

# THE BAHÁ'Í WEEKLY

**Beware of prejudice ; light is good in whatsoever lamp it is burning. A rose is beautiful in whatsoever garden it may bloom. A star has the same radiance whether it shines from the East or from the West.—Abdul Baha.**

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9th June 1931

## THE HOLY SPIRIT—the Intermediary Power Between God and Man

Paris, October 31st 1912.

The Divine Reality is Unthinkable, Limitless, Eternal, Immortal and Invisible.

The world of Creation is bound by natural Law, finite and mortal.

The Infinite Reality cannot be said to ascend or descend. It is beyond the understanding of man, and cannot be described in terms which apply to the phenomenal sphere of the created world.

Man, then, is in extreme need of the only Power by which he is able to receive help from the Divine Reality, that power alone bringing him into contact with the Source of all life. An intermediary is needed to bring two extremes into relation with each other. Riches and poverty, plenty, and need ; without an intermediary power there could be no relation between these pairs of opposites.

So we can say that there must be a Mediator between God and man, and this is none other than the Holy Spirit, which brings the created earth into relation with the "Unthinkable One", the Divine Reality.

The Divine Reality may be likened to the sun and the Holy Spirit to the rays of the sun. As the rays of the sun bring the light and warmth of the sun to the earth, giving life to all created beings, so do the "Manifestations" bring the power of the Holy Spirit from the Divine Sun of Reality to give Light and Life to the souls of men.

Behold, there is an intermediary necessary between the sun and the earth ; the sun does not descend to the earth neither does the earth ascend to the sun. This contact is made by

the rays of the sun which bring light and warmth and heat.

The Holy Spirit is the Light from the Sun, Truth bringing by its infinite power, life and illumination to all mankind, flooding all souls with Divine Radiance, conveying the Blessings of God's mercy to the whole world. The earth, without the medium of the warmth and light of the rays of the sun, could receive no benefits from the sun.

Likewise the Holy Spirit is the very cause of the Life of Man ; without the Holy Spirit he would have no intellect, he would be unable to acquire his scientific knowledge by which his great influence over the rest of creation is gained. The illumination of the Holy Spirit gives to man the power of Thought, and enables him to make discoveries by which he bends the laws of nature to his will.

The Holy Spirit it is which, through the mediation of the prophets of God, teaches spiritual virtues to man and enables him to attain Eternal life.

All these Blessings are brought to man by the Holy Spirit, therefore we can understand that the Holy Spirit is the Intermediary between the Creator and the Created. The light and heat of the sun cause the earth to be fruitful, and create life in all things that grow ; and the Holy Spirit quickens the souls of men.

The two great Apostles, St. Peter and St. John the Evangelist, were once simple, humble workmen, toiling for their daily bread. By the Power of the Holy Spirit their souls were illumined and they received the eternal blessings of the Lord Christ.

ABDUL BAHÁ,

## Travels of Abdul-Baha

IN

EGYPT, EUROPE AND AMERICA

BY

Late Mirza Mahmood Zargani.

[ Translated by the Editor ]

VIII

5th April 1912.

The sea was calm and a fine breeze was blowing and Abdul-Baha was enjoying the sight of distant islands by means of a binocular and was walking on the deck. Toward the evening many friends gathered in the saloon occupied by the Master and one of them was an American, the proprietor of a press. Talk at first turned on Persia and then Abdul-Baha said that he was going to America on the invitation of Peace organisations in that country, since the basic principles of the Baha'i teaching were Universal Peace and Oneness of Mankind.

As this age was the age of enlightenment and mysteries, it was necessary that these ideas should spread and illumine the East and the West. The American was so pleased with these conversations that he desired to kiss the hands of Abdul-Baha, but Abdul-Baha instead gave him a rosary. Every day the passengers on the ship would come and meet Abdul-Baha and would take off their hats every time they passed by him.

Next day the 5th of April, Abdul-Baha spent some time in dictating tablets (letters) to the secretaries, one of these letters was for Haji Mirza Mohammed Taqi Afnan. This was the twelfth

(Continued at foot of col. 1 page 2)



## IS RELIGION WORTH WHILE?

BY A. SAMIMI.

