CHAPTER III

AN EXPOSITION OF MAWRIE’S WRITINGS

This chapter is devoted to bring out the views and interpretation of H.Onderson Mawrie on the Khasi Religion. Mawrie is one of the most outstanding figures in interpreting the Khasi Religion. He has written many books and articles on various subjects. His hard work has enriched our study of the Khasi culture and religion. In order to grasp his ideas and interpretation of the Khasi Religion we need to refer to the books he had written on Khasi Religion. Mawrie’s chief works on Khasi Religion consist of five books. These five books are (1) The Khasi Milieu (2) The Essence of the Khasi Religion (3) Ka Theology jong ka Niam Khasi (The Theology of Khasi Religion) (4) U Khasi bad la ka Niam (A Khasi with his Religion) and (5) Ka Risaw jong ka Niam Khasi (The Core of Khasi Religion).

H.O. Mawrie published his first book entitled “The Khasi Milieu” in 1981. This book shows that Mawrie believe that the Khasis have a monotheistic belief in God (u Blei). He also demonstrates that God pervades everything in the world. In other words, God permeates every aspect of human life. According to Mawrie God created human beings as well as heaven and earth. He also created all things in the Sky high above and on the Earth down below. He holds the view that the Khasi conception of creation is similar to the Jewish understanding of creation. He writes:
The Khasi concept of man is similar to that of the Jews. A Khasi believes that God made him, which means that he made him a full-fledged man to inhabit this world. A man belongs to God during his life time as well as when he has left this world. After he leaves this world he goes to God's House to spend his time chewing betel-nut (bam kwai ha iing U Blei). The body will decay and perish but the soul belongs to God and to Him shall it return. The Khasi thinks that man is a special creature of God. He is un-comparably higher than any creature. Man alone can express his mind and commune with God. If there is any deterioration on his part as a man, it is either because he does not submit before God or because he forsakes Him altogether. If there is any deterioration of his race it is also because the race does not abide by or fulfill the commandments of God.\(^1\)

Mawrie pointed out that the Khasis had their own "Doctrine of man" as it appears in their traditional teachings and also in the writings of some scholars and researchers. He also said that the Khasis have no sacred writings in their religion. In this chapter I intend to give only a summary of where we can meaningfully look for and find and grasp Khasi Religion. According to Mawrie, the Khasis like to celebrate life. They celebrate events in the life of the individual and the community. Briefly speaking, Khasi Religion and their doctrine of man can be found more meaningfully in the rituals, ceremonies and the festivals of the people. Though the Khasis hardly have shrines, sacred places and religious objects or the works of art and symbols, but they have a lot of teaching sources in the form of proverbs, riddles and wise sayings. Myths, legends, beliefs, and customs form part of Khasi Religion. Since Khasi Religion can be found in different aspects of human life, this is one of the

reasons that I undertake to briefly discuss on the Khasi conception of man as expounded by H.O. Mawrie in his book, *The Khasi Milieu*.

In a very clear and lucid manner, Mawrie discusses that man is part and parcel of God’s creation. The term ‘creation’ is taken from the Latin root ‘creare’ which literally means ‘fashioning of new forms out of an existent, or given material’. As a potter makes a pot out of clay, so also it can be said that God is the Creator of man. Taking in this sense, creation is the ‘making activity’ of God the Maker. Like the Judeo-Christian, to Mawrie, creation is technically understood as the fashioning of new form without any pre-existent material. It is the product of *ex nihilo*.

While Mawrie is discussing and expounding the concept of man, he refers to the Khasi creation myth, *Ka Krem Lamet Ka Krem Latang*² (The Cave of Lamet Latang). According to the myth, religion (ka Niam) is not only the God-given Religion but also an outcome of man’s struggle. Religion is God-given in the sense that it is God, out of His willingness and free will, created man and put within his heart the spirit of submissiveness and the thought and feeling of creatureliness. It means a feeling that he longs for his Creator. Man realizes himself that he is imperfect and limited in many ways. On the other hand, it is the struggle of man because, as a thinking being, he tried to find out ways and means to get rid of the darkness while the Sun was

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² *Ka Krem Lamet Latang* is a mythical cave where the Sun is said to have hidden herself because she had been publicly being humiliated together with the Moon her younger brother while dancing. One day, the Cock came out of another cave where he was living with a view to help humanity who was living in darkness since the day the Sun refused to give its light. Once the Cock met the Sun requesting her to come out from the hiding place and to give her light once again to the world. Finally she agreed and the world could have light as before.
In this way the world was able to get back the light of the Sun.

