

DECIDED TO RENOUNCE HINDUISM

At the end of March 1936, the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal Lahore, informed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar that they had postponed their Conference to the middle of May. There was a stir in the Punjab press and the orthodox public had subjected the Mandal to a very bitter criticism for having elected its President a leader like Dr. Ambedkar 'who was a declared hater of Hindu religion'. The result was that even the staunch leaders like Bhai Parmanand, Dr. Narang, Mahatma Hans Raj and Raja Narendra Nath, had to disassociate themselves from the Mandal. To give a correct idea to Dr. Ambedkar of the situation, the Mandal, whose leading light was Sant Ram, sent Har Bhagwan to Bombay. He saw Dr. Ambedkar in Bombay on April 9 and took away the portion of the presidential address which was ready.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar also left for Amritsar on 10th April 1936 to attend the Sikh Mission's Conference, which was to meet on April 13 and 14. The Sikh Conference was attended by huge crowds of Sikhs and the Depressed Classes from the Punjab, Kerala, U. P. and C. P. The Conference was presided over by Sardar Bahadur Hukum Singh, a retired District Judge, and the Chairman of the reception committee was Wasakhas Singh. Both the President and the Chairman in their addresses stressed the need for improving the plight of the Depressed Classes by intensive missionary work.

Addressing the Conference, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar expressed his approval of the principles of equality among the Sikhs and added that he had not yet made up his mind, though he had decided to renounce Hinduism.

Sir Jogendra Singh, another speaker, stressed the need for missionary work and the creation of a trust for the purpose, and

appealed for funds. The main feature of the Conference was the conversion of five prominent Depressed Class leaders of the Thiyya community of Kerala headed by Dr. Kuttir and fifty others from the U. P. and C. P., to Sikhism.”¹

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¹: Keer, P. 267.