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

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Editorial

"Can specialization damage your health?" asks Mary Midgley.[1] 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"[2] that provides an "integrating vision" "in a world [that is] rich in scientific and technical knowledge."[3] 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."[4] 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.

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Rationale for the Seminar

Towards An Integral Approach to Religious Studies

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Introduction

Fifty years is a short span in the timeline of a nation or an institution. It is all the more true with regard to a worldwide institution like the Roman Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council impacted the Church in a decisive manner, especially in its documents and pastoral approach. Did that impact percolate to the rank and file of the church, and in a sustainable way? What does it look like after fifty years? Rather than evaluating the impact in a general way, an attempt is made in the following pages to look at one of the specific areas of its impact across inter-disciplinary lines, namely on the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom in their relatedness.

One of the major documents of the Council *Dei Verbum* (Divine Revelation) dealt with the relationship between revelation and faith, reason and faith, scripture and tradition, and the reception of the faith by the believing community etc. It was one of the first schemas to be introduced in the Council and one of the last ones to be voted on, as it was thoroughly revised and debated during the entire period of the council. The prolonged debate and discussion on the document shows the significance of the issues involved. This was a schema that was planned and prepared as per the original intent of the council and yet it underwent drastic changes precisely because the Council wanted to introduce a new vocabulary of a more dynamic approach, especially in its understanding of faith and revelation.

Dei Verbum rightly introduced a new vocabulary of dynamic understanding of faith as a personal response to the even more dynamic personal communication of God with humans. Faith certainly included wisdom as the mature response to the divine-human encounter. Similarly, reason as treated in the Council documents, encompassed wisdom as the climax of human endeavours and search. However in the Council documents wisdom is treated rather independently in several places. Did the Council Fathers think of wisdom as a different category, independent of faith and reason or as complementary of both? Probably there is room for research in this regard. Rather than a theoretical consideration of the issue, the JDV seminar entered upon a moderate enquiry into the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of the triad of faith, reason and wisdom from an inter-disciplinary angle. One of the aims of such a study was to look for an integral approach to religious studies that combines faith, reason and wisdom traditions. This, we thought, was a fitting way to celebrate Vatican II in this year of faith.

In Search of Integration.

The triptych of faith, reason, and wisdom has contributed immensely and differently to the advancement of human progress. However their contribution remained rather disconnected. Perhaps this could be one of the reasons for the fragmentation of societies, of cultures and of knowledge systems and the resultant violence. We chose to look at them closely and in their inter-connectedness. The emerging trends in these three areas of faith, reason and wisdom might provide us with a perspective for the future and for understanding the enormity of the fragmentation around us. One of the major concerns in our faculties of philosophy and theology is also to bring about an integral approach to religious studies. Much of the fragmentation of knowledge, and the resultant violence, are caused by the separation of the religious perspective (faith) from that of the secular (reason) to the detriment of both. An interdisciplinary approach to religious studies could minimize fragmentation of knowledge and provide an integrating tool for living.

We are living in an exciting period of the cosmic journey. We have journeyed with the universe for 13.5 billion years and have been evolving and living as humans for the last 7 million years. This gives us a new sense of inter-dependence and inter-relatedness and a new cosmic vision. Science teaches us, hypothetically though, that the universe began at a point in time and from a single point, and the metaphor used is that of a 'Big Bang'. From a theological point of view, one could say that "God expresses God's self in every aspect of created reality. So every person, every tree, every leaf, everything is a little Word of God: the Word of God being spoken in the vast spaces of the universe. And that's not metaphor. Nothing would come to be except as an expression of God's love". (Ilia Delio, http://www.uscatholic.org/print/23530#sthash.CyX2knQr.dpuf). If so, we can account for the cosmic intelligence and its potential for connectedness across the various spheres of life, and the wisdom that is operative in all creation. In our preoccupations with the immediate concerns, we miss the empowering richness of being connected with other dimensions of this great life force. We stay at the realm either of faith or of reason or of wisdom, and often neglect that they participate, albeit differently, in the same point of cosmic wisdom. The innate intelligence within creation at large can be accessed by insight, intelligence, intuition, and imagination. We are programmed for intelligent cooperation, not for individualistic competition; hence we can realign with the cosmic wisdom and discover the wholeness and goodness of God beyond fragmentations (O'Muruchu, 2008, cf. pp.61-63.) Probably the Indian terms of 'sraddha' and 'Prajna' come close to the holistic perspective that we are seeking.

What seems to be emerging is the desire for an integrating approach or perspective that does not stop with any of the triptych separately, rather views them in their interrelatedness. This integrating point may lie neither in faith, nor in reason nor in wisdom taken separately, but at the point of their intersection, of their inter-relatedness. Perhaps we should launch a project for a 'science of limits', science of the 'frontiers' where we discover our inter-relatedness at the inter-section of knowledge-spheres. That seems to be true with regard to the microcosm and macrocosm. A molecule is what it is, not because of protons or neutrons, but because of

both, in their relatedness. This seems to be the case with the macrocosm too. The Christian conception of God as trinity implies an eternal intersection among the persons of Trinity in an ambience of communion.

The incarnational meeting point at the borders of the human and the divine is the melting point where faith, reason and wisdom meet. The trinity of faith, reason and wisdom in their inter-relatedness announces that the real is at the frontiers. We are invited to stand at the periphery of faith and look at reason; to stand at the border of reasoning and behold the centre of faith; to stand at the frontiers of wisdom and execute faith. This intersection of borders might reveal to us an integrating epistemological tool for religious studies. Reality discloses itself at the periphery and at the core; at their intersection we discover new horizons and refreshing connectivity.

The ancient polarity between the objective-empirical and the subjective-intuitive cannot be sustained. As Ken Wilber argues, the evolutionary process is continuing in the humans through a dialectical process of human consciousness towards a new culture of integration. (Wilber, 1997, pp.73f). He holds that the kosmos laboured mightily for 13.5 billion years in every aspect in an extraordinary and all-encompassing process that hit upon humans. It cannot then cease operating – evolution for the rest of the cosmos and downfall for the humans. " If evolution is operating in the rest of the universe, then it must be operating in humans as well, which means human cultures might also evolve, which means progressively advanced forms of interaction must be emerging ... which runs smack into the contradiction known as Auschwitz". (Wilber, 1997, p.68). Wilber argues that evolution is progressing through a culture of integration, and this integration is visible most in epistemology. Through the various philosophies and sciences, the objective-empirical and the subjective-intuitive approaches, we are moving towards an integral vision of reality. Any phenomenon can be approached in an interior and exterior fashion, and also as an individual and as a member of a collective. It is against a vast background of cultural practices and languages, meanings and contexts that one's individual thoughts are shaped; the culture that one inherits, contains material and social components of technology, forces of production, written codes,

social systems and geopolitical locations. Wilber holds that human knowledge has four large camps: the individual-subjective camps of truthfulness, sincerity and integrity; the individual-objective side of truth, correspondence, representation and proposition. The collective-intersubjective world of justness, mutual understanding and rightness, and the collective-objective side of social systems, structures and functions - each of these is valid and cannot be dismissed. (Wilber, 1997, Cf. Introduction). An integral approach honours the entire spectrum of consciousness, the I-domain, the we-domain, and the it-domains; thus integrating art, morals, science, self, ethics and environment – the beautiful, the good and the true.

The Faith, reason and wisdom debate takes us into the origins of consciousness and into the beginnings of revelation that initiated and erupted into the evolutionary process. Such a revelatory beginning calls for an integral approach. The Second Vatican Council seems to have hinted at such an integrated approach when it said the "human mind is looking and loving what is true and good" and 'our age, more than any of the past, needs such an ennobling wisdom', that enables us to contemplate the mystery of God's design"(GS 15). Perhaps the integration of faith, reason and wisdom might serve as the root-metaphor for our times and an epistemological tool for religious studies, beyond the fragmentation of knowledge systems.

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Towards Wholeness:

Reweaving the Tapestry of Life with Sophia

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Abstract: This paper takes the experience of fragmentation that results from the dualistic notions of masculinity and femininity as the starting point of the discussion. The rational/emotional binary in its association with maleness and femaleness leads to the degeneration of the social fabric of man-woman relationships, production of knowledge, the way faith is understood and expressed, and the manner in which humans relate to the earth. Reweaving the tapestry of life with Sophia-Wisdom is the challenge of our times as Wisdom understands complexity and seeks integrity in relationships. This entails opening to the dynamic interplay of yin and yang modes of consciousness in the human person in its integrative and self-assertive tendencies. Openness to Wisdom is mystical as it leads to the re-discovery of the inter-connectedness of the web of life. Feminist theological insights into Wisdom point to the awareness of the Divine in the affairs of humanity and creation. In this integral and inclusive vision of faith which seeks to tear down the walls and patterns that dehumanize and divide humans from creation and from each other is the key for the integration of faith, knowledge and life.

Keywords: feminism, fragmentation, integration, Fritjof Capra, Raimon Panikkar, wisdom theology

Introduction

The concept note of this seminar points to the fragmentation that continues to do much violence to humankind and to the evolutionary journey of the universe. Often people live fragmented lives without being aware of the harm it can cause to themselves, to their relationships, and to life at large. Awareness of this problem can be rightly termed the beginning of wisdom and so it is commendable that this seminar focuses on the mutuality between faith, reason and wisdom from an integral perspective.

I want to take the experience of fragmentation that is at the core of being human as a woman or man, as the starting point of our discussion. The notions about who a man is or what a woman ought to be, has strong implications not merely on man-woman relationships, but also on the production of knowledge, the way faith is understood and expressed, and the manner in which we humans relate to the earth. However, this fragmentation is so deep rooted, pervasive and normalized, that we tend to overlook its subtle manifestations in our everyday dealings. I shall illustrate this point taking the very program of this seminar as an example.

This program has a woman speaker only for giving a feminine perspective to the discourse on '*Faith, Reason and Wisdom,*' while all the other perspectives are given by men. I imagine, for the organizers, the reason behind this arrangement could just be the convenient availability of scholarship, or it could be that women themselves keep away from serious intellectual engagements for different motives. Whatever the cause may be, women's exclusion from the mainstream production of knowledge has serious implications on the way we understand reason and associate it with different concerns in life.

Looking at the issue from another angle, it would appear logical that if a feminine perspective given by a woman is deemed important, a paper on a masculine perspective given by a man would have balanced the program better. May be it is considered that a masculine point of view comes through all the other perspectives whether it is the scriptural, theological, philosophical, or the perspective of science, folklore, human resources and the like. Such an arrangement is all the more problematic as it betrays the binaries that underlie our thinking patterns in the association of the feminine only with femaleness and of the masculine with maleness and with the dominant production of knowledge. Perhaps the very alienation between faith, reason and life as mentioned in the write-up of the seminar results from such gendered associations.

My paper is entitled 'Towards Wholeness: Reweaving the Tapestry of Life with Sophia'. I imagine the term 'feminine' is used in the program as a synonym for 'woman/women'. However, I am

not comfortable taking a 'feminine' perspective as it generally signifies the patriarchal notion of what a woman ought to be. Instead, I would like to take a feminist point of view, which takes women as fully human beings with faculties of the mind, emotions and the spirit besides their bodies. This affirmation of women's human dignity as persons in their own right, with their biological differences with men, is important for positioning them on an equal footing and partnership with men. Overcoming the dichotomy between the sexes is imperative for addressing the alienation of rationality from the heart and spirit, and this will enable us to learn the art of 'weaving' the tapestry of life. Reweaving implies going beyond a mere 'welding' of faith and knowledge. It is a trans-rational position which entails openness to the mystical dimension, and this is fundamental to being on the path towards wholeness.

The Anatomy of Fragmentation

We shall first take a critical look at the question of fragmentation and then see how feminist insights on wisdom can help bring about a better understanding into the discourse on wholeness. In order to analyze the problem of fragmentation when reason is alienated from wisdom, I take the reactions expressed in the aftermath of the Delhi gang rape by some people holding important leadership positions in society.

Many well-meaning politicians and religious leaders advised girls and women to dress soberly and not to venture out at night. For the hard core defenders of Indian tradition, "this is happening in India...but such things do not happen in Bharat." The women protesters were termed "dented and painted", but worse still was the 'faith verdict' of an illusory guru who blamed the victim, and reasoned that she could have stopped the attack if she had chanted God's name and fallen at the feet of the attackers. The fraudulence of his reasoning was unveiled only later, when he himself was accused of rape and arrested. According to some women in political leadership, 'rape cases are on the rise because men and women are interacting more frequently'.[1]

These opinions in reaction to the rape epidemic that plagues Indian society are indicative of a reason strongly conditioned by uncritically assimilated patriarchal notions of gender -both of women and men. Rape is not just about sex. It points to the aggressive self- assertion of masculinity using sex as a weapon of extortion, objectifying women's bodies and sexuality. It is a sign of the unrest resulting from a host of many unaddressed issues, and is symptomatic of the acute fragmentation of the human in what constitutes man or woman. Alienation of rationality from feelings of the heart and spirit obviously leads to violence, but it also shows how people become dogmatic about what they think to be right. Only reason informed by wisdom can help perceive the matter in its complexity and facilitate a process of much needed integration within the person and in the relationship between the sexes, in the different socio-cultural contexts.

Setting the Premise Right

When the degeneration of the social fabric or the disease of the societal body is strongly felt -as in the unrestrained occurrence of rape, it is indicative that change is imperative in order to prevent further societal decay. It is a time that calls for deep socio-cultural transformations. As physicist and systems theorist Fritjof Capra opines, what we need as preparation for this transition is 'a deep re-examination of the main premises and values of our culture, a rejection of those conceptual models that have outlived our usefulness and a new recognition of some of the values in previous periods of our cultural history.'[2]

One of the crucial aspects that needs re-examining in our culture is the dualistic setting of man/ woman identity and the consequent distortion of human nature of both man and woman. Dualism, as feminist theorists observe, is more than a relation of dichotomy and difference; it implies a hierarchical relationship. In a dualistic construction, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior. Dualism then, is an intense, established, and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship,

constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable.[3]

The key elements of dualistic structuring in western thought include culture/nature, reason/emotion, mind/body, spirit/flesh, male/ female, public/private, subject/object/ and self/other.[4] In the male/ female dualism, culture, reason, mind, public, spirit, the subject positions etc., are appropriated by the male and defined as foundational to masculinity and credited a superior status whereas nature, body, emotion, flesh, private, and the object positions are identified with female, classified as feminine and ascribed as inferior. Male/ female dualism is most strikingly marked by the rational/ emotional binary. Woman's rationality is taken as inferior as she is considered to be more emotional and impulsive than man. This leads to contradictions and ambiguities in the understanding and practice of both reason and faith.

For feminist theorists, the issue at stake here is the question of identity. What is operative in gender categorization is a logic of identity which separates reason from emotion, desire, affectivity, passion and imagination for the sake of impartiality and objectivity. Instead, feminists advocate the logic of democracy which requires passionate involvement, respect and recognition of the other, desire for justice, recognition of needs, zest for life, and the vision of a different community of equals. Whereas the logic of identity creates dichotomy and oppositions, the logic of democracy seeks to integrate inside and outside, public and private, politics and religion, reason and imagination".[5]

Certainly, with women increasingly accessing public space through education and employment opportunities, there have been some changes in the understanding of women's identity at a superficial level. However, biology continues to be a defining factor in the Indian understanding of masculinity and femininity, and hierarchical dualism continues to inscribe gender roles. The persistent association of knowledge production, leadership and other public roles with men, and the identification of care- related roles with women result in polarization of the sexes and the stunting of growth both in women and men. The destructive effects of gendering is all the more palpable

in the realm of spirituality and theology. as men are positioned primarily as the mediators of faith and women as loyal practitioners of religion, sustain the system while being at the receiving end.

Overcoming gender dualism is crucial in view of integrating the faculties of the mind, emotions and spirit within the person. Noted feminist journalist Kalpana Sharma, in one of her recent columns, expresses concern that even as much is written and talked about the women's question, there is little discussion on what it means to be a man in today's India. And she raises some very pertinent questions: Has the understanding of being "masculine" changed even as women have begun to think of themselves differently from their mothers? Or are boys and men, barring a handful of exceptions, no different from their fathers and grandfathers? Has their view of women changed? Or do they continue to believe that women, whether they are mothers and sisters, or wives, are basically there to serve them?[6] Without a critical re-thinking on masculinity and femininity, any discourse on mutuality and wholeness remain baseless, and this has strong implications on the way we look at economy, politics, development, environment, culture, family, religion or any other aspect of life.

Reweaving the Tapestry of Life with Sophia

Even though the human mind generally detests times of crisis for very many reasons, the wise always find it a graced time which holds tremendous potential for the emergence of the new. Philosophers, scientists, mystics- all speak of humanity having reached a crucial moment in its unfolding history - a time of degeneration that beckons for a new integration. The current times, though chaotic with its intrinsic contradictions and rampant fragmentation, is undoubtedly a point in time, which calls for a rediscovery of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena –a time for a new synthesis in the Hegelian sense.

System theorists look at the world in terms of living organisms, societies and ecosystems all being part of an integrated whole. The wise testify to this - as expressed by the noted naturalist and writer, John Muir in what he wrote shortly before his death: 'When we try

to pick out anything by itself,' we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.'[7] It is in these decisive moments of the universe story when the dialectic tension between fragmentation and integration is strongly felt, that the search for Wisdom becomes a vital concern.

Feminists point to wisdom as intelligence shaped by experience and sharpened by critical analysis. It is the ability to make sound choices and incisive decisions. It is a perception of wholeness that does not lose sight of particularity, relativity and the intricacies of relationships. Wisdom understands complexity and seeks integrity in relationships. It is usually seen as integrating the left and right brain in a union of logic and poetry, as bringing together of self-awareness and self-esteem with the awareness and appreciation of the world and the other.[8] In its application to faith, devoid of Wisdom, faith becomes a barren ritual or a rigid dogma which serves only to legitimize oppression, division and alienation of humans from each other and from the rest of creation.

This feminist notion of integration being effected through the agency of wisdom is reflected in what the sages have said in the earlier traditions and modern times. The Chinese *I Ching* -considered one of humanity's oldest books of wisdom- introduced the polar opposites *Yin* and *Yang* as the two archetypal poles underlying the fundamental rhythm of the universe. As per this Chinese wisdom, yin is associated with the feminine and yang with the masculine, but sees the personality of each man and each woman as a dynamic phenomenon resulting from the interplay between feminine and masculine elements. The intuitive and rational modes of consciousness though associated with yin and yang respectively, they are recognized as complementary modes of the functioning of the human mind.[9]

This view is in sharp contrast with the patriarchal association of the masculine with men and feminine with women, putting the yin and yang qualities in opposition with each other. Yet, wisdom allows one to see beyond abstract reason as 'it is practical knowledge gained through experience and daily living'[10] and this has direct implications on the deconstruction of gender stereotypes. The illustrious speech

of Sojourner Truth, a freed New Yorker slave, titled "Ain't I a Woman?" illustrates this by challenging the racist and classist notion of the feminine. In her own words:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches... Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles, or give me any best place. And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arms! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me. And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well. And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?"

She adds:

"Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [a member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?"[11]

This celebrated speech of Sojourner Truth reflects the conflict between the rational and the intuitive, which are complementary modes of functioning of the human mind. Rational thinking is linear, focused and analytic. It belongs to the realm of the intellect whose function is to discriminate, measure and categorize. Thus rational knowledge tends to be fragmented. Intuitive knowledge on the other hand, is based on a direct, non-intellectual experience of reality arising in an expanded state of awareness. It tends to be synthesizing, holistic and non-linear.[12]

The integration of the rational and intuitive modes of consciousness becomes possible when we are able to see the personality of each man and each woman not as a static entity but a dynamic phenomenon resulting from the interplay between feminine and masculine elements. A culture informed by patriarchy has consistently favored the yang over the yin, rational knowledge over intuitive wisdom, science over religion, competition over

cooperation, exploitation of natural resources over conservation and so on. This results in the cultural imbalance which lies at the root of our current crisis, which is an imbalance in our thoughts and feelings, our values and attitudes, and our social and political structures. The dynamic interplay of yin and yang in its integrative and self-assertive tendencies are necessary for personal, social and ecological health.[13]

Wisdom as the perception of wholeness in gender relations comes through also in the writings of integral theorist Ken Wilber. He points to the Agency-Communion and Eros-Agape drives in the human consciousness which are generally polarized in its association with male and female. To this he adds two movements-the path of ascent which is Wisdom and the path of descent which is Compassion. Wilber envisions the integration of the two paths as a great circle which captures a holistic vision big enough to include everything. Ascent as Eros, aspire to union or oneness at levels of ever greater complexity, and Descent as Agape, the love that celebrates diversity of phenomena, embrace their distinct identities and wholeness. Eros and Agape together constitute the evolutionary process that unfolds through phenomena, even as it enfolds them at every level of complexity, in all spheres of the Kosmos.[14]

The need for overcoming the head/heart binary as a pre-condition for understanding wisdom is illustrated by the renowned Philosopher and Visionary Raimon Panikkar by taking himself as a case of reference during his preparations for the prestigious Gifford lectures. He says:

My subtlest temptation was to prepare these lectures instead of preparing myself. To search for something to say, instead of aspiring for something to be. The danger was to engage myself gathering "materials" (even "ideas") instead of gathering myself, my Self; to experiment with abstractions, instead of experiencing my-self, and observing reality. The destiny of the universe passes in and through us—once the us, of course, has been purified of all that is "our" private property. We are not isolated beings. Man [sic] bears the burden, the responsibility, but also the joy and the beauty of the universe. This is wisdom.[15]

Feminist epistemology has consistently challenged the persistent mind/body, culture/ nature dichotomy resulting from Cartesian dualistic thought and called for a greater integration within the person. A concrete expression of women rising above the body/ mind; body/spirit dualism is in claiming the erotic as power. Feminist writer Audre Lorde names erotic as the power which rises from women's deepest and non-rational knowledge.[16] She finds that patriarchy has associated the erotic only with sex and often used against women and so women have confused it with its opposite, the pornographic.

Lorde defines the erotic as a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognizing its power, in honor and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves. Going to the word's Greek roots- the word *eros* signifying the personification of love in all its aspects, born of Chaos and personifying creative power and harmony- Lorde names the erotic as an assertion of the life-force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which women are now reclaiming in their language, their history, their dancing, their loving, their work, their lives.[17]

Overcoming the body-spirit dualism has strong implications also on human-earth relationships. In investigating the roots of our current environmental dilemma and its connections with science, technology and the economy, historian of science Carolyn Merchant calls for re-examining and re-conceptualizing that worldview of science which conceives reality as a machine rather than a living organism, the worldview that sanctioned the domination of both nature and women. In her opinion, this entails re-evaluating the contributions of the founding 'fathers' of modern science such as Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Newton and Harvey.[18] Only when we re-discover the inter-connectedness and interrelatedness of the web of life can we experience a sense of communion with all forms of life. Mystics express faith in these terms, rising above the creedal boundaries set by religions and discovering new paths of union with the divine within and beyond visible expressions of life.

Feminist Theological Insights into Wisdom

Feminist theological insights into Wisdom, conceptualized as 'wisdom theology' also addresses the fragmentation of knowledge/ faith/life and signals to the path that facilitates the move towards wholeness. Wisdom is most fascinating to feminists as a representation of the Divine in female "Gestalt" or form. In the bible, "Spirit (Ruah)", "Presence (Shekhinah)", "Wisdom (Chokmah)" are all expressed in grammatically feminine terms. Sophia, Wisdom *in* Greek is a female figure of power and might, who mothers the world into birth. [19]

Feminist theological engagements with the submerged traditions of Divine Wisdom over the past three decades have led to a fascinating rediscovery of the creativity of wisdom/ Wisdom. They make a distinction between 'wisdom' as capability which is a state of the human mind and spirit characterized by deep understanding and profound insight, and 'Wisdom' as a female personification of the Divine. Nelle Morton, one of the first feminist theologians and teachers of Wisdom speaks of her search "to hear Wisdom into speech."[20] Feminist theologians highlight the experience of Wisdom as 'the mistress of discretion, the inventor of the lucidity of thought' (Pr 8:12), and delight in Her being 'a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle...a breath of the power of God', who 'passes into holy souls in each generation, making them friends of God and prophets' (cf. Wis. 7:22 -30). They point out that different female figurations of the Spirit in the Hebrew Bible express God's saving presence in the world and signify that aspect of the Divine which is involved in the affairs of humanity and creation.[21]

In this discussion on wisdom theology, I take mainly the contributions of two renowned feminist theologians Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Elizabeth Johnson who have done pioneering work in this field.

Elizabeth Johnson states in her much acclaimed work *She Who Is,* that her aim in writing the book is 'to give classical theology, a hearing, listening for wisdom".[22] Her wisdom Christology, in its conceptualization of 'Jesus Sophia', serves as a corrective to the

theological problematic posed by the emphasis on the maleness of Jesus Christ as an essential feature of incarnation.

Johnson's argument is that within the worldview of traditional Christology, the historical Jesus, who was indisputably a male human being, is interpreted as the incarnation of the Logos, an ontological symbol connected with rationality and thus, according to Greek philosophy, with maleness. The 'Word made flesh' is then related to human beings defined according to an androcentric anthropology that sees men as normative and women as derivative. What results is a Christology that functions as a theological justification for the superiority of men over women, relegating women to a marginal role both in theory and practice.[23]

Liberating Christological language from the monopoly of male images and concepts is imperative for bringing about change in the Church's consciousness and social order, observes Elizabeth Johnson.[24] She uses the biblically founded personified Wisdom texts to speak about Jesus-Sophia as the Christ, thus facilitating an inclusive rather than exclusive interpretation of the incarnation. Wisdom Christology is presented by her as the right theological base for maintaining egalitarian relations between men and women, in accordance with the Genesis tradition.[25]

Elisabeth Fiorenza finds that the biblical discourses on Divine Wisdom significant not merely for it being a rich resource of female language for God but more importantly because they provide a framework for developing a feminist ecological theology of creation and a biblical spirituality of nourishment and struggle. Moreover, they embody a religious ethos that is not exclusive of other religious visions but can be understood as a part of them, since Wisdom is celebrated in all of them.

As Fiorenza opines, the goal of Wisdom teaching is to enable one to cope with life and to impose a kind of order on the myriad experiences that determine a person. Wisdom teaching is an orientation to proper action, engaging in value judgments that urge a certain course of action. It is a search for justice and order in the world that can be discerned by experience. Wisdom teaching does not keep faith and knowledge apart; it does not divide the world into

religious and secular, but provides a model for living a "mysticism of everyday things."[26]

Fiorenza finds a *radical,* that is *grassroots* (from Latin *radix=roots*), democratic wisdom/ Wisdom space carved out today by social movements for change. Wo/men's grassroots movements around the globe have initiated processes of democratization that allow wo/men to determine their lives, participate in decision making and contribute to the creation of a just civil society and religious community. [27]Such interactions in the "open house" of Wisdom seek to tear down the walls and patterns that dehumanize and divide humans from creation and from each other. The ability of subordinated and oppressed people to imagine a complete overthrow of relations of domination and situations of injustice depends on the articulation, circulation, radicalization and institutionalization of radical egalitarian democratic wisdom/Wisdom discourses. A feminist wisdom/Wisdom spirituality of justice challenges us to create and participate in a movement of Wisdom's friends, and asks that we get involved in such Wisdom movements for change and transformation.[28]

Conclusion

Reweaving is an evolutionary task which we humans need to engage in consciously. Feminists speak of spinning cosmic tapestries. Though the word spinster is generally used as a deprecating term - meaning 'old maid', unmarried woman- feminists have discovered its rich meaning as a cosmic verb.[29] Spinsters spin and weave, mending and creating unity of consciousness. In doing so, they spin through and beyond the realm of multiply split consciousness. Spinsters span the dichotomies of false consciousness and break its mind-binding combinations.[30]

I find this expression, spinning-reweaving, echoing a wisdom which is very pertinent to our times, a wisdom that has something to say not just to individuals, but to those who hold power and control the destinies of others through politics, religion, the corporate sector, those committed to technological advancements and those engaged in service industries. This wisdom speaks of the ethics of

care that should inform the political economy of development, the care of the earth and the care of the deprived masses. It calls for rising above the divisive, fundamentalistic assertions which lead to much violence and death in today's world. It offers the key for discovering the power and beauty of human becoming, the key for integrating theory and action. The grave fragmentation of our times demands that we engage in this spinning-reweaving with a certain prophetic impatience as expressed by feminist poet Adrienne Rich, when she says:

This is what I am: watching the spider
rebuild- "patiently" they say,
but I recognize in her
impatience -my own-
the passion to make and make again
where such unmaking reigns.[31]

Notes

1. Frank Jack Daniel and Satarupa Bhattacharjya, Asaram Bapu's view on Delhi rape raises anger, but shared by many in http:// in.reuters.com/article/2013/01/09/india-delhi -gang-rape-asaram-bapu-views-idINDEE90809L20130109 accessed 16 August, 2013.
2. Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point*, London: Flamingo 1983, p. 15.
3. In a dualistic thinking pattern, as feminist theorist Valentine Plumwood points out, once the process of domination forms culture and constructs identity, the inferiorised group (unless it can marshal cultural resources of resistance) must internalize this inferiorization in its identity and collude in this low valuation, honouring the values of the centre, which form the dominant values. See Plumwood V., *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, London: Routledg e, 1993 p.47.
4. Ibid., p. 43.
5. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*, Beacon Press, 1992, p.157.
6. Kalpana Sharma, "Let's talk about men", *The Hindu* , 15 Sept 2013.

7 As cited by Raimon Panikkar, in *The Rhythm of Being: The Theo/ Anthropo/Cosmic Trinity*, GIFFORD LECTURES, University of Edinburgh, 1989, p.118. This reflects the Buddhist notion of " Pratityasamutpada" meaning "interdependent co-arising", the concatenation of everything in the universe.

8. Fiorenza, "Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being", p.4.

9. Capra, *The Turning Point*, p.19.

10. Fiorenza, Fiorenza. Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being", p.4.

11. Sojourner Truth (1797-1883): Ain't I A Woman?, Speech delivered in 1851 at Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio See Suzanne Pullon Fitch and Roseann Mandziuk, *Sojourner Truth as Orator: Wit, Story, and Song* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1997.

12. Capra, *The Turning Point*, p. 21.

13. Ibid., p.18-22.

14. See Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution*, Boston: Shambhala(Kosmos-trilogy, Vol.I)1995.

15. Raimon Panikkar, *The Rhythm Of Being*, The Gifford Lectures, Orbis Books Maryknoll, New York 2 010, p.35.

16. Audre Lorde, Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*, CA: The Crossing Press, 1978, p.53.

17. Ibid., p.55.

18. Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, New York: Harper and Row 1980, p.xvii.

19. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being, p.4.

20. Nelle Morton, *The Journey is Home*. Boston: Beacon, 1985, 255p. See also *Fiorenza Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2001.

21. Traditional theology has focused on the Spirit, who is in Latin grammatically masculine Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Towards a Femi-

nist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being", Nhanduti Editora 2009, p.3.

22. Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is*, Crossroad Publishing Company 1992, p.8-9.

23. Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Redeeming the Name of Christ," in *Freeing Theology* (ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, San Francisco: Harper-San Francisco, 1993), p. 118.

24. Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Wisdom Was Made Flesh and Pitched Her Tent Among Us," in *Reconstructing the Christ Symbol* (ed. Maryanne Stevens: New York: Paulist, 1993), p. 109.

25. Harold G. Wells, "Trinitarian Feminism: Elizabeth Johnson's Wisdom Christology", *Theology Today*, October 1995.

26. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Towards a Feminist Wisdom Spirituality of Justice and Well-Being, p.11.

27. Fiorenza writes wo/men as an inclusive term to express women and men.

28. Ibid. Fiorenza has elaborated such a discourse on wisdom in terms of biblical hermeneutics. It's seven steps are a hermeneutics of experience, of domination, of suspicion, of evaluation, of remembering or historical re-construction, of imagination and of transformation. See her*Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*, Maryknoll-New York: Orbis Books 2001.

29. The word spin is connected In its origin to the Latin term *sponte*, meaning "of one's free will, voluntarily." Thus spinning implies spontaneous movement, the free creativity that springs from integrity of being. See Mary Daly, *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical feminism*, Great Britain: The Women Press Unlimited, 1979, p. 389.

30. Ibid., p.386.

31. Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*, as cited by Mary Daly in *Gyn/Ecology*, p.385.

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Nature, Dynamics and Praxis of Faith, Reason and Wisdom

A Northeastern Indian Tribal Perspective

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Abstract: In the absence or the near absence of written literature among the tribals of Northeast India, the nature of the notions of faith, reason and wisdom are to be gleaned from the daily ordinary use of these terms. These terms in daily parlance are more personal and relational terms than abstract concepts. There are faithful persons; they are reasonable and wise too. Because they are personal, they are relational too and act in mutuality. And in harmony with tribal culture characterized by solidarity with nature, egalitarianism, and non-competitive collaboration, the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom function in interdependence as well as mutual enrichment and can be illustrated in their institutions, laws and myths and legends.

Key words: Faith, reason, wisdom, personal, relational

Briant Myers, in a book on development, *Walking with the Poor*, writes that the Western mindset of dichotomies in speaking about development "in terms of two separated realms – material and spiritual with a gap between the two, "the excluded middle," may be the reason why western Christianity is struggling with the tensions between faith and reason, evangelism and development, church and state and values and facts. These dichotomies are major hindrances to finding a genuinely holistic Christian approach to human transformation.[1] In the face of uncontrolled development, causing rapid depletion of natural resources and harm to the ecology, last year's Rio Summit (20-22 June 2012), the largest gathering of world

leaders, unequivocally opted for "sustainable development and green economy." [2]

This option for 'sustainable development and green economy' can be seen as the first step at removing the hindrances to a more holistic approach to development and human transformation. It is also the model that is in tune with the traditional indigenous/tribal way of development and economy. It is, perhaps, an indication that the indigenous/tribal people may have something to teach the world today. In fact, they have an alternative to offer: "Their culture which can broadly be described as 'tribal,' includes extraordinary values of solidarity with nature, egalitarianism, a non-competitive collaboration with one another, and a filial (not mercantile) relationship with the land, which offer a valuable alternative to the rampant individualism, unchecked greed, aggressive competitiveness, and a growing alienation from nature which is leading the postmodern world to nuclear and ecological disaster."[3] If tribal culture offers something in the field of human development, it may also contribute towards a more holistic approach to human knowledge. Albert Einstein, the most celebrated scientist of the twentieth century, describes what such a holistic approach to human knowledge could mean: "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."[4] This paper is an attempt to indicate such a holistic theory of knowledge from the perspective of the tribal tradition of Northeast India which is a mutuality of faith, reason and wisdom. We shall first analyze the notions of faith, reason and wisdom in tribal societies and illustrate the close relationship of these through a folktale.

Faith, Reason and Wisdom in Northeastern Indian Tribal Traditions

Northeast India lies between 22 and 29.30 North latitude and 89.46 and 97.50 East latitude with an area of 2, 55, 983 sq.km.[5] The area is said to account for nearly 9 per cent of the total area of India, with a population of 38, 444, 026 according to 2001 census; and the total tribal population is around 10, 354, 493 which is about 27.67 per cent of the region's total. About 12.28 per cent of India's Scheduled Tribe population lives in Northeast India.[6] The creation

of the Northeastern states as one, unified unit started in 1971 when the *North Eastern Council* (NEC) was launched by the Central Government.[7] These states are popularly known as the 'Seven Sisters': Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Tribals are the majority in four of these states, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.

Till today, nobody knows exactly how many tribes live in the Northeast. The approximate number, according to Prof A. C. Bhagabati, former Vice-Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh and present Director of Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Northeastern Regional Centre, Guwahati and a leading anthropologist of the region, is about 300 distinct tribes who speak about 400 dialects.[8] The reason why exact data regarding the number of tribes is difficult is because some smaller tribes who were attached to bigger groups are beginning to assert their uniqueness or distinctness. Our discussion on the notions of faith, reason and wisdom would be limited to some tribes, but hopefully, it will apply to most of the tribes. Some of the languages of the tribes of Northeast India,(fifty at least), were given written forms by missionaries in the latter part of the nineteenth century.[9] The first written literatures of these tribes were the translations of the New Testament. Hence, biblical terms like faith or wisdom are quite familiar to them. The term reason might be the least familiar.

Faith in Tribal Tradition

Faith, as already noted, is familiar to tribal Christians but in their pre-Christian days, faith is often associated with trust and reliability. In Mizo, faith is ***rin*** or ***rina***. It means faith, belief, confidence, trust or reliance.[10] In two other sister languages of Mizo, namely, *Zou* and *Paite,* faith is ***ginna*** which means trust. In Kuki (my language), of the same family, the usual word for faith is ***tahsan*** which has a similar connotation with the Hebrew word *amunah*. It stands for firmness, steadfastness and fidelity. ***Tah*** means firm or solid. The basic notion of faith as trust, trustworthiness or reliability is significant and flows from the tribal sense of community-orientedness and non-competitive collaboration.

Tribal languages do not usually have abstract nouns. They would rather speak of a faithful person, a person who has faith or one who can be trusted. Faith is, therefore, personal and relational because it is trusting someone who is trustworthy, reliable and confidence enhancing. Faith is not belief in doctrines or truths. Faith in the tribal world, then, would be closer to the biblical idea of self-surrender to someone whom one trusts and relies upon. The Bible, according to George Soares-Prabhu, is a "book steeped in tribal culture."[11]

Wisdom in Tribal Tradition

The term wisdom is also familiar to the tribals through the Bible. Tribals would speak of a wise man/woman. However, the abstract noun wisdom has become part of their religious vocabulary. It has been translated as ***finna*** in Mizo and the verb ***fiug*** is to be wise, sagacious, clever, astute, etc.[12] A wise person is ***mi fing*** and proverb is ***thufing*** which means clever, wise or smart word. In Kuki, wisdom is ***chihna*** and to be wise ***aching*** or ***chihna nei*** (one who has ***chihna***). A proverb is called ***thuchih***. ***Thu*** means word. The term ***chihna*** or ***chih*** is connected the Kuki traditional drink called rice-beer. To the fermented pot of rice, water is added and siphoned out by a pipe after a few minutes. The first that comes out is called ***ju-chih*** (strong rice-beer). ***Ju-chih*** is used for religious rituals and served to honoured guests but never offered to youngsters. Similarly, ***thu-chih***, proverb, means word/words that have deep, dense and intensive meaning.