(From the *Bahá'í Magazine*, April 1931.)

Religion receives little respect in this present age, when the minds of the thinkers of the world have so much advanced, and the masses are more attracted to the present material civilization with its brilliant scientific discoveries and inventions, than to the spiritual life.

It should be frankly admitted that those who have been so much allured by the outward dazzling beauty of the present material civilization and think they may dispense with religion and its seemingly elaborate principles, are partly right in holding such an opinion. For they see in the present religious systems of the world, when judged only outwardly, an awkwardness in comparison with the marvellous body of scientific knowledge. In the religious doctrines inherited from the past are ideas and beliefs which cause astonishment to those who look upon them at the first glance through the eyes of Twentieth Century intelligence. Consequently, they fail to take the further step of searching into the truth of the principles and ordinances originally revealed by the founders of religions.

These fantastic and strange looking dogmas and beliefs still held by many followers of the present religions, are in reality a series of superstitions and false ideas which in no way can agree with scientific truth. These dogmas have never been intended or revealed by the Founders of religions, but they have been added in the course of time, to

the fundamental spiritual principles revealed by the Founders of the religions, and thus they are man made doctrines. This is why most of the enlightened men of to-day, when finding these innovations and false ideas to be against scientific rules, are somewhat reluctant even to hear the word "religion."

If, however, we take a further step and thoroughly study the principles of religions as they are revealed, we will see that religion is the only effective and divine force and policy which is able to secure order and harmony among human societies, bring about real peace and comfort, and become the remedy for curing the various social ailments and pains from which humanity has been suffering for ages.

One might say, however, that such an object can be secured by laws and regulations enacted by man. But such laws could only govern mankind as far as their social and civil dealings and relations with each other are concerned. They could not in any way touch the hearts of people, give them that real tranquility of mind which is so much sought by every individual in the world. Furthermore they could not prevent men from perpetrating unlawful and irregular acts, and from encroaching upon each others' rights. A glance into the history of religions would make very clear the fact that it is only religion which has always been able to accomplish such a wonderful achievement. All the great world religions, when they first appeared in conformity with the exigencies and requirements of the time and environment, have been able to relieve human beings from various troubles and difficulties, cure them from various ailments and pains, and guide them to the path of prosperity and progress. But after the lapse of a few centuries, the superior and ecclesiastical heads of religions began to introduce gradually new ideas and personal views of their own into their respective religions, sometimes with more or less self-interest; and in time the originally revealed principles were so much changed and transformed by these additional views and ideas that they seemed to

have no relation with the religion itself as it first appeared in the world. One might say that the Sun of religion became darkened and fundamental principles of religion lost their divine force and ceased to guide humanity along the divine path.

What we need is a religion which may be universal, and thereby promulgate peace and order in all parts of the world in this day when the relations and communications between human societies are rapidly increasing and as a result, drawing humanity closer together. When we study the existing religions most impartially and in a spirit of searching for truth, we would certainly come to the conclusion that the Bahá'í principles, because of their loftiness and high ideals, being in complete conformity with the exigencies of the time, can adequately administrate the affairs of the world of humanity and bring peace and harmony among various races and creeds. These principles are, in fact, the unique remedy for various ailments with which humanity has been suffering for ages.

Furthermore, if we study the Bahá'í religion, we would find that apart from being of an international nature, the Bahá'í teachings clearly and categorically provide that no one has the slightest right to make any comments on or interpretations of the writings of Baha'u'llah the Founder of the Bahá'í religion. These principles and teachings are therefore, immune from any additions or interpretations on the part of individuals.

We may safely say that the Bahá'í religion is now the only universal religion aiming at bringing about complete co-operation and real harmony among humanity and meeting fully the requirements of the present age. It is in other words the only divine force which is able to unite all different religions and creeds of the world.

This is why peace-lovers, philosophers, enlightened men and well-wishers of the world, who are working for establishing peace and for the eradication of hatred and animosity in human society, should for the sake of success in their noble task, after carefully studying the principles of the Bahá'í religion and realizing the absolute necessity and advisability of putting the same into force, try to promulgate these principles and make them known throughout the world.

