

woman.

I congratulate those whose surrender is spontaneous ! It is not
This is an old tradition in Nordic countries. But in his story it is so easy.
No, that is not the difference.

ends badly: the one who had to renounce the love of woman
Sacrifice diminishes the being.

is drowned and it ends with the twilight of the gods.

That is true, but why ? One thing is so, so simple - it is the
very meaning of the word. To sacrifice means to give up some-
thing to which one clings. To sacrifice one's life is to give up
one's life to which one clings; otherwise it would not be a sa-
crifice, it would be a gift. If you use the word "sacrifice", it
means it is something which makes you suffer when you give it
up. The word "sacrifice" is used at random, that is understood,
but I am speaking of the true sense. One can sacrifice only what
one holds dear. If one does not cling to it, it is not a sacrifice,
it is a gift with all the joy of the giving. Surrender has no value
if it is painful, if it is a sacrifice. Surrender must be truly a
joyous offering (I am using the word soumission in the sense
of surrender, but it is not quite surrender - surrender is be-
tween soumission and abandon). One gives up something,
surrenders oneself, but without sacrifice.

"In our Yoga there is no room for sacrifice. But

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Questions and Answers

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everything depends on the meaning you put in the father's religion. He told me his story and what word. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, in Persia at the beginning of the religion. And I a making sacred to the Divine. But in the significance telling me with what intense joy, what a sense that it now bears, sacrifice is something that works Presence, of the divine Force, these people went for destruction; it carries about it an atmosphere of sacrifice - it can't be called "sacrifice", it was a very joy- negation. This kind of sacrifice is not fulfilment; it is their life He always spoke to me of someone who a deprivation, a self-immolation When you do any- appears, a very great poet and who had been arrested as thing with the sense of a compression of your being, because he followed the Bahai religion. They wanted be sure that you are doing it in the wrong way." away to kill him - or burn or hang or crucify him, Ibid. I don't know what, the manner of death in vogue at the time

to preach his
had happened
remember him
of the divine
to the
ful gift of
was, it
a heretic
to take him

- and, because he expressed his faith and said he would be
Why does sacrifice have such a great value in reli- happy to
suffer anything for his faith and his God, people de-
gion? vised the plan
of fixing small lighted candle-ends on his body,
his arms, his shoulders. Naturally the candles melted with the
Many religions are founded upon the idea of sacrifice; for in- hot
wax all over, till the wick of the candle burnt the skin. It
stance, all the Chaldean religions. The reforms of the Muslim
seems Abdul Baha was there when this man was tortured and
religion also had a very strong tendency towards sacrifice. All as
they came to the spot where he was to be killed, Abdul Baha
the first adepts, the first faithful, paid with their life for changing went
up to speak to him affectionately - and he was in an ecs-
their religion. In Persia, they were persecuted beyond all telling. tasy
of joy. Abdul Baha spoke to him of his sufferings; he re-
There are even many writings in which the joys of sacrifice are
plied, "Suffer ! it is one of the most beautiful hours of my
praised highly - that is a Chaldean idea. But you should be on life
.... " This cannot be called a sacrifice, can it?
your guard; all depends upon the meaning given to the word.
Generally, all those who have suffered tortures for their
It is obvious that for him who sacrifices himself willingly, that
faith, that is, for their highest thought, their most sublime ideal,
is, who gives up his life voluntarily and with joy, it is no longer have
always felt a kind of divine grace helping them and keep-
a sacrifice, by the very definition we have given to the word. ing
them from suffering. Of course, outsiders call this a "sacri-
We also speak of the "sacrifice" of the Divine. But I have fice"
(that is understandable, they have sacrificed their life), but
noticed that this is called "sacrifice" when one understands that one
cannot use the word for what personally concerns them, be-
if obliged to do it oneself it would be very difficult ! it would cause
for them it was not a sacrifice, it was a joy. All depends
give you much pain, it would be very hard (laughing) so one on
the inner attitude. Now, if for a single moment during the
speaks of sacrifice, but it is probable that for the Divine it was
torture they had had the least idea, "Why am I being tortured ?"
not painful and he did it willingly, with all the joy of self-giving. they
would have undergone unbearable suffering. A single pass-
I knew Abdul Baha very well, the successor of Baha Ullah, ing
thought suffices.
founder of the Bahai religion; Abdul Baha was his son. He was
Almost all events - at least all the important circumstances
born in prison and lived in prison till he was forty, I believe. of
human life - may be looked at from two sides: from below
When he came out of prison his father was dead and he began or

from above. If you see them from below, with the feel-

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