



Innovation

A Collection of My Personal Views- My Reflections.

This Innovation is a collection of some of my personal views that I have accumulated over the years and promoted among my friends and family members.

Dr Ram Lakhan Prasad
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By Dr Ram Lakhan Prasad

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INTRODUCTION

I wish to make my own contributions for my readers to consider an alternative way of life. These articles are my own personal views and people have the right to agree to disagree or ponder some more to change the environment as well as the way of life for the future of humankind.

I do not wish to impose my ideas on anyone but if my contentions are worthy of your support I would appreciate more publicity.

In some cases, my views are disturbing for orthodox readers but when taken with a pinch of salt they make good logic and need to be viewed with understanding. I firmly believe in the power of the Supreme Being and conduct my prayers the way I feel comfortable and content.

My readers should try to understand my point of view because I am not in favour of any unnecessary religious ceremonies that waste our time, money and effort. Thus, I am a believer of *Pakhand Khandan* and wish to bring about ideas that would reform my way of life.

Modern Hinduism must give us the freedom to pray and live our life as we want to and not as dictated by some archaic and unnecessary ceremonies that have no meaning and logic.

I am fully responsible for all my words, actions, thoughts, character and habits so I WATCH my future steps with care and control.

Common Ground of Religious Unity

Many educated and wiser people have said a mouthful on the topic of the common ground of religious unity. There are many points of views on this subject but the one that outshines every one was made in 1893 by Swami Vivekananda. He never ever hoped that this unity would come by the triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the others.

If anyone had this feeling, he made his point clear to them. "Brother, yours is an impossible hope." Did the Swami wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Did he wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid.

The Swami explained his point thus: "The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth; or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant, it develops after the law of its own growth assimilates the air, the earth, and the water that converts them into plant substance, and makes them grow into a plant.

Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. However, each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.

All healthy discussions on the issue of assimilation of all human religions have shown the modern religious people of the world one good aspect. It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the

exclusive possessions of any church, religion or temple in the world, and that every religious system has produced men and women of the most exalted character.

In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreamt of the exclusive survival of their own religion and the destruction of the others, the Swami pitied them from the bottom of his heart, and pointed out to them that they needed help and not resistance; they needed more assimilation and not destruction; and they required a lot more harmony and peace rather than dissension.

All the religious leaders of the world need to rethink about world peace and stability by finding a common ground of religious unity first and then other forms of peaceful events will naturally follow for our peaceful co-existence.

A Way of Life That Needs Some Changes.

I am not any expert on religion but a common Hindu who thinks for himself. The views presented here are solely for intelligent discussion and not as an argument or any form of debate. The readers are free to make their own conclusions dispassionately after reading these remarks.

Change has been a constant aspect of our living. History has revealed that we have experienced a variety of cultural, social and religious changes in our lifetime. It is believed by many people that our way of life needs a change if it does not meet the demands and requirements of the current situations.

Religious practices have been modified or changed if they became too rigid for any group of people. Hinduism has had many changes where wise people went on different paths but kept the initial beliefs. As time went by we saw the emergence of Arya Samajis, Kabir Panthis, Buddhists and others like the Saibaba followers. All these came about because people thought that necessary changes were needed.

Hinduism has had many internal changes as well. From time to time we have seen the emergence of a great lawgiver. He would codify the existing laws and remove those, which had become obsolete. He would make some alterations, adaptations, readjustments, additions and deletions to suit the needs of the time and see that the way of living of the people would be in accordance with the teachings of the Vedas.

We Hindus have seen that of such lawgivers, Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parasara were the most celebrated persons. They gave us their Smritis or laws and institutes. These laws and institutes were intended for a particular period and time and were never intended to go on forever.

These laws and rules of Hinduism, which are based entirely upon our social positions, time, climate and region, have been changing. It follows therefore that it must change with the changes in society and the changing conditions of time and climate. If this happens with consensus of the people it affects, then and then only the progress of the Hindu society can be ensured.

Many Hindus agree that it is not possible to follow some of the laws of Manu at the present time and in places like UK, Australia, USA, Canada and other overseas countries where Hindus have migrated. Maybe people are rightly questioning some of the practices that need change. Of course, we can always follow their spirit.

Our society is advancing and when any society, like ours, advances, it outgrows certain laws, which were valid and helpful at a particular time and stage of its growth. Many new aspects, which were not thought out by the old lawgivers have come into existence now. Many people believe that it is no use insisting that people should follow those old laws, which have become obsolete.

Our body needs food to function but we cannot live by food alone. As we grow up and receive or are given the needed knowledge we wish to attain some form of realisation. It is natural that we then look for a lot more reasons to live than the other animals do. A time comes when all the worldly prosperity and prestige do not give us full satisfaction in life.