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day of the voyage and Abdul Baha observed that they had crossed quarter of the globe and were six hours ahead of the time in Alexandria. It was noon time in Egypt and evening with us in the Atlantic. Talk then turned on the crucifixion of Christ which according to the Christians was for the sins of mankind. Sin could, said Abdul-Baha, be removed only by acting on the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Cross was the symbol of His having attained the highest station, that of the Saviour.



## The Baha'i Weekly

### NOTES AND NEWS

[ BY EDITOR. ]

June 9, 1931.

*Late Jamshed Khodadad Hakim.*—The news of the passing away of Jenabe Jamshed Khodadad Hakim in Bombay on the 17th of May 1931 has cast a gloom over the Baha'is of India and Burma. Jamshed Khodadad Hakim was one of the oldest Baha'is and was the President of the Bombay Spiritual Assembly for many years. His learning in the Zoroastrian and Moslem scriptures was very great and his advice and suggestions were of the greatest value to the Assembly. A memorial prayer was offered by the Bombay Baha'is and meetings were held in all the Baha'i Centres in India. We pray at the Divine Threshold for peace to the departed and for comfort to the family and friends of Jenab-Jamshed.

*The Central Fund.*—The Baha'i Central Fund stands very low and owing to general slump in business, the Baha'is cause in India can not give much money. But the work of the Baha'i cause in India can not be suspended or postponed. The great change that is coming over India necessarily implies that friends of peace and concord should exert all the more to spread the message of Baha'u'llah far and wide. This message will be like a healing balm for the sorrows and sufferings of the peoples of this ancient land, who are striving for freedom—freedom from the slavery of old superstitions and dogmas. We trust friends will cut some of their superfluities and save enough to help the Baha'i cause. All contributions however small are payable to Mr. N. R. Vakil, the Treasurer, Havadia Chakla Surat, India.

## A Universal Religion

### League of Nations and Bahaism

#### A New Religious Year Book

An impressive record of growth on the part of what its followers consider the World Religion of this age is revealed by *The Baha'i World*, the third biennial volume issued by the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Baha'is of America, Europe and the Orient.

Dealing with the period 1928-1930 this volume makes known, for the first time, among other events of international interest the facts concerning the intervention of the League of Nations, through an official resolution of its Council, in the efforts of the Baha'is of Baghdad, Iraq, to recover possession of the house once occupied by Baha'u'llah, founder of the movement, and illegally seized some years ago by leaders of the Shiah Muhammadans in that city. The formal action of the League Council, the text of which has been reproduced in the Baha'i year book, consisted in directing the Mandatory Power (Great Britain) to make representations to the Government of Iraq with a view to the immediate redress of the injustice suffered by the Petitioners (the National Baha'i Assembly of Iraq).

While the attention of American Baha'is is at present largely concentrated upon the construction of the beautiful Baha'i Temple now actively going forward at Wilmette, Illinois, they are also co-operating, through the American National Assembly, in the solution of several problems described in the volume, such as

the seizure of the famous Baha'i Temple at Ishqabad by Soviet agents, attended by the imprisonment or exile of many Baha'is resident in Russia; the lack of a civil code in Egypt which has compelled Egyptian believers to petition the Government for permission to employ their own administrative principles in place of the harsh and unbending practices of the Muhammedan code still existing in that country; and the gallant efforts of the Persian Baha'is to develop modern education of the Western type for their women and children. In these and other current Baha'i activities, members of the Faith feel themselves part of a world-wide religious community.