Besides the terminology, tribals also have institutions and narratives of wisdom. The *council of the elders* in the village which oversees the day to day affairs of life in the community is the *practice of wisdom*. It honours the wisdom of experience of the elders. Secondly it signifies the wisdom of many heads rather than that of one. They also have narratives of wisdom centred on some personalities. The most popular one among the Kukis and some Naga tribes is a person called ***Benglam.***[13] This is similar to the personification of wisdom in the Bible (Proverbs 8, Lady Wisdom). Wisdom literature in tribal tradition, like in the biblical one. also

contains its opposite, namely, folly (Wisdom of Solomon 13-14, etc.). There are many episodes, some of which show the super-wisdom and cunningness of the character or extreme naivety and foolishness. An example each may illustrate this:

Benglam Calls His Hut

Once upon a time Benglam was returning to his hut in the *jhum* field and his enemies were waiting for him inside the hut. Sensing the presence of some people in the hut he called out "*O Ka Buh*"- "Hello my hut". There was silence. He said, "How come my hut is not responding to me today. Perhaps it is afraid to answer me because some people are there". Now, thinking that the hut used to respond to Benglam, his enemies decided to respond to him if he calls again. So when Benglam called out again, "O my hut!" the enemies responded "Ku!." Thus, Benglam confirmed the presence of his enemies and ran away.[14]

Benglam Hides Salt in a River

Once upon a time Benglam went to a far off village and managed to return with a bag of salt. When approaching his village, he was thinking of how to hide that precious bag of salt as it was a rare commodity in his village. He tried many places but thought they were not safe enough. So, at last he hid it under water and placed a big stone over it. When he went to take it with his wife nothing was left as it had dissolved in water.[15]

I believe the teachings on the values of life of most races began in stories and folktales. It is true particularly of the tribes of Northeast India.[16]

Reason/Rationality in Tribal Traditions

Reason or rational thinking may appear to be the least visible trait of tribal life to the outside observer. They have terms for reason, ***ajeh*** in Kuki[17] and ***chhan***[18] in Mizo which means reason in the sense of 'the reason for or of,' or motive of or for,' etc. Rationality in Kuki means ***lung phataha gelthei*** (one who can think correctly,

adih adihlou gelkhenthei, one who can distinguish what is false and true, and to think means ***lunga gel***, thinking in the heart.[19] In Mizo, rational means ***chhia leh tha hriatna nei***, sense of right and wrong[20], or ***awmze (awmzia) nei***, has reason for being, or ***awmze neia siam***,[21] meaningful and to think means ***ngaihtuah.***[22] In general, for the tribals, the heart is the centre of life, they think with their hearts. Though lacking well-defined terms for reason, rationality or thinking, the tribals demand and expect a reason for everything that happens. The most effective way of correcting children for their misbehavior is not corporal punishment, scolding or yelling at them; rather it is to gently make them see the irrationality of their behaviour.

The best known aspect of tribals in the Northeast to the rest of India is the insurgent movements, militant groups and violence. The popular perception, and perhaps the assumption as well, is that these movements betray a lack of rational thinking: Tribals are driven by impulses and emotions which are not grounded on rationality. However, for the tribals themselves, these movements are the most rational outcome of the step-motherly treatment they get from New Delhi. B. G. Verghese, one who understands the Northeast better than most other mainland Indians, is right when he says: "The various movements in the Northeast all have to do with identity." [23] What could be more rational than trying to assert one's identity? And these movements are "essentially manifestations of extreme frustration"[24]

According to Sanjoy Hazarika, one of the powerful voices of the region, Delhi's lack of understanding of "the compulsions and beliefs of proud but small nationalities" is the reason for the many insurgencies in the region.[25] To have a sense of self pride and the desire to have the right of self -determination has nothing irrational about it. Elsewhere I have tried to show that these movements in the Northeast are expressions of the tribal people's *Liberating Quest for Identity, Equality and Respect.*[26] If these movements have become violent, it was not their original intention. It is because the Government seems to hear only the voice of violence.

In a seminar held at *North-Eastern Hill University* (NEHU), Shillong, in 2001, Professors of the Department of Philosophy

examined rationality in the traditions of various tribes in the Northeast. The fruit of this seminar was a book, *Rationality and Tribal Thought.*[27] The department of Philosophy was established at NEHU in 1974 with the "express aim of helping the students of the Northeastern region to achieve an authentic awareness of their own culture and traditions."[28] Tradition embodies not just a way of life but a way of thinking, and therefore a kind of rationality.[29] I wish to refer to two studies of the seminar.

The first is "Rationality and Tribal Folklore: An Exploration" by S. C. Daniel.[30] The author shows that tribal folklore exhibits rationality. In an analysis of a ***Liangmei***[31] Naga folktale of *Two Orphans*, the author defines rationality in terms of the Kantian notion of universalizability[32] and argues that tribal folktales "thematically carry with them moral principles that ought to be followed by the tribes concerned. Different folktales have different moral principles and a particular folktale is for the purpose of exemplifying "the notion that a 'universalizable' moral principle is a moral principle fundamentally because of the fact that it is rational."[33] The moral virtues embedded in this story are: philanthropy; compassion for the sick, needy, and poor; keeping promises; humility and forgiveness. These cardinal virtues can be universalized. It may be reiterated that I identify rationality with universalizability. Rationality and universalizability can be substituted for each other since they have the same value."[34]

This study, I think, is indicative of how to read tribal myths and legends. They are the sources to discover, not only rationality but also their philosophy of life, theology, the values and their meaning systems. Contrary to popular perceptions of myth as something not true to life, scholars are increasingly appreciative of its significance and importance. "Myth possesses an intensity of meaning that is akin to poetry."[35] For Joseph Campbell, the author of ***The Power of Myth***, described as "the rarest of intellectuals in American life,"[36] "myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life."[37] To J. R. R. Tolkien, author of books like *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, described as "among the greatest works of imaginative fiction of the twentieth century," "just as speech is invention about objects and ideas, myth is invention about truth."[38] Myth is the Bible

of the indigenous Latin Americans.' It is the expression of their way of life, nature and the world, the consciousness the tribe has of itself as a tribe, the tribe's Old Testament."[39] Loss of myth can result in the disappearance a people as people.[40] Hence, "evangelization resulting in a people's exile from their identity is contrary to the pedagogy God used with the twelve tribes of Israel. It is also contrary to what the church has always taught, namely that 'grace builds on nature.'"[41] The same can be said about the myths of tribals of the Northeast.

Another significant study is that of C. P. Alexander's "Ethos and Postulates of Nagas: A Philosophical Approach,"[42] in particular, on the Naga tradition of the so-called 'head-hunting.' The raw expression 'head-hunting' could be one example of what has been lost in translation or become crude in translation. Head-hunting has a dual purpose, ontological and existential. Ontologically it was believed that in the world of spirits, the spirits of the heads hunted would be slaves to the one who hunted them. Existentially, the head-hunters were soldiers and head-hunting was a defence mechanism.[43] I think, the main reason for head-hunting must have been an existential need justified by an ontological reason.

'Head-hunting,' need not be condemned as if it was barbaric compared to the civilized world today. "Don't we still practice the same in our day in a much more sophisticated manner? Don't we give ***viracakra*** to our brave soldiers for their valour, as an honour?[44] The only difference is today's head-hunters know how to disguise these practices. The army calls it 'combing operations.' If nations, in today's world, find rationality for pre-emptive attacks, attacks with drones, the Nagas and other tribes of yore too, had rational grounds for doing so. It was an existential need for preserving their identity, in fact, for survival as a tribe.

Faith, Reason and Wisdom: Their Mutuality in Folktale

Having discussed the theoretical notions of faith, reason and wisdom in tribal traditions separately, I shall now try to illustrate the mutuality of the triptych through a folktale which is quite common among the various tribes of the Northeast.

Chemtatpa Thusism: The Story of the Dao Sharpener

One day a man was sharpening his dao/knife on a stone by the stream. A shrimp/crayfish crawled up to him and pricked his testicles. Howling in pain and anger the man sliced off the bamboo nearby. The sliced off bamboo piece flew and hit the cheek of a wild fowl. The wild fowl, out of pain scratched the ground and opened up an ant hill full of red ants. The red ants ran helter-skelter and bit the testicles of the wild boar nearby. The wild boar got wild in pain and swung its head wildly cutting off a wild banana plant on which was a bat. The bat got so startled and flew off and went right into the ear/nose of an elephant. The elephant got so disturbed and angry that it ran and knocked down the hut of the widow. The widow got so angry and ran off and took shelter by the water pond of village and dirtied the place.

When the whole village came to know of what the widow had done, they called a village meeting and questioned the widow:"Why are you camping at our water source and dirtying it?'" they questioned. The widow said: "Because the elephant destroyed my house." The villagers then summoned the elephant and asked him: "Why did you destroy the widow's hut?" "Because," the elephant said, "the bat flew into my ear and I was so disturbed and so ran." Then the bat was summoned and questioned: "Why did you fly into the ear of the elephant?" The bat said: "because the wild boar cut down the wild plantain plant on which I was resting and I had to fly away suddenly." When the wild boar was questioned, he said: "I was resting peacefully and suddenly the red ants were all over me and I had to swing wildly to get rid of them." The red ants while questioned said: "We too were peacefully staying inside our home and were disturbed by the wild fowl." The wild fowl too was questioned by the villagers. In reply it said" the man with the dao sliced off a bamboo which hit my cheek and I was in terrible pain." And when the man with the dao was questioned, he blamed the little shrimp/lobster for biting him causing him to react in pain by slicing of the bamboo.

Finally the shrimp was summoned and questioned. The little shrimp admitted he was the culprit behind the chain of events. He

himself suggested the punishment to be meted out to him. He said: "You can either put me back into the stream in which case, I would remain darkish in colour or boil me alive in water in which case, my appearance would become red and colourful." The villagers decided to put the shrimp in a pot of water to boil him alive. While the shrimp was half-dead on the dry land, it was fully alive again in the pot of water and happily jumped out of the pot back into the stream. Shrimps always appear darkish in the water but become red and colourful when boiled, to this day.[45]

A Tale True to Rural Environment

First of all, the story is set in quite a realistic rural context of Northeast India. Men always carry a dao or knife when they go to the forest. Such a man sharpening his dao on a stone by the stream is quite realistic. By such streams are found stones (sand stones) which are good for sharpening daos. Men usually try some stones to sharpen their daos and if they find a good stone, they would carry it home. A stream surrounded by a forest of bamboos, trees, wild banana plants as the habitat of wild fowls, wild boars, bats, and elephants are also plausible and realistic. A village in the vicinity of such an environment where the hut of the widow poorly constructed with bamboos and thatch, at the outskirts of the village, and becoming an easy target of such mishaps is also quite realistic. At the same time there is an air of artificiality in it. Everyone who reads or hears it, will know that it is a story. It could have happened as narrated, but it probably did not. A wise storyteller has created it to teach some lessons of life. As children we know this story mostly as a funny one. It can be read at various levels. Nobody knows who the author is, and perhaps, nobody bothers about it too, as a Spanish poem says:

Until the people sing them

Verses are not really verses;

And when people sing them

No one remembers their authors.[46]

Faith, Reason and Wisdom: Their Mutuality

Reason appears to be the first casualty when the story is read in a casual way. The sequence of events narrated in the story appears to be the result of impulsive emotional reactions on the part of the characters. A closer look at the story, however, reveals that the chain reaction is the result of the rational behaviour of characters. What each character exactly did may be incidental – the man cutting the bamboo, ants biting the boar, etc. What is rational is that they had to react in such situations. If they did not, it would have been inhuman or un-animal-like behaviour. It may be an instinctive reaction, but instinctive reaction is rational. It is being true to one's being. Only the dead would not react in such a situation. The collateral damage caused by the characters is practically forgotten because of the rationality of their behaviour.

Faith comes into play to accept the reasonableness of the sequence of events. Each character is asked to explain the why of their behaviour and their explanation is accepted on faith. Readiness to listen to each character itself presupposes a community life that is lived on mutual trust/faith. There is no hint of suspicion about the veracity of the account given by each character.

Wisdom stands in the middle, as it were, to draw from both faith and reason to find a resolution to the crisis in the community. Wisdom calls on the community to see the rationality of the events and invites it to have faith in the reasonableness of the accounts given by the characters and accept it. Wisdom is the foundation on which the traditional societies live and conduct their daily lives. Though not always obvious, it is imbedded in the authentic traditional institutions, practices and myths. It has a particular concern for the widow, the one who suffered most in the story, as she so often does in real life as well. The resolution to the crisis is set in motion because the widow is deprived of the bare minimum she had. Finally, another aspect of wisdom comes into play which makes the culprit suggest his own punishment which also contains a clever device to escape from it. He is allowed to do so because had he in anyway anticipated the consequences of his silly prank, in wisdom's view, he would not have done it. So he is forgiven. After all, wisdom in the person of a wise story teller created this tale.

Conclusion

By opting for 'sustainable development and green economy' the world is in dialogue with the indigenous peoples in order to find a way out of a 'growing alienation from nature heading towards nuclear and ecological disaster.' The world can also be in dialogue with the indigenous in regard to human knowledge in order to come to have a holistic understanding of science and technology and religion so that science does not become devoid of religion, and religion devoid of science. This will happen in the mutuality of faith, reason and wisdom.

In its dialogue with the indigenous/tribals, the world also should become sensitive to the feelings of alienation, discrimination, oppression, exploitation, etc. of the tribals and their aspirations to be liberated from these, including being called by the derogatory term 'tribal' and be on equal footing with all. Finally, if the world is in dialogue with the tribals in order to learn from their traditions, the tribals themselves must be in dialogue with each other in the true spirit of their 'extraordinary solidarity with nature, egalitarianism, and a non-competitive collaboration with one another' for mutual enhancement among themselves and for that of humanity at large.

Notes

1. Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*(Revised and Expanded Indian Edition) (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2011) xxiv.
2. 57 heads of state, 490 ministers, 1,200 UN staff, 12, 000 intergovernmental organizations, 10, 000 NGOs and 63, 000 delegates representing around 195 countries and seven billion of the planet earth. Cf. Pushpam Kumar, "A Promising Pathway: Rio + 20 Green Economy and India,"*Down to Earth: Science and Environment Fortnightly (August 1-15, 2012) 52*
3. George M. Soares-Prabhu, "Editorial, Tribal Values in India," *Jeevadhara xxiv*/140 (March 1994) 84.
4. Cf. Science, Philosophy and Religion: A Symposium, published by the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their Rela-

tion to the Democratic Way of life, New York, 1941 as quoted in Steven L. Bridge, *Getting the Old Testament: What it meant to Them, What it means for Us* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009) 25

5. Ved Prakash, *Encyclopaedia of North-East India* Vol.1 (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2007) 37

6. Birichi K. Medhi, R. P. Athparia and K. Jose, eds., "A Peep into the Tribal Scenario of North-East India: Introduction," in Idem, *Tribes of North-East India: Issues and Challenges* (New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 2009) xi-xii.

7. Cf. Amar Krishna Paul, Northeast Encyclopedia (Guwahati: General Publication, 2004, 2nd Print) 1. NEC is a nodal agency under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1971. It started functioning in 1972 and was amended in December 2002 to induct Sikkim as the young sister of the state of NE region.

8. A. C. Bhagabati, "North-East India: A Unique Home to Tribals," in Peter Haokip, Thomas Manjaly and Kuriakose Poovathumkudy, eds., *Know Your People: Cultural Sensitivity in Formation* (Shillong: Oriens Publications, 2005) 2.

9 Frederick F. Downs, "Christianity and Cultural Change in North-East India," in Milton S. Sangma and David R. Syiemlieh, eds., *Essays on Christianity in North-East India* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1994) 192

10 James Herbert Lorrain *Dictionary of the Lushai Language* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, first published in 1940, 3rd Reprint in 1990) 389; see also Chuauthuama, *Zotawng Bible Dictionary* (Bible dictionary in Zo (Mizo) Language (Guwahati: Bhabani Offset & Imaging Systems, 2nd Reprint 2012), 938

11. George M. Soares-Prabhu, "Tribal Values in India,"*Jeevadhara* xxiv/140 (March 1994) 88. The whole issue is devoted to Tribal Values in the Bible and edited by George Soares.

12 Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, 137; see also Chuauthuama, *Zotawng Bible Dictionary*, 29013 The Thadou-Kuki tribes call the hero of these folktalesBenglam. The same folk character is known by different names among the other Kuki tribes. Among the Vaiphei, Lamkang, Tarao and Chothe tribes where, he is known by the same name, Benglam but the Zou, Simte, Paite and

Sukte (Tedim Chin) tribes use the name Penglam and Hmar, Lushai and Darlong Kukis call him by the name Sura.

13. The Thadou-Kuki tribes call the hero of these folktales ***Benglam.*** *T*he same folk character is known by different names among the other Kuki tribes. Among the Vaiphei, Lamkang, Tarao and Chothe tribes where, he is known by the same name, ***Benglam*** but the Zou, Simte, Paite and Sukte (Tedim Chin) tribes use the name ***Penglam*** and Hmar, Lushai and Darlong Kukis call him by the name ***Sura.***

14. James V. Haokip, *Benglam* (Unpublished Compilation of Folk Tales) (Shillong: North Eastern Hill University, 20013)

15. V. Haokip, *Benglam*

16. Cf. B. K. Borgohain & P. C. Roy Chaudhary, *Folk Tales of Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura & Mizoram* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1991); see also Desmond L. Kharmawphlang, ed., *Narratives of Northeast India*–II (Shillong: PROFRA (Programme of Folklore Research and Archive) Publications, 2002). Unfortunately, the documentation of most of these folktales has been faulty. They are third person summaries. They should have been documented as actually told by the indigenous narrators.

17. T. S. Agou Singson, ed., *Thadou-Kuki Suongmantam Dictionary* (Imphal: JB Offset Printers, 2001) 579

18. James Herbert Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, 73

19. T. S. Agou Singson, ed., *Thadou-Kuki Suongmantam Dictionary*, 577

20. James Herbert Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, 78

21. James Herbert Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, 24

22. James Herbert Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, 333

23. B. G. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent: Ethnicity, Insurgency, Governance, Development* (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1996) 285

24 B. G. Verghese, *India's Northeast Resurgent: Ethnicity, Insurgency, Governance, Development* (Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1996) 285

25. Sanjoy Hazarika, *Strangers of the Mist: Tales of War & Peace from India's Northeast* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995) 249

26. Peter Haokip, "The Tribal People of the Northeast: A Liberating Quest for Identity, Equality and Respect,"*JPJRS* 2/2 (1999) 63-72

27. Sujata Miri, ed.,*Rationality and Tribal Thought* (New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 2004)

28. Sujata Miri, *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, 1.

29. Sujata Miri, *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, 3

30. S. C. Daniel, Rationality and Tribal folklore: An Exploration," in Sujata Miri, ed. *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, 41-51

31. Liangmei Nagas are one of the components of three Naga tribes – Rongmei, Zemei who have amalgamated into one known as Zeliangrong. They are found both in Nagaland and Manipur

32. Sujata Miri, *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, 17

33. S. C. Daniel, Rationality and Tribal Folklore, 41

34. S. C. Daniel, Rationality and Tribal Folklore, 50

35. Arthur Cotterell, *A Dictionary of World Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 1.

36. Cf. Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth with Bill Moyers* (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1998) front cover page.

37. Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, 5-6

38. Cf. *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition*, "Myth," (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 21

39. Carlos Maesters, "Indian Myths and the Old Testament,"Sedos Bulletin 24/3 (15 th March 1992) 69 [67-73]

40. Carlos Maesters, "Indian Myths and the Two Testaments," *Sedos Bulletin* 24/8 (16th September 1992) 227 {227-272

41. Carlos Maesters, Indian Myths, 228.

42. In Sujata Miri, ed., *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, 121-12943 C. P. Alexander, Ethos and Postulates of the Nagas, 126

44 C. P. Alexander, Ethos and Postulates of the Nagas, 127

45. This folktale is a common heritage of many tribes of the Northeast with minor variants. It belongs to the Mizo-Kuki-Chin tribes, the Nagas and the Karbis too. Cf. B. K. Borgohain and P. C. Roy, *Folk Tales of Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram*. See also Desmond L. Kharmawphlang, *Narratives of Northeast India* II

46. Manuel y Antonio Machado, *Obras Completas*, Madrid, 1947 as quoted by Louis Alonso Schökel, *The Inspired Word: Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965) 229-230.

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Faith, Reason and Wisdom

A Folklore Perspective

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Abstract: Folklore is often thought of as unscientific and neglected in the academic world. This paper tries to deconstruct this myth and tries to establish that the 'folk' have a different logic, different ways of knowing and a unique wisdom that is different from the wisdom of the literate world. Without claiming to have the last word on the Folklore Perspective on Faith, Reason and Wisdom, this paper tries to take the reader to the world of the folk and initiate a process of reflection to bring out some of the positive elements of the culture of the simple and ordinary people, without in anyway romanticizing it. It is hoped that the questions and challenges posed by this paper would prompt further study and dialogue with the literacy/ classical world to arrive at a more integral and Indian approach to religious studies in India and Asia today.

Keywords: folk perspective, syncretism, Christian folklore, performative hermeneutics, folk wisdom, irrationality, critical appropriation.

1. Introduction

The National Seminar on "Faith, Reason and Wisdom" conducted by Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeth, Pune on 12-13 Nov. 2013, was a very commendable effort to search for a holistic, integral and Indian approach to religious studies. Hopefully this initiative will go beyond acknowledging that the neglect of the *'feminine, tribal, folklore and ecological perspectives'* has resulted in the *'fragmentation of knowledge/faith /life at the expense of an integral view of life'* and shed more light from these neglected perspectives. This paper for its part, would try to view faith, reason and wisdom from a folklore

perspective and point out some of the challenges it poses to religious studies in India.

Folklore has been neglected in the academic world for a long time, both in the religious and secular sphere; it was compared to literary discourse and found wanting as a source of knowledge and wisdom. This paper will try to deconstruct this "myth" and establish that the 'folk' have a different logic, different ways of knowing and a unique wisdom which the literacy world may find it very difficult to fathom. For, it questions, challenges the dominant worldview and proposes another approach to faith, reason and wisdom. Without claiming to be the last word on the folklore perspective on faith, reason and wisdom, this paper tries to initiate a process of reflection by placing before the reader some positive elements in the wisdom of the simple and ordinary people. It is hoped that the questions and challenges posed by this paper will be a starting point for a careful study and purposeful dialogue with the literacy/ classical world to arrive at a more holistic, integral and Indian approach to religious studies in India and Asia today.

1.1. Who are the Folk?

At the outset, let me try to situate the 'folk' and the 'folk perspective'. From a panoramic and sociological view of human life, the earliest forms of organizing human life are found in the tribal societies. The *tribals* were our true ancestors; they lived in clans, groups and tribes with a deep sense of community bonds, ancestor worship, rituals, and totems that linked them to one another and to nature. In the slave societies that followed, the society was divided into slaves and masters; the slaves were treated as lesser human beings. *Slave lore* grew up within this ambience but separate from the masters' cultural institutions. The feudal society, which was basically agrarian, had the serfs or the 'folk' as against the land lords. The former slaves now had more freedom yet lived mostly as bonded labourers of the landlords and higher castes. Their cultural production came to be known as the *folklore/folk media* as against the classical traditions that were patronized by the feudal lords and kings. The capitalist society has its working class or the subalterns (all the people in the fringes of society) as against the capitalists.

From a historical perspective, therefore, folk are the *peasants and serfs of the feudal society*; today, they are the working class, the oppressed, the poor and the marginalized. They are the people in the periphery- the subalterns and the *dalits* who are in search of identity and liberation. Folklore is the creative expressions of these 'lower strata' of society. It questions the practice of keeping the 'folk' in the periphery.

A Folk Perspective, therefore, is the perspective of the marginalized. It challenges the elite /classical traditions with an *emancipatory concern*. As a culture of the 'human hearted,' it justifies the protest of the oppressed. But folk culture has diverse elements and not all of them are emancipatory. Therefore, there is a need to *critically appropriate* those elements that would enhance and contribute to their emancipation. These elements would be the focus of this paper. It uses ethnography and field work to substantiate its arguments and not the 'literacy' methods.

1.2. Key Features of Folklore

Although long neglected, there is a growing interest in the folk traditions in the contemporary world. It is seen in the academia, in the film world, in music and in literature. Literature that give us the basic knowledge about folklore abound (Dundes, 1978; Lee Utley, 1965; Ben-Amos, 1982; Dorson, 1972). Most scholars agree on the following features as characteristic of folklore: it is orally transmitted; based on a tradition; has no single author (its authorship is collective and anonymous); it is commonly shared by a group; it has a formula and diffuses into many forms.

Folklore takes many forms. The main ones are: *Verbal Art or folk literature* (songs, stories, ballads, proverbs , riddles etc.), *Material Culture* (housing, implements used for cultivation, the household objects, vessels, seating arrangements, kolam– rangoli, ornaments and the dress codes.. etc.), *Social Customs* (village meetings, *Pathilaal* system or the of sharing work, village festivals and games, *Shared beliefs* concerning cause of sickness, life cycle ceremonies, etc.), *Worship* (Nature Worship, Ancestor Worship, Animism, Totemism, magic and hero worship) and *Performing arts*.

Performing arts include *social and martial arts* (such as kalari payatu and silambam), *worshipping arts* (Karagam or bow song), *ritual arts* (vow offering), m*ythical and puranic arts* (therukoothu , yakshagana, puragatha, leather puppet) and *occupational arts* (handicrafts) (Lourdu D,1997; Islam, 1985).

2. 'Beliefs' in Folklore

Sometimes practices like touching a statue or kissing a relic are considered 'simple faith' of the people. But the fact is that the folk do not have the concept of faith as adherence to some dogmas and doctrines of the Church. But there are plenty of 'beliefs' and practices. These beliefs cannot be dismissed as irrational, superstitious and foolish as more and more studies show them playing a variety of psychological, social, economic and healing roles in the lives of the simple 'folk'. They point to a faith that is more experiential than intellectual and these will be of great value to those who seek to understand the Indian religious reality. We shall return to this point later.

2.1. Folk Belief Systems

Our primitive ancestors believed that every animate and inanimate parts of nature had a spirit or a soul in them. This is known as animism (Tylor 1817; 1958; Korovkin 1965:19; Leach 1972:62). These spirits were considered to be either benevolent or malevolent. Such beliefs can be seen even to this day in popular Christian devotions and practices related to spirit possession and exorcism (Wilson 2010:112). Animism implies the belief that some things had supernatural powers (Wilson 2010:113). Magic is another element of primitive religion; it seeks to control the powers of nature to get positive or negative results (Bharathi, 1990: 336-337). Later on, magic developed into *black and white, protective and destructive, witchcraft, voodoo* and so on. Even today many beliefs and practices related to magic can be seen among Catholics (Wilson, 2004; 2010:115-116).

Rituals and magic reached their high point of development in feudal society. They played a meaningful role in pre-modern societies.

According to Siva Subramanian (1988:17) magic played an important role in the economic activities of the folk and it was an integral part of their production process. But with the advent of capitalism, together with its rational and scientific outlook, such practices began to be treated as meaningless, superstitious and irrational. For example, with the advent of electricity, lots of beliefs and fears about devils and demons disappeared; because of modern medicine, many beliefs related to sickness disappeared; due to economic changes, employment and higher studies, many beliefs regarding women disappeared. Marxist and other rationalist movements also helped to destroy many such beliefs and practices. Such changes brought about a cultural vacuum that needed to be filled with new myths, beliefs, meaningful rituals and symbolic actions. However, instead of creating new practices, some so called religious persons, priests and magicians began to rejuvenate the old and outdated beliefs to make a living for themselves (Wilson, 2010: 222-224).

The challenge of religious studies today, therefore, is to address this cultural vacuum. Not all the tribal and folk beliefs have become obsolete and irrelevant. The question is whether we are in a position to discern the relevant/irrelevant practices and replace the irrelevant ones with those that can meet the cultural and religious needs of today. In the following section we shall try to describe some of their helpful beliefs and practices.

2.2. Beliefs for Conservation of Life

Indians have for long been involved in constructing explanatory systems for psychic and physical distress/disorders and evolving techniques for their alleviation. There are palmists, horoscope specialists, herbalists, diviners, sorcerers and a variety of shamans whose therapeutic efforts combine elements from classical Indian astrology, medicine, alchemy and magic with folk traditions (Kakar 1990:2-3). Some scholars come to the conclusion that the western model of psychotherapy and the Indian folk healing practices, although different in methodology, have the same healing process (Lewis, 1993).

Many tribal and folk beliefs are helpful for the conservation of nature. For example, the *adis* of Arunachal Pradesh believe that the huge trees like *Rotne* found in their surrounding forest is the abode of the evil spirit called *Epom.* Therefore they usually don't fell such trees. In case it is inevitable to cut them, then they perform rituals by sacrificing pigs and fowls to appease the spirit whose habitat is being destructed. Similar restrictions apply to the cutting of cane bamboo and leaves used for thatching houses. For instance, *Epoeng (big bamboo with huge circumference)* is felled during the *Ruruk* – the dark fourth night after the full moon, as it is commonly believed that during that period this bamboo remains free from a insect locally called *Takit* which can reduce its longevity. They seldom cut some plants and trees, such as, *Tattong, Taapit,Tan* etc., as they are believed to have sprung from the bones of *Kari Bote* - the great mythical hunter who is considered repugnant to the evil spirits. (Chaudhuri,2007). There are many such folk beliefs and practices that need to be reinterpreted and maintained if we are to overcome the present day crisis with ecology and resource conservation (Vatsyayan, 1992; Gadgil, Chandran, 1992; Shiva, 1992; Kthori et al, 1998; Ramakrishnan et al, 1998).

2.3. Christian Folklore: A Different Logic

Historically, there has existed and still exists, folk beliefs and practices along with the official Church doctrine and rituals. Christian folklore, though formed on the basis of official religious dogmas, has absorbed a lot of ideas based on the living experience, traditions, needs and interests of ordinary believers. Therefore, it differs in many ways from the official forms of the Christian religion with their teaching authority, theological interpretations and canonical sanctions.

Some see the divide between 'popular' and 'elite' Christianity as two aspects and others see them as levels of the same continuum that are not mutually exclusive (Wilfred, 1995). Christian Folklore is not to be seen as a degraded form of official Christianity. The socio-religious practices of people produce an original wisdom. It is a *different logic* altogether (Parker, 1996; Espin 1997, Goizueta 1995). The interpretations and faith expressions of the folk may be discounted by the Churchs' theology and its magisterial; but it is here, among

people, that the Church is alive and active. Therefore it becomes necessary to study and bring to light Christian Folklore in all its aspects.

2.4. Inculturation by the people

The true identity of Indian Christianity may be found only in the Little Traditions comprised largely of popular/folk devotions. Questions of contextualization, adaptation, accommodation and the cultural transformation of the Christian faith may be the topics of hot debate in the Great Traditions, whether Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant denominations. But the Little Traditions have no difficulty in finding appropriate cultural incarnations of the faith. Ethnography and field work attest to this process taking place throughout history. It is essential to unearth and bring to light the undirected inculturation processes (Bahmat, Weist, 1999; Rowena and Kujur, 2010; Baily, 1989).

Further, so far the attempts at inculturation in the Church have followed the Sanskritic tradition. In the case of Catholics, the process has resulted in a form of Brahmanism that has failed to strike a chord amidst the common people. Sanskritic inculturation has positively ignored the already inculturated nature of folk Christianity. Many Christian folk devotions have been created as parallel alternatives to the worship of folk deities. Thus one can find village shrines, street shrines, family shrines, memorial shrines and wayside shrines in the area that have sizable Catholic population (Wilson, 2004).

These Christian shrines have imbibed many elements from prevailing folk traditions. Thus, besides being the place of inculturation from below, popular Christian shrines also become the loci of interreligious dialogue as they also attract people of all faiths. Studies show that stories of origin have inter-religious roots. *Velankanni Matha* of Nagapattinam is in fact the *Kula deivam* (family deity) of a fishermen community known as *Pattanavar*. The officiating priest of the *Kulatheivam* temple is the catechist in the shrine too. The changing of the *sari* of Our Lady is done in his presence. The flag for the feast is brought by the *Pattanavar* people

even today, seeking protection for their caste and community. The *chapparam* or *ther* (car) is in the control of the *Pattanavar* caste head. The virgin Mary of the Chapel of apparition is the *Kiramateivam* (village deity) of the pilgrims. Brigitte Sebastia, who has studied these syncretisms, finds many similarities between the *Maariamman* (rain goddess) and the *Mariamman* (Mary) in Veilankanni and says that the caste structures and the ritual practices of folk worship have been absorbed into the Christian devotions (Sebastia, 2002). The Veilankanni Shrine is truly a syncretism of Christian and Folk traditions. In a country like India, where Christians are an insignificant minority this kind of syncretic, cultural reciprocation can be an effective means for involvement in the culture and life of the people at large.

2.5. Folk Experience of God

The Christian folk understanding of 'faith' is quite different from the classical one; normally they do not understand the classical concepts like the Trinity, two natures of Christ, etc. Their understanding of God is experiential. *"Our Saint/Maatha will save us"* is one of their firm beliefs. They believe that their saint will solve all their problems. The childless go to the saint for children, the unemployed for employment, the farmers for a good harvest, and so on. They would say, "Don't worry Our Lady (Maatha), Our St. Michael, will not let us down". Basic to this experience is the belief that "Our *Sami* (*God/ Goddess*) is powerful," even more powerful than Jesus himself. He will punish the evil and bring justice. The folk understand God as a friend, and not as a mystery; theirs is not unknowable or abstract God. For the folk, saints/Our Lady/ godmen/ women are the tangible 'faces' of God. Due to this familiarity, the deity can possess the priest in a Trance Dance (*Saamiyatttam)* and the charismatics can call God as "daddy". This also enables them to bargain with their God or the saint.

The folk experience of God has also a strong communitarian dimension. In the cooking of food and sharing (*Asanam*) in a community celebration and other common devotional practices, for example, one can notice a community feeling that leads to a transcendence of ego, selfishness, likes, dislikes and desires resulting

in a real concern and care for others. Such transcendence is also seen in their ritual actions; their participation in rituals is characterized by tremendous involvement and surrender of the self to a greater power; this gives meaning and will power to do their daily activities well (Turner, 1969).

The folk experience of God has also a liminal character. In a liminal state a person is neither "here" nor "there" but "in-between" the traditional and ceremonial positions (Turner, 1979). Rhythmic loud sound or music *(Aaravaaram)* plays an important role in their God experience, as against the silence that is emphasized in the contemplative traditions. Therefore, their trance-inducing dances *(saamiyattam)* and praying in tongues in charismatic prayer groups are not to be easily dismissed as aberrations. Visions and dreams are also prominent in folk religiosity, just as it does in the biblical apocalyptic tradition.

Scholars point out that all the basic elements of a 'God Experience' are found in the folk religiosity as well (Turner, 1979). Therefore, rather than dismiss it as aberration of faith, we need to evolve a theology of a Folk experience of God.

3. 'Irrationality' Of Folklore

3.1. Folk Ways of Knowing

We have already noted that the folk have a different logic and rationality. This can seem irrational and superstitious to others. Although Walter Ong is not a folklorist himself (Farrell, 2000), his description of the characteristic features of Oral discourse is helpful for understanding the ways of knowledge practiced by the folk for centuries (Ong, 1988).

According to Ong, folk way of narration is *additive* rather than subordinating. This means that sentences are used to coordinate structures rather than to subordinate them. A familiar instance of additive oral style is the creation narrative in Genesis 1:1-5, which is indeed a text but one preserving recognizable oral patterning. The Douay Version (1610), produced in a culture with a still massive oral residue, keeps close in many ways to the additive Hebrew original.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. **And** *the earth was void and empty,* **and** *darkness was upon the face of the deep;* **and** *the spirit of God moved over the waters.* **And** *God said: Be light made.* **And** *light was made.* **And** *God saw the light that it was good;* **and** *he divided the light from the darkness.* **And** *he called the light Day,* **and** *the darkness Night;* **and** *there was evening and morning one day.*

There are nine introductory 'ands' that shows the additive style. Adjusted to sensibilities shaped more by writing and print, the *New American Bible* (1970) translates:

"In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, **and** *darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light',* **and** *there was light. God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day' and the darkness he called 'night'. Thus evening came, and morning followed – the first day."*

In this translation, there are only two introductory 'ands', each submerged in a compound sentence. The Douay renders the Hebrew *we* or *wa* ('and') simply as 'and'. The New American Bible renders it 'and', 'when', 'then', 'thus', or 'while' to provide a flow of narration with the analytic, reasoned subordination that characterizes writing.

Oral thought is *aggregative* rather than analytic. Rather than taking an idea and breaking it down into its separate parts *(analysis)*, oral thought tends to build meaning by adding details. Oral folk prefer to use many adjectives and flowery language to describe a person, a place etc. Orally based thought and expression tend to be clusters of integers, such as parallel or antithetical terms/phrases/clauses and epithets.

In oral discourse, there is nothing to back-loop into anything outside the mind, for the oral utterance has vanished as soon as it is uttered. Therefore, an idea tends to get repeated in different ways in order to make sure that the listener understands the point. This makes oral communication full of *redundancy* and *repetition*. Such

redundancy may be looked down upon by the literate, but is more natural to thought and speech than sparse linearity that is characteristic of writing.

Since oral societies have no dictionaries, records or history books, they invest great energy in saying over and over again what has been learned arduously over the ages. The rural folk regard highly those wise old men and women who specialize in conserving knowledge, who know and can tell the stories of old. Folk discourse, therefore tends to be *conservative* or traditionalist; folks find it hard to understand and accept new things. So, a speaker stands a better chance of being understood if he conveys his ideas in old, accepted and "conservative" ways. But oral societies are better described as *homeostatic* rather than conservative. This means that while the purpose of oral discourse is to maintain the stability of the group by passing on traditions and stories, this stability is more a matter of achieving an equilibrium or homeostasis with the present. This process calls for sloughing off memories that no longer have present relevance.

Folk knowledge is close to their life world. Oral cultures conceptualize and verbalize their knowledge with more or less close reference to human life. In that sense Folk knowledge is *situational* rather than abstract. This means that it is tied to specifics and concrete particular details rather than generalized into abstract concepts. An oral culture has no vehicle as neutral as a 'list' that is entirely devoid of the context of human action. The folk do not speak in universal concepts about God or Nature. Their idea of God is found in their stories of gods and goddesses and their idea of nature is correlated with fertility cults and other rituals.

