

CHAPTER II

THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

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The history of religions of the world shows that all the great religions, such as Judaism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Brahmanism, have risen in the Continent of Asia. It is this Continent that has produced these great religions which have followers in different parts of the world. At the same time we notice that each one of these religions has claimed to be universal.

The doctrines of Judaism were preached among the Jewish people. The doctrines of Zoroastrianism were preached among the Parsees. The doctrines of Hinduism or Brahminism were taught in India, but its off-spring Buddhism went outside of India and was accepted by the people of China, Tibet, Siam, Burma, Ceylon, and other countries. There are two springs of Judaism: viz., Christianity and Mohammedanism. Christianity has travelled far in the West, and has made great many followers. In fact, Christianity has become the religion of the Western countries in Europe and America, while Mohammedanism which prevails in Asia today, had its time, and went as far as Spain and had large followers in Europe. Each one of these great religions has tried to convince the world that the doctrines and teachings of their Prophets were the only ways of attaining to salvation.

Some of the followers were so earnest and enthusiastic that they tried to convert people by force. Some held swords in one hand and scriptures in the other. Others had gone to demolish the temples of the so-called Heathens. All these efforts have more or less failed to convince the world that each one of these religions could be universal. Naturally the question arises in

our mind which of these great religions should be called universal religion.

If you go to a Christian Missionary, he will tell you that his religion is universal; there is no other way of attaining salvation, there is no other way of reaching God. If you go to a Mohammedan, he will say almost the same thing. If you go to a Buddhist, his opinion would be that Buddha is the Saviour of mankind, and whosoever follows the teachings of Buddha will reach Nirvana. But Hinduism was never a proselytising religion. The word Hindu is a misnomer. There is no such religion as Hinduism, neither there is any such religion as Brahminism. Foreigners have called our religion by such names as Hinduism or Brahminism. We do not call it Hinduism or Brahminism, but we call it Aryan religion or *Arya-dharma*. This Aryan religion has no particular God, but is based upon the fundamental spiritual laws which govern our soul-life. It has no founder. All other sectarian religions had their founders. Judaism is based upon the personality of its great Prophet Moses. Christianity is built upon the personality of Jesus the Christ. Mohammedanism is also built upon the personality of Mohammed. Zoroastrianism is based upon the teachings of Zoroaster. So is Buddhism based on the teachings of Buddha. But Aryan religion has no such founder, although it may be called the oldest religion in the world. Because its scriptures, the Vedas, are the oldest ones, and the Rig Veda is the oldest scripture that has been handed down through memory to us. It had existed long before the art of writing was known to the world.

The teachings of the Vedas are broad and unlimited in their scope. We can show that the teachings of the Vedas were the first to give the highest ideals of a spiritual life in the struggle of the human soul to commune with the infinite Spirit: All other religions are more or less related to the religion of the Vedas. Most of the doctrines of Buddhism can be traced back to the teachings of the *Upanishads*. In fact, Buddha did not teach anything new. All that existed before his time in the *jnana-kanda* of the Vedas, was popularised and brought by Buddha before the masses to help humanity. Great many ideals of Christianity can be traced back to Buddhism, and also to the teachings of Vedanta. Some people are of the opinion

that Jesus the Christ came to India and lived for six years and studied under Buddhist teachers, and after finishing his studies, he went to his own land, and there he preached his doctrines and that was afterwards known as the religion of Christ. Some of our Western friends might not consider this as authentic, but there is a great deal of truth in it. In fact, nobody knows what Jesus the Christ did from his twelfth year, until he appeared before the public in his thirtieth year. The unknown life of Jesus is yet to be explained by the followers of this great religion. There might be a difference of opinion on the subject, but as I have already said¹, there is a good deal of truth in this statement.