*The Baha'i World* also sets forth the history of the movement since 1844, together with a statement of the new principles which Baha'u'llah established to bring about World Peace and moral regeneration; references to the Faith written by leading scholars and religionists of Europe and America; extensive quotations from sacred Baha'i Writings; a list of Baha'i centres in all countries; special articles written by members and friends of the movement, explaining its significance in this age of universal transition and unrest; and more than a hundred illustrations from photographs which convey the intimate, human side of a religion already enrolling more martyrs than Christianity and claiming

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## Annual Report of the N. S. A. of India and Burma For the Year 1930-31

1. During the year under review no meeting of the members of the N. S. A. could be held for the simple reason that members were scattered all over India and Burma. The distances in India are so great that the cost of arranging a meeting would almost be prohibitive. Bombay, Karachi, Rangoon, Lahore and Delhi are as distant from one another as London is from Venice or Baghdad is from Basra. A member starting from Rangoon will take 5 days to reach Delhi and in the same way if a meeting were arranged in Rangoon members from India will have to travel at a great expense as well as inconvenience to attend the meeting. One has to admit however that the meeting of members is very necessary as such a meeting will be fruitful in results. What face to face discussion and consultation can achieve is decidedly superior to what mere correspondence through letters can attain.

2. In July 1930 it was decided that the Declaration of the Trust Deed of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of India and Burma be formally registered with the Official Trustee and a draft Trust Deed as well as byelaws were circulated among the members of the National Spiritual Assembly but the registration had to be postponed because the draft could not be discussed at a meeting of the

N. S. A. which could not be held for the reasons stated in para 1. The incoming N. S. A. will have to take up the question once again and expedite the registration.

3. *Kaukib-i-Hind*—of Delhi, is an Urdu Monthly devoted to the Baha'i cause and has been ably edited by Maulvi Mahfoozul-Haq Ilmi from Delhi. During the last year only eight issues were published and it was decided that the ninth volume should begin from January 1931. This monthly has been financed by the Assemblies of Bombay, Rangoon and Karachi and is being published with the permission of the N. S. A. It is doing very good work and has been instrumental in teaching the cause to many in Northern India.

4. *The All-Asian Women's Conference* was held (19th-26th January 1931) in Lahore and delegates from China, Japan, Afghanistan, Siam, Burma, Turkey, Persia and Egypt attended. A Persian Baha'i delegate Mrs. Shirin K. Fozdar was deputed by the N. S. A. to represent the Baha'i Community. A Message was sent by the Guardian of the Cause and by the Holy Leaf (Sister of Abdul-Baha) for the success of the Conference and a paper was read by Mrs. Shirin K. Fozdar on the Position of Women in Asia at one of the Sessions of the Conference and was very

well received. A Pamphlet on the Baha'i Movement was printed by the N. S. A. and distributed broadcast at the meeting of the Conference. At a Tea-Party organised to meet the Delegates some very distinguished people were present and the Baha'i Message was given. Many who attended the Conference heard of the Teachings for the first time and were very much impressed.

5. *The Baha'i Weekly* in English, was started in January 1931 with the permission of the N. S. A. and is edited as well as owned by Professor Pritam Singh M. A., of 39, Temple Road, Lahore. About 500 copies of this Weekly (issued on the 9th, 19th and 29th of every month) are being sent out to different parts of the world and the Guardian of the Cause was pleased to set the seal of his approval to it and gave a donation of (£ 9 = Rs. 120-7-0) to encourage the Editor. It is expected that this Weekly will do good work among the educated people of India who are in need of this life-giving Message.

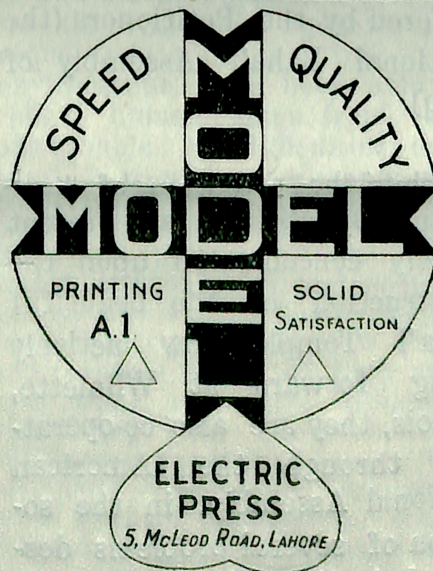
6. *The Local Assemblies of India and Burma* have been having regular meetings all the year round. At Karachi the plans for building the Hazirat-ul-Quds are being considered and the plot acquired for the purpose has been named "Shoghi Garden". At Calcutta a plot of land has been purchased for the "Gulistan" (Burial Ground) out of the gift of 700 rupees made by Mrs. Daulat Behmard Behram of Bombay. At Mandalay the splendid gift of the property (house, shops and garden) worth Rs. 45,000 by an old and devoted servant of the Cause, Syed Mustafa Roumie and Mrs. Roumie has been transferred to the Guardian of the Cause by means of a Trust Deed, a copy of which has been deposited in the Archives of the N. S. A. of India and Burma.