Since the meaning of words is controlled by real-life situations, and communication is often accompanied by gestures, vocal inflections, facial expression, etc. oral cultures have few semantic disagreements. Rooted in the life world, oral knowledge tends to assimilate the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings. Such close relation to the life world requires that the speaker explain his or her meaning in terms that the listener can relate to, often by comparing his idea to something in the listener's world.

By keeping knowledge embedded in the human life world, oral discourse situates knowledge within a context of human struggles. Therefore it is *agonistically toned.* Many art forms, folk literature and folk worship are polemic by nature. Folk literature, like proverbs and riddles, are not used simply to store knowledge but to engage others in verbal and intellectual combat: utterance of one proverb or riddle challenges hearers to top it with a better one to counter it.

Oral expression is a *product of give and take.* Because of the immediacy of speaker and audience, the speaker can adjust to the audience, and the audience's reaction becomes a factor in the production of the discourse. A speaker can also defend himself against another's attacks. In written language, there is no immediate give-and-take, no adjustment to language as a reaction to someone else's response. Writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for 'objectivity', in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing. Oral knowledge, in contrast, is *empathetic* and *participatory.* For an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known. This can be seen in ritual celebrations, playing folk games, or participating in a story telling.

In short, an integral approach to religious studies must take these folk ways of knowledge and expression seriously especially in our Indian context. Can our papers, theology studies, philosophy studies and dissertations accept these folk ways of knowing and expressing as an alternative epistemological tool that would make more sense to the ordinary people in our parishes?

3.2. Folk Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics plays a decisive role, in all realms of human life and expression. The folk have their own way of interpreting life from their world view and experience. Felix Wilfred has enumerated some aspects of folk hermeneutics that could be considered here. (Wilfred, 1995)

In folk hermeneutics, it is the folk who become the interpreters of their religious traditions, history and its contents. It is the bards,

story tellers, folk artists, shamans and leaders of the ritual ceremonies who interpreted the stories of their gods and goddesses and not the experts. In day-today living, the people themselves interpret the meaning of their religious traditions according to the need of the village or the household.

Folk hermeneutics is characterised by a certain *earthiness.* Through their experience of oppression and subjugation, there takes place, a "de-construction" of the religious tradition. As a people who have been denied bread, freedom and human dignity, their focus is on this worldly life. For the subaltern groups, being religious is a matter of performing a series of rites and rituals, experiencing certain events and intervening with some actions. In other words, they interpret the "heavenly", the "mysterious" and the "sacred" through their earthly experiences, actions and performances. Their main concern centers around a prosperous and happy life devoid of the harms by evil powers.

For the folk, all interpretations take place in the form of performance as there are no written documents to fall back as a reference. This we can call *performative hermeneutics.* A performance approach to oral literature has been developed over the past decade chiefly in the discipline of folklore (Abrahams 1968; Ben-Amos 1972) and its allied field of socio-linguistics (Hymes 1974, 1975). In the performance of folklore, the *texture, text and context* are considered very important (Dundes, 1964; Stucky,1995:1-14). The time and place of performance *(story - telling, singing, performing, sculpturing, painting, playing, designing, framing),* the particulars in detail of those belonging to the two sides i.e. the gestures and postures of the narrator, the nature of his performance, facial expression, mimicry, his dance and acting, impersonation etc. of the performer and the total reaction of the audience *(their occasional comments and laughter, their response in the form of dancing or singing or acting out parts in a tale)* make up the texture, text and the context of the performance. Oral tradition also has a strong collective character and therefore the communitarian aspect of the performance has to be taken into account in the folk hermeneutical process.

The life of the folk *(mostly dalits and the underprivileged)* was and is lived in the context of exploitation and injustice. Their oppressors were so powerful that the folk could not protest or retaliate directly as it would invite worse consequences. Therefore they had to invent indirect forms of protest. There is an enormous amount of such protest material in folk literature. The stories of folk heroes tell us that they stood for a cause and paid the price of fighting for the rights of the oppressed. Many folk religious traditions and folk deities also have this protest character. As the life of the folk is predominantly combative they tend to interpret everything from a *combative perspective.* Thus liberation can be seen as a hermeneutical principle for the folk.

In the 1990s, scholars in increasing numbers began to call for a consideration of orality in New Testament studies. (Botha, 1990; Achtemeier, 1990; Dundes, 1977). Nevertheless, most biblical scholars continue to examine the New Testament documents using presuppositions that apply more to nineteenth and twentieth-century literary/print culture than to the culture in which those documents were originally produced. Well, then this is the challenge before us. Can we interpret the scriptures using a folk hermeneutics? James George Frazer has written three monumental volumes on Folklore in Old Testament (Frazer,1918). Alan Dundes has tried to interpret Jesus as a folk hero (Dundes, 1977). More such studies and interpretations have to come in biblical studies.

3.3. Folk Philosophy/Theology

An oft repeated complaint of ministers and Church activists is that lofty theological concepts and Church doctrines do not get communicated to the folk. It is possible to argue that the difficulty of communication is precisely the result of a cultivated discourse (philosophical and theological studies) that has marginalized the folk discourse. The ineffectiveness of Christian ministry should, at least partly, be attributed to this. Among the Christian churches themselves there is a growing conviction that "the Christian faith must be rethought, reformulated and lived anew in each human culture...and this must be done in a vital way, in depth and right to the culture's roots" (David, 1991:55; Thumma, 2000).

A Christian theology that is alive to the Indian reality could only he shaped by an understanding of the faith expressions and cultural practices of "folk" Christians and a meaningful interaction of the Gospel with such expressions and practices. This kind of folk theology / philosophy will rely on *irrationality* and *imagination* rather than the rationality of the West. It will use *symbols* and *art forms* instead of concepts to theologize or philosophize. Instead of literacy methods or the written word it will use *orality* and *performance* to express its ideas. In place of grand theories or ideologies folk theology/philosophy will use *narratives* that keep on changing according to the context; in place of scientific discourse it will use *rhythmic discourse*.

4. Folk Wisdom

As pointed out earlier, the rationalism, modernism and the romanticism of Western science slowly eroded the wisdom of the people; folk wisdom began to be regarded as ignorance and superstition. Globalization also has made a huge impact in the life and culture of the folk, destroying many traditional practices and altering the lifestyle of the ordinary folk. But all the same, a critical appropriation of their folklore can reveal the real wisdom and the philosophy of the simple folk. Here we shall see some of those aspects of the wisdom of people that cannot be ignored by our religious studies.

4.1. Folk Philosophy of life

Simplicity is the key feature of the folk way of life. Oral nature of folklore makes it very flexible as it has no grammar or fixed structures. Folklore or folk arts are also easy to learn. So are folk songs and music; they can be learnt easily as they are based on some kind of formula or *santham*. The life style, dress, food and the house patterns of the folk also tend to be very simple. Images of folk gods and goddesses are simple; often they are made up of a stone, a mud figure, a *chulam* (forked spear) etc.; their places of worship are either just an open space (e.g., under the tree) or a small temporary shed); their worship patterns have no agamas or prescribed rituals.

Strong community feeling is another positive aspect of the folk life. Most of the folk ballads and stories stress unity and equality as values to be cherished. It is interesting to note that most folk dances are communitarian and they are performed in groups; so are folk games. Their strong community and family bond is also shown by the fact that they honour relationships up to five generations. The sharing practiced in village festivals, the *panchayat* system and the voluntary service on behalf of the family to the village (*pathilal system*) are clear examples of a strong community feeling.

The protest character of folk culture is also commendable in the context of the oppression and discrimination practiced on the basis of caste, sex, economic and social status. Stephen Fuchs enumerates a number of protest religious movements that arose from the folk traditions of India (Fuchs, 1965; see also Chanda, 1998). Oneness with nature is another aspect of folk wisdom that needs to be preserved. They have learned to live in harmony with nature, including animals and other living creatures.

4.2. Folk Knowledge and Wisdom

There is much wisdom in proverbs, riddles and other forms of folk literature.

A proverb is an example of a coded communication that would hardly be possible today because people no longer know the double or hidden meanings in them. In other words people have lost some cultural competence today. In the villages older people can create an entire dialogue consisting only of proverb citations. Riddles were meant to sharpen one's mind and stimulate creative thought process and produce a wealth of ideas.

Games play an important role in the life of the ordinary folk. There are games for children that taught them to walk, run, breathe, sing and think; there were games for women, adults and old people that gave exercise, entertainment, and joy besides teaching morality and discipline (Kumari Aathavan, 2009). Unfortunately, much of these beautiful traditions have been lost to money mongering and destructive popular media.

Folk Technology is another area of folk wisdom which the modern people have to learn from. The *Warlis* of Maharastra, for example live in harmony with their environment and their culture incorporating the spiritual and the material, the living and the nonliving, into one integral whole (Pereira 1992:189). The agricultural system of the tribal and the folk, often ridiculed as primitive, is in fact very sophisticated, having been carefully developed over several millennia. The folk know the nature of the soil; know how to obtain multiple crops from the same plot without irrigation; know the use organic manures and natural pest control. The indigenous technologies for fishing, irrigation and conservation of food are true wisdom of the land that is being forgotten and neglected.

Folk Art Forms have so much to learn from. They evolved as the folk lived, worked, worshiped, and celebrated their lives. It has a local character on the basis of caste, occasion, worship, gender, place, theme, time of performance etc. It means that folk arts have a context. A folk performance is not one-way traffic. This is a 'live' show in which a face-to-face situation is created between the communicator and the receiver with the possibility of instant feedback. The structures of the dances point to unity, equality and solidarity. The folk songs and ballads reflected the reality of its time. Their roots are deep in the earth. Because of this deep-rootedness, they can command the confidence of the local people. Since the villagers acquire the needed skills easily and the art forms are mobile, they are also economically feasible. They are performed in street corners also without the use of any special lighting and sound system. The improvisational nature of such forms is an important strength. These folk media are an alternative media and could also serve as an alternative language for religious studies.

Folk medicine is another rich tradition; it includes specialized practitioners as well as home remedies for common ailments. Folk medicine includes knowledge regarding the relation between food and health, as well as practices of a preventive nature. Specialists practice in fields like bone-setting, treatment for poisoning and birth attendance, etc. A conservative estimate is that there are around 70,000 traditional bonesetters throughout the country. They attend to over two-thirds of fractures, as modern orthopedic facilities are

few in number and are concentrated in urban areas. Some 600,000 traditional midwives perform home deliveries.

In the tribal areas the folk medical practices include herbal treatments, often in combination with reciting certain *mantras* and the use of symbols, such as ritual chalk drawings or *gondas*. Often the sacred stick and rings are used to invoke the blessings of the gods/ spirits for healing. Moreover, there is a tremendous depth of tribal knowledge regarding the use of natural resources. The tribal communities alone use over 9,000 plant species, including some 7,500 species of plants for medical properties. Besides this, a considerable number of materials of animal and mineral origin are used in traditional medicine. Is it possible to critically appropriate these riches that are getting lost under the pressure of globalization?

5. Conclusion

That the 'Folk' have a different logic, different hermeneutics, different ways of knowing and a wisdom different from that of the classical and literacy world cannot be discounted, denied or ignored. At the same time one has to accept the fact that the folklore and folk life have not remained the same down through the centuries. Lots of oppressive and inhuman elements have crept into them, very often due to the hegemonic ideologies imposed on them by the upper class and sometimes due to the sanskritization process by the folk themselves. The influences of globalization have certainly eroded folk life and wisdom of the simple people to a large extent. Above all the economic, social and political deprivation of the folk (*dalits*) has also pushed them to take up violent and unpleasant means, at times, in their pursuit of self identity and social justice. All these factors have to be taken into consideration while studying folklore and one has to carefully sift with an *emancipatory concern* all that is inhuman, unjust and irrelevant while highlighting the wisdom of the folk in our pursuit for an integral approach to religious studies in India and Asia.

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Science and the Signs of the Times:
Redefining Science and Enriching Humanity

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Abstract: Science, a powerful and influential enterprise, affecting even our thinking, cannot be ignored. Its recent inventions and interventions touch the very core of our human identity and dignity. However, the realization of various limits in science, too deep to be solved, show us that we are forced to move beyond 'scientism' and revise the very 'notion' of science. This paper seeks to discuss the need of looking at science from the perspectives of faith, rationality and wisdom. The natural limits in our reasoning capacity and the inability to have access to reality other than our human ways, lead us to see how *faith* matters in science. The very notion of *rationality* emerges from the scientific society as there is no one absolute standard framework of rationality to be imposed upon science from somewhere external to it. Since mere logic and reason will not take science too far in the service of humanity, we need *wisdom* to produce safe and holistic science.

Key words: Faith, Revision of Rationality, Need for Wisdom, Holistic Science

Introduction

Science, a powerful and influential enterprise as it is, cannot be taken lightly. It affects, especially in our modern times, not only the way we *live*, but also the way we *think*. Given the importance and the influence of science in our lives, several disciplines have come up in the twentieth century to investigate the nature and the claims of science. Disciplines like, History of Science, Sociology of Science, Philosophy of Science, Psychology of Science and so on bring science under sincere scrutiny. While science studies nature, these re-

cent disciplines study science itself. For instance, Philosophy of Science, though it has been there for long, has recently emerged as a distinct and powerful enterprise, to address important questions regarding the nature, aims, method(s) of science; it takes up the fundamental claims of science, like objectivity, rationality and progressiveness, head on. All these disciplines need not be taken as attempts to damage the venerable image of science, nor to belittle its wonderful feats; they are, rather, to bring us to our awareness the need and responsibility to deal with science, in such a manner, that science gets a human face, that science may work towards the enlightenment of humanity and the enrichment of nature at large.

This paper seeks to discuss the need and the relevance of looking at science from the perspectives of faith, rationality and wisdom. The natural limits in our reasoning capacity and the inability to have access to reality other than our human ways, lead us to see how ***faith*** matters in science; for instance, if scientists don't have the fundamental faith in the meaning / purpose in the universe, they will not be ready to invest their time and energy in exploring it. Further, the very notion of ***rationality*** that emerges from the scientific community is internal to it as there is no one, absolute standard framework of rationality to be imposed upon science from somewhere external to it. It is the consensus of the scientific community, for instance, which decides about the existence of a particle in nuclear physics. Once it is made clear that mere logic and reason will not take science too far to be of any use to humanity, then it would not take too long for us to see the need of ***wisdom*** to produce safe science, and more importantly, to use it holistically. The paper ends with concluding remarks, highlighting how the 'revised' science would enrich humanity.

Part I

Faith in Science

It is not uncommon to hear that: "I don't *believe* in anything because I think only science is truly successful and necessary for humanity" – such declarations underline the assumption that faith or

beliefs don't play any role in science, as science is based on rational methods and logical conclusions. According to Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th edition, faith is defined as "unquestioning belief that does not require proof or evidence and unquestioning belief in God or religious tenets, etc." and it further explains that "faith implies complete unquestioning acceptance of something even in the absence of proof, especially of something not supported by reason". When one analyzes the actual practices of science and scientists, one realizes that not only such faith but also convictions, assumptions, postulates, beliefs, values, inspirations, intuitions and so on, are not strange to science. There are scientists who see faith as something crucial and values, like truth and beauty, as something essential to science. The religious assumption that God created the universe and the scientists' assumption that there was something here that's just always been the same – both assumptions are not radically different.[1] Science seeks to understand structure and the operations of the universe, while religion seeks to understand the purpose of the universe; but both, science and religion, require the human mind and evidence. Therefore, that an element of belief is very essential in the world of science too cannot be denied. As Van Fraassan puts it, in *The Scientific Image*, "Science aims to give us theories which are empirically adequate; and acceptance of a theory involves belief that it is empirically adequate".[2]

Science is not a body of provable truths; it is not the case that scientists arrive at demonstrable truths by mere logical reasoning and mathematical calculation. For, "virtually all of science is an exercise in believing where we cannot prove".[3] The History of science is full of evidence that discoveries and inventions don't occur following some strict rules. A scientist first visualizes what he or she wants to arrive at; even a long struggle may not prove useful; but sometimes it may dawn in his / her mind as a flash and this would inspire to solve the issue, even before some necessary rules are invoked, in a hitherto unimaginable manner. For instance, "when Democritus said that everything consists of atoms, he certainly had not the slightest confirmation for his theory. Nevertheless, it was a stroke of genius, a profound insight, because two thousand years later his vision was confirmed".[4] Thus, it is made clear that an element of faith,

intuition and creative imagination are very much part and parcel of science.

Meaning of the Universe – a Faith Declaration!

It is quite normal to see a picture of the mechanical and random universe to be dominating the world of natural sciences. This leads to a world of meaninglessness in the whole of human existence and that of the universe. Several scientists and philosophers have come to the unfortunate conclusion that the universe is fundamentally devoid of any meaning and purpose;[5] that the universe would one day be extinct is a gloomy and brute fact, about which we cannot do anything. As per the recent report in *The Times of India*,[6] our Earth is said to be facing a serious problem; it can sustain life only for 1.8 billion years as it will become very hot and the oceans will evaporate; one way to escape the extinction is to migrate to Mars. But, even then, the Sun's life span is about only another six billion years and after that the solar family will be wiped out. With such revelations, scientists get dismayed. They are disillusioned that scientific methodologies are not capable of showing the purpose or the meaning of the universe. So scientists, like other creatures in the universe, are forced to surrender themselves to the fate of a pointless universe, which is ultimately cold and lonely.

Nevertheless, several other scientists and thinkers show that the universe is purposeful, good, beautiful and worthy of our serious investigations, going along with the declaration in the Book of Genesis: "God looked at everything God had made, and found it very good (*Genesis* 1:31). Pat Byrne argues that the gloomy picture of the universe is unwarranted, by undertaking a case-study regarding geomagnetism – a study that goes on for more than a century, but still a number of questions remain unanswered. Unless scientists are convinced of the worth of their scientific investigations they will not be ready to invest their time and energy in them; unless they are convinced of the meaning and value of their researches they will not be ready to undertake challenging, risking and even life-threatening activities. It is a sort of *faith* that they have in the meaningfulness of their efforts, which propels them to work further and such inspiration to slog cannot be justified by the empirical world around us.

From their strenuous efforts we learn, among many other insights, that they are convinced of the *fundamental intelligibility* of the universe: "Intelligibility is what we come to know when we have insights that answer our questions. Intelligibility is what makes sense of the puzzling observations and questions that we pursue. By their ongoing questioning, therefore, scientists are seeking the intelligibility of the natural universe. In this way they are already engaging in a certain kind of *faith experience*".[7] To struggle to obtain intelligibility is equated with a faith experience, because this intelligibility cannot be proved or touched or seen by empirical methods! Many geniuses indeed marvel at the intelligibility (comprehensibility) of the universe and Einstein meaningfully wonders: "The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible!"[8] Scientific laws can only describe the situations but cannot go deeper to answer the questions about why only those situations, and not different ones, exist. Certain fundamental questions about the natural laws or the functions of the universe don't come under the purview of science. Scientific inquiry cannot answer them, though they are very much related to the scientific inquiry. Byrne, going along with Bernard Lonergan, is convinced that questions like, "Why are these forms of the laws that characterize our universe? ... Why do the events of our natural universe follow these laws rather than some others?... Why are those conditions under which the laws have to operate, rather than some others?" – are implicitly questions about God.[9]

Moreover, even "faith" in the religious sense as related to the experiences of divinity is not something strange to the contemporary world of science. The better and deeper awareness of the complicated structure of the universe, whose complex nature exceeds even our imagination, paves the way for some religious experiences, in and through the exploration of this amazing universe. The same convictions are shared by physicists like Werner Heisenberg, Arthur Eddington and many other quantum physicists.[10] The words of Einstein bear a strong witness to this faith: "The cosmic religious experience is the strongest and the noblest driving force behind scientific research",[11] without which no committed investigation would ever take off.

Part II

Redefining Rationality

As any human enterprise, science does have a history – a history of not only successes and achievements, but also struggles all along. In science, we find a steady and gradual growth in its every domain, even in the very conceptions of its nature and its methods. With the emergence of modern philosophy and modern science, in the 17th century, and discoveries in the further centuries, the mechanical conceptions of the universe and the traditional methods of science were questioned. There are experiences and facts of life that lie beyond the purview of science and this realization was a great thrust to move beyond science for a holistic understanding of human life. For instance, now we are given to understand that subjective dimensions play an important role in science. Science has so far been thought to bė a totally objective, rational and progressive enterprise, leaving no room for elements of social or personal factors. The dichotomy between subject and object has been stressed so much that the role of subject (or agent) in the process of investigation was totally forgotten. Reflections in the recent Philosophy of Science reveal that the subject assumes great importance in several aspects, like value-judgment, creative imagination and production of language. Insistence on subjectivity does not mean that science loses its objectivity. For, 'subjective' does not mean going by one's likes and dislikes. Value-judgments are based upon valid reasons but they remain human judgments. This awareness was the first step in releasing science from the tentacles of a one-dimensional idea of science as products of pure reason and logic and towards taking the non-rational factors seriously and helping science to be holistic and integrated. One is led to realize that humans need more than science and its rationality, for instance wisdom, for a meaningful life. In fact, it is this wisdom that enables us to put the scientific knowledge into right use. Thus, the rational conceptions of rationality had to be modified in order to accommodate many others aspects of the actual science and human existence, which were usually kept out of science and rationality.

The rationalist model of science has been severely criticized during the second half of the 20th century. Rationality was equated with scientificity and irrationality with the unscientific. But Putnam argues that it is not proper to take science to be co-extensive with rationality. According to him, there are at least three important areas of our human lives, where science has nothing to say; it cannot even affirm that those facts exist: a) the domain of objective values; b) the domain of freedom; and c) the domain of rationality itself.[12]

As I have explained elsewhere,[13] scientific changes and theory choice in science cannot be fully explained in terms of logic and reason, as there are many social, psychological and non-rational elements at work. *A rationalist model has to tackle the following hurdles*:[14] a) the issue of incommensurability, which claims that with major theory changes, the meanings of the terms in those theories radically change; b) the goal of science has to be explicated; c) they have to show that the principles of comparison are in fact a means to arrive at that goal; d) they have to show that adhering to these principles ensures progress in future and also in the past; and e) they have to show that the actual history fits with this model and that the social and psychological factors have only a minimal role in the course of science. All these hurdles are not going to be easily overcome and thus we are forced to look for a more adequate notion of rationality.

To show that there is a need to revise the understanding of rationality in science, for our present considerations I limit the discussion only to the modern methodologies of natural sciences. In modern times, Inductivism and Hypothesism are the prominent methodologies. For inductivism, to do science is to observe and to generalize, while Hypothesism aims to generate hypotheses and to explain those hypotheses in terms of unobservables. Both methods involve some elements which have been traditionally ignored in the conception of rationality of science; for example: 'intuition':[15] the inductive method has the intuition (inductive faith) that our beliefs about the world come from observation and interaction with the world; it believes that the future resembles the past, and the known is helpful in understanding the unknown; whereas, the method of hypothesism relies on intuition and creative imagination in formulating the hypothesis about the world and it has faith in the unobservables. In fact, in a

way, these unobservables are more "real" than the observables because even the observables are explained in terms of the unobservables; for instance, the table I see in front of me is explained in terms of billions of atoms and sub-atomic elements some of which are obviously unobservable! So, in both methods we have 'faith' involved. Inductivism does not explain what counts as observation, and it assumes that observations are theory-free. But now we know that there is no observation that is theory-free.[16] On the other hand, the method of hypothesism, though it rightly begins with hypotheses (not with observations as inductivism does), it is not able to explain the origins of those hypotheses. Both these methods rely on several background beliefs, which cannot be scientifically proved. Those background beliefs are needed *not only for* i) determining the instances, ii) choosing the relevant instances and iii) dividing instances into circumstances, *but also for* a) the formulation of problems, b) deciding upon the research strategies to find solutions, c) to fix up the criteria to choose from the possible solutions, d) to form the goals of science and e) to create regulations for directing the researches.

Thus we understand that the methodologies in science, and thereby, the notion of rationality in science, are not that simple and straightforward as they are assumed to be. Given such issues there are several philosophers who have attempted to revise the notion of rationality in science. For instance, Peter Winch[17] searches for *social rationality*; Stephen Nathenson[18] looks for an *ideal type of rationality in terms of reasonableness*; Heidegger looks for *an authentic reason*, as reason is the most authentic form of Being, and for him the misunderstanding of science and technology is basically the result of our misunderstanding of Reason; Habermas[19] insists on constructing *practical rationality*, and Tran Van Doan[20] invites us to *return to Confucius' notion of reasonableness.* Similarly, Feyerabend warns us to be cautious of science, so much so, that he demands the *liberating of society from science.* I have elsewhere briefly evaluated a few traditional notions of rationality. Due to their shortcomings I have also attempted to capture the notion of rationality in terms of reasonableness.[21] As Stephen Toulmin points out the one-sided emphasis placed on formal deductive techniques by the 17th

century natural philosophers, the ideas of 'rationality' and 'reasonableness' closely related in antiquity, were unfortunately separated.[22] Now it is the time that we brought them together to improve upon science and thereby to enrich humanity.

Part III

Inaccuracies and Impossibilities in Science

In spite of its amazing achievements, science still encounters its own limits and limitations. In many fields, accuracy in measurement is restricted. Uncertainties and inaccuracies are intertwined in the very existence of science. There is a limit in the speed with which we can share information, in the accuracy of measuring time, in having hyper sensitive technologies to avoid uncertainties.[23]

1. Abundance of Assumptions and Axioms

The National Science Teachers' Association (NSTA) describes science as follows: "Science is a method of explaining the natural world. It assumes that the universe operates according to regularities and that through systematic investigation we can understand these regularities... Because science is limited to explain the natural world by means of natural processes, it cannot use supernatural causation in its explanation. Similarly, science is precluded from making statements about supernatural forces because they are outside its provenance".[24] Regularities in nature are taken for granted. But without such an assumption science cannot proceed any further. Similarly, it is not easily explainable why we all have bias towards simple solutions. Further, science has many axioms, which are assumed to be unwritten laws, without which it cannot function. For instance:

a) Measurability of all things: All things are measurable and those things that can't be exactly measured, like emotions, aesthetic sense, love, etc., lie outside the field of science. However a closer look at the claim would reveal that even objects can never be absolutely measured. For instance, if this table is measured to be 100 cm long with a help of a ruler, a physicist with her better instruments would

find it to be 100.124 cm; and if a still more sophisticated instrument it may be 100.12457 cm. But at the quantum level it will be much more challenging to measure it as one cannot locate where electrons are exactly. So the exact length of the table will never be known.

b) Reliability of Logic and Mathematics: It is assumed that logic and mathematics work out correctly to give us accuracy. Mathematics is said to be the queen of sciences. It even constitutes sciences and without its help many concepts in the contemporary science cannot be understood. However, all is not rosy with mathematics too. For instance, there are irrational numbers, which can't be expressed in writing as they have infinite digits, without any pattern of repetition of the digits. (e.g. the square root 2, and the value of π = 3.14159... it will go on and on, without any repeatability of the digits). It shows innate inability.

c) Reliability of Experiments and Observations: Experiments are usually taken as the final word. But any experiment answers only a specific question. What is that specific question is decided by the practical and theoretical situation. The relevance and interpretation of experimental results always depend on the theoretical context and the creative imagination of the scientists involved. There is no pure observation as observations are always made with certain questions in mind and all the theories that are used to make the instruments of observation have to be assumed to be true. Further, there are several non-scientific elements involved in scientific experiments. We need to take them into account in order to trust or doubt the results of an experiment. For instance: i) Faith in a scientist's experimental capabilities and honesty, based on a previous working partnership; ii) Personality, the value-system and intelligence of the scientists involved; iii) A scientist's reputation gained in running a huge lab; iv) Whether or not the scientist worked in industry or academia; v) A scientist's previous history of failures; vi) 'Inside Information'; vii) Scientists' style and presentation of results; viii) Scientists' 'psychological approach' to experiment; ix) The size and prestige of the scientist's university of origin; x) The scientist's degree of integration into various scientific networks; and xi) The scientist's nationality. [25] Therefore, "The recognition that rational thought cannot be the final arbiter of truth and that some mechanisms that are external

to the working of our minds are essential in the pursuit of new knowledge, is fundamental to modern experimental science".[26]

2. Limitless Limits

Several authors explore the limits of science; like Hempel points out: a) the inability to justify inductive reasoning; and b) Science being an empirical enterprise always "seeks knowledge that reaches far beyond the supporting evidence... (so) the ideal of empirical knowledge with certainty is logically self-contradictory".[27] Hempel speaks about *the incompleteness of explanation* in science; for science explains anything in terms of something else. "A scientific explanation is thus always incomplete in the sense that the explanatory facts it adduces are left unexplained and thus ununderstood. It may even seem that, as a consequence, an explanation in science never does more than reduce the problem of explaining one fact to the problem of explaining several others".[28] But this is a problem for metaphysics or religion also. Hempel would concede that all such fundamental impossibilities, which are problematic for all, may not be limitations of science, but only 'limits' of science.

a) Limits in our Reasoning

We have many pitfalls in our reasoning; there are several natural tendencies in us, which either often deter us from seeing reality as it is, or often create an imaginable picture of reality. For instance, a tendency to underestimate the probability of coincidence, a lack of appreciation for randomness, a tendency to jump to conclusions, a tendency to perceive order in random arrangements, a tendency to detect spurious correlations, a propensity to ignore unfavourable evidence, and a constructive and selective memory – all these do hamper the so-called objective and rational approach to reality.[29] We tend to assign causal relationships to random events and we analyze and approach the world with the strong assumption that we are the 'main player' in the whole chain of events. Several domains of our life are dominated by irrational and illogical elements: playing lottery cannot be justified by any rational argument, but still millions undertake that; while we are on the phone, we laugh, frown, smile and

make various facial expressions though we know that the hearer cannot see that; we become victims of 'inattentional blindness' when focus on one particular thing blinds us to novel facts and ideas, as we filter through our baggage of past learning, etc. Taking a rationalistic approach as the only source of life and knowledge would sadly prove that we are, in fact, irrational. As Jaffe puts it, "Despite the mountain of evidence regarding the limits of the human mind, most humans believe that rational thinking, using only the powers of our mind, is sufficient to untangle any complexity in our surrounding reality. A strong belief in the absolute power of our rationality is irrational."[30]

b) Ontological Limits

Predictability gives science its special character; science has acquired its enormous power and influence in every field, and it has been held in high esteem precisely because of its ability to predict events in nature, which in turn enables science to control nature. However in the past few decades science is increasingly realizing the limitations of predicting even probabilities, especially in the world of sub-atomic entities. This inability is not due to our technical inefficiency, but due to the very nature of observed things and the relationship between the observer and the observed. As Popper puts it succinctly, "Every physical measurement involves an exchange of energy between the object measured and the measuring apparatus (which might be the observer himself). It is thus impossible to infer from the result of the measurement the precise state of an atomic object immediately after it has been measured. Therefore the measurement cannot serve as basis of predictions".[31] With all these revelations, it seems to be safe to conclude that we have theories "that predict that they can't predict".[32]

It is true, as Hempel points out that all these limits may not be limitations of science as such, but I believe, they point out to some other deeper lesson: that is, the powers of human cognition are not limitless. It seems that humans cannot see themselves as the masters of shaping their own destiny. It may be seen as a limit of human existence as a whole, as most of the Existential Philosophers have pointed out. Some of them, like Sartre and Nietzsche, have ended up

with a pessimistic outlook towards the world, while some others, like Gabriel Marcel, have taken the fact of limits as something adding interest to the very human existence, opening up avenues of transcendence. After all we cannot even know whether we know everything.

Concluding Remarks

After reflecting upon the actual practices of science and scientists, one may be convinced of many things and learn many lessons from it; one of the fundamental lessons is that we realize that science is not enough, not only to make our existence meaningful and worthwhile but also for science itself. Isolated from human context, stripped of its human face and social characteristics, science loses itself. For science "is an activity of persons, involving unspecifiable powers of creative imagination. Science by itself is not enough even to describe the pursuit of science itself".[33]

The limits, inaccuracies, impossibilities, uncertainties - that we encounter in science need not discourage us. We can still be optimistic; for they are not negative factors blocking our growth and our realization of our potentialities. In fact, they can become a positive source of our further development. For "there is more to impossibility than first meets the eye. Its role in our understanding of things is far from negative. Indeed...we will gradually come to appreciate that the things that cannot be known, that cannot be done, and cannot be seen, define our Universe more clearly, more completely, and more sharply than those that can"[34].

Wise Science... Wise Humanity!

There are various sorts of limits and natural restrictions in our explorations of nature. But those limits make our science a humble and wise undertaking that boldly and realistically acknowledges that it does not know everything. We may not be sufficiently wise to clearly define what wisdom is, but we are certainly wise enough to know that we need to be wise. The inability to define 'scientifically' what wisdom is, must not deter us from deliberating on it; it must not be an excuse to science to do whatever it wants! Better to be wise than other-wise. Otherwise science would become a monster,

too big to be contained. Science, which aims at, not just enhancing life, but retrieving the glorious pre-fallen state of our human existence, will annihilate the very life that it is expected to enrich. Just because we can do something, does it authorize us doing it? Polkinghorne cautions that the technological imperative (we can do something) must be tempered with the moral imperative (should we do it?). Compared to ignorance, science as a body of knowledge may help us to take a better decision, but "to make a right decision wisdom must be added to knowledge".[35] There are intrinsically undesirable knowledge: e.g. to the know the genetic causes (if there are!) that produced differences of average physical strength or average mental ability – this knowledge would lead to unfair stereotyping; so better not to know them at all! Science is not just to accumulate information; all such wealth of information must turn into useful knowledge. But again knowledge must turn out to be wisdom, without which one may not know how to use that knowledge efficiently and effectively. As Francis Bacon insisted, science must take us back to the glorious life of pre-fallen stage described in the Book of Genesis. Humanity struggles to live a life of worth but in the bargain it loses life itself. That is why, T. S. Eliot rightly wonders: "Where is knowledge that is lost in information? Where is wisdom that is lost in knowledge? and Where is life that is lost in living?"

Wisdom will enable us to acquire intellectual humility and honesty. Newton becomes a great model for us in this regard when he said that the world might call him a great genius but as far as he was concerned he was only like a little boy on the sea-shore, playing with pebbles, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before him. Wisdom will evoke the child-like wonder in us which is necessary to pursue further investigations, in spite of struggles and failures. It teaches us to learn to live with unsolved mysteries by science and many elements that don't make any sense or fills us with awe and wonder, like that we can account only 4 % of the universe, and the remaining is in the form of dark energy/matter.[36]

Limited Science... Limitless Life!

It is our existential experience that there is a gap between what we want to be and what we actually end up being; we make use of

science and technology, and we rely on people for their love and affection, and in spite of all these, there seems to be a sort of unfulfillment and a sort of vacuum. All the efforts to fight for the sense of fullness have not been a total success and land us in frustration. "We are left with the choice: either to fight for the Impossible and Unlimited; or to submit to it. The people who fight against the fragility of humanity end up in frustration. The people who surrender to it develop an interior modification that enables them to lead their fragile existence meaningfully. That interior modification is "spirituality".[37]. All the domains of our life cannot be explained by science; there are issues and questions which cannot be touched upon by science. Even if they are explained by science those need not necessarily psychologically satisfy us and remove all our anxieties; they will not account for our need for love and affection, the passion for success and many other human needs and wants.

Cottingham gives a perceptive plan for a meaningful life: Because we are limited, finite and fragile, there is a sort of innate deep yearning for meaning and fulfillment in life, deep longing for the Impossible and Unlimited in life, and this is what is meant by religion in the postmodern times.[38] He invites us to come to terms with the limits; we need to realize that life is meaningful in spite of all its shortcomings, limits and limitations. The limits reveal that we are not unlimited and at the same time that life is worthwhile as we have the inner desire and longing to overcome those limits; and that makes life interesting and challenging. We need to develop a way of life, which admits traditions of worship, in total submission to God, not dominated by power of wealth and reason; our life has been mechanized by technology; has led us to individuality; we need to regain communal and collective consciousness. Pierre Hadot makes a meaningful suggestion: Spiritual exercises and experiences help one to accept our limitedness humbly; we need to renounce false values, while undertaking fervent prayer, meditation, a moderate life-style and the simple happiness of every practice of justice and truth.[39]

Finally, in his recent letter, former Pope Benedict XVI has clarified to Piergiorgio Odifreddi, a popular Italian atheist professor, who wrote a strong criticism against Benedict XVI's writings, on a certain fundamental issue that is very relevant to our discussion here:

namely, the professor has replaced God with 'nature', but he has not defined what this nature is; 'religion of faith' has been replaced by the 'religion of mathematics'. But this religion cannot touch upon the three basic elements of human existence – freedom, love and evil, which are so inevitable in our lives that they cannot be ignored. If any religion keeps silence on these issues as if they do not exist, that religion loses any worth.[40] Taking a cue from the former Pope, I would like to conclude that a revised understanding of science would certainly not allow religion to be replaced with science and it will take freedom, love and evil for serious reflection which would certainly enrich humanity.

Notes

1. For example, see: Charles Townes, "Testing Faith and Wrestling with Mystery", in *Faith in Science – Scientists Search for Truth*, ed. by Mark Richardson and Gordy Slack (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 170-86.
2. Van Fraassan, *The Scientific Image* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 12.
3. Philip Kitcher ,"Believing Where We Cannot Prove", in E.D. Klemke et al., (eds.), *Introductory Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998), p. 78.
4. Rudolf Carnap, "The Nature of Theories," in Klemeke, E. D., et al., (eds.), *Introductory Readings in the Philosophy of Science* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998), p. 330.
5. For example, Bertrand Russell is convinced that science offers a purposeless and meaningless universe, that is condemned to extinction, sooner or later, though he tries to find an humanistic answer to this challenge (See his work: *Mysticism and Logic, and Other Essays* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918). Similarly, Jacques Monad projects human beings as the ones who don't know their destiny in the vast Universe, where they are left alone (See his work: *Chance and Necessity: An Essay on the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology* (New York: Knopf, 1971). Max Weber and Richard Dawkins are also convinced that the Universe is brutally pointless. See: Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation", in Hand H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays*

in Sociology (NY: Oxford University Press, 1946), 138-9; and Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 30th anniversary edition, 2006).

6. *The Times of India*, Goa edition, 20 Sep, 2013, p.11.

