CHAPTER - IX

EASTERN MYSTICISM AND WESTERN CHRISTIANITY

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Radhakrishnan studied the religious texts of Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Indian religions devoutly. This has made him discover what is living and what is dead in Indian religions. The challenge of Christian critics lead him to trace the origin and development of Christian Religion from the time of its births in Palestine upto to the present time. His deep knowledge of the history of Civilizations of the world, the histories of various religious cults of Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Palestine and Alexandria revealed to him that Christianity has acquired many ideas, from religious cults existing at the time of the Apologists and other Christian Fathers who laid the foundations for its historical development. He came across innumerable writings of the modern researchers on religion. From their writings, he discovered that Indian religions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, have contributed their religious and philosophical ideas to the religious cults through their contact with persia and Alexandria. It is believed that Buddhistic communities lived in Egypt, Alexandria and Palestine. In his opinion, Indian religious ideas have been borrowed by various cults which were existing from third century B.C. His views have been supported by citations from learned scholars and Christian theologians of the West.
Such a wide knowledge of religions has enabled him to formulate the characteristic features of what he conceived to be a True Religion. His notion of True Religion has been developed from the Eastern religions which are based on spiritual experience. He began to evaluate other religions from the view point of such True Religion. He found that this True Religion has influenced Christianity in its early phases before it was wedded to the religious culture and organization of Greece and Rome. He realised that Modern Christianity has deviated from the early teachings of Jesus Christ which formed its earlier phase. With utmost sincerity he wished to bring about a renewed alliance with the Eastern religions. It is in this connection that he expressed his views very strongly against Christian religion, pointing out its deviations from the essential teachings of Christ and the early Christianity. The outcome of these deviations in his view have been, exclusivism, absolutism, authoritarianism, dogmatism, intolerance of other religions. Radhakrishnan attributed the causes for the religious situation at his time in the West to the failure of Christianity to some extent, in its practice.

He found that the contrast between Hinduism and Christianity as something between religion and self-sufficient humanism. While religion is taken more seriously in the East, Humanism is the predominant feature of Western life. Religion and Humanism do not exclude each other, but organic to each other. Religion should enlarge the internal man and his external existence should also be shaped properly in order to be sound and complete. In other words, both Religion and Humanism should sustain their proper goals in order to make the chief values of religion sound and complete. The spiritual
view, according to Radhakrishnan, is sustained not only by insight but also by a rational philosophy and sound social institutions.¹

9.2 EASTERN RELIGIONS AND WESTERN CHRISTIANITY

In some of the lectures he delivered at Oxford, Radhakrishnan stated the unique characteristics of the religions of the East and contrasted them with the religion of the West, with the purpose of fostering better understanding between the people of different religions.

9.2.1 Eastern Religions distinct from Western Christianity

The Asiatic and the European strains have achieved wonderful results each in its own way. While the Asiatic is well known for his absolute sincerity in spiritual matters, the European has shown severe intellectual integrity. Christianity may be taken as a typical western religion and Hinduism and Buddhism as typical Eastern religions. While the Western mind is rationalistic and ethical, positivistic and practical, the Eastern mind is more inclined to inward life and intuitive perception.

India typifies the East, while Greece and Rome typifies the spirit of the West. The Semetic spirit is more akin to activism and love of power characteristic of the West. Though, Christianity is an Eastern religion, it got transplanted into the West and acquired the forms which are distinctive of the western mind. Hence Christianity can be taken as the type of the Western religion. In the distinction between the pure and simple teaching of Jesus and the development of Christianity assumed in the West, Radhakrishnan finds a
striking illustration of the difference between the attitudes of the Eastern and Western religions. While the East believes that there are realities which cannot be clearly seen and even assumes that logical attempts to formulate them in communicable propositions do violence to them, the West demands clearness and it is shy of mystery.\(^2\)

In the East, religion is more of the life of the spirit and the perception of the oneness of man. The Hindu and Buddhistic religions recognize every form of faith as a possessor of some degree of truth on account of which one finds every sort of cult and superstitious belief found abundantly within these religions.\(^3\) On the other hand, vigorous life and active services are what appeal to the Western mind. While religion is the cultivation of inward life in the East, the religion in the West is a social phenomenon, or matter of ecclesia or the community.

