadays, because of disbelief in religious structures and activities, but mostly for economic reasons, the ritual of initiation (*upanayana*) is postponed till the day prior to the wedding. In that case, it constitutes a mandatory ritual for the official title of «twice-born» in order to proceed with the vedic ritual of wedding.
- iii. BG. VII .16
- iv. BG. IV .11
- v. BG. XVIII .66
- vi. BG. III .26
- vii. BG. III .35
- viii. BG. III .33

THE MEETING OF THE MUNDANE AND THE DIVINE: SOME ORIGINAL SANSKRIT POEMS

ALAKA HEJIB

Introduction

A few words about Sanskrit poetry. Sanskrit poetry by definition cannot be reduced to «any composition in verse form», for true poetry (*kāvya*) can be found in prose as well. It is not merely an exquisite arrangement of beautifully sounding rhythmic patterns of words. That is simply a matter of poetic embellishment. Metre and diction are important, but do not constitute poetry as such.

Sanskrit poets often play with various levels of meaning of words: literal (*abhidhā*), implied (*lakṣaṇā*) and poetic suggestion (*vyāñjanā*). Brevity and parallel-meaning structure through pun (*śleṣa*) are the easily discernible characteristics of Sanskrit poetry. References to mythological stories, philosophical statements, famous quotations, popular norms and customs, certain poetic conventions (*kavisaṃketa*), etc. are used frequently to enrich the content of the poetry. The poets are allowed to innovate and reinterpret the treasury of literary and popular tradition and wisdom. The interplay of the mundane and metaphysical levels of reality, the admixture of the various disciplines of knowledge - aesthetics, philosophy, grammar, logic, ritualism, popular religion, ethics, devotion, art, erotic norms - and the interaction of nature with human psychology among other devices are used commonly to convey the complexity and richness of the subtle and manifest ways in which the reality is revealed to the poet's mind.

In my composition of the following poems, some of these features of Sanskrit *kāvya* will be apparent.

MUDHĀBHRĀNTI: A Maze of Mundane Mind

kusumādhārād rasāvāptyai guñjāravaṃ stauty alir-
gandhamadāt kastūrīm vai bhrāmyan mṛgayati mṛgaḥ
brahmāsvādasahodaram aham ānandam anviṣya nu
madhupamṛgavad ātmany eva tṛptimavindaṃ rasagandhavat.

For the attainment of the *rasa* (i) from the lips of a flower, a bee offers its praise through humming, not realizing that the *rasa* (ii) lies in the bee (the *rasika*) (iii) and not in the flower.

Maddened by the exhilarating fragrance of *kastūrī*, (iv) a deer madly wanders about searching ignorantly for the source of that fragrance.

I too have been madly seeking the happiness that parallels the Realization of Brahman. (v)

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And, now, like the bee and the deer, I have discovered the source of that happiness within myself (My Self).

Notes

- i. juice, honey.
- ii. *Rasa* as a technical term in Indian aesthetics means «aesthetic sentiment», the experience of which is the Realization of the Supreme Beauty.
- iii. connoisseur.
- iv. A kind of scent. This refers to a poetic convention (*kavisamketa*) in Sanskrit poetry. A deer is believed to have *kasturi* in its navel. However, it gets frustrated not knowing the source of the fragrance.
- v. The Supreme Reality, The Cosmic Soul.

SATTVAPARIKṢĀ: Ordeals

pāduke pratinidhīkṛtvānvatiṣṭhad rājakāraṇam
bhaktipūrṇarasārdrāṇy ucciṣṭāṇy ārpayat satī
vakṣonirdālanād ūrdhvaṃ rāmaṃ brahma nirākarot
no jāne karavāṇi kiṃ, yena prasanno bhavān?

Bharata (i) looked after the kingdom that legally belonged to Rāma. Being unselfish, he wished only to represent his eldest brother, the king Rāma. So he placed Rāma's sandals on the throne, and ruled in his name.

‘Sabarī (ii) offered Rāma wild berries, making sure that they were succulent with juice. She even tasted each of them to ensure their sweetness!

Hanūmān (iii) tore open his chest to demonstrate that Rāma truly resides in his heart. That is the supreme gift he values, not the wreath of precious stones!

What shall I do, I know not, O my Lord, so that you may be propitiated by me?

Notes

- i. Bharata is the younger (half-) brother of Rāma, the God and hero of the epic Rāmāyaṇa. The reference is to Rāma's exile that was instigated by Bharata's mother Kaikeyī so that Bharata could inherit the kingdom.
- ii. ‘Sabarī is a hunchback woman, a devotee of Rāma. Every Hindu person is familiar with the story of ‘Sabarī.

