Preface

Even though I was born and bred in the Christian faith, my personal and very frequent contacts with men of other faiths - many of whom I found to be real models of goodness - could not but convince me that they would all be saved within the bounds and through the tenets of their own personal convictions. This conviction, however, seemed to clash with the supposedly certain aspects of my own faith, which seemed to me to be beyond my understanding, at least as far as this particular situation was concerned. More specifically, it seemed to me more than odd and difficult of comprehension, that these good people with whom I had come in contact and learned to appreciate, could not be saved except within, and through the truths of the faith I professed.

Vatican II, no doubt about it, brought about a fundamental, almost radical change both in the attitude and outlook of the Church. Positive efforts were actively made to acknowledge holy men of other faiths and to even hold dialogue with them. While, however, to many this understanding of the precise relationships between various religious seemed to be a rather theoretical problem, to me personally, it was a very acute and painful one. And so, if in this thesis, some attempt has been made to remove certain doubts, both my own and those rankling in the minds of others; if again, I have been able to
establish a reasonably feasible relationship between the various religions, giving to the work a certain philosophical colour, then, I deem my efforts have not been in vain.

Needless to say, I am extremely indebted to many good people for the kind and willing cooperation and assistance rendered me in the course of my work. In first place comes Prof. K.J. Shah, by whom, in the course of these four years, I had the rare privilege of being guided and enlightened through the innumerable discussions into which he was ever ready to enter, at any time and with that patience and generosity, which are just two of his many outstanding qualities. The present work was made possible by virtue of a totally new perspective into which I was drawn unwillingly, I must admit, in the early stages of the discussions. Often these were sheer wrestlings and even quarrels, rather than discussions. Without any attempt at imposing his views on me, he did succeed, and very powerfully too, in imposing his influence, as it were. And so, his share in the work is certainly ever so much more than mere guidance. He placed his deep insight and wide knowledge completely at my disposal, and for this, I am deeply indebted and grateful to him.

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I sincerely thank the typist for his neat work carried out in quick time.

Dharwad
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(A. Pushparesjan)