

THE BHARATA DHARMA

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Notes.

Elsewhere in this issue we publish the news in detail regarding the conversion of Miss Miller, an American girl, to Hinduism in true vaidik style with appropriate ceremonies conducted in the immediate presence of His Holiness Shri Shankaracharya of Karavir Mutt. It is an event of great and epoch-making significance for Hinduism. The gates of our beloved religion have been in recent centuries closed against those who are not born-Hindus. The word Hindu itself is not of very old origin and the prohibition against entrance into Hinduism of non-Hindus should obviously be of later date. The Sanatana Dharma of ancient Aryans laid down no such prohibition, which now stands against even out-castes.

Writing of the origin of the out-castes and the prevailing prohibition against their re-admission into the Hindu society, the late Pandit A. Mahadeva Sastri has put down thus:—

The Vedic Ideal.

"The Hindu ideal of clean, moral and high spiritual life is laid down in the Vedic Law, and its essential factors may be stated as follows: (1) recognition of the human soul as immortal and essentially of a divine nature; (2) aspiration to realise the oneness or fellowship of the individual soul with the Universal Soul; (3) devotion of one's energies of the body, senses and mind to the advancement of the world's well-being in the service of the Divine Lord; (4) truthfulness, abstention from animal food and intoxicating drugs, sexual continence or chastity.

One Varna.

"An ardent pursuit of this ideal is termed *Yaga-Diksha*, vow of

sacramental life. Those who recognise the ideal and strive to follow it to the best of their ability are called Brahmanas, spiritual aspirants. The Vedic Law declares that this status of Brahmanahood is open to every man and woman whatever they may be by birth. The status is derived from the spiritual not the physical birth. As acknowledging this ideal of life, all the Hindus are known as Brahmanas and as such form one community, one *Varna*, one community of spiritual aspirants. Hence the considered view of Bhrigu, the Great Teacher and Lawgiver, that there is no real distinction among different *Varnas* and that the whole Hindu community is of one *Varna* made up of Brahmanas or spiritual aspirants.

Castes and Outcastes.

So long as this high spiritual ideal is the ruling factor in life, there can be no distinction of *Varna* such as we now have. In the golden age of the Indo-Aryan evolution, the *Krita-Yuga* as it is called, when the spiritual aspiration was the dominant factor, there was, it is said, only one *Varna*: all the people were comprehensively known as Brahmanas. The social occupations, however different, did not divide them. All classes alike could attain spiritual perfection. In the later ages spiritual aspiration went into the background, and material interests loomed large; and then the original community of Brahmanas was split up according to their worldly occupations into different social classes and castes, such as Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. They are described as having abandoned their Dharma or spiritual outlook in their respective occupations, engaged as they were in pursuit of self-interest. At this stage of our evolution, some people of the community had to leave it owing to excommunication for neglect of formal spiritual culture and serious violation of social regulations. These outcastes (called *Vratyas*, those who need expiation) led an irregular life quite inconsonant with the civilised and cultural life of the Aryan community. Some others who were of an adventurous spirit went to distant lands in search of wealth and enterprise; and as they lost all touch with the traditional spiritual and social life of the original community, their conduct and modes of living were unregulated and unwholesome. Such brahmanas came to be known as *Dasyus*, *Mlechhas*, *Chandalas*, etc., and they were regarded unfit for social intercourse of any kind.

Readmission of Outcastes.

"While thus from Shastras we learn how the outcastes originated, we also learn from them how they were readmitted to the original community. It is said that the worst *Vratya* becomes fit for social and

religious intercourse in the main community by going through the sacrificial ritual called *Vratya-stoma*. Other processes of purification are laid down in the case of those families in which spiritual culture had long been neglected, and which were called *Shmashanas*, spiritually dead people. These processes of purification as well as *Vratya-stoma* may be resolved into the terms of the spiritual and moral culture and physical purity comprehended in the Vedic life of *Yagadiksha* already explained. These methods of reclamation are based on the idea that these outcastes as derived from the original community of Brahmanas are potentially Brahmanas and are readmissible to the main community when they return to its regulated life. In course of time, rules for re-admission became more and more stringent as the Vedic religion became more and more formal and ritualistic, and the real spirit of the rituals was lost sight of. At last the ritualistic observances having themselves become perfunctory, people lost faith in their efficacy, and the readmission of outcastes through expiatory processes has altogether ceased."

With lapse of time, Hinduism has lost its original plasticity and has become rigid and inhospitable even to repenting delinquents who are prepared to re-enter the fold and lead the regular life.

With a view to relax the rigidity and to strengthen and broaden the basis of Hinduism, the original objects of the Bharata Samaja provided "facilities for readmission to Hinduism, through membership of the Association, of persons who may have been converted to other faiths, and for the fresh admission thereto of persons who, though not originally Hindus, are deemed qualified to be admitted by reason of the known purity of their lives."

"If a follower of any of the other religions is willing unreservedly to accept its (Bharata Samaja's) cardinal principles, and is known or recommended as in other respects a worthy person, the Samaja is prepared to extend the hand of welcome to him as a member, and to recognise him as a Hindu.—Mr. Justice Chandrasekhara Aiyar on the *Samaja—Its Principles and Policy*. (1925.)