The other-worldliness is a tendency of the Eastern religions and this worldliness is the distinctive characteristic of western types. The Eastern religions aim at producing saints but the Western religion aims at producing social activist. "We have in the West the Realism of the man of action, in the East the sensitiveness of the artist and the imagination of the creative dreamer"\(^3\)

The ideal of Western culture derived from the Greeks is to train men for citizenship that they may be able to realise the full power in the State and for the State. "Emphasis on logical reason, humanist ideals, social solidarity
and national efficiency are the characteristic marks of the Western attitude to life.  

In the East, the good man is one who feels at home in the whole world. Both these two types of the East and the West Radhakrishnan thinks are essential, because no spiritual revelation can flourish in an anarchical society.

9.2.2 Jesus an Eastern Seer and Christianity, a Western Religion

Radhakrishnan discovers Jesus as a typical eastern seer and the religion He preached as of the eastern variety but the western Christianity which developed in the West is distinctly different. He says that when we compare the life of Jesus and his teaching as recorded in the gospels with the Nicene creed, the difference between the Eastern and Western approaches and the attitude to religion becomes evident. Some of the characteristics of Jesus, like intuitive realisation, toleration, insistence on the non-aggressive virtues and Universalist ethics, make Jesus a typical Eastern seer. On the other hand dogmatism, exclusiveness and confusion of piety with patriotism are the striking features of western Christianity.

The religion of Jesus was one of love and sympathy, tolerance and inwardness. He founded no organization, but enjoined only a private prayer. He did not profess to teach a new religion, but only deepened the spiritual life. He formulated no doctrine. There is nothing in common between the simple truth taught by Jesus and the Church militant with hierarchic constitution,
and external membership. He did not discuss the intricacies of theology, but proclaimed the love of God. Having been transplanted into the West, Christianity acquired the intricate subtleties of scholasticism, displacing the simple love of God. The creeds and dogmas took the place of vision and prophesy.

9.2.3 The Universal Character of Mysticism in East and West

Radhakrishnan felt that the mystical religion of India would be of immense value to give a soul to the growing world-consciousness to develop ideal institutions and to train the present generation into world citizens. According to Professor Heiler, there are two great independent currents of development in the history of Mysticism. In his words:

There runs an unbroken chain from the Atman-Brahman mysticism of the Vedic upanisads to the Vedánta of Sankara on the one side and on the other through he mystical technique of the Yoga system to the Buddhistic doctrine of Salvation. Another line of development equally continuous leading from the orphic-Dionysiac mysticism to Plato, Philo and the later Hellenistic mystery cults to the Neo-platonistic mysticism of the Infinite of Plotinus, which in turn is the source of the Mystical theology of the Pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite. Perhaps the second chain is only an off shoot of the first, since the Eleatic speculations and the cryptic doctrine of redemption have possibly borrowed essential elements from early Indian mysticism. The prophetic religion of the Bible which is poles as under from mysticism manifests the same continuity. Starting from Moses ...... it runs through the prophets and psalmists to its culmination in Jesus and is perpetuated by Paul and John. This line continues in the succeeding Christian centuries until it again finds its pristine strength in the Biblical Christianity of the reformers.⁷
9.2.3.1 The Great European Tradition of Mysticism

According to Radhakrishnan, there is a great European tradition of mysticism, which starts from mystery (orphic and Eleusian) religions of Greece and develops through pythagoras and Plato and Alexandrian religious philosophy, Jesus, Paul and John, Clement and Origen, the Neo-Platonists, the medieval Christian mystics, the Cambridge Platonists and scores of others.⁸

In his book, 'Christian Mysticism', Inge refers to the mystic strain in the early thinkers and agrees with Heiler's view that the world denying character of ethics and the negative descriptions of the deity in Christianity, is of Indian origin. He says: "The doctrine that God can be described only by negatives is neither Christian nor Greek, but belongs to the old religions of India".⁹

Radhakrishnan discovers certain pervasive characteristics of Christian Mysticism which show the decisive influence of Indian thought on Christianity. He is of the firm opinion that Hinduism and Buddhism have influenced Christianity in the process of its development through the schools of Alexandria. He quoted a number of Christian scholars who believed in such a possibility and expressed the strong influence on Christianity.

9.2.3.2 The Universal character of Mystical Religion

According to Radhakrishnan, mysticism takes its stand on verifiable truth and is not opposed to science and reason. Since it is not dependent on any impossible miracles or unique historical revelations, no scientific criticism
or historical discovery can refute it. Mysticism does not commit itself to the authenticity of any documents or the truth of the stories concerning the origin of the world or any prophesies of its end. It also protests against abuses of organized religions and revolts against institutionism and stereotyped forms of religious life. The mystics of all religions are opposed to authority and spiritual dictatorship.

