Chapter 7.

SAMADHI AND CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

The quest for some ultimate reality beyond the world of appearances and the conception of an underlying reality seems to have manifested itself more and more with the growth of human consciousness. As pointed out by Hopkinson, what was previously haphazard and disjointed achieved meaning and unity through such a conception of the 'underlying reality'.

Man as a spiritually conscious being tried to grasp reality by means of his method of rationalism. For instance, the Jewish scriptures record certain revelations and the Christian scriptures complete that process.

In the sweet eternity of love man found reality itself reflected, like Christ, Bodhisattva, Lord Krishna, and Bhagavan Mahavira. This reality gave an impetus for compassion for the suffering humanity. In order to attain this reality man must have a perpetual aspiration towards God. This aspiration should be attended by inspiration followed by the questioning spirit that is

implanted by God. There are three means of religious apprehension. They are: 1) institutional and authoritative, 2) intellectual and ethical, and 3) mystical and experiential. Religion thus asks man to look outwards, upwards, and inwards. They are the parts of a composite whole.

In Christianity there are two types of mysticism. They are: Theocentric mysticism of the Dionysian tradition, and the Jesus mysticism. There is a marked difference between them, for a superficial observer. But the distinction is more apparent than real. The institutional religion believes that the Christian tradition comes from God, and in case of Berulla, there was no Christian mysticism without the institutional element.

Powys+ has given an interesting account of the rise of Christian mysticism. He has said that the Hebrew origin of Christianity is very clear from the Bible. It were the Jews who converted the idea of Yhevah of Sinai into the idea of a universal God.

Jesus was executed during the reign of Tiberius, who was the successor of Augustus. Jesus was influenced by the sacred scriptures and the sights of the country. He assimilated the inner wisdom of the scrolls.

and meditated upon the personalities, and developed a novel way of revealing the inner hidden being. It was John the Baptist who initiated him to the Messiahhood. He felt the inner wisdom of the scriptures and lived by the light of Isaiah prophecies. His mind was like that of a child as it was anticipated by Isaiah\textsuperscript{+} that "he will be brought as a lamb to slaughter," and "he openeth not his mouth."

The hidden truth which Jesus revealed was that life is wavering and blind, and that truth is to be found in comprehensions of opposites. The strength of his Gospel is that it is capable of infinite interpretations. According to every interpretation the soul of man was his main concern. The publicans and harlots had their place in the kingdom of Heaven. A harlot is forgiven because she 'loved too much'. This was quite in harmony with his doctrine which taught us to 'forgive the trespasses of others'.

According to the main doctrines of Christianity God is beneficial, and each soul enjoys eternal life. Each soul is always the object of attention of God. The personality of Jesus is an ideal for every

\textsuperscript{+} Isaiah, Chapter 53.7.
Christian who aspires for eternal life or salvation. Jesus himself rose from the dead and rejoined God, his Father in the Heaven. His imaginative sympathy for life was poetic and mystic. The mystery of life was that it was redemptive, and hence, resurrection supplying the evidence, a note of optimism is its general characteristic.

Christianity was nurtured in its infancy by the genius of St. Paul. He was the greatest exponent of its hidden inner strength. But the real inventor of Christianity as a world religion was a Pharisee who had the peculiarity of becoming 'nothing' in the adoration of what he worshipped. It was the Christ in him that did everything.

As described by Margaret Smith†,

"He lifted the crude form of Christianity into the realm of high mystical import. He held that the mystical ecstasy he felt every day was of real consequence. He lived and moved in the love of Christ, and in the light of his eternal vision. He knew that salvation was very near, as 'the day of the Lord commeth as a thief in the night."

† Smith, Margaret., Studies in early mysticism, Macmillan and co., 1931, p. 47.
This idea of Lord coming as a thief in the night was a new doctrine. All early Christians were confident of immortality.

St. John, the divine, was named by Jesus "the son of thunder". He once remarked that the partridge represents the whole teaching of Jesus. He very highly influenced the teachings and workings of the church, which provided for the emotional and intellectual drives of the first and second century, by means of the sacrament and the fourth Gospel.

In the beginning the historic figure of Jesus was also made an object of worship like Mithra, the Persian Sun deity. The worshippers of Mithra used to perform a eucharistic ceremony in which bread and wine were served. They also used bells, candles, and holy water. These Goetic elements of worship have found their way in the Christian church.

