CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In the fore-going chapters of this present research work, I have presented the views upheld by P.R.Gurdon and H.O.Mawrie on the Khasi Religion. I have based mainly on their expressions as reflected in their books and articles as the primary sources. I have mentioned that Gurdon was a British Officer of the British Government during the pre-independence period. His observations of the life-style and the religious beliefs of the Khasi people made him to write a book on the Khasis. His main focus was on the Khasi traditional Religion. As we know, Gurdon was a foreigner and an outsider of the Khasi Society, but his spirit of friendship with some Khasi people made him to put in writing of his experience while he was in Khasi Hills. His presentation and interpretation have been brought out in this dissertation.

Formerly, H.O.Mawrie was a Christian but later abandoned his Christian faith and re-converted into the traditional Khasi Religion. It was his commitment that made him to write several books and articles on Khasi Religion. Being an educated and talented person he could write many books and articles both in the local Khasi language and in English as well. His writings deal more on the essence of Khasi Religion. Indirectly, he rejected the view expressed by Gurdon on Khasi Religion. In other words, Mawrie
defended the cause of the Khasi Religion. In this way, Mawrie was a main contributor and defender of his Religion. As a member of the Khasi Society he could express the spirit and substance of the Khasi Religion through his lifelong experience and conviction. In other words, he gave his opinion as an insider of the Khasi Religion.

A. Recapitulation

In Chapter I, of this present dissertation, I have introduced both, P.R.Gurdon and H.O.Mawrie as the two thinkers and writers who boldly made their attempts to expound the traditional Khasi Religion. I think it would be appropriate in this concluding chapter to reiterate a few lines on the meaning of the word ‘Religion’ itself. To put plainly, the word ‘Religion’ is not merely a subject matter of belief but it is also an institution. It has its own set pattern of rituals and ceremonies, which more often than not reinforces religious belief in any religion either in India or in the western countries. Religion in a general sense, deals with the supernatural. This is the power of the Supreme Being or the power of the deities which always dominates the religious affairs. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines religion as “A body of persons or institutions adhering to a set of religious beliefs and practices”\(^1\). The Encyclopadia of Philosophy defines religion as “A belief in God and in the afterlife are the essential ingredients of religion”\(^2\). Based on the light of these two sets of definitions, we could reasonably say that religion

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is concerned with God as the supernatural Being and it also deals with beliefs and practices including rituals, and ceremonies as the essential elements of religion.

It appears that Gurdon has made a sincere confession when he said that the Khasis have a vague belief in God the Creator (U Blei). His confession reflects in his inability to grasp clearly and precisely the deeper notion of the Khasi philosophy of religion. An analysis of the writings of Gurdon on the Khasi Religion may be summarized as follows:

(a) Firstly, Gurdon admitted that U Blei has been regarded by the Khasi people as the Supreme Being and the Creator of the whole Universe.

(b) Secondly, Gurdon in his attempt to study the truth and reality of Khasi Religion failed dismally to understand the individual choice of worship as in the case of the worship of U Thlen (a male ferocious devil) which is secretly practised by a few interested individuals. It is not an imagination but a reality that U Thlen truly exists in the world. He can take upon himself different forms, like in the form of a snake, a fish or some other shapes when the situation demands. It is commonly believed by some Khasi people that U Thlen is a kind of Khasi mammon or the Devil of riches whose food is to suck human blood. The other two female devils which are well known in Khasi Hills are ka Shwar and the other female devil which is quite common among the Jaintia people is
These two female devils need only goat sacrifice to offer to them once a year or once in two years. Such sacrifices are performed by those worshippers who derive benefits from these devils, but not approved by the society. The Khasi Religion, *per se* has nothing to do with these evil spirits at all.

H.O. Mawrie as an indigenous Khasi writer on Khasi Religion tries to go deep down and trace the origin of Khasi Religion which he calls *ka Niam*. He holds the view that *ka Niam Khasi* (Khasi Religion) is directly given by God and it is not man-made or invented by man. Mawrie seems to have based on the writing of Rabon Sing who writes:

Ka Niam Khasi ka long ka Niam kaba ki Khun Khasi baroh ki ju tip bad ngeit ba ka long kaba aiti da U Blei hi ha kita ki Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum, kat kum ka jingiathuhkhana pateng la pateng ki Tymmen Khasi.³

(Khasi religion is the religion in which all the Khasis believe that it is a God-given religion to the people of *Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum* (Seven families) according to the stories being handed over to us from generation to generation through the elders).