7. If I were permitted to make a suggestion I would like the Baha'is of India and Burma to realise their responsibility as Baha'is. If they desire that the teachings of Baha'u'llah should spread in this vast continent of India inhabited by

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to possess the only basis for a world-wide civilisation.

*The Baha'i World* has been edited by an international board under the direction of Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Faith, and published by the Baha'i Publishing Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly, New York City. It is issued as the official reference book of the Baha'is.—*The Inquirer*, London.





# Tablet to India

ABDUL-BAHA

His Highness the Merciful One hath caused the appearance of the splendours of love and affinity in the world of humanity, so that the individuals of mankind might be perfectly united and the rays of unity be revealed amongst the children of men. Hence He sent forth the holy Manifestations, inspired their hearts with the contexts of the heavenly books and instituted divine religions, in order that these sanctified personages, these revealed books, these religions of God might become the means of unity and accord, love and good fellowship in the human world.

Should we study the divine religions with the perception of truth, we would then conclude

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different races and religions, they must adopt some vigorous measures. They should send out competent travelling teachers to different parts of India and also translate the Teachings from Persian into the vernaculars of India. Thus alone will their Central Fund be enriched and the burden of running the Cause of India shouldered by Indian Baha'is. I hope the members of the new N. S. A. will give serious thought to this suggestion and in the new year more work will be done than has been done this year. Our watchword should be *Propaganda, more Propaganda and still more of it.*

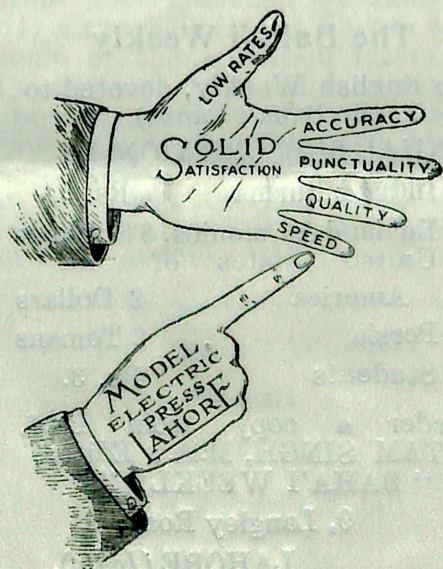
(Sd.) PRITAM SINGH,  
Secretary, N. S. A.

LAHORE.

15th May 1931.

that their underlying principle is the One Reality. All the religions of God are the reality. Reality does not admit multiplicity and division. But alas! that the fundamental reality is laid aside and forgotten, and a catalogue of creeds, dogmas and rites have taken its place which are the basis of differences, the cause of hatred and prejudice, and the establishment of the religion of God is totally forgotten and neglected.

When this impenetrable gloom—that is, the gloom of the traditions of ancestors—surrounded the world, and the pristine light of the divine religions was changed into the darkness of the ideas of men, then the true morn dawned and the Sun of Reality (Baha'u'llah) arose from the horizon of Persia, reflecting in the mirror of the world of humanity the effulgence of the heavenly unity. Thus he destroyed the foundations of the structure of blind dogmas and man-made creeds and rituals which are the result of ignorant prejudices. It is owing to this fact that this light is spreading with the greatest rapidity in all the countries of the world. The



influence of these divine teachings in all the countries of the world is like the influence of the spirit over the body.