Later on, out of the trinity, the holy ghost was left out. In Catholicism there was worship of God in the form of trinity, and then trinity in unity. This was true of St. Jerome and also of St. Augustine. St. Jerome translated the holy scriptures into Latin, while St. Augustine gave a philosophic language to the new faith.

St. Augustine was a mystic of the highest order. He believed that the death of the soul lies in its
freedom to err. Zimmer+ has remarked about St. Augustine that he was a religious philosopher to be listed with St. Thomas Aquinas and Pascal.

It may be argued about all these early men of the Christian church that they had one thing in common, namely, the serenity and peace drawn from the practice of meditation (which, according to Yoga is called samādhi). This shows how samādhi transcends all religious observances and beliefs, and bestows upon the masters of samādhi the same pious attitude, love of all human beings, and understanding the basic facts of human suffering and its removal. That is why samādhi may be called the common thread running through religious men of all times, whether they were Hindus, or Buddhists, or Christians or Sufis.

The consolidation of the Christian church was based on the principle of obstruse secrets. For the rank and file it was enough to know that the sinner will be punished. St. Clement, of Alexandria, who attempted at such a consolidation argued that Christianity was the heir of all past time and the highest interpreter of the future.

It may be true, as believed by some experts, that the destruction of the Roman Empire enabled the church to replace its classical method of intellectual inquiry by its theology. Yet there were discordant notes at times against the priesthood.

In the year 1366, John Wycliffe wrote the famous book 'The vision of William concerning Piers, the plowman'. This was an expression of the general public resentment against the ways of the church. Earlier, Chaucer, in his 'Canterbury tales', had sarcastically pictured the lives of the high priests. Sampson\(^+\) says about this book that, it has exercised great influence on the reformers up to the sixteenth century. It described vividly the social evils and religious abuses prevalent in those days.

Another writer, Walter Hilton, gave a clear differentiation between concentration and consecration. Concentration, according to him, was the path of the mystic, while consecration was the path of the saint. He described three ways in which man can serve God, namely, active life, contemplative life, and mixed life. Active life was the way of the worldly people, whereas, contemplative life was for the aspirants of salvation. Mixed life, he

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argued, was followed by the prelates.

Max Muller+ has brought out some striking similarities between Christian mysticism and Buddhism. He has shown how their life situations of the founders (Christ and Buddha) are similar, and so are their methods of using parables, wanderings, and collecting together the disciples in an organized way for propagating their doctrines. Most of the moral truths preserved by the Gospels are found also in the Buddhist scriptures. The present writer wants to point out in this connection that if we see the general tenor of the Yoga writings we find a remarkable unity of approach and principles of molding physical and psychological behaviour, in Christian mystics, Zen Buddhists, and the masters of samādhi.

Acharya Rajneesh ++ is quite enlightening in this respect. He says that Christ began his preaching career when he was only thirty years of age, and he was crucified at the age of thirtythree. He visited Kashmir and stayed in a Buddhist monastery for some time. He was known by the villagers there as Yousa Asaf. He died there, and the tomb, having a Jewish look is still there.

+ Max Muller, F., Studies in Buddhism, Calcutta: Susil Kumar Gupta, 1953, chpt. IV. and V.
The epitaph is in Hebrew. His crucification, according to Rajneesh, was a Yogic feat. He escaped from the cave, and lived up to the age of 110 years.

Rajneesh further puts that when Pilate asked Jesus 'what is truth?' he remained silent. This answer by silence was very much similar to the Buddha. Most of the doctrines of Christian mysticism, so says Rajneesh, are Buddhist at the core.

Marquette +, who studied in detail the prophetic and mystic characteristics of Christianity, has remarked that in Moses we can see both the prophetic and mystic vision. The mystic vision resulted into a dualistic belief in matter and God. The principle of eternity of matter, which we find enunciated by the Persians, and also by the Sankhya philosophers, led men to forswear material ties to seek God. There are striking parallels between the Bhagavadgita and the Palestinian schools of thought. Marquette remarks that the invasion of Alexander had brought about a fusion of religious ideas from Egypt to India, and that is why we find similarities in various religious outlooks in the world.