According to Mawrie the Khasi Religion has been given by God to the Khasi people who are the descendants or posteriors of the so-called *Hynniewtrep Hynniewskum* (Seven Huts) as in ancient days. But due to lack of written records, it has been interpreted differently by different scholars at different times. Its originality may have been distorted or changed at different ages. Following the foot steps of Rabon Singh, H.O. Mawrie traced out the nature and spirit of Khasi Religion by referring to the Khasi myths. Jeamine

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³ Rabon Singh, *Ka Kitab Niam Khein Ki Khasi* (Shillong: NEICS Printing Department, n.d.), p. 1
Miller said "Myth is a view of life no less valid in itself for those who propound it than any rational view for its adherents. Its roots plunge much deeper in human nature than what was ever suspected by the superficial nineteenth century mind." Further, Mawrie explained that religion was instituted by God (*U Blei*). But man committed sin by being disobedient to God. Interestingly, Rabon Singh, in his book "*Ka Kitab Niam Khein Ki Khasi*" said that God did not allow or permit man to make any image of God. It is for this reason that the Khasis never bow down before idols. In the Khasi Religion, idol worship has no place whatsoever. In his presentation of his viewpoint of the Khasi Religion, Mawrie gives much importance of the commandments of God as the necessary directive principles of moral and ethical life.

In chapter II, I have made an attempt to re-examine Gurdon’s conception of God in Khasi Religion. According to P.R.Gurdon, the Khasis have a vague belief in God the creator. This statement appeared in the Section IV of his book *The Khasis*. The problem of ‘vagueness’ was created in the mind of Gurdon while he was trying to understand the Khasi conception of God. *Ka Niam Khasi* teaches that only *U Blei* has absolute sovereignty over all creatures including human beings. In other words, God is a metaphysical Being. The confusion cropped up in the mind of Gurdon due to some reasons which can be briefly and possibly pointed out as follows:

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(i) P.R. Gurdon was a mere observer and spectator of the Khasi culture and Khasi Religion from outside. In his process of observation to understand meaningfully the essence and components of Khasi Religion it seemed that he was able to grasp only the shadows and missed the very substance of the Khasi Religion. But to a certain extent his effort deserves to be appreciated.

(ii) We find that Gurdon failed to pick up the correct understanding of the Khasi conception of God. To the Khasis, U Blei (God) is the supreme Being who is neither male nor female in term of gender. The Khasi Religion, through its tradition, has taught that God has no specific gender. In other words, God is not based on sex or gender because he is beyond gender. In this connection He is not like the human beings for He is gender-free. It is precisely for this reason the Khasi worshippers of U Blei feel free to address God as 'U Blei' (He-God) or Ka Blei (She-God) based on human conveniences. Gurdon being superficial in his knowledge and understanding of the Khasi Religion misinterpreted the Khasi idea of God.

(iii) In the previous chapters, I have pointed out that Gurdon was puzzled when he reflected on the grammatical number of God in the context of the Khasi Religion. Gurdon could not penetrate the depth of the Khasi Philosophy of Religion. The Khasis may address God both in the singular form 'U Blei' and also in the plural form 'Ki blei'. Sib
Charan Roy, in his book *"Kot Tohkit Tir-Tir"* clearly stated that *U Blei* is one and only one. He has no parents, no brothers or sisters, has neither wife nor children. The elders and Teachers of Khasi Religion cannot accept the Christian idea of the Divine Trinity of God.

In order to throw some light on the idea of singularity and plurality regarding the manner that the Khasis use to address God, it can be clarified as follows:

(i) According to the Khasi worldview and philosophical thought, God is above number. When they address God in plural form it does not mean that there are many gods. It only means that different names can be given to one and the same God.

(ii) Though God is one, yet He has many manifestations. Sometimes, when the people speak of the manifestations of God, they also use the name of God. For instance, God manifests himself in different ways. When the Shillong people called God ‘*U Lei Shyllong*’ it means that God protects people from harm and evil.