In pursuance of this object, the Samaja administered the Upanayana Samskara to three ladies not born Hindus but who accepted the prescribed life. Even some well-meaning and liberal friends could not accept this whole-heartedly at the time.

Now comes the high religious sanction from a recognised and respected *pita* of Shri Sankaracharya. The Time Spirit moves on more rapidly than we imagine or are normally prepared for. The objects of the Bharata Samaja, we rejoice to see, stand thus justified to-day by one of the high priests of the land and acclaimed as right

and necessary by his large following and by a larger circle of thinking members of the community.

We also request special attention to Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar's weighty pronouncement on Hinduism and Conversion, also printed elsewhere.

Jeevan Veda

BY T. L. VASWANI

(From a Discourse in Hyderabad)

There is a little book by a great mystic, Shri Keshub Chandra Sen. It deserves to be translated into all vernaculars. It is named "Jeevan Veda".

The title is significant. Life is meant to be a Veda, a Scripture. The life of every one should be a sacred scripture radiant with God's revelations. As it is, alas! we have made of life a "prison". What are you in pursuit of? Money? Pleasures? Honours? All this labour is of jail, for you have not known the secret. Therefore you feel unhappy,—with all your honours and money-bags. Your cravings keep you prisoners in life. To him who begins to realise life's sanctity, life is a Veda, a scripture which he may read every day in the Temple of Experience.

Yes—every one of you is essentially a revelation of the Supreme. Who are you? Not the broken ones you imagine yourselves to be. But Pictures! Pictures of the Divine Photographer! This we forget and so we wander restless.

An important *mantra* in the Veda, the scripture of Life, is:—*Prayer* Would you grow in the Hidden Life? Pray! Would you face temptations and trials? Pray! Would you gather strength to serve others? Pray! What is Prayer?

In my heart is a picture of one who prays. I am not a painter or I would paint this picture for you in beautiful colours. Let me, in a few imperfect words, give you some idea of the picture.

(1) Prayer a window.

I see the man of prayer sitting with the window opened. We are unhappy because we live closed lives. We feel confused because the curtain is not lifted, the window is not opened. It is the open-air religion I plead for. Would you learn to pray? Open the window of your heart. Many seek Him at best, with their "minds". Intellect, too, is a fragment of the Divine Reality. But intellect is not enough. When you sit to prayer, open the window of your heart.

(2) Prayer as Electricity

In my picture I see the prayer-room lighted up with electricity. This electricity is faith. In the night of difficulties and sufferings, faith shines. Faith is the light in darkness. There are men who worship God with a view to have material prosperity. What a mistaken view of prayer! Religion is not bargaining. It is no easy going religion of material comfort and fat prosperity I plead for. Not a spiritual man but must bear his cross. He must pass through the dark night of the soul. In that darkness let the electricity of faith shine!

(3) Prayer and tears

In my picture I see the man of prayer calling God with tears. Often our prayers are lip-utterances. O! let us seek Him with tears! Blessed are they who weep, for they shall be purified! Tears have a purifying influence. True prayer is a purifying Bath. O my friends! go to God with tears in your eyes, and He will give you the greatest of all gifts,—the gift of New Life.

Hata Yoga

BY SWAMI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI

As human beings, we are blessed with weightier brains and mightier powers than our brothers of the lower animal kingdom. Man is expected to realize all other lives in himself thus realising Him who is the embodiment of all lives. There are two methods of realization—one by action and the other by knowledge. Man has to discipline himself first and use his disciplinary forces in the service of others. There are two ideals of life—one, Tyaga and the other, Yoga. Renunciation and concentration fulfil these ideals. By Yoga man focuses all his sense activities into the mind turned inwards and realises the bright One within. By process of Yoga or concentration or meditation, man leads to an inward search of truth, realizes the great Shakti within and becomes eternally happy, free and pure. Man has to use his yogic powers in Tyaga or sacrifice. He should dissolve himself like the lamp in selfless disinterested service. Tyaga is the aim and yoga is the means to the end. Yoga is not practised for the advantage of the individual self. It is the development of the inner magnetic self to embrace the universal self. Yoga is the first discipline of life.

There are three branches of Yoga. (1) Yoga of purification (2) Yoga of liberation and (3) Yoga of unification. Hata Yoga falls