Philo was an exponent of the Judaeo-Hellenistic

school which flourished during two centuries before Christ. Philo preached that God was transcendental, but worked in and on the universe through the logos and the angels. Plato, about the same period, had given the relation between God and the soul in a tripartite composition, such as vegetative soul, irrational soul, and rational soul. This idea was further explained by Plotinus in terms of the nous and the psyche. St. Paul spoke in terms of the body, soul, and spirit. Plotinus attached great importance to the spiritual value of aesthetic contemplation. Both St. Paul and St. Augustine were in agreement with this, because beauty is found to detach the soul from the body and lift it up to the intelligible world. The world being creation of God, we can not find fault with any part of God's creation.

Ingarden +, who discusses St. Augustine's view, has remarked that according to St. Augustine there are seven stages of the soul to turn to God. They are:
1) animation 2) sensation 3) reason of act 4) virtue or beautiful action 5) tranquility or near beauty 6) approach and 7) contemplation.

By the last two stages of approach and contemplation the soul turns to God seen as pure beauty. This aesthetic experience seems to have a bearing also on Yogic consciousness in the state of samādhi. In aesthetic experience there are moments of being convinced about the existence of an object. According to Ingarden, such moments are creative in the sense that they represent a reality higher than conceptual reality of the objects of experience. Ultimate truths are realized in this manner.

St. Augustine drew his inspiration from the philosophy of Plotinus, which gave an important place to such ultimate truths. In mysticism such ultimate truth is regarded as a self-evident reality. It is not a state of knowing but rather a state of being or experiencing without concepts or rational thinking. This is common to experience of samādhi, as well as the mystic experiences described by Christian mystics.

As explained by John Laird†, mysticism is not a matter of opinion or philosophic knowledge, but it is a state where knowing and being are one. This was true of the mysticism of St. Augustine.

Thousless + has pointed out that according to the description given by Dionysius in Timothy (VI.16.), there are many degrees in contemplation. In the first stage the soul is made empty of the divine darkness. Then there arises the mystical light in which God lives. This is immortality which is followed by mystical 'silence', and then there is the 'vision'. It is the stage of union.

It is the contention of the present writer that Dionysius came very near to the Hindu idea of union in the state of samādhi, like St. Paul. His idea of reality is beyond being and non-being. According to him the highest form of consciousness is devoid of any perception. The Greek influence is seen on St. Clement, whose disciple called Origen taught mystic union with a socialized attitude. St. Basil was also his follower. He put forth some physical and intellectual control for the union.

The Carmelites have a long tradition. The mystical union advocated by them is termed 'the Bridal mysticism'. It is quite similar to the Bhakti-Yoga methods. Santa Teresa has described seven successive steps of the ascent of the soul to the Kingdom of God. The first step is to be achieved by man's intellectual effort, while the others

come by the grace of God. Santa Teresa also speaks of
the stages among the seven which involve union, and also
a state of liberation or non-attachment. This state is, as
the present writer views it, very much like the state of
Jivanmukti of the Hindu Yoga.

It is interesting to point out that
the mystical awareness or the consciousness that accompa-
nies the mystic experiences is creative in the sphere of
social existence. For instance, salvation as a principle
of Christian mysticism is found to invoke in its aspirants
a sort of universal brotherhood and love. The natural
effect of this attitude is service to others. This attitude,
it seems to the present writer, is the same as 'maññī' and
'karuṇā' which a master of samādhi is supposed to have.
It is in no way different from the vow of the Bodhisattva.

The conception of salvation of the soul
in Christianity compares well with the kaivalya of
Sankhya and Yoga philosophies. Both involve an existence
without a subject-object differentiation.

As explained by Zimmer, there is a
difference between the western idea of the cosmic Man and
the Indian idea. It is that the former contains only the
Heaven whereas the latter includes the earth as well.

+ Zimmer, Henreich. The philosophies of India,
Although heaped in darkness, even the atoms, according to the Jaina belief, are looking for salvation. Just as the Heaven is in a human form, so also is the hell, too.

The supreme being and the creator of the universe, according to the Hindu view, is not of a wrathful nature like the Yahweh of the old Testament. Nor does He make any totalitarian claims like the Allah of Islamic belief. He does not demand that sinful mankind should reconcile to Him through the supreme sacrifice of the redeemer.

Powys + is of the opinion that there are actually two gods described in the Bible. Jehovah of the Old Testament is 'rude', whereas Jehovah of the New Testament is kind and considerate.

The relationship between God and man is explained in the Bible in terms of lambs gone astray. God is like a shepherd, and individual souls are like lambs that are gone astray. The shepherd rejoices when a lamb returns to him. The soul that turns to God does understand that his salvation lies in God, his Father. As declared in the Bible (Isaiah- XIII.2.), God is the soul's strength and song.