While Mawrie is bringing out in writing about the rationality of man, he said that God gives man *ka Rngiew*. Mawrie expresses that *ka Rngiew* is the rational and divine power given by God to man. It is this power which adds to the life of man both personality and dignity as a rational being. Interestingly, it is Mawrie from among the Khasi thinkers who speaks of the three commandments given by God to man. The three commandments are: (i) *Kamai ia ka Hok* (To earn righteousness) (ii) *Tip briew tip blei* (To know God and to know man). (iii) *Tip kur tip kha* (To know the maternal relatives and the paternal relatives). The first commandment teaches that every action of man either good or bad will not go unrewarded for God keeps an account of all human actions. This is similar to the *Law of Karma* in Indian Philosophy. The second commandment firstly, teaches that, by knowing human beings in the right perspective, leads us to the knowledge of God the Creator and secondly, it teaches that God is not perceivable yet he is knowable. The third commandment teaches that marriage within the same clan is profane and forbidden in the Khasi society. Any transgressor of this commandment is liable to be excommunicated from the entire society. Again, marriage with the father's sister or brother is prohibited. Likewise, marriage with the sister's cousin or aunt of the father is not allowed by the society because marriage
between persons of too close blood relation can lead to unfortunate consequence which may result in having either a deformed or abnormal child.

In his Book entitled The Khasi Milieu, H.O.Mawrie also discusses his view on the concept of God. According to him, the Khasi people from time immemorial believed in the existence of God. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274 A.D.) gave five proofs proving God’s existence from experience. Unlike Aquinas the Khasis do not formulate arguments to prove God’s existence. H.O.Mawrie writes:

The Khasis like the Jews, never seek to formulate arguments that God exists. They take it for granted that God exists and that there is only one God who is omnipresent, omnipotent and eternal.

Mawrie holds the view that though we cannot perceive God with our eyes, yet we can know God through revelation and intuition. We can also know God through his manifestations. According to Mawrie, God reveals Himself through nature and through the world that He has created it. The beauty and splendor of nature and the things in the world reveals the greatness and wisdom of God who created them all. Looking and thinking of the things created by God in this world, this makes man to give God different names according to his experience and understanding. Some of the names which Mawrie mentions are:

(i) U Nongbuh Nongthaw (The Supreme planner and Creator);
(ii) *U Nongsei U Nongpynlong* (The Giver and Dispenser of Life);

(iii) *U Nongthaw bynriew u Nongbuh bynriew* (The Creator of Mankind and the Controller of Mankind);

(iv) *U Nonghukum bad U Nongsynshar* (The supreme Commander and Ruler of all);

(v) *U 'Leilongkur* (God of the Clan);

(vi) *U 'Leimuluk* (God of the State);

(vii) *U 'Leijaka* (God of territory);

(viii) *U 'Leikhyrdop u 'Leikharai* (God of War).

All these different names presuppose that God permeates every sphere of human life and activity including religion. Mawrie tries to conceive God from the empirical point of view, that is to say that God possesses some qualities and that is why He is the object of worship. To cite his words:

"For a Khasi *ka Niam* (Religion) necessarily compliments *Ka Rukom* (Rite), hence the phrase 'Ka Niam ka Rukom'. *Ka rukom* indicates the ceremonial aspect of religious observances, which must be according to the norms laid down in *ka Niam.*"\(^4\)

It is from the empirical standpoint that we say that God is the omniscient and the omnipotent Creator who posses qualities. It is similar with the Sankara’s conception of God as *Saguna Brahman* or *Ishwara* in Sankara’s Philosophy. Mawrie tries to reflect on the conception of God in the light of

\(^4\) Ibid., p.33
common experience of how God can be both in the world and yet beyond it. In other words, he means to refer to the immanence and the transcendence of God. This means to say that the holiness and perfection of God is not in any way affected or touched by the imperfection of the world.