In chapter III, I have brought out an exposition of H.O. Mawrie’s writings which are related or have direct bearing to the Khasi Religion. Mawrie wrote many books and articles which addressed different religious issues in the context of the Khasi Society. In his book *The Khasi Milieu* Mawrie shows that religion has its own function in any society. According to

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him, religion can rightly be understood, if it is placed in its proper cultural setting and viewed as the spiritual force holding society together and growing out of the necessities of life.

Mawrie tries to discuss the Khasi concept of man through a religious approach. He depicts the high and unique dignity of man by bringing into discussion the divine origin of man. In Christianity, the origin of man, is stated by the Bible saying, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created him" (Genesis 1:27). Interestingly, Mawrie tries to bring in, the Khasi conception of man by referring to the divine where man was originally created and lived with God in heaven. In the course of time, seven families out of the sixteenth families, at the divine Order of God were sent to come down and live on Earth. In this way man is directly created. Man is the product of ex nihilo. In other words, man is not created from any primordial elements or the dust of the Earth. Man as a rational being, is endowed with natural curiosity about the origin and development of things around him.

Further, Mawrie says that God gives man ‘Ka Rngiew’ as the rational and divine power which could add to the life of man the divine force of rationality and dignity. As the Khasis believe that man has been created by God in heaven, he has the knowledge of God through his contact and meeting with God himself. This is one of the reasons why Khasis never require any proof for God’s existence. Any attempt on the part of man to prove the
existence of God would mean to commit a sin of showing disrespect to God
(U Blei) who created him.

In Chapter IV, I have brought a comparative analysis of both the writers, P.R.Gudon and H.O.Mawrie on Khasi Religion. I have also shown similarities and differences regarding their views on the Khasi Religion. Briefly, we can compare them as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gurdon's Views</th>
<th>Mawrie's Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gurdon is a foreign writer on Khasi Religion. He is an outsider of the Khasi Society.</td>
<td>1. Mawrie is a native Khasi writer on Khasi Religion. He is an insider of the Khasi Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The religion of the Khasis may be described as animism.</td>
<td>2. The religion of the Khasi people may be described as monotheism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In the Khasi Religion, there are Priests called Lyngdohs.</td>
<td>3. In the Khasi Religion there are Priests and Priestess known as Lyngdoh Niam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Khasis believed that the departed souls will eat in God’s house.</td>
<td>4. The departed souls will eat Kwai (betel-nut) in the house of u Blei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Khasis apparently, do not believe in punishment after death.</td>
<td>5. The Khasis believe in the existence of Hell they called ka Nurok ka Ksew and ka Myngkoi u Jom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Khasis are the ancestors' worshippers.</td>
<td>6. The Khasis do not worship their ancestors but they respect and revere them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Khasis have a spirit-worship as part of their religion.</td>
<td>7. In Khasi Religion there is no spirit-worship but some individuals may worship such things at their own choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. If funeral ceremonies are not performed the departed souls may take the forms of animals, etc.

9. The Khasis regarded *u Thawlang* as the first father and *ka lawbei* as the first mother.

10. The Khasis regarded *U Suid-Nia* as the maternal uncle.

11. The Khasis believe in the existence of the river goddesses at Langrin and Nobosohphoh and then goat sacrifice.

12. The *Wars* (Riwar people) of Nongjri worship "*u 'lei lyngdoh*"

13. The cock then appears as a mediator between God and man.

14. How the cock came to occupy such an important position, tradition is vague and self-conflicting.

15. The Khasis worship numerous gods and goddesses.

16. The Khasi tradition states that in the beginning there was no sin, no hell and no heaven.

8. If funeral ceremonies are not performed the departed souls may not invoke God’s blessings to their family members who are still alive on Earth.

9. The Khasis respected *u Thawlang* and *ka lawbei* as the first known parents of Khasi race.

10. The Khasis show respect to *U Suid-Nia* as *u Kni Rangbah* (Senior maternal uncle).

11. The Khasis believe that God controls everything including rivers of every place and at any time.

12. *U 'Lei Lyngdoh* is the name given to the manifesting spirit of God.

13. The story of the cock in the Khasi Religion indicates that a victim of sacrifice is one who suffers for others.

14. The cock has an important position in Khasi Religion because it has given its life to be a sacrifice of peace and reconciliation between God and man.

15. It is the one and the same God who manifests himself everywhere and the Khasis feel free to address God as a male-God or a female God.