The metaphysical function of Jesus in Christian mysticism is that he is an intermediate agency between the absolute, i.e., God, and the finite soul.

As pointed out by Saher†, the phenomenal world is God per se, and God as creation. So the saying that, "truth will make you free" has the same meaning as "the truth, if and when told, is that you always were free". It implies, according to Saher, that the soul which aspires for enlightenment should first approach Jesus. None can reach God except through what is called Christ consciousness.

Marquette ‡‡, quoting from St. John (6.47) says that for liberation it is only necessary to hear or learn about the Father. Only Christ had seen God, and if we do believe in Christ, then we shall have everlasting life. Christ consciousness is the key to such a life. That is why, according to Marquette, +++ it was declared by Christ, "I am the bread of life". (St. John : 6.48.). This is the essence of Christian

+++ Ibid. p.147.
mysticism. Similarities between this approach and that of Bhakti Yoga are very conspicuous.

Otto has brought out the fact that prayer forms an important part of Christian mysticism. Basically prayers are man-made, but God-centered. There are five types of relationship between man and God described in prayers. They are: 1) He is the Creator and we are the created. 2) He is our Master and we are his servants. 3) God is our friend. 4) God is like our child. 5) He is our husband.

All these forms of devotion find their exactly corresponding counterparts in Indian Bhakti cults. Whether in Christianity or in Hinduism the devotee aims at the same thing, namely, an eternal existence in the company and care of the Supreme object of devotion or Bhakti.

Prabhavananda has explained one very important aspect of prayer which applies equally to Christian mysticism and samādhi attained through Bhakti yoga, namely that, "when the mind and speech unite

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in earnest prayer, that prayer is answered". Such a prayer is a kind of meditation in which one sees the presence of the Supreme Lord in all creation. This is, according to Hindu Yoga the highest state of samātā characteristic of samādhi. Thus, according to Prabhavananda, when the soul sees God everywhere, it itself becomes perfect like God.

In that state the world becomes far more worth living because all has become God. This perhaps explains why a man of samādhi has deep interest in the welfare of the whole of humanity.

Sauton + has referred to the Psalms (46.10.) which says, "Be still and know that 'I am God' ". In order to realize this non-dualistic monism the soul must become quiet. There must be perfect stillness in the soul to make it a vehicle of God's message. Then only the light of God will shine in the soul.

The present writer wants to emphasize that this state explained by Sauton is in all respects the state of samādhi which we have described as the samādhi of no return. It is remarkable to see how the psychological aspects of that state are exactly the same whether it is a Hindu or a Buddhist or a Christian who comes to achieve that state of samādhi.

According to Swami Prabhavananda, our existence becomes perfect when we merge with the Godhead. It is this knowledge of unity and perfection that brings with it salvation and freedom.

The keynote of such a state is, as pointed out by Hopkinson, not effort but receptivity, not pride but humility. This type of mysticism is not necessarily asceticism, which is followed by the monks or Hindu sadhus. It involves an attitude of brotherhood, love, and service. It also involves an adventure of the most fascinating form, namely, the adventure of searching for reality and being found by God.

In this search for reality rationalism is of no avail, although the reality, after once found, may be explained on the basis of rationalism. Religious apprehension and experiencing, may it be in Christian mysticism or in Hindu science of samādhi, needs neither intellectual nor rational approach.

For Jesus the world is real, and so are its agonies, exploitations, frustrations, and human needs. The sinner is not to be condemned, but the sinful act. Hence Jesus asks to love our enemies, so that there may be a chance for their improvement.

+ Hopkinson, A.W., *Mysticism, old and new*, London: Nisbet and co., 1946, chpt. II.
Christ was against exploitation of all kinds. So he has warned that it may be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. It is said in Timothy (6.8), that money is the root cause of all evil. Jesus accepted life, his body, and soul as a gift from God. For him the kingdom of God is among men and it is within us. Man can not earn money limitlessly and serve God at the same time. In order to have an entry into the kingdom of God man must be a leveller. And Jesus himself, as pointed out by Johnson\(^+\), was the Head Leveller.

This levelling may be called an idea very similar to the **asteya** and **aparigraha**, which teach the man of samādhi to abstain from accumulating riches and wealth. This brings out the fact that the basic attitudes which have been emphasised by pious men are the same all over the world.