- iii. Hanūmān is a monkey-god, a devotee of Rāma. He assisted Rāma in the victory of Lanka in order to bring Rāma's kidnapped wife Sītā back. Hanūmān was given a wreath of precious stones as a reward for his help but he refused to take it since, for Hanūmān, those precious stones had no 'Rāma' (true value) in them.

PRASĀDANAM KALĀ KHALU: Pleasing is No Joke!

sudāmnas taṇḍulān bhuktvā harṣonmattaḥ prabhur hariḥ
kaṭāhaśiṣṭaparaṇaṁ vai cāsvādyā śāmitaksudhah
nāmamātrād api tuṣyan rāmo 'thava śrīharir-
yāti vai kiṁ bhavādāspadaṁ kiṁ kṛcchrāprasādyo bhavān?

God Kṛṣṇa (i) became exhilarated with joy when his childhood-friend, a poor brahmin Sudāmā, came to see him in his palace with just a handful of pressed rice, which was all that he could collect for the offering. (ii)

Kṛṣṇa burped with satisfaction by eating merely a left-over leaf that was stuck in the bottom of the frying pan in Draupadī's kitchen. (iii) She felt ashamed, however, that she could not offer him more.

Both Kṛṣṇa and Rāma could be pleased so easily, in fact, even by the chanting of their names (iv) by their devotees.

Would these gods really equal you, my Lord, so that I could entertain a hope of pleasing you?

Or, are you greater than they (v) in that you are just truly hard to be pleased?

Notes

- i. The God and hero of the epic *Mahābhārata*.
- ii. It is a norm of behaviour not to visit a king, a god or a teacher empty-handed. One should take at least a bunch of sacred grass as a token of respect. Kṛṣṇa was the king of Mathurā.
- iii. Draupadī is Kṛṣṇa's dearest cousin-sister. Once Kṛṣṇa visited her house when the family had already finished their supper. He was famished but he did not want Draupadī to start cooking again for him. So he searched for food and found a vegetable leaf in the frying pan. Because Draupadī's desire to feed him was genuine, one leaf was enough for the God to be satisfied. This is a very popular story among the Hindus.
- iv. *japa* or name-chanting is a form of devotion.

- v. Sanskrit poets are fond of the *vyatireka* figure of speech in which the «object of comparison» is shown to be superior to the «standard of comparison», thus creating a poetic twist.

Thus, when the «path of devotion» (*bhakti-yoga*) proves to be fruitless, the poetess resorts to the path of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*), and again appeals to her lord!

SĀHĀYYAM TULYĀŚĪLAYOḤ: True Guidance Comes from the Like!

tamaso bhītā kampitatanū rajanī raśmim īhate
raśmidāhān nijāyur astam saheta sā tat katham?
tamojamohād bhayaśaṅkitatvād anvīkṣamāṇā svatām
bhavacchāyā saraṇarūpaṃ jīvanaṃ labdhavatī aham.

The Night got frightened by Darkness. Shaking with fear, she wished for light to comfort her.

As she examined her own self, she realized that her fear was rooted in her «illusion». For Darkness (*i*) indeed is her own Self.

How could she, being «Darkness Incarnate», endure the destruction of her self that would be caused by the very presence of the light (of the day)? (*ii*)

Confused like the Night, I too was shaken with fear, but found the solution to my «illusion» about my own self.

Ignorant though I am, I sought refuge properly in «your shadow», and not in your «light», which would have destroyed my «self» instead of «enlightening» it! (So now it is my «duty» to follow «your shadow», which is not intimidating like the «halo around your face»).

Notes

- i. Darkness (*tamas*, in Sanskrit) stands for Ignorance and Illusion as one of the three constituents of *prakṛti*, the Primal Matter of the Universe.
- ii. Sanskrit poets often enjoy punning throughout the verse, thus every word being paronymous, the verse presents the reader with a double intent.

Thus, the poetess indicates her refusal of the direct discipleship of her *jñānayogi* (knowledge-oriented) friend. Instead, she wishes simply to follow the «blue-print» of his path to salvation (*mokṣa*) though she wishes to carve out the details of her path through her own understanding of *mokṣa* (salvation).

JÑĀNAṂ MUDHĀ KRIYĀM VINĀ: Don't Teach, Practise!

'brahma ātmā' 'tat tvam asī' ti sarvadā khaḷu cintitam
jñānayogaṁ svapatham anucarantyā ca tat sunirūpitam
hanta re! dvaitaśaṅkāpīśācād bādhito 'yaṁ jano, nu
«yūyam vayaṁ vayaṁ yūyam» iti subaddhāṁ matim prāpitah.