Each of these religions, however, claims to be the universal religion, but at the same time we can find through reason that it cannot be universal religion. None of these religions, which are limited by the personality of its founders, can be called universal, because the founders of these religions had different ideals which they gave to their own people at a time when they flourished. Those ideals might have been necessary in those days, but today we cannot consider them necessary. In the light of modern science and in this age of reason, we cannot accept anything that is illogical, unscientific, irrational or unphilosophical. Those who follow the ideals blindly and accept the doctrines and dogmas of some special religion, may find comfort and consolation in their soul. But when you ask them why we should not reject their doctrines and dogmas and accept those of ours, they cannot answer. They might say, 'our religion is true and yours is false' and 'our religion is based upon revelation whilst yours is not'. A Christian might say that to a Mohammedan, but a Mohammedan will reply that his religion is based upon revelation, just as much as the religion of Christ and that his scripture is a revealed word of God. Again the followers of Judaism would not accept Christianity. They are satisfied with their teachings which they received from Moses and other Prophets.

In this way, the followers of different religions are diversified in their opinions, and are quarrelling and fighting against each other for all these centuries. Is there no way of finding

¹ This fact has been revealed in the Bengali book, *Kashmere O Tibbate*.

harmony amongst these existing religions of the world? This problem is to be solved in this age, because we cannot accept anything blindly. Whatever we accept we must have sound reasonings behind it, otherwise we are bound to reject it. I have already said that no religion which is based on or limited by the personality of its founder, can be called universal, and it is a fact. Why? Because the personality of Christ might appeal to a certain class of people; while there are classes of people to whom the personality of Mohammed will be more appealing, or the personality of Buddha will be regarded as better than that of Jesus the Christ. Therefore, there will be a division, and we cannot change the whole world by enforcing the doctrines and dogmas of one religion amongst others. The doctrines of Jesus the Christ might help a certain class of people, but the same doctrines will not be accepted by others. How are you going to enforce this? How are you going to convert people by force? There had been attempts to convert by force and that is done in this age. You have read in the papers that the Moplas tried to convert the Hindus by force. There are fanatics in every age. But we cannot be fanatics. Fanaticism is not religion. Fanaticism proceeds from ignorance, and wherever ignorance is strong, the zeal of fanaticism is strong. For this reason we will have to find some other method by which we can see harmony among the existing religions. So long as we consider the doctrines and dogmas of different religions, we will find no harmony. But when we go down to the fundamental principles and the spiritual ideals, there we shall find harmony. Therefore each religion can be divided into two parts. The one is non-essential part and the other is essential part. The non-essential parts are the doctrines, dogmas, beliefs, sentiments and other ethical requirements, but the essential parts in all religions are the same. The essential parts are self-control, self-mastery, self-renunciation and the knowledge of truth. As Jesus the Christ said: "And Ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free". So you will find in all religions the same ideal that the knowledge of truth brings freedom to the soul. And this knowledge of truth, being the ideal common to all religions, is one, because truth is one. That which is regarded as truth by the Buddhists, is the same truth of the Mohammedans, the same

of the Christians, of the Hindus and of the Jews. Truth cannot be many, but is one. Our aim is to realize that truth and to attain to freedom. We want freedom from home, all limitations, bondage of the body and environments which have enslaved us and have made us what we are today. The earnest desire of our soul is to become free and to outgrow all limitations. To gratify that desire all these religions have prescribed various methods by which that goal can be realized. The methods may vary according to the needs of the people. That which is needed by the people who live in the desert of Arabia, may not be needed by the people who live in Europe, or in America, or in India, or in China. The needs of the people must go hand in hand with their manners, customs and environments. Thus when the essential part of religions is one and when the methods are diversified, we may say that unity through the variety of methods is the ideal of the universal religion. That religion would be called universal which would embrace these various methods as the paths leading to the same goal. The doctrines, dogmas and beliefs as described in Judaism form the path which leads to God. The God of the Jews again is the God of the Christians, and also of the Mohammdans, of the Hindus, and of the Buddhists. There may be minor differences in the names and forms of the Divinity, but the essential part, the truth, which is the reality of the universe, is the same. If we study the Vedas, there we find this ideal: "From Truth we have come into existence, in Truth we live, and unto the Truth we return at the end, and that Truth is one". Making this as the foundation, if we proceed and examine the fundamental and essential part of all religions, we find harmony; but at the same time we must consider all methods as good. We must not think that the method of a Christian is better than that of a Mohammedan or of a Buddhist, because that which is good for a Christian, may be so for him, but may not be good for another, and we must not persecute others on account of their beliefs. The history of Christianity is described in the words written in the blood of its martyrs who were massacred during the inquisition of the Middle Ages. On account of their faith, the innocent persons were burnt alive, and simply because they did not believe, according to the notions of the churches.