16. In the beginning man was in heaven with God. Man was sinless and hell did not exist at that time.
Gurdon tried to show that religion has a very important role to play in the Khasi Society. The children need a naming ceremony right from childhood days. The adults need to be solemnized by the Priests for their marriage. Funeral ceremonies are very important in the life of each and every one in the Khasi Society because it is the last and the final social service in everyone’s life.

Mawrie explains that the Khasi Religion has no human founder because it is God-given. Though it has no scripture yet the knowledge of the different aspects has been written in the heart and mind of the worshippers. Further, he says that the Khasi Religion never emphasize the need to construct worship building or altar because God is everywhere in the world.

In chapter V, an attempt has been made to show that before the coming of Christianity, Khasi Religion which is known in the local Khasi as “Ka Niam Khasi” dominated the Khasi Society and only a few Khasis had embraced the Hindu Religion. Those who had accepted Hindu Religion are in Sheela areas and in Shillong city. There are very few members of the Khasi Society who were converted to Islam during the 18th and 19th centuries.

During the early part of the 17th century the Baptist Mission from Serampore (West Bengal) sent Krishna Chandra Pal to sow the seed of Christianity in Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Though Mr. Pal left Khasi Hills very shortly, the mission headquarter from Serampore sent other Missionaries to come to Cherrapunji (Sohra) to open up primary schools for educating the
Khansi converts and others as well. The coming of Thomas Jones I in Cherrapunji left a lasting impact in the history of the Khasi-Jaintia people. He came in 1841 and established several Primary Schools in and around Cherrapunji areas. Thomas Jones a missionary of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission deserves to be regarded as a giant missionary, an architect of Khasi modern education and the father of Khasi Alphabets. His precious gift of the Roman Alphabets to the Khasi Society marks a step forward towards transformation and modernization in the social strata of the Khasi Community.

The Elders and Priests of the traditional Khasi Religion saw that the rapid growth and development of Christianity in different parts of Khasi and Jaintia Hills was an alarming threat to the Khasi Religion. As a preventive measure, they established a new association known as ‘Ka Seng Khasi’ in 1899. Since that time, Christianity and ka Seng Khasi became somewhat rivals with each other. The Christian Missionaries would ex-communicate the members of their churches when they participated in the functions of Ka Seng Khasi. On the other hand, the members of ka Seng Khasi regarded the Christians as members of a foreign religion.

B. Implications

P.R.Gurdon though he was a stranger to the Khasi culture and religion, yet his works cannot be rejected randomly. He left some worthy notes on Khasi Religion. His works are valuable in the sense that he did not condemn the traditional Khasi Religion. He rather frankly confessed his inability to get
a vivid picture of the Khasi Religion. His works need a serious academic evaluation which can truly reveal the positive and negative aspects of Gurdon's contribution to the Khasi Society and the literary genre.

H.O.Mawrie, though he was an ordinary school teacher, yet his spirit of hard work made him possible to write and publish several valuable books and articles on the Khasi Religion and other allied subjects or topics. Mawrie has contributed so much to the 'Khasi Authors' Society' and to the Khasi Literature as well. Moreover, H.O.Mawrie was a defender of the Khasi traditional faith. On some occasions, Mawrie represented the Khasi Religion to the World's Parliament of Religions outside India with his close friend Mr.Hipshon Roy Kharshiing. It is a normal practice for the writers on any topic to present their views, but it is up to the readers to accept or reject their views.

C. The Impact of Christianity on the Khasi-Jaintia Community.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the word 'impact' briefly speaking, it means an act of one object hitting another. Plainly, the word 'impact' very often means a noticeable effect or influence of one's work upon any given society or individuals. In other words, it also means an impressive effect. In this connection, my aim in this concluding Chapter is to examine mainly the impact of Christianity on the Khasi-Jaintia community during the pre-independence period but only a few references are to be made to the Christian works during the post-independence period.
Christian work was first taken up in Khasi and Jaintia Hills by the London Missionary Society based at Serampore which was formerly a Danish settlement. Burning with a tremendous love for Christ and his Gospel, William Carey deputed a new Bengali convert, Krishna Chandra Pal to initiate the work of evangelization among the Khasi people. This was during the year 1813. In his book “History of Christianity in India, Volume V, part-5”, Frederick S. Downs, a prominent historian recorded:

In the meantime Serampore had made contact with another people of the North East – the Khasis. In 1813 Krishna Chandra Pal, the first convert of the Serampore mission, spent eight months at Pandua, under the protection of the British but within the Syiemship (Chieftainship or Kingdom) of Cherrapunji. During that time he baptized seven persons, described in his own words, as “four sepoys, two natives of Khasia, and one of Assam. Though U Duwan and anna, the two Khasis baptized are the earliest known converts from among the indigenous population of the North East …

As the Khasi and Jaintia Hills were then closed to contacts with the outside world, Krishna Chandra Pal (Missionary) set up his base at the English East India Company at Pandua (Pandua is now in Bangladesh but formerly it was under Sohra Syiemship). Due to the strong opposition and persecution in the areas where Pal worked, it compelled him to leave Khasi Hills within a very short period. The gap was subsequently filled up by another Christian denomination known as “The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission in 1841 (today, it is known in Britain as the Presbyterian Church of Wales). The Welsh mission concentrated fully on the mission activities and the welfare of the hill people, the missionaries did not have any connection with the works of the

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British Government. They took part in the development process by introducing a number of developmental projects. It was in that year 1841 Rev. Thomas Jones, a Welsh missionary introduced the Roman Alphabets in the Khasi community at Cherrapunji (Sohra). The Roman Script substituted the Bengali script which was introduced earlier. Rev. Thomas Jones, his wife and other missionary colleagues started to open up schools in Cherrapunji and its adjoining areas. In his missionary report Thomas Jones wrote:

I am glad to tell you that everything is looking most cheerful and promising with regard to the good work on the people. They are inclined toward the word of God, as the chief advantage to be derived from learning the art of reading ... The other day, for example, the school master at Maulai was here purchasing seven Bibles (English) at a shilling each, for some of his scholars. And the Khasee Testaments which we sell at from 6d to 2s each, according to the circumstances of the buyer, are fast getting out of stock. (Cherrapunji, October 28th, 1864)

Thomas Jones's attempt to educate the Khasis yielded unexpected results and today, he is known as the father of the Khasi Alphabet. The impact of Christianity upon the Khasi people was more strongly felt in the sphere of education. Over the years the mission schools in the course of time turned out to be a steady stream for converts. William Lewis who arrived after Thomas Jones, took keen interest to train and impart quality education to the leaders of the Church. He remained working in Cherrapunji for not less than 20 years. In 1887 the Welsh Mission started the Cherra Theological College. In 1891 Rev. H. Roberts published a book entitled "A Grammar of the Khasi".
Language. It was for the first time that the readers could have a complete and somewhat exhaustive Grammar of the Khasi language.

The Catholic Mission which started its mission in 1890 made tremendous contribution to the Khasi society, especially in the field of higher education. Other foreign missions did come into the different parts of Khasi and Jaintia Hills like the Church of England (CNI), the Seven Day Adventists, Pentecostal Missions and others. Dr. H. Gurdon Roberts started one Hospital known as “Dr. Roberts Hospital” in 1922 in Shillong. We cannot deny that the Christian social works developed gradually and steadily in Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The Missionaries and the educated Christians of Khasi and Jaintia hill tribes, began to write and publish books on different subjects, in the forms of Poetry, Drama, Fiction, and History. They regarded the Bible as a piece of Literature *par excellence*.

D. The Spirit of Revivalism in Khasi Society.

The dictionary meaning of the word “revivalism” means a process of reawakening of religious faith in a given society. It also means to bring back and strengthen certain hope, interest and ambition. In other words, it means that the revivalists of a given society work for the promotion of a revival religious faith. In this concluding chapter, I propose to discuss on the spirit of revivalism in the Khasi society in the recent past which continues to be an inspiration to the modern Khasis even today. In this connection, I wish to limit only to the revival of religious faith. Almost, from the very beginning, the

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Christian works in Khasi and Jaintia Hills have been closely associated with social transformation in the Khasi society. The Priests (Lyngdohs) and Elders of the traditional Khasi Religion, realized that the rapid growth and development of Christianity in Khasi and Jaintia Hills served as a challenge to the traditional values, morality and indigenous wisdom. It is apparent that the chief objective of ka Seng Khasi which was formed and established in 1899 is the preservation of the Khasi Religion and restoration of the original Khasi identity. H.Kelian Synrem writes:

Confronted with the Challenges of modernization, Christianisation and industrialization, Khasi society is today making a conscious effort to preserve its identity through revivalism. Revivalism generally aims at the restoration of a former golden age. Among the Khasis, revivalism has, of a limited extent, made people revert back to their own religion. But, by and large, revivalism has made people conscious of their past heritage though in practice most revivalists have aimed at merely cultural revivalism, excluding Khasi Religion.  

