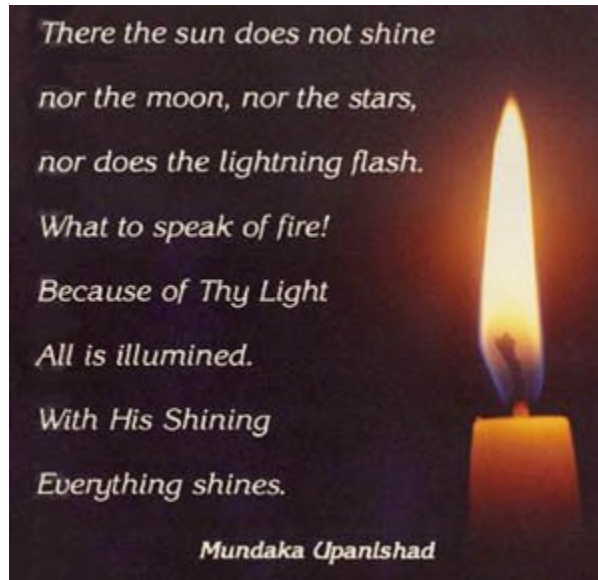


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RENEWING CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY IN TERMS OF KASHMIR SHAIVISM

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Introduction

My good friend Bettina Bäumer¹ relates the following story:

“It was a seminar in Vienna University where [Karl Rahner] also spoke and I gave my first ever paper on KS [Kashmir Shaivism] on anupāya. After listening very attentively, he took me aside after the discussion and said [Wir sind nur Waisenkinder] [which she glosses as] “we are orphans compared to what these Indians have discovered!” (Waisenkinder means we are far behind or more primitive, spiritually).”²

The first generations of Christians moved out of the Jewish framework into the thought-world of the Greeks and reinterpreted their faith in a new way. Now with the end of the colonial era, where the East was interesting only if it was exotic, we are witnessing a massive new shift. Rahner’s comment to Bettina Bäumer reflects his awareness that the Hindu thought must profoundly affect Christian theology, making Christians qualify categories and images that are so familiar as to be unquestioned.

¹ Prof. Dr. Bettina Bäumer, Institute of Religious Studies, University of Vienna.

² Personal communication, 9 April 2004.