7. Patrick Byrne, "Is the Universe on Our Side? Scientific Understanding and Religious Faith", in *The Lonergan Review*, III, 1, Nov 2011, 140-161, p. 149. Emphasis mine.8 http://www.phnet.fi/public/mamaal/einstein.htm (Accessed on 17 May, 2013)

9. Patrick Byrne, 2011, 140-161, p.156.

10 For an elaboration on the issue of the philosophical and religious leanings of quantum physicists see my paper: Stephen Jayard, "Mysticism and Quantum Physicists – Friends or Foes?," in *Omega – Indian Journal of Science and Religion*, Vol. 3, No.2, 2004. pp. 89 – 106.

11. David E. Rowe and Robert Schulman, *Einstein and Politics: His Private Thoughts and Public Stands on Nationalism War and Peace*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 234.

12. Hilary Putnam, "The Place of Facts in a World of Facts," in Douglas Huff and Omer Prewett (eds.), *The Nature of the Physical Universe* (New York: A Wiley-Inter-science Publication, 1979), 113-140.

13. "Are Values Valuable in Science? – A Kuhnian Perspective", in *Omega – Indian Journal of Science and Religion*, Vol 9, No 1, 2010, pp. 7-24. See also: Basu, Prajit K., "Theory-ladenness of evidence: A Case Study from History of Chemistry", Studies in History and Philosophy of Science, 34(2003), 351 – 368; and Brewer, William F., and Bruce L. Lambert, "The Theory-Ladenness of Observation and the Theory-Ladenness of the Rest of the Scientific Process," in *Philosophy of Science* 68, no. 3 (2001).

14. Newton-Smith, W. H., *The Rationality of Science* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 267. First print 1981.

15. I have elaborated elsewhere the role and relevance of 'intuition' in science and the implications of taking it seriously in science and life. See: Stephen Jayard, "The Role of Intuition in Science", in (ed.), *Together Towards Tomorrow – Interfacing Science and Religion in India* (Pune: Association of Science, Society and Religion, 2006), Kuruvilla Pandikattu (ed.), 2006, 145-170.

16. I have argued elsewhere to show that all our observations are theory-laden. (See: Stephen Jayard, "Observations on Observation in Philosophy of Science", in *Omega – Indian Journal of Science and Religion*, Vol.6, No.2, 2007, 65-84.

17. Peter Winch, *Ethics and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

18. Stephen Nathanson. *The Ideal of Rationality – A Defence, within Reason* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1994).

19 Jurgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, Trans. John Viertel (London: Heinemann, 1971). Of course, Habermas is better known for Communicative reason which is more comprehensive than practical rationality.

20. Tran Van Doan, *Reason, Rationality and Reasonableness*, Vietnamese Philosophical Series, I, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, Series I, Culture and Values; Vol 25, Series IIID, South East Asia, Vol. I, General Editor, George F. McLean, 2001.

21. I have considered some traditional notions of rationality; namely, rationality as logical consistency, as justification, as scientificity, as goal-orientedness, as the fundamental assumption of being humans, as deducibility, rationality in terms of true / false beliefs, and rationality provided by autonomous (a priori) principles – and construed rationality in science in terms of reasonableness. I see the role of reasonableness, in science, at three levels, though they cannot be categorized in water-tight compartments, nor are they exhaustive: *Reasonableness at the Personal Level of the Scientists* – Imagination, the Agent, Judgment and Intuition; *Reasonableness in Scientific Methodology* - Rejection of Zero-tolerance, An Enriched Notion of Objectivity, The Need of Skeptical Attitude, and The Need for Common Sense; and *Reasonableness in Scientific Practice* – Embracing Pragmatism and the Consensus of the Scientific Community. See: Stephen Jayard, *Towards a Theory of Rationality in Science – A Plea for Reasonableness*, New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2012.

22. Stephen Toulmin, *Return to Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 204.

23. John D. Barrow, 2005, p.154

24. C. John Collins, *Science and Faith – Friends or Foes?* (Illinois: Crossway Books, 2003), p. 40

25. Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch, *The Golem at Large: What You Should know about Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.101.

26. Klaus Jaffe, *What is Science? – An Interdisciplinary View* (NY: University Press of America, 2010), p. 31

27. C. G. Hempel, *The Philosophy of Carl G. Hempel – Studies in Science, Explanation and Rationality*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 331.

28. C. G. Hempel, 2001, p. 335.

29. Klaus Jaffe, 2010, pp. 69, 70

30. Klaus Jaffe, 2010, p. 30; emphasis mine.

31. Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 212.

32. John D. Barrow, *Impossibility – The Limits of Science and the Science of Limits* (London: Vintage, 2005), p.26

33. John Polkinghorne, *Beyond Science – The Wider Human Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 2

34. John D. Barrow, 2005, p. ix

35. John Polkinghorne, *Science and Theology – An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), p. 130.

36. John Malone, in his *Unsolved Mysteries of Science*, (Canada: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001), explains twenty one mysteries that are, or even cannot be, solved. Further, that there are several facts from the fields of Biology to Cosmology, from Psychology to Physics, that cannot be adequately explained even by eminent scientists is a claim made by Michael Brooks, *13 Things that Don't Make Sense* (London: Vintage, 2009).

37. Joe Arun, SJ, "The Post-modern God – ways of Being Religious in the Postmodern World", in *Vidyajyoti – Journal of Theological Reflection*, Vol. 73 (2009), 564-580, 571.

38. John Cottingham, *On the Meaning of Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

39. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p.103.

40. For more details: http://www.news.com.au/world-news/pope-benedict-breaks-his-silence-to-engage-atheist-mathematician-piergiorgio-odifreddi/story-fndir2ev-1226726585334. Accessed on 8 Oct, 3013.

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Faith Process in Human Development

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Abstract: This paper looks at Faith as a process of growth. Starting with Erikson's life as a journey of growth in eight psychosocial stages, it looks at various scholars who applied it to faith development. After comparing the theories of James Fowler, Scott Peck, Friedrich von Hugel and John Westerhoff, the author adopts the ring theory of Westerhoff and elucidates the relationship between Faith, Reason and Wisdom. These are similar to the three rings of tree, one developing over another layer. Faith is visible in the 'Affiliative stage' of Westerhoff. Reason is visible in the 'Searching Faith' of Westerhoff. Wisdom is manifested in the 'Owned faith'. During the searching faith, the clash of world views become very important and the author examines three dominant world views for this stage to demonstrate the conflicts a person faces in dealing with Faith. Thus, the process of Faith involves Reason and Wisdom.

Key words: stages of faith, Erik Erikson, John Westerhoff, worldviews, holographic worldview.

1. Theories of Human Development and Faith Process

Faith is a life-long process. Faith as a finished product is one that is stagnant. Faith as a response to God's Revelation and as an expression of trust in the unknown is a process that has degrees of conviction that is shown in living, knowing, and understanding. Starting from infancy, Faith goes through different stages of development. In order to be able to determine the *state* of our Faith we need to know the *stage* of our Faith. Faith – like life – is a journey of growth, development and becoming. It involves change, movement, loss and gain. A number of phases or stages of the faith journey can be identified, mirroring the stages of human

psychological development from infancy to adulthood. Life as a journey of growth is pioneered by Erik Erikson[1]. Erikson stressed the importance of cultural influences on development and outlined eight psychosocial stages, periods during which all individuals must confront a common crisis, caused in part by the new demands posed by different phases of life. He presents human growth from the point of view of the conflicts, inner and outer, which the healthy personality weathers, emerging and re-emerging with an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase in the capacity to do well, according to the standards of those who are significant to him. The individual who resolves such a crisis improperly will, according to Erikson, face problems later.

The Eight Psycho-social stages of Human Development According to Erikson[2]

Stage	Basic Conflict	Important Events	Outcome
Infancy (birth to 18 months)	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care, and affection. A lack of this will lead to mistrust.
Early Childhood (2 to 3 years)	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Toilet Training	Children need to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence. Success leads to feelings of autonomy, failure results in feelings of shame and doubt.
Preschool (3 to 5 years)	Initiative vs. Guilt	Exploration	Children need to begin asserting control and power over the environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. Children who try to exert too much power experience disapproval, resulting in a sense of guilt.
School Age (6 to 11 years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	School	Children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of

			competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority.
Adolescence (12 to 18 years)	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Social Relationships	Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself, while failure leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self.
Young Adulthood (19 to 40 years)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Relationships	Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.
Middle Adulthood (40 to 65 years)	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Work and Parenthood	Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or creating a positive change that benefits other people. Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.
Maturity(65 to death)	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Reflection on Life	Older adults need to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfilment. Success at this stage leads to feelings of wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair.

Faith founded on our belief system is also a dynamic experience and it develops corresponding to our physical and neural growth. Inspired by Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, several authors have depicted faith as a growth journey in phases. The theory of 'stages of faith' was originally spelt out by Professor James Fowler in 1981. In his book entitled *Stages of Faith*[3] he identified 6 stages of spiritual development. Fowler's stages relate to normal/typical human spiritual development, in terms of the individual's relationship to the 'Universal' or 'Transcendent' (not necessarily God). Fowler's six stages of Faith are the following[4]:

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith

Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith

Stage one and two are focused on Faith per se. Stage 3, 4 and 5 deal with Reason and Faith. Stage six deals with Wisdom and Faith.

Fowler's stages correspond roughly to an age range. M. Scott Peck's schema, by contrast, is not tied to specific age ranges but relate to stages in the development of religious faith leading to and following on from a conversion experience. In this schema, a person may convert at any age, and at any later age may start to question and then deepen their faith. He enumerates four stages in his book, *Further Along the Road Less Travelled*:[5]

Stage I is chaotic, disordered, and reckless. Very young children are in Stage I. They tend to defy and disobey, and are unwilling to accept a will greater than their own. Many criminals are people who have never grown out of Stage I.

Stage II is the stage at which a person has blind faith. Once children learn to obey their parents, they reach Stage II. Many so-called religious people are essentially Stage II people, in the sense that they have blind faith in God, and do not question His existence. With blind faith comes humility and a willingness to obey and serve. The majority of good law-abiding citizens never move out of Stage II.

Stage III is the stage of scientific skepticism and inquisitiveness. A Stage III person does not accept things on faith but only accepts them if convinced logically. Many people working in scientific and technological research are in Stage III.

Stage IV is the stage where an individual starts enjoying the mystery and beauty of nature. While retaining skepticism, he starts perceiving grand patterns in nature. His religiousness and spirituality

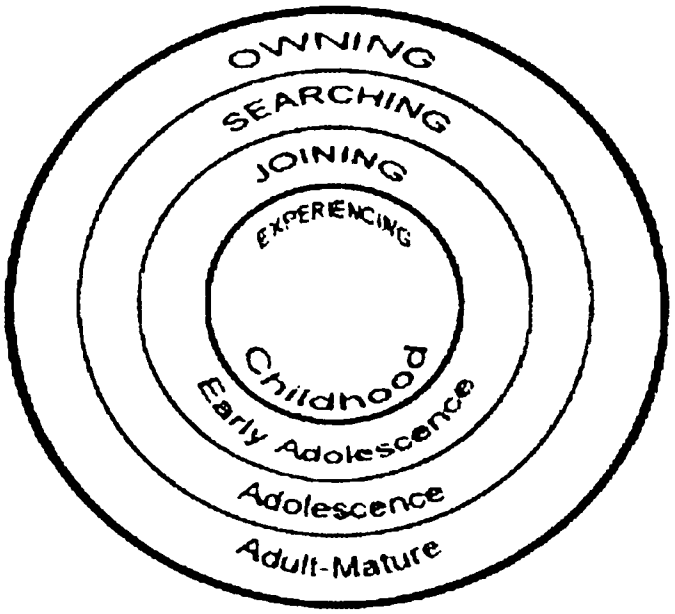
differ significantly from that of a Stage II person, in the sense that he does not accept things through blind faith but does so because of genuine belief. Stage IV people are labelled as mystics.

Friedrich von Hugel[6] offers a 3 stage faith development for "Integrated Religious Development".

The three key stages he outlined are connected with childhood, youth and adulthood. Children can grow up happily within an 'institutional' kind of faith, where their images of life are shaped by their belonging to a family and church tradition. They learn to say night prayers or to prepare for communion. They find themselves at home in faith as inherited. But some years later a young person can run into many new questions and he or she needs a more 'critical' approach: at this stage one's faith looks for reasons that make sense. For von Hügel a third or adult stage of faith goes beyond these two institutional and rational dimensions to what he calls a more 'mystical' phase. By this he meant that "faith also needs to be experienced in depth, to be felt rather than seen or reasoned about and to be loved and lived rather than analysed"[7]. And he summed up his threefold adventure of faith in one concise sentence: 'I believe because I am told, because it is true, because it answers to my deepest interior experiences and needs'[8].

Westerhoff[9] identifies four concentric "rings" that an individual passes through on his or her journey of spiritual development. According to him, Faith grows like the rings of a tree, with each ring adding to and changing the tree somewhat, yet building on that which has grown before. Adapting Westerhoff's terminology a bit[10], the rings may be named as ***experiencing, joining, searching,* and *owning*** styles of faith as shown in fig. 1.

Fig. 1



The circle at the centre is ***experiencing***. This stage is linked to childhood, and the key is for children to experience the faith community as a place where they feel loved and accepted.

The second circle is ***joining***. This is a stage in early adolescence and is a time when the young person looks to belong to a faith community and to join "God's family."

The third circle is ***searching***. This stage corresponds to later adolescence and the natural shift in intellectual capacity. To use Piaget's terminology, one moves from concrete to formal operations. Adolescents are questioning their experience of faith, the church, and what they have been taught, as well as the experiences of others.

The fourth circle is ***owning***. This is a stage during adulthood when the person makes a decision to believe and personalize what they have been taught as a child. This person is now believing because he wants to.

Looking at the development of these four concentric rings in an individual's faith development, one can compare the growth of a person through faith, reason and wisdom. In the first stage, a person

experiences faith in the family. In the second stage, that faith is accepted without any questioning. In the next stage, faith is questioned and in the process, it is made one's own. As the person grows further, this faith process leads to wisdom. As a tree grows taller, similar to the aging of the tree, so also the width of the tree increases adding new layers. Fig 2, demonstrates the growth and integration of Faith, Reason and Wisdom.

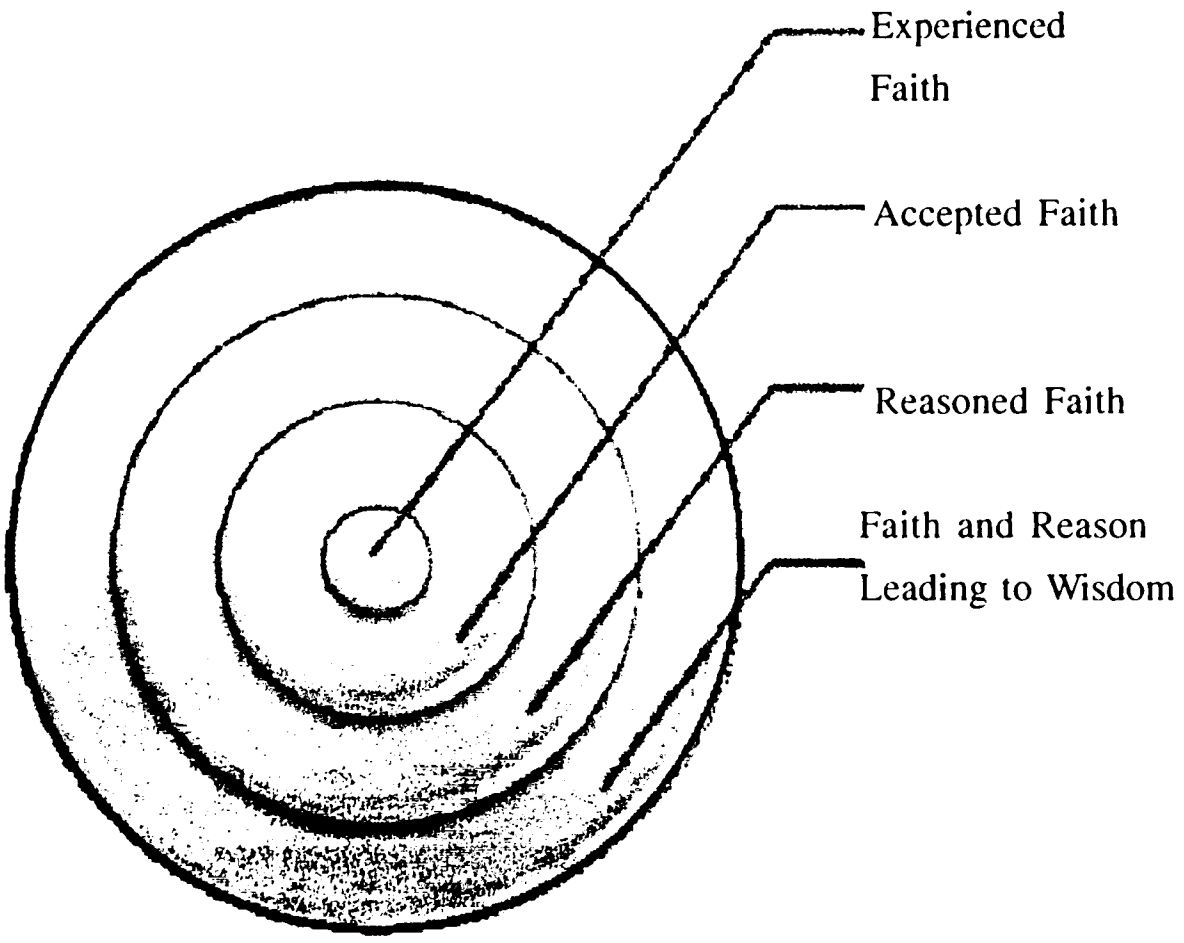


Fig 2

Having briefly looked at the different stages proposed by different thinkers, let us consider Westerhoff's stages in more detail.

2.Experienced Faith

Westerhoff's first stage of faith begins at birth. It does not necessarily determine the course of our later faith, but it does lay the foundations on which later faith will build or that will have to be

rebuilt in later faith. We find this stage grounded in that which comes through feelings or sensory experiences in the form of interactions with others and our world.

It is critical during this infancy stage that a child is able to develop a basic sense of trust in him/her self, in other people and in the world in general. Infants need emotional support that includes attention, warmth and touch, interest in what they are doing and empathy. When these basic emotional needs are not met, a child is not able to sense the world as trustworthy. The ability to trust and respond to those who have primary responsibility for their care is the foundation for future development and it is critical for the way they hold their faith. Basic trust makes it possible for the child to have hope. The failure to develop trust and to attach strongly to a caring adult has implications for the child's life of faith. A child who has not learned to trust other people may find it difficult to trust God and God's care for him/her. The lack of empathy will limit the child's ability to love others and the possibility of the child's healthy future development—emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual—is compromised.

Erikson's second stage, autonomy versus shame and doubt (ages of 18 months to 3 years), also occurs during the "experienced faith" stage. During this time, a child begins to see himself/herself as a separate being interacting with people and objects around him/her. At this age, children have also gained more control over their physical movements. This stage has been described as a delicate balancing act: setting limits and experiencing newness of self-regulation. Eriksson states, "This stage becomes decisive for the ratio of love and hate, cooperation and willfulness, freedom of self-expression and its suppression. From the sense of self-control without loss of self-esteem comes a lasting sense of good will and pride.[11]"

Usually by age four, children have fully arrived into Eriksson's third stage. Pretend play, sometimes called symbolic play, gives the child an opportunity to practice the roles and behaviours of their culture. During these early years they learn to trust other people, themselves, and the world, not because they are told of their worth and the world is trustworthy, but because they experience it as

such. At the core is the faith which they experience from their earliest years of life.

Faith as an essential human experience, according to behavioural sciences, is a nurtured behaviour. Faith is implanted in an individual from the moment of his/her conception and developed by the early experiences of human interaction with the parents and the family. Later, it is cultivated and shaped by sound beliefs, which form the foundation of faith and which are inculcated in a human person. Andrew Newberg says in his book *Born to Believe*[12] that no one is born with certain faith or religious affiliation but he/ she is taught to form and to live his/her beliefs. Beliefs of a particular religion or ideology are transmitted to him/her which become his/her convictions and commitments giving orientation and power to live.

The belief system of an individual depends on the parallel development of the brain and its activities like cognition. Jean Piaget[13] speaks about the four stages of cognitive development from the birth to adolescence, when individuals grow learning in the first stage through sensory experience but later in the adolescent stage they are capable of abstract learning.

A person who did not have a normal childhood and did not experience trust and faith is going to find it difficult to experience faith in his/her life. As that person grows up, the affiliative faith (second stage) may not take place at all. Some people through therapy and such other experiences may develop faith later.

3. Affiliated Faith (Early adolescence)

It is a time of belonging to a group and a time which centres around the imitation of what the group does. These are busy, active years for the child and the family. The primary social context is school followed quickly by sports teams, music lessons and groups, scouting, and the church. Eriksson identifies this stage as that of industry versus inferiority. A child's job or task is to learn the basic skills of life and how to function. As a child moves into what we call the primary and elementary school years (6-11), the style of their faith takes on a different quality. As another ring is added, the qualities of experienced faith are not left behind completely; rather the new is

added to the old and the quality of faith changes. This doesn't necessarily correlate in chronological stage only. The journey of faith assumes these qualities and stages at any age.

Fowler calls it the age of *mythic-literal* faith[14]. Adolescents at this stage enter into the world of identity formation, adventure, personalisation and assertion. Anything and everything they learn are visualized and dramatized yet critically analysed before assimilating them. The characters in the stories and narratives become real and they develop a strong sense of justice, love, truth, etc. represented by the myths and legends. Adolescents identify themselves with the characters of the narratives and stories and their beliefs are formed as literal interpretations or as moral rules and attitudes. Moreover the sources of perception and inputs of information are no more the classical agencies, like family, school, etc. and the authority of parents and teachers is eroded by the peers and the media. Affiliative faith extends to the age of *synthetic* and *conventional* faith of Fowler. As individuals they form their identity, faith and personality. It is characterized by conformity to religious authority and the development of a personal identity but also pulled asunder between personal judgment and expectations and dictates of the authority

This phase of a person's growth is recognized as a time of testing. It is a matching of the person with peer expectations. Where traditions, values, and practices are similar, there usually is a good match and the individual merges his or her identity with that of the body. There is little room for personal differences due to a strong emphasis on unity and conformity in belief and practice. The concerns of belonging, for security, and for a sense of power (and identity) that come from group membership are the key drivers in forming one's faith concept during this period. This level of faith is expressed, at the earliest, during the adolescent years.

4. Searching Faith And Reason (late adolescence onwards)

The third stage of faith development, **searching faith**, is the faith of questioning and internalizing what we have long been taught. Searching faith usually begins during late adolescence and often

continues in earnest during young adulthood. This stage can be troubling for parents, teachers, etc. if not properly understood. And, of course, it's risky. However, only by questioning and testing what we have long been taught can we truly come to accept and internalize these teachings. Searching faith is a necessary prerequisite to owned faith.

The Fourth and fifth stages of James Fowler - *individuative* and *reflective* as well as *conjunctive* faith coincide with this stage. This stage develops in an individual due to critical reflection on the self and on the world-view. As adults, they take responsibility for their emotions, beliefs, attitudes, commitments and life-style. Fowler calls it as 'demythologising stage' which is marked by uncertainty and conflict between personal conviction and the imposition and expectation of society. However, there is openness to a new complexity of faith, but this also increases the awareness of conflicts in one's belief system.

The *conjunctive*[15] stage is when the individual goes through the mid-life crisis. He or she acknowledges the absurdity of life and the transcendence relating reality behind the symbols of inherited systems. Hence, Fowler says that there should be a critical recognition of one's social unconscious - the myths, ideal images and prejudices - built deeply into the self-system by virtue of one's nurture within a particular social class, religious tradition, ethnic group, etc. The limits of logic are acknowledged and the paradoxes in life are accepted. Life is understood as a mystery and key to solve it is to be found not with mere critical thinking but with naive faith and simplicity. Faith is enlivened rather by surrendering to the intricate presence of the divine rather than wriggling with the complexities of life.

The individuals in this stage lives and acts in a divided situation - divided between an untransformed world and a transforming vision and loyalties that they have inherited and nurtured. Their convictions and commitments to truth and values are real but the power of evil that has confronted them in their life, is also alarmingly factual. Hence, faith is challenged by the aggression of the faithless world. If proper care is not taken, persons at crisis of identity and

accomplishments may give up faith completely or turn out to be indifferent practitioners of religious rituals in a routine manner.

4.1 The clash of worldviews during the questioning phase

Everyone lives with a world view and all of us have an orientation to the world that situates us with respect to the earth and its happenings, and to our fellow humans and other creatures who live with us on this planet. Our worldview is constructed from the totality of our life experiences. It is made up of womb and birth experiences, of our formative years, of interactions with parents other humans, genetic sensitivities and insensitivities, physical and cultural circumstances, linguistic environments, education and so on. It is the prevailing myth within which we live. We can define a worldview as "*the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things and their relationships.*" So, a worldview is the basic perspective we use to understand the world around us and our experience of it. A worldview is an everyday ordinary-language description of the world that shapes and guides our lives, helping us to explore, understand and explain the world around us and everything in it, and how these are all related to each other, by giving us a way in which we can see them.

All of us live out of a worldview, even if we do not realise it, or are unable to articulate it if asked. But a systematic articulation of a worldview is not what drives us in life; it is the worldview itself which does that, so being able to spell out and examine a worldview is not essential for living. It is not the articulated presentation of the worldview that drives us, but the actual worldview rooted in our deepest being. Thomas Kuhn's influential book, *the Structure of scientific revolutions*, maintains that both theories and data in science are dependent on the prevailing paradigms of the scientific community. He defined a paradigm as a cluster of conceptual, metaphysical, and methodological presuppositions embodied in a tradition of scientific work. With a new paradigm, the old data are reinterpreted and seen in new ways, and new kinds of data are sought. A paradigm shift is, in Kuhn's words, "a radical transformation of the scientific imagination", a 'scientific revolution' which is not the product of experiment alone[16]. In the choice between paradigms there are no rules for applying scientific

criteria or for judging their relative importance. Their evaluation is an act of judgment by the scientific community. A paradigm defines a community which works together within a set of shared assumptions. An established paradigm is resistant to falsifications, since discrepancies between theory and data can be set aside as anomalies or reconciled by introducing ad hoc hypotheses[17].

a. The Christian worldview

A truly Christian worldview accepts the dominion of God over the world he has made, and made known through his revelation to us in Scripture. We need a worldview because we are creatures of God created to respond to him in how we live our lives, that is, we are responsible beings who cannot hold purely arbitrary beliefs or make unprincipled decisions. We are created responsive creatures, and need something to guide us in the responses we make, to hold our responses together to form a coherent and consistent way of life.

The major themes of a biblical worldview are: **Creation, fall, redemption,** and **consummation.**

These themes are not simply chronological, although that is part of the structure of Scripture. They are introduced progressively in chronological order, but continue to be expanded and developed and are interwoven with each other throughout the whole of Scripture.

There is not much point in discussing discernment of spirits unless there is a spiritual world to discern. If we are indeed confined to the everyday world of space and time, talking about spiritual influences is quite nonsensical. If one is going to try to distinguish which influences come from God and which come from some other source, it is first of all necessary to believe that there is a spiritual world and that it affects our world profoundly.

One aspect of the New Testament narrative which has been discredited almost universally in modern times is the belief in the realm of spiritual beings, a vast realm of angelic and also demonic beings. Along with the belief in spiritual healing, dreams, visions and other such

intrusions into our self-contained physical world, the idea of active and effective spiritual entities is regarded as absurd.

b. The materialistic worldview/scientific worldview

In the last 500 years, materialistic philosophy has permeated every level of society. So pervasive has it been that most people, in one way or another, have come under its influence. This fundamental materialist philosophy arose from an understanding of the universe which was based on a mechanistic model. Scientific materialism makes two assertions: (1) the scientific method is the only reliable path to knowledge; (2) matter is the fundamental reality in the universe.

Newton built an understating of the universe, complete as far as it went, which was so successful that until the present century it was accepted by all scientists. For Newton matter was extended in space, and reality consisted of concrete objects moving in space and time. Measurement of mass, motion and other properties, and their interrelationships, provided the model of the universe.

Biological science went ahead to attempt to explain life and living phenomena in terms of mechanical causality, using the concepts and physics and chemistry. Darwin enunciated the theory of evolution. Molecular biology has made extraordinary discoveries about the nature and function of genetic material, and in the area of genetic engineering immense new visions have opened up, all within the framework of this mechanistic system. Life, itself, then, came to be explained exclusively in terms of mechanism. In cosmology and the natural sciences generally the existence of God was no longer necessary. In psychology the existence of a soul was considered superfluous. The whole human being could be explained in terms of mechanistic causality.

In the recent past, new wrinkles were added to the fabric of the universe: quantum mechanics, the Uncertainty Principle, String theory, dark matter, Higg's particle, black holes, expanding universe, and Relativity, to name a few. The whole field of communication has been modified by the new computer communication technologies using the different frequencies of the electromagnetic waves. Neuro-science has opened up new ways of looking at the functioning of

the brain. There is a whole lot of research trying to understand the source of emotions.

c. The holographic worldview

In the mid-1960's, Holography was developed, in which the interference patterns of twin laser beams create realistic three-dimensional images. Interestingly enough, any fragment of the holographic film can be used to create the entire original 3-D image. What is fascinating about the hologram is that if the photographic plate on which the object is recorded is cut into pieces, each piece when illuminated by coherent light will reconstruct the whole image, perfect in every detail, although less sharply defined. The hologram is a concrete example of the principle that the whole is present in every part.

If a hologram of a rose is cut in half and then illuminated by a laser, each half will still be found to contain the entire image of the rose. Indeed, even if the halves are divided again, each snippet of film will always be found to contain a smaller but intact version of the original image. Unlike normal photographs, every part of a hologram contains all the information possessed by the whole. The "whole in every part" nature of a hologram provides us with an entirely new way of understanding organization and order. The new physics presents us with an understanding of the physical world as a field of energies, an integrated whole in which the whole is present in every part.

Each of us, in the cells of our body, is linked with the original matter of the universe because the entire universe, and everything in it, is one integrated whole. We are all linked with all the original cells which began to form on this earth as it reached a state when life could emerge. The status of the observer in science has also been reconsidered. The earlier accounts had identified objectivity with the separability of the observer from the object of observation. But in quantum physics the influence of the process of observation on the system observed is crucial. In relativity, the most basic measurements, such as the mass, velocity and length of an object, depend on the frame of reference of the observer.

In addition to its phantomlike nature, such a universe would possess other rather startling features. If the apparent separateness

of subatomic particles is illusory, it means that at a deeper level of reality all things in the universe are infinitely interconnected. The electrons in a carbon atom in the human brain are connected to the subatomic particles that comprise every salmon that swims, every heart that beats, and every star that shimmers in the sky. Everything interpenetrates everything, and although human nature may seek to categorize and pigeonhole and subdivide, the various phenomena of the universe, all apportionments are of necessity artificial and all of nature is ultimately a seamless web.

In a holographic universe, even time and space could no longer be viewed as fundamentals. Because concepts such as location break down in a universe in which nothing is truly separate from anything else, time and three-dimensional space would also have to be viewed as projections of this deeper order. At its deeper level reality is a sort of superhologram in which the past, present, and future all exist simultaneously

I have listed just three worldviews. There are many others that a person may hold . Today we live in a world where a person may simultaneously hold multiple worldviews. When I teach Physics, I work out of a scientific world view. As a priest, I work out of a biblical world view. As a spiritual guide, I use a holographic worldview. At times they clash with each other. Some people find it very difficult to live with multiple worldviews without questioning their faith. Some others give up their faith because they believe in a scientific worldview.

5. Owned Faith And Wisdom (early adulthood onwards)

This stage only comes through the searching stage. This is the strong, personal faith that one witnesses to and one is willing to die for. This final stage of faith development, **owned faith**, rarely occurs before young adulthood. Because of the serious struggle with doubt that precedes it, owned faith may appear as a great illumination or enlightenment. It's now our own faith and no longer merely the faith of our parents, family, etc. Even though doubts and questions remain, those who own their faith want to witness it by personal

and social action, and are willing and able to stand up for what they believe.

James Fowler calls this stage as the stage of *universalizing* faith. It is an age of enlightenment and wisdom, which overcomes the paradoxes and uncertainties of the previous stages and arrives at the stage of making the imperatives of absolute love and justice real and tangible. Those who attain this stage of faith become actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community. They would embrace everyone with compassion as members of a universal community, as St. Paul claims, 'they have become all things for all people'.[18]

Conclusion

For a life that is Faith-filled, for a Faith that is lively, for a full-flowering and for a fruitful Faith all these three stages of Faith, Reason and Wisdom must be present for the faith journey of a spiritual person at any given time. Insistence on one at the expense of the other(s) can be detrimental. Faith as a process involves one leading to the other. My Faith is "richest", "deepest" and "fullest" when all stages are operative.

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Christian Faith, Philosophy, and Culture:
The Triumphs and Failures of Wisdom

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Abstract: Convinced that those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it, this paper looks at the history of the interaction between Christian faith and culture in the Western tradition. Presenting two millennia of history in such limited space is bound to be fragmentary. But it serves the limited purpose of uncovering the dynamics of the interaction between faith and culture. It is seen that faith flourished as long as it remained faithful to this dynamics and it declined when it failed to do so, i.e., from the modern period to the present. The latter can be seen as a failure of wisdom inasmuch as wisdom consists in creatively responding to a given situation. This realization, in turn, prompts another look at Aquinas to see if he can function as an exemplar for integrating reason and faith in the contemporary world.

Keywords: God-man, Aquinas, Philosophy, Theology, Culture

Introduction

Recent pontiffs have been insistent on linking faith and reason.[1] While there is more than one reason for this insistence, the most clearly stated reason is a perceived crisis in "postconciliar theology".[2] Some observers see this crisis existing already before Vatican I (1869-70)[3], and still others trace it to the Enlightenment.[4] The depth of the crisis can be gauged from the Church's incoherent, flip-flop responses to modernity. After an initial period of welcoming modernity the Church began to build the protective walls of neo-scholasticism around its theology, culminating in the anti-modernist oath; then it demolished that carefully, constructed fortress with one stroke and

embraced the new currents at Vatican II; presently there is the rather ambiguous stand of seeing Thomas Aquinas as an "exemplar" of integrating faith and reason, without giving his thought an official stamp.[5] This stand is ambiguous inasmuch as it can be read either as an open ended statement or as an attempt to return to scholasticism. What is clear is the mandate to study "the relationship between reason and Christian faith – that is, between philosophy and theology – from a systematic and historical point of view".[6] This demand seems to be prompted by the realization that those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.[7] Prodded on by this realization, the following study looks at the history of the interaction between philosophy and Christian faith, in the briefest possible manner. It will be seen that the interaction between the two cannot be studied in isolation from culture. Thus, a dynamic, triadic relationship is seen between Christian faith, prevailing culture, and philosophy. History of their mutual interactions shows a pattern such that creative response to cultural changes enabled Christian faith to flourish whereas the failure to do so led to its decline, of which the present theological crisis is a symptom.

The structure of the paper is as follows: after some terminological clarifications regarding rationality of faith and its relation to culture there will be three brief sections dealing with three important moments in the history of Christianity that instantiate this relationship. The fifth section examines in greater detail the exemplary character of Aquinas' manner of relating Christian faith to culture, and finally some reflections on the opportunities and dangers presented by contemporary culture for Christian faith.

1. Preliminary Considerations

'Culture' is understood as a humanly constructed environment as opposed to the natural environment; it is a human achievement and not a given.[8] It is made up of diverse components, like art and architecture, science and technology, economic and political organization of society, and above all, language, ideas, and the values underlying these human constructions (i.e., philosophy, theology, and sciences). Of these, we will be primarily concerned with the last (ideational) component. The significance of culture is that they

provide a pattern of acceptable forms of life and behaviour (cultivated behaviour as against instinctual behaviour) such that one does not have to start by re-inventing the wheel for oneself.[9]

The term 'faith' could be understood either in a generic, philosophical sense or in a more specific religious sense. In a generic sense, faith is the ultimate stand one adopts towards life in the world. In this sense everyone lives by faith.[10] However, the word 'faith' is more commonly used in the context of religious faith. Since I will be concerned only with Christian faith, which is one specific form of religious faith, I shall identify its core with a commitment to the mystery of the God-man, or the divine as experienced in the human person of Jesus. That hyphenated term (God-man) is meant to indicate the bifocal vision of that lies at the heart of Christianity, which makes it a kind of humanism that is rooted in the Transcendent. Unlike the secular humanism of the modern era that saw God as a threat to human autonomy (see section 4 below), the humanism that lies at the heart of Christian faith sees God as the source and the guarantor of human fulfillment. This humanism was best put by St. Irenaeus (130-202 C.E.) when he proclaimed that the glory of God is man fully alive. This bifocal vision of Christian faith gives it an identity that is inseparable from its mission. On the one hand, since nothing human is alien to the Christian, Christian faith assumes a trans-cultural character. It has a point of access to any culture inasmuch as that culture is human; no culture is alien to it. On the other hand, Christian faith is not completely at home in any culture because as mere human products, every culture needs to be touched and transformed by the mystery of the God-man. This built-in tension between Christian faith and culture was most succinctly put by the author of the second century document *Epistle to Diogenetus* where it is said that for Christians "every alien homeland is theirs and every homeland alien".[11] If this formulation of the dynamic relationship between faith and culture comes from the beginnings of Christianity, its latest expression comes from Pope Francis. His affirmation that "every culture offers positive values and forms which can enrich the way the Gospel is preached, understood and lived"[12] indicates its access to all cultures; his statement that "no single culture can

exhaust the mystery of our redemption in Christ"[13] emphasizes its trans-cultural character.

The word 'reason' too has diverse meanings and since I cannot deal with them here, I merely suggest that Peter's address at the temple after the Pentecost (Act 2: 12 ff) be taken as the first attempt at showing the rationality of Christian faith. Here is a situation of perplexity and lack of understanding; the disciples are accused of being irrational, drunk, out of their minds. Peter tells them that such is not the case and helps them to understand the situation by referring them to the words of Prophet Joel. If this is taken as a model for linking reason and faith, then it has two implications. First, rationality of faith consists in bringing the content of one's faith (object of one's *shraddha*) accessible to others whose faith (object of *shraddha*) differs from one's own. Second, to make one's faith so accessible is to relate it to those beliefs that are already accessible to the listeners. In other words, Peter would not have been able to explain his faith with the help of the Prophet, if his listeners were not Jews. The implication is that the rationality of faith can change from time to time and from culture to culture. This is a crucial point for exploring the rationality of faith down the centuries, as done in this paper.

