The Renaissance in Studies of World Religions

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I. THE END OF RELIGIOUS ISOLATIONISM

AFTER a period of comparative dormancy, we are now in the midst of a renaissance of studies of Eastern religions and of the philosophies associated with them. There have been other ages of lively interest in religions beyond the Judaeo-Christian domain, but the latter part of the nineteenth century will serve to illustrate the fact that the present day activity in this field is a reawakening rather than an entirely new phenomenon.

In 1855 Sir Richard Burton published his **Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah.** It was but one of the many remarkable works and translations to come from his prolific pen. **Sacred Books of the East,** under the editorship of F. Max Mueller, began in 1879, the fiftieth volume appearing in 1910. That same year the Eleventh Edition of the **Encyclopaedia Britannica** came out, with articles of immense learning on aspects of world religions, many of which are still worthy of consultation. The same may be said of **Hasting's Enclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,** which began to be published in 1908. There was not only more such material produced than in a later period, but there seems to have been more general interest than subsequently, and particularly in the theological schools. For it is certainly not the case that specialists in various aspects of world religions were inactive during the period of the thirties and following. Many remarkable books and monographs appeared, but fewer than before and after. Also, men of broad learning evinced interest in this subject and aspects of it related to religious and social philosophy. All the same, there is reason for believing that the work of specialists in world religions tended to be shunted off from the mainstream of thought, especially Western religious thought, during the thirties, forties and fifties. While wars and social upheaval can account for some of the decline in publication, other factors seem also to have contributed. An examination of the extensive bibliography in Mircea Eliade's **Yoga: Immortality and Freedom**[1] will, I believe, bear out the general picture I have suggested. I wish to emphasize again that there is no suggestion that the quality or intensity of such study declined, but that there was less general interest on the part of the public, including the realm of scholars, and less interest in utilizing material drawn from the study of world religions or relating to other sorts of philosophical and religious thought. This is somewhat in contrast with studies of primitive religions, which continued to flourish in this same period.

The extraordinary interest exhibited during the Victorian era was, no doubt, one of the more laudable by-products of colonialism, but the same trend to some extent may be observed in this country. In the mid-nineteenth century the Transcendentalists turned naturally and frequently to references drawn from Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Evidently their readers were not strangers to such sources. William Ernest Hocking similarly turned to materials from Eastern religions in **The Meaning of God in Human Experience** (1912) without apology or condescention. The following year George Foot Moore published his **History of Religions,**

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[1] *Op. cit.* Translated by Willard R. Trask. New York: Pantheon, 1958 (French ed., 1954). Bollingen Series LVI.

which remained standard for so long. James Bissett Pratt's **Pilgrimage of Buddhism** (1928) must still be accounted an important work. All these, along with many others that might be mentioned, received wide attention. If one examines bibliographies in current books on world religions, there can be little doubt either of the importance of the earlier period or the relative dormancy of the later one. F. S. C. Northrop's **The Meeting of East and West** (1946) is an outstanding exception, but it had far less impact on religious thought at the time than political, and he was writing precisely in recognition of the neglect of the subject.

We must turn to the counter trend to understand this period of dormancy. During that period one frequently encountered strong objection to "eclecticism" and "universalism." Of course some forms of eclecticism are open to strong criticism, but frequently these objections were so stated as to mean that Christians have nothing of significance to learn from other religions and that borrowing in religious thought can only be adulteration. Much depends on the terms used: one man's "eclecticism" is another man's "cross fertilization of thought"; and one's "universalism" is another's "open-mindedness." Thus while eclecticism was depicted in its artificial forms, there was precious little indication how a deep encounter between cultures might legitimately and beneficially yield creative results for both, including areas of religion and philosophy.

Christianity as it emerged in the primitive church is so clearly an amalgum of cultural interchange—and including some of its fundamental doctrines—, that it is difficult to understand why spiritual isolationism should now be commended, but that position was often maintained. The general supposition was that we Christians had wisely outgrown a nineteenth century folly, and a Christianity come of age could be depended on not to return to it. This becomes painfully evident if one examines the dominant and most influential religious writings of the thirties and following for the neglect, not to say disinterest, towards non-Judaeo-Christian heritages. When other religions were dealt with it was generally in a manner that made genuine give and take impossible. The study of other religions is hardly necessary if you have the truth, finally and definitively, except, of course, the better to understand the customer to whom you would sell this final truth—a stance which, when found out, hardly endears your product to the prospective customer.

