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Religious Categories as Universal Expressions of Creative Personality

A Study in the Sociology of Values *

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THE SELF AS CREATOR AND GUIDE

Religions may come, and religions may go, but creative man goes on for ever. As an instrument of life and as a creation of the human personality religion in its diverse forms and processes is universal and eternal. It is the dignity of the individual as the supreme fact of the universe that is the foundation of man's spiritual existence.

The group and the society, Nature, the region and the world are being perpetually influenced, moulded and re-made by the creative personality of man. The rôle of the individual as the transforming force in cultural metabolism has ever been the factual substratum of world-evolution. In the sociology of values no estimate of man's position *vis-à-vis* the world is more appropriate than what we find in the Jaina *Samādhi-śataka*, which says

Nayatyātmānamātmaiva

Janmanirvāṇameva vā

Gururātmāmanastasmāt

Nānyosti paramārthatah.

It is the self that guides the self, its birth and its extinction. The self is its own preceptor and there is nothing else from the standpoint of superior values. Religion is one of its creations like philosophy that belongs to culture or civilization.

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PSYCHO-SOCIAL GESTALT IN RELIGION

and religion are almost synonymous or identical categories, in so far as each implies a binding or connective

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principle. A cementing or associative ideology is inextricably bound up with the Indian term as with the European. It is in the milieu of sociality, solidarism, harmony or equilibrium, in the domain of human experiences, whether individual or collective, that we have to move while dealing with the substance of *dharma* (=religion). Naturally, therefore, both in the East and the West no category has been taken, consciously or unconsciously, in a more synthetic, comprehensive and all-sweeping manner than religion (= *dharma*).

Comprehensive categories are as a matter of course elastic and rather indefinite in contour and make-up. A delightful and often dangerous vagueness has therefore attached from the nature of the case to *dharma*-religious discussions. Religion has ever and everywhere been appealed to, as it can by all means legitimately be appealed to, on the most varied items of human life.

Our Manu and indeed all authors of *Dharma-śāstras* before and after him have devoted attention as much to the health and wealth of men and women as to their manners, customs, laws and constitutions. From eugenics, dietetics and sanitation to jurisprudence, economics and politics there is no branch of human science, physical or mental, individual or social, which has been ignored, overlooked or minimized in these encyclopaedic treatises.

Psychologically, therefore, if there is anything on which the human brains have a right to fight among themselves it is pre-eminently religion (*dharma*). Generally speaking, it would be a sheer accident if any two thinking, scientific, philosophical or creative minds were independently to focus their activities on just the same phases and items of life or thought while dealing with such an all-sweeping, synthetic or pluralistic category. A museum of religions is just the most appropriate pandemonium of thought,—the veritable battle-ground of nations.

In the manner of the chemical analyst in his laboratory it may indeed be possible for the anthropological, historical, scientific or philosophical student of religion to isolate the diverse items or aspects of the religious complex from one another and deal with them one by one individually. This intellectual analysis may be of great help in logic, psychology, metaphysics or sociology. But it is the synthetic whole,—and not the individual parts—that men and women, even the philosophers and scientists themselves, vaguely call religion or *dharma* when they apply it to their own life in the

interest of day-to-day and concrete problems, individual or social. Religion is really one of the expressions of the psycho-social *Gestalt*¹ or "configuration" of creative man. In the interest of intellectual clarification the *Gestalt* or structural whole may be pulverized into its contentual atoms, into the *Beziehungen* (relations) and processes, to use an expression from von Wiese's sociology. For certain purposes of scientific and philosophical laboratory-collaboration we may dissociate the religious from the psychical and the social. This pulverization or dissociation can however but lead to the isolation of anaemic or bloodless corpuscles such as pure abstractions ought to be called from the viewpoint of human values. The analysis of parts may nourish our brains as a discipline in logic; but it is the *Gestalt* or total inter-relations and form-complex that rule our life. The identities in the individual items, the elemental atoms or raw materials may not therefore lead to any identity or formal similarity in the psycho-social or socio-economic *Gestalt* of the persons or groups.

THE GESTALT OF PRIMITIVE RELIGION

The results of scientific analysis in the field of religion are quite well-known. Even in analytical treatments of religion we are but presented with a diversity of views.

In one group² we encounter the view as formulated by Wundt, for instance, in his *Ethik*, that all moral commands have originally the character of religious commandments. That religion furnishes the beginnings of all morality is almost a postulate with a very large number of investigators. The most extreme view is perhaps to be found in Durkheim's *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, according to which science, poetry, plastic arts, law, morality and what not have all been derived from myths, legends, religious ceremonies and ritualistic practices.

An exactly opposite view is also tenable. In Westermarck's *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas* morality cannot be traced in its origins to the gods or religious ideas. Among very many peoples religion cannot be proven to be associated with the regulation of

1 S. C. Mitra : "Gestalt Theory in German Psychology," Lecture at the Bangiya Jarman-Vidya Samsad (Bengali Society of German Culture) Calcutta on September 26, 1936. See the *Calcutta Review* for January 1937. See also R. H. Wheeler : *The Science of Psychology* (New York, 1929) and K. Koffka : *The Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (London 1935).

2 C. Bouglé : *L'Evolution des Valeurs* (Paris 1929) pp. 127-129, W. Schmidt : *Origin and Growth of Religion* (London 1935) p. 132.

social life, says he. The independence of morality from religion is likewise the conclusion to be derived from Meyer's studies in the *Geschichte des Alterthums* (history of the ancient world).

Religion and society are both creations of man. Instead of establishing the religious "interpretation of society" or social "interpretation of religion" it is time to recognize or rather re-emphasize the supreme majesty of man as the creator of the thousand and one items which constitute the *Gestalt* of culture or civilization. This is why we should be prepared very often for situations in which the social and the religious are inextricably mixed up with each other, instead of the one being the *function* of the other.

In an objective examination of human attitudes and relations it is possible even to establish an equation between religion and family-life, as Tönnies does in *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and Society)³ For, it is in and through the sacredness ascribed to marriage, birth of children, respect for elders, mourning for the dead and other incidents of family life that religion has always and everywhere worked on human spirit and conscience.