I always believed with intellectual conviction the following statements of Truth: The «Supreme Soul» is indeed Itself the «Individual's Soul», and Thou art That. (i)

Practising in this manner the path of Knowledge (*jñānayoga*) I also taught it as best as I could.

But, alas! Despite these philosophical convictions of Ultimate Non-Duality, this «wretched soul» was haunted by the notions of duality for a long, long time.

And now, the same soul (My Self) has finally reached the Truth that «Thou Art I and I am Thou. Thus we are one, my friend.» (ii)

Notes

- i. The Upaniṣadic doctrines.
- ii. The switch from the philosophical level to the personal level is poetic.

The Sanskrit phrase «yūyam vayaṁ vayaṁ yūyam» in the fourth line is borrowed with special appreciation from the joint composition of a verse by Professor Arvind Sharma and Professor Harshacaran Mathur (from their collaborated work of original Sanskrit poetry entitled *Mitra-saptatiḥ*. Details of publication are not known).

PHALANTI KĀMĀḤ NAIṢKĀMYE: Hopes Come True for the Hope-less!

nīlotpalam kaṇṭakasevanāśritam
khanyam tāmobhedam apekṣate śrīḥ
advaitamuktir māyāviraktijā
bhavatsauhrdam pūrṇanaīṣkāmyalakṣyam.

A blue lotus is to be availed of only after putting up with the thorny bushes surrounding it.

The shining wealth in a mine can be dug out only after penetrating the darkness.

Enlightenment through the non-dualistic path of Salvation is possible only after renouncing *Māyā*. (i)

Likewise, O friend, your friendship can be hoped for only after
«total renunciation of any hope» of having you as friend! (ii)

Notes

i. *Māyā* - attachment to mundane reality.

ii. «True friendship» is no different from the *advaitamukti*, that is, freedom obtained through the realization of the identity of the two. Hope or desire imply duality, hence even the «hope for friendship» is to be given up in order to accomplish true friendship.

SVAPNO 'PI SATYAM BHAVET: Dream May Lead You to Truth

apatyajam raja' iṣṭam bruvāṇo
vane 'pi luptam svapūtram pramanyate
mukteḥ prasūr dhīr bhavatām aheyā
dure 'pi, ko brahma muñcen mumukṣuḥ

Just as Duṣyanta always dreamed of having his own son and watching him play with dirt, though he did not know that he actually had a son growing up far away in a forest,

So, distant though you are, my friend, almost hidden, your ways of thinking will forever be revered by me, as I always dreamed that your path would unmistakably lead you (and guide everyone) to salvation.

Therefore, I should never lose faith in you though you are lost in remoteness, my friend.

For which seeker of *mokṣa* (salvation) ever gets deterred by the distance of his goal?

MADHUBHĀRAḤ (Sweet Burden)

nityam hi gharṁśutejaḥsakāśāt
tejo ḡhṛītvopakṛto himāṁsuḥ
pratigrahītum upakārabhāvams
-tad eva tejaḥ pratidadyāt katham vai?
evam eva

bhavatsakāśād upadeśavittau
saubhāgyayuktaś ca madiya' ātmā
bhavatkṛpām pratidadyāt katham vai?
datuḥ prasāstasya dātā katham vai?

Desiring always lustre from the light of the Sun, the moon is eternally thankful to the Sun.

But, how can the Moon return the favour to the Sun? He (i) cannot offer (some of) his light, for it originally belonged to the Sun.

In the same way

Being educated and guided by you now and again, I have been greatly obliged to you.

What can I offer you to express my gratitude to you!

How can one give anything to a giver who himself is the giver of *all*?

Notes

- i. The word for 'moon' in Sanskrit is *candra* (masculine). In Hindu mythology, *candra* is 'he', not 'she'.

Poetic Expression of The Concept of Hindu Marriage

Sāmīpyasaukhyād unmattavṛttī
taraṅgaraṅgād rasādrabhāvau
āvāṃ vivāhasya pravāhanityatām
dṛṣṭvā cirāyājanayāva manmatham.

Being intoxicated with the happiness of relishing the presence of each other (i) as we observed the amorous sport of the waves that drenched our minds with the *rasa* (ii) (aesthetic sentiment) derived from the beauty of nature,

We perceived and foresaw in our prospective marriage «Eternality in Continuity» (iii) fundamental to the Flow of Existence.