The Presbyterian Church published a book on Catechism entitled “Ka Kot Tikir” to provide basic and elementary information to the Lower Primary School Children about God, creation and Jesus Christ and his redemptive works here on Earth. After having read through this book, Sib Charan Roy, a veteran leader of the Seng Khasi, decided to write and publish a similar book as an encounter of faith against the teaching of the Presbyterian Church. In 1913 Sib Charan Roy could fulfill his ambition by publishing a book entitled “Kot Tohkit Tir-Tir”. In this book Sib Charan Roy gave basic information of the Khasi traditional belief and understanding of God, creation and role to man to perform as a rational or thinking being. This book was reprinted in 1929.

due to public demand. Kynpham Singh, a learned member of ‘Ka Seng Khasi’ explained that there are various reasons and purposes which made the members of ‘Ka Seng Khasi’ wrote and published many books on the subject ‘Ka Niam Khasi’, he said:

Urged by a deep concern for the future of their race whose social structure was being eroded, whose moral fibre weakened and whose bond of unity disintegrating by the inroad of foreigners, especially the Welsh Calvinistic Mission, who mercilessly attacked, denigrated and maligned their religion, condemned their culture, belittled and actually encourage its followers to discard and disown the Kur – Kha concept of kinship, which is the source and fountain of existence of the race, sixteen non-Christian youngmen met together on the 23rd November, 1899 in the Brahmo Samaj Hall at Mawkhar to form an association to forge and mould again its people, to foster a sense of unity and oneness founded on the traditions handed down by their forefathers and to revive the moral teaching and tenets passed on from generation to generation.  

Babu Jeebon Roy was regarded by the members of ka Seng Khasi as the apostle of Khasi Renaissance which led to the establishment of the Seng Khasi in 1899 in Shillong. We should also bear in mind that the Seng Khasi was formally inaugurated on November 23, 1889 with Rash Mohon Roy Nongrum as Chairman and Babu Chandra Nath Roy as Secretary. This organization was started precisely to maintain the Khasi cultural identity and to strengthen their traditional Khasi Religion. In 1981 the leaders of ka Seng Khasi established ‘Ka Seng Khihlang’ (A social movement organization). This movement is to foster a sense of brotherhood among the Khasis who still retain their socio-cultural-religious heritage and to encourage sport activities.

among the young people. R.T.Rymbai, an active member of Seng Khasi writes:

There is no hierarchy of castes; it is simply a hierarchy of functions. Equality of man as the creature of God before whom everyone is equal is the supreme faith of the Khasi, the guiding light and the ruling principle ... But the knowledge of a Khasi about ancient story and culture is from the oral tradition about his origin, system of beliefs, philosophy and view of life handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, hallowed by time.\(^\text{11}\)

In 1995 Professor Bevan L.Swer of the Khasi Department, NEHU, wrote and published a new book entitled “Ka Mationg ki Khanatang”. In this book, B.L.Swer said that the Khasi myths and legends should be looked upon as the storehouse of the traditional thought, ideas and wisdom. He also said that they are guiding stars. We should not regard them as things obsolete or outdated but as things which are still relevant to us. To cite his words:

\begin{quote}
Lada ngi pdiang ba ki khananatang ki dei ki myth, ngi sngewsarong ban pynbna ha kmhat ka pyrthei ba ngi don bun km kum kita. Haba ngi kren shaphang ‘U Sohetbneng’ ne ‘U Diengiei’ ne ‘Ka Krem Lamet Latang’ ne ‘Ka Dainthlen’ ngi klet ba ki dei ki myth (khanatang) kiba long ka tyllong jong ka pyrkhad pyrdaing u Hynniewtrep bad kiba long ruh km ka iikmih ia ka bor jabieng u longshuwa ban puson bad shemphang kaei ka longbriew bad kaei ka Longblei.\(^\text{12}\)
\end{quote}

(If we accept the stories of ancient days as myths, we are truly proud to tell before the world that we do have many of such kind. For instance, the ancient stories about ‘U Sohpetbneng’ or ‘U Diengiei’ or ‘Ka Krem Lamet Latang’ or ‘Ka Dainthlen.’ We should not forget that myths are sources of our rational thought as the Hynniewtrep (Seven Huts) people and mirrors of our traditional wisdom which reflect of our knowledge of God and our fellow human beings.)