What about wisdom? It concerns "sound and serene judgment regarding the conduct of life".[14] Wisdom is a practical matter; so are techniques. Knowledge, understood as information, is basic to both wisdom and techniques. But techniques are context free; anyone who knows the principle of the lever can use it to lift weights. Wisdom calls for a creative response to the uniqueness of given situations. Learning to use a gun is to learn a technique; but determining when to use it calls not only for knowledge of the situation but also for wisdom. Reflectiveness and judgment are the two basic components of wisdom.[15] Therefore, wisdom tends to be creative whereas technique is repetitive. If rationality of faith consists in making one's faith accessible to the people of a given culture, doing it creatively without undermining the built-in tension between faith and culture demands wisdom. We shall see that successful responses to cultural change maintained this tension whereas the other responses undermined it. The present crisis of

Christian theology can be seen as an instance of the unfolding of this dynamics. In order to show this I shall divide the history of Western Christianity into three main stages.

2. Pre-Thomistic Christianity (Beginnings to the 12th century)

Placing this large chunk of history into one category might seem arbitrary, as a lot had changed during these centuries. Christianity had changed from being a persecuted religion to becoming the successor to the Roman Empire, uniting the whole of Europe; Islam had emerged as a powerful force about which the Church did not feel very comfortable. In spite of such major changes, there are three reasons for placing this part of history into one category. First, the Greco-Roman culture into which Christianity was born was an enchanted one, permeated with gods, goddesses, and spiritual powers. It remained so throughout this period and beyond. Second, while the philosophers were unsparing in their criticism of vanity of their deities, their philosophies –especially neo-Platonism and Stoicism—remained spiritual pursuits. Philosophy in the ancient world was not theoretical speculation, but a way of life.[16] In a world that was saturated with philosophies of this kind, Christianity was consciously cultivated as a distinct philosophy.[17] This brings me to the third reason for placing this part of history into one category. Throughout this period, there is no distinction between philosophy and theology. Whether it was Justin martyr or Origen of old, or Augustine or Anselm of later centuries, their theology is philosophy. Anselm goes to the extent of trying to explain the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation in a manner "as if nothing were known about Christ".[18]

The kind of tension that an enchanted world brings to Christian faith concerns the nature of the deity. Thus we have the great Christological controversies. Christian thinkers steadfastly maintained the tension between their faith and culture by resisting all attempts to deny either the humanity or the divinity of Jesus.

3. Aquinas and the Aristotelian Christianity

From our perspective the first major cultural change took place in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. The twelfth century is marked by the rise of two brilliant Peters: Peter Abelard dazzled with his logical sharpness and Peter Lombard became a shining star on account of his brilliance in synthesizing faith statements from the stalwarts of the previous millennium. These two Peters, together, prepared the way for the great scholastic flourishing that followed. Further, universities like Paris and Oxford that would hold sway over Christendom in the following centuries came into existence at this time. Most important of all, scholarly contact with the Islamic world brought the major works of Aristotle into limelight and began to gain wide circulation. Unlike the Augustinian model that studied nature (Book of nature) under the guidance of the Bible (Book of scripture) to see the imprints of God in nature, Aristotle was seen to study nature on its own terms. This posed a major challenge to Christian faith. The initial reaction was to ban the study of Aristotle's natural philosophy, but without much success. It was the genius of Aquinas that overcame this problem and made Aristotle look almost a Christian. To put in contemporary parlance, he was the first one to recognize the autonomy of the sacred and secular without allowing that autonomy to become a division or fragmentation.

In order to accomplish that, Aquinas had to address two problems. The first was the problem of integrating the natural philosophy of Aristotle with the transcendent focus of Christian faith. This was not too difficult, as Aristotle himself had shown a way of doing this by linking his physics with metaphysics, by arguing from the observed world to an Unmoved Mover to explain the observed change and motion in the world. Aquinas followed this model and what he accomplished came to be known as the famous Five Ways. The fact that thirteenth century European culture was still an enchanted one that placed a high premium on metaphysics made this passage from physics to metaphysics smooth and effortless.

The second problem arose from Aquinas' realization that, as far as Christian faith was concerned, logic and philosophy can go so far and no further. Unlike Anselm, he was very clear that some

doctrines of Christian faith (like the Trinity) cannot be made accessible to all. This was a more difficult problem to handle than the first as he had no model solutions available; he had to devise one himself. His solution consisted in making a sharp distinction between "natural" reason and supernatural revelation, philosophy and theology. He argued that these two ways of knowing cannot conflict; on the contrary they complement each other inasmuch as the one tells us *that* God exists and the other tells us *what* God is. Thus philosophy functions as preambles to theology. Thus Aquinas managed to maintain the tension between faith and culture by distinguishing theology and philosophy and yet dynamically linking the one with the other.

4. The Challenge of Modernity

The biggest cultural challenge to Christian faith came with modernity, that amalgam of disparate factors that came to be called Enlightenment rationality. It included the scientific revolution with its enormous potential to predict and control the natural phenomena, the Renaissance or the rebirth of the classical humanist cultural traditions of ancient Greece and Rome, the Reformation and counter-Reformation with their focus on ecclesiastical reforms, and the French revolution with its promise of fraternity, equality, and liberty in place of feudal monarchy and ecclesiastical hierarchy. The combined result was that in many respects human beings began to occupy the place reserved for God in the earlier era.[19] It was a declaration of human independence from God and the world, from society and its inherited traditions, including the Christian heritage.

Autonomy from God resulted in the secularization of society, that "process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols".[20] This was an entirely different kind of humanism from the Christian humanism coming from the inspiration of the God-man. This was a self-enclosed humanism that derived entirely from within the alleged nature of human beings than from any rootedness in transcendence.[21] It would be no exaggeration to say that modernity replaced the God-man with Man-god where man[22] created gods to suit his thinking. Typical was the idea of a deistic god that satisfied the human need

for explaining the origins of the world; this was in distinct continuity with the Aristotelian-Thomistic natural theology. But unlike that tradition, this god was not permitted to intervene in a world that functioned on the basis of mechanical scientific laws.

Emerging from an era of plagues and Black Death modern man declared his autonomy from nature. Now on he was to control nature rather than being controlled by it. Nature was seen as a machine, not a source of awe and wonder. Aristotle's complex rationality of four-fold causes gave way to just one of those causes, namely, efficient causality or empirical reason. Eventually, empirical sciences would be considered as the only legitimate paradigm of human knowledge. This results in philosophy (that was the handmaid of theology for the scholastics) becoming the under-labourer of science (Locke). Theology, the old queen of sciences, was dethroned and sent into exile, into the margins of modern universities. Sciences themselves, devoid of the unity provided by either the ancient metaphysics or by God, would become numerous autonomous disciplines, resulting in the fragmentation of knowledge and life.

Moderns declared their autonomy not only from God and nature but also from society and received traditions. "Have the courage to use your own reason" (Kant) became the motto of the age. Reason was understood as an individual achievement, a matter of bringing under conscious scrutiny and control. Earlier, human life was seen as having a built-in *telos*, a journey towards God. Modernity had no place for such *telos*, except those goals which human beings themselves put in place. Thus, modern man recognized himself as instinctual and selfish, free to accumulate (growth of capitalism occurs at this time) and copulate, but as rational beings, these activities could be done in an orderly fashion by freely coming together in a social contract.

4.1. Responses to Modernity

The Catholic Church rightly saw that modern culture and its self-enclosed humanism was at loggerheads with its own vision and mission. Its response to such comprehensive dissonance with the prevalent culture came in the form of *Aeterni Patris* (1879), the

encyclical that made scholasticism its official philosophy and theology, culminating in the anti-modernist oath of 1910. These moves gave an identity to the Church that made it distinct from the prevailing culture as well as from the protestant traditions struggling to cope with the modernity. But it also meant that while Aristotle was out of favour in the surrounding culture, Aristotelian thinking remained the heart of the Church's intellectual life. While the identity fostered by the scholastic fortification led to a vibrant life within the Church, it was an identity bought at the cost of its mission. It could not reach out to the men and women steeped in modern culture. The built-in tension between faith and culture was managed by isolating itself from culture. If the original identity of Christian faith was inseparable from its mission, there existed a gap between its new identity and its mission. Mission was still emphasized, but it meant reaching out to faraway lands that had not heard of Christ than becoming a leaven in one's surrounding culture.

It is this realization of its compromised identity and mission that led to Vatican II.[23] In his opening address to the Council Pope John XXIII said, "our duty is not just to safeguard this treasure, as though it were some museum piece and we the curators, but earnestly and fearlessly to dedicate ourselves to the work that needs to be done in this modern age of ours, pursuing the path which the Church has followed for almost twenty centuries".[24] In the words of Mercellino D'Ambrosio, "The goal of the council was to equip the Church to effectively re-evangelize the world through a compelling proclamation of Jesus Christ in a language that the world could understand (ecclesia ad extra)."[25] In this understanding of mission, it was not a matter of taking the gospel to faraway lands as was done during the advent of modernity but taking it to the alienated children of modernity.

If the Council was occasioned by the situation in the West with its specific focus on re-evangelizing those parts of the world that had gone away from its Christian moorings, this goal clearly has not borne tangible fruits in the postconciliar period. There are no indications of a new Europe breathing in the fragrance of the gospel. If anything, the signs point in the other direction.

What went wrong? While mainstream Catholic theologians like Rahner valiantly tried to reach out to modern culture by reworking on the modernist claim that religious truth is an articulation of the human experience of the divine,[26] at the hands of lesser theologians Catholic theology began to look like mere restatement of "secular ideas in theological terms".[27] What makes this assessment credible is that it comes not from the opponents of the Council but from its leading lights, who, often at great personal cost to themselves, pioneered the revolutionary changes. If Louis Bouyer talked about the "foolish capitulation to the spirit of the times" Henri de Lubac warned of "the servile adaptation to the world and its changing idols".[28] Similar sentiments are found in the writings of Congar.[29] *Fides et Ratio* echoes them when it talks of theologians being "swayed uncritically by assertions which have become part of current parlance and culture".[30] Although it should not be generalized, to the extent that it says something right about much postconciliar theology, this theology is as guilty of failing to maintain the tension between faith and culture as neo-scholasticism. Whereas neo-scholasticism resolved the tension between faith and culture by withdrawing within the walls, much postconcilar theology resolved it by losing itself in the prevalent culture. Neither solution befits the Christian spirit that calls for maintaining a creative tension between the two, such that the good news can be heard in the culture without being lost in it. In other words, Christian faith calls for actively engaging with a given culture; it can neither isolate itself from culture nor dissolve itself into it.

It is one thing to observe that much postconciliar theology failed to maintain the tension between faith and culture and quite another to understand why it happened. It seems to me that this has to do with the very nature of the *ressourcement* movement that led to the conciliar changes. Faced with the aridity and formalism of neo-scholasticsm and its inability to reach out to their contemporaries, the pioneers of this movement sought to return to the sources of Christian faith, the patrimony the Catholics shared with the Protestants, i.e., the scriptures and the Fathers of the Church. This came to be known as *ressourcement*. The logic of *ressourcement* was simple. It was the early thinkers who had first struggled to

integrate their Christian commitment with an alien culture and thought pattern. Therefore by returning to them, they hoped, one could learn valuable lessons for reaching out to the present times. Moreover, it would have tangible ecumenical benefits.

What was overlooked in the process was that the Fathers were relating their faith to a culture that was consonant with the overall Christian pursuits. Not only was it an enchanted culture but also a culture where philosophy was understood as a way of life. Christian theology, in that culture, took the form of a distinct philosophy as we have seen. In other words, theology functioned as the direct mediator between faith and culture, then. Neither of these consonant features existed in modern culture: it was neither enchanted, nor was modern philosophy a way of life. It was Thomas Aquinas, and not the early Fathers, who faced a comparable situation in the past. This is what makes him an exemplar for our times. When the Church says that the "Church's preference for his method and his doctrine is not exclusive, but 'exemplary'"[31], it seems to recognize that yesterday's solution cannot work for today's problems, but we can learn from it to address the contemporary situation. Therefore let us return to how Aquinas managed to maintain the tension between his faith and culture.

5. Aquinas as Exemplar

Aquinas's solution, we have seen, had two components. The first was linking the natural world to the religious world. This took the form of arguments. In an enchanted culture Aquinas could overlook the difference between a theistic God and the Aristotelian terms like the "Unmoved Mover" and declare as a conclusion to each of his five ways by saying, "and this everyone understands by God." Although the genius of Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) had seen through the impossibility of such identification, Catholic apologists kept pouring the old Aristotelian-Thomistic argumentative wine into the newer Newtonian bottles but to no avail.[32] Protestant thinkers who followed Schleiermacher turned to religious experience as the starting point of theology. This was in keeping with anthropocentrism of modernity, but Karl Barth found its fruits so unpalatable to his

Christian sensibilities that he revolted against it. In the postconciliar period Rahner tried to rework the path of religious experience, as we have noted, but the success of that attempt to reach out to modern culture remains debatable.

It is the second component of Aquinas' solution for maintaining the tension between faith and culture that has a special significance today. This is the distinction and the relationship he saw between philosophy and theology. We noted that he makes a clear distinction between philosophy and theology or what he called "sacred doctrine".[33] Philosophy functioned as preambles or prolegomena to theology. The need for preambles assumes a gap between Christian faith and culture, between what can be communicated to all in a culture and those Christian doctrines that cannot be directly communicated to all.[34] And it was the task of philosophy to bridge this gap. As a mediator, philosophy must be accessible to all, Christians and non-Christians. If it is to be accessible to all it must use the resources available to all and speak the common language that Aquinas termed "natural reason". But, unlike in Anselm and others of the earlier period, philosophy does not deal with the "sacred doctrine". "Sacred doctrine" goes beyond the common language; it is accessible only to those who have accepted the preambles.

If philosophy is to function as preambles to Christian theology, not any philosophy that is prevalent in the culture can do this job; only a philosophy that accords with the Christian faith can perform that function. In other words, only a Christian philosophy can be a preamble to Christian theology. Aquinas knew this very well. This realization prompted him to reject or modify those elements of Aristotelian philosophy that did not accord with the Christian faith.[35] (In doing so, he followed the example of the earlier thinkers who carved a Christian philosophy out of available cultural material). Such modifications, of course, were done through reasoning and arguments. The resulting philosophy provided an integral way of life that resonated with faith and culture at the same time.

Even after modifying Aristotelian teachings to make them conform to the Christian revelation, such philosophy (even a Christian one!) still remained a philosophy; it still fell short of what was revealed by

God in Jesus Christ. The philosophy of Aquinas, thus, becomes the immediate interface between the Christian faith and the surrounding culture, theology being the more mediate interface. Theology, for Aquinas, functions like the balancing pole of a tightrope walker where philosophy is the rope that is tied across the chasm between faith and culture. In this tightrope walk between Christianity and culture, theology can do its balancing act only as long as a philosophical rope is firmly tied to the Christian faith on the one end and the prevalent culture on the other. Tying it too close to a culture would sacrifice Christian faith at the altar of cultural fashion and fastening it too close to Christian faith would sacrifice its mission at the altar of identity. The Christian philosophy of Aquinas managed to hold on to both without compromising either. When Aquinas' philosophy and theology is not understood in this integral fashion, it runs the risk of treating his natural theology as a sort of missionary manual,[36] and his theology into doctrinal statements without a context. Michael Buckley tells us that the former was the sin of Christian theologians in their initial encounter with modernity[37] and the *ressourcement* thinkers taught us that the latter was the mistake of neo-scholasticism.

This understanding of theology and philosophy –theology as the mediate, and a Christian philosophy as the immediate, interface between Christian faith and culture—helps to explain the seeming incoherence of the various responses of the Church to modern culture. The Church's hither-thither moves become inevitable because the demise of scholasticism left it bereft of a tightrope for theology to walk on. The pre-conciliar Church took to fortifying the scholastic walls because it mistook scholasticism to be a permanent achievement and not as a bridge between Christian faith and a particular culture. Strengthening (neo-)scholastic philosophy in the new culture was like erecting an artificial wall onto which the cultural end of the rope could be fastened; the rope was tight but it had nothing to do with the living culture to which the Church needed to reach out in mission. The *ressourcement* thinkers helped us to demolish that artificial wall so that it became possible to reach out to the existing culture.

If preconciliar theology relied on a tightrope that was tied to an earlier culture, postconciliar theology largely did away with all tightropes, as the Protestants had done before. If the Protestants

consciously sought to return to an earlier time when Christianity was not "corrupted" by Aristotle, the Catholic attempt at *ressourcement* unconsciously took it to the same pre-Thomistic period. What was overlooked in both instances was the Thomistic insight that relating Christian faith to a dissonant culture calls for an intermediary between the two, that theology cannot be related directly to such a culture. This attempt at a theological walk without a philosophical tightrope explains why even a theological giant like Rahner has been described as a "theologian in search of a philosophy".[38] It is the realization of the urgent need for a new philosophical tightrope that has led the Church to clearly affirm in more recent times that there can be "no Catholic theology without – the right – philosophy".[39]

Although some are likely to see this as a call to return to the safety of the scholastic walls, the Church seems sufficiently clear that it is not looking at quick-fix solutions but setting a long term agenda, "one of the tasks which Christian thought will have to take up through the next millennium of the Christian era"[40]. Moreover, the very idea of an exemplar is that of someone to be imitated, not parroted. To imitate Aquinas today is to build a tightrope to contemporary culture as he did to his culture. Seen thus, the Church is inviting its intellectuals to forge a new tightrope between Christian faith and contemporary culture on which its theological artists can walk firmly to reach out to the men and women of our times with the good news.

6. Concluding Observations

Contemporary culture is rightly called postmodern. Let me conclude by making some preliminary observations about building a tightrope to this culture. To do for our culture what Aquinas did for his would require that (1) we should know the similarities and the differences between his culture and ours; (2) discern the opportunities and dangers offered by the ideational component of contemporary culture for Christian faith; and (3) dialogue with our culture on the basis of that discernment. Such is the challenge for anyone who would take Aquinas as an exemplar for our times.

The most important similarity between his culture and ours is the autonomy of the secular realm, including, and especially, of the sciences. But there is an important difference: whereas the sciences (natural philosophy) were unified under metaphysics and handed over to the queenship of theology during his time, there is no unifying metaphysics now and theology is found only on the fringes of academics. As a result the different sciences are not only autonomous but also fragmented. Another difference is that although the mechanical philosophy of nature propagated by modernity has loosened its grip with the arrival of quantum theory, it has not re-instated the mysteriousness of nature in any significant way. On the contrary, the omnipresent electronic media and internet have led to demolishing all distinctions between nature and culture, reality and virtual reality, human persons and robots (imagine the talk of machine rights similar to human rights!) The gods who were banished by modernity are allowed to return as long as the gods are content to remain human constructions and not claim any independent reality that can put restraints on the human freedom to construct. If the moderns specialized in talking about God, post-moderns prefer that we talk to God,[41] if we so choose. But in the absence of any real God we can listen to, our talk would end up as monologues to deaf idols of our own making.

The contemporary world is not without its opportunities. Its anthropocentrism offers an opportunity for Christian humanism, if it can be rescued from its self-enclosed character. Although the move away from the modern mechanical philosophy to a more complex understanding of the world does not amount to any re-enchantment of nature, it does permit a more wondering attitude toward it. Replacing the misplaced self-assurance of the moderns who identified the self with the conscious, rational self with the more mysterious and unconscious dimensions of the self, together with the manifold advances in the study of religious experiences, do offer avenues for moving beyond the self-enclosed humanism of the past towards the transcendent humanism of Christian faith. This is the challenge of relating a living faith to contemporary culture. It is the challenge of being able to listen to a living God and speaking

of what one has heard to that culture, with the freshness and creativity that wisdom alone provides.

Notes

1. Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Fides Et Ratio* (Mumbai: Pauline Publications, 1998); Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the German Bundestag" on September 22, 2011; Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, nos. 32,33,34.
2. *Decree on the Reform of Ecclesiastical Studies of Philosophy* (2011) issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE), henceforth, *Decree*, no. 9.
3. Fergus Kerr, "A Different World: Neoscholasticism and Its Discontents," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no. 2 (2006), 129.
4. Thomas Reese SJ, "2001 and Beyond: Preparing the Church for the Next Millennium," *America* June 21(1997), 16.
5. *Decree*, no.12.
6. *Decree*, no. 60, 1°b.
7. Winston Churchill, addressing the House of Commons on 16th November 1948. This is a modification of George Santayana who said in his book *Reason in Common Sense*, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it". See the Wikipedia article on George Santayana. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Santayana
8. Geertz refers to it as "webs of significance he himself [human being] has spun". See, Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.
9. Geertz goes to the extent of saying that culture is "the role it plays in social life". See, Ibid. vii.
10. See, Terrence W. Tilley, *Faith : What It Is and What It Isn't* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2011).
11. Cited in Margaret Mary Mitchell, Frances M. Young, and K. Scott Bowie, eds., *Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol. 1. Origins to Constantine (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 300.
12. Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium* (Vatican Press, 2013), no. 116; see also, no. 75.
13. Ibid. no. 118.

14. Brand Blanshard, "Wisdom," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Donald M. Borchert (Thompson Gale, 2006), 793.

15. Ibid. 794-795.

16. Pierre Hadot and Arnold I. Davidson, *Philosophy as a Way of Life : Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995).

17. Winrich Löhr, "Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project," *Vigiliae Christianae* 64, no. 2 (2010), 160-88.

18. St. Anselm, "Cur Deus Homo," Fordham University Center for Medieval Studies, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/anselm-proslogium.html, preface.

19. Frank B. Farrell, *Subjectivity, Realism and Postmodernism: The Recovery of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.

20. Peter L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion* (Hammondsworth, Middlesex: Penguine Books Ltd, 1973), 113.

21. Cf. *Lumen Fidei* says, "Modernity sought to build a universal brotherhood based on equality, yet we gradually came to realize that this brotherhood, lacking a reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation, cannot endure".(no. 54); Charles Taylor calls it the "immanent frame". See, Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambride, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), especially chapter 15.

22. I deliberately use the word "man" here (and in this section on modernity) not because of gender insensitivity but for two unrelated reasons: (1) because of the linguistic ease in showing the reversal of the God-man to Man-god, and (2) because modern philosophy as a whole had a typical male character in terms of its aggression and insensitivity to the other.

23. Apart from the need to reach out in mission to the modern culture, the Council was also prompted by the realization that the neo-scholasticism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was far from the scholasticism of Aquinas, and a need to return to the Christian roots.

24. Pope John XXIII, "Address at the Opening of Vatican Council II," (http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?RecNum=3233, 1962)

25. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, "The Vision of Vatican II: Bringing Aggiornamento to the Church-Part 1," Good News Archives March/

April, no. http://www.ccr.org.uk/archive/gn0603/g05.htm#top1 (2006)

26. Mary E. Hines, *The Transformation of Dogma : An Introduction to Karl Rahner on Doctrine* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989).

27. R.R. Reno, "Theology after the Revolution," *First Things* 173, May (2007), 19.

28. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, "Ressourcement Theology, Aggiornamento, and the Hermeneutics of Tradition," *Communio* 18, no. winter (1991), f.n.74.

29. Flynn and Murray, eds., *Ressourcement : A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* 10.

30. Fides et Ratio no. 55.

31. *Decree* no.12

32. Michael Buckley, S.J., *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

33. "Theology that is included in the sacred doctrine differs in kind from that [natural] theology which is part of philosophy". ST 1, q.1, a.1.

34. Aquinasclarifies that this is not on account of any shortcoming in the revelation from God but "on account of the weakness of our intelligence" and the need "to make its [divine] teaching clear" (ST 1, a.5.reply to obj. 1 and 2).

35. For a list of Aristotelian teachings that were found to be incompatible with Christian faith, see Wippel, *Mediaeval Reactions to the Encounter between Faith and Reason* 14–18.

36. See, Rudi A. Te Velde, "Natural Reason in the Summa Contra Gentiles," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 4 (1994) 43–45.

37. Michael Buckley, S.J., *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

38. See, George Vass, S.J., *A Theologian in Search of a Philosophy* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1985).

39. This is Kerr's evaluation of Fides et Ratio. Kerr, "A Different World: Neoscholasticism and Its Discontents" 129.

40. *Fides et Ratio*, no. 85; *Decree* no.5.

41. Stanislaus Swamikannu, "Post-Moderns Prefer Praying to Speaking About God: Don Cupitt- an Example," in *God-Talk: Contemporary Trends and Trials*, ed. Kurian Kachapilly (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2006), 172-93.

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

Their Nature, Dynamics, and Praxis in the Indian Classical Traditions

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Abstract: This paper explores the sangama (confluence) of *śraddhā* (faith), *tarka* (reason) and *prajñā* (wisdom) in the Indian classical traditions. Each concept is seen from the aspects of its nature, dynamics and praxis in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. These three concepts are seen also in their mutual relatedness and the need for their integration in the journey of discovering the truth of the ultimate reality and its realization. In the concluding part the advaitic model of *śravaṇa* (listening faith), *manana* (faith assisted reasoning) and *nididhyāsana* (experiential wisdom) is proposed for enabling the integration of *śraddhā*, *tarka* and *prajñā*. Finally we reflect on the implications of this discovery for the philosophical and theological formation in India.

Keywords: faith, reason, wisdom, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, dynamics of integration

Introduction

We can begin the presentation of this theme in the spirit of what Pope John Paul II said in the encyclical FIDES ET RATIO:

> My thoughts turn immediately to the lands of East so rich in religious and philosophical traditions of great antiquity. Among these lands India has a special place. A great spiritual impulse leads Indian thought to seek an experience which would liberate the spirit from the shackles of time and space and

would therefore acquire absolute value. The dynamic of this quest for liberation provides the context for great metaphysical systems. In India particularly, it is the duty of Christians now to draw from this rich heritage the elements compatible with their faith, in order to enrich Christian thought (*Fides et Ratio*, 1998: no.72)

This paper explores the saṅgama of *śraddhā* (faith), *tarka* (reason) and *prajñā* (wisdom) in the Indian classical traditions. Each concept is seen from the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain perspectives. In the concluding part the integration of these is seen in the practice of *śravaṇa* (listening faith), *manana* (thinking faith) and *nidiḍhyāsana* (experiential faith) as proposed in the *advaita Vedānta* for realizing the ultimate truth. We will also reflect on the implications of this for philosophical and theological formation in India.

1. *Śraddhā*(Faith)

Etymologically '*śraddhā*' is derived from the root '*śrat*' (heart) and '*dhā*' (to place). Hence the word means placing one's heart or confidence in something. '*śrat*' is linguistically related to '*credo*' (Latin) and '*kardia*' (Greek) which once again means something to do with the heart (Panikkar, 1983: 398). According to the *Nirukta* of Yāska '*śrad*' is truth (9.30). Further '*śrat*' also means 'to relax', 'to rest' indicating faith enabling ultimate rest in the Being. '*śraddhā*' has meaning of longing of a pregnant woman indicating her longing and confidence that new life will spring from her (Panikkar, 1983: 398).

1.1 Vedic Faith

In the Vedas '*śraddhā*' is neither just intellectual assent nor blind trust. It is the quality of the full human being. It refers to the basic ground or matrix from which all actions and decisions spring. A person's depth and convictions are expressions of faith. Faith is all pervasive. "Faith wraps the gods, faith wraps this whole world" (*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*: 2.8.8.8). *Śraddhā* is closely tied with *Ṛta* (cosmic harmony). According to the *Upaniṣads* it is the *sine qua non* for approaching the Guru for emancipatory knowledge (Panikkar,

1983: 178-180). The following Vedic texts highlight the rich meanings of '*śraddhā*'.

A. *Śraddhāhaviḥ* (*Ṛgveda* 10.151.1, 4, 5)

1. By faith is fire kindled.
By faith is offered sacrifice.
Sing we now faith, the pinnacle of joy.
4. The Gods, led by the Spirit,
Honor faith in their worship.
Faith is composed of the heart's intention.
Light comes through faith.
5. Through faith men come to prayer, Faith in the morning,
Faith at noon and at the setting of Sun.
O Faith, give us Faith.

B. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.1.10

What one performs with knowledge, with faith, with meditation, that, indeed, becomes more effective.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7. 19-20

19. When a man has faith, then he thinks. Nobody thinks until he has faith.

20. When a man perseveres, then he has faith. No one has faith without having perseverance.

C. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 1.11.3

Give with faith, give nothing without faith.

D. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9.21

On what is faith based?
On the heart, for through the heart one knows faith.
In fact, on the heart alone is faith based (Panikkar, 1983: 180-181).

1.2 Faith in the *Bhagavadgītā*

In the *Gītā* faith is praised as a person's very identity. As the person's faith so the person (17.3). Faith is the requirement for obtaining knowledge (4.39). "The most basic requirement of the path of devotion is faith (*śraddhā*), a necessity that is tied to a

willingness to surrender oneself completely to God and to become totally attached to Him" (Olson, 2007: 125). The following text brings out the kinds of faith.

> The faith of every man, O Arjuna, accords with his nature. Man is made up of faith; as is his faith, so is he. The threefold austerity (of body, speech and mind) practiced with faith by men of balanced mind, without any expectation of reward, is said to be pure. Without faith, whatever offering or gift is made or work done or penance performed, it is reckoned "not-being" both now and hereafter (17.3.28).

Ultimately in the *Bhagavadgītā* faith is experienced as a loving surrender to the Lord and it is strongly tinged with *bhakti* (Panikkar, 1983: 180). One who doubts will have neither this world, nor the next, nor joy (4.40).

1.3 Faith in the *Vedānta*

According to Śaṅkara the aspirant should have the virtue of faith along with discernment (*nitya-anitya–vastu-viveka*), detachment (*vairāgya*), virtues beginning with mental control (*śamadamadhi*) and an ardent desire for liberation (*mumukṣatva*). 'Faith' here has so wide a meaning as to include faith in oneself, Guru, the sacred scriptures and God. Faith is the conviction held in a peaceful mind that it is like that, namely that the *śāstra* teaching regarding the Brahman as innermost Atman is incontrovertibly true (*citta-prasāda-āstikyabuddhi*): such a faith precedes and imitates all the efforts of a man towards his goal (Mu.U.Bh.2.1.7). When there is faith, the mind becomes concentrated upon the subject which it desires to comprehend, and then due comprehension follows (Ch.U. Bh.6.12.2). And perfect faith is no longer merely an intellectual assent but a surrender of the whole mind; it is *buddhi* coupled with *bhakti*; more precisely, it is *āstikya-buddhir-bhakti-sahita*, i.e., conviction of existence of Brahman-atman accompanied with devotion (Br.U. Bh.3.9.21) (Ivo, 2013: 148).

For Rāmānuja faith is intimately connected with bhakti which culminates in *prapatti* (complete surrender as expressed in the

caramaśloka of the *Bhagavadgītā*, 18.66). After Rāmānuja this tradition gave rise to famous 'cat' (*mārjāla*) and 'monkey' (*markaṭa*) theological perspectives based on whether the importance should be given to human effort or grace in realizing salvation.

Madhva's approach to faith is influenced by his notion of five-fold differences and the supremacy of Viṣṇu, the sole independent principle. Faith in Viṣṇu should be practiced with the knowledge of the greatness of the Lord. In the journey of faith, Guru's role is very important.

1.4 Buddhism

In Buddhism, faith is closely allied with the four noble truths, the eight-fold path, the cardinal teachings of impermanence (*sabbam khaṇikam*), no-soul (*sabbam anattam*) and the theory of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and the three jewels: Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Saṅgha*. Buddhism is a religion of self-help. The following texts express various dimensions of faith.

A. At this time the world-honored one serenely arose from meditation and addressed *Shariputta*: "The wisdom of all the Buddhas is infinitely profound and immeasurable. The portal to this wisdom is difficult to understand and difficult to enter. Neither men of learning nor men of realization are able to comprehend it." (Lotus Sûtra 2)[Wilson,1993:56].

Here men of learning are the shravakas who rightly understand the Theravada teaching and attain arhatship. Men of realization are *pratyekabuddhas* who attain enlightenment through solitary effort and meditation. This sutra was composed in a period of rivalry among the various schools of Buddhism. The Buddha goes on to say that the only way to enter the door is by faith (Wilson, 1993: 56).

B. By faith you shall be free and go beyond the world of death (Wilson, 1993:537).

C. There are four kinds of faith. The first is the faith in the ultimate source. Because of this faith a man comes to meditate with joy on the principle of suchness. The second is the faith in the numberless excellent qualities of the Buddha. Because of this faith a

man comes to meditate on them always, to draw near to them in fellowship, to honor them and to respect them, developing his capacity for goodness and seeking after the all- embracing knowledge. The third is the faith in the great benefits of the Dharma. Because of this faith a man comes constantly to remember and practice the various disciplines leading to enlightenment. The fourth is faith in the *Saṅgha*, whose members are able to devote themselves to the practice of benefitting both themselves and others. Because of this faith a man comes to approach the assembly of Bodhisattvas constantly and with joy to seek instruction from them in the correct practice (Wilson, 1993: 537).

1.5 Jainism and Faith

According to Jainism, the three jewels together work towards the difficult path of liberation. They are: right faith (*samyak darśana*), right knowledge (*samyak jñāna*) and right conduct (*samyak cāritra*). *Tattvārthasūtra* (1.1) says: Right belief, right knowledge, right conduct, these together constitute the path to liberation (Wilson, 1993: 536).*Uttarādhyayana sūtra* (28.30) echoes the same view:

> Without faith there is no knowledge, without knowledge there is no virtuous conduct, without virtues there is no deliverance, and without deliverance there is no perfection [nirvana] (Wilson, 1993: 536).

Here faith means believing in the veracity of the teachings of the tīrthaṅkaras. Knowledge is the understanding of complex and pluralistic reality through the nayas and pramāas.The practice of the five great vows (*ahiṁsā, satya, asteya, brahmacarya* and *aparigraha*) are important virtues stressed in Jainism.

2. *Tarka* (Reason)

2.1 Hinduism

The role of reason (*tarka*) in searching for the truth is not overlooked. We read in *Brahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.4.5: "One's self must be seen, must be heard, must be reasoned about, must be meditated on." Kauṭilya, in his *Arthaśāstra*, praises critical inquiry:

> Investigating by means of reasons, good and evil in the Vedic religion, profit and loss in the field of trade and agriculture, and prudent and imprudent policy in political administration, as well as their relative strengths and weaknesses, the study of critical inquiry (*ānvīkṣikī*) confers benefit on people, keeps their minds steady in adversity and in prosperity, and produces adeptness of understanding speech and action. The study of critical inquiry is always thought of as a lamp for all branches of knowledge, a means in all activities, and a support for all religious and social duty (Ganeri, 2008: 413).

A systematic attempt to rigorously apply reason takes place among the Nyāya thinkers. The Navya-nyāya particularly is a *pramāṇaśāstra*, a compendium of logic and logical arguments; an epistemology built upon a technical methodology of analysis that is unparalleled in subtlety and accuracy (Mazumdar, 1999: 54). Nyâya advocates a model for this inquiry in treating inference in an intricate manner. It consists of five limbs (*avayava*) making the compact structure of a logical reasoning. The first step is the statement of the thesis, the second the statement of reason or evidence, the third citation of an example (a particular case, well recognized and acceptable to both sides) that illustrates the underlying general principle and thereby supports the reason or evidence. The fourth is the showing of the present thesis as a case that belongs to the general case. The fifth is the assertion of the thesis again as proven or established. Here is the time – honored illustration:

Step 1. There is fire on the hill.
Step 2. For there is smoke.
Step 3. (Wherever there is smoke, there is fire) as in the kitchen.
Step 4.This is such a case (smoke on the hill).
Step 5. Therefore it is so, i.e. there is fire on the hill (Matilal, 1998: 4).

Tarka is generally translated as reason, argument, logic, discussion, proof, contention, conjecture, reflection, refutation, and the making of inferences. The word is primarily used in contexts where competing positions are defended against other views. The focus here lies more on the identification and classification of irregularities, inconsistencies, or fallacies within scholarly debates;

speculative doctrines, or philosophical systems. *Tarka vidya* or *tarkaśāstra* is the science of inductive reasoning and thought (Quack, 2012: 628).

Debates in Akṣapāda's view can be of three types:

i. An honest debate (called vāda) where both sides, proponent and opponent, are seeking the truth, that is, wanting to establish the right view;

ii. A tricky debate (called *jalpa*) where the goal is to win by fair means or foul; and

iii. A destructive debate (called *vitaṇḍā*) where the goal is to defeat or demolish the opponent, no matter how.

The first employs logical arguments and proper evidence to establish a thesis. Normally the participants were teacher and students of a particular tradition. The second was in fact, a winner-takes-all situation. Tricks, false moves were allowed. It took place between two teachers of different schools. In the third type there was mere refutation without establishing any position. It was destructive and negative (Matilal, 1998: 2-3). Hence in the words of Matilal, "verification and rational procedure are as much part of Indian Philosophical thinking as they are in western philosophical thinking." (Matilal, 1971: 11).

While Indian Philosophical thinking treasured reason, it was also very much aware that reason can also be abused, as we shall see in the last section.

2.2 Buddhism

Buddha and Buddhism advocate strongly the use of reason. The disciples were told by Buddha to use their discretion. We can gauge this spirit in the following texts.

A. So, Ananda, you must be lamps unto yourselves,.. Rely on yourselves, and do not rely on external help. Hold firm to the truth as a lamp and a refuge, and do not look for refuge to anything besides yourselves (*Dīgha Nikāya* ii. 99-100, Warren, 1896).

B. Do not be misled by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearance, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea: "This is our teaching." But when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome and wrong, and bad, then give them up...And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept them and follow them.(*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, i. 190-191-Keśaputta sutta, Walpola, 1974).

Nāgārjuna (150 CE), a creative and brilliant Mādhyamika philosopher radically critiques the metaphysical and epistemological speculations of the rival schools with a rational method known as *prasaṅga* or *reductio ad absurdum*. He demonstrates vigorously that perceptions about reality involve self-contradiction (Gupta, 2009: 30).