And it was only after perceiving this metaphysical Truth of Marriage that we generated in ourselves the crowning sentiment of erotic love. (iv)

Notes

- i. *Sāmīpya*: «Being together», one of the four kinds of *mokṣa* (salvation). Being present with God.
- ii. *Rasa*: Heightened sentiment through aesthetic experience.
- iii. *pravāhanityatā*: Eternality in Continuity. «Eternal» is not necessarily static. «Flowing Existence», «Flowing Time», etc. are also Eternal. The «flow of a river» inspires Sanskrit poets to meditate on Eternality in Continuity.
- iv. *Rasarāja Śṛṅgāra*: «Erotic Love» is the most celebrated «aesthetic sentiment» (*Rasa*) in the Sanskrit literary tradition. However, in the context of religion, «erotic love» is always supposed to emerge in marriage and not prior to or outside marriage.

LĪLĀ: Sport

tulyaśīlaṃ vai dvandvaṃ yadākadāpi śrjyate
aho līlā gūḍhaśakteḥ devo na jānāti na dvandvaṃ.

Very rarely indeed is born a perfect couple, just once in a while!

How graceful and gracious is the sport of that Mysterious power
when it plays!

But Neither God nor the couple knows the play of that Mysterious
Power!

SASVADVIRODHA AIKYAM EVA: Simultaneity of the Mundane and the Divine

snehārdratvān mṛdusparśo 'nyasminn ante tu dāhakaḥ
vartikāvad dvaitarūpo' dvaitānando 'yam adbhutah.

Like an oil-drenched wick, he is soft to touch on the one end
and scorching on the other.

Thus wondrous is he who, having realized «That One Reality without
second», appears Mundane (i) and Divine (ii) simultaneously in his
existence.

Notes

- i. vyāvahārika
- ii. pāramārthika



NOTES FROM THE ACTING DEAN....

Although the darkening afternoons and bare trees put us in mind of the fading year, there is much that is new to report in this first issue of ARC for 1980-81.

Two new members of academic staff joined us in September, *Ed Furcha* who replaces *Keith Markell* in Church History and *Fred Wisse* who has taken up where *John Kirby* left off in New Testament. We welcome them and their families and wish them happy and fruitful years at McGill. Among the part time lecturers there are two new old faces: it is nice to see *John McNab* (Ph.D. 1972) back again - he is teaching Liturgics; while *Pierre Goldberger*, who has been on the scene as Principal of U.T.C. for several years, will offer a course for the first time next term «A Theology of the Body».

On the administrative side, *Olive McCaskill* retired in August after many years as the Dean's secretary. She has been replaced by *Ms. Joanne van Zwol* who comes to us from the University's Comparative Literature programme and has an active interest in world religions herself.

Things are also moving in the degree programmes. Several discussions have been held to develop a Master of Divinity course through the Faculty and affiliated Colleges and we hope to be able to announce something concrete before too long. To fill a recently perceived need in Québec, a new programme in the B.Th. for Francophone Theological Education has taken its first few shaky steps as several francophone students have begun studying Greek with - guess who - the indefatigable *John Kirby*. Our B.A. programme is under revision to meet new requirements for course seniority and prerequisites laid down by the Faculty of Arts. Finally we are also tinkering with the B.Th., in the hope of helping our students integrate their academic work more usefully through interdisciplinary seminars.

Even the Birks Lectures took on a new twist this year. *Dr. Wilhelm Pauck* who was scheduled to lecture on Tillich's theology had to undergo surgery at the last moment. Fortunately his lectures were ready and *Douglas Hall*, a friend of Pauck and a former student of Tillich, delivered them. Discussions were stimulating as Doug Hall split himself into as many as three points of view on some questions - his own, Pauck's and Tillich's! News from California is that *Dr. Pauck* is recuperating nicely. Next year's Lecturer is *William Sloane Coffin* so note the dates - October 5-6.

With all this added to the return of old students, the arrival of new, orientation day, visiting speakers, a new and active Chapel committee, we are well into a busy and happy year. There remains one cloud on our horizon, one which threatens to be with us for a while - reduced budgets. Like many universities McGill is being squeezed between reduced enrolments and rising costs. Our enrolments are very slightly down this year, though by no means as much as forecast. Things will no doubt get worse before they get better and we will

need your continued and welcome support. This means financial support in gifts to the Faculty (you can specify this in your donation to the University) and in sending students our way. With the affiliated theological colleges we still provide a unique and first class theological education; and McGill and Montreal are still stimulating and fascinating places to be.

Our best wishes go to you all for the Christmas season and the New Year.



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NOTES FROM THE PRINCIPALS

WILLIAM KLEMPA

The 1980-81 academic session got off to a fine start with College Retreat at the McGill University Gault Estate on the weekend of September 12-14. Thirty-two students and faculty members attended the retreat making it the largest college retreat in several years. Three faculty members: *Dr. Fred Wisse*, *Dr. Bill Klempe* and *Dr. Art Van Seters*, each gave papers on the theme of Mission and Church Growth. These papers led to lively and lengthy discussion which went on into the small hours of the morning. Vespers were led by *Dr. Bob Culley*. The retreat concluded with a Communion Service in which the *Reverend Tom Gemmell* was the celebrant.