under the first category, the Yoga of purification. There are three kinds of purifications 1. the purification of the body. 2. the purification of the mind and 3. purification of the speech. Hata Yoga treats about the purification of the body, which leads to the purification of the mind. This is a much misconstrued subject. Hata Yoga is mistaken by some as a thing fit for only lonely hermits. Some classes of people regard it as a mere physical exercise. Hata Yoga is a hygienic process of body-building, a sovereign remedy for all physical maladies and something more subtle. Hata Yoga is not mere *Asanams*, it is *Asana* plus something more. *Ha* means the moon, *Ta* means the Sun. They both represent the *Ida* and *Pingala* nadis or nerves of the body. It is harmonising the *Ida* and *Pingala* nadis that Hata Yoga signifies. It also implies elementary Raja Yoga. It is a road to health, strength and happiness which are the bases of human felicity. The first qualification of a Yogi is good character and cleanliness. Purity and simplicity of diet, pure thoughts, worshipful nature, love for all beings, extreme patience, stern *brahmacharya*, moderation in food and sleep is the first step towards Yoga. The second step is *Niyama*. *Niyama* consists of happiness, serenity, faith, austerity, non-attachment, worship of Godhead, study of sacred books, etc. The third step in Yoga consists of the *Asanas* or physical postures. *Asanas* make the body light and healthy. They are also curatives of diseases. They make the mind live in a sound body—in a lean though fleshly house. Some of the important *asanas* are (1) Padm-*asan*, (2) Swastik-*asan*, (3) Gomuk-*asan*, (cow pose) (4) Veer-*asan*, (5) Koorm-*asan*, (6) Kukkut-*asan*, (cock pose) (7) Matsendri-*asan*, (8) Sinh-*asan*, (lion pose) (9) Mayura-*asan*, (peacock posture) (10) Pret-*asan*, (11) Shiras-*asan*, (12) Sarvanga-*asan*, (13) Paschimothana-*asan*, (14) Chakra-*asan*, (15) Garud-*asan*, (16) Baddapadm-*asan* etc. All these *Asanas* should not be practised all at a time. Some five *Asanas* can be selected for daily practice. Each *Asan* should be maintained at least for a minute. If practised regularly and with proper control of diet these *Asanas* give very good health. *Asanas* Nos. 9, 12, 13, 14 & 16 can be practised with advantage daily. Common diseases such as constipation, dyspepsia, spermatorrhea, the curse of modern civilization and unnatural life which devitalise and emaciate our nation can be avoided by the practice of these five *Asanas* with dietetic purity. Paschamothanasan and Shirasasan are simple means of rooting out constipation.

Better than all these *Asanas* Nauli and Oodyan remove the digestion ash wonderfully well. These mean the drawing back of the abdomen and isolation of its muscles. These should be done ten

minutes after taking ten ounces of water. The best way of curing dyspepsia is through Dhouties. There are four kinds of Dhouties or cleaning processes of the stomach of all bad sediments. (1) By means of a long piece of cloth (2) By drinking plenty of water (3) By breathing. (4) By means of a stick. Cleaning by means of water is the best. The process is as follows. Take plenty of luke-warm water say, 30 ounces and retain it for two minutes rolling the abdominal muscles and then vomit it back with the fingers. This will bring out all the bad sediments that convert into disease.

The above are some of the processes of Hata Yoga that can be practised by all with the help of a proper teacher. The youth of today is the manhood of tomorrow. Young men that are to build the destiny of our sacred land have to build first their body which is the embodiment of the all-embodied Lord. Body is the temple of the Lord. Ever earnest, ever happy and ever firm in purity, the great power of youth, let it build the further glorious kingdom of heaven in the self. The world is waiting for the message of India. Youths are the messengers of the message. The great Bharata Shakti lives in the youthhood of India. The great Lord lives in the centre of every heart, ever bright and ever full of Shakti. Realise Ye! that great Shakti within and fill the world with shakti or power. It is this power that Hata Yoga aims at. Om tat Sat!

The Cycle of Brahma

(Contd. from page 9 of April issue)

The Hindus are enjoined to celebrate the births of the three latest Avatars viz: Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna and Sri Buddha. Probably because we have yet to learn the ideals placed before us by these great Teachers of mankind. Those who have yet to learn the lessons of the previous Avatars viz., the Parasurama, are only few and they are those who will not care for any religious injunctions nor for any scriptures of the world. The criminal and social laws of their country alone will guide their conduct and lead them on in the course of Evolution. As regards the rest, by far the largest number are now in the stage of Sri Ramachandra Avatars. A yet smaller number are in the Sri Krishna Avatars stage and only a few are ready for the ideals of Sri Buddha Avatars. It may here be stated that this does not apply to Hindus only but to the whole mankind, just like Sri Krishna's statement in the Bhagavadgita about the classification of the whole mankind into four types, the Brahmana (priest); the Kshatriya (soldier); the Vaisya (merchant); and Shudra (servant).

The whole humanity on our earth can thus be divided into four groups without reference to any of the religions of the world. The followers of all religions and even those who do not follow any religion, will be found to be at one or the other of these four stages. Again the groups are not like water—tight compartments. A person may belong predominantly to one group and may be developing the ideal of a higher stage at the same time. This is especially the case as regards the Sri Ramachandra and the Sri Krishna stage. Another thing to be borne in mind is that this has no reference to the fact whether one is a devotee of Siva or Vishnu or any other God. These stages depend upon how far the embodied Jivatma can control his bodies and express his divine powers through them, un-hampered by the gunas of the Prakriti. To this end he receives help from the planetary spirit connected with each of these four Avatars. He absorbs their power in a greater degree than the other planetary influences, because he has learnt to respond to those particular vibrations and can develop the necessary centres in his physical, astral and lower mental bodies with the help of those vibrations. The progress he makes in this way shows itself in the higher life he leads and the keener senses and superior mental powers he exhibits here, on the physical plane.