Brahmajālasutta mentions sixty-two views as products of *tarka* which may be subsumed under the following ten headings:

1. The world is eternal.
2. The world is non-eternal.
3. The world is finite.
4. The world is non-finite.
5. The soul is identical with the body.
6. The soul is different from the body.
7. The *tathāgata*
exists after death.
8. The *tathāgata* does not exist after death.
9. The *tathāgata* both exists and does not exist after death.
10. The *tathāgata* neither exists nor does not exist after death (Gupta,2009:43)

These ten are rejected because they are based on pure reasoning and not on direct personal knowledge and experience. Ambedkar, in modern times, followed the spirit of rationalism and interpreted *Dhamma* to the situation of the dalits in his famous "Buddha and His Dhamma".

2.3 Jainism

Jainism rejects the authority of the Vedas and advocates asceticism. It follows the spirit of self-reliance and non-violent ethics. With its famous *syādvāda* Jainism proclaims utmost intellectual democracy and tolerance of opposing and contradictory views. The seven predications about a knowledge event illustrate the complex and complementary nature of reality. The supreme principle of non-violence manifests in the metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and religious realms. Extolling reason, Haribhadra says: I am not biased in favor of Mahāvīra, nor averse to Kapila or other teachers. I am committed to the preaching that is truly rational (Haribhadra, *Lokatattvaṇirnaya* 38, 1976).

One important area where reason or *tarka* makes its impact is the mutual refutation between theists and non-theists in regard to the existence of God. We have famous nine proofs for God's existence in Udayana's *Nyāyakusumāñjali*. Even within the *āstika* systems mīmāṁsā and sāṁkhya are atheistic. Among the *nāstika* schools *cārvāka* and Jainism offer vigorous critique of theism. In a way atheism and rationalism are not opposed to Hinduism. The founder of Hindutva movement, Savarkar (1883-1966) publicly announced his atheism and rationalism because "Hinduism" was more a marker of cultural and political identity to him (Quack, 2012: 632).

3. *Prajñā* (Wisdom)

3.1 Hinduism

Indian Philosophy, known as '*darśana*', by its very nature demands going beyond reason to realize the ultimate truth. In the *Upaniṣad*s this is termed as '*parāvidyā*.' When Uddālaka was asking young Śvetaketu whether he knows that thing by knowing which he knows everything, he was referring to wisdom learning. The *Kena Upaniṣad* describes this situation well: He truly knows Brahman who knows as beyond knowledge; he who thinks that he knows, knows not. The ignorant think that Brahman is known, but the wise know him to go beyond knowledge (Wilson.1993:56). Describing the limited character of human knowledge *Ṛgveda* (1.164.45) says:

The word is measured in four quarters. The wise who possess insight know these four divisions. Three quarters concealed in secret, cause no movement. The fourth is the quarter that is spoken by men (Wilson, 1993: 576).Interpreting the Ṛg*veda Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.8) comments:

He who does not know that indestructible Being of the Ṛg*veda,* that highest ether like self-wherein all the gods reside, of what use is the Ṛg*veda* to him? Those only who know It rest contented (Wilson, 1993: 575). Surprisingly *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* (2.3.2) has characterized human beings as endowed with intelligence-*prajñā* (Halbfass, 1991: 269).

The *Bhagavadgītā* has highlighted the significance of wisdom in the following verses.

As the heat of a fire reduces wood to ashes, the fire of knowledge burns to ashes all karma. Nothing in the world purifies like spiritual wisdom. It is the perfection achieved in time through the path of yoga, the path which leads to the self within (4.37-38).

This is true knowledge: to seek the self as the true end of wisdom always. To seek anything else is ignorance (13.11).

The concluding verses of the second chapter of *Bhagavadgītā* give a beautiful profile of the person of steady wisdom known as *Sthitaprajña.* We shall allow these verses to speak for themselves.

Person of steady wisdom (2. 55, 56, 57, 58, 68, 69, 70, 71)

55. The Lord of Śrī said: O Pārtha, one who having renounced all desires born of the mind, is satisfied in the self and by the self, is said to be one whose insight is steady.

56. In the midst of suffering and happiness his mind is neither confused nor kindled. He who is free from desires, passions, fear, and anger is said to be a sage of tranquil mind.

57. One who is free from all material desires, who is neither delighted nor disturbed by joys and sorrows is the one who stands firm in wisdom.

58. And when he completely controls his senses and keeps them away from their objects, like a tortoise drawing its limbs within its shell, his wisdom stands steady.

68. Therefore, O mighty-armed, one whose senses are completely withdrawn from sense objects, is the one fixed in wisdom.

69. That which is dark for all sentient beings appears like bright daylight for those whose senses are controlled. That which is dawn for sentient beings appears like the dark night for the introspective sage, who sees.

70. Just as many rivers entering the ocean cannot stir or disturb its stillness similarly, the mind of a person who is unmoved by desires remains still and attains peace. The one who hankers after such desires does not attain peace.

71. The action of a person who has abandoned all desires is free from desire. Indifferent to ownership or sense of possession and free from any sense of ego, he attains peace.

3.2 Buddhism

Buddha, the enlightened one, stresses the need for wisdom in his teachings. The eight-fold path is classified under *prajñā*, *śīla* and *Samādhi*. In early Buddhism, *prajñā* (intuitive insight) represents the highest activity of the mind. Intuition and intellect are not two opposed methods of grasping reality, for only a comradeship between the two can help us in the knowledge of reality as it is. According to Mahayana tradition there is no wisdom without compassion. The one who would attain to enlightenment must have a profound compassion for all sentient beings. He or she must love the poor and the sick and the afflicted and must share in their sorrows. Furthermore, compassion does not end with material help. The compassionate person desires the salvation of all, even refusing to enter into nirvana until all sentient beings are saved. Compassion leads to wisdom just as wisdom leads to compassion. Through compassion one becomes empty, abandons any kind of attachment.

One becomes so empty, as to receive the whole universe into one's belly (Johnston, 2004: 221).

3.3 Jainism

In Jaina epistemology there is the knowledge of the absolute known as *kevalajñāna*. The *tīrthaṅkaras* are endowed with omniscience. The three jewels of Jainism are a closely related unit. At the pragmatic level Jaina wisdom expresses itself in the practice of the great five vows. Among them *ahiṁsā* is termed as the supreme duty.

4. Integration of the triptych *śraddhā*, *tarka*, and *prajñā*

We have seen how the three components of acquiring insight into reality function in the three traditions, i.e. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The Indian thinkers say that these three do not, and should not be, allowed to function independently. They were very much aware that reason without faith can be easily abused. In the *Mahābhārata* (12.173.45-48) we have the example of Indra describing the cause of his rebirth as a jackal:

> I used to be scholarly, a reasoner, a scorner of the Veda. I was pointlessly fond of critical inquiry and the science of argument. I used to make declarations on the basis of logic; in assemblies, speaking with reasons, I harangued the Brahmins and was rude during the Vedic recitations. I was an unbeliever, skeptical about everything, and though stupid, I thought myself wise. The status of a jackal that I have obtained is the result, Kāsyapa, of my misdeeds (Ganeri, 2008: 411).

The *Rāmāyaṇa* too cautions against free thinking people. In the following text (2.94.32-33), Rama advises his brother Bharata to keep away from the worldly thinkers:

> You must not associate with those 'Worldly" (*lokāyata*) Brahmins, dear brother. Their only skill is bringing misfortune; they are fools who think themselves wise. In spite of the pre-eminent treatises on right conduct (*dharma*), these ignorant

people derive their ideas from critical inquiry, and make declarations without any point (Ganeri, 2008: 411).

Strong words, those! Śaṅkara too was emphatic that reasoning is to be undertaken in the context of faith. He distinguished what he called dry reasoning (*śuṣkatarka*) from reasoning in accordance with revelation (*śrutyanugṛhīta tarka*); it is only the latter that can lead to an experience of Brahman (BSBh, II,1,6 cited in Halbfass, 156).

In a similar vein we have seen the detailed analysis of the products of *tarka* given by the *Brahmajālasutta* of the Buddhists. After enumerating sixty two views of this kind, all of them are rejected as they are not based on personal knowledge or experience. Indeed, *tarka* without *śraddhā* can only build castles in the air!

If *tarka* needs *śraddhā*, *śraddhā* also needs *tarka.* Otherwise knowledge will be dry intellectual knowledge and that *śraddhā* will be blind beliefs or cheap sentimentalism (Manimala, 2008: 171). Taken together they give knowledge that matures into wisdom. As we have seen in Jainism, all the three jewels together constitute the path to liberation. Even in Buddhism *prajñā*, *śīla* and *samādhi* together help towards reaching *nibbāna*. But how does one achieve this integration? I think the *advaitic* means of liberation gives an excellent model towards this goal. So let us see how these three come together and contribute towards realization of the truth.

4.1 *Śravaṇa* (hearing)

It has to do with the initial acquaintance with the teachings of *advaita*. The aspirant is encouraged to listen to the great sentences of the Vedanta through a competent guru. "Hearing is a mental activity leading to the conviction that the vedic texts inculcate only Brahman, the One without a second" (Narain, 2003: 270). "*Śravaṇa* does not mean mere hearing about the Supreme Brahman from a competent teacher or the sacred texts; but it is the study (*vicāra*) of the Upaniṣadic texts and ascertaining the central idea of these texts, i.e. Brahman's nature of absolute identity, by means of the six semantic clues." (Archak, 1992: 74). *Śravaṇa* is done with a spirit of investigation leading to the discovery of oneself.

4.2 *Manana* (reflection)

Manana is unceasing thinking of Brahman, one without a second, which has already been heard from the preceptor, by means of proofs which are in tune with the central teaching of Vedanta. It is not mere thinking. It consists of three points:

i. The subject of thinking, i.e. Brahman as established in the scriptural texts and heard from the preceptor.

ii. The subject agreeable to the *śruti* texts and decided by means of *tātparyaliṅgas* should be developed by accepted reasoning (Archak, 1992: 74-75).

In this second stage, i.e., thinking, the advaitic seeker is called upon to appreciate inwardly, by means of prolonged reflection, the philosophical principles of *advaita* and mark these the stuff of his own living faith, (Deutsch, 1973: 107). *Manana* is meant to clear the doubts regarding the knowledge gained from śruti.

4.3 *Nididhyāsana* (meditation)

It refers to the stream of ideas of the same kind as those of Brahman, but excluding the ideas regarding body, etc. which are antagonistic to the absolute Brahman (Archak, 1992: 75). This third stage is that of "constant meditation" through intense concentration on the identity of self with Reality (Deutsch, 1973: 109). This stage culminates in the experiential knowledge of Brahman. All the three steps are inter-related. Meditation (*nididhyāsana*) is the direct cause of Brahman realization. Reflection is the cause of meditation, because it is not possible to meditate on what one has been heard of without reflecting upon its meaning. Likewise, hearing is the cause of reflection because it provides verbal instructions to be reflected upon (Narain, 2003: 270).

Conclusion

We have traversed the path of becoming familiar with the triptych, i. e., *śraddhā*, *tarka* and *prajñā* in the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Though they have their distinctive roles to

play, yet together they contribute to the dynamics of integral human knowing. Neglect of any of these would result in myopic vision of reality. The insights of the *sa°gama* of the triad must enable us to take a relook at the way our theological and philosophical formation takes place. Why does it not have the desired transformative impact? Have we neglected some elements of the triptych? Let us hope that our reflection may lead us to become integrated and integrating persons.

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Nature, Dynamics And Praxis Of Faith, Reason And Wisdom

Theological Perspectives

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Abstract: This essay discusses the nature, dynamics and praxis of reason, faith and wisdom in the context of our life, mission and our journey towards our final goal. I begin by making a brief presentation and a critique of the depiction of the relationship between reason, philosophy, faith, theology and wisdom in Pope John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio* (FR). I then critically consider the approach of RaimudoPanikkar to understand the nature, dynamics and praxis of faith; and finally verify the possibility of wisdom providing a framework for integrating faith and reason at a deeper level.

Key words: Faith, Reason, Wisdom, Ortho-poeisis, Ortho-praxis, foolish wisdom

Introduction

This essay discusses the nature, dynamics and praxis of reason, faith and wisdom in the context of our life, mission and our 'journey' towards our final goal. Since this journey is a present reality[1], somehow the final goal too becomes at once an ongoing experience (albeit, partially) as well as something that is yet to be arrived at in the full measure. I intend to begin by making a brief presentation and a critique of the depiction of the relationship between reason, philosophy, faith, theology and wisdom in Pope John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio* (FR). I then critically consider the approach of Raimudo Panikkar to understand the nature, dynamics and praxis of faith; and finally verify the possibility of wisdom providing a framework for integrating faith and reason at a deeper level.

Some initial clarifications

At the outset we must acknowledge that a clear distinction between faith, reason and wisdom may exist in the Greco-Latin-Christian tradition; but not in several others elsewhere in the world.[2] In fact it is acknowledged that separation of theology/faith from philosophy led to some of the main disasters of late 18th and 19th centuries in Europe.[3] These continue to this day in the form of philosophies of radical scepticism and agnosticism, atheistic humanism, nihilism and consequent totalitarian ideologies and regimes, relativism and provisionalism (FR 45, 46). It is equally disastrous when theology is separated from wisdom and from life in general.

Since the point of reference of our discourse is the human being, reason as such cannot be left out of any kind of human act. But one can speak of different types of reason. The ***discursive reason***: Here belong science and philosophy. Faith is the human response to the Divine revelation and theology is the articulation of what is received in revelation. Though human reason is involved in this process, it cannot be restricted to its ***discursive*** nature alone. There can be ***intuitive, aesthetic*** and other forms of reason involved here.

In Western thinking we can broadly identify four positions regarding the relationship between faith and reason: 1) faith dislodged from reason, (St. Paul, Tertullian, Luther, Kant, and Kierkegaard) 2) reason based on faith (Augustine, Anselm, and Barth) 3), autonomy of faith and of reason; yet their relatedness (Aquinas), and 4) harmony of faith with reason (Spinoza, Hegel, Leibnitz).[4]

The Roman Catholic position concerning the issue of the relationship between faith and reason can be summarised as: *fides non destruit sed perficit rationem* (this in fact is a paraphrasing of the formula: *gratia non destruit sed perficit naturam).* That is to say that between faith and reason there can never be a real contradiction, but only a substantial harmony.[5] The four main stages in the development of the doctrine of harmony between faith and reason can be traced as follows: (1) origin of the doctrine (Clement of Alexandria, who actually moves away from Pauline distaste for pagan philosophy and considers it as the highest positive achievement of pagan culture); (2) defence of this doctrine against the "double truth

theory" (Aquinas); (3) defence of the harmony between faith and scientific reason (Vatican I); (4) defence of the harmony between faith and "cultural" reason (Vatican II).[6]

In more recent times, what Clement of Alexandria considered harmony between faith and philosophy is interpreted by Antonio Rosmini-Serbati and Cardinal Newman as harmony between faith and science. Catholic theologians such as Yves Congar and Marie-Dominique Chenu extended this view to speak about a possible harmony between faith and cultural reason. Just as grace does not destroy nature but only perfects it, so does it perfect culture. Hence a harmony between faith and cultural reason can be meaningfully posited.[7] Obviously such a harmony does not exclude mutual critique, which in turn is intrinsic to a process of perfection.[8] In this sense, faith life denotes a journey. As *Lumen Fidei* of pope Francis rightly puts it, "faith 'sees' to the extent that it journeys, to the extent that it chooses to enter into the horizons opened up by God's word" (no. 9).

In this context *Gaudium et Spes* strongly affirms that the gospel "takes the spiritual qualities and endowments of every age, and with supernatural riches it causes them to blossom, as it were, from within; it fortifies, completes, and restores them in Christ."(No 58).[9]

Fides et Ratio on the interrelation between reason, philosophy, wisdom, faith and theology

The biblical wisdom literature remarkably exhibits the relationship between knowledge gained by faith and that gained by reason. A very striking feature of this literature contains not only the faith of Israelites but also the wisdom of other civilizations (cf. Sir 14: 20-27) (FR 16). Prov 16:9 sums up an ideal collaboration of human reason and faith: "The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps". In understanding the course of history the collaboration of faith and reason is held to be of special significance in the Christian tradition. In this process, reason is denied absolute autonomy. It is faith that makes it 'see' the fact that God is active in the historical events (FR 16). To see history in the larger framework of God's activity is the true knowledge that texts such as Prov 1:7;

Sir 1:14 speak of: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"/ knowledge.

But what is 'fear of God'? Among other things it can also be understood as the awe at created reality which is the starting point of philosophical enquiry. Awe is followed by speculation and construction of logically coherent affirmations, which is done to ensure an organic unity of their content (FR 4). A similar process is clearly visible at the origin and in the historical development of Christianity when it encountered various cultures in the context of its proclamation. In the early Christian ages Justin Martyr was a pioneer in relating philosophical truth to that which was revealed in Jesus Christ. In the thinking of Clement of Alexandria, the defence of faith is the primary role of philosophy.[10]

The mutually complimenting roles of faith and reason are considered essential for an enlightened Christian life. The teaching of Vatican II echoes it when it says: "Methodical research, in all realms of knowledge, if it respects... moral norms, will never be genuinely opposed to faith: the reality of the world and of faith have their origin in the same God" (*Gaudium et Spes,* 36). Indeed faith divorced from reason can end up being a question of mere subjective emotion and worse, as superstition, just as reason having no links to faith can lose sight of the ultimate dimension of existence. It is for this reason "[F]aith and philosophy recover the profound unity which allows them to stand in harmony with their nature without compromising their mutual autonomy. The *parrhesia* of faith must be matched by the boldness of reason." (FR 48)

The interrelation between faith and reason is seen in the very nature and functioning of theology, which is governed by a bi-polar methodological principle: the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei.* The first refers to the appropriation of revelation and the consequent formation of the sacred scripture, sacred tradition and the living magisterium. The second is at work in responding to the questions that need speculative enquiry. The role of philosophy is obvious in the second. In the first, philosophy facilitates a correct *auditus fidei* by its study of the dynamics of human knowledge, language and other communication forms (FR 65).

In this context, the knowledge of the role of culture becomes significant, though no specific culture or philosophy as such can gain priority over others in providing the ultimate criterion for truth (FR 72). The interaction between the Gospel and culture is obvious. Indeed "culture itself has an intrinsic capacity to receive divine Revelation" (FR 71). In such interactions, the Gospel does not destroy culture; rather it liberates it from distortions caused by sin thereby enabling it to "develop in new ways" (FR 71).

FR makes a special mention of Indian traditions and encourages us to "draw from this rich heritage the elements compatible with [Christian] faith, in order to enrich Christian thought." Three criteria are suggested to be employed in this process: First, "the universality of the human spirit, whose basic needs are the same in the most disparate cultures." The second, "in engaging great cultures for the first time, the Church cannot abandon what she has gained from her inculturation in the world of Greco-Latin thought. To reject this heritage would be to deny the providential plan of God who guides his Church down the paths of time and history." And the third, in affirming the uniqueness and originality of the Indian thought one should not imagine that "a particular cultural tradition should remain closed in its difference and affirm itself by opposing other traditions." (FR 72)

In this connection Thomas Guarino points out that just as it took time to develop a certain degree of consistency in adapting the cultural forms to articulate Christian faith in the early ages, so too it would need sufficient time to judge the adequacy of such adaptations at present.[11]

Finally, when it comes to religion and faith a fine balance needs to be struck between various realms of human activity. *Fides et Ratio* cites the following insight from St. Bonaventure, who points out the inadequacy of "reading without repentance, knowledge without devotion, research without the impulse of wonder, prudence without the ability to surrender to joy, action divorced from religion, learning sundered from love, intelligence without humility, study unsustained by divine grace, thought without the wisdom inspired by God".[12]And hence the encyclical intends to maintain the mystery dimension of faith that falls beyond the confines of reason: "Reason

cannot eliminate the mystery of love which the Cross represents, while the Cross can give to reason the ultimate answer which it seeks. It is not the wisdom of words, but the Word of Wisdom which Saint Paul offers as the criterion of both truth and salvation." (FR 23).

In summary FR affirms:

- The distinct fields of reason and faith and yet their inseparability and complementarity.
- Dignity of human reason in terms of its God-given capacity to probe deeper into truth and arrive at certainties, though not at the full truth.
- Necessity of faith to provide the safeguards to reason which otherwise could end up in darkness.
- Need of reason for faith which otherwise could end up being superstitious.

What kind of philosophy according to FR is consistent with Christian revelation? Three criteria are mentioned:

- It must have nothing less than the ultimate and overarching meaning of life (the sapiential dimension) as the object of its search (FR 82).
- It should affirm the "human capacity *to know the truth*, to come to a knowledge which can reach objective truth by means of the *adaequatio rei et intellectus.*"(*Summa Theologiae*, I, 16, 1. Cited in FR 82). That is, it should uphold an epistemology that is related to some sort of realism.
- It should be "capable of transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for truth" (FR 83)

A critique of the main thrust of the *Fides et Ratio*

It is clear that FR demands certain realism and a foundationalism in prescribing the adequacy of a philosophical foundation for faith and theology. However, such factors are to be applied within the framework of the *auditus fidei-intellectus fidei*. Hence the employing of philosophy is subjected to theological criteria. Further, by

emphasising the principle of not favouring any particular philosophy over others a priori, the encyclical looks for "new and creative syntheses to express the truth of Christian faith", thereby remaining open for some sort of pluralism.[13] However, the autonomy of human reason is clearly stressed. Therefore, theology cannot, in a unilateral manner, demand philosophy to adapt itself to the demands of religion. In this context the encyclical's distinction between "valid autonomy" of reason and its "self-sufficiency" is important (FR 75). While the former can be legitimately held, the latter can be upheld only by subjecting divine revelation to human reason – indeed an untenable position.[14]

The pluralism envisaged in FR can be summarised as follows:

- Approaches other than Greek philosophy are not precluded (FR 72)
- The Church does not favour any one philosophy a priori; nor does it have a philosophy of its own (FR 49, 76)
- "No historical form of philosophy can legitimately claim to embrace the totality of truth" (FR 51).
- The Magisterium has no competence to direct/ compel theologians to follow particular methods (FR 64)
- "There are many paths which lead to truth ... [and] any one of these paths may be taken, as long as it leads ... to the Revelation of Jesus Christ" (FR 38)

The encyclical's demand for some sort of realism and foundationalism in theology should be understood as a reaction to extreme forms of constructivism and conceptual pragmatism. Hence it demands that theological statements should at least refer to a really and objectively existing reality.[15] Otherwise "there would be no Revelation of God, but only the expression of human notions about God" (FR 84).

Looking at the encyclical more critically we can make the following observations:

With all its openness to plurality, FR still does not seem to be adequately addressing some of the issues raised by the disciplines

of current epistemology and hermeneutics; such as the role of subjectivity and historicity in the process of human knowing.[16] Hence the contemporary search for the middle grounds between nihilism and foundationalistic metaphysics is not seriously considered by the encyclical. Between rejecting relativism (FR 80) and affirming foundationalistic metaphysics as the only alternative, the encyclical does not seem to be sharing the concerns of many a current thinker such as Gadamer and Habermas of looking for other possible alternatives. In other words the encyclical does not show sufficient awareness of the situated nature and the linguistic and historical limitations of human reason.

Just as a religion bereft of reason can turn out to be dangerous to human life, so too reason without a balancing dialogue with faith can be pathological and destructive, as we have seen in the modern era.[17] Though the encyclical affirms the importance of a dialogue between faith and reason, it does not show adequate suspicion about reason when it advocates a return to metaphysics.

An alternative approach: faith as *orthopraxis*

Faith in God is essential for salvation. However, I have always wondered whether it would not amount to positing a certain pettiness in God if we believe that God would save us only if we hold on to some faith propositions (orthodoxy). On the other hand if our salvation depended on our doing certain deeds (morality), wouldn't salvation cease to be a gratuitous gift and be only a reward for good behaviour? The third position is that living morally amounts to actually accepting God's free gift of salvation. This is a conceptually unclear statement. Panikkar's deliberation on the nature, dynamics and praxis of faith can be seen a response to this problematic.

Faith, according to Panikkar, is *orthopraxis,* understood as the most fundamental act that manifests itself as the openness of oneself to the possibility of perfection of one's being.[18] It is the existential 'thirst' that moves one towards the Absolute. It is at once "seeking as well as the finding, deriving from inquisitive man."[19] We are at once reminded of the *supernatural existential* as posited by Karl Rahner. Such concepts are closely linked.

Panikkar points out three distinct ways of understanding faith. They are: *orthodoxy*, *orthopoiesis*, and *orthopraxis*. The first refers to the primacy of Truth and identifies faith with holding on to correct doctrinal propositions. The second, in its emphasis on the correct moral behaviour, identifies faith with "the attitude and moral deportment which leads man to his destiny." The first of these can turn out to be "dogmatism" while the second "moralism". Panikkar is careful to point out that these two need not necessarily be false, but are "unilateral". That is, "as does *orthodoxy*, *orthopoiesis* has its place in a global conception of faith. However, the relationship is not reversible: negative moral deportment could be an obstacle to a real life of faith, but an irreproachable ethical life is not equivalent to a life of faith."[20]

Faith as *orthopraxis* links religion to our very being seen as act. "If man as such is a religious animal, his religion cannot be a sect; his religiousness cannot be one element among others, or a mere 'virtue' (cf. *Sum. Theol,* I-II, q. 60, a. 3). Rather his religion must be this movement which penetrates the totality of his being in re-joining his most profound existence to its source, and faith must be what gives him liberty."[21]

It is clear that Panikkar's usage (as in Aristotle) of *orthopoiesis* refers to the human activity which primarily affects an external object; whereas, *orthopraxis* while containing within itself a *poiesis* "reverts on the agent himself and transforms him."[22] The first type of activity is represented by *facere*; the second, making the human being a real agency can be called more an *agere*. Faith as an *agere* (praxis) makes man himself, thereby completes him and saves him.[23] "The effects of *praxis* are part of man's very being: it is the salvific activity *par excellence*. In a certain metaphysical framework, *praxis* is that activity by which the potentiality of the human being is actualized."[24]The author of the letter to the Hebrews is right in saying: "Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb 11:1, KJV). Faith as the *orthopraxis* which refers to the most fundamental act of self-realization in human beings indeed is geared towards the "things hoped for" – the finality of humanity.[25] The *orthopraxis* understood in this way is conceptually articulated in the doctrinal statements of a religious tradition. When

it is perceived in terms of a righteous living, it takes the form of moral injunctions.[26]

In the perception of Panikkar, faith as *orthopraxis* has a social/ communitarian dimension. It constitutes those actions of the human individual which contribute towards the full flowering of a humane society.[27] Such contributions in their genuine sense should not be seen only as affecting persons other than oneself; and hence a sort of *orthopoiesis*. They affect oneself as much as they do others. The human being indeed is 'metaphysically' a social being.[28]

We now understand why faith is absolutely necessary for salvation. For, faith by its very definition (as Panikkar understands) is the bridge/ the very possibility that links us to our ultimate goal.[29]In this sense faith for Panikkar is a given state of affairs of the human condition as creature. Hence he can speak about the faith of an atheist as "what permits him to discover himself entirely divorced from any theistic transcendence. This faith alone, so he says, offers him the possibility of realizing his life's destiny. Christian theology here cannot escape the alternative: either only those who have Christian faith are saved, or salvific faith can also be found among the so-called 'non-believers.'"[30] In this way, revelation, to be truly humanly intelligible, has to be presented to the human subject as the answer to his/ her fundamental quest. Hence the nature of revelation corresponds to the structure of the human condition of faith.[31]

In the perception of Panikkar if ***faith*** is the human condition of being open to the ultimate goal, ***faith-act*** is the human response to this condition.[32] Such an act, if misled, could take the individual away from the Goal (a case of faulty faith-act). But faith as such is the givenness of all human beings. If the faith-act is appropriate it leads us to the ultimate Goal which is the Beatific Vision. The itinerant human condition, that faith is, is meant to end up in the Vision, the fullness of the things hoped for (Heb 11:1).[33]

In summary, we can say in the words of Panikkar

> The essence of faith seems to me to lie in the question rather than in the answer, in the inquisitive attitude, the desire, rather than in the concrete response one gives to it. Faith is the existential "container" rather than the intellectual content of

"that thing" which we try to describe. It is not only in those who give a correct response, but also in all those who authentically seek, desire, love, wish ..., in those who are of "good will." The proper realm of faith is in the orthopraxis, in those right actions that men believe they have to perform in order to be what they believe they have to be.[34]

A critical evaluation

Panikkar defines faith-act as the response to the faith-condition (*orthopraxis*). But he does not tell us how to verify whether a particular faith-act actually performs this function. In fact this is a common difficulty in all the existential and transcendental approaches to faith. Is it left to the discretion of an individual? Does it amount to being guided by an external authority? Or is it both? One thing however is clear. A human act whether in terms of a belief or a deed, to the extent that it is actually helpful towards responding positively to the existential faith-condition alone becomes the genuine faith-act. Hence the criterion for judging its authenticity cannot be an external authority as such but its actual consequence for the individual. Hence 'dogmatism' and 'moralism' as such have no place in Panikkar's depiction of faith-response that is essential for salvation. Salvation is neither a reward for our good behaviour nor is it some automatic event that depends on what faith propositions one holds on to. It is rather a free gift of God already given at the very creation of the human being in the image and likeness of God. It needs to be fully realized by the faith-acts as explicated above, both at the individual and the communitarian levels.

- *Dhrarma,* derived from the Sanskrit root *dhr,* is a good rendering of *faith.* It points towards being held together – a relatedness in all that is real. Being faithful to the demands of this relatedness is justice. Hence, faith intrinsically implies justice

- Pluralism granted by FR is subjected to the deposit of faith and to the authority of the Pastors (FR 76). But in Panikkar's perspective it should be submitted to the ultimate goal of the human being. In the context of John's gospel this attains a special significance. There the emphasis is on believing in the Son that

leads to attaining eternal life. This believing is not basically a question of giving intellectual and much less oral assent to a set of propositions enshrined in the creed; but of responding to the faith (existential openness) in terms of one's discipleship of the Son.

- The *infused wisdom* (cf. A. Dulles, below) is related to faith understood in Panikkar's sense. Infused wisdom refers more to an enlightened state of existence than to a specific content. Such an enlightened state is part of the awareness of the openness to the Transcendence. Wisdom as such being an awareness (*prajna*) unlike knowledge (*jnana*) lacks a definite cognitive content. It is the mindfulness or *prajna* (a Buddhist term) of the state of existence.[35] It can be readily related to the awareness of Panikkar's sense of faith.

- Panikkar has defined faith in transcendental and existential categories, giving a rather negligible importance to its historical dimensions.[36] As J. B. Metz has pointed out, such an understanding can lead to an excessive individualism in the understanding and in the practice of faith, leaving little room for communitarian and historical aspects. This is where the ecclesial dimension that is so much central to Ratzinger's fundamental theology[37] is absent in Panikkar's depiction.

Wisdom and aesthetics

Albert Einstein after attending a concert by the violinist Yehudi Menuhin is reported to have said to the musician "Thank you, Mr. Menuhin; you have again proved to me that there is a God in heaven."[38] In a similar vein Richard Viladesau opines: "aesthetic experience seems to play a major role—at least for some people—in the exercise of the practical judgment for belief in God—perhaps a great deal more than the traditional 'proofs' of God's existence set forth in apologetic theology."[39] Aesthetic experience can be more persuasive than rational arguments in the religious realm. Wisdom and aesthetic experience are closely related. Wisdom is 'produced' in an aesthetic experience; and in its turn a 'wise expression' can give rise to a very enlightening aesthetic experience in the 'audience'.

Wisdom is of various types. Avery Dulles makes a distinction between ***philosophical wisdom*** (rational), ***theological wisdom*** (the articulated form of what is received in revelation) and ***infused wisdom*** which results from savouring (*sapere – sapientia*) the things known in faith.[40] The ***infused wisdom*** is of special interest and involves a unique type of reason. The *infused wisdom* is a combination of divine revelation, human contemplation and intuition. It is here that human discursive reason is at once included and transcended. Hence the *infused wisdom* is neither irrational nor a-rational; but meta-rational. It is the realm that offers the necessary space for the inclusion of both faith and reason and their mutual integration at a deeper level.

The original quest of philosophy understood as the 'love of wisdom' actually corresponds to that of a genuine religion. It is the personal transformation. It is in this sense that Justin the Martyr had found Christianity a true philosophy – a way of life that is based on salvific wisdom. It is only after Descartes that philosophy came to be known as a "knowing process by an unaided reason from any other non-rational sources".[41] It is also important to distinguish between wisdom as one of the intellectual virtues and wisdom as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. While faith accepts the divine truth as it is given in revelation, the Spirit's gift of wisdom enables spiritual discernment in this process (FR 44).

In general Christian theological tradition fails to appreciate the histories of other peoples as capable of being locations of God's revelation. Hence the discourse on general revelation is focussed excessively on texts such as Rom 1 and 2, John 1, and Acts 17, almost to the neglect of the narratives of Melchizedek king of Salem (Gen 14:18), Abimelech king of Gerar (Gen 20:3f), Pharaoh Neco (2 Chr 35:21-22) and Lemuel (Prov 31:1) etc., who fall outside the boundaries of the covenant community, and yet have God's word functioning in their lives. In general Christian theology is impoverished to the extent that it separates the 'redemptive' from the 'creational' and prefers the former at the neglect of the latter; and prefers the 'propositional' at the cost of the 'narrative'.[42]

The issue of general revelation in the bible, among other things, is also related to the wisdom of people falling outside the covenant

community. For instance see the following textual references in the book of Proverbs: "The words of Agur son of Jakeh" (30:1-33), "the words of King Lemuel . . . that his mother taught him" (31:1-9). These names do not sound typically Israelite. Their presence indicates the recognition of God's revelatory truth in the wisdom of Israel's neighbours.[43]

Scholars have pointed out a similar recognition, at least an implicit one, in the Lukan text of Acts 17. Paul, in this text is far from being manipulative just in order to get the approval of his audience. 17:28 actually cites poets Epimenides ("in him we live and move and have our being") and Aratus ("For we too are his offspring") in recognizing in the Athenians a desire to know the unknown God. What is more surprising is that the poets cited by Paul are not referring to some general, spiritual principles, but are very specific in their reference: Zeus. Epimenides composes the words of Minos, the son of Zeus: "They fashioned a tome for thee, O holy and high one – The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies! But thou art not dead; thou livest and abidest for ever, for in thee we live and move and have our being." (*Florae Semiticae X*).[44] The original text of Aratus which Paul cites, reads: "It is with Zeus that every one of us in every way has to do, for we are also his offspring" (*Phaenomena* 5).[45]

Albeit this is not to suggest that Paul professes faith in Greek deities, but to affirm that he sees the Greek theological articulations as consisting of traces of the real experience of the one, true God. Paul indeed has left us sufficient cues for relating special revelation to general revelation. The apparent failure of the Christian theological tradition to build on this seems to be springing from the failure to see the vast range of the activity of the Spirit, perhaps beyond the visible Church confines. St Irenaeus of Lyons spoke of the Son and the Spirit as the two hands of the Father, active in history.[46] That is how he sought to posit a unity of God's involvement in history in and through his Son and Spirit. Documents like *Dominus Iesus* and *Verbum Domini* (no. 15) assert that to conceive of two parallel salvation economies one related to the Logos (incarnate) and another (broader) related to the Spirit, is contrary to Catholic faith. But that precisely is the point: how to see the unity between these two in their action in the varied cultures and history of peoples – a daunting

task for speculative theologians, but certainly not an impossible reality for God!

The special role of "foolish" wisdom

In the biblical perspective, the "fear of the Lord" is the source of wisdom (Prov 9:10; Ps 111:10). For the modern world, knowledge is power, and wisdom, for all practical purposes, seems to be a lost entity. This is visible in the contemporary world, where the explosion of knowledge, which is bereft of wisdom has not been able to curb human degradation. Rightly then, "the future of humankind belongs not to the increase of sciences but to the rediscovery of wisdom, because only 'wisdom gives life' (Eccl 7:12)".[47]

However, as pointed out earlier, wisdom is of various kinds. Not all of them are helpful for the full blossoming of human reality. In this context Peter C. Phan makes a special case for a particular form of wisdom, which he calls "irony", "fantasy" and knowledge illuminated by love.[48] This is the wisdom attributed to the Christian category of the 'wise fool' or the 'holy fool', what he calls *mōrosophia.*[49]

He gives the following examples: "fool for Christ's sake" in Christian tradition, the Sufi *majzub*, the *avadhuta*[50] in Hindu tradition, the "holy madness" (expressed in *koan*s, and even certain forms of physical violence) of Zen tradition, even the court jester that critiqued the political affairs with impunity etc.[51] Such forms of wisdom and its expressions can be subversive of the status quo, and hence those who possess them are feared and even brutally liquidated. Jesus and Socrates can be seen standing in this tradition. Their 'insanity' was simultaneously enlightening as well as subversive. Phan justifies the necessity of this sort of wisdom on the basis of the fact that reality is paradoxical and hence cannot be comprehended in terms of straightjacketed concepts. However the 'foolish wisdom' can take destructive forms and hence needs true love as the guiding principle.[52] For "in the final analysis, knowledge is but the luminous radiance of love."[53]

This is demonstrated in the "wisdom of the cross". The apparent powerlessness of the cross destroys the powers of darkness with

the power of self-giving love. Wisdom of the cross is certainly neither a passive acceptance nor a masochistic glorification of suffering as such; but is a faith-daring that is not scared of making specific options against the forces of evil and to pay the price. The faith-daring in this sense actually is daring love. Its options are the result of an unflinching commitment to the Reign of God, which makes one develop faith-based doubts. A faith-based doubt refers to the suspicion, prompted by one's faith commitment, about all that is anti-Reign, however 'sacrosanct' it may claim to be. This is because in the Biblical perspective it would be self-contradictory to understand commitment to the Reign, which is bereft of commitment to justice and love. Abraham Heshel has articulated this sharply. According to him, God's justice "is not an interference, but an *a priori* to biblical faith, that is self-evident; and not an added attribute to his essence, but given with the very thought of God. It is inherent in his essence and identified with his mercy."[54]

Conclusion

"Knowledge of the Lord" as Is 11:9 presents, or the vision of 'God being all in all' as 1 Cor 15:28 articulates, is the ultimate goal of creation. It is analogous to the highest *jñāna* or *sārupya bhakti* that some Indian traditions speak of. There are unique expressions and depictions of similar visions in various traditions. Faith indeed culminates into such a beatific vision. Whether we understand faith in terms of propositions or as moral injunctions or simply as the existential givenness that drives the human person beyond every limit towards the Ultimate, the goal is the "knowledge of the Lord". Such 'knowledge' is already present in the human being in its potency form as the *sensus divinitatis*. It is part of what the Scriptures call the 'image of God' (cf. Gen 1:26f; Rom 1:20f; Jn 1:1-18; Col 1:15f).[55] It needs to be realized in fuller measure. It is more a unitive knowledge than a content that bears the characteristic of a subject-object duality. Reason, too, to the extent it is related to faith as FR insists, is a helpful means in this journey towards the Ultimate. In the historical interval one could encounter many wisdom systems. Not all of them nor the entirety of any one of them can be considered helpful towards the full blossoming of the entire creation. The discerning wisdom

that is needed in this context is churned out from a variety of sources: A life of commitment to the Reign, a faith-based contemplation on reality; reason, both personal and communitarian; dialogical relationship between one's own and other religious traditions; signs of the times encountered in the critical engagement with history etc. are some of these. In this way reason, faith, and human wisdom, when guided by an higher form of discerning wisdom, act as signposts in our historical engagement and pilgrimage towards the Ultimate.