Thus considered, religion is virtually coeval with man and his creations. It is impossible to accept the recent thesis of *La Mythologie Primitiv*e in which Lévy-Bruhl has developed the doctrine of primitive society as being marked by pre-religion. A condition like this is as unthinkable psychologically and undemonstrable anthropologically as his conception of pre-logical or pre-critical mentality such as had been established by him in *Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*.⁴

Rather, in regard to the relations between the logical and the pre-logical or illogical an acceptable view is that of Pareto, who in his *Trattato di Sociologia Generale* has brought into the boldest relief the instincts, emotions, prejudices etc., i.e., the non-logical and non-rational elements, such as influence the purely rational or mechanistic scheme of human life. The activities or behaviours of men and women are determined by "constant drives" or "residues" of personality. And these residues are as a rule so conflicting that

3 Edition of 1935 (Leipzig) pp. 37, 234-235.

4 Goldenweiser: *Early Civilization* (New York 1922) pp. 380-389. W. Schmidt: *The Origin and Growth of Religion* (London 1935); A. Ouy's resumé in *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* (Paris, May-June 1935) pp. 317-318. J. Leyder: "Association primitive d'Idées" in *Comptes rendus du deuxième Congrès National des Sciences* (Brussels 1935), which furnishes an objective criticism of Lévy-Bruhl's *La Mythologie Primitiv*e.

human behaviour becomes normally to all intents and purposes illogical and self-contradictory. There is then plenty of logic in Frazer's standpoint that superstitions are as natural, nay, as beneficial to human beings as rationalism, logicalness and self-consistency.⁵

The "irrationals" of Pareto are not however to be discovered as the only mental features in the alleged pre-logical and pre-religious strata of primitive society. Besides, the Paretian irrationals are quite in evidence even in the most hyper-developed conditions of complex culture-systems. And criticism, discrimination or logic is to be credited to the most primitive of all minds. It would be wrong to identify the religious with the irrational. In the making of religion the whole personality of creative man is active.

The position of Bouglé is, therefore, reasonable which admits that⁶ the logicity and rationality of the primitives are abundantly manifest in their religious prescriptions. The modern mind, known to be logical and rational as it is, has not established any thing more serious than obedience to the old, generosity towards friends, living in peace with neighbours, avoidance of intercourse with the wives of others, such as were imposed by their gods on the Australians. The divinities of the Andamans likewise punish thieving, robbery and adultery. All these items of "savage" life are not less logical and not less rational than any set of commandments devised by civilized man.

"*L'existence d' une mentalité logique*" (the existence of a logical mentality) may be demonstrated among the Sudanese peoples of Belgian Congo. Even the mystical mentality is not absent, although rare, say Leyder.

The mixture of the rational and the irrational, the logical and the illogical is an integral part of the human *psyche*. Herein is to be found the eternal duplicity of man, as Pascal maintained. Morality is indeed dualistic, nay, pluralistic. Inconsistencies are nowhere more glaring than among the "leaders" or builders of civilization, whether ancient or modern, in whom, as a rule, as Sorokin observes, the "savagery of a lion," the "slyness of a fox," or, at any rate, severity, cynicism and moral indifferentism constitute the "necessary pre-requisites for successful climbing through many channels".⁷

⁵ J. G. Frazer : *Psyche's Task* (London, 1913) p. 154.

⁶ *L'Evolution des Valeurs* (Paris 1929) pp. 135-136, 141-142.

⁷ P. Sorokin : *Social Mobility* (New York, 1927) pp. 308-311.

In other words, the presence of alleged superstitions, wherever they may exist, does not lead to the total eclipse of many rational, logical, 'humane' and such other desirable cultural characteristics.

Primitive mentality as operating in the religion of 'savages' was not all haphazard, bizarre and incoherent. The *Wakan* of the Sioux tribe of North America and the *Mana* of the Melanesians are impersonal and anonymous forces such as serve to impart movement and life to the animate and inanimate objects. It is forces like these that are embodied in the *totem*, which is ultimately adored as the divine ancestor of the race. It is impossible to minimize in *totem*-worship the profoundly religious aspects of life as understood by the modern mind.

In the rites organized by the primitives to permit contacts between the two worlds, secular and sacred, "don't we recognize", asks Bouglé quite correctly, "the rudiment of the sacrifices, communions and oblations which will occupy such a great place in the most complex religions?" Mysticism is thus found to have a very long history.

In the most ancient of human cultures, again, if we may follow Father Schmidt,⁸ the belief in a Supreme Being was very deeply and strongly rooted. Traces of this belief are to be found among the Hokas, Algonkins and other tribes of North America. And the idea is gaining ground that this Supreme Being is really the god of a monotheism, especially among the Bushmen of Africa, the Kurnai of South-East Australia, most of the peoples of the Arctic culture, and virtually all the tribes of North America.

FOLK-RELIGIONS

Between the totemism of the primitives and the world-religions of to-day the psychological and moral links, then, are not few and far between. Not less prominent are the intimacies between the most diverse races of the civilized world so far as the intellectual and moral outfit of personality is concerned. The folk-psychology of the East and the West, as exhibited in the literary creations of Eur-Asia, is found to be uniform in a remarkable degree.

We find no difficulty in believing, for instance, with Renan who maintains in his *Mission de Phénicie* that mankind from the earliest times on has worshipped at the same place.⁹ No matter what be the race, it has virtually succumbed to the magical or hypnotic spell, so to say, of the sacred spots of history.

8 *The Origin and Growth of Religion* (London 1935) pp. 260-262.

9 J. Goldziher: *Mohammedanische Studien*, Zweiter Theil (Halle a.S. 1890), p. 334.

The history of North Africa shows that from generation to generation the same holy place changes the names of the saint. Only the names change, however; but the sacredness, the divine consecration and the sanctity of the place are handed down through the rise and fall of folk-tradition from the earliest into the most recent times. The Folk-Mohammedanism of Tunis and Algeria, for instance, is essentially the worship of gods and saints—the *Ginn*—to which the North Africans had been used for centuries.¹⁰

Folk-festivals in connection with the tombs of *Wali*, both male and female, are to be observed as much among the Bedouins of Arabia and the fellaheen of Egypt as among the Moslems of Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and India. And in many of these festivals the non-Moslems take as great a part as the Moslems.¹¹

