

A TASTE OF RELIGIOUS MYSTICISM

HERMAN HESSE in *STEPHENWOLF*

"There were now and then, though rarely, the hours that brought the welcome shock, pulled down the walls and brought me back again from my wanderings to the living heart of the world. . . I set myself to recall the last of these experiences. It was at a concert of lovely old music. After two or three notes of the piano the door was opened of a sudden to the other world. I sped through heaven and saw God at work. I suffered holy pains. I dropped all of my defenses and was afraid of nothing in the world. I accepted all things and to all things gave up my heart. It did not last very long, a quarter of an hour perhaps; but it returned to me in a dream at night, and since, through all the barren days, I caught a glimpse of it now and then. Sometimes for a minute or two I saw it clearly, threading my life like a divine and golden track. But nearly always it was blurred in dirt and dust. Then again it gleamed out in golden sparks as though never to be lost again and yet was soon quite lost once more. Once it happened, as I lay awake at night, that I suddenly spoke in verses, in verses so beautiful and strange that I did not venture to think of writing them down, and then in the morning they vanished; and yet they lay hidden within me like the hard kernel within an old brittle husk."

SRI RAMAKRISHNA in
THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA
Transcribed by his disciple, Mahendranath Gupta

"I have practiced all religions – Hinduism, Islam, Christianity – and I have also followed the paths of the different Hindu sects. I have found that it is the same God toward whom all are directing their steps though along different paths . . . A lake has several ghats. At one the Hindus take water in pitchers and call it 'jal'; at another Mussalmans take water and call it 'pani'. At a third Christians call it 'water'. Can we imagine that it is not 'jal', but only 'pani' or 'water'? How ridiculous! The substance is One under different names, and everyone is seeking the same substance; only climate, temperament and name create differences."

LEX HIXON / SHAYKH NUR AL-JERRAHI in
COMING HOME: ENLIGHTENMENT IN SACRED TRADITIONS

“True Nature, Original Mind, Turiya, Tao, Godhead, Allah, Divine Mother, Messiah Nature, Christ Nature – these and similar expressions evoke one mystery in several keys. Their various usages should not be regarded as contradictory, nor should some be considered more adequate than others. Similarly, the One, God-realization, self-knowledge, kensho, Gnosis, illumination, coming home, and holy ecstasy are members of a single family of meaning, as are sage, guru, tzaddik, saint, shaman. Yet these terms reflect the rich contrasts among various spiritual and cultural moods.”

ALDOUS HUXLEY in *THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY*

“More than twenty-five centuries have passed since that which has been called the Perennial Philosophy has been committed to writing, and in the course of these centuries it has found expression, now partial, now complete, now in this form, now in that, again and again. In Vedanta and Hebrew prophesy, in the Tao Te Ching and the Platonic Dialogues, in the Gospel according to St. John and Mahayana theology, in Plotinus and the Areopagite, the Persian Sufis and the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance – the Perennial Philosophy has spoken almost all the languages of Asia and Europe and has made use of the terminology and traditions of every one of the higher religions.”