Two faculty changes have taken place in the College. The 1979-80 academic session marked the end of a distinguished thirty-three-year long teaching career for *Dr. H. Keith Markell* at The Presbyterian College and the McGill Faculty of Religious Studies. At the annual Alumni Association Dinner held on the day of the College Convocation (May 14) about 100 persons gathered to honour Professor Markell. The president of the Alumni Association, the *Reverend Earle Roberts*, presented a wallet and cheque to *Dr. Markell* and wished him good health and a happy retirement. At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, meeting in Windsor, Ontario, in June, a minute of appreciation was recorded. It read in part: «A generation of ministers of our Church and of the Anglican and United Churches has profited greatly from his wide knowledge and careful scholarship... His loyalty and dedication, his wit and wisdom will be greatly missed by students and staff alike.»

Dr. Fred Wisse, Associate Professor of New Testament in the McGill Faculty, has been made a member of the Presbyterian College Faculty. The College community has welcomed him into its midst and appreciates the active part he is taking in its life and work.

Karen Prevost, who has served as the College Librarian since 1975, resigned at the end of the last academic session in order to pursue full-time studies in the Montreal Institute for Ministry. Her valuable service to the College was acknowledged at General Assembly and by the presentation of a gift book from the students and faculty. The vacancy created by her resignation has been filled by the appointment of the *Reverend Daniel Shute* as the new librarian. *Dan Shute* has a Bachelor of Arts degree in History, Latin and Greek from the University of Guelph and a Master of Divinity from Knox College. He is bilingual and in addition to his other duties, will have responsibility for developing the College's collection of French theological works.

William Klempe is Principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

«College Hours» for B.Th and S.T.M. candidates for ministry are being held on Thursday afternoons on the general theme «An Introduction to Presbyterianism». Topics discussed are: Historical Origins, Canadian Presbyterianism, Presbyterians and Biblical Authority, Worship, Ministry and Sacraments and Presbyterians and Ecumenicity. The one-hour sessions are being led by members of the College faculty.

The 1981 L.W. Anderson Lectures will be given by the American novelist and preacher, *Frederick Beuchner*. These are scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 1981, at noon, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the College Auditorium. The public is invited. The 1982 Anderson Lecturer will be *Professor Brian Gerrish* of the University of Chicago.

Three programmes of Continuing Theological Education are planned for the first two weeks of March, 1981, and the last week of April. Programme A: March 2-9 will be sponsored jointly by United Theological College and Presbyterian College and will include lectures and seminars by *Professor Donna Runnalls* of McGill, *Professor Charles Scobie* of Mount Allison University and a workshop on Preaching from the Sermon on the Mount led by *Professors Fred Wisse* and *Ed Furcha* and *Dr. Bill Klempa*. Programme B: March 9-13, will include sessions led by *Dr. Alexandra Johnston* of Victoria University, *Dr. John Scott* of Toronto and others. A Paulin Ministers' Institute on preaching and pastoral care will be held the week of April 28-May 2, 1981.



ANTHONY CAPON

The most important development at Diocesan College over the past twelve months has been one that is hard to measure in terms of statistics. This has been the very significant strengthening of our sense of community. As Principal, I believe that it is only as our College community becomes a living fellowship that we are going to grow in our awareness of Jesus Christ and in our understanding of what it means to minister in his name. And it is only by the initiative of the sovereign Holy Spirit that this living fellowship can be created.

My perception is that this work of God's Spirit has been taking place in the College, and that many of the characteristics of a truly caring community are now evident.

Our beginning-of-term retreat in September probably marked an important turning point. The students proposed the topic of Spiritual Growth, with a subsidiary topic of Creative Worship, and the leadership of *Canon Tom Maxwell* of St. Barnabas', Pierrefonds, enabled us to consider the basic essentials of Christian experience and how these work out in a communal setting. The spouses of students were also all present and have shared in an important way in what God has been doing among us.

The pressures of term, of study and assignments, of time and tiredness, have represented a test, often a severe test, of the reality of our concern. However, the sense of unity continues, and has been particularly centred on our daily chapel worship. The daily offices of morning and evening prayer have received consistent support from our entire community, and our minimum of three weekly Eucharists have been found to provide an important source of spiritual renewal.

A number of crises involving students or those close to them have given opportunities for the supportive nature of our fellowship to show itself in prayer and also in practical service. The next step, I think, is for a deeper commitment to the expression of our faith in terms of mission, both in our own immediate social context and on a worldwide scale.