In the domain of folklore, also, which is very often virtually identical with and forms an integral part of folk-religion the most striking characteristic is the identity or similarity between the mental reactions of the Eastern and Western races. Delight in the stories of adventure, interest in the romantic, the humorous and the marvellous, and sympathy with the fortunes of the heroic personalities, whether fictitious or real, are not confined to any particular race. These are ingrained in the "original nature" of man, so to speak, and form part of his theatrical instincts, love of play and sense of fun. The stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Iliad*, the *Cuchulain*, the *Beowulf* and the *Nibelungenlied* cater to the same demand among different peoples.¹²

The mysteries and miracles of mediaeval Europe as well as the "passion-plays" of Oberammergau and Erl have had their counterparts in India too. Chambers's *Mediaeval Stage* is an account as much of the folk-ludi, feasts, pageants, buffooneries, folk-dances and folk-drama of Europe as of the *Yātrā*, *Rāmalīlā*, *Bharat-mīlāp* and *Gambhīrā* of India with slight verbal modifications.¹³

Masks of beasts besmeared with filth are not yet things of the past in European festivities.¹⁴ Christian manners grant "indulgences" to the

10 Goldziher, Vol. II. pp. 344-345.

11 Goldziher, Vol. II. pp. 328-334.

12 Ridgeway: *Origin of Tragedy* (1910), *Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (1915). Ed. Chavannes: *Contes et Legendes du Bouddhisme Chinois, Fables Chionis du VIIIe au VIIe Siècle, Cinq cents Contes et Apologues*. The migration of folk-lore is traced by Chavannes in these studies.

13 B. K. Sarkar: *Folk-Element in Hindu Culture*, London, 1917.

14 Chambers: *Mediaeval Stage* Vol. I. pp. 93, 115, 145, 149; Stubbs: *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents* (1869-78) p. 149, cf. Lecky: *European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 288, 367.

moralties which are practised in connection with 'vigils' or 'wakes' (i.e. all-night watches) that are enforced on the anniversary or dedication day of churches. Summer festivals in the Occident are notorious for such "moral holidays." All this is not psychologically, ethnologically or climatologically distinct from the Asian practices wherever they may be detected by sociologists.

Some of the Buddhist *Jātaka*-stories of the pre-Christian era as well as of the tales prevalent among the various peoples of India today are common to those with which the Europeans and Americans are familiar, e. g., in Grimm's collections. Thus the stories of St. Peter in disguise as beggar being entertained by Bruder Lustig, of *Brüderchen* and *Schwesterchen*, of the substituted bride, of the ass in Kaden's *Unter den Olivenbäumen*, of Teufel smelling human flesh, of the queen's order to kill Maruzedda's three children and bring their liver and heart, of the daughter telling her father, the king, that she loves him like salt and water, of gold-spitting princes, and pearl-dropping maidens, belong to the tradition of both Hindustan and Europe.

The popular May-festivals of Europe and the spring-celebrations (*Holi*, *Dol-yātrā* etc.) all over India are born of a common need and satisfy the same hunger of the human heart. The agricultural observances, harvest rites, ceremonial songs, and rustic holidayings of the Christian are akin to those of the Hindu¹⁵.

The ideals of life have been statistically and historically the same in Asia and Eur-America. The student of culture-systems can, therefore, declare his inductive generalization in the following words of Walt Whitman:

"These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands,
This is the grass that grows where the land is and the water is,
This is the common air that bathes the globe."

It is the higher intellectuals in a community that are interested in the doctrines of theology, philosophy and metaphysics, while the man in the street in the theatrical, scenic or anecdotal aspects of God, the soul and the other world. The morals, however, though they depend in the last analysis on the individual's status in the economic grades or classes of a people, may for ordinary purposes be taken to be the out-come of its general consensus and collective

15 Martinengo-Caesaresco: *Essays in the Study of Folksongs*, London 1914; John Moyle: *The present ill state of the practice of physik in this nation truly represented*, London, 1702 (a study in British superstitions).

tradition. In a study of comparative religion we must take care to point out exactly which of these three phases of socio-religious life or human values we have singled out for discussion, for it is clear that it would be unscientific to compare the popular superstitions and folk-beliefs of one faith with the metaphysical speculations in which the high-browed Doctors of Divinity indulge in another.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF CHRISTIANITY

Dante, the greatest poet-saint-mystic of Roman Catholicism, was very much agitated over the "she-wolf" (moral and political muddle of his time). He used to predict the advent of a "Greyhound", a *Veltro*, or Deliverer, who would restore on earth the Universal Italian Empire, both temporal and spiritual. His prophecy finds expression in several eloquent passages of the *Divine Comedy*. Thus Virgil, the "master and guide" of the poet, gives the following hope in the first canto :

"This beast

At whom thou criest her way will suffer none
To pass, and no less hindrance makes than death :
To many an animal in wedlock vile
She fastens, and shall yet to many more,
Until that Greyhound comes, who shall destroy
Her with sharp pain. He will not life support
By earth nor its base metals, but by love,
Wisdom and virtue ; and his land shall be
The land 'twixt either Feltro. In his might
Shall safety to Italia's plains arise,
For whose fair realm Camilla, virgin pure,
Nisus, Euryalus and Turnus fell."

The same apocalyptic faith in a *Yugāvatāra* or God-incarnate-in-man has maintained the optimistic Hindu in all ages of national distress. The advent of Messiahs to embody the successive *Zeitgeists* is thus guaranteed in the *Gītā* by Lord Kṛiṣṇa Himself :

*Yadā yadā hi dharmasya
Glānir bhavati Bhārata
Abhyutthānam adharmasya
Tadātmānam srijāmyaham.
Paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām
Vināśāya cha duṣkṛitām
Dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
Sambhavāmi yuge yuge.*

"Whensoever into Order
 Corruption creeps in, Bhārata,
 And customs bad ascendant be,
 Then Myself do I embody.
 For the advancement of the good
 And miscreants to overthrow
 And for setting up the Order
 Do I appear age by age."

Mediaeval Christianity did not produce only one *Divine Comedy*. Each of the Gothic Cathedrals of the thirteenth century Europe is a *Divine Comedy* in stone. It may be confidently asserted that the spiritual atmosphere of these noble structures with their soul-inspiring sculptures in alabaster and bronze has not been surpassed in the architecture of the East.¹⁶

We shall now exhibit a few specimens of Christian anthropology. On Christmas and New Year days the folks of Christendom are used to forecasting their lot according to the character of the first visitor. And what is the burden of their queries? "What will be the weather?" they ask, and "what the crops?" How, besides, are they to "fare in love and the begetting of children?" And a common superstition among the *Hausfrauen* enjoins that wealth must come in and not be given out on these days. Such days and such notions are not rare in Confucian-Taoist, Hindu, and Buddhist Asia.

