

Preface

The mystery of the East remains unsolved long after its discovery by the West; rather, it seems to deepen with the passage of time. While the philosopher is busy preparing the ground for the "Meeting of East and West", the poet's instinct tells him that "the twain shall never meet." Can they really meet, and if so, how? The answer is important, especially for the contemporary Indian who would rather have the best of both the worlds, Indian and Western.

Modern Western, rather than merely Western. This further specification has been made in this study, because it is the modern West that co-exists in India today side by side with its native and ancient tradition; and it is, by and large, the puzzles of the modern West that the average educated Indian has inherited.

These puzzles have been mine, too. What shall I make of Indian thought - its 'practical' concerns, 'intuitive' methods, and 'spiritual' discoveries? How is it to be understood vis a vis modern Western thought? These have been some of the very nagging issues one had to live with for a long time. Not that I have found clear answers to these; however, the direction in which the answer might be

found has become more or less clear to me as a result of this study.

I had the privilege of being guided in this study by Prof. K.J.Shah. To say that I owe him a great deal in this respect, is a gross understatement; it is basically his insights that I have, with his help and encouragement, developed and presented in this thesis. In the process, however, I have made them my own, and the responsibility for the thesis as it is developed and presented here is entirely mine.

Constant interaction with the work that was being done by Prof. Shah's other research students has added an important dimension to this study. Whether the thesis was on Gandhi or Manu, on the Advaita or Existentialism, on the problems of religious dialogue or the theory of meaning, there came up always, one way or another, the question of contrast between the approaches of India and the modern West. Interaction with work in these areas has enabled me to give some content to what would have otherwise been too general a discussion on the perspectives in question. I am grateful to Prof. Shah and the various members of the Research Group for this.

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Dharwad

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(Joseph Mathew)