It is very interesting that Mawrie suggests by saying that if one tries to understand religion in particular, one needs certain amount of spiritual development. The main reason for this is because each religion is based on faith or entering into the form of life, as stated in the language of Wittgenstein. Mawrie plainly states that the Khasi religion has employed myths, legends, figures of speech and others, with a view to illustrate the relationship between man and God. He also states that the Khasi religion, at the initial stage, began as a religion of a clan. The Khasis, in those early days, had to move from place to place for the purpose of cultivation and other reasons. They had no permanent building as temples to worship God. Explaining this fact, Mawrie said:

A Khasi has no church or temple to worship God whereas each and every clan or group has its iingseng iingkhatduh (the residence of the youngest in the lineage of each clan) where all necessary religious rites and ceremonies of the religion are performed.\(^5\)

According to Christian scriptural teaching (The Bible), Satan who is also known as the Devil is the leader of the demons. He is the great enemy of God and man. There are so many demons that no one can count them

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 37
(Mathew12:26-27;25:41,Mark 5:9). The Bible also describes the devil as the killer and destroyer of human beings. He does not tell the truth because he is the father of lies. He hates both God and man. He is the tempter and the leader of the power of darkness. The Devil is known by different names as the dragon, satan etc., who was cast down from heaven to earth (Rev.12:9). In other words, the Christians have the understanding that the devils are the heavenly beings but due to their disobedience to God they were cast down from heaven to earth. This description shows that the devils were originally in heaven.

But H.O. Mawrie has a different conception of devil as he has pointed out in his book the ‘Khasi Milieu’. Like Christianity, Mawrie describes the devil as the enemy of God and humanity. According to the Bible, the devils are the disobedient and bad angels who revolted God. Again, they are the spirit without physical bodies. They can appear to man in different forms since they have no fixed forms. Mawrie also holds a similar view which according to him, the devils are the chief enemies of both God and man. Unlike Christianity, Mawrie said that wicked men and women after their physical death their souls turn to be the devils and the evil spirits. To quote his words:

But there are individuals who have committed unpardonable sins and are condemned; their clanmen have refused to perform the death rituals for them as per the Niam and religious rite. The ghosts of such individuals take the form of devils and they turn out to be ferocious and horrible devils.6

6. Ibid., p. 40
Mawrie who has a wide range of knowledge of the Khasi religion clearly tells us that there are many kinds of devils. In this chapter, I would like to mention just some of them as follows:

(i) *Ka Tyrut* (It is the queen of evil spirits).
(ii) *Ki Ksuid lum* (The hill and wood devils).
(iii) *Ki Ksuid wah* (The water devils).
(iv) *Ki Ksuid suin* (The devils of the air).
(v) *U Rih* (The devils of fever and other diseases).
(vi) *Ka Shwar* (a female ferocious devil).
(vii) *U Thlen* (a terrible male devil - needs human blood for food and drink).

H.O.Mawrie who had undertaken an indepth study of the Khasi Religion and Culture with his authoritative knowledge states that some of the devils mentioned above are living in different places. Some of them live in water, trees, rivers, streams, on the hills and woods. Though the Khasi Religion does not instruct people to regard the devils as deities or to offer sacrifices to them, but some individuals, for the sake of their personal interest, regard some of the devils as their deities and even offer sacrifices to them. Such people, who have done this, will always live with a tremendous sense of fear psychosis. The reason is because these devils are malicious and it is very difficult to cast them out or exorcize them. But man is capable to free himself
though he has been possessed, by claiming himself that he is more superior to
the devils and therefore, he has the right to cast the devil out. It is a wrong
belief on the part of some people who called the female devil of Kupli River
by the name ‘Ka Lei Kupli’ (The Goddess of Kupli River). Consequently,
some people who happened to cross the Kupli River were made sick by the
Lei Kupli.

