

Joseph Pandiappallil, *The Man and the Pearl: A Christological Interpretation of Puru•asukta and the Pearl of St. Ephrem*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2007, pages: 187, ISBN: 817086415-1.

The Man and the Pearl is an illuminated book of hours. It gives a Christological interpretation of the *Purusasukta* and the "Pearl" (a poem) of St. Ephraim, an Eastern Church Father who is held in high esteem. The book describes about early religion, both Semitic and Indian. It also

describes the interaction that had taken place among these religions. In fact, initially, most religions started to interact through trade and so on. The author dwells on the influence of Western Christians and the Syrian Church of Indian in the 17th century. Pandiappallil is bold enough to say that the whole interaction was a big loss for the Indian Christians as a whole.

This book concentrates on analyzing the hymn of *Purusasukta* and the Pearl, i.e., two important hymns of Hindu and Christian traditions. He describes various aspects of both these hymns in an elaborate manner. When we go through the systematic treatment, we understand the deep knowledge the author has of both these hymns. He explains different aspects of the *Purusasukta*, i.e., concept of the primordial man to the sacrifice. According to him, these hymns are mystical and can be used for the holistic development of human beings. Further, in his treatment about *The Pearl*, the hymns of St. Ephrem, the author concentrates on the “divine man” who is Christ Jesus.

In an attempt to prove that the Aryan and Semitic traditions possess common elements, the author undertakes a detailed analysis. He concludes this analysis with the contention that these traditions are closely related in theological discourses and literary compositions.

In the context of widely prevalent and ongoing fight among various peoples and religions, it is, indeed, the need of the hour that the author has undertaken an analysis of the foundational sources indicating that they share common heritage and shared inner dynamics. The author’s contributions are welcome as they highlight the need and techniques to establish religious harmony through scholarly studies. Moreover, this work stands as a testimony to the fact that an integral theological and cultural synthesis is possible between what is generally considered to be ‘antagonistic’ traditions. May we see more works forthcoming from the author!

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