Notes

1. "... [M]en and women are on a journey of discovery which is humanly unstoppable - a search for the truth and a search for a person to whom they might entrust themselves" (*Fides et Ratio* 33. Henceforth FR)

2. For instance it would not make much sense to bring in such a distinction especially in the *jòâna mârga* schools of Asia or in the Hebrew biblical tradition.

3. For instance, the Atheistic philosophies of Karl Marx (and the bloody revolutions that it gave rise to in the later centuries), Nietzsche and the like; enormous blood shed caused by French revolution, which had clear anti-faith bias; modernity's uncritical faith in human rationality bereft of faith and the consequences that occurred in the 20th century such as Nazi holocaust etc.

4. Theodore T. Shimmyo makes this classification based on several scholarly studies. See his "Faith and reason: A unificationist view", in *Journal of Unification Studies*, 3 1999-2000, pp. 79-80.

5. See Battista Mondin, "Faith and reason in the Roman Catholic thought from Clement of Alexandria to Vatican II", in *Dialogue and Alliance,* 1 no 1 Spr 1987, p 18.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid. p. 23.

8. There is a distinction between 'culture' and 'cultural reason'. The cultural reason being shaped by a culture (and vice versa; and in reality there is no reason that is not shaped by culture) is part of the culture but not the culture itself. It is this reason that preserves a culture and justifies the related cultural norms. It is the pervading

rationality of a culture. I don't mean to say that such reason is entirely liberated in any culture; nor is it entirely corrupt. Therefore there is a need for a mutual critique between faith and cultural reason. The cultural reason is not a monolithic whole even within a given culture; just as a given culture is not a monolithic whole. It is not even a fixed entity, but exists in a flux of change and constancy (*Evengelii Gaudium* 122). For instance: it is the same cultural reason in certain parts of India that upholds non-violence towards cows and at the same time justifies terrible violence against a *panchama*. It is the same cultural reason in the West that upholds individual's dignity and simultaneously promotes dehumanizing 'individualism'. The former expressions of these two cultural reasons can be in harmony with Christian faith/Gospel. The latter expressions in both the cases need to be critiqued. Indeed behind the 'use and throw culture' that Evangelii Gaudium speaks about, there is a cultural reason that simultaneously gives rise to a spirit of never ending innovations and discoveries, which can be evaluated positively. In fact Evangelii Gaudium no. 116 clearly hints at the possible harmony between positive aspects of cultures and the Gospel.

9. "Similarly the Church has existed through the centuries and has utilized the resources of different cultures in its preaching to spread and explain the message of Christ, to examine and understand it more deeply, and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in various aspects of the life of the faithful. Nevertheless, the Church has been sent to all ages and nations and, therefore, is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, to any one particular way of life, or to any customary practices, ancient or modern. The Church is faithful to its traditions and is at the same time conscious of its universal mission; it can, then, enter communion with different forms of culture"(*Gaudium et Spes* 58).

10. "The teaching of the Saviour is perfect in itself and has no need of support, because it is the strength and the wisdom of God. Greek philosophy, with its contribution, does not strengthen truth; but, in rendering the attack of sophistry impotent and in disarming those who betray truth and wage war upon it, Greek philosophy is rightly called the hedge and the protective wall around the vineyard"*Stromata* I, 20, 100, 1: SC 30, 124. Cited in FR 38.

11. Thomas Guarino, "Fides et Ratio: Theology and contemporary pluralism", in *Theological Studies*, 62 no 4 D 2001, p 690.

12. *Prologus*, 4: *Opera Omnia*, Florence, 1891, vol. V, 296. Cited in FR 105.

13. Thomas Guarino, op.cit., p. 686

14. Ibid. pp. 686-687.

15. Ibid., p.691.

16. Ibid., p.693.

17. Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger, *The Dialectics of Secularization* (San Francisco, California: Ignatius, 2007), p. 29. Referred in Pablo Blanco Sarto, "Logos and Dia-logos: Faith, reason, (and love) according to Joseph Ratzinger", in *Anglican Theological Review*, 92 no 3 Sum 2010, p. 508.

18. In a related way James Fowler treats development of faith as the development of ego (the self-understanding), which in turn is essentially a relational reality. See his perceptive article, which exhibits an interdisciplinarity of ontology, epistemology, psychology and theology – "Faith and the Structure of Meaning" in Christiane Brusselmans, ed., *Toward Moral and Religious Maturity*, (Morristown N.F.: Silver Burdett, 1980), esp. p. 11.

19. Raimundo Panikkar, "Faith: A constitutive dimension of man", in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 8 no 2 Spr 1971, p. 232.

20. Ibid. p. 237.

21. Ibid. p. 232.

22. Ibid. pp. 237-238.

23 Ibid., p. 238.

24. Ibid. pp. 238-239.

25. In this context the comment on Is 7:9 ("If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all") in *Lumen Fidei* is very enlightening: Standing firm in faith is necessary for Israel for being 'established' (LXX uses the verb synete) as a people, (LF 23, 24). Panikkar's understanding of faith as orthopraxis, indeed refers to that which 'establishes' or builds us up according to what we are destined to be by God.

26. The assurance is rendered as ὑποστάσις (hypostasis) in the Hebrews text. Seeing the connection between Heb 2:1f and 11:1 Panikkar notes that "the faith as this hypostasis has its στάσις

(stand) in the hope for what is not yet and whose ὑπο (base), is found in what can never appear, in the radical apophatism of that which, in as much as it is that, can never have any epiphany because its φαινόμενον (phenomenon), is already the εἰκων (image), the λόγος (word)". See R. Panikkar, op.cit., pp.245-246.

27. Ibid., p. 239

28. I have dealt with this issue in my article, "Some Religious Anthropologies and Their Implications", in *Journal of Indian Theology* Vol VI, No.2 (May-August), 2013, pp. 27-51.

29. R. Panikkar, op.cit. p. 240.

30. Ibid., pp. 240-241

31. Ibid., p. 247.

32. Ibid., p. 246.

33. The Encylical *Lumen Fidei* (29, 30) of Pope Francis rightly points out how faith is both, a 'hearing' (Word) and a 'seeing'. As he points out we see this combination vividly in John's gospel. In the Indian traditions too we have *darśana* (sight/ vision) and *śruti* (that which is heard) to denote the Reality of the Beyond impinging on us and transforming us.

34. Ibid. p. 248.

35. In Mahāyāna Buddhism *vijñāna* stands for reason, in so far it represents a mental activity, but *prajña* is mindfulness or an enlightened awareness. "The defining characteristic of *vijñāna*, says Suzuki, 'is dualism in the sense that there is one who sees and there is the other that is seen — the two standing in opposition.'" See Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. "Reason and Intuition in Buddhist Philosophy," in Charles Moore (ed.), *The Japanese Mind*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1967), p. 66. "The principle of differentiation, [it] can never see *prajña* in its oneness" (Ibid. p. 67). On the other hand, *prajña* as an integrating principle, where "differentiation does not take place; what is seen and the one who sees are identical; it is the self-knowledge of the whole. Further, it is pure act, pure experience" (Ibid. pp. 65-67). All these citations are from: Angela Andrade, "Reason, intuition and action: A Shin Buddhist approach", in *Pure Land* (Berkeley: California), ns no 15 D 1998, p 108.

36. The communitarian character of faith is very much emphasised in LF: "Faith is necessarily ecclesial; it is professed from within the body of Christ as a concrete com-munion of believers. It is against this ecclesial backdrop that faith opens the individual Chris-tian towards all others." (no. 22)

37. "Faith is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church, by which we obtain the privileged knowledge that we can reach through reflection and through trust. This verstehen – an understanding – takes as its starting point, stehen of being in the church. In the communion of the church – which is a reflection of the Trinity, all the truth of the faith comes into view." See Pablo Blanco Sarto, "Logos and dia-logos: Faith, reason, (and love) according to Joseph Ratzinger", in *Anglican Theological Review*, 92 no 3 Sum 2010, p. 506.

38. Albert Einstein, quoted in Richard Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 104. Cited in Robert Johnston, "Discerning the Spirit in culture: observations arising from reflection on general revelation", in *Ex auditu*, 23, 2007, p 53.

39. Richard Viladesau, Ibid., p. 107. Cited in Robert Johnston, Ibid.

40. Avery Dulles, "Faith, reason, and wisdom", in *Living Pulpit,* 9 no 3 Jl-S 2000, p 14.

41. Peter Simpson, "The Christianity of philosophy", in *First Things*, no 113 May 2001, p. 36.

42. Robert Johnston, op.cit., p.55.

43. Ibid., p. 61.

44. Cited in Ibid., p. 64.

45. Cited in Ibid., p. 65.

46. *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 7, 4: PG 7, 992-993; V, 1, 3: PG 7, 1123; V, 6, 1: PG 7, 1137; V, 28, 4: PG 7, 1200.

47. Juergen Moltmann, "Science and wisdom", in *Theology Today*, 58 no 2 Jl 2001, p. 164.

48. We have this enlightening text from Pope Francis that emphasizes the guiding role of love and truth in our search for truth. We can as well say, love being the supreme virtue is the criterion for the au-

thenticity of wisdom: "Only to the extent that love is grounded in truth can it endure over time, can it transcend the pass-ing moment and be sufficiently solid to sustain a shared journey. If love is not tied to truth, it falls prey to fickle emotions and cannot stand the test of time... If love needs truth, truth also needs love. Love and truth are inseparable. Without love, truth becomes cold, impersonal and oppres-sive for people's day-to-day lives. The truth we seek, the truth that gives meaning to our jour-ney through life, enlightens us whenever we are touched by love." (LF 27)

49. See Peter C. Phan, "The wisdom of holy fools in postmodernity", in *Theological Studies*, 62 no 4 D 2001.

50. *Avadhūta* is a Sanskrit term from some Indian religions or *Dhārmic* Traditions referring to a type of mystic or saint who is beyond egoic-consciousness, duality and common worldly concerns and acts without consideration for standard social etiquette. Such personalities "roam free like a child upon the face of the Earth". An *avadhūta* does not identify with his mind or body or 'names and forms' (*nāmarūpa*). Such a person is held to be pure 'consciousness' (*çaitanya*) in human form. *Avadhūts* play a significant role in the history, origins and rejuvenations of a number of *Dhārmic* traditions such as Yōga, Vēdānta, Buddha dharma and Bhakti tradition (*parampara*) even as they are released from standard observances. Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avadhuta accessed on 8th July, 2013.

51. Peter C. Phan, op.cit., p.732.

52. Ibid., p. 750.

53. Karl Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 81.

54. Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1992), p. 159.

55. Scott Oliphint, "Using reason by faith" in *Westminster Theological Journal*, 73, no 1 Spr 2011,p. 104f.

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Spatial Contestations:
Interplay of Faith, Reason and Wisdom in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Contemporary Goa

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Abstract: Faith, reason and wisdom are terms often discussed by philosophers, theologians and scholars of religion in abstract terms. But ask any believer and he will articulate his faith by employing the reason and wisdom he learns and assimilates from his everyday life practices. Vatican II has taken the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom from the rarefied echelons of philosophers and theologians and spread it down among the masses. This paper drawn from my doctoral work, "New Christian movements in contemporary Goa: a sociological study" attempts to study the interplay between faith, reason and wisdom in a particular faith tradition employed by a specific religious community in a concrete socio-historical context. It is a study of the various strategies employed by the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in contemporary Goa to formulate and articulate world views, beliefs, rituals and practices as they jostle for space in the religious sphere of the state, which has been dominated by the Hindu and Catholic communities for centuries.

Key words: Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, Christianity in post-liberation Goa, Sociology of faith, reason and wisdom, Sacred & Profane, Religious symbols, Religious Contestation.

I. Introduction

This seminar organised by Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune on 'Faith, Reason and Wisdom' is to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Second Vatican Council and the year of faith. This paper is an attempt to present a sociological perspective of faith, reason and wisdom. In sociological and especially anthropological literature faith is not merely belief in a set of theological precepts and dogmas, but is the process of articulating one's religious beliefs in and through everyday

life situations. Faith is lived out in the mundane rituals and practices of common people. Similarly reason and wisdom are not abstract ideas or an ideology or a particular state of mind, but are thought processes and worldviews conditioned by concrete historical situations and cultural contexts that guide and shape the everyday faith responses of a believer. Therefore instead of looking at the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom from a theoretical and definitional perspective, this paper will highlight the interplay of this triptych in formulating and articulating the religious system of Fentecostal-Charismatic Christian groups (a particular faith tradition) in contemporary Goa (a particular historical and cultural context).

II. Christianity in Post-Liberation Goa

Goa was liberated in 1961 and with the departure of the Portuguese, massive public funding was earmarked for development projects and as a result industry, mining, tourism, agricultural productivity, mechanized fishing, banking, real estate, education, health care and business all started to develop and expand. All these new industries and public sector ventures required a lot of skilled workers and the period after liberation witnessed a huge influx of migrant workers into the state. The mining boom which began in the 1950s and got further boost after 1961 also led to an inflow of workers, especially from the neighbouring states. This is reflected in the sudden increase in the population of Goa from 1961 to 1971. From 589,997 in 1961, the total population rose to 795,120, an increase of 34.8%. This is much higher than the subsequent decadal growth rates of the total population: 26.7% from 1971 to 1981, 16% from 1981 to 1991 and 15.2% from 1991 to 2001[1].

Among the people who came to Goa, seeking their fortunes in the 1960s, were a few Syrian Christians from Kerala, the Methodists and the Seventh Day Adventists. The Indian Pentecostal Church was the first Pentecostal group to arrive in Goa in 1971, while in 1972 the first independent evangelical group, the Vasco Brethren Assembly, was started by a Keralite, C. John. Bethel House of Worship was the first independent Church started by a pastor of Goan origin, Evangelista Dias in 1979. He began with just three families at Assolna,

South Goa and has presently grown to 150 members and has shifted to the town of Margao.

The decade of the 1980s can be described as the decade of the mushrooming of neo-Pentecostal Churches. 1987 saw the emergence of two prominent neo-Pentecostal Churches, the 'New Life Fellowship' and 'New Frontiers International' (henceforth NFI). The former under the banner of New Life Fellowship Mumbai began simultaneously in Vasco under Pastor Joseph D'Cruz and in Panjim under Pastor Arc D'Cruz. At present New Life Fellowship has five congregations in Goa catering mainly to Goans and have services mainly in Konkani and English. The other prominent neo-Pentecostal Church, the NFI was launched in Gogol, Margao by Pastor Duncan of U.K with the help of a team from Mumbai. Today they have spread all over Goa having congregations in Mapusa, Vasco, Margao (2) and Panjim and cater to all sections of society. The decades of the 1990s and 2000s have seen a lot of expansion and many new neo-Pentecostal congregations coming into Goa. Most of these Churches cater to the non-Goan community and their services are in Hindi, Telegu, Kannada or Malayalam. According to Pastor C. M. Saji of the Indian Pentecostal Church, there are nearly 120 congregations in Goa comprising of around 6000-7500 neo-Pentecostals or 'believers', with about 90 known pastors[2].

III. Identity Formation of the Neo-Pentecostal Movement with the Recreation of the New Testament Church as the Guiding Motif.

The recreation of the 'New Testament Church', as the neo-Pentecostals understand it, is the basic defining principle around which the corporate identity of the neo-Pentecostal movement as a whole, and the individual identities of different neo-Pentecostal congregations and their individual members are built. Since none of the neo-Pentecostal Churches in Goa are more than 40 years old, they assume the garb of the early Biblical Church to show a continuum between present day neo-Pentecostalism and the nearly 2000 years old New Testament Church. The members of NFI quote from the book of Revelation in the Bible, which speaks about seven

independent Churches like the Church in Ephesus, Church in Smyrna, etc, and equate their congregation in Panjim to such an independent Church. They identify their Church not as a denomination coming from some Protestant movement, but as a New Testament Church based on the Bible and similar to the above seven independent Churches.

In the process of identity formation for any individual or group or section of society, the first step in that process is identifying the other(s) and showing that they are distinct from them. The New Testament Church, which was a Jewish sect trying to assert its own separate identity, first tried to separate itself from the Jewish community on the one hand and the Roman state religion on the other. Secondly, to draw converts from the Jewish community, the nascent Church had to show some continuity with Judaism (Matthew's gospel is a good example of this) and at the same time maintain its 'newness' and superiority over the old Jewish faith (Pauline theology is an attempt to do this). The neo-Pentecostal movement in Goa, which has modelled itself on the New Testament Church, has also tried to carve out a separate religious space, which is distinct from Catholicism and Hinduism, the two dominant religions in Goa. This marking of sharp boundaries with other religious traditions is carried out at different levels and in different loci.

A. Marking of Boundaries with the Catholic Community

As stated earlier, the New Testament Church emerged from the Jewish community with all its early members and leaders, including its founder, Jesus Christ, being Jews. So, initially the main tussles and conflicts were between the Christians and the Jews[3] as the nascent Christian community tried to separate itself from the parent Jewish community by selectively borrowing certain Jewish religious beliefs, practices and symbols and critiquing and rejecting the others. Thus the Biblical Church at the first council of Jerusalem[4] rejected the practice of circumcision - the key external marker of Jewish identity inscribed on the body of the individual believer.

Similarly the neo-Pentecostals in Goa, whose founding leaders and early members were mainly from the Catholic community, have

carved their own separate identity by critiquing and rejecting many religious beliefs, practices and symbols of their parent Catholic community. The neo-Pentecostals have had several conflicts with the Catholic community in Goa, which is described in some detail a little later. The main contrast between Neo-Pentecostalism and Catholicism, as seen by the neo-Pentecostals, is based on the theme of the New Testament Church. The neo-Pentecostals argue that the Catholic Church has lost the original vision of the Biblical Church and have compromised the New Testament values, while the neo-Pentecostals have remained loyal to the New Testament vision and values.

The neo-Pentecostals therefore re-read the history of Catholicism as being manipulated by the Roman Empire and various other worldly powers over a long period of time and underline how the Church has misused power during the Inquisition & other events in history. The neo-Pentecostals argue that the Holy Spirit, which came down on the New Testament Church at Pentecost, is no longer working in the Catholic Church; it is only Father, Son and Mother Mary and so Catholics, like the Hindus and Muslims, are still searching for the real God. So they redefine Catholicism as a man made religion - "it is not God's wisdom, but man's wisdom", said the pastor of World Revival Ministries (henceforth WRM) an independent indigenous born-again Christian group at Siolim, which is affiliated to New Covenant Family of Ministries, based in USA.

B. Popular Marian devotion and usage of images

The two very important external markers of separation between the neo-Pentecostals and the Catholics which are cited by many of the common folk, both Catholics and neo-Pentecostals, are popular devotion to Mary and usage of statues and images. Both these Catholic traditions are rejected by the neo-Pentecostals as these are not part of their idea of the New Testament Church and so the neo-Pentecostals are strictly forbidden from participating in any of these practices. Thus litanies at wayside shrines, celebration of the feasts of saints and other parish feasts (with their characteristic processions, fire-works and fairs), the innumerable wayside crosses and chapels

seen all over Goa and the large Churches and Cathedrals with many crosses, statues and other religious artefacts that are characteristic of the Catholics, and form their external and visible markers of distinction, are rejected by the neo-Pentecostals. According to the neo-Pentecostals, popular Marian devotion is taboo since it portrays Mary, a human being, as God.

The neo-Pentecostals term the Catholic tradition of using images, statues, amulets, etc in their religious observances as idolatry. They cite from the Mosaic Law to show that idolatry is against Biblical tradition[5]. Thus a complaint heard from several Catholics is that the neo-Pentecostal pastors make the new converts walk on rosaries or crosses to prove that they are no longer Catholics, since venerating and respecting rosaries and crosses is seen as a key external marker of Catholic identity.

C. Other markers of boundaries

The neo-Pentecostals reject several Catholic doctrines and traditions like the necessity of good works of mercy and charity for salvation, celebration of Christmas on December 25, feasts of different saints and the three kings, praying for and offering masses for the dead, etc., all of which they reason are not in accordance with the Biblical Church values. Individual neo-Pentecostal believers criticize several observances and traditions practised by the Catholics, interpreting them as demonic and contrary to the wisdom of the word of God. The neo-Pentecostals are especially critical of the religious professionals of the Catholic Church. The Catholic clergy are accused of promoting such traditions and practices that are not in accordance with the New Testament Church model. They cite the example of the festival of Zagor held in Siolim village where the Catholics and Hindus together worship the Zagorio, which is a demonic spirit[6]. According to their reasoning this tradition was started by the local Catholic priest. The neo-Pentecostals especially attack the Catholic position on the necessity of celibacy for priesthood and label the Catholic clergy as womanisers, drunkards and not faithfully following their vows. Neo-Pentecostals also reject the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation[7] and the Catholic practice of infant baptism, which are contradictory to the wisdom of the Biblical

Church. Their understanding is that neither the bread nor the wine becomes the body or blood of Christ respectively.

While the primary process of boundary marking for the neo-Pentecostals in Goa has been with the Catholic community, they also use their faith formulations derived from their New Testament wisdom to draw up sharp boundaries with other religious traditions. When it comes to other religions, the neo-Pentecostals have rather extremist positions. They draw their position from the New Testament model, where St. Paul strongly condemns the existing pagan practices of the Greek and Roman religions. According to them Satan's plan is to use different religions to take mankind away from God. Most of them believe that the non-Christian religions are leading people away from heaven and into hell. The neo-Pentecostals clearly distinguish between the worldly persons (gentiles) who do not have the wisdom of Christ, and themselves, who have put on the mind of Christ. Hollenweger (1972: 485) opines that the 'tribal religion' of Pentecostalism needs clear and tangible 'tribal marks' in order to make abundantly clear who belongs to one's own 'tribe', the Church, and who belongs to the 'hostile tribes', the world.

They draw clear-cut boundaries with other religious scriptures pointing out that only the Bible is the word of God. Some of them would even go to the extent of saying that all other scriptures are Satanic. The neo-Pentecostal pastors sharply attack the New Age gurus labelling them as imposters and alleging that they take their teachings from the Bible, while changing and twisting things. Practices like Yoga, meditation, art of living, etc are regarded as taboo since they believe that these practices are not just cultural but are rooted in religious traditions.

Neo-Pentecostalism as a new religious movement in Goa strives to carve out a separate religious space for itself, distinct from and yet in continuum with the two major religious traditions of Hinduism and Catholicism existing in Goa. They achieve a separate formulation of faith and formation of a distinct religious identity by showing that the others (pagans, gentiles) are stagnant, and worship dead or false Gods, while their faith is characterised by dynamism, growth, revival and commitment. By identifying with and assuming the values,

symbols and practices of their model of the New Testament Church the neo-Pentecostals employ both reason and wisdom drawn from that particular understanding to arrive at new expressions of faith identity that ascribe superior status to themselves. As New Testament Christians they believe that they are the chosen ones certain of being saved and this divine wisdom gives them power and victory over the pagans and all their enemies.

IV. Religious Symbols and Discourses of the Charismatic-Pentecostal Movement

This section in trying to understand the worldview and ethos of its adherents looks at how Pentecostal Christianity employs reason and wisdom drawn from their understanding of the Bible to formulate religious symbols and discourses which they accept as authoritative and truthful at a given period of time. Clifford Geertz in looking at religion as a cultural system defines religion as "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (1973: 90). Geertz's ideas have to be understood in the light of Talal Asad's criticism. Asad (1993) suggests that religious symbols cannot be understood independently of their historical relations with non-religious symbols, in which work and power are crucial. He argues that religious symbols are intimately linked to social life and so change with it, and they usually support the dominant political power (and occasionally oppose it). It is not mere religious symbols that implant true Christian dispositions, but power- ranging all the way from laws (imperial and ecclesiastical) and other sanctions (hellfire, death, salvation, good repute, peace) to the disciplinary activities of social institutions (family, school, city, church) and of human bodies (fasting, prayer, obedience, penance). In the light of Geertz's conception of symbols providing a model of and for the world of existence of the believers and Asad's corrections about the important role of power in deciding which representations/ discourses are accepted as authoritative, we analyze how religious symbols and

discourses of the neo-Pentecostals are articulated in their ritualistic observances.

A. Concept of Sacred/Profane

Neo-Pentecostals who draw inspiration from the Pentecost event of the early Church have both different and similar conceptions of what constitutes sacred and profane compared to other Christians. According to Bourdieu (1990: 57) the *habitus,* which is constituted in the course of an individual history, facilitates agents to partake of the history objectified in institutions and thus "makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to appropriate them practically, and so to keep them in activity." The habitus enables the institutions to attain full realization, that is, the Church made flesh (Ibid). While analyzing the concepts of sacred and profane for neo-Pentecostalism it is necessary to study the influence of the habitus, constituted in individual histories of members, on the institutions of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and neo-Pentecostalism and unravel those "authoritative representations/ discourses" (Asad 1993) which have fashioned these conceptions and study the role of power in determining their authoritative status.

For the continuation and growth of any voluntary movement it is necessary to recruit a large number of committed volunteers who are able and willing to render a large amount of 'free service' to the entire group. Since the group cannot remunerate the volunteers economically or socially, it formulates a discourse on service to the Church that draws from Biblical models of service, for e.g. Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and at the same time attaches the sure promise of eternal salvation, besides enhanced status among the members of the group as rewards for the service rendered. Once, the pastor of a born-again Church made a special mention of a couple on the serving team who did a good job welcoming people at the door, and made them stand up while everyone applauded them. This practice of public acknowledgement of the serving team enhances the discourse on the importance of service to the Church. As Asad (1993) mentions that the authoritative status of representations/discourses depends on the appropriate production

of other kinds of practice. The goals of this discourse are to identify what type of work can be considered as 'service to the Church', to motivate people to work and serve, and to elevate mundane chores like sweeping, cleaning the hall, arranging the chairs, arranging the mikes or preparing tea and coffee to the level of sacred activity. The neo-Pentecostals argue that once a person is certain of salvation he will lead a life of service in gratitude to the free gift of God. Thus, those who serve the Church are the selected ones within the group of elect. While the people assigned to serve have to make sacrifices like coming earlier than others and leaving last, cleaning and arranging the hall, getting the sound system ready and doing various other chores, they also have the privilege of access to equipment, facilities and contacts and being part of the inner decision-making group – the core group or the team of elders.

B. Sacred and Profane Space and Time and Mapping of History and Geography

One of the most influential thinkers on religion and territory/ space is Mircea Eliade who argued that religious difference was a result of diverse instantiations of the sacred that erupted into the seen world in "hierophanies," thereby creating "sacred space" (E. McAlister 2005: 250). Most of the current religion scholars like J. Z. Smith, David Chidester, Sam Gill and Karen Mccarthy Brown criticise Eliade's theory of sacred space, which posited a universally existing, natural dualism between 'sacred' and 'profane' space, as ultimately resting on a Western theological template. These current scholars instead begin with a premise from philosopher Henri Lefebvre, whose book *The Production of Space* (1991) parses out any given local space in a tripartite synthesis of physical, mental and social spaces that operate simultaneously. Thus space is always a part of material culture, always social, always produced and there can never be any neutral or merely physical space (Ibid). The neo-Pentecostals use this reasoning that 'place' 'space' and 'territory' are 'second-order categories'[8] to deny that there is any period or moment which they call as sacred time or any specific place that they term as sacred space. For neo-Pentecostals sacredness is

derived from the activity performed at a particular place and in a particular time.

The neo-Pentecostal position is in contrast to the Catholic position which holds a spatial distinction of sacred and profane and identifies the physical and social space of the Church universally as 'sacred'. More than the physical structure of the Church, it is the restriction and control of social behaviour within the Church premises that produce the 'sacred' Church space. As referred earlier, Lefebvre argues that space is always social and always produced. Stirrat identifies the use of space and controls over behaviour within spatially defined limits to highlight the distinction between sacred and profane found at a Catholic pilgrimage centre in Sri Lanka (1992: 64). He notes how the pilgrims were aware of the rule-bound nature of the sacred and the expectation that they should act with decorum within the boundaries of the Church land, which was absent outside. Besides the physical space, the Catholics also regarded the social space of the Church or shrine as sacred and contrasted the sense of oneness in the Church with the divisions of normal society (Ibid: 66). Visvanathan (1999: 36-38) points out that for Syrian Christians a place, whether a Church or a house, is a mnemonic expressing the continuity and linearity of historical time.

On the other hand, the Pentecostal Christians map the universe into Christian-reached and un-reached (demonic) territories. This global-mapping is not only of "people groups" but also of territories (E. McAlister 2005: 252). Territories can be ruled by "principalities" or "powers" invested with theological, spiritual significance. Unlike the Catholic Charismatics who hold the territorial confines of the Church as sacred the neo-Pentecostals spiritually map the entire universe into swathes of sacred and profane territories – sacred where there has been successful church planting and demonic where their ancient peoples had transacted pacts with un-Christian powers. On the basis of this distinction McAlister describes an additional concept, namely, the '10/40 window'. The phrase '10/40 window' became a prominent concept in evangelical Christian discourse. It maps a territory from 10 degree to 40 degree north latitude, a rectangular 'window' between Northern Africa and Eastern Asia where the Christian population is quite small and evangelization is

deemed necessary. The neo-Pentecostals stress on the idea of the entire universe being divided into Christian (reached) and demonic (un-reached) territories. Through conversion to Christianity, a territory and its people can detach itself from demonic entrenchment and become a righteous land standing before God (profane to sacred movement).

'Sacred time' plays an important role in the religious discourses of neo-Pentecostalism. A certain period or time, hour or day or year acquires a sacred character either due to the fulfilment of some vision or prophecy or due to the expectation of the occurrence of some sacred event devoted to God. The exact day or year can keep changing depending on the contents of the discourse feeding into its sacredness. The millennial expectation of the second coming of Christ plays an important role in their conception of sacred time, which leads them to evaluate specific historical situations in the light of what is to be at the time of the Last Judgement.

The neo-Pentecostals divide the historical period on earth into different ages. There is the Biblical age which is divided into the Old Testament, the time from the creation of Adam and Eve till Jesus' entry, and the New Testament, that is, Jesus' time. From Jesus' times it is the Christian era wherein Christianity as a religion has been growing. Once the word of God spreads to the end of the world and the world is completely evangelized, the Christian Age will end. God the Father and Jesus will appear to all peoples and that will be the end of humanity. For them the New Testament period and the present end-days are important, while the intervening period of human history that includes the growth of Christianity is overlooked. The Old Testament is only important since it is a preparation for the entry of Jesus Christ into the human world. In their mapping of human history, based mainly on Christological criteria, the New Testament period is important because of the entry of Jesus Christ into history and the present age is important due to Christ's imminent second coming. Being very young movements with almost no history, they conveniently play down the importance of human history and in an unhistorical manner connect their Church to the New Testament age.

C. Inscription of Moral Codes and Practices on the Christian Body

The discourse on the recreation of the New testament Church and the resultant dualistic worldview leads the neo-Pentecostals to label habits like drinking, smoking and taking drugs as evil habits and practices like fasting, praying and doing penances as good habits. Restrictions on drinking are widespread in Neo-Pentecostalism. Teetotalism is the model for all neo-Pentecostals. These restrictions are enforced in some groups directly with a lot of pressure, including the threat of excommunication and in others indirectly, using mainly psychological pressure. The discourse on the body being the temple of the Holy Spirit and thus the need to be 'holy, pure, blameless' and 'do the will of God' are linked to giving up habits like drinking and drugs. Since their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the women and girls are urged to dress modestly and appropriately.

Thus, both holiness and moral codes are inscribed on the physical body of the adherent through the discipline of fasting, prayer, penance and dress codes and abstinence from alcohol, drugs, etc. since these elements are said to lead people away from God and towards the world. Their discourse on fasting is emboldened with Biblical wisdom drawn from texts like 'certain types of demons go only through fasting', 'Jesus says that when he is not there, they should fast and pray', and 'Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness' which give legitimization to the practice of fasting. This is what Asad (1993) meant when he said that true Christian dispositions are implanted through the disciplinary activities of human bodies such as fasting, prayer, obedience and penance.

V. Power, Superiority & Religious Contestations

With selective emphasis on certain religious beliefs and symbols and downplaying of other symbols, rites and rituals the new Christian movements have articulated new modes of faith expression and religiosity that simultaneously identify with and reflect discontinuity with the traditional Catholic faith, which has been the dominant form of Christianity in Goa for centuries. These new Christian sects have attempted to carve out a separate identity in the post-liberation

religious history of Goa by ascribing superior divine status to their faith conceptions. By claiming that their religious reason and wisdom, which is drawn from their model of the New Testament Church is superior and closer to the divine truth, they have seriously challenged the monopoly of the Catholic Church. This has led to a polarisation of the religious space in Goa, with an increase in religious contestations. This polarisation of the religious space in Goa is illustrated by the below-mentioned case.

A battle for religious supremacy has been going on for several years between the World Revival Ministries (WRM), a neo-Pentecostal group, and the Catholic Church in Siolim. It has been fought over different areas – village, land, school, media, and has covered various spaces like social, religious/metaphysical, physical and economic. The pastor of WRM, a former Catholic and leader of the Konkani Charismatic prayer group in Mapusa, broke away from the Catholic Church in 1998 and formed his own independent group taking with him many members of the prayer group, which angered the Catholics in the village. This sense of betrayal of the Catholics increased when he converted his old residence, which is very close to the Catholic Church and where he used to run a bar and restaurant, into his present Church.

Since his prayer meetings began more or less at the same time as the Sunday mass in the Catholic Church, the frustration of the local Catholics grew seeing many neo-Pentecostals coming for the services and also having to hear the loud music coming from WRM Church. Given the history of the pastor's divorce from the Catholic Church, this activity of conducting their services so close both in space and time to the Catholic Sunday service, was a clear sign that they believed that they had a divine sanction to undertake 'sacred' activities without paying attention to issues like religious tolerance and violation of other sacred spaces. This attempt to usurp the sacred space and establish their faith supremacy led to a series of conflict situations between the Catholics and neo-Pentecostals of that village. Once when the WRM Church was having a New Year Eve open air prayer service, a group of Catholics barged in, vandalised the place and attacked the worshippers. The pastor immediately filed a FIR with the police and took recourse to legal means to resolve the issue.

Another dispute broke out over a piece of land between the Church property and the pastor's house, which the pastor claimed belonged to him, while the catholic priest argued it was a common pathway for people to walk. While the ecclesiastical authorities tried to build a gate from their compound wall onto the disputed land, the pastor dug a trench in front of the gate to block them. In retaliation some of the Catholics came to the pastor's residence and assaulted his workers.

Another issue that feeds into this religious contestation is the insider-outsider tussle due to the influx of thousands of non-Goans into Goa who came to benefit from Goa's high living standards and job opportunities. The resultant 'anti-outsider' feeling and 'Goa for Goans' sentiment (Newman 2001: 69) has got translated into anger and resentment against the new Christian groups which are often headed by non-Goans and have a substantial number of outsiders and are considered by the local Catholics as catering for the poor migrant labourers from beyond Goa's borders. Like the above contestation in Siolim there are other such tussles between the dominant Catholic community and the neo-Pentecostals in different villages of Goa. Seul (1999: 564) points out that religion does not cause conflicts between religious groups but it frequently supplies the fault lines along which inter-group identity and resource competition occurs. In the case of the Siolim conflict too issues of ownership of land, notions of insider-outsider, threat to village peace, historical memory and claims over use of public utilities have led to the conflict, that developed on the fault lines of a Catholic-'Believer' (neo-Pentecostal) religious divide. The above conflict has been fought on different terrains and over different spaces and factors like caste rivalry, class equations, family disputes, insider-outsider differences and language and identity politics have played an important role in such conflicts, thus echoing the Foucaultian position that power is not an absolute, universal thing that acts on people and situations uniformly, but is found working in different, multiple sites of social relationships and networks (Foucault 1980 & Dreyfus & Rabinow 1986).

Thus a sociological understanding of the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom entails dealing with sociological issues of stratification,

hierarchy, identity, cultural and regional differences, etc. In the specific case of the neo-Pentecostals in Goa reason and wisdom are employed in the recreation of the New Testament Church as the guiding motif to fashion a distinct religious space that is simultaneously continuous with the Catholic and Hindu faith traditions. In this process of creating & articulating a new form of religiosity, a religious system that is both continuous and distinct from the older mainline religious traditions, the neo-Pentecostals take recourse to a reason that is derived from their understanding of the tenets of the New Testament Church. Similarly the interplay between sacred and profane and its reconfigurations, the recreation of the New Testament Church both as a historical and mystical entity and the selective appropriation and rejection of symbols and discourses belonging to other religious traditions are inspired by the neo-Pentecostal wisdom that they regard as the divine, unchanging, eternal truth which is beyond history and culture, but which can also be adapted to meet the temporal, market-driven demands of a globalised religious logic.

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Notes

1. The population analysis is taken from various Censuses & other books like *Censo da Populacao...* 1903, 1916; *Anuario Estatistico,* 1950, 1955; Census of India, 1991, 2001; Christovam, Pinto, 1882; J. N. Fonseca, 1878.
2. Interview with Pastor Saji.

3. Book of Acts in the Bible cite several instances of conflicts between the Christians and Jews.

4. Acts 15

5. Deuteronomy 5:8-9, from the Bible.

6. See "Popular Religiosity and Syncretic Practices in Goa-Western and Eastern Influences" by Savio Abreu in Acharya & Mata (eds.), *St. Francis Xavier: His Times and Legacy*. The word "Zagor" comes from the word '*zagran*' which means night vigil. It is a nocturnal vigil of the deity in honour of the village protector (*Rakhno*), locally known as *Zagorio*, for the protection of the village from every evil. The Zagor is a night long dance-drama which has no continuous plot or narrative and is performed in Siolim village on the first Monday after Christmas. It is unique since both Hindus and Catholics jointly participate and organise the celebrations, the most notable manifestation of syncretic popular religiosity in Goa.