It is well known, further, that in South-West England as in parts of Continental Europe, there are several *tabus* in regard to food. Hares, rabbits, poultry, for instance, are not eaten because they are "derived from his father" as the peasant believes.¹⁷ There is nothing distinctively Christian in these customs and traditions. Asians can also heartily take part in the processions attending the bathing of images, boughs of trees etc. with which the rural populations of Christian lands celebrate their May pole or summer festivities. And they would easily appreciate how men could be transformed into wolves by the curse of St. Natalis Cambrensis.

Would the ritualism, the rosary, the relic-worship, the hagiology, the consecrated edifices, the "eternal" oil-lamps in *Waldkapellen* (forest-chapels), pilgrimages, prayers, votive offerings, self-denial

16 B. K. Sarkar : *Hindu Art Its Humanism and Modernism* (New York, 1920) and "The Aesthetics of Young India" (*Rupam*, Calcutta, January 1922).

17 Gomme : *Ethnology and Folk-lore* (London) Ashton : *Shinto, the Way of the Gods* (London 1905), Harada : *The Faith of Japan* (London 1914).

during Lent, fasts and chants of the Roman Catholics scare away the Shintoists of Japan, Taoists of China, or Buddhists of Asia? By no means. Indeed, there are very few Chinese, Japanese or Hindus who would not be inspired by the image of Mary. Nations used to the worship of Kwanyin, Kwannon, Tārā, or Lakṣmī could not find a fundamentally new mentality or view of life in the atmosphere of a Greek or Catholic Church service. And the doctrine of faith (*bhakti*, *saddhā*), the worship of a Personal God, and preparedness for salvation (*muḁkti*) are not more Christian than Buddhist or Hindu.

Men and women who do not feel strong without postulating God would produce almost the same philosophy of the Infinite and of the immortal soul if they happen to be intellectual. But if they happen to be emotional or imaginative or "irrational" (?), as human beings generally are, they would create more or less the self-same arts (images, pictures, *bas-reliefs*, hymns, prayers, rituals, fetishes, charms). Humanity is, in short, essentially one,—in spite of physical and physiognomic diversities, and in spite of deep historic race-prejudices. The effort to understand the nature of God or the relations between man and Divinity is the least part of a person's real religion. The *élan vital* of human life has always and everywhere consisted in the desire to live and in the power to flourish by responding to the thousand and one stimuli of the universe and by utilizing the innumerable world-forces.

THE CATEGORIES OF CONFUCIANISM

Let us watch the psycho-social *Gestalt* of China. Confucianism is the name wrongly given to the cult of public sacrifices devoted to *Shāngti* (the One Supreme Being), the *Tāo* (or the Way), and ancestor-worship that has been obtaining among the Chinese people since time immemorial. This cult of what is really an adoration of nature-powers happens to be called Confucianism simply because Confucius (B. C. 551-479), the librarian of Lu State in Shantung, compiled or edited for his countrymen the floating Ancient Classics, the *Yi-king* (Book of Changes), the *Shu-king* (Book of History), the *Shi-king* (Book of Poetry) and others in which the traditional faith finds expression. The work of Confucius for China was identical with that of Ezra (B. C. 450) of Israel who edited for the Hebrews the twenty four books of the *Old Testament* that had been burnt and lost. In this sense or thus misnamed, Confucianism had existed among the Chinese

long before Confucius was born in the same manner as the Homeric poems had been in circulation in the Hellenic world ages before Pisistratus of Athens had them brought together in well-edited volumes.

Confucianism is often considered as not being a religion at all, because it is generally taken to be equivalent to positivism, i. e., a Godless system of mere morals, and hence alleged to be necessarily inadequate to the spiritual needs of man. The fact, however, is quite otherwise. The Socratic sayings of Confucius, that are preserved in the *Analects*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and other treatises, have indeed no reference to the supernatural, the unseen or the other world. The fallacy of modern sinologues consists in regarding these moralizings as the whole message of China's Super-man. Strictly speaking, they should be treated only as a part of a system which in its entirety has a place as much for the gods, sacrifices, prayers, astrology, demonology, tortoise worship, divination and so forth of Taoist and Folk-China as for the purely ethical conceptions of the duty towards one's neighbour or the ideal relations between human beings.¹⁸

This alleged positivism or atheism of Confucius, and the pre-Confucian religion of ancient China, which for all practical purposes was identical with the polytheistic nature-cult of the earliest "Indo-Aryan" races have both to be sharply distinguished from another Confucianism. For since about the fifth century A. C. the worship of Confucius as a god has been planted firmly in the Chinese consciousness and institutions. This latter-day Confucius-cult is a cult of nature-forces affiliated to the primitive *Shāngti*-cult, Heaven-cult, Tai-(Mountain) cult etc. of the Chinese. In this Confucianism Confucius is a god among gods.

BUDDHALOLOGY AND CHRISTOLOGY

Similarly in Buddhism also we have to recognize two fundamentally different sets of phenomena. There are two Buddhisms essentially distinct from each other. The first is the religion or system of moral discipline founded by Śākya (B. C. 563-483), the son of the president or archon (*rājan*) of the Śākya republic in Eastern India, who came to be called the *Buddha* or the Enlightened (the Awakened). Śākya

18 B. K. Sarkar : *Chinese Religion Through Hindu Eyes* (Shanghai, 1916), "Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity" (*Open Court*, Chicago, November 1919) and *The Futurism of Young Asia* (Berlin 1922). See also Werner : *Chinese Sociology* (London 1910) and De Groot : *Religion in China* (New York 1912).

founded an order (*samgha*) of monks, and adumbrated the philosophy of twelve *nidānas* (links between ignorance and birth) and the ethics of the eightfold path. In this Buddhism, which should really be called Śākyaism, Buddha is of course neither a god nor a prophet of God, but only a preacher among the preachers of his time. The system is generally known as *Hīnayāna* (or the Lower Vehicle of Buddhism). Its prominent tenet is *nirvāṇa* or the cessation of misery (annihilation of pain).¹⁹

But there is another faith in which Buddha is *a* or rather *the* god. This Buddha-cult, or Buddhism strictly so called, cannot by any means be fathered upon Śākya, the moralist. It chanced to evolve out of the schisms among his followers. Buddha-worship was formulated by Aśvaghoṣa and came into existence as a distinct creed about the first century A. C. in northwestern India during the reign of Kāṣka, the Indo-Tartar Emperor. This faith, also called *Mahāyāna* (the Greater Vehicle), was theologically much allied to, and did not really differ in ritual and mythology from, the contemporary Jain and Puranic-Hindu "isms" of India. It is this Buddhism, furnished as it is with gods and goddesses, that was introduced from Central Asia into China in A. C. 67, from China into Korea in A. C. 372, and from Korea into Japan in A. C. 552.

