

The Secret of India's Greatness.

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IX

Modern Times.

To this, too, it may be objected that whatever may have been the case with poor benighted Mediæval Europe in respect of its religious bigotry and fanaticism towards people of other sects and denominations, the *modern* Western world is of a different, *i. e.*, a *tolerant* type and believes and acts on the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood! We may readily grant that undoubtedly it always *talks* of it; but as to its *belief* therein and *deeds* according thereto, we must frankly and honestly declare our scepticism in both! In fact, we have found absolutely *no* justification whatsoever from *History* for any other attitude on the matter!

The Example of America.

Let us, hereon, take the instance, not of British South Africa, British East Africa, Switzerland or France or any other such part of the Western world but the case of the United States of America, the most advanced, the most progressive, the most civilized, the most cultured, the most fashionable, the most up-to-date and the most typical Representatives of Modern Democratic and Republican Ideals of Life, where the "Pilgrim Fathers" (from Britain) in their quest for Liberty of Conscience in matters of Religious Faith and Worship found a haven of rest and shelter, where the statue of the Goddess

of Liberty is the first thing for you to set your eyes on and be greeted by on landing and where the Ideal of Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, and so on is trumpeted and blazoned forth as being so great and so universal that (as most of you may know) there are only two parties there—we mean political parties—one Democratic and the other Republican! The names are different, but the meaning of the two words is the same; and this shows that the Ideal—or at any rate, the Political *shibboleth*—of the two parties is the same *i. e.*, Government of the people *by* the people and *for* the people! And yet, not only in South Africa, Kenya and so on, but even in such a Land of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality as the United States of America, what have you there? A poor emigrant from India, China, or Japan goes there, not to become a multi-or-even-ordinary millionaire but only to appease the pangs of hunger by eking out a mere pittance as a mere livelihood; and you have the Immigration Laws of America shutting him out! And there is the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, Liberty, Fraternity, Equality and all the rest of it, exemplified in actual experience for you! Here, in India, because we refuse to admit people of certain classes, castes, or parentage inside our *houses* and inside *our* temples, *we* are narrow-minded! But if and when they, in America, refuse them admittance into their country itself, *they* deserve to be described as broad-minded! This is the beautiful logic of the position! And

we are called upon to take our cue from such splendid and model practical conduct! What a queer, nay, sickening and brutal contrast between Theory and Practice? Such being the case even with regard to the most Democratic Democracy and Republican Republic of the modern Western world, we need not go and delve further in into the question of South African immigration and so forth and dwell on any further examples of the same or a similar sort!

India's Record.

Now, over against these pictures, let us take up and consider the instance of India and prove the pudding in India's case by the actual taste of it in practical experience! It is true, as already stated, that we *feel* differences of caste, *talk* of differences of caste, *insist on* differences of caste, do *not* take food or drink touched by many races, classes and castes of people and do not allow people of some classes and castes to come into our temples, into our houses and even into our Agraharas! But, at any rate, we allow such people to live in our country, to eke out their livelihood and to lead *happy* human lives! Leaving aside, for the moment, the difficulties which engineered, *i.e.*, artificial, agitation on the matter has newly given rise to in our towns and cities at the present time, we may refer, not from a sense of Pharisaical self-glorification but from the standpoint of Truth, to the fact that, in the villages, where modern artificial catchwords and *camouflage* have not yet found entry and the modern "Social Reformer" in particular has not yet made his *debut* and achieved any degree of success worth mentioning, the relationship between the highest of "high-caste" Brahmans and the lowest of "low-

caste" Chandalas has always been and is continuing to the present day to be—and, we hope, will always stay—of the most cordial and loving character! From our boyhood onwards to the present time, we have been travelling almost incessantly; and there is not a single province in any part of India whereof we have not, in our itineraries, gone into the most old-fashioned of Indian villages absolutely untouched by the withering touch of the artificialities of modern life and so-called modern civilization! And we can conscientiously say that we have not found even a *single* exception which could possibly militate against the truth of the statement we have just made with regard to the cordiality and loving co-operation obtaining between caste and caste! Evidently, therefore, the feuds and the friction between caste and caste which these "Reformers" make so much of, nay, actually and gleefully *exploit* for their propagandist purposes are not normal and natural features and consequences of Indian life and Sanātani doctrines respectively, but the real and actual creation of the "Social Reformers" themselves!

Unity Underlying Diversity.

So, we *do* believe in differences and honestly admit and readily plead guilty to, such belief; but these differences are God-made (or Nature-made, if you prefer that expression) and are therefore absolutely inevitable; and they are such that, notwithstanding them, we can and do have sympathy and even love towards one another, with the resultant cordial co-operation in all matters affecting our common interests! And this is *the* thing inculcated in and by our Scriptures. Thus, the exact and true position as

between the East and the West in this respect is that, we here have all the differences on the lips and all the co-operation at heart and in action, while, in the West, there is no difference at all on the lips and the worst possible difference at heart and in actual practice! The question now is, which is the *Ideal* or even the *procedure* which you wish to follow? You can make up your own minds for yourselves on this matter. There is no need for us to go into any other, further and more detailed exposition of this point. But there are lots and lots of illustrative examples which may be mentioned in support of our position hereon; a few of these we shall go into, just now.

The History of Indian Christianity.