If we cannot love our neighbour whom we meet every day then how can we love God whom we have never seen? This is what Jesus wants every one of us to think. The practice of virtue should begin in our immediate surroundings and in our every day experiences. This is a principle highly recognised in the science of

\[\text{+ Johnson, Hewlett, Christianity and communism, London:}\]

\[\text{Putnam and co., 1956, p. 95.}\]
samādhi also, as we have already explained earlier.

Rev. Exell +, while describing the special features of the Kingdom of God, has said that in its beginning it was not a very significant or important concept. This kingdom grew to a 'Great Tree' in spite of an opposition by many thinkers to the idea. The way to it is a humble but living faith. Higher places in the kingdom are achieved by service and sacrificial love. The path which takes us to the Cross is the way to the throne. Christ consciousness is the pure land inside the kingdom.

Christ consciousness forms the very pith and marrow of Christian mysticism. The present writer wants to argue that an attitude similar to it is inherent in all human beings. Buddha nature and Swaroopa jñāna are nothing different from it in essence. It is what makes us see all existence in our self and thereby in God. When this superior consciousness replaces our ordinary consciousness of the world of finite objects, then one becomes the son of God, or a Bodhisattva, or a jīvanmukta. It may thus be said that this superior consciousness is the factor which

makes one achieve the same final goal, whether one is a Christian mystic or a Zen Buddhist or a Hindu monk practising samādhi. This is a finding of a very crucial importance.

As brought out by Romain Rolland +, the spiritual unity or identity of materials constituting humanity is attested by these experiences. We find that the illuminations of Philo, Porphyry, and Plotinus were identical, and that all of them could be shown to be very similar to the experience of samādhi. That is because, the mind registers the results of enlightenment in the same way at any time, or at any place in the world.

Before proceeding further it would be beneficial to summarise the doctrines of Christian mysticism which we have discussed at some length so far. They are:

1) A Trinitarian doctrine of God, our Father in the heaven.
2) Man is responsible for all his actions and for salvation.
3) Christ, the Son of God is the Saviour of mankind.

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4) Attainment of the Father through Christ.
5) Resurrection of the Christ consciousness.
6) Union with Christ and habitation by God's spirit.
7) and the church and sacrament as helps to salvation.

The remarks about mysticism by Srinivasachari+ apply equally to the Christian mysticism also, which we have enumerated in the form of the above seven characteristics. He says,

"Mysticism describes poetically the way in which the soul, freed from the lusts of flesh, seeks the inner Lord of love and sees him directly. The bliss of such mystic union is ineffable and is Brahmananda itself".

There may be many ways in which the mystic experiences of union with the Lord are expressed by the mystics. One peculiar way is that of Bridal mysticism, which uses the example of a husband and wife in union to explain the mystic union. This is similar to the kundalini yoga, in which the Goddess Kundalini is supposed to represent the female element and Lord Shiva in the brain is the male principle. Their union in the sahasrāra chakra is said, as we have already noted earlier,

to give rise to ultimate knowledge and eternal bliss in a state of samādhi.

In the Bridal mysticism of Christianity the male element is operative and active, and not the female element. Absorption in divine love is a kind of self-annihilation, a destruction of the existential ego or personality. The 'I' becomes a nullity or non-entity. In Christianity this 'I'-lessness is called union with God, whereas, in Zen Buddhism the same state is given the name of nirvāṇa, and the same state is called jīvanmukti or turiyā or saddha samādhi in Hindu Yoga. Only the expressions vary here, and not the actual state.

It would be interesting, at this stage, to study the teachings and specialities of some prominent Christian mystics with a view to bring out parallel tendencies in them and other holy men.

St. John of the Cross:—

The basic urge of his personality was love for God which knew no limits. He was a spiritual poet. He looked upon the human body as a palace having two storeys. The dark night of the soul is perhaps an original idea of St. John. It is a state of vacuum and suspense, when the longing for sensuous pleasures is withdrawn completely, and it is turned towards God. After the night of obscure senses there comes the
light of understanding. It is a stopping of conceptualisation of the images and imaginations. St. John has given the concept of the soul as the bride longing for union with the husband.

Bridal mysticism, it may be pointed out, has found a clear expression in Sufism and also in Vaishnavism. Beauty and love are used in them as the two most important attributes of God. The soul is looked upon as only a radiaiton of divine love which is all-pervasive. The final goal of this kind of mysticism is complete communion of the soul with the Lord. It is a state of perfect identification of the two.