The contrast between Śākya the preacher and Buddha the god, or Confucius the moralist and Confucius the god has its parallel in Christology also. Modern criticism expresses this contrast, says Bacon in the *Making of the New Testament*, in its distinction of the gospel of Jesus from the gospel about Jesus. The distinction between Śākyaism and Buddhism, or between Confucianism as the system of tenets in the body of literature compiled by Confucius and Confucianism in which Confucius figures as a Divinity, as a colleague of *Shāngti*, is the same in essence as that between the teachings of Jesus the Jew and teachings, say, of St. Paul about Jesus the Christ who is God-in-man.

THE AVATARAS OF INDIA, ISRAEL AND CHINA

The incarnation-myths of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and similar legends of the *Jātaḥas* (Birth-Stories) must have developed as early as the epoch of

¹⁹ De la Vallée Poussin : *Nirvana* (Paris 1925), T. Stcherbatsky : *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana* (Leningrad 1927), N. Dutt : *Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism in its Relation to Hinayana* (London 1930).

Maurya imperialism (B. C. 322-185.). While the poets of the *Rāma*-legend sang,

"For Viṣṇu's self disdained not mortal birth,
And heaven came with him as he came to earth,"

and Kriṣṇa proclaimed in the *Gītā* section of the *Mahābhārata*:
"Forsake all *dharma*s (ways, *Taos*, creeds), make Me alone thy way,"
the sculptors of India were carving *bas-reliefs* in order to represent scenes in the life of Śākya deified as the Buddha. The post-Asokan but pre-Christian sculptures at Bhārhut (second century B. C.) leave no doubt as to the prevalence of a faith in Buddha whose birth was believed to be super-natural and whose career was to anticipate ideologically the holy ministrations of the Syrian Messiah. Besides, the mind of India had become used to such emphatic announcements of the *Gītā* as the following:

"I am the Father, and the Fostering Nurse,
Grandsire, and Mother of the Universe,
I am the Vedas, and the Mystic word,
The way, the support, the witness and the Lord.
The Seed am I of deathless quickening power
The Home of all, the mighty Refuge-tower."

Buddha-cult was thus born and nurtured in a perfectly congenial atmosphere.

The Pauline doctrine of Jesus as an *avatāra*, i. e., God-incarnate-in-man was also quite in keeping with the spiritual *milieu* of the age, rife as it was with the notions of Redeemer-gods. Here an Osiris, there a Mithra was commanding the devotion of the civilized world as a god resurrected after death to save mankind. Parallel to the development in Iran, which transformed Zarathustra²⁰ from the man-prophet-singer of the *Gāthās* into a super-natural and semi-divine figure, there was in Israel the continuous and progressive re-interpretation of traditional beliefs and symbols, as Canon Charles points out in the *Religious Development Between the Old and New Testaments*. From the third century B. C. on, as a consequence, whole histories centred round such conceptions as the soul, spirit, *sheol*, Paradise, Messianic Kingdom, the Messiah, the Resurrection. The idea of the Redeemer was taking definite shape, for instance, in the following verses of the *Psalms of Solomon* composed about the first century B. C.:

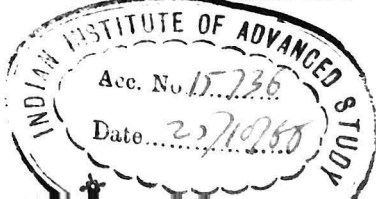
20 Moukon: *Early Religious Poetry of Persia* (Cambridge 1911).

“Behold, O Lord, and raise up into them
Their King, the son of David,
At the time in which thou seest, O God,
That he may reign over Israel Thy servant
And gird him with strength that he may
Shatter unrighteous rulers
And that he may purge Jerusalem from
Nations that trample her down to destruction.”

In India the rhapsodists of the Vālmikian cycle were singing of the advent of the Messiah as Rāma, and the Śākyan monks elaborating the Buddhist stories of incarnation (*Jātaṇa*) in the self-same strain. Nor was China to be left without an *avatāra* or a deified personality. In the fourth century B. C. Mencius, the St. Paul of Confucianism, calls his great Master *Chi Ta-cheng*, i. e., the embodiment of highest perfection. Three hundred years after his death Confucius was made Duke and Earl, Sze Ma-chien, the Chinese Herodotus (first century B. C.) describes him as the “divinest of men.” But by the end of the first century A. C. the birthplace of Confucius had become a goal for the pilgrim and even emperors wended their way to pay respects to his shrine. In A. C. 178, says Giles in *Confucianism and its Rivals*, a likeness of Confucius had been placed in his shrine as a substitute for the wooden tablet in use up to that date. In 267 an Imperial decree ordered the sacrifice of a pig, sheep and an ox to Confucius at each of the four seasons. The first complete Confucian temple was built and dedicated in 505. About 555 it was enacted that a Confucian temple should be built in every prefectural city, for the people had come to “look upon Confucius as a god to be propitiated for the sake of worldly advantages.”

This heroification and deification of Confucius was not an isolated phenomenon in the Chinese world, for China was also simultaneously transforming Lao-tsze, his senior contemporary, into a Divinity. The Taoist writers had begun to describe their great prophet as an incarnation of some Superior Being who came among men in human shape in every age. They told also the various names under which he appeared from the highest period of fabulous antiquity down as late as the sixth century, making in all seven periods.

Indeed, the spiritual experience of the entire human race was passing through almost the same climacteric. Zoroastrianism was evolving Mithraism, Chinese classics were evolving the worship of Confucius and Lao-tsze, Hinduism was evolving Buddha-cult, Kṛṣṇa-cult, Rāma-cult etc. and Judaism was in the birth-throes of Christ-cult.