Consequently, through the breaths of this divine spirit, the followers of the different religions in Persia have rent asunder the veil of superstitions, are freed from the effect of unenlightened doctrines, and have attained to the Beloved of Reality. These antagonistic faiths are united with the bond of perfect love and amity. For this reason great meetings are organized, in which are represented Mohammedans, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Turks, Arabs, Parsees, Persians, Kurds, English, French and Americans, who associate and mingle with each other as brothers. Like the sheep of God they are grazing in the pastures of truth under the protecting staff of the heavenly Shepherd.

Should you reflect with the insight of reality, you will observe that these antiquated and superannuated dogmas have ever been the cause of massacre and carnage among the nations and peoples.

As this is the cycle of sciences, there must needs be *new* teachings, a *new* revelation is required and a *new* life wanted. The minds and hearts refute the veracity of ancient opinions. *New* ideas are called for and *new* principles are urgently demanded which may fill the requirements of this age, be as the spirit of this century and as the life of this period.

Search, labour, investigate, work and show extraordinary effort, so that the centre of the light of Reality, like unto the witness of love, may become revealed in the assemblages of mankind.

There is a power in this cause, a mysterious power, far far, far away from the ken of men and angels. That invisible power is the source of all these outward activities. It moves the hearts. It rends the mountains. It administers the complicated affairs of the world and breaks to pieces all the forces of opposition. It creates new spiritual worlds.

ABDUL BAHÁ.



# Races and Religions of India

## Broadcast Lecture by Lord Zetland

*Apart from his five years' service as Governor of Bengal, Lord Zetland has travelled extensively in India and Burma, and knows these countries from the angle of the scholar, statesman and author. The following is a report of a broadcast lecture :—*

The mistake that you are most likely to make about India is to think of it as a country like England; a country, that is to say, inhabited by a people of one race, speaking one language, professing a single religion and having a common outlook upon life. India is nothing of the sort. If you must have something to compare India with, you had better take Europe; but even Europe will only provide you with a very rough basis for comparison.

There are differences of race and of language in Europe, certainly; though these differences are far less striking than similar differences in India, where at least 220 different languages and dialects are spoken. And in the case of religion it can scarcely be said that Europe provides any comparison at all. There are, of course, religious differences in Europe; there is the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church and the various denominations of the Protestant Church; but the members of these churches are all adherents of a single religion—Christianity. In India things are very different. There, no fewer than nine entirely distinct religions are professed by varying numbers of the population. And in the case of one of these, namely, Hinduism, the different sects into which its adherents are divided are almost too numerous to count. The part which religion plays in the lives of the people is much greater than in Europe. There can be very few days on which a religious festival of some sort is not being celebrated in one part of the country or another. The religious calendar of the Hindus alone contains something like two hundred and sixty celebrations. But before I say more about the religions I must say something of the races of India.

### COMING OF THE PEOPLES

Before the dawn of history India was inhabited by a dark-skinned people of mixed origin whose descendants are still numerous in the southern half of the peninsula. Then, four thou-

sand years or more ago, a caravan of men born and brought up among the rugged highlands of Central Asia, breasted the high passes of the Hindu Kush on the north-west and, seeing before them a fair land, poured down into it, driving before them, or subduing, the more primitive people whom they found already in possession. They were a fair-skinned race who called themselves Arya, or Noble; a branch of the original stock from which we ourselves are descended. These new-comers were in the habit of offering sacrifices to their gods—personifications in the main of the forces of nature—and of chanting hymns in their honour at the performance of the sacrifice. This—the Vedic—is the earliest of the Indian religions of which we have any definite knowledge, it is the source from which have sprung the many branches of Hinduism, as we know it to-day.

Centuries rolled by, and a thousand years or so after Christ the men of another race professing another creed which had its origin in the south-west corner of Asia appeared at the summit of the passes of Afghanistan. They were the pioneers of the great Mohammedan incursions into India; and like the Aryans before them they poured down into the plains of India. From time to time people of yet other races

drifted to India. Through the labyrinth of mountains on the north-east came people of Mongolian stock; from the west, the Parsees, people of Iranian stock, fleeing from the Arabs who overran Persia in the eighth century A. D. And within comparatively recent times still other peoples, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English, have found their way to India, thus adding to the medley of races and creeds which had found a home in the peninsula.