This much is enough to enable us to understand the directions of the forces of Evolution at work at the present time. Now we shall consider the secondary forces at work.

We are told that there is a cycle called the "Precession of Equinoxes." The Vernal Equinox or the spring Vishuvan Day, from which the true Solar Year begins, is moving backwards in respect of the zodiac of fixed signs and is now in the sign Pisces. It takes about 2000 years for the Vernal Equinox to pass through one sign of the zodiac.

Evolution on our globe takes an important step forward whenever the Vernal Equinox occupies one of the fixed signs viz: the Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius.

The Great Mahabharata War took place when the Vernal Equinox was in Taurus. It is now in the last quarter of its journey through the sign Pisces and will enter Aquarius, the sign of Human Perfection, about 500 years hence. The great European war and the present turmoil on our Earth is the preparation for that next step forward in our evolution. Aquarius is ruled by Saturn and he is also the ruling planet of India. Naturally, India can and will take a leap forward in its own evolution and will considerably help the whole world in taking the next step forward in its evolution. India is being convulsed now to this end.

There was an important and peculiar position of the planets in the heavens in the evening of the 11th January 1910 and if only the import conveyed by these is properly understood and borne in mind it will give a clue not only to the strange events which have happened since that time but also indicate what we may expect in the coming years. Judging the *Varshapravesha Phalani* by ordinary methods will not help us to understand the mysterious nature of the times we are living in now. Let us therefore consider the prognostications of that event on 11th January 1910. What has happened since then till now is enough to justify the great importance of it as regards our destiny in the immediate future. It is of supreme importance to know how we can take the best advantage of our good fortune to be alive at this unique period of our Evolution on this globe.

(To be continued.)

L. B. RACE

Miss Miller's Conversion to Hinduism

Miss Nancy Miller of America was converted to Hinduism at Nasik on the 13th instant at 8-30 a.m. The ceremony of conversion was simple. Miss Miller squatted on the floor in Indian fashion opposite half a dozen priests who chanted Sanskrit hymns and mantras from the Vedas. Homa (sacrificial fire) was burning nearby to which priests were offering ghee (clarified butter) and from time to time holy water was being sprinkled on Miss Miller signifying purification, Miss Miller nodding her acceptance of purification every time. That Miss Miller was taking deep interest in every ceremonial was evident from the fact that a Hindu gentleman seated next to her had to explain their meaning from time to time. She was wearing a necklace of small deep blue glass beads such as worn by ladies of Maharashtra, red glass bangles round her wrists, only one on each hand, and a diamond ring. All the time her aged grand-mother was seated behind her on a chair watching with interest all ceremonies. At the conclusion of "Homa" and Shuddhi (purification), Miss Miller walked up to the place where Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya was seated and received his blessing touching his feet. Shankaracharya next presented her with a cocoanut, sweets, brocade sari, bodice and red-powder in a tray signifying that her Shuddhi was complete. Then priests one by one and also pundits gathered there, came up and blessed her, Miss Miller gracefully acknowledging their offerings with folded hands. "Hindu Dharma

ki-jai" or "God bless Hindu religion" went up up from assembled Hindus, thus bringing the functions of the morning to a conclusion.

Congratulatory Meeting at Panchavati

A public meeting attended by over twenty thousand persons was held in the evening to bless Devi Sharmishta or Miss Nancy Miller as she was hitherto known upon her admission to Hinduism. Tremendous enthusiasm prevailed among the largest audience ever seen in Nasik. It was a vast sea of human heads stretching far away to right and left. The meeting was held on the bed of the Godavari river at Panchavati and presented a memorable scene. Beginning from the shamiana the huge crowd rose in tier after tier right to the topmost point of vantage on the western bank of the river, besides occupying all the available vantage ground including house-tops and terraces. Among those present in the shamiana were many European ladies and gentlemen. Hundreds of Hindu ladies also took part in the meeting. When Miss Miller in her Indian dress accompanied by ladies of the Holkar family and attendants arrived at the pandal she was greeted with applause. The same manifestation of love and goodwill was shown towards Shri Shankaracharya when he arrived a few minutes later. Though the speakers were hardly audible even a few feet away the audience remained good humoured throughout. After some welcome songs and poems had been recited Miss Miller made a speech expressing her gratitude to those who had helped her in the conversion. Dr. Savarkar also made a short speech in Marathi.

New Era in Hinduism

The Shankaracharya next spoke blessing Miss Miller and explaining his reasons for the unprecedented step in modern Hinduism that he had taken.

Gift of a Gita

Among the tokens of regard and appreciation presented to Miss Miller is a miniature *Gita* enclosed in a miniature silver casket. Miss Miller expressed her heartfelt thanks to the President and members of the Committee and the volunteers. She concluded by saying that service would be her greatest ambition and this announcement was received with applause.