The elaboration of these "Great Exemplars," *Avatāras* or "Supermen" is but one of the forms in which the uniform psychological metabolism of the different races was manifesting itself. The types of ethical and spiritual "perfection" or highest ideals and norms in human personality, that had been slowly acquiring prominence in India, in the Hellenistic world, and in China during the preceding centuries at last began to crystallize themselves out of the solution of folk-experience and emerge as distinctly individualized entities. The world-forces or nature-powers of the antique world, viz., Mother Earth and the elemental energies, furnished no doubt the basic foundations and the nuclei for these types or patterns. Folk-imagination in brooding over the past and reconstructing ancient traditions had sanctified certain historic personalities,²¹ legendary heroes or eponymous culture-pioneers, and endowed their names with a halo of romance. Philosophical speculation had been groping in the dark as to the mysteries of the universe and had stumbled upon the One, the Unknown, the Eternal, the Absolute, the Infinite, the Ideal. Last, but not least, are the contributions of the "lover, the lunatic and the poet," — the Mark, the Matthews, the Mencius, the Vālmiki, the Aśvaghoṣa — who came to weld together all these elements into artistic shapes, "fashioning forth" those sons of God, — concrete human personalities to embody at once the man-in-God and the God-in-man.

THE WALI-CULT IN ISLAM

More or less identical is the psycho-social *Gestalt* of the Moslem world. Mohammed was already looked upon by his immediate followers as an "extra-human miracle-worker" (*übermenschlicher Wundermann*) and his death surprised even Caliph Omar as something impossible or inconceivable.²² Everybody who wanted to believe that Mohammed had died was threatened by Omar with the most gruesome punishments. The biographers of Mohammed during the subsequent generation enriched his life-story with the details of his miracles. In the third century after his death, Ibn Hibban of Andalusia went so far as to say that Mohammed was not a human being subject to hunger and thirst.

21 W. Ridgeway : *Origin of Tragedy*, 1910, and *Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races in special reference to the Origin of Greek Tragedy*, 1915.

22 *Fadāil al-aṣḥab*, No. 6, *Al-Tabarī* I p. 1815, and *Al-Zurkāni* IV. p. 128 quoted in *Goldziher : Mohammedanische Studien* Vol. II (Halle, 1890), pp. 283-284.

The *Wali*-cult of the Mussalmans throughout the world,—in Asia, Africa and Europe,—is psychologically linked up with the normal *Heiligenverehrung* (saint-worship) or hagiology of all races of men. Moslem faith in the power of *Igma* is but a part of the most universally observed folk-mentality which feels helpless without supernatural agencies and extra-human energies.

THE ETHICAL EQUATIONS OF NATIONS

The ethical conceptions or moral codes of a people are bound up inextricably with its economic and social institutions. For all practical purposes they may very often be regarded as almost independent of its strictly religious thought, its theological doctrines, and the hypotheses of its prophets or thinkers regarding the nature of Godhead, the soul, and the relation between man and the Creator. While, therefore, the "whole duty of man" is sure to differ with people and people, nay, with class and class, and also with epoch and epoch in each nation and in each class, it is still remarkable that the most fundamental categories of moral life all the world over have been the same. The ethical systems of historic Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity are broad-based on almost identical notions of the good and the right. Social equilibria or similarities and equations between the nations in psycho-social *Gestalt* are nowhere more prominent than in the domain of moral ideals.

But here it is necessary to make a few special remarks about Confucianism. In the first place, suggestive sex-ideas associated with such concepts as "immaculate conception" in Christlore or "energy" (*Śakti*, the female "principle") in Buddhist and Hindu mythologies do not appear to have any place either in the *Classics* compiled by Confucius the man or in the religion in which Confucius is a god. From the standpoint of conventional morality, Confucianism is perhaps the most chaste and undefiled of the great world-religions.

In the second place, one must not argue from this that the Chinese mentality is what Confucianism presumes it to be, for China is not mere Confucius magnified. Every Chinese is a Confucianist, and yet something more. Like the Japanese who is at once a believer in *Kāmi* (supernatural agencies or nature-powers), *Shinto* (the way of the gods), a polytheistic cult of world-forces, a Confucianist as well as a Buddhist, the men and women of China, almost each and all, are Tāoists (followers of Lao-tsze's mystical cult of *Tāo*, Way or Natural Order) and Buddhists at the same time that they offer sacrifices to Confucius and *Shāngti*. When the head of the family dies, as says

Wu Ting-fang in the preface to the present author's *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes*, the funeral services are conducted in a most cosmopolitan way, for the Tāoist priests and the Buddhist monks as well as nuns are usually called in to recite prayers for the dead in addition to the performance of ceremonies in conformity with the Confucian rules of "propriety." The *mores* of Chinese life, eclectic as it is, cannot thus all be found in the teachings of the *Classics* alone.

LIFE-DENIAL, MYSTICISM AND POSITIVISM

One need not be surprised, therefore, to find in the Chinese *Weltanschauung* or view of life a place for the pessimism that one meets with in the announcements of Jesus. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me," said Jesus, "is not worthy of Me." And further, "if any man cometh unto Me, and leaveth not his father and mother and wife and children, he cannot be My disciple." Here is the origin of the system that, backed by St. Paul's recommendation of celibacy for Christ's followers, ultimately developed into Christian monasticism and the ethics of retreat from the "world and the flesh." The self-same doctrine of holiness by means of asceticism, life-denial, and self-mortification has had a long tradition in pre-Confucian China as well as in China since the age of Lao-tsze and Confucius. Even in the earliest ages of Chinese history perfection, holiness or divinity were held to be exclusively attainable by dispassion, apathy, willlessness, unconcernedness about the pleasures and pains of life, quietism, or *wu-wei*. Emperor Hwang-ti of hoary antiquity is mentioned by Chwang-tsze (fourth century B.C.), the great follower of Lao-tsze, as having retired for three months in order to prepare himself for receiving the *Tāo* from an ascetic who practised freedom from mental agitation.

