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DO NOT WORSHIP GODS IN HINDU RELIGION

"No. 11 of 1938.
Oriental Translator's Office
Secretariat,
Bombay, 5th January 1938.

Memorandum

The undersigned presents compliments to the Secretary to Government, Home Department (Political), and has the honour to forward the accompanying Marathi book *Niropya,* Vol. XXII, No. 6 (November 1937) as it contains noteworthy matter in an editorial note, appearing on pages 135-138.

2. The *Niropya* is printed and published by the Archbishop-Bishop of Poona at the Examiner Printing Press, Dalal Street, Fort, Bombay. The declaration of the keeper or the Examiner Printing Press stands in the name of J. M. Serres S. J. and is dated the 23rd January 1937. The date of issue of the book from the press is 1st November 1937.

3. Full translation of the editorial note appearing on pages 135 to 138 is sent herewith.

(Signed)

Oriental Translator to Government,

(Signed) D. C. P.

Superintendent S. B. C. I. D.

Necessity of Conversion

Full translation of an editorial note headed *"Dr. Ambedkar Ani Dharmantarchi Avashyakata"* (i.e. Dr. Ambedkar and the necessity of conversion) appearing in the *Niropya,* Vol. XXII, No. 6 for the month of November 1937.

(Portions appearing in brackets throughout this translation do not appear in the original, except when otherwise indicated in the margin.)

It is learnt from the weekly newspaper *Janata* that a large public meeting of the Depressed Classes was held at the Municipal Hall, Bandra, on the 28th August 1937, under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and that the following resolution was passed thereat :—

"As resolved at the Bombay Presidency Mahar Conference our brothers and sisters should not observe the Hindu religious festivals, the religious rites of Hinduism such as vows, etc., and religious practices such as fasts."

After several speeches had been made on this occasion Dr. Ambedkar rose to speak.

He said : "Our meeting is specially (convened) in order to remind (you) of the resolutions regarding conversion passed by the Bombay Presidency Mahar Conference. Therefore if any one has any questions (lit. doubts) to ask about conversion he should certainly ask them." As no one came forward to ask any question (lit. doubt) Dr. Ambedkar commenced his speech.

He said,

"Dear brothers and sisters,

I was not going to attend this meeting; but I learnt that there-are some persons here who stick to old traditions and do not give full effect to the resolution regarding conversion passed by the 'Mahar Conference'. I have, therefore, come here to remove the doubts of such persons. I have several times expressed my views (on this subject) long ago. As a matter of fact you should not entertain any doubt about them in your minds. The Bombay Presidency Mahar Conference held in 1935 is fit to be written in letters of gold in the history of the Mahar community. The resolutions passed by such a Conference must, therefore, as a matter of fact, be obeyed by the Mahar community as a whole and a majority of the members of the Mahar community do act up to those resolutions.

Gods in Hindu religion should not be worshipped

Dr. Ambedkar further said, "We must give up (observing) all the religious festivals and days which we had been observing according to the Hindu religion. We must consider whether the rites performed according to the Hindu religion are proper from the point of view of religion and morality. Some rites are full of extreme ribaldry. For example, several persons observe fast on

Monday in the name of (god) Shankara and worship the *Pindi* (the Phallus or linga) of Shankara in various ways. But has anyone considered as to what the *Pindi* of Shankara is? It is nothing else but a representation of the union of man and women. Should we sing the praises of an indecent representation of this sort? If man and woman indulge in indecent behaviour in the street like dogs, are we to worship them with flowers or with shoes? Should we then worship the representation of the same act of Parvati (and) Shankara, i.e., the indecency of god ?

Similar is the case with Ganapati also. "Dr. Ambedkar continued :" The story of Ganapati is that once Parvati was taking her bath naked, Shankara had gone somewhere else at that time. Therefore in order that she may not disturbed by any one, Parvati scraped off the dirt of her body and formed out of it, Ganapati the protector. Then how is this odious deity born out of dirt to be considered as God? God must be spotless and holiness incarnate, but the Gods in Hindu religion are very queer as I told you now. It is, therefore, my honest belief that they should not be worshipped."

Thirdly, Dr. Ambedkar related the story of Dattatraya, "Narada went on telling the wives of the three Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha that Anusuya the wife of the sage Atri was a highly chaste wife. They could not bear to see that any woman should be (considered) more chaste than themselves. Therefore these three wives asked their respective husbands to violate the chastity of Anusuya and the three heroes also listended to their wives and became ready to do so. These three persons went to Anusuya's house, sent her husband elsewhere on some pretext and began to live in Anusuya's company. In this condition she gave birth to a son. And as there was a doubt as to the fatherhood of the child three heads were attached to it in order to throw equal responsibility on these three (gods), and the same is the incarnation of Dattatraya."

The movement (in favour) of conversion is not to be withdrawn

At the end of his speech, Dr. Ambedkar said "It is the impression of several people that the wave of conversion has now subsided. But it is not so. Conversion is sure to take

place. Bear it well in mind that I have not abandoned this movement. Several Hindus say to me 'our eyes have been opened as a result of your agitation for (lit. Question of) conversion. As we have now been awakened we shall not now fail in our duty towards you; do therefore withdraw your movement of conversion.' But I do not intend to withdraw the movement of the very reasons which I have related till now. Consider (the matter) thoroughly, and the new (lit. other) religion to be adopted must be adopted only after a close searching examination (lit. after heating and testing as in the case of gold). I hope that hereafter all the members of the Mahar community will act just in the manner decided by the Mahar Conference."*[1]

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[1] : *Extract from Station Diary of Bhoiwada Police Station, dated Thursday, the 27th May 1937,12-10 a.m..

This speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the resolutions were published in Janata, dated 4th September 1937.—Editors.