We gradually want some form of spiritual consolation, a bit of solace and maybe peace in our life. We do not have to stick to and live in the past to achieve these phenomenon. Change in many respects brings progress.

It is at this time of our life that we look to some form of religion to give us some happiness and better understanding about our world we live in and the human society we interact with generally. We realise that there is a Supreme Power somewhere that created everything for us. We know that we have to bind our soul to that Supreme Power known as God.

This then makes us somewhat religious. It is this comprehension of religion that reveals to us the way for the attainment of human peace, progress and prosperity. We differentiate our living from that of other animal existence.

Depending on the place of our birth, our association with each other and our family history we look toward a certain belief and either remain a Hindu or convert to any of the many other religions of the world. Whatever is our religious belief, ultimately we have to behave as good human beings. Good human beings attain goodness, truth and beauty in their words, thoughts and deeds. Any deviation from these sound and solid aspects of living makes us alienate and we tend to differ in our human conduct and behaviour to be corrected through the processes of social or religious justice.

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions and the people who follow these principles and practices are known as Hindus. Unlike other religions, Hinduism is neither founded by any prophet nor has it any fixed dates. It should be free from religious fanaticism. It is an eternal religion based on the Vedas that were expressions of intuitive experiences of the sages of those days.

Therefore, we can say that Hinduism is a revealed religion. If it is so then some realistic changes are not only necessary but needed if it wants to survive the modern pressures of living and just criticism.

We cannot run away from the fact that our present society has considerably changed. Maybe there is a need and necessity for a new Smriti or religious laws to suit the requirements of this age. Another sage like Manu would have to emerge and place before us new and suitable codes of practices and laws. I certainly feel that the time is ripe for a new Smriti or law for Hinduism.

This will make our younger generation of Hindu families to better appreciate and fully understand the purpose of their religion. We all are able to hear some of the valid objections of this new generation but in our religious pride we attempt to force our own views on to them and are not able to think dispassionately to assist them. The children either withdraw altogether and change their religious paths or are fed up with religious fanaticism and become non-believers.

We all believe that Hinduism, unlike other religions, does not dogmatically assert that the final emancipation is possible only through its means. It should allow absolute freedom to the rational mind and it should never demand any undue restraints upon the freedom of human reason, thought, feeling and will. Hinduism has always allowed us the widest freedom in matters of faith and worship.

However, nowadays we notice that as an individual we Sanatanis or Hindus have very little say if any in the performance of our religious prayers that we ask our priests to conduct for us at our homes. Unless of course, we are free thinkers and are eager to practice religion as we wish.

The priests go on and on with their same routine and give us the religious jargon in a language that our new generation are not able to comprehend and find it boring. We are at the mercy of these priests to obey the obsolete and archaic practices and laws. If we want any changes to suit, our time and clime, they refuse to conduct the prayers for us and ask us to seek the services of a priest from a different sect of Hinduism.

Where has that allowance of absolute freedom to the human reason gone for Hinduism? I am told that Hinduism does not lie in the acceptance of any particular doctrine, or in the observance of some particular rituals or forms of worship. It should not force anybody to accept particular dogmas or forms of worship. It should allow everybody to reflect, investigate, enquire and cogitate.

Of course Hinduism does not condemn anyone or any religion. Even the unbelievers should be recognised as pious and honourable members of the society as long as they are good human beings. This is why Hinduism is proverbial, is extremely catholic and liberal. Despite all the differences of prevalent metaphysical doctrines, modes of religious discipline and forms of ritualistic practices and social habits, there should be an essential uniformity in the conception of religion and in the outlook on life. This is my reason to look for some changes.

It is good to notice that in some places in the world like the West & East Indies, Trinidad and Mauritius a lot of aspects of Hinduism have been modernised and the people have absolute freedom to practice Hinduism as they feel and like. The people there believe that Hinduism is a synthesis of all types of religious experiences. It is a whole and complete view of life. It is free from fanaticism and that is the reason it has its survival there.

If truth, beauty and goodness are the cornerstones of Hinduism then it is time now to become more elastic and tolerant to the new changes that are inevitable. We need to be more elastic in readjusting to the externals and non-essentials and then we would succeed in keeping our new generation intact and to be followers of new form of Hinduism.

Some priests I have spoken to agree that some changes are definitely needed in our obsolete practices and there are others who are prepared to conduct prayers for us in our homes and in public places as we would like them to do. But there are many around us who are still stuck in the past and any changes in the principles and practices of Hinduism for them are impossible and cannot be accepted.

We modern Hindus need the emergence of a courageous and determined new and reformed sage or lawgiver like Manu to give us new meaning to our old Universal Hindu Religion. One last thing to remember is that our voice for a change is more than what we have heard and a lot greater than whatever we have experienced.