Mawrie’s book “The Khasi Milieu” is a very interesting book which
has touched different aspects of human life, of course from a religious
perspective. According to Mawrie, it is very important that man should know
who he is and what is the purpose of his existence? Man should have the
realization that he has been created by U Blei (God) for the purpose of living
righteously and be a law abider. God is both the giver of life and the destroyer
of life. If a man wants to live meaningfully and successfully, he needs to
follow the instruction of the commandments which had been given by God to
man for the purpose of living a happy and good life. The three
commandments, as mentioned earlier, are as follows:

(i) The first commandment is ‘Kamai ia ka Hok’. The word ‘kamai’ means to
earn and the word ‘ka Hok’ means Righteousness or to do what is right before
the eyes of God. According to the prescription of the first commandment, man
should live justly and honestly in whatever way he does. Mawrie conceives
man both as a rational and a moral being. Man should keep in mind of what he
should do for the cause of earning righteousness, for God keeps a record of our action, either good or bad. Therefore, he should be honest and true to his words, actions and thoughts.

(ii) The second commandment is *Tipbriew Tipblei*. The word *tipbriew* is a composite word. It is made up of two words, namely, the word ‘*tip*’ which means to know or knowledge while the word ‘*briew*’ means ‘man’. Etymologically, the word ‘*tipblei*’ is also a composite term. It is made up of two words, that is, the word ‘*tip*’, in the same way it means either knowing or knowledge. But the word ‘*blei*’ means God. If we translate literally, the word ‘*tipbriew tipblei*,’ it simply means ‘know man know God’. But a more meaningful translation will involve some reflection and meditation to find out what are our duties towards our fellowmen and towards God. In other words, man has a service to render before God his Lord and Creator. Man also has the service towards his country and for the wellbeing of his fellowmen or our country men. If a man says, he loves and respects God, but, if he hates or does evil things against his neighbour, such man’s claim is untrue or false. In other words, if man fails to do good things towards his friends and neighbours whom he can see and meet them, he cannot love and respect the one (God) whom he cannot physically see or meet.

(iii) The third commandment is *Tipkur tip kha*. The word *tipkur* is a composite word because it is made up of two words, viz., *tip* and *kur*. The word *tip* as it
has been pointed out earlier, means to know or knowledge and the word *kur* means the maternal relatives. In other words, it means the relatives from the side of the mother. The word *kha* means either cousin or the relative from the side of the father. This particular commandment deals either directly or indirectly with marriage.

In Khasi language, the word, *ka sang* (a taboo in the form of incest) is a mortal sin which is not pardonable and there is no place for atonement. In other words, *ka sang* is an eternal sin. It is a sin which is not possible for forgiveness. According to the Khasi moral teachings, to have marriage within the same *kur* (clan), it is *ka sang*. It is an act of profane. The word *tipkur* also means that one should investigate from the clan of a man or the clan of a girl before any proposal of marriage, so as to avoid from committing *ka sang* which is a deadly sin. A marriage with the father’s brother or sister is to commit *ka sang*. The word *tipkha* is suggestive in the sense that a boy or a girl, before marriage, should take their own time to find out that their marriage proposals should not be with the maternal relatives or paternal relatives. Marriage should be sacred, honourable and acceptable by the community’s sanction.

One may be surprised why Mawrie in his discussion of the Khasi Religion refers to the Khasi conception of religion. The reason for this is that the Khasis follow certain form of religion. That is, they believe that a divine
power created the world and everything in it. This sort of belief influences their lives and their thought. As we know, ‘Nature’ is part of the created world and it has a divine touch of God and not man-made. According to Mawrie, *Ka Mariang* (Nature) is a living entity. He has the understanding that though Nature has been created by God, yet God is within and not without. It means to say that God is the inner Controller and the Sustainer of Nature.