According to Dr. Inge, mysticism is singularly uniform in all times and places. The mystics of sufism, Christianity and a Quaker found the same expression of the communion of the soul with God. Mysticism springs from a deeper level.¹⁰

True mysticism explains the significance of values and ends necessary for individual life. Each individual’s life represents a distinct value, a unique purpose which will be retained as long as the cosmic process lasts. The ends and values have their source and consummation in eternity. Radhakrishnan affirms that the strain of mysticism latent in humanity requires favourable conditions to reveal itself. He finds enough justification for the mystic element in Western religion. Mysticism, he believes will have a deeper appeal to the spiritual minded people of the West especially when an attempt is being made to break away from the incredible beliefs and unsociable traditions in Western Christianity. They required a religion which is both scientific and humanistic. He says: “Religion, science and humanism were sisters in Ancient India and they were allies in Greece” ¹¹
He hopes that a combination of them would attract today all those who are indifferent to organized religion, atheism, Nihilism and Supernaturalism. This view is indirectly supported by Paul Tillich. He says, "The Christian theologians were and are right in criticising Non-personal non-social and non-historical attitude of the Mystical Religions, but they had to accept the counter criticism of the Mystical groups that their own personalis is primitive and needs interpretation in transpersonal terms".\(^{12}\)

9.2.3.3 Mystics of all Religions are World citizens

The adherents of mystical religion, according to Radhakrishnan are the citizens of this world, and they belong to a movement that is world wide. They do not have sectarian attitudes. The believers of this movement are scattered throughout the space; Mysticism, in Radhakrishnan view, is latent in the very depth of world's sub-consciousness. Prof Heiler, says: "The mystics form an invisible brotherhood scattered through all lands and times, though separated by space and time, they reach hands to each other and agree in saying that God and man are separated only in outer appearance, both are indissolubly one. In spiritual transport, they utter the great mystical prayer, I am Thou, and Thou art I".\(^ {13}\)

9.3 PROBABLE INFLUENCE OF INDIAN MYSTICISM ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Radhakrishnan strongly believes that Indian mysticism influenced Greek thought and also Christianity in its development through Alexandrian
Judaism, Christian Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism. He attempts to trace the probable influence of Indian mysticism from the reports based on research done on ancient studies by many Western scholars, which were available to Radhakrishnan when he was in England. The main motive of these attempts appears to be to point out to the world that Indian mysticism which is the highest religion for him, has influenced the world in general, and Christianity in its development in particular.

An attempt has been made here to bring out into focus the references concerning the influence of Indian mysticism on Christianity in its historical development through Alexandrian Judaism, Christian Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism. Radhakrishnan's arguments in these attempts, have been brought under three categories - (1) probable influences of Mysticism on the mind of Jesus, the Christ. (2) Parallels in the birth stories and teachings of Buddha and Christ. (3) Probable influence of Indian mysticism in shaping Christian thought, during its early and later development.

9.3.1 Probable Influence of Indian Mysticism on the Mind of Jesus

According to Dr. Inge, the mystical outlook on life which is at once a philosophy and religion was felt first in Asia, especially in the *Upanisads* and Buddhism.¹⁴ Likewise Stutfield is also of the opinion that India was the birthplace of our fundamental imaginings and the cradle of contemplative religion and nobler philosophy.¹⁵ Radhakrishnan supposes that Buddhism entered
Palestine two centuries before the Christian era and influenced the Jews with its spirit.

9.3.1.1 Essenes of Palestine - A Jewish sect of Asceticism

It appears that there were in Palestine a few Jewish sects called the Essenes the Mandeans and the Nazarenes. These sects were referred to in the writings of Philo and Josephus. Though the Essenes were Jews by birth they practised a form of communism in the matter of worldly goods, abjuring marriage. They were strict vegetarians and drank no wine. Lightfoot makes a reference to the asceticism of the Essenes where he finds the germ of Gnostic dualism, which regards matter as the abode of evil. These Essenes were famous for their powers of endurance, simple piety and brotherly love. According to Dr. Moffatt, Buddhistic tendencies helped to shape some of the Essenistic characteristics.