Our revelations and traditions are books written by sages but they cannot constitute the final authority because they were heard from someone's experiences and were left as a record for the benefit of posterity. Then when the written language developed they were all composed as far as the memory could dictate.

What the sages heard and what they experienced and then what they wrote could vary from the original form of religious law. This is because the ones who heard and the ones who experienced the laws of religion were different from the ones who acted as scribes.

Therefore, some items may have been either forgotten or left out from the original in the process of recording and writing. Then, we now have more reasons to say that the time has come for a change and a modification that would be useful to all new generation Hindus.

Ramayan According to Valmiki.

There are two important epics for Hindus- The Ramayan and The Mahabharat. Both the epics have elements of violence and peace, deceit and honesty, evil and goodness, as well as truth and beauty. No other literary piece in any other language has the amalgam of such vast treasure. Ramayan depicts the duties of ideal relationships of many kinds- servants, lords, brother, wife, father, mother, king and their citizens. It is the journey of the incarnate of Lord Vishnu, Ram and was originally composed by Valmiki into 24,000 verses and 7 books or kaands.

The epic explores the concept of human existence and the idea of religion (Dharm) or righteousness. It contains the teachings of ancient Hindu sages and their philosophies and devotional elements. Hindus have been reciting these verses individually or in groups in a variety of ways and methods and interpreting the stories as best as they possibly could.

Ramayan is one of the longest literary pieces where Ram is depicted as an ideal hero and Ravan is his antagonist. While the theologists worship Ram as God incarnate, philosophers make him the mouth piece of an absolute human being. Then materialists appreciate the lyrical values of the whole literary composition. The point is that whoever sees him in whatever way, he is the one.

The one who is well behaved, well presented and all pervading. The one who is as bright as the full moon and who is many times more powerful than any human being. The one who always wears a pleasant smile on his face and is meditated upon with sincerity and emotions to eradicate and extinguish all obstacles.

The story of Ram, the incarnate of Lord Vishnu and his whole journey of a variety of activities were narrated to Valmiki by the sage Narad who was the brain child of Lord Brahma and sent to this world for this particular purpose. The reason why Valmiki was chosen by Lord Brahma to compose the epic can be interpreted by looking at the life of Valmiki before he became a sage.

Valmiki was a hunter who hunted and killed animals to feed his family and when asked as to who was responsible for all the sins thus created, none of his friends and family members stood up to share his sins. He then advanced his knowledge and abstained from all killings and became a devotee of the Lord.

Jaan aadi kavi naam prataapaa

Bhaye siddh kar ulta jaapaa

(By uttering his familiar idea
MaraMaraMaraMaraMaraM Valmiki found **Ram** and became a sage.)

When Valmiki asked Narad as to who is the one that is an absolute and a supreme human being he was told about the various qualities and attributes of Ram and his future activities and journey to uphold dharm or righteousness on the earth.

Divine sage Narad arrives at the hermitage of Sage Valmiki in order to enlighten him and keep him informed of his duty to author the epic poem Ramayan. In the dialogue between these two sages, Valmiki elicits from Narada about most virtuous person on earth, namely Ram. While eulogizing Ram, Narad gives an outline of Ramayan, truly highlighting those aspects that are the keynotes in this epic, like virtuosity, generosity, morality, chastity and the like.

Narad depicted Ram as the person who will be principled to rid the world of sins and all the demons who are the enemies of humanity. He will be the potential one, the one that would be conscientious, a redeemer, a truth teller and self determined in all his deeds.

Thus upon asking Narad, Valmiki came to know in advance all about the journey of the courageous one, who was to control all his ire. Valmiki's prospective hero Ram was going to be a man with godly qualities, a human being with godly attributes. In fact Brahma had imparted the knowledge about such a man to Narad who in turn imparted the legend to Valmiki to compose Ramayan.

Ram was to emerge from Ikshvaku Clan or Vansh and was destined to be a human being different from all normal ones to free all people from misery and suppression. He was to be born, study all aspects of devoted living, get exiled to fulfill a particular purpose when a replicar of his wife Sita was to be taken away by Rawan, the cruel king of Lanka but with the help of monkeys such as Hanuman and Sugriev Ram crosses the Strait to conquer and defeat Rawan to free Sita.

Valmiki then used his own initiative to compose the epic with philosophies, devotion, art, relationships and other human values to let the world believe that whenever there is an excess of sin and sinful people such as the demons and suppression of the rights of the good and law abiding people, God himself reincarnates in such human form to rid the world of all calamities.

Ramayan therefore has become one of the most read epics of Hindus for their salvation and attaining dharma or righteousness. People have the choice of

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