To Mawrie, Nature is a thing of beauty which a modern man, with all his scientific development, should not try to cause damage or destroy Nature in any form of destruction. To Mawrie, all the trees, bamboos and other plants can be useful to meet human needs as in making houses, for making medicines and other useful purposes. We should remember that the Khasi Religion emphasises on respecting the harmony between man and nature, especially on minimum destruction of living and non-living resources to satisfy their basic and human needs for survival. Mawrie strongly, opposes against the exploitation of nature for the sake of meeting our own selfish ends. Again, to Mawrie, Nature is like an open-book for man to learn and observe. He writes:

Nature for a Khasi is like a book. The teaching and wisdom he derives from it, he makes use of it, in his daily life. He examines meticulously and with great care the objects around him. He cares for and treasures all he sees and observes so that they could be of help to him in all his needs. Nature is also like a big hospital on whose threshold all types of medicines are to be found which can heal all bodily ailments.  

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In his second book, *The Essence of the Khasi Religion* which was published in 1981, Mawrie tried to re-interpret the Khasi sacred stories of Creation. First he tried to re-examine the relationship between God and man in the ancient past. He reflected this God-Man relationship through the three sacred stories viz. (i) *The Story of U Lumsohpetbneng*, (ii) *The Story of U Lum Diengiei* and (iii) *The Story of ka Krem Lamet Latang*. Finally, Mawrie shows that it is the spirit of ‘Creator-created’ relationship between God and Man that led to an event of ‘worship’.

**The Story of U Sohpethnbeng**

The phrase *U Sohpethnbeng* literally, means the navel of Heaven. This story briefly explains that the original home of mankind is Heaven. In a very simple pre-modern way, this story describes the arrival of human beings on earth and how they lived on the lap of mother earth. It also tells that originally, the human beings have only sixteen families. Nine families are living in Heaven while the other seven families live on earth, that is, they came down from Heaven to live on earth as agriculturists. Mawrie calls this story ‘a parable’.

According to this story, the member of the nine families above and the member of the seven families below, could freely go up to heaven and come down to earth through a golden ladder provided by God. This story in a
symbolic way describes the healthy relationship between God and Man and between man and other living beings on earth. Mawrie writes:

The central idea of the parable of U Sohpetbneng is 'Peace between God and man'. In the context of this parable, God is imagined as a personal god (anthropomorphised) who has a personal relation with man. On the top of U Sohpetbneng peak there grew a tree which served as a ladder or communication between God and man.  

This story also, in a symbolic way, tells us how the age of peace and harmony between God and humanity has been disrupted by the power of devil which came in the form of U Thlen (a devil in the form of a serpent). The Devil tempted man to go against all the commandments given by God to man. Since that time the God-Man relationship was broken down. This event also affected the Man to Man relationship because the members of the nine families in heaven above and the members of the seven families here on earth could no longer enjoy either going up to heaven or coming down to earth. This story depicts the devil as the chief enemy of peace and harmony on earth.

The Story of U Lum Diengiei

This story goes on to say that after the breaking down of the golden ladder on the Sohpetbneng peak, there grew a gigantic tree known in the local Khasi language as Ka Diengiei. This tree was so big and its leaves and branches overshadowed everything on earth. At that particular time there was no sunlight but darkness prevailed everywhere. Finally, man cut down the

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gigantic tree and began to get sunlight as before. This story reminds that man has to struggle for his life and that the period of human suffering and misery had started in this world since the tie of God-Man relationship was made disorderly. To cite the words of Mawrie:

> After the fall there grew on the top of U Diengiei peak another tree which was as big as it was tall and its ever-spreading branch and leaves became so thick so as to overcast the earth with darkness. This darkness signifies man's spiritual crisis.⁹

### The Story of Ka Krem Lamet Latang

This story of 'Ka Krem Lamet Latang' seems to be either a continuation or a different version of 'U Sohpetbneng' story. This story of 'Ka Krem Lamet Latang' narrates that Ka Sngi (Sun) and U Bnai (Moon) were brother and sister. The Sun was the elder sister while the moon was a younger brother who belonged to the same family. One day they went to dance on the dancing ground arranged for all the creatures. While dancing, the Sun (sister) and the moon (brother) were insulted by the other creatures for having danced together like husband and wife. The Sun was angry and full of shame when the other creatures shouted at her mockingly. Immediately, she stopped dancing and went to hide herself in the cave known in Khasi language as Ka Krem Lamet Latang.