A number of speakers paid eloquent tributes to the Shankaracharya who they declared amidst applause had unfurled the flag of nascent Hindu religion.

Shri Shankaracharya's Speech

The following is the authorised version of the speech delivered by the Jagadguru, (Dr. Kurtkoti) at the monster meeting on Tuesday.

evening at Nasik in connection with Miss Miller's "Shuddhi" ceremony :—

"We are meeting here to-day under the shadow of a great event in the history of the Hindu Dharma. The admission of Miss Miller to Hinduism is a historic event and you all have witnessed the great enthusiasm which marked the ceremony this morning. It has given me the greatest pleasure to have admitted her to the Hindu faith. It may seem to you the most unprecedented thing. For generations the gates of Hinduism have remained shut in the face of those who have sought its portals. Yet it is no new thing. The gates of Hinduism from the earliest times had been opened to all new-comers, but for some extraneous reasons these gates had been closed, and the most powerful reason was the loss of independence of Hindus. Owing to their position of dependence the Hindus had been forced to close up their ranks and limit their sphere to those who had already been Hindus. But to-day's function marks the re-opening of the gates once more to all who seek its portals in a sincere spirit of conviction."

A Far-reaching Event

It is a far reaching event whose effects you may not be able to realise, but future generations of Hindus will have every reason to be proud of our achievement to-day. It restores once more to the Hindu faith the elasticity and tolerance which were characteristic of it. It opens the path to all seekers of a cosmopolitan religion, and enables them to follow its great truths without violence to their conscience. There is no doubt that there is need of a true and tolerant religion all over the world and at such a time as this to keep the doors of such a great faith shut against foreign seekers would be to pursue a course of moral and spiritual disaster, and to deny to the world the solace of a true religion.

Universal Religion

In this connection I may refer here to a visit that a German professor, Dr. Otto, paid to me recently. He said to me how great was the need of a universal religion acceptable to all embracing the essentials of all religions in this world, less dogmatic and more humane, and he propounded his ideas in a manner that was bound to carry conviction. But I pointed out to him that there was already such a religion; only that its essentials had not been properly appreciated. Hindu Dharma is the most broad-based religion containing some of the highest truths that are required to make religion acceptable to the great majority.

Viewed from this stand-point it is hardly necessary to stress

unduly the urgency of Hinduism once more being made a living and growing organism. Judged from this point of view the Shuddhi-karma of Miss Miller which was performed this morning is full of greatest meaning to Hindu faith. Though it may seem a small affair to some of you who are apt to connect it with an individual and view it from different stand-points, I am fully convinced that it makes the beginning of a new era for Hinduism. The event has to be considered from four main points (1) the Philosophic, (2) Dharmic, (3) Historical and (4) Pragmatic or practical.

Different View Points

I shall deal with these in their order. From the philosophic standpoint the ceremony that we have witnessed to-day is a matter of great rejoicing to me. It shows the inherent greatness of Hindu philosophy for the simple reason that it marks out the Hindu faith from other faiths. It may not generally be known that all the religions do not rest for their support on their philosophies. This accounts for the fact that some religions are called revealed while others are known as inspired. The Bible says:—"Love thy neighbour like thyself." The Bhagwad Gita enjoins the same truth. But why should one look upon others as oneself? The Bible does not answer this question. Why should one do so? That is because it is essentially dualistic and Christian philosophy is dualistic. There is no philosophy in the world which is non-dualistic except the Vedic one. So other religions have to look to Vedic Philosophy for their support. Besides other religions maintain that the world was created by God. But Hinduism teaches us to look upon the world as God. It is no wonder that such a faith as ours should make a powerful appeal to others or that Miss Miller should have been attracted to Hindu philosophy.

Suddhikarma and its Significance

There are some to whom Suddhikarma may seem inconsistent and contradictory. But these are people who look upon Hinduism in a restricted sense. And because of this they hold that Hinduism is not a proselytising religion and that it cannot take new recruits. But such a view is an erroneous one. A discerning eye will readily see that the Hindu faith far from being so narrow and limited is capable of absorbing new forces and withstanding new shocks. Some people ask what is your spiritual authority for admitting foreigners. If I may answer a question with another question where has Vedic Dharma recognised the existence of other religions? There is a Vedic text which clearly says that Dharma is the foundation of the entire universe. Vedic Dharma embraces all points essential to human welfare, and it is therefore

natural that it should cover everything conducive to the wellbeing of world. All other faiths are obviously extensions of isolated creeds comprehended within the limits of Vedic Dharma. For instance Christ enlarged upon the tenets of peace, while Mahomed selected the creed of aggressiveness as the governing factor of its creed. In the same way, other faiths as for instance Jainism which lays stress on Ahimsa or non-violence. There is no need to enlarge upon this side of the matter. But Hinduism contains all these truths which are scattered among many religions and all faiths. It enjoins upon its followers to act according to special conditions keeping in view the welfare of the world and promotion of the brotherhood of man as the sole aim of their faith. This is not all. Christainity teaches that God is impersonal. Hinduism does not deny that God is impersonal. But at the same time it recognises that God is super-personal meaning thereby that he can be personal without losing His omniscience and omnipotence.