The Indian Sufis often speak of prema, or divine love. Prema is a kind of feminine love. The soul, which is called the atman or anariri, is the absolute reality. The aesthetic mysticism of India considers Brahma, the creator as sundara, and the absolutr Brahman as Bhuvana-sundara. The idea of an identity of God and soul in this mysticism is very much similar to St. John's idea. Harding mentions many songs of St. John, the following of which would be quite relevant

for our purpose. St. John sings:

Oh! Night, that led me, guiding Night,
Oh! Night far sweeter than the Dawn,
Oh! Night that did so then unite,
The Love with his Beloved,
Transforming lover in Beloved,
I lay quite still, all my memory lost
I leaned, my face upon the loved One's breast!!

St. John belonged to the school of the Carmelites. As remarked by Swami Nityabodhananda, he was eminently a bhakti-yogin who practised devotion as a path of perfection and who attained great heights of spiritual experience by the aid of devotion.

St. Teresa:

She is another prominent representative of the Carmelite school. According to her the ascent of the soul to reach God is constituted by seven mansions. Her ideal was Jesus Christ whom she wanted to possess entirely. Meditation, according to her, is a state of high dignity to which man is elevated by the Grace of God. Meditation makes the soul pure and receptive, so that it becomes fit to receive God's Grace.

St. Teresa used to say that those who

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practise meditation live in the eyes of God. Hence she recommended that meditation should be continued even in illness or sleep. Meditation, for her, was a means to deliver oneself from all agitations and obsessions of the world. Discretion, she said, is another boon of meditation whereby we cease to be slaves of passions, and thus we can feel the divine presence in us.

St. Teresa described five main stages of meditation through which 'the barren piece of land is turned into a garden blooming with most beautiful flowers'. The five stages are:

1) Internalization of all tensions and actions, and the feeling of God's presence.
2) Development of the attitude of servant and master, the soul being the servant and God, the Master.
3) Highest urge for a union with God.
4) Waiting upon God for a union in utter receptivity.
5) and, eternal union with the Lord.

It is believed by many that St. Teresa had the power of levitation. This is, to be sure, a Yogic power. It is spoken of very highly in the texts of Hathayoga. It is a result of intense practice of prānāyāma. In fact it is the culmination of prānāyāma, which is the same thing as arousal of kundalini power, and samādhi state. Thus it may be said that St. Teresa
was a *Yogini* of the highest achievements, and that she had a first-hand experience of what is called *bhāva-samādhi*.

It may be said that St. Teresa’s experience of *samādhi* was a result of her *Bhakti-yoga* or the Yoga of devotion. As remarked by Sauton, the cult of St. Teresa was the *Bhakti* cult.

Francio of Assisi:

He was another prominent person who has left his mark on Christian mysticism. He was born in Italy in the year 1182. He embraced the life of a wandering monk. His soul could communicate with God, and during such communications he realised the highest type of ecstasy. Yet he served the people in various ways, and was never cut off from daily life due to his ecstatic state. Thus he lived like a *jīvanmukta*. Even during his travels he used to be absorbed in God. That sometimes made him oblivious of what was going on around him. His special mission, as brought out by Swami Atulananda was a sort of co-ordination of daily life with his ecstasy.

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From the ways of the saints and pious people mentioned above, we find one common method, namely, the method of love, devotion, or Bhakti as the means to bridge the gap between man and God. Jesus had said that love of God is the Great Commandment. He said,

"Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment". (verses 37-40).

Even God's remedy for sin as such is nothing else than love and devotion. God did not create sin. It is the free will in man which was the cause of original sin. When man has committed the sin, He has a rescue plan for us, as pointed out by Lickey†, from time immemorial. It is a plan for our escape from the total wrong choice of damnation. His remedial plan is a way of deliverance from the awful consequences of sin.

With the maturity of human intelligence it reaches the stage of individual responsibility. Here the holy spirit works to evoke response to God's offer of mercy. He speaks to our hearts regarding the law of love. He convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgement.

† Lickey, A. E., God speaks to modern man, Pune: Oriental Watchman, 1969, p. 60.
If we can love God, then we can automatically love man, which is very important. The mystics really saw the secular part of this teaching in their union with God. The ideal of mysticism is the direct intercourse of the soul with God. The aim of all asceticism is the conquest of life through that of the self. So these two goals being more or less similar, we see many mystics were also ascetics and monks.

