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# ***jñanadeepa***

Pune Journal of Religious Studies

**Faith, Reason, and Wisdom**  
***(Śraddhā, Tarka, and Prajñā)***



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All **correspondence** (requests for subscriptions, manuscripts, books for review-two copies, please exchange copies of journals, advertisements, etc.) to:

**The Editor, *Jnanadeepa*, Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune 411 014, India**

Tel (office): +91-20-41026364,

(res): +91-20-41036111.

E-mail: <journalpune@gmail.com>

<jdv@gmail.com>

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## Editorial

“Can specialization damage your health?” asks Mary Midgley.<sup>1</sup> Borrowing an imagery from H.G. Wells, she draws the delightful picture of creatures specially grown in jars, each with a single organ that is highly developed at the expense of others. Her concern with the craze for specialization and the subsequent fragmentation of knowledge is echoed by the recent pontiffs when they insist on the need for a “sapiential horizon”<sup>2</sup> that provides an “integrating vision” “in a world [that is] rich in scientific and technical knowledge.”<sup>3</sup> What makes the situation worse is that it is not only the empirical sciences that have been hit by the specialization virus but also philosophy and theology. The great divide between the continental and analytic traditions of philosophy where each side discusses issues as if the other side did not even exist is perhaps the best example of such philosophical fragmentation. If such is the case with philosophy, the supposed citadel of reason, the less said about the other disciplines the better. Ours is indeed a world that is characterized by an information overload without an integrating vision.

Not having an integrating vision has serious consequences for religious studies. Louis Dupre is right to observe that “Religion can change all its conceptual expressions, but it must die when it can no longer integrate.”<sup>4</sup> Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, as an Institute of religious studies, is alive to this situation. The two day seminar it organized on October 12-13, 2013 on “*Faith (Śraddhā), Reason (Tarka), and Wisdom (Prajñā): Towards an Integral Approach to Religious Studies*” was prompted by this concern. Celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Vatican II and conclusion of the Year of Faith provided the occasion. The papers included in this issue of *Jnanadeepa* were originally presented at that seminar.

## The Papers

George Pattery, well known theologian and chief organizer of the seminar, presents the need for an integral approach to religious studies. The seminar did not visualize philosophy and theology as self-contained disciplines to be integrated with each other, but integration was seen as an inter-disciplinary endeavor that is attentive to the diverse voices that cry out to be heard from the various corners of our fragmented world. Accordingly we have three papers from the feminist (Kochurani Abraham), tribal (Peter Haokip) and folklore (Wilson B. Wilson) perspectives. If these papers come from neglected social topography, others deal with some prominent disciplinary voices. One paper from the perspective of contemporary philosophy of science pleads for softening the scientistic view of rationality to a more human and holistic view (Stephen Jayard). The paper by PT Joseph gives a developmental perspective on how individuals struggle with the issue of integrating faith into their lives as they live through the various stages of life. George Karuvelil provides a historical perspective on how Christian faith has responded to changing historical and cultural conditions, sometimes dynamically and other times not so dynamically. Henry D'Almeida explores the Indian classical traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism) to see how these traditions have seen the relationship between faith, reason and wisdom. Joseph Lobo presents some theological developments after Vatican II and goes on to suggest his own framework for integration. The last paper by Savio Abreu focuses on the Pentecostal movements in Goa; it illustrates how zealous attempts at integrating faith into life can result in social fragmentation.

These main papers are followed by observations of three experts. The very brief observations of Errol D'Lima are remarkable for their clarity and comprehensiveness. Nishant Irudayadason, besides presenting his observations on the seminar, argues that a Derridian approach provides a framework for drawing not only the folk, Dalit, and women into conversation but also for including atheists in the conversation. S. Peppin wonders what might enable us to integrate the various perspectives presented at the seminar; he insightfully observes that what is missing is "the weaver in the web"

and suggests that a “deep-ecological” perspective could put the weaver back into it.

## Lest We Forget...

The theme discussed in this issue of the journal is a matter of special significance as it is intimately linked to the purpose for which *Jnanadeepa* was founded. The editorial of its inaugural issue (January 1998) talked about “the need for an integrated approach to life and reality” in the face of fragmentation and the growing trend of disciplines “getting more and more specialized” and isolated from other disciplines. *Jnanadeepa*, in that background, sought “to provide a critical, creative and interdisciplinary approach ... to issues that confront the Church and the country.”

There is a growing realization, however, that integration needs to go beyond juxtaposing various disciplinary perspectives; those disciplines must be made to converse with each other. With that goal in mind, this issue ends by raising some questions emerging from the papers for further discussion. This is found in the form of a rather opinionated Afterward at the end. Readers are welcome either to respond to them or make independent contributions that can take the discussion beyond various disciplinary perspectives to an interdisciplinary conversation; select contributions that help further this process would be published in the coming issues as a follow up.

**George Karuvelil, SJ**  
Chief Editor

### Notes

1. Mary Midgley, *Wisdom, Information and Wonder: What Knowledge Is For?* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989; reprint, 1995).
2. Pope John Paul II, *Fides Et Ratio* (Mumbai: Pauline Publications, 1998), n. 106.
3. *Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy*, by Congregation for Catholic Education (2011), no. 8.
4. Louis Dupre, *The Other Dimension: A Search for Meaning of Religious Attitudes* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 18.