Those days have gone by, and we do not want to have

those terrible tortures repeated again in this age. Today we are becoming more civilized and following the path of toleration, our knowledge of the highest ideal is becoming grander every day, for truth is the goal of all religions.

The same truth is the ideal of all science. The knowledge of truth is also the goal of modern science. That which is unscientific cannot be called religion, because by religion we should not understand a set of doctrines and dogmas which should be followed blindly, but it must be regarded as *science of the soul and its relation to the universal truth.*

Scientific method should be applied to trace the origin of the soul or the spirit within us. The war that was waged between science and religion in the last century, is still continuing, and has not stopped as yet. It may not stop for a long time, but **the tendency is towards the triumph of science over blind faith.** Today we are not willing to accept such ideas that this world was created six thousand years ago out of nothing, that the sun was created after the earth came into existence, as is described in the Old Testament. Today we believe in the process of evolution which explains that all these various manifestations of the universe have come from one eternal Energy, and that matter is only a stage in the process of manifestation of that energy. Matter is no longer understood as a reality, but is something that is evanescent and passing away. Under certain conditions we can see it, touch it, taste it, hear it or smell it. But if the conditions change, all these objects of sight, touch, taste, or smell will vanish. The ultimate reality will be the one uncreatable and indestructible energy. If this be the fundamental principle of modern science, we will have to harmonize this principle with the principle of the universal religion, otherwise there is no use of a religion which teaches something different, and the tendency of the modern world of the West is to find that harmony.

Today we know that there is only one life. Mental Science has proved that there is only one mind and that our individual minds are but the individual manifestations of the cosmic mind. The cosmic mind is one which you may call the mind of God, which is the Creator of the universe. By the word Creator we should not understand as our forefathers understood it. The Creator cannot create something out of nothing, because it is

an impossibility. The word 'Creator' means that spiritual Being or Entity which gives a start in the progress of evolution from the sleeping energy of the universe, or in other words He is the starter of evolution. And that ideal will be accepted by the scientific minds of today. The spiritual influx into the cosmic energy was the beginning of the evolution of matter and the material world.

Universal religion must have a perfect harmony with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, but when we examine the doctrines and dogmas of different sectarian religions, we do not find this harmony. If however we study the Vedanta philosophy and the *Upanishads*, we find that these ideals and ultimate conclusions of modern science were anticipated by the seers of truth, who described their realization in a most beautiful language which is called the language of the gods. It is the Sanskrit language. In the Rig Veda, we read a description of the process of evolution of the universe from one eternal Being that existed before the evolution began. The hymn of creation states: "Before the beginning of evolution there was neither entity, nor non-entity, neither this space, nor the sun, the moon, and the stars. There was neither air, nor day, nor night. In that absolute darkness, darkness was rolling over darkness, and there was the eternal Being, who breathed, but was breathless. From Him emanated the energy and all the forces of nature". "From that one Substance emanated the *prana* or life-force, the mind or the sense power i.e. the powers of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and touching, and that which is ether or which is gaseous, liquid and solid". What a beautiful description it is! No scientific mind can more fully describe that ideal. There is no other scripture in the world which gives such a perfect description of the evolution of the world. Again the ideal of unity in variety is given in the same Vedas: "As one fire entering into the world is manifesting itself into various forms, so the one universal Being has entered into the universe and has manifested in the forms of minerals, vegetables, animals, birds and human beings". "As one air entering into a musical instrument passes through different holes and produces different notes of music, so the one eternal Being entering into this universe has appeared in so many different forms". As you see in so many electric lamps, the

