

A COMPARATIVE OF DYNAMICS
IN NAVAJO CEREMONIAL AND
THE BAHAI'S WORLD FAITH.

It is a fairly common tendency among the peoples among the peoples of the western (white) world to discredit any religious practices that do not have the outward appearance that is associated with Christianity, in fact go so far as to discredit the varying practices of it among themselves. Little thought is given to the underlying truths which are constant, and that the widely varying surface practices of the beliefs are but cloaks woven of the symbolisms that give body to their spiritual truths and enable man to better be aware of them by having them materially present as a constant reminder of their spiritual meaning.

Man of the western world, having more and more replaced spirituality with "materiality", reached the point of attributing all the values of existence to outward form of religious ceremony to the extent of losing the very part that is stood for or symbolized, that is, spirituality. Since now man has only these outward forms without meaning, he tends to judge others comparatively by this form alone. Any thing that differs from it is judged foreign, heathen and of the devil.

However this may be, upon clear examination we find quite a different picture unfolding to the discerning eye if we but look underneath the shell of ceremonies. Like the fires and energies of this earth are hidden under the mantle of the soil in all its variations, the variations being dictated by locations with their varying climatic and other characteristics, so the mantles of religion differ but the fires and energies, i.e., their dynamics are one truth no matter what the outward appearances may be.

The southwestern Indian peoples have a long and intricate system of ceremonial, known chiefly as SINGS, WAYS or CHANTS among the Navajo and dances among the Pueblo. The Navajo SINGS are, in their majority, used in the art of healing, of achieving this in part in bringing the patient back into tune with the universe, i.e., with himself and through that with all things, spiritually and materially in the world in which he lives. The dynamics employed by the SINGER, or MEDUCINE MAN, are in direct relation to the Tablets written by Bah-u-llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha, and "Some Answered Questions" (see B. and the N. E. p. 133). In the Bah'i Writings it is explicitly stated that spiritual means must go hand in hand with material means for full and lasting effectiveness. The prayers to help achieve this, are sung, or chanted, much like the Persian or Arabic manner of chanting prayers to the One Almighty Being. The purging done through physical stimulants, the anointing and application of herb medications, all have a dual meaning, the materially soothing and healing effect of their own as well as the spiritual adjustment implicated by their varying symbology. The potency of healing and, spiritually, character uplifting forced evoked by near absolute faith to the extent of carrying the faith into daily living attests to the power and oneness of all religion that is practised to the Glory of the One True God, be He called Great Spirit, Mazda, Allah, God, Creator, Divine Being! The powers of nature given man for his utilization (S.A.Q., ch. 1) are invoked through the rhythm in prayer inducing harmonious energies to come to his aid. This is almost a lost knowledge and can only begin to be tapped by western man through returning to the living of a spiritual basis of existence in this world.

Thus, the spiritual invocation of the natural energies for the wel-

fare of man is the basic premise of Indian ceremonial. It must be admitted that there are ever increasing aspects within ceremonials that are becoming perverted through misuse, lost original meaning and and "over the ages mininterpretation" which is bringing about superstition and fear and strong signs of disintegration, especially among the Navajo. Also the so-called "adaptability" of this people is greatly contributing to this disintegration by adapting too much of the bad and very little of the little good of the white man. Quite the reverse with the same result may be attributed to the Pueblo where, in many cases, he has become so inflexible in his protective armor against white man influence, that the everincreasing vibrations of change, and this is new spiritually as well as materially, are disintegrating in their influence. He has ceased to be able to end with the new wind and acknowledge its influence.

Still, it is no good for us to put out accent on the negative aspects of any one faith but only concentration on the positive side, its strengthening thereof and the progressive and the progressive steps that must needs harmoniously follow will help us achieve ourgoal.