Our thanks are due to our Director of Studies, the *Reverend Don Thompson*, for his part in these developments, and also to *Bishop Russel Brown*, *Dr. Eric Jay*, and *Dr. Monroe Peaston* for their consistent support and help.

Student enrolment this year is slightly up on last year. We have 27 students, of whom 23 are full-time. One is in pre-theology, 21 in theology, and 5 in final year. Men number 20 and women 7. Distribution by dioceses is: Montreal 16, one each from British Columbia, New Westminster, Ottawa, Niagara, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Central Newfoundland. There are two students from Zaire and one from Uganda.

Anthony Capon is Principal of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College, Montreal.

The College residence is full, as are also the Rexford Hall apartments. We seem to have left behind the days when there was doubt about whether or not the College could continue its operation!

Much work has been done on the College buildings this past summer. Major work has been completed on both stairwells. The old balcony at the rear of the main building has been removed and the door to it bricked up to a window. Stairway walls have been repaired or replaced. Other areas that have been repaired, replastered, and repainted are the main floor corridors and front foyer, the students' common room, and Convocation Hall. The front doors of both the College and the Principal's Residence have been taken down, stripped, re-varnished, and replaced. Much subsidiary work has been done on walls, windows, fire escapes, etc.

All this has been accomplished within our regular operating budget. Major work remains to be done, however (such as the re-wiring of the whole College buildings) which will require special funding. Hence, plans are still going ahead for a capital campaign in the near future.

Relations between the College and its alumni have been further strengthened this year. Attendance at the annual meetings was good and there was a well-attended and inspiring dinner for all those who graduated in 1945 or earlier, at which presentations were made to fifty-year graduates. The alumni presented to the College a photographic portrait of Bishop Powles, and this now hangs in Convocation Hall.

The College sends its greetings and good wishes to all the alumni to whom this issue of ARC comes. Visit us as often as you can! And may God bless you all.

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THE MONTREAL INSTITUTE FOR MINISTRY

ARTHUR VAN SETERS

Maureen Kabwe has been appointed as Special Staff part-time. Maureen is Resource and Planning Officer in The Montreal Presbytery office of the United Church. Her involvement with the In-Ministry Year is the result of a recommendation by a Women's Task Force which reviewed all aspects of the In-Ministry Year programme last Spring from the perspective of women in ministry. Maureen will be teaching especially in the area of Education and Administration, will be involved in the workshop on Ministry and Sexuality (November 3-7), and will work informally with the students.

Gregory Baum of St. Michael's College in Toronto has agreed to be the principal resource person for a workshop on Ministry and Mission scheduled for February 16-20, 1981. Other people from the Montreal area will also give leadership in the afternoon workshop sessions.

A Lay Reading Course in Theology has been administered by The Montreal Institute for Ministry for the past seven years. It has recently been revised by *Don Thompson*, Director of Studies for Diocesan College. There are some thirty people at present enrolled in this programme including a number from Eastern Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland, and several from elsewhere. The course uses most of the same basic texts assigned in the comparable Faculty of Religious Studies courses. It consists of twelve units (2 Old Testament, 2 New Testament, 2 Theology, Worship, 2 History, Christian Ethics, World Religions, and Philosophy of Religion). Each unit is prepared under a local tutor and assignments are submitted to the Institute for marking. Depending on various factors, participants can normally complete a unit in two or three months.

Arthur Van Seters is Executive Director, The Montreal Institute for Ministry, Montreal.



PEOPLE AND EVENTS

Professor Edward J. Furcha was elected Secretary of the Canadian Society of Church History at its June meeting in Montreal.

He read a paper on *In Defence of the Spirit: An Examination of H. Zwingli's Hermeneutic in the Period Before 1523* at a meeting of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History, 27 September 1980, in Toronto.

His research projects in progress are a translation with an Introduction of H. Zwingli's *Exposition of the 67 Articles* and a translation of Sebastian Franck's *Paradoxa*.

He was a delegate on behalf of the Division of World Outreach, The United Church of Canada, to a three day symposium in Pittsburgh, during May 1980, on Disarmament and Peace.

Professor Douglas J. Hall was Gastprofessor in the Forschungsinstitut für Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften of the Universität-Gesamthochschule Siegen, in Siegen, West Germany, during the period 13 April to 29 July 1980. His seminars there were entitled *Religion und Gesellschaft: Zukunftsperspektiven für das nordamerikanische Experiment*. While in Europe, he visited centres of theological study in Prague, Leipzig, Strassburg, Bethel and elsewhere.

During the summer two new books appeared: *Has the Church a Future?* (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press), and *The Canada Crisis* (Toronto, The Anglican Book Centre). Some articles also were published including «Ein anderes Bild von Christus» in *Theologie der Gegenwart*, 23 Jg. 80/1 (Münster, Germany).