Along with this pessimistic strand of Christianity Chinese moral consciousness can also display the mystical leaning of Jesus as manifest in such declarations as "the Kingdom of God is within you" or "My Kingdom is not of this world." Thus, says Chwang-tsze: "Be free yourself from subjective ignorance and individual peculiarities, find the *Tāo* in your own being, and you will be able to find it in others too, because the *Tāo* cannot be one in one thing and another in another." And according to the *Tao-te-ching*, the Bible of Tāoism, "mighty is he who conquers himself," and further, "if you keep behind, you shall be in front," or "he who is content has enough." These are the tenets of passivism and non-resistance that Jesus stood

for when he advised his followers to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

We need not dwell here on the ascetic or pietistic ideals and institutions of Buddhism, as the Plotinuses, the St. Francises, the Jacopone da Todis, the Böhmes, the Ruysbroecks, and the Guyons of India are too well known. But we have rather to emphasize, on the other hand, the fact that transcendentalism, idealism or mysticism is not the only attitude or philosophy of ethical life advanced by or associated with the religious systems of the world. Not less is the ethics of positivism, i. e., of humanitarian energism (*virīya*) and social service or brotherhood (*sarva-sattva-maitrī*) a prominent feature in Hinduism, in Buddhism, in Christianity, and in the moral *dicta* of the Chinese sages like Confucius, Moh-ti, the preacher of universal love, and Mencius, the advocate of tyrannicide.

There is no doubt a great difference in the manner in which the categories have been stated in the different systems, especially as regards the intellectual analysis or psychological classification of the cardinal virtues and vices. But from the viewpoint of moral discipline none but a hidebound linguist or a student of formal logic can fail to notice the pragmatic identity of life governed by the "eightfold path" of Śākya, the "five duties" of Confucius and the "ten commandments" of the Bible. Nay, like the Mosaic dictates, the Confucian and Śākyan principles are too elemental to have been missed by the prophets of any nation.

RECIPROCITY, SOLIDARISM AND SOCIAL SERVICE

The most important tenet in Confucius's moral creed is to be found in the idea of "reciprocity."²³ It is thus worded in his *Doctrine of the Mean*: "What you do not wish others should do unto you, do not do unto them." In a negative form this is indeed the golden rule of *Luke*: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." In all treatments of fellow-beings Śākya's injunction also is "to put oneself in the place of others" (*attānam upamāṃ katvā*). We read in the *Dhammapada*:

"All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death: Putting oneself in the place of others, kill not nor cause slaughter."

²³ For an anthropological analysis of reciprocity as a universal social force see R. C. Thurnwald: "Gegenseitigkeit im Aufbau und Funktionieren der Gesellschaften und deren Institutionen" in *Reine und Angewandte Soziologie*, Festgabe für Tönnies (Leipzig 1936). See also C. Gide: *La Solidarité* (Paris 1932).

"All men tremble at the rod, all men love life. Being as one would be done by, kill not nor cause to kill."

Reciprocity is thus the common golden rule of the three world-religions. From the idealistic standpoint as represented, for instance, by Giorgio Del Vecchio in *Etica, Diritto, e Stato, il riconoscimento della identità sostanziale dell'essere di tutti soggetti* (the recognition of the substantial identity in being of all subjects or persons) constitutes the universal beginning of ethical principle. And this is why reciprocity which is based essentially on this feeling of identity may be taken to be so universally appreciated.

The formulation of this rule was the distinctive contribution of Confucius to Chinese life. His catechism of moral discipline points out, further, that the duties of universal obligation are five, and the moral qualities by which they are carried out are three. The duties are those between ruler and subject, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder brother and younger, and those in the intercourse between friends. Intelligence, moral character and courage, these are the three universally recognized moral qualities of man. The performance of these duties is the *sine qua non* of "good manners" or propriety. In the Confucian system the tenet of reciprocity leads thus to the cult of "propriety". In the Śākyan discipline also we have the same propriety in the doctrine of *sīla* (conduct). The path leading to the cessation of misery is described in the *Digha Nikāya* as consisting in right belief, right resolve, right speech, right behaviour, right occupation, right efforts, right contemplation, and right concentration. It is obvious that some of the conditions stated here, especially those in regard to speech, behaviour, and occupation, are other-regarding, i.e., have a social significance in the system of self-culture.

Lest the social energism of Śākyan morals be ignored it is necessary to point out that *appamāda* (vigilance, strenuousness and activity) is the first article in the Buddhist monk's creed of life. Śākya wanted his followers to be moral and intellectual gymnasts and "move about like fire." Such were the men who built the first hospitals of the world for men and animals, established rest-houses and planted trees for wayfarers, popularized the trial by jury and the methods of election, voting, and quorum in democratic assemblies, and founded universities, academies and other seats of learning in India, China, and Japan.

The Hindu doctrine of five *mahā-yajnas* (great sacrifices) teaches the householder to behave as a *debtor* to Nature, man and the world,

and to perform in discharge of his debts a number of duties every day such as render him virtually an embodiment of *le solidarisme social* (*Taittiriya Āraṇyaka*). The first sacrifice, "debt" (*riṇa*) or duty is that to the *devas* (gods). The second consists in the study and teaching of *Brahma* (the sacred texts). The third sacrifice is that of propitiating the *pitris* (ancestors) with libations of water. The maintenance of the poor, the hungry and the destitute belongs to the next sacrifice, called the *nri-yajna* (sacrifice for man). And finally, the fifth or *bhūta-yajna* implies service to all created beings, the lower animals. Philanthropy and social service are thus linked up in the daily estimation of the Hindus with ancestor-worship, cultivation of learning and prayers to the gods in a scheme of religious discipline.

THE CATEGORIES OF RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

The religious categories created by the human *psyche* are then as numerous as conceivable. And it is possible to discover virtually every category in one form or other among the diverse races of mankind, especially such as have well-developed systems on account of evolution through ages.

In modern times the religious tendency of men, as we may agree with Spranger,²⁴ has assumed a secular *Gestalt* whose contact with the metaphysical or speculative is not obvious. But even today, *aller echten Wissenschaft liegt ein religiöses Fundament zugrunde* (a religious basis is the foundation of all real science).

Religion and religious categories may, then, be described as some of *i residui costanti dei fatti sociali* (the constant residues of social facts), in Niceforo's words. These are the permanent, universal, invisible, *sottogiacenti* (underlying) and general categories to be discovered when one descends from the superficial into the depths of mentality and social life.²⁵

Even without inventing a *totem*, popularizing a ritual, or establishing a god one can be worshipped as a saint, nay, an *avatāra*. For instance, Ramakrishna (1836-1886), who within fifty years of his death is being worshipped virtually as a god by a large section of the modern Hindus, owes his divinity or avatarahood, if one may say so, not evi-

24 "Theorie und Ethos" in *Die Erziehung* (Leipzig), XI, 10-11, pp. 449, 456.

