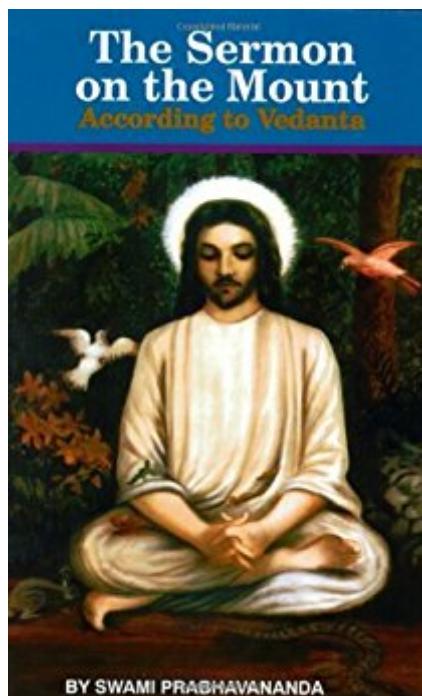


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Sermon On The Mount According To Vedanta



Synopsis

Christ taught in his Sermon on the Mount that God can be seen and that divine perfection can be achieved. These talks by Swami Prabhavananda present Christ's teachings from the perspective of Vedanta as a practical program for daily living. Spiritual seekers from any path will find inspiration from his message. The surprise for many Christians unfamiliar with the Vedanta tradition is that we focus on what Christ actually said in the Bible, and don't worry about the theological interpretations. Christ said, and we teach, that you can see God.

Book Information

File Size: 1125 KB

Print Length: 127 pages

Publisher: Vedanta Press & Bookshop (July 4, 1964)

Publication Date: November 30, 1963

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0031ER4VA

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #395,881 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #95
in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Religion & Spirituality > Hinduism > Sacred Writings #257
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Customer Reviews

Over the course of my life, I have been presented on various occasions with texts described as being 'comparative' of different religions -- usually one religion being stood up against Christianity, the author being a Christian, in an attempt to debunk the teachings of non-Christian faiths. I saw those books as little more than thinly-veiled attempts at propaganda, attempts to spread the Christian message (as the authors saw it) to the 'unsaved, misled masses'. This book, which I originally stumbled across quite by accident, couldn't be further in theme and temperament from that lot -- this is absolutely the gentlest, most respectful, most loving book that I could imagine on the

subject. It makes no attempts at conversion, but in a very scholarly -- yet very readable -- way, takes Christ's Sermon on the Mount (paying special attention to the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer) and makes line-by-line comparisons to the ancient teachings of Hinduism. Prabhavananda was a monk of the Ramakrishna Order -- and one of Sri Ramakrishna's most fundamental teachings was the 'oneness of all religions', that, when sincerely believed and practiced, 'all paths lead to the same goal'. This incredible, tender book shows how deeply true his teachings were. Ramakrishna -- a Hindu saint of the 19th century who worshiped God in the form of the Divine Mother, and who experienced ecstatic visions of Christ, Mohammed and Buddha as well -- was one of the most unique, unpretentious, all-encompassing figures in any religion. He embraced them all. Would that we had, in this 'modern, civilized era', when people are still killing each other over the way they each worship God, a teacher so unifying, so true of heart, that could shine the light of wisdom on our folly.

What did Jesus preach? It depended on his audience! Jesus taught the masses according to their capacity. He spoke to them indirectly about spiritual truths through means of parable and metaphor. He was not an elitist. He was a realist. Even the Universe itself is but a parable God is telling us. I digress. Jesus taught those closest to him through both indirect and direct means. "When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, the secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables..." Mark 4:10-11. NIV. There is the exoteric "outside" type of Christianity of the masses and then there is the esoteric "inside" type of Christianity of the few. This is a tendency of all organized religions. But this is a book about the Sermon on the Mount. One type of Christianity is of the letter of the law, of doctrine, an indirect religion. The other a Christianity of the spirit of the law, of direct experience, a gnostic faith. Knowing through personal experience rather than believing through indoctrination. Believers are religious, knowers are spiritual. Jesus was an irreligious man. He was in direct communication with God and so was excommunicated and sentenced to death by the religious believers of his time. Jesus was a revolutionary, a freedom fighter that gave his life for his cause. The cause of spiritual freedom. The truth shall make you free. Fundamentalist Christianity is doctrinal religion. Tribal religion. As I alluded to above every esoteric spiritual tradition has a fundamentalist crowd of outsiders claiming to be insiders. They know doctrine, but they do not know God.

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