Tolerant Hinduism

Thus you will see that Hinduism does not oppose those who hold the belief that God is impersonal nor do they exhort those who believe in His personality. People are free to offer worship to Him in his personal aspect. It is clear that Hinduism shows the greatest tolerance for both schools of thought—those who recognise the personal conception of God and impersonal character that is attributed to him. So there is nothing which is opposed in reality to Hindu Dharma or which does not fit in with its conception of Universe. There is about it no sense of difference in regard to Dharma. But those who think that the part is the whole may be taken into the fold of those who regard part as the part and the whole as the whole. At the same time Hindu faith affords the broadest platform to all those who possess different talents and wish to contribute to the sum total of human happiness and the perfection of their faiths.

Dharma Enlarges Faith

Therefore to admit Christians or Mohamedans to Hinduism is not to ask those who seek it to give up their faiths but rather to enable them to enlarge their outlook and widen their horizon and live a broader and more tolerant life doing what lies in one's power to promote the happiness and the contentment of the world. That is in short the essence of Hindu Dharma.

History of Conversion

Now as to the Historical aspect of conversion, of Suddhi, there are innumerable instances of the admission of foreigners to Hinduism. From

the time of Mahabharat to the time of Asoka and Chandragupta and even almost to the times of the Mogul invasion there have been any number of instances of such conversions. You might have heard about Arjuna's marriage with Ulupi, and Ulupi according to modern historical research has been recognised as an American woman. Then there is Kanva Muni who, Bhavishya Purana relates, went to Egypt, brought 10,000 recruits and had them taken into Hinduism and absorbed within the four Varnas. It is related of Jaratkaru Rishi that he married a Naga Kanya and treated her as his Dharma Patni. Nor can a reference be omitted to Asoka and Chandra who married foreign wives after converting them to their own faiths. There are innumerable inscriptions and coins and literature extant on the subject and these are published, and some of these researches have been embodied in recent publications of Indian Antiquary.

Importance of Events

From the practical point of view it is hardly necessary to emphasise the importance of the event. Too much stress cannot be laid on the significance of the admission of Miss Miller to the Hindu faith. Some difference of opinion has been expressed mainly on account of the possible sequel to the Shuddikarma. Some people have taken strong exception on the score that Miss Miller is to be married to the Maharaja Sir Tukojirao Holkar. I have no wish to discuss the aspect of this matter which is purely personal to the parties concerned. The most important consideration would be the admission of a seeker who wants to be taken into the Hindu faith out of her or his inborn conviction and admiration for the faith. It cannot be denied that the ultimate intention has been bearing on the question, but the question cannot be solely determined on that ground alone nor can be allowed to reflect a sense of responsibility. I want those who are objecting to the conversion on the ground of the proposed marriage to consider whether a doctor would be justified in refusing medical aid to a sick man on the ground that if the man is restored to health he proves dangerous to the society. That is no concern of a true doctor. His business is to give all the best assistance to his patient and leave the consequences to take care of themselves. If the man proves dangerous there are other agencies to note of it and deal with it. Such should also be the attitude of all informed persons concerning the admission of foreigners to Hinduism if they seek it in a true spirit of devotion and sincerity.

The position to-day in regard to Miss Miller's conversion is not much different. She has conceived a great regard

for Hinduism and has expressed a sincere desire to be admitted to that faith. Is it just or fair, I ask, to refuse her the solace of a faith which has appealed to her powerfully and evoked her intense admiration?

Exception has been taken on the ground that these mixed marriages should not be encouraged and the conversion of Miss Miller is said to be an encouragement in that direction. It is difficult to endorse the view though one may be inclined to sympathise with the doubts entertained by these people. It seems to me that there is some confusion of thought and a difference between this case and other cases. Here is a woman who sincerely desires to be taken into her new faith and it seems to be unfair to deny her the opportunity. The matter has to be judged on its own merits free from any preconceived notions of prejudices and it is no less important to bear in mind the fact that Miss Miller has given a categorical undertaking that she would remain true to her new faith and maintain its truths. In view of this if any undesirable consequences follow from such conversions, society would be able, I am sure, to deal with these cases. But I do not think that anyone would be justified in shirking responsibility from an apprehension of future trouble.

Duty of the Gurus

It is the only duty of God, Dharma and Gurus to show the path of light to all who seek it. But if they abuse their opportunity there are other means by which the consequences can be countered. Some people have expressed their apprehension that this conversion has been effected for fear of the parties concerned embracing some other religion such as Mohamedanism, to facilitate their aim being achieved. But such apprehension is unfounded. I have entertained no such fears. The only apprehensions that I have had is that I might be failing in my duty towards Hindu Dharma if I did not act in the manner I have done.