electricity is one, but manifestation is in multiform, similarly, the one life-force which is all-pervading is manifesting through all. Where there is life there is the manifestation of the eternal Being. Beginning with a protoplasm the expression of life-force is to be found everywhere. In a human being, it has reached its climax. There is no such thing as dead matter. The word 'dead matter' should be taken out of the dictionary. You may call this table as dead matter, but there is life in it. When that latent life-force leaves the table, it will disintegrate into electrons and vanish into the ocean of eternal energy.

So, my friends, this eternal energy is the abode of God who is called Allah, or Father in Heaven, or Siva, or Vishnu, or Buddha, or by any other name. All these names refer to the same Being which is one without a second. As the same substance 'water' is called by different names: in German it is called 'wasser', a Frenchman will call it 'ean', in latin 'aqua', in English 'water' and in the Indian languages "*jalam, pani, bari*" but you may call it by any name that will quench your thirst. So, my friends, God is one, but his names are many, and if you are longing for God, you may worship him by any name. If you are earnest and sincere, and if your longing is real, your thirst will be quenched, and you will reach the goal, and will be one with the supreme Being.

Universal religion must embrace all the sectarian religions whether monotheistic or dualistic, whether qualified non-dualistic, or non-dualistic. There should be three different phases in the universal religion; in the first phase of dualism or monotheism it will embrace Judaism and Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Mohammedanism and other dualistic religions of the world. There will be no difference whether you worship God by turning your face towards the east or the west. To the omnipresent God there is neither east, nor west. That which you call east, goes to the west, and that which you call west, comes to the east, for the earth is revolving upon its own axis. You may see the sun rising in the east, but if you go to the west, you will see the sun rising there also. Similarly, there is neither north, nor south, and neither upward, nor downward in this infinite space, and God is infinite. So, why do you make such difference that you prefer east to west or west to east? The real divinity is dwelling within us. You will have

to look inside instead of outside. You may think that God is sitting overhead above the clouds. But, my friends, if He is sitting there, which you imagine, He is also sitting near you. He is the Soul of your souls, the Life of your lives, and in Him you live, through Him you exist, and without Him there could be nothing. Every breath that you inhale, is not by your own power, but that power belongs to God. When you raise your hand, the power which you exercise, is not yours. You may foolishly claim that as your own, but in reality it is God's power. A fool might think that the air which is in his lungs, belongs to him, but that air belongs to no one but God. Again the brain's power of thinking which you call your own, is not yours. You are nothing but an instrument, and through you the divine force is working. You may make good use of that force or abuse it.

If you abuse it, you make a mistake, and you are a sinner. But if you make good use of it, you are virtuous and you gain some good results. Thus the whole world is bound by the law of cause and effect, or the law of causation. No one can escape this law as it is stated in the Christian Bible: "Whatsoever thou sowest, that thou shalt reap."

So the result will be according to the nature of the cause. If you sow oats, you cannot reap wheat, and if you sow corn, you cannot reap rice. Such is the law and we are bound hand and foot by this universal law of causation which is also the same thing as the law of *karma*. Within this law no one is free. We have to outgrow this law, and reach the goal of perfect freedom. The ideals of a sectarian religion might be going to heaven and enjoying celestial pleasures. Each religion describes a separate heaven. There is a Christian heaven, there is a Mohammedan heaven, there is a Buddhist heaven, there is a Hindu heaven. All these heavens are different ; because the founders of these religions described their heavens according to the needs of the people. They are all good. One kind of heaven might appeal to one person, another might appeal to another person, according to the desire of the individual. A man who lives in a desert and who cannot get any food or fruit to eat, will like to go to a heaven where there is shade of trees and where there are rivers of good water and rivers of milk and honey. Another person would not care to go to such a heaven, because he has plenty