9.3.1.2 Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were Essences

Radhakrishnan supposes John the Baptist to be an Essenee who had spent his time of preparation in around the wilderness of the Dead Sea and reached the Essenee tenets of righteousness towards God and mercy towards fellowmen, insisting on Baptism which was the practice of Essenes. He believes that Jesus was greatly influenced by the tenets of Essenes. Jesus, according to him worked as a disciple of John and took baptism before His appearance in Galilee. Both of them preached salvation by the forgiveness of
sins. The emphasis of Jesus on non-resistance to evil, says Radhakrishnan, may be due to the influence of the Essenes.\textsuperscript{15}

9.3.1.3 The Influence of the Book of Enoch which is derived from Indian Tradition

The book of Enoch which is a remarkable Hebrew work written several years before the Christian Era containing speculations which are believed to be of Non-Jewish origin. Radhakrishnan finds some of the central features of Jesus consciousness and teaching traced in it. The four titles attributed to Jesus in the New Testament. The Christ, the Righteous One, The Elect One and the Son of Man are found in the Book of Enoch. Prof. Rudolf Otto states emphatically that this idea of the 'Son of God', who was also 'A Son of Man' is certainly not from Israel. Otto says that these materials are found in India in more primitive form, in the remote pre-Christian Kausitaki Upanisad. In his words: "That such ancient Aryan conceptions had analogues in Iran, is not to be doubted. That they shine through in our Book of Enoch is just as certain".\textsuperscript{19}

After making several references to the statements in the Book of Enoch, Radhakrishnan drew similarities to some of the statements in the New Testament. On the strength of the views expressed by Rudolf Otto Radhakrishnan comes to the conclusion that: "It is the ancient Hindu tradition which Enoch illustrates and Jesus continues".\textsuperscript{20} In Rudolf Otto's view, the atmosphere of the palestine which described Enoch's primitive Deity is quite Indian.\textsuperscript{21}
9.3.1.4 The Jewish and Mystic tendencies never reconciled in the mind of Jesus

Hence the exclusiveness and the militarism of His Jewish ancestors were in conflict with Universalism and Passivism. The synoptic gospels make it clear, says Radhakrishnan, that the two currents - the Jewish and the Mystic, the Materialistic and the Spiritual - were not perfectly reconciled in the mind of Jesus. The Preaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom, according to Rudolf Otto, contains elements which are certainly not of Palestinian origin, but point definitely to connections with the Aryan and Iranian East.\textsuperscript{22} The mystic conception of Jesus, says Radhakrishnan, is the development of Indian idea, while the Messianic conception belongs to the Palestinian tradition\textsuperscript{23}. The Jewish conceptions have been enlarged and transformed by Jesus in the light of His own personal experience. The religious environment of His time, which included Indian influences, the tenets of Essences and the book of Enoch, has helped considerably in shaping his mind. He broke away from the Jewish tradition in His teaching of the Kingdom of God, Eternal Life, and His emphasis on asceticism and future life approximated to Hindu and Buddhistic thought. In Radhakrishnan’s view, Jesus did not develop his teachings on the above from the essential doctrines of Judaism, though His general teachings were historically continuous with it. The Jewish and the Mystic tendencies in the mind of Jesus, in his opinion, were never reconciled perfectly and hence the tension continued in Christian religious development.\textsuperscript{24}
9.3.2 Parallels in the Birth stories and teachings of Buddha and Jesus Christ

Radhakrishnan tells us the birth stories of Buddha which find a striking resemblance to that of Jesus, who is believed to be 500 years younger than Buddha. Buddha, it appears, was miraculously conceived and wondrously born.\textsuperscript{25} According to \textit{Lalithavistara}, the queen mother was permitted to lead the life of a virgin for thirty-two months. Asita, the Buddhist Simeon, comes through air to visit the infant Gautama and asks the angels, the reason for their rejoicing. They answered that they were exceedingly glad as the Buddha to be born, was for the weal and welfare in the world of men.\textsuperscript{26} Early in his career, Buddha was tempted by Mara soon after a fast of 49 days, to give up his quest for truth promising him a world dominion. Jesus was tempted by Satan after 40 days of fasting in the wilderness with similar offer. Like Jesus, Buddha did miracles. The blind received their sight, the deaf the hearing and the lame walked freely. Buddha had twelve disciples like Jesus and he sent them forth to carry his message among all classes of men. Before his death, Buddha's body was transfigured and at the time of his death, Buddha's body was transfigured and at the time of his death there was a tremendous earthquake which was felt throughout the world. \textsuperscript{27} The same events took place in the case of Jesus.