At that particular period, there was darkness everywhere that caused great confusion to all the living creatures. At last, man requested 'U Syiar'
(Cock) to go to the *Krem Lamet Latang* (Cave of Lamet Latang) being advised to humbly request *Ka Sngi* (Sun) to kindly come back to her usual place and to continue to give its light to the world as before. This goes to tell us that man promised to the Cock to give him colourful dress and other needs as well. Consequently, the Cock agreed to fulfill man’s request and was ready to go and meet the *Ka Sngi* (Sun).

In Their meeting, *Ka Sngi* (Sun) told *U Syiar* (Cock) that she was unbearably humiliated by her fellow creatures and friends. In their dialogue, *U Syiar* (Cock) told *Ka Sngi* (Sun) that such a thing was unfortunate. Again, *U Syiar* assured Ka Sngi that such public humiliation would never be repeated. Their dialogue turned to be conducive and cordial. Finally, *Ka Sngi* agreed to come back and reappear again with one condition, that *U Syiar* must give a signal by crowing thrice before day break. Such a mutual agreement between *Ka Sngi* (Sun) and *U Syiar* (Cock) was very successful. Since that time, the Cock could hold a very important and sacred position in the life and religious performance of the Khasi people. In the Khasi Religion ‘cock sacrifice’ is very significant. H.O. Mawrie himself writes:

The story of ‘Ka Krem Lamet Latang’ confirms that … God is merciful and loving. God’s reaction to man’s fall has no touch of revenge.  

Another important contribution of H.O. Mawrie to the Khasi Religion is through the publication of his book entitled *Ka Theology jong ka Niam*
Khasi which he published in 1991. This book is the first of its kind because in the past, the elders of the Khasi Religion had not published any book related to the theological studies of the Khasi Religion. This book of Mawrie is a sort of an introduction to the studies and investigation of the theological concern of the Khasi Religion. This book is not an indepth study but only a humble attempt to highlight the theological understanding of the religion of the Khasi people. The word ‘theology’ is a composite word. It is made up of two Greek words, viz., the word ‘theos’ which means ‘God’ and the word ‘logos’ which means ‘word’ or ‘thought’. The word ‘logia’ has its root from the word ‘logos.’ In religious studies, the word ‘Theology’ has been translated as (i) The study of God (ii) The science of God. In other words, a theological study, means making an effort to describe in terms of human word the concept of God and his actions, especially those actions of God which are related to the world and man. Briefly speaking, Christian theology is written from the viewpoint of those who accept and believe in Jesus Christ as the one in whom God has made himself fully known to men. Similarly, the theology of the Khasi Religion has been written and fashioned from the perspective of the Khasi Religion and their believers. Theology and theological writings are very often written with a view, (i) to explain certain doctrines (ii) to provide understanding of faith and (iii) to avoid heresy and so on. According to Mawrie’s theological writings, the Khasis believe in the existence of one God (U Blei) who is the metaphysical being. He is one and the only one. But there

10. Ibid., p.1
are many manifestations of God in different ways and at different times. He has no father, no mother, no children, and no wife for he is beyond and above sex. *U Blei* (God) who is the metaphysical Reality has no gender and has no form or shape.

Mawrie translates the English word 'Theology' into the Khasi language as 'Ka Nia Niam'. He said:

Kaba ngi lah ban batai kat kum ka pyrkhat Khasi ka long ba ka ktien 'Theology' ka long ka 'Nia Niam' kaba ka Niam ka don ban ai shaphang u Blei. Kano kano ka jaitbynriew ka don la ka Niam. Ka don hi la ka pyrkhat-Niam, ka seng-nia bad ka seng niam wat lada kata ka lah ban wan ha kano kano ka dur.\(^{11}\)

*We may read as,*

What we can explain according to the Khasi thought, the word 'Theology corresponds to the Khasi wording 'Ka Nia Niam'. It deals with the study about God. Each nation, big or small, has its own theological association. It may have its own content and form.