\(^{11}\) R.T.Rymbai “The Cultural Heritage of the Khasis” Seng Khasi College (Shillong: College Souvenir Committee, 1990), p.9
\(^{12}\) B.L.Swer, Ka Mationg ki Khanatang (Shillong: B.L.Swer, 1995), p.9
To commemorate the centennial celebration of ‘Ka Seng Khasi’ its leaders formed a special committee known as ‘Kiew Lum Sohpetbneng Committee on 20th February, 2000. Since that time, the members of ka Seng Khasi almost on annual basis, they use to go to Lum Sohpetbneng peak which is situated at Ribhoi District with the purpose to pay special respect as they as they believe that their first ancestors came from heaven and first landed on the Sohpetbneng Peak. This place is considered sacred by the non-Christian Khasis even today, because they believed in the divine origin of their race. D.L.Nongbri writes:

Ko Lum, ko Lum, Lum Sohpetbneng,
Ko Lum don nam iaineh pateng,
Hapdeng ka Ri U Hynniew Trep, I’u Khyndai-sah kynmaw.13

(Oh Mountain, oh mountain, mountain Sohpetbneng,
You are famous mountain and remain forever
In the land of the Seven Huts people
We always remember the remaining nine above)

E. Synthesis

Hamlet Bareh, a renowned historian among the Khasi-Jaintia people, holds that ka Niam Khasi (Khasi Religion) is monotheistic in its nature, that is, in the beginning. They worshipped the supreme God u Blei Nongthaw (God as Creator) and they worshipped Him and only Him. But in the later stages it has

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been polluted with animistic beliefs. These animistic beliefs comprise of the different elements and different worship patterns. For example, the cult of fertility, worship of mountain and river spirits, divination, glorification of ancestors and other elements. The term ‘animism’ used here, is viewed from the theological perspective as to explain the fundamental association of the spirit with the natural objects. Hamlet Bareh writes:

Religion is both theistic and animistic though at the beginning it was apparently monotheistic. The tradition says at the beginning, the supreme God (Blei Nongthaw) alone was worshipped. But later it was polluted with animistic beliefs. Animistic beliefs comprise cult of fertility, worship of mountain and river spirits, divination, glorification of ancestors and other allied elements.14

The cult of fertility worship can be found in Ribhoi areas and also in Jaintia Hills, especially, in Nartiang and Kupli areas. Ki menshohnoh (hunters of human blood) appeared in the later stages because some Khasis accepted u Thlen (a devil in the form of a serpent) as their god of wealth and riches. In this manner, the elements of syncretism groped in, in the Khasi Religion. P.R. Gurdon tries to describe the Khasi Religion by referring more to the polluted Khasi Religion of the later stages and making use of the syncretic understanding of the nature of Khasi Religion. Gurdon is not completely ignorant of the Khasi Religion but he almost totally missed the main substance or the essence of the Khasi Religion. Gurdon did not show appreciation towards the Khasi Religion but showing his spirit of colonialism and cultural superior complex.

H.O. Mawrie tries to present Khasi Religion by referring back to the background of the ancient days which means the nature and spirit of the Khasi Religion from time immemorial. His attempt is to present the Khasi Religion as a purely theistic religion. The genuine desire of Mawrie is to present and preserve the true significance of the of the Khasi traditional beliefs as being handed down by words of mouth by the ancestors from one generation to another without being tainted by any religious parochialism.

The writings of Gurdon and Mawrie, in many points appear to be diametrically, opposite to each other. It is like thesis and anti-thesis. Taking both of them as the two sides of a coin, we could get a synthesis of the so-called Khasi Religion. Most of the animistic beliefs go together with the propitiation of the spirits while the monotheistic elements discussed by Mawrie deserve special attention because the Khasis have different titles for their Supreme Being or *U Blei*. The concept of their God is He who watches and protects. Though the Khasis believe in the existence of one Supreme Being, yet in certain respects, some minute and private affairs of individuals appear to be under the superintendence of divine agents or spirits.