of water. I come from a country where there are 300 inches of rainfall during a year, therefore I would prefer to live in a dry heaven. There are heavens again which are described as places where constant music is going on and men playing upon harps and singing hymns of praise to God. A Christian hymn graphically describes this heaven: "Where congregation never breaks up and where sabbaths never end". There is another heaven which is called the *gandharvaloka* of the Hindus. This is the heaven for dancing girls, and those who enjoy dancing, might go there. Others may not care to dance, and may not like to go to such a heaven. I remember once I met a man who was addicted to opium habit. He was dreaming of a heaven where there was plenty of opium, and the walls of which were plastered with opium, which he could lick with his tongue and get intoxicated and enjoy heavenly dreams.

In New York city, when I was lecturing, a man came to me and asked me whether there was any newspaper in the heaven, because he did not care for a heaven where there was no newspaper. So, my friends, there are different ideas of heaven according to the various tastes of the people. They all expect to enjoy heavens throughout eternity. These heavens and hells are like dreamlands. They exist in our minds. They are not places outside, but are the mental states, some of which are pleasant and others painful, just like the pleasant and unpleasant dreams which we dream in sleep. Suppose you dream of the Blast Furnace from which molten iron is coming out, which has a temperature of 300° degree, and you can imagine some wicked persons thrown in that molten iron. It would be like the hell-fire described in Dante's *Inferno*. Punishments in Christian hells are like terrible sufferings in a longstanding nightmare. Similarly one can dream of beautiful things and enjoy celestial pleasures. Thus heavens and hells are in our own minds. The mind which is holy, will go to heaven after death. If we are not holy we would be in a hell. When we do good things and forget ourselves for the good of others, we are in a heaven. Therefore we should not fight over heavens whether they are written in the scriptures or not. We must look on them like dreamlands.

Universal religion should embrace all these different ideals of heavens, and consider them according to their relative

value. But going to heaven is not the highest aim of life ; on the other hand the highest aim of life is to realize God and to become one with Him.¹ This is the ideal of all religions whether dualistic, qualified-non-dualistic, or monistic, and they all aim at the same goal, which is the realization of the Truth, or the attainment of Godconsciousness, or perfection, although they start from different viewpoints.¹ As two faces are not alike, so two minds are not alike. If we try to make all faces look alike, we will have to smash every face, and there will be no face left on the earth. So, my friends, we are all standing upon the different rungs of the ladder of life. What is normal to you, may not be normal to me. I want to go forward from where I am standing, and where you are standing, you must go forward from that point. Therefore if you try to enforce one set of ideals upon all, you will make the same mistake, as I would make when standing at the street corner, I offer my coat to, all passers-by, and ask them to try it on their bodies and curse those whom it would not fit. All sectarian religionists make similar mistake, when they say that those who do not believe in their doctrines and dogmas will not receive salvation, but will suffer in eternal hell. Here let me tell you that there is no such thing as 'eternal hell'. Try to forget it. Because if you analyse the meaning of the word 'eternal', you will find that it means a hell which has neither end, nor beginning. It is an impossibility. Again how can your soul go into eternal hell, when it is in the process of evolution. This is not the first and the last time that you have come to this world. You have been here many times. Your soul has come through vegetables and animals,² and now you have become human beings, but you are still progressing higher and higher and will continue to rise until you become perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect.

That is the process of nature, and how can you stop that process by setting a block, by telling everybody that this man has done some sin or mistake and, therefore, he will go to eternal perdition ? Therefore there is no such thing as eternal perdition. We must consider sin as a mistake, or as an error. We can learn the laws of nature by making mistakes, or by

¹ It is purely the non-dualistic Vedantic view.

² See description in the *Upanishads*.

committing errors. A child who does not know that fire burns and tries to play with fire, gets burnt. But once it gets burnt he never touches fire again, because it has taught a lesson to him. Similarly we are trying to find out what is the best thing for us to do and which are the laws that govern the conditions of our environments, and we are testing and experimenting, and going on making mistakes and learning at the same time. So every sin is a great teacher in the end and the so-called sins will lead us through the path of suffering to become saints in the future.