A representative book is **The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World** by Hendrik Kraemer (1938). Kraemer's position is that Christianity possesses the only true revelation. The notion of general revelation is ridiculed. "By its nature revelation is and must be special." [1] Not only must general revelation be cast out, but natural theology as well. "The Roman Catholic concept of 'natural theology' is therefore from the standpoint of revelation a failure and an error. The unique character of Biblical religion, which it intends to maintain, is imprudently sacrified to the exigencies of all-inclusive harmonistic thinking." [3] Kraemer goes to some lengths to deny that this exclusivism need cause an attitude of superiority. A typical statement:

> The real Christian contention is not: "We have the revelation and not you," but pointing gratefully and humbly to Christ: "It has pleased God to reveal Himself fully and decisively in Christ: repent, believe and adore." [4]

It is very difficult to see why this does not amount to a contention that Christians are in a superior position and do have the truth which others do not, although it would be impolitic to state it that way. Indeed, the position

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[2] Kraemer, *op. cit.*, New York: Harper, 1938, p. 119.
[3] *Ibid.*, 115.
[4] *Ibid.*, 119.

is that saints and mystics of other religions are not only mistaken, but guilty of presumption and sin "in the most vicious way."

> The mystic, who triumphantly realizes his essential one-ness with God or the Divine, knowing himself in serene equanimity the supreme master of the universe and of destiny, and who by his marvellous feats of moral self-restraint and spiritual self-discipline offers a fascinating example of splendid humanity, commits in this sublime way the root-sin of mankind, "to be like God" (Gen. iii. 5).[5]

There are many objections which may be raised. Few mystics lay claim to being "the supreme master of the universe." The Biblical exegesis is equally questionable. The point, however, which concerns us here is that it is a view which would hardly encourage the serious and sympathetic study of non-Christian doctrine, although I am well aware that Professor Kraemer's knowledge of other religions is considerable. It is a position that inevitably slips into distortions. For example:

> The truly remarkable thing about Christianity as an historic and empirical reality, **which differentiates it from all other religions,** is rather that radical self-criticism is one of its chief characteristics, because the revelation in Christ to which it testifies erects the absolute superiority of God's holy Will and judgment over all life, historical Christianity included.[6]

Many Moslems would make precisely that claim for **their** revelation, and Christianity cannot in the least be differentiated from all other religions on this basis.

Now one may use intellectual criteria to examine other religions or to examine the "human" manifestations of Christianity, but not the divine (docetic) aspects. "Revelation in its proper sense is what is by its nature inaccessible and remains so, even when it is revealed." [7] Thus in examination of religious thought, we do not have equality under the laws of scrutiny and evaluation. Evidently double standards—"false weights are an abomination unto the Lord"—are acceptable in the realm of religion. This, of course, is a familiar position. It has often characterized Christianity. But not always, by any means.

It is not my contention that such writing caused the diminishing interest in comparative religion, although it surely would not have aroused much enthusiasm for such study. My guess is that other social forces and circumstances were more direct causes, and, as usual, the theological apologetics merely provided after the fact justification. It is interesting to observe that philosophy of religion also underwent something of an eclipse during this same period, and, I believe, for much the same reasons. In some of his other books Kraemer makes just this point. His way of thinking and of defending the faith was, in varying degree, rather characteristic of the thirty or so years in which the thought of Niebuhr, Barth and Brunner was dominant. An interesting contrast is provided by recalling that Phillips Brooks at the height of his career planned to take a sabbatical year for the study of Islam, not so that he could convert Moslems, but because he believed he might learn something from them.

II. THE REAWAKENING

All this is changing. The growing mood is closer to the spirit of Phillips Brooks than Kraemer. It is in no small measure a matter of changing fashion. Areas of study have their ups and downs, and fads are not unknown in religion. It is also the result of United States' involvement in strange and faraway lands, not to say the "new colonialism." Isolationism and provincialism turn out to be neither more attractive nor defensible in spiritual matters than political. Also, however, we must give special credit to Vatican II, where the legitimacy of other religions was recognized and their representatives were

[5] *Ibid.*, 113.
[6] *Ibid.*, 109, italics added.
[7] *Ibid.*, 69.

invited as observers. Prior to that, Protestant councils and gatherings were very concerned about being "truly Christian." Now, thanks to Vatican II, one need not defend the idea of having dialogue with Hindus or Buddhists. What an earlier age thought had been forever outgrown has returned, and few would have predicted that the door to open would have been at Vatican City. But so it has. It may be that God moves in even more mysterious ways than Christian exclusivism supposed. No one approaches these issues without bias—especially where normative judgments are involved—, but it does seem to me very clear that given the extent of confrontation among differing cultures, the interest and study of world religions of the Victorian age was normal, and the period of dormancy the abnormality.