A Personal View

Apart from all this I have had occasion to discuss with Miss Miller her real views and I am glad to say that the impression I derived from her conversation is that she is sincere and earnest in her desire to be admitted into the Hindu faith. You will remember that she had received voluntary offers of conversion to Hinduism from various institutions such as the Arya Samaj, Satyashodhak Samaj and Hindu Sabha, but she was determined that, if at all, she would be admitted into the Hindu faith in a regular manner by this Pith and none else. And that shows the earnestness of her purpose. As I have said already she has

unequivocally declared her desire to remain true and constant to the Hindu faith and it is my sincere hope that she will conduct herself in a manner that will remove all prejudice and win the confidence of the brothers and sisters of the faith which she has of her own free will and choice selected for herself. It is also my earnest hope that the event will be justified in every way and ultimately conduce to the glory of the Hindu faith and its emancipation from its thralldom of ages. I am glad to announce here for the information of every one of you that I have bestowed upon her the name of Sharmishtha and I am confident that our new Sharmishtha will prove in every way worthy of the honoured name she bears from now.

—From the *Indian Social Reformer*.

HINDUISM AND CONVERSION

BY SIR P. S. SIVASWAMY AIYER, K. C. S. I.

During the last few years an attempt has been made in Northern India on a considerable scale for the conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism. The Shuddhi movement, as it has been called, is not apparently intended to be confined to apostates from Hinduism who have embraced other religions like Islam or Christianity. If the descendants of those who have lapsed from Hinduism can be brought back into the Hindu fold after some generations, there is no reason for any distinction between their case and that of persons whose ancestors were not members of the Hindu community at any time. If reconversion of the descendants of an apostate is justifiable, conversion also is equally proper. The movement raises a fundamental issue, whether conversion to Hinduism is possible or not. The most spectacular case in which this issue has been forced upon the public notice is the conversion of Miss Miller, an American lady, by the Shankarachariar of the Karvir Pith. The question whether conversion to Hinduism is legally possible has not, so far as I am aware, been the subject of any legal adjudication.* It is open to doubt whether there is any textual authority forbidding such conversions. It would be, however, idle to deny that the Hindu Smritis or canon law proceeds upon the assumption that caste is a matter of birth and not of adoption. The system of Hindu law is a system of personal law binding upon the members of the caste

* We just understand that the Patna High Court has delivered Judgment in the case of Sita Devi (prev. Miss Elsie Caroline Thompson, an Australian by birth) against the Maharaja of Tikari holding that the conversion of a non-Hindu to Hinduism makes him or her a Hindu and eligible for a valid marriage with a born Hindu in the eye of the law—Ed.

organisations recognised by it. It is not a system of territorial law claiming allegiance on the ground of residence within a particular country. The applicability of the Hindu code to any particular person would depend upon the answer to the question whether he has been admitted by Hindu society, or is recognised by it as a member of their body. If Hindu society chose to admit any stranger within its fold, it is not for the Courts to say that the society had no right to do so. It is essentially the right of each society to decide for itself any matters of this kind and it is not for the Courts to fetter the discretion of the community or tie it down by any rules or prescriptions. Here the question arises, what exactly is meant by Hinduism. Does it mean merely a body of religious tenets and ethical rules, or a social organisation, or both? As a matter of fact, it is the social organisation with its peculiar characteristics that would seem to be connoted by the term Hinduism rather than any particular religious belief. Far be it from me to say that Hinduism does not imply any religious belief of one kind or another, but there is no system of theology in the world which has allowed such a vast amount of intellectual freedom to its followers in matters of faith and doctrine and sanctioned such large varieties of religious belief. We have all a more or less vague idea of what Hinduism is, but it would baffle the ingenuity of the learned to lay down a comprehensive and at the same time sharp and logical definition of Hinduism. It is the accommodating capacity of Hinduism that has enabled it in the past to absorb many communities and many religious beliefs and to resist the shocks of collision with alien and hostile races and religions. One thing that has enabled it in the past to survive the impact of so many attacks is the social structure to which it has tenaciously clung. But this very structure founded upon the development of the caste organisation, which has been the strength of Hinduism in the past, is now proving to be a source of weakness to itself and to the country and Nation at large. No one can deny the right of any person or community to convert others by persuasion to his or its own religious belief or the right of any society to receive any stranger into its bosom. That the caste organisation of the Hindus was not always so rigid as it now appears is clearly borne out by history. That several of the tribes and communities with which the Hindus came in contact were gradually admitted within the pale is borne out by historical evidence. The enlargement of the Hindu pantheon itself is one of the obvious results of this process. Several members of foreign tribes which invaded the country like the Greeks and the Scythians became Hinduised and some of them received the Kshattriya status and rank. The means by which this assimilation