At this point of discussion, I intend to highlight some of the aspects of the Khasi theology and its theological teaching. As we commonly know that the Khasi Religion has no organized theology. But we cannot deny that it has some theological teachings which are not organized and scattering here and there in the form of references and citations. Some of them may be mentioned as follows:-

1. *Ka Hok U Blei* (The Righteousness of God)

\(^{11}\) *Ibid.*,
The word 'Righteous,' means doing what is morally right or morally justifiable. In other words, it means an action which conforms to a norm. When Mawrie speaks of 'Ka Hok U Blei' he means the righteousness of God. In other words, it means that the actions and plans of God for his creations should be both morally right and justifiable. This idea of Righteousness often refers to the relationship between two parties. In this particular context, it speaks of the relationship between God (U Blei) and people.

It refers to the character of God who is just, good, impartial and perfect. The Khasis have one commandment which is related to Ka Hok (Righteousness). This presupposes that God records each and every action of man. He will reward them according to their actions whether good or bad. The Khasis believe that God is the source of everything good and noble. The teachers and preachers of the Khasi Religion use to teach people how to live and act righteously, for God is righteous and He is the source of righteousness.

2. Ka Hok Longbriew (Human Right)

Mawrie holds the view that God has created us and place us to live on earth. Therefore, we have the right to live, move and have our being. Further, he says, our human right for existence follows from the right that God has created us with specific purposes. Human life is sacred because it has the divine spark of God. Man has the right to worship and propagate his faith in God. The life which God has given us, others have no right to take it away. In
this context, killing is a violation of our human right. Stealing and encroachment are examples of malicious action and violation of our right to live and the right to own property. Mawrie writes:

Ka hok longbriew kam long tang ia u shimet. Ha ka tipbriew ka don artylli kiei kiei, kawei ba un tip ia lade ba u dei u briew bad kawei pat ba un tip ia kiwei ruh ba ki dei ki briew kiba don kajuh ka hok longbriew kumba don ma u. 12

_We may read as,_

Our human right given by God does not apply just to one individual. Human right has two aspects, one is for an individual to know for himself, but the other aspect is to know that others also have the same right to enjoy and exercise as we enjoy and exercise our human right.

This kind of moral teaching is very important for us today. It will point out or show that taking the lives of others in the form of killing either by way of shooting or bomb blasts should be condemned for it is morally or ethically wrong. _Ka Hok longbriew_ (the Human right) is definitely related to the idea of the sacredness and the sanctity of life. It forbids the taking away of life at any cost.

Another important book written by Mawrie is _U Khasi bad la ka Niam_ (A Khasi with his Religion). This book provides us clearer insight of what the Khasi Religion is all about. According to H.O.Mawrie, the Khasi conception of God is very much similar to the Jewish understanding of God. There is a need to have a critical analysis of the relationship between Christianity and the

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12. ibid., p. 23.
Khasi Tribal religion. Mawrie tries to explore some of the concept and belief system of the Khasi Religion. While examining and analyzing the books of H.O.Mawrie, it may be noticed that he tries to explain almost the same topic in his different books. It appears to be repetitive because he is repeating the same subject-matter. But as we try to read more of the books of Mawrie, we get more and more acquainted of Mawrie’s understanding of Khasi Religion and the Khasi people. On the part of one who reads of Mawrie’s books one needs to be patient, tolerant and appreciative of his efforts, for they have added much towards the understanding of the Khasi culture and religion. Mawrie is not a well-trained theologian or an academic philosopher. But his books have contributed towards enriching the study of Khasi religion more than other Khasi authors or writers in the field of religion.

In this book *U Khasi bad la ka Niam* Mawrie clarifies that the Khasis have a monotheistic conception of God. Though there is only one God, yet He has many names. We cannot perceive God, but we can perceive his manifestations. The most common names given to God, is *U Blei*. He is infinite and self existent. He is limitless and he does not need any one to cause his existence. He is both transcendent and immanent in his character. He is transcendent in the sense that He is limited to this world of here and now. Though he controls the world from within, yet He is beyond and above the world. Since his spirit is pervasive and permeating the world, this makes possible to have *U Blei* as a personal God which we can offer sacrifices.
Though *U Blei* (God) is not perceivable, yet the rational power of the Khasi elders make them have the understanding that God is loving, good, merciful, holy and the only perfect being.