As brought out beautifully by Margaret Smith:

"In the silence of the desert and in the solitude of his cell, the mystic could ascend, freed from the entanglements of matter, to the mountain tops where he could contemplate and hold communion with the Absolute."

The words of the New Testament are pregnant with the hidden meanings of mysticism. St. Paul was a mystic who was faced with a sudden conversion of his personality. Sundarsingh was another example of a mystic who underwent sudden conversion. He was an Indian Christian. It was his strong belief that salvation is possible only through the Cross. This may be, indeed, a disputable point, because salvation can be achieved by

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+ Smith, Margaret., Studies in early mysticism, MacMillan and co., 1932, p.47.
samādhi, as all our discussion of the first three chapters of this work shows, and samādhi may be achieved in various ways. It is true that the way of devotion is one of the easy and sure ways to samādhi.

Appasamy* brings out an important fact in this matter when he says that, "In order to obtain spiritual knowledge the soul's powers and inner senses -- which on account of sin are benumbed and deadened -- should be awakened."

"In order to attain it," he continues, "meditation is necessary. Meditation is like the rays of the Sun of righteousness."

The Sun of righteousness spreads its light on everything in the world including the soul. It also reveals God. It removes the darkness from the mind. This is very much like the idea of the "third eye" in Hindu mysticism and Shaivism. Rising of the Sun of righteousness is perhaps the same thing as the soul's entry into the Kingdom of God.

Malgo has shown why most of us are unable to enter the Kingdom of God. This is a very important question that is true about any spiritual path. It applies equally to the practice of samādhi and Zen meditation. The problem is: why is it that all of us cannot reach the highest state of eternal bliss and enlightenment, notwithstanding the fact that all religions and all pious people unmistakably point to such a state, and do show a way to it?

Malgo has mentioned eight reasons for this. They are:

1) Distrust in the Lord and in religious sayings.
2) The act of not believing in the words of the Lord.
3) Superstition.
4) Hatred towards religious men and sayings.
5) Lust for flesh.
6) Belief in sorcery.
7) Idolatry.
8) Hypocrisy.

One is reminded here of the six enemies of the student of the spiritual path famous in Sanskrit literature, which are called the 'Shadripus'.

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Malgo, Wim., Focal point of the world, -- Jerusalem: Jacob and Co., p. 84-93.
They are: i) kāma (desire for enjoyment) ii) krodha (anger) iii) lobha (greed) iv) moha (infatuation) v) mada (intoxication) and vi) matsara (envy).

It is easy to see why they are called the most dangerous enemies of any one interested in spiritual pursuits. They prevent any progress on that path. That is why Yama and Niyama are placed in the very beginning of the discipline of Yoga leading to samādhi.

Religious and spiritual sentiments of the students of samādhi, Zen practices, and any other form of mysticism, are rooted in a particular instinct expressed in the language of love. This is always accompanied by suppression or sublimation of the sex appetite by inhibiting the expression of what Freud calls 'the libido'. This is a process of educating the sub-conscious.

Swami Ashokananda+ has explained clearly how there are remarkable similarities in this respect between the outlook of Vedanta and Christianity. He has put emphasis on the inner divinity of man and the goodness inherent in him as the common factor involved in all spiritual disciplines and endeavours.

Describing the personalities of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, Mitra\textsuperscript{+} has declared that, "the personality of Jesus, behind which the whole Christian world and the Church revolves, was an entirely new phenomenon in the west. His counterpart in the east was Bodhisattva."

Zimmer\textsuperscript{++} has rightly pointed out that the compassion which was characteristic of Lord Krishna and Bodhisattva was like the 'spiritual sacrifice' of Jesus Christ.

As the net result of our discussion of Christian mysticism in this chapter it may be argued that the basic principles governing the attitude, ethical training, and spiritual perfection attained while reaching the ultimate goal, are all very much the same whether the student is following the path of Christian mysticism or Yoga samādhi. And it may be pointed out further that this similarity can very well be extended to the followers of the path of nirvāṇa in Zen Buddhism.

In the next chapter we shall see whether Sufi mysticism also stands on the same footing as the three disciplines described so far.

\textsuperscript{+} Mitra, Kamakhyanath., Mysticism, false and true, Prabuddha Bharata, Vol. 31, 1926, p.16.

\textsuperscript{++} Zimmer, H., The philosophies of India, 1958, p.553.