was effected might have been conversion or legal fiction or some one or other of the devices familiar to us in ancient history. Evidence of the resort to fictitious theories may be found in one of the oldest Smritis. There is a text of Gautama in his Dharma Sutra which states that according to some authorities, the Yavanas (i.e., the Greeks) were the offspring of mixed marriage, between men of the Kshattriya caste and women of the Shudra caste. This interesting text is an illustration of the many fictitious theories which might have been employed for the purpose of reconciling society to the inevitable adjustments to new social environments. That society has a right to act for itself in these matters cannot be gainsaid by any reasonable person. Whether in any particular case, the action of any particular section of the community can be regarded as an expression of the will of the community is a question upon which it is impossible to lay down any rules. The first steps of the social reformers are like those of the men who start to establish a right of way through an enclosed field. After several successive instances, what was at first an unauthorised innovation tends to become a well-established right of the public. There is no doubt that the conversion of Miss Miller will be looked upon in many orthodox quarters as a flouting of public opinion and that it may be deplored as subversive of the very foundations of Hinduism. On the other hand, there must be large numbers among the educated sections of our countrymen who would welcome this event as marking an epoch and as a proof of the continuing adaptability of Hinduism to the conditions of the time. I for one am disposed to congratulate the Shankarachariar who sanctioned, and assisted in, the conversion of Miss Miller on his high moral courage and patriotism in broadening the foundations of Hinduism and promoting National progress. It is the first shot fired into the citadel of the exclusive organisation of Hindu society. The first faint cracks are visible and there can be no doubt that they are bound to widen into a breach sufficient to allow of its being stormed in the near future. We may be told by social die-hards that there is hardly any race or caste prejudices, but the existence of such prejudices is no proof of their desirability or of their fitness for survival under modern conditions.

—From *New India (Weekly)*

REVIEW

Hinduism

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Published by Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1928.

The famous paper read by Swami Vivekananda before the Parliament of Religions which met at Chicago in 1893 and four other lectures by Swamiji have been now reprinted by the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore in a neat little booklet of 114 pages. To an audience which had misconceptions about Hinduism and which had addresses given about other religions, Swamiji standing in orange robes gave the first address which thrilled them and made them all show him a respect not given to other religionists. For the first time then in the Western world and especially in the cradle of materialism, our Hinduism was shown to have its basis in Veda or Science of Knowledge and that it solved all the burning questions easily. The problem of God and Man and their relation is a serious problem in philosophy and in giving the solution he reminded us that we are the "children of Immortal Bliss" (not "sinners"), are children of God, sparks of that Great Flame, sharers of the Immortal Bliss, divinities on earth. He is the Almighty the All-merciful. We worship Him through love 'as the one beloved dearer than anything in this life or the next. A man ought to live in the world—his heart to God and his hands to work; unselfish work for its sake is our nature.—"God works and we work with Him". Though the man is divine he has to break the bonds of matter only through the Mercy of God, the loving unselfish work by man and his Purity. The Hindu Religion reveals a system by which a man by constant struggle becomes perfect and divine—the expansion of consciousness reaching universal consciousness. Man is to become divine by realising the divine—in thought, word and deed. This Hindu Religion is Universal as it gives different steps to the different people. Every religion speaks only of an evolving God out of the material man and the same God is the inspirer of all of them. The apparent contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures. The Hindu religion provides for all these varieties and hence is universal.

In the same way he shows how the Vedas show the worship of the several Devas (mistranslated Gods) and also the worship of the Personal God and still above that the worship, if it may be so called,

of the One Being, "That which exists is One: sages call It by various names." He strikes a true note when he says further "we have to learn that all religions under whatever name they may be called, Hindu, Buddhist, Mohammadan or Christian, have the same God and he who derides any one of these derides his own God". Therefore also, he says, sects must be, but sectarianism need not, for it would be a sin to force every man to work out our own interpretation of things, and to live by our own methods. As he states, the more we understand that it is only that man who has realised God and seen Him, is religious, the less we shall have of sectarianism in India, the less of persons groping in darkness leading others to grope in the same darkness. Such truly religious men are of different types and show means for different types of people to attain salvation—philosophic, emotional, mystic or conducive to action. Swamiji says that his ideal of perfect man is one in whom all these four elements are equally present in full. "To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions, is my ideal of religion and this religion is attained by Yoga". Though he describes the four Yogas he emphasises on balance and winds up by saying "Religion is realisation. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging, but it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes".

Every Hindu should make it a point to study closely this valuable book which would warm his frozen soul and make him work for the spiritual regeneration of India.

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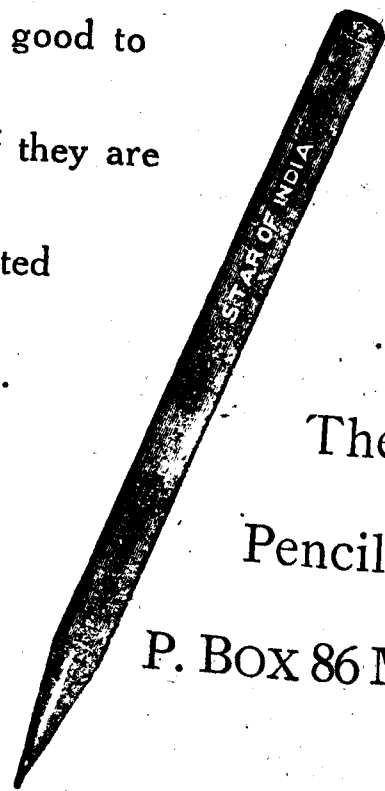
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