Many parables appear to be common between the two. Buddha as the sower of the Word is mentioned in a parable. There was a reference to the feeding of 500 of his brethren with a small cake, which was put into his begging bowl, the remnants of which were thrown away.\textsuperscript{28} In Jataka 190, an
eager disciple walks on the water in order to cross perhaps a river. When in the middle, the waves rose, and he lost his faith and began to sink. Only when he re-assured himself with his faith in Buddha, he went onto the other side safely. The same kind of events are referred to in the Gospels. Though Buddha performed many miracles, he disapproved them as proofs of his divinity. Four centuries after his death, Buddha was declared to be a temporary manifestation in an earthly form of the Infinite, accessible at all times to his disciples. 29 Otto Pfleiderer says: "These (Buddhist) parallels to the childhood stories of St. Luke are too striking to be classed as mere chance; some kind of historical connection must be postulated". 30 Regarding this Max Muller writes thus:

In these cases our natural inclination would be to suppose that the Buddhist stories were borrowed from our Christian sources and not vice versa. But here the conscience of the scholar comes in. Some of these stories are found in the Hinayana Buddhist canon and the date is before the Christian era. 31

Sir Charles Eliot said: "A number of Buddhist legends make their appearance in the apocryphal gospels and are so obviously Indian in character that it can hardly be maintained that they were invented in Palestine or Egypt". 32

Since incidents of Jesus' life assumed the form of legends, Radhakrishnan considers it not improbable that the evangelists were unconsciously influenced in this work by the Cult of the Buddha. 33
9.3.3 Probable Influence of Indian Mysticism in shaping later
Christian Thought

In the Alexandrian circles where mysticism prevailed, there arose
different forms of religious philosophy. Chief of them were: (a) Jewish
Platonism (b) Gnosticism (c) Neo-Platonism (d) Christian Platonism and (e)
Mysticism of Dionysius the Areopagite.

9.3.3.1 Jewish Platonism

Alexandria was a meeting place of East and West. It was a place for
trade and marketing where there was also commerce, in religions and
philosophies. Philo, the Jew, interpreted the Jewish Scripture and expressed
the religious conceptions of the Hebrew Prophets in the language of the Greek
philosophers. Radhakrishnan finds a mystic rendering of historical Judaism
and considers him as one of the greatest mystics. Dean Milman, in his "History
of Christianity", wrote as follows:

It is certain that the genuine Indian mysticism first
established a permanent Western settlement in the deserts
of Egypt. Its first combination seems to have been with the
Egyptian Judaism of Alexandria, and to have arisen from
the dreamy Platonism, which in the schools of that city,
had been engrafted on the Mosaic Institute.\textsuperscript{34}

Radhakrishnan refers to the Jewish Kabbala, where the mystic
tradition is preserved in two of the chief books. Many features of the Kabbala
such as the theory of emanation, belief in rebirth, a definite pantheistic
tendency and the use of charms and amulets, are alien to the spirit of the orthodox Judaism, but akin to that of the *Upanisads* and Tantrism.\(^{35}\)

### 9.3.3.2 Gnosticism

Gnosticism, in Radhakrishnan's view, was a deliberate attempt to fuse Greek (Platonic) Philosophy and Hindu elements. The whole system of syncretistic religious thought which covers many sects with widely different tenets was called by this name 'Gnosticism'. Gnosticism prevailed during and before Christianity especially in the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. According to Radhakrishnan, many of the chief features of Gnosticism are found to be common both to the *Upanisads* and the mystic traditions of Greece.\(^{36}\) Gnosis is not intellectual knowledge or logical understanding, but it is seeing God. It is an esoteric doctrine, a secret wisdom imparted only to those who are initiated.

Gnosticism, says Radhakrishnan, became fused with the Christian ideas during the first Century A.D. Christianity was in need of philosophy in its early days and it was supplied by the Gnostics. Harnack looks upon the Gnostics as the theologians of the first century. He says: "The Gnostic systems represent the acute secularising or Hellenising of Christianity, with the rejection of the Old Testament, while the Catholic system, on the other hand, represents a gradual process of the same kind with the conservation of the old Testament".\(^{37}\)
The Church Fathers inform us that the doctrines of Gnosticism have derived from the Mystery Religions, and from Pythagoras and Plato. In Radhakrishnan's view, Gnosticism introduced into Christianity, was not the pure spirit of Greek philosophy. The conceptions of Eastern religions were current everywhere in the Roman Empire during the first century A.D. The conceptions found in Gnosticism such as dualistic theology, ascetic ethics, ecstatic experience of the Real and redemption from the trammels of flesh were derived from the Eastern cults. According to Kennedy, Gnosticism is not pure Hellenism, but rather pure orientalism in a Hellenic mask. In the course of time, the Christian Church stigmatized the Gnostics as the first born of Satan. Gnosticism is regarded as a heretical perversion of Christianity.

