

INTRODUCTION

This book is an exposition of the beliefs propounded by what might be called Brahmanic theology. It is intended for the common mass of Hindus who need to be awakened to know in what quagmire the Brahmins have placed them and to lead them on to the road of rational thinking.

The Brahmins have propagated the view that the Hindu civilization is Sanatan, that is, unchanging. This view has been reinforced by a good many of the European Scholars who have said that the Hindu civilization is static. In this book I have attempted to show that this view is not in accord with facts and that Hindu Society has changed from time to time and that often times the change is of the most radical kind. In this connection, compare the Riddles from Himsa to Ahimsa and from Ahimsa back to Himsa. I want to make the mass of people to realize that Hindu religion is not Sanatan.

The second purpose of this book is to draw attention of the Hindu masses to the devices of the Brahmins and to make them think for themselves how they have been deceived and misguided by the Brahmins.

It will be noticed how the Brahmins have changed and chopped. There was a time when they worshipped the Vedic Gods. Then came a time when they abandoned their Vedic Gods and started worshipping non-Vedic Gods. One may well ask them—where is Indra, where is Varuna, where is Brahma, where is Mitra — the Gods mentioned in the Vedas? They have all disappeared. And why, because the worship of Indra, Varuna and Brahma ceased to be profitable. Not only did the Brahmins abandon their Vedic Gods but there are cases where they have become the worshippers of Muslim Pirs. In this connection one glaring case may be referred to. In Kalyan near Bombay there is a famous Darga of Pir called Bawa Malangsha on the top of a hill. It is a very famous Darga. Every year a Urs (pilgrimage) is held and offerings are made. The person who officiates at the Darga as a priest

This is a seven-page manuscript, with corrections in Dr. Ambedkar's handwriting. Last few paras are additions in the handwriting by Dr. Ambedkar to the typed script.—Ed.

is a Brahmin, sitting near it, wearing the clothes of Muslims and receiving monies offered at the Darga. This he did for the sake of money. Religion or no religion what the Brahmin wants is Dakshina. Indeed the Brahmins have made religion a matter of trade and commerce. Compare with this faithlessness of the Brahmins the fidelity of the Jews to their Gods even when their conqueror Nebuchadnezzar forced the Jews to abandon their religion and adopt his (religion)¹.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king, made an image of gold, whose height was three score cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits; he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king, ordered the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar, the king had set up.

Then the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Then an herald cried aloud,

“To you, it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sack-but, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

And who so falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of burning fiery furnace.”

Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sack-but, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar,

“O King, live for ever.

Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sack-but, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick shall fall down and worship the golden image;

¹ What follows is from Daniel Ch. 3 (Old Testament).

And who so falleth not down and worshipping that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace;

There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before king.

Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them,

"Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sack-but, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well! but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King.

But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

Can the Brahmins of India show such stead-fast faith and attachment for their Gods and to their religious faith?

Buckle in his history of civilization says:

“It is evident that until doubt began, progress was impossible. For as we have clearly seen, the advance of civilization solely depends on the acquisitions made by the human intellect and on the extent to which those acquisitions are diffused. But men who are perfectly satisfied with their own knowledge will never attempt to increase it. Men who are perfectly convinced of the accuracy of their opinions will never take the pains of examining the basis on which they are built. They look with wonder, and often with horror, on views contrary to those which they inherited from their fathers; and while they are in this state of mind, it is impossible that they should receive any new truth which interferes with their foregone conclusions.

On this account it is, that although the acquisition of fresh knowledge is the necessary precursor of every step in social progress, such acquisition must itself be preceded by a love of inquiry, and therefore by a spirit of doubt; because without doubt there will be no inquiry and without inquiry there will be no knowledge. For knowledge is not an inert and passive principle which comes to us whether we will or not; but it must be sought before it can be won; it is the product of great labour and therefore of great sacrifice. And it is absurd to suppose that men will incur the labour, and make the sacrifice for subjects respecting which they are already perfectly content. They who do not feel the darkness, will never look for the light. If on any point we have attained to certainty, we make no further inquiry on that point; because inquiry would be useless, or perhaps dangerous. The doubt must intervene, before the investigation can begin. Here, then we have the act of doubting as the originator or, at all events, the necessary antecedent of all progress.”

Now the Brahmins have left no room for doubt, for they have propounded a most mischievous dogma which the Brahmins have spread among the masses, is the dogma of the infallibility of the Vedas. If the Hindu intellect has ceased to grow and if the Hindu civilization and culture has become a stagnant and stinking pool, this dogma must be destroyed root and branch if India is to progress. The Vedas are a worthless set of books. There is no reason either to call them sacred or infallible. The Brahmins have invested it with sanctity and infallibility only because by a later interpolation of what is called the Purusha — Sukta, the Vedas have made them the lords of the Earth. Nobody has

had the courage to ask why these worthless books which contain nothing but invocation to tribal Gods to destroy the Enemies, loot their property and give it to their followers (have been made sacred and infallible)¹. But the time has come when the Hindu mind must be freed from the *hold** which the silly ideas propagated by the Brahmins, have on them. Without this liberation India has no future. I have undertaken this task knowing full well what *risk** it involves. I am not afraid of the consequences. I shall be happy if I succeed in stirring the masses.

B. R. AMBEDKAR

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¹ Inserted by the editors—Ed.

* The word 'hold' has been introduced by us. This word is illegible in the hand-written manuscript. So also the word 'risk' is missing from the original.

PART I

Religious