Throughout his writings on the Khasi religion, Mawrie gives some clarification that the Khasis have a concept of the Supreme Being called *U Blei* in their local Khasi Language. This Supreme Being is also known as the Creator and sustainer of the world. In this world, there are also variety of spirits that exist, but they cannot be identified as gods or having the power of God. They are only the created beings of God who need to worship the Supreme Being (*U Blei*). Mawrie also gives us a clarification that the Khasi Religion has no scriptures, it has to rely and have faith on the authority of tradition. The teachers of Khasi Religion do not teach people to worship the various kinds of spirits but some people may have close association with the spirit for expecting some benefits from them especially in times of difficulties, like wars and other troublesome periods.

According to Mawrie the Khasis respect the departed soul of their ancestors, like *Ka Jawbei, U Thawlang,* and *U Suidnia,* but they do not worship them. What they use to practise is to venerate their lives and appreciate their works or achievements.

One of the most recent book written by Mawrie is *Ka Risaw jong ka Niam Khasi* (1984). In this book, Mawrie gives a conceptual exploration of
some of the terminologies which are frequently used in Khasi language especially, those terms which are related to culture and religion. First and foremost, he clarifies that the Khasis as a race are the posteriors or descendants of the sixteen families whose original home is heaven. Since the time that human beings had gone against the will of God, the golden ladder provided by God was then destroyed. The members of the nine families remained in Heaven and the members of the seven families remained on earth. This view is based on the mythological oral tradition and it is not historical. It might refer to the pre-historical days.

The Khasi conception of 'U Sohpetbneng' is similar to the Christian conception of the Garden of Eden as stated in the Book of Genesis from the Bible. In this book Ka Risaw jong ka Niam Khasi, Mawrie used the word Risaw which means a central idea. In this book Mawrie tries to give only some central ideas of the Khasi religion. He explains the age of 'U Sohpetbneng' as the Golden Age in human history. It was the age of perfect peace and happiness. Human suffering was unknown. Human beings, at that particular period of history did not have any negative experience like poverty, ignorance, and illness. In other words, they were free from all sorts of worries and anxieties. It was a Paradise for man.

The cordial and healthy God-Man relationship was broken by the disobedience of man by disobeying the commandments of God. This
brokenness of God-Man relationship ushered in the age of suffering, pain and sorrows. The power of devil began to operate at the different levels of human life. The next, we see, the age of *U Diengiei* which was the age of hope. Man has to struggle for himself. The darkness caused by *Ka Diengiei* (A gigantic Tree) posed serious problems to man. *Ka Diengiei* was a mysterious tree. Man, in spite of his hard work could not fell it down due to the power of the devil who came in the form of a tiger in the night and licked the *Diengiei* to let it grow mysteriously. It was through the help of a small bird ‘*ka Phreit*’ that man could fell down the *Diengiei* tree successfully. This shows that man needs the help of others in his attempt to solve the problems of life.

Mawrie gives an exegetical note of the story of *Ka Krem Lamet Latang* which helps us to understand better the meaning and purpose of God behind our human scene. The darkness was removed through the dialogue between ‘*Ka Sngi*’ (Sun) and ‘*U Syiar*’ (Cock). It is through talk and discussion that we can know the truths as they are. This gives us that blaming and suspecting others will not help us solve our own problems or to solve the problems of others. Once we come to know of the root cause or causes it is important to make reconciliation with the give-and-take spirit. Mawrie, very often in his writings, insists on the importance of knowing ‘*Ka Daw*’ which means ‘Cause’ or ‘Reason’. As a researcher and a writer, Mawrie emphasizes that every effect has a cause. In order to remove the effect, we need to remove the cause. Most of the times, our human problems begins with certain causes. But
one needs to come to the terms of reconciliation by being reasonable. We must think, reflect and maintain our congenial atmosphere in our relationship with God and our fellow human beings.