Gnosticism was one of the most powerful currents of thought, in Radhakrishnan's opinion, which influenced Christian doctrine in practice. The Gnostics accepted the Christian creed and looked upon themselves as Christians. They maintained that they had deeper knowledge in Christian truth and appealed to the Christian Scripture. However, their teaching was condemned as heresy.

9.3.3.2.1 Hindu and Buddhistic Thought enters into Christian Frame Work

Basilides, belonging to the first half of the second century A.D. brought Hindu and Buddhist thought into a Christian framework. Basilides believed in Christianity as the main factor of the system, but it is pointed out
by Radhakrishnan that the former's interpretation of Christianity is profoundly Buddhist without any doubt.

9.3.3.2.2 Heresies in the Christian Church traced to Indian philosophy

C.W. King in his book writes as follows: "In the history of the Church, it is most certain that almost every notion that was subsequently denounced as heretical can be traced upto Indian speculative philosophy as its genuine fountain head".\textsuperscript{41}

9.3.3.3 Neo-Platonism

Plotinus was the founder of Neo-Platonic school. He believes in re-birth and also in the law of \textit{karma}. He also refers to the absorption of disembodied soul in the Universal Soul. Dr.Inge thinks that in Plotinus' theory of vision, we have the direct influence of Oriental Philosophy of the Indian type\textsuperscript{42}. In the Neo-platonism of Plotinus, Radhakrishnan finds the fruits of religious syncretism and revival of the mystic tradition of the Greek cults which resembled both Alexandrian Judaism and the philosophy of \textit{Vedanta}.

Radhakrishnan discovers in the Philosophy of Plotinus, many a doctrine corresponding to several conceptions of the \textit{Upanisads}. According to Stutfield, Indian mystical thought passes over into Africa and Western Europe and blossomed forth in Plotinus and entered into Christian thought through the monk-mystic and theosophical pantheist, the so called Dionysius, the Areopagite.\textsuperscript{43} Radhakrishnan writes about Neo-Platonism thus:
Christian Theology early absorbed the spirit of Neo-Platonism. The thoughts of Plotinus were revived by Boethius and his spirit inspires the writings of Scotus Erigena and Master Eckhart. At the renaissance, Neo-Platonism again became popular.\(^4\)

Primitive Christianity was considered a Mystery Religion where Christians formed a mystery group, meeting secretly with an inner and outer Circle. Kirsopp Lake holds that Christianity was a mystery religion.

### 9.3.3.4 Christian Platonism

Radhakrishnan finds the characteristic features of mystic religions in some of the conceptions in the Epistles of St. Paul and the epistles of St. John. He recognizes Gnostic phraseology and mystic elements more than in other discourses. In his view, the Book of Revelation is full of Gnostic ideas. Christianity was represented by Justin Martyr as the fulfilment of the aspirations of the Platonic and Stoic systems through his view that Jesus was 'the incarnate reason'. "Christ was and is the Logos who dwells in every man".\(^45\) "The highest embodiment of Logos is in Christ Jesus".\(^46\)

The chief representatives of the Alexandrian Christianity were Clement and Origen. Clement interpreted Christian tradition with the help of Greek philosophy. He was much influenced by Basillides, who in turn was influenced by Buddhist thought. Origen was from Alexandria and he expounded the orthodox Christian faith. His system was full of speculations which were of different origins. The real source of these speculations appears
to have come from the intellectual atmosphere of the time where the ideas of Platonists, Stoics and Orientals were mingled.  

Radhakrishnan claims St. Augustine as the Christian Plotinus. He thinks that Augustine remained a Neo-Platonist. This greatest of the Church Fathers, according to Radhakrishnan, was a Neo-Platonist by conviction and Christian faith was subordinate to his consciousness for the truth of Neo-Platonism. In his view, the writings of Augustine where the main doctrines of Neo-Platonism were incorporated, exercised the most enduring influence on the Medieval mind.  