Universal religion does not believe in the inheritance of sin, committed by one man, Adam, at the beginning of creation, as described in Genesis. Whether Adam ever lived or not—has not yet been proved, and nobody knows where the Garden of Eden was. Some say it was in Persia, and others say it was in Ceylon and others again say that it was at the North Pole. Thus we do not know exactly where it was. What is the need of discussing all these? We have now out-grown such myths. Universal religion tells us that all these things are non-essential, and that the most essential thing for you to know is that you are all children of God, that you have come from God, and you are going back to God, and in the meantime, you are gaining experience, and learning to manifest the divine powers that are latent in you. It is the manifestation of potential divinity that we call spiritual life, and that potential divinity is not limited to a certain class of people. It is in every soul. However sinful it may appear to be, each soul is potentially divine. The divine power is manifesting through each one of us, whether low or high in social life. Divine powers are the only powers that exist in the universe, but you do not possess anything. Whatever you claim as your own, in reality, belongs to God. If you do not realize it, it is your own fault. Therefore do not blame your scriptures, but blame your own mind, and blame your ignorance and selfishness.

You may cut the throats of your brothers, and try to enrich yourself by accumulating wealth which does not belong to you, but by doing this, you will do the greatest harm to yourself first, before you could do wrong to another. When you cheat others, you cheat yourself first, and when you injure another by thought, word or deed, you injure yourself first, and

you will have to suffer for your wrong act. Such is the eternal law of action and reaction, and upon this eternal law is based all the ethics and morality of the world.

Christ was a dualist, when he prayed to his Heavenly Father: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, etc.". The idea of a dualist is that the Father is separate from us as well as from this world. A dualist believes in a Creator who is separate from his creatures and creation. When we rise from that ideal a little higher, we begin to see divinity everywhere, and ultimately we realize that God is the one stupendous whole, of which we are only parts. This is the conception of a qualified non-dualist, who sees unity in variety of manifestation. Christ was a qualified non-dualist when he said: "My Father is the vine and I am a branch thereof". Then again, there is another conception higher still. When a man realizes his oneness with the Infinite or the Infinite Spirit, he declares 'I and my Father are one'. It was not Jesus the Christ alone who said this. A Mohammedan Sufi also says '*Anal Haq*' which means 'I am He'. Similarly the Hindu sages say: '*aham brahmasmi*',—I am He; I am one with the Infinite Spirit. Therefore Christ's statement: 'I and my Father are one' is not an exception, but it is a statement of the universal truth. The same truth and the same spiritual statement of realization were meant for all seekers. So long as you do not understand the real spiritual meaning of these expressions, you may quarrel and fight and create dissension and discord. Therefore, my friends, we must open our eyes and realize the principle which underlies all such statements, and then we shall find that he who is worshipped in ignorance as sitting in a heaven, is not different from the Spirit (*Atman*) within us. Christ said that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and Vedanta describes the same thing. The other scriptures too, the Koran and the Zend Avesta, the scriptures of the Mohammedans and Parsees also describe the same truth which is dwelling everywhere. We are directly related to God, the infinite Spirit. We will have to understand this essential point, and realize the oneness of the ideals. Then there will be no difference in our actions and behaviours, amongst our relatives, friends and neighbours.

Universal religion must have love as its foundation, and that love is love for humanity, nay, love for all. All

religions have regarded love as the highest ideal, because Love is Heaven, and God is Love. Jesus the Christ came and taught the truth: "Love thy neighbour as thyself". But, in the Christian Bible, we do not find the answer to the question: "Why should we love our neighbours as ourselves? Why should we not cut the throats of others?" The answer is not given in the Christian Bible, but we find it in the Vedas, which was given out centuries before Christ was born. The answer is this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour not because thy neighbour has done thee some good, not because thy neighbour has given to thee some rich gifts or a social position or a good girl or some amusement, but because thou art thy neighbour in spirit: '*tat-tvam-asi*' as it is said in the Vedas. It means: 'The spirit in you is the spirit of the neighbour', because there is only one spirit according to the Vedas. This is realization of love. What you call love, is nothing but the expression of that oneness. It is the feeling of oneness. When you fall in love with another, you become one with your lover in spirit. Whatever is interesting to your lover, you are also interested in that, and your heart flows towards the ideals of your love. So, my friends, if your heart overflows with the ideals of Divine love, you will see that that Divine love is manifested in humanity and all human beings are parts and parcels of your true Self. Therefore that is the highest standard of real love.