Professor Alaka Hejib, as Organizing Secretary for the Canadian Association for Sanskrit and Related Studies, organized (in collaboration with Professor Katherine Young) the annual meeting of CASRS, which was held in May 1980 in Montreal. Six papers were presented in two panel discussions on *Indian Hermeneutics*, the topic for this year's academic enterprise for CASRS.

Professor Hejib presented at the same meeting a paper entitled *Etymology as a Device for Commentarial Convenience: A Case Study of Parāśara-bhaṭṭārya's Commentary on Viṣṇusahasranāma (640-644)* (co-author, Professor K. Young).

On 19th August, 1980 she presented a paper entitled *The Concept of Sacrifice in Understanding Hindu Women* at the International Association of History of Religion (IAHR)'s meeting in Winnipeg. The paper was read in the section on «Religion and Femininity». Professor Hejib also acted as a member on the Committee for «Indian Religions» section of the IAHR meeting.

She was interviewed by Radio Québec on the topic of «Scope for Hindu Religious Rites for Indians in Canada and Socio-cultural problems of Indian residents in Canada». The interview was broadcast on 18 February 1980 on Tele-India, Channel 17.

Professor Donna Runnalls has returned from a sabbatical leave spent in Jerusalem. A trip to Syria and Iraq in the summer of 1979 prior to arrival in Jerusalem allowed her to visit many of the archaeological sites of the area including the recently excavated Tel Mardik in which the Ebla tablets were discovered. Research during her sabbatical was concerned with the biblical interpretation of Flavius Josephus. A close association with both the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and L'école biblique et archéologique française provided an excellent opportunity to keep abreast of work being done in the archaeological field in Israel.



RELIGIOUS STUDIES LIBRARY

Book Donations

Book donations are welcomed by the Religious Studies Library. However, because of space limitations, we do request that a list (author, title and date of publication) be sent to us to be checked against our present holdings. We are *particularly* interested at this time in Eastern Orthodox material.

BOOKS ON REVIEW

With this issue of ARC we initiate what we hope will become an annual feature of our autumn edition. Although we have from time to time included book reviews as well as bibliographies relating to specific subjects, it seems to us that a regular listing by members of the faculty of recently published books in their areas of specialization may prove useful to our readers. The books listed will be of major significance among those published in the main during the past calendar year. In this issue we have contributions from the fields of Christian Ethics, Church History, New Testament Studies, and Comparative Religion.

Professor J.A. Boorman, Christian Ethics:

Some Book Suggestions related to Economic Ethics in Global Perspective:

There are a number of organizations whose publications are essential reading in this area, The Club of Rome, Worldwatch Institute, World Order Models Project (WOMP), Overseas Development Corporation (ODC) - U.S., SODEPAX (The Committee on Society, Development and Peace) (WCC and RCC).

Among other provocative, important books, are the following:

Denis Goulet, *A New Moral Order*, Orbis, 1974.

Susan George, *How the Other Half Dies*, Penguin, 1976.

Ronald Higgins, *The Seventh Enemy: The Human Factor in the Global Crisis*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1978.

John V. Taylor, *Enough is Enough*, SCM, 1975.

Professor E.J. Furcha, Church History:

A glance at Recent Publications:

William Clebsch, Professor of Religious Studies and Humanities at Stanford published in 1979 *Christianity in European History*. The booklet, available in paperback (Oxford University Press), breaks with tradition and seeks to juxtapose dominant expressions of Christian faith and culture in a refreshing analysis of viable faith responses in the life of the Church. Mystics, martyrs and theologians, moralists, activists and apologists are examined among others. The author seems to suggest that all these were legitimate responses to the «manifestations» of the many faces of Christ and deserve our fullest attention. Exciting reading here and a good starting point for a closer look at what happens when men and women respond to the reality of the divine in their own time and place.

Christopher DeJung, *Wahrheit und Haeresie*, Samisdat, Zurich, 1980. The author rightly decided to publish privately the essence of his doctoral thesis on the philosophy of history in Sebastian Franck. The work is carefully

written, well documented and deserves to be widely read and assessed. In keeping with the tradition within which Franck saw himself in his own context (the sixteenth century) DeJung does not treat him as a heretic who is accepted or rejected on whether or not he measures up in terms of traditional Christian teaching, but rather as a serious scholar who had something to say to his time and who spoke slightly «out of season» and could not be «heard» as a result. Brush up on 400 level German and give the work a try; it may prove rather rewarding.

Recent issues of journals of history deserve careful attention. Especially noteworthy is the eleventh volume, No. 2 of the *Sixteenth Century Journal*, which is devoted to essays on important aspects of the so-called Counter-Reformation.