### ANIMIST AND PARSEE

Now let me return to the religions of India. Scattered over the jungles of central and southern India still survive descendants of the primitive people who were in occupation of the land when the first of the Aryan invasions took place. They are classed as animists and their religion is the crudest superstition. They live in constant dread of a shadowy crowd of powerful and malevolent beings, the inhabitants of an unseen world, whose activities interfere constantly with the lives of men. Only in comparatively recent times have they been persuaded to give up the more reprehensible of their customs. Dr. Edgar Thurston, writing of the practice of female infanticide prevalent amongst some of them up to the middle of last century, says that they maintained that the Sun God whom they worshipped, contemplating the deplorable results produced by the creation of feminine nature, charged men to bring up only so many females as they could restrain from inflicting evil upon society. We need not dwell further upon these primitive people who though numerous—about ten million—are of interest to the anthropologist rather than of importance in the body politic.

Now let us look for a moment at some of those religions which were not evolved on Indian soil but have been imported from without. There is, for example, the religion of the Parsees, a small community of gifted and highly cultured people who play an important part in the industrial and commercial life of India. Benevolence plays a large part in their religion, and among their symbolic celebrations is worship of the sacred fire, brought by their forefathers from Persia and kept perpetually burning upon their altars. If you visit India you will gaze with interest, but I hope, also with reverence, at the Towers of Silence in Bombay, on the summits of which the bodies

### The Baha'i Weekly

(An English Weekly, devoted to the Baha'i Cause).

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of the Parsee dead find their last resting place, since burial and the burning of the dead are proscribed by their religion.

I have already spoken of Islam, the religion of the Mohammedans, which had its birth in Arabia. There are to-day seventy million or more Mohammedans in India and the part which they play in the life of the country, owing to their past history and to their own virile characteristics, is a more important one even than their numbers would suggest. Their incursion into India had the curious result of adding not one but two more religions to the number already in existence. Let me explain. The whole country was steeped in the polytheism and pantheism of the Hindus. Into the polytheistic world the Muhammadan invaders swept with their own aggressively monotheistic creed. "There is no God, but God, and Mohammad is his Prophet," was the cry which they carried over the passes into the plains of India; and the shock of its impact against the polytheistic beliefs of the Hindus had important results, for the ferment of mind caused by it found expression in the teaching of two great Indian figures of the fifteenth century, Kabir and Nanak; and out of it arose in due course the powerful community of Sikhs. I shall have more to say about the Mohammedans; but before I do so I must touch upon what is the most essentially Indian of all the religions with which we are concerned, namely, Hinduism and its off-shoots Buddhism and Jainism. The starting point of Hinduism, as I have explained, was the nature worship of the Aryans contained in the Vedas; but in the course of the centuries these comparatively simple beliefs underwent important change. From very early times the Indo-Aryan people displayed a marked tendency towards abstract speculation.

#### INEQUALITIES OF LIFE

They were puzzled, in particular by the inequalities of life which they noticed all around them. How and whence, they asked did these inequalities arise? Why was one man rich and another man poor; one man a peasant and another a prince; one man healthy and another man sick; one man a scholar and another man a dunce. And brooding upon these things, they arrived gradually at a conclusion. The good fortune or the bad fortune of a man, they argued, must be

due to the merit or the demerit of his own past actions. As a man sowed, so did he reap, if not in his present life, then in one of an infinite number of lives that lay before him. This came to be known as the doctrine of *karma*, and re-birth *ad infinitum* was an essential feature of the doctrine. "What on earth is *karma*," I can hear some of you saying. Let me explain. You know what the regimental doctor means when he talks about a man's medical history-sheet. He means a record of the man's health, the diseases from which he has suffered and so on. In the same way a man's *karma* is his moral history-sheet. When a man dies there is left over, according to this doctrine, a balance of merit or demerit which has accumulated during his life and which remains attached to his spirit, compelling its re-birth to suffer the retribution or to enjoy the reward due. And since the prospect of being eternally re-born into a world full of inequalities was anything but attractive the discovery of some way of escape from the endless cycle of earthly existence became the central object of the Hindu religion.