7. Transubstantiation according to Catholic theology means essential change. This doctrine teaches that at the time of consecration in the mass, the substance of bread and wine, by the power of God, changes into the substance of Jesus' body and blood, while the empirical realities of bread and wine as phenomena remain.

8. Space comprises of a synthesis of physical, mental and social spaces. Place implies only the physical aspect of space, while territory involves the idea of ownership, jurisdiction and boundary.

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Towards an Integral Approach to Religious Studies:

Observer's Remarks

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At the completion of the interdisciplinary seminar, one puts together the outcome that was meant to throw light on an integral approach to religious studies. At the start, the meaning of the three terms highlighted in the course of the seminar is set down.

I. Terms and their clarification

(a) Faith is seen as an experience that related at least two persons, one to the other. It exists within a community and enables the community to exist because of the trust shared among the members. In human communities, human faith exists. Faith in God supposes more than a human's ability to trust since the 'other' cannot be reduced to the level of another human person.

(b) Reason can be viewed as a critical understanding of one's own and a community's experience. It can be seen as accounting for experience at different levels and is not necessarily confined to the use of the scientific method alone. For instance a person may have beliefs (in virtue of his/her faith) which preside over and influence his/her life, and then uses creative and critical tools to assess the value of those beliefs.

(c) Finally wisdom is a person's discerning ability to measure the quality of his/her own relatedness to the "other" and to make choices in life accordingly.

II. Integration as a Process

Unity is seen as a positive where parts attain their realization in the whole: this is a supposition. Such unity can be seen in terms of being a complement, completion, fulfilment, harmonious relationship, etc. Integration can be seen as a species of unity where parts are united in a larger whole even though the nature of the larger whole is not known or recognizable a-priori.

Secondly, such integration is a process, a journey that continues throughout the life of a person and that cannot be measured in exact terms. Integration is a dynamic process to which intentionality, rights and duties, human efforts, and the 'breaking of idols' contribute.

III. Reference Points of an Integration Process

(a) ***Community***: Relatedness beginning with man-woman, self-society, people-humankind, etc.

(b) ***Intentionality***: What does a person intend when posing a question and finding an answer?

(c) ***Breaking of Idols***: No non-negotiable status should be attributed to what a human being 'confects'.

(d) ***Critical discernment***: To use all means honestly to add to oneself and the common good.

(e) ***Habits of Mind and Heart***: Intellectual rigour, compassion, forgiveness, care, love.

(f) ***The Sense of Mystery***: Human experience and the transcendent. Dialogue as a way of life.

The above points/factors are to be considered when one seeks to integrate the fruits of learning so that they are readily available for future projects and planning.

IV. Significant Points in the Papers

(a) Some neo-Pentecostals employ categories (sacred and profane) inaccurately. (SAVIO)

(b) Relatedness and egalitarianism: tribal identity, development and dialogue(?) (HAOKIP)

(c) Gender was seen correctly in terms of an inclusive equity. (KOCHURANI)

(d) Assessment is always necessary in theological claims whether Indian or from abroad. (WILSON)

(e) Keep in mind "the breaking of idols" in thought processes. (GEORGE KARUVELIL)

(f) Do not attribute certainty to a 'scientific event' even when such claim is made. (STEPHEN JAYARD)

(g) Traditions are found in communities; the more we learn about other traditions the more communities we belong to.

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Wisdom Grafting Faith And Reason

An Observation Paper on the Seminar on Faith, Reason and Wisdom

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My observation would consist of two parts. I would like to first highlight the key points that emerged in the presentation of the papers and discussion from different perspectives followed by theorizing those points from philosophical perspectives. One of the major strengths of this seminar is to have an open and genuine dialogue on Faith, Reason and Wisdom cutting across different disciplines paving way for multiple perspectives on the topic of the seminar. This becomes for me the important hermeneutical key to ascertain that no one discipline can have a monopoly on faith, reason, or wisdom. This seems to be a very humble recognition of the limit of privileging of one epistemology or one meaning system within which the richness of the subject matter can be contained. This does not mean that each of these perspectives are totally disconnected from one another, as if each were a complete whole without having to be complemented by another perspective, though we may like to maintain the uniqueness and the autonomy of each discipline. Each disciple or each perspective therefore is already and always inhabited by other perspectives. This immediately presents us with a creative tension between wholeness and particularity of perspectives, integration and difference. We cannot choose one pole over the other, as doing so would lead us back to the metaphysical language of the binaries which would undercut the very purpose of this seminar not only by making faith and reason as binary opposites but also paving way for many set of binary opposites like faith and unfaith, reason and unreason and the like. So our approach cannot be one of either... or, but should be of both... and.

The idea of moving beyond binary opposites in dealing with faith, reason and wisdom was emphasized by many speakers because such binaries have far reaching consequences in the existential dimension of our life. The binary masculine/feminine has been instrumental in begetting violence against women, the binary purity/pollution (or sacred/profane) has led to the oppression of Dalits for many centuries, the binary primitive/civilized has deprived the tribals of their human dignity, the binary scientific/unscientific has marginalized the folk from main narratives. While most of us will agree that faith and reason are not opposite poles, they are nevertheless not the same. While acknowledging their intersecting and interacting spaces, we need also to maintain the difference between them, retaining their individual spaces, thus affirming and even celebrating the healthy tension between the two. Perhaps it is the space in between, the *Khora* – to use the Platonic image – the space between the world of ideas and the real world that can be the locus of wisdom. Wisdom, therefore, is the dynamics of interplay between faith and reason, the very flow that cannot be interrupted. Along with the image of *sophia*, I would also like to bring in the Indian image of *Sarasvati*, the personification of wisdom. *Saravasti* is also the name of the river that flows underground. The flow of the river reminds us of the dynamic nature of life. Wisdom is precisely the reminder that neither faith nor reason is a static aspect of human life but is always evolving in as much as we humans evolve.

This brings me back to the idea that emerged during our discussion, namely, faith and reason are born out of concrete human experience. They are part of the human growth process taking into account the embodied existence of human life in flesh and blood which would account both for the suffering and the exuberance of the folk, the Dalits, the Tribals and women. Though faith and reason emerge within individual consciousness, they have a community dimension as we humans are social beings and we have shared existential concerns. We need to guard ourselves at once against overstating the role of the community at the expense of individual search, individual flowering which may sometimes call for a transgression of a particular community experience or that of a tradition. Otherwise prophetic faith and prophetic reason will have no place in our deliberations. Again, we need to guard ourselves

against privileging one community experience over another. The faith experience and even knowledge production of each community may be different; each one creates different mythos and logos (different ways of meaning making); each creates a different world-view. They can be different but can be complemented by other world-views. One of the positive traits of multicultural societies like ours is having multiple affiliations and therefore, creatively appropriating different world-views. Wisdom invites us to a humbling process of opening our faith and reason to other paradigms of faith and reason. This calls for a dialogue between faith and reason, but also among different faith traditions and among intellectual traditions in a true spirit of public discourse advocated by Habermas, lest our faith boils down to fundamentalism or our reason to ideology. It is through this humbling experience we can let the subalterns speak; allow the mini-narratives to occupy centre stage.

This takes me to the second part of the reflection from philosophical perspectives. For philosophizing this interplay between faith, reason and wisdom, we also need to take dialogue with atheists seriously. I begin with an analysis of the post-religious faith of Ricœur who remained faithful to his religious tradition and Derrida's Faith and Reason, who became a declared atheist for cause.

Ricœur's Post-religious Faith and De-absolutization of Reason

In a lecture delivered at Columbia University in 1966 entitled "The Religious Significance of Atheism," Ricœur highlights some key aspects of post-religious faith. He says that 'atheism' occupies "an intermediary position, both as a division and as a link between religion and faith." Ricœur holds that there are two main functions of traditional religion: "accusation" and "consolation." By accusation, he means taboos imposed by religion along with the fear of punishment for breaking the taboos and by consolation he means the desire for protection. The primitive human person was attracted to religion precisely because of this two-fold function of religion. He defines religion, as a "primitive structure of life which must always be overcome by faith and which is grounded in the fear of punishment and the desire for protection."[1] Atheism, he says, is useful

in that it destroys the shelter offered by traditional religion and liberates men from taboos imposed by religion. In this sense, says Ricœur, "atheism opens up the way to a faith situated beyond accusation and protection."[2] Ricœur thus speaks of the "religious meaning of atheism," suggesting that oppressive and life-denying components of faith challenged by atheism must be done away with so that a genuine form of faith can emerge.

Ricœur's thought illustrates the double rejection of a spiritual harmonization and destruction of philosophy. The reciprocal challenge then is a mutual acknowledgment of faith of reason in fraternal tension that continues to maintain the difference between both. In one of his works, while commenting on a protestant philosopher Pierre Thevenaz, Ricœur contrasts religious philosophy with a philosophy responsible before God, a philosophy where God is no longer the supreme object of philosophy, but where he is implied in the call and response of the philosophical act itself. This is what is meant by the striking word responsibility. Thus Ricœur brings to closure a false problem generally raised by the antithesis of reason and faith.[3] Hence the modest simplicity and this "asceticism of the argument" that Ricœur never parted with – as he says in his preface to *Oneself as Another* in which he makes a distinction between argument and conviction to explain how the theological question is held "in suspense [so] that one can call [my philosophy] agnostic."[4] Similarly we will also notice in Ricœur, a refusal to represent the beyond. In this regard, Ricœur is rather Kantian and it is on the reflection of the limits that he sets out to meet the theological figures of hope.

Ricœur repeatedly evokes the idea that this limit is precisely not the boundary of the inaccessible beyond. It is like a constitutive limit in reverse, which brings us back to ourselves, by a sort of a descending movement. The end, in the sense of finitude, sends us back to our world. By this change of direction, this limit makes us descend again, renounce metaphysics, meta-language and meta-human. The collapse of theological philosophy gives way to a modest philosophy and theology in time, where reason is inscribed as part only of human history of questions. While affirming that a believer confesses his/her responsibility of a philosopher before God, Ricœur asks if the philosopher knows that he is before God. The human

person is indeed put in his/her place by the "de-absolutization" of reason and the recognition of human finitude before infinity.

Faith, for Ricoeur, is not immediate but always mediated by language, history, among others, and this is the hermeneutic condition. Faith is mediated by canonical texts, always already interpreted and received in a given tradition. Thus, it is as a philosopher that Ricœur reads the biblical texts in the same way as he reads Greek tragedy or Shakespeare or Proust. This use of non-philosophical sources such as myths and stories is part of his philosophical approach. However, the biblical texts have a canonical status for Christianity. That is why philosophers, like contemporary theologians and exegetes, must take into account the depth of the written traditions and their crystallization in various forms: exegesis "invites us not to separate the figures of God from the forms of discourse in which these figures occur. By form of discourse I understand the narrative or the 'saga,' the myth, the prophecy, the hymn and psalm, wisdom literature, etc."[5] This literary polymorphism of biblical literature opens up a fruitful intertextuality that makes apparent this irreducible plurality of voices and modes of expression. And "the referent 'God' is not just the index of the mutual belonging together (*appartenance*) of the originary forms of the discourse of faith. It is also the index of their incompleteness. It is their common goal, which escapes each of them."[6]

Ricœur identifies philosophical discourse with "critique" and the religious with "conviction" while admitting that philosophical discourse also has some elements of conviction and the religious discourse involves critique. "I shall say that critique is no longer on one side and conviction on the other; in each of the fields that are traversed or touched upon I shall attempt to show that there is, to different degrees, a subtle blending of conviction and critique."[7] However, by placing conviction in polarity with the critique, Ricœur introduces what he calls "a twofold reference, which is absolutely primary for me (...) But this is only one manner of expressing the polarity of conviction and critique, for philosophy is not simply critical, it too belonging to the order of conviction. And religious conviction itself possesses an internal, critical dimension."[8] In contrast to Habermas who contrasts argument with conviction, Ricœur prefers "substituting for it a subtle dialectic between

argumentation and conviction (...) In real discussions, argumentation in its codified, stylized, even institutionalized form is but an abstract segment in a language process that involves a great number of language games."[9]

Derrida: Khoratic Space

Derrida has made an important analysis on the Platonic notion of *Khora* in his book *Timaeus*. This term is described by Plato by means of metaphors like mother and receptacle. The *Khora* is impossible to define, it escapes logical discourse and it seems that only metaphors can express it. Plato speaks of it as a third genre distinct from two other genres: the intelligible and sensible. The third genre escapes both intelligible and sensible, so metaphors come into play. A metaphor is an image: for example, sun is metaphorically refered to a "ball of fire" or truth designated as light. In both these examples, metaphor presupposes the distinction between literal and figurative meanings. While the literal meaning is "real," the figurative meaning designates the figure, so something of the face value, the appearance. Figurative meaning hides in as much as it reveals.[10] Metaphor presupposes the existence of the literal and the figurative thus taking us to the difference between the intelligible and the sensible.

But if *Khora* is neither intelligible nor sensible, it means it is not a reality, neither essence nor appearance; it has no specific meaning. *Khora* falls short of all distinctions that found knowledge according to Plato and is on the threshold of thinking. The etymology of Greek *Khora* is χώρα that has at least three meanings in reference to space: to, withdraw, to change place and to make place. In the nominal form, *Khora* refers to a space occupied by something, country, territory, region, an area of land between two things and a place for something. It would be wrong to understand that this "place" as space, because space is a geometric representation that belongs to the intelligible and whose image is mapped only as a sensible projection of the intelligible. But *Khora*, as we know, is neither sensible nor intelligible. Plato gives the metaphor of the "receptacle" to indicate that *Khora* rests between the intelligible and the sensible. We cannot define it without contradiction. According to Plato *Khora* leads to all determinations, but it is not itself a determination or a cause or origin

of anything and it is not determined; it is deprived of meaning, but it is as much a place as a non-place. *Khora* escapes literal discourse, logic and rhetoric.

The status *Khora* in Plato's philosophy is remarkable because everything happens as if *Khora* were indispensable for knowledge to take place but it escapes this very knowledge. *Khora* is the threshold of everything; essential but unthinkable condition of thought and the world. That is why every metaphor used by Plato to designate it immediately destroys itself by another that contradicts it. For example, *Khora* is compared to a womb, but immediately acknowledged as a virgin. *Khora* is metaphorically a virgin mother: she gives birth without losing her hymen, having never been united to a man (see Timaeus' 50c-e).[11] Plato also says that *Khora* is like fragrant ointment, but he immediately adds that it should have no odour itself, which implies another metaphor logically impossible: an odorless oil, neutral, not a neutrality resulting from the mixture of all possible flavors and odors blurring the difference between odors, but a neutrality in which what blurs is the possibility of distinguishing the odor of the odorless, that is the impossibility of representing logically this neutrality. We understand as to why Plato says that *Khora* is a third genre, difficult to understand: *Khora* defies epistemology or logic.[12] Yet we must not forget that without *Khora*, no epistemology would be possible.

Can we not then recognize in *Khora* a realm that does not obey any determination of logic and philosophy, that which also escapes religion; that which is not allowed to sanctify, purify, indemnify? Does not *Khora* show a new way out of religious war and violence? In his essay "Faith and Knowledge," Derrida opens up this discussion. Thanks to *Khora*, we must be able to get out of the death of religion as we know it today. A new anchorite mode (note this term derived from *Khora*) is ready to take over. As Derrida notes, "*It is neither Being nor God, neither God nor Man, nor History. It always resists them.*"[13] The redoubled formula "the desert in the desert" is an abstraction made of withdrawal and subtraction of all institutional mediations. Is *Khora* a place of resistance to faith?

The answer cannot be simple because the challenge is immense. On the one hand, it seems that *Khora* escapes determinations of the

content of faith, but on the other, is it not impossible to think of *Khora* without falling into these determinations? So when we speak of "resistance" and "new way," are we not, without however realizing, using a religious language that we would like to avoid? Are we not confronting an undecidable oscillating abyssal? We should not begin to believe in *Khora* as is if it were a new goddess but should be aware of the fact that the logic of religion though it passes through everything is not founded on anything; it is a bottomless bottom.

It is then not surprising that Derrida deconstructs traditional religions and messianisms and ultimately calls for a "religion beyond religion" that can scarcely give a name to God. However, while Derrida renounces all content of religions and messianisms, he does not abandon the form of faith, messianicity with messiansim as he calls. His notion of messianicity goes beyond concrete historical messianisms of the Abrahamic religions and presents us with a structure of religion as an endless waiting for the arrival of the Messiah without however determining the figure of Messiah in advance.

Faith in messiancity, for Derrida, seems at times to mean a radical absence of any historical instantiation of the divine – no epiphanies, songs, testimonies, no sacred embodiments or liturgies. In the name of a universal openness to any other at all (*tout autre est tout autre*), Derrida's "religion without religion" seems to have no visage to speak of, no embodied presence in space and time. "Ascesis strips the messianic hope of all biblical forms," as he says, "and even all determinable figures of the wait or expectation; it thus denudes itself in view of responding to that which must be absolute hospitality, the 'yes' to the 'arrivant(e)', the 'come' to the future that cannot be anticipated – which must not be the "anything whatsoever" that harbours behind it those too familiar ghosts, the very ones we must practice recognising. Open, waiting for the event as justice, this hospitality is absolute only if its [sic] keeps watch over its own universality."[14]

Faith, therefore, is a complete openness to transcendence. But this should not be understood as opposed to immanence. It is going beyond oneself to the other – exteriority (the wholly other) and interiority (the other in me). Hence it is a journey though a desertified land, an arid space – a weak messianism as Walter Benjamin the

Jewish Philosopher would say. Derrida characterizes this as messianic without messianism or messianicity without messianism, arrival of the future with the incantation 'come' (*Maranatha*) but without any determinant identification of the Messiah, a future that is unforeseeable and unprogrammable. It is within this structure of faith and reason, we can invent the other, the totally other – the stranger, orphan and the widow to use Indian image, the Dalit, tribal, Woman any situation – whose face calls me into question. Wisdom is that Khoratic space of Faith and reason from where can emerge a possible Ethics of Responsibility, Aesthetics of Gift and Politics of Hospitality.

Notes

1. Paul Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations* (London: The Athlone Press, 2004), 437.
2. Ibid.
3. See Paul Ricœur, "Un philosophe protestant: Pierre Thévenaz,"*Aux frontières de la philosophie* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 246-247.
4. Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 24.
5. Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 482.
6. Paul Ricœur, "Naming God,"*Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 34 (1979): 222.
7. Paul Ricœur, *Critique and Conviction: Conversations with Francois Azouvi and Marc de Launay* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 10.
8. Ibid., 149.
9. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 287-288.
10. ðñüóùðïí in Greek means both face and mask evoking thus the idea both of letting known and be hidden.
11. see Timaeus 50c-e of *Plato, Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929).
12. This, of course, raises the question as to how Plato knows about Khora. But that is another matter!
13. Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 59.
14. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 168.

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The Weaver in the Web

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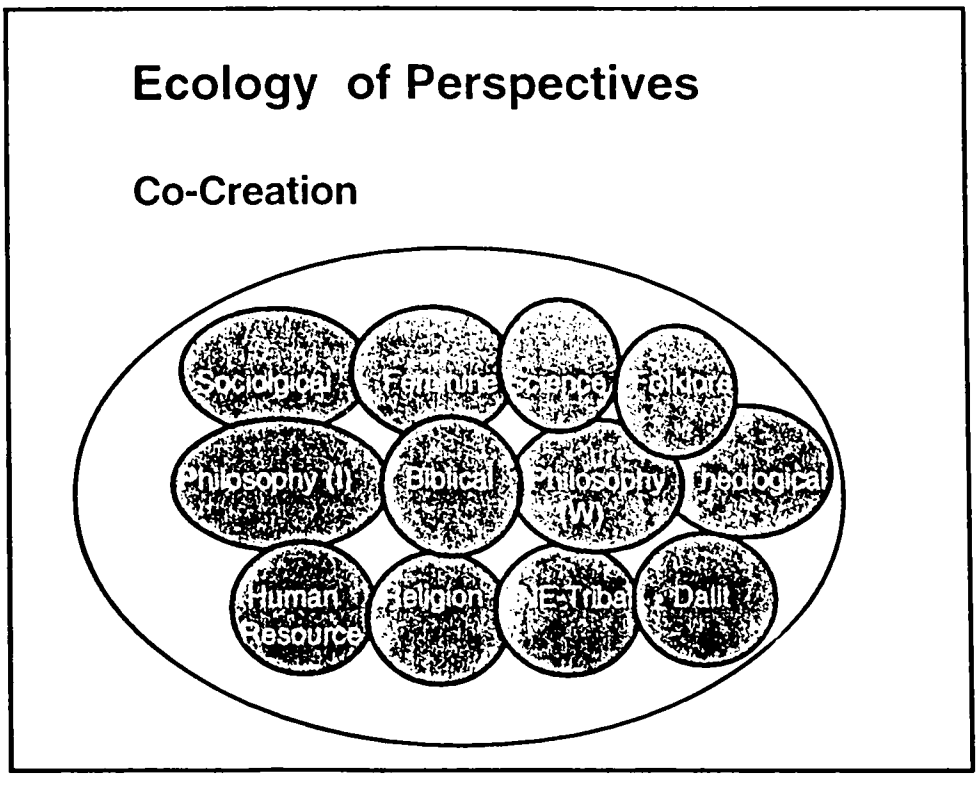
Introduction:

Co-existence, complementarity, compatibility and contradiction are some of the themes that have dominated the discourse on faith and reason. Wisdom has never been seriously positioned as a binary to faith or reason. Inclusion of wisdom in the ongoing debate on faith and reason is perhaps a wise decision to enrich the dialogue that is increasingly been perceived as a necessary condition to bridge the gap between faith and reason. Therefore, organising a seminar on the theme, 'Faith, Reason and Wisdom' deserves sincere appreciation and admiration.

Though this seminal seminar was organized to commemorate the 50th year of Vatican Council II, the historical Encyclical Letter 'Fides et Ratio' of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the relationship between faith and reason, has provided a strong platform for the confluence of thinkers with diverse perspectives to examine the power and profundity of faith, reason and wisdom. While the first Vatican Council laid the foundation for weaving the relationship between faith and reason as it stressed that there is "knowledge peculiar to faith" that transcends but does not contradict natural reason[1], the Church after Vatican II felt the need to strongly reaffirm the indomitable relationship between faith and reason. This was done in 'Fides et Ratio' with its assertion that "faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves."[2] However, in the face of modernity, in order to understand the interrelationship between faith

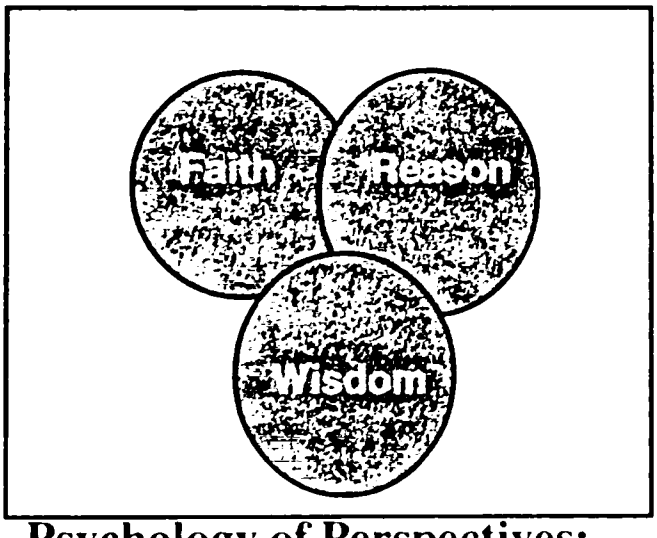
and reason, we need "philosophical reason as a form of wisdom that attains to true knowledge of God."[3]

The relevance of discourse on faith, reason and wisdom will lose its merit if it does not transcend the boundaries of theology and philosophy. This is because, in the wake of growing economic crisis, nuclear threat, ecological imbalance, demographic transition and rising terrorism, humanity is searching for sustainable solutions. The resonance of the cry for peace, love and harmony is felt across nations and cultures. While some rely on the power of reason, others search for solutions in the profundity of faith and wisdom. However, the general tendency appears to be to invoke the power of the one independent of the other. Therefore, the challenge is to harness the collective power of faith, reason, and wisdom. This seminar perhaps is an attempt to delve into the depth of this collective force through different lenses and perspectives. However, in my view, one perspective that can provide us the canvas to paint clearly the interplay between faith, reason and wisdom is the 'ecological perspective', which for some reason or the other did not find a place in the seminar. Therefore, while attempting to state my humble observations on the seminar, I have also taken the liberty to explain briefly the basic tenets of ecological perspective and how it can be used to create a web of faith, reason and wisdom.



1. Ecology of Perspectives:

One of the key outcomes of this seminar is the co-creation of different perspectives. The seminar, by encouraging different perspectives to look at the power of faith, reason, and wisdom, has created an ecology of perspectives that can help us see how each perspective is interlinked to the other.



2. Psychology of Perspectives:

The Seminar did create a psychology of perspectives. This is because of the inherent and perhaps, unintended tendency among the presenters to position their perspective as something more comprehensive than the `ones articulated by their co-presenters in the Seminar. While this tendency can be explicated at the inter perspective level, we can also see the manifestation of this propensity at an intra perspective level. This is because of the following concerns that emerged during the seminar.

Preeminence:

A careful look at each of the perspectives indicates that there was an attempt to place one before the other suggesting the preeminence of faith or reason or wisdom.

Centrality:

One could also see the tendency to give central position to any one of the factors indicating its importance or supremacy.

Interjection Vs Interdependence: While some perspectives attempted to maintain the eminence of each factor, argued that all the three could interject at a particular point and need not depend on each other. At the same time, some perspectives maintained the position that all the three are so interdependent that it is impossible to understand one in exclusion to the other two.

Inclusion Vs Exclusion: Some perspectives took the position that the power of each factor can be fully understood only to the exclusion of the other two. This is because, as argued by them, all the three cannot co-exist at the same time.

Coalescing factor: One of the important views that emerged during the course of the discussion was the role of each factor in unifying all the three factors. It was perceived that the opposing tendency, say between reason and faith, can be overcome with the power of wisdom.

The seminar created a strong platform to generate and disseminate diverse perspectives to examine the relevance of faith, reason and wisdom. It did try to identify the threads that could be used to weave a web of faith, reason and wisdom. It also attempted to identify the linkages between all the perspectives. However, what was found missing, in my view is the weaver in the web. The ensuing part of this note attempts to explain the weaver.

Ecological Perspective: The seminar would have been highly enriching if it had created some space to include the ecological perspective to look at the web of faith, reason and wisdom. This is because, in all the other perspectives, while the weaving is visible, what is invisible is the 'weaver'. In order to see the 'weaver' we need to understand the following concepts.

a. **Interbeing**[4]: This concept was coined by a Vietnamese Buddhist Monk and scholar Thich Nhat Hanh. Interbeing means 'to be'. According to him, 'to be' means inter-dependently co-exist. The meaning of interbeing recognizes the dependence of any one person or thing as to all other people and objects. For instance, if we use the lens of interbeing, we can see the ocean, cloud, rain, tree, pulp etc in a sheet of paper. Interbeing helps us to see the

power of interdependence transcending boundaries and spiral of co-existence.

Therefore, faith and reason can co-exist. Faith and wisdom can co-exist. Reason and wisdom can co-exist. Faith, reason and wisdom can co-exist. Faith, reason and wisdom can co-exist with other elements that are necessary for human existence.

b. Deep-Ecology[5]: One of the celebrated books of Fritjof Capra is, 'Web of Life'. In this book, he argues that the web of life is weaved by two threads. They are our thinking and our values. According to him, our thinking and values can be either self-assertive or integrative. The following table presents the factors that can help us see if our thinking and values are self-assertive or integrative.

Thinking and Values: Factors of 'self-assertive' and 'integrative' dimensions			
Thinking		Values	
Self-assertive	Integrative	Self-assertive	Integrative
Rational	Intuitive	Expansion	Conservation
Analysis	Synthesis	Competition	Cooperation
Reductionist	Holistic	Quantitative	Quality
Linear	Non-linear	Dominance	Partnership

Source: Capra, Fritjof (1996): Web of Life, Harper Collins, London.

3. Deep-Ecology framework to analyse the perspectives on Faith, Reason and Wisdom: The 'Deep-Ecology' framework can be used to understand whether all the perspectives on faith, reason and wisdom presented and discussed in the seminar are self-assertive or integrative[6]. The interbeing or the integrative nature of the web of faith, reason and wisdom can only be understood by knowing the weaver and not just by knowing the threads alone. The threads are our thinking and values. The perspectives presented and discussed in the seminar do reflect the thinking and values behind each of them. As suggested by Capra, our thinking can be either self-assertive or integrative. If we give preeminence or centrality to any of the three factors (faith, reason, and wisdom), it would assume

the role of self-assertive both at the thinking and value level. Ecology by definition means an ecosystem consisting of many parts but closely and deeply interrelated to each other. Interbeing and interdependence is vital for the existence of humans and all other living and non-living organisms. The essence of our existence can be understood only in the realm of interdependence -how each one of us is dependent on other human beings and all the life sustaining objects found in the universe. While our own existence is a mark of interdependence, why can't faith, reason and wisdom continue to co-exist with each other and also with us?

4. Love: The Weaver: The ecological framework helps us understand the threads, which are our thinking and values. Thinking is related to reason and values can be attributed to faith and wisdom. However, the ecological perspective espoused by Capra does not give enough scope to widen the boundary of faith. Though faith is strongly linked to values, the integrative dimensions of values mentioned by Capra do not include love, which is critical to keep the web active and alive. In my view, faith can only be expressed and experienced through love. If Abraham agreed to sacrifice his only son Isaac, it was entirely and essentially because of his love for God. If God sent his son Jesus to the world to die on the cross, it was purely out of His love for mankind. Jesus' death on the cross is the greatest act of sacrifice, which is the supreme form of love. Life without love is meaningless. Reason and wisdom, which dominate life, are meaningless without faith and faith can fully be comprehended only in the form of love.

Love is not just faith; it has the power to encompass faith, reason and wisdom. The interbeing or the interconnectedness of faith, reason and wisdom can fully be seen and experienced only through love. Jesus is the epitome of love. One of the greatest commandments he gave is, 'love your neighbour as you love yourself'. This command speaks not just of inclusion, but immersion, which is the greatest form of interbeing. Hence, love, if expressed and experienced, can integrate faith, reason and wisdom in their entirety. The world today is in need of love that can make life fully human and fully alive. I wish, all the perspectives had the courage and conviction to include love, the weaver in the web.

5. Conclusion: I would like to conclude my observation by quoting Pope Francis. "At time we lose people because they don't understand what we are saying, because we have forgotten the language of simplicity and import an intellectualism foreign to our people. For ordinary people the mystery enters through the heart"[7]. Love is the function of heart. Let this seminar help all of us to discover, rediscover and experience the power and purpose of this mystery of love that is Jesus, the Weaver in the web of faith,reason and wisdom.

Annexure 1

Deep-Ecology framework to assess the degree of self-assertive and integrative nature of the Perspectives on Faith, Reason and Wisdom

Perspective:				
	Faith*	Reason*	Wisdom*	Remarks
Thinking (Self-assertive)				
Rational				
Analysis				
Reductionist				
Linear				
Thinking (Integrative)				
Intuitive				
Synthesis				
Holistic				
Non-linear				
Values (Self-assertive)				
Expansion				
Competition				
Quantitative				
Dominance				
Values (Integrative)				
Conservation				
Cooperation				
Quality				
Partnership				

Notes

1. Neuhaus J.Richard (1988): : A Passion for Truth: The Way of Faith and Reason (http://bearspace.baylor.edu/Scott_Moore/www/Phi_Rel_info.html)
2. Pope John Paul II (1988): Fides et Ratio, Vatican II (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_15101998_fides)
3. White J.Thomas (2009): Wisdom in the Face of Modernity(Faith and Reason: Studies in Catholic Theology and Philosophy (http://www.amazon.com/Wisdom-Face-Modernity-Faith-Reason/dp/1932589554)
4. http://bodhileaf.wordpress.com/2009/05/25/understanding-interbeing/
5. Capra, Fritjof (1996): *Web of Life*, Harper Collins, London
6. The sheet at annexure 1 can be used to assess the self-assertive and the integrative nature of each of the perspectives presented in the seminar.
7. *Asian Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 58/5, Sept.2013

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Afterward

When I consider the material in the forgoing pages I am reminded of an analogy from Buddhaghosa, a Buddhist thinker of the 5th century.[1] He asks us to imagine a heap of coins piled on a table, and three people looking at them: an ignorant child, a villager from the countryside, and a professional moneychanger. The child sees the coins as bright and ornamented, but has no idea that these objects are a valuable treasure. The villager knows not only that the coins are bright and ornamented but also that they are a treasure; but he would not know which coins are genuine and which fake. The professional moneychanger knows all that the child and the villager knows, and in addition also knows where the coin was made, who fashioned it, and so on. He has the wisdom to discriminate the genuine from the fake. The wealth of information contained in the foregoing pages, from various perspectives, could dazzle us as the child was dazzled by the coins; some might even recognize their worth. But what gives them unity and significance? Here are some possibilities:

1. "**Truth**": It was a firm conviction developed by medieval Western scholastics that one truth cannot contradict another, and, therefore, the more one begins to inquire into any truth, whether empirical or sacred, one will come to see their unity. This idea has had a powerful influence on the Western mind, and many of our own contemporaries in different disciplines seem to operate under this paradigm. But is it a viable paradigm? While this kind of integration offered a live option as long as all learning was held together with a unifying metaphysics of the One, ever since that kind of metaphysics was undermined by empirical epistemology during the modern period, the viability such integration has been seriously questioned. The most sustained attempt at such integration of knowledge without a unifying metaphysics was undertaken in the twentieth century by the Vienna Circle. But their ambitious project of producing an

International Encyclopedia of Unified Sciences came to naught and had to be abandoned. Anyone who seeks to follow this model is going to be confronted with the question raised by S. Peppin in his observation: Where is the weaver in the web?

2. **Commitment**: The existentialists were the first ones to realize the impact of the breakdown of the traditional, unified metaphysics and its disintegrating effect on the modern outlook. Their solution was to replace the "objective" metaphysical foundations with the "subjective" foundations of passionate commitment. The life of a passionate lover becomes an integral whole, not because there are no other desirable women in the world, but because the passionate commitment of the lover has displaced all the others. Analogously, the source of integration, say the existentialists, is the subjective passion of the individual, whether it be the drive to be the superman (Nietzsche) or the drive to become an authentic Christian (Kierkegaard). While this kind of integration can be an admirable personal achievement, its ability to dialogue with differing points of view and other commitments seems problematic.

3. **Flux**: this is a kind of unity of no-unity or unity of permanent ambiguity. This is a typical postmodern approach advocated by the likes of John Caputo, Richard Rorty and others. A brief echo of it can be found in the khoratic space –a metaphysical space without determinations—advocated by Alphonse Nishant in his observation. While this solution carries its commitments on its sleeves, these commitments seem as idiosyncratic as that of the existentialists. It may be liberal democracy as in Rorty or the cause of dalits, tribals and women, as in Nishant. If such commitments look like Buddhagosha's villager, it is not surprising because they seem dictated more by the social agenda of the day than by any reasoned faith. What else could be expected when faith remains merely an openness to the future (Derrida) without the rootedness in any past experiences of the divine wherein one could dwell? Since this kind of faith has no historical instantiations, no Moses who saw the burning bush, no Buddha who attained Nirvana, no experience of the Word-made-flesh, it seems to lack any existential home to reason from.

Looking at these options leads me to envy our ancestors, as they seem to have had an easier time than we do. And by 'ancestors' I

mean the shining stars of both the Indian classical traditions as well as the Western Christian tradition (D'Almeida, Karuvelil). Not only were they brilliant reasoners who could split hairs with their *tarka* (reason) but also enlightened men and women of faith whose *śraddhā* (faith) illumined their reason; and they had the wisdom to know the difference. And among the ancestors, perhaps our Western forebears had an easier time as they were dealing with Christian faith, and therefore, their faith matrix remained more or less constant. Matters were more complex for our Indian ancestors as their faith matrix itself differed. Yes, they started by inviting noble thoughts from all quarters (*Ṛg-Veda*, 1-89-1), but they were under no illusion of being able to integrate them all into one unity, unless guided by a faith perspective. This led them, like those from our Western lineage, to warn about dry reason that is uninformed by faith. Dwelling in the existential home of one's own faith, they studied what the others had to say, debated and argued with them, and even borrowed from them.

While there is an urgent need to go beyond scientism (Jayard), how are the various empirical disciplines to be woven into the existential fabric of our lives? Is not some version of "Naturalized Epistemology"[2] a good platform that offers an empirically informed approach to dialogue and argumentation? While more than one paper in this volume speaks about epistemology in a rather uncomplimentary manner, it is never clarified as to what is being disparaged as epistemology or what might take its place. Does the professed goal of promoting inter-disciplinarity call for a new approach to knowledge that places dialogue and communication at the centre?

Irrespective of how that question comes to be answered, there is another lesson we can learn from our ancestors. An important factor that contributed to their ability to integrate was not only having their existential homes, but also their clarity on the kind of knowledge they were after: they were after transformative knowledge. This provided certain methodological unity to their quest. Little wonder that even the very words used in *Fides et Ratio* (no. 65) for describing the twofold methodological principle (*auditus fidei* and *intellectus fidei*) look hardly different from the *śravaṇa* and *manana* of Śaṅkara.

Is this the wisdom that can carry us beyond the dazzle of empirical knowledge and the commitment of the existentialists and the postmoderns to a commitment that is open to dialogue with a *telos*, as done by our ancestors?

George Karuvelil, SJ

Notes

1. Buddhaghosa, Henry Clarke Warren, and Dharmananda Kosambi, *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosâcarya*, Harvard Oriental Series, V. 41 (Cambridge.: Harvard University Press, 1950), chapter XIV, 3-7.
2. Most fundamentally, naturalized epistemology claims that the descriptive (empirical) and normative sides of epistemology cannot be separated from one another, as attempted by the post-Fregean epistemology. For a brief overview, see, Feldman, Richard, "Naturalized Epistemology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2012 Edition). http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/epistemology-naturalized.

jnanadeepa

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