9.3.3.5 Mysticism of Dionysius, the Areopagite, the Father of Christian Mysticism  

Dionysius, the Areopogite, is believed to be the Father of Christian Mysticism who exercised a decisive influence on the theory and practice of religion in the Medieval Church. According to Radhakrishnan, he is Christian Neo-Platonist hailed from Syria. He seems to have dealt extensively concerning the adventures of the mind in climbing the ladder of perfection. He professes to have had ecstatic union with the Arch-God. He advised him ever to be in mystical, perfect and primitive union. Dr. Inge commented on this system thus: "It is the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in clothes borrowed from Jewish allegorists, half Christian Gnostics, Manicheains, Platonising Christians and Pagon Neo-Platonists".  


Dionysous is believed to be the author of *Theologia Mystica*. Harnack said: "The writings of Pseudo-Dianysius contained Gnosis in which the dogmatic of the Church is changed into a scholastic Mysticism with directions for practical life and worship."  

Neo-Platonism, says Radhakrishnan, was absorbed by Christianity through the writings of Dionysius, the Areopagite. They became, according to Baron Von Hugel, the great treasure house from which much of the literary material was drawn by the mystics and the scholastics during the middle ages. Albertus Magnus, a great mystic of the age, was a follower of the Dionysian tradition. Albertus Magnus who is believed to be the teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, seems to have taught doctrines which were characteristically Indian. Kennedy believes that these doctrines were distinctly Indian and supposes that they must have come from India to the West.

### 9.4 AID OF MYSTICISM NEEDED FOR REVITALIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY

A number of open-minded modernists who include Historians and theologians, expressed their views, openly, through their writings that the Christian religion needs revatilization and purification of certain aspects in the tradition by eliminating some meaningless accretions, which have been blocking its progress. The mystic religion of India, they hoped, might aid the Christian religion to return to the mystic standpoint. Therefore, Radhakrishnan felt that certain new ideas in the East would help in
quicken the religious aspirations of the Christians and agnostics. He writes as follows:

The modernists in every religion are preparing the way for it. Ernest Troeltsch and Dr. W. R. Inge declare that Christianity if it is to be saved from formalism and excessive institutionalism, must return to the mystic standpoint. In their opinion, only such a movement can revitalise Christian life, purify the Christian faith of the dead weight of the tradition, stripping off the many lifeless accretions that hamper its progress and inaugurate a new society based on justice and generosity. 55

Radhakrishnan believed that the highest mysticism of India will be useful to revitalize Christianity since it is thoroughly rational and is associated with a profound philosophical culture. "If thousands of the more open minded among Christians and agnostics find that these new ideas from the East, have more power to quicken their religious aspirations and if they hold that the teaching of Jesus requires reinforcement from these mature conceptions which are by no means unfamiliar to Christ endeavour, it is a matter for rejoicing" 56

9.4.1 Max Mueller points to India for a transfigured and eternal life

Max Mueller declared

If I were to ask myself from what literature, we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of the Greeks and Romans and of one Semetic race, the Jewish - may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more Universal, in fact, more truly human, a life not for this life alone but a transfigured and eternal life, again I should point to India. 57
Radhakrishnan says that Christianity which arose out of an Eastern background early in its career and got wedded to Graeco-Roman culture may find her re-birth today in the heritage of India.

9.4.2 Grant seeks a new human urge for holiness of Life from India

He quotes a similar view of W.J. Grant who said that India has a preciousness which a materialistic age does not have. When the fragrance of her thought wins the hearts of men, India will be searched by loving eyes and mighty hands. 68

9.4.3 Toynbee, Arnold

Radhakrishnan also quotes Prof. Toynbee who said that the world will turn away from worshipping ideologies like Communism and secular individualism and become converted to an Oriental religion. Toynbee guesses that the avatar of Christianity will include the vision of god as being love but it will discard the other traditional Christian vision of God as being a jealous god and that will reject the self-glorification of this jealous god's "chosen people" as being unique. This is where India comes in with her belief that there may be more than one saving approach to the mystery of the universe. 59

9.4.4

Bernard Phillips believes that: "The religious tradition in the West was not as it was in India, a native growth, but a graft on a pagan stock. The
graft never completely took and the stock was not properly pruned so that
lately the scion has been from the stock. In India, they would claim, the
spiritual life is an indigenous expression of the soul of the culture. Science in
the West, has got out of hand because the West has all but lost the spiritual
resources which alone can supply the proper controls. In the end, then India
will bring salvation to the West, because she has preserved her ancient
heritage of spirituality".60