Christ came and preached love for enemies. But, my friends, it is a sad thing to consider that the European nations do not practise his grand truth 'love your enemies'. In the late European War³, the Christians instead of preaching love were preaching hatred. They were singing the hymns of hatred. This was directly against the teachings of Christ. I remember that in the United States if anybody did not believe in war, he was put into jail, simply because of his opinion that the war was not good. So it was in England and also in France. They did not practise 'peace and good-will', and yet they called themselves Christians and followers of Christ.

The days of commercialism and selfish materialism are passing by. The late war has taught a great lesson that reli-

³ The World War I.

gion and bloodshed or hatred are not the same thing. Christ's religion was not religion of the churches which urged men to slaughter others and to pray for victory for themselves. Each nation was calling the opponents wrong and finding fault with them.

Today the world is wide awake to find universal religion which does not believe in bloodshed and commercialism for selfish ends. The greed and ambition of modern commercialism is stupendous. The so-called civilized nations want to possess and hoard everything. They come out in the world like beggars, exploit the weaker nations, usurp everything that they can get hold of, and by force of wickedness become the lord of the world. The one lord wants to keep another lord in prison. Then comes another lord who wants to take his place. Before the war the German people thought whatever possessions they had, they had won by the sword, and they were proud of it. They carefully spread that idea that their prosperity depended upon the power of their sword. But today, what they gained by the sword they have lost by the sword, and such is the inevitable result. Napoleon the Emperor won everything by the power of the sword, and lost everything by the power of the sword, and died as a prisoner in the island of St. Hellena. Such is the end of militarism. It will always end in trouble and death.

Therefore, my friends, try to understand the fundamental principles of universal religion. Try to spread good-will and love all, and kill away your selfishness, greed, ambition, and desire for possession. These are the greatest enemies. If you are slaves of ambition, greed and selfishness, your religion teaches that these you should abandon. But just now the minds of the European people are not inclined towards the spiritual ideals. In the West, majority of the people want material comforts and luxuries. After the war, if you go to Europe, you will see nothing but amusements, drinking, and dancing girls. These are the ideals of the West. But that does not mean that all Westerners are addicted to such amusements. Those are exceptions. The vast majority of people think that material prosperity is the highest pleasure, and this is the way to live and to enjoy. It is the most degrading state of affairs that you can imagine. But, my friends, what can

you do? But, on the other hand, there are those who are spiritually minded in the West. They are looking for a better religion, for a truer understanding of the ideals of love, and are looking towards the East, because the West has received all their spiritual ideals from the East; and it is India that is going to give to the West the highest spiritual ideals which are needed for the good of those people. Now we have greater responsibility. We have to educate our masses and supporters in the spiritual line, and we are going to show them that the harmony amongst the existing religions is the ideal, that a Mohammedan and a Hindu are brothers, that a Christian and a Hindu are brothers, that a Buddhist, a Parsee and a Hindu are all brothers, that they are worshipping the same God, and that they are going towards the same goal.

The ideal of universal religion is to realize that all these various religions of the world are like so many paths which lead to the same goal. Before I conclude I will chant one prayer which gives the same idea: "O! Lord, as rivers rising from different mountains run crooked or straight towards one ocean, so all sectarian religions rising from different points of view, run crooked or straight towards Thee—the Infinite Ocean of existence, intelligence and everlasting love".⁴

⁴ Cf. The *Mahimna-stotra*.