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Religious Awakening

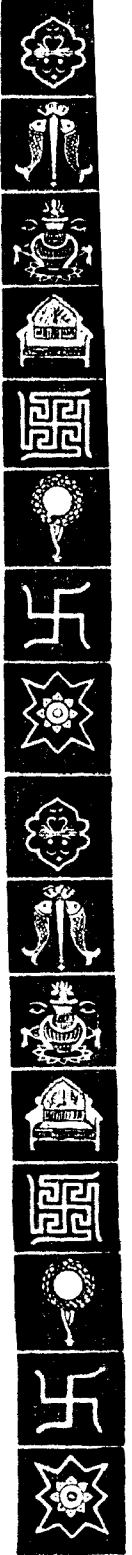
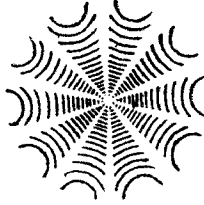
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Man is a complex being. He has to attend to the needs of his body, to the demands of his mind and also to the yearning of his spirit. If his pursuits in the three directions are properly balanced, then alone he can lead a life not only of contentment, but also of happiness. Eating, sleeping, protecting oneself and satisfying biological instincts these are more or less common to all the animals. But, if a man or a woman claims him herself to be a superior animal, naturally these needs will have to be properly channelised with restraint : and they should not be allowed to overpower and destroy the dignity of the individual. Even if all the physical needs are satisfied, a man cannot be happy. He is gifted with intellect, and naturally he would like to have some intellectual pursuit. It may take the form of study, of devotion to some art like singing, painting or some creative activity, in some field or the other.

If a man was all by himself, he should have been satisfied with the above two pursuits. But he is a social being. He lives in a society. His environments have obliged him, and naturally he owes something to the society and to the humanity at large. This consciousness is possible in a man only if he recognises the spirit in himself as well as the communion of this spirit with all others in the society. Such a communion is possible only with what may be called Religious Consciousness or awakening. Here, the man tries to keep under restraint his physical needs, to channelise his intellectual pursuits in a healthy manner, and then to keep himself awakened for satisfying his spiritual needs. If we reflect in this background, we can try to understand modern friends in religious thinking, especially in our Indian society. The aspirations of the spirit are fulfilled in various ways according to the intellectual levels of the man. Ordinary people find religious consolation in rituals, in devotional functions, etc. They feel thereby that they are lifted up to better levels. The intellectual, however, tries to satisfy his spirit by philosophical speculations, by understanding the complicacies of life and by finding out ways and means to make himself more contented and more happy. On an intellectual plane, there is a limit to all this. Some people want to contain themselves within themselves and try to realise their spirit as something higher and as something nobler.

Now-a-days, in affluent societies, the individual is attending more and more to his physical needs, and the pressure of life is so heavy that even his intellectual pursuits are an escape from the druggery of the daily routine. Science and technology have put him in abundance and given him plenty of leisure. For such people, there come moments of mental vacantness and of frustration. They try to find consolation by addicting themselves to some unhealthy habits. Thus today, Religious Thinking has fallen on a low ebb in affluent societies. But it is to be hoped that even affluent people would come, one day or the other, to feel that there is something like a spiritual pursuit, which can be satisfied only by Religion, understand in its best form.

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