9.4.5

Sir, George Birdwood, who spent a life time among the Indians hoped
that Hinduism will reconcile the truths of Judaism and Christianity with
earthly life. He believed that while the Hebrews gave the world the conception
of Unity of God-head and the Christians that of the Fatherhood of God, the
Hindus would help to make these truths effective in life and thus achieve the
brotherhood of man. Sir Birdwood writes thus:

India may yet be destined to prepare the way for the
reconciliation of Christianity with the world and through
the practical identification of the spiritual with the
temporal life, to hasten the period of that third step
forward in the moral development of humanity when there
will be no divisions of race or creed, or class or
nationality.61

9.4.6

The West seeks India’s role in the march of Material progress and
Spiritual freedom comfortably. The viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow said that
even the most enthusiastic believer in Western civilisation will feel the need for a form of society where material progress and spiritual freedom march comfortably together. He also strongly believes that India will contribute to the Western thought and to the world thought.\textsuperscript{62}

9.5 \hspace{1cm} \textbf{ATTEMPTS AT COMBINING ASIATIC RELIGION WITH EUROPEAN HUMANISM}

It has been practically admitted that mysticism originated in India, the learned did not deny its influence on the Western tradition. The mystical rendering of religion has persisted in India through centuries in the past and this is a common knowledge. Radhakrishnan hoped that India's influence on the British Common Wealth and the world at large if exerted towards the development of a higher quality of life in the individual and the establishment of a World Common Wealth based on the ideals of Spirit, the just aspiration of India will receive their fulfillment.\textsuperscript{63}

9.5.1. \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Truths of Spiritual life from the East - Need of our civilization}

Radhakrishnan visualizes the moving out of East and West from their historical past, towards a way of thinking that would eventually be shared in common by all men. The world moulds of civilization have begun to crack. The rifts that appeared few decades ago have now become yawning fissures, since the cracking of the moulds is resulting in the cracking of civilization itself. Radhakrishnan thinks that we need today a proper
orientation to the values the world derived from the orient, the truths of inner life.

For human happiness as outer organization, these are considered very essential. He points out the restlessness and self-assertion of our civilization as an evidence of its youth, rawness and immaturity, which in all possibility would wear off its coming of age. Radhakrishnan prophesies: "The fate of the human race hanged on the rapid assimilation of the qualities associated with the mystic religions of the East. The stage is set for such a process." \(^{64}\)

9.5.2 Strive for a Philosophy to combine Europe in Humanism with Asiatic Religion

Till recently, people of different continents and countries were scattered, living in isolated corners of the world for want of established trade routes, means of communication and transportation. Men of previous centuries lived apart with hostility to strangers. Now that we have entered a New Era where the world has become one and small, we strongly feel the whole body of our one civilization and one world Community. Hence he says: "Today the whole world is in fusion and all is in motion. East and West are fertilizing each other, not for the first time. May we not strive for a Philosophy which will combine the best of European Humanism and Asiatic religion, a Philosophy profounder and more living than either, endowed with greater spiritual and ethical force which will conquer the hearts of men and compel people to acknowledge its sway." \(^{65}\)
9.5.3 A Third type of Christian Theology Proposed

In his book, 'The platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought', Dr. Inge pleaded for: "The recognition of third type of Christian thought and belief by the side of the two great types, usually called Catholic and Protestant".66

Dissatisfied with the then existing two types of Christian theology of Protestantism and Catholicism, Dr. Inge wanted to introduce perhaps a third type of Christian theology, sufficiently suffused by the mystic tradition of India. He perhaps thought that the mystic religions of India could creatively express through this third type of Christian theology to the satisfaction of the believer and the agnostic who were dissatisfied with the Christian religion of the West. Besides Dr. Inge, a number of such open minded and learned intellectuals among the Christians in Europe seem to have expressed their views through their writings concerning the ineffectiveness of Christianity as a religion. Having heard of such a need for the mystic religion of India, Radhakrishnan stated in his works about the general characteristic features of mystic religion and also its history in influencing the various religious cults in Greece and Alexandria from centuries before Christ. Hence he attempted to bring closer the mystic religions and Christianity. He wrote:

Every attempt on the part of the historical religions to regain universality is bringing them nearer to the religions of India. The increasing interest in Indian religions is due to the consciousness that Mysticism has had a more successful chance in them.67
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