Buddhism and Jainism were both founded about five hundred years before Christ by men who dissented from the orthodox Hinduism of their day. The central object of each is the same as that of Hinduism, namely, escape from earthly existence, though the means adopted are different. The Jains, of whom there are rather more than a million in India, are noted for their reverence, not only for human, but for animal and insect life. They are largely a community of traders and bankers. Then as to Buddhism; though it has been one of the great religions of India, it has almost disappeared from the Peninsula, its present day stronghold being Burma and some of the mountain tracts on the north-east of India. Its outstanding feature is its ethical code which is permeated by a moral grandeur unsurpassed even in the ethical teaching of Christianity itself. From the point of view of these religions which

postulate a personal God, both Jainism and Buddhism are atheistical systems; but in the case of popular Buddhism the founder has come to occupy the position almost of a deity. Relics of him are regarded with a veneration which amounts to worship. Did space permit, I would describe to you a Buddhist ceremony carried through in accordance with the tradition of the Buddhist church in which it fell to my lot, as the representative of the King Emperor, to take a leading part. The occasion was the presentation, to a congregation of Buddhist priests and monks, of a relic of the Lord Buddha which had come to light in the course of excavations carried out by the Government in Southern India.

#### THE SYSTEM OF CASTE

Hinduism is a very comprehensive term, for it denotes not only a religion but a social system. In their latter sense it consists of an elaborate code of rules which plays a determining part in almost every action of the daily life of the orthodox Hindu. What, and with whom, a man may eat; from whose hands he may take the water that he drinks; at what hour he must rise; what ceremonies and ablutions he must perform; from what group of people he may choose his wife—all these things are laid down for him by rules of extreme precision, the rules, that is to say, of his caste. No fewer than 180 main castes are recognised officially, and these castes are split into innumerable sub-castes and the sub-castes into yet smaller groups. The history of the origin and growth of the caste system is of extraordinary interest, but it is much too long to tell now, and I can only refer to two results of the system which are of outstanding importance. You sometimes read of the depressed classes. What are the depressed classes? They are castes in the lowest of the five great divisions into which the Hindu social system separates the Hindu people. There is, for example, in Southern India a large labouring caste named Paraiyan, the mere touch of whose members is held to pollute persons of the priestly caste. It is from this name that the English word "pariah" is derived. Members of these lowest castes are prohibited from entering the high caste quarter of a village; they may not draw water from the ordinary wells; they are debarred from entering many of the Hindu temples; on the approach of a Brahmin, or

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member of the priestly caste, they must even leave the public highway; they are, in fact, outcasts among the people. You can imagine for yourselves the sort of difficulties to which this state of affairs gives rise in a country which is struggling to put on the garments of democracy.

Now, in conclusion a word as to the other main result which has followed from the existence of the caste system. I have mentioned the rule which tells a man from which particular group of people he may choose his wife. This ordinance has had one astonishing result, for if a Hindu may not marry outside his sub-caste, still less may he marry one who is not a Hindu. Hence the remarkable fact that though the Muhammadans have dwelt in India for a thousand years they remain a race apart. That two great races should have lived side by side for a thousand years and yet have remained wholly unrelated to one another would have been inconceivable had it not been for the Hindu caste system. And quite apart from this special cause of division, the whole outlook upon life of these two great communities is fundamentally different. While under the caste system of the Hindus men are segregated in an infinite number of water-tight compartments, under Islam all men are equal. Hinduism is essentially aristocratic; Islam is as emphatically democratic. Hinduism is polytheistic, Islam is severely monotheistic. To the Hindu the cow is sacred; to the Mohammedan a mere animal to be sacrificed in the course of his religious observances. I have said enough perhaps, to make it clear that foremost amongst the problems to be solved in India is that of constructing a bridge across the gulf which yawns between the Mohammedan and the Hindu.—*Statesman*.

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