25 "I Fatti costanti della Vita Sociale" in *Rivista di Psicologia* (Bologna, April-June, 1935).

dently to any miracles or messages of mystery, but, among other things, to such words of secular and practical wisdom as the following:²⁶

"Many with a show of humility say, 'I am like a low worm grovelling in the dust.' Thus always thinking themselves worms, in time they become weak in spirit like worms" (No. 518).

The avatahood of the modern Bengali saint is founded on inspiring talks like these which endow men and women with courage, strength and spirit of self-assertion. Among other "words of nectar" (*kāthāmṛita*) that the world has got from Ramakrishna is to be mentioned a *sūtra* like the following:

"The mind is everything. If the mind loses its liberty, you lose yours. If the mind is free you are free too." (No. 514.) This is the gospel,—Fichte²⁷ as it is,—that can energize the poor, the lowly, and the depressed enough to be able to combat the cruel conditions governing the society and rise above them all into the position of glory and world-conquest.

And if Ramakrishna has any god it is to be found, as the masses understand it, in his epoch-making equation, *Jīva* (man) = *Śiva* (God). The divinity of man is the bed-rock of his teachings, profoundly democratic as they are.²⁸

Let us take a category as propagated by Vivekananda, namely, :²⁹

"You will understand the *Gītā* better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the *Upaniṣads* better and the glory of the *Ātman* when your body stands firm upon your feet, and you feel yourselves as men."

It is not of the gods and goddesses, the rituals and the ceremonies, the temples and the holy places that Vivekananda speaks. In his psycho-social *Gestalt* "it is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion; it is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics."³⁰

The creed of the Poor as God or the Divinity in the Poor (*Daridra Nārāyaṇa*) with which Vivekananda is associated in the milieu of middle and working classes as other teeming millions has enabled him to declare: "I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot

26 *The Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* (Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1934).

27 Fichte: *Reden an die Deutsche Nation* (1808), XIV.

28 B. K. Sarkar: *The Might of Man in the Social Philosophy of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda* (Madras, 1936) and "Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and the Religion of Progress" (*Prabuddha Bharata*, Calcutta, January 1937).

29 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* Vol. III (1932) p. 242.

30 *Ibid.*, Vol. I (1931), p. 18.

wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to an orphan's mouth."³¹

One can read in this bit of Vivekanandism the romantic socialism of early nineteenth century Europe, and indeed the contents of the traditional five *mahā-yajnas* ("great debts") of the Hindus, if one will.³²

SOCIO-RACIAL DIVERSITIES A PERMANENT REALITY

From totemism to Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam and Vivekanandism man's creative or spiritual urges have given birth to thousand and one religious categories. The contents of some of these categories are mystical and of others positivistic. And in every instance the *Gestalt* of religion is a psycho-social blend of heterogeneous strains. It is for every individual to choose the ones that one wishes. For, it is the privilege of man, using the words of Śākya the Buddha in *Dhammapada*, to "rouse thyself by thyself" and "examine thyself by thyself." And "whoever shall be a lamp unto themselves shall reach the very topmost height" (*Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta*, II, 35).

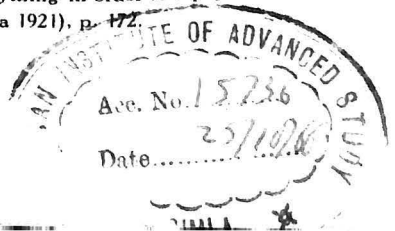
And of course it has likewise ever been the privilege of man since Mohenjo Daro and earlier times to construct his own socio-economic and psycho-social *Gestalt* out of the natural and human, i. e., the regional and racial (or social) elements among the *viśva-śakti* (world-forces). This cosmic privilege of the human race has found expression in our own times in Ramakrishna's enunciation of the pluralistic doctrine of *yata mata tata path* (as many faiths, so many paths). He has called upon mankind to look upon every faith as a path to God thereby constructing a world-republic of religions.

Human logic is forced to realize once more that the diversities of the psycho-social, socio-economic and socio-racial *Gestalt* in spite of the fundamental unity of the *psyche* and its constituents are some of the permanent realities of world-evolution. It is on the postulate of world-embracing and full-blooded freedom in morality, of intensely diversified individualities in spiritual life, both personal and collective, as well as of the multiplicity of racial and social morphologies that the philosophy of inter-religious harmony and international concord may be established.

Calcutta University.

31 *The Complete Works etc.*, Vol. V. (1924), p. 39.

32 "In the doctrine of the five great sacrifices the entire world is a divinity. Whatever exists on earth is a god. Man has debts to every thing. He has therefore to sacrifice something in favour of everybody and everything in order to repay those debts"—Ramendra Sundar Trivedi: *Yajna-Kathā* (Calcutta 1921), p. 172.



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Religious Categories as Universal Expressions of Creative Personality

A Study in the Sociology of Values *

BY BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

THE SELF AS CREATOR AND GUIDE

Religions may come, and religions may go, but creative man goes on for ever. As an instrument of life and as a creation of the human personality religion in its diverse forms and processes is universal and eternal. It is the dignity of the individual as the supreme fact of the universe that is the foundation of man's spiritual existence.

The group and the society, Nature, the region and the world are being perpetually influenced, moulded and re-made by the creative personality of man. The rôle of the individual as the transforming force in cultural metabolism has ever been the factual substratum of world-evolution. In the sociology of values no estimate of man's position *vis-à-vis* the world is more appropriate than what we find in the Jaina *Samādhi-śataka*, which says

Nayatyātmānamātmaiva

Janmanirvāṇameva vā

Gururātmāmanastasmāt

Nānyosti paramārthatah.

It is the self that guides the self, its birth and its extinction. The self is its own preceptor and there is nothing else from the standpoint of superior values. Religion is one of its creations like philosophy, which belongs to culture or civilization.

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PSYCHO-SOCIAL GESTALT IN RELIGION

and religion are almost synonymous or identical categories, in so far as each implies a binding or connective

* A paper for the Parliament of Religions, Calcutta, 1-7 March, 1937, convened under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Centenary Committee.