Anyone interested in what happens when Lutherans and Catholics enter into serious dialogue *must* purchase *Teaching Authority and Infallibility in the Church*. The book is available in paperback through the Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, and contains sixteen studies by important spokespersons in this enterprise. Some have passed on to their reward, but their legacy is very much alive and worth «acquiring». Paul Empie, T.A. Murchy and J.A. Burgess are listed as co-editors. Copyright was granted in 1978, 1980.

Professor George Johnston, New Testament Studies:

Books in New Testament Studies published in 1979:

J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd. revised edition, Nashville: Abingdon.

An astute, provocative study of *John*, set amidst the conflict between the Church and Rabbinic Judaism near the close of the first century. Martyn teaches us to read off several levels of meaning in the Johannine text.

Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, New York: Oxford University Press, paperback.

An authoritative introduction to an important figure in Egyptian, Hellenistic Judaism. Sandmel died in November, 1979.

Herbert Braun, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Man and His Time*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

An important review of «the state of the question».

R.S. Hamerton-Kelly, *God the Father: Theology and Patriarchy in the Teaching of Jesus*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, paperback.

Discusses an essential element in the thought of Jesus and is relevant to several contemporary issues.

Fortress Press, Philadelphia, has also published a reprint of Ernst Käsemann's brilliant book *New Testament Questions of Today*, paperback, and another volume in the prestigious series of *Hermeneia* commentaries - *Galatians*, by Hans Dieter Betz of Claremont, California. It is the first volume that is not simply a translation!

Professor R.W. Stevenson, Comparative Religion:

The Mahābhārata, vol. 3, translated and edited by J.A.B. van Buitenen, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

This is an important series and its continuity is in peril with the death last year of van Buitenen. The epic poem runs to 100,000 verses in 18 books and this volume brings us to the end of Book V. The poem came together over some 1200 years and gives us legends, social and military customs, philosophy, religion and ethics to provide a kaleidoscopic view of Indian culture and history from about eighth or ninth century B.C. to A.D. 400. In a country climatically hostile to the preservation of archaeological evidence, a work like this is very important. Previous and frequently inadequate translations were done in the nineteenth Century.



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«WOMEN ERASED?: POWER, PATRIARCHY AND RELIGION»

- Thurs. Jan. 15 - Lecture (12 Noon): The Hebrew Goddess: Was She Ever Legitimate in Judaism? Dr. Raphael Patai - internationally known anthropologist; author of «The Hebrew Goddess». Discussion (1:30 p.m.) Do we need to bring back the goddess in contemporary religion?*
- Thurs. Jan. 29 - Lecture (12 Noon): Eve Misrepresented?: The Charge of Biased Hermeneutics on the Part of Biblical Interpreters. Dr. Phyllis Tribble - Professor of Old Testament Studies, Union Theological Seminary, New York. Discussion (1:30 p.m.) Is there scope for a feminist interpretation of the Bible?*
- Thurs. Feb. 12 - Lecture (12 Noon): The Bishop Was A Lady?: The Charge of Deleting The Evidence of Equality in the Early Church. Dr. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza - Professor of New Testament Studies, University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Discussion (1:30 p.m.) Is ordination the way for Women to obtain power in the Church?*
- Thurs. Mar. 5 - Lecture (12 Noon): The Virgin Elevated: The Charge of Effacing the Sexuality of Women. Dr. Elizabeth Clark - Professor and Chairperson, Department of Religion, Mary Washington College, Virginia. Discussion (1:30 p.m.) Must women who desire power in the contemporary church deny their sexuality?*
- Thurs. Mar. 19 - Lecture (12 Noon): The Church Eliminates The Troublemaker: The Charge of Church Financing of Witch Hunts and Forcing Women Out of Mainline Christianity. T.B.A. Discussion (1:30 p.m.) What are the excuses of the contemporary church for eliminating the powerful woman?*
- Thurs. Apr. 2 - Lecture (12 Noon): New Models For Women, Power and Religion. Dr. Dorothy Sölle - Professor of Theology, Union Theological Seminary, New York; Public Lecturer, Germany. Discussion (1:30 p.m.) Can Christianity accommodate feminism?*

ARC is an attempt to provide a means of maintaining the ties that exist between the academic community and its Alumni/Alumnae. To aid in this continuing theological education, we are publishing two issues per year which are distributed to almost 1500 graduates and friends of the Faculty of Religious Studies of McGill University, its affiliated Colleges (Anglican, Presbyterian and United Church) and the Montreal Institute for Ministry. Rather than charge a fee for what we feel is an important service, we are asking donations to offset the printing and distribution costs which amount to approximately \$3.00 per person per year.

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