



DR SHOBHA RAJU

Sanatana Dharma

HINDU MAHA SAMUDRAM



The Indian Ocean is called “Hindu Maha Samudram”. “Sanatana Dharma” (the oldest and eternal religion) is called “Hindu Dharma” by many. Dharma has no equivalent word in English. I call “Hindu Dharma” as “Hindu Maha Samudram”. “Maha Samudram” means a vast ocean. “Hindu

Dharma” is like a great ocean joining and merging all the rivers in it. Here the rivers are different religions. We find the essence of every religion in Hindu Dharma.

The people belonging to Hindu Dharma can appreciate every religion and love any person belonging to any religion because we are

taught, “Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti”...People of high learning and righteousness say the same Truth in different ways.

A guy was helping me in making a power point presentation. After my routine worship, I gave him “Prasadam” (Anything offered to God and later taken, particularly



food items). He politely refused to take it saying that he wouldn't accept as he belonged to a particular religion. I remember a lady belonging to that particular religion asking my mother to send me and my siblings to participate in the celebration of Christmas. We were given covers in which there were some biscuits and chocolates. We were very happy to receive them.

My mother was educated in Christian missionary school. She was taught "Abhignyana Shakuntalam", Kumara Sambhavam", "Raghu Vamsham". She was totally a Sanskrit bird. Because of her, we got the flavour of Sanskrit. Her pronunciation was very perfect, whenever she chanted "Sreesooktam" "Venkateswara Suprabharam", "Bhagawadgeeta" etcetera. She would fast on all festivals and involve all of us in the traditional rituals. I used to hear her sing a few songs like:

"Carry a blessing wherever you go

*Smiling along smiling along
Singing of purity..."*

"Lead kindly light

Amid encircling gloom

Lead Thou me on..."

Obviously these are Christian songs. She sang with love. Is there

any contradiction with our prayer meaning wise? No. While rooted firmly in our traditions and philosophy, extending ourselves to devotion of other religions is the sign of our strength and the evidence of our broad outlook. If other religions are drawing a boundary and not accepting Prasadam offered to our God, it's a sign of their narrowness.

I have a few accompanying artistes who belong to other religions. They wish me on every Hindu festival. Should I not have the courtesy of wishing them on their festivals?

Moreover, Paramahansa Yogananda Maharaj's "Auto Biography of a Yogi" widens our understanding of spirituality. Yoganandaji was sent to the United States of America by His Guru, Sri Yukteswar Giri Maharaj just to make the westerners realize that Krishna and Christ are from the same Consciousness. We should be able to see the Truth as it is. Pinning down the Truth to suit our needs and conveniences is not right.

Swami Vivekananda, the icon of Hinduism, had a great reverence to Christ. As a true Hindu, we all must. If any Christians do not

respect Hindu Incarnations, it's their ignorance and narrowness. If any Hindus do not respect Jesus, it's also their ignorance. Why should we disown Christ and give exclusive ownership to certain sect of people? Christ is but extension of The Consciousness that took the form of Krishna. "Brahmamokkate", Consciousness is one.

In the name of broadness, we should not tolerate aggressiveness like breaking our idols of worship. In the name of devotion to our religion, we should not turn out to be fanatics as to not wish friends on festive occasions of their religions. We have dealt sternly with a few Hindus who had committed crimes in temples themselves. We don't expect every Hindu to be so, right? So also, there are some vandalistic elements in other religions too. They have to be sternly dealt with. Not all are of the similar attitude.

"Strength is Life, Weakness is Death

Expansion is Life, Contraction is Death

Love is life, Hatred is Death"

- Swami Vivekananda

(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer, writer and composer.) 