We have already seen how Christianity had to fight every inch of its way through into Europe, come into death-grips with all the then existing religions of the Western world and actually annihilate *all* of them in order to survive! Let us now see the other side of the shield, *i.e.*, how Christianity fared in India! The only Apostle of Christ who had no such bitter experience and suffering was St. Thomas who brought Christ's religion into India; and the very first Christian colony in the entire history of the world was the one which was established by him in the Kerala (*i.e.*, Malayalee) part of India and which is a flourishing colony even to the present day there! India has never persecuted people of other faiths; on the contrary, India has always welcomed and received with open arms the people of all countries, races and faiths; and India is the meeting-ground of all Religions of the World as no other

country on earth ever was, is or ever will be! Is this not a better proof of the pudding (of Universal Brotherhood) than the history of Europe and America which have always paid lip homage, but never really owed heart-allegiance, thereto?

Our Parsi Guests.

The history of the relationship between the Parsi community and India is another splendid example in point. You know about the Parsis forming one of the great communities in India at the present day. In fact, they are amongst the foremost citizens of India at present. But when, wherefore, wherefor, how and under what circumstances did they come to India? Their own publications inform us of the great Historical Fact that, in their own country, *i.e.*, Persia (which in those ancient times used to be called Iran), they suffered horrible "religious" persecutions, but, unwilling to abandon their religious faith and the rituals which they conscientiously believed in, they preferred to abandon their hearths and homes, and, taking the Sacred Fire with them, they sought shelter in various different Western lands, to wit, Greece, Rome, Egypt and all sorts of countries of Europe, Africa and Asia, too, in fact; but in none of them were they allowed to land and stay! They suffered and suffered everywhere, and, finally, they came over to India. They landed in the West Coast of India, in that part of our sacred *Bhārata-varṣa* which now goes by the name of Gujerat in the Bombay Presidency. There was one Raja Yādava ruling there at that time. Seeing these strange people, who were strange in appearance, strange in dress, strange in faith language, strange in habits,

strange in worship—in fact, strange in everything—Raja Yādava felt perplexed about his duty towards them. And, in that predicament, he applied for advice and guidance to the then Jagadguru Śri Śankarāchārya of Dwarka and got from him the characteristic Sanātani reply:—“These people, whom you are asking me about, are *Atithis* (guests) that have come from foreign lands into your country. Treat them according to the Indian Sanātana Dhārmic Law of *Atithi-pūjā* (reverential hospitality towards the stranger at the gate), a law which applies to every stranger as such in general and much more therefore to these guests, who, whatever their Religious Faith may be, have, for the sake of their Religion, travelled widely, suffered intensely and at last sought shelter under you”! Accordingly, Raja Yādava gave them shelter and not merely allowed them to live in his country but loaded them with all the conveniences, facilities, comforts and even luxuries which they needed or desired! So much so that, looking at the question from the standpoint merely of *external* prosperity in the shape of *material* wealth (*i.e.*, Rupees, annas and pies), the Parsis are *the most prosperous* community in India at the present day! And this is why, year after year, at the time of the celebrations of their New Year Festival and in other great gatherings of the Parsi community as a whole from time to time, whatever important and emergent matters may need consideration and may, in fact, have been responsible for the convening of the meeting in question, they begin their proceedings with an *invariable First Resolution*, namely, of thanks to the memory of Raja Yādava for having made them what they are in India to-

day! Once again, we challenge all the rest of the world to show even a *single* instance of such feelings of this truly sublime type, not merely honoured and paid homage to on the lips but actually exemplified by the West in its *historical* practice!

The Flemish Case.

On the contrary, we must candidly state that we actually find the history of the Western world disfigured from day to day by instances of just the opposite type! Text-books on the Industrial and Economic History of Europe, which are actually in use at the present day in the great Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and other Institutions of England, inform us that a colony of Flemings came over to England, at the special invitation and entreaty of the English people themselves in order to teach the latter the silk-weaving and other industries so that the poor working classes of England might learn these profitable trades and earn a paying and respectable living thereby. But, when the Flemings had taught them those trades, and the English workers had learnt all that they had to and could learn from them, they were unable to see the sight of their Flemish teachers living prosperous lives in their midst, persecuted them, actually fell upon them and drove them out after indulging in horrible scenes of carnage and bloodshed! We are told that the Flemings were not living in luxury, nor even leading lives of mediocre prosperity but only of what might be called a mere competence! And yet, even this, their own pupils could not bear to see and therefore actually despoiled them off of! Here again are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man and other

beautiful *Shibboleths* for you in the actual *historical practice* of the Western world!

Toleration.

It is in the fitness of things, therefore, *i.e.*, actually befitting the spirit shown all through by the Western world, that from the time of Justin Martyr, one of the earliest if not actually the earliest of Christian Apologists and Theologians, on through the time of Augustine and even the great Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, down even to modern times, we have to deal with the curious theological fact that one of the cardinal points of the Christian Church has been its doctrine of Eternal Hell, as a punishment for non-belief in Christ! This has formed alas! an inherent and integral part of the religion of the professed followers of the Prince of Peace! Modern etiquette, politeness and Humani-

tarianism have, no doubt, produced a more refined or at least a more polite spirit in the western mind! But even now they only *tolerate* other creeds but are not prepared to accept the position that followers of other faiths can also be on paths which will, in reality and ultimately, lead them to their goal of Salvation (Spiritual and all-round)! Even now the enlightened followers of Christianity and other *founded* religions of the world continue to consign to Eternal Hell the sincere and conscientious followers of all other faiths than their own! And this is why they are all found to be fundamentally, temperamentally, and therefore inevitably, aggressively propagandist, militantly prosletysing and actually intolerant at heart and, at the most, to tolerate other religions merely as a matter of *State Policy* and no more!