Be that as it may, the philosophy of religion is enjoying something of a renaissance too. Again, I am far from suggesting that highly significant work was not done in this area in recent decades, but rather that it tended to be ignored in the mainstream of religious study. This was evident both in publication and the structure of theological curricula. Neither existentialism nor analytic philosophy, which dominated that period, was so structured as to encourage the pursuit of philosophy of religion. And all this has changed, at least in some of the writings now receiving attention. Religious thinkers are taking analytic philosophy seriously, if not credulously. Ancient debates are being subjected to contemporary forms of examination. All this goes hand in hand with that spirit of curiosity which leads men to ask about other religions than their own. If we can be relieved of some nonsense by the analytic philosopher, the extraction, though painful, will be all to the good. And if we can learn something from the Hindu, though not supportive of our egos, that, too, is all to the good.

It is necessary at this juncture to eliminate some possible points of misunderstanding. For the fact is that the emergence of new studies of world religions and their philosophies is not going to be a return to Victorian modes of thought and study. It is a renaissance; a re-birth is never merely a repetition. The motivating interest is much the same, but the forms it takes and the paths it pursues will be quite different.

As I have thought about this, I have become convinced that the general trends of the recent past needed to be reviewed. Discussions with interested persons enabled me to see that a general introduction—apologia, if you will—was appropriate. For a widespread attitude seems to be: If you accept Kraemer's viewpoint or something like it, what serious interest can the Christian have in Hinduism or its various philosophies, Many, many people, including some who do not themselves hold such convictions at all, seem to assume that the only available Christian position is an exclusivist one. Thus I concluded that it is necessary to essay an exposition on the theme that cultural isolation—including religious isolationism—is in our time an anachronism. It was a curious lapse of Neo-orthodoxy, which followed logically, and quite unreasonably as existentialists readily admitted, from their fundamental position.

The matter of taking other religions seriously need not assume that "we are all after the same thing" or that "one religion is as good as another, if only people will be committed to it." There are other alternatives available between this romantic universalism and doctrinaire, exclusivist orthodoxy. Among them is the position that Christianity is a defensible religious affiliation to hold, but need not make any outlandish claims to either its own finality or the sinful falsity of other religions. We may well regard other religions as having something to teach us, which we can incorporate into our "faith" without shame or corruption. Furthermore, it seems quite clear to me that every system of thought has its peculiar vulnerabilities. As I survey the

history of Christianity, I cannot escape the conclusion that it is especially vulnerable to the invitations of intolerance, a weakness that it shares with its partial off-spring, Islam, although the structures of intolerance are quite different as they have occurred in history. It is quite conceivable that we might learn something from Hinduism or Buddhism that would be of help on this score.

When it comes to reformation and reconstruction, I find Gandhi's career most illuminating. On the one hand, he made his most direct appeal for positive dedication to elements **within** Hinduism. When he wished to explain what he was about and why men should follow his program, he turned to ancient doctrine and example. Ahimsa and Satya-graha come to mind as outstanding examples. In other matters, when he saw ancient and sanctified belief—for example, in the caste system [8]—as a stumbling block, he said so quite forthrightly and explained why. In none of this was he uncomfortable in his own Hinduism, nor did he ask that fellow Hindus leave their religion, nor did he hesitate to read from Moslem or Christian scriptures for edification or enrichment. Had he been at pains always to explain the superior and definitive truth of Hinduism, it is unlikely that he would have accomplished the amount of progress that he achieved. But the fact which we must not lose sight of was that he did not do all this from a primary interest in his image or maximum effectiveness in selling a program, but quite simply from conviction.

I find a similar forthrightness in the basic pattern of Vatican II. Had the Council stressed primarily the superiority of "Christian truth," i.e. Catholic dogma, with mere admission of a few minor items to be tided up, it would have been the same old story. But this was neither the spirit nor substance of Vatican II. As I read the situation, it was a recognition that the Church has been full of pride and must now confront the twentieth century and that relevantly, which is precisely to say, not with the old stance of "we have the final truth which we have admittedly not presented or embodied in perfect forms" — a position the Church has always been ready to proclaim—, but "we are beginning to learn and we wish to learn more," a genuinely radical departure. Thus, it is not so much the substance of the reports which emanated from the council as the spirit and the approach which signal a new day. Perhaps the clearest example of the shift in spirit, although it has nothing directly to do with the council, can be found in the treatment of the writings of Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard was a Christian who was not threatened by the existence and admirable qualities of aspects of non-Christian religions. This harmonizes naturally with his espousal of evolution. For several years he was forbidden to publish his views, then after his death his writings have not only been published, but given wide and serious attention by Protestants and Catholics alike.

III. BUT WITH A DIFFERENCE

Teilhard de Chardin, however, is not altogether typical of the current style of study. It is not within the scope of this paper to give attention to his elaborate system. Suffice to say that he presents a grand scheme, within which other religions have legitimate place and make authentic contributions, although the Omega Event is, of course, explicitly Christian. Speaking in a very general way, we may place Teilhard in the general tradition of Idealism—Hegel, Royce, Bradley and Hocking. This was very much the fashion in earlier periods of comparative religion. One recalls Vedanta and Ba'hai as examples of quite different sorts, which nevertheless presented grand schemes, within which each religion finds its place.

[8] E.g, when he was in Yeravda jail in 1932, fasting against Hindu mistreatment of the "Harijans."

This was quite characteristic of the late nineteenth century. If, for example, you consult the literature on the six systems of Indian philosophy, the prevailing assumption was that Vedanta is the really important one. Undoubtedly its influence has been most pervasive, but the others have enjoyed their vogue and significance as well. From the Vedantist's point of view (as in Western philosophy we may say the Hegelian's) the other so-called systems have significance to the extent and in the ways in which they were able to be incorporated into Vedanta. Thus as extensive as the literature was, it had extraordinary gaps. Mueller's work contains rather little dealing with Nyaya, because much of it simply does not fit comfortably into the gnostic metaphysics of Vedanta. Now it is true that these "systems" are more properly called "schools," and they are each concerned with different pursuits of study. But it is also true that the rich history of Indian philosophy was filled with sharp disputes and disagreements, and it does violence to these debates to synthesize them too comfortably in one encompassing system.

A further distortion was placed on the material by concentrating on speculative metaphysics. Again, the material is much more diverse than that. In particular Indian thinkers devoted serious attention to problems of perception and to linguistic analysis, but these areas were neglected, at least in comparison with the amount of attention given to cosmology. Professor J. F. Staal published his work on Indian logic in 1962, filling a great gap in Indian studies.[9] Several other imoprtant works on the problems of meaning and language in Indian philosophy have appeared recently. This reflects the mode of philosophizing in recent years, but it also corrects the balance somewhat, since there is a vast amount of material in Indian thought which lends itself to just such study. It is also the case that other forms of study tend to follow the style of more painstaking study, rather than preoccupation with grand schemes. For example, Wilfred Cantwell Smith's approach to world religions is not that of comprehensive summary, but comparison and elucidation of selected themes.[10]

Another respect in which the present style of study tends to be different concerns the difficult subject of evaluation. Kraemer dismissed the question of the "value" of Christianity, for it is a question that must never be confused with the question of "truth." [11]

An earlier generation was often either overly romantic and generous in its appraisal of other religions or unfairly critical. It would seem clear enough, however, that we need not limit the approach in any of these ways. It is all too painfully evident that other religions, as is true of Christianity, have had their times, their doctrines and practices, and their manifestations which can only be seriously condemned from the point of view of any life affirming value system. And most of them have had their sublime manifestations. There is no more reason why the student should shrink from rendering his value judgments on aspects of religion and its consequences than from doing so in matters of politics and economics. For certainly the faith that men have held has not been less prone to serve as a blight or a blessing to them and their neighbors. And, of course, such evaluations must be done with fairness, with a willingness to defend the judgment arrived at, and even more, willingness to learn better. But that is true of all evaluation.

It has often happened that the influence of one religion upon another has

[9] *Logic Methodology and Philosophy of Science.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press. Among previous works were A. B. Keith: *Indian Logic and Atomism,* Oxford, 1921; F. T. Stcherbatsky: Buddhist Logic, Vol. II, New York, 1962 (Leningrad ca 1930).

[10] Cf. *The Meaning and End of Religion.* New York: New American Library, 1964.

[11] *Op. cit.* 106 ff.

come through some back door, although cultural diffusion has come through every imaginable avenue. Rather more often, I suspect, it has been transmitted by the slave, the trader, the warrior, than by king or priest. So it is interesting to recall that Zen made its appearance in America largely through student groups, not as a result of interfaith dialogue. Gandhi's non-violence took hold when it was welded into Martin Luther King, Jr.'s movement, and my guess is that it will prove to be an enduring part of our society, gradually finding its way into Christian doctrine. I have no basis for any guess as to whether Zen will prove of any lasting significance within American religion, but it is quite possible that in some form it might, given the impoverished condition of our time in materials of private religious devotion and contemplation. All this is by way of arguing that to decry religious borrowing and syncretism does not stop the processes of cultural interchange. We might well review in this connection the age of Scholasticism. The crusades were intended to put the Moslems in their proper place, at least originally, which meant at the least to rescue the Holy Land. What happened was that European learning was immensely enriched and stimulated. The achievement of Aquinas is unthinkable apart from the Arabic custody of Aristotle, together with their commentaries. It would be strange indeed if American travel and foreign assignment did not have somewhat similar results. I hazard the prediction that some years from now we will look back on theological education of this period and the recent past with amazement that the study of other religions could have occupied such a peripheral position in the curriculum. Of course, as I have indicated, that provincialism is rapidly dissolving.

It boots nothing to say with Kraemer that every religion is a "whole." It is only to some extent that this is true, and the extent varies with individuals and communities. It is also true that in times of social upheaval, religions are also in process of change, which means that some parts of the whole drop out of sight, other parts are emphasized, and new elements come into the picture. And it is also true that if one is taught by some aspect of someone else's religion, one need not swallow the whole of that religion to benefit and the fact that is is a whole to the devotee has nothing to do with the part of it that is borrowed. To give a personal example, with admission that personal examples are risky and unconvincing, I remember being intrigued years ago on learning that in Navaho religion there is a tabu against permitting a sand painting to last beyond sunset. The intriguing curiosity gradually and slowly became a forceful conviction. It dawned upon me that this relates to what Whitehead calls "perpetual perishing." One of the problems of life is that of letting go, and I have come to believe that over and above prudential calculations there is need for a cosmic based conviction to enable one to accept the necessity of this fact. The Navaho believes that violation of this tabu will cause an affliction of the senses, and it is precisely awareness and responsiveness that are damaged by our propensity to accumulate and preserve. These are perhaps commonplace observations, but the point is that they took hold of me and became a living part of my faith as a result of contact with Navaho religion. without for one moment requiring that I become a devotee of that religion.

A curious paradox of evaluation is that when you do not hesitate to make the value judgments that are demanded, you are relieved of being preoccupied with them. Watch out for the man who begins the sentence with the words, "I do not pretend to be anybody to judge others, but . . ." Or the man who sees himself as one who does not make value judgments. Whether what follows is little else than an orgy of condemnations or a bland acceptance of

evils and injustices that would cause hysterics if they were directed at him, makes little difference. Either is intolerable. But the man who is clear about what he condemns, and why, and who accepts the responsibility for such judgments, can accept the variety of human belief and custom, where it does not harm others, with equanimity and even delight. It appears that present scholarship in world religions is far less obsessed with the need to pass judgment on everything precisely because it is willing to do so with regard to clear and important items. One need not be a pragmatist to suppose that if Christianity is superior at some points—or if you prefer, possesses saving truth—that should be evident in human life. Where this is not the case, it is not unreasonable to presume that something must be wrong with the kind of Christianity that is adhered to. It is by no means obvious that doctrinal orthodoxy is a sure fire guarantee of enrichment of life or of just social structures. An inquiring spirit — willing to condemn where the evidence is overwhelming and to commend where possible—is the mark of the man who is secure in his faith and who trusts God far more than his own contrivances.

Perhaps nothing will point up the change in mood from the preceding period more than to notice Professor Kraemer's denunciations of "secularism," for the secularization of Christianity is one of the dominant themes of present day religious thought. Far from being a threat to Christianity, the secular realm presents the most challenging opportunities for the expression of faith, according to many of our most thoughtful theologians. Others might wish to qualify that assertion, but the denunciation of secularism is far from an effective rallying cry these days. One final quotation from Kraemer will serve better than anything else to indicate how remote the exclusivism of yesterday is. Having summarized the "existential apprehension of the faith," he says:

> Thus, a real insight is possible only if one applies this "totalitarian" approach to a religion and its constituent parts; only so, therefore, can the problem of the concrete points of contact be approached with intelligence.[11]

Much of the criticism of Victorian study of comparative religion, including Kraemer's criticisms, was well taken. The trouble was that it posed the question in terms of exclusivist Christianity or artificial syncretism. No other position was respectable save "Biblical realism." The renewed interest in world religions and their philosophies is not a return to Victorian modes of thought, but an extension and refinement of them. The insistence upon the exclusive, final and definitive truth of Christianity is an unnecessary burden, and an obstacle to any creative dialogue with other faiths.

It was natural that wherever some form of Hegelianism dominated, there would be an affinity between the philosophy of religion and the history of world religions. For in the cosmic evolution pattern the diversity of beliefs, and rationale given, could easily be accommodated into the system. Furthermore, as Eastern religions have in some forms stressed The One, they could in that respect serve the purposes very well of Der Geist. Professor Eliade comments on the Western approach to Indian studies, and his comments remind us that Hegelianism has flourished at different times in various European countries.[13] As far as Indian philosophy is concerned, Vedanta lends itself quite readily to that interpretation. However, the empirical types of philosophizing have not made the use of Indian sys-

[12] *Ibid.*, 136.

[13] M. Eliade: Yoga: *Immortality and Freedom,* Foreword. An apology must be given the reader in what follows where Sanscrit words apear in that the type available for this article does not permit the inclusion of the superimposed symbols which are quite necessary for transliteration.

tems, such as Nyaya and Vaiseika, which they might. S. Radhakrishnan presents the quasi-Hegelian approach, although fortunately he gives considerable attention to these other systems.[14] Thus he regards Nyaya as "a natural and necessary stage in the evolution of thought." The weakness, as he sees it, of Nyaya is its pluralism, its empiricism (although he does not use that word), and its appeal to common sense.[15] Nevertheless, he recognizes more directly than most the fact that in the Six Systems of Indian philosophy you do have fundamental disagreements, and even within the all-encompassing grasp of Absolute or Objective Idealism it is necessary to acknowledge that these other systems were different and cannot be wholly accomodated to the synthesis of thesis and antithesis.

Various forms of Hegelianism are still current, for example, Thomas J. J. Altizer has found his philosophical home, for the present, there. I have already suggested that Teilhard de Chardin can be so interpreted, although I know many would object to that interpretation. It is here, also, that I would place Tillich. So it must not be supposed that Hegelianism is dead. I say this despite all the obituaries frequently devoted to that theme. And that approach gives us one way of approaching and absorbing Eastern religious thought.

A somewhat different way of approaching that is found in the abandonment of any grand scheme of religious evolution and simply asking what men have believed and asserted in this variegated world scene. If along the way we learn something we can use to our advantage, well and good. If we do not, the encounter, which takes thinkers at their own word, is worthwhile and interesting. The notion which scandalizes Kraemer, that God may have been revealed to non-Christians, in ways that we knew not of but from which Christians might profit, may be not only appropriate for our day and our need, but a reason to praise God the more. This is the spirit of Don Marquis' poem, "The God-Maker, Man," in which he says, "I will bow down where my brothers bow, Humble, but open-eyed!" I see nothing amiss with such an attitude, for even if I had no interest in world religions I would be unable to accept the position of orthodoxy in the exclusivist mold. There is a viewpoint from which it is impossible to accept notions of exclusivism, and especially when they are couched in protestations of humility, because of the loftiness of the concept of God, who is too noble to be party to schemes of wholesale denunciation, and because of the feeling for our common humanity, which seems not to have formed in such fashion that any group is demonstrably superior and worthy, while others are consistently despicable and unworthy. To attend patiently and seriously to what these others have thought is, then, not a denial of faith, but an expression and fulfillment of it. This is one attitude and approach, different from Hegelianism as well as from exclusivism, which accords well with the spirit of the times and the eternal spirit of goodwill towards men. It does not shrink from evaluative judgment when required, but also does not seek such occasions avidly. Much there is that need not be judged evaluatively, but only logically and factually.

There is nothing new about such an approach. It can be argued that this is precisely the attitude and method of inquiry which has characterized the best of cultural anthropology as it has examined primitive religions. I see no reason why it should not be utilized in study of the developed religions of the East, and, in fact, it is this sympathetic but non-credulous and open-eyed inquiry which characterizes many of the studies now in progress.

[14] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2, New York: Macmillan, 1927, Cf. Jan Gonda: *Die Religionen Indiens*, vol. 2, *"Der juengere Hinduismus."* Stuttgart: W. Kohnhammer, 1963, pp